

The Agiot

54th Edition

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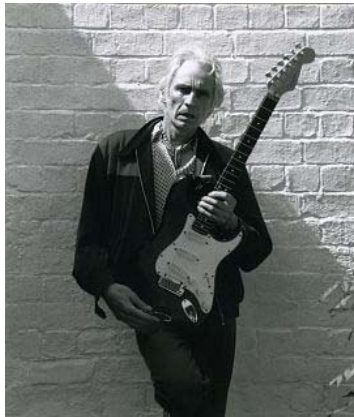
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The Steve Gibbons Band - Headline Agiotfest 12

Steve Gibbons:



Born in Birmingham, Steve first came to prominence as the leader of The Uglys, an uncompromising outfit at the forefront of the City's burgeoning 1960s music scene. By the early 1970s he had formed the five-piece Steve Gibbons Band which enjoyed success in the singles charts during the decade and has been perennially popular on the live circuit ever since. With a huge international following, Steve's long career has encompassed 15 albums. Along the way he has worked and toured with

many bands including The Who, Little Feat, E.L.O. and Lynard Skynard. In 1981, SGB responded to an invitation from the German Democratic Republic and became the first western rock band to tour the major cities of East Germany. With a huge repertoire of original material to draw on, Steve's set list is always fresh and surprising. He draws the audience into a musical world with its own special history and culture; in his hands rock & roll is a magical force. It's a formula that works in venues as diverse as Ronnie Scott's, Madison Square Garden or the Isle of

Mann TT Races and it's a formula that has won him tremendous respect from fellow musicians. These days Steve is as busy as ever with appearances as a solo artiste, with SGB or touring with pianist Phil Bond, guitarist PJ. Wright and Fairport Convention's Dave Pegg and Gerry Conway as The Dylan Project. In 2004 Steve was invited to join the legendary Scotty Moore on a live show filmed and recorded at Abbey Road to celebrate the 50th anniversary of *'That's All Right Mania'*, Elvis Presley's first release.

Followers of Agiotfest
please try this link:

<http://youtu.be/vUpj8MGkKCg>

9th Losers' Cup

By
Andy Player



"Russ identifying insect found by Sue"

The 9th Corfu Losers' Cup took place on March 31st. There was no Cup in 2011, as it was decided to switch the event from the Post-Christmas period (far too cold for our little tootsies) to a much milder Springtime. And, the weather, though cloudy, held. The Organising Committee has to say it was a fantastic day, and everyone at one stage or another was a "Winner"; Nine events were included in the day.... plus drinking. Individual events score breakdowns are not being published until the Committee has bought a rubber. Chrissy also made a claim for champion Boules but rule 87 subsection 3.1 states that if the scorer has a chance of small time glory he will take it.....Lula also showed significant potential in the Golf nearest the pin, (watch out Tiger), and of course Lionel's support and common sense in interpreting the rules throughout the day was fully appreciated, as always. Lionel became the first blind competitor to try golf. Peter was awarded 10 points for man of the match!! Thanks to Rich & Karen for the flags and Paul M & Lula for the cup (both of them). Mr Quilter is politely requested to return the trophy to HQ when he has stopped polishing and admiring it, so it can be inscribed.



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"Sue returning insect to twig"



"Alex asking his mum what the insect was"

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"A champion in the making"



"You don't have to be able to see to play this game"

it, so it can be inscribed.

A big thanks to all the competitors and their supporters, and to Tony Bloch at Croquet, who actually could play and knew the rules. Boring.

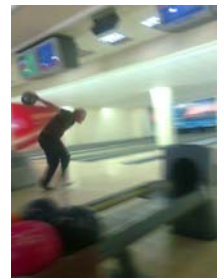
A wondrous slap-up meal at Mrs Anna Taverna's Pie Shop put a seal on a great occasion

Hope to see you all next year....evidence of the scoring method has now been destroyed,

Keep Training Paul & Paul



"No coaching gentlemen please"



"The power of Tom"



"The crowd goes mild"



"The Feast"

Positions and Points;

- 1st Rich Quilter 117.5 (1st in both Golf events & Pool) He was the only non-drinker.
- 2nd Alex Ferguson 105.5 (consistent throughout all events, and at restraining himself from murder at Croquet)
- 3rd Paul Scotter 92.5 (1st at Boules, and creative scoring)
- 4th Karen Quilter 92.0 (if Paul S hadn't been the scorer he might have been 4th!! TOP Lady of the day)
- 5th Russ Conway 91.0 (1st at Shove halfpenny & only "hole in one" of the day). He also did a fine medley of tunes at the taverna.
- 6th Tom Schafer 89.5 (Great at pouring Tequila, and should have won on that alone, must try harder at Darts). Top non-Brit this year.
- 7th Fonda Grammenos 86.0 (1st at Bowling with 282 points, and hassling, 3 times winner had no chance).
- 8th Paul McGovern 85.0 (Founding member retaining top 10 for the 73rd year). Would have come higher if able to stand.
- 9th Tony Barker 83.5 (Strength in Putting and contender for 2013.....**note all the positions 3rd to 9th within 9 points**)
- 10th Adrian Batten 69.5 (Strong first performance of new Agiot villager). Fell asleep whilst talking to Lionel at banquet.
- 11th Kostas McGovern 58.5 (Sorry Kosta for not letting you practice at golfPaul S feels guilty, but only a bit !!)
- 11th Sue Barber 58.5 (Boules and Putting strongest events, wins for most smiles of the day)
- 13th Alex Vasilakis 54.0 (Croquet excellent performance, massive sandwich may have hampered later events)
- 14th Spiros Revis 53.0 (Late arrival hampered a top ten spot, but still 2nd in darts with 80, and peaked around 21.00hrs)

Village News

By
Dr. Lionel Mann

The frequent roar of aircraft engines has announced the start of another season. As well as Easyjet, Ryanair is now operating inexpensive direct flights from U.K. airports. Already some visitors have used this new facility.



“Eletheria”

Eletheria, known as Crazy Nitsa, the wife of Spiros Thre wheeler, has

died. She often used to help at the taverna when it was busy, but for many months had been ill, confined to home and hospital.

We experienced a little seismic jolt on Independence Day, nothing much, only 4.9, and many did not notice it. I was still in bed, not having been told of the start of Summer Time, and thought that Aspros had jumped on, but then I remembered that he was outside trying to teach Bonnos better manners. I was ready with my big stick to thrash the brute if need be.

Paul Grove and Micky Clarke are visiting. They will return here with others for Easter.

Harry, last here in 1973, 1975 and 1976, lives near Stansted Airport and took advantage of the new flights from there to pay a short visit. He noticed a number of changes having

known Lula and Anna as pretty schoolgirls. He also renewed his acquaintance with Alekos whom he remembered as picking up tables with his teeth. Alekos has since given up that hobby - no teeth!



“Lionel in his new house”

*Happy Easter
to all our readers!*

*We apologise for being 2 days
late owing to I.T. problems.*

When Nitsa was Young

By
Lord Biro

Chapter 3: Transition

One day the Italian soldiers performed a search in the village and they herded several political suspects towards a van, for they were to be interrogated in town. Nitsa’s little brother Prokopis [now in Time-Out] fainted during the commotion. His Mum Sofia called to her husband, who was being led away. He tried to get to his son, and the Italians raised their rifles, but were sympathetic to the plight of the child.....After one day of interviews all the suspects were



“German Patrol”

released unharmed. On another occasion in 1942 Ioannis was sleeping outdoors at night, in the heat of the summer. In the dawn he noticed

a haystack afire. Everyone awoke and scurried to get the nearby children away. The flames spread quickly and it took all the villagers and the Italians with buckets of water drawn from the well and a spray machine, to subdue the inferno. Part of one home was burnt out but nobody was hurt. This incident frightened young Nitsa greatly. It was suspected that the fire had started from a discarded cigarette butt, tossed by a worker sleeping in the haystack.

In September 1943, the Germans became the new masters of Corfu. On the 13th of that month they bombed the theatre, then came their army. They landed near Lefkimmi. Nitsa’s father Alekkos and a few villagers went down as far as Benitses to repel the invaders, but the size and power of the incoming tanks made them beat a hasty retreat

The Italians had changed teams, and the Germans were not amused. 3500 Italian troops were taken off

the island to be drowned at sea off Kefalonia and Zakynthos.



“Mountain Infantry”

Ioannis was always in the thick of things. One day the Germans roared in to search the houses. They were not as easy-going as the Italians had been. However, luckily for Ioannis he happened to have a framed photograph of the Kaiser [from the Achilleon] on his cabinet. The soldiers soon spotted this and immediately stopped the search of his home.

Finally, the Germans too departed, as the tides of war changed. There were celebrations over their retreat but they were short-lived. A Civil War was brewing, which extended hostilities in this small corner of the globe for another three years.

In 1946 Nitsa’s father died, so young, from appendicitis. She remembers her and her siblings trundling off to the rich Estates to gather olives to supplement their shrunken income.

News From the North

By Uncle Bulgaria
Contributing Editor

Well I would like to start with a well done. Earlier this month along with thousands of others I had to renew my EKA book for my wife and I. Any person that went to the EKA office at this time would have observed the heaving mass of people acting like animals. I observed a lot of abuse aimed at the EKA officers. After 2 days when I eventually got to the window having waited for about 6 hours each day, I was given a form to fill in (totally in Greek of course) and told to bring it back next day together with a long list of documentation. I mentioned that I had been patient for two days and at 70 years old found the thought of a third day of waiting distressful! This kind lady said dont wait just bring the documents round back into the office and give it to her direct. Which the next day I did. She checked everything briefly and said come back the following week. Well the good part is at 8pm one evening this lady phoned me on her own time and expense for the answer to just one question, this is above and beyond the call of duty,

most of the clerks would have sent me away again to do the paper correctly. So, THANKYOU that EKA clerk for your help and consideration. You are one in a million.

You know it makes me sick every time I watch SKY or freeview TV the amount of so called charities begging for money, Save the bear, the cheetha, the lion, the elephant, the monkeys, the child in every third world country, pay for digging wells, Cancer research, you would think after 50 years of research and millions and millions of pounds sent by the public they would have got somewhere with cancer, and when they do, although the public paid for it whos going to make huge profits out of the cure, and who is going to be paying for that profit. I digress, the point is we rarely see charities for our own children and if we sent money how much is squandered in "Administration" costs and how much would actually be applied to the care of the subject? Frankly rather than cough up about 100 quid a month to all these so called charities I would rather treat a fellow expat down on their luck direct, with a couple of beers which will do more

good!!!!

Lovely weather the tourists are hopefully coming, everything is looking a bit rosier. I would like to thank the many people who supported Little Al and myself with our Utube Video,

We did make a follow up, very tongue in cheek if your interested in seeing it, its on Corfu's UTube channel. We had good feedback from the first film some people who were not coming here for holiday, now are, and a producer from ITV has expressed an interest in the subject when they make a series about Corfu later this year so all good stuff.

The street light outside my house has not worked for nearly a year, despite many complaints to the Demos. I might as well hang a sign outside my house to the burglars (Ive been done twice) saying "come on, break in here its nice and dark noone will see you"

I Love the new Corfu market really great, but I reckon a public toilet would be nice, or if there is one (and I cannot find it) why dont they put a sign up. Typical!!!

Well on that crappy note, that's it.

I am and always will be.
Obnoxious Al.

Aunty Lula's Love-bites

Cheese Pudding

Ingredients

225g Fresh White Bread (cut into cubes, crusts removed)
150g Grated Edam Cheese
50g Grated Kefalotiri Cheese
3 Eggs (whisked)
500ml Milk
A little Salt & Pepper
A pinch of Cayenne Pepper

Go:

1. Place the bread in a basin, add cheeses and whisked eggs.
2. Heat the milk and pour on to the bread mixture. Season and mix well together.
3. Pour mixture into a buttered 1 litre soufflé or pie dish and bake at approximately 190°C for 45 - 50 minutes.

Bon Appetit!!

Corfu Weather Statistics

March 2012

Maximum Temperature - 22C
Minimum Temperature - 3C
Average Temperature - 13C
Windspeed - 42km/h.
Gust-speed - 61km/h.
Rain - 20,6mm

Two Easters

By
Simon Baddeley



Latin Palm Sunday ~ 1 April 2012

We "Amy's went to the hospital at 3.00. They sent her home. Then we went in again at 7.30" would have set out tonight but we've postponed travel to Greece awaiting our grandson. We'll not be in Ano Korakiana until the middle of Greek Easter - a fortnight after the Latin; as Mark said when I e-mailed him. "Well you will just have to throw your bags through your door and play catch up on the booze and food, on arrival." At nine this morning Guy phoned.

We said we'd to go and collect Cookie dog to feed and stay with us.

"So we're going to have two Easter's" said Lin



Oliver Sebastian Hollier

In the village yesterday, the Eastern celebration of the prayer to Mary in Ag.Giorgos Church, referred to as Akathistos, Ακάθιστος, meaning 'not sitting'. The church is bright, the anthem one of jubilation, the congregation standing to rejoice...



Ημέρα του Ακάθιστου Ύμνου η χθεσινή για τα εκκλησιαστικά μας και στον Άη - Γιώργη ξεκίνησε από τις 7 το απόγευμα η Ακολουθία των «24 Οίκων». Η φωνή του παπα-Κώστα απλωνόταν έως το περιούλιο του ναού, με τα επαναλαμβανόμενα «Χαίρε...». Νίκος και Τάκης Σαββανής θα ξεχωρίσουν στην απαγγελία του «Άσπιλε» και του «Και δος ημίν Δέσποτα» αντίστοιχα, ενώ προς το τέλος της Λειτουργίας, ο Νίκος Μεταλληνός θα αναγνώσει κείμενο με την ερμηνεία του Ύμνου και στη συνέχεια το εκκλησίασμα θα περάσει μπροστά από τη μεγάλη εικόνα της Παναγίας για προσκύνημα...

It was Akathistos Anthem Day yesterday celebrated at Saint George's, the sequence of '24 Stanzas' starting at 7 pm. The voice of Father Costa spread through the church, with the repeated call "Rejoice ..." Nikos and Takis Savvani reciting the 'Immaculate' prayer and the Lord's Prayer 'Give us this day our daily bread', respectively, while towards the end of

the Liturgy, Nick Metallinos reading an interpretation of the Anthem, after which the congregation passed the icon of the Virgin on pilgrimage ...This isn't a satisfactory translation of Thanassis' words on the village web. At least I'm not trying to translate the actual Anthem which contains rhetorical devices that defy translation' with an alphabetical acrostic for the first word of each web. , and its stanzas - οίκος, house - and the lines beginning 'Rejoice!' full of internal rhymes that work in Greek.

Phone call to Lin from Guy just after noon "You have a grandson"



Oliver and grandparents at Good Hope this afternoon

Percy Williams and the Sacred Ibis

By
Dai the Nant

When I moved to Wales, almost the first person that I met was a 70 year old character called Tom Roberts, otherwise known as "Tom the Logs" and also "Tom the Ticket". The first because he supplied the village with all their winter fuel, and the second because he was always raising money for charity by selling raffle tickets.

Everybody got their logs from Tom although they were always ringing wet. I once asked Gerry Williams landlord of the The Crown if Tom's logs were likely to be soaking again this year: "he's had the hose-pipe on em all morning" replied Gerry cheerfully. Tom, of course, sold all his logs by weight.

Accounting for his income from both sources was a bit of a problem because Tom couldn't read or write although he could handle small change. The big job of drawing up a schedule of takings was left to Hannah, his lovely wife. Despite being unable to read, Tom in an earlier life had run a haulage business and had delivered goods all over England and Wales. He couldn't read the signs so I expect he developed a very good memory, as most illiterate people do.

Another bye-product of his lack of letters was his frequent habit of mispronouncing words and names. For example, he always called Conrad, who lived next door to The Crown: Conrod. This irritated Conrad so much that he always avoided Tom when drinking in The Crown, and he eventually moved away from the village.

On another occasion, Mervyn asked Tom to go with him in his

big wagon to deliver a consignment of something or other in Tangiers. They were gone for a fortnight, and when they came back, Tom was soon regaling all and sundry in The Crown with his adventures. Arthur asked him if he brought back plenty of cigarettes and tobacco. Apparently not. You couldn't move for Customs men on the lookout. "If we had filled the wagon" said Tom, "they would have been on us like a flock of Vouchers"

Shortly after we moved to the village I asked Tom if he would help me with some foundations for a garage. We were halfway through digging the footings out when two significant events occurred. First of all Percy Williams died, who had served in the same unit as Tom during the 2nd World War, and second: the village was invaded by bird-watchers.

The bird-watchers had turned up because a Sacred Egyptian Ibis had landed in a field opposite the football pitch. Tom was on to this in no time "that bird has been blown here by a high wind from the Sahara" he stated. Actually this wasn't as stupid as it sounded as I can remember being in Leeds when 30 tons of Sahara sand had come down on the city and collected in the gutters.

What with nipping up to check on the Ibis, and getting ready for Percy's funeral, Tom was not much help with my footings. In fact I didn't see him until after lunch on the Sunday. By that time, Percy had been buried, and Tom, in his best suit was piping his eye over a bottle of Guinness. Also a policeman from Anglesey had turned up (he kept exotic birds) given the Ibis a good slap and thrown it in his van

"I could tie a 56 lb weight to this bird and it would find a way to fly off" he shouted at the Twitchers. Very red in the face he was too.

"It could have been brought by a High Wind from the Sahara" said Tom later "I have heard of such things"

And then he went all maudlin again, thinking about his old comrade in arms: "A good man was Percy, always kind to others, he looked out for me and I looked out for him." A deep sigh, and then: "But we will all meet again, in the Great Erection"

Dai the Nant

Photo Gallery



Aeglis Cake



Simon Baddeley



Abby (was Lucinda) enjoying life with new sister.



And one from Canada



"Corfu Life"

Christmas 1938

By
Dr. Lionel Mann

Part Four:

How is it that I can remember so well that Christmas long ago? It was absolutely unique in my experience, the last in peace-time while I still lived in the village of my childhood, yet the first when I lived with my grandparents and was old enough to go shopping in the city without adult supervision. The panorama of late afternoon with the brilliant lights of the displays in the shop windows and market stalls, soon to be eclipsed in wartime blackout, I can still recall in my mind. Too, that was the last Christmas of a gracious era, one of politeness and consideration.

It also marked the end of my five-year close friendship with Roy. Early in the New Year our dear old vicar died, replaced by a young shallow, cheesey-smile-and-Brylcreem cleric. Our young keen organist left to join the rapidly expanding R.A.F. Roy 'retired' from the choir and I also left to 'turn pro' from a twopence-a-week choirboy to a ten-shilling-a-week singer warbling alto along with three young contraltos, six sopranos, four tenors, four basses in the west-end-gallery semi-professional choir of a well-endowed city church; great experience for a twelve-year-old. After Sunday Evensong the organist, who had been my first piano teacher, handed out the next week's music and woe betide anyone who had not mastered it by the following Friday practice; Mr. Rush was not overly patient and had a very sharp tongue! This elevation lasted only eight months before my school Music Master, also a church organist, gasped, "Phone Mann; he'll play at

St. Nartin's tomorrow," as he was being rushed for emergency surgery. Still aged only twelve, I duly played, became master of a choir of twenty-four boys, some older and bigger than I, and was set on my lifelong career. I had no trouble; they were locally famous, drawing overflow congregations, determined to remain so, made sure that I quickly learned my job! Six years playing and chorister experience also helped me.

My new closest friends became the Head Chorister and his deputy that I inherited, both in the same form as I at school. I still exchanged pleasant greetings with Roy whenever we met, but in the hierarchy of the school he was my senior and also in Science whereas I was in Classics; great rivalry, mainly friendly, existed between the two.

On Friday morning, two days before that memorable Christmas, Roy and I, dressed appropriately in scruff gear, wheeling handcart and well equipped with tools, went to the woods with grandfather and his elderly part-time gardener. For the first time we entered legally when grandfather unlocked the gate, instead of through a hole in the fence, the access of all children coming to play in that wonderland and local residents seeking fallen timber as firewood. Roy and I helped to rope in the branches of a young fir tree to facilitate digging around its roots before we set off in search of holly with plenty of red berries, leaving the adults to their spade-work.

It was clear that others had been there before us, but when we went deeper into the woods we found plenty to fill the cart. Grandfather came looking for us and led us to an old oak tree upon which grew mistletoe. We cut a few sprigs of that, dragged the cart back, loaded the fir tree and went home. Tree

was potted and, together with most of the holly and mistletoe, stored in a corner of the scullery. Roy took home some of the holly.

I cannot remember how I passed that afternoon, but I was never short of something to do. As well as playing viola or piano I was a voracious reader, visiting the local public library at least weekly as well as finding interesting material on grandfather's well-filled bookshelves. Also I had been given free access to the large workshop at the end of the garden, until recently used by grandfather's builders for their woodwork. All the builders had now been taken for Government work and I had full use of a treasury of tools, equipment and a big stock of cut-offs for the construction of models of all the latest R.A.F. aircraft, from a small Spitfire fighter to a big Sunderland flying boat. Great fun! In the absence of electricity the lathe and drills were pedal-powered and I could just reach them. The gas lighting was permanently turned off so I was able to work only in good daylight.

That evening, smart again in uniform, I went with Roy to choir practice, the final rehearsal of all the Christmas music. Boys' practice was from 6.30 to 8.00 while adults overlapped, arriving and leaving later.

The nearby Public Library, on our way home, closed at 9.00 so we always called in there after practice to change books. I had been going there regularly for five years and the staff had become friends, recommending reading and finding books on subjects in which I expressed interest. At Christmas we always received a cheerful greeting and a bar of chocolate or a little bag of sweets. We were not disappointed this time.

Christmas 1938 - Part Four
Continued from Page 7

The next morning, Christmas Eve, Aunt Louise and Uncle Lionel went to work, leaving visiting Aunts Bessy, May and Lily to put up the decorations. First the tree was carried into the lounge and there was an indication of things to come when each of the trio had a different idea of where it should be placed. Grandmother came to settle the dispute and we unroped the branches leaving them to spread. I had been conscripted to assist by climbing the stepladder whenever anything was out of reach from below as none of the three was particularly agile. Life became full of ups and downs as none could agree where the paper streamers should go until Bessy and Lily retired with hurt feelings, leaving domineering May to do the job. I had apparently been forgiven my amusement at her clock cleaning; we worked pleasantly and soon had lounge, hall and dining-living room festooned with a variety of brightly coloured paper streamers while the disaffected pair showed good seasonal spirit in returning to place sprigs of holly above every picture and upon every convenient projection. Aunt May and I decorated the tree, taking great care to attach candle-holders firmly in positions where the candles would not pose a fire hazard. All this took up most of the morning and our first taste of Christmas was the hot mince pies with which grandmother rewarded us when we reported the end of our labours to her in the kitchen.

In succession throughout the morning we had heard the distinctive cries of the baker, milkman, butcher, fishmonger, grocer, green-grocer, coalman as with their horse-drawn vans they made their last rounds before Christmas. Grand-

mother went out to them to make last-minute purchases. When no house had a refrigerator such an opportunity to buy daily except Sundays fresh perishable provisions was very important. Moreover the vendors would impart items of local news about Mrs. Jones's baby, Mr. Smith's uncle, farmer Giles's sheep. They would exchange cheerful banter with their customers and were enveloped in merry laughter. If the goods were heavy they would carry them into the house to leave them where required. In those days, before "the acquisitive society" and politicians' "divide and rule" fostered envy, greed, malice and dishonesty, it was unthinkable that anyone should steal from an untended van.

Our front gate was just five yards outside the city boundary and therefore we were usually the first stop for those merchants. From us they circulated around the housing estate, the new part of the village, much of it grandfather's creation, before going out into the quaint old village surrounding its beautiful little medieval church where I had first been a six-year-old chorister. Apart from the later installation of a small organ and choir stalls the building had remained unchanged for more than five centuries. That part of the village had a small general store selling everything from pins through potatoes to paraffin, but those visiting suppliers provided a most useful additional service.

From time to time a knife-grinder, a tinker, a 'Spanish' onion-seller would also come round. Actually there were a number of shops within easy walking distance of home, at the top of the long hill into the city, including a hardware store, haberdashery and a very popular fish-and-chip shop run by a big jovial Dane with his wife and

son, but my grandparents preferred to deal when possible with the tradesmen who came to us.

We received two postal deliveries daily and I was deputed to intercept the postman that afternoon to hand him his half-crown "Christmas box". Four years later, when wartime shortage of staff placed a strain on coping with the Christmas postal flood, I served as a temporary postman and found it very lucrative, even after sharing equally my gains with the regular postman who remained in the sorting office and bundled all the mail in the correct order of delivery.

I had been told that presents should be left at the foot of the tree in the lounge to be handed out when everyone had returned from church on Christmas morning, but I privately resolved to be optimistic and to hang a stocking anyway. Part of the afternoon I passed in wrapping my presents for others and then placed them as required.

Father arrived in time for dinner, brought to the gate by a "leave-bus" from the airfield where his team was erecting hangars. Later he read my school report and expressed himself well pleased, yet I detected some reservations regarding my position first in Music and my many musical activities. Though himself a very competent musician, organist of a city church until recently called away by the Ministry of Works, he had always been opposed to my ambition for a musical career, especially one in church music, although for more than three centuries our ancestors had been church musicians in and around the city and even further a field. "You don't want to get into that; you're always at the mercy of ignorant parsons and even more ignorant congregations."

Continued on Page 9

Christmas 1938 - Part Four
Continued from Page 9

However he was hardly ever at home now and grandfather was encouraging my music. Father was later proved right, but by then I was well established, able to ignore ecclesiastical pettiness.

Having hopefully hung my pillowslip 'stocking' I went to bed. There was no Christmas Eve Midnight Mass at the church where I sang and, though there was one at the church a mere hundred yards from home, staunchly-Protestant grandfather reckoned that such observance savoured strongly of

'Popery' so none of us attended. I found it rather amusing that little over a year later when I became organist and choirmaster of the 'spikiest' Anglo-Catholic church in the city, arriving home after every Sunday and Saint's Day service surrounded by an aroma of incense and candle-smoke, he was very supportive and always asking of our doings.

The creaking of the door and the two wooden steps down into my bedroom awakened me, but I kept my eyes closed against the glow of torchlight by which father and Aunt Louise were filling my

'stocking', listening with amusement to their whispering. I always had a torch under my pillow; finding and lighting the gaslight in the dark was very difficult. Having waited a minute or two for the elves to be a safe distance away I slipped out of bed to inspect what Father Christmas had sent. Two books, some chocolate and sweets was a promising start as I knew that there would be more under the tree. Happily munching I went back to bed.

To be continued ...

Joke of the Month - sent in by: John Christie

A man is driving down the road and breaks down near a monastery. He goes to the monastery, knocks on the door, and says, "My car broke down. Do you think I could stay the night?"

The monks graciously accept him, feed him dinner, and even fix his car. As the man tries to fall asleep, he hears a strange sound; a sound like no other that he has ever heard. The next morning, he asks the monks what the sound was, but they say, "We can't tell you because you're not a monk."

The man is disappointed but thanks them anyway and goes about his merry way. Some years later, the same man breaks down in front of the same monastery.

The monks again accept him, feed him, and even fix his car..

That night, he hears the same strange mesmerizing sound that he had heard years earlier.

The next morning, he asks what the sound was, but the monks reply,

"We can't tell you because you're not a monk."

The man says, "All right, all right. I'm dying to know.

If the only way I can find out what that sound is to become a monk, how do I become a monk?"

The monks reply, "You must travel the Earth and tell us how many blades of grass there are and the exact number of sand pebbles. When you find these numbers, you will become a monk."

The man sets about his task. Some forty-five years later, he returns and knocks on the door of the monastery. He says, "I have travelled the Earth and devoted my life to the task demanded and have found what you had asked for. There are 371,145,236,284,232 blades of grass and 231,281,219,999,129,382 sand pebbles on the earth.

The monks reply, "Congratulations, you are correct, and you are now considered a monk.

We shall now show you the way to the sound."

The monks lead the man to a wooden door, where the head monk says, the sound is behind that door.

The man reaches for the knob, but the door is locked. He asks, "May I have the key?"

The monks give him the key, and he opens the door.

Behind the wooden door is another door made of stone... The man requests the key to the stone door.

The monks give him the key, and he opens it, only to find a door made of ruby.. He demands another key from the monks, who provide it.

Behind that door is another door, this one made of sapphire. And so it went on until the man had gone through doors of emerald,...

...silver, topaz, and amethyst.

Finally, the monks say, "This is the key to the last door."

The man is relieved to be at the end. He unlocks the door, turns the knob, and behind that door he is astonished to find the source of that strange sound. It is truly an amazing and unbelievable sight....

... But I can't tell you what it is because you're not a monk.

The Economy

By
Paul Kidner

Greek MPs finally voted through a controversial austerity plan in return for a £110 billion EU bailout as rioters clashed with police in the streets outside.

Without the cash injection the country would have faced the prospect of defaulting next month when it ran out of money.

But what is it like living in a society buffeted by all this turmoil?

Born in Athens to a Greek mother and English father, PAUL KIDNER [no relation of Paul Scotter, Paul Edwards, Paul Grove or Paul McGovern] returned to the Greek capital four years ago after 14 years working in various countries around the world. He recently started up a business and here he gives Yahoo! News a personal insight into the crisis gripping his country.

I've stopped watching the news. Every day feels like Groundhog Day. We watch the same drama on our screens - crisis, default, the drachma, unemployment, downward spiral - and it is getting increasingly depressing to watch.

For those living outside Greece the footage of rioting in the streets is in complete contrast to the cultural imagery handed down since the 1970s. Older women dressed in black, men playing backgammon in cafes, black coffee, ouzo, delicious food and beautiful beaches.

And now? What have we to show for the 'fast-food tourism' which developed from our cultural brand? Very little apart from vast debts and an all-pervading sense of gloom.

To give an indication of how it affects our daily lives, to keep bills down people have taken to switching off their central heating. One friend told me her family even uses

a quick blast of a hair-dryer to keep warm.

They can't afford expensive diesel-powered heating systems any more. It also begs the question of why we even use diesel in a land of wind, sun and rich geothermal energy sources?



An Athens cinema set on fire by protesters opposing austerity measures

But we do, the state-owned electricity grid still uses lignite - known to be one of the most inefficient fuels. And that is indicative of what little change takes place here. Things never change - except for the worse.

Since the austerity measures kicked in one business is closing after the other. Unemployment jumped from 11% last year to a current level of 21% and rising.

Among my immediate circle, I know of three people who have lost their jobs, and another who has remained unpaid over the past eight months. He's finding it difficult to make ends meet and moved to a smaller flat with his girlfriend to cut down on costs.

Now one of the three has found a job but that involves taking a severe pay cut. 'I'm back to where I was in the 1990s,' he says. One friend who owned a printing business is now working as a security guard for €600 (£500) per month.

Many are thinking of emigrating.

On top of this there are the tax bills, one after the other. I had to

pay 600 euro (£500) - the basic monthly salary in Greece - for a 'solidarity tax' a couple of months ago. At first the government said it was a one-off payment but there are fears it will be demanded again.

I earned a respectable salary last year but left in order to start my own business which still isn't profitable. But I still had to pay this tax.

After that there came a 'special tax' for anyone who owns property - it is worked out according to the area in which you live and how large your property is.

I own a small flat, so I 'only' had to spend a further €500 (£419). But - like many others - I found it hard to pay my mortgage as well as paying this new bill.

And it adds to a sense of unfairness that I have to pay an additional, brand-new tax on top of other property taxes I've already paid. The way it was implemented shows the government knew how unpopular it would be. So the property tax was taken through your electricity bill.

Anyone who didn't pay would have their electricity cut off. What one side of the fence calls austerity, another calls extortion.



Clashes in Athens have seen fireworks launched at riot police.

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The Economy
Continued from page 10

The middle-class feel they are constantly the ones who have to front the bills. We are the easy target, the people who can't hide from the tax system. The rich move their money to off-shore accounts, while small businesses don't issue bills making it impossible for the tax-man to track their earnings.

A friend recently moved to a flat which needed work doing to it. But neither the painter, the electrician nor the plumber would issue a written bill.

So we get hit each and every time.

Taxes erode the middle class, while leaving systemic failures untouched. On top of that, despite many political scandals, no one with large pockets or 'good connec-

tions' has ever been punished. The sense of injustice infuriates the public.

The problem is that there is no light at the end of the tunnel. Greeks feel that there are little prospects and no plans for growth. And there is little to choose from the political parties. If the EU was really concerned about Greek debt, why are we not talking about cutting our defence spending? Greeks believe this is because EU countries benefit from lucrative defence contracts. Most Greeks would agree that the country needs fiscal re-structuring, that the tax system has to be automated to reduce graft, that bureaucracy needs to be minimised and a business-friendly environment needs to be introduced. One that doesn't require two weeks of

queues and umpteen civil servants to stamp one piece of paper. But the current measures on offer are seen as simply harsh, unfair and unsustainable.

As people's wealth is being eroded so is their silence. Greece is going to begin to roar and its creditors are not going to like the consequences that this instability will bring.

Our leaders and the EU also bear responsibility for this need to communicate to the Greek people how they plan on making things better, how they will create jobs, efficiency and clamp down on tax evasion.

There is a Greek proverb which says 'hope dies last' but if we are ever to survive this collective anguish we need to find a source of hope - and quickly.

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Villa Theora



Villa Aphrodite

GREAT DEALS AT OCAY VILLAS

Hello Campers,

With the summer not far away- you would not think this if you were looking out of a Corfu window today [Jan has just told me the wind has got up. I asked her if she has seen the doctor about it]-we would like to start to fill our vacant summer weeks

Prices on Villa Theodora and Aphrodite were already reduced, to help people with the current financial doldrums, and now we would like to fill our few remaining weeks with as many of our friends and visitors as we can. It seems such a shame to have sparkling blue pools and cloudless skies without the sounds of splashing or squealing.

So, there is a further 10% discount to website prices for you mailing either here or by going to www.ocayvillascorfu.com

Please note there are no further reductions at present for Villa Persephone, Noy or MouseHouse, as these villas are already discounted.