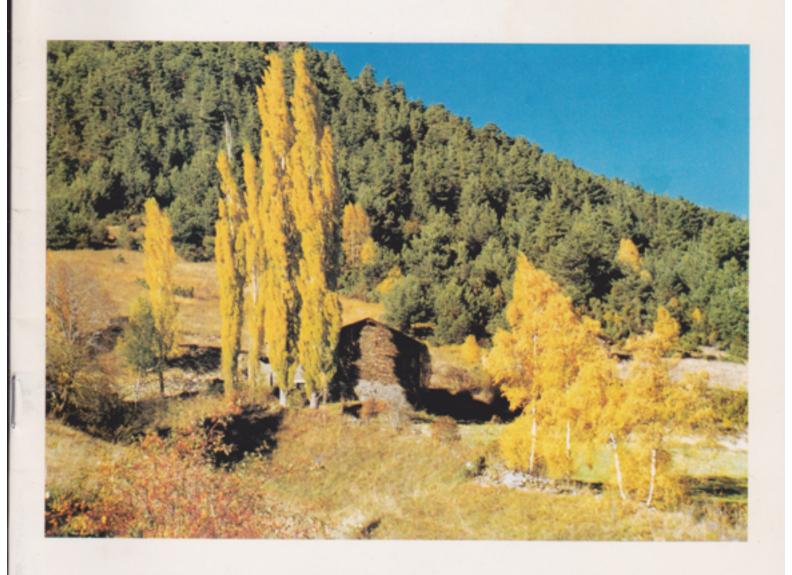


MAGAZINE / REVISTA



VOL. 7 - Núm. 1 - AUTUMN / TARDOR 1997

CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

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COVER PICTURE: AUTUMN COLOURS, CORTALS DE SISPONY BY ERIC LACK



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INTERCOMM

Club Internacional d'Andorra

Quarterly Magazine

September 1997

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EDITOR: Margaret Shaida Published by Club Internacional d'Andorra Typeset by Margaret Shaida Artwork by Hassan Shaida Printed by Impremta Envalira S.L.,

NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Tony Hooper

The AGM, held on 28th May, along with the meeting between the Committee and Group leaders held beforehand, enabled a fair number of members to engage in some productive discussion. The Board were very pleased to receive votes of thanks and appreciation from those present.

Activities during the summer have continued to be very successful. The Car Boot Sale received a tremendous amount of publicity from all the media, including banner headlines on the front page of *Periodic Andorra*. Perhaps we gained these because news was short in the country, but it all reflected very well on the Club and those who organised the event, particularly Caroline.

The trip to Avignon was reported as another success, and I am sure that someone will have written a few lines for this issue. Mention of the trip and all the other successful activities arranged this year by Ann and Josefina of course leads to a repeat of the request for members to come forward and volunteer to organise an event in 1998 whilst our two stalwarts take a well earned sabbatical. If activities are to continue next year we do need you to come forward now so that we can put a programme together.

We are now approaching the tenth birthday of the Club. In the near future, I should like to write a brief history for the magazine, and would



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welcome any input, particularly from those who were around at the birth.

Peter Parkinson has resigned from the committee, but retains his membership of the Board, where, as he writes, he can perhaps help as an "elder statesman". The Board and the Committee would like to thank Peter for all his work over the past few years.

EDITORIAL

Margaret Shaida

In 1992, when I first saw the splendid great black bull hoarding down on the road to Barcelona airport, I was very impressed. Each time I went to the airport, I looked out for him. When, two or three years later, I saw the hoarding begin to disintegrate, I was saddened. However, I was delighted when he was restored to his former magnificence.

I was even more delighted to receive an article about this bull and all the others dotted around Spain - Peter Dunkley has written us another of his splendidly researched articles - this time about the Osborne Bulls of Spain - and how they nearly became an endangered species. It is nice to know that I was not alone in welcoming back this grand Spanish sight. (See Page 13)

We have a full magazine - due in part, I have to say, to two anonymous authors. No doubt, those of you who were involved in the activities reported on will be able to detect who these anonymous writers are.

The first is a report about the very successful Car Boot Sale (see page 5) organised by Caroline Colvin-Smith in the Arinsal Car Park last July. This was written the day before and gives us all a hint as to the amount of work involved in the preparation of such events.

The second report (see page 7) is on the Activities Group visit to Avignon and the South of France back in June. This trip appears to have been a lovely one which was greatly enjoyed by all the participants.

We also have two features on a couple of members of the canine family - two dogs - one who made a lasting impression on the Feilberg family over many years and whose death last year devastated Solveig and Henrik. The other tale is of a dog who made a much more fleeting appearance on the stage of life at La Massana, but who clearly impressed Samia with his irrepressible charm.

We have two recommendations for a couple of restaurants. Jacquie Crozier very much enjoyed a meal in a restaurant in Andorra la Vella, and has written a splendid restaurant review to tell us all about it (see page 16). And we have a brief recommendation from Elise Kellet. (see page 11).

Our next issue appears in December so if you have anything you want to put in for
the Christmas issue, please let me have it by the
14th November. All reports on the Groups
should also reach me by that date, please, and
all your letters too! (We have no letters this
time because I didn't receive any!). So please
drop me a line.





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NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

International Singers

une 21st was a red letter day for us. We had been invited to join Andorra's celebrations of The International Day of Music. Then almost didn't make it. With singers in Holland, France, England, Brazil, Japan and America, we weren't sure we could muster enough voices - and there was no way Binnie would let us perform in public if we were going to let the side down. However, the side rose magnificently to the challenge. Maria Teresa acted as our excellent emissary. Jean Axten returned post-haste from the UK, loyally turning out despite her crutches. Leela, operating on modern, just-in-time, management methods, hurtled back from Holland, arriving for the dress-rehearsal. While Deborah, after working all day, squeezed in practices at night. Later she said that singing with the massed choirs was one of the most uplifting experiences she'd had since her arrival in Andorra. This was our first performance in the National Auditorium. We sang 'Let There Be Peace On Earth' and 'This Land Is Your Land' to a packed house. Then joined the other choirs for four songs, including Auld Lang Syne in Catalan.

Then poor Joe Segal damaged his new hip, which lead to our SOS for a standin pianist while Binnie cares for him. (Who says there's no drama in Andorra!) Well, the SOS has been answered most nobly by Barbara Melin so, make a note for your diaries. All being well, we shall be performing our usual Christmas concerts on the 13th and 14th of December. We may also give a short performance for UNICEF at the Andorra la Vella Fira at the end of October. Any women wishing to join us would be made most welcome. Please ring Jean Axten on 835978 or Brenda Ross on 836886.

C.A.

Helpline

ilias Grassie wishes to remind you that she is asking for Catalan recipes, typed in Catalan, to be sent to her AS SOON AS POSSIBLE PLEASE! Please give this some thought check through your books or ask your Catalan friends. Recipes should be sent to:

Lilias Grassie Ed. Anyos Residencial, Apt. P.B. 1 Anyos, La Massana

The Helpline Book of International Recipes has been received very well and while sales have naturally slowed down, every month we are still selling a few more.

We are also receiving a financial contribution from the Andorra Writers Circle who are generously donating the profits from the sale of their excellent "Anthology from Andorra". Both books are available at our Coffee mornings and from Estil Nordic in La Massana.

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Britt Nielsen

Immobiliària - Real Estate - Ejendomshandler Sales & Rentals throughout ANDORRA The Coffee Mornings

Between forty and fifty members turn up each week to attend the Coffee Morning. The Club meets over coffee every Wednesday morning from 10.30 to 12.00 noon (NOT 12.30), at the Paris-Londres Hotel in Escaldes. The hotel offers pleasant surroundings, ample parking, and a constant supply of coffee and drinks at a very reasonable price.

At least two members (usually more) of the CIA Committee are on hand to offer advice and guidance on what the CIA can provide and help. There is a notice board filled with information, offers of assistance, and requests for help, and upto-date news of Club and Group activities. Bookings for the activities may be made at the Coffee mornings, and the Weekly Newsletter (giving an English translation of the news contained in the local press) is on sale (a bargain at 25 pts each), which means you get it at least two days (and often a week) earlier than by post. English language magazines are often on hand for anyone to take. It's a pleasant morning, and entrance is ABSOLUTELY FREE.

So do come along, meet other Club members and catch up with the news.

Telephone Contact Group

his is a Group that is already up and running - it is a support group for all those who live on their own and would like to receive or make morning calls. These are NOT hour-long chats (although the last one on your list may become that...), but just a quick check-up call to ensure that all is well with the world!

Naturalist Group

he Group has continued with its activities throughout the summer, including at least one early morning trip up into the mountains to count isard.

The Group's planned programme for the year was given in the December 1996 issue of *Intercomm*. Anyone interested in receiving a programme for the rest of the year's activities, or in joining the group should call Brian Dore on 835931.

Activities

The CIA Activities for the autumn are all fully booked up (including the crafts visit in September, the Egypt tour in October, the dinner talk in November, and the Christmas shopping trip to Barcelona in late November), but if you are still interested in any of these activities, give Ann Price a call on 836653 in case of cancellations



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MERCAT D'OCCASIO

You can't go far in Britain during any summer weekend without coming across a car boot sale. Such events are not so common in Andorra, but the Annual Car Boot Sale organised by the CIA in Arinsal has become a huge success. Here we have an anonymous - and heartfelt report on the preparations for this growing phenomenon - written by an understanding participant on the day before the event.

Andorra by the CIA, the car boot sale, has become part of the Andorran year, keenly anticipated by everyone except my husband. It allows us all to shed what we no longer need (in order to buy something else) and provides a valuable platform for the work of local, voluntary organisations.

A Great Deal of Work

The Club sells pitches to private stallholders and donates the proceeds to La Massana church charities. The voluntary groups are given their areas free of charge. It all began - and stayed - in Arinsal because the original organisers knew Arinsal and its people and they knew us. It has proved a pleasant alliance and the CIA could not hope for more interested and involved support.

Members might be forgiven for believing there is nothing more to it than the marking off of parking spaces

sold to a queue of eager stallholders. Having helped to organise a car boot sale, I am only too delighted that Caroline Colvin-Smith is doing it this year and regret that her hair may turn a shade of grey as a result. There are the necessary permissions; advertising and publicity; contacts with the voluntary groups; the sale of pitches and local co-operation which ensures that the car park is emptied of lorries and that the press of customers won't be fined for parking in illegal zones. Up to the night before the event the organiser is checking, rechecking and reminding.

Spared these chores, the voluntary groups are successful in relation to the amount



(Above) A number of people study one of the charity stands manned by Betty Pilkington. The snow on the mountains above give a hint of the cool air, but the warm sun was clearly being enjoyed by the sitting gentleman in the background, and by the three people standing having a chat. (Below) Lilias Grassie and Maria Theresa make a sale of one of their publications from the Helpline stand





Maurice and Betty Pilkington and Lilias Grassie are clearly happy with their sales in the sunshine. of work they are prepared to invest. And it is no longer necessary to beg. The community now knows what the car boot sale is about and it is astonishingly generous. Friends advise friends - don't throw it out... Volunteers become rag and bone merchants, ferrying loads, turning spare rooms and garages into disaster zones. Husbands negotiate heaps of boxes, park their cars outside and contemplate divorce. They also, invariably, do a great deal of the work.

Twenty-four hours before the day the voluntary groups wish they knew anyone who owned a twenty-ton lorry, but have in the meantime press-ganged everyone they can think of to transport things to Arinsal. And please, please, will it not rain? The idea of having to move all those rickety tables, that mountain of stuff, to squeeze with everyone else into the parish hall is simply not to be contemplated. We have had brilliant days

when the crowds have flocked, and one absolutely freezing day when the July mountains were dressed in snow and we all turned blue. The mountains were white again this year, twenty-four hours before the event...

Caroline, you have our gratitude.

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Activities

AVIGNON AND LAVENDER

The bus returning from Avignon and Provence was full of contented CIA members and the smell of lavender, as revealed in the report below (sent in anonymously)

his is a brief account of another of Ann Price's successful and well organised trips - this time to Avignon.

Wednesday, 25th June: Raphael, our bus driver, collected members from Anyos, Ordino. La Massana. Arinsal. Andorra la Vella and St. Julia early in the We had a morning. smooth drive Villefrance de Conflent. a small walled town, where we had coffee and stretched our legs. Raphael drives so well that even those who suffer from motion sickness survived the dreaded descent from Mont Louis Villefrance, Fortunately, the next stretch of the road is fairly flat and straight to Beziers where we had lunch in the main

square: an indifferent meal, in not very attractive surroundings. Beziers has an interesting and troubled history, and should not be dismissed as a dull place.

Horst Matschke, Raphael, Dinah Baxter and Oonagh Maclachlan at the Castle at Mornas

We arrived in Avignon in the early evening. Our hotel was in the centre of town, just off the Place de l'Horloge. We all had a comfortable, double bedroom with a good ensuite bathroom. In the evening, we split into groups and each did their own exploring around this famous town, and we had a meal, in one of the many restaurants that line two sides of this central square. The food was edible, but not outstanding - too many tourists. There were entertainments going on in the square, some noisy, some playing guitars badly, others juggling, all trying to entertain the diners in the hope of collecting a few francs when the hat was passed round.

Thursday, 26th June: This morning we were free to explore Avignon. I went to the Palace of the Popes, an extraordinary building, started in the 1300's, with bits added on over the next four hundred years. There are three beautiful Gobelein

Tapestries in the Palace. There was also an exhibition of tapestries, depicting the life of St. Etienne (I think he's the Patron Saint of Avignon). There are people of many different

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(From left to right) Horst and Anne Matschke, Ann Price, Dinah Baxter, Brenda and Sandy Ross

races depicted, African, Oriental, Semitic as well as European. There is one wonderful figure of a toothless old man with fist clenched and knees slightly bent, ready to defend his master from the surrounding hostile crowd. Have you ever wondered how tapestries are made? It's worth reading about.

Until I got there, I didn't know that the famous bridge of Avignon goes only half way across the Rhone. The original bridge had twenty-two arches and was built in 1177-85; floods and wars have destroyed most of it. Attempts to complete the bridge were finally abandoned in 1680. Anyway, Ann, Horst and I did our dance "sur le Pont d'Avignon".

After lunch in Avignon, Raphael drove us to a Perfume factory - not the correct name for it - where essential oils are extracted for aromatherapy treatments. Many of the plants and herbs are grown near by. The factory has a museum of old equipment, used over the last two hundred years to extract oils from plants used by apothecaries and chemist and for the manufacture of perfumes. The young woman in charge explained to us how the oils are obtained. Dennis O'Shea translated for us. Thank you, Dennis. There is a huge collection



Cuina Tradicional francesca English spoken Tancat diumenges nit i dilluns ARANS (Ordino) Telefon 850 830 of scent bottles, plain glass, cut glass, china and even some made of metal. The whole building smelled of lavender; we all sprayed ourselves with various oils and perfumes. In the end our olfactory senses were so overwhelmed, it was hard to smell anything at all.

Back to Avignon for dinner - we never get lost on all these trips because while Raphael drives, Ann does the navigating - another of her skills.

Friday, 27th June: We awoke to a wet, rainy day and made an early start to Arles. When we got there the sun came out, and we went to the Roman Arena where bullfights are held during the summer. The little black bulls of the Camargue are not killed: the matador has to pluck rosettes from the horns of the bull. The arena is in a good state of preservation but because it is used, it has modern seating on metal scaffolding surrounding the arena, and it is difficult to conjure up any sort of feeling of antiquity - no lions and Christians, gladiators or chariots. It is the same with the Roman theatre near by. There is a modern moving stage and twentieth century seating, but lying about at one side is all the architectural "bricollage" of the original theatre - broken pillars, carved capitals, richly decorated lintels and deep brick-lined ditches, either for a hot water system or for drainage.

From Arles, we drove to Les Saintes-Maries-de-la-Mer where we had lunch, and then went on a paddle boat, on the waterways of the Camargue. We saw white horses, little black bulls, seagulls, herons, egrets, harriers (birds, not the Hash House sort), waders and fishmen all in lovely sunshine and a refreshing breeze. After the boat trip we went to Aigues Mortes -

Club Internacional d'Andorra











Top left: Horst & Ann Matschke and Oonagh and Ralph Maclachlan on the waterways of the Camargue; middle left: Brenda Ross sharing champagne on her 29th birthday; bottom left and right: Dinah Baxter and Ann Price celebrating Brenda's birthday with huge icrecream sundaes; top right: Dinah puts Oonagh in the stocks for no crime at all!; middle right: Brenda and Oonagh enjoy themselves on the carousel in France.



"Dead Water". This walled town was once a port but the canals, dug in the late 1300's, were soon silted up, and the harbour no longer useable.

Once again, we had dinner in the Square, then champagne and cake at the hotel to celebrate **Brenda Ross**'s birthday (her 29th of course!).

Saturday, 28th June: Another early start, going north to the Chateau de Mornas. We walked through the narrow village streets, and then up a steep concreted road, with many typical Mediterranean flowers and shrubs, in full bloom on each side. Most of the fortress is in ruins, but one can walk round some of the battlements and get wonderful views of the countryside - including the Rhone, the main north-south railway, and the auto-route going north to Lyons and Paris. There was an army post here up until the end of the 1914-1918 war. We found a workable stocks and put Oonagh in them - not sure what her 'crime' was, but we did not throw rotten eggs at her.)

Driving south, we came to Orange. The name is probably derived from Aranjo, an early settlement in the area. Orange became a haven for Protestants during the Wars of Religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the thirteenth century the Counts of Orange, were designated Princes and the area became a Principality. One of the Princesses married into the House of Nassau and Orange

became part of the Netherlands. The House of Nassau became the House of Orange - thus the connection with William III of England, the Orangemen of Northern Ireland; the Orange River and the Orange Free State in South Africa, via the Voertrekkers.

Apart from this bit of (diversionary) history, Orange's main claim to fame is a well preserved Roman theatre which has a complete all (screen) behind the stage. In almost all other theatres these walls have been destroyed. Near the theatre

there is an interesting small museum which gave me a clue to the relationship between Orange and the Netherlands. After lunch we found our way to the market - a market of non-edible things such as locally-made soaps, wooden toys, paintings, clothes and many other handicrafts.

Our next stop was the Cheateauneuf du Pape wine growing region. Here we visited a family run vineyard (seven generations we were told). We were given a rather sketchy talk about wine production and saw the huge stainless steel vats where the grapes go after passing through an interesting machine that removes the stalks and the pips but which does not crush the grapes. No bare feet in this sterile place! Wine was tasted and several boxes of bottles were carried to our bus.

We were all quiet on the journey back to Avignon. The wine, perhaps? Later, some of us had a hilarious dinner at an Italian restaurant. The food was excellent and the hilarity due to a Scot explaining a Scottish tribal custom to a Spaniard (Lilias telling Raphael about a Burns' Night supper, haggis and bagpipes.)

Sunday, 29th June: The final day. A very early start, in rain, but everyone on time. Drove to the Pont du Gard, the most famous aqueduct, built by the Romans two thousand years ago. It is undergoing some repairs so that one could not walk through the water channel nor on the top-which was just as well as the heavens opened and we all had to run for the bus.

We stopped at Uzes for coffee and to potter around the market - more like a large car boot sale with awful rubbish on offer! Uzes is a

> pleasant walled town with a particularly beautiful round Lombard tower rather like some of those in Andorra, but with more windows. It is the only one of its kind in France. Our next stop was a Bamboo Nursery near Anduze. It is the largest such nursery in the world with bamboos thirty to forty feet tall, green bamboos, yellow and brown bamboos - and in the gift shop every conceivable object made of bamboo. Lunch at a large kiosk outside the nursery, and then the long drive home.

Raphael is a wonderful driver, and our thanks to him for a smooth journey, and also, of course, many thanks to Ann Price for another enjoyable and well arranged trip.



HERE AND THERE

lise Kellett kindly wrote to me about the "El Bosc" restaurant in Arinsal. She tells me that Hugo, the proprietor, is a jolly Frenchman from Marseille and that his food is absolutely lovely. She goes on to say that Angel is Spanish, shy and a real sweetie. She suggests I try the grilled chicken or goat cheese salad, and says that the price is extremely reasonable and the house wine amazing!

who sent us the following information:

For people interested in Catalan, it is useful to have a pocket dictionary. These can be bulky and electronic translators are much smaller. Unfortunately, it is not easy to obtain an electronic translator for Catalan.

However, there are available numerous electronic organisers or electronic diaries. These usually have provision for storing names and addresses. This facility enables them to store Catalan words, instead of names and the respective meanings of words, instead of addresses. To obtain the meaning of a Catalan word, enter the word into the machine in place

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The disadvantage of this "Do It Yourself" electronic translator is that you have to enter into the machine all the words that you wish to store and their meanings. This can be a tedious process, depending on how many words you enter, but it is not difficult and it should contribute to the learning process.

As described above, the translation is only "one way", that is, from Catalan to a foreign language. Using the "Memo" section of the machine will allow reverse translation, from the foreign language to Catalan.

Here are a few more Household Hints sent to us by Jean Axten:

- To make candles burn longer, place in deep freeze for an hour before lighting.
- To stop cheese from going green put a lump of sugar in the dish with the cheese.
- To make dough rise more, add a few drops of lemon juice.
- * To make Melba Toast, cut the crusts from a piece of sliced bread, roll out the slice very firmly with a rolling pin, then cut into small fingers and bake slowly in the oven.
- * To get a stain out of table linen and clothes, etc. pour a drop of Perrier water onto it and dab a little - and hey presto - it vanishes!

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THE OSBORNE BULLS

We have all seen the black bulls dotted about the Spanish countryside - there is one on the road to Barcelona (between Cervera and Barcelona). Peter Dunkley takes a look at the black bulls of Spain, and how they nearly disappeared.

For forty years, the Osborne bull silhouettes have been as much a part of Spain's landscape as the parched brown hills, the olive trees, the white-walled villages. On long trips, kids amuse themselves by counting the number of Osbornes between towns, drivers use them for directions ("...take the first exit after the bull...). Even airline pilots have been known to joke about landing at Jerez airport by lining up the runway with a nearby Osborne. When the Spanish

government launched its campaign against roadside advertising, it was their remarkable visibility which threatened the animals' survival.

In 1956, Osborne y Cia gave its advertising agency the task of creating a billboard symbol for its

'Veterano' brandy. The agency's consultant designer was Manuel Prieto, famous as an engraver of Spanish coinage and postage. At first, when Prieto proposed the cut-out of a bull as their brandy symbol, Osborne's executives commented sniffily that they were not in the business of breeding 'totors' and almost voted it down. Fortunately for them, Prieto persisted. Today, the company treasures his original drawing.

The first Osborne, seven metres high and made of wood, was erected in May 1957 at Cabanilla de la Sierra near Madrid, on the road to Burgos. By 1964, there were more than five hundred spread across Spain, including over one hundred in Cataluna. A small army of maintenance

people criss-crossed the country, making repairs, erasing graffiti or removing impromptu appendages added by creative, if saucy, amateur artists.

The size of the cut-outs increased, as well. The earliest regulations introduced by the government, in 1962, required billboards to be placed at least 125 metres from the roadside. To achieve the same visual effect when it re-located the Osbornes, the company scaled up their height to twelve metres. Now made of

metal, the bulls weighed some 4,000 kilos and had to be bedded in six feet of concrete to withstand the often gale-force winds which scoured the plains and hillsides.

The government's objective was to clear up the environment and

improve driving safety. The 1962 regulations were only the beginning. In 1988, it passed another law banning all advertising hoardings visible from a national highway. The company responded, cannily, by painting over the slogans 'Vetrano Brandy' or 'Osborne Sherry and Brandy' on the bulls' sides.

The silhouette was now a classic example of advertising by suggestion. Everyone knew that these were the Osborne bulls. Moreover, with its lettering eliminated, the already well-endowed animal seemed to exude an even more forceful, more potent aura; the Osbornes were said to be a favourite overnight stop for childless couples anxious to restore their fertility.



The government had not given up. In 1994, it created new regulations. This time, the target was not merely advertising hoardings; no advertising of any kind was to be permitted along the national highways. The bulls seemed doomed but again, the government had miscalculated. So far, only relatively few insiders had been aware of the threat to the bulls. When the entire Spanish press picked up the story, the prospect of the animals' extinction created national outrage. Opinion polls showed that most Spaniards considered the Osbornes to be a symbol of their country, in the same league as America's Statue of Liberty or France's Eiffel Tower.

Within a few months, the protest movement had gone into orbit. Spain had seen nothing like it. Writers, artists, broadcasters, TV presenters, even the political parties, all joined the cause. A radio station collected signatures to send to the Minister for Public Works. A TV channel formed an 'Associacion Para Salvar El Toro Amigo De Osborne' with an appropriate acronym, ASTADO. cultural association 'Espana Abierta' published a coffee-table book, 'Un Toro Negro y Enorme', in which well-known personalities described what the Osborne bulls meant to them; amongst the contributors were a British cartoonist and the Minister of Culture in Felipe Gonzalez's own administration. Even provincial governments enrolled in the crusade. Navarra said it would keep its Osbornes since it didn't accept that the 'Law of the Roads' applied to its area. Andalucia said it

would declare the twenty-two Osbornes within its jurisdiction as part of the cultural heritage and refuse to remove them. Media across the world added their support; an Osborne glared out from the front page of the New York Times under the headline, 'Spare the Bulls'.

Meanwhile, the legislation had taken its toll. The company faced heavy fines and in those areas where the authorities pushed hardest, the bulls were removed. Also, the installations were costly to maintain and allocating funds to them when the animals seemed to have no future made little sense. They were allowed to deteriorate; many collapsed.

Endangered Species

By 1994, Osbornes were endangered species, mustering only ninetyseven. Contingency plans were considered. One involved removal of the animals to provincial roads or other sites not covered by the legislation. In another, the director, Bigas Luna, whose 1992 comedy film 'Jamon, Jamon' had featured an Osborne, both in the film and on its advertising posters, offered to purchase and relocate all the animals in a 'Taurus Park'. Many personalities offered to buy 'singles' to be installed on their properties; a radio station offered to 'retire' one of the bulls to pasturage on behalf of a listener whose name was to be drawn by lot from those applying.

In the end, it was the system itself which came to the rescue. Even after Osborne had painted out the brandy and



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sherry slogans in 1988, the authorities continued to bring charges in respect of the now-unadorned silhouettes.

In one case there was a fine of 1,000,001 ptas. The 'Law of the Roads', however, had always been directed specifically against 'advertising'. The company appealed against the fine, claiming that their bulls fell outside the scope of the legislation. They were not advertisements at all but art, expressed in a peculiarly Spanish medium.

Historic Monument

In the words of a Madrid University professor: "It (the bull) has become a symbol, an historic monument, a piece of popular culture which has transcended advertising."

Despite arguments that permitting the bulls to survive would open the way for silhouettes of camels, cola bottles and Andalusian gentlemen in sombreros to litter the countryside, Osborne's appeal ultimately prevailed. The bulls lived to fight another day.

One can't help feeling sorry for the government. While acting from the best of motives, it stumbled into a public relations disaster. The hapless minister in charge of the legislation was pilloried as a cowardly matador who, unequipped to face a bull in real life, chose to massacre a herd of beasts unable to defend themselves.

One tongue-in-cheek headline read, "Minister Takes Alternativa to The Max". (In torero-speak, 'taking the alternativa' is the graduation ceremony by which the novice becomes a full-fledged matador.)

But to extend the bull-fighting metaphor, it seems that in the end, it was the Osborne bull which 'gave the puntilla' to the minister and the government.

@ Peter Dunkley

For Osborne aficionados who are also on the Internet, the bulls have their own website at: http://www.osborne.es/eltoro/toro.htm



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MEL i FLOR

When Jacquie Crozier went to the Mel i Flor restaurant in Andorra la Vella for dinner, she enjoyed her meal so much she immediately wrote a review for us.

e first enjoyed the cooking of the chef (and owner) of the Mel i Flor restaurant at a special Sunday lunch arranged at the Hostal in l'Aldosa earlier this year, which was attended by many Club members. It was a superb five-course lunch, one of the best I've eaten in Andorra; each course was small but beautifully cooked and presented and they were designed to complement each other. We determined that as soon as possible we would see what the chef's own restaurant in Andorra la Vella was like.

The Mel i Flor, situated on a corner of the Carrer la Llacuna, one of the narrow old streets that twist through the Cap de Carrer, between the Placa de las Arcades and the Placa Rebes, does not try to be either trendy or traditional; cool white walls, a few assorted pictures, plain tables and chairs. Here, food is important, not the decor.

A menu in Catalan and French is chalked up on a board outside; the ones handed to you inside are also in Catalan but do not worry, the waitress speaks extremely good English and will translate if necessary. In fact Mel i Flor is a truly international restaurant. The chef is an American from Baltimore - he learnt his trade in a French restaurant in New York and subsequently worked in Barcelona. The English-speaking waitress is a French girl with an Andorran grandfather. The evening we dined there, two other Club members (Canadians) were there with some Dutch friends. They said that they usually came for lunch, when the Mel i Flor is much busier than in the evenings. This can mean that if there has been a run on any particular dish, it may be "off" in the evening because the menu is quite short, changes regularly according to what is in the market and everything is freshly cooked.

Small, home-made "nibbles" were served with our pre-dinner drinks, always a nice touch. Service was very quick but then the restaurant was almost empty. For starters we ordered cold cod salad and cod scrambled with egg and aubergines - very much nicer than it sounds. Our main courses were again fishysalmon and bream (daurade, dorado) although
the waitress recommended the lamb chops
which our neighbours ordered and said were
very good. Filet steak was also on the menu.
The plates were warm, and the fish were good
sized portions, carefully cooked to retain all
their flavour and juices; the bream had been
baked in wine in the oven and the salmon came
with spinach. They were served with light,
fresh sauces and a dish of thinly sliced potatoes
baked in a cream sauce. Starters cost about
700 to 950 pts and main courses range between
1,600 to 2,100 pts.

The cooking here, though imaginative and original, is definitely influenced by nouvelle cuisine and if there is a criticism, it is that the portions are on the small side. The Dutch man at the next table said that he would have liked more vegetables with his lamb. I suspect most women would find the portions exactly the right size.

If it leaves room for dessert, then the small courses are an advantage, for the home-made apple and creamy orange "tartes" were delicious (the best part of the meal, one satisfied diner said). A glass of Madeira came unasked for, with our coffee. The bill for two, including pre-meal drinks and a 950 pts bottle of wine, came to almost 7,000 pts. Not particularly cheap but highly recommended, especially for anyone wanting a change from Catalan cooking.

Mel i Flor, Carrer la Llacuna, No. 5, Andorra la Vella. Tel: 867812.



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Press Review

THE WORLD IN ANDORRA

The August edition of 'La Revista d'Andorra' published an article about the CIA by Marisol Fuentes.

Caroline Colvin-Smith brought along several copies to the coffee morning last month, and has, by

popular request, translated the article for us.

Poor many years Andorra has been a country which has welcomed a large number of people, mainly from Europe. Owing to the opening up of its borders to the outside world and especially its economic and commercial development mid-way through this century it has been home, workplace and even refuge to thousands of newcomers, bringing together more than thirty-two nationalities living here today. The CIA gathers them in for social and cultural activities. They form a whole world in the middle of the Principality - a nice example of cultural, religious and ethnic variety.

Caroline Colvin-Smith speaks almost fluent Catalan. "I manage," she says, smiling (she's always smiling) and tells us that she learnt it in two years. She's British and is the Secretary (sic) of CIA which is the group that has brought together the greatest number of different nationalities to be found in Andorra. The Club has been in existence for eight years and it is like a microcosm of the whole world sitting in the middle of this country. "The language we use most is English but that doesn't mean that all our members are British," she stresses. "Anyway, we're not aiming to create activities from different countries: rather to bring together all the different cultures so that everyone becomes familiar with them."

Improved Relations with Andorra

The Club's main objective is to help foreigners who settle in Andorra to feel part of what is going on here. "For the last four years the relationship between the Club and Andorran organisations has been growing as well," says CCS, adding, "We hope we don't still give the impression that we are a closed-in group which doesn't mix with the rest of society."

The members (who include some Andorrans) themselves feel they have quite an unusual mix and like the fact that, for instance, Japanese or Chinese might join the Scottish dancing group which meets every Sunday or that Indonesians and Catalans should be learning how to make an Andaluchian gazpacho.

What all the members (there are more than 400 of them) do have in common are all the activities they organise. There are eleven different groups each involved in either excursions, plays, nature rambles, Scottish dancing, singing, art exhibitions, bridge, tennis, wine-tasting, language courses or a service called "Helpline" which advises new arrivals about local laws or medical assistance here when some of them have language difficulties.

Programme of Activities

They organise a never-ending programme of activities each year - exhibitions, excursions, journeys, dinners - they publish their own magazines and a summary of press reports. Furthermore, they meet every Wednesday for what they call a "Coffee Morning". This is a morning get-together where news is discussed, literary lectures (sic) given or where people can have a good natter. They even join in many of the cultural activities organised by the comus or Govern.

A Healthy Paradise

A majority of the members are passive residents, retired people from Europe, America, Australia, and Asia who have found Andorra an ideal place for their retirement. According to CCS, "what we most appreciate here is the combination of town and countryside: it is healthy and you can be right up in the mountains within a few minutes and at the same time there is so much to do here; go to the ballet, the theatre or even a large commercial centre for shopping." In fact, it is a paradise in which to enjoy a golden retirement. However, not all the members are retired: there are also younger families who consider the Club ideal for organising their spare time.

FAREWELL, BUSTER

A year ago this month, Solveig and Henrik Feilberg's dog, Buster, died. Many of you Arinsal residents and Hash fans will well remember their handsome and well-travelled pet

It was with sorrow in our hearts and an empty seat in our car that we returned to Andorra from our holiday in Denmark last autumn. Our Buster - Airde of Lairde - died in September of old age. He's buried in our garden under a fir tree, for ever watching our house in Denmark. Our feeling of loss is difficult to describe. Buster had been a part of our family and lives for more than twelve years.

We always said that Buster chose us and not us him. Born in Kenya, his parents had earned lots of silver medals - his father was even chosen as the Best Dog of the Show at the Nairobi Kennel Club.

Less than two months old, Buster was brought to our house with two brothers and a sister. They clung to their owner's legs, too timid or frightened to leave her, Buster was investigating his new surroundings and finally settled himself by my legs - believe me, I was sold! He certainly was not the one I would have chosen - I had my eyes on his bigger brother - but there was no choice!

He spent his first four years with us in Nairobi where, like his parents, he was shown at the yearly Nairobi Kennel Club Dog Show. In his third year, he beat his father as the "Best of Breed". Our tour in Kenya ended, he flew with us to Denmark for a holiday and then on to Nepal where we stayed for nearly three years.

During our holidays in Denmark he turned out to be a great sailor. And when we finally retired to Andorra in 1992, he drove with us from Andorra to Denmark and back again, sometimes twice a year. Never airsick, carsick, or seasick - always happy and full of energy, though he did slow down a bit towards the end.

My biggest worry during our six months stay in Jakarta last winter was not our children, as so often in the past, but Buster. The lovely couple at La Bedouce kennel in France kept him alive, and even sent us a monthly letter from Buster, so we knew he was well. We were overjoyed to have him with us again after returning from Jakarta last June. By then, we knew each day with him was a gift. He was getting old.

The most remarkable thing about his last few months was that he did not like to be parted from me, so of course we took him with us when we went shopping or visiting - he would wait patiently in the car for our return.

On the day he died, I had to go out without him. Henrik stayed home to look after him. But Buster was watching out for my return, and as soon as he saw me at the end of the path, he came running towards me, just like a young dog. Maybe it was too much for his old heart... I don't know but I can't help wondering... All I know is that shortly afterwards, when Henrik wanted to go back into the house, Buster was lying just by the door, gasping for breath. I rushed to telephone the vet. But Buster died in my arms on the way to the clinic. Even now, I cry as I write this, but I know that every dog lover will understand.

Still, life must go on, and I expect we shall find a new Buster. He will not be Airde of Lairde, but I am sure we shall grow to love him as dearly.

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A DOG ABOUT TOWN

Samia Omar recalls a young Dog about Town, who turned up in La Massana one day and claimed a place in her heart

e arrived in La Massana on the same day that the new owner of Font Hotel arrived. A small, dirty scruffy mutt, he chased after cars, followed people everywhere, and barked at everyone in sight. He was all over La Massana, and every child and every adult knew him. I didn't like him to start with: he was filthy and he barked at me, and I wasn't sure whether he would bite me. He was, in a word, a bit of a nuisance.

But one day when I was delivering "Meals on Wheels" (chicken soup), who do you think followed me - all the way to my destination and back again to the apartment?

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Pipo - this was my name for him. Anyway, I opened the door of my apartment and "my boys" sniffed him - and gave their approval. So I gave him a bowl of home made dog food.

Within a minute, all the food was gone, and Pipo looked up at me as though to say "Seconds, please!"

This went on for several weeks, each time Pipo becoming bolder and venturing further into the apartment - knocking into the furniture, stretching and eventually having a good siesta every day.

And then one day, he wasn't there. I didn't see him anywhere. I heard that two young ladies in the building had adopted him. He was now on a leash, well fed, clean and with a roof over his head.

I was glad for him, but I also felt sad for the loss of his freedom - and for all the children and adults who missed him - for he was a real charmer. Pipo, if you are reading this - I miss you very much!



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All this may sound rather dull and uninteresting, but Alpha is actually stimulating and enlightening. What's more, it is an enjoyable experience which has profoundly affected some lives. This is verified by the fact that from small beginnings several years ago at Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, London, it has spread remarkably to many parts of the world.

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