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In this issue ...

The Insider

I'M fed up with referendums occupying column inches.

Scotland screamed for independence going to the polls in 2014, Greece held a pointless and poorly-worded EU bailout vote the following year, and, if the British press is to be believed, the UK wants to divorce Europe on June 23rd.

I can't help but wonder if there's an EU spin doctor in an office out there who decides which EU country should host the next hot-button referendum and hold our economies hostage while generating separation anxiety.

Of course, my homeland is no stranger to asking citizens to decide on the country's fate. Canada held two votes, the last being the 1995 Quebec referendum, to ask Quebec voters whether the province should become an independent country.

In the years leading up to this event, I'd been living in Quebec's Gaspé region, in a town north of Rimouski, before moving to Joliette, some 50 kilometres outside of Montreal. These two years afforded me insight into the minds of would-be leavers. I'll share two memorable experiences. First, listening to a Parti Québécois

politician campaign that if Quebec left Canada, it would no longer have to pay transnational highway taxes. This was met with thundering applause at the rally. Second, getting my legs waxed by the only aesthetician in town who, leaning over me with a cigarette dangling from her lips, vented her anti-English Canada rhetoric as she tore strips off me, literally. Things became particularly painful when she talked about the preservation of French culture and language. Needless to say, the swelling lasted for days.

However, I've had a comforting dose of Canada recently. Attending the March 17th ceremony for the new Honorary Canadian Consul in the PACA-Corse region, Gilles Stallin, in Nice, I also met the Canadian Ambassador to Paris, the Honourable Lawrence Cannon.

And this issue has six Canadian writers: Mike Meade (pg 8), PJ Heslin (pg 12), Sarah Legon (pg 20), Jameson Farn (pg 34), Father Walter Raymond (pg 39) and, born in Montreal, yours truly.

I dedicate this edition to my old pro-separatist waxer. I hope she will proudly celebrate our nation's 150th anniversary in 2017. **Editor, Nancy Heslin**

TOP STORIES

- 4 Riviera Reportage
- 5 France News
- 8 UK: Brexit
- 12 US
- 14 Monaco

RIVIERA LIFE

- 13 Business
- 16 Energy
- 18 Finance
- 19 Freelancing
- 30 Sirens of the South
- 33 Nutrition
- 41 Yachting

YOU & YOURS

- 42 Marketplace
- 44 Letters
- 47 Events
- 49 Classifieds

FEATURED

- 20 Health
- 23 Q&A: Luc Salsedo
- 24 Riviera Life
- 26 Property
- 32 Wine
- 34 Community
- 36 Books
- 38 History
- 40 Village life



8



23



34

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Above: Monte-Carlo Rolex Masters ©SBM

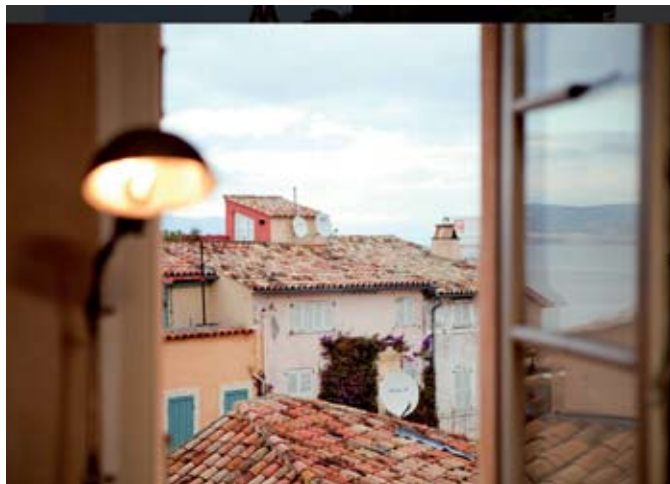


FRANCE'S FIRST LUXURY PROPERTY AUCTION PAGE 4

GOING ONCE, GOING TWICE ...

"HER NAME WAS JACKIE"

UNTIL May 29th, a photo exhibition by Frédéric Lecomte Dieu, the Kennedy family biographer, gives an unprecedented look into the legendary wife of John F Kennedy. At the Ferrero Gallery in Nice, admission €10.



IF you have a couple of million euro lying around, you may want to note a few sale dates in May.

A first in France, a private auction for a luxury property will be auctioned off on May 5th. The Villa La Ponche – a 4-storey, 120m² with 3 double bedrooms and en-suites plus an electric sliding door to a 20 m² panoramic rooftop terrace with views of the Citadel – is within St Tropez's old town and steps away from the famed La Ponche Beach. It was originally listed at €3.25 million. The seller has voluntarily chosen the auction method as an alternative to the

traditional way of selling real estate.

"This is going to auction without reserve," says Paulina Kimbel-Alvarez of NYC-based Concierge Auctions, which have sold nearly \$1 billion in luxury real estate since 2008, "and will sell to the highest bidder, thus offering a fantastic opportunity for a savvy buyer."

To participate in the auction, you have to register by May 3rd. This consists of filling out a registration and Terms & Conditions form, providing a refundable deposit and proof of funds.

Open houses are held every weekend 1-4 pm (no appointment needed)



or by appointment outside of those hours. As always, brokers are protected under the Concierge Auctions model and there is a 2.5% cooperating broker commission (TTC) for the agent bringing in the winning bidder.

For those looking for something more mobile, RM Sotheby's Monaco will be auctioning off a Porsche 911 GT1 during its biennial sale on May 14th, which coincides with the legendary Grand Prix Historique. The price? The classic car, the same model that Niki Lauda made his F1 debut in, looks to fetch between €2.7 and €3 million.

le FLASH ...



WITH 200 farms a week disappearing in France, the annual Journée Nature & Partage on Saturday May 28th in Le Rouret aims to preserve our natural environment, with some 60 stands raising awareness about sustainability, recycling and *bio* issues.

One of the main exhibitors will be l'Association Terre de Liens (Links to Earth), which was established in 2003 to

buy land with the help of local citizens and offers a place for organic farming in exchange for a fair rent. In the last 13 years, 120 farms have been set up across 2800 hectares, seven of which are in the PACA region.

New in 2016, visitors are urged to bring anything in cupboards that they no longer use to give to or swap with others, expanding on the idea of the Journée's "no cash" principle.

Nature & Partage Secretary Virginie Teillet explains: "This initiative goes against the idea that any service or object must be paid for. It's an alternative system for the exchange of goods, which not only allows for objects to be recycled, but is also a progressive change to the way we consume."

The day will have something for all age groups, from eco art displays through to the "Troc aux Plantes" exchange of cuttings and plants with other growers.

To find out more about the day, see www.happyaurouret.com. **Karen Hockney**

MONACO'S MEDICINE CONCIERGE



THE official launch of the Grace-Penn Medicine Concierge Service

took place in Monaco in February. This follows the 2013 strategic alliance between Penn Medicine (University of Pennsylvania Health System) and Princess Grace Hospital of Monaco, designed to increase the exchange of information in the areas of cardiology, surgery and oncology. The Princess Grace Hospital formally opened the Concierge Service, which will offer Monegasque residents access and second opinions to Penn's leading physicians and facilities.

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How paying your income tax in France is going to change



FRENCH Finance Minister Michel Sapin signalled in March that a long talked about reform will definitely go ahead and it affects most of us.

Sapin confirmed the change to the way income tax is paid and promised that the process would be "as simple as possible".

What's going to change?

BASICALLY, the way we pay our income tax in France will change from us paying it ourselves one year late, to it being taken out of our pay automatically each month as we earn.

Currently workers in France either don't pay their taxes on what they earned in 2015 until 2016, or, as most do, they pay estimated amounts, monthly or thrice yearly, based on the previous year's taxes.

But in future, the money will be automatically deducted from your monthly salaries, in an employer based Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE), as it is in most European countries.

This means that income tax goes from being an annual headache to just an extra line on your payslip, although the yearly tax declarations will still have to be made.

Is it a good idea?

WHILE your monthly pay packet will obviously be reduced, given that the tax has already been deducted, there are certain advantages. For a start, if your salaries fluctuate, and apparently they do for 30% of French people, then it will take away the stress of having to put money aside to pay your income taxes a year later, when perhaps your earnings may have dropped significantly.

Although you can currently pay income tax each month for the previous year, many workers pay in one lump sum or in three yearly amounts. Plus, in theory, there should be a lot less paperwork without the annual back and forth between you and the taxman.

FRANCE IN THE NEWS

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From the government's point of view, it helps in all sorts of ways, not least by the huge savings that will be made in administration costs. It will also help cut down on tax fraud, they say, and will give the government more regular income. It will also allow the government to more easily adjust its tax policies to the current economic conditions.

When's it going to happen?

FINANCE Minister Sapin confirmed mid-March that the change will come into force on January 1st, 2018. However, the reform will need to get the green light from parliament first, and Sapin says this should happen in summer this year. In the summer of 2017, companies will have to contact fiscal authorities to find out what tax codes to give their employees. Then they will have to set up their new systems.

Is it just income tax that will be deducted monthly?

NOPE, the reform will affect the tax on salaries but also pensions or replacement income like unemployment benefit, income earned by freelancers or *indépendants*, as well as income on property. These account for the earnings of 98% of French households. So, if you are working or retired, your income will be taxed at source.

How will it be organised?

THE minister confirmed that the job of deducting income tax from workers' salaries will fall to the companies

themselves, so account departments in French companies have a stressful year or two ahead it seems.

Business organisations are not too happy about this and fear added complexities to an already complex system.

The company will have to contact financial authorities to get a tax code for each employee to find out how much they should be paying. Then a slight tweak to the already complicated French payslips will see a line added showing how much has been deducted.

Tax will continue to be calculated on the basis of household or “family” earnings for those who are married or joined by civil marriage (*pacée*) rather than individually. Nevertheless, each member of that household (so normally each member of the couple) will be given their own tax code, depending on what they earn.

That means that in the case of huge disparities in salaries, one member of the couple can take the burden for paying most of the tax, rather than it being split evenly. But the finance ministry insists the overall amount for the married couples will be the same.

France says it's ready to pump money into EDF if needed



THE French government stands ready to inject fresh capital into energy giant EDF if necessary, Economy Minister Emmanuel Macron said.

“If there is a need to recapitalise, we will do so,” Macron said during a visit at the Civaux nuclear station in central France.

“If we need to forego dividends again, we will do so,” he added.

EDF, 84% owned by the French state, has reportedly asked the government to help it finance a contested plan to build a next-generation power plant in Britain.

French leaders have publicly thrown their support behind the £18 billion (€23 billion) project at Hinkley Point in southwest England, despite the growing concern over its price tag, which reportedly prompted EDF's finance chief to quit.

Funding that scheme comes on top of EDF's existing debt pile of more

than €37 billion as it seeks to overhaul its French nuclear plants, as well as finance the takeover of the reactor arm of struggling nuclear giant Areva.

Last month, the government accepted dividend payments in shares rather than cash, saving EDF some €1.8 billion.

“We will all make an effort. The government as shareholder has started doing so,” Macron said, acknowledging that the government had been “too short-termist” in its dealings with EDF in recent years.

But a source close to negotiations between EDF and the government told AFP that the utility's chairman, Jean-Bernard Levy, is also pushing the state to accept a capital increase to cover Hinkley Point expenses. “That is the only solution to finance this kind of project,” the source said.

Such a cash call would have to be for at least five billion euros, said Alphavalue analyst Juan Camilo Rodriguez, enough to cover EDF's cash flow needs for the next three years.

But that would still leave a question mark over EDF's longer-term future in the face of falling electricity prices and losses in income from France opening up its energy markets to competition, analysts said.

As the French government is strapped for cash, it will lean towards solutions that don't involve handing out money, like converting dividends into stock for several years to come, analysts said.

Another such option would be the partial sale of EDF unit RTE, which manages energy transmission. Analysts at brokers Natixis said recently that the sale of 25% in RTE would net EDF around €3.5 billion.

Watch out Scotland, France may soon be “home of whisky”



ACCORDING to researchers, the average whisky consumption by a French adult is 2.15 litres a year – and that's on top of all the wine, cognac and pastis they drink.

To put it in perspective, that's 140 million litres of whisky in total, which would fill 45 Olympic swimming pools.

That was enough to put France on the top of the global league table for the biggest whisky drinkers in the world.

In the US, the home of Bourbon, they only drink 1.44 litres of whisky per person each year and in Britain it's 1.25 litres per person, ever so slightly ahead of the Irish on 1.24 litres per person.

Even the French press were taken aback.

“You thought that the biggest drinkers of whisky were the Americans, the Irish or the Scottish? You are wrong. It's ... the French!” wrote Europe 1 radio.

Not only does France top the world table for whisky drinkers, but the tippie is also the most popular spirit in France, which is not short of popular spirits.

Some 38% of the spirits downed in France are whiskies, enjoyed by all social classes due to the relatively low prices of a bottle. While Scottish malts and blends accounted for 90% of the whisky drunk, the favourite brand was actually Jack Daniels.

But the French love of Scotch is burgeoning, with France the world's biggest importer of Scotch whisky – some 200 million bottles are downed each year.

But things may change.

While French distilleries currently only produce around 700,000 bottles a year, French whisky makers are convinced that they will one day compete with Irish and Scottish brands.

Nicolas Julhès, the head of the Distillerie de Paris told The Times: “Within 15 years the world's best whiskies will be French. We will be able to stop copying the Scots and bring a real French style. We have the greatest specialists on the ageing [of alcoholic drinks] who have always worked in wine and cognac.”

So either Scotland needs to up its game or quickly learn how to make cognac.

In 2015, the regions of Alsace in the east and Brittany in the west were declared official whisky-producing areas with “Le Whisky Breton” and “Le Whisky Alsacien” being granted protected status.

Whisky is also made in the south east of the country (Tarn and Herault) and in Champagne-Ardenne, the Nord-Pas-de-Calais and Corsica. ■

THE A8 TAKES ITS TOLL

AFTER a two-year freeze, the A8 toll rates went up from February 1st. The national increase is 1.12% but for the Escota network (A8, A50-A52, A51 and A57), it's a rise of 1.18%, or an extra €0.10 at Cagnes (No 48), Monaco (No 56) and La Turbie. In the Var, there's an increase between Brignoles and Frejus. You can sign an online petition against the toll hikes at: stopauxpeagestropchers.com

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THE LOCAL



Brexit and what the future may bring

BY MIKE MEADE



THESE are probably the most important pages we've published in the history of this magazine.

Along with my partner, I still own the Riviera Reporter publishing company that I founded almost three decades ago. But since I put editorial responsibility into the competent hands of Nancy Heslin and started drawing my French pension, I've been just as active as ever in managing the company, albeit far less visible in these pages. This will be a rare exception.

As different contributors here use different terms, we use them all. "Brexit" is a term commonly used to describe the process of leaving the EU but it's an inaccurate label; the Northern Irish will vote also, so the entire UK is concerned, not just Britain. Brexiters are people who intend to vote to leave and are sometimes called Outers or Leavers. Brexiteers are those who actively campaign to leave. Those who want to remain in the EU are commonly called Remainers, Innies or Remainers.

It's fair to say that the results of the June 23rd referendum on whether Britain will remain in the EU will greatly affect all Britons, but the 2.2 million British expats in Europe more than most.

The EU is very far from perfect but, on balance, the case for remaining in is far stronger than the case for leaving. Britain has already opted out of the two most disputable EU measures – the euro and Schengen.

It's easy to see why we are firmly in the remain camp. A look at the hard

facts – comically dubbed "Project Fear" by Brexiteers – leads any sensible voter to the conclusion that, for all its faults (and there are many), the EU offers the UK more advantages than disadvantages. For expats it's not even close.

The economic argument is striking. Within the EU, the UK has gone from being the "sick man of Europe" in the 60s and 70s to become Europe's second economy, with the best GDP growth performance, ranking consistently among the top six economies in the world. Outside of the EU, Britain, with a population of only 65 million, could be no match for a European trading and political bloc of 508 million in a world population of over 7 billion. Comparisons with Norway and Switzerland show just what renegotiation of trade conditions would mean. Switzerland had to revise its banking laws and both countries still have to "pay without a say" and even join Schengen as part of their trading treaties with the EU.

Whatever the referendum outcome, the UK will still have to follow most EU regulations and norms concerning goods and services and even obey new ones imposed on trade and finance. Losing Britain's seat at the table will remove the possibility of having a further say in those rules and means that, within a few years, Britain would have less influence in Europe than Japan, America or even Brazil. Where's the sense in that?

David Cameron has compared leaving the EU to a difficult divorce, calling it a "leap in the dark". While compiling these pages we studied hundreds of documents, many of them long and boring but also edifying. The more we learnt about the facts and probabilities, the more we became convinced that the Prime Minister is right.

And those with the opposite view? We're not impressed by their lack of specifics or even credible likelihoods. Most Brexit theories are devoid of logic but facts are stubborn things when it comes to evaluating probabilities. Brexiteers

invariably base their loudly proclaimed position on distortions and inaccuracies spread by political opportunists such as Boris Johnson, Michael Gove and IDS, or gutter press titles like the Daily Express, The Sun and the Daily Mail. In short, sweeping generalities that don't propose a credible alternative project for what Britain's future would be outside the EU.

Many of the Outer arguments use easily debunked myths, fallacies and inaccuracies to sway those who prefer sound bites to hard logic. The EU is "undemocratic" they say. Yet the 750-member European parliament is fully elected (how else could Nigel Farage and Marine Le Pen have become MEPs?). Westminster is more undemocratic with its 816-member House of Lords, only 88 of which are elected. Brussels is overstaffed? There are fewer public servants (Outers like to call them "Eurocrats") employed by Brussels than by Whitehall. The EU budget has "never" been signed off by auditors according to the Outers. In fact, it has indeed been signed off by the Audit Commission every year since 2007. The EU gives ridiculous "human rights" to convicts? No it doesn't. It's not the 28-member EU that does that. It's a separate and unrelated organisation – The European Convention of Human Rights – signed by 47 nations and upheld by the independent European Court of Human Rights. Other human rights obligations are down to the United Nations. Leaving the EU wouldn't change most human rights legislation one bit, but Brexiteers aren't campaigning to leave the UN or the ECHR. Why not?

The EU does impose some workers' rights on member states but they're anything but excessive. The European Union's Working Time Directive states that a work week cannot be more than 48 hours "on the average" but stipulates several exceptions and opt outs. The average working day of 8 hours and the minimum daily rest period of 11 hours in 24 barely give time to leave work, have dinner, sleep and return to work. A short

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break every 6 hours enhances worker safety and it's hardly unwarranted to grant a minimum weekly rest period of 24 uninterrupted hours for each 7-day period. That's only one full day off a week.

The Leavers are right to say that the European Union is far from perfect and needs reform as Clive Bates makes very clear, but this eurosceptic businessman makes a compelling case for continuing to have a seat at the table in order to push for that change.

Few in the business community disagree. Only 5% of the 800 CBI members are for leaving – 80% were in the Remain camp and 15% were undecided in a March poll. However, "Vote Leave" campaigners say that "employment and the economy would continue to grow following an exit", adding that the CBI is focused on "skewed scenarios" in an attempt to discredit CBI director Carolyn Fairbairn, who says that a UK exit from the EU would be "a real blow for living standards, jobs and growth" and that "Brexit could blow a £100bn hole in the UK economy and cost up to 950,000 jobs". Why would Britain's leading business minds claim that if they don't have reason to believe it?

Airline executives, including easyJet CEO Dame Carolyn McCall and British Airways' Willie Walsh are adamant Remainers. The Open Skies Treaty and the Nine Air

Freedom's that offer remarkable flexibility to EU based airlines and competitive fares to passengers explain why even Ryanair's Michael O'Leary is a fervent Remainer.

Here we give you some facts and reasoned opinions, correct some common untruths and misunderstandings, and outline what we think are the real probabilities of what a post-EU Britain would look like for expats. The argument to remain is called "Project Fear" with good reason. We are justifiably fearful of what could easily happen to Britain and to British expats if the UK does indeed vote to leave the European Union.

For space reasons many articles here have been shortened or summarised. A file on our Facebook Group gives links to the complete originals of articles and blog posts by those that contributed to this report – Clive Bates of "The Counterfactual", Brian Cave of the Votes for Expats movement, Graham Trott, Professor of law Steve Peers, George Peretz QC of Monckton Chambers London, and many others. There are also links on our FB group to facts about the EU, the ECHR and other organisations.

Have no illusions – it will probably be a close race. Brexit is as much a possibility as "Bremain". At least until June 24, the only certainty is uncertainty. ■

HOW TO SAY GOODBYE

IF the UK votes to leave the EU, the most likely procedure will be to invoke Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty which states that a leaving country must abide by European Union rules for two years but will no longer have a say in what those conditions are.

Negotiations – especially concerning trade – will be numerous and complex and will go on for years, perhaps even a decade or more. They always do. It took Norway, Switzerland, and even Canada over nine years to hammer out trade treaties with the EU. In the meantime trade with all EU countries fall under WTO rules with tariffs and conditions that are far from as advantageous as they are for Britain at the moment.

In the two year period, companies that have invested in the UK to gain free access to the European market will have to decide whether or not they will want to move into the much bigger trading bloc instead. Many undoubtedly will, including some in the City banking sector that have already said they would move.

Even Brexiteer Boris Johnson admits that years of instability and uncertainty will follow Brexit. In November 2014, Boris said, "Most of our problems are not caused by Brussels, but by British short-termism, inadequate management, sloth, low skills and a culture of easy gratification and under investment."

Earlier this year (Feb 7, 2016) Boris wrote in the Daily Telegraph: "Leaving would mean embroiling the Government for several years in a fiddly process of negotiating new arrangements, so diverting energy from the real problems of this country."

He was right in both statements.

What will happen to expats?



At the very least, living as a non-EU expat in France will be far less convenient than it is now. Just ask any Canadian, American or Australian.

Gone are the days when EU citizens had to jump through discriminatory bureaucratic hoops in order to live, work and retire elsewhere in Europe. It was once a bureaucratic nightmare but the EU changed all that.

The only hoops we jump through now are the same ones our French hosts encounter as well. Being in the EU allows Britons to live wherever they choose within the union without needing authorisation or a resident card, start a business with no more formalities than a Frenchman endures, trade without tariffs, have professional qualifications mutually recognised, drive on a British licence, benefit from reciprocal health care and social services, move about freely within the 28 nation bloc, have their rights as expats protected and defended, vote in local elections and even stand for political office in their town or commune.

All that without Britain needing to join either Schengen or the euro. Not bad.

A vote for Brexit would undeniably put those advantages at risk, especially for new arrivals. Why would the EU offer benefits to Britons that are not granted to Norwegians, Swiss or other non-EU nationals?

There is however, some hope. The 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties contains articles that are based on “acquired rights” which individuals build up over time and keep despite any changes in future treaties between nations. We saw this when Greenland withdrew from

the EEC. Britain withdrawing from the EU should not affect rights or obligations acquired by expats before withdrawal but future rights will not be guaranteed, either for newcomers or for current residents.

Most EU countries, including the UK, are signatories to the Vienna Convention but unfortunately France is not. However, many legal opinions say these protections would probably be there for existing expatriates.

So, in theory, most existing rights would still be honoured for Britons who reside in other EU nations prior to any treaty changes. The Vienna Convention obligations would prevent any government from deporting migrants from elsewhere in the EU who arrived under the old system. However, re-settling in another EU country – such as a Brit moving to Italy from France – would not be nearly as simple and could mean a loss of rights which citizens currently have. It’s not sure that resident Britons will be able to claim future rights or rights that are modified. We just don’t know what would happen in those cases.

A great unknown is what official attitudes of the remaining EU countries would be. Whatever acquired rights British expats will still have under international law will be regularly misinterpreted and not always respected by obstructive petty officials (and even higher up the administrative pyramid).

It’s not uncommon to hear “we are not in the EU here, we’re in France” from petty officials. They are wrong of course, and their obstructions can be easily overturned, but imagine what it would be like if bureaucratic jobsworths can correctly say “you are not in Britain here, you are in the EU”. ■

What might happen to air travel?

EXPATS probably use air travel more than most people. For some, it’s a vital link to business interests and friends and family abroad. Industry professionals led by easyJet CEO Carolyn McCall are adamant that Brexit means fares will have to rise and route options will be fewer.

The aviation sector supports 921,000 jobs in the UK according to Oxford Economics. Heathrow Airport alone is one of the country’s biggest employers – 72,000 people work there, not including flight crew. British Airways alone employs over 40,000 people. Then there are the jobs in all the other airports around the country, not to mention manufacturing like Rolls Royce aviation engines and the parts of Airbus that are made in the UK. Around 100,000 jobs are generated both directly and indirectly in the UK by Airbus wing work.

Of course all these jobs won’t disappear but some will and industry professionals agree that the growth of the sector will be adversely affected.

The EU allows all nine Air Freedom rights (they vary from the right to overfly a foreign country to the right to fly within it without having to continue on to one’s own country) to member nations. This helps keep British airlines in business and keeps the prices down for holidaymakers as well as business travellers.

But come Brexit, British airlines will have to spend years renegotiating those freedoms with countries that will be in no hurry and in no mood to do so. They will certainly prefer to favour their own airlines instead. Air France-KLM’s budget carrier Transavia will gain where easyJet loses.

France to London routes will continue as before but British airlines will no longer have the automatic right to fly from Barcelona to Paris or from Athens to Rome or from Nice to Paris. These 7th, 8th and 9th Air Freedom flights are hundreds every week within the EU and bring massive amounts of revenue to UK airlines, helping to keep fares down.

Healthcare for expats after Brexit

WHEN this magazine started almost 30 years ago, by far our most important advertisers were insurance companies that covered expats who were living in France. This was before the Carte Vitale and before reciprocal healthcare coverage had been worked out between EU countries so that British retirees in France, and French retirees in Britain, were both covered by the NHS and French Assurance Maladie. It was also before the CEAM/EHIC card, which covers medical treatment for emergency illness and accidents for travellers between EU countries.

The future of health coverage is a major consideration for expats and a question without a clear answer so, as for some other issues, we can only offer probabilities.

In the two years following the invocation of Lisbon Treaty Article 50, nothing much should change, although administrations being what they are, there will probably be some confusion similar to the period when EU driving licences were reciprocally recognised but someone forgot to tell the police about it.

For two years at least, expect some hassle, but Britons here will retain their healthcare rights during that period under the present EU agreements. The NHS would still be responsible for paying the ongoing cost of healthcare of British pensioners. Those already in another EU country's health care system would probably remain so. Britons who are covered by the Sécu in France should – in principle – be able to continue under the same conditions as today but new healthcare rights may not be honoured.

After two years and in the longer term, nothing is certain. Everything will depend upon whether Britain and the EU each wish to continue as before. The number of EU immigrants in Britain is roughly the same as the number of British expats within the EU, so continuing with the present arrangement indefinitely would make sense for all.

Note that most Britons call EU citizens who have settled in Britain "immigrants" whereas British residents in Europe are usually "expats"... for reasons unknown (apart from blatant racism, that is). ■

Who can vote and how

THE exact words on the ballot will be "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?"

UK citizens who have been out of the UK for less than 15 years can vote in the referendum. Over 5.5 million UK citizens are estimated to be living overseas – 2.2 million in the EU – and many are potentially eligible to vote.

If you were too young when you left the UK to have been registered, then you can register online as an overseas voter if your parents or guardians were registered to vote in the UK in the last 15 years.

Expats can now register online at gov.uk/register-to-vote.

Campaigners like Brian Cave want to extend voting rights to all UK citizens living abroad in the belief that voting is a fundamental right of any citizens within a democratic society, including those outside of the country.

A High Court judge ordered the government to file a written response to the expat 15-year exception claim by April 1st so the court will now decide how and if the case should proceed further.

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A TEXTING BOOK CASE

PJ Heslin on a digitally-distracted generation



A recent survey in the US claims the average college student checks their phone 11 times a day while in class, and 86% say it's for texting. Photo: Alice Brousse

ONE of the employment opportunities available to expats with certain qualifications is teaching English. Before I left the US in 2009, the prospect of finding full-time work as a teacher, or even as a temp, seemed an impossibility, despite my Master's degree.

I consider myself extremely lucky to teach in France; it's the most rewarding work I've ever had. Nevertheless, there are challenges.

When I started teaching at a private post-secondary school in the area, I believed that the college-aged students would be a walk in the park as far as classroom behavior goes, and that I would spend a great deal of time and effort trying to corral the youthful exuberance of my teenaged students. Six years later, I am still shocked at the conduct of my "mature" students.

If phones and computers were the only problem, I could deal with it but these are just a few of the behavioral issues I encounter each class. Many students will break off into conversation mid-lecture at a volume that would seem to indicate they are at a café instead of a classroom. Many seem to have chronic bladder issues necessitating several bathroom breaks during a 90-minute class. Students who have failed have hounded me on my mobile and private email address (even though I never give out these details and only contact my students via the school's email service), demanding to know why they have not passed the course.

I know I'm getting older, there's a generational gap, but still, almost weekly, I'm stunned by their actions. Initially I thought this might be limited to French students. Yet both French students and teachers have told me not to take it personally if people talk during my lecture; it's common culture to ignore a speaker and have their own tête-à-tête.

I had my doubts.

Over the past few months I've been doing online research to see if this type of demeanor is cultural or generational. It's the latter and the more I look into the subject, the harder my jaw hits the floor.

I've also had a number of discussions with my college-aged nieces and nephews about how students act at universities in the US and Canada and 100% confirm that talking, texting, and lateness are all common, especially in large auditorium-style lectures.

A couple of YouTube searches have also brought up some great clips of professors freaking out on students. My favorite is the "Cornell prof and the loud yawner". Twenty years ago I would have thought the teacher's behavior over the top; now I recognize how at least once a week, I am on the verge of a similar classroom outburst.

An article from the "Journal of Effective Teaching" from 2012 also shows that there is a generational difference in the behavior of college students, not just here

but in America. The journal refers to this as "inappropriate behavior" and refers to actions such as: grade grubbing, texting, talking and arriving late and leaving early.

According to page 440 of the study written by Kristen Knepp, the reasons for this student behavior as such are as follows, "the Millennial Generation" – those who graduated from high school in 2000 or later – present unique challenges to university instructors, in part due to "permissive parents, overly lenient school environments, and a regular diet of instant gratification entertainment". Professors of the Millennial Generation often bemoan this cohort's short attention spans and affinity for multitasking, which makes engaging students throughout a 75-minute lecture a "formidable task".

I assume that when my students go on to enter the work place, they'll grow up and learn more acceptable social behavior. Wrong again. A friend visiting from Toronto, who spent her entire career in upper management of a large insurance company, said one of the reasons that she took early retirement was due to the differences in work culture between older and younger generations. For example, she had to attend a Human Resources seminar on how to deal with parents who phone on behalf of their children because their kid's raise wasn't enough. The accepted protocol should be: laugh heartily, slam down the phone on said parent, followed immediately by ridicule of the employee. But no, that is considered unacceptable.

According to an article entitled "Helicopter Parenting in the Workplace" by Howe and Strauss, "Parents who get involved most often gather information about prospective employers: Fully 40% of employers have had parents gather employment information for their children. Nearly one-third of employers have seen parents submit a resumé on their child's behalf. Over one quarter of employers have had parents promote their children for a position, and 15% have had parents call to complain if the company does not hire their son or daughter."

A little good news, only 4% report having parents sit in on a job interview (presumably because they are still being breastfed). ■

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Your tax filing days are numbered

BUSINESS

BY PETER JOHNSON

ELECTIONS are coming up. You can tell as the government takes some of the sting out of income tax rates. Last year, 3 million households were totally exempt from tax; a further 8 million will get substantial reductions this year. This concerns middle-income families with taxable income of approximately €37,000 or less.

Once again, the other preoccupation of Bercy is to get people to file online. There will be a small fine this year if you file a paper copy, whereas in previous years the "carrot" was a €20 reduction if you did.

By 2019 it will be obligatory for everyone to file electronically.

And heaven help those who can't cope, as the tax offices in France are nearly empty of staff. Indeed, in January, national news carried a story that the tax offices in the Alpes-Maritimes were no longer answering the phone. No staff to do so, and further evidence of the lack of funding for "public service" can be seen in the number of half

days (and sometimes full days) local tax offices are now closed. And when they are open, as you can imagine, the queues stretch around the block.

The computerisation and digitalisation of modern life went a surreptitious step further in February when a standard routine questionnaire was sent out to almost everyone registered to pay tax in France. The form asked to verify personal information, such as a date of birth for instance, but – more significantly – it also asked for a *numéro de sécurité sociale*, or French social security number (SSN).

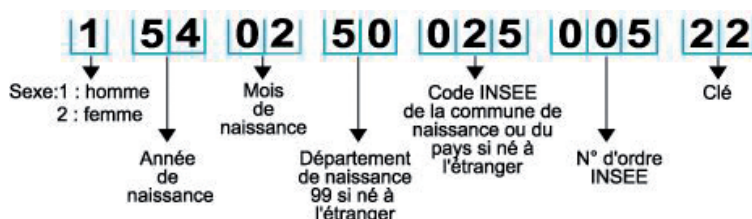
For years the tax office have not been linked automatically to the social security department ... until now. Employers have to send salary details straight to the tax office by internet. For many of the self-employed this is done by an accountant, and in MOST cases this information is accompanied by that person's unique SSN. What happens then if you're

paying tax, but have no SSN? Immediately there is a suspicion that the work you're doing is outside the "system", partially undeclared, partially declared, but – in any case – not exactly "regular". Investigations will follow, that's for sure, as the French try to emulate the American IRS by instilling a level of fear in people so that they simply dare not try and cheat.

A link between a tax number and a SSN tells the authorities just about everything they need to know about an individual. Not having a SSN will be a "red rag to the bull".

For those "on the fringes" and without such a vital identification, from January 1st, 2016, the French health service has made available to EC nationals a state-sponsored health cover under the generic title of PUM (*Plan Universelle Maladie*), which replaced the old CMU (*Couverture maladie universelle*) system. This might prove to be a useful way of getting the crucial SSN. The only criterion is to be able to prove "stable residence" for more than 3 months.

And what with virtually all offshore banks now sharing information direct with the French tax office (even Monaco and the European Union signed an agreement on fiscal secrecy on February 22nd), there's precious little they don't know ... or can't find out at a click of a mouse. ■



A French social security number has 13 digits, followed by a 2-digit control key.

READY TO GO



BY MOLLY BROWN

WHILE spring-cleaning a neglected cupboard, I discovered my first Monaco Murmurs ... written in spring 1988! How unnerving is that ... such a large chunk of my life spent chattering about a very small place. But quite a special very small place ... a 700-year old Principality with a fascinating history. Celebrities, world famous people and thousands of visitors come and go in this small but unique tourist resort on the Côte d'Azur, but it stays the same at heart: a small close-knit town that has grown into not just a city state, but a country. So, murmuring on, what has changed in all those years?

"Monaco awakens from the tranquillity and elegance of the winter season. With the coming of spring and the Grand Prix de Monaco. Tranquillity in the sense of few tourists and few year-round residents, but not in the sense of peace and quiet ... even the ground beneath the palace has been shattered by the grind of drills and roar of cement trucks as the rock was 'Gruyered' by new roads to and from the new town of Fontvieille and the dust still has not settled in Monte Carlo as the new parking garages in the Place du Casino and avenue Princesse Grace are still under construction."

No change there!

Where to eat when you are not a millionaire is always a topic of conversation, so I mentioned that a delicious dinner could be enjoyed "at Le Grillardin restaurant, 2

minutes from Barclays Bank, for a modest 65 francs (€10) with wine and coffee." Ah! That was in the good old days before the euro, when banks paid 10% interest and a deposit account was considered by many in Monaco to give a better return on capital than investing in real estate, as prices were too high, so I ended my first epistle with:

"If it's magical, it must be Monaco ... but if you are thinking of moving here, consider carefully. For an apartment by the sea in Monte-Carlo, you could buy a 34-room château and 12 hectares in central France ... for only 3 million French francs."

Probably still true today, but a studio by the sea might not have been a bad investment. A garage in Monaco now costs €250,000 and property is one of the most expensive in the world ... and who needs a 34-room château when you can swim in the Mediterranean sea and one of the world's most expensive and glamorous sporting events is just down the street.

It was in 1988 that Ayrton Senna drove one of the greatest qualifying laps ever seen in the history of Formula One to win pole position and beat his teammate and rival, Alain Prost, and win the Monaco Grand Prix, to the delight of 60,000 fans. Over 100,000 fans are expected to flood into Monaco for the 2016 Grand Prix (May 26-29), which is all about Mercedes and Ferrari, who swept the board in 2015. The Mercedes team will no doubt be on their toes after last year's debacle, so will Hamilton or Vettel

beat Rosberg? The 4-day race is a money-spinner, bringing in 5% of Monaco's annual revenue. Work has already begun to prepare the circuit and erect the grandstands and safety barriers as the bi-annual 10th Grand Prix Historique is two weeks earlier (May 13-15). This event is a joy for lovers of classic cars: a quieter, less frenetic affair with a special flair, where you can watch 1920s Bugattis, 1930s Maseratis, 1950s Ferraris, Cooper Bristols and a BRM race around Monaco's state-of-the-art circuit with drivers in leather helmets and white scarves and see them all up close and personal in the paddock outside Stars'n'Bars before the races.

Spring produces showers, flowers and another big sporting event which brings ten of the world's top tennis stars to their favourite tournament, the Monte Carlo Rolex Masters (Apr 9-17) at the Monte-Carlo Country Club, a small, select, beautifully situated club overlooking the Mediterranean on the eastern border of Monaco. It is a social event where one can lunch on the terrace, mingle with the crowds and watch some amazing tennis. A well-timed Top Marques show awaits the winning players with the latest, most expensive, bespoke luxury cars and boats to match at the Grimaldi Forum (Apr 14-17), which then welcomes Les Ballets De Monte Carlo's festival of dance, with legendary Czech choreographer, Jiri Kylian (Apr 28-May 1).

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Drive of the Bumble Bee

CHARITY



THE inaugural Bumble Bee Rally will leave Edinburgh's Holyrood Palace on Sunday May 8th with up to 24 motoring enthusiasts from the UK taking part in a 1,600 mile journey, across seven countries, taking in some of the highest mountain passes in the Alps en route to the glamorous Côte d'Azur and the principality of Monaco.

After crossing the Channel, the rally will make three overnight stops in Bonn and Ulm in Germany, and Varenna in Italy, before making the final dash down through Italy to the French Riviera in time for a reception on May 12th at Le Berlugan à la Plage in Beaulieu-sur-mer. Here, a dinner

will be held in memory of the late Richard Barlas, affectionately known as "Bee", who made the same trip with his friend and rally organiser Alan O'Connor in 2008.

The rally is raising funds for the charity Richmond's Hope, which provides bereavement counselling for children who have lost parents, very poignant since Richard's untimely passing, aged 50, left behind his wife Claire with their four adorable children.

Cars from all eras will be taking part with a line up including Aston Martin, Bentley, BMW, Jaguar and Porsche. Support vehicles from France will pick up the rally in Amsterdam, with Beaulieu

residents Gerry Brown and Andrew Jopson ready to provide assistance on what can at times be a challenging route. Le Berlugan owner Ian Connor will join Alan O'Connor in his Porsche 356 Outlaw and help keep pace with racing driver David Goodwin's Bentley Turbo among others vying to be first into the Principality.

O'Connor stresses it's not a race but more of a fun-packed adventure and raising awareness for an extremely worthwhile cause. Prizes won't be for the fastest time or best performance but perhaps for the biggest drama or the worst dressed drivers. Friends and partners will arrive on the coast in time for the big dinner with more than 50 guests expected to let their hair down at the seaside restaurant.

The rally has been timed to coincide with this year's Grand Prix Historique, with some of the group joining the Bentley Drivers Club on their biannual pilgrim over the weekend. "If this year is a resounding success," O'Connor says, "then we'd definitely like it to become a regular event where we open the doors to even more participants."

"This year has very much been about friends creating a legacy for someone we were all very fond of." ■

Donations can be made at justgiving.com/Alan-O-Connor or for more info, contact Alan.oconnor@aocgroup.co.uk

WEALTH MANAGEMENT

SPOTLIGHT: Rob Kay



Rob Kay, above, has been with Blevins Franks for nearly 20 years. The team: (inset, L-R) Mike Marsden, Rob Kay, Stuart Stojkovic; (back) Nathalie Currid, Clare Stares, Jo Leach, Colm Doyle and Rebecca Fleck.

BLEVINS Franks are the leading international tax and wealth management advisers to British nationals living in Europe.

Rob Kay joined the firm in 1998 and established the first permanent office in the French Riviera.

Originally from Manchester, Rob met his wife Lisa in the South of France and

both their children, Jamie and Harri, were born in Cannes. "Away from the office," Rob says, "I enjoy spending time with my family, playing golf, skiing and watching sport, especially Manchester United."

During Rob's time with Blevins Franks, the Valbonne office has grown from one Partner and 30 clients to a team of eight

with over 350 clients. Rob is very proud of having built a strong client relationship with the support of his group. His motto "be flawless in client care" probably explains why the majority of his new clients come from referrals from existing ones.

"Together, we created a warm and welcoming workplace," he explains. "Our aim is to give clients the peace of mind, knowing they have taken all the steps to protect their wealth so that they can enjoy their chosen lifestyle and know their heirs will be well looked after."

Rob has over 35 years' experience in the Wealth Management and Estate Planning industry. In association with colleagues in Malta and London, he designs and provides Strategic Financial Planning Solutions.

Blevins Franks are responsible for over €2.4 billion in assets under advice. "However, you don't have to be a millionaire to benefit from our services," Rob points out.

"Wealth preservation is achieved by creating cross-border holistic strategies that minimise taxes and maximise capital appreciation. We combine our experience of the financial issues faced by British expatriates and our deep understanding of the local French tax regime and investment environment to offer the best solutions."

Blevins Franks have been operating for over 40 years: they have 30 Partners and 17 Private Client Managers, based in 22 offices in France, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Malta and the UK.

Adds Rob, "We believe in controlled expansion and growing gracefully. I am delighted that Blevins Franks has opened an office in Monaco. We see this as an important and natural development, improving access for clients east of Nice towards the Italian border and in the Principality itself."

If you are British and live in France or Monaco, consider speaking to Blevins Franks. ■

For more, visit blevinsfranks.com or email rob.kay@blevinsfranks.com. Offices: Monaco +377 97 77 55 74 or Valbonne 04 93 00 17 80.

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GO FIGURES

Barth Hulley learns a lesson about being number one

FREELANCE



BOOKKEEPING, accounting and generally knowing your numbers are a fairly important part of working for yourself, be it in France or elsewhere. However, when you move to foreign climes you have to grant the experts around you a certain degree of flexibility and trust, as you acclimatise yourself to the way they do things.

For me, this is not an easy step to take; I've often been accused of cynicism when it comes to certain professions – like private dentistry, for instance. I'm always asking myself: why on earth would a dentist say that your teeth are in perfect health when a filling or extraction would earn him three times as much as a regular check-up?

I had to trust my French insurance broker as he was the expert, but experience has taught me to be sceptical of people selling insurance, with catchy little phrases like "you might get hit by a bus tomorrow", "your home could get repossessed" or "you may never be able to work again".

What little trust I had in my insurance dealer started to decline when I realised that, after only two years into our *assurance d'habitation* policy, our premiums had doubled. I suspected he wasn't being entirely honest, but not completely understanding the policy's small print or knowing how to say in French "I think you're ripping me off", I let it slide.

My unquestioning malleability is probably why this particular insurance man felt it was worth trying to steal €600 from me, an escapade in which he actually succeeded ... for a time. Had I been a confrontational, argumentative type, he would have given it a second thought.

His little scheme was based upon "a simple misunderstanding" in the way I wrote the number one (1) on the cheque I filled out as annual payment. If I'd been brought up in the French education system, I'd have known to compose the capital letter A without its cross-piece – the accepted way of writing the number "1" in France.

To scrawl a "1" with a short downward top serif (as it appears in most typefaces) can be construed by the French as a seven, especially when cashing a cheque is concerned.

It would seem that the increase in my household insurance premium was voluntary, due to the ambiguous way I scribble the number "1".

Logically, the reason you write out in words the amount that corresponds to the figure you are making the cheque out for is to ensure people don't try to commit fraud.

I guess the bank where my broker cashed the cheque didn't get that memo.

I've seen the number "1" written in various ways in France and so the capital A is not wholly universal. There is no doubt in my mind that my insurance guy simply saw an opportunity, knowing that if he was caught could plead innocence using this "A" argument.

While I may be cynical, I'm not the vindictive type. When I finally discovered his dishonesty, some six months later, I took a threatening posture until my cash was returned and then I let it *laisse tomber*. I'm still kicking myself because I let him get away with attempted fraud. I suspect, though, that I'm not the only expat to have been held victim to a French chancer, and simply put it down to cultural differences.

The moral of the story: trust no one when it comes to money matters. Learn French as quickly as you can and don't let your good manners stand in the way of a confrontation – the French don't hesitate to talk to you this way, nor do they take it personally. Let it be known you're not a pushover, otherwise you'll be easy pickings and out of pocket. ■

Barth Hulley lives in Strasbourg. His recent book, "Freelance in France 2015", offers practical advice on working for yourself in France. See freelanceinfrance.fr

THAT'S SO NICE:

Electricity's digital future has dawned on the French Riviera



Solar panels in Carros can send power to the grid or charge batteries. Photo: GE

THE commune of Carros straddles a leafy valley tucked away a short ride from Nice and the beaches of the French Riviera. Like much of Provence, the medieval town of 11,000 swells every summer with tourists seeking tans and sipping rosé. But it may soon become a magnet for people interested in the sun for a different reason.

The town holds the world's first smart solar grid, a system that could one day allow cities to generate more renewable energy closer to customers. "This is a prototype for an end-to-end system from the consumer to storage to the distribution grid, back to transmission," says Laurent Schmitt, smart grid strategy leader at GE Grid Solutions.

The GE business and French distribution grid operator ERDF, which spent the last four years building the grid, picked Carros because of its remote location on France's transmission grid. Despite its proximity to Nice, Carros relies on a single

electricity supply line. This drives up the risk of outages, especially in busy July and August, when demand shoots up. A local business park is another factor that taxes the line.

Ironically, solar panels would seem like the obvious solution to add more power. But in the past they just caused more problems, and often had to be shut down because they generated more electricity than the grid could carry. "This really created a complex problem that ERDF wanted to solve," Schmitt says. "If we get it right here, we'll have solid proof that we can do it elsewhere." He believes the smart grid market will be worth €50 billion by 2020.

The team began by modernizing the existing grid with software and automatic switches, placed solar panels on more than 500 buildings and installed a centralized 1-megawatt battery to store and release excess electricity. The result is a smart grid

that can be more flexible and efficient in sending power to the grid.

One piece of GE software, called distributed energy resource management system, allows operators to mesh consumption information from smart meters with load forecasts, status updates from the grid and weather reports.

The software, for example, allowed the operators to offer a subsidy via text message to a local coffee roaster if the company fired its ovens when neighbours' solar panels were generating excess electricity. "We load up, and the coffee roaster roasts their coffee at a cheaper price because they get a subsidy from the grid operator to consume during this period," Schmitt says. Grid operators used the same incentive to make residents turn on water heaters during solar peaks.

When local business cannot soak up all the extra electricity, that's where the battery and more GE software come in. Engineers coupled the battery

with charge management technology that charges or drains batteries based on electric demand on the grid.

At the town's business park, 15 customers with installed solar power also became an "islanding" zone — generating and storing enough power to be disconnected from the grid at certain times. Schmitt says islanding will be especially useful in emerging economies where grids are unreliable.

Although the market for battery energy storage is still minuscule today, it could reach 10 gigawatts of installed capacity by 2020, GE says. Storing power from renewables such as solar and wind and feeding it into the grid will drive most of the demand.

GE estimates a smart grid like the one in Carros could cut power generation costs by 20 percent by reducing the need for building up excess power generation capacity. It will also cut the district's carbon footprint.

The project is just one of many globally where GE is testing innovative ways to improve grids. Worldwide, electricity demand is expected to rise by up to 70 percent by 2030, according to the International Energy Agency, creating a \$12 trillion market. Rising demand in India, China, Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia will drive much of the growth. In those markets, coal will still play an important role, but renewables are expected to represent one-quarter of the energy mix by 2050.

That puts the electricity industry on the verge of a global digital revolution that is leading to a whole new idea in power generation: distributed energy. With renewables in the mix, it starts to make sense to have smaller, cleaner plants serving smaller communities. Just like in Carros, the idea is to generate some electricity locally to reduce stress on the grid, cut energy costs and increase flexibility. ■

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BY CAREN TRAFFORD

OVER the last few months, I've fallen in love. And the object of my desire is helping to save the planet. I'm talking about the cutesy canary-yellow scooters that deliver our letters and magazines, courtesy of La Poste – our French postal service. Interesting fact. Did you know that France has one of the highest number of post-boxes of any country in the world, first installed in Paris in 1653? Back then, stamps did not exist, and it was the receiver of the letters that had to pay for the privilege of receiving them.

Today, La Poste is one of the few public services in France that gets any praise for the quality of its service. But there's competition. In 2005, La Poste lost its monopoly on postal delivery and since then several competing firms have set up business in France, although most of them only deliver parcels (TNT Express, DHL

Express, United Parcel Service ...) or recorded letters.

But back to the object of my desire, those bright yellow two-wheelers. La Poste is doing its part in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. More than 10% of the 600,000 vehicles in the fleet of the French postal service are electrically powered. Not only is your post being delivered to your door in the most environmentally friendly way possible, but La

Poste currently has the largest fleet of electric powered vehicles in the world. And they intend to add another 10,000 vehicles by 2017. The introduction of electric vehicles is part of its global strategy to reduce CO2 emissions by 1000 tonnes a year and to save 5 million litres of fuel.

The idea is not new. Postal operators have been trying out electric vehicles to handle the shorter-range deliveries – between 60 and 70 kilometres – before returning to the depot to be recharged. But La Poste is now working with French car manufacturer Renault to test out a longer-range mail truck powered by a hydrogen fuel cell, which can reach a range of 200 kilometres before needing to be recharged. And in the scooter department, it has selected Ligier to supply a number of exclusively designed three-wheeled vehicles for the delivery and collection of mail and small goods.

Ligier has named their three-wheeled

bright yellow vehicle the Staby, due to its increased stability and safety. The Staby is eventually intended to replace the fleet's scooters.

The French government is keen to get in on the act, too, and it wants to encourage all drivers to cut out tailpipe pollution and reduce carbon emissions. New schemes have been implemented to reduce pollution, from paying people to bike to work and creating more bike lanes to banning cars one day a year in Paris. But the powers that be in Paris want a reduction in road pollution and, with that in mind, have launched a new initiative to financially compensate drivers who opt for electric cars.

The Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy wants to target especially older cars responsible for a disproportionate amount of emissions. The "conversion premium" will offer up to €10,000 for a fully electric vehicle or up to €6,500 for a plug-in hybrid to any driver who wants to trade in their old car.

The US tried a similar programme, but only offered up to \$7,500 per car. In the UK, Highways England has implemented a series of tests, placing electric cables under the bitumen to recharge the electric car battery while the car is moving. A novel idea, but it comes at a high cost. €300,000 per kilometre!

In the meantime, my love affair with the bright yellow electric scooters looks set to continue as La Poste is committed to lowering its greenhouse gas emissions by 15% between 2013 and 2020.

So, next time La Poste comes to your door, spare a thought for my aching heart and blow a kiss to the environmentally-friendly bright yellow scooter. ■

EXPATS FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

You don't need to go through it alone. As Sarah Legon explains, an English-speaking support group is here to help



CSG06 SEVEN SUPPORTIVE YEARS (L-R) Back: Angela Anderson (President of CSG06), Pauline Manassen, Meta Looij (Founding President), Dr H. Naman (oncologist). Front: Anne-Marie Swiegot, Mim Kay (also President of the BSN), Sus Stroyberg (head oncology nurse, Tzanck Mougins) Sarah Legon. Photo: Rick Anderson

SADLY, it seems cancer touches everyone in one way or another.

I helped found the Cancer Support Group for English speakers while I was having chemo at the Clinique Tzanck in Mougins because the oncology nurse asked me to support English-speaking patients. Then Anne Sookhoo, a psychologist known to the Reporter, asked me to help her start a group along with Mim Kay of the Bereavement Network of the Var (which helps people in the Alpes-Maritimes also).

It began out of the Tzanck clinic because one of their oncologists, Dr Naman, came and spoke to me during my treatment and thought it was a good idea. He gave us a

space on the premise and Sus Stroyberg, the head oncology nurse, joined us, which was fabulous. Two wonderful Dutch ladies (Meta Looij and Pauline Manassen had the same idea and came on board, and so we had the beginning of a support group.

Thus, in January 2009, Cancer Support Group 06 (CSG06) was founded by a group of concerned health carers and former patients who recognised the need for a cancer support group for English speakers. Our motto is: "You are not alone."

The group has become an official association and more professional. Initially based at the Tzanck clinic in Mougins, most of the group services

that we offer are now at The Grange, home of Sunny Bank, who allow us to use their lovely facilities at 815 chemin des Gourettes in Mouans-Sartoux and thus provide support in a non-hospital environment.

"No one should have to face this difficult disease alone," says Meta Looij, outgoing President of Cancer Support Group 06, "and those who do not speak French fluently have not been able to find adequate support. We hope to change that with this group, after all there's more to life than cancer."

One of the founders of CSG06 adds, "Many family members and friends also need help. And sometimes you just

need to be with others to talk about your worries, grumble or just joke about things. Learning you can live with cancer is a stage you often need help with."

There are all sorts of activities for cancer patients and caregivers including Mindfulness, Art Therapy, Psychology, and Flower Arrangement. Cogs for Cancer, a yachtie group, and the IWCR have kindly raised a lot of money for the group and continue to do so. We thank them heartily.

In addition to group services, such as regular monthly meetings, art therapy, Ikebana flower arranging classes, Alexander Technique workshops and mindful meditation meetings, there is also one-to-one help. This might be support from our psychologist, sophrologist or counsellor, help with the French administration system, translation of documents or at medical appointments, practical help like shopping or even dog walking. Whatever a client needs, it's our aim to help. Current services are all free of charge.

Future plans include working closely with the local Ligue Contre le Cancer, which has recently opened a new multipurpose space in Antibes – thanks to the fundraising efforts of another English-speaking group,

Mimosa Matters (see page 46) – and CSG06 hopes to offer English services there.

The monthly open meeting, on the first Wednesday of the month (15h30-17h) is open to anyone interested in our work, including clients, volunteers and potential volunteers. The meeting also includes many of the founding members, like psychologists Anne Sookhoo and Eli Cookson, Sophrologist Pauline Manassen and the head oncology nurse at Tzanck, Sus Stroyberg.

CSG06 is affiliated with the nationwide Cancer Support France (CSF), a group of associations which provide services to Anglophones. This involvement with a national body enables the sharing of information and expertise, together with vital help with training, which is an important part of ensuring that both clients and volunteers are supported.

CSG06 is a small but growing association that wants to raise public awareness. You can learn more about what Cancer Support Group for English Speakers offer – our new helpline answerphone 07 68 38 74 70 is checked daily – and also how you can help on our website: cancersupportgroup06.wix.com/csg06. ■

HELPFUL CANCER LINKS

Pink Ribbon Monaco
pinkribbon.mc

SOS Cancer du Sein (French)
soscancerdusein.org

Cancer vaccines Dudderstadt, Germany - immunotherapie.org

Cancer Options Service, UK - canceroptions.co.uk

Photodynamic light therapy, Winchester UK - doveclinic.com

The Haven charity, London, UK - thehaven.org.uk

IPCT Clinic near Munich, Germany - klinik-st-georg.de

Naturopathy & IPCT, US - manhattanadvancedmedicine.com



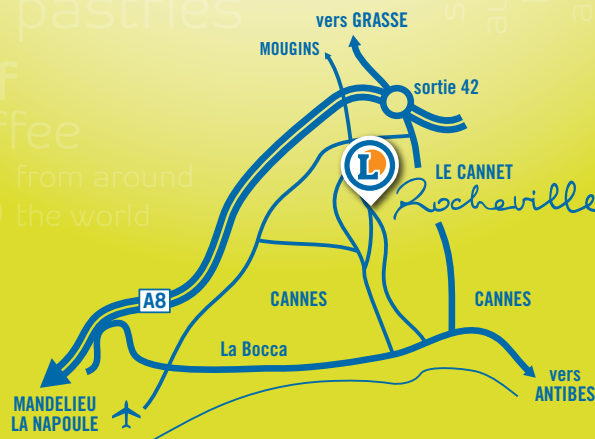
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SMOKE SIGNALS

Nice resident Nikki Manwarring on kicking a lifetime habit



I LOVE being a non-smoker. I feel free.

I started smoking when I was 18. It wasn't to be sociable. I was working as an au pair, looking after 4 children and a house, and it was stressful. I bought a packet of 10 cigarettes and, alone in the quiet of my bedroom, I tried one. I felt very sick, it was actually deeply unpleasant, but I persevered and, before long, it became a daily habit. I became a heavy smoker.

Smoking was a big part of my life for the next 39 years. Cigarettes accompanied me everywhere and, however difficult it became to smoke inside or in public, I still managed to fit 30 cigarettes into a day. I thought I enjoyed it. I believed it relaxed me, took away the stress. For several years, my breathing was getting more difficult, I had a perpetual cough and I had serious, recurring bronchial problems. I didn't complain or talk about any of this, even to my doctor. I hid it. The last thing I wanted was anyone suggesting I should give up smoking. Nobody was going to take that "pleasure" away from me.

I knew that cigarette smoking was an addiction. Just one that I was choosing to keep. Like any addiction, the denial connected with it is enormous. I truly believed I enjoyed it, something I find very difficult to get my head around today. After all, what's enjoyable about the inhalation of toxic fumes, the constant coughing, the recurring bronchitis every time I got a cold, the smell of stale smoke in my hair, on my

clothes, in my home, the waste of money ...

I tried to give up several times. It didn't last more than a few hours: the need to smoke was stronger than any promise of potential benefits or threat of nasty diseases. I consulted a hypnotherapist and an acupuncturist, both asked me to come back when I had a desire to stop.

My big breakthrough came with reading Allen Carr's book, "The Easy Way to Stop Smoking". I had heard about it for years and deliberately avoided reading it. I knew people who had done his course and managed to give up but I had no wish to follow suit.

I had cleaned up my life in various areas when I realised that this particular addiction was killing me. I finally bought a copy of the book and my delusions about smoking, my beliefs about what it did for me, were shattered with each page. I learnt that the only thing smoking a cigarette does for me is to create the need to smoke another cigarette. It was a revelation.

I followed the author's instructions to keep smoking while reading through the book, knowing that I was going to be asked to stub out my last cigarette in the last chapter. In the end, I read the book about 9 times before I was ready to read the final chapter – but at least after nine readings, my beliefs about smoking had started to turn around.

After the 9th reading of all but that one dreaded chapter, I made an appointment to see a lung specialist on October 10th,

2012. As part of my preparation to maybe give up, I wanted to know exactly what state my lungs were in (which I had very carefully avoided knowing for many years). That afternoon, I listened to the doctor telling me I had lost 76% of my lung capacity. He said I was in the final phase of COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) and needed to stop smoking or I would die. He suggested that I try to cut down to 10 cigarettes a day by Christmas.

That night I read the last chapter of the book. As directed, I smoked my "last cigarette". I ran my remaining cigarettes under the tap and threw away all of my ashtrays.

Still following directions, I woke up the next morning and said, aloud, "Yippee, I'm a non-smoker!"

From that minute, I have not smoked a cigarette. Physically, it was a bit difficult for the first few weeks. In the afternoons, I had an indescribable feeling of lack for a couple of hours but, strangely, I did not want to smoke. I knew that one puff would take me back to where I didn't want to go any more. I had something to lose. So I kept myself busy for those hours, focusing on being grateful for being a non-smoker – and one day it just lifted.

From the first day, the gratitude for being a non-smoker heavily outweighed the pull of a cigarette. Each of those early days I found benefits in being a non-smoker – opening the door to my flat to a smell of freshness, not having to sit outside in the cold, my hair smelling of shampoo rather than smoke, no feeling irritated as the effect of nicotine was wearing off 30 times a day, being much more aware of the taste of different foods, even my constant cough disappeared almost immediately. People say I look better – healthy even – my skin, my hair and my teeth have certainly benefitted.

I don't miss it. I have never missed it. I thought it would be difficult to be around other smokers. It isn't. I thought I would be more nervous and depressed. I'm not.

My lungs are irreparably damaged but I am grateful that I have enough breath left to put my energy into looking after the body that I have abused for so long.

Stopping smoking comes into the top three of the best things I have ever done in my life, but it's the only I need to share. ■

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SOCCA TO ME

Q&A with Luc Salsedo, creator of the socca chip



With his local brand "Les Créations Luc Salsedo", Luc and his wife Christine launch their first product, Socca Chips®

RR: Born in Cagnes-sur-mer, how did the region influence your relationship with food?

LS: "I grew up with a grandfather who was a butcher, fond of local cuisine, and my mother was a cook. Both would cook regional specialties with me."

RR: Did you always want to be a chef?

LS: "It was a childhood dream to have my own restaurant but I had to gain the necessary experience first. I trained at the top restaurants with talented chefs, like Franck Cerutti, Christian Plumail and Arnaud Poëtte, before I opened my self-titled restaurant, Luc Salsedo, on rue Maccarani in Nice in 2005."

RR: Does every chef dream of a Michelin star?

LS: "I think so, even if secretly. My stars have always come from the satisfaction of my customers. Even today, with my Socca Chips® venture, the customer is my engine and his satisfaction my fuel."

RR: You say that Socca Chips® were an "accidental" creation, much like how the Tatin sisters invented the now famous upside down tarte in the 1800s.

LS: "It's true. By fluke Socca Chips® are the result of a happy combination of circumstances. I've always been careful not to waste food and one day while reworking

a batch of socca at the restaurant, I discovered these chips made from chickpea flour, and this became the first test batch. Some fine-tuning followed, then wine tastings with family, friends and customers ... The feedback was excellent, so my wife, Christine, and I decided to launch the product."

RR: You recently sold your outstanding eatery to focus full-time on developing this socca snack, which you patented, and also launched a website (soccachips.com). Do you envision opening another restaurant?

LS: "Today my main activity is Socca Chips®. I work with my team to develop production so that we can better meet customer demands on a distribution level. My plan is to gradually build the brand 'Les Créations Luc Salsedo', I have quite a few ideas in mind but all I can reveal at this point is that innovation, tradition, and quality will be the key words in all of our products."

RR: Where can we buy your niçoise chips?

LS: "Currently in the Alpes-Martimes, Monaco and the Var but very soon in Marseille, Paris and elsewhere. You can check the always-expanding distribution map on our website to see where you can pick up Socca Chips® near you. ■

NICE'S culinary heritage can be summed up in one word: socca. Since 1923, this golden-baked chickpea flour pancake has been served at Chez Pipo in Nice at 13 rue Bavastro. Now you can get a taste for Pipo at Terminal 1 at Nice-Côte d'Azur airport.

SPIILLING THE BEANS:

A Riviera institution turns 25



IN 1990, Geoffrey Garnett was looking for a new challenge in life and identified a business opportunity in Antibes while on holiday there with his family.

The following year, he moved his family to France and took over an existing English food shop, Barney Cox's failed Ashleys of England, which was in dire financial straits. (Later, Cox would be convicted of killing his mother by setting fire to her house.) In April of that year, Geoffrey opened for business in his first shop, which was a 40 sqm unit in the Galerie du Port in Antibes. He had soon outgrown this space and over the following five years expanded until he was running the business known today as Geoffrey's of London, from a total of five units in the Galerie du Port.

Believing that location was essential to his business, Geoffrey battled on in these restricting circumstances until a premise on the outside of the Galerie became vacant in 1996. Geoffrey then converted this much larger unit into a 350 sqm supermarket of English products based as far as possible on an English convenience store. Today, suppliers say that "Geoffrey's is certainly the largest independently owned UK food shop in France."

When Geoffrey first started twenty-five years ago, he regularly drove his own van down to the South of France from London full of stock. He then progressed to only flying visits to London to source and buy the stock that could not easily be obtained in other ways. Suddenly, in 2001, there was an outbreak of Foot and

Mouth in the UK that stopped all imports of meat and dairy products from his usual suppliers. Not one to be easily beaten by mere technicalities, Geoffrey immediately invested in a large Fridge Van that he drove himself to and from Dublin every three weeks and loaded on the return journey with the only English sausages, bacon and cheese that was to get through legally to the Riviera while the bans were in place.

A year later, convinced that Antibes was a unique location to be able to support a British supermarket successfully due to the large community of working expats, he turned his eye to the idea of wholesale. Wholesale and retail do not necessarily go hand in hand but Geoffrey, as usual, fearlessly made his decision and would not be talked out of it! His vision was to sell British food products to French supermarkets with expats in their vicinity, and to do it with the authority that only a Brit can bring to the subject. And so in October 2002, he purchased the goodwill of an existing French wholesale company in Antibes, and continued to run the business from his new warehouse.

Unfortunately, Geoffrey's fun was temporarily disrupted in the autumn of 2005 when he suffered a serious stroke at the age of 59. Typically, he came out of intensive care fighting back and extremely angry at the inconvenience this stroke might cause. Paralysed on one side and unable to walk at all, he was hospitalised for three months. His laptop went with him and he quickly converted to calling

STAFF & CUSTOMERS

THE day-to-day running of Geoffrey's of London is left to Mike Chamberlin, who joined in 2003, and Alice Eddy, on board since 2012. The sales assistants tend to stay a long time, too, enjoying the friendly atmosphere and banter with the many regular customers. While numbers vary according to the season, about a thousand people a week make the trip to Geoffrey's.

A small proportion of regulars are French, searching usually for some authentic *crème anglaise*, ginger preserve, or *real* British teabags. At Christmas, of course, it's mince pies, Christmas puddings and party crackers they're after. The younger French customers, like their British counterparts, are more interested in the vast choice of sweets, crisps and cold drinks.

Mostly, though, it's the resident Anglophone expats, the tourists and visiting crews from Port Vauban who make up the majority of Geoffrey's clientele. The shop offers them an unbeatable range of British groceries, and supplies many of the largest motor yachts and finest villas on the Riviera with their monthly provisions.

A quick click on the website (geoffreysoflondon.com) and you can search through 3000 products listed to place orders for collection from the shop or home delivery, which is free for every order over €50.

the shots via email and by phone. He was told that it would be possible to walk again but not to run. When advised to do two hours of physiotherapy per day, he did five. He would fall over and, undaunted, just get himself up again refusing all offers of assistance. He absolutely refused to have anything to do with a wheelchair, and became the talk of the convalescence home for his fearless bravery.

Now quite able to walk unaided, from choice he continues to do two hours of physiotherapy per day and installed a running – or perhaps walking – machine and an exercise bike in his office. All the medical staff who have helped him agree that he has a

mentalité extraordinaire, which is certainly seconded by his loyal staff.

Other than that, Geoffrey no longer jumps in a van and delivers a rush order himself, yet the stroke has done nothing to slow him down or curb his enthusiasm for business. He can still be heard in the warehouse each morning booming out instructions in his big voice.

From a small start back in 1991, he has built his two businesses in his relentless style and Geoffrey's of London has become a Riviera institution. And while there's still no progress on Geoffrey speaking French – his physios are all now fluent in English and know all about Southampton football club! ■

PRODUCT RANGE & DELIVERIES

WHEREAS once Geoffrey used to trundle back and forth to the UK in his own van, these days, with both wholesale and retail operations to stock, all his deliveries are consolidated in the UK and come across once a week on a large lorry. On average, the warehouse, led by right-hand man Chris Brand, who's been working there since 2001 (and is on everyone's speed dial 24/7) receives 15 pallets each week, a mixture of fresh, frozen and dry goods.

As well as food, Geoffrey's also dedicates a section of the store to DVD rentals and another to the very popular range of English greetings cards.

BEST SELLERS

UNSURPRISINGLY, many of the best sellers are based around the traditional Full English Breakfast: baked beans, sausages, bacon. PG Tips and Marmite. Cadbury Dairy Milk continues to



be a hot item also. In fact, over the last quarter of a century, Geoffrey's has sold some 80,000 bars since the shop first opened, and shifted more than 300,000 cans of baked beans (over 100 tonnes!), 85,000 packets of sausages and 170,000 packets of bacon.

25TH BIRTHDAY

THROUGHOUT the month of April, to celebrate the 25th birthday of Geoffrey's of London, there will be some extra special in-store promotions, daily prizes and a tombola to be drawn on April 30th as a way of thanking all those customers who have helped the shop to survive and prosper for so long.

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JUST an hour from Sainte Maxime and the Côte d'Azur, in the heart of old Provence, sits the enchanting village of Sillans-la-Cascade in Central Var.

Its name alone entrances ... famed for wonderful waterfalls just a few minutes' walk from the village – you can almost hear the cascade rushing down rocks as you say it. And with a boulangerie, several restaurants as well as a summer Art Exhibition, there's plenty to tempt you to stay awhile and linger – for this village is unspoilt by modern additions and there's many a nook and cranny to explore. Perhaps best of all is its lovely surroundings with forests and a small river valley in seemingly untouched countryside.

This part of Provence has much to offer. After all, who needs busy crowded beaches in summertime when there are natural wonders to explore such as the Gorges du Verdon? Then there's the nearby Lac de Sainte-Croix and many a beautiful Provençal hilltop wine village, set against craggy foothills, to explore. Enchanting

villages host street markets proffering the best of local produce – and the scent of lemon, lavender, rosemary and thyme waft gently on warm air during the long summer evenings giving balm to the soul as you sit in the shade of an ancient tree sipping an apéro, a perfectly chilled Provençal rosé. Could this be the perfect end to a perfect day? Yes! Especially if it's in total seclusion on your own terrace and within easy walking distance of this lovely village.

Less than a kilometre from Sillans-la-Cascade sits this traditional Provençal bastide providing enchantment of a different kind – almost Narnia-like, its many rooms offer surprises in an inimitable floor plan ... and what treats there are in store.

It was built around the 18th-century building, possibly on older foundations – for who would not have wanted to first lay claim to this enviable spot? While so close to the village, its 20 hectares of woodlands and paddocks are totally secluded and its elevated position ensures privacy.

Built of ancient stone, with pretty

blue shutters, as a first time visitor you might enter through double doors into the entrance hall that leads on into the double height grand dining hall, complete, naturally, with its minstrel gallery making this the most wonderful place in which to entertain. The book-clad walls of the salon secrete a hidden door, which in turn opens into a private snug or perhaps the perfect reading room to while away the hours looking out over your new domain. And there are more surprises awaiting in the beamed large country kitchen – for here there is the entrance to a vaulted wine cave which sits below, perfect to store all the Provençal wine you'll want to collect on your sojourns around the neighbourhood.

For the artist, there's an atelier and music room ready to delight, as well as necessary adjuncts of offices and utility room.

Upstairs in the main house, there's the master suite with dressing and bathrooms, as well as a further four bedrooms. Every self-respecting bastide should have its own *pigeonniere*, and this one does not

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disappoint with its own bedroom and study. Outside mature gardens surround the house; then there's a courtyard and covered terraces perfectly sited for long hot summer days as well as the wonderful, superb fully-enclosed swimming pool – the perfect place in which to cool off – or, perhaps, even exercise.

Set in out buildings, there are another three studio apartments – one awaits completion – perfect to use as *gîtes* or

establish long-staying visitors. And speaking of long staying "friends", there is stabling for 12 horses. Of course, they'll be well catered for, too, with the tack room and outdoor ménage, hay shed, and will even have their own shower. With paddocks and woodland, this is the perfect place to escape the world and go riding through the countryside – your magical kingdom awaits...

With a total of eight bedrooms and five bathrooms, this exceptional property

is on the market through Leggett Immobilier (Leggett reference: 60594) at an exceptional price of €997,500.

With its private setting, secret rooms, and generous accommodation for both two- and four-legged friends this is no "run of the mill" Provençal farmhouse – and it might very well be your own Narnia. ■

For more information contact Jill Wilson at Leggett Immobilier on 06 82 86 95 56 or email jillwilson@leggett.fr



Less than a kilometre from Sillans-la-Cascade, this 8-bedroom, 5 bathroom Provençal bastide comes with an exceptional swimming pool and stables.



Will paradise be lost?

BY TIM CLARK



BREXIT! There, I said it. I am sure the Editor is going to have kittens at yet another Brexit story (see page 8), but here it goes.

Clearly this story is dominating the English-speaking press at the moment and the claims and counterclaims by one side then the next is bewildering, to say the least. Even the experts can't agree on what is best for Britain.

As far as current and potential French homeowners from the UK are concerned, I can only speak for myself and Leggett Immobilier when I say the number of enquiries from the UK hasn't slowed down, and our recent attendance at the "Place in The Sun" show in Manchester heralded an almost record number of new client queries.

What is clear, though, is that whichever route the UK takes on June 23rd, it will have an impact on owning a home in France. However, I think I can state categorically here that we won't all get thrown out of the country the following day ... At least I hope not, I love it here.

What are the implications of a Brexit on my French property purchase? Our (personal) view is that even if the vote was to leave the EU, there would be little in the way of substantial change to UK citizens living in France and a recent Daily Telegraph article confirmed this when it concluded that this claim of significant change by the out campaign is not grounded in legal

fact, as the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties 1969 would come into play. It contains articles that are based on "acquired rights", which individuals build up over time and hold despite any changes in future treaties enacted by their nation.

It says that the 2 million Britons abroad have "acquired rights" and the NHS, for example, would be responsible for paying the cost of pensioners abroad.

We're convinced that the government will take every step possible to protect benefits in any withdrawal discussions, it's a financial and political minefield ... imagine all the (generally elderly) citizens coming back to the UK and the burden this would place on the NHS.

All independent polls (the FT shows a poll of polls updated daily) are indicating that the most likely outcome is a vote to stay in. However, to be prudent, we have outlined below the three scenarios in the unlikely event of an "exit" vote:

1. UK retains membership in the EEA (European Economic Area) – this means that existing rules on freedom of movement would still apply.
2. A compromise solution – falls short of the existing rules but with special arrangement for certain citizens (we think this is the likely outcome).
3. No agreement between the UK and

the EU. Even given this scenario the EU tends not to impose visa requirements on wealthy countries.

In short, whatever the outcome, the view held by Leggett Immobilier is that we see little in the way of substantial change to UK citizens living over here currently.

It is likely the uncertainty at the moment is going to cause fluctuations on currency for example and recently we have seen the previous gains of sterling eroded, although our Currency Partner (Foreign Currency Direct) has concluded that, much like the run up to the Scottish independence referendum and UK general election last year, there is a roller coaster effect and buyers should be prepared to exchange currency when there are inevitable peaks.

There could be some changes to how one's tax liabilities on property are calculated should the UK exit, however this is an article in itself and each individual is treated differently anyway, so it is best to seek independent advice on your finances.

Finally, some scare stories have suggested that UK citizens won't be able to own property in France. This is simply untrue and many non-EU citizens already reside and own second homes here on the French Riviera. ■

Contact Tim Clark of Leggett Immobilier at tim@leggett.fr



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Sirens of the South

BY DELANA NELSEN

As a French and Classics major, Helen Basson from Cornwall made a life-changing decision to move to France and finish her studies at the University of Lyon. At least that was the official explanation

“WELL, the truth is that I had an uncle who worked as a ski instructor in Courcheval,” Helen, 42, confesses, “and every weekend I’d take the train from Lyon to pop off and ski.”

It was at the French resort where in 1995 Helen met her future husband James Basson, who was working at the ski shop. James was from Beaconsfield, so following a few years of toing and froing between France and England, in 1998 they ended up in Chateauneuf de Grasse, an area the two had fallen in love with on previous visits.

By the year 2000, the couple set up their business, Scape Design (*scapedesign.com*), in France. James is a professional landscape designer and with Helen’s background in advertising, they work together designing local gardens and landscapes, particularly dry gardens that are environmentally sustainable and suitable to the Mediterranean climate.

The Bassons’ talents marry well, as proven by the plethora of worldwide design awards Scape Design has won, including three most recently in January at the Society of Garden Designers’ 2015 competition: The Grand Award, the International Award and the Planting Design Award.

“In our designs, we often try to tell a story and this is where our two skill sets meet; he is the pictures, I am the words,” Helen explains.

The couple and their three children live in Bar-sur-Loup and, to this day, Helen still is in love with the region. “Even now, as I’m driving down from our village and looking at the beautiful countryside, I think, ‘Oh, I’m so lucky!’ Why would we ever leave?”



FOR THE LOVE OF ART:

Fondation Maeght in St Paul de Vence, there’s something for everyone.

NIGHT ON THE TOWN:

I absolutely love the L’École des Filles restaurant (right) in my village of Bar-sur-Loup. The food is a real *gastronomique* experience using local ingredients and the owners and staff are delightful. I just wish I could go more often.



Photo: Poupette 0312

BON APP?

Professionally I use TeamUp, and for personal – Audible, as it makes homework with the children so much easier.

LOCAL VIN:

I love a red from Provence. While they’re often overshadowed by, say, a Bordeaux or Côte-du-Rhône, the Maison des Vins in Les Arcs-sur-Agès has a magnificent selection.

BEST TERRACE CAFÉ FOR APÉRO:

Honestly, I don’t really go to cafés for an apéro but nothing is better than sitting on a friend’s terrace in the summer.

HAVE-TO-HAVE HANDBAG:

I have to confess to hating handbags, I really don’t get what all the fuss is about, however, I DO love jumpers!

NOT-TO-MISS ANNUAL EVENT:

Fête de L’Oranger in Bar-sur-Loup. Every year on Easter Monday the village is a vision in orange, with all sorts of wonderful artisanal demonstrations and stands, a real insight into tradition.

BEST PUBLIC GARDEN:

I find them a bit soulless and prefer to walk in the countryside behind Bar-sur-Loup, Gourdon and Caussols, with amazing views and huge selections of plant life that changes throughout the seasons.

MUSEUM STAPLE:

Being a bit of a Classics freak, I love the Musée d’Archéologie in Antibes. It’s tiny but fascinating.

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CAN'T-DO-WITHOUT BEAUTY PRODUCT:

We've been lucky enough to work with L'Occitane and, as a result, I have sampled their "Divine" range and it is fantastic, even for a non-believer like me.



PREFERRED PÉPINIÉRISTE:

We have worked with a fantastic family-run nursery called Gaudissart in Vence for years and they are just lovely.



Photo: Pepinieres-gaudissart.fr

OVER LUNCH:

La Licorne in Chateaufort de Grasse has great home cooked food, very reasonable prices and they're always smiling.

TO-DO 2016:

Chelsea Flower Show in May, Singapore Garden Festival in July, publishing a book (hopefully!) and most definitely a family trip to Corsica.

NECESSARY EXTRAVAGANCE:

Chocolate.

SHOPPING SPREE:

I'm not a big shopper and seem to buy more clothes for my children than for me but Polygone Riviera has certainly made life easier.

DAY BY THE SEA:

I don't really go to the beach but am lucky enough to be able to go sailing regularly. I know it's not as easy as hopping in the car and heading to the coast here, but Corsica is one of my favourite places in the world.

It is so unspoilt and breathtakingly beautiful. I never get bored of going there.

BEAUTY SECRET:

I am rubbish at anything beauty-wise, but I guess drink lots of water and herbal teas?

HIDDEN GEM:

La Grotte-chapelle Notre-Dame de Calern, north of Caussols (below), is an absolutely incredibly beautiful chapel tucked away in a cave in the middle of nowhere at 1300m.

FAV FRENCH PHRASE:

"Les cordonniers sont toujours les plus mal chaussés" (it's always the bakers children that have no bread), as it completely sums up the state of our garden.



GARDEN GADGET:

It would have to be gloves. There's nothing better than touching the ground with your hands but they need protecting! A good pair of secateurs come in handy, too.

ON MY NIGHTSTAND:

I have about 10! I've just finished the incredible "A Strangeness in my Mind" by Orhan Pamuk and am about to start Andrey Kurkov's "Death and the Penguin". ■



Photo: rakovsky2001

A REAL CHARACTER

BY ALEX IGNATIEFF



AN early Easter and the season of pink is well and truly launched, perhaps with a big jumper or two nearby, but what a grand way to ease into the best of Provence.

The professional calendar is always a step ahead and we are coming out of the first part of the tasting season. A few days' rest post-Christmas madness and while the vineyards are dormant, just needing a spot of pruning, the producers take a window to show us their wares ahead of the summer rush. Time to fight through the new releases, invariably the "best in living memory", hoping for that rare new gem that really does live up to some of the hype.

As well as the smaller local events I made two trips to the vast Exhibition Centre in Montpellier: the first to the bijou Millésime Bio, hunting for a new organic offering or two. The second, to the labyrinthine puzzle of Vinisud, which highlights wines with a Mediterranean aspect, although some of the regions included really do have to crane their necks for a glimpse of a sea view. Both were on top form, Millésime Bio well organised and full of exciting new directions, some we've even chosen to add to our range. Vinisud was as overwhelming as ever but the bits it does get right really are worth the trip, planning and all that exhaustive tasting.

The subject of this issue's discourse came from a chance encounter at Vinisud. Wandering about the Provence Pavilion, I was waved over by fellow oenophile and Reporter contributor Elizabeth Gabay, who introduced the team at Château Gassier. We tasted a flight of rosé, which for me defines in microcosm the diversity of Provence. Three wines from two Châteaux but three terroirs, showing three very distinct styles.

We started with Château Beaulieu's Cuvée Alexandre. Beaulieu is located just north of Aix in the Coteaux d'Aix-en-Provence appellation. The vines of this classic old Château are planted some 400 metres above sea level in what remains of the crater of a great volcano. A massive great core of basalt is the secret to the Cuvée Alexandre, a wonderfully elegant wine and bone dry. Its very shy, delicate fruit is supported by an exhilarating mineral edge. As you pour it into the glass you can almost hear the screams for something to nibble with this perfect foil.

From here we moved not so far to the Mont Sainte Victoire and Château Gassier. The estate covers some 40 hectares at the foot of the striking outcrop. Beautiful almost Outback red soil, cobalt blue sky and pristine white grey limestone

make for a spot of striking beauty not to mention potential for making fine wine. We tasted two offerings from Gassier. The first was their Esprit Gassier, a Côtes de Provence. The second, their cuvée Côtes de Provence Sainte Victoire Le Pas du Moine, theoretically imparted with a regional character specific to the Mont Sainte Victoire, made famous by Cézanne. Both were delicious and both wonderful examples of their own appellations.

The size of the Côtes de Provence appellation, its variety of soils, climates, altitudes and general growing conditions really defies a singular style but if one exists, the Esprit Gassier is it. It's all about soft, ripe berry fruit with an overriding creamy texture. The Esprit hits this on the head, a delectable drop that one could happily sip all day long with or without some sustenance to keep your feet on the ground.

Le Pas du Moine carries the extra regional title of Sainte Victoire, and it does indeed have that extra local character that sets it apart from the more general charms of the Esprit. The cuvée gets its name from the footpath that leads up the mountain to an ancient retreat. The retreat was beautifully sited in the cool of a fold in the mountain. Great in the full heat of summer but a real test of the faith in mid-winter. But where there's a will there's a way and the monks cut away the hillside to let some warming winter sunlight into their hearts. This tasty rosé did the same for me on a chilly February morning and, just like the monk's retreat, will certainly give even more when the days warm up. Grown at some 460 metres above sea level, there is a gentle weight and power seemingly typical of the Sainte Victoire appellation. It has all the fruit of the Esprit but adds a more racy edge. A bit like the difference between a soft sweet ice cream and a generous but more racy sorbet. Both are delicious and cut from the same winemaking mould but both heading in slightly different directions, following their roots.

A trio of wines that sum up some of the subtle differences in pink style from Provence.

We've put together an offer on each of the three or a mixed dozen across the three, so you can taste them side-by-side and pick your favourite. Available via emporiumduvin.com ■



MARKET VALUE

BY SUSAN TOMASSINI

NUTRITION



ONE of the most pleasant aspects about living on the French Riviera is exploring the open-air food markets. From Mandelieu to Menton, almost every town and village along the coast has its own *marché* offering an ever-changing variety of just-picked seasonal fruits, vegetables and herbs, to inspire chefs and foodies alike.

Aside from the novelty, there's plenty of evidence that eating what the season provides naturally – such as springtime's abundance of artichokes, asparagus, fava beans, broccoli, spinach, and chive – helps retain the maximum amount of vitamins, minerals and enzymes that are vital to our health and best suited for that particular time of year; warming root vegetables in winter, hydrating fruits in summer, detoxing greens and onions in spring.

When it comes to food, we're used to convenience. Supermarket chains have made almost anything available to us

year-round and we take for granted that we can just pick up what we want, when we want. In fact, we've become so distanced from our food sources that many of us have little idea where stuff is grown or how it was produced, let alone the effect these things have on our own health and that of the environment.

With numerous markets on the Côte d'Azur, having such a sizeable choice of regionally grown produce at our fingertips means that we have a unique opportunity

to develop individual connections with stall vendors – an ideal opportunity to practice your French – and help support neighbouring farmers while contributing to the local economy. This not only helps reinforce a sense of shared community but cuts back also on your personal carbon footprint, as food travels a much shorter distance before it reaches your plate.

And if that isn't motivation enough to head over to your village market (ask your local tourist offices for details), remember seasonal produce has unequalled flavour and is kinder on the pocketbook. ■

For other nutrition tips, join The Clever Kitchen's monthly lunches at Stars'n'Bars in Monaco. Contact Melanie@thecleverkitchen for more details.

A MARKET FOR EVERY DAY

Antibes: Daily exc. Mon, Cours Massena.

Beaulieu-sur-Mer: Mon, Tues, Sat mornings: Place Général de Gaulle.

Cannes: Daily exc. Mon, mornings: Forville Market & Place Gambetta.

Cannet-Rochville: Organic, Wed mornings: Place de l'Aubarede.

Eze: Thurs mornings: Place Colette.

Grasse: Daily exc. Mon, mornings: Pl. aux Aires.

Mandelieu: Organic, Sat morning: Place Jeanne d'Arc.

Menton: Every morning: Gare Routière and Port.

Monaco: Every morning, Place d'Armes.

Nice: Daily exc. Mon, mornings: Cours Saleya.

St-Laurent-du-Var: Agri-Bio: Tues and Fri in front of Cap 3000.

Valbonne: Fri mornings: Place des Arcades.

Vence: Daily exc. Mon, mornings: Place Surian.

Villefranche: Sat morning, Jardin Binon.

Villeneuve-Loubet:

Agro-bio Wed and Sat morning, in the village

Ste Maxime: Daily exc. Mon, mornings: Rue Fernand Bessy (summer, daily, all day).

St Raphaël: Daily exc. Mon, mornings: Place Victor Hugo and Place République.

St-Tropez: Tues and Sat mornings: Place des Lices.

The Riviera through pink-coloured glasses

May 17th is International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia. Riviera resident Jameson Farn talks about the local gay community and offers some LGBT friendly hangouts



THERE is something magical about the Côte d'Azur. Besides the gorgeous weather and scenery, there has to be something that has brought so many people here from around the world to discover for themselves.

Growing up in Canada, I had, of course, always heard about the French Riviera and it was on my first trip to France in the early 1990s, while visiting relatives in the Dordogne Valley, that it was suggested that I check out the region.

This was well before the internet had taken a hold of the world, and long before any kind of social media, at a time when one would read what one could about a place, or ask for advice on what to see and do from friends and family who had been before. Although I was a bit nervous, it also felt exciting.

As a young gay man having just experienced the Paris scene for the first time the month before, there seemed to be less information to go on with the Côte d'Azur and so the start of this adventure would be one that ended up actually changing the direction of my life.

Acceptance for being gay at this time was still difficult both in North America and Europe; basically, it was safer to just keep to yourself and close friends, keep your emotions and mannerisms in check and, if you couldn't pass for straight, it was wise to blend in with the crowd as best you could.

This was difficult for me because since the time I was a little boy, I was never the most naturally masculine looking and with that came the teasing and various degrees of bullying from a young age. Fortunately, though, I used those early episodes to build a tough shell and figured if I was going to be taunted, I was not going to hide but rather stay as true to myself as I could, even before I really knew what it was to be gay.

Although I'd heard stories from friends that it was tough for them to be gay, from my earliest first encounters visiting Europe I personally found I had more of an acceptance here. Call it naïve or what you will but, with all my exploring of the country, and leaving nightclubs in the middle of the night, I have yet to have an issue and I'm the kind that likes a good adventure, almost looking for the unusual to happen. Even though today one has to be aware and on guard in one's surroundings, there just seems to be more acceptances now in the LGBT community.

When I first arrived by train to Nice one evening back in September 1990, I was enamoured right away. Thinking back, the city was a bit grotty then, there was no tram system in place, the street lighting seemed sparse, it was even dirty to an extent, yet Nice had a certain edge to it. To this day I recall my first impressions, there is a lot of history here and a certain mystery about the place, you could just sense it in the air and, for this, the region has been intriguing to me ever since. I found the French interested in other people and their lives in France; it feels more important to socialise with others than to sit in front of a computer, and to appreciate the people, places and things that surround you, taking in life in general.

Those days, when trying to find out more about the local gay community, everything seemed to be by chance and having limited knowledge of the French language didn't make it easy either, along with not knowing anyone. But I found while touring around, sometimes at a café or an avant-garde clothing shop, you'd come across these seemingly homemade promotional flyers by the entrance door, some with subtle yet provocative male images that would state the name of a nightclub with an address, it was at least a start.

The local gay community here, compared to what I was used to back in Canada, was definitely smaller at the time but it had a hopeful spirit. The one or two places I did find in Nice then were very private, and with an expensive cover charge and drink prices, you took your chances but these clubs would also be packed with great music, people smiling and a ton of fun all night long.

Over the years, like any other gay community I have visited in North America and Europe, establishments would open and close with some hanging on until the bitter end (the internet and mobile apps haven't helped). But one thing that I have noticed since the early Nineties is that the LGBT community on the Côte d'Azur continues to slowly grow and has pulled through any economy, even becoming much stronger as the years pass, with the core of what friends and I experience as being a positive sense of community. Less cliquey than what I have found in other cities, almost like a family that watches out and supports one another.

Every year it seems a new straight bar also holds gay-friendly nights and there is always something to suit everyone's choices

now, with many of the establishments cross promoting with one another. Having become friends with many owners and managers, when I have asked them about this promotional practice which I rarely experience in North America, each one has told me it doesn't make sense to have a competing business as an enemy, the stronger everyone is, the stronger the community.

For a number of years now, both Nice Tourisme and Cannes Is Yours, along with various city officials and mayors, have jumped on board recognising the value of the "pink dollar"; tourism campaigns are making it much easier to help promote the French Riviera as being more of a gay travel destination every year. This has helped the local economy and it can certainly be felt during high season with nothing cooler than meeting people from various cultures around the world enjoying the atmosphere at a nightclub or at a beach bar.

When gay marriage became legal in France on May 18, 2013, the happiness was certainly obvious; it's a fantastic feeling to see friends you have known for 20 years, who have been a couple all that time, finally get the chance to legally marry. To be in attendance at such an

event is truly heart-warming and not taken for granted.

Lou QueerNaval, France's first gay carnival, has also been very beneficial. In 2015, its inaugural event during Nice's carnival was hard to get media attention outside of France and funds had to be raised for the most part within the community to put on the event. After the first successful test run, worldwide media attention was not a problem at all this year, nor was sponsorship. In fact, they came to the organisers of Lou QueerNaval in Nice, which has helped tremendously. Word was out well before the festivities began this year with gay publications and websites in contact for a storyline from places such as New York, Los Angeles and London; travel bloggers were coming to experience and then write about not only the carnival but various tourist spots and businesses as well.

Plenty has changed over the years and for the better. There is something special about the French Riviera, and it is wonderful to experience a region open up their minds and hearts to grow along with the rest of the world. ■

For more see <http://dayagainsthomophobia.org>

JAMESON'S GAY-FRIENDLY LISTINGS



CANNES

Club 7: 7 rue Rouguiere

Friends Bar: 52 rue Jean Jaures

NICE

Glam: 6 rue Eugene Emanuel

Malabar Station:

10 rue Bonaparte

Morgan Hot Cruising Bar:

3 rue Claudia

Gossip Bar: 7 rue Bonaparte

Le Bar Bitch: 2 rue Rossetti

Le 6: 6 rue Raoul Bosio

GClub: 73 Quai des Etats-Unis

High Club: 45 Prom des Anglais

Les Garcons Restaurant:

3 rue Centrale

Comptoir Central Electrique

Bar: 10 rue Bonaparte

Castel Plage:

8 Quai des États-Unis

Hi Beach: 47 Prom des Anglais

Bar Le Kult:

14 rue Benoit Bunico

Centre LGBT Côte d'Azur:

123 rue de Roquebillière

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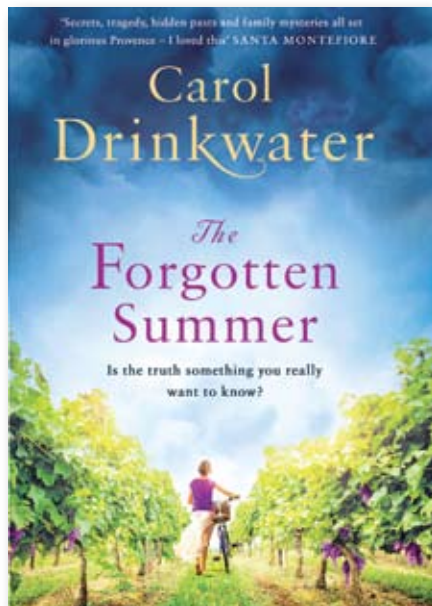
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THE BEE'S KNEES

Barth Hulley sits down with author Carol Drinkwater to discuss writing, racism and pollinators



CAROL Drinkwater is best known for her nonfiction best sellers “Olive Farm” series, with over a million copies sold worldwide. Her latest foray into set-in-France fiction, “The Forgotten Summer”, follows hot on the heels of three successful Kindle Singles.

As well as being a full-time writer, the 67-year-old’s busy schedule revolves around running her own olive farm on the Bay of Cannes, repairing an old château in La Brie and campaigning for bee awareness.

BH: *Before establishing yourself as an author, you played the character Helen Herriot in the hit BBC television series “All Creatures Great and Small” in the 70s and 80s. How did this shape your life?*

CD: “The series brought me an award and a career with international recognition. It has proved itself to be classic TV and I am exceedingly proud of my role in it. However, I have moved on and done a million different things since – most are connected to writing and my life in France.”

BH: “*The Forgotten Summer*” came out in February. How much of the book draws on your own life story and experiences?

CD: “Well, there’s the deliciously warm South of France location, of course, although I don’t live on a fabulous vineyard overlooking the Mediterranean nor are we producing fine wines. Certainly, the chapter or two that

is set in olive fields has been culled from my knowledge of producing olive oil. But perhaps, most importantly, the love story that sits at the heart of the book has been inspired by my love of my husband, Michel.

“When I set out to write the novel, I looked to create characters that endured. An adolescent French boy, born in Algeria, meets a shy, young English girl having arrived with her English father who is hoping to represent an estate’s wines within the English market ... two children whose friendship blossoms, matures and becomes a love story. What happens when tragedy strikes? This is the kind of question my writer’s mind poses, and from there the seed of a novel is born.”

BH: *Do you think you would have been as successful a writer if, say, you’d lived in Bromley all these years?*

CD: “I would have been writing very different material if I had lived in Bromley or any suburban environment. However, I have been writing since I was about eight years old, so the process was well underway. France and the Côte d’Azur, with its natural beauty – light, colour, vegetation – has inspired me as it did many of the master painters. How could it not?”

“I live in one of the most beautiful places in the inhabited world. My eyes, all my senses, experience this every day that I am at home at our olive farm. But, and this is big but, if I really have my eyes open, there are other elements, other notes, tones, in the Provençal palette, that I cannot turn away from. There is racism, there is alienation; there are tricky local power politics. All these can add to the drama, if I so choose. France is not perfect. I believe it is one of the finest places on earth to live but it is important that a writer does not look through rose-coloured spectacles. And that is what inspires me: the contradictions, the secrets, the hidden layers ... all played out against a backdrop of beauty and good living.”

BH: *Would you say your nonfiction work has helped you to develop as a writer?*

CD: “Everything has helped be to become a better writer. Acting, life, pain,

loss, grief, love, happiness, passion, great sex, travelling the world ... Writing is writing, whether fiction or nonfiction.”

BH: *Tell me about bee awareness.*

CD: “Arriving home after sixteen months travelling around the Med in quest of the history of the olive tree, I discovered that the 14 honeybee colonies that had been residents on our olive farm for over a decade had died off or disappeared. I telephoned the beekeeper, who had always tended the hives during our absences, and learned that he had was on the point of bankruptcy. Out of his entire stock of 103 colonies, only a handful had survived.

“I began to look into the problem in more depth. I learned that pollinators, particularly honeybees, are under serious threat. A third of the western world’s honeybees have disappeared. Pesticides, habitat loss, parasites, intensive farming, all have been cited as causes and I believe there is an urgent need for awareness about land management. I also believe that no matter where we live, no matter how small our patch – even window-boxes – we have the possibility to help avert the deepening of this crisis.

“I created a page on my website because I want to keep abreast with and share what is happening in the world of apiary. I am keen to hear from experts or novices.”

BH: *What are your plans for the future?*

CD: “I am in the middle of a new novel also set in France and the UK and am getting very excited about it.”

BH: *The Daily Mail says “The Forgotten Summer” has “plenty of page-turning drama ... but also mouth-watering descriptions of Paris and Provence.”*

CD: “They also said ‘makes you want to rush to buy a ticket on the Eurostar’ ... this is a review that every author dreams of, especially with the Mail’s huge readership, it is a gift. On Amazon or reading bloggers on Twitter, the reviews have simply been fantastic. I am over the moon – and very relieved.” ■

“*The Forgotten Summer*” is available at Antibes Books and the English Book Centre in Valbonne. See also caroldrinkwater.com

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The shop just around the 17th-century corner

BOOKSHOP



quintessential charm and Provençal character of the shop's interior, which remains largely intact since those early days – only the tearoom has gone. Arched wooden frame windows lead you into this Aladdin's Cave of books, where the entire ground and first floors (and even the staircase) brim with books that rub shoulders with great authors of the past and present with genres as diverse as Biography, Politics, Home & Garden, Poetry, Music and Well-being. There is also a superb children's section and a flourishing schoolbooks department, and for those of us who need (and forget) them – Lin has a steady supply of reading glasses.

"The shop often ends up acting as an advice bureau and we do a lot of hand-holding. In fact, I often feel like a bartender, *sans* the libation, of course! As the fourth owner, this shop has brought me friends and a culturally rich life."

Lin has decided to return to the US where her family is now located and this thriving business is now for sale for €80,000 (\$89,000 USD). It would certainly make a wonderful project for any bookworm who dreams of living in Provence and having a little piece of France. Valbonne, which translates as the "good valley", is under 20 km from Nice-Côte d'Azur Airport and 13km to Cannes. Could the fifth owner be you? ■

For more, contact Lin Wolff on +33 (0)4 93 12 21 42. See englishbookcentre.com

SNUGGLED in the pretty medieval village of Valbonne, with a population of 9,500, an unassuming bookshop has quietly become an icon of the expat community and the French Riviera.

For nearly four decades, the English Book Centre (EBC) has been selling English books although the bestsellers, at times, have shared space with a tea shop. The books took over and the EBC became a fully-fledged independent bookshop, which today actively promotes local authors and, more recently, provides schools and students with textbooks and literature.

The shop at 12 rue Alexis Julien is run by the ever-welcoming Lin Wolff, whose knowledge of books will take your breath away. Lin arrived in the South of France after living 25 years in Cornwall and London, trading in the more often than not grey skies for the sunnier skies of Provence.

Like many expats, Lin had followed her heart. "My husband had a successful career as a helicopter pilot for films mainly based

in Europe. Sitting in Cornwall during the horrible wet winter of 2000, I realised we could relocate to this side of the channel. As luck would have it, we settled in Plascassier – just 5 minutes away from Valbonne."

It did not take Lin long to discover the bookshop. "It was one of those serendipity moments. I'd been shopping at Valbonne's well-known Friday market and, with time to spare, decided to explore the village. As I meandered up the main street I turned a corner – and discovered an adorable bookshop. I was captivated and soon began spending time there among the beloved books, chatting to Jill Shepperd, the then owner of the bookshop, and other 'refugees' taking a break from the intensity of learning French and adapting to a foreign country. Before long, I was working for Jill, and when she wanted to sell up the business, I simply couldn't imagine life in my corner of France without this pillar of the community. So in 2009 I bought it."

Lin has been careful to keep the

DUST TO DUST ...

Robert Bullock on the fate of D.H. Lawrence's ashes after his burial in Vence

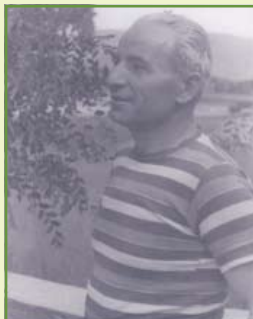


Lawrence and Frieda

DURING the afternoon of March 4th, 1930, a small group of people gathered in Vence Cemetery for the funeral of the novelist and poet, D.H. Lawrence, who had died of tuberculosis two days previously at the Villa Robermond (see Reporter 173). In addition to Lawrence's wife, Frieda, other mourners included Aldous and Maria Huxley; the English poet, Robert Nichols (who later wrote a long and detailed account of the funeral); and Edward Titus, the Paris-based American publisher who had brought out "Lady Chatterley's Lover" the year before. There was no religious service, no prayers and no speeches. In Frieda's own words, "... we buried him, very simply, like a bird we put him away, a few of us who loved him."

Five years later, on March 12th, 1935, Lawrence's body was exhumed at Frieda's bidding as the first step in her plan to have his remains cremated and the ashes transported to her home in the US – the Kiowa Ranch at San Cristobal near Taos, New Mexico. Her idea was to place them in a shrine to Lawrence's memory which her lover, former Italian Army officer and later third husband, Angelo Ravagli, had built near the ranch house where he had been living with Frieda since 1931.

Ravagli, whom Frieda had dispatched to Vence to supervise the exhumation, arrived late at the cemetery and almost missed it.



Angelo Ravagli (1891-1976)

di Savoia", which was due to sail from Villefranche-sur-Mer early in April. Once in New York and safely through customs, he would transfer the ashes to a more elaborate urn that Frieda had ordered in Europe and which Ravagli had sent *poste restante* to New York to be collected on his arrival. He was then to embark on the long 4-day railway journey across the US to Lamy, New Mexico, to deliver the new urn and its precious contents to Frieda, who would be waiting for him at the station there.

That was the plan, but if we are to believe the conclusion reached by Vence's very own Lawrence scholar, the late Emile Delavenay, it seems probable that Lawrence's ashes never crossed the Atlantic at all. According to an article entitled "A Shrine Without Relics", which Delavenay published in 1984, a more credible scenario was that unbeknown to Frieda then or later, the ashes were unceremoniously dumped in the Mediterranean somewhere between Marseille and Villefranche by a reputedly miserly Ravagli whose only apparent concern was to avoid all the administrative complications and personal expense of transporting Lawrence's cremated remains to the US, even if it later meant telling Frieda an enormous lie about the substitute ashes he procured in New York and deceitfully passed off as her defunct husband's when he finally arrived in New Mexico.

By the time he got there, Lawrence's remains had already been placed in a small zinc-lined casket ready for him to take by hearse to Marseille for cremation the following day.

His mission was then to accompany Lawrence's ashes to New York on the "Conte

The story emerged in 1984 when Professor Delavenay was contacted about the fate of Lawrence's ashes by Baron Prosper de Haulleville, a Belgian petroleum engineer and brother-in-law of Maria Huxley's younger sister, Rose. In a meeting in Vence with Professor Delavenay in February of that year, de Haulleville related how during the course of two evenings he and his sister-in-law had spent as guests at the Kiowa Ranch at an unspecified date before Ravagli died in 1976, some 20 years after Frieda, their host – having imbibed generous quantities of the bourbon they had brought him as a gift – tearfully confessed to lying to Frieda about Lawrence's ashes. Evoking the numerous administrative and financial difficulties he had encountered following

the exhumation (most of which Delavenay demonstrated were exaggerated or blatantly untrue), he remorsefully admitted: "I threw away the D.H. cinders", and "My worst lie is the D.H. Lawrence cinders lie."

Delavenay's conclusion was that there was no reason



Emile Delavenay (1905-2003)

to disbelieve de Haulleville's version of events, and that Ravagli's confession was doubtlessly genuine. And what of Lawrence in all this? What would he have thought of the fate of his own mortal remains? In all probability, he would have seen the amusing side of the story and approved of his ashes being scattered across the azure-blue surface of the Mediterranean which he loved so much, rather than being mixed into the cement of Frieda's concrete memorial to him in the Lawrence Chapel, which was the fate reserved for the ashes delivered by Ravagli. In the absence of any hard evidence, however, we will – as Professor Delavenay suggested – have to form our own opinion and decide "whether to go and meditate on Lawrence's remains along the quays of the Vieux Port in Marseille, or in front of Ravagli's concrete slab in the 'shrine' at San Cristobal." ■

Photo of Angelo Ravagli by Carl Van Vechten, by kind permission of The Van Vechten Trust.

In the good books of St Paul's Monaco

BY STEFANI "SPOOKY" COOPER



The library is nonprofit and run by three volunteers, including Wibha Lele, pictured.

ONE of the best things in the world is to curl up somewhere comfortable and open a book. Kindles, tablets and all the other electronic paraphernalia that intrude upon our lives have their place (I'm not a total Luddite!), but books are special, more tangible, and have been with us longer.

Reading the story is, of course, the climax of any relationship with a book, but there is also the excitement of choosing. Wandering round the library, picking up a volume, reading the blurb, deciding whether this story or that one will keep you enthralled until the last word.

The English Library at St Paul's Monte Carlo, on avenue Grande Bretagne, started quite some time ago by Baroness Orczy, originator of the elusive Scarlet Pimpernel. (You can see her bust on the top shelf of the first bookcase as you enter the library.) She and her husband, Mr Barstow, had a villa in Monte

Carlo, and spent every winter there, as one did in those days, and were both very involved with the fundraising and building of St Paul's Church.

In the beginning, the meeting room or Church Club, as it came to be called, was a place where English maids, valets and chauffeurs working in Monaco, as well as crews from visiting British ships, could get together to play games, dance to the gramophone records and enjoy some light refreshment. There was always a selection of English papers and magazines available for the habitués. One can imagine that perhaps one day, the Baroness, being an authoress herself, had the idea of providing a few books as well, and so the library was born. It was apparently very popular.

The library has been around for a long time but that doesn't mean that the books are ancient and falling apart. There are some old books, rather interesting ones in fact, but about 30 new books are bought every two months or so, which make up the 4,000 both fiction and nonfiction in the collection.

Why not drop in and have a look round? And if you like what you see, become a member. You'll always get a warm welcome. ■

Open Saturday, 10h30 to 12h, and a year's subscription is €30.

St Paul's gets a lift

Early February, St Paul's Monte Carlo held its first fundraiser for a new lift, with more than €52,000 of the estimated €250,000 raised. H.S.H. Prince Albert II of Monaco paid a much-appreciated visit to the event and has agreed to serve as the Honorary Patron for the Lift Campaign. Since its consecration in 1925, the church on Avenue de Grande Bretagne has served as the heart of the English-speaking community in Monaco. For more on the Lift Appeal, see stpaulsmonaco.com



HSH Prince Albert (right) with Father Walter Raymond (left) at fundraiser.
Photo: St Paul's/Simon Wynne

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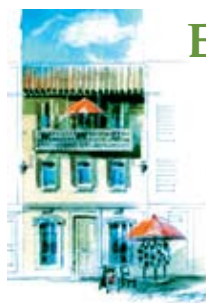
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THE THIGH'S THE LIMIT



BY DAN BRIGGS

MY French teacher has advised me to watch as much French television as possible. My favourite shows are the current affairs programmes. They are usually presented by an older man, a wily old fox.

Rather than having one co-presenter, the Fox is usually at the centre of the show, and different presenters sit with him for different segments. There's a token gay arts editor; other than that, the Fox chats away to a coterie of younger women, dressed not for TV but as if they are going out for lunch with a lover.

Of course I don't understand much of the conversation between the Fox and his harem. I watch the pictures and imagine the rest. Most of the programmes have review segments on French films. They tend to be comedies about middle-aged lotharios reliving their teenage impulses.

The Fox sits on his stool and touches the knee of his co-presenter. Her hair shines like she's in a L'Oreal ad. She shakes her mane and they watch the clip together, and then they start talking, but

the real conversation, the subtext is all in the body movements, the sly winks and raises of the eyebrow, the questing hand that strays too high on the thigh. I am an expert at interpreting and imagining.

The Fox: "You were sooo good last night."

L'Oreal: "Ssh, we mustn't let the nation know."

The Fox: "The nation already knows, you are my favourite, my love, my life, my east, my south, my north, my west."

L'Oreal: "But your wife?"

The Fox: "What of her? Listen, there's a break coming up, and then the news, I want you, naked in my dressing room."

L'Oreal: "Tssh, you steamy saucisson."

The Fox: "And you will do that thing with the mic and the hair gel?"

L'Oreal: "Grrrh...."

The Fox: "And so 'Will They, Won't They' is in cinemas from Friday. I'll see you after the commercial break and the news."

The Fox coughs to clear his throat and walks off set in an aroused state.

And that, of course, is just one genre of show, the entire output of original French language television simmers with

suppressed sexual tension. In the cheap soaps and detective series the women wear red bras with the straps always exposed. The lipstick is thick and the skirts short. The men are in suits and shirts with their ties at half-mast, and they perpetually walk around with their hands in their pockets ... It's like porn without the sex.

I don't understand a word of the language during discussion shows between politicians but I can catch the "I'm getting more than you sneer" better than anyone. Female presenters, of course, are only ever there to be flirted with, denigrated, and then slept with after the show.

Then late at night, the shagging starts, often in covert form documentaries about the Pigalle red light district of Paris, or the rising number of French employees having sex in their lunch time. There's always a strategically placed undercover camera to make sure nothing is left to the imagination.

After a week of intensively watching French television, I felt exhausted. I took the subject up with my French teacher. She is after all my instructress in all things French.

"But yes, of course he wants to have sex with them," said FT about one of my fox anchor men, it is no secret, the nation knows that he sleeps with them all, and when there's a new presenter, he turns all his charms on her, you just watch, he is, how do you say, like a dog on heat."

"It's the female dog, not the male, that is on heat," I clarify.

"Anyways, it is like a soap opera," she continues, "every day the nation watches, she plays hard to get, he touches her knee, she nearly slaps him, and then, bam, one morning all has changed, and she is putty in his hands. No woman in France can resist."

"But this is okay?" I asked "Presumably he has a wife."

My French teacher laughed. "Of course it is okay, you English are so repressed. It's the wife's fault if she has not kept him interested." ■

Read more about Dan Briggs's trials and tribulations at provençeguru.com

MEGA WEALTH

BY MICHAEL HEALY

FOR a display of real opulence, look no further than the ports of Monaco and Antibes. The rows of huge yachts, presented stern-to, inspire awe, if not envy. They cost more to buy and maintain than even the most sumptuous residence. So what is the motivation of the billionaires who own them? The megayacht industry needs such rich-listers, who provide employment and scope for thousands of people on the Riviera and elsewhere, so criticism is not appropriate.

Owners can be graded according to their usage. At the top are those with State or Royal yachts – a surprising number that no longer includes Great Britain since 1997, when Her Majesty's famous "Britannia" was sold by the incoming Labour government and turned into a tourist attraction in Leith, Scotland. The Queen has since had occasional use of the now sold yacht "Leander" of Sir Donald Gosling (Honorary Vice Admiral of the United Kingdom and esteemed serial yachtsman).

Famous Royal megayachts of today include the "Prince AbdulAziz" (Saudi), "Katara" (Qatar), "Savarona" (Turkey) and "Pacha III" (Monaco – Princesse Caroline), but many others have visited the Riviera, such as Libya's "Hannibal" (ex-"Lac II"), Iraq's "Qadissiyat Saddam" (now called "Basrah Breeze" and serving as a research vessel) and yachts of most of the oil-rich Middle-East rulers.

Then there are the Explorer yachts with a purpose, like exploring the Antarctic seaboard or diving on coral reefs by scuba or with an embarked submarine. Or seeking (and finding!) the WW2 wreck of the biggest battleship ever built – the

Japanese "Musashi", which was sunk by American Navy aircraft in the Battle of Leyte Gulf (Oct 1944). This was the exploit in March 2015 of Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen, using the submarine based on his "Octopus". And one much in the news this last year is the "Phoenix", fully occupied rescuing migrants from drowning while attempting to cross rough seas from Libya, Turkey and now Bangladesh. The Reporter did call for owners to volunteer their big yachts for this humanitarian task (see *moas.eu*), but in vain! However, several yachts have been active in disaster relief in the South Pacific and elsewhere under YachtAid Global. Many are also built or adapted for lucrative chartering, where the market seems very buoyant for the coming season. One trick here is providing accommodation for more than the traditional 12 passengers, by building to stricter Passenger-Ship rules.

For others, it is just owning the biggest, fastest, latest, glossiest – in short doing more than keeping up with the legendary Joneses, and this is best served by keeping the boat in harbour on show, or anchored off the Croisette or Senequier.

Of course there is plenty of enjoyment in cruising or chartering a megayacht, but a much tinier boat will give as much pleasure. As for value for money, there is no yardstick for valuing yachts, although the sum total expended on designing, building and equipping a vessel would be a start. The price depends on the market and the motivations of seller and buyer. When price reductions of \$6 million (for M/Y "Solandge") are announced, one feels sorry for a buyer who just bought a similar yacht for that much more.

Well, most of us don't have to face such a decision. ■



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we've got mail...

THE FRENCH TOUCH

I COULDN'T resist taking this on the Nice-Monaco TER during morning rush hour. To the fascination of other passengers watching the show, this woman was using an eyelash curler and putting on her makeup while freestanding!

Alice Coggs, by email



WHAT IS OUR FATE?

I AM very worried about what will happen to expats if the UK leaves the EU. Should we leave now?

Gillian Gillot, Valbonne.

No, and whatever the outcome, it is very unlikely that you will be forced to leave at all. Expat life could be more complicated but no expat should be made to return to the UK. See our complete coverage starting on page 8. RR

JP CONSTRUCTION

QUITE a while ago you covered the sudden disappearance of JP Construction run by Mr John Olsen, which left several of his clients and suppliers in the lurch, but we haven't heard much news since. Is there any?

G.H. (name provided) by email

Yes. The Monaco Court will be examining the case for fraudulent bankruptcy against John Olsen and Peer Pedersen on June 28. The court details are on our Facebook Group where there is a copy of the Tribunal's announcement that victims should send in their claims. RR

DRIVERS BEWARE

THERE'S been a new speed camera in operation on the A8 autoroute behind Nice, well before the St Isidore junction after the Canta-Galet tunnel in the Italy-Aix direction. The speed limits on that portion vary from 90 to 110 km/h, depending on the section and the type of vehicle.

Nigel Wallace, Beausoleil, by email

OFF-ROAD BEETLE BOMB

I HAVE an old VW camper van that I intend to do up to be like the one in this picture when I retire. It's in running order but for the moment just sitting under a tarpaulin in my garden. A mate says it must be MOTed and insured even though I don't yet take it out on the road. What's up?

Gordon Petri, by email

You don't need a Contrôle Technique (MOT) until it's on the road but you should see an insurer about some minimal insurance until then. Your household policy is unlikely to cover you for anything that might happen while the vehicle is sitting unused, such as a fuel explosion or a fire that spreads to your or another property, or injury to a child that might stray into your garden to play in the van. By the way, depending on its age, your old VW van may qualify as a "voiture de collection" which would mean French MOT pollution standards would not apply and you could get special insurance. RR



GREEN CRED

I AM very interested in the future of electric travel and have been delighted to see that you sometimes include electric powered motoring tips in your articles.

RUBBER STAMP & SCISSORS FOR SHREDDING

SOMEONE had been playing tricks on me by using papers I had thought I had thrown away.

**Star
letter**

I had envisaged buying a paper shredder but it is expensive and takes up space. A French friend suggested these as an inexpensive way to solve the problem.

Special scissors shred just part of a document so I only need to slice the address and bar code for it to become illegible. The rubber stamp is purposely comprised of gibberish, which makes it impossible to read the text underneath it.

These are inexpensive, quick and easy solutions. I ordered mine online but they are also available at some stationers and I would like to recommend them to other readers.

Carole Humbert, by email



On the Riviera, we are seeing new charging stations for electric vehicles and should welcome that we have ever more choice in how we power our vehicles. Monaco is very proactive in this.

But things are not always quite as simple as they appear. Some caution must be taken when evaluating the global "green cred" of any choice meant to protect the environment.

The energy efficiency of electrically powered vehicles is measured in watt-hours of electricity per km (Wh/km), and some models consume much more than others. But this electricity must be produced in power stations before being transferred to the batteries that



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LETTERS

power the vehicle.

If we want to evaluate the global environmental impact of electric travel we must also look at how that power is produced because emissions transferred somewhere else are still emissions as far as the planet is concerned.

Much of French electricity is created in nuclear power plants and, short of a reactor incident, nuclear is a relatively clean way to produce electricity although there is a major issue with the disposal of nuclear waste. Hydroelectric and geothermal power is best but not possible everywhere.

If electricity is produced by burning fossil fuels, the global environmental impact of an electric vehicle would be about the same as a petrol car. The only advantage being that the emissions would be present in the places where the power is generated, not where there are cars. This could have lesser impact on people's health in cities.

Batteries used in electric cars are a major issue. Most are highly toxic, containing elements like mercury, lead, lithium polymer or lithium-ion, and so must be manufactured and disposed of under very stringent conditions. This is sometimes the case but certainly isn't in China where more and more of these batteries are manufactured.

Further considerations are the body design's streamlining factor (cx) and how efficient the vehicle is at recycling the kinetic energy from braking

and unpowered downhill gliding. One very important consideration is that, unlike petrol cars, electric vehicles consume no power at all when idle. This is especially important in urban traffic where stops are frequent.

For hybrid vehicles we must also factor in the overall environmental impact of making and disposing of two engines rather than one.

There is a long way to travel yet but we have started on the road to cleaner transportation. The long-term potential of electric powered vehicles can only improve as the production of electricity decarbonises.

In our region especially, solar power can be added to the mix of renewable and nonrenewable ways to produce electricity. So please do keep reporting on this.

Graham Wiggs-Hall, by email

FOOLING THE SCAMMERS

I HAVE a friend who's brilliant at wasting the time of those scam callers trying to tell you there is something wrong with your PC. The longer we can keep these callers on the line, the less time they have to try conning unsuspecting innocents.

It's like a hobby when he's bored and there's nothing on the telly. He can keep them going for hours by acting to be clueless. He even gets them to call back "when my wife is back from shopping. She knows how to work this PC thing".

LETTERS, PAGE 46



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LIKE this magazine almost 30 years ago, the Riviera Reporter Facebook page is a convenient place for Riviera anglophones and their French friends to be informed and discuss local issues.

WE'VE replaced our web forum with a Facebook Group because so many of you are already Facebook members, it's much easier to join and contribute to than an internet forum.

THE Riviera Reporter Group allows any member to initiate topics or respond to a post. If you don't want to actively participate, it's perfectly fine to just read and learn from others.

THERE is discussion of local and wider issues, from community support initiatives to crime and traffic warnings, from news of local charities to the yachting community. There

are also administrative and other documents that you can download and keep for reference.

RECENTLY, there've been posts concerning the UK-EU referendum that we cover extensively in this issue. The referendum on June 23rd will affect all of our futures in vital ways. On the group you will find posts, documents and links to keep yourself up-to-date, ask questions and learn how to vote in the referendum if you qualify.

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LETTERS

LETTERS, FROM PAGE 45

As his wife is French, she joins in by speaking segmented English in her French accent and inserts a few choice French swear words for good measure, but in the sweetest of voices so they don't know they're being sworn at.

The funniest is when she pretends to be following the scammer's instructions, but badly.

She calls the PC 'him' as many French speakers would in their gender specific language. So when the caller asks her to click on something she says, "I'm touching his couilles but he only makes a noise."

Couilles means testicles in French slang so I imagine "he" would! One scam caller even asked her what the noise sounded like and she answered "happy".

H. Willis, Villefranche, by email

WRITE TO US: Letters to the Editor can be sent by post (see page 50) or email: info@rivierareporter.com. Unless specifically marked "not for publication", letters may be published in our Letters pages. Names are withheld when requested but please note anonymous letters will not be considered.

THE PERFECT COCKTAIL



LADIES WHO LAUNCHED CHARITY:
Eight expats set up "Mimosa" in 2013: (L-R):
Marilen Kenington, Juliette Clarkin, Ellie
Goblet d'Alviella, Gemma Bishop, Sara Parks,
Sophie James, Emma Nyman, Anissa Perkins.

BY KAREN HOCKNEY

THE Cannes Film Festival and the Monaco Grand Prix are without a doubt two of the French Riviera's glitziest events of the calendar year. And, for the first time, taking place on Friday May 27th – just after the Festival's Closing Ceremony and two days ahead of the Grand Prix – will be the Mimosa Cocktail fundraiser.

This year's party is a twist on previous Mimosa charity events. Held for the first time at the exclusive L'Ecrin Plage club in Cannes, which also hosts Calvin Klein's annual soirée, it promises to be quite simply the hottest ticket in town.

Founded by a group of eight expat women in 2013 who have all been touched in some way by cancer, Mimosa activities have rapidly expanded into a year-round fundraising effort encompassing a myriad of events, including two gala fundraising spring balls, a pub quiz and clothes sale held in

March, a children's Mini-Mimosa 2km-run in Nice on April 23rd and a team run in November's Nice-Cannes Marathon.

The combined events have raised an impressive total of over €100,000 for La Ligue Contre le Cancer, a nationwide charity which offers complementary therapy and support to cancer sufferers and their families. These funds led directly to the opening of a second Alpes-Maritimes Espace Ligue last autumn, which provides massage, reflexology and friendly advice in the heart of Antibes.

Along with CSG06 (Cancer Support Group 06) and the yachting charity bike ride COGS4CANCER, which has raised over €700,000 since its inception, Mimosa has been instrumental in raising awareness and support for cancer sufferers on the Riviera among the international community.

CSG06 and La Ligue are in talks to further extend services to the English-speaking community at the centre in Antibes.

Committee member Ellie Goblet

d'Alviella said, "We have a fresh new look this year with a glamorous venue for our Mimosa Cocktail at L'Ecrin and our recently unveiled new logo by Pure Design International. We are confident that this year's Mimosa Cocktail will offer just as much fun and glamour as the previous gala balls.

"We are completely overwhelmed by the generosity of local businesses on the Riviera, who have offered prizes and sponsorship at previous events."

Past sponsors of the balls and the marathon include Currencies Direct, Blue Square, Blevins Frank, Ma Nolans and Colgan's Brewery.

Once again, celebrated local trio Lizzy and The Gentlemen will be performing a capella at the champagne reception for 200 on the beach, before DJ Thomas Dusseune takes to the decks to get everyone on the dance floor.

A once in a lifetime experience donated by luxury lifestyle and bespoke travel experts Greenbird is among the unique prizes in the silent auction, as well as nude charcoal drawings by locally-based artist Chris Savage and an Antony Parks painting of the Cannes coastline. All funds raised by the auction and raffle will help to run Espace Ligue as well as segue out to other worthy cancer related causes in the region.

Adds Ellie, "With one in two people now touched by cancer, we have to work together to consign this terrible disease to the history books. Joining forces with the other groups and adding to our roster of events will hopefully help us to make a real difference." ■

For more on cancer support, see page 20. To donate a prize, become a sponsor or find out more about tickets, please contact mimosamatters@gmail.com

march

PRINTEMPS DES ARTS FESTIVAL

Until Sun Apr 10: Monaco's annual Spring Arts Festival brings talented artists from around the globe at venues throughout the Principality. See printempsdesarts.com

EUROPEAN DAYS OF ARTISANS

Fri Apr 1-Sun Apr 3: Meet art and trade professionals, initiation workshops, exhibitions. See journeesdesmetiersdart.fr

UKULELE CONCERT

Fri Apr 1, 19h: Come and sing with The Ukulele Orchestra of Sweden. Drinks and snacks at the Swedish Club, Villa Ingeborg, Cagnes-sur-Mer. Members €15; €20 guests. rivieraklubben.com

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE SOUTH OF FRANCE SPRING LUNCH

Sat Apr 2, 11h45: 360 The Oxbridge spring lunch is to be held on Saturday, 2nd April, 2016, at 11h45 at the 360 Degree restaurant on the top floor of the Radisson Blu Hotel in Cannes (2 Blvd Jean Hibert), with pre-lunch drinks on the terrace at 12h00. Please book via email to: halfordoxbridge@yahoo.co.uk

AARON MESSIAH TALK

Sun Apr 3, 18h: The life and works of Aaron Messiah, architect anglo-niçois, together with his great-grandson of Messiah, Daniel Jessula and Judit Kiraly. Free at Holy Trinity Nice.

COUGOURDON FESTIVAL

Sun Apr 3: A celebration of the niçois "cougourdons" (see Reporter 170) at Jardins des Arènes de Cimiez in Nice. See nice.fr

PWN EVENTS

Mon Apr 4: Nice Round Table by Deborah D'Alessandro.
Mon Apr 11 (TBC): Mindfulness and the art of clear decision making in stressful times by Rod Briggs.
Tues Apr 19: Monaco Round Table "Is the Silver Market for You?" by Bettine Frohlich. See pwnnice.net

SINGING DAY



Sat Apr 9, 10h to 16h30: Singing day for church congregations with the Royal School of Church Music in France. Gain confidence to join in the musical life of your church. All abilities welcome. Held at St John the Evangelist church, av Paul Doumer, St Raphael. See rscmfrance.org for details or ring 04 94 50 38 46.

ANTIBES: HARLEM GLOBETROTTERS

Tues April 5, 20h30: At the Azur Arena d'Antibes, rue Emile Hugues. See francebillet.com

POSH PARAPHERNALIA

Thurs Apr 7 & Thurs May 5, 10h-15h: Books, bric-a-brac, posh paraphernalia and light lunch.
Sat Apr 16 & Sat May 21, 10h-15h: Books, bric-a-brac, posh paraphernalia and 2-course lunch. At the Grange (815 chem Gourettes Mouans-Sartoux). See sunny-bank.org

MONTE-CARLO ROLEX MASTERS TENNIS

Sat Apr 9-Sun Apr 17: See montecarlotennismasters.com

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

Sat Apr 9, 9h30-13h: A teaching morning on "The Chosen People". A broad look at the sweep of the history of the Israelite people from the call of Abram to the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. Lunch provided. Holy Trinity Church Cannes, ave Branly. See holyltrinitycannes.org

FLASHDANCE, THE MUSICAL!

Sun Apr 10, 17h: More than 30 artists that will make you dance and sing the unforgettable hits, including "What a feeling," "Maniac" and more at Palais Nikai. See nikaia.fr

TOP MARQUES MONACO

Thurs Apr 14: Sun Apr 17: The world's most exclusive supercar show. See topmarquesmonaco.com

AFTER WORK WITH SWEDISH CLUB

Thurs Apr 14 & Thurs May 12 18h: Hôtel Ellington, Nice.
Thurs Apr 28 & May 26, 19h: Royal Antibes Hôtel, Antibes. rivieraklubben.com

BA CANNES

Fri Apr 15, 11h30: Visit to Ephrussi de Rothschild Villa & Gardens, Cap Ferrat. €30 inc. lunch. Meet group promptly at 11.30 am at Villa. Reservations: 04 93 43 74 09 before Mar 31. See more details on britishassociationcannes.org

ANTIBES ART FAIR

Sat Apr 16-Mon May 2: See salon-antiquaires-antibes.com

FRANCE-GRANDE BRETAGNE NICE

Wed Apr 20: Guided literary tour by the Centre du Patrimoine: "Nice et ses écrivains".

AMIA C & VIAC LUNCH

Thurs April 21: Joint Lunch with VIAC at La Bleu Lavande, Valbonne. Please ring Douglas Goldin on 04 92 94 02 47 to reserve. More details at VIAC83.fr

CONCERT CANNES

Thurs Apr 21, 19h: Famous singer and actor Sven-Bertil Taube in concert with Göran Fristorp and Curt-Eric Holmquist. Cannes, Espace Miramar. Concert Members €55; €60 guests. rivieraklubben.com

BA VAR

Fri Apr 22: Artists Quarter & Lunch Draguignan.
Sun Apr 24: Bring and Share lunch at Villecroze. See baofthevar.com

AMERICAN CLUB OF THE RIVIERA NICE PHILHARMONIC

Sat Apr 23: Our member, Cindy Egolf, will make a humorous presentation at the Le Grand Balcon restaurant next door to the Opera House, on "How to conduct an orchestra". After lunch, we will attend an afternoon concert by the Nice Philharmonic at the Opera House, just a few minutes walk from the restaurant. Details on our website: americanclubriviera.com or for further information please phone Jeanette 06 48 62 39 72.

NICE SEMI-MARATHON

Sun Apr 24: For info see nicesemimarathon.com

SCRABBLE

Thurs Apr 28, 15h30: Tea, biscuits, conversation and Scrabble in English or French. Holy Trinity Church Hall, 11 bis rue de la Buffa, Nice. Tel: 04 93 81 76 74 - fgb-nice.com

CHARITY ART SHOW

Fri Apr 29 & Sat Apr 30: Six artists from the International Women's Club will exhibit paintings, sculptures and photographs at the Salle la Renaissance in Fayence. You're cordially invited to join us for a reception on April 29 at 5pm and/or April 30 at 11am at the Salle la Renaissance in Fayence. Participation €3.50; all proceeds will be donated to charity.

may**PWN**

Tues May 2: Nice Round Table by Deborah D'Alessandro. Entrepreneurs Club by Deborah D'Alessandro.
Tues May 10 :Sophia Antipolis Round Table.
Tues May 17:Monaco Round Table/ Stem Cells Therapy by Klara Doert.
Sat May 21:One Day Event, "Team Building and Outdoor to Enhance Board Team Spirit" by Marina Gregorette and Eli Rota. See pwnnice.net

LIBRARY & LUNCH

Every Wednesday, English library at 10h30, Shepherd & Dog lunch at 12h30.
Thursdays 10h: Keep Fit. Holy Trinity Church Cannes, ave Branly. See holytrinitycannes.org

RADA

Thurs May 5, Fri May 6 Sat May 7, 20h: The Riviera Amateur Dramatic Association presents "Relatively Speaking", a comedy of misunderstandings and mistaken identity by Alan Ayckbourn. Performances at the Mougins School. €10 admission incl. a free drink. Book by phone 07 83 53 76 20 or email: radabookings@free.fr

COMMONWEALTH CLUB OF THE RIVIERA

Sun May 8: VE Day
Details on
commonwealthclubriviera.com

CHANCES FOR CHILDREN CHARITY LUNCH

Sat Apr 23: Chances for Children annual charity lunch at Villa Les Falaises overlooking the Plage Mala at Cap d'Ail to raise even more money than last year and provide rent and other amenities for the Orphanage of Kampala, Uganda. The Orphanage is now the home of 59 street children who, thanks to everyone's generosity, are getting an education, have food and clothing and most importantly, a roof over their heads. See c4c.mc

ART EXHIBITION

Mon May 9, 12h: No entry fee. Exhibition with the Nordic Art-Team, ArtNordique from Le Var. 10th Anniversary Celebration. Music and lunch buffet (members €18: €23 guests) on the sunny terrace. The Swedish Club, Villa Ingeborg, Cagnes-sur-Mer. rivieraklubben.com

COFFEE TIME AT THE SWEDISH CLUB

Every Monday, 14h30: Coffee and Cinnamon Bun, €3 at the Swedish Club, Villa Ingeborg, Cagnes-sur-Mer.

CANNES FILM FESTIVAL

Wed May 11- Sun May 22:
See festival-cannes.com

VIAC

Thurs May 12 & Fri May 13:
Visit to Marseille. More details at VIAC83.fr

HISTORIC GRAND PRIX

Fri May 13-Sun May 15: A "must-see" retrospective of the golden age of car racing that takes place every other year on the famous track of Monaco on roads that haven't changed since the first race on April 14, 1929.. See acm.mc

BA VAR

Fri May 13: Coffee morning & croquet match at Nans-Les-Pins. See baofthevar.com

AMERICAN CLUB OF THE RIVIERA FESTIVAL LUNCH

Sat May 14: Our annual Film Festival lunch at the 3.14 restaurant on a central Croisette beach (opposite the Carlton Hotel). With entertaining industry speakers. See Cannes from the midst of the festival and participate in our famous film quiz. Details on our website americanclubriviera.com or for further information please phone Jackie on 06 98 12 89 00.

BA CANNES

Sat May 14, noon: Spring BBQ in the Chairman's garden at Mouans-Sartoux: €25. Reservations: 04 93 43 74 09 before May 11. See more details on britishassociationcannes.org

AMIA C LUNCH

Wed May 18: Les Pierre Rouges, Valbonne. Please ring John Bailey on 04 93 65 00 58 to reserve.

CHOIR CONCERT

Fri May 20, 19h30: Choir Concert with Aventurine from Vence. Join us for some drinks and snacks 19h. At the Swedish Club, Villa Ingeborg, Cagnes-sur-Mer. Members €10; guess €15. rivieraklubben.com

EUROPEAN NIGHT OF MUSEUMS

Sat May 21: European museums open exceptionally for a night, free of charge. See nuitdesmusees.culturecommunication.gouv.fr

MONACO GRAND PRIX:

Thurs May 26-Sun May 29.

L'ITALIE À TABLE:

Thurs May 26-Sun May 29: At Quai des Etats-Unis, Nice. Organized by the Nice Italian Chamber of Commerce, a showcase of Italian food and wine with homemade pasta, local cheeses to olive oil, Italian deli and a diverse entertainment program. See italieatable.fr

MIMOSA COCKTAIL

Fri May 27: Fundraiser at L'Ecrin Plage, Cannes. See page 46.

to note**RACE FOR LIFE MOUGINS**

Sun June 5, 8h30: 5km walk, jog or run at the Parc de l'Etang de Fontmerle in Mougins, open to all women and girls. The entry fee and the sponsorship money will go to Cancer Research UK. If you are interested please contact Angela Anderson 06 48 50 36 46 or email: raceforlifefrance06@gmail.com or see cruk06.wix.com/cruk06

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For Sale: Bar/Snack, Nice. Promenade des Anglais. Waterfront, 100m², next to Hotel Negresco. Furnished and equipped, renovated, other activities possible. Call owner: Max 06 71 40 19 50 or mail: jamax@orange.fr

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English American Library, 12 rue de France, Nice. Open 10-11 & 3-5 Tues-Sat. See: nice-english-library.org

Azur Road Travel.....	43
Banking, Banque Populaire International	41
Bed, Darya Blake, Bed Concept.....	43
Books, Antibes Bookshop	39
Books, Valbonne English Book Centre ...	39
Building, Victorious Renovations	39
Business Services, Peter Johnson	39
Car Rental, Greenrent.fr	17
Catering, The New Caterers.....	25
Computing, Gale Force.....	19
Computing, MPCs	31
Education, International Bilingual Schools	23
Education, Mougins School	11
English Garage	23
Finance, Blevins Franks Int. Ltd	13
Fitness, Endurance Shop	42
Fitness, Fitlane	19
Food, Brittain's Home Stores.....	11
Food, Centre Leclerc, Le Cannet	21
Food, Geoffrey's	cover
French Riviera Connect	42
Insurance, Eric Blair Network	41
Internet, Webstore	33
Mosquito Free	42
Mouratoglou Tennis Academy.....	cover
Photography, Studio Photo Alfieri	42
Photography, Arta Photo	42
Property, Coast & Country-Century 21	13, 21
Property, Domaine Albatros	27
Property, Hindle & Badlock	29
Property, Leggett Immobilier	15
Removals, AGS Worldwide Movers ...	cover
Removals, Riviera Removals	37
Restaurant, Enjoy Pasta, Rocheville	25
Rugs, The Woodman Collection.....	35
Satellite, HasEurope.....	9
TheLocal.fr.....	7
US Tax Advice, George Donnelly.....	45
Victoria Retirement Home	5
Villa Management, Sylvie Mutel	39
Vision tests in English	42
Wine, L'Emporium du Vin	37
Wine, Château des Chaberts	42

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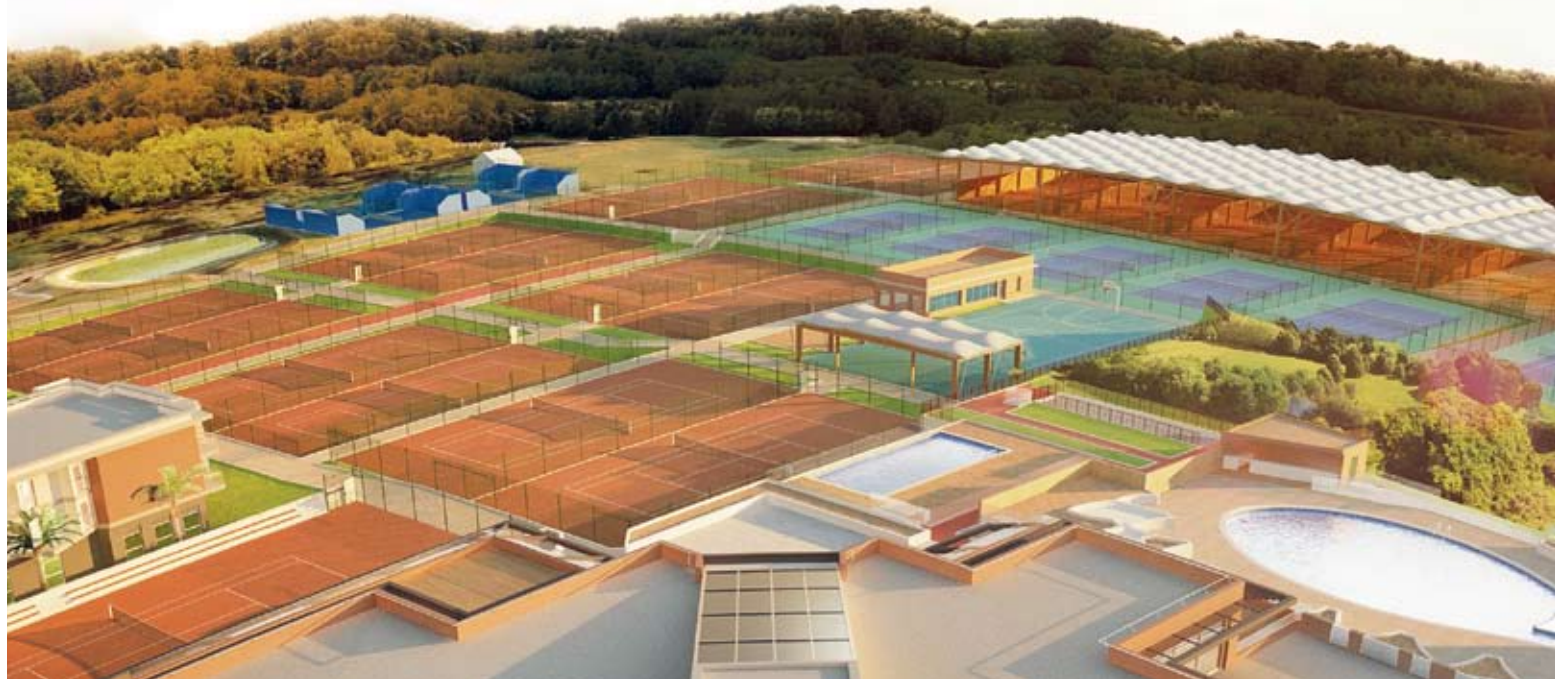
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