

# **INTER A COMM**

**CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA**

**MAGAZINE / REVISTA**



**VOL. 8 - Núm. 2 - WINTER / HIVERN 1998**

# CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

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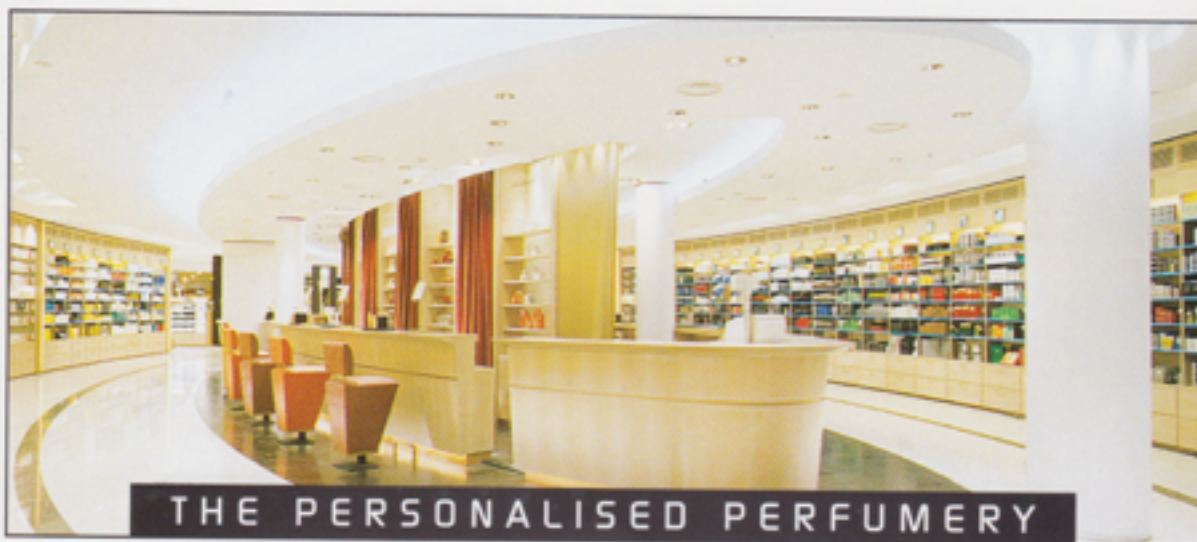
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COFFEE MORNING IS HELD EVERY WEDNESDAY (10.30 - 12.00) AT THE HOTEL PARIS-LONDRES, COME ALONG FOR A PLEASANT MORNING.

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# INTERCOMM

## Club Internacional d'Andorra

Quarterly Magazine

December 1998



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EDITOR: MARGARET SHAI DA

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### NEWS FROM THE BOARD

**Tony Hooper**

Once again it is time to wish all our members a Happy Christmas and a Prosperous and Healthy New Year. To help those who do have health problems, we are very pleased to welcome **Veronika Baines** who has taken on the role of co-ordinator of Helpline. One of her first jobs was to look at, and make an inventory of all the equipment, which we have, available to aid those with problems. We were quite surprised to realise how much equipment we do have. As a member who has recently needed to call upon Helpline prior to and following my recent operation, I can personally offer my thanks and appreciation. Veronika has also been co-opted to the Executive Committee to represent Helpline.

Elsewhere in this issue you will find an article on the early history of the Club. To celebrate the tenth anniversary we are organising a Buffet Lunch on 20 January 1999 at the Hotel Paris-Londres. You should have already received information about this event.

Mention has been made earlier this year about the rising costs, which might entail an increase in the Club subscription. The subscription has not been raised for eight years; in fact, by the introduction of Family Membership during that period it has in effect been reduced. Because of increased costs we expect that this year we will



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Make a loss, and we expect that outgoings will increase in the future as we find it necessary to pay for some of the jobs which at the moment are done voluntarily. It might be interesting to compare subscription rates between Andorran clubs and us. Most local organisations start at a fee of 5,000 pts.

## EDITORIAL

Margaret Shaida

**I**d you know that Andorra has its own windmill in La Mancha? I was most fortunate back in October, to be able to join an invited group visiting Andorra's windmill near Consuegra, south of Madrid, and to participate in the annual saffron festival. It was a delightful experience. We were formally welcomed by the mayor, and "our" windmill had its sails fitted and was started specially for us. Sadly, we missed the saffron harvesting because the heavy traffic round Madrid delayed us. Afterwards, we visited Toledo, another astonishing experience – a mediaeval walled city heaped up on a cliff on the banks of the river. It was a packed three-day weekend, most ably organised by Cases Velles Andorranes.

The annual gastronomic festival of Ordino was blessed with a fair day last October, despite fresh snow on the high peaks. This was the seventh festival, and I understand it was as delicious as ever. If you didn't go, make a note to go next October. The elegant tables prepared in the street, surrounded by first-class restaurants create a delightful atmosphere.

Stanley Jones (who runs our Computer Group) received an early Christmas letter from Michael and Judith Scott, now living in Jakarta. It seems they had rather an exciting time earlier in the year during the Indonesian riots. Apparently, it was so frightening that Judith lost three kilos. They spent most of the time confined to their high-

rise flat, but even here, military helicopters hovered just above them. Finally, they were told to leave, and spent a frightful 12 hours of heat and misery at the airport before flying out to Brunei and then to Singapore. They have since returned. I wonder how they are getting on now that there has been a new outbreak of violence in Indonesia.

For this festive season, we have a bumper issue. With 28 pages, it is the biggest magazine we've ever produced. You probably know that our Club celebrates its tenth birthday this winter, and Tony Hooper, one of the founder members, has given us a brief history of the early days of the club (see page 4).

We also have a most interesting article from the leader of our Art Group, Nina O'Brien, who discusses the appreciation of art. She suggests that we allow our senses to be our guide. And Dee Lian brings a hint of summer into our lives by reminding us of a medicinal plant that grows wild in Andorra.

We also have a report on one of the several activities organised over the past month or so by Ann Price – despite her year's "holiday". The trip to Villefranche by bus and the Little Yellow Train is described on page 22.

Jacquie Crozier most kindly sent the Restaurant Review (page 16). I always appreciate Jacquie's assistance, knowing how busy she is producing the weekly newsletter. Quite fortuitously, we were invited last October to lunch at the restaurant under review, Roc del Bisbe, and I can heartily concur with Jacquie's praise. Our first course salad was tasty and of a reasonable size, while the main course *coq au vin* was utterly delectable. We also include the articles mentioned in the editorial of the September issue, but which had to be carried over.

The Forthcoming Activities prepared for us by Maria Theresa Raurell is, as always, full of

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interesting things to do. In this issue, she give us a hint of the many fascinating Christmas traditions in Andorra.

And don't forget, our own Singers are giving a concert at the Cathedral at Montserrat, just prior to the famous boys choir who sing daily at 1 p.m. This is a great occasion that should not be missed, and Ann Price is organising a bus to take CIA members to attend this beautiful affair. This is in addition to the usual Christmas concerts being put on by the choir here in Andorra la Vella, Ordino and Encamp (see page 7 for details).

The annual Christmas fair in la Massana has just passed (and we are sure it was as successful as always), but the St. Lucia Christmas Market, also in la Massana, will be held on 12 December. Helpline is taking part, selling mulled wine, home-made sweets and biscuits, as well as candles and drinks, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic. Why not go along and support them?

And if you're still stuck for ideas for presents, don't forget the best-ever book written in English about Andorra. Packed with information and with full-colour illustrations, the book is a snip at 1,500 ptas. The background to Andorra's many Christmas traditions is described in loving detail, so it would make an ideal gift for visitors to Andorra during the Christmas season. The book is available at the Coffee Mornings and from Clare Allcard on 836269.

I hope you all have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. And remember, this is a good time to make a New Year Resolution. Why not resolve to send a letter or an article to this magazine. They are always welcome!

The closing date for the next issue is 1<sup>st</sup> February. Send to Margaret Shaida, Teulades V, Apt. 201, Els Vilars, Escaldes-Engordany. Or call the Editor, on 860043. ☐

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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Last summer, I purchased two computers in England, which I passed to Casa Servei for shipment to Andorra. One computer was damaged on arrival. Fortunately, we were able to have it repaired locally. However, the repairman opined that it had been damaged during shipment. When I approached Casa Servei regarding the cost of repairs, I was told - in an unnecessarily abusive manner - that I was not entitled to any claim as the computer was

carried under *groupage* insurance.

This was a shocking revelation to a customer who had entrusted his entire household to the firm, and who had used Casa Servei for almost eight years.

I thought your readers might be interested to know what the situation is regarding insurance of their goods with Casa Servei.

Yours sincerely, Hassan Shaida



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## TEN YEARS YOUNG!

*Over the current three month period, the Club Internacional d'Andorra will be celebrating its tenth birthday. Here, Tony Hooper tells us about the early history of the Club*

**W**hen I meet members at the Coffee Morning or on Club Functions, I realise that many of our present members have no idea of how and when it all started. November and December this year mark the birth, or at least the gestation period, of the International Club.

One reason for its formation was that in the not-too-distant days no more than twenty foreigners were allowed to meet together unless they were part of an officially recognised organisation. Some members still have memories of the police coming to a party to count how many were present!

### THE ORIGINAL CONCEPT

This situation obviously had some bearing on the need for a club, but the real seeds came from Kerstin Walker who dreamt of an organisation which would welcome all nationalities and through social intercourse bind them together. She tells me that she first had the idea whilst recuperating in hospital, and later she discussed it with members of the Andorran Inner Wheel.

During the last two months of 1988, a series of meetings were held to find out what was needed and the interests of those who attended. On 10<sup>th</sup> January, a Steering Committee was formed of Doreen Woolton (President), Emyr Hughes (Co-President), Inge Miller (Treasurer) and Morna

Hughes (Secretary). A week later, following an announcement on Radio Valira, an open meeting was held. To fulfil the requirement of an Andorran President, Alan Haytree was invited to fill the post and the members of the Steering Committee were confirmed as Officers until the Club could become "legal".

**TO CELEBRATE THIS TENTH ANNIVERSARY, WE INTEND TO HAVE A BUFFET LUNCH AT THE HOTEL PARIS-LONDRES ON 20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, INVITING THOSE MEMBERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE WHO ARE STILL IN ANDORRA AS OUR GUESTS. LOOK OUT FOR FURTHER DETAILS.**

The next day, 18<sup>th</sup> January, the first meeting of the Wednesday Coffee Morning was held at the Hotel Valira. Almost without a break, this weekly meeting has taken place, and is the forum where many of our present members

first came into contact with the Club. For the first two years, meetings continued at the Hotel Valira, then after a short period at the Roc Blanc we moved to the Paris-Londres which in many ways has become our "home".

The initial committee meetings were held in the Inner Wheel offices, a rather small place that over some time provided a base for a number of activities. I well remember painting scenery there with Ron Richards. With the very limited space, it was a wonder that we did not paint every wall as well.

A meeting with Paco Rodriguez at the Comú d'Escaldes-Engordany led to an agreement to allow us to use two rooms on two afternoons a week. In fact, the Comu became our first base for a number of activities. These included language

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classes in Catalan, Spanish, French and English, practice facilities for the choir, committee meetings of both the Club and various groups. This continued until pressure on the facilities (which we had been getting free) meant that we had to look elsewhere. But the Theatre Group continued, presenting only two Cabarets and one play away from Escaldes.

### The Early Activities and Groups

During 1989, an attempt was made to have a social event each month of lunches and dinners with speakers (I was honoured to be amongst those), a picnic lunch hosted by **Jacque Crozier**, and a dinner at the Hotel Como. A large number of groups had been formed, and the forerunners of our International Singers had become part of the Club. It is interesting to note that these singers had a male majority whilst today the choir is female. Where oh where have all the men gone?

Throughout the year, work proceeded on writing and submitting a Constitution. Approval of it was given by the Minister of Education and Culture on 7<sup>th</sup> September and by the Government on the 17<sup>th</sup>, and the Secretary was notified on the 1<sup>st</sup> November. On 30<sup>th</sup> November, the first elections were held combined with a dinner at the Hotel Comtes d'Urgell, and the initial "official" Committee were in office. Of our present "active" members, only **Jacque Crozier** was on the Board.

The Groups and their activities have always been a major strength of the Club. Again, only **Jacque** continues as a Group Leader from the original leaders. The original groups were: Art, Naturalists, Music (Choir), Bridge, Tennis, Wine-Tasting, Helpline, Computers – all of which have survived – and Cooking, Languages and Drama. Some have not had a continuous history, but we are fortunate that when one seems to be disappearing someone comes forward to resurrect the group.

Ten years have seen many changes, but it is my belief that we have always gone forward, and continue to do so. I introduced the Magazine in September 1991, and I am very pleased that it now only gets better each issue under the editorship of **Margaret Shaida**. **Jacque**, who was co-editor with me of the magazine (and the rather meagre newsletter which preceded it) launched the Weekly Newsletter five years ago, a publication which is of

immense value to our members. The International Singers have become a very important part of the cultural life of the country, and act as excellent ambassadors of the Club. In some ways they epitomise the true spirit of the Club in that they have FIFTEEN different nationalities singing.

During the past years several members have taken responsibility for organising "activities". This has enabled members to travel and visit many places both within Andorra and in some cases far afield. The last two or three years these activities have been truly organised in a very professional manner by **Ann Price** and **Josefina Martinez**. We certainly missed their efforts when they took a short break recently. Now, once more back in the saddle, members can look forward to an exciting programme.

There was a period when the Club was viewed with suspicion by others in the country. Even ex-pats who worked here and were members of Andorran institutions were wary of becoming members. We were viewed as an elitist group who wished to keep separate from the life of the country. Oh, how things have changed, and much of the credit for that must go to **Caroline Colvin-Smith** who took on the post of Publicity Officer and spread our name and our activities far and wide. Today, we are regarded as an integral part of the cultural life of Andorra, and the media search us out so that they can report our activities.

Although there will always be further summits to climb, further standards to achieve, I believe that we have started to attain the dream of our founders – a Club which through social interaction brings together peoples of ALL nationalities who live in this beautiful country of Andorra. □



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## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

*Membership of the groups is open only to members of the Club. Each Group Leader has the right to refuse entry to those who are not members or who are not suitably qualified. Further information about the formation of groups is available from Tony Hooper*

**THE INTERNATIONAL SINGERS**  
Diaries ready please. It's that time of year again. We're performing our VII Festival of

International Christmas Music at the church of Santa Maria del Fener (between the Andorra la Vella fire station and the free car park) on Saturday, 12th December at approximately 9 p.m. (straight after Mass), and on Sunday, 13th December at 4.30p.m. at Ordino Church. After both performances, the CIA, aided and abetted by Stella Madden and her helpers, will be offering refreshments. We do so hope you can come.

We are also giving a shorter, more Catalan version of the concert, at St Eulàlia Church in Encamp on Thursday 17th December at 9.30 p.m.

### A Concert at Montserrat!

Finally, on the 20th December at 12.20 p.m. we will be singing a similar programme in the Cathedral at Montserrat, Spain! Ann Price is very kindly arranging this as a CIA outing. So why not join us on a Christmas trip to that marvellous mountain. At 1 p.m. the famous boys' choir of Montserrat will sing for a short time.

Our other big news is that, with the help of the Club, the English-speaking church and two very generous anonymous donors, we now have our very own, easily transportable, electronic piano. It makes a huge difference. While our new home, the Sala d'Actes, Andorra la Vella, has been closed for renovations, we have been able to rehearse at Fener's church with the new piano and with the major co-operation of Mossèn Josep

Maria. There we work extremely hard under the inspired and exhilarating direction of Barbara Melin. (After seven years of non-stop devotion to

conducting the choir, Sheila is taking a well-earned sabbatical.)

This year we have managed to persuade some men to join us for part of the Christmas programme. So do come along and hear us.

With our 10th anniversary coming up, plans are afoot for a celebratory dinner/concert next March. We always welcome new members who love to

sing and can do so in tune. We rehearse on Tuesdays between 4 and 6 p.m. For further information on any of the above please ring Clare Allcard 836269 or Brenda Ross 836886.

## CHRISTMAS CONCERTS

**Saturday, 12 December at 9 p.m.**

At the Church of Santa Maria del Fener  
(followed by refreshments)

**Sunday, 13 December at 4.30 p.m.**

At the Church of Ordino  
(followed by refreshments)

**Thursday, 17 December at 9.30 p.m.**

At the Church of St Eulàlia in Encamp

**Sunday, 20 December at 12.20 p.m.**

At the Basilica of Montserrat  
(Followed by the famous boys' choir at 1 p.m.)

## SCOTTISH DANCING

After last year's late start, we decided that this year we'd get going before the Christmas festivities arrived to interrupt us. We had a heartening number of dancers on our first outing and do hope that more of you will join us. You don't need to be Scottish, or to have ever done Scottish dancing before. We begin the season with easy dances and lots of help available and progress from there. Bring light, flat shoes and dress comfortably. We dance from 4.30 - 6.30pm on Sunday afternoons at the Sala Parroquial of La Massana (above the main street, just below the church). For further information please ring Brenda Ross 836886 or Clare Allcard 836269.

### THE COMPUTER CLUB

**T**he club holds regular meetings every other Thursday at the Rutllan Hotel, la Massana, but the hotel is closed again for renovations. So we are back at Hotel Paris-Londres, Escaldes. Our next meeting will be on 3 December 1998 at 11.00 a.m. The date and place of subsequent meetings will be announced later.

Various computing problems are discussed and remedies suggested by Brian Keep and Peter Jennings. Brian Keep has written a leaflet on the way to configure a computer to access the net, and photocopies of this are available. In addition, there is a wealth of knowledge that only a group of users can share among the attenders. *El Diari* may be partly read at [diariandorra@asolucions.ad](mailto:diariandorra@asolucions.ad).

The club now has a list of about seventy members who are interested in using computers. One of the pleasant things that is developing is that when members move away they often give us a new address in England, or France or Indonesia, where we can contact them. There are forty-six members who are active on the Internet, and there is a slow growth in this number.

The net continues to expand in Andorra, with the C.I.A. Newsletter now available on the net, at 30 pts a copy. For this consult Brian Dore at 835931 or [bdore@andorra.ad](mailto:bdore@andorra.ad). STA also provides an up-to-date telephone guide at <http://www.laguia.andorra.ad>. Another first was the advertising of a property for sale on the Internet by one of our members.

New members are always welcome. Contact Stanley Jones on 836 972 [jones.stanley@andorra.ad](mailto:jones.stanley@andorra.ad) or Gil Lamb on 835 258 [gillamb@andorra.ad](mailto:gillamb@andorra.ad).

### THE ART GROUP

**S**tudio sessions with guidance and advice are held in Andorra la Vella on Fridays, or any other day by mutual agreement from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Art group members may use the studio if they wish throughout the week to work on their own. Quite a few members of the Club have expressed a desire to join the group but feel that they would be starting in the middle of some ongoing line of tuition or may not have had a previous background of art. Actually, the group does not operate within a set time frame or strict curriculum. Members are of all levels of experience and ability and typically travel out of Andorra at different times and duration. Nina O'Brien prefers to start from basic brushwork techniques, encouraging development of individual preferences and abilities. These can range from photographic reality to modernistic expressions of colour and shape.

All art group members are working on whatever may appeal to them only with guidance from Nina. Some may or may not be influenced by Nina's style and this is quite normal with all progressive schools of art. For information, call Nina O'Brien at 837772.

### ORNITHOLOGICAL AND NATURAL HISTORY GROUP

**T**he Naturalists (as we are usually called) have been meeting regularly both inside and outside Andorra since the International Club was formed. We usually meet on the third Thursday of each month for a nature walk and picnic lunch, but we often extend this to a visit of two or three days outside Andorra, in Spain or France.



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**THE 1999 PROGRAMME**

**21 January**

Video – either “Microcosmos” or part of the new David Attenborough epic “Life of Birds”. At 11.00 a.m. at Maurice and Betty Pilkington's Anyos Residencial 1-4, Anyos.

**18 February**

Video and slides on Namibia, 11.00 at Cortal de la Solana, Anyos. (Booking closes for Huesca) Drinks/light refreshments will be provided for lunch at both these indoor meetings. Numbers are limited, so phone well beforehand if you are proposing to come.

**18-19 March**

Two nights in a rural guesthouse catering especially for naturalists on a lake near Huesca. Lots of exciting birds promised as well as early spring flowers and blossom.

**15 April**

Walk along river near Seu. Meet at Spanish Frontier at 10 a.m.

**20 May**

Mas d'Alins. Meet at entrance to Fontaneda

village. Spring migrants and early flowers. (Booking closes for Corbières)

**15/16/17 June**

Three nights in Corbières National Park, and the Gorge du Tarn. Magnificent scenery, re-introduced vultures and other raptors from superb new observatory, orchids at their best. (More than 900 species wildflowers have been seen in Park).

**15 July**

Vall de Sorteny. Meet at 10.00 at valley entrance. Summer flowers and butterflies on one of our most popular walks.

**19 August**

Pic del Maià. Meet at 10.00 on Coll d'Envalira at 24.05m sign. Ptarmigan, izard, easy walking on one of the highest parts of Andorra with easy access and no really steep slopes.

**1/3 October**

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**21 October**

Orlu Reserve, near Ax. Meet at 8.30 a.m. Andorran side of French frontier. Autumn colour in the beech woods, izard, marmots. Booking closes for Aiguamolls).

**17/18 November**

Two nights in either the Camargue or Aiguamolls Reserve near Roses. Water and sea birds (booking closes for Christmas Lunch).

**16 December 1999**

Naturalists' Christmas Lunch.

**THE ACTIVITIES GROUP**

**W**e give here a summary of forthcoming events. Full details were sent out in November. Further information is available from Ann Price on 836653.

**Monday, 14 December**

Members are invited to a pre-Christmas gathering at the Hotel Micolau in Arinsal on Monday, 14

December, at 1 p.m. to meet the new British Honorary Consul, **Hugh Garner**. Members: 2,000 pts, non-members (only one per member) 2,500 pts. Numbers are limited.

**Sunday, 20 December**

Why not join in the tenth birthday celebrations of our International Singers who will be performing some of their Christmas music in the Basilica of the Monastery of Montserrat? We shall arrive back in Andorra in time for dinner. Price for coach travel only 1,800 pts.

**January**

Join us for a dinner with entertainment by **Ian West**, a professional pianist and singer who performs regularly at the Angel Blau and the Hotel Roc de Caldes.

**March**

Date and price to be announced. A visit to the co-operative at Guissona, an extremely good value supermarket, specially for meat. A chance to stock up your freezer. Have you heard about the co-

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op lunch at 500 pts – eat as much as you like, grill your own meat, serve your own salads. Join us on the CIA shopping bus. Phone Ann to reserve a place.

#### 15<sup>TH</sup>-22<sup>ND</sup> April 1999

Eight-day visit to Crete, staying at the 5-Star Porto Elounda Mare Hotel in Elounda, with planned sight-seeing each day.

#### 6-10 May

Five days in the Dordogne, staying at the 3-star Hotel de Bordeaux on half-board basis. The hotel is famous for its cuisine, and is situated on the main square in Bergerac – very convenient for the truly magnificent open market.

Price including room, breakfast, dinner, bus transport and some of the museums: double per pax 59,000, singles 67,000 pts. Book now to guarantee a place.

#### September

Dinner with a speaker. Next year we are inviting Hassan Shaïda to give his version of Margaret's early years in Iran! We can make a comparison with Margaret's fascinating talk of last year.

#### November

Deep Sea Diving in the Red Sea. You don't, of course, have to actually dive! Based at the Deluxe Sheraton Hotel in the new purpose-built resort of El Gourni, you can enjoy all the cultural and ethnic delights of both ancient and modern Egypt. Several people have expressed an interest so far. The rest of you have until the end of January!

#### AND DON'T FORGET!

**W**e mentioned in the last CIA Activities mailing our cooperation with Maestro/Centre d'Esplai. Starting in mid-December, Maestro are offering their weekly programme of winter excursions to members of the CIA and their guests. This is the perfect opportunity to visit some of the highlights of Andorra and the surrounding areas without the hassle of driving or making your own arrangements – or just put your guest in Maestro's capable hands, while you have a rest!

Prices for CIA members on application – it would be helpful if you could book these excursions one week in advance through Ann Price on 8366653. In brief, it includes trips to Seu d'Urgell (on Tuesdays), to the Segre Valley Craft workshops on Wednesdays, Andorra Highlights on Thursdays, and to Villefranche on the Little Yellow Train on Fridays.

#### THE COFFEE MORNINGS

**U**p to forty members (not always the same ones) turn up each week to attend the Coffee Morning. The Club meets over coffee every Wednesday morning, 10.30 to 12.00, at the Paris-Londres Hotel. The hotel offers pleasant surroundings, ample parking, and a constant supply of coffee and drinks. At least two members (usually more) of the CIA Committee are on hand to offer advice and guidance on the activities of the CIA. Bookings for activities may be made at the Coffee Mornings, and the Weekly Newsletter is on sale (a bargain at 25 pts each), which means you get it at least two days (and up to 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, catch up with the news, and find out what's happening around town.

#### HELPLINE

**A**s you will have read elsewhere, Veronika Baines has kindly agreed to become the Helpline Co-ordinator. She will be in overall charge of organising the equipment and the services available to members in times of emergency and need.

You will also have received mailings about the new phone number of Helpline which came into effect last October. The number is 334055, and since it is a mobile phone, the number will not keep changing, only the person "manning" it!

Veronika has a complete list of the equipment available to club members in times of emergency. There are walking frames, crutches and other medical equipment. It is advised that before hiring crutches and walking frames, you ensure that you know the correct size that you need – the wrong size can cause damage.

Helpline also have a selection of frozen, prepared meals ready to use for its "meals-on-wheels" service. At a modest prices, these dishes are sufficient for two meals for a "normal" appetite. They range from beef stew with vegetables and pasta, shepherd's pie, chili con carne with rice, chicken korma with rice, ratatouille with pasta, and also bread and butter pudding.

Helpline are also taking part in the Sant Lucia Christmas Market, to be held in la Massana, on 12 December. Helpline members will be selling mulled wine, home-made sweets and biscuits, as well as candles, and drinks, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic. I hope you will give us your support.

Helpline also sold Christmas cards during November at the coffee mornings. Please call Veronika if you need some cards.

All donations are always welcome and you can be sure they are put to very good use. Regular donations can be made by setting up a monthly

standing order to CIA Helpline a/c No. AC1888, Credit Andorra, la Massana (Bustia No. 2910).

Further information about Helpline and its equipment available for hire during emergencies may be obtained from Veronika on 838142.

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(or by appointment)

The Consulate is in Casa Jacint Pons, on the main street in the centre of la Massana; on the third floor, door No. 2 (above Granja Pons' coffee shop). There is ample parking immediately behind the building.

**FAREWELL  
PARTIES**

We had to say some sad farewells this autumn, when parties were given to wish Dinah Baxter a happy future in her new life in England – the pictures below show Tony Hooper addressing the meeting, with Jacquie Crozier, Brian Dore, and Alan Hadden in the foreground, and Dinah herself at the head of the table.

On the right, Dan and Daphne Parsons place some flowers in a vase shortly before their departure from Andorra.

June and Peter Wong also left Andorra this autumn. We hope their journey home this autumn was less fraught than their earlier trip to England (see page 26)! They will all be sorely missed.



*Some sad farewell parties held this last autumn: to wish Dinah Baxter, and Dan and Daphne Parson good luck*

## *Is knowledge of art necessary to* **APPRECIATE A WORK OF ART?**

*This interesting question is one that Nina O'Brien attempts to answer in this hard-hitting look at "art appreciation" as taught in today's schools.*

**I**f you sometimes feel that "art" is surrounded and hidden behind words, talks and clichés. Most of the self-styled art critics and half-baked academics have never created any art form themselves. They have never had to experience the typical frustration and disappointment encountered in the process of creating. Their shallow and empty words in attempting to interpret most art forms fulfil a desire to patronise and to elevate the critic above the norm. Unfortunately, this whole business can turn many laymen away from art and its appreciation because it may seem to be something only for experts.

Faced with a flood of books, articles, dissertations, speeches, lectures, guides, newspaper reviews and very frequently appearing T.V. critics, all art forms and appreciation of them are being degraded. Is the exquisite response of one to a particular violin concerto enhanced by knowledge of the use of diminished sevenths. Of course not and no amount of teaching and education will enhance your response to it if you just do not "like" it.

### **LISTEN TO YOUR SENSES**

We are influenced to neglect and void the gift of comprehending what our senses tell us about whatever form of art we are concerned with. Since having been always guided one feels lost in the presence of art objects that we believe make sense only when assigned a guide or given a detailed brochure.

So-called art appreciation is often "taught" in schools and education centres. The teacher or lecturer generally bears no resemblance to an artist. His teaching of art is generally a form of draughtsmanship along the lines of some

curriculum. This is often seemingly designed to suppress any inherent ability to appreciate an effect on the senses. The history of art is an entirely different subject well worthy of study by many but should not be confused with art appreciation.

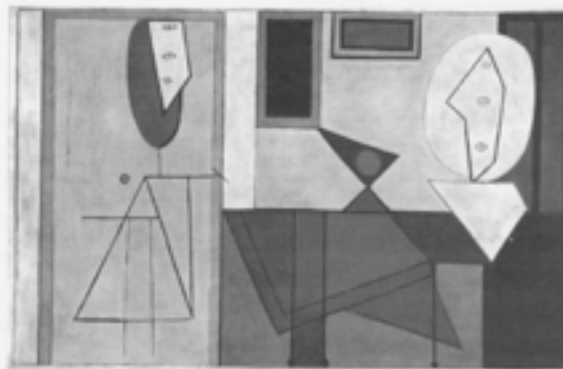
Many people visit galleries and museums and collect pictures and prints as advised without feeling anything themselves. The concept of "knowledge of art" simply crates a blockage against real appreciation.

The inborn capacity to comprehend a visual emotion has been dulled by the "experts". Throughout human history we have been blessed with the ability to like or dislike a particular art form without the guidance of self-professed critic.

What an artist or artisan captures through colour, shape and above all his emotion has to be felt. It is practically impossible to describe exactly the effect on individuals of any of the visual or audio media by words. Appreciation cannot be taught. Words or no words, theoretical knowledge or not knowledge, anyone can interpret a work of art or any form of art in whatever way his feelings direct.

### **CRITICAL APPRAISAL**

An observer of an artwork does not have to justify or to write a critical appraisal of it. The reaction is either negative or positive. One often feels guilt or shy when saying something adverse about a well-known work of art – even though it failed to arouse a



*Do we really like this?*

favourable reaction. This is particularly the case if it has been hailed as superb by the critics, the money-minded art agents and art collectors. Can the layman be bold enough to say that it is awful? Of course he can.

#### EVERYONE'S DIFFERENT

We all like different things. Very recently one of our Art Group members visited a museum of art in New York, and on seeing Van Gogh's "Irises" was honest enough to say, "Why would anyone pay millions for that?" It is not easy to deny all that has been said by the pundits. Did the "experts" of the museum buy at a huge cost something that was not worth the price of the canvas and paints on it? Did the financial barons that now infest the art market fool them?

In most cases one is told that visual analysis of the potential capacity to "see" is not possible without the study of "art principles".

Terms and appreciation of them such as balance, rhythm, harmony, etc. are believed to be essential by many. Heaven help the poor

cave man who, without such "expert" knowledge, just drew and painted on his cave walls what appealed to him and the rest of his tribe.

It is, of course, true that some knowledge or learning may help appreciation in some cases. Taken or used too literally it can be very inhibitive.

On the credit side, the works of an artist that are found attractive may lead the enquiring mind to investigate his mode of life and the effect of changes in it on his art and its impact on you. Since "art" is a part of our daily lives, museum art was once a part of daily life.

The pundits, however, have put it in an exalted position whereas its true artistic impression on you may be negative.

The artists who created the really great works of art were ordinary people, completely unaware of art history and appreciation as it exists today.

Our capacity to sense, feel, think and decide for ourselves needs to be re-awakened but not through courses on art appreciation.



*And do we really like this?*

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## ST JOHN'S WORT

*To remind us of summer and to lift our spirits, Dee Lian tells us about a medicinal plant that grows wild in Andorra and which is used as a nerve tonic and to treat depression*

**S**t. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is a shrubby perennial plant with numerous bright yellow flowers. It is native to many parts of the world including Europe and the United States, growing freely, especially in dry and sunny locations.

St. John's wort has a long history of folk use. Dioscorides, the foremost physician of ancient Greece, as well as Pliny and Hippocrates utilised St. John's wort in the treatment of many illnesses. Its Latin name, *Hypericum perforatum*, is derived from Greek and means "over an apparition" - a reference to the belief that the herb was so obnoxious to evil spirits that a whiff of it would cause them to depart.

The naming of St. John's wort has its origins in folk traditions. One claims that red spots, symbolic of the blood of St John, appeared on the leaves of the plant on the anniversary of the saint's beheading. Another comes from a common mediaeval belief that if one slept with a piece of the plant under his/her pillow on St. John's Eve, "the Saint would appear in a dream, give his blessing, and prevent one from dying during the following year."

### TREATMENT FROM DEPRESSION

**H**istorically used as a nerve tonic, St. John's wort is now widely used as a mild to moderate antidepressant. Karin Taylor's black moods were often accompanied by inexplicable bouts of insomnia, crying and lethargy. By last summer she'd sunk so low she didn't care if she

lived or died. But Taylor balked when her physician suggested a common anti-depressant: she didn't feel comfortable taking drugs. Fortunately, she says, a visiting friend suggested a natural herb called St. John's wort. Within three weeks, Taylor's depression had lifted. "I feel restored," says the 58-year-old Toronto accountant, who continues to take two herb capsules daily. "I'm my normal self again."

### PREMIER HERB FOR DEPRESSION

**R**ob McCaleb of the Herb Research Foundation calls St. John's wort "the premier herb for treating moderate depression."

What's the evidence for this claim? The respected *Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry and Neurology* aroused a good deal of interest in 1994, when it devoted an entire issue - seventeen research papers in all - to "*Hypericum: A Novel Antidepressant*". One compelling study tracked the herb's effects on 3,250 patients battling mostly mild and moderate depression, and found that about eighty per cent either felt better or become completely free of symptoms after four weeks.

The *British Medical Journal* published a review of twenty-three controlled studies involving 1,757 depressed patients. In that analysis, researchers from the United States and Germany found that St. John's wort worked nearly three times better than a placebo. The herb shows "definite promise," says Dr. Cynthia Mulrow, a University of Texas internist who co-authored the study.

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## DRUGS AND HERBS TOGETHER

Though most psychiatrists favour drugs over herbs, some are incorporating St. John's wort into their practice. Dr. Harold Bloomfield, a Yale-trained psychiatrist and co-author of a new book called "*Hypericum & Depression*", heard about the herb while researching his 1994 book, "How to Heal Depression". After reading the literature, nearly all of it from Germany, he started giving the herb to patients, and he claims the results have been excellent.

Is St. John's wort as benign as a vitamin? Enthusiasts note that millions of Germans have used the herb extensively without any reported deaths. In the study of 3,250 depressed patients, only 2.4 per cent experienced side effects. These included restlessness, gastrointestinal irritations and mild allergic reactions. Purdue University herb expert Varro Tyler notes that prescription anti-depressants, such as Prozac, cause more common and more serious side effects, such as insomnia, weight loss and sexual dysfunction.

"The absence of serious side effects is one of *Hypericum's* biggest selling points," she says.

One concern is that the herb might make some people sensitive to the sun. Certain animals, such as sheep, have grown sick from exposure to the sun after ingesting large quantities of St John's wort. No one has ever reported phototoxicity in people using the herb for depression, but Bloomfield says the potential "should be kept in mind" if one has a prior hypersensitivity to sunlight or if one is taking photosensitising drugs" such as tetracycline. Patients should also avoid combining St. John's wort with prescribed antidepressant drugs. ☐

*Dee Lian is a Master herbalist and Member of the American Association of Drugless Practitioners.*

*Condensed from articles by Michael Murray, N.D. in Health Counselor, Vol. 7, No. 4; Living Guide, Western Canada Edition, No. 125; and from the Macdonald Encyclopaedia of Medicinal Plants by Roberto Chiej.*

## A PASSING THOUGHT...

To be pondered during the year preceding the end of the second Millennium

*From Margaret Shaida*

Why is that everyone who refers to the year 2000 and subsequent years, says "the year two thousand" or "two thousand and one", instead of saying "twenty hundred" or "twenty oh-one". Nobody ever said "one thousand nine hundred" when it was 1900, or in 1901, "one thousand nine hundred and one". As far as we know, no one referred to the year 1000 as "one thousand". Certainly, that famous year, 1066, was not known as "one thousand and sixty-six", was it?

I began to wonder why so many people say it this way. Well, perhaps the very "roundness" of the word form "2000" makes it more natural to read "2000" as "two thousand". We say "two thousand BC" rather than "twenty hundred" BC. However, I don't think it's due solely to the appearance of the word form. I suspect it is more likely to be due to Stanley Kubrick's film "2001 Space Odyssey". It introduced us to a way of seeing (and saying) the first years of the next millennia. But this is surely no reason for the entire British media - and us! - to continue with this strange way of speaking!!

Are we going to go on saying the date this way, or shall we revert eventually, perhaps, in, the year 2010 to saying, "twenty ten" - so much more concise! It would be rather nice, I think, if we could start much earlier - with the year "twenty-oh-one" ☐



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Restaurant Review

## ROC DEL BISBE

*Jacquie Crozier has discovered a new French restaurant in la Massana (at Ed. Bons on the Ordino Road) and shares her experiences with us.*

At last - a French restaurant in la Massana! And one that is rather different from anywhere else in town. The chef at the brand-new Roc del Bisbe used to cook at the Coma Hotel in Ordino, but like most aspiring chefs, wanted his own restaurant.



Following a recommendation by club member Sarah Dawtry (whose home-made chutney is being used in the kitchen), we went there shortly after it opened. There is a sensibly limited à la carte menu (some dozen starters, half a dozen each fish and meat main courses, priced between 1,500 and 2,000 pesetas in the main) and a set price "menu of the day" at 1,800 pesetas.

We chose the latter as it gave far more choice than most set-price menus and all items on it were taken from the à la Carte list. Helpfully, the menu is written in four languages.

It was difficult to choose a starter but we rejected the home-made terrine, salad of the day, eggs Benedict with smoked salmon; and chose mussels (of course!) and the terrine of layered dried cod and pimento, which arrived with a beautifully dressed salad, sufficient to be a starter on its own. Both were excellent.

For our main course, Brian had sirloin steak (at last a Frenchman who can cook a steak!" he commented) and I chose the "fish of the day", which turned out to be trout. "Proper mountain trout, from high up," the chef came out of the kitchen to tell me, pointing heavenwards! The

trout (two small ones) were fine, if not very exciting; one can get trout almost anywhere. I had hoped for something more unusual. Both dishes came with a well-chosen and beautifully arranged variety of vegetables - very "nouveau cuisine". The other main courses were port casserole, boned rabbit and chicken with pasta, all with different sauces.

The third course on the set menu was either cheese or a choice from the desert buffet. There was no cheese board to choose from, just a plate with more salad and three small helpings (goat, blue and strange dry slivers of what tasted like Parmesan). The dessert buffet had a choice of four different tarts: apple, almond, chocolate, peach and pear (very good) or fresh fruit salad, crème Catalan or caramel.

The wine list contains more French than Spanish wines and is not cheap. The lowest priced were a white and rosé from Catalunya at 900 pesetas and there were only another two under 2,000 pesetas.

At the moment the restaurant is quite hard to find, hidden at the backing of a building site. It is the only completed part of the marble-faced block being built on the left of the Ordino road, some 400 metres beyond the la Massana roundabout. It says "restaurant" in lights and there is a bicycle outside with the menu in the basket! Until November, the Roc del Bisbe was open every day, lunchtimes and from 8 p.m. in the evening. ☐

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## THE LITTLE YELLOW TRAIN

*The Club trip to Villefranche via the Little Yellow Train last September was a magnificent day, despite the poor omens of the early morning. Margaret Shaida tells us all about it.*

The clouds were low over the mountains, the rain teemed down. It was the perfect day to stay at home and curl up on the sofa with a good book.

But it was the day we had arranged to go on a Club activity to France and on the Little Yellow Train. We looked out gloomily, regretting our foolhardy act in making the reservations back in the summer. We debated whether to drive up to Arinsal to join the bus to France – or whether to simply go back to bed. It was a close run thing.

We checked the mail, forgotten in our post box from the previous day. There was an envelope from the Club – which contained our membership card. The reverse side ominously announced that “The Club takes no responsibility....”

Despite this inauspicious message, we decided to go anyway. We set off in the rain, glumly predicting a wet, miserable day.

Since this was a joint venture between the Club and maestro, the local organisation set up for English-speaking tourists, we found Ann Price and the maestro guide, Marcus, from New Zealand, awaiting us along with a huge bus driven by a very careful driver. As usual, Ann was able to give us quite a bit of information about the events of the day, what we were about to see, and what time we were due to return to Andorra.

Despite the rain, we found a number of hardy souls already sitting in the bus. They all seemed remarkably cheerful, and our spirits might

have picked up, had it not been so cold in the bus.

At first, I was personally rather glad, since I tend towards travel sickness. In the circumstances, there was little danger of that – the careful driving and the extreme cold dispelled any queasiness. Marcus apologised, saying that we had been given a

“summer” bus. However, he assured us that he was making arrangements for a warmer “winter” bus to come and meet us.

By the time we arrived at La Tour de Carol, where another small group joined us, we were more than ready for some excellent croissants and coffee. We thawed out, and greeted our new bus with pleasure.

We crossed the Cerdanya Valley, still lovely despite the lowering clouds and fitful rain. We were just approaching Odeillo, the world's largest solar furnace when we were stopped by the ever-vigilant French Gendarmes. Two of them climbed up into our (now warm) bus, demanding to inspect our passports. They seemed very casual about their job, probably because we clearly weren't a bus-load of lager louts or smugglers. Indeed, they appeared to enjoy our company a great deal, very carefully inspecting our passports. We suspected that it was because it was more comfortable in our bus than it was outside in the rain, which by now was tipping down relentlessly.

Twenty minutes later, we were on our way again, but the delay meant that we had less time in our carefully planned day to spend at the solar furnace. Given the pouring rain, it was hard to believe that the solar furnace could ever operate



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believe that the solar furnace could ever operate successfully, but we were assured that it does. It's certainly an eye-catching feature in the under-populated foothills of the Cerdanya Valley.

#### The Sun Shines upon the Righteous

Finally, we reached the station where we were to join the Little Yellow Train. We tumbled out of the coach – and into golden sunshine! A lovely break in the clouds lifted our spirits. The train pulled in on time, our coach was clearly marked, and we clambered in, now getting quite excited at the prospect of a new journey. There were open carriages, as well as closed ones, and after a couple of stops (and another heavy downpour) the skies began to clear in a most promising way, and several of our companions went to the open carriage. Later, when convinced that the weather was seriously clearing, more of us joined them.

The journey down to Villefranche is magnificent. It is France's highest railway. We rattled through tunnels, and over the impressive Viaduc Sejourne and the Giscard suspension bridge. The ever-changing scenery was remarkable, with high green peaks, deep valleys, tiny wooded glades and towering bare mountains – made all the more dramatic by the bright sunshine playing chase with the patchy clouds.

#### A Mediaeval Town

When we pulled into Villefranche-de-Conflent, we felt breathless and exhilarated. Our coach was waiting for us – as were Ann and Marcus along with our packed lunches.

We were dropped outside the walls of the medieval town, in a very pleasant area – seats and sunshine greeted us. We promptly investigated our bags of lunch! A right royal spread greeted us – an excellent, well-filled ham sandwich, a tasty tuna sandwich, a bag of crisps, a cake, an apple and a

bottle of water. Very delicious, though far too much for me. Thus fortified, we made our way into the ancient town to explore its craft shops and mediaeval ramparts, and to find a good cup of coffee. Being France, we had little difficulty locating a bustling café.

Villefranche is a delightful town, mediaeval, beautiful, and relatively unspoilt. I understand in high summer, it is filled wall-to-wall with tourists, but on this late September week-day, there were very few people about. Just enough to make us feel that we had not slipped inadvertently into another dimension.

Before lunch, we had been advised of a trip to some caves. Ann asked if there were any among us who didn't want to go. I hesitated. After my earlier experience with French caves, I wasn't very keen. But I thought I should perhaps have another go! So I agreed to go.

What an experience! Apparently, these caves were discovered fairly recently. We were told that the entrance was quite low, but that the caves then opened up. Well, I thought, as I walked upright through the wide entrance, they don't know what "quite low" means! But they were right about the caves opening up. They certainly did. There were iron walkways and the whole way was beautifully lit. We crossed over a small lake, and climbed up stairways into several chambers filled with startlingly-shaped pink and white stalactites and stalagmites. It was quite breathtaking.

In the deepest and largest chamber, a bank of seats had been set up for the *son et lumière* show. Despite one or two false starts, and more people joining us, the show was wonderful. At half an hour, it was rather long, but the beauty of the chamber, the clever lighting and the choice of some of the music (I particularly liked the Gregorian chants) made it a most worthwhile

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experience.

It was with some reluctance that I left this magical underworld. But we had to hurry along, and pick up those few people who had read my article in last September's issue and had, as a result, decided never to go into another cave again!

They were all waiting in the warm afternoon sunshine. We set off for home, stopping only briefly for tea, and to drop off some of our group at La Tour de Carol. As we crossed the high Cerdanya Valley, we could see the rain clouds piled high in the west. It started to rain again, the mist and cloud hanging low over the foothills, the high mountains completely hidden in great banks of cloud.


Our arrival was greeted with rain. It had, we realised, been raining all day in Andorra, and we thanked our lucky stars that we had decided to go on the trip after all. We had spent a wonderful day in sunny, warm France, travelling on an exciting little Yellow Train, exploring an ancient town, and wandering deep into some beautiful caves. It certainly beat sitting behind my computer, looking out at the incessant rain.

The trip, though organised by maestro, had been thoroughly investigated by our own Ann Price to ensure it was up to her standards. We're glad that Ann's "sabbatical" didn't last a whole year! Thank you, and welcome back, Ann! ☐

## A MEDICAL DICTIONARY

*A medical dictionary has been circulating for some time which we thought was worth reprinting for your pleasure during this Christmas season. It might also be helpful to hand to any injured lager lout you may spot in the bars of Andorra this winter.*

Artery	Study of painting	Terminal illness	Sick at airport
Bacteria	Cafeteria back door	Tumour	More than one
Barium	What undertakers do	Urine	You're not out!
Caesarean section	Rome real estate	Varicose	Nearby
Cat scan	Searching for kitty		
Cauterise	Made eye contact		
Coma	Punctuation mark		
D&C	Where Washington is located		
Dilate	Have a long life		
Enema	Not a friend		
Fester	Quicker		
Fibula	Small lie		
Genital	Non-Jew		
Impotent	Distinguished		
Labour pain	Hurt at work		
Medical staff	Doctor's cane		
Morbid	A higher offer		
Nitrates	Cheaper day rate		
Node	Was aware of		
Outpatient	One who has fainted		
Pap smear	Fatherhood test		
Pelvis	Cousin of Elvis		
Rectum	Damn near killed 'em		
Secretion	Hiding something		
Seizure	Roman emperor		
Tablet	Small table		

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## HERE AND THERE

**A**t this time of the year, charity is much in our minds. But did you know that Christina at the Arinsal Hotel gave two buffet dinners last month in aid of charity? On Saturday and Sunday, 14 and 15 November, Christina entertained nearly seventy people, raising some 100,000 pts for Cáritas. Many people are doing such acts of kindness – unfortunately, we don't always hear about them until it's too late – either to participate or to write about them.



**M**y article about the Niaux Caves produced numerous responses. First, I was reprimanded – in the nicest possible way – about my derogatory comments on the caves (see June 1998). They are, I was told, some of the finest caves in Europe, and that I had been quite foolish to go on such a trip so ill-

prepared. I was also assured that there had been absolutely no danger.

Other reactions resulted in a couple of people *not* going to the caves near Villefranche! Well, at least I know that *somebody* reads the magazine, even though I get so few letters!



**W**ith the onset of winter, Helpline suggest that if you live alone, you may like to set up a system of morning "check-in" calls. They suggest that you arrange with a neighbour that, at a pre-arranged time every morning, you dial their number three times and then hang up; your friend then calls you three times and replaces the receiver. In this way, you can check that all is well without incurring any cost at all. If your friend does not make a call, then you should investigate immediately!

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## SOME BUZZLES FOR CHRISTMAS

The words listed below may be found in the diagram. They can be read in any direction but always in a straight line.

H	G	I	E	L	S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C	C
Z	T	U	Y	T	T	C	W	U	R	E	T	P	Y	A
N	O	W	A	L	T	L	A	I	N	O	Q	L	H	H
H	T	R	I	B	E	L	O	P	H	T	R	O	N	N
T	W	O	N	S	C	A	P	S	A	E	L	D	Z	L
E	W	O	N	A	E	S	Q	N	B	L	C	U	O	C
H	T	I	T	A	M	M	G	M	Y	T	S	R	I	A
M	T	N	W	T	R	E	E	M	S	S	E	V	L	E
S	A	J	A	R	L	C	N	N	Y	I	O	C	E	E
S	T	N	E	S	E	R	P	T	F	M	E	U	K	G
P	O	H	G	D	S	A	S	Y	S	T	M	F	M	P
A	A	I	G	E	P	O	T	B	H	Q	K	K	T	U
X	H	C	N	I	R	G	F	H	O	P	J	G	W	P
J	G	P	Q	F	L	L	I	B	S	G	W	X	Z	X
A	X	A	D	U	N	R	G	H	E	O	O	F	Q	M

ANGELS, BIRTH, CHRISTMAS, DECEMBER, ELVES, FROSTY, GIFTS, GRINCH, HOLLY, LIGHTS, MANGER, MISTLETOE, NORTH POLE, ORNAMENTS, PRESENTS, RUDOLPH, SANTA CLAUS, SLEIGH, SNOW, STAR, TINSEL, TREE, WISE MEN, WREATH

## LOGIC PROBLEM

"Knights of Depravity"

Sir Lancelot has been sent out to fight four nefarious knights and to rescue damsels in distress from their castles. Lady Xanthura and the Princess Myna were two of the ladies in distress, while two of the knaves were known as The Ruthless and The Vile. From the clues given below, can you work out each of these knaves' names, their nicknames, and the names of the damsels they're distressing.

1. Sir Losel, kidnapper of Lady Calandra, is not the knight known as "The Foul".
2. Sir Vaurien is the lord of Castle Drye; the owner of Castle Grymm, whose victim is the same rank as the damsel held prisoner in Castle Horydd, is not the knight known as "The Pitiless".
3. Sir Caitiff "The Ruthless" will be the first of the evil knights that Sir Lancelot deals with.
4. The Knight who is holding Princess Rhea prisoner in a tower of Castle Dress has a nickname the same length as that of Sir Malfearor.

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS



*Maria Teresa Raurell who kindly provides us with the details of activities being organised in the various comús during the next three months would like to thank all the people in the various government departments, comús and tourist offices who have assisted her in the compilation of this list.*

### ANDORRA LA VELLA

**4 December:** at 21.00 and 23.00, Teatre Comunal, XIII Season of theatre presents Joan Echanova in "Como Cana una Ciudad de Noviembre a Noviembre" by Federico Garcia Lorca.

**10 December:** at 22.00 in Sala d'Actes of the Comú (next to the car park lift) "Season of Music and Dance", Concert by Yo-Yo MA, cellist, and Kathryn Stott, piano.

**12-13 December:** a.m. "Fira de Santa Llúcia (St. Lucy's Fair) at Plaça del Poble. One can buy miniature figures to make Pessebres (Nativity scene figures), Christmas decorations, candles, traditional sweets, etc.

**12 December:** at 21.00 (after Mass) Concert by the International Singers d'Andorra in Santa Maria del Fener's Church

**21-22 December:** at 22.00 at Sala d'Actes "Season of Music and Dance" "Tango Passion" choreography by Hector Zaraspe.

**24 December:** at about 17.00 at Plaça del Poble, Christmas Tió (an oak log traditionally beaten by children for presents). Father Christmas will be there too for a moment to collect the "Want" letters from the children.

**24 December:** at 24.00 Missa del Gall (Midnight Mass) at Sant Esteve Church sung by Orfeo Andorra. Afterwards, La Condació (Andorran tradition when everyone is invited to have mulled wine and cake).

**24 December:** at 24.00 Missa del Gall in Santa Coloma Church.

**January 1999** will begin the new Season of Theatre together with the Comú of Sant Julià (ask for special programme at Sindicat d'Indiciativa).

**4 January:** p.m. the Royal Page will arrive to collect children's "want" letters". Organised by the Culture Department of Andorra la Vella together with Unió Pro-Turisme of Escaldes-Engordany. They will also organise on

**5 January:** the Three Kings Procession, with decorated floats, through the streets of Andorra

la Vella and Escaldes Engordany. A magical evening for children.

**17 January:** at 13.00 "Escudella de Sant Antoni" (a Catalan and Andorran traditional stew). Free lunch for everybody at Plaça del Poble.

**21 February:** "Carnestoltes" (Carnival) Fancy dress competition for children at 17.00 in the Centre de Congressos i Exposicions - Sala d'Actes of the Comú (Plaça del Poble). With a show by the musical group "La Troca", and afternoon snack for the children.

### CANILLO

**December:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Competition of Christmas Decorations on the facades of the parish. Organised by the Unió Pro-Turisme.

**December:** Judo team tournament in Alcañiz (Aragón, province of Teruel).

**12-13 December:** A Sporting Visit in the Gymnasium Olimpus of Andorra la Vella (Judo team).

**20 December:** Inauguration Competition of Pessebres (Nativity Scenes), organised by Unió Pro-Turisme.

**20 December:** The Andorra Artistic Gel will participate at "Copa Pirineu" in Puigcerdà.

**21-22-23 December:** Judo team to visit Foix, France.

**December:** Christmas Festival by Club de l'Andorra Artístic Gel at Palau de Gel of Canillo.

**24 December:** p.m. Father Christmas will visit the streets of Canillo and the children will receive some presents from him at Plaça Montaup.

**24 December:** 24.00 Missa del Gall (Midnight Mass) and afterwards, mulled wine and chocolate for everyone. Organised by Unió Pro-Turisme de Canillo.

**December:** Father Christmas will visit the ski station of Soldeu-El Tarter. For more information ENSISA Tel. 851151.

- 31 December:** p.m. New Year's Eve at the Ski Station of Soldeu-El Tarter (descent of torches, mulled wine and cake for everyone). More information ENSISA tel 851151.
- 5 January 1999:** p.m. Three Kings Procession through the streets.
- 17 January:** at 13.00 Vianda de Sant Antoni (also called "Escudella", a traditional Catalan stew). Free for everyone.
- 31 January:** Crema del Mai (Andorran and Catalan tradition). The Christmas Tree is burnt at the square. This means that the Wintetr Season is finished and the warm season is coming.
- Mid-February:** Carnival - Fancy dress balls and other activities for children and adults.

# ENCAMP

- December:** "VIII Saló de la Infància" in all areas of the Complex Esportiu i Cultural d'Encamp, there will be many interesting exhibitions and activities for children during the Christmas holidays.
- 10 December:** Santa Eulàlia's Day. Encamp celebrates its Patron Saint's Day.
- 13 December:** a.m. Inauguration of the new stained glass windows of Santa Eulàlia's church, and solemn High Mass with H.E. the Bishop Martí Alarió. The Petits Cantors will sing during Mass. The same day, inauguration of the new Museum of Encamp and the new

square dedicated to Sant Ermengol.

- 13 December:** p.m. Concert at Santa Eulàlia's Church by the Petits Cantors.
- 15 December:** End of the first round of the Paroquial "Indoor Football Competition" (this started on 20 Novmber).
- 17 December:** at 21.30 Christmas carol concert at Santa Eulàlia's Church by the International Singers d'Andorra.
- 18 December:** Finals of the Squash Competition that began on 16 November.
- December:** Exhibition of "Full Contact" (sportive combat modality).
- December:** "Festa dels Torrons" at Casal del Poble.
- 24 December:** p.m. Father Christmas Parade through the streets of Encamp/Pas de la Casa.
- 24 December:** 24.00 Missa del Gall (Midnight Mass) in Santa Eulàlia's Church of Encamp and in Sant Pere's Church in Pas de la Casa.
- 31 December:** p.m. New Year's Eve Ball in Encamp and Pas de la Casa.
- 5 January 1999:** p.m. Traditional Procession with floats through the streets, with the Three Kings of the Orient.
- 12 January to 23 March:** Second Round of the Paroquial "Indoor Football" Competition.
- 17 January:** at 13.00 "Escudella de Sant Antoni" Traditional Free Lunch in Encamp and Pas de la Casa.
- February:** Carnestoltes - Fancy Dress Balls and

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Parades through the streets in Encamp and Pas de la Casa.

### ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

Throughout December, several activities about Christmas and the Three Kings Festivity at the Children's Library and the Ludoteca.

**1-24 December:** Advent Calendar on "La Façana de l'Art" (on the façade of the restored old Hotel la Terrassa on the main road near the Parish Church).

**24 December:** p.m. arrival of Father Christmas, organised by Unió Pro-Turisme.

**24 December:** 24.00 "Missa del Gall" (Midnight Mass), afterwards "Cremat" for everyone (Cremat is a traditional hot drink of rum, coffee, lemon, sugar, cinnamon and sometimes fruit). Organised by Unió Pro-Turisme.

**4 January 1999:** p.m. the Royal Page will arrive and collect the children's "want" letters. A procession is organised by Unió Pro-Turisme Escaldes-Engordany together with the Culture Department of Andorra la Vella. They will also organise on

**5 January:** the Three Kings Parade with decorated floats, through the streets of Andorra la Vella and Escaldes-Engordany. A magical evening for the children.

**17 January:** at 13.00 "Escudella de Sant Antoni" a Public Free Lunch of a traditional Andorran and Catalan stew).

**February:** a.m. In the Church Square, an auction to raise money to help people in need.

**23-16 February:** "Carnestoltes" fancy dress balls.

**22 February:** p.m. Festival of Carnival for the children.

### LA MASSANA

**12 December:** All morning, Christmas Market at La Closeta area (Comú Car Park) selling

Christmas decorations, greetings cards, preserves, candles, etc. HELPLINE will be there waiting for us, so don't forget!

**24 December:** at 19.00 Father Christmas will receive the children at the Information Hut's Square (Caseta d'Informació).

**24 December:** at 24.00 Missa del Gall (Midnight Mass) sung by Coral Sant Antoni of La Massana. Afterwards, hot chocolate and cake (coca) for everyone.

**5 January 1999:** at 19.00 The Three Kings of the Orient will arrive at La Closeta Hall.

**16 January:** at 22.00 Saint Antoni's Eve Concert by Orquestra Nacional de Cambra d'Andorra at the Church.

**17 January:** at 11.00 Mass at Sant Antoni de la Grella Chapel to mark Saint Antoni's Day.

**17 January:** at 13.00 Escudella free for everyone at Prat del Colat.

**17 January:** at 17.00 Festival for children at the Parish Hall.

**14 February:** at 17.00 Carnival, with fancy dress competition for children at the Parish Hall.

### ORDINO

On 19 November: the new Postal Museum was inaugurated in Ordino in front of the free car park near the Auditori.

**From December to May 1999:** Monthly squash leagues at Centre Esportiu d'Ordino.

**Early December:** Competition of Christmas greetings cards, for children and young people.

**6 December:** at 21.30, Auditori. Concert by Orfeón Donostiarra from San Sebastian. The Orfeón is considered the best choir in Spain and one of the best in Europe. They will sing some Basque traditional songs and well known opera choruses.

**13 December:** at 16.30 Christmas Carol Concert, International Singers d'Andorra at Ordino

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Church.

- 19 December: p.m. Christmas Concert by Petits Cantors and Orquestra de Cambra d'Andorra in the Auditori.
- 24 December: at 18.00 Arrival of Father Christmas.
- 24 December: at 24.00 "Missa del Gall" (Midnight Mass) and afterwards, mulled wine with chocolate and cake.
- 1<sup>st</sup> January 1999: at 19.00 New Year's Concert by Orquestra Simfònica del Vallès. Waltzes and Polkas.
- 5 January: The Three Kings Process through the streets.
- 28-29-30 January: Trofeu "Borrufa" (ski competition for children) at Ordino-Arcalis.
- February and March: Film shows, organised together with Canillo.
- February: "Carnestoltes".

### SANT JULIA DE LORIA

- 6 December: a.m. Christmas Market in Plaça de la Germandat, organised by Unió Pro-Turisme Lauredià.
- 6 December: a.m. Inauguration of the Pessebre (Nativity Scene) at the Centre Cultural organised by Unió Pro-Turisme.
- 19 December: 22.00 Christmas Concert by Coral Rocafort, Coral Joves Veus and Petits Cantaires Lauredians, at the Parish Church.
- 24 December: 20.00 Arrival of Father Christmas at the hall of the Centre Cultural.
- 26 December to 7 January: Exhibition of "Els Pastorets" by the various area of the Art School at the Hall of Centre Cultural. The opening will be at 22.00.
- 26 December: at 12.30 The Tió Festival (log beating tradition), organised by Unió Pro-Turisme.
- 26-27 December: at 18.00 Els Pastorets, a play at the Auditori Claror, Centre Cultural.
- 2, 3 and 6 January 1999: at 18.00 Els Pastoresets, Auditori Claror.
- 3 January: at 20.00 Arrival of the Royal Page at the Hall of the Centre Cultural, organised by Unió Pro-Turisme.
- 5 January: at 19.30 Processions with floats through the streets, Three Kings tradition, organised by Unió Pro-Turisme.

- 7 January: at 17.00 A Festival for Children on the occasion of Saint Julià at Auditori Rocafort, Centre Cultural.
- 7 January: Saint Julià's Day.
- 20 January: a.m. "Escudella" de Saint Sebastian at Plaça de la Germandat.
- 20 January: 20.00 Opening of the Ceramics Exhibition by Meritxell Virgili at the Centre Cultural.
- 20 January: All day: 6th Anniversary of the Library (several activities for members and the schools), at the Centre Cultural.
- 10-28 February: at 20.00 inauguration of a Photograph Exhibition put on by Club Fotogràfica Lauredià at the hall of Centre Cultural.
- 13 February: at 10.00 "Cercavila de Carnestoltes". The Centre Cultural and the schools organise parades for children wearing "multi-coloured costumes and grotesquely-painted faces", through the streets of the Parish and Plaça de la Germandat.
- 13-16 February: Unió-Turisme organises several activities of Carnestoltes: Parades, Balls, etc.
- 16 February: at 21.30 Carnestoltes' Trial at the Centre Cultural, Auditori Claror, organised by Unió Pro-Turisme.
- 19 February: at 22.00 Festival for the Benefit of "Mans Unides" at the Centre Cultural, Auditori Claror.
- 26 February: at 22.00 beginning of the XIV Season of Theatre, at the Centre Cultural, Auditori Claror.
- 3-21 March: at 20.00 inauguration of the paintings exhibition by Meritxell Duran, at the hall of the Centre Cultural.
- 19 March: at 22.00 XIV Season of Theatre, at the Centre Cultural, Auditori Claror. □

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## AN AFTERNOON AT ANDORRA TV

*When Georgina Tennyson took part in the Andorran TV quiz show, she found that she was one of only two foreigners to have appeared on the show. She tells us all about it.*

**F**ate has many twists and turns, especially where Andorra TV and La Fira d'Automobil are concerned. On Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> July last year, I went to visit the car fair in search of my dream sports car. I fell in love, for I found the future partner of my dreams. To acquire this gem, I had to fill in a form and slip it into the ballot box that was placed precariously on its gleaming bonnet. I filled it in, naively not reading the conditions of the prize!

I thought no more about it until Tuesday morning when I received a telephone call from a Catalan woman. I had absolutely no idea what she was talking about. Then she mentioned "Concurs" and it clicked. She was talking about the beautiful car. My heart skipped a beat. For a second I believed I'd won – but that would be too simple! She went on to explain to me that I had to take part in an Andorran TV programme, called "Qui no corre no vola".

I had to be at the TV studios at 4.30 p.m. where I met up with the other seven participants. The show was then explained to us: it consisted of playing a board game through Andorra with the aim of landing on different squares to pick up prizes, as well as performing embarrassing dates. The worst was singing and dancing to some groovy music. If you were very lucky, you could pick up the show's bottle of milk emblazoned with its logo.

The presenters, Mariella and Raoul, were very nice and stopped us feeling nervous. The first contestant worked at Pizzeria Roma, and ironically won a free pizza from Pizza Hut! He also won a three-day trip to Rioja. When my turn came, I also picked up a pizza, as well as the famous bottle of milk and two peppers. The time ran out, and I had to continue the next day, which was the Day of San Joan. When we had finished the show, and were eating *coca* and sipping champagne, I learnt a useful TV tip – never eat on TV, for you don't know what you'll look like!

During the break, we were fed a Dutch courage feast of *bocadillos* and more champagne. The only trouble was there were only two bathrooms –

and the queues were worse than those for the chair lift on a Sunday! We continued again, though I had to stop when I answered one of the questions incorrectly. The show ended with the appearance of a comic dressed up as a woman, and the grand entrance of the pizza-delivery man delivering pizza to the presenters. TV work is hungry work! It was a fun afternoon, despite something rather spooky happening: during the show a cloud prop fell down – and when we left, it was pouring cats and dogs. Is there an X-file connection?

If anyone would like to take part, you can call 829 880. The show appears twice daily on Andorra TV at 11 a.m. and 9.30 p.m. ☐

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## A HAIR-RAISING JOURNEY

*We all have memories of terrible journeys, where nothing seems to go right – lost passports, stolen wallets, closed petrol stations. When June Wong and her husband, Peter, set off for a few days in England recently, they didn't realise what awaited them!*

**W**hen we set off for England via Cherbourg, we had little idea of what was awaiting us. Enjoying the lovely alpine scenery, we crossed into France, by-passing Toulouse and Bordeaux without incident.

Then suddenly, the warning light of the petrol gauge began flickering – we'd forgotten to fill up at the last stop. We crawled along, conserving fuel. At a roadside rest stop, we asked several truck drivers and motorists if they had some spare petrol, but to no avail. Eventually, a couple kindly agreed to follow us to the next petrol station. After what seemed an interminable length of time, we sighted a petrol station.

Much heartened, we headed for Niort, seeking accommodation for the night. We were taken aback as hotel after hotel said they were "Complete". Apparently, two conferences and a festival were being held in the town, and no accommodation was available for miles around. Our hearts sank. We had no option but to continue on in the late afternoon. We glumly envisaged sleeping overnight in the car, but when we spied a *chambres d'hôtel* (bed and breakfast) along a country road, our hopes soared. Yes, there was a vacancy!

Early in the afternoon of the next day, as we approached le Mont St. Michel, we stopped at some traffic lights – but not for long! Crash! Suddenly, we were in motion again. A huge Belgian trailer had cannoned into our car and pushing us into the oncoming traffic. We managed to avoid a deep ditch, coming to a halt on the other side of the road.

There ensued several hours with the driver and the gendarmes who were patient and kind in dealing with their non-French-speaking charges. Eventually, we were informed that help was on its way.

As we waited, the sky began to darken ominously. Deep rumbles of thunder and threatening flashes of lightning portended a storm. The heavens opened. We huddled in our raincoats

in the front seat of the car, as rain and hail stones pelted through the shattered rear window. A huge pool of swirling water formed around us and water splashed over us as traffic flashed past.

Finally, a pick-up truck appeared and took the damaged car and us twenty kilometres to a garage. From there, the car was to be repatriated to Andorra for repair. After another long delay, there followed a 40-km drive where, after further negotiation, we obtained a replacement car to drive to Cherbourg. Weary and drained, we managed to find a hotel at 9.30 p.m., just in time to have a meal before the restaurant closed.

Thankfully, our journey continued to England without further incident, though we were sadly encumbered with extra luggage from the car. Whilst there, more phone calls and faxes had to be sent and our return trip by air arranged.

Several days later, we flew to Barcelona. Knowing that our early evening arrival would not synchronise with the minibus, we went to the Meson Castilla Hotel, expecting to catch the 9.00 p.m. taxi to Andorra. (cf CIA Newsletter No. 221, 3 May 1998). "But you have no reservation," the receptionist told us. The next day's taxi was fully booked too. We thought we'd stay the night, but the receptionist said the hotel was fully booked. "Everywhere in Barcelona is full - it's an exhibition weekend."

Peter suddenly had an idea. What about the 2.00 a.m. taxi to Andorra, departing from the

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leave at 2.30 a.m. While waiting, we took a stroll down the Ramblas, fearing pick-pockets on this trouble-filled trip.

At last, it was time for the helpful receptionist to call a taxi to take us to the rendez-vous with the Andorra-bound taxi. Our destination appeared to be a dimly-lit industrial area, eerily deserted, except for a few scurrying figures. Our taxi driver shrugged and drove off, no doubt wondering about the sanity of his two passengers. Fearfully, we went towards the only lighted building – which proved to be the printing house of La Vanguardia, the Spanish daily newspaper. We realised that our "taxi" was actually a large van piled high with newspapers destined for Andorra, and other towns en route. We sat in front with the driver, who stopped at frequent intervals, to jump out and thump down another pile of newspapers at towns and villages on the way. Eventually, the pearly grays gave way to the rosy tints of early dawn.

At Seu d'Urgell, we and the remaining newspapers were transferred to a smaller van going to la Massana. Finally, we rounded the last bend for home, tired, thirsty and hungry. We staggered into our apartment – more than 24 hours and 15 minutes after we had started. ☐

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