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This issue marks 25 years of bringing you the *Riviera Reporter*, the only local medium in English with both a paper publication and a dynamic website.

There have been many changes over the years but none greater than the use of new technology. In the early years each *Reporter* issue was prepared by filming sheets of text printed from the computer and assembled on film by hand. Now the magazine is prepared entirely on screen and sent to the printer electronically.

Each issue costs nearly €30,000 to produce and is solely financed by our advertisers, so it's our advertisers you should thank for the *Reporter's* prolonged service to the Riviera's anglophone community. And the best way to do this is to think of them whenever you need a product or service.

Another change is our recent adaptation of green technology. We believe that, done sensibly, putting ink on paper is no more damaging to the environment than putting pixels on computer screens. Computers often remain turned on, consuming energy even when they're not being used. All you need to read the *Reporter* is a place in the sun. This magazine is now produced by the greenest printer in the region, Imprimerie Zimmermann in Villeneuve-Loubet. The paper we print on is recycled and recyclable. Production is entirely electronic and no chemical processes are used, unlike in the old days when offset films were developed using pollutants that were flushed down the drain. The ink is entirely biodegradable which answers the question that some of you had been asking: why does the *Reporter* smell different?

So what's next? None of us feel like hanging up our hats any time soon so you can expect more of the same ... and better. Our website (see page 24) is a growing extension of the paper magazine, and you will see some very unique and resourceful additions to the site over the next few months. We have a Twitter feed for breaking news and a Facebook page, which we invite you to "like". Daily local news briefs, the latest VO cinema listings and local events are kept up-to-date. Our magazine advertisers benefit from privileged online presence so if you can't put your hands on that latest paper issue and you need that name and number, look at rivierareporter.com

More than 3500 people downloaded the PDF version of last issue. Our extensive network of free distributors ensures the *Reporter* gets to readers from the Italian border to west of St Tropez and inland, and our vehicles cover about 1800 kilometres delivering each issue.

A note that one of our oldest advertisers and distributors, the Cannes English Bookshop, is closed for renovations until the end of June. And Deco Boiserie, our newest advertiser, now has a second shop near Place Commandant Lamy in Cannes. Our next issue appears in July. *Mike Meade*

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Cover Photo: Early morning off Monaco
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WHAT PRICE NICOLAS?

Past presidents and prime ministers in most countries have expensive privileges for life. Do you know what Sarkozy is going to cost French taxpayers?

James Riddell, by email

According to René Dosiére in his book L'Argent de l'Etat a French past president costs about €1.5 million a year. Like others, Nicolas Sarkozy will be given a monthly pension of about €6000 (gross) for having been French president plus a pension of about €4000 for his time as president of the Conseil Général and Deputy of the Hauts-de-Seine and mayor of Neuilly-sur-Seine. If he opts for his right as past president to sit on the Conseil Constitutionnel, he will be paid an extra €12,000 a month. He will be able to travel free on the SNCF and Air France without limitation and he can expect free accommodation in any foreign city where France has an embassy. He will be provided with a chauffeured car for local trips within France. Two police guards will be assigned to his close protection for the rest of his life. The state will provide him with a Paris office and seven administrative helpers, including an office manager, a national archive manager and five secretaries.

The only other surviving French presidents are Valéry Giscard-d'Estaing and Jacques Chirac. Sarkozy is still young enough to cost French taxpayers for many years. Maybe there's something to be said for electing an older president. M.M.

THE COST OF BEING BRITISH

It's getting expensive to be British. I just

renewed my passport using the online system and credit card payment. I was debited £185! The new passports are much stiffer and seem to have some biometric data and a repeat image of the photo. The last time I renewed my passport it was only about £60. That's inflation for you. Margaret Smith-Collins, Nice

THE PAIN IN SPAIN

Your own and readers' remarks about the trouble encountered by visiting handicapped people pale next to how some expats are treated in Spain. A mentally handicapped British man, Andrew Dmytruk, has been held without trial there for 18 months on suspicion of arson. He has made suicide attempts while in jail and has lost five stone and several teeth since his arrest. The association Fair Trials International hopes he will be tried quickly but they are having little success. I encourage other readers to visit their website at fairtrials.net and support them in their efforts to free this man who claims innocence and deserves a speedy trial. Lydia Ammott, by email

TRACKING THE TRAPS

Some of us are compiling a list of red light and speed trap "radars" in the area. There is a new one on the Voie Mathis in Nice near the Magnan exit in the East to West direction.

H. Forrell, by email

The Sécurité Routière makes no secret of fixed speed trap positions but by all means share this sort of information with others on our online forum. M.M.



OUT OF BREATH

The new rule about carrying breathalysers in the car doesn't altogether make sense. To begin with you are supposed to have an unused one with you in the car. Doesn't it defeat the purpose if it isn't used?

Janice Roswell, above, by email

You have a point. A reminder that éthylo testers must be carried in your car from July 1st. There are some unofficial models being sold at the moment so be sure to buy yours from a reputable store (Carrefour, Auchan, NorAuto, Massa, Feu Vert) and that it is marked Conforme à la norme NF. Expect to pay about €6 for a one-use chemical model and up to €100 for a reusable electronic model. M.M.

MONACO-MONTE-CARLO: NO LONGER A NO-GO AREA

Welcome to Monaco!

Arriving at Monaco-Monte-Carlo train station the other day, around 8h00, I went to use the public lavatories off the main hall. I was shocked and disgusted by what I found: of three cubicles two had broken locks, walls and doors were lavishly decorated with graffiti (often obscene) and there was no toilet paper. Monaco likes to think of its station as something of a showpiece. Visitors are unlikely to be favourably impressed by a facility of such squalor.

A suggestion: the Principality claims that it more or less guarantees jobs to its nationals. Surely among those currently unemployed there are a couple of fellows with the qualifications and experience to carry out the obviously necessary task of bog watching. Chris Cundall, by email

We sent a copy of this email to the Monaco Tourist Office. Their spokesman expressed regret at the condition of the station toilets but insisted that the upkeep and cleaning of such facilities was entirely the responsibility of the SNCF. At his suggestion I then spoke to the Chef de gare at Monaco-Monte-Carlo. He reacted with commendable speed: "I'm proud to be in charge of this splendid station," he told me, "and I'm grateful to you for drawing my attention to this problem." When I checked a couple of days later I found there'd been a determined clean up although one cubicle, badly vandalised, has been taken out of service for the moment. P.M.

AN IRISH EYE

Thank you for mentioning us in your April/May issue on page 38 (Clubs & Associations). Our Brendan Behan evening was hugely successful thanks to the most unexpected attendance of Prince Albert. He was so charming and the ambiance

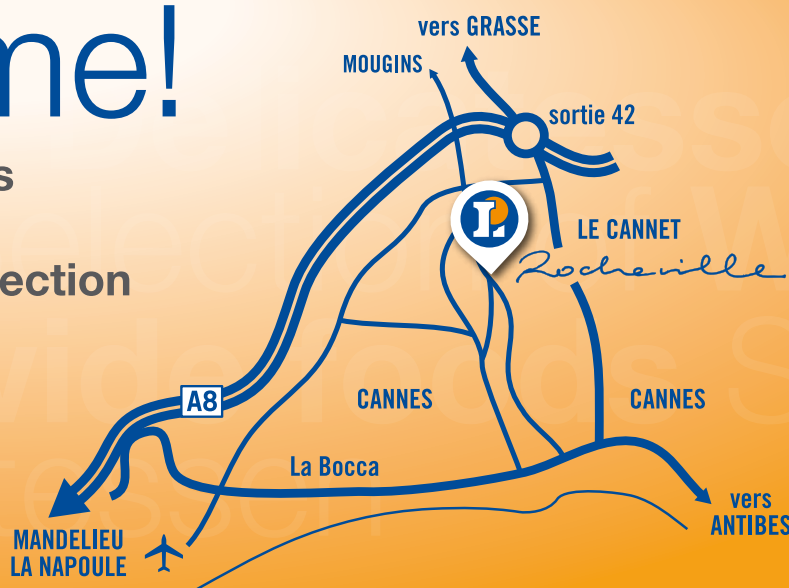
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so relaxed and informal. Not only did he stay for the whole show, but lingered on afterwards chatting to the actors. Everybody was delighted. This is my reward for so much hard work over the years – we founded our group in 1994 – already 18 years ago! May I take this opportunity to say how much my husband and I enjoy the *Riviera Reporter*. Yours is by far the best anglophone magazine in the region – so packed full with valuable information. *Virginia Connell, Monaco-Ireland Arts Society, by email*

UNLUCKY NUMBER

In response to your article in number 150 April/May, 2012 “Attitudes to Friday the 13th” the main reason why the number 13 is considered to be unlucky is that there were 13 people at the Last Supper – where also the salt was spilt. *Joanna Millar, Monaco*

Most airlines have a 13th row. Some exceptions are Air France, Iberia, Ryanair, Continental and Lufthansa. Most airlines won’t admit that superstition has anything to do with it and give “consistency” as an excuse, especially when two airlines merge their fleets. I never understood what “consistency” is supposed to mean. I once stayed in the hotel in Las Vegas where the lift (elevator for Americans) didn’t have a button marked for the 13th floor. But there was a 13th floor. It was occupied entirely by a very wealthy resident who had his own lift. Lucky man! *Jonathan Byrd, by email*

In your interesting article on Friday the 13th, you could have noted that back in January that day was indeed unlucky for the 32 passengers who died on board the *Costa Concordia*

when it capsized off the Italian coast. I learned from a recent BBC report, by the way, that the master of the vessel was by no means unusual in not going down with his ship. A Swedish study of dozens of shipwrecks since 1850 has shown that very few captains have done this. Captain Smith of the *Titanic* was quite exceptional. *Tony Rossiter, by email*

UP IN THE AIR

Like other publications you often have a dig at Ryanair and it’s no surprise. As one irritated passenger said on the web recently, “It’s nothing like low cost in many cases ... and with an incompetent and surly staff it’s horrendous.” O’Leary, of course, crows delightedly at such quotes, pointing out that his planes are packed and most of the moaners happily fly with him again. Not me. My last experience

of the company was so awful that I decided I’d never fly with them again. I’ve found that if you look carefully you can often find good fares with carriers like Air France and BA where you’re usually treated like a human being. Try it next time you’re looking for a flight. *Derek Wroe, by email*

Just thought I would drop you a note re BA advertising new flights to Gatwick. In the last issue of the *Reporter* and on a certain radio station BA are advertising new flight times to Gatwick from Nice that will connect with flights from Gatwick to the Caribbean. Having spoken to BA this morning, these new flights only apply to their summer timetable, and cease on Oct 27th. The most popular time of year to holiday in the Caribbean is winter, when they, in their wisdom, have decided to stop the extra flights and ➔

revert to the old times. Great thinking from BA, and very misleading advertising.
Michael Walker, Riviera Reporter forum

For the moment, the early morning flight to Gatwick links directly to the Caribbean flights during the summer only but I don't see what is "misleading". Airline advertising is usually season related as schedules always change in March and October. I put your claim to BA's French Director Patrick Malval and he pointed out that the airline business is very competitive and there's little room for loss-making routes. The Caribbean connections through Gatwick are possible at the moment because other NCE-LGW summer traffic is sufficient to cover the considerable expense of a "night stop" of crew and aircraft in Nice, ready for the early morning departure. This permits a full business day in London as well. Malval assured me that the company is keeping a close eye on the load factors and if they show that an early morning NCE-LGW liaison is feasible in the winter, one will indeed be introduced next year. M.M.

IT'S A DATE

I enjoy your excellent magazine but I feel I must take

you to task re a disagreeable Americanism. I refer to the date in your article on P 9. Surely you should have used the European manner, ie 17/02/12 as I would think you had more British readers than American. Continue the good work.
John Westlake, by email

This was a typo, however, we don't consider Americanisms "disagreeable", even when not part of our house rules. M.M.

THE PICASSO LEGACY

In your obituary for Dorothy Chamaide last issue you mentioned that she had acquired several Picassos. The master was very prolific so a great many people are lucky enough to possess one of his works, sometimes found or bought for a very low price. Recently an unemployed man in Ohio bought what he thought was a copy in a charity shop for \$15 but it turned out to be an original print which he was able to sell for \$7000. The previous owner was a schoolteacher who had held on to it for many years without realising it was an original and had decided to donate it to the charity shop.
Michael Kyrian, Vallauris

KEEPING WARM

Can you advise? I've lived here for many years on now

a very limited income. I'm in receipt of a UK state pension but I'm told I do not qualify for the Winter Fuel Allowance. This is bad news – I find the cost of heating very onerous.
Name and address supplied

I'm afraid the news for our reader is bad: put simply, if he never received the WFA when a UK resident he won't qualify to receive it here. P.M.

IS YOURS A HOME SWEET HOME?

We are currently casting for a series of the ITV1 property game show *May the Best House Win*. The series features interesting homes that have been lovingly created by their owners, real passion projects and properties that are distinctive and express their owners personality, whether it's people who live in interesting conversions, fascinating period properties, or who have filled their home with fascinating objects or artefacts, or decorated in a particular theme. We are coming to the South of France to film in a few weeks' time. Anyone wishing to apply for the show can call +44 20 71 57 42 34 or email their contact details to besthousefrance@shiver-productions.co.uk
Sunil Mistry, by email

20 years ago

Cleaning up the image – but what about the act?
 A lot of local businessmen, especially in tourism and related areas, are worried. Their turnover is down, they are convinced, not only because of the worldwide recession but also as a result of the poor reputation which the Côte d'Azur has acquired abroad. Their anxieties echo, in many respects, those reflected in documents put out by the Prefecture and the Chamber of Commerce.

Some of the more energetic members of the business community have decided that something must be done. Prominent among them is Mike Riddell, British boss of Marineland in Antibes, and Patrick Millet, senior partner in the ARSH market research firm in Sophia. As they see it, the area has acquired a reputation for administrative confusion, corruption, urban blight and pollution which is economically very harmful. To mobilise business opinion Riddell and his collaborators have mailed 3800 firms urging them to join an association called *Ici Côte d'Azur*.

And what does it intend to do? Image is all, it seems, since their immediate aim is to make the world think better of this region. Millet is a sociologist by training and will have been taught that what matters is not reality but what people perceive to be reality. True enough, but perceptions change as they are contradicted by reality. Anyone who spends any time here soon realises that the Côte d'Azur is indeed plagued by administrative confusion, corruption, urban blight and pollution. Putting out a glossy brochure to deny this won't change anything. Admittedly, Jacques Médécine got away with some remarkable distortions of reality but the old magician's services are no longer available.

Reporter, June-July 1992

Music with a (heart) beat

Recently on the *Reporter* forum, a user asked where defibrillators could be found in Cannes. A helpful website defibrillateurs-en-france.com maps out locations across France.

Dr Claude Mariottini, president of Association 20000 Vies (20000-vies.com) – a charity that helps supply local towns with defibrillators – explains the importance of raising awareness on this subject: "In France, cardiac arrest accounts for around 50,000 deaths a year. Only 3% of victims are resuscitated but with a defibrillator the rate is 30%."

A heart surgeon in Nice, Dr Mariottini is also the front man of Low Budget Men (see *Reporter* 145), a group that raises money for the association. The release in June of their new album *Crossing Lives* will be supported by local concerts (see page 40 for details) with all proceeds in aid of the Association 20000 Vies, to offer Automated External Defibrillators (pictured) to towns on the Côte d'Azur.

See facebook.com/pages/The-low-budget-men/140054956045907



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French news & views

Exit Sarko ... Enter “wobbly pudding”



Photo: Dilma Rousseff

Score Sarkozy 48.3% - Hollande 51.7%



Photo: kyro

The French, Napoleon once remarked, “complain about everything and all the time”. True ... and discouraging for any President who seeks a second mandate. Whatever he may have to his credit, he risks getting blamed for whatever the voters don’t like. Unemployment, for example, is at its highest level for twelve years. This is scarcely Sarko’s fault but he’s been held responsible. Again, many politicians and economists see some measure of austerity as unavoidable in the present circumstances in Europe. In France the Left has dismissed this as the policy of a socially discriminatory President.

Of course, Sarko has suffered from being seen by many people as not very likeable with his fondness for the company of the rich, his taste for the high life and, unpalatable to a large number of the French, an evident streak of vulgarity not appropriate in a President. And articulate as he is, he failed to give a clear and positive definition of his ongoing achievements. As his biographer Catherine Nay has put it, “He hasn’t sufficiently emphasised his successes ... He changed the subject every day so people forgot what he’d done the day before ... He left their minds in a fog.” This was aggravated by his “finger-in-every-pie” style which could win him some credit but also much blame.

So what of his successor, François Hollande? Until quite recently he had to take a lot of stick from his socialist colleagues. Party First Secretary Martine Aubry, his rival for the candidature, declared him to be “weak ... vague ... indecisive”. More brutally, her father, veteran Eurocrat Jacques Delors, dismissed him as *une couille molle* (no sorry, this is a family paper – ask the dustman). A satirical TV show awarded him the widely adopted nickname *Flamby*, a brand of wobbly caramel pudding. His vagueness was very clear in the list of “sixty engagements” pushed through millions of letter boxes (example: “I will make every effort to reduce unemployment”) and his failure to explain how his more concrete proposals would be funded (“I will create 60,000 new posts in education”).

What he’s offered the French as he throws his arms in the air yet again is “a singing tomorrow” as they say, with lower taxes, higher benefits, retirement at 60 and gay marriage. It’s not clear, of course, how he’ll approach the problem of the deficit and the Eurozone crisis. As with Mitterrand back in 1981, the first months and after of his mandate will be marked by efforts to keep the singing going ... until reality breaks in. Hollande, remember, will have to cope with pressure from the crazies on the Left, notably Jean-Luc Melenchon who has quite a following among the young. Here’s a man who claims the governments he most admires are those of China, Cuba and Venezuela. If the workers don’t get their due, he says, he calls for “insurrection”. Let’s hope Hollande can face him down.

“We had a choice: pack a bag or end up in a coffin”

So says Cannes resident Alain Ferrando, recalling what happened to his family, and around a million other “French of North Africa”, just 50 years ago. These are the people who, with their descendants, are known as *pieds-noirs*. Their story is little known among foreigners here and even the metropolitan French have been

reluctant to dwell upon it.

The outline is simple enough, the details more complicated. In 1830 the French invaded Algeria, then part of the Ottoman Empire. Across a quarter of a century it was subjugated and declared to be an integral part of France, eventually made up of three departments. It was settled by Europeans, including many from other Mediterranean countries such as Spain, Italy and Malta (hence such typical *pied-noir*

names as Sanchez, Mazzucco and Attard). By the middle of the last century around a million Europeans dominated a “native” population of some 9 million Arabs and Berbers.

For most of the *pieds-noirs* life was very good ... and survivors of that exodus recalled by Alain Ferrando speak of their “African” years with great nostalgia, often remembering the scent of the orange trees, the aroma of frying green peppers (a great favourite) and, above

Martin Courtois, in the Vosges village of Bruyère, got a demand recently from *le fisc* for a property tax left unpaid by his grandfather ... who died 62 years ago. Said Martin, “I know these *petits fonctionnaires* work slowly but this is ridiculous.”

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all, extolling the wonderful spirit (they claim) that existed in their communities. They usually have little to say of the deeper realities of a society in which “native” children were offered little or no education and an adult Muslim was paid on average one-fifth of a European’s wage. Of course, it’s futile to dwell on such social “injustices”: that’s how colonialism worked and it can’t be usefully judged by our standards.

But colonialism in Algeria, as elsewhere, was quickly doomed after the end of the Second World War. Muslim discontent simmered after 1945 and by 1954 flared into open guerrilla warfare. At first Paris governments believed this could be contained and some 600,000 troops were sent in. Charles de Gaulle, returning to power in 1958, thought otherwise – he was a great reader of history – and



10cm
average height the
French have grown over
the past century

175.6cm
average male height

169.6cm
average female height

“very tall” Gauls
1.3 million men at
190cm or more
400,000 women at 180cm

opened negotiations with the rebels. In 1962 Algeria was granted independence. The immediate outcome was a mass flight of Europeans across the sea to metropolitan France – “a choice: pack a bag or end up in a coffin” – and many settled along our coast. They brought with them a visceral resentment at de Gaulle’s “betrayal”, a feeling aggravated by the less than warm welcome they often found here. In fact, like comparable refugee groups – the UK’s East African Asians, for example – they were empowered by misfortune and have made a notable contribution to the economy and culture of this area, from business entrepreneurship through the revival of the Jewish community, North African Sephardi replacing the perished Ashkenazi, to politics where their presence does much to explain the strength of the National Front here.

Over recent months there has been talk in the media of the events of 1962 and some admission (as by Sarko) of official guilt for their treatment. After half a century wounds are still raw: Laurent Garcia in Toulon, a third generation *pied-noir*, now in his forties, is bitter: “We were French, they told us, and yet they betrayed us. I heard that from my father and that’s what I tell my kids.”

Pot: a hot potato

Doug, an exchange student from a US West Coast college, felt at home his first day in Nice. “I smelt it as I walked through the front door of the dorm.” What he’s confirming, of course, is that students here – like students on American campuses – smoke pot more or less openly, even if university administrators look grim about this or sometimes even try to deny its presence.

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Photo: Cimec2

A recent French study found 1.5 million people said they were regular pot users.



Photo: Lupinelawyer

France's National Centre for Space Studies says a fifth of sightings await explanation.



Photo: Philippe Viglietti

Former mayor Jacques Peyrat accused of spreading rumours about Estrosi's family.

Certainly, cannabis offers a textbook case of how official and actual realities can be very different. You can still come across claims that the drug is an indulgence of a depraved minority. Not so: one recent national study found that 13.5 million French adults had consumed cannabis and that 1.5 million admitted to being "habitual users" (likely an understatement, say experts).

This is context for the likely emergence of soft drugs as a live issue in political debate, especially with the socialists forming the new government. Already there is a strong current of opinion in the party that favours the legalisation – or *depenalisation* – of cannabis. A vocal spokesman in this sense is former Interior Minister Daniel Vaillant: "It's a daft law. First, it doesn't really work as repeated studies have shown and then it's applied in a very haphazard way. It ties up a lot of police time, erodes respect for the law and leads to the criminalisation of otherwise good citizens. And if we get rid of it, the traffickers would be out of a job." Not everyone agrees. In fact, in one recent survey 58% of respondents were opposed to legalisation. A number of prominent socialists have come out against Vaillant's point of view, including Martine Aubry and Ségolène

Nice

the second most visited city in France after Paris.

Top 6 attractions

Promenade des Anglais & Vieux Nice (1m)

Bibliothèque Louis Nucera (1m)

Parc Phoenix (450,000)

Musée Matisse (160,000)

MAMAC (160,000)

Palais Lascaris (80,000)

From the Office du Tourisme

Royal. What are their arguments? One – which we find unconvincing – is that traffickers would simply turn to pushing hard drugs. "That's pure speculation," says Vaillant. "Cannabis is legal in Portugal, along with some other recreational drugs, but there's been no increase in consumption." Less easy to dismiss are medical objections. Dr Laurent Karmila, a specialist in addictive conditions, says, "It's a totally unacceptable idea. We're talking about a drug that can cause schizophrenia and leads to road accidents." Vaillant again: "I'd like some hard figures to back up that kind of talk. Millions of people have used cannabis without ill effects. Take Barack Obama – he's admitted he smoked pot as a student and, unlike cautious Bill Clinton, he inhaled."

"Take me to your leader"

As we note elsewhere in this issue, this is the season of unwelcome visitors: among others, mosquitoes, jellyfish

and burglars. And there's also the chance of encountering an ET. That's right: over these months you're more likely than at other times to see (or think you've seen) a visitor from outer space. According to France's National Centre for Space Studies (CNES) late spring and summer are the peak times for celestial traffic and this region holds the record from reported sightings – around a hundred a year. "That's easy to explain," says CNES expert Charles Arnaud. "At this time of year the skies are clearer and also people are more likely to be out of doors in the evening and able to see things, whatever they are."

So what do they see? "We're not going to say that we've confirming evidence of extra-terrestrials coming to have a look at us. However, every report that seems serious is investigated. The vast majority, even when the observer is a civil or military pilot, turn out to relate to phenomena with a fairly simple explanation, involving a meteorite, say, or

Old hands will probably know that the Prom' in Nice was a Keynesian notion of the Reverend Lewis Way, an Evangelical parson working in Nice. In 1822 a terrible frost destroyed many of the local orange trees, throwing many *niçois* out of work. He persuaded resident Brits to create jobs for them by funding a walkway along the shore – today's Promenade. A less familiar fact is that Way was well known in his time as a Christian Zionist, arguing that it was God's will for the Jewish people to return to Palestine.



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an aspect of weather or just aircraft lights. The number of sightings has increased over recent decades, given the number of aircraft around and various kinds of space vehicles. Of course, people have always seen things in the sky. For centuries they were often given a religious significance – think of the Star of Bethlehem – but now science fiction seems to be the first call for help with interpretation.” Arnaud and his colleagues at the CNES are not simply blindly sceptical. “That wouldn’t be a valid scientific attitude. Around one-fifth of sightings await explanation.” Among mysterious phenomena in the records are revolving circles of blue light seen above la Colle-sur-Loup and a huge blue egg-shaped object which hovered over Lorgues. One curiosity is the tradition found in the Alpes-Maritimes villages of Andon and Coursegoules concerning

strange visitations from the heavens which have been traced back for generations. At the *mairie* in Andon a woman official laughed: “I heard that stuff when I was a kid but I’ve never seen anything or met anyone who has.” In Coursegoules the *secrétaire de mairie* was more encouraging: “I’ve never seen anything but there are people here who claim to have seen strange things in the sky and some of them believe they’re from outer space. I wonder why spacemen would want to come here?”

Estrosi clears the streets ... and the air

“I’m determined that our city should be a place where people can go about their business without any trace of fear or discomfort.” So says Christian Estrosi. And he means it. Recent measures include bans on “aggressive



According to Michael Mould’s Dictionary of Cultural References in Modern French (see Reporter 147), “French politicians are allowed to become lawyers without taking the bar exam. Nobody has yet been refused. Such politicians include Dominique de Villepin, Jean-François Copé and Rachida Dati.” Well, at least they can’t become doctors.

begging” (including those annoying windscreen washers) and on drinking alcohol on the street or in parks and gardens between 8pm and 5am. Late-night groceries are now compelled to close at half past midnight. Says the mayor, “That’s where the jobs used to buy their booze and that led to a lot of trouble.”

One man who doesn’t appreciate Estrosi’s undoubted popularity is his predecessor and former National Front honcho Jacques Peyrat. Recently a rumour was spread that the mayor’s daughter had been secretly married to an Arab in Morocco. Estrosi was angered: “First, if one of my kids chooses a spouse – whatever race or colour – I’d go along with that and wouldn’t make it a secret. But this story isn’t true and it’s disgraceful that someone like Jacques Peyrat should be spreading it around.” ■

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Joan of Arc

Was she hiding something and what else don't we know?



Joan of Arc's Death at the Stake (Hermann Stille 1803-1860) at the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg

Your average Dupont doesn't know much about France's national heroine ... except that she was "burnt by the English". This ignorance is understandable since, although thousands of books and dozens of plays and films have been devoted to her, what we really know about is her career as a mythical figure rather than as a real human being.

So what are the basic facts? Jeanne, as she's known in France, of course, was born in 1412, on a date that's uncertain but is traditionally held to be January 6th, into a peasant family in the Vosges village of Domrémy. Against all likelihood, at just seventeen she emerged as a leader of resistance to the English invader of the time. She claimed to have heard angelic voices over several years previously urging her to take on such a role (she had the additional motivation that English soldiers had raped her sister). As the story goes, she dynamized the wimpish King Charles VII

and then, clad in armour, led his troops to victory. Her triumph, however, was short-lived. Someone betrayed her on her own side and sold her to the English. She was imprisoned and then put on trial as a witch who had "completely abandoned the decency and reserve of her sex". Found guilty, she was burnt alive in front of the Rouen cathedral in 1431.

From late developing adolescent to Gallic icon

How reliable are those "basic facts"? Certainly, there's evidence that a teenage girl – even if *un garçon manqué* ("tomboy") – did play a part in the battle with the English. Details, however, are obscure: what were the circumstances of her "sale" to the enemy, for example? We may have, though, some idea of what she looked like. During her trial a court official made a sketch of the accused girl, which has survived. Unsurprisingly, she doesn't look very feminine. On screen she's usually been portrayed by attractive women – Sandrine Bonnaire and Imogen Stubbs, to mention a couple – but last year's Clémence Poésy, at best *une jolie-laide*, in *Jeanne Captive* was likely closer to the reality. As to her character and behaviour these remain enigmatic. All we have to go on is that she heard those voices telling her to take up arms ... and to avoid sex.

At the time her accusers put the angelic messages down to witchcraft. More recently many other explanations have been advanced. Typically, Dr Lydia Bayne of the University of California-San Francisco concluded that Jeanne was "an epileptic given to partial complex seizures, marked by trance-like states and hearing

voices", the latter often provoked by "rhythmic sounds" (Jeanne often mentioned hearing church bells). More fancifully, a French doctor has offered the view that she was actually a man with "a hormonal disorder" and "hidden testicles" (she certainly had balls). In a recent paper the historian Colette Beaune argues that Jeanne was simply "a late developing adolescent" (a common condition in pre-modern Europe) who fantasised about virginity because she had no experience of the alternative. There's much more speculation of this kind, all of it unverifiable.

On the other hand, there's a mass of evidence about Jeanne's later career as a Gallic icon. Although she was formally rehabilitated by the French Church before the end of the 15th century – after all, she was seen as a victim of the English – she was virtually forgotten for centuries, except for occasional dismissive asides (for Voltaire she was just "an unlucky idiot"). Change came in the mid-19th century as part of a continuing effort to strengthen and consolidate French national identity. Very soon she became the focus of competing claims and enthusiasms among different groups, although Catholics and socialists even joined forces to lobby for her canonisation. The situation during the Second World War was especially interesting. The collaborationist Petain regime put up posters showing Jeanne at the stake with RAF bombers flying above her and the legend "the criminal always returns to the scene of the crime". At the same time both Charles de Gaulle and the underground communist party adopted her as a symbol of resistance to the Nazis.

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**Colour her whatever
way you like**

Within today's politics the attempt to take over *la Pucelle*, as she's known, continues. Partly this has been provoked by the claim of the Le Pen's National Front that she is exclusively theirs. Objection has come from all sides. François Mitterrand called for "vigilance and unity" in the name of Jeanne, while Ségolène Royal has declared her "loyalty to this daughter of the people". Back in January Nicolas Sarkozy was in Domrémy for the birthday celebrations, insisting that "she belongs to the whole of France, not to one party or group". But the French had better watch out: the Japanese have been eyeing "Jann d'Ark" for years, hailing her as "the first of the women Samurai", and even giving her the leading role in a typically violent video game. And why not? As historian Nicolas Offenstadt has put it, "She's very useful ... You can colour her whatever way you like." *P.M.* ■

Victoria Chapel: "such a pretty little building"



No other British expat community in Europe has so many active Anglican churches as we have on the Côte d'Azur. Just a century ago there were 19 between Menton and Saint-Raphaël; there are now half a dozen (Menton, Monaco, Nice, Cannes, Vence and Saint-Raphaël). In an interesting (and well-illustrated) booklet Gilles Teulié has resumed the history of one church, St John's Grasse, now used by the French Reformed Church – of which he and his wife are members – and known as Victoria Chapel. As in the 1880s the British population – they mainly came in winter – increased in and around Grasse so there was call for an Anglican place of worship led by the Booker and Bowes families. St John's was finally opened in 1891 and Queen Victoria, on one of her Riviera visits, attended the Easter Day service. Mary Adeane, her lady-in-waiting,

found it "such a pretty little building". However, unlike some other Anglican churches here it did not flourish, a limited population meaning a chronic financial precariousness.

It survived the First War – for some years before 1914 the Chaplain was given free board and lodging at the Grand Hotel – but the Twenties and Thirties were hard. Many Brits left in these years, especially after sterling weakened so much in the later decade. One who stayed on was Alice Pearce (Madame Jacot) who did her best to protect St John's from the Germans: "Nobody who didn't live under them," she recalled, "could imagine what it was like." It was clear enough after 1945 that Grasse could not survive as an independent chaplaincy. Finally, after protracted negotiations involving the Diocese of Gibraltar, the building was passed to the French Reformed Church. Anglican services are still occasionally held – Giles Williams from Cannes conducted a wedding there not long ago – but these are very rare. The Victoria Chapel (pictured) is well worth a visit and justifies Mary Adeane's description.

Gilles Teulié's attractively produced booklet, Victoria Chapel – with text in French and English giving a detailed history – can be obtained from the author at 256 avenue Paul Bourret, 13300 Salon de Provence, for €10 including packing (proceeds to the upkeep fund).

Tips for travellers

Legacy vs Low cost



MD of British Airways France, Patrick Malval, pictured third from left, announced at a recent press conference that BA now has 13 daily flights to London. Also, BA's Terminal 5 at Heathrow has been voted the World's Best Airport Terminal 2012 by Skytrax.

News for Norwegians:

Across this season they can fly to Oslo from Nice (Sandinaivan Airlines or Norwegian Air Shuttle) and Toulon-Hyères (Ryanair).

THE LEGACY OPTION

The prevailing notion is that low-cost carriers such as easyJet invariably offer better prices than legacy carriers such as British Airways (see following item). Careful comparison, notably a report published in the *Daily Mail*, shows this is far from true in many cases.

British Airways (*ba.com*) has been flying to and from Nice for 66 years and as London is the second destination out of Nice-Côte d'Azur after Paris, more Gatwick flights have recently been added to their Nice-London routes.

A new morning flight to Gatwick (dep 7h05) allows easy connections to destinations in the Caribbean (Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic) and Florida (Tampa and Orlando), as well as Mauritius and the Maldives in the Indian Ocean.

Last year BA carried almost 550,000 passengers from here to Heathrow and London City, where fifteen BA aircraft are based. The company expects this figure to rise to 620,000 in 2012.

And good news for air miles. The IAG Group, which owns BA and Iberia, has just bought BMI and codeshares with American Airlines so now, whatever route and whichever IAG airline, your Avios (air miles in old-speak) can be used.

See a more detailed report and links at *rivierareporter.com*, keyword "BritishAirways".

GO FLY WITH THEM!

Nice-Côte d'Azur Airport, with over a hundred destinations timetabled, expects some 11 million passengers to pass through its gates this year – over a 5% increase on the 2011 figure (10.4 million). A significant contribution to this traffic will be made by flights originating at the new "low-cost" bases inaugurated at the end of March by Air France and easyJet. A wide range of destinations is on offer, including in the case of Air France, Athens, Istanbul and Tel Aviv.

The national carrier has been quick to emphasize that in its case "low cost" doesn't mean minimum service. Fliers will be able to choose their seats and

will not have to pay for food and drink on board. And more: a closer look shows that, whatever they say, easyJet doesn't come out cheaper. They claim that their base fare on these routes is just €32 compared with Air France's €50. But remember they are skilled extractors of "ancillary revenue" (charges additional to the advertised base fare). To give one example: you have one piece of checked baggage, weighing in at maximum 20kg – you'll pay easyJet €28 for that but it's free with Air France. This sort of thing has to be taken into account when deciding how to fly to the UK. Maggie Neden, a second-homer in Cassis, points out that both BA and Ryanair offered the same fare Gatwick-Marseille of €78. In reality, given all the extras, the supposedly low-cost alternative was much more expensive. And back to easyJet: if you're wheelchair-bound best give them a miss. They've just been fined €70,000 by a French court for refusing to board unaccompanied handicapped passengers. The judge threw out the airline's claim that they constituted "a security risk". ■

Business

Minding your own business

BY PETER JOHNSON

Indemnités Congés Payés	1 624.93	12.8000	207.99	1 624.93	6.0000
SALAIRE BRUT TOTAL	1 624.93	12.8000	207.99	1 624.93	6.0000
ACCIDENT TRAVAIL	1 624.93	1.5000	134.87	1 624.93	1.5000
ALLOCATIONS FAMILIALES TAUX PL	1 624.93	8.3000	1.62	1 624.93	8.3000
VEUVAGE	1 624.93	0.1000	4.87	1 624.93	0.1000
MALADIE	1 624.93	0.3000	6.50	1 624.93	0.3000
VIEILLESSE TOTALITE	1 624.93	0.4000	29.25	1 624.93	0.4000
VIEILLESSE PLAFONNÉE	1 624.93	1.8000	65.00	1 624.93	1.8000
FINA SUR TRANCHE A	1 624.93	4.0000	1.62	1 624.93	4.0000
CONTRIBUTION EMPLOI SOLIDARITE	1 624.93	0.1000	73.12	1 624.93	0.1000
FINA / TOTALITE / + 9 SAL	1 624.93	4.5000	19.50	1 624.93	4.5000
TRANSPORT	1 624.93	1.2000	32.66	1 624.93	1.2000
ASSÉDIC TA	1 624.93	2.0100	1.74	1 624.93	2.0100
AGS	1 624.93	8.0000	8.12	1 624.93	8.0000
RETRAITE CIRSE / IER TRANCHE	21.77		29.59	21.77	
AGFF Tranche 1		0.5000	2.92		0.5000
PREVOYANCE CIRSE	1 624.93	1.8270	7.31	1 624.93	1.8270
TAUX 8% / PREVOYANCE	1 624.93	0.1800	21.41	1 624.93	0.1800
CSG-CRDS NON DEDUCTIBLE	1 624.93	0.4500	-211.24	1 624.93	0.4500
CSG-CRDS DEDUCTIBLE	1 624.93	4.2500	589.70	1 624.93	4.2500
Taxe apprentissage	503.73	-0.1300		503.73	-0.1300
Taxe continue	1 624.93			1 624.93	
Formation continue					
Contribution au dvpt apprentis					
Effort construction					
Taxe sur salaire s/totalité					
ALLEGEMENT FILLON					
MONTANT TOTAL DES RETENUES					

Yet, are any of these measures really tackling the fundamental problems of the French economy? By the time you read this the country will have just voted a new President for a 5-year term and, whatever the result, the new incumbent at the Elysée has got to balance France's books, last achieved in 1974. Public debt stands at 90% of GDP and increases by the month (predicted to reach 100% by 2015 or 2016), while public spending at 56% of GDP is higher than in any other Eurozone country. Unemployment has peaked over ten years and not dropped below 7% in nearly 30 years, creating an underclass of wretchedness in the many *banlieues* that ring France's big cities.

CSG - General social contribution

Created in 1991, this deductible differs depending on the type of income to which is applied.

CRDS - Contribution to social debt repayment

Introduced in 1996 to fund the *Caisse d'amortissement de la dette sociale* (Cades), it's not deductible from tax base on income.

Social contributions

No sooner had the last business article been posted in *Reporter* 150 than the next wave of bad news came down from Bercy, namely that the CSG/CRDS (*prélèvements sociaux*) was going up by a further 2 points to 15.5%! This is the social tax levied on dividends (the subject of last issue's column), investments, capital gains, bank interest and net rental income. The new level of tax comes in effect on July 1st 2012, so – as a Director of a SARL – every good reason to take your dividends before this date and pay at the old rate of 13.5%

These social taxes have been around for 20 years and started off at the modest rate of 1.1%. The biggest leap came in January 1998, when they reached 10%, and since then it has been ever upward and – as demonstrated by the last 2-point hike – increasingly frequent. It's the first place the government seems to think of to raise revenues.

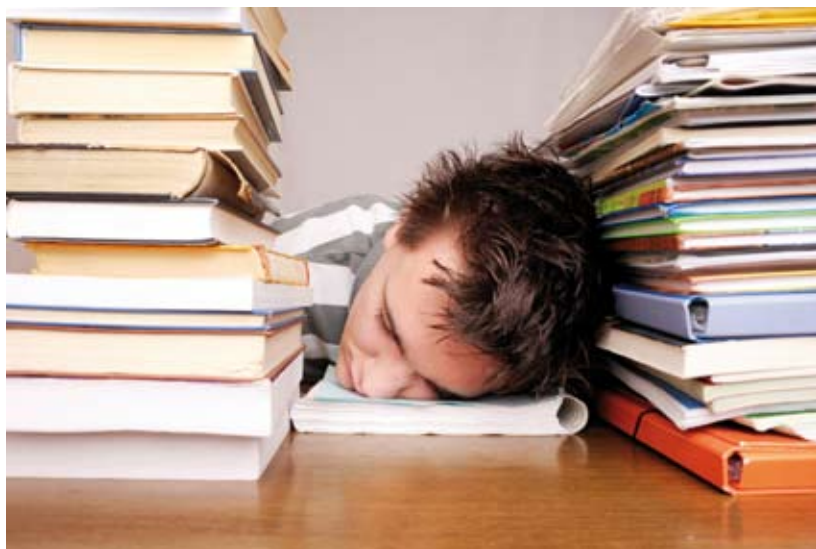
Not quite as frequent are rises in VAT, which from October 1st increase from 19.6% to 21.2% and from 5.5% to 7% (renovation, restaurants, tourist rentals etc).

French exports are stagnating while in Germany they forge ahead and, returning to the vexing matter of social charges, these are twice as much in France and hourly labour costs are 10% higher than Germany's.

The new government must face the uncomfortable fact that the social system is not sustainable in the current climate. France can no longer borrow its way out of trouble and continuing to raise taxes and social charges will merely stifle any fledgling growth. Mr Hollande's 75% tax would send out the most damning message about how France treats financial success. Entrepreneurs (if there are any left!) will launch their good ideas elsewhere; indeed, dozens of French businesses are planning on crossing the Channel to set up in the UK, so much so that the British branch of the Assembly of French Citizens Abroad (an expat association) has set up a group of experts to handle such enquiries. The Association has been receiving about ten requests for information every month, according to Olivier Cardic, their UK representative. No need to remind anyone that the last time the Socialists held power in 1997 under Lionel Jospin 1000 French businesses moved to the UK over a 3-year period. Could YOU be next? ■

BACstory

Jill Penton-Browne on France's high school diploma



Janet, who took her A-levels at one of the North of England's surviving grammar schools just over twenty years ago, shakes her head when she talks about her daughter Kate, now in the top class at her *Var lycée* and in the run-up to taking the *baccalauréat*. "On the whole, I'm very impressed with what we've seen of French schooling, especially the *maternelle* and the *lycée*, but I don't quite get the way they look at the *bac*. Teachers, parents, and pupils all seem ridden with anxiety over this exam. Quite a few seem quite manic about it. They pay for private coaching and I know one mother who's encouraging her son to take amphetamines to keep up the necessary pace of revision during these last few weeks. It wasn't like that when I took A-levels." Daughter Kate, who arrived at one point, seems happy to tell me that she's "like totally stressed out".

Philosophy: waffle or wisdom?

So what exactly is the *baccalauréat*? Like a lot of things in France it was introduced by Napoleon and first took place in 1809 when there were just 31 candidates, all male – girls were not admitted until

1861 since the Emperor could see no need for them to be educated (as he famously put it, "A woman is just a garden in which a man plants his seed."). Initially, it was an oral examination with questions on classical literature, history and geography, and philosophy. By the late 19th century it had taken more or less its familiar form with intensive written tests and assumed its role as the basic qualification for university entrance as well as offering proof that the *bachelier* had received an academic-style secondary education. Until very recently not to have the *bac* was to be socially stigmatised and to be seen as unfit for anything other than manual work. And, it has to be said, this attitude has by no means completely disappeared.

This year across France some 650,000 candidates will sit the examination. Of the several *filières*, the most popular is the *Bac S* (science) followed by the *Bac ES* (economic and social studies); these options attract an overwhelming majority of entrants. These days the once highly-prized literary programme (*Bac L*) is chosen by only one in six high school students. For Anglo-Saxon parents

Local international schools: expanding more than just minds

September 2012 will see the opening of Mougins School's new Primary School building, with twelve classrooms permitting two Years 3, 4 and 5. This provides double classes from Year 3 through to Year 13 and will boost Mougins School's enrolment to around 500 students.

This addition enables the transformation of the Performing Arts Hall, which currently houses four primary school classes, into a building used exclusively for theatrical performances and concerts and the teaching of music and drama.

To complete the building programme, in September of next year Mougins School will inaugurate a new science building with its three specialist laboratories: Biology, Physics and Chemistry. It will also include a general science laboratory and a second IT suite and a classroom.

Marketing Consultant Sue Dunachie tells us, "Completion of these new buildings will provide a unique campus with state-of-the-art facilities for the teaching of all subjects in the Mougins School British curriculum. As the 100% pass rate at A-Level for the past three years testifies, the school continues to provide a first-class international education."

Down the road in Sophia Antipolis, Sébastien Guinet, Marketing Director at EBICA – École Bilingue Internationale Côte d'Azur – gives details of their new building. "Located minutes away from our current location, the new 2700sqm site at 245 route des Lucioles has 15 classrooms with a science lab, theatre, multimedia room, art room and ... a bigger cafeteria. We will now have a 5000sqm exterior for a sports field, a larger playground and 130 parking places. We have a current enrolment of 110 students with an objective of 130 for next September."

Launched in 2006, EBICA has 22 different nationalities, and combines academic excellence with an openness to the world. "Our team has been carefully selected for its pedagogical skills, its dedication towards the success of each student, and its multicultural experience. All teachers teach in their native language and adapt their programmes to the needs of each student."

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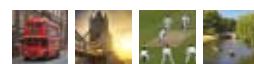
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like Janet the most unfamiliar aspect is the philosophy paper which is obligatory for most candidates and traditionally kicks off the *bac* season in the second half of June. This requires the anxious youngsters to write for up to four hours on such issues as "Can equality and liberty co-exist?" and "Is art less important than science?" French teachers – especially those paid to give classes in *philo* – are quick to defend the subject. So Odile Charrot of the *lycée* Carnot in Cannes claims that "it helps people to think and to make reasoned decisions as voters". Yeah, yeah ... but sceptical Anglo-Saxons (like me) feel that the effect is rather to allow the French to waffle away about anything without offering much in the way of substantive meaning. Revealingly, research on the grading of *Bac philo* scripts has shown a wide divergence of judgements among markers. One man's waffle is another man's wisdom.

Bac-less school-leavers: shit work or unemployed

When the last script is handed in that's not the end of the stress. There follow a couple of weeks of waiting for the results. The pass mark is 10 (those who don't fall too far short are allowed to try to make up lost ground at an oral). What matters most to many candidates, given they've passed, is their *mention* – the grading of their performance as *très bien*, *bien* or

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how you might
do in the bac?
You can find
questions
likely to come
up this year at
bac-s.net
(science),
bac-es.net
(economic
and social)
and bac-l.net
(literary).**

assez bien ... the weakest among those who pass get no *mention*. To achieve a *très bien* is a matter of considerable pride and is a plus for applicants to prestigious institutions of higher education (*grandes écoles*). In the Alpes-Maritimes, the *Conseil Général* awards such students a cash prize of €250.

In recent years around 86% of candidates got their *bac* (in some cases at a permitted second try). An unhappy minority quit school branded as failures. Routinely, newspapers try to cheer them up with tales of high achievers who also "failed": these range from Alain Delon through Bernard Tapie to ... Christian Estrosi. But these people had specific talents which enabled them to succeed, anyway. Your average *bac*-less school-leaver is likely to end up doing shit work or unemployed.

But what of those who do emerge with the much desired diploma? For many, disillusion awaits. The *bac* is a good

illustration of how educational policies driven by egalitarian dogma create what could be called self-liquidating advantages. A UK example is Tony Blair's mad notion that half the population should have a university degree. What's happened to the *bac* is quite clear: in 1970 one in four of the age group qualified as *bacheliers*, by 1990 this had risen to two out of three. At that time Socialist Education Minister Lionel Jospin said the target (still to be reached) was eight out of ten. Result: as more come out of school with that bit of paper so its value as a qualification has sharply declined. As one educationist has said, "They give them out like candies ... It doesn't mean much more than that the holder can read and write reasonably well." So how does Janet react to this? "Kate's going to university in England – Exeter, in fact – but afterwards she wants to live and work in France. Having the *bac*, she says, is part of being French." ■



It's easier if you cheat ... and they've been at it for a long time. Until ID was required of those entering exam rooms (not until 1901) impersonation was common: bright Bertrand could sit in for dim Didier. Later all sorts of corrupt practices occurred – from putting cribs on water bottles that looked like labels to bribing the printers of the question papers. More recently new media – especially the smartphone – have been a boom to the *tricheurs*. Concedes veteran *bacologue* Philippe Merieu, "With these new technologies you just can't beat the cheats."

Want to finally learn French?

We caught up with Grisel Damgaard to discuss “Real Life” individual language courses offered at Carfax in Monaco



Grisel Damgaard,
Director of Carfax
Education Monaco,

Last issue we looked at Carfax Educational Consultants (carfax-education.com), now well-known on the Riviera for their academic top-up tuition for international school students, exam preparation services and university selection and application guidance. Yet there's another side to their business, to help both adults and children either improve a language they already speak, or learn a new one.

“Many expats living here do not yet speak French,” Grisel explains, “and it’s something which can really contribute to their feeling of isolation. What we find is that many clients have tried various methods and then just given up – which further reinforces the idea that ‘I can’t learn French’.”

Practice language in real-life situations

“Our tutors are well-versed in several methodologies and are able to discern the best method for each client. The challenge with group lessons is that it is almost impossible for the organisers to find participants who all have the same schedule, goals, starting point and language learning style. That’s why so many people start group lessons and then give up after a while – they feel frustrated that their individual needs are not being met or else they cannot move their busy schedules around to comply with a school’s timetable. Add to that people’s goals vary: some just moved here and want to learn French, others have children about to integrate into an English-language school and want to ensure that the transition goes smoothly, some wish to brush up on a language for professional reasons, and others wish to learn vocabulary which is specific to a

certain industry, such as banking or yachting. For these reasons, we only offer individual tuition.”

This past January, Carfax Education Monaco launched their new “Real Life” lessons, whereby clients, in addition or instead of learning in a classroom setting, can practice the language in real-life situations. “Many clients can actually speak French quite well,” Grisel explains, “but then they get in front of their bank teller, or the auto mechanic – and they freeze! Cultural differences add further stress to the mix; so before you know it you have someone who just gives up and only speaks with fellow anglophones, which is a shame, because they are missing out on such a wide variety of amazing experiences, not to mention the pleasure of communicating in what I think is one of the most beautiful languages in the world, *la langue de Molière*.”

Carfax Education Monaco works closely with clients to monitor their progress, and provides them with detailed monthly reports, with the Academic Director, Jeanne Spoeri, overseeing the entire process, whether lessons take place at the client’s home or at the Carfax offices next to the Monaco Yacht Club. Most clients request tuition in English, French, Italian, Russian and Mandarin, but requests for more unusual languages, such as Portuguese or Japanese, can also be fulfilled.

Grisel adds: “I like to say that it’s quite the opposite from ‘getting someone who can teach your child a bit of English’, or ‘hiring someone who does a bit of tutoring here and there’. All of our tutors are professional, reliable, experienced university graduates who are passionate about their work, who teach with enthusiasm and who are good at motivating the client to put in their best effort. We’re really – really! – picky about who works for us.” **N.H. ■**

For more information about language lessons, see page 46 for Grisel’s contact details.



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Everybody needs good neighbours

René, an elderly retiree, had lived in the same Strasbourg apartment block for some twenty years. None of his neighbours, it seems, ever gave a thought to him. That changed a few weeks ago when they suddenly heard his radio blaring out *France-Info* at maximum volume. And it went on and on ... and on. Finally, the next morning, one exasperated resident called the police. They broke in and found René sitting not too far from his radio. To be more precise, what they found was his skeleton. According to a pathologist's report the old fellow had died some three years previously. And that radio? The police found two windows were open which had allowed a pigeon to fly in. It had perched on the set and, hopping about, turned it on at full volume. Those open windows, by the way, accounted for the absence of a give-away smell on the landing. And the reaction of the neighbours? One woman remarked to a local reporter, with obvious indifference, "*C'est triste ... mais c'est comme ça ...*"

Well, it shouldn't be *comme ça*, insists Atanase Périfan. He's the founder and energetic moving spirit of the *Immeubles en fête* movement (*immeublesenfete.com*) – this year on Friday June 1st – which we've written about before. As he claims, "Organise a party of this kind and you transform the life of a building or a street." At one level, Périfan's idea has been a success: last year across France over six million neighbours raised a glass together on the evening of the last Friday in May; in Cannes alone there were 47 separate *Immeubles en fête*. A similar number did the same elsewhere in Europe where the event has caught on (*european-neighbours-day.com*). More recently he has launched *Voisins solidaires* (*voissinsolidaires.fr*), a spin-off initiative encouraging neighbours to look out for practical ways of helping each other (shopping for the sick, for example, or feeding a cat when the owner's away).

Périfan also commissioned a survey to discover what the French would consider an ideal neighbour. Majority answer: "the one you never see". Commonest grievances relate to noise, disturbances involving kids and pets, parking and – no surprise – people who are too anxious to speak beyond those mumbled greetings. This can be interpreted as being nose-y which can arouse instant hostility.

If this topic interests you, Emily Cockayne's new book *Cheek by Jowl: A History of Neighbours* (UK: Bodley Head) recounts how those living next door have related to each other across the centuries. **C.v.Z.P. ■**

A fuller version of this article can be read on rivierareporter.com



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We're just moving into the high season for burglaries and road travel. Phil Heinlein reports



During a prolonged absence, it's advisable to **have your landline calls automatically transferred to your mobile** or – if you're abroad – to a friend or neighbour's telephone. And **be wary of social media. It's really not a good idea to blab about your upcoming departure to the Maldives on Facebook or Twitter.**

Summer visitors

When preparing this article I found that some police chiefs and mayors were announcing a decline in break-ins on their patch. Other reports told a different story. According to France's National Crime Observatory (OND) last year across the country burglaries rose by some 10%. Two facts to note: firstly, after the Greater Paris area the Alpes-Maritimes and the Var are the areas where you're most likely to be burgled. Secondly, one in three break-ins occurs in the summer (June through September) and one in seven during the Christmas and New Year holiday period. And here's the most depressing figure: only 13% of *fric-fracs* – that's slang for burglary – are solved.

Burglars, the police say, come in two main categories: professionals – who choose their target homes very carefully and prepare and execute their break-ins with great efficiency; opportunistic amateurs (a significant number of these are now East Europeans) who are often discouraged if premises are difficult to get into and leave empty-handed. The estimated average value of a burglar's haul,

according to the OND, is €6500 and the items most favoured are jewellery, easily portable electronics from mobiles to iPads, credit cards and any cash that's been left lying around. Chances of getting back what's been nicked are pretty slim but if you're willing to ransom your property it's worth having a look at *leboncoin.fr* – a website much favoured by thieves looking to sell their loot. One gang ran over 400 ads – for everything from bicycles to high-end wines – before the police traced them through their IP address.

Don't make a burglar's job easier

One reason why this is the peak season for burglaries is that in summer homes are often unoccupied, either for part of the day (“and when we came back from the beach...”) or for longer periods. Advises one local security firm, “There's a lot you can do to reduce the risk. Install timing devices to switch on lights and television during the hours of darkness, get a neighbour to clear your mailbox and to put rubbish in your bin so it looks as if someone's around, to take a couple of examples.”

One basic rule is don't make the burglar's job easier for him.

Valuables should always be kept in the safe, which is best set in the floor rather than a wall where it's harder to work on – remember, anything which slows down the burglar is a plus. It's better, of course, if he never gets inside your home and this is why doors and windows are so important. Quite a few intending housebreakers get discouraged at that stage. This is a matter where professional advice can be crucial and this could be part of a security audit of your premises which can be carried out by companies like Azur Security and EASS (see ads pages 13 and 35). A good investment, that, which could add a lot for your peace of mind. You don't need the added blow of finding your home violated and then maybe being told by the insurance company that you'll get little or no compensation because it was inadequately protected.

And finally do think things through. Here's a sad story from the Var: a burglar took a reader's jewellery along with a number of other easily portable items including her PC. When her insurance company asked for pictures of the jewellery, she realised that the only ones she had were in the computer.

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Driving to distraction

The summer is always a time when you need to be more careful at the wheel. Quite likely – if you're off on vacation – you're driving longer and further than on your daily commute, and then in these holiday months you're sharing the roads with visitors from all over Europe who may be unfamiliar with French regulations or with habitual Gallic driving behaviour.

Most people are aware that driving after drinking is a bad idea and can have fatal results. It's not so widely recognised that tiredness can be as dangerous as alcohol. According to the road safety organisation *Prévention Routière* it triggers one in ten accidents and is responsible for one in three deaths on the road. Last August three children died – aged one, three and five – on their way to a holiday in Nice when their parents' car crashed into a bridge at La Bléone near Digne (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence). The gendarmes' report stated the accident happened around 6h30 after the father had been at the wheel all night. It seems he fell asleep.

Before a long drive:

- Get a good night's sleep
- Take regular breaks at the wheel
- Have water on board (thirst can cause fatigue)
- If taking any medicine, read the notice in the box or get advice from your doctor or pharmacist: 340 prescription drugs in France may induce drowsiness
- If driving into a foreign country for local traffic regulations see theaa.com/motoring_advice/overseas/countrybycountry.html

Less evident to many as a potential danger to drivers is distraction, anything from drinking a take-away coffee through to programming your GPS to using a mobile phone of any kind (safety experts urge employers not to call their staff when they're likely driving and to discourage them using mobiles at the wheel). Says Dr Amy N. Ship of the Harvard Medical School, who's been researching in-car distraction, "Any activity which distracts a driver visually or cognitively increases the risk of an accident. None of them is safe."

Kids, of course, can be a distraction and that's why – for everyone's safety – they should be properly strapped in. And that needs emphasizing. A study by *Prévention Routière* found two-thirds of children are routinely not properly seated with their belts suitably adjusted. This can't be shrugged off: last year in the Alpes-Maritimes 14 children died in car crashes. ■



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INSPIRING LEARNING

The Love Coach

In a new column, TLC – a sex therapist and expat relationship expert for over 9 years – answers readers' questions



How do I get out of my rut?

Back in the UK, I used to be a confident and independent woman. Now I don't recognize myself. I should be happy with my new life but I feel miserable and isolated. My husband is often away and we're growing more and more apart when he's back home. He thinks I've got the best deal: free time and money! We've been expats in the South of France for over six months now. I never thought it would be this hard to settle on the Côte d'Azur. I feel helpless in this situation. What should I do? *Marian, Cannes*

TLC: You're writing that you left a job you loved to be with your husband. It just adds to your resentment towards your partner. And if you combine that with the frustration of being by yourself most of the time, more than you planned and wished for, you have a good recipe for currently experiencing anger.

It seems to me that you find it difficult to recognize this, thus express it and talk about your emotions. There is also a sense of guilt as if happiness is a "must have". Expat relationships put a huge strain on couples. It takes time to settle in a new environment, to adjust between the projected dream life versus the reality, and to start feeling comfortable. All the more reason to come back to the basics: open communication between both partners, talking about your feelings (using "I" rather than "you"), and making quality time for the two of you. It's also time to be active rather than waiting for your husband to return home at the weekend and start developing your own core interests and social circle: join a local (expat) club, take French classes, learn a new skill and

bring back structure into your day by doing something useful for you or to others. That way you'll regain some self esteem.

Finally, find ways to surprise yourself – after all, you're in the perfect place to do so – and share it with your partner. There are things he can learn from you!

The French lover, what a myth!

I'm an American woman working in the tourist industry. I met a French guy and we've been going out for a year. I must say I was curious to find out if their Latin lover reputation was justified. Well it's not; I am terribly disappointed in the way he shows his love to me. How can I tell him without upsetting him? *Amy, Nice*

TLC: For starters, nobody is psychic. Essentially, what you would like is to have your boyfriend read your mind, guess your likes and dislikes and how you would like to be loved. Well, that doesn't exist in the real world. It's up to you to take your share of responsibility by saying and/or showing what turns you on or not. I agree, adding intimacy to cultural differences can change the game of how we express sexuality, making it more difficult to express one's true desires and aspirations. It seems to me, though, that you primarily engaged into this relationship not with the man but with the "French" man in order to test his sexual skills against your own fantasized set of criteria. Generalities and stereotypes tend to overload people with unnecessary burden.

If you were in front of me, I would ask: "How exactly would you like to be loved?" And most likely you would not know yourself. To figure out what you want, I think you would find it helpful to use what's known as Nonviolent Communication (NVC). This is a method that clarifies your emotions by really listening and observing, and asking what you want of yourself and your partner. This in turn allows you to pinpoint what you need from a relationship and to be able to verbalise it (no more guessing games). Try this and let me know how it works, as you may learn a lot more about yourself and your boyfriend now than over the past year. ■

Do you have a question? Write to The Love Coach c/o Riviera Reporter (see page 46) or email TheLoveCoach@rivierareporter.com

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Gardener's Notes: Gardens glorious

BY JAMES HARTLEY

DIRECTOR, ENGLISH GARDEN GROUP



The best months of the year

I absolutely adore spring and early summer. As beautiful as they are, I've got to admit that by March the novelty of brown leaves hanging on *Carpinus* bushes has rather worn off on me and I develop a fixation on inspecting leaf buds on the bushes in the nursery, as if looking at them will accelerate their development. This annual preoccupation usually lasts for a good two to three weeks before finally, and not a moment too soon, spring comes bursting through. And how glorious it is when it comes!

I've been particularly aware of it this year since two large gardens we've just built had designs that depended largely on deciduous plants and I couldn't wait to see how they would develop as they filled out. Watching the change of seasons closely, it's astonishing just how fast the onset of spring actually is. Just a few days of warm weather and – bang! – lush greenery is out before your eyes. I can't quite put my finger on what it is so magical about it, but there is something deeply satisfying in seeing the fresh growth burst out even in the evergreens, picking up the baton from the leaves that did their duty through the previous year and carrying the battle scars to show for it. Like a clean slate you get given as a gardener each new season, you are excused by the plants for the lack of water or insect attack that you allowed last season as they fill out with a fresh new coat. That said, the thickness and colour of this new coat is influenced by how you have fed and trimmed the plant – so not entirely independent of your actions. To me therefore, it also serves as a reminder that in gardening, as in life, fortunes and reward travel in cycles, with one's actions creating effect further down the road.

For someone as studiously unreligious as myself, this is about as close as I get to belief in a higher order and obvious to anyone who has me as a messenger phone contact: my pseudonym is "Chauncey Gardiner" (from the 1979 film *Being There* with Peter Sellers, one of my heroes). In the film, one of my all-time favourites, Chance the gardener (whose name is misinterpreted in the film by one of the characters to "Chauncey Gardiner"), a simple mind whose entire knowledge is derived from gardening and television, has his humble remarks about life in the garden interpreted by business leaders as wise allegorical insights on business and the economy. From having enjoyed the film's comedy on a superficial level when I first saw it, I have since come to believe in a deeper genius, as to my mind, both business and the wider economy truly do have some close parallels with the natural world. On the subject of cycles, in the immortal words of Chance: "First comes spring and summer, but then we have fall and winter. And then we get spring and summer again."

Not a spectator sport

Although you can (and we do) plant plants at any time of year with the exception of late August when it is really too hot, you get the best out of the growing season if you can get new plants into the ground before mid-May. The lush burst of spring growth that happens from then on is not one of nature's most subtle developments: it's about as understated as being hit round the head with a spade and evident to anyone with eyes. The dramatic changes above-ground however are accompanied by a hidden burst in root development, and if this can be in the ground rather than in a pot in the nursery, so much the better for the plant for the coming season. As far as pruning goes, don't be cruel to your plants and prune too late: olive trees, oleanders and all the other classics of a Mediterranean garden that need regular thinning or reducing should be dealt with before they expend their energy developing shoots high up in branches that you subsequently decide to amputate. Depending on where you live, once you are sure that the cold weather is over, get in there and carry out the trimming before the plants gear up for growth. This effort to trim before the plants start to grow maximises the plant energy where it is



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required for new growth and avoids over stretching the plants' reserves.

Onward care

Once you've got all the spring preparation out of the way and growth is in full tilt, you shouldn't rest on your laurels (or any other plants for that matter). The fresh spring plant development is very tender and even the tougher plants have leaves that are soft when they first come out. Keep a good eye out therefore for pests such as greenfly, scale insects and the ubiquitous *Cicadelle*, a small white fly that is fairly easy to eradicate but has a nasty habit of returning a few days after you have treated the plant. All of these love to feed on the soft fresh growth, as yet unhardened by the sun, but in doing so they create damage that will be evident on the leaves for the remainder of the season. If you have plants that are affected, a quick shot of general insecticide will usually do the trick. Alternatively, although a little less ecological, one can opt for the preventative approach on the worst affected plants by spraying before the problem occurs with a systemic insecticide. Absorbed by the plant through the leaves, this provides enduring protection for at least three to four weeks, and is especially useful on plants that are notoriously easily attacked by insects, such as peaches, nectarines and citrus fruit.

Likewise, do not neglect the roots. Having fed your garden (hopefully) over the winter, you'll soon need to be repeating the procedure, but this time with a little more nitrate to support the new growth. In the immortal words of Chance the gardener: "As long as the roots are not severed, all is well. All will be well in the garden."

In these times of economic uncertainty, with Europe faltering and several countries on the edge of an economic precipice, is this referring to plants or to the roots of an economic recovery? Either way, to me this has never made more sense. But then again, perhaps I'm just a little simple. ■



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The Var Report



Despite Bernie Ecclestone's green light to the F1's return to France, Flavio Briatore, above, says the return is "impossible".



Water bomber pilots must be at least 40, IFR qualified, have at least 12 years experience with 3000 flight hours.

F1's return to the Var ... or not

Before the Presidential election it looked like the Var was in line to host the return of a Formula One Grand Prix to the Paul Ricard track at Castellet. In April, F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone even announced, "The deal is done. We have actually agreed on financial terms with the sports minister, David Douillet." This signalled the return of F1 to France, which has been absent from the calendar since 2008 when the European Grand Prix took place at the remote Magny Cours circuit. Castellet looked to be an appealing option for the teams, sponsors and VIPs.

Now it's not so sure. France's shift to the Left has put Ecclestone in doubt.

There's no doubt, however, in the mind of 62-year-old F1 personality Flavio Briatore who managed the Benetton team before it became Renault F1 in 2001, and saw a fall from grace amid race fixing accusations. Briatore is credited with the discovery of the brilliant driver Fernando Alonso, but also made the mistake of removing Jenson Button from the Renault team in 2003.

So, Flavio's predictions don't always pan out but he seemed pretty sure of himself when he said in May that an imminent return to the Paul Ricard circuit was "impossible".

Formula One is 75% business and 25% sport, and it's on the business side where Briatore finds the Var lacking. In spite of a beautiful location and proximity to Marseille, France's second city, there has not been enough investment in infrastructure at Castellet and there isn't enough space for spectators. One advantage, however, is the airstrip directly next to the track, which would allow easy access to both teams and the more well-off spectators.

Magny Cours also lacks the financial means to host a return to F1 in France. It costs up to €300 million annually to keep an F1 team on the road so financial considerations are heavy with consequence. According to Briatore, racing follows the money and there's less and less of that in Europe.

The final decision lies with Ecclestone, a man known for his shrewd business sense. It's unlike him to backtrack but this time he appears to have done just that. Maybe he's reconsidering ... or holding out for a better offer. His big-spending socialite daughter Tamara has very expensive tastes, like her £1 million bathtub.

Risk before the fire

More than any other French department, the Var is at risk of forest fires. The dry summer climate, native pine forests and an influx of holidaymakers – not all of them

cautious picnickers – make for a worrisome mix. Thanks to years of replanting less volatile species, a network of summer watch stations and the proximity of the Canadair base at Marignane, recent years have seen fewer serious fires than a decade ago. The risk is still there, but it's been much more under control.

Pilots at the Marignane Civil Security base worry that relative security won't last as cost-cutting measures will soon reduce the water bomber fleet this summer. Until now, twelve Canadairs and nine Trackers have been on regular summer service in the Var and Bouches-du-Rhone, but this year three of the Canadair planes and a Beechcraft spotter will be grounded because of budgetary restrictions. The planes can be brought back into service in case of a large fire but at least 24 hours will be necessary to get one air worthy.

The *Securité Civile* base employs 148 people, 88 of which are flight crew coming from military careers with specialist training. Water bomber pilots must be at least 40 years old, IFR qualified, have at least 12 years experience with 3000 flight hours. To prevent fatigue each pilot is limited to a daily 8-hour shift or 60 water pickups (*écopages*), whichever is less. Pilots cannot fly for more than 20 hours per three days, 35 hours per week or 90 hours per month.

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Aircraft maintenance is a major cost and the main reason part of the fleet has been removed from service. Maintenance is carried out by a private company which must guarantee 50% readiness in winter and 100% readiness from mid-June through October. The annual maintenance budget for the Marignane-based planes is €36 million but the public cash available in 2012 will fall short by some €11 million.

Not surprisingly, Canadair and Tracker pilots are crying danger and threaten to strike on July 1st in a typically Gallic fashion to express dissatisfaction. The date was chosen to allow plenty of time for negotiation. According to Michel Laur of the pilots' SPAC union, "All it will take is a couple of unexpected fires, or a particularly large one, and we simply won't have the men and aircraft ready to cope". The Marignane fleet also backs up the Ajaccio base in Corsica during the summer months whenever necessary.

That plaice on the lake

The Arbousiers Restaurant on the Lac St Cassien has been handed over to the next generation. Jim and Tina Cookson have passed the reins to Tina's son Ian and his charming wife Sandrine. Fish and Chips remain the *plat du jour* on Friday and the young team is adding new dishes while keeping some of the old favourites. The lovely view from the terrace over the lake is one thing that hasn't changed, though.

Not wanting to retire

just yet, Jim will be managing Arbousiers Plage on the lakeside. It's a calm place to escape the summer crowds for a family day out. There is a terrace, snack bar and pedal boats for hire as well as fresh water bathing for those who don't like the sand and salt of the Mediterranean.

VARIABLES

The *Réserve des Maures* is one of those hidden corners of the Var protected by environmentally friendly laws. The 5275 hectares around the Lac des Escarets is managed by the *Conservatoire d'études des écosystèmes de Provence*, and only recently placed under the governance of the *Conseil Général du Var*. Local environmentalists are not amused at the change, citing the vested interests of the CG as evidence that the area will now be managed with financial, rather than green, concerns in mind.

The *Reporter* is now available at the Hotel des Oliviers near the lower roundabout in Fayence, thanks to proprietors Angelo (who's as British as they come) and Hélène.

Is it the local rosé that disturbs vision? A wolf, which was sighted by several residents around Callas in May and reported to the authorities, has turned out to be nothing more than a domestic dog. That "bear" we reported in a previous issue as seen by a group of British cyclists has never been seen again. Hibernating perhaps?

Harris Stobbs ■

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Monaco Murmurs

BY MOLLY BROWN

Why are we always looking for something to celebrate? Is it an addiction, a welcome escape from screen gazing, subliminal marketing or a simple pursuit of happiness? Not just birthdays, weddings and anniversaries, but now it is centenaries. This year marked the centenary of the *Titanic* disaster when my namesake made it into a lifeboat. People took a cruise to the exact spot to celebrate... with champagne of course... flowers tossed overboard... teddy bears, perhaps. A once in a lifetime experience... and a business opportunity! Celebrations for Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics have British entrepreneurs working around the clock to cash in on the occasion and make it an event "fit for a Queen". In our competitive world, the next celebration must be even grander, the next milestone even higher. Is that why buildings climb ever taller and the richest of the rich prefer a penthouse? Or are they reaching for the stars? If, however, they are just looking for a little peace and quiet, in Monaco it is only ever a matter of time before work begins on the foundations for an even higher building!

Image is everything

In the hundred years since a disapproving Queen Victoria refused to visit the Principality because of its casino and frivolous lifestyle, Monaco's reputation as the playground of Europe has aroused both disapproval and envy. In today's economic downturn, Monaco merits a certain amount of envy as its security and quality of life attract wealthy foreign residents as much as its climate, location and favourable tax structure. However, in spite of no unemployment, a 3% increase in new jobs,



Photo: RK

The Monaco Grand Prix was first held in 1929. Considered the most prestigious Formula One race, drivers manoeuvre 78 laps around a 3.340km circuit for a total distance of 260.52km.

28% trade balance and a 10% increase in general business turnover in 2011, in today's economic climate and highly competitive luxury travel market the Principality realises it needs to improve its image if it is to retain its place as a vibrant tourist destination.

A fast changing world

A hundred years ago, tourists flocked to Monte Carlo to see the elegant new casino and mingle with Europe's rich and famous. In 1956, when Prince Rainier married American film star, Grace Kelly, Monaco became world famous, the place to see and be seen. In the 70s, 4400 Americans lived here, lured by the romance and glamour of the 700-year-old Principality and a strong dollar. Today, Americans visit on Mediterranean cruise ships

and tourists can travel the world easily and cheaply. The super-rich millionaires have superyachts or private jets to fly them to wherever they want to go and luxurious hotels to welcome them with personalised service and smiles. There are also other Grand Prix races in faraway exotic places and all can be watched on television around the world or on computers, iPads and even mobile phones.

A thoroughly modern Monaco

Monaco is trying to keep up with the fast moving IT world where information can be beamed to gadgets in the palm of the hand and where everyone can be a virtual tourist. Many of today's IT business enterprises can be run from a small office in a small Principality and they are being

encouraged to move here, with the construction of new office space and improved facilities, but the most effective and liveliest development is in the number of events being staged in Monaco: sports, music, art, film and television festivals, international forums and travel markets, car auctions and exhibitions of luxury goods. Each event brings a new group of visitors, excellent publicity and interesting people from everywhere who are happy to meet in a place which offers such an extravagant menu of entertainment possibilities and starts the summer season with not just a bang, but the roar of the F1 cars screaming around the centre of town. ■

Want to Toast the Queen in Monaco? See page 40.

Make it a day to remember. Official Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant products, made in the UK by Event Merchandising Limited, are now for purchase online at themerchandisingshop.co.uk. Items, including shirts, flags, jackets, teddy bears, bibs, mugs and hip flasks, are available internationally throughout The Queen's Diamond Jubilee year and sold along the Pageant route on the day. Profits from sales will go to the charitable Thames Diamond Jubilee Foundation, to meet the costs of the Pageant and raise funds for charitable projects through The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust.



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Sporting d'Hiver: why the rush?



Destruction of the Sporting d'Hiver will begin in 2014 and seven glass towers (above), an expensive and unpopular scheme, will be built in its place.

Photo: SBM

The demolition of the Sporting d'Hiver has been brought forward two years and will begin in 2014. Not only is part of Monaco's history being lost, but there are several very old, very large trees in the gardens adjoining Sporting d'Hiver, some with long roots visible from the road, impossible to move, which will also vanish. Their destruction goes against the principle of Monaco's stated interest in preserving the world's forests and the admirable idea of planting a tree in the country nearby for each new baby born in the Principality.

"Modernising Monaco"

"Modernising Monaco" is SBM's reason for destroying the classic art deco building Sporting d'Hiver and building seven modern towers, with the government also reasoning that Monaco needs another shopping centre; this at a time when shops on Blvd des Moulins go out of business and the Metropole Shopping Gallery, with its chandelier and marble, is quite big enough and certainly never a financial success. My suggestion of creating an elite, top quality "Harrods of Monte-Carlo" in the existing, sound, elegant building was not even considered, though a viable proposition, necessitating the cleaning of this originally white classic building and modification of the interior, with possibly an extra floor on top and a roof garden.

None of the ideas proposed have been deemed feasible, or considered seriously, but this expensive, unpopular scheme to build seven glass towers on this site, not even modern or elegant, or suitable for the location, taking away part of the lovely gardens and requiring four years construction work in the centre of town "will go ahead" pronounced the Minister d'Etat recently at a press conference. Surprisingly,

nobody in the government voted against it!

Why is this project being rushed ahead? Where is the money coming from ...when SBM has had its worst results for years?

The tourist bureau building on the far corner of the Casino gardens could be "modernised" instead, the offices easily moved, and a tall apartment building (or two) would not spoil the ambience of the Place du Casino.

Prince Albert stopped the building of an offshore island near Larvotto (now planned offshore Fontvieille) for ecological reasons. What about the trees, which provide oxygen in a city polluted by so much traffic and dust from building sites?

Monaco neither has a Green Party, any tree huggers, nor a Society for the Preservation of Historic Buildings. Yet there is a museum of old classic cars ... and a Historic Grand Prix!

So now the demolition of the Sporting d'Hiver will begin in 2014 while work in the adjoining park to accommodate the Chanel, Dior etc boutiques presently in the Carré d'Or will begin in October. Does this mean the only garden café in Monaco, Häagen-Dazs, will no longer be there next summer? What about the trees? Comments to patrimoinessportinghiver@hotmail.fr M.B.

A Golden Nymph, more than ever before, something to brag about

As final preparations are made for the 52nd edition of the Monte-Carlo Television Festival Patrick Middleton talks to the new man in charge, Laurent Puons



Laurent Puons, General Manager of Monaco Medias, will oversee this year's Monte-Carlo Television Festival, which takes place at the Grimaldi Forum June 10th-14th. See tvfestival.com

Laurent Puons will have been in his new job for just a little over six months when this year's Festival gets under way on June 10th. "It's a great privilege," he says, "to be asked to run what is – after over half a century – one of the major institutions in the world of broadcast media. On the other hand, while paying a much deserved tribute to my predecessors, I can't afford to be intimidated by tradition. There's been a lot of change in television in recent years and we have to change with it."

Have to have household names

What are his priorities for the next few years? "First of all, I want to raise the profile of the Golden Nymphs – the awards given in our competition. At the moment there's certainly an impact in the trade and in most years we have an excellent field but I want our competition to attract much more attention in the general media and among the public. Our model, I'd say, is the Emmies." So how does

he aim to achieve this? "In two ways. First, I want to upgrade our juries. Don't misunderstand me – we get top professionals as judges but we have to have some real household names. And then we need to reinforce our communication. Absolutely crucial to this is exploiting new media. We're now on Facebook and this has led to a significant improvement in the penetration of our message."

"What I hope to do is turn the Festival into a media event in itself – rather like the Cannes Film Festival. I want to see crowds – not just a handful of youngsters – hanging out around the Grimaldi Forum waiting to see the stars of the smaller screen coming and going. That's why we're getting more actors to come here and we're arranging signings where the fans will be able to meet them. There'll also be more screenings open to the public. To increase local interest we'll have more French actors coming in from top shows on the national networks as well as familiar figures from popular American, UK and other foreign programmes. I'd add to that my aim of drawing on a wider range of sources for our competition. These days there's a lot of interesting television being made around the world. I'd like the Festival to be recognised as a primary showcase for that product."

Strengthening business content

I tell Laurent Puons that I'd heard – and, indeed, read in a trade paper – that he intended to restore a market function to the festival for the sale of programmes. "Absolutely not," he insists. "I've heard that story and I wonder where it came from. It would be quite futile to set up a market here, especially so close to MIPTV in Cannes which attracts over 4000 buyers – and where a huge

amount of business is done. On the other hand I do want to strengthen the business content of the Festival. As you say participants have told you, it's a great opportunity to network with other professionals and that's something I want to encourage. We're organising Q&A sessions where there'll be plenty of opportunity to exchange views. We're also having themed evening receptions, also ideal for informal contacts. We'll be kicking off with a party to mark the 50th anniversary of the *Bold and the Beautiful*."

Laurent Puons is clearly a man of energy and enthusiasm, full of ideas. How far does he think he will be constrained by the current economic situation, both in general and in the television industry? "Well, I can't predict what's going to happen in the wider economy. As to television, it's true that network and production houses are looking carefully at how they spend but there's still a lot of money out there. You can see this in the quality of many of the shows that are coming out. Big budgets allow for production values previously only regarded as affordable in the cinema. Just compare the new version of *Hawaii Five-0* with the original from back in the Seventies. It's this upgrading of the television product that attracts so many top actors to the medium."

We're moving forward

So how does he set about organising the Festival? "Well, this first time round I only had half a year but to take the Americans as an example, I made two trips to the US to talk to studios and get them to understand that we're moving forward and that picking up a Golden Nymph will be, more than ever before, something to brag about." ■



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News of Britain & the British

BY PATRICK MIDDLETON



"No other leading democracy takes as restrictive an approach as our country," Lord Lexden said about British expat voting, adding that it was "high time the United Kingdom joined the international consensus".

A milestone? But where's it leading to?

A few months ago a Lord Lexden – who he? – stood up in the Lords and told his fellow peers that the 15-year limit on expat voting rights was "a problem that had been allowed to go on too long". Now, I greatly admire the energy and enthusiasm of Brian Cave, a leading campaigner on this issue, but for him to call these words of a very obscure member of the Lords "a milestone" is just wishful thinking. I'd wager a gift pack of Marmite, Earl Grey and H.P. Sauce that nothing will happen in the present Parliament; a Labour government would be even more disdainful of expat rights. (For more see votes-for-expat-brits.com.) Sadly, I think the same is true of the question of "frozen pensions" which affects some 540,000 Brits worldwide, including a number in Monaco who are not fat cats. This column is unlikely to give more space to these hopeless causes. However, if you want to do a spot of lobbying you can contact

136,000
number of
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the minister who handles electoral matters at mark.harper.mp@parliament.uk and if you're concerned with the pensions issue take a look at pension-parity-uk.com/uk-mps.htm

The hyping has to stop

... about the London Olympics, I mean. I had the chance in my travelling days to observe the ravages of Olympomania in Atlanta, Sydney and Athens. In the run up to the Games' opening, signalled by the arrival of The Torch, euphoria reached its peak. The actual events helped keep it going, depending on the host country's pocketing a respectable number of medals. But once it was all over *post coitum triste* syndrome kicked in and there was a mounting chorus of complaint and criticism, partly about cost, but also about crime figures and, very soon, the failure of the Games to generate the predicted boom in tourism. On this point David Cameron sounds at his most Blair-like. He should have a word about this with other recent Olympic venues.

The Prime Minister has also called for "more ceremonies" during the Jubilee celebrations and the Games so as "to show Britain at its best". This has irritated the country's Morris Dancers who have been angered by being ignored by the Olympic organisers. Insists Morris honcho Barry Goodman, "It's a tragic wasted opportunity... what we do would amaze a worldwide TV audience." Come on, Barry: a bunch of middle-aged blokes wearing clogs and bells leaping about and waving their hankies. Amazing indeed! They last took part in major public events at Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee ... in 1887. In recent decades their numbers have continued to fall

and their average age has risen. And a pessimistic spokesman of the Morris Ring has said, "Within twenty years we could have disappeared." Very likely: Morris dancing is just too naff to survive.

Och, awa' wi' ye!

That's what Alex Salmond, Chairman of the Scottish National Party, expects his compatriots will say to the rest of Britain when – he hopes in 2014 – they are invited to vote on their country's future (Salmond opted for that year as marking the 700th anniversary of the year in which Robert "Spiderman" the Bruce trounced the English at Bannockburn). For the moment, though, according to polls, only one-third of Scots favour full independence; rather more are attracted by some kind of federal "devo max", as it's known – which would leave them free to run their own financial affairs.

The Scots have been a famously mobile people, settling all over the world, not only in New Zealand, Nova Scotia and the Falklands but also in less likely places such as Uruguay and Poland. When I taught at the University of Cracow some years ago I had a student called Adam Gordon whose ancestors had settled in the area in the 18th century. It's unlikely that expat Scots will have a vote in the referendum. I've canvassed a few here who seemed unenthusiastic about any breakaway from the UK, fearing bureaucratic problems both in Britain and abroad.

But will it happen? David Cameron says he will battle "with every fibre in (his) body" to prevent it while – Blair-like again! – making rather feeble gestures of goodwill to the Scots (on a recent trip north of the border he visited a porridge factory

We can't know how many medals Scots competitors will gain for the UK in the Olympics, if any, but one champion has emerged in a non-sporting field: Jamie Cumming from Dundee **has fathered 16 children with 14 different women in just seven years**. Now aged 24 he's unemployed, lives on benefits and admits that he doesn't fancy work.



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and quoted Burns). He'd like to believe veteran expat Rod Liston who told me, "We like to needle the *Sassenachs* but I'm pretty sure we'll stay with them." And talking of needles, did you know those clever North Britons invented the hypodermic and, along with much else, the kaleidoscope, the microwave, and the vacuum flask?

Remembering Denis and Lindy

I've recently had reason to recall a couple of encounters from the Nineties. One agreeable, the other less so. First Denis Thatcher: although praise (and an Oscar) were heaped, and rightly, on Meryl Streep for the portrayal of the Iron Lady, less audible, though equally merited praise, was offered to Jim Broadbent for his remarkable performance as her husband.

One sweaty evening in July 1990 I went to interview him at a reception organised for him by Conservatives Abroad at the Hermitage in Monaco. He hadn't come to campaign but simply circulated, chain-smoking but glassless, listening carefully to what people had to say. He came across (forget that *Private Eye* caricature) as an amiable but very sharp-witted and, if need be, blunt-spoken man. I ran into him again the following day and asked him how the previous evening's Conservatives Abroad subscription dinner had gone; "Mean buggers," he exclaimed. "I got more in Andorra." Jim Broadbent had the voice and manner to perfection.

I was less impressed with Lady Runcie – who died recently, the wife of the former Archbishop of Canterbury. After Robert Runcie's retirement the couple moved to St Alban's. One day I was called up by John Livingstone, then Anglican chaplain in Nice, who asked if I could arrange free flights for them to attend some junket at the church where the former Primate had once been a locum. I put this to the affable Andrew Gray, then MD of Air UK (R.I.P.), which flew from Stansted to Nice and was convenient for St Alban's. He readily agreed.

After the Runcies' return I rang them at home to find out how things had gone. Rosalind – who liked to be known as Lindy – came to the telephone and sounded obviously displeased. First complaint: when they arrived at Stansted there was nobody there to escort them to a VIP lounge (I checked this with the airport: they had to wait just 30 minutes for their flight to be called). Second complaint: their seats were uncomfortable. Tough! Air UK only operated one-class flights and so no upgrades on their free flights. In the *Telegraph* obituary I noted that Lindy was given to saying that she couldn't "put up with too much religion". A little more of it may have given her a greater measure of that humility expected from Christians and ... beggars. ■



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Our man in Marseille

Simon Taylor, British Consul for a large chunk of France, including our own area, has been talking once again to Patrick Middleton



When Simon Taylor arrived in the region, just over five years ago, I was, he recalled, the first journalist he talked to. What impressed me then was how well suited he was to consular work: conceived in Saigon, born in Liverpool, much of his earlier years were spent, during school holidays, in a variety of places to which his diplomat father was posted – Kinshasa and Warsaw, Tunis and Brussels. His earliest link with this country was through his French maternal grandmother and he then went on to take a wife who's half a Gaul. His initial ambition was to be an artist but gave up the idea after taking a supposedly temporary job at the British consulate in Paris. It lasted twenty years until he was offered the posting to Marseille "and that was an offer I couldn't refuse".

Our priority ... good services to our citizens

We had lunch in Cannes where he'd come to attend the memorial event for Dorothy Chamaide (see last issue). "I think it's useful for your readers

to catch up with what's been happening in the consular service," he told me. "In these difficult times the FCO has to reconcile reduced resources with changing needs. Put plainly, we have to do more in areas like the former Soviet Union and so rationalise our activities elsewhere. That's why Florence was closed, for example, and in France, Lille. Our situation in Marseille is that we now cover a rather bigger territory but with a smaller staff. Given that, our priority remains providing good services to our fellow citizens."

What does that mean exactly? "Well, we no longer do political and commercial work. We concentrate on personal consular services. Before I expand on that, let me say what we don't do. An FCO spokesman said not long ago that we don't offer a concierge service. So – to take some of his examples – we can't help you sell your house or sort out a matrimonial dispute. Some demands are commoner and more insistent in some cases – so we have to make clear that we don't lend you money, other than in exceptional cases, or help you with legal problems." So what's the consulate's basic function? "It's twofold: firstly, to offer help to those facing emergencies – accident, sudden illness, bereavement, natural disaster – or those who've been victims of crime or even the perpetrators if they end up in prison where we make sure they are aware of their rights. Secondly, we are ready and able to offer advice on the availability of English-speaking professionals such as doctors, lawyers, undertakers and so on. In emergencies we have to act as comforters and that's where we value our co-operation with the British Association and the churches. In your neck of the woods I'm thinking of people like Valerie Haxton and Michael Healy. Linking both residents and visitors to sources of advice and help within the wider British community is a central aspect of our work." ■

For fuller information on British consular services in France – including passport renewal and replacement (handled in Paris) – see ukinfrance.fco.gov.uk

One good reason – see our last issue – why British expats here are happier than those who stay in the UK is that they escape from the miseries of the National Health Service. Just one more story: Bristol Royal Infirmary is appealing for help for Ward 23 where the elderly are "cared for".

They're asking for people to donate basic toiletries for the use of their patients explaining "there's only enough money for medicine and to pay the staff. Even the smallest of items such as a bar of soap would be welcome. We are really grateful for anything we get". So – and especially if you've got

an elderly relative or friend who could possibly end up in BRI – direct your charitable impulse, firstly not towards Bangladesh or Burkina Faso but rather to Ward 23, Bristol Royal Infirmary, Upper Maudlin Street, Bristol, BS28 HW, Angleterre. Charity should begin, we'd say, at what used to be home ...

Relaxxxxxx...

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Nautical

Pensions for aged Yotties

BY MICHAEL HEALY

Since 1995 the *Reporter* has been urging professional yacht crew to secure themselves an income to live on once they are too old to work. Most workers in western societies are employees and have to pay the state a monthly contribution – not only for healthcare but also for a retirement pension. This works well enough, but it is nowhere sufficient to live decently. Still, pensions from different countries where one has worked add up, are guaranteed by the state and not dependent on the prosperity of some investment fund – such as the *Daily Mirror* scheme “controlled” by the late Robert Maxwell, himself a mega-yacht owner, so he needed a golden goose. (It was from *Lady Ghislaine* that Maxwell went overboard to his death in 1991.)

The problem for yacht crew is that they are often not affiliated to any state pension scheme, and any contributions made earlier in life will be wasted unless they keep up their contribution record. This is therefore a voluntary act, rather than compulsory;

many fast-living yachties feel they will never survive to draw an old-age pension, and would rather spend their income now. But some are still navigating for their owners at age 80 – and why not indeed? Anyone who feels fit enough to work should be entitled to if they wish, or to stop work and draw their pension, if any. There's the rub: no contribution means no pension!

Free advice for crew

The pensions world is complicated, but expert free personal advice for British yacht crew is available from the International Pension Centre in Newcastle-on-Tyne, who will readily give an advance pension estimate (see direct.gov.uk and search “Pensions for Britons living abroad”). Suffice it to say that the state pension age for men is 65, rising to 67 by 2028. But you are not forced to stop work at that age. And the basic state pension for a single man or woman is (April 2012) £107.45 per week. That works out at £5587 per year (indexed

annually) plus the cheery £10 Christmas bonus, but needs 30 qualifying years; any less will attract a smaller pension in proportion. However, anyone who ever paid a few UK contributions can top them up by paying up to six back years at £13.25 per week (a total of £689 per year). A good investment.

So, work in yachting as long as you enjoy it – and most crew and captains do – and plan wisely for your future by amassing as many state pensions as you may be eligible for from different Flag States. And when you do swallow the anchor, then live as long as possible to maximise your hard-earned benefits.

Working in Monaco

The same applies to British workers in Monaco (not part of the EU), who receive a Monaco pension if they have worked there for 10 years. So a parallel UK pension is also worth saving for, by voluntary Class 3 Contributions under the same conditions. Don't hesitate. ■

Down with taxes!

Governments in France, Spain, Sardinia, Greece, and recently Italy have had to abandon or modify plans to impose taxes on yachtsmen in their waters, although

Turkey has just announced another. Most countries, with the notable exception of Great Britain, levy an annual tax on yachts, depending on tonnage and engine power. As a resident here, I must pay my French *Droit annuel*; I find it perfectly normal for France to tax a luxury.

Turkey is now taxing in a different way: foreigners without residence permits will be permitted to stay in Turkey for 90 days every other 90 days, which will hit many yacht crew based in the new marinas there. This will also cause an exodus and lead no doubt to its withdrawal, as happened in 2009 to the Luxury Tax levied on super-yachts (and villas, aircraft etc) in the Italian province of Sardinia. *M.H.*

American Notes

BY PJ HESLIN



Photo: Gage Skidmore



Former Vice-President Dan Quale, above, throws his support behind Romney at a rally in Arizona.

Above right, Jennie Dallery has taken over from Burton Gintell as president of the American Club of the Riviera.

A reminder to those who have not filed 2011 taxes, George Donnelly (see Reporter website) is an American tax consultant registered in France who can help.

The Race is over

Now that Romney is the presumptive Republican nominee it's time to reminisce on how enjoyable the race was. Maybe my memory is short but it seems to me that this last primary was the most entertaining GOP or Democratic primary ever. There was serial infidelity (amongst more than one), God telling some of the candidates to run for President and who to marry, Mormonism and Newt Gingrich. The things they were saying and doing were usually reserved for fringe candidates who you hope and expect will be constitutionally crazy.

I couldn't help but think, how is it that the Republican Party could become so unhinged? I think the answer is family values. Since 1992, when Dan Quayle went after Murphy Brown for being a single Mom (it didn't matter that she wasn't a real person), the Republican Party has hoisted the banner of family values. After 9/11, family values took a backseat to security but in the last six years or so it's back in the driver's seat.

In 1992 family values stood for the traditional family unit, and, according to some, their absence caused the breakdown of "urban" families. Now when family values are discussed what they're really talking about is gay marriage or abortion. Bush (the younger one)

ran with this and who took the standard from him with a vengeance? Sarah Palin.

Palin is the bridge that brings us to the present. Palin wrapped herself up in the rhetoric of many things but especially family values with her talk of God, country and snowmobiles. She also brought with it a dash of "crazy", or as she likes to call it, "rogue". Before Palin, a political candidate like her would have been a flash in the pan but instead of falling back into obscurity she became a celebrity. I believe this is where GOP hopefuls took note. Family values was a useful tool to talk about God guiding your vision for America and it didn't matter if you won or lost an election you could still have a career. Even though Palin's political career has peaked, she still makes a healthy salary as a political reality star.

So, this last fleet of Republican Presidential hopefuls all tried to out family value each other with talk of God and protecting zygotes and making sure Americans don't end up marrying animals. And it didn't matter how "crazy" they seemed because the more they would try and out family value one another, the more press they'd get. Would it lead to the Republican nomination? Who cares? All that attention would certainly lead to increased personal appearance fees, book

deals or Fox political commentating jobs long after the Presidential election is over.

The French version of family values is immigration. In this past election, it seems to me the common thread of all the candidates is keeping France for the French, which means placing limits on immigration. And the person who best takes it to this extreme is Marine Le Pen. Personally, I find her the candidate with the most political charisma but then she starts to speak and it's all ruined for me.

Voting

The second round of the French Presidential election saw a turnout of 81%, which is astonishingly high when compared to that of the 64% who voted for the 2008 American Presidential election, an election that involved issues such as the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, involvement in a few wars across the globe and the first African American Presidential candidate; one wonders what it would take to inspire Americans to get out and vote.

Some political scientists and sociologists point a finger at Nixon for creating voter apathy. They argue that the Watergate cover-up created a loss in faith for American leadership. Others say that voter registration is too difficult or that most voters feel disenfranchised

because they perceive the American political system as being controlled by a small, wealthy, elite. It might be a practical issue since American elections are held on a Tuesday whereas the French elections take place on a Sunday.

With this in mind, I contacted William Beachner from Democrats Abroad, to see how American expats can vote in the upcoming election. Beachner explains that, first of all, voters need to register. The easiest way for American expats to do so is to go to votefromabroad.org and follow the step-by-step instructions there. And he reminds us, due to "changes in the Federal law in recent years, all Americans, even if they have been registered before and have voted in previous elections, must register again for each election cycle. Everyone must register this year if they want their vote to be counted in the November 2012 elections."

Founded in 2011 in order to empower American voters abroad, the Union of Overseas Voters offers training for volunteers and help for overseas voters. Tony Paschall, Union Chair of the organization stresses how important the expat vote is. "Although absentee ballots have made the difference in some US federal elections, almost one-third of overseas ballots were never mailed back to US election officials for counting in 2010 and we intend to change that."

Organizations like Democrats Abroad also offer American expats the opportunity to help with the registration process abroad. Says Beachner: "Americans joining our organization can assist us with our two major activities: organizing events of interest and value to Americans in our region and encouraging and assisting Americans to register and vote by absentee ballot."

See page 46 for William Beachner's contact details or visit democratsabroad.org/group/france-riviera. For those

interested in what the GOP is up to overseas visit republiansabroad.org or if you want some non-partisan voting information visit wewote.fr

The American Club's new face

Not only do the Republicans have a new leader but also the American Club of the Riviera (ACR) recently selected a new President. Jennie Dallery has been living in France on and off over the past decade and is pleased to take on the role as the head of the 50-year-old institution. Although she returned to America and lived in Amsterdam during the past ten years Jennie describes herself as having an elastic band attached to her when it comes to France. "No matter what, I have to return here."

Jennie describes herself as a reluctant President of the ACR. "Frankly, in the past I was not interested in seeking fellowship with other Americans abroad but rather, integrating and letting the cards fall where they may. Yet after a very positive experience in Amsterdam with the American women's club I started to recognize the advantages of an affiliation with an organization of compatriots. The expat experience is at once unique for each person and collective at the same time. Our cultural imprint is stronger than the influences of our chosen country of residence. That said, a club should not be a crutch. People who move abroad have an obligation to speak the native language and adapt to the norms."

Last November, ACR hosted the annual Conference of Presidents of American Clubs in Cap d'Ail, which saw representatives from 15 European countries. The club is open to "Americans and friends of America" and in the next two years Dallery hopes to broaden the demographic of the club and diversify their activities. See page 40 for ACR events. ■

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Clubs & Associations



The International Club's Fiesta Latina last month hosted 64 people at the Grange. The evening consisted of Tango demonstrations (left), Latino dance lessons for adults and children, a Latino quiz, typical cuisine and charity raffle in support of children born with AIDS.

The International Club: on the street

No doubt about it the International Club of the Riviera (*internationalclub.fr*) is one of the success stories of our community's *Vie Associative*, as the French call it. While some clubs struggle to attract members, the International Club of the Riviera has decided to cap its enrolment at 120. Explained George Kasiliyake, "We want to have active people who come with ideas, not just passive attendees at an occasional lunch." What's striking is not just the varied origins of the members (currently of 36 nationalities) but also the variety of activities they're offered – from golf and cricket, to drama and sailing. The "International" in the club's title really means something: already this year there have been celebrations of Burns Night and St Patrick's Day and then there's just been was "Fiesta Latina" focusing on South America. Cuisine, by the way, is central to such ethnic occasions.

A major event in this year's calendar (Saturday May 26th at 19h) is a street party to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. This will

take place at the Grange in Mouans Sartoux. "It's not just for Brits, of course," George told us. "We'd like as many people as possible to come along but we'd like UK and Commonwealth guests to feel they're taking part in something authentic – we've even ordered our decorations from the Middleton family firm."

Another clue to the club's success is the segmentation of its activities. If golf isn't you then go sailing. One special group is parents with young children who can't always fit into events easily. Now there's a subgroup called "Family Fun Club" catering precisely for mum and/or dad and the kids.

Swedish rhapsody

Of course, a lot of people like to spend some time with their compatriots – though, as noted last time, this seems less true of the Irish. The Swedes are more typical. Their local association – *Rivieraklubben* (*rivieraklubben.com*) – has some 3000 members. We spoke to secretary Ulla-Lena Detamanti: "Swedes have been coming here for decades and they seem very happy. One of the first regular visitors

Home on The Grange

Celebrating two years this month, Sunnybank's Grange in Mouans Sartoux has firmly established itself as a club venue. Lynette Beardwood tells us, "To date, the BA Cannes and BA Alpes-Maritimes use it as their registered address and for committee meetings, as do the British Legion Cannes and the Var. All this is at no charge to them, it is offered by Sunny Bank as part of our charitable mission. The BA and IWCR also use it for social functions for fundraising while the Commonwealth Club just had their AGM here. As you know, the International Club have used it extensively over the last year for a variety of themed lunches and musical evenings. We welcome approaches from the wider public about usage for charitable purposes, which are always at our discretion."



They went Gaga and are now in Antibes

With a repertoire spanning classical, Broadway and pop, the Kingswood String Quartet (*kingswoodstringquartet.co.uk*) comprises four classically-trained professional soloists who have performed with Lady Gaga and Andrew Lloyd Webber, at the BBC Proms and Eurovision. Their talent and professionalism have quickly made them one of the Riviera's most in-demand ensembles, and they recently played at the Antibes Yacht Show and have a gig lined up for the Monaco Grand Prix. Based in Antibes, they play at parties, receptions or other private events in the region, adding the ultimate in taste and refinement.

See page 46 for contact details.



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after the war was King Gustav V Today the Royals have a house in Ste-Maxime. According to the consulate's estimate, over 8000 Swedes live here permanently and about half that number have second homes. Our club has a varied programme – lunches and lectures, country walks and cultural visits and much else. Anyone interested in Sweden is welcome to join us."

Many Swedes leave during the height of summer to avoid the heat and holiday crowds. Before this year's exodus to the cooler clime of the north there are two events to note: Sweden's National Day on June 6th and then on June 24th the feast of St John, a traditional celebration going back to pagan times with a lot of folk dancing. Next year will see the 40th anniversary of King Carl Gustav's accession to the throne. Will this see Jubilee-style festivities? Kjell Skoog, a second-homer in Villefranche, was doubtful: "He's an odd guy, our King. He was long regarded as respectable but dull and not much of a communicator, maybe because he's dyslexic. Anyway, although he's got that place in Ste Maxime, we don't see much of him. But attitudes have changed: not long ago a book came out revealing his taste for sex parties and – despite his 35-year marriage to Queen Silvia – giving details of his affair with a half-Nigerian singer. Swedes aren't

prudes, as you know, but they got something of a surprise, it turned them off a bit. The heirless to the throne, though, Carl Gustav's daughter Victoria, is very popular."

There's the head. But where's the tail?

As we've often remarked, one of the best ways of "integrating" is to join a French club or association focused on an activity which interests you. We recall a British reader in the Var who told us she had made friends by joining a stamp club. And here's another possibility: the Fishing Club (they opted for an English name) is made up of French enthusiasts for sea fishing. There are about 150 members with around half owning their own boats. Explains Jacques Autran, "The idea is to allow the boatless to come out fishing and to share the fuel costs. It's worked very well. Any English-speaker – preferably with a bit of French – would be welcome. We're based in the port of Mandelieu." And one point to note: "We can't be seen to compete with the professional fishermen and by law when we catch a fish – tuna or whatever – we must cut off its tail fin so it can't be sold."

And if you're looking for fishing lakes in France, see fishingfrance.net

**Meet
Jennie
Dallery,
the new
president
of the
American
Club of the
Riviera, on
page 36.**

**Looking for
your What's
On guide?**

**See events
listing on
page 40.**

Comment ça!

At the Cabris Cricket Club they tell a story of the only Frenchman to join them – briefly. He bought a top-of-the-range kit at Harrods, no less, and then turned out for the first time. After a few minutes on the field he had an epileptic fit and was carried off ... never to be seen again. French cricketers are very rare although an historian has claimed they invented the game (along with poker and Sudoku). But this could change. The *Association française de cricket* (francecricket.com) has reached an agreement with educational authorities to begin teaching cricket in select primary schools from this autumn (though, sadly, not around here). With admirably curbed enthusiasm John Ward, a big wheel in Breton cricket, says: "This is rather encouraging ... interest does seem to be growing."

Seb Coe pointed out recently that the English introduced several sports to other peoples – including the French – rugby, soccer, tennis, golf among others (including cricket, of course, though it's never caught on with the natives here) and have usually been beaten by their converts. Could the Gauls one day be avenging Waterloo at Lords?

For more on the local cricket scene see rivieracricket.com ■

may

MONACO GRAND PRIX

monaco-grand-prix.com: May 24-27.

FESTIVAL CROSSOVER

festival-crossover.com

Sat May 26-Sun June 3: Concerts by Cypress Hill, Charlotte Gainsbourg etc, plus beach parties and exhibitions at various Nice venues.

BIOT À MUSIQUES

04 93 65 78 00

Sat May 26-Thurs June 21, 19h: Free concerts every Saturday night in the Jardin F. Mistral.

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONY DRAGUIGNAN

06 61 78 80 98

dafrance.riviera@gmail.com

Sun May 27, 10h: Join Democrats Abroad attending the wreath-laying ceremony at the Rhone American Cemetery in Draguignan, sponsored by the American Overseas Memorial Day Association in remembrance of those who have died serving our country. Officers and members of other associations, both American and French, will be present. See *Reporter* events calendar for details or contact DA.

EUROPEAN PROFESSIONAL WOMEN'S NETWORK (EPWN) NICE

events@europeanpwn.nice.net

europeanpwn.net/nice

Tues May 29, 12h30: Sustainable Monaco lunch with fashion designer Mihaela Stoica.

Wed May 30, 18h30: Sophia Antipolis Networking Cocktail: Behind the Scenes of Upper Management. Pls register online.

FRANCE-GRANDE-BRETAGNE TOULON

04 94 30 69 77 - afgb-toulon.net

Wed May 30, 15h: Literature Workshop: London's contemporary writers. Annexe du Cercle Naval, Rue Mirabeau (near the train station).

Thurs May 31, 15h30: Presentation in English of Charles Dance's *Ladies in Lavender*.

june

COURS SALEYA FREE CONCERT

0892 707 407

Fri June 1, 17h-21h: The Crossover Music Festival.

RIVIERA INTERNATIONAL SINGERS

06 14 92 78 44 - 06 14 95 71 27

riviera-international-singers.com

Fri June 1 & Sat June 2, 20h30: Celebrating 25 years of summer concerts at Mougins International School. Entrance €10 (€5 children) with a complimentary glass of wine. Proceeds, as always, to charity. Come and support the longest serving international choir on the Riviera as they sing a selection of their "greatest hits". Contact for further info.

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

jubileepartymonaco@gmail.com

Sat June 2, 18h30-20: The Royal British Legion (Nice-Monaco) will host a large cocktail party at the Yacht Club de Monaco to honour the Queen. It will be "Happy Hour" style (pay for own drink) to ensure that anyone wishing to drink the Loyal Toast to the continuing Health of Her Majesty would be able to afford it. The event will be open to all who register, not just members of British Associations, Royal British Legion etc. Please sign up (with name, nationality, title, email address and phone number) to jubileepartymonaco@gmail.com. No reply will normally be sent but early registration will ensure entry to the Yacht Club. Smart dress required please, and parking is possible in the underground parks on Quai Antoine 1er; Dinner available in the newly renovated Stars 'n Bars nearby. Queries to Commander Michael Healy MBE mhealy@orange.fr

20TH CHALLENGE

INTER-BANQUES-TROPHÉE ERI

+37793106406-yacht-club-monaco.mc

Sat June 2-Sun June 3: Organised by the Yacht Club de Monaco.

Post for free your non-commercial events on forum.rivierareporter.com/calendar

CHARITY CONCERT LOW BUDGET MEN

lowbudgetmen.margaret@gmail.com

20000-vies.com

Raising money for Association 20000 Vies (see page 4) and in support of their new album *Crossing Lives*, concerts with all profits to charity.

June 18: Nice at the Theatre de Verdure, Nice featuring Irish singer Paul Casey.

July 20: Gilette

July 22: Golfe Juan

July 26: St Laurent du Var.

ST PAUL'S JUBILEE BEACH PARTY AT LARVOTTO BEACH

monacobeachparty@aol.com

stpaulsmonaco.com

Sat June 2; 19h30: Beach party at La Spiaggia restaurant at Larvotto Beach. Price: €35, includes a welcome drink on arrival, gourmet buffet supper, music and fun. Please email to book.

EPWN NICE

events@europeanpwn.nice.net

europeanpwn.net/nice

Mon June 4, 12h30 Nice Buddy Lunch. Please register online.

HOLY TRINITY CANNES

04 93 94 54 61 - holytrinitycannes.org

Tues June 5, 17h: Jubilee Evensong. Service of thanksgiving for the Queen and a celebration of the 350th anniversary of the Book of Common Prayer. Refreshments afterwards.

COURS SALEYA FREE CONCERT

0892 707 407

Wed June 6, 19h30: World music with Ma Saisara then indie rock with The Kitichies.

ASSOCIATION FRANCE GRANDE BRETAGNE CANNES

04 93 97 86 32 or 04 93 49 37 01

Fri June 8, 16h: Celebration of the Queen's birthday with a tea and champagne toast at the prestigious Carlton Hotel, Cannes. Price €24. Please call for information.

HOLY TRINITY CANNES

04 93 94 54 61 - holytrinitycannes.org

Sat June 9, 9h30: Teaching Day "The Early Church and the Writing of the New Testament". Covering the history and establishment of the early church, the role of Paul and his missionary journeys and the writing of the New Testament. Break for coffee and lunch provided. Please call to reserve.

COURS SALEYA FREE CONCERT

0892 707 407

Sat June 9, 15h-21h30: La Croix Bouge Festival.

MONTE-CARLO PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA CINEMA CONCERT

+377 98 06 28 28 - opmc.mc/index.php
Sat June 9, 20h30, & Sun June 10, 18h: *Les Temps Modernes* with Charlie Chaplain and music by the OPMC, conducted by Frank Strobel, at Salle Garnier, Opéra de Monte-Carlo.
Reservations online or by phone.

MONTE-CARLO TV FESTIVAL

tvfestival.com
June 10-14: At the Grimaldi Forum.

AMIAc

Kim or Gary 04 93 01 20 37
06 45 95 02 28

Thurs June 14, 12h: Aperitifs and lunch at Le Mas de Peyrebelle (ex Auberge Fleuri) in Valbonne. Please ring to reserve.

INTERNATIONAL CLUB OF THE RIVIERA

06 21 20 60 10 - internationalclub.fr
Thurs June 14, 10h: International Golf Club at La Provençal Golf Club, Sophia Antipolis.

INTERNATIONAL SOLOISTS COPENHAGEN OPERA ACADEMY

06 82 90 30 08 - jennifer@amisbrusc.com
Fri June 15, 20:30: At the Chapel of Notre Dame du Brus (Chem des Colles, Châteauneuf-Grasse). Directed by Friedrich Gurtler, arias and scenes from operas by Bizet, Beethoven, Gershwin, Massenet, Mozart, and Wagner. Tickets: €20 adults; €15 members; €7 students; free under-16s. Pls contact Jennifer to reserve.

AMERICAN CLUB OF THE RIVIERA

Jaber Jallad Rjjallad@wanadoo.fr
americanclubriviera.com
Sat June 16: Visit to Bordighera, Italy. Enjoy a sumptuous lunch at the Grand Hotel del Mare, with impressive sea views. Guest speakers Laura and Donald Malcolm of the Global Hope Network International will discuss their dedicated humanitarian aid work, specifically the remarkable Garden of Peace and Hope for Kabul project. Event open to members and guest alike.

59TH CANNES LIONS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CREATIVITY

canneslions.com
Sun June 17-Sat June 23: Guest speaker Bill Clinton at the Palais des Congrès in Cannes.

EPWN NICE

events@europeanpwn.nice.net
europeanpwn.net/nice
Tues June 19, 18h30: Sophia Antipolis Networking Cocktail & discussion. Please register online.

VIAC - viac.fr

Tues June 19: Members and guests are invited to an evening beach party in Ste Maxime. Full details on website.

COURS SALEYA FREE CONCERT

0892 707 407
Thurs June 21: Afternoon jazz with Mellow Street at 11h30, then the Nice Jazz Orchestra at 21h30.

ELTON JOHN - nikaia.fr

Fri June 22: Palais Nikaïa, Nice.

INT'N CLUB OF THE RIVIERA

06 21 20 60 10 - internationalclub.fr
Sat June 23, 19h: Summer Solstice Party at Roquefort-les-Pins.

NICE IRONMAN

ironmanfrance.com
Sun June 24: 3.8 km, 180km bike, 42km run.

AMERICAN CLUB OF THE RIVIERA

Jaber Jallad Rjjallad@wanadoo.fr
americanclubriviera.com
Wed June 27, 10h: For the connoisseur's of the fine art of golf and socializing, at the ever hospitable Golf de la Grande Bastide (Chem des Picholines, Châteauneuf de Grasse). Individual competition prizes (and a few surprises as well) as although this is a serious event (for some) laughter and fun are never too far away once we hit that salubrious 19th hole terrace. Event open to members and guest alike.

MONACO INTERNATIONAL JUMPING

jumping-monaco.com
Thurs June 28-Sat June 30:
An event as spectacular as it is thrilling, the Jumping International of Monte Carlo hosts a gathering of the world's finest riders. A gold-standard event, the 3-day Monaco competition offers a spectacle of unparalleled calibre.

INT'N CLUB OF THE RIVIERA

06 21 20 60 10 - internationalclub.fr
Thurs June 28, 10h: June Outing 2 of the International Golf Club at Victoria Golf Club, Valbonne.

JOHNNY HALLYDAY - nikaia.fr

Fri June 29 & Sun June 30, 20h30: Palais Nikaïa, Nice.

COURS SALEYA FREE CONCERT

0892 707 407
Fri June 29, 18h30: Pop and rock with Killtronik and HVN.

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ENRIQUE IGLESIAS

+ 377 98 06 36 36 - ticketoffice@sbm.mc
Fri July 6 & Sat July 7:
Enrique Iglesias opens this year's Monte-Carlo Sporting Summer Festival with a dinner-concert at Salle des Etoiles. Tickets: €220; reservations online or by phone. See en.sportingsummerfestival.com

COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF THE RIVIERA

commonwealthclubriviera.com
Sat July 7: Caribbean evening at the Grange, Mouans-Sartoux.

HOLY TRINITY CANNES

04 93 94 54 61 - holytrinitycannes.org
Sat July 7, 10-17h: Holy Trinity Church, Cannes in conjunction with the British Association are holding a Summer Fête at Moulin de la Mourachonne, Route de Pegomas, Mouans-Sartoux.

NICE JAZZ FESTIVAL

nicejazzfestival.com
Sun July 8-Wed July 12: At Place Masséna and Jardin Albert 1er.

LA BOHÈME & DINNER

04 97 01 10 00
Wed July 11, 19h30 for 20h00: Performance of Puccini's opera with Shaun Dixon in the role of Rodolfo. At Château Diter, 52 chem du Vivier, Grasse. Dress: Black Tie or smart. Tickets €158, incl. opera, dinner, wine and champagne.

52ND JAZZ À JUAN FESTIVAL

jazzajuan.com
Thurs July 12-Sun July 22: Contact for ticket info.

INT'N CLUB OF THE RIVIERA

06 21 20 60 10 - internationalclub.fr
Thurs July 12, 10h: International Golf Club at La Provençal Golf Club, Sophia Antipolis.
Sat July 14, 19h: Bastille Day Ball at the Grange.

VIAC - viac.fr

Tues July 17: Members and guests are invited on a guided visit to Roquebrune sur Argens followed by lunch. Full details on website.

AMIAc

Ann or Dan on 04 93 61 87 60
Fri July 20, 11h: Boules followed by lunch at Restaurant Leslies in Pegomas. Please ring to reserve.

BEACH RUGBY TOUR 2012

ffr.fr
Tues July 24: At Bormes-les-Mimosas. For the 9th consecutive year, the annual Beach Rugby tournament, ending Aug 15 in Normandy. Lots of events, touch rugby for the whole family, workshops ... for rugby lovers of all ages and all backgrounds.

INT'N CLUB OF THE RIVIERA

06 21 20 60 10 - internationalclub.fr
Thurs July 26, 10h: International Golf Club at Victoria Golf Club, Valbonne.
Sat July 28, 19h: We are the World! Signature event of the ICR in Mougins.

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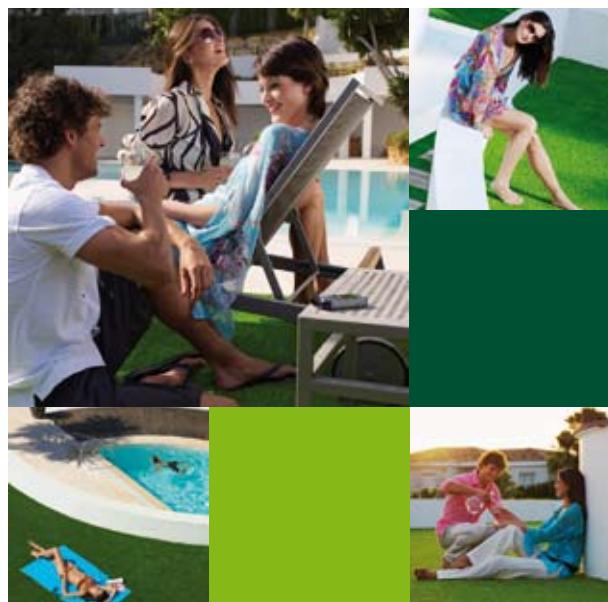
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Arenas Partners, Office Hire www.arenas-partners.com
Office Xtra 1501 rte des Dolines, Sophia Antipolis
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Amahoki Maison & Bois, eco-friendly homes 06 83 45 12 47
Corner Stone Renovations 04 93 40 81 20

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Tresors De Lysa 2030 rte de Cannes, Mouans Sartoux
Yachting Decor 04 93 74 70 07

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Webstore www.webstore.fr
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LEISURE, SPORT, HEALTH, RECREATION

Star Wellness 45 Bd de la Croisette Cannes
The Osteopathic Practice 04 92 28 51 75
MOTORING & TRAVEL
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Zucchini Blossom Best Burgers 1283 Ave de la Plaine, Mougins

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If your business would like to appear here email: theFinder@rivierareporter.com

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BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT NETWORK (VAR)	04 94 84 64 89 - 06 48 46 93 21 - www.bsnvar.org
BRITISH ASSOCIATION CANNES	06 65 38 05 29
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CANCER SUPPORT GROUP IN ENGLISH	Anne Sookhoo 06 69 33 78 40 - cancersupport06@gmail.com
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UFC-06 QUE CHOISIR CONSUMER ASSOCIATION	04 93 62 43 72 - Fax 04 93 62 23 75, 20 Bd Raimbaldi, 06000 Nice

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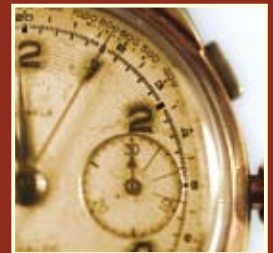
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