

INTER COMM

CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

MAGAZINE / REVISTA



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CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA

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INTERCOMM

Club Internacional d'Andorra

Quarterly Magazine

March 1999



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NEWS FROM THE BOARD

Tony Hooper

Now we are ten! It was gratifying to see a full house at the anniversary lunch, and especially pleasing to welcome **Ingrid Millar**, one of the founders of the Club. I would like to make a public apology to **Doreen Woolton**, the only founder who did not receive an invitation. Sorry, Doreen, but I sent invitations to all who were still in Andorra and did not think that you would come up from the deep south.

All members recently received a letter asking for more volunteers to come forward to assist in the running of the Club. I am happy to report that we had some response, including an offer to organise the Car Boot Sale. But we still need more members who would be prepared to give an hour or two each week when they are available.

Connected with the above it is becoming more and more obvious that we are going to have to pay for some of the services necessary for us to continue. This means a greater outlay of Club funds, and the Board will recommend an increase of the annual subscription at the A.G.M.

I am sorry to have to report that, because of lack of numbers, the Bridge Group in St. Julia has closed. All the equipment has been put in store and is available if anyone wishes to try and start a new group. We would suggest that any new group be aimed at beginners or first level players. Any



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offers?

As many of you know, I am involved with Special Olympics and I am proud to announce that at the time of writing (10 February) over half the volunteers for the Skiing Championships in the first week in March are from the Club. Well done!

EDITORIAL

Margaret Shaida

In this Easter issue, we look forward to the Spring Festival with an article by **Karin Ostergaard** telling us about Easter in Denmark (page 11). The lovely sketches illustrating the article were all drawn by Karin herself. We also have a recipe for a splendid Easter Cake (page 15) sent in to us by **Joan Spiller**. You will probably have more fun making it than eating it! Have a good baking session!

All of us who have driven up the main road to France will have passed under the Funicamp just north of Encamp. **Clare Allcard** has been up to the very top of this very long ski lift, and has written a report on its wonders (page 16). It is hoped that this lift will remain open in the summer months, and it should be a wonderful trip for those non-skiers among us - when the hills are green and strewn with wild flowers.

Our restaurant review (page 18) this time comes from **Maria Teresa Raurell**, who has also given us the detailed and useful "Forthcoming Events" for the next three months (page 19).

We also have two brief reports on the Christmas shopping trip to Barcelona, and the buffet lunch held to welcome the new British Honorary Consul (see page 13).

Finally, we have a short story from **Alan Weatherbe** (page 22). Well, actually, the story is not very short, so we are having to continue it in our next issue. It is a tale of fantasy, set here in the valleys of Andorra. We hope you enjoy it.

And don't forget that the Special Olympics Andorra (SOA) "1st Skiing Championship and Alpine and Cross-country" are to be held here in Andorra (la Rabassa) during the first five days of March. Our own **Tony Hooper** (see above) is much involved in the organisation of this worthwhile affair. Many of you have already volunteered, but we can all go along and simply support these determined young competitors. An enthusiastic audience is very important. You can contact Tony on 836154 for details on where and when to go to cheer them on!

We should like to thank all those who have sent in contributions and features for publication in the magazine. These all help to make the magazine more varied and interesting. Many thanks. Please keep up the good work.

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

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LETTERS

PROVOKING CONTROVERSY!

I enjoyed 'A Passing Thought' in the Winter *Intercomm* but, oh dear, Margaret, how insular! But perhaps you wanted to provoke controversy! Surely only the British say 'nineteen-hundred and one! In Catalan one always says 'mil-nou centes novanta-vint' or whatever, and in Spanish and French too. After having given one's dates of birth and arrival to Immigration a few times, it comes quite trippingly off the tongue. And as for 1066, I imagine the Norman conquerors certainly said 'mille soixante-six' – or its equivalent in mediaeval French!

So perhaps the year 2000 will be an opportunity for the British to come a little more into line with European norms – but I expect by 2010 we'll all be saying 'twenty ten'.

Regarding the interesting article on "St. John's Wort". At least five species grow in the Pyrenees, besides *H. perforatum*, which can be told by the translucent dots on the leaves. The *Hypericaceae* is a difficult family in that they are so similar and while I can't imagine any reader going into the mountains and chomping on the leaves, care should be taken with any herbal remedy to ensure that it has been manufactured by a reputable herbalist who knows the plants.

Yours sincerely, Jacquie Crozier

It's a long time since I've been called 'insular'. However, I take heart from Jacquie's prophecy that by 2010 we shall indeed be saying "twenty-ten". However, in my opinion, we can only be grateful that the Anglo-Saxons did not succumb to the French way of saying, "70", "80" and "90". When speaking French, I sometimes feel I could do with a calculator! - The Editor

SUCCESSFUL CHRISTMAS FAIR

The English-Speaking Church of Andorra held its annual Christmas Fair on Sunday, 29 November 1998, in the Church in la Massana. We are very happy to announce that we raised over 1,000,000.00 ptas. This will be given to the Associacio per a la Defensa de la Natura (A.D.N.), Associacio per a la Procteccio d'Animals, Plantes i Medi Ambient (A.P.A.P.M.A.), Centre d'Acolliment d'Infants, la Massana Caritas – Mossen Joan, Cancer Care, The English-Speaking Church, and the Honduras Flood Appeal.

This success depended upon the very hard work of a small group of members of the international community here in Andorra. Thanks are expressed on behalf of all the stall holders and their helpers and to all who helped to make this year's Fair a success.

The next Christmas Fair will probably be held on Sunday 28 November 1999.

*With our heartfelt thanks, on behalf of
the English-Speaking Church of Andorra
Sarah Dawtrey-Lovatt*

OLD FURNITURE

Should any members have old hardwood furniture (oak, mahogany, rosewood, etc.) that is beyond repair, or odd pieces such as panels, I may be able to use them for my antique repair service. For any pieces that are suitable, I will make a donation to the local charity of your choice. Call Ian Sharp at Cristòfol on 332042.

Yours sincerely, Ian Sharp



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A FINE OLD TIME

Many years ago, when I was at school, I started writing to a girl in the States. We have continued our correspondence ever since, although now we only exchange letters at Christmas. We have never met, but we spoke once on the phone. When Siaron was a toddler, my pen-friend was passing through Heathrow on her way back home. I was going to give her a surprise and meet her, but unfortunately our daughter Siaron developed German Measles, and I had to stop at home. It must be at least fifty years since we first started writing to each other. This year, she enclosed the following letter, which her 83-year-old mother had written to her local newspaper. I thought that it might strike a chord with those of us who are advancing in years!

Yours sincerely, Sheila Hooper

"My Dear Family,

I have become 83 years old since you last saw me and a few changes have come into my life since then. Frankly, I have become quite a frivolous old gal. I'm seeing six gentlemen every day!

As soon as I wake up, Will Power helps me get out of bed. When he leaves, I go see John. I know then that I must see Phillip Magnesia; he is always there, so strong, yet so mild and gentle; never gripes like the rest. It is such a relief to have him. Soon, Charley Horse comes along. When he is there, he takes a lot of my time and energy. When he leaves, Arthur Ritis shows up and stays the rest of the day. He does not like to stay in one place very long, so he takes me from joint to joint. After such a busy day, I am really tired and ready to go to bed with Ben Gay. What a life! But I am never lonesome.

Old folks are certainly worth a fortune, with silver in their hair, gold in their teeth, stones in their kidneys, lead in their feet and gas in their stomachs.

Love, Mum"

P.S. The preacher came to call the other day. He said that at my age, I should be thinking about the hereafter. I told him that I do - all the time. No matter where I am - in the parlour, upstairs, in the kitchen or down in the basement, I ask myself, 'Now, what am I here after?'

SOMETHING ROTTEN?

Members of the International Club might be living in Andorra for hundreds of reasons, but, quoting Shakespeare that "Something is Rotten in Denmark", I will tell you just one of the reasons why Henrik and I are living here: Denmark has a population of five million people. Of these,

- ◊ 0.5 million are pensioners, i.e. more than 67 years of age - that leaves 3.5 million people;
- ◊ 1.5 million people are under age, i.e. less than 21 years of age - that leaves 2 million people;
- ◊ 1 million people are employed by the State - that leaves one million people;
- ◊ 500,000 people are employed by the Communes - that leaves 500,000 people;
- ◊ 300,000 people are unemployed - that leaves 200,000 people;
- ◊ 100,000 people are on holiday - that leaves 100,000 people;
- ◊ 40,000 people are in hospital - that leaves 60,000 people;
- ◊ 50,000 people are either drug addicts or alcoholics - that leaves 10,000 people;
- ◊ 9,998 people are in prison, which left only two people in the State of Denmark - Henrik and me - to keep the whole of Denmark going!

Yours sincerely, Solveig Feilberg

APPRECIATION

Dear Mr Hooper

Thank you very much for your circular letter of 20 January. I feel very sorry and very guilty for not being able to offer assistance with the various activities of the C.I.A.

Unfortunately, I am having many health problems and am not very ambulant awaiting a second knee operation, and without transport. I could, however, help with the folding and putting into envelopes of the Newsletter were they delivered to me.

I have not been able to attend any of the activities, but I have enjoyed reading about them.

I should like to express my appreciation and gratitude to all the committee members and helpers who have worked so hard and done so much to give interest and pleasure to the Club members.

Yours, Marion Brunner

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 ACTIVITIES GROUP

You will have received mailing concerning the Activities during the months of March, April, May, June and July 1999. In August, **Ann Price** is taking a break from "organising". Would any member like to volunteer to arrange something during August?

SEPTEMBER

In September, there is a dinner with speaker, **Hassan Shaida**.

OCTOBER

In October, a Spanish cookery course with the famous cookery writer, Janet Mendel. Many members will know her from *Lookout Magazine* and her much-praised book on cooking in Spain. The course is held in Mijas in Andalusia. The four-day course costs 75,000 pts which includes instruction, accommodation, meals, wine, excursions and tastings – but NOT transport to and from Andorra.

NOVEMBER

Red Sea diving – details sent in the last mailing.

DECEMBER

As in previous years, there will be the Annual CIA Christmas Shopping Trip to Barcelona. **Ann Price**

THE INTERNATIONAL SINGERS

This year Christmas was even more hectic than usual with four concerts culminating in the one at Montserrat, a truly memorable, if nerve-wracking, experience. At the end we were allowed to sit in the monks' seats behind the altar while the monastery's famous boys' choir sang not ten feet away. Wonderful!

Our audiences here in Andorra were also wonderful. They raised a record 142,926 pts for charity. (During the last three years we've raised over 400,000 pts.)

After seven years as our devoted conductor, **Sheila Hooper** is retiring (see page 7). In her stead, **Barbara Melin** has valiantly agreed to become our permanent director. We very much look forward to a future full of serious hard work along with lots of fun.

The next date for your diaries is towards the end of May when we hope to celebrate the tenth anniversary of our first public performance with a dinner/concert. Please come and support us. Once again we will be singing with men. But we need more. There must be male singers in the club – and sopranos too. You haven't sung since the school or church choir? Don't worry! Most of us were the same. Come along and give us a try. We need you. Ring **Clare Allcard** 836269 or M^{rs} **Teresa Raurell** 836123.

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A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE CHOIR'S FIRST TEN YEARS

We first met in Joyce and Geoff Turner's flat on 16th January, 1989. The original 12 members: **Jean Axten**, **Clare Allcard**, **Wendy and Maurice Holmes**, **Hans Kiaer**, **Jeanne Lodge**, **Brenda Ross**, **André Slatter**, **Mike Stone**, **Joyce and Geoff Turner** and **Barry Wilson** held our first rehearsal at the Holmes' house with **Wendy** at the piano and **André Slatter** conducting. We rehearsed for one hour once a fortnight. A month later **René de Knight**, the excellent jazz pianist, joined us as musical director. By March he had us practising for two hours once a week and we had 18 members of six nationalities.

As it was illegal for more than 19 foreigners to meet together without permission we put ourselves under the protection of the Club Internacional d'Andorra. The Board and members have stood by us magnificently ever since, not only paying for our photocopying and subsidising our new piano but enabling us to give our first concert on 24th May, 1989 at the Anyos Sports Centre. Many more followed.

However, the concert that stands out most in the memory was actually the most disastrous. Held at the Xalet Ritz on 10th November 1991, we had one very 'merry' member of the audience who danced throughout and, on stage, we weren't helped by a crazy tenor who decided to sing soprano! The post-mortem meeting was none too harmonious either. **René**, who had written such fabulous arrangements for us and who had worked so hard trying to make us at least vaguely professional, was fed up to the back teeth and, in effect, resigned, along with several others.

It was **Sheila Hooper** and **Jean Axten** who came to the rescue. **Sheila** would conduct and **Jean** play the piano. Our first Festival of International

Christmas Music, only one month away, would go on. We had just ten singers.

A HANDFUL OF MEMBERS

In 1992, several of our best singers left Andorra for good. Ever helpful **Ken Law** became our part-time pianist. There followed 18 months of hibernation with only a handful of members meeting each week. Then, towards the end of 1993, our much-loved pianist **Binnie Segal** was lured into our midst.

Membership increased. Our 1993 Christmas concert was a success. **Stella Madden** and **Marilyn Dunns** offered to organise refreshments for the next one. The International Club agreed to foot the bill. The Festival had become an annual event.

TRULY INTERNATIONAL

In 1994, M^{rs} **Teresa Raurell** became our first Catalan-speaking singer. She has been composing elegant Catalan translations for us ever since. In 1995, we sang at M^{rs} **Rosa Gresa** and **Desmond Allen's** wedding - and captured another performer, **Gisele Pereira**, for the choir. That year we also recruited our Japanese who have been so loyal, hard working and above all, tuneful ever since. For our 1995 Christmas concerts we had 23 singers of 11 nationalities.

A short time before Christmas 1997 we faced another crisis. **Joe Segal** needed post-operative care from **Binnie** and we needed a pianist. Our prayers were answered by **Barbara Melin**. Her enthusiasm, energy, musical experience and knowledge have proved invaluable over the past 12 months, 12 challenging months which have seen great changes in the choir.

Today, we have almost as many Catalan as English-speakers. For the first time in four years we had a fair number of men for our Christmas concert. We have outgrown sitting rooms and now practice in a theatre and a church thanks to the Comú d'Andorra la Vella and

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Mossens Blai and Josep Maria.

In one hectic 24 hours last summer, we sang at the International Day of Music concert on a Saturday night. At 10 am the next morning we gave our first live television performance. Then at 5pm were invited to sing at the Sanctuary at Mertixell for the golden wedding anniversary celebrations.

The majority of our members now live in Andorra twelve months in the year. For the first time we have become a 12-month-in-the-year choir. Which has lead to further changes.

A FOND FAREWELL

After 10 years as a choir member, seven of them as conductor, **Sheila Hooper** has decided that, no longer able to give our increasingly active choir the 12-months-a-year commitment it requires, she will retire as our conductor.

We shall miss her enormously; her cheerfulness, her tolerance, her guts and her mischievous, twinkling eyes. We shall never forget her remarkable devotion to the choir when, one month before Christmas, she was told she had to have a cancer operation.

"Oh no," she said. "I can't. Not now. I've got two concerts to conduct!"

Dear Sheila, we salute you and thank you for your years of loyalty to us and we wish you great happiness in your retirement. (We also very much hope you'll come back and sing with us when you've time.)

As a memento of Sheila's years as conductor, **Hassan Shaida** beautifully engraved a pair of glass goblets: one bearing the daffodil of Wales and the other the narcissus of Andorra.

Clare Allcard

SCOTTISH DANCING

We've several new members this year who have added greatly to our enjoyment. Our old teacher, **John Gill**, came back one Sunday bringing with him some new versions of old dances and also an excellent system of diagrams for remembering how to do them. (We just have to find the time to produce our own!) We still meet every Sunday afternoon at 4.30pm in the La Massana church hall or the smaller room next door and have decided that, after almost a decade, we should up our weekly contribution to Mossèn Joan's fund to 200pts each per session. Anyone interested in joining us, do please just turn up, we'll make you most welcome or, if you want further information then ring **Brenda Ross** 836886 or **Clare Allcard** 836269.

Clare Allcard

THE PATCHWORK GROUP

The Patchwork Group started last September and we have been meeting regularly every Monday. It is amazing how this hobby can soon become an obsession. We have had three complete beginners who are now well on their way to finishing their first quilts.

In December, we were invited to join the ladies in the Escaldes Patchwork Group, we were given a very warm welcome and thoroughly enjoyed our evening together. especially as their work inspired us to make many new projects. They have since been to our meeting and we are going to make a quilt together to be raffled for charity. We were also invited to contribute to their Exhibition held in the summer.

We are expecting more people to join our group this year, as I have had many enquiries from



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interested ladies. Numbers are limited, so if you want to join us, please give me a ring on 836060.

Gill Furnston

CHARITY BOOKS, 1998

It was a very good year for book sales. The amount collected was 28,000 pts, which has been shared equally between HELPLINE, APAPMA and ADN. A record is kept of Monies collected, with signatures of the purchasers, and the charity receipts are filed. These records are available to the CIA Treasurer for auditing.

There was a donation of a large bookcase from Mrs. Yeoman, which proved to be very useful. I am now able to display shelves of non-fiction books, including two shelves of autobiographies, which previously were mixed with non-fiction in a cupboard.

There were thirty-two visitors to buy books during 1998, some of whom are quite regular visitors throughout the year.

It was suggested on one or two occasions that I should pay for the books brought to me, especially new books, and I had to remind the individuals that all books are **donated for charity**. Occasionally, books are donated which are too old for re-circulation and they are disposed of. I check every book that comes in - if it is very old and the pages are brown or if the spine cracks when bent, then it is not considered to be suitable for sale. When buying, the books are available at only 100 Pts each.

Fiction Paperbacks in **good condition** are always welcome. I cannot take Fiction hardbacks however because they occupy too much shelf-space. Non-fiction tends to be hardback, and I have some space for these, **BUT** they must be reasonably new otherwise little interest is shown in them.

La Massana Bibliotech sometimes gets

donations of English books. If there are more than they can accommodate, I am telephoned as to whether I would like any of the paperbacks. Conversely I take hardbacks which I cannot keep to the Bibliotech. If you have hardbacks in good condition, preferably with their shiny paper jackets, many of the Bibliotechs would welcome them.

If you wish to buy/donate books, please telephone me first on 837681. Keep the books coming! They serve a very useful purpose in re-distributing good reading matter, as well as generating funds for deserving charities.

Finally, thanks to all donors and purchasers, and here's wishing everybody a Happy Easter.

Stella Madden

THE COFFEE MORNINGS

Up 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. **M.S.**

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THE COMPUTER CLUB

The Club holds regular meetings every other Thursday at 11:00 a.m. but the date and place of the meeting changes from time to time. Contact **Stanley Jones** on 836972 or **Gil Lamb** on 835258 to find out where and when the next one will occur.

Various computing problems are discussed and remedies suggested by **Brian Keep** and **Peter Jennings**. Brian has written a leaflet on the way to configure a computer to access the net, and many photocopies have been distributed. In addition, there is a wealth of knowledge which only a group of users can share.

There are forty-six members who are active on the Internet, and there is a slow growth in this number. The rapid growth in the net has now reached the point where Christmas cards were being sent between members with pictures and music.

The club now has a list of about 70 members interested in using computers. One of the pleasant things to happen is that when members move away they often give us their e-mail address, and sometimes choose to receive the International Club Newsletter by E-mail.

If this interests you, please contact **Brian Dore** on 835931 or E-mail at bdore@andorra.ad. STA provides an up-to-date telephone guide at <http://www.laguia.andorra.ad>.

The year 2000 bug keeps reappearing in our discussions, as new aspects emerge in the various media.

Stanley Jones

HELPLINE

Earlier this year, Helpline was able to help one of our members from la Massana, who fell ill in January. During her illness,

Helpline volunteers cooked meals for her, visited her and did her shopping. We should like to thank our volunteers for doing such a splendid job. For so many of us, living here without close family nearby, it is wonderful to know that through Helpline, we have our own extended family – consisting of kind and helpful volunteers.

Helpline has a selection of frozen, prepared meals ready to use during illness, when members are unable to cook for themselves. At modest prices, these dishes are sufficient for two meals for a "normal" appetite. Call **Betty Pilkington** 837606, **Lilias Grassie** 838349, or **Veronika Baines** 838142 for a menu and the organisation.

The Saint Lucia Christmas Market saw the sale of the 500th copy of the Helpline Cookery Book – the lucky buyer was club member, **Jill Furnstone**! Congratulations, Jill!

Some of you will remember **Mike Thompson** who, in April last year, was receiving treatment in Andorra for a serious illness. He eventually returned to England to be with his parents and family.

Together with the funds raised by ski instructors and young people working in Arinsal, the Hotel Micolau team and your contributions, Helpline was able to assist in repatriating Mike. The Red Cross of Andorra gave an ambulance and escort from Arinsal to Barcelona, and arranged for the Red Cross in England to meet the plane, and transfer Mike to his destination.

Previously Helpline has passed on to you Mike's appreciation, but perhaps it is best to quote from a letter he has now sent to the Hotel Micolau:


"Dear Friends,

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Club, without whom I would never have got back.

- *All the instructors and workers from Arinsal for their Charity Football Match.*
- *And you all at the Micolau.*

X X X Mike"

THE 116 EMERGENCY NUMBER

May we also remind you of the efficient emergency service, number 116. However, we **MUST STRESS** that this number is **FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY**, and should **NOT** be called if you are suffering simply from a common cold, coughs and other such minor complaints. While the doctors are dealing with you, others may need them for heart attacks and other life-threatening illness.

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EASTER IN DENMARK

Easter is an ancient spring festival with its roots deep in the distant past. Here, Karin Ostergaard tells us about some of the beautiful Easter traditions in Denmark

Easter always falls on a Sunday in one of the early months of spring. Therefore, it is no wonder that those old heathen fertility rituals and sun worship has influenced us in the way we celebrate Easter. Spring and fertility are connected and the egg has always been a symbol of these and of life itself.

One thing, which is strongly emphasised in the Danish Easter tradition, is the Easter Egg. In the early days, the hens produced fewer eggs in winter, because fodder was sparse, so that when the first spring eggs appeared, they were considered to be the best. They very best were the so-called "Hønikke" eggs. They were the eggs of young hens.

Easter Saturday was egg-eating day. In the olden days, the farmer would give eggs to his people on the farm. The men would receive ten eggs each, the women eight each, and the children

six eggs each. It was thought that the more eggs one could eat, the healthier one would be in the coming year.

Painting and decorating Easter Eggs is another old tradition. A simple way to colour eggs was to boil them in water with onion skins which gave the eggs a nice yellow colour. But hand-painted and decorated eggs have always been more popular, especially when everyone in the family participated and were able to show some creativity. These ranged from creative designs to children's drawings of a flower or an



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animal and so on.

Many games are also connected with the Easter Egg, such as the "Easter Egg Roll" where one rolled the egg down a small hill or a slanted board, trying to hit one of the eggs that had already rolled down. Whoever succeeded in hitting an egg would win it - and to win an egg in these games always meant good health for the winner.

Easter Sunday in many Danish homes is for children almost as exciting as Christmas. This is the day to show off all the new spring clothes. Everybody dresses up for Easter. It is also the day to present family and friends with Easter egg gifts, (mostly fancy chocolate eggs, these days). The breakfast table is always decorated the night before (by the "Easter Bunny"). The centrepiece is a big straw basket filled with coloured eggs and surrounded by tiny candy eggs strewn amongst small Easter figures such as rabbits, woolly lambs, yellow cotton chicks, etc. - a truly colourful display symbolising springtime. On each plate there is a basket filled with small chocolate eggs, candy eggs and a big chocolate Easter bunny (whose head will soon be devoured!)

The normal breakfast of hot rolls or other delicious wholesome food will on this day be somewhat overlooked in favour of the sweets! Besides, the lack of interest in anything but admiring (and maybe playing with) the Easter decorations, also seems to curb the appetite of most children. In the afternoon on Easter Sunday, the Easter Egg Hunt takes place, either outdoors, weather permitting, or indoors. The Easter bunny has already hidden all the colourful foil-wrapped chocolate eggs. The "start signal" is given, and the race to find the eggs starts. The one who finds the most eggs gets a prize, usually more chocolate eggs!

Sometimes, when there are many eggs hidden, not all the eggs are found - not until much later anyway. Perhaps on a sunny summer's day, the last egg or two may be finally discovered in its secret hiding place - much to the delight of the lucky finder. ☐



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Maite CASTRO
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Activities

The New British Honorary Consul Meets Members of the Club

A most convivial buffet luncheon was held last December when some fifty Club members of various nationalities gathered to meet the new Honorary British Consul, **Hugh Garner**. Everyone present was able to have a few words with Hugh, who later made a short speech. He touched upon his duties and looked at the humorous aspects of dealing with the Foreign Office and with British citizens abroad, especially those in a state of extreme penury. He said that he felt honoured to have been chosen, and that he intended to do everything possible to fulfil his duties. **Tony Hooper**, President of the Club, made a short speech of thanks, assuring Hugh that he hoped members of the Club would not be calling upon him in a penurious state!

Mulled wine and canapes were served, followed by an excellent buffet lunch including all types of Christmas Fayre. There was a fine selection of wines and the meal was followed by mince pies and coffee. All the members and their guests felt that the event had made an excellent opening to the Christmas season, and

were delighted to have had the chance to get to know – and, in many cases, to renew their acquaintance with – the new Honorary British Consul.

We wish him well in his new career – and despite his charm, hope we shan't need to call on him too often – at least not in distress! ☐



A large group of well-wishers gathered in the Hotel just before Christmas to meet the new British Honorary Consul, Hugh Garner

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Activities

THE CHRISTMAS SHOPPING TRIP

Mince pies, pork sausages, shortbread, Christmas puddings, brandy butter and crackers were just some of the items found in the vast number of shopping bags packed away in the "cargo hold" of the bus by the ever-pleasant and efficient driver, **Rafael**. The annual Christmas Shopping weekend in Barcelona was clearly a great success. In addition to the usual visits to museums, cathedrals and, of course, the shops, the participants were taken to a wonderful fish dinner down in the fish market in the harbour.

On Saturday evening, instead of the usual trip to the Tablao of Spanish flamenco dancing, the group went off to an Italian restaurant.

The highlight, of course, was the visit to Marks and Spencer in the shopping arcade situated in the same block as the Hotel L'illa – what could be more convenient? But Marks wasn't the only shop to be visited on that busy Monday morning! When it was time to leave, it seemed impossible that all the shopping bags and cases could all be stowed away in the bus.

Another innovation on this trip was a visit to the co-operative at Guissona, on the way back to Andorra. More purchases of good value meat and vegetables – and a great bargain lunch – provided a satisfactory finish to a fantastic weekend. Many thanks, as always, to **Ann Price**.

THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY CLUB LUNCHEON

The luncheon held to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the founding of the International Club of Andorra was a complete sell-out. The event was held in the "club house" – the Paris-Londres Hotel in Escaldes-Engordany last January. The guest of honour was **Ingrid Millar**, one of the founding members and the first Treasurer. **Tony Hooper**, the present Chairman and President presented her with a bouquet of flowers. A fine meal of many courses was put on by the hotel and served by its ever-courteous waiters.

Tony Hooper's speech of welcome was brief. He felt there was no need to repeat the story of the history of the club that he had already

recorded in the December issue of this magazine.

He said that all those founding members, still resident in Andorra had been invited to participate in the luncheon. Unfortunately, ill health and absence meant that Ingrid was the only one able to attend. Tony went on to welcome members of the press who were present at the lunch, and also raised his glass in appreciation of the fine service we always receive from the Paris-Londres Hotel.

Finally, **Maite Castro** stood up and raised her glass in appreciation of all the efforts made by the Chairman and members of the Board to provide such a splendid club for its members.

Margaret Shaida



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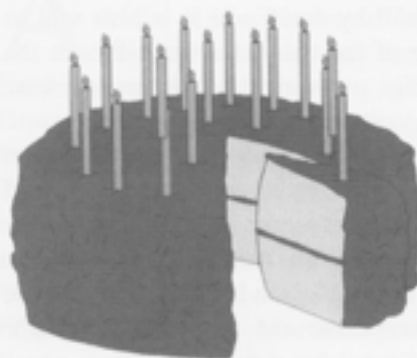
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WHY NOT MAKE AN EASTER CAKE THIS YEAR?

Joan Spiller sent us this excellent recipe. It's wonderful fun to make, and will make an interesting appearance on your Easter table!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup of butter
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1 cup of brown sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup of dried fruit
- Lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 or 2 bottles of brandy
- 1 teaspoon of baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda



METHOD

1. Before beginning, sample the brandy to check for quality.
2. Select a large mixing bowl, measuring cup and wooden spoon.
3. Check the brandy again, as it must be just the right quality. To be sure it *is* of the highest quality, pour one level cup into a cup and drink it quite quickly.
4. Repeat the exercise.
5. With an electric mixer, beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl. Add one teaspoon of shugar and beat again. Meanwhile, make sure the brandy is indeed of the highest quality – savour it well. Cry another tup.
6. Open the second bottle if necessary. Add two large eggs, two cups of fried fruit and beat until high. If the dried fruit gets buck in the steaters, just pry it loose with a drewscriver. Sample the brandy again, checking for tonasticity. Next sift three cups of salt or anything – what does it matter?
7. Sample the brandy.
8. Chop half a pint of lemon juice into the butter and stained nuts. Do something with the eggs and add one babblespoon of brown shugar. Mix well. Grease the oven and turn the cake tin to 360 degrees. Burn into the oven and take.
9. Check the brandy.

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ENCAMP'S FUNICULAR "FUNICAMP"

Anyone who has driven up the main road to France, will have seen Funicamp, the cable car just beyond Encamp that goes up to the mountains. Here, Clare Allcard tells us all about it

Yes, it's arrived, Europe's longest cable car. Built by Austrians, it is also said to be one of the two safest such lifts in the world as it hangs on two cables rather than one, offering much greater stability in high winds.

This really is a terrific experience and an ideal outing for visitors - provided they don't suffer from vertigo. However, there are still a few snags to the system. While they wait for a purpose built car park, Encamp comú have designated three 'Funicamp' car parks: one opposite the Motor Museum, one next to the black glass comú building and one right on the hairpin bend above town and a few hundred metres below the Funicamp itself. The first two cost 10pts an hour and are supposed to be served by a free bus every 15 minutes. Not in my experience. There are none at all between 1.30 and 3pm and they come perhaps every 25 minutes at other times.

Once at the Funicamp you have a choice of tariffs. If you are one of our lucky members with an All-Andorra or a Pas de la Casa-Grau Roig season ticket you travel free. If not, but you plan to ski once you get to the top, then you can buy a Pas de la Casa day ski pass and pay 400pts extra for the ride. Alternatively, you can buy a straightforward 'tourist' ticket at 1,000pts and just go up for the view.

Each car can hold 24 people but it is much more fun with only six or eight. There are excellent fixtures on which to hang skis and poles, and the

all-round view is stunning. As they enter the station the cars slow to a crawl but never stop; the great metal clamps, which attach them to the moving wire, lift off and the car is passed along by a series of rubber wheels. As the doors open you step in and make yourself at home. Passing an infrared 'eye', the doors automatically close. Suddenly the car swirls into action, a bit like a fair ride. This sudden acceleration is to allow the car to catch up with the constantly moving cables. As you hurtle out of the station the great clamps reattach themselves and you're off.

The cable car goes straight as an arrow up the El Cortals valley, one of Andorra's best preserved. In summer one should be able to get off at the El Cortals station to enjoy a walk or take part in the many summer activities that the comú have on offer.

The journey of 6.137 kms took us about 20 minutes although the brochure claims the cars travel at 7.2 metres a second.

Once at the top, step out of the station and on to a flat bit of piste. Just ahead is a knoll. Climb the knoll and, provided you've chosen a beautiful day, prepare to be overwhelmed. From here you have a 360° panorama of white-capped mountains. Take a picnic and you could stay up there for hours (though I didn't notice any loos). Next year there should be a restaurant at the top but, till then, why not enjoy one of the most spectacular views in Andorra. □

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HERE AND THERE

The Andorran media showed keen interest in the Club's 10th anniversary. The highlight was fifteen minutes on the TV chat-show *En Directe* on Monday, 18 January, with Maria Teresa Raurell, Maite Castro and Caroline Colvin-Smith answering a great many questions about the celebration on the preceding Wednesday and the Club in general. The programme was repeated later the same day. The 3 p.m. news report on Wednesday, 20 January also devoted five minutes to us, with some excellent footage of the carol services, with Maria Teresa being interviewed about the Singers and the early days of the Club.

The Press, who had already given us good pre-celebration publicity, came to the lunch and enjoyed themselves immensely, chatting to members. Their reports appeared in *Diari d'Andorra* and *El Periodic* on 21 January 1999. The report in *Informacions* appeared the next day.

The Radio stations were also busy on our behalf, giving information about the anniversary in several of their "what's on" type bulletins during the days leading up to it.

This media response is very gratifying, especially considering all the other newsworthy activities in Andorra at the moment.

From Caroline Colvin-Smith

The Christmas Bazaar may seem a long time ago now, especially with spring just around the corner. But since this is the first issue to appear since the Christmas Bazaar was held last December, I felt I should like to congratulate **Sarah Dawtrey** who does such a splendid job organising it each year. Lots of people do lots of work creating works of art, making handicrafts, jams and cakes, collecting books, jumble and gifts, setting out the stalls, and standing for hours on end "manning" their stands. Lots more people go along to support the good causes and to meet, chat and catch up with old friends. For me, it is the first major social event of Christmas each year. The work put in by the individual organisers is great, but the overall organisation is immense. So I should like to extend my belated thanks to Sarah. Perhaps now is the time for us all to be thinking of

what we can start to prepare for next year's Christmas Bazaar!

From the Editor

A number of our members were represented at the 14th Mostra d'Art d'Andorra, which was held in the Government Exhibitions Hall last February. The C.I.A. Art Group created a 'group painting', entitled "El Poble dels Meus Somnis" which was on display. The Art Group was also represented with several other paintings by members of the Group, including a large and very beautiful one entitled "1492" created by the Group leader, **Nina O'Brien**. **Josefina Martinez** had produced a lovely "tufted" tapestry entitled "Riviera Ligure", while **Hassan Shaida** exhibited one of his glass engravings, entitled "El bany de l'harem".

My letter concerning uninsured overland shipments, which appeared in the last issue of *Intercomm*, resulted in a huge and sympathetic response from fellow members. Not all their sad experiences, of course, concerned the company mentioned. It all boils down to the fact that expatriate non-working residents, especially the elderly and single women, are fair game. It has been suggested that the Club should form a Consumers Group. If interested, please contact the Club Secretary for the proposal to be tabled at the next AGM.

From Hassan Shaida



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Restaurant Review

MOLI DELS FANALS

This month, our restaurant review is about an establishment set in the heart of Andorra la Vella.

CIA Board member, Maria Teresa Raurell, tells us all about it.

I want to tell you which is my favourite restaurant in Andorra. Without any doubt, it is **Moli Dels Fanals**, which is situated at c. Dr. Vilanova, Borda Casadet (in front of the old bullring), in Andorra la Vella. There is a private car park for clients (which you should request to be opened), but usually it is easy to find a place nearby, especially if you are early.

The Moli is a family business. The owner welcomes clients at the bar and leads them to their places. His wife, Dolors, is the chef. The kitchen is her kingdom! The dining room is their children's responsibility, with the help of a few waiters.

From Tuesday to Friday, they offer a well-composed three course *Menu of the Day*, with a variety of choices for 1,500 pts, including wine and dessert, though not coffee.

If one prefers to eat a la carte. The Moli has a large selection, specially of Catalan country cuisine, all tasty, copious and at reasonable prices. The menu is written in Catalan, Spanish, French and English. And Dolors very often offers some pleasant surprises. It is worth asking about them.

My favourite dishes include White Beans with Clams (950 pts) and Cannelloni (four for 800 pts). I also like the Goat's cheese salad (1,100 pts). The Meatballs with Squid (1,350 pts) are delicious, as are the Trotters with Mushrooms (1,300 pts). If you like fish, I can also recommend the "Suquet" of Monkfish (2,100 pts) and the

Dorada baked in Salt (from 900pts). There is also a large range of grilled meats from Chicken (900 pts) to Sirloin Steak (1,750 pts).

Moli specialises particularly in desserts. All the cakes and sweets are home-made and are really tempting. My favourite is the Chocolate Cake, but there are also some fruits of the season and fruit salad.

They have several good Catalan and Spanish wine to suggest to you.

I would suggest that if you decide to go to Moli dels Fanals, you reserve your table before you set out. Call 821381.

The restaurant is closed every Sunday evening and all day Mondays.

Now, it is time for me to stop. Joan is waiting for me. We are going out to lunch - at **Moli dels Fanals**, of course! ☐



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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

- 3 March: Cineclub at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal
- 5 March: Theatre Season at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal
- 10 March: Cineclub at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal
- 17 March: Theatre Season for children in Teatre Comunal
- 20 March: Cineclub at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal
- 2 April: Theatre Season at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal
- 4-5 April: Easter – "Caramelles" (Easter songs) will be sung in the morning in the streets and in front of the church
- 7 April: Cineclub at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal
- 14 April: Cineclub at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal
- 15 April: Season of Music and Dance by Ballet of St. Petersburg with soloists of the Kirov Ballet and the famous Julia Makhalina, at 22.00 in Sala d'Actes
- 17 April: Theatre Season for Children in Teatre Comunal
- 21 April: Cineclub at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal
- 23 April: St. George's Day "The Day of the Book and the Rose at Plaça del Poble.
- 5 May: Cineclub at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal
- 7 May: Theatre Season in Teatre Comunal
- 12 May: Cineclub at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal
- 15 May: Theatre Season for Children in Teatre Comunal
- 19 May: Cineclub at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal
- 27 May:
- 2 June: Cineclub at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal
- 4 June: Theatre Season at 22.00 in Teatre Comunal

CANILLO

- First "Cicle de Cinema e Montanya" (several activities about cinema with mountains as the main subject matter):
- 4 March: The film "Thalai Sagar 6.909, the mountain of the lake" (56m) and "Gavcarne diálogos con el hielo" (20m) both by Oscar Cadiach.

- 6-7 March: A unique competition in the world – 200 cyclists compete over more than 110 km/h of snow and ice. VI International San Miguel Snowbike Competition.
- 6-7 March: Training for Monitors in AINA. For more information, tel: 851434.
- 11 March: 21.30 in Palau de Gel "Esperit Projecte" (35m) and a lecture by its author Carles Vallès (in Catalan)
- 18 March: 21.30 in the Auditori Nacional of Ordino "From 8 till 8,000 meters" (60m with comments by the author Ferran Latorre (in Catalan)
- 25 March: 15.15 in Palau de Gel and
- 26 March: 15.15 in the Auditori Nacional of Ordino "l'Ombra del Kilimanjaro". Both will be open to all the educational facilities of Andorra. To be followed by a colloquy with Sr. Jordi Pons, Sr. Conrad Blanch and Sr. Pere Frases. Author Sr. Jordi Pons (in Catalan)
- 27-28 March: III San Miguel Snowsurf Competition – Mega Snowboard Concentration. Maxi boardcross. Big Jump. Entertainments and competition. With top international and professional snowboarders. (More than 500 took part in 1998). For more information, tel: 890500.
- 13-14 March: "Dia del Patinador" (Skater's Day in Palau de Gel, organised by Club Gel) For more information, tel: 800840.
- 13-14 March: Catalan Skating League Competition. Organised by Club Gel. For more information, tel: 800640.
- 21 March: International Judo Competition for Children
- ? Interclub Judo in Andorra
- ? Judo Competition in Foix, France
- ? Diada de l'Amic (Friends' Day) in Canillo
- 23 April: St. George's Day – Schoolchildren wearing traditional dresses will sell books and roses in the streets of Canillo.

ENCAMP

During the months of March, April and May, there will be several exhibitions and other activities in the Casal del Poble.

23 January to 23 March: Second round of the Paroquial "Indoor Football" competition

7 March: Marathon of Aerobic "Women's Day"

? March: Table Tennis Tournament opens.

5 April: Easter celebration of St. Romà de les Bons

23 April: St. George's Day

24 April: International Meeting of Swimming

1 May: Celebration of St. Felip and St. Jaume dels Corals

8 May: "Blacktop" of Basketball

23 May: Celebration of St. Romà de Vila Estremera

During the months of March, April and May, there will be several exhibitions and other activities in the Casal del Poble.

ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

During the months of March, April and May there will be several exhibitions in the Exhibition Hall of Comu Cultural Centre.

April: Easter activities for children in the Ludoteca of the Centre Social i Recreatiu from 5 p.m. Children from 6-14 years old.

8 May: Sant Miquel d'Engolasters' Day. Organised by Unió Pro-Turisme d'Escaldes-Engordany.

Free Bus Service from Plaça Santa Anna to Miquel d'Engolasters 9.30 to 14.00

11.00-14.00: Craftsmanship market in front of St. Miquel d'Engolasters Church

12.00: Sardanes by Cobla Jovenívola d'Agramunt

12.50: Presentation of the Pubilla, Pubilleta and Padrina elected in 1998.

12.50: Traditional offering of flowers to St. Miquel in the Llar de Jubilats

13.00: Mass and Blessing in St. Miquel d'Engolasters

13.30: Traditional Dances by Esbart Santa Anna

13.45: Coca and Moscatell

16.00 Shooting Competition at the Shooting Gallery of Engolasters (only for local people). Inscription at the same place.

17.00: Afternoon Ball for retired people in the large tent of Prat del Roure with Orquestra Pennsylvania

18.00: Fast Chess Game Competition in the Comu, organised by G.E.V.A.

18.00: Show by the Dandy Clowns Group for Children in the Comu Hall

19.00: Traditional Football match between the present and former members of the U.P.T.E.E. Board

21.00 Sardanes at Plaça Co-Prínceps by Cobla Jovenívola d'Agramunt

9 May: 15.00: "Pétanca" competition at Parking del Parnal. Inscription at the same place..

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Later, Prize Giving

In case of bad weather, the U.P.T.E.E. may change the programme.

Every Saturday, there are markets at Plaça Santa Anna and at St. Pere Martir's Church square.

LA MASSANA

- 19 March: 22.00: Concert by the Petits Cantors d'Andorra in the Parish Church
- 16 March - 25 April: Exhibitions, important collaborations and other activities in Poliestportiu of l'Aldosa "La Massana-Comic"
- 23 April: St. George's Day celebration in Comunal Library. Theater in La Closeta's Hall
- 4 May: Feast of the Tree
- 14-16 May: Andoflora '99 - VI Fair-Market of flowers and plants
- 30 May: X Fast Painting Competition
- ? June: Traditional Dances by Esbart els Esquirols
- 1-15 June: Exhibition of the X Fast Painting Competition

ORDINO

- ? IV Tenpin Bowling, Spring Championship in Centre Esportiu d'Ordino (triplets" modality). IV Trophy Banc Agricol i Commercial d'Andorra
- 7 and 21 March: 19.00 Auditori Nacional: "Concerts Familiars". These concerts, organised by Fundacio Caixa Bank (like those held on 7 and 28 February) are to introduce children and their parents to the world of music.
- 18 March: 20.30 Auditori Nacional: Concert, organised by Fundacio Caixa Bank, by The Sixteen Orquestra of Harmony and Innovation with singers and soloists: St. Matthew Passion by J.S. Bach
- 24 March: 21.30 Auditori Nacional: Concert by the Portuguese Group Madreus. (This group has been chosen to inaugurate the new Auditori Nacional de Catalunya of Barcelona this month.
- 8 April: 21.30: Concert by Bebo Valdes and Eladio Reinon Latin Jazz Octet (music inspired by typical Cuban musical styles, such as bolero, mambo, guaracha etc.)
- 8 May: 21.30 Auditori Nacional: Concert: First half, Orquestra of Porto (Portugal); Second half the Petits Cantors conducted by Catherine

Metayer, singing the Kleine Orgelmesse (or Missa St St. Joan de Déu) by J. Haydn with the Orchesta of Porto.

SANT JULIA DE LORIA

- 13 March: 22.00 in Auditori Claror of the Centre Cultural i de Congressos Lauredia, Festival of traditional dances by Esbart Lauredia.
- 19 March: 22.00 in Auditori Claror: XIV Theater Season
- 20 March: 2-.00 in Auditori Claror: First course of "Lectures dramatitzades" - the renowned actor and director Sergei Belbel will read his own play "La Sang" ("Blood")
- 17 April: Evening show in Auditori Claror: Concert by La Cia es Grata
- 23 April: 22.00 in Auditori Claror: XIV Theater Season
- During the month of May there will be several shows for children and other activities to celebrate the Feast of Canolich, the Patron Saint of St.Julià, organised by Informació i Turisme Lauredia
- 14-16 May: "Historia i Llegendes d'Andorra Medieval" (an interesting show about Andorran History and Legends in mediaeval times) in Auditori Claror
- 17 May: 20.00 in Auditori Claror: "Lectures dramatitzades" (The actor Pep Miràs will read the play by August Strindberg "La Senyorete Júlia")
- 19 May: 22.00 in Auditori Claror: XIV Theater Season
- 22 May: 22.00 Auditori Claror: Concert by all the choirs of Sant Julià
- 30-31 May: Auditori Claror: International Singing Competition "Montserrat Caballe" (This will go on till 6 June)
- 7-9 June: in Auditori Claror Master Classes by Montserrat Caballé. □

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Fiction

A FANTASTIC TALE OF MANY MIRACLES

Alan Weatherbe sent us this entrancing story, which he described as "a fantasy for little girls (and little boys?) of all ages. It will be concluded in our summer issue.

The dark grey clouds engulfed the Pyrenees Mountains, and the heavy rain gave way to a fine mist which hung like a veil over the seven parishes of the principality of Andorra. In the deep narrow valleys of this stony land-locked country, fog patches shuttled from side to the other.

From a twelfth-century church, built of stone walls and a slate roof, a young girl ran into the courtyard as soon as the service was over. She stood to one side of the path, her head down, her right foot tracing circular patterns in the gravel. When the old priest came out of the church, ahead of his parishioners, the young girl did not look up at him. He stared at her for a few seconds, sighed, then forcing a smile, he spoke to her.

"Why do you have such a sad face, Elena?"

She muttered something and continued to study her circular designs in the gravel.

"Speak up, child."

Elena raised her head, shrugged her little shoulders and said:

"Tomorrow is my birthday and..."

"Congratulations! You should be happy."

"But... but... I want a bicycle and my father said it is too expensive."

"Your parents work very hard, but times are difficult, Elena. You know that."

"Yes, but last year I wanted a bicycle and I didn't get one."

"Well, my dear, you shall have to pray for a miracle," he said with a chuckle and a big smile on his kind face.

"I don't believe in miracles!" came the angry retort.

At that moment, a thin ray of sunshine sliced through the clouds and, for a few seconds, Elena was caught in its beam.

"Oh... you are lucky, my child. There is a story from Andorran folklore that when a ray of light shines on a person, an angel will slide down



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from Heaven to give help. Here is your miracle."

"I don't believe in miracles!"

The priest slowly shook his head and, with a pained expression on his weathered face, he turned his attention to his parishioners who were waiting to talk to him.

Elena, who was feeling sorry for herself, watched her parents as they talked with the priest, but when all three looked at her, she departed in haste. She ran rapidly through the narrow and uneven streets, tripping and stumbling until two of her friends caught up with her.

"What... happened... Elena?" asked Mercè, gasping for breath.

"Why is your father so angry with you?"
We only heard part of the conversation," said Ramon.

Elena stopped running. She also was almost exhausted. When she was able to talk, she felt quite uncomfortable as she said:

"I told Father Cantacreu that I don't believe in miracles."

"I think you will have a problem with your parents when you go home. Your father is very unhappy with you," said Ramon.

Ramon was correct. When Elena arrived at her house, her father quietly but firmly told her how annoyed he was at her childish behaviour.

"You may believe in miracles or not; that is not the point. I am disappointed because you insulted our old priest who was only trying to help you. Now, you have your supper and go to your room."

"But, Papa, tomorrow is my birthday and... and... tonight I want to watch my favourite television program - The Lady Airline Pilot."

"No. Go to your room."

"But... but... the program is educational... and..."

"NO!"

So it came to pass that petite Elena stormed into her bedroom in the attic, took her teddy bear from her bed and threw it into a corner. She slammed the window shut, locked the shutters, fell into her bed, and pulled the blankets over her head. Life was so cruel, she thought, she cried... and cried... and...

...Elena sat upright in her bed. Someone or something was in her bedroom! Beyond the foot of her bed, she saw flashes of light, thousands of them! Like fireflies, she thought. No... more like electrons! It was as if she were watching a television channel and the program had shut down. Now, there were millions and millions of electrons flashing on and off, hanging in the darkness of the room. Suddenly, as if by an unknown command, the electrons quickly formed the image of a woman who was quietly smiling at Elena.

"Are you afraid of me, Elena?" said the Electronic Lady.

"No, of course not!" Her little chin stuck out defiantly, but inwardly Elena was not so sure. However, the Electronic Lady did not look like a nice person. She had such a beautiful smile and she was so elegant, but she was old - a least thirty - thought Elena.

"So you are petite Elena who doesn't believe in miracles."

"I don't believe in miracles!" came the answer, as if it were a recording.

"Then if you are not afraid, come with me." The Electronic Lady held out a hand which Elena took. Both of them flew through the solid stone wall of the bedroom into the early morning air.

Elena looked back, her eyes as big as full moons. "It's impossible! It's really impossible! We flew through a stone wall!"

"Poor Elena, you have such little faith!"
Never let go my hand... never. With me you will

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The flew hand-in-hand above the slate roofs of the stone houses; they bombed around the spiralling smoke from the chimneys; they admired the numerous flowers brilliant with colour, the green grass on the slopes of the steep mountains and the sign of the blue-green waters of the Grand Valira river in its pulsating rush through Andorra la Vella. Elena was enjoying her freedom of flight. They arrived at the Square of the People and hovered several meters above the tiled terrace.

Almost immediately Elena recognised her school friends.

"Look, over there! I see Mercè, Ramon, Maria and Pere!"

"What do you think of your four friends, Elena?"

"Oh, they're always studying. They want to be teachers."

"Do you want to be a teacher?"

"No. Never. I want to be rich."

The Electronic Lady and Elena flew to a position in front of the four students.

"Listen! They're talking about me! Hi, folks!"

The young students continued walking and talking completely unaware of Elena's presence.

"You are witnessing the miracle of sight

and the miracle of sound," said the Electronic Lady. "You of the human ace, most unfortunately, take these miracles for granted."

"Hey, Ramon! Speak to me!" said Elena, but her friends did not even look up nor answer her.

Elena was puzzled. "Why don't they speak to me or see me?"

"Because you and I are on a different frequency, a different channel. We can see and hear your friends, but they cannot see or hear us."

(To be continued in our next issue

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