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Cover photo: "Modigliani in Andorra" arranged by Nina O'Brien

CONTENTS:

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|---------------------------|-------|-------------------------|----|
| The Board | 1 | Into Africa | 10-11 | The Grasshopper Machine | 24 |
| Group Leaders | 2 | Madhatters' Summer dance | 12 | Now I understand! | 25 |
| Magazine Policy | 2 | Photos | 13-16 | Understanding new speak | 26 |
| Editorial | 3 | The Cure | 17 | Dear Conceptia | 27 |
| News from the Groups | 4-5 | Cycling for children | 18-19 | Recipe | 27 |
| International Singers | 6-7 | Memories of Spain | 20 | Anyos evening poem | 28 |
| Modigliani in Andorra | 8 | A chance walk to Canolich | 21 | | |
| | | Mad English | 22 | | |



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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.

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EDITORIAL

Our international community is full of multi-talented people who have led extraordinary lives and have come together in a very tiny part of the world blessed with spectacular scenery and a virtually care-free way of life. You only have to switch on the television or read the newspapers to draw comparisons. The contributions in this edition of the magazine once again demonstrate the breadth of interest and the variety of events that take place in the little principality we call home.

When I first wrote this editorial it was unclear whether the magazinewould continue after the current issue. Following the EGM in September it has now been agreed that this is indeed the last Intercomm magazine. On the other hand, some of the vacant positions on the Board were filled during the EGM. So it looks as if the CIA will continue after all. Don't let the cartoon of the CIA Members' Action Group become a reality! In order to continue the activities people have to come to expect volunteers are always needed.

Now that I have had my little rant, I do hope you enjoy the interesting articles we have included this time. Life in Andorra offers so much more than just a postal address. Take a look at the section of articles in the magazine and see for yourself! Because this is the last magazine, I hope you will join me in thanking my fellow editor, John Coville, David Perkin, business manager, Sarah Manning, typeset and layout specialist, Ann Archer, advertising manager. And it is with great regret and many tears that I say goodbye to Nina O'Brien who passes away on October 9th. Nina was a CIA Board Member for many years, runner of the Art Group and provider of all the fine art for the magazine front covers. You will always be in my thoughts, dear Nina. Finally, my thanks to all of you who have contributed to the magazine over the past two years. Without all of you, it would have been impossible to produce.

Best wishes,
Sandra Reid.



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NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

PATCHWORK GROUP

by Valerie C. Rymarenko

To receive an invitation is a pleasure, but to receive an invitation in acknowledgement of one's creative skills is delightfully flattering! In mid-April, I was contacted by my former patchwork teacher, Inmaculada Farreró, who is also Editor of the magazine *Asociación Española de Patchwork* [Spanish Patchwork Association]. Sra. Farreró knew of the Andorran Patchwork Group, and she wanted two things: an article about the group for her magazine, and to ask the group to participate in a two-week long exhibition of patchwork.

Gill Furmston, the founder and leader of our patchwork group, said yes to both these challenges. The easy part was producing an article which was then published in the June 2004 issue of the Spanish magazine. Preparing for the exhibition was much more demanding because we had very short notice: the opening date had already been set as 15th July, 2004.

The title was *Primera exposición de Patchwork del Pirineo* [First Exhibition of Patchwork of the Pyrenees] which certainly included our Andorran group! Sylvia Morgan and I were deputed to find out what was involved; we contacted Ana Maria Morera, the organizer and – laden down with examples of our patchworks – went to see her in Puigcerdà.

Ana Maria showed us the setting – the Cerdà Museum. This fine building, dating from 1880, was originally the convent of the Barefoot Carmelites of Saint Teresa of Jesus, a very strict and totally enclosed order. A curtained, metal grille in the outer door was the sole means of contact with the world, but the nuns left their mark on many local lives and households because they did exquisite needlework and embroidery for little money. In 1982 the nuns moved away from Puigcerdà, and the convent building began to decay. Over recent years it has been restored by the town council, specifically to provide a local museum and exhibition space.

Given this history, it seemed particularly appropriate that the first exhibition to be held in the new museum should be one of patchwork quilting – a branch of handicraft and sewing skill which is most often (though not exclusively) the work of women. Where the nuns' small cells had once been was now a single, long room, lined with windows and with a ceiling of wooden beams: a perfect space, full of light, and ideal for displaying patchworks.

We reported back to Gill's group, and the various members who were not out of the country set about deciding what work they had ready to show. One of the joys of patchwork is that it is often made to be given away: to daughters and nieces getting married: to new grandchildren: to family and friends far away. As soon as a patchwork quilt, or cushion cover, or cot quilt, or Christmas wall hanging is made, it is usually carried or posted overseas. This means that although we produce a lot of work, we rarely have much to hand. Some glorious pieces which deserved to be exhibited in Puigcerdà were unavailable covering beds in Australia!

Sandra Reid and I delivered the chosen works; and our patchworks, plus those of Gill Furmston, Puk Nikolajsen and Sylvia Morgan, formed part of a total of 74 exhibits by 22 contributors. I went with Gill, Puk and Alexa Travers-Dade to the opening ceremony at 5pm on 15th July which was not only wonderfully crowded, but also provided with the most copious food and drink I have ever seen at any 'first night'.

As foreigners living in Andorra we cherish every opportunity to participate in local, native activities. From the speech given to launch the patchwork show it became clear that our efforts had been really appreciated. Apparently, the organizer had been told that 'the English-speaking patchworkers of Andorra would be rather stand-offish and cold to the idea of an exhibition'. It turned out, instead, that we had done the most to help, and we were very publicly petted and thanked for our willing involvement.

The mayor, the museum director and the cultural secretary were all so pleased with the event that they have asked for another patchwork exhibition next year, as well as our participation in the Puigcerdà Week of Culture in July 2005. We shall have to start sewing at once – and not give away our creations – if we are to have enough work to satisfy these official invitations!

What else are we up to? Gill is keen for the group to have a patchwork exhibition in Andorra before the end of the year – date and place still being decided. Sylvia Morgan is in France on a course run by Dilys A. Fronks, an expert in using patchwork to create images of beautiful vistas seen through wrought-iron gates. The effect is as magical as it is technically demanding.

Not all husbands understand or appreciate their wives' dedication to patchwork – in fact it drives some men mad! Fortunately, Chris, Sylvia's husband, is rightly very proud of his wife's patchwork skills, so he has gone along to Dilys Fronks' course as well. Chris has even got so involved that he has decided on the view that Sylvia should create in fabric – Casamanya seen behind wrought iron. That is togetherness.

I have managed to infect my husband, Bohdan, with my fascination for fabric (as important for patchworkers as paint is for artists). Bohdan discovered a Japanese fabric shop in Barcelona's Barrio Gótico, telephoned to tell me, and rushed in to demand samples to bring to our group. The patterns were so beautiful that the group members ordered a total of 5 kilos of Japanese cottons – which Bohdan hauled back to Andorra with delight and pride. Now I am awaiting the arrival of fabrics bought by a friend for me in Sudan and Ivory Coast. Expect to see some unusual patchwork creations emerging from the Andorran Group as a result.

So, if anyone out there thinks the patchwork group is just an opportunity for idle women to eat cakes, gossip and, occasionally, sew a bit – think again. We – egged on by some of our husbands – are out in the world making quite a stir!

THE GARDENING GROUP

If you select a date a few months in advance, notify everyone a few days before the event, you can guarantee a wet day. Such is the skill we have in the Gardening Group. Having visited a few gardens within Andorra and the garden centres in La Seu area, the group then formed into another genera, or sub-species, to look at wild flowers with Ann Matschke leading us.

The Wildflower Group's first outing enjoyed a wet start and finish. It had rained from dawn onwards so just about all sensible people cancelled but the object was to find some ramondas and even with Ann we failed to find any within a reasonable visible range. What we saw were 15ft up a sheer cliff and surrounded by electrical cables but they were in bloom and visible with binoculars. We went up the Cortals of Encamp but the May Lilies and Herb Paris known to be there had been destroyed by new buildings and roadworks. However a few Martagon lilies were emerging. On and upwards again where we found orchids aplenty and we paddled through the swampy conditions where the cotton-grass were at home. Up again into the freezer zone where we had to wrap up well, eating our sandwiches in the wind until we decided it was more sensible to go south and get warm. So we searched for ramondas again in St Julia where it was considerably warmer and two layers of clothing lighter. A wall of ramondas that Ann knew about was beckoning but upon arrival there wasn't one to be found, not even a leaf or a seedhead. In the space of a year persons unknown seem to have removed every single one. We had one last try and did find a few leaves in a hidden location. The heavens then opened so we legged it back to the car. All this for a flower? But yes, some are disappearing fast. Despite the weather we have had some excellent forays, first into Sonia Hunter's garden where we were able to obtain some bulbs and cuttings, to Susan and Michael Payne's to see their large garden with colourful terrace and pots and between some heavy rain showers we were able to see Jenny Keown Boyd's roses at their best. Our thanks to you all.

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DIVORCED HIM. HE WAS NEVER
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INTERNATIONAL SINGERS



RENÉ DE KNIGHT



A QUARTET OF MEMORIES

Clare Allcard

René was well into his 80s when he received a phone call from an old friend in the States.

Say, did you know they were using your Delta Rhythm Boys recording of 'Dry Bones' on the sound track of 'Rain Man'?"

'No!'

'Yup! You better give them a call. Ask them about royalties.'

René did and received the following response.

'Gee! We thought all you guys were dead!'

René was far from dead. An amazing man from an amazing family: his brother's paintings hung in New York's Metropolitan Museum; his sister was head of one of the US's most prestigious libraries. René himself was a jazz pianist, composer - and inventor. He and his wife Marie moved here after reading an American article on Andorra's 'life forces'.

I first met René when, soon after its inception, he valiantly took the choir in hand. It was René who christened us 'The International Singers' for, back then, he had great touring ambitions for us. Poor René, we proved a serious disappointment to him. Nonetheless, for over two years he wrote music for us, inspired us with great loyalty and patiently directed us from the piano. Trouble was, being a free-spirit jazz musician, he seldom played the same intro twice!

Mike Stone

When he arrived in Andorra, René still had many projects on his agenda. Foremost was his SwingTrue golf improvement system which not only included a special practice mat but attempted to address the psychology behind the swing process. As far as I know he successfully patented it. He had also written a musical, *Lady Sweets*. Not entirely happy with the demonstration tape's opening song, he had Wendy Holmes and myself record a new version which I edited onto the existing tape. I also helped him in other recording projects: a soundtrack for a promotional video for SwingTrue, jazz trio versions of some of his compositions (he provided the piano and bass parts, I some understated percussion), backing tapes for International Club events, and a realised CD of religious music, *Dear Soul* by Renu (Ramala Records RMR CD 909), recorded in Andorra. Whilst René's musical and people skills were unquestioned, when he was faced with something outside his competencies (such as silicon chips) he would always seek assistance and learn from it with grace and enthusiasm. René moved back to California to be with his wife, Marie, who had suffered a health relapse whilst visiting family there. The last thing he asked me to do before he died was to send him a recording of his *Horizons* so he could play it to someone in the music biz. It was probably his last composition. He was 91.

Caz Leonard:

When I think of René the word 'ageless' comes to mind; he seemed able to fit in with any age group due to his deep link with his spirit, helped at times by a spiritual teacher - of which he had several!

René looked at life as a school in which one learns one's lessons, and then returns home for the holidays. And to him, one lifetime was not long enough to absorb all the things there are to know and understand. This I feel enabled him to look at people with compassion; he knew that everyone is passing along the same road, and at times, we all need a helping hand. His way of looking at life must have contributed to his amazing vitality - he certainly lived in a very colourful present tense! And I am so glad that for a little while I was included in that reality. Wherever René is now, I have no doubt he is making the most of it!

Kay Kay:

I had been a little bit in love with René since the day I met him.

I first worked with him when he was Musical Director of the International Club's 'Old Time Music Hall'. As someone without a musical bone in her body I fully expected to be relegated to top tea maker. Ron Richards had other ideas and produced a 'Song' for me that had a chorus which was to be sung, deliberately, completely out of tune. So far, so ingenious.

The challenge for René was to get me through the verse to the point in the chorus where I could give free range to the dramatic cacophony. Standing in his sitting room at the side of his baby grand he lead me gently through the technique of

'speaking' a song, never once losing his patience or sense of humour. He neither patronised nor demeaned, he only made me believe that I could succeed.

At the dress rehearsal some children from the Mertixell Special School had been invited in. As I flung myself into the chorus with all the dramatic power of a wanabee opera singer I caught René's eye.

Neither of us had quite appreciated that these delightful kids suffered no inhibitions, so when they began to rock back and forth groaning, shouting and holding their hands over their ears to protect them from the mad woman, warbling so out of tune, we were taken by surprise. René, professional that he was, simply carried on as though we were receiving the warmest reception in the musical world.

Curtain down and I rushed across to René. He was sitting on the piano stool rocking with laughter; no bruised ego, no temperamental tantrum, just pure joy in the situation. As Kipling wrote, and I am sure I misquote, 'If you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two impostors just the same, then you will be a man my son'.

What a man .



AT HOME WITH THE SINGERS ON THEIR 15th ANNIVERSARY

by Sandra Reid



The International Singers celebrated their 15th anniversary this year. And to mark the occasion they celebrated in style with dinner at the Roc de Caldes followed by a concert. But this wasn't the typical concert where the women stood neatly in tiered rows wearing their familiar blue robes and the men held up the rear sporting suits and blue ties. (All eyes looking at Barbara, of course.)

This time we invited as many guests as the Roc de Caldes dining room could hold. While the women wore evening dress, men were dressed 'al Americano', in short-sleeved shirts, no less!

And not only did the choir sing some of its best-loved songs ('Cindy, Cindy' certainly had a good airing!) but from our ranks came numerous solos, duets and even a quartet singing in German! Had you any idea there were so many talented individuals in one group! We were supported as always by our beloved director, Barbara, our delightful new accompanist, Patricia, and our entertaining Master of Ceremonies, Desmond Allen. (And yes, dear Barbara, as this picture shows, we were still looking at you!)

MODIGLIANI IN ANDORRA

by Nina O'Brien

Although a tiny country, Andorra enjoys magnificent exhibitions and culture events more expected of great cities. We are fortunate to be able to see original works of the great artists on our "door step" and appreciate the efforts of those who obtain and prepare such magnificent displays. I am sure the art lovers still remember the two Dali exhibitions. I can only wonder how, sitting in Andorra, one could arrange and collect so much of Dali. More recently, we have had Modigliani presented to us. It is often hard to believe, considering the size and resources of Andorra and the culture of the country, that we have such opportunities.

Modigliani Amedeo (1884-1920) was an Italian painter and sculptor, who was concerned with the graceful, simplified and sympathetic portrayal of the human figure. Born in Leghorn, he grew up in a Jewish ghetto where he suffered serious illness as a boy. He studied art in Florence and in 1906 moved to Paris, where he became acquainted with Pablo Picasso, Jean Cocteau and other avant-garde artists living there. In Paris Modigliani led a reckless, dissipated life that gradually affected his health. His talent as an artist, however, was never doubted by his fellow artists. He was influenced by Fauvism and later by the work of his friend, Romanian sculptor Constantin Brancusi. Modigliani first produced sculpture inspired by African carvings but eventually concentrated on painting.

Modigliani's paintings, highly distinctive and delicate, are marked by sinuous lines, simple, flat forms, and elongated proportions, almost classical in effect. Portraits and figure studies constitute most of his work and both are characterized by the oval faces for which he is popularly known. Portraits, although of the utmost simplicity in contour, reveal considerable insight and a curious sense of pathos. He achieved, in his best work, a blend of dynamism of African sculpture and the pure grace of the early Renaissance style of Botticelli.

In spite of spending most of his life in France, he remained Italian in spirit. He is considered the greatest Italian artist of the 20th century. He was handsome, amorous and addicted to drink and drugs. He said "I am going to drink myself dead" and he did. His work - painting and sculpture - are in Buffalo, Chicago, London, New York, Paris, Philadelphia, Sao Palo, Washington and elsewhere.



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INTO AFRICA

(continued)

by Ralph MacLachlan

In continuation of the saga of our life in Tanzania; the next development was a move into our assigned house. This was a pleasant surprise. The dwelling was a substantial two storey building with a large well-tended garden – located in what might be described as a leafy suburb of the capital city Dar Es Salaam. There was a live-in general servant and a gardener. Additionally, there was a 24 hour complement of two armed askaris (guards) for security. The servant was named Mahomed – a middle-aged Muslim of small stature with decaying teeth who boasted two wives and numerous children. The wives lived in separate locations and were visited on a rota basis at week-ends. We met the second wife on one occasion – a tall and beautiful young woman. In my secret thoughts I could see some of the merits of polygamy. On one occasion my wife (a late convert to family limitation) attempted to demonstrate to Mahomed the difficulties of feeding large families. She used a small loaf of bread to make her point. Mahomed replied that small families were acceptable for foreigners but no good for Africans. In the absence of state pensions one had to assume that at least one child would look after the ancients in their declining years – therefore a large number of children would provide a rudimentary form of social security. In view of the current pension crisis in the UK his point has resonance outside Africa!. The gardener's name was Abdulla – also a Muslim. These names (and the religious affiliations) illustrate how profoundly slave traders (and colonisers) from the Arabian Peninsula had affected the east coast of Africa. The gardener walked to work each day. His work shirt had originally been tailored in Savile Row, London but all that remained of the original garment were the seams. Fortunately the weather was normally warm. The askaris were armed with bows and arrows and pangas (machetes). I asked one to demonstrate his archery skills. He swiftly planted an arrow in a tree at the end of the garden – with a satisfying thud. Thus reassured, we felt reasonably safe at bedtime but to promote loyalty my wife began to provide a cup of tea and a fried egg sandwich to each askari just before retiring. Whether this helped to keep them awake or was conducive to sleep I was not sure. Finally, just before lights out my wife would lean out of the bedroom window and shout "are you awake askari" to which the standard reply was "yes mama". The servants and askaris were provided (and paid) by the Company.

The garden provided a number of exotic and useful fruits – including lemons. I immediately thought of my favourite sun-downer from the Arabian Gulf – gin and tonic. Alas, neither gin nor tonic was available. I remembered an old Irish saying – "If we had bacon, we could have bacon and eggs, if we had eggs". My next consideration was a supply of beer. Local beer was available but to our consternation could not be purchased without provision of the appropriate number of empty bottles. My

predecessor had not left any empties in the house and fellow employees seemed unable to help. However we finally managed to buy some empties and that particular problem was solved. At this time the lack of foreign exchange was so critical that locally produced whisky (?) and vodka were sold in plastic bags. Locally produced cigarettes were available – and could be bought singly if one was financially challenged. In addition to vodka, local supplies of tomato juice were available so we changed to Bloody Marys for our sun-downers. In these early days my wife began to invite friends and fellow church-goers back to our house for Bloody Marys after church. The Government had banned all vehicular traffic after 2 pm on Sunday – to save foreign exchange. This was useful as it ensured that guests left before the critical hour obviating long afternoons of alcoholic indulgence. At one of the first church services my wife spotted a man she knew from her home village of Dalkey, south of Dublin. It transpired that he was a visiting professor of engineering from an Irish university on a year's exchange deal with Dar Es Salaam University. He and his wife were accommodated in what could only be described as extreme third world conditions. We were happy to invite them to several of our Sunday drink sessions and – in the relative splendour of our garden – listen, with a hint of schadenfreude, to their housing problems.

One Saturday afternoon, shortly after moving into our house, we were sitting quietly in the garden when we heard a hubbub of sound – rising and falling and reminiscent of spectators at an English football match. There was, however, no football stadium in the vicinity!. Shortly afterwards, a grey-faced African burst into the next door garden, pursued by a howling mob shouting "mwezi" (thief). The alleged thief was cornered on the road outside our house and the mob started the process of beating him to death. My wife telephoned the police whilst I considered my options – and decided that discretion was indicated. My wife's conversation (in summary form) with the police station went as follows:

Wife: Is that the police?

Police: Yes mama.

Wife: There is a man (one of yours) being beaten to death outside our house.

Police: What is your name and address?

Wife: Oonagh MacLachlan, 37 Kinindoni Road; but hurry for God's sake!

Police: What is your tribe?

Wife: Irish.

Police: Well, we are sorry we have no transport: if you come and get us we will help.

Wife: Oh for God's sake!

At this juncture, a car with 2 army officers in uniform stopped at the execution scene and rescued the alleged miscreant, badly shaken and injured, taking him away to an unknown destination. We were disturbed by this incident and further alarmed by a subsequent report in the "Tanzania Daily News" of an attack on a police station by a mob who removed an alleged thief and inflicted summary (terminal) justice.

There was no television service in Tanzania and initially we had to rely on the "Tanzania Daily News" for a news

service which was not overly comprehensive. My first experience of socialist democracy was a presidential election – the only candidate being the current incumbent, President Nyerere. The "Tanzania Daily News" presented a full page of instructions on how to complete the ballot paper for a single candidate!. Surprisingly, the president was returned with 99.8 % of the vote. UK papers were not available in the newsagents (there were no newsagents!) so I visited the public library which subscribed to a single air-mail copy of (strangely) "The Daily Telegraph". This was readable for about 30 minutes before falling apart under the onslaught of hundreds of citizens anxious for a glimpse of a non-socialist world. Finally, I opted for the "Weekly Guardian", paid for offshore in sterling.

The Company provided Peugeot 504's for management staff. These had good ground clearance necessary for some of the less well maintained roads. Anything that was not nailed down in Dar was likely to be stolen – together with many items that were in fact nailed down. Our first experience was the theft of the spare wheel from the Peugeot's boot. I asked my wife to report the theft (for insurance purposes) to the local police station. In those days she had more patience than I and she had already made contact regarding the alleged thief who was rescued from the road outside our house. My wife spent some time with the police, filling forms (possibly inherited from the days of the German Empire) with a mass of detail. She finally emerged with the necessary police report to find to her consternation that one of the Peugeot's front headlights had been removed (stolen) while she reported the original theft. She returned to the police station to report the second theft – to a sceptical policeman. However she was able to prove her point by inspection of the damage. So a second police report was laboriously prepared. Spare parts were unobtainable so the spare wheel had to be purchased on the "unofficial" market. I can not recall how the headlight was replaced but Indian "fundis" (craftsmen) could make almost anything if the price was right.

The next theft occurred as I swam in the Indian Ocean from one of the excellent beaches. My wife had elected to remain on the beach. Two young innocent – looking African men approached, greeted her in Swahili, grabbed my clothes and disappeared rapidly. My wife waved and shouted to me as I frolicked in the surf but I misunderstood the message. In any event pursuit or recovery was impracticable. The only significant loss was a pair of spectacles which had to be replaced from the UK. My wife refused to make yet another trip to the police station so we accepted the small uninsured loss. However, the miscreants had not given up. Some time later, we left for a recreational trip to a distant tea plantation. During our absence, a Company auditor (with wife) from Kenya moved into our house. Shortly after our departure a truck (complete with Company logo) arrived at the house – allegedly to collect the air-conditioning units for servicing. The auditor accepted the cover story – but Mahomed the house servant became the hero of the hour by telephoning the Company office to verify the story. In the absence of verification, he called the police immediately who

(somehow) managed to arrive expeditiously and apprehend the culprits – with scant regard for their civil rights!. The police also removed the air-conditioning units as "evidence". These were never recovered. The auditor's wife awoke to find her temporary home filled with bogus maintenance workers and a squad of police beating them up in the course of arrest. She was so upset by the incident – and the police methods employed – that she departed immediately for Kenya leaving her husband to complete his assignment alone.

There was widespread perception in Dar that expatriates were especially at risk (and targeted) because of their relative affluence. Personally, I did not consider that we were any less safe than in a western European city. However a nervous Company management decided that each expatriate should have a "safe haven" in the house. So, mid-way through our assignment the Company installed a metal grill (complete with padlock and key) at the top of the stairs leading to the second storey. In the case of a mass attack we could escape on to the flat roof if necessary but further deliverance was questionable. Anyhow, with our two armed guards and our safe haven, my wife felt fairly secure after dark – and we did not experience any night attacks.

(To be continued.)



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MADHATTERS' SUMMER DANCE



by John Coville

We have Mignon Shaw, Janet Humpreys and Jane Coville to blame for instigating this event, sorry..... thank!

A glorious late May evening (actually, as late as you can get because it was the 31st), indeed the weather was so clement that many perspiring devotees were immediately forced to extinguish their headdress's with an aperitif.

The Coma Hotel had provided us with a lovely room, enticingly pink and soft to complement the excellent menu of Salmon and Pork delights. Ian West was once again on hand in his inimitable style to stir those of us with perambulatory predilections out onto the floor and hats

of all denominations were soon seen cohabiting (some of my best hats are friends).

We were all fortunate to have Sarah Dawtrey take control of affairs, distributing prizes, giving advice etc. etc. Her other half, Tony, was much missed!

Congratulations to Mary Crowe for her splendid Chelsea Flower Show of a hat, Brian Keep for showing us how to get rid of useless CD's, Chris Hansen for her flickering lights and the magnificent and Highly Commended Richard & Joanna Inskip's Ravening Horned Beast of the Bogs...quite safe because Joanna was in control at ALL times ! Runner up John Coville with something obviously rescued from a Fancy Dress outfitters end-of-season sale – he was dumbfounded to go home with a bottle of Cava.

Hats off to everyone for your efforts, both those who participated and those who assisted. We hope you all went home happy.

MADHATTERS' SUMMER DANCE



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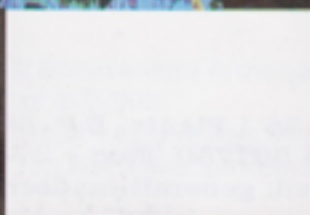


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MADHATTERS' SUMMER DANCE



THE CURE

A story by Valerie C. Rymarenko

Inmaculada had only two attitudes towards him now: neither silently, dully staring or moving slowly about the house, unseeing, as if he did not exist: as if nothing existed. She oversaw his meals; his laundry; she kept the larder; said her prayers. But that was all. Everything else had faded away, bit by bit, day by day. Before, she had sewn, made lace, planted in the garden. He remembered she had smiled; quietly, as she did everything quietly. But the smiles had faded and only the silence remained.

Don Inacio knew why. He knew why the babies had never come, so that the sewing and lace-making slowly ceased. Everything happened slowly: the calf had died gradually. No reason, nothing one could see, but it faded away. The cow's milk dried up and the next cow was no better. The sheep seemed to eat less and grow thinner, and the shepherd said it was a spell and prayed to St. Antoni Abbat. The walnut trees, the olives, the vines – even the pigs – seemed to cease to grow: all was static and yet gently declining. Nothing had gone wrong quickly, but since that day, that day of the loss, it was as though the sap, the life, the warmth began to ooze away. Oh, so little by little that one could not see it at first. Don Inacio felt it before he saw it.

He had searched for explanations: gone to ask the old mad woman; worked spells; brewed herbs; killed the cats – he had even prayed, at the beginning. But he always knew the real reason, though he had hoped he was wrong. After all, he could never undo the loss. Other causes he could have worked to cure, but the true reason for all the ill-fortune was impossible to rectify. His heart sank, day by day, and he faded with Inmaculada and the animals, and the harvests, and the farm.

When he had nearly reached the end of hope – the change came. He began to be angry: inside, noiselessly, but with a growing blackness. In fact, the only thing increasing within the house was his anger, his resentment.

His brother, Don Antonio prospered. His house did not grow cold and silent, but clattered with children and life. His wife, Doña Elena, was plump and she rustled as she busied about. New chairs came in to the house and the kitchen was regularly white-washed. In the village, Don Antonio was greeted with respect: the priest chose him to organize the men when the Virgin was taken to bless the fields. Don Inacio saw all these things and the darkness within him grew.

Once, the brothers had been alike. Their mother, in her black weeds, lived with Antonio – which was right: he was the eldest. And their mother grew old and tiny and almost transparent, but she ruled the family well and saw that it prospered. One day she had sent for the brothers and they had stood before her, almost middle-aged, and humble. She gave each of them a great gift: a magic talisman: a charm against all ills. To Antonio and to Inacio, to each she had given one of her teeth, fallen from the old mouth, kept till the time was right. Antonio's had a gold filling – the better tooth – he was, after all, the eldest.

Inacio's tooth of his mother was yellow too, but only with age. The two sons had kissed their mother's hand, devoutly clutching their treasures, and left her presence, knowing they had been blessed and given powerful magic that – even when their mother was dead – would make the family continue to prosper.

So it was. Life had been good, things had gone well. Don Antonio kept his mother's tooth safely in a little box, hidden in his room, in the hollow base of the crucifix. Don Inacio kept his tooth in a little bag, on a chain around his neck. No one knew what was in the bag, not even Inmaculada, his young bride. The magic was too powerful, too valuable to share. It was enough that it worked and the brothers were blessed. Even after their mother died and was buried and the mourning was over and the grave was less visited, the brothers did well.

Then came that terrible day when – somehow – the bag and the tooth had fallen from the chain around Don Inacio's neck – and been lost! He searched: went over and over his path and the ground: turned the house upside down: threw clothes out of chests: dug up the earth under the fig tree: stayed up all night tipping things out of jars, boxes – raging, whimpering, swearing, praying...nothing. 'nada'...it was gone...the tooth of his mother was lost. And the decline began.

The babies did not come, and the sheep grew thin, and the calf died...and the cow went dry...and the pigs...and the olives...and the vines...and Inmaculada...and the stares...and the silence. Don Antonio grew stout and Doña Elena gave birth...and Inacio faded – and then grew angry. He plotted how to steal Antonio's tooth of his mother – but he did not know where it was hidden. He tried, clumsily, to make Antonio tell. He failed – as everything he did now failed. And then the thought began. Gradually, day after day, Inacio's mind was invaded by the thought. At first it was an almost unspoken feeling, but it grew, little by little, to be his only waking idea. He lay in the bed and watched his wife praying – Inmaculada's bedside prayers – for what? – Inacio could not bear to think what she might be praying for – and he thought his one thought.

It was dark but Don Inacio carried the lantern unlit. He wanted no light: he knew the paths: the way. He had come with the tools he needed.

In the night, on the cold, black hillside he started to dig, like a man driven. And he dug and dug until the spade banged against the wooden box...he paused in cold fear, cold rage...and then continued digging. All the while his mind held the thought; for long his only thought... 'I think there are teeth in my mother still'.

**"THE COCK MAY CROW BUT
IT'S THE HEN THAT LAYS
THE EGGS."**

MARGARET THATCHER QUOTED IN
THE SPECTATOR.

PROGRESS?

(Or how life has become more of a struggle)

The following advances made by humanity were spotted by Richard Inskip in UK newspapers:

The *Ten Commandments* required a mere 300 words and the *American Declaration of Independence* 1,300 words. The *European Union regulations* on the export of duck eggs require 26,900 words.

A *Famous London Store* is telling customers that *European Union regulations* compel it to warn that "Children's Crackers" are unsuitable for those under-eight years of age.

A *Beefeater who guards the Tower of London* – and lives there within yards of the Crown Jewels – has been refused household insurance. The Tower's postcode covers an area that includes a crime-ridden council estate.

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WITHIN JARS, TUBES AND BOTTLES.

CYCLING FOR CHILDREN



The following letter was received from Matthew Beaumont who recently made Andorra one of the stops on his cycle trip from Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire to Romania and back. The reason for this incredible journey was to raise money for the children of Romania through the charity organisation, Hope and Homes for Children. Matthew met many members of the international community at the Xixerella campsite to talk about his volunteer work in Romania.

"Hope all are well, your hospitality and the kindness of everyone I met was unparalleled, thank you.

Tenbury Wells: 3618 miles / 6030km

The Pass de le Casa is the highest road pass in the Pyrenees, and I can testify it is very, very high. 2500 meters to be precise, with not a cloud in the sky and the heat bearing down on me it hurt, a lot, yet I got to the top and whilst taking some photos met some British bikers who shook me by the hand and said how proud they were of me. I had been waved at and encouraged more times than ever before and the momentum was great. Had any of the nice people waving offered me a lift I still don't know if I would have accepted, but that's by the by, it was just great to have got there.

After a short descent the border into France is marked by a massive shopping complex, tax-free heaven in all its glory, but then the real down hill started, 25-miles / 42km straight down hill. Mercifully I was into the wind so I had some natural breaks, but mid-way I passed the 3000-miles / 5000km mark, and flew through village after village. As it started to level out I sat in a lay-by eating apple and blue cheese before grudgingly returning to reality and trying to find a campsite.

The road through the foothills was beautiful, but the body was just tired of going up and down the whole time and with the weather having turned it was a hard few days.

A night was spent in Lourdes, amazing place, but sorry to say it's been totally over commercialized and is an insult to its cause, and then I headed west to join the Atlantic just north of Biarritz.

From a shrine to a saint to a shrine to money, it could not have been more different, the ride down the coast though

took me from the ridiculous to the sublime, climbing hills so high I was in the clouds, descending to beaches where there was more flesh than there was sand. As I entered Spain I discovered I'd chosen a perfect day, Blue Saturday, a big Basque celebration, meant that I gate crashed town parties and celebrations. I was escorted through one town centre by the police as there was no way I could have made it alone.

Arriving near Bilbao the afternoon before my ferry meant that I had some spare time to go into the town centre, had an amazing couple of hours in the Guggenheim museum / gallery and fell in love with the work of Bill Viola. Slight problem that night with no restaurants being open, but got by on bread and cheese and made it to the ferry the next morning with lots of time to spare.

Standing in line waiting to board, me and a mass of motorbikers, one asked where I'd been and what I was doing. He announced the project to everyone else and there was spontaneous applause from each of them. Several hours later, watching whales in the Bay of Biscay having survived watching a Tim Henman victory, one of the bikers came over and offered to buy me a drink. We talked a lot about child care, alternative medicine and why Guinness really is so good, and when he left I was invited over to a group of other bikers who quizzed me about HHC and Romania whilst plying me with more drinks.

The next morning I didn't feel so great, but with a new book to read and the sea a whole lot calmer, I just sat on deck all day reading and resting.

England was confusing, everywhere I looked there were British cars, I could understand people, and I kept trying to cycle on the wrong side of the road. Only once on the first evening was it a big problem, but every junction I had to hope there would be a car to follow otherwise I would be cycling straight towards articulated lorries! Head Office near Salisbury were great, they were all outside waiting for me, balloons, champagne and cakes were all on hand. I even had half a bottle of champagne poured over me in celebration, thanks Mark, but it tasted great. I spoke to friends from Romania and all over England, did a radio interview and finally got to meet all the people who I'd been exchanging texts with for the last 6-weeks.

The cycle for the rest of the day was long, but covered roads I've cycled down in the past, through Bradford on Avon, Trowbridge, Yate, and then over the Severn Bridge to Tintern Abbey where I had my only legal free campsite, at least I hope it was free, no one asked me for any money. The group of school kids there weren't all that impressed to have company, but having done 105 miles from Southampton I was dead to the world in seconds.

My last sprint was a good one, the Welsh hills were not nearly as bad as I remember them and despite the phone ringing every few minutes with people wanting interviews I made it back in good time. The last 5-miles (8km) were done at an average of 25 miles an hour (42Km/h) and typically just after I crossed the border into England I broke my top speed record without even noticing!

I was greeted by cameras, balloons and more phone calls; the body was definitely ready for it!

Some facts and figures, in 43 cycling days or a total of 296 hours, 56 cycling minutes I did 3618 miles, visited 15-countries (if you count Corsica and Wales as countries), crossed the Alps, Apennines and Pyrenees, experienced temperatures from 1 degree C - 45C, had one puncture, an inflamed Achilles tendon and for a while hands that would make Shrek proud.

Everywhere I have been with only a couple of irritating exceptions, I've been met with warmth, kindness and encouragement. Not quite everyone I've spoken to thinks I'm certifiable, and if given the chance I'd be on the bike again tomorrow to do the whole thing again!"



**"EVERY MAN IS SURROUNDED BY A
NEIGHBOURHOOD OF VOLUNTARY
SPIES."**

JANE AUSTEN QUOTED IN THE MONTREAL
GAZETTE.

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MEMORIES OF SPAIN

by Elsie Kellett

I have no garden. My house is small, situated in a narrow street that steeply winds its way up to the stations of the crass, past the purple domed church where the bells strike every fifteen minutes day and night pealing out their message of life and death to the populace. The language of the bells has meaning to all, as it did to their forefathers before them as long as they can remember. The valley is green and beautiful, bursting with fruit and flowers for each morning the golden sun caresses the mountain peaks and softly warms the slopes while eagles soar between the sierras.

I have no garden; what need have I of a man-made plot when this beautiful Balulla valley fills all my needs. "Buenas," says the old man as he winds his way down the ancient street of the water diviner called 'Calle Saure' to where the blacksmith Juan Vicente plies his trade. He stops to pass the time of day with Dolores, the toothless old lady carrying her newly baked bread to her daughter's tiny casa in the Calle Santa Barbara.

The streets are swept of debris before nine in the morning and soon the ladies are trotting down to the church Piazza to buy their vegetables from the farmers' street market. Flowers in profusion spill out onto the pavement. Spicy olives and brown eggs freshly laid tempt the Callasa ladies to buy. No niggardly weighing here, one extra is always added after the correct weight is calculated. By ten o'clock ladies laden with shopping congregate in Paco's Bar for a well-earned cup of coffee and a chat.

In October the town 'awakens' to a lovely choir singing throughout the village, heralding the start of the 'Moras e Christianas fiesta'. It is the highlight of the year... costumes blazing with lights and jewels, absolutely magnificent! An old wooden castle is built on the church square and the old Sardana really comes into its own! On to the 'Battle of the Moors and Christians'. Even the foreigners attempt this lovely dance but sadly we are all left-footed and add no beauty whatsoever to the village experts who, holding their hands above their heads ease themselves completely into the ecstasy of movement.

Now the procession, Roman legions sparkling in gold armour, ten abreast, march by with a flying standard. Moors in turbans ablaze with jewels follow, swords brandished bravely in rhythm with the local band's bracing march. A white horse bows to the crowd baring a twinkling blue-eyed rider who, fully in charge of the huge white stallion, throws me a flower! My goodness, he's an Englishman who runs the local garage. (He scrubs up well, I might add!)

Then the Kings and Queens with pretty flower girls appear. Belly dancers, clowns, lady pirates, ladies in velvet pantaloons all follow for two hours non-stop.

It's a wonderful sight! Why oh why did England stop the Whit walks! The 'Moras e Christianas' in October has lasted in Spain since the 1300s and I for one would not miss it for anything. Callasa den Sarria does Alicante proud!

**" IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T
SUCEED, COVER UP ALL
EVIDENCE OF EVER HAVING
TRIED".**

**" ALL MEN MAKE
MISTAKES BUT MARRIED
MEN FIND OUT ABOUT
THEM SOONER".**

**"IT'S EASIER TO
FIGHT FOR ONE'S
PRINCIPLES THAN TO
LIVE UP TO THEM."**

ALFRED ADLEN QUOTED IN THE L.A. TIMES.

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A CHANCE WALK TO CANOLICH

by Trevor Tasker

While walking in Sant Julia in late May I came across a poster in a bus shelter. The poster had a sketch of a 'walker' with pack and stick. With my limited Catalan/Spanish I could just make out to meet at 8am in the Placa Lauredia on Saturday 29th May, but that was about all the information I had.

On the Saturday, I was up early so I decided to go on this mystery walk, a mystery to me at least. While I was only a few hundred metres from the square a rocket went up over Sant Julia. At the meeting square there were only about 10 people waiting, most of them were young. Then, just before 8am about 40 rockets went off just over the town. Birds flew in all directions thinking some war had just broken out.

Just after 8am a party moved off to the north, (for some reason, about half of the people remained in the square). So I just followed the party going north, still not knowing where I was going, only that the walk would be two and a half hours. We walked to AIXOVALL, and over the new bridge at the hotel Barcelona. A few hundred metres down the road (to Os de Civis), we turned into a small lane by the vehicle inspection center (*inspeccio tecnica de vehicels*). Waiting in this lane were about 50 walkers talking in small groups. Across the footbridge over the river Os, there was a wooden information board indicating that this was the start of the Canolich walk. A few people started off and I followed on a steep single-file track through a wooded area. I noticed that this track was better maintained than most of the walks in the area. In about an hour I came across another wooden information board telling us that we were now at Meners Font. We had already climbed about 400 metres. After about an hour we came to yet another Information board at Collet Purgat; here there were many people resting. Most were teenagers, but there were also whole families (some with the dog and grandmother). By this time the walk leveled-off, the path crossing two large scree slopes, the first of which was completely white consisting mainly of quartz (one of the most common minerals). After another hour we came across a further information board at "Collet Marti" and a refug. However this particular refug is not on the GR map of Andorra that lists all 26 Refugi and, when I looked inside, there were no bunks to be seen. Perhaps it was the Commune resort base for local school children. There was a font to fill up your bottle, but the water was little more than a dribble. The path then went down into a valley, then up again to a church. The smell of BBQs helped with the navigation. Once I had reached the spot I realized how big it was. In fact, most of the inhabitants of Sant Julia seemed to be there. There were even traffic wardens helping with the parking along the road up to Canolich! I also noticed many bags of bread rolls stacked outside the church and outbuildings.

It took me 3 hours to get to the church, and I had to get back, so I decided to leave and walk back using the road

via Bixessarri. When I got back to Sant Julia I had to do some shopping but found that 95% of the shops were closed, even the Mamut Supermarket! But then I remembered that I had seen one of the Mamut till girls on the walk.



I visited the Tourist Office and also asked around about Canolich but I could find no good map of the walk; so I made my own. However, here is what I managed to glean. In the 13th Century (1223) a cowherd from Bixessarri found a multicolored bird and took it back home. The bird kept escaping and returning to the rock where it had been found. Eventually, a wooden carving of the mother of God was found, and taken to Bixessarri. This too had a habit of miraculously returning to the same rock. Finally a sanctuary was built there. Similar tales can be found throughout the Pyrenees dating back to the 13th Century (e.g. nearby Meritxell). So, be warned, on the last Saturday of May each year, Sant Julia is 'closed' and most of the population is at the Canolich Sanctuary, some doing the pilgrimage on foot, and some by car.



Mare de Déu de Canolich



MAD ENGLISH

Reasons why the English language is so hard to learn:

- 1) The bandage was wound around the wound.
- 2) The farm was used to produce produce.
- 3) The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
- 4) We must polish the Polish furniture.
- 5) He could lead if he would get the lead out.
- 6) The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
- 7) Since there is no time like the present,
he thought it was time to present the present.
- 8) A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
- 9) When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
- 10) I did not object to the object.
- 11) The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
- 12) There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row.
- 13) They were too close to the door to close it.
- 14) The buck does funny things when the does are present.
- 15) A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer line.
- 16) To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
- 17) The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
- 18) After a number of injections my jaw got number.
- 19) Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
- 20) I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
- 21) How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

Let's face it - English is a crazy language.

There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger; neither apple nor pine in pineapple. English muffins weren't invented in England or French fries in France. Sweetmeats are candies while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham?

If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth beeth?

One goose, 2 geese. So one moose, 2 meese?

One index, 2 indices? Doesn't it seem crazy that you can make amends but not one amend.

If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught? If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

Sometimes I think all the English speakers should be committed to an asylum for the verbally insane. In what language do people recite a play and play at a recital? Ship by truck and send cargo by ship?

Have noses that run and feet that smell? How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out and in which, an alarm goes off by going on.

English was invented by people, not computers, and it reflects the creativity of the human race, which, of course, is not a race at all.

WORDS OF WISDOM

That is why, when the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible.

**"START EVERY DAY
WITH A SMILE, AND
GET IT OVER WITH"**

*W.C.FIELD QUOTED IN THE COLUMBUS,
OHIO, DISPATCH.*



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**YOU KNOW IT'S TIME TO DIET WHEN YOU
NOD ONE CHIN AND TWO OTHERS SECOND
THE MOTION**



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THE GRASSHOPPER MACHINE

by Elizabeth Steiner

These are the strangest of days.
The sun still seems fresh and
clean. And yet see how the
Grasshoppers
work at their machines,
so hard. How absurd,
they look.
If you sit quite still
one may appear
and eat the very words
from the pages of your book.

I am complacent.
I have a message from inner space
so leave your books to the
Grasshoppers,
busy little knights
Lords of the dazzling market place,

—
and listen to the song of the perfect
blue
far out. The clouds uncurl,
stretching —
their white arms, white as empty
roads
lightly wet with rain
where you may walk just once
and never walk again.

Perhaps you missed the call ?
Unavoidably detained ?
If you had heard then would we all
have been so different, or just
the same ?
It may have been another world
which if we could
see all, then all might seem good.
But the Grasshoppers at their
machines
work on, hear no songs
see no clouds nor lose themselves
in effervescent dreams.



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**COULD IT BE
THAT A DOG IS
A MAN'S BEST
FRIEND
BECAUSE HE
NEVER GIVES
ADVICE, NEVER
TRIES TO
BORROW MONEY
AND HAS NO
IN-LAWS?**

J W Serveis

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NOW I UNDERSTAND !

(The following is an e-mail from a "help desk" set up by a well-known European furniture supplier, in response to a query regarding prices)

Dear Jane,
Thank you for your email regarding the Colony Office Corner Desk. We are currently in a price establishment period which we are required by law to have for 28 days. During this period we establish our prices at the full retail price and we also have an offer of 45% off when you buy two or more units but this is conditional on both items having been displayed at the established price during a regulatory period which we are currently establishing. The item is not available at present because the price has not been established.

"Home Office" as a category was trading on a two-tier pricing platform in July 2003 in line with our kitchen and bedroom trading platform. During this period these products were sold at the higher price for a price establishment period of 28 days. "Home Office" was then changed to a single pricing platform up until February 28th 2004. We have now changed this back to a two-tier pricing platform for the price establishment period to keep it in line with bedroom and kitchen categories. Please accept my sincerest apologies for any inconvenience and confusion caused. Once again thank you for your email and trust that you are now fully conversant with our pricing policy.

Warm Regards,
Raewyn Dale



(Well.... that's cleared
that problem up hasn't
it?)

**** Home Furnishings
E-Commerce Price Platform
Customer Helpline Team

WORDS OF WISDOM

**PEOPLE WHO CANNOT FIND TIME FOR
RECREATION ARE OBLIGED SOONER OR LATER
TO FIND TIME FOR ILLNESS.**

ANN ARCHER

UNDERSTANDING 'NEW SPEAK'**by John Coville**

Here are a few guidelines to the many 'green field' references made in today's press

DUEPROCESS! At last, someone singing from the same hymn sheet; someone embracing the concept of procedure and putting the pro back in process. It's all too easy to lapse into modern technobabble. More and more, hollow suits are taking helicopter views of their engagement synopsis, which amount to no more than in-actionable administtrivia. While I appreciate that, in real-time commercialism, we should build a bridge to avoid the void, bloated syntax and ad-hocracy result of widespread brainstorming. If opportunity were a ship should we wait for it to come in or swim out and grab it? I am amazed to hear so-called professionals 'cooking with gas'. Are we not more eco-friendly? Should we not be 'frying with fossil fuels'? In this climate of correctness, these ideas are so betamaxed. It's nice to be important but, hey, it's more important to be nice. Let me tee this up, getting back to basics is no longer sufficient, we should learn to focus on business. This is a green field opportunity to make some use of that blue sky thinking that lurks just outside the box. Hey, don't get stuck in the envelope !

And, for those of you who still don't get it...a few 'Newspeak' words translated:

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| green field opportunity..... | second chance |
| blues skies thinking..... | second thoughts |
| beacons of excellence..... | good |
| refreshing the brand..... | new logo |
| placing innovation at the forefront of our strategy..... | new gadget |
| the challenge of change..... | old is best |
| brainstorming session..... | try to stay awake |
| employment opportunity launchpad..... | you're fired |
| mainstream..... | dull |
| lifestyle choices..... | which deodorant to buy ? |
| a better you..... | same old you |
| gateway of excellence for the lifeblood of the community..... | school gate |
| taking you to the heart of your neighbourhood..... | bus |
| clasp the future towards you..... | train timetable |
| bettering the streets for a smoother nation..... | traffic warden |
| working at night for a leaner nation..... | burglars |
| at the vanguard of health choices..... | prison suicide watch |
| furtherance and futurity..... | one more time |
| enhancement of bigness in the fuel of endeavour..... | expand |
| unfurlment of opportunities..... | chance |
| radical paradigm shift..... | all change |

Editor's note: Remember, forewarned is forearmed!

LETTERS TO CONCEPTIA

Dear Conceptia,
I have been happily single since birth but my friends continue to criticise me for my spinster status. Do I REALLY need to get married to enjoy life?

Confused of Cortinada

Dear Confused,
There is a way out. All you need is to keep three pets at home to answer the same purpose as a husband:

- 1) A dog which growls every morning.
- 2) A parrot which swears all afternoon.
- 3) A cat that comes home late at night.

Knowledgeably yours,

Conceptia

Dear Conceptia,
I retired a few months ago and had hoped that my wife would now give me her undivided attention. She now tells me that she will be volunteering to help with International Club activities. This seems to me to be most selfish on her part. What should I do to dissuade her?

Neglected of Pal

Dear Neglected (?),
It would appear to me that you are the selfish one. I think you should consider getting a new address and not making a home in your wife's mind. Open all the windows, you may be surprised at what flies in, you may find you can breathe unaided. Be magnanimous and congratulate your wife for offering to help with something that gives us all so much pleasure.

Yours disparagingly,

Conceptia

Dear Conceptia,
My dear old granny thinks my husband is a bit like a UFO. What do you think she means?

Innocent from Erts

Dear Innocent,

If your husband is like a UFO then it is probably because you don't know where he's coming from, you don't know what his mission is and you never know when he's going to take off.

Hope this clears things up.

Effortlessly yours,

Conceptia

Tomato and Orange Soup

2 lbs. ripe tomatoes
1 large garlic clove, peeled and minced
1 tbsp. unsalted butter (or olive oil)
1 bay leaf
Several whole peppercorns
1 cup (236 ml.) stock or broth
1/2 cup (177 ml.) fresh orange juice
1 tbsp. minced mint leaves or basil leaves
Salt
Paper-thin orange slices for garnish

Wash, core and chop tomatoes coarsely. Sauté them gently with garlic, butter, bay leaf and peppercorns for a few minutes. Add stock, cover the pan and simmer for 20 minutes. Strain through a food mill, pressing through as much pulp as possible. Stir in the orange juice and mint/basil and add salt to taste. Chill thoroughly. Garnish each serving with an orange slice. Makes about 5-6 servings.

**A SUGGESTION FOR
UNSUCCESSFUL DIETERS :
DON'T THINK OF IT AS
FAT... THINK OF IT AS
INSULATION**



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ANYOS EVENING


At this moment
some clock chimed
in the valley.
The tent like landscape
collapses.
The present showers and falls
upon the head.

The light is fading
gentler than before.
Calling into view
nothing detailed
nothing small
but only misty mountains,
apartments with lamps in them.

The slumbering bulk of woods.
The fan shaped light
pushing blackness before it
along a winding road.

Night comes
in which reflections in the dark
pool
of the mind
shine more clearly than by day.

John Coville



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