

INTER COMM

CLUB INTERNACIONAL D'ANDORRA



VOL. 12 - Núm. 2 - WINTER / HIVERN 2002

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2003**

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THEY DO NOT NECESSARILY EXPRESS THE VIEWS OF THE BOARD OF THE C.I.A.

Cover photo: The Nativity. Artist unknown - Arranged by Nina O'Brien.

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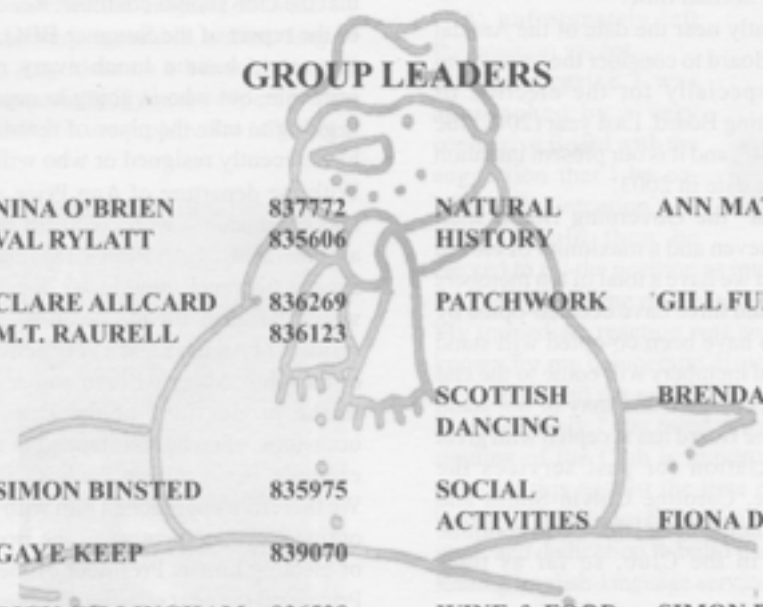
INTERCOMM

International Club of Andorra

Quarterly Magazine

WINTER 2002

GROUP LEADERS



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TENNIS	DICK GILLINGHAM	836528	WINE & FOOD	SIMON BINSTED	835975
HELPLINE	ANN, EDDIE NIELSEN	838482	(On call 24 hours)		

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MAGAZINE POLICY

It will be self-evident that both text, whether editorial matter or contributed articles, and advertising must be in conformity with the Statutes and Rules of the Club. The Statutes refer to "gatherings of a linguistic, cultural or leisure nature", and to exclusions from its objectives of "any class, political or social revindications". The "aim of promoting — friendship between the different nationalities" implies the necessity of avoiding controversy in certain areas, in particular religion and politics. Under Andorran law, Board Members are responsible for the content of the Magazine, so they must exercise a measure of discretion in what can be accepted both for contributed articles and for advertising. We are confident that all members will realise that the Editorial Board must reserve the right to edit, in the widest sense. This may in practical terms be minimal, provided contributors will bear this statement of policy in mind.

The club may not engage in commercial activity.

EDITORIAL FROM THE BOARD

Previous experience has shown us that the post in Andorra gets blocked around Christmas and that nothing gets delivered, especially bulk mail, some post offices even refusing to accept them. Well, we believe that with careful organisation and tight scheduling we are going to get the issues in normal time.

And we shall be sufficiently near the date of the Annual General Meeting for the Board to consider the timing and sequence of events, especially for the election of candidates for the Governing Board. Last year (2002) the AGM was held on April 24th, and it is our present intention to aim for about the same date in 2003.

Our statutes provide that "the Governing Board shall comprise a minimum of seven and a maximum of eleven members". At the moment we have a total of ten members whom seven are elected and three have been co-opted by the board. The three who have been co-opted will stand for election. Three elected members will come to the end of their four-year period of office and may or not stand for re-election. Recently the Board has accepted with great regret and with appreciation for past services the resignation of Ann Price, Caroline Colvin-Smith and Maria Teresa Raurell. We hope that all three will continue to play an active role in the Club, so far as their circumstances permit.

All club members will have received copies of the new Statutes and Rules, which were adopted at the Extraordinary General Meeting on October 30th. The minutes of the meeting have already been prepared and will be sent out shortly. Formal adoption of these minutes, and those of the agenda of the Annual General Meeting held in April 2002, will be on the agenda of the AGM to be held in 2003. We have thought it appropriate to prepare a separate informal article in this issue, drawing attention to some effects of the results of the EGM.

Contributions to Intercomm

We of the Magazine Sub-committee are always on the lookout for almost anything that can be of interest to members. Even if you have only a half-formed idea, get in touch with one of the Editors by telephone or at the Coffee Morning. Now and then we receive a mild complaint that Intercomm is too much this or that or the other. Well, the answer is obvious. Write something that isn't this or that or the other and we will (almost) promise to publish it.

There has been no slackening in the need for new contributions. Wherever possible, one or more photographs, postcards or drawings make for greater interest.

Contributions for the next issue to be left please in the Club letterbox at the Servissim Office in La Massana by 2nd February 2003, or handed in to one of us at a Coffee Morning.

This issue of Intercomm and the next one will be edited jointly by Sandra Reid and Peter Parkinson. After that Sandra Reid will be the sole Principal Editor, assisted by other members of the Magazine Sub-committee; Peter Parkinson will remain in this body, and David Perkin has joined it.

We would like all club members to read thoroughly and reflect on the open letter from Simon Binsted, particularly the last paragraph. The results of the questionnaire printed in our last issue of autumn 2002 show a clear demand that the club should continue. Read also the last sentence of the report of the Summer BBQ, —"there is a general request to have a lunch every month so—"Fine in principle, but who is going to organise them? And who is going to take the place of those Board Members who have recently resigned or who will resign soon?

With the departure of Ann Price we were faced with a major decision – who could fill this important position as President of Andorra's leading social group for all ages? After much thought, we decided that Simon Binsted would be ideal for the position. Simon is a long time resident of Andorra and a very active and helpful member of the Club. Many will remember his remarkable acting in the productions of the Drama Group and many occasions when he has stepped in to assist the C.I.A., for example, in organizing the last car boot sale in Arinsal. We therefore approached him with the proposition of co-opting him as a member of the Board with the intention of electing him as President of the Club, replacing Ann Price until the next relevant election in spring 2004. Since Simon is involved very deeply in his own expanding business of Servissim, his "spare time" for club matters is limited. The Board does appreciate his difficulties and apprehensions regarding possible conflicts of interest, which could arise between his company and the Members' requests and his initial refusal was not unexpected.

We persisted and eventually did convince him to accept the position for the interim period. "Welcome aboard Simon" we are very pleased to have you.

As well as Simon Binsted, the Board has recently co-opted Carlos Hansen as Publicity Co-ordinator; he will of course stand for election at the next AGM. Nina O'Brien has agreed to act as Group Co-ordinator. With these co-options and that of David Perkin, there are now ten people on the Governing Board, almost up to the maximum authorised strength of eleven.


It likely that at least one older member of the Board will not seek re-election in 2003 or 2004. We hope that some young people, say not older than 55, will be willing to be co-opted (and hopefully elected) to the Board.

There is also a need for people in Helpline, and for these willing to arrange a lunch, dinner, or other function. Please contact us at a coffee morning or by letter or telephone.

All members are asked to note that the next Annual General Meeting will take place at the Paris Londres Hotel on Wednesday 2nd April 2003. An official notification will be sent out shortly.

Some of the Groups seem to be becoming dormant and / or to have very few members, such as the Drama Group and Scottish Dancing. At the same time other recently formed Groups seem to be flourishing, Garden and

Patchwork for instance. So it would be useful to have some ideas for new Groups. Suggestions made at the recent Board meeting included mountaineering, apres-ski activities, stamp collecting. No doubt many others will occur to members. So please write with any suggestions that you may have – we must assume that those who write are prepared to take part in such activities, though not necessarily to be involved in the detailed organisation. Those who attended the talk by David Baines on "Cosmology and Astronomy" may see this as a sort of precedent, of a highly intellectual subject, attended by almost 40 people, in the very agreeable surrounding of the St. Gotthard Hotel. Any ideas on other subjects will be gratefully received, especially if you are expert or very keen on some subject that you are prepared to talk about.



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OPEN LETTER FROM SIMON BINSTED

The departure of Ann Price from Andorra, for pressing personal reasons before the end of her anticipated term of office as President of the CIA, unfortunately left the position vacant.

To my surprise I was approached by a very persuasive Board with the suggestion that I be co-opted. The intention was that I could then be

elected to fill the position as interim President of CIA for the period until the next election in spring 2004.

My immediate reaction was surprise. After all I am not known for my democratic disposition. So, why me? Had they exhausted the possibility of anyone else accepting? More seriously, I was faced with the dilemma. The smooth running of the Club is important to its members and I must set this against the time required for my full time business. Servissim has taken sixteen long years of hard work and dedication to build it up to what it is today – the leading English-language service and Assistance Company – and it will continue to need equal effort in the future. It is a commercial concern and as its principal I clearly cannot mix business with pleasure. It will not be possible therefore, for me to be President of the Club to consult on members' private concerns, since that could present a major conflict of interest. I cannot promise that I'll solve all the members' concerns on this point, but I will try.

My hope is that, in the months to come before the elections 2004, a person, with or without knowledge of Catalan, will "emerge" as the obvious choice as the long term President of our Club. Nevertheless, in the meantime I much appreciate the honour of being asked and have accepted the proposal to be co-opted to the Board and to serve the Club as its President to the best of my ability whilst I continue to retain their confidence and that of the members.

Kindest regards,
Simon Binsted



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COMMENTS ON EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The Club Internacional d'Andorra was in effect founded early in 1989, that is almost 14 years ago. The EGM approved the new Statutes and Rules by 96 votes to NIL, a very gratifying result. This is the third set of Statutes for the Club, so on average we may expect them to last for another six or seven years. The Rules are a purely internal matter for the Club. The Andorran authorities require only that the Club should comply with the Statutes and with the Law of Associations in so far as its provisions are not explicitly contained in the Statutes. It was for that reason that the Board felt it necessary to have an English translation of the Law of Associations. Our first set of Rules was produced in 1993 - 1994, to be consistent with our second set of Statutes. Of course from time to time there have been, and will be, changes in the Statutes and Rules as provided for in these documents. It is to be hoped that there will not be too many of these, because changes in them presents an expensive and time-consuming effort. It is not necessary for every agreed change in procedures to detail a change in the Rules. In total, adoption of the New Statutes and Rules has cost the Club about 1600, or more than 3, per member. The total includes legal costs, English translation of the Law of Associations, English translation of the Statutes, etc. The Translation of the Statutes was done by Maria Theresa Raurell and Peter Parkinson, who as Board members draw no remuneration for this work; the only outlay by the Club was the revision fee by the official translator, Derek Ward, a sum of about 70. To meet the costs of this adoption may require a special contribution by members or an increase in the subscription, which is a matter for the next Annual General Meeting. Any Club members who feel that this is unreasonable are invited to reflect, that without this work and related costs, the Club would no longer exist, which all of us would regret.

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NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

THE ART GROUP

Report by Nina O'Brien (Phone: 837772)

One of our Art Group Members, Irene Percival, won the first prize in a first time multi media competition. There were 118 entries by Senior Citizens at the well attended (800) Festa Magna on 27th, of September. Prizes were awarded by Marc Forne with Irene's oil painting "Los Tres Amigos" gaining first prize.

We, the Art Group Members, are very pleased and proud of Irene and we hope for more success. Recognition of an artist's work by gaining award is truly appreciated by any artist.

We meet Fridays (whenever possible) from 1pm to 4 pm in our studio in Andorra la Vella. Members can use the studio on any other day as needed. For information call Nina O'Brien at 837772 or Val Rylatt at 835606.

THE COMPUTER GROUP

The computer group usually holds meetings every other Thursday at the Hotel Rutllan in La Massana at 11 a.m. We are a friendly Group, so members usually meet for coffee in the bar beforehand.

The Group actively encourage new members and everyone is most welcome from beginners to experts. The meetings take the form of a chat group where members are encouraged to ask questions and discuss problems. The subjects discussed include issues related to hardware, software, viruses and websites, etc.

Thanks to our experts Brian Keep, Peter Smith, Peter Jennings and Malcolm Harris for their help.

For further information, please contact:

Brian Keep: 839070

e-mail bkeep@andorra.ad

Richard Hooker: 835142

e-mail richard.hooker@andorra.ad

THE PATCHWORK GROUP

by Gil Formston

The Patchwork group is still as busy as ever. We have fifteen regular members, a real squeeze round my dinning room table, with overflow onto the sitting room sofas, if all attend. However, the foreign community in Andorra being very transient and many having families scattered all over the world, the weekly patchwork group meetings consist of 5 to 10 members.

What does the group make? Well, 'Nothing is too much of a challenge' Double-bed quilts, lap and crib quilts, wall-hangings, cushions, bags, waistcoats, faux-chenille, dolls, bears and chickens. Flannel is a popular fabric and Japanese Kimono silk has been experimented with. Some members specialise in folk/country pieces and prefer appliqué; others try every technique going and are known for a love of crazy colour combinations and novel fabrics. Some work slow and carefully, hand-stitching everything and then beautifully hand-quilting the resulting masterwork. Others are sewing-machine devotees who arrive each week with something newly, and rapidly, made. There are the finishers who never begin a new work until the old are complete; and there are those uncontrolled enthusiasm for some new project means an unstoppable growth of UFO's. In other words, a pretty normal group of patch workers!

And what has been 'in fashion' for the patch working ladies of Andorra in 2002? Well, quilts, which have been made by the dozen for friends, children and grandchildren, and posted or carried to all corners of the globe.

As you can see we are very productive and will one day get round to organising an exhibition BUT we have managed to produce a group quilt, which we are going to raffle and proceeds are going to the Charity - Hope and Homes for Children, this is a charity that helps to find a family and future for young victims of war or disaster. It is also the charity that the English Speaking Church of Andorra has chosen to dedicate 25% of its income to for the year 2003. Tickets are 2, each, 3 tickets for 5, and can be purchased from any member of the Patchwork Group and also at coffee mornings every Wednesday at the Paris Londres Hotel. The raffle will be drawn on the 14th February 2003. Please help us and buy a ticket, it is a very worth - while cause, as the people who went to the talk given by Col. Mark Cook OBE, in October, will appreciate.

A photograph of the quilt can be seen on page 16 (colour section). It is a lovely, full size quilt 97 inches by 77 inches, and will fit in with most colour schemes. We have put a lot of time and effort into producing this lovely quilt, and truly amazing group effort, please support us and buy a ticket for this very worthwhile charity.

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NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

THE TENNIS GROUP

by Dick Gillingham

This will be just a quick effort taking a break from packing for our hols. My packing responsibilities lie with the tooth brushes and aspirins and something something else (which I forget). After a year of the rigours of this job, we are off on a much earned rest leaving behind no emergency telephone contact number in case someone is looking for a fourth for some strange double or another. After this year, I think we should have a sober assessment of our performance to date and what we plan for next year:

We have not tried to do too much and in this we have succeeded. All we have really done is to have three Tennis International Tournaments which have all gone surprisingly well and which we enjoyed. The events have all been well supported (and thanks to all of you who have participated). For the last event in Escaldes (held on 14th October) we had 16 contestants filling up the 4 courts reserved which tested us to the limit our organizational capabilities. The infallible computer generated numbers table had not been tested to these extremes but it has been punishingly tweaked and so hopefully will perform better next time. We plan to continue with these events next year roughly around the same times (mid April, Mid Summer, and mid October). It is all something we can build and add on to.

Next year, we are thinking of cranking up the ratchet a bit and organizing a few social events as a group happily watching some matches of Grand Slam events (so we can all 'Oooh and Aaah' instead of 'Ugh and Ouch' together). After extensive and enjoyable research of large screens in public places of Andorra, we think we have a venue with agreeable hosts. We will probably select a match for the Australian Open to start with (3rd week in January probably).

The tennis list is still abysmal. Before resorting to the sick we will try the carrot approach. For the first person to call (836528) and show the sheer brass to join us two on the tennis list, there will be a prize bottle of bubbly (and that's not Badoit!). Otherwise, we will have to bring out the pliers and clippers. So do not hang back. Remember the saying:

"On the plains of hesitation lie the bleached bones of countless thousands who sat down waited and waiting they died...."

What that has to do about tennis I do not know but I am sure our editor appreciates another inch filled in. OK. So back to the packing: Toothbrushes, Aspirins, and what else? Of course.... Tennis Rackets for restringing at Oshman Supersports!!

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THE INTERNATIONAL SINGERS

I don't think I'm giving away any secrets when I say 'We wish you a Merry Christmas'. We also very much hope to see you at one, or more, of our concerts.

We're kicking off our Eleventh Festival of International Christmas Music in the Medieval Banqueting Hall at ***El Castell, Seu d'Urgell at 8.30pm on Friday, 6th December:** wonderful ambience, great songs while a delicious, if expensive, dinner can be ordered from the hotel for before or after the concert. We will be making a collection at the door for Alzheimer's sufferers.

Next we move back to the Festival's roots, to where our Christmas concerts began. We will be singing in the ***Ordino Church on Sunday, 8th December at 5pm.** As usual refreshments will be served outside the church afterwards.

The following weekend we have two more concerts. On ***Saturday, 14th December** at approximately **9.15pm** (after Mass) we will be performing in the church of **Santa Maria del Fener** (opposite the Andorra la Vella fire station near the Plaza Gallery and Hotel) while the last of our pre-Christmas concerts will be held in the simple Renaissance church of ***Canillo at 5pm on Sunday, 15th December.** If you've never been there why not give it a try? It's really lovely.

After which we take a rest until January when we hope to be singing in the ***Cathedral of La Seu at 5pm on 6th January** but this still has to be confirmed.

You're wondering what sort of programme we have chosen for you this year? As usual the carols come from many traditions: English, American, Catalan, Spanish, French, German and Latin and from different periods. We've added seven new songs to our repertoire and are particularly happy with two modern spirituals written by two of our favourite composers: Jay Althouse and Don Besig, and an Andalusian carol which required weeks of sleuthing before we tracked down the original words, unearthed for us from the Internet by the owner of an antique shop... Good classical pieces suitable for small choirs are not easy to come by but we hope you will enjoy our latest offering from Handel. And then of course we have to choose some carols where you too can join in with gusto. The problem here is that there are only a limited number known to all communities. So this year we've decided to offer the rousing *Hark the Herald* at Ordino (a predominantly English-speaking audience), and the jolly Catalan carol *El Desembre Congelat* at the other concerts along with the universally popular *Silent Night*, *Joy to the World* and *Adeste Fideles*. So do come along and get into the Christmas mood, and please bring your purses as we will, as usual, be collecting after the church concerts for local people in need.

And so what have we been up to since I last wrote? Well practising mainly - and under fairly trying circumstances, for which Barbara and Binnie deserve gold medals for tenacity - indeed there was a time when they both threatened to throw in the sponge. Choir members seem to have been more mobile than ever this year and I don't think we have had a full compliment at any rehearsal since July. Even

more reason for you to sign up and swell our numbers....

At the beginning of October that excellent local charity 'Patronat de les Dames de Nostra Senyora de Meritxell' (they catch the people, many of them foreigners, who fall between the cracks in Andorra's welfare system) marked their 30th Anniversary. And they invited us to sing a celebratory Mass plus a few songs in the Meritxell Sanctuary; not only a great honour but also a pleasure although it did distract us from our Christmas rehearsing. And later a few of us were able to use the same very beautiful *Kyrie Eleison*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei* when Jenny asked us to sing for her mother, Anne Keown-Boyd's Requiem Mass.

Recently we have welcomed Lurdes Querol, a strong Catalan soprano who immediately fitted into our family and came with us on a hilarious, illicit visit to Gigi who was in hospital after a knee operation. Illicit because it was Gigi's birthday and we came armed with three bottles of cava, two birthday cakes and some peanut butter cookies. We placed the 'singing' candle in the centre of the cake, lit it and as it squeaked out *Happy Birthday to You* some dozen of us processed solemnly into Gigi's room, immediately reducing the birthday girl to tears of emotion. She repaid us a week later by leaving hospital at 6pm and coming to choir practice at 8.15. Now there's loyalty for you!

To end our report this year I thought I would introduce you to a couple more of the Singers behind the voices; this time the two remaining founder members, both English.

Brenda Ross. Brenda came from a old-fashioned musical background, singing round the piano on Sunday afternoons. Her father played piano-accordion, piano and mandolin, all by ear. Her aunt was a concert pianist.

As a child Brenda was induced to sing pieces like *Jerusalem* and *Ave Maria* at local concerts, and attended a musically-orientated Grammar School where she sang in the choir. She also had one year of cello lessons though never really learnt to "read music".

After working in a stock broker's for two years, she decided to become an air stewardess, first training in hotel reception and then taking a post as governess to the Rothschild grandchildren in Paris to brush up her school French. There followed a fabulous year of living in luxury and being fed by one of the best chefs in Paris! She finally realised her ambition and became an air stewardess with B.E.A., flying European routes and, with Cyprus Airways, to Bahrain where she met Sandy on a night stop. They married in 1959 and lived in Bahrain until 1986. They had a son and daughter, both born in Bahrain, and took the opportunity of travelling the world during long leaves.

Brenda worked with U.T.A French Airlines and British Airways, both for 5 years, and thoroughly enjoyed herself - as only Brenda can! In Sandy's oil company, she became involved in musical comedy giving twice annual shows until she eventually joined the Manama Singers, a choir with up to 60 members, some ex-professional. They sang

light operettas, show music and, of course, Christmas and Easter music.

Newly settled in Andorra, Brenda was overheard singing on a Hash and immediately invited to join Ann Lamb's Christmas church choir. That eventually led, in 1989, to the founding of The International Singers in which she played a major role. Brenda has been a faithful, lively and much appreciated member ever since.

Clare Allcard. I am the other remaining founder member. When it came to singing both my mother and my kindergarten teacher despaired of me. But I've always fancied a challenge and after attending 10 schools in three different countries managed to pass the audition to my last school's choir. Later the BBC wanted to use our Carols and Nativity Scenes as their Christmas offering. Our head mistress turned the offer down because one day someone in the choir sang a wrong note in Chapel - wasn't me, honest!

I left school to act but ended up nursing. Then, aged 22, I met Edward and sailed off to 20 years of vagabonding with nary a choir in sight. As a child I had taken piano lessons but this involved bicycling past a wood reputed to be haunted and, after a winter of negotiating it with my eyes tight shut, I decided to become a cowgirl instead. But the desire to master a musical instrument did not fade. At various times I attempted to teach myself the tenor recorder, bongo drums, clarinet and guitar none with any marked success. Though I did receive a certificate at the end of a course in classical guitar held at the Chinese Young Mens' Christian Association in Singapore..

When I first came to Andorra I was struck by the fact that the only ex-pats I saw under the age of 90 appeared to sing in the English-speaking Church's choir. I joined and, as mentioned above, it was from that small group that the International Singers grew. A couple of months later our director, the jazz pianist René de Knight, gave us our fortuitous name as, soon after that, we joined the Club Internacional. Then, too, I started singing lessons with Teresa Vidal to whom I've been going regularly ever since. In 1992 I took over from Hans Kiaer as group leader. As The Singers became more and more international - at present we have 11 nationalities - I was metamorphosed into the *organitzadora* - much more fun!

So, once again, if any of you enjoy singing and can do so in tune do come along to a Thursday practice 8.15pm at Santa Maria del Fener and see what we get up to. There's no obligation to join. Ring either Clare Allcard on 836 269 or Maria Teresa Raurell on 836 123. We'll welcome you with open arms.

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TRAVELLING IN ANDALUCIA

by David Baines

We started off in Andorra with a well-organised pickup system of passenger collection assisted by helpful volunteers who assembled less able people in designated bus stops. The bus was driven by Cesar, a Cuban, now resident for the last five years in Andorra. He was generally assessed by his passengers as being an expert in manoeuvring his 46-streets, most would hesitate to enter with a car. The bus was stopped frequently enough, and not full, and the journey was pleasant and the Olive groves of Catalunya soon gave way to later the Olive groves of in Spain has a majestic geology of the mountain slightly hampered by the regulations. In Valencia we stayed the journey as a tour of the a street map of the city which the one-way street system, outwards from the hotel. We sightseeing tours of the area way in.

The highlight of any visit to Granada is of course the Alhambra, which draws more visitors than any other place in Spain. On a previous visit it drew so many that I couldn't see anything. However, the crowds are now restricted to 8700 tickets per diem including guided groups of not more than 30, which enter on a rigidly enforced schedule this arrangement seemed to improve crowd control.

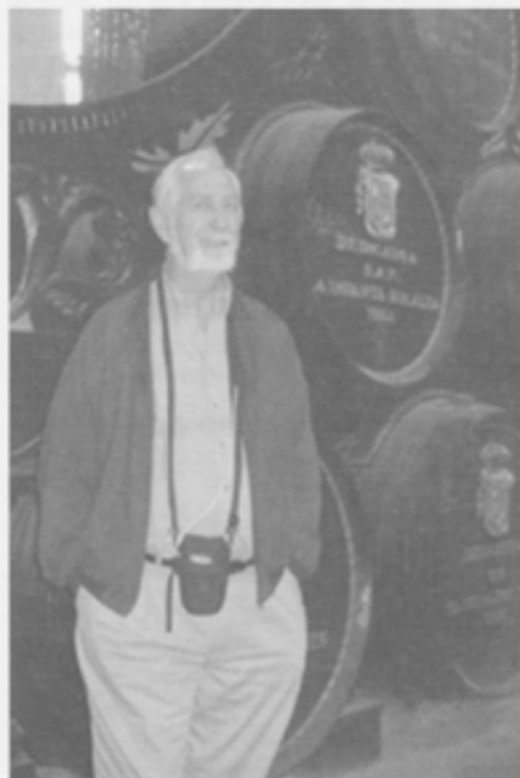
An unusual sight in town, was the Ojo de Granada, a camera obscure as used by Leonardo da Vinci. It is a rotating periscope and lens system that focuses the external scene onto the horizontal table

within a darkened room, giving a detailed view of the area. It must be a desirable

tool for any well-equipped voyeur and perhaps an obvious investment opportunity for those wishing to examine the views of Andorra.

The bus took us to Guadix, where the signpost indicated "Los Trogloditos". Here residents have solved the problem of acquiring building materials for their houses, by burrowing into clay hills and making caves. The caves have small constructions at the entrance to imitate conventional, though very narrow, houses. In the hills behind the streets, numerous whitewashed chimneys poke out of the ground betraying the extent of the excavations beneath. Occasionally, according to a local resident, unsurveyed house enlargement can cause the digger to accidentally break into his neighbour's room.

Back in Sevilla there was a moment of comedy in the Alcazar, when one of the Celtic members of our group with a keen interest in textiles wondered how such materials could have been reproduced so realistically on one of the numerous statues within the building, on testing the texture with her finger, she found that the statue, Pygmalion style, sprang into life. Her reaction produced much screaming and jumping about because it was really a mime artist who was trying to keep still!



Sevilla Cathedral



Alhambra, Granada



Alcazar, Sevilla



Guadix

Minaret,
Cordoba



Cadiz



Guadix, Trogloditos




Group photo, Sevilla

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Reference Art Group / patchwork articles on page 6.



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TRAVELLING IN ANDALUCIA Continued

Formerly the Alcazar area was inhabited by Jews, Moslems and Christians, who lived together in peace and harmony, offering a moral metaphor contrasting today's political problems.



We had three nights in Sevilla and of all the hotels we stayed in, the Emparador Trajano was perhaps the only disappointment. It was our most expensive hotel. It had 4 stars, which were possibly self-appointed, but despite this drawback the city was well worth the visit.

The Gonzalez Byass sherry group offered a tour of their distillery and we were escorted through the plant, where, the grape harvest being over, we missed the production phase of their Sherries but viewed the cavernous stores, waiting to mature. Here they have

adopted the habit of asking famous visitors, not us, to autograph the barrels, creating the worlds largest guest book. Here conspicuous toppers like W.S. Churchill lies almost alongside the temperate Mrs Thatcher, and King Juan Carlos but the stars of the display were a troop of dipsomaniacal mice that were doing cartwheels near the exit having been supplied with a daily wine glass of Oloroso, equipped with a mouse-size boarding ladder that allowed them to access the sherry. Management stated that the mice preferred Oloroso to Tio Pepe but I don't know if you can rely on rodents as vineal authorities. Occasionally the population explodes, due no doubt to the never-ending office party, where even humans have been known to slip the moral cuff under similar circumstances. But letting the cat in for a while redresses



this problem. It seems a poor way to treat the junior staff.!

Toledo was more an over-night rest enroute than a chance to visit, and by the time the party had puffed up the hill from the bus' closest approach, and checked in at the Hotel Carlos V, (one star less and cheaper, but twice as good as the Hotel in Seville.) dusk was falling. As we set off into town, it was too late to see many of the sights of this remarkable city. There was a tourist tractor-train that offered a quick tour of the city but it had already stopped. Perhaps another visit is necessary. Next morning the bus was positioned nearly outside the hotel door after another masterpiece of urban navigation.

Perhaps it is in recognition of the wealth that the tourists bring, that despite the overwhelming number of them on the streets, most of the residents were unaggressively friendly, and very willing to help strangers.

This is the third CIA tour that I have joined and I have suggested to Ann that she convene another to Tuscany, Florence and Venice, perhaps in the early spring, when the weather might reduce the tourist load to allow better access to the places of interest. She said she might do so.



Photographs relating to this article kindly supplied by Clare Allcard, and Diana Stansby.

NEW MEMBERS OF THE EDITORIAL SUB-COMMITTEE



Here is a picture of David and me taken in our home in Toronto, the house that I somewhat reluctantly agreed to sell over a year ago. Since then, we arrived in Andorra and, to my surprise, have been welcomed into a community of fascinating people... I never cease to be amazed at the previous exploits of others we have met. They make our past lives seem quite tame in comparison! Nevertheless, as new members of the Editorial Committee for the Magazine, we would like to introduce ourselves. David was born in Stoke – on Trent and graduated from Sheffield University with an Honours degree in Mathematics. He spent a year in Nigeria teaching and on his return decided Canada seemed a more exciting place to live. In Canada he became a qualified actuary, moved to work in Bermuda for several years and then went back to Canada where he gave up mortality/morbidity tables. He went on to found an insurance brokerage that he ran for a further 10 years. His most recent career was as an independent Investment Advisor. As such, in his role of Business Co-ordinator for the Magazine, he would seem to be ideally suited, at least 'on paper'!

I was born in Canada but moved to England at the age of 4 and lived a typical life as an English girl. At 21, I decided to reinstate my right to being a Canadian citizen and returned to Canada, albeit with my English 'accent'. I attended the University of Toronto, graduated with an Honours degree in French and subsequently worked as an Insurance Consultant. (No connection; I just needed a job! It's also where David and I met.) Much later, I obtained a Master's degree in Adult Education and Counselling and became a Career Consultant. You may wonder what any of this has to do with being one of the Editors of the CIA Magazine. Well, I have always had a sneaking passion for getting my ideas down on paper. In addition, in my previous advice-giving, consulting roles I quickly realised that it was much easier to correct others' work than to do it myself. Just like Editors!

As for the two of us working together.... For those who have already met us, you may have noticed that we have a healthy disrespect for each other's ideas unless they make sense. It probably seems like arguing but we think of it as a debate.

Looking forward to working with you,

Sandra Reid and David Perkin

P.S All of us involved with the Magazine always welcome your ideas and comments on how we could improve the publication. Would you like to see more of this or less of that? Please let us know. Remember, it's *your* magazine, so tell us what *you* want to read about! Better still; why not write an article for a future edition that you think would be of interest to other readers? Don't be shy – even Hemingway had to start somewhere. He then went on to run with the bulls in Pamplona!

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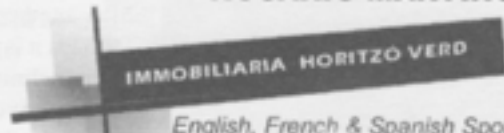


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ANDORRA NINETY YEARS AGO

ANDRE GIDE : A JOURNAL OF ANDORRA.

Translated by James Kirkup

At Canillo, on the first floor of a little ale-house, we are served bread, flat slices of sausage full of hot pepper, goat cheese, eggs fried in rather nauseating oil; a harsh, blackish wine.

Escaldes: thermal baths; we were dreaming of pools like those at Alet, with waters to our liking, hot and cold.... All we found was a mediocre hotel built half-way across the road; the baths they offered us did not tempt us at all.... As soon as we had ordered dinner, we set off up the torrential river we had just come down, seeking a sheltered spot to bathe.

This abominable inn! While I'm writing this, a phonograph is barking in the sitting room, where we are going to eat soon. Six priests arrive and are at once made to feel at home. We wanted to lunch at eleven, and then leave in order to be able to spend the night at Seu d'Urgel. They made us wait for the regular meal time.

"You're in no hurry", the inn keeper informed us.

"How do you know?"

"Oh, you're not the first foreigners I've had to serve."


What a meal! Though we have a good appetite by now, we skip certain unmentionable dishes; but all through the meal, the inn keeper takes care to fan his guests with an enormous fly-switch made of multicoloured stripes of cloth.

At Andorra la Vella one can see: a goose with one wing growing backwards right to its beak; a duck without a beak; a hen with a wooden leg; on the way out of the village, a mule with a broken leg that it flings out sideways as it walks, like locomotors ataxia. That's all.


The rock faces reverberate with the heat. The road is bordered by box and hellebore. Arrived in Santa Julia de Loria towards four o'clock. Our chief desire was to get to Seu as quickly as possible, but I felt exhausted, and besides, this evening we cannot find a mule to carry our baggage into Spain. They unload the one we hired at Le Hospitalet and which is not allowed to pass the Spanish frontier. The ropes have kept tied on its back a mountain of coats, blankets and the big sack of brown cloth in which are bundled together with clothes and provisions. After some days of co-habitation in this sack; the most disparate objects have found themselves in intimate contact with one another; tins have split open and poured out their contents; everything is stuck together and transformed into a conglomerate of nameless mess. My umbrella has come out of it best—an umbrella I didn't know what to do with as I couldn't pack it in a suitcase nor leave anywhere to be picked up later, and that the muleteer handed back to me bent almost double, having taken on a surprisingly metal stem, but as soon as I attempted to open it, the whole thing, worn by the rubbing of the ropes, let its alpaca fall to pieces.

Day's end by the riverside; children are setting nets that they will go and pull in at dawn next morning.

The heat on the terrace where we are dining, lit by an acetylene lamp. Heat in the bedrooms; bugs. J is convinced that they are descended from Saint Joseph, a benevolent saint, whose smile is suspended over his bed; (above mine is Saint Ignatius). Can it be true that its half-unstuck portrait is harbouring them? Between the brass bedstead with its decorative medallion and the cheap colour print he liberally sprays insect powder, which makes him sneeze a lot, without at all scaring away the bedbugs.



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Four o'clock; first sounds from the square; a cat mewing with hunger in the corridor; I can hear the eldest of the last night's fisher children getting ready to go down to the river, the owner's son; already two others are waiting for him; I get up and lean over the balcony; the square is grey with ash. The children recognise me and call to me. They have donned the soaking clothes they wore the night before. The summit of the mountain trembles and grows paler, but all colours are still asleep; an old woman leading scraggy horses... I've hardly closed my eyes all night. The air is filled with a vinous odour. I go back to bed for a few moments.

Five o'clock; I start off, leading the way, meeting briefly the young fisher boys who wave to me from the other bank; they've complaining that someone has raised their nets, and they've caught one fish, only one! There they are all soaking wet again, but still laughing.

The extraordinary narrowness of this valley; here we are, without realizing it, in Spain. The river is getting deeper; a canal runs along beside it, which we follow, leaving the road where from afar we see our horses raising the dust.

As soon as we are through the customs, an inn where they serve us black sausage and miserable goat cheese. At the back of the room that the outside brightness makes dark, there is a staircase with steps made from slate; a little girl, naked, is sitting on the bottom step. She is watching a lamb being gutted; the inn keeper is hanging up the innards under the low ceiling; a little later, suddenly standing up, I banged my forehead against them. Our guide, seated beside us, seasons a tomato with greyish salt. On the table, escaping from the cheese comes crawling a skinny, lively maggot. The old innkeeper's wife weighs the sausage to judge how much of it we've eaten.

CONCLUSION

Quote

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CASTANYEDA

by Peter Parkinson

As for at least the past seven years, I took part in the Annual Castanyeda event in Ordino, outside the Sports Centre. The weather was not too cold, and there must have been more than one hundred participants, not all present at the same time. I did not recognise any Club Members among them. As usual, there was an accordionist to liven things up a little, and there were the usual muscatel wine and roast chestnuts, served in a conical newspaper container. They were roasted over wood fires in steel braziers, which added some warmth on a cold evening. This time the portions seemed to me much larger than usual, so that more than half the chestnuts were left over. No matter; when shelled there were enough to make in the morning a worthwhile amount of chestnut puree after putting through my blender. While doing this I reflected, just why do we eat chestnuts on All Hallows' Eve? So I looked it up in the Encyclopaedia Britannica and in "The Golden Bough" by Sir J.G.Frazer. As one might expect, the answers to that simple question are complex and uncertain, but make some sort of sense.

All Hallows' Eve certainly predates Christianity. It was believed that ghosts and witches wandered about in great numbers on this day October 31st, and it was customary in many countries of Europe to light bonfires. Often an image of a witch or other maleficent being, made of old clothes, was burnt, perhaps an indication of human sacrifice in pre-Christmas times. It does not need much imagination to work out that in England the bonfire and image burning has been transformed to Guy Fawkes Day November 5th, to commemorate a plot to blow up King James I and the House of Lords.

But still, why chestnuts? It seems that the Christian authorities grafted on to the Celtic ritual a celebration of the Roman Festival of Pomona, held about 1st November. Nuts and apples, representing the winter store of fruit, played an important part in this festival, and the roasting of chestnuts was recorded in France two hundred or more years ago.

So, next time you go to a Castanyeda, reflect that you are taking part in a ritual dating back more than two thousand years.

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OUR AMAZON ADVENTURE (PART 4)

By Bill and Val Erry

On the 8th January 2000 at 8pm we exited the river Amazon and entered the South Atlantic Ocean. For the next two days we cruised northward towards the



Caribbean. As usual there was a lot to do and to entertain us on board. Val got busy in the Arts and Craft Class, Bill attended a lecture by an ex US Ambassador. We saw some films; Sunday evening was ladies' night, Monday evening Show Time with an excellent cabaret.

At 9am on Tuesday 11th January 2000, we docked at Port of Spain on the Island of Trinidad and Tobago which is just off the coast of Venezuela at the south east corner of the Caribbean. Nearly all the Caribbean Islands were originally colonized by Spanish, British, French, Dutch, Portuguese and Americans. The Colonists imported many black slaves from West Africa and then the Colonists fought amongst themselves trying to pinch each others' Islands. The result is most of the Islands have changed hands several times between the original Colonists. Trinidad and Tobago is a typical example. The main port is where we landed, Port of Spain. A big modern city. Main Street is Richmond Street. The language spoken is English. Other principal cities are San Fernando and Sangre Grande. The population is mostly the descendants of West African black slaves with sprinkling of white people. Temperament very friendly, nice people.

Since our ship had docked right at the end of Richmond Street literally in the middle of the downtown area Val and I decided we would just make our own walking tour. The city centre was well laid out with some broad straight streets, gardens in the centre with tropical trees, flowers and fountains. Modern office blocks everywhere. In the narrower side streets we found lots of interesting smaller shops, shopping malls etc. Then there were large ornate churches and Government buildings which were all open free to visitors. We walked into the Treasury building and were confronted with a huge coat of arms above the words 'Together we aspire, Together we achieve.' This was flanked on either side with photos

of all those who had been Treasurers. It all looked very orderly and democratic.

In the evening before the ship left a steel band appeared on the dockside and they played a beautiful traditional musical farewell to us as the sun went down in the pouring rain. In spite of the rain the general atmosphere was so pleasant and happy that many of the passengers were dancing on the dockside in the rain.

Our next stop was the following morning at Bequia, a tiny island in the Grenadines not far to the north. The ship docked at 7pm. We disembarked after breakfast at what was really a large spread-out village. Bequia is a typically beautiful tropical island. A tiny port, blue sky, palm trees and a generally peaceful and idyllic place. At 11am we departed for Georgetown on the island of St. Vincent where we arrived at 1 pm. Georgetown was a sleepy small town, very British on another typically tropical island. Val and I disembarked with the general intention to walk around and explore the place. After passing a bunch of old British red telephone boxes we came across several members of the ship's band haggling with a minibus owner about the price of a tour of the island. With our inclusion, two more persons at the same price, the deal was clinched. We all boarded the minibus and had a wonderful tour of Georgetown and the remoter higher parts of the island including Kingstown, the capital, and Fort Charlotte 600ft above sea level with fantastic views of the Grenadines. We also stopped at the 200 year old Botanical Gardens where a display of tropical trees, including a Bread Fruit tree descended from the original ones brought to St. Vincent by Capt. Bligh in 1793 and other outstanding flora could be seen. We also visited the



Mesopotamia valley commonly called the food basket because the soil is so rich and fertile. After a drink at a beach bar we returned to the Stella Solaris.

Wednesday evening, 12th January, we continued sailing northwards towards the island of Antigua. It was a lovely evening. We all danced on the deck under the stars until quite late. Next day, Thursday 13th January, we docked at 1pm near the capital of Antigua, St. John's, and a bustling interesting place with lots of charm. We really enjoyed exploring it. A most peculiar sight was a couple of gigantic cruise liners parked at the end of a row of cars in a market street. It looked just as if the cruise liners were parked on parking meters like cars. Nelson's Dockyard is situated at the southern end of the island, one of the safest land-locked harbours in the world which has been carefully restored to its former glory.

Our next port of call was in the U.S Virgin Islands. This was the one exception to visiting different places on



the return trip, for we had visited the Island of St. Thomas on the way out, but the town of Charlotte Amalie was so popular that everybody had voted to visit it again on the return voyage. On the way out Val and I had taken the submarine tour at St. Thomas and now we were looking forward to visiting its excellent duty free shopping centres. Upon landing at 9am we were greeted by a young peoples' steel band who gave us an enthusiastic welcome.

The shopping centres were fascinating. It was the American/Caribbean version of Andorra La Vella, with lots of first class jewellery shops thrown in for good measure. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and spent a lot more money than we ought to have done, especially on jewellery. Tanzanite is a very beautiful deep blue stone offered by many of the better class shops. It is quite expensive, but a good investment because the only mine which produced it is in Tanzania and it has been closed down because there was no more Tanzanite to be found.

It took three more days of cruising to reach our final home port, Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The first two days we encountered really rough seas and Val and I found we had the dining room almost to ourselves! In calm waters and lovely weather our Amazon Adventure came to its close as we docked at Fort Lauderdale 8am on the 17th January 2000.



Rosa Mari Sopena
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A BRIEF ROYAL VISIT TO ANDORRA

by Maurice Vincents.

While he was still a bachelor, on May 1st 1961, Don Juan Carlos de Bourbon, Prince of Asturias and heir to the throne of Spain, crossed the frontier near Seo d'Urgel and entered Andorra for a few hours. It was a private visit. Quickly he took off his uniform of student at the Spanish Military Academies and put on civilian clothing. But, after having been greeted by the authorities of garrison of Seo, the prince, before anything else, entered the church St. Etienne of Andorra la Vella to bow before the altar of the Virgin.

It was only later that he changed at the Park Hotel, to receive the respects of the honourable Syndic General Francesc Cayrat, accompanied by an advisor. Their meeting, in the presence of the military and civil chiefs of the household of Juan Carlos, did not last long. The brief ceremony, in the hall of the Hotel, took place without several clients of the hotel being aware of what was happening. Mr Cayrat made known to the Prince that this was the first time that a member of the royal house of Spain has visited Andorra. Don Juan explained to the Syndic that the Co-Prince Bishop, Monseigneur Iglesias Navarri, whom he had gone to greet at Seo, had strongly recommended that he should become acquainted with Andorra.

The grandson of Alfonso XIII stayed for barely two hours in the principality. Those who accompanied him asked that his visit to a foreign country should be kept short. Very quickly Don Juan Carlos said farewell to the Andorran authorities, proceeding by car towards the frontier, after having discreetly put on his uniform again.

At Seo, a detachment of the army paid him their respects, and the Prince continued his study trip across Catalonia, to Gerona and then to Barcelona.

On the day after his brief visit to Andorra, Don Juan Carlos announced officially his forthcoming marriage with Princess Sophia of Greece. The Spanish press took the opportunity to recall that Franco had designated the Prince to, later, occupy the throne of Spain.

(The French original of this article – an abridged translation by Peter Parkinson – appeared in the September/October 2001 issue of "L'Echo des Vallées", published by the Andorra chapter of the Union des Français de l'Etranger, to whom we are grateful for permission to publish).



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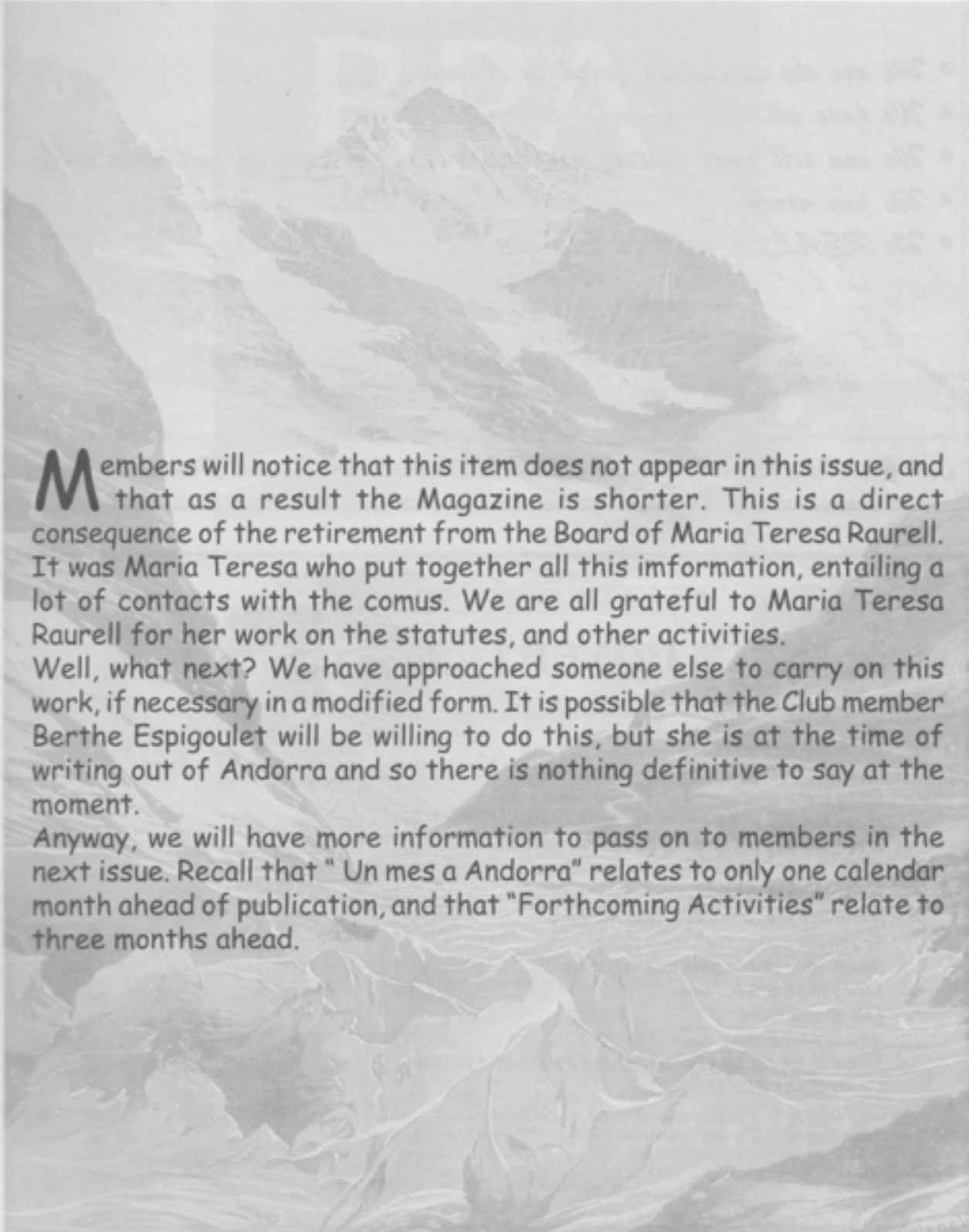
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and others.

Many thanks to them all



Members will notice that this item does not appear in this issue, and that as a result the Magazine is shorter. This is a direct consequence of the retirement from the Board of Maria Teresa Raurell. It was Maria Teresa who put together all this information, entailing a lot of contacts with the comus. We are all grateful to Maria Teresa Raurell for her work on the statutes, and other activities.

Well, what next? We have approached someone else to carry on this work, if necessary in a modified form. It is possible that the Club member Berthe Espigoulet will be willing to do this, but she is at the time of writing out of Andorra and so there is nothing definitive to say at the moment.

Anyway, we will have more information to pass on to members in the next issue. Recall that "Un mes a Andorra" relates to only one calendar month ahead of publication, and that "Forthcoming Activities" relate to three months ahead.



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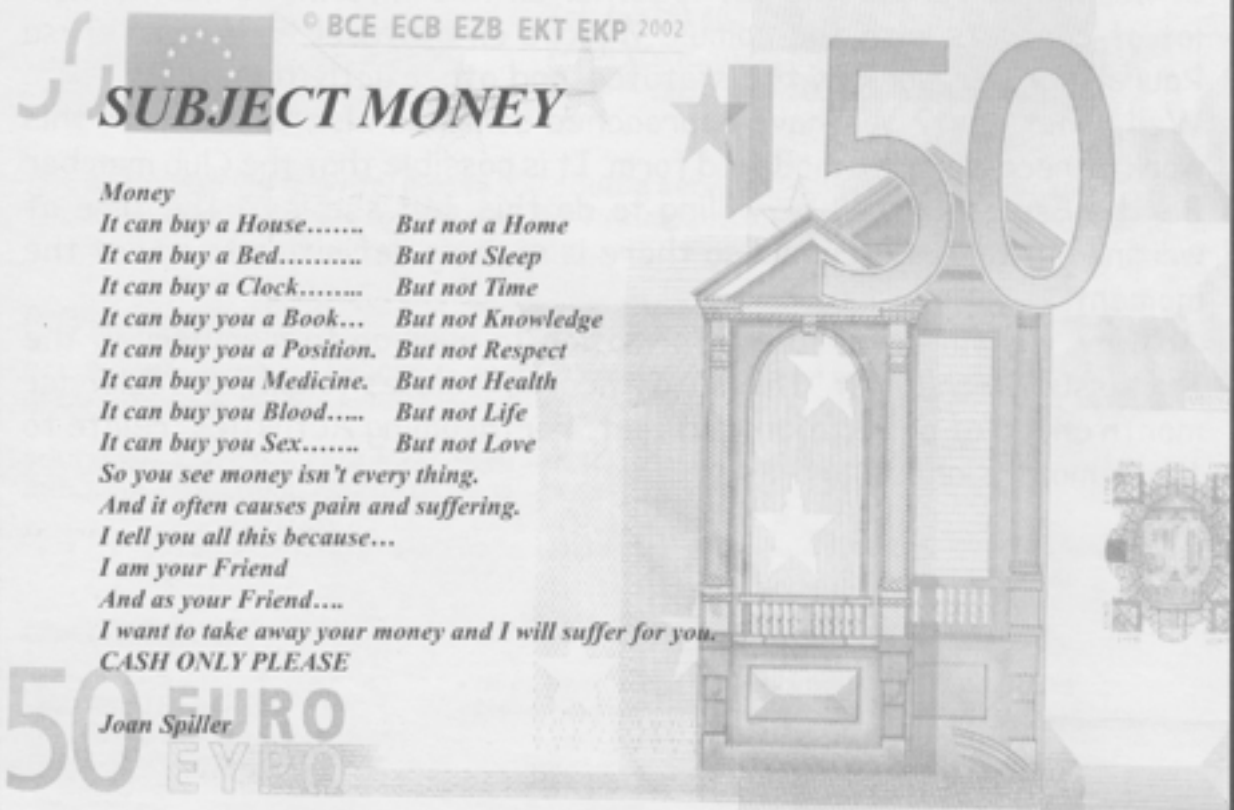
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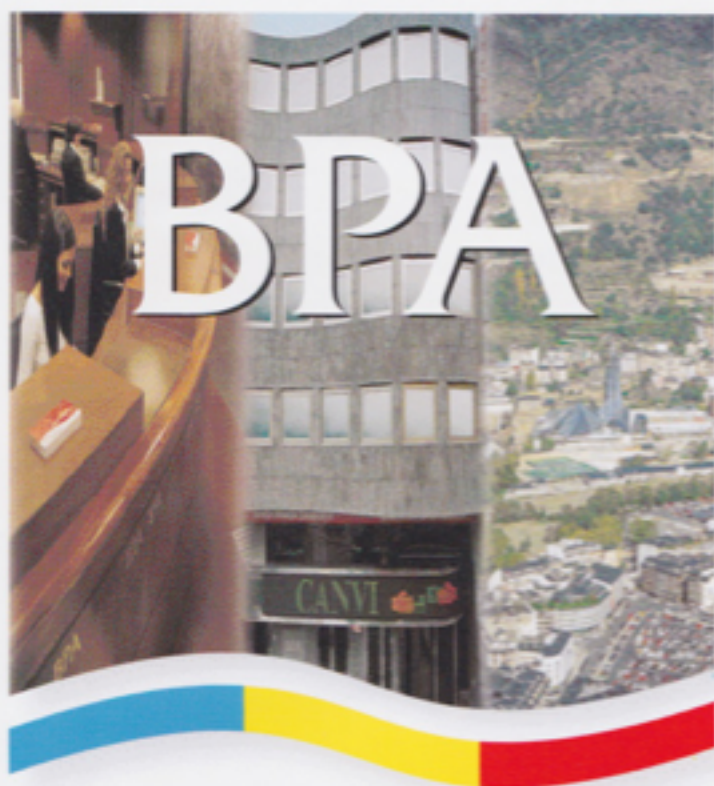
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