

74th Edition

The Agiot

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Village News

By
Paul McGovern & Dr Lionel Mann



**A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL
OUR READERS
AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!**

We rapidly approach Christmas, and the time of season turns towards those lovely times spent fireside or around the woodstove, telling tales and imbibing fearsome quantities of home-made wine, roasting chestnuts and scoffing mince pies. The Village is a whole different place with its summer coat shed, but nonetheless beautiful. It is also a time for wandering through beautiful deserted forests and along windswept beaches, our pack of friendly dogs-augmented this winter by NiceStray. Homeward bound after a long and pleasurable walk with the dogs, there is magic in the twinkling Christmas lights and the gentle whorls and spirals of woodsmoke from the stove flues. This is a time for parties and family gatherings and wood chopping for the following winter and board games on the big kitchen table. In town the lights will cheer us as always as we slip through the narrow darkening alleys to a cosy taverna.

Lionel says:

Glug – glug – more glugs. We are just surfacing from having been inundated by a fortnight of continual thunderstorms. The sun is now beaming from a cloudless sky to keep us steaming gently although the bottom seems to have dropped out of the thermometer. Winter does come to Agios Ioannis, but its stay is

mercifully brief.

There have been no visitors to the village for the past month with the exception of more unwanted stray dogs dumped here by callous owners. Local pet-keeping seems to have reached saturation point and the poor animals are starving, a pitiful sight.

Agios Ioannis has no football team, but a number of the young men of the village go to play for a variety of the island's clubs. The level of skill is quite commendable. Perhaps one day a suitable field in this locality will be provided with required facilities and our talented village lads will no longer need to look elsewhere for an opportunity to display their prowess.

The turkeys that Vasili has been rearing in his hotel grounds are beginning to look suitably plump. It has been observed that the bushes have been pruned so as to afford no concealment to a bird when the dread day arrives. It can be no fun to be a turkey at Christmas!

DECEMBER 21ST

**AT VILLA THEODORA, AGIOS IOANNIS
A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

To kick off the Yuletide spirit in the appropriate spirit, any readers are welcome to attend our annual Carols STARTING AT 8.00.P.M.

Dr.Lionel will be presiding over his organ to encourage you to sing along, whether you can, think you can, or can't.

**MINCEPIES AND TASTIES AND DRINKS
WILL BE ON HAND FOR LUBRICATION
OF THE TONSILS.**

This is a free evening and all our welcome, but please let us know in advance if you are coming so we don't run out of vittles.



Agiots Nostalgia



< ===== Then ===== >



Now

Please write in to the Agiot editor if you recognise anyone on any of these photos to identify them.

Letters to the Editor

Hi Paul

My annual Poppy collection isn't completed yet (did I receive a donation from your good self?) and so I won't be able to prepare my write-up in time for your December issue. I will, I promise, have a write-up ready for your January 2014 issue!

Can I ask if you will add the following to your monthly mailing list, please?

jackiedallos@hotmail.com Jackie is

the wife of the manager of the marina in Lefkada. She is also my authorised agent for the annual British Legion Poppy Appeal and has a very generous community of ex-pats on the island many of them ex-military who give very generously indeed!

Needless to say, I am very happy with her and her efforts both last year and, again, this year!

At the Anglican church last Wednesday Lionel issued a verbal

invitation to all present regarding your annual Carol service on Saturday evening, 21 December at 8pm. This is my acceptance of your invitation and I look forward to seeing you all there on the night.

All the best, Lucy xx

The return of Obnoxious Al

Well we know Corfu is not perfect but most of us love it, which is why we live here. But, do we really have to be ripped off by OTE. What are they playing at with the internet and phone connections ? Up here in the North many people are suffering loss off internet and landline on a daily basis for the last two weeks. My internet goes of about 4 pm and comes back at 7 am, in between it is very unstable, the landline has not been connected for nearly a week. I have spoken to many people and they are having similar problems. Why not phone the help number 13888 you may ask, I have on a daily basis using foolishly my mobile, a months usage used in one day on that. What do you get ? put on hold for up to 20 mins!!!! Then a smarmy person comes on listens to your problem, (put to them politely) and say "I will check your line" they already know its down they must be getting hundreds of complaints.

So whats the score? Are they doing major work? why not say so? Why do they lie and spin you along? If we are late paying their blood money every month we get cut off damn fast, but we still must pay in full for half the usage we are getting.

Lets be honest, if a trader is selling apples 12 for a euro and only puts six into the bag would you pay a euro or fifty cents.

The OTE regrettably are a law unto themselves we have no recourse they have a monopoly and are arrogant with it.

Continuing the saga, Here I am 3 days later, Still no landline and no internet between 4pm and 8am the next morning and what I DO GET IS UNSTABLE.

Many expensive mobile phone calls to OTE have a elicited one returned

call from a smarmy guy assuring me they are looking into the problem and that I would receive a reduction on my account for days off line. (When and if the problem is resolved) a shrug off by the technicians at OTE technical services, except for on woman who said "they have a hardware problem that is difficult to resolve". In the meantime they continue to canvas their customers selling the 28mbs broadband upgrade,(What a joke) vigorously. The Greek locals also having similar problems are signing up for this upgrade and shrugging off the lack of service as "Oh well, thats OTE"

NOT GOOD ENOUGH!! I shall write again in a few days to add to the saga.

Dearie Dearie me, The OTE story continues, here I am another 3 days having passed still with no land line or stable internet, BUT, a miracle occurred this morning and the internet came on for the first time in 11 hours at 8am this morning and is still on 4 hours later, it will of course go off again, as we know every bit of sunshine has a clouded lining (Or something like that) the land line is still dead!!!! as a duck, as a dodo, so I took a little trip into Acharavi to the local Cosmote office who very kindly try to help with using their phone, and we phoned 13888 again. Well say OTE "we gave your problem to the local techniks to sort out, 11 days ago." Ho Ho Ho, Christmas is coming are they going to come down my chimney on Christmas day to fix it.

As it happens I called in at the local WIND shop and asked if i HAVE TO PAY FOR OTE HELP LINE CALLS on my mobile. Of course they say, it is a premium number and costs 1 Euro a minute!!!!!!!!!!!! They do tell you that in GREEK, before the connection. What slimeballs these people are, WIND probaly sub lease their lines from OTE, OTE keep you on

hold on the help line for an average of 20 mins, they both win and we the punter lose. I reckon on that basis my mobile bill this month will be over 200 euros. @#%#@! is what I say. Wind are pretty fast to use English to sell you something.

SHAME ON YOU OTE!!!



Whats gone wrong, An hour ago I wrote a further paragraph to my tale of OTE woe , and now an hour later I have a stable net connection AND a landline, however do I feel like praising OTE ? Do I heck, 3 weeks to fix a problem is ridiculous even for Corfu, and the costs on my mobile mean that next month if I pay it I will be eating cat food curry .

So thats the end of my story unless tomorrow it is off again. Lets face it a little rain, a bit of wind or even some one passing a bit of gas to close to a pole and poof its gone again!!!!

A final update. Now 5 weeks with no landline or stable internet . Been to OTE in Corfu and changing my ISDN line to PSTN but they charged me 36 Euros to do it. They said it would solve the problem!!!!!!

However when they do the work who knows. Then I have to go again to Corfu to collect the modem as the ote installer does not keep any in his van. More expense OTE stink

I am and always will be OBNOXIOUS AL!

Hilary's Blog

By
Hilary Paipeti

The London World Travel Market took place in November, and results seem to be positive. My 'roving reporter', travel agent Anna Aperghi, came back with this report:

'The atmosphere towards Greece was a lot better than last time, and everybody thinks that next year is going to be a good one.

Pre-bookings at this stage are about 10% higher than last year. Other than that, with Greece in the current situation, nothing is stable, and everything could change.

'If Egypt was in a better position, Greece would have fewer chances to recover in 2013. There are unbeliev-

able investments underway in Sharm El Sheik [on Egypt's Red Sea coast] which are going to be completed in 2015.'

Meanwhile back at the ranch, Lionel and I went along to Remembrance Day events, celebrated in the usual style at Corfu's British Cemetery and at Holy Trinity Church. The cemetery service was attended by a healthy number of ex-pats, as well as by representatives from Corfu's military services, an Orthodox priest and Corfu's Mayor Trepekis (who typically arrived late and barged to the front, nearly knocking Lionel over).

The grounds were the usual delight, and custodian-gardener George Psailas looked sprightly still. I had heard rumours that the Greek

government is poised to take over running of the cemetery when George 'retires', but thankfully our Consular staff assure me this is out of the question. Indeed, the gardens - over three acres - are actually the property of the British government. A place forever England.

I noticed Lionel was the only person present who had actually served in World War II, although he did not apply for the medal he was entitled to. 'It was only six weeks,' he said, 'and I didn't fire a shot, only on the rifle range.' He admits to being a 'lousy shot', more likely to hit other people's targets than his own. 'But I was pretty good with a grenade!'

Fleashpots Of The North

By
Mark Thompson

Well, in the words of John Lennon '*another year over and a new one just begun*'. Perhaps not quite yet lovey, but we do seem to be rolling headlong toward the festive season at breath-taking speed. So as we say in my part of the world-'drink now, avoid the Christmas rush!'

Whilst most of our shopping for presents, drink etc., is completed there remains unresolved, in my household at least, the vexed question of Christmas cards. My wife is old fashioned in that she likes to send and receive cards, whereas I prefer electronic messaging via the wonders of the worldwideweb relying upon the marvels of IT technology.

When working in offices in Eng-

land I found that the giving and receiving of Christmas cards developed, in many places, a competitive element. Not so much '*Mine's bigger than yours*' rather '*I've got more than you*'. I'm not sure that the Christ Child, the Prince of Peace would have much truck with such behaviour.

However rather than undertaking repeated and tedious arguments on the subject I adopted a different policy. In the lead up to Christmas I e-mailed all my colleagues advising that I was not sending cards, rather I would make a donation to recognised charity for a sum greater than that I would have spent on cards.

I invited colleagues to nominate a charity to which a payment could be sent and from which I would

obtain a receipt. I also invited colleagues to join me in such a donation and abandon the giving and receiving of cards especially amongst people one saw almost each and every day.

Believe me this never went down well in any of the offices where I made such a proposal. It was even suggested to me, on one memorable occasion, that what I proposed was not in the spirit of Christmas. Now I'm well used to some convoluted theology from present day clerics, like the Archbishop of Canterbury's recent plea for us to pray for terrorists, but this response from a normally level-headed workmate simply floored me.

Continued on Page 5

Fleashpots of the North
Continued from Page 4

Nonetheless this continues to be my policy to this day. I'm afraid those with whom I'm not in electronic communication must assume my good wishes. For anyone reading this, who I don't know, may I take this opportunity to wish a happy, peaceful and joyous Christmas? As for the New Year may I wish you all that you wish for yourself?

In case you're interested the charities to which I'll donate this Christmas are as follows: ABC Trust, this is the charity established by Jimmy Page, ex-Led Zeppelin, to help the countless 'street kids' of Brazil. As the 2014 football world cup is to be played in Brazil it seems appropriate to make a donation to this charity as these long suffering homeless children may, once again, get overlooked this time in the 'razzmatazz' of the football.

Secondly I'll be supporting Philippa Gregory's charity 'Gardens for The Gambia'. What I particularly like about Philippa Gregory is that she trained as an historian before she became a novelist. Thus she's not subject to the usual jibes from professional historians and talking heads, you know who I mean, that she's simply a romantic novelist ignorantly playing with history.

I also thoroughly enjoy her books and the clincher for me is that she lives in Yorkshire! Gregory's charity helps to provide wells for water in gardens of rural schools in The Gambia. This is one of the driest and poorest countries of sub-Saharan Africa and the charity digs wells for village schools, community centres and in The Gambia's only agricultural college.

At the schools, with the water from the wells, they grow vegetables to provide food for the pupils who otherwise might not have anything to eat all day. The surplus produce is sold to provide stationery and educa-

tional equipment for the school and its pupils, who being involved also learn the basics of sustainable agriculture.

The average well costs about £400 to build and Gregory guarantees that any donation, no matter how small, goes to The Gambia without any deduction.

Closer to home I'll also send a donation to Holy Trinity church in Corfu town towards the marvellous and varied help they offer to so many.

The answers to a previous quiz are as follows: the common factor that links Cameron Diaz and George Clooney is that they both use or used a personal trainer. In the case of Miss Diaz I believe that this is well known though with Monsieur Clooney perhaps less so.

The 4th volume of John Grigg's excellent biography of Lloyd George *War Leader*, unfortunately unfinished at Grigg's death, tells us at page 297, Penguin/Allen Lane, hardback edition, pub 2002: '...(Clemenceau's) day began working on papers between 5.30 and 7.30 a.m., when a physical training instructor arrived to put him through a routine of exercises and massage. He was at his desk at the War Ministry by 8.45 am'.

The answer to the second part of the quiz as that the ribbons of losing team, which would have been attached to the cup, are taken to Wembley but never used.

There is a partial winner, Les Woods, at least to the second part of the quiz. Whilst a strict interpretation of the rules suggests that Mr. Woods would not be entitled to claim his prize living as he does in Ellesmere Port. However after detailed consideration, long into the night and with the aid of strong drink, the committee decided on this occasion to make an exception and Mr. Woods will be able to claim his prize when he visits Corfu next July.

However I would caution Mr. Woods about becoming too excited

about the prize. Come July my own wine, the grapes having been harvested from vines on my own patio, and pressed by own feet and bottled in my own bottles will be 'on stream' and thus will form the quiz prize. It's too early to say if I'll be declaring a vintage this year, but the signs look good so those Romanée-Conti people should look to their laurels. As my wine has in the past also been likened to ξύδι-kseedhee-vinegar, so perhaps Sarsons should be on the look-out also.

Regrettably until the new wine from *Chateaux/Spiti Thompson* is available the quiz is suspended.

The 100+ Club

A polite notice Tuesday 3rd December 2013,

Start time 4pm,

Hosted By Sandra Klouda

@

The Mediterranean Corner Market
Roda,

The 100+ Club, Monthly draw.

One lucky Club member will win 70€.

If you are interested in joining this organisation, or would like to know more, come along and see what we are about, there is no obligation to join everyone welcome. To contact us for further information Tel 6946949545

Thank you to, Paul & Jan Scotter, central area co-ordinators, Tel; 6948701369, Sally Tinkler Ipsos area co-ordinator, Paul & Lula McGovern Agiotfest Co-ordinators.

Also to our supporters:

Hovoli Kafe-Neon Acharavi, Mediterranean Corner Market Roda, Chippy Chippy Sidari, Sally's Bar Ipsos, UK iMPORTS Sidari, Corfu Barber, Sofias 41, 49100 Corfu,

Scooby's Bar Sidari, Shooters Bar Canal d'Amour Sidari, and Darryl Bill's Butchers Perithia,

If your business would like to support

The 100+Club Tel 6946949545

The 100+Club supports Corfu Charities.

The Wall Current Sponsors of The Agiotfest

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Aunty Lula's Love-bites

Light Christmas Pudding

Ingredients

- 150g Soft Light Brown Sugar
- 75g Breadcrumbs
- 200g Flour, Sifted
- 1 tsp Baking Soda
- 1 tsp Cream of Tartar
- 1 pinch Salt
- 1 tsp of Cinnamon
- ½ tsp of Ginger
- Grated rind and juice of 1 Orange
- Grated rind and juice of 1 Lemon
- 1 medium cooking Apple, peeled, cored and chopped small
- 150g pitted Dates, halved (preferably bought in a re-sealable airtight packet, for moisture)
- 150g Kum Quat or Glace Cherries, halved
- 100g Chopped Walnuts
- 2 Eggs, beaten with 1 tsp of Vanilla
- 4 tbsps of Maple or Golden Syrup
- 100ml Oil (50ml of Olive Oil & 50ml of Sunflower Oil)
- Milk (if needed)

Go:

1. Grease a 2 litre pudding basin or 2 x 1 litre pudding basins.
2. In a bowl stir together breadcrumbs, flour, baking soda, cream of tartar, sugar, cinnamon, and ginger, grated rind of orange and lemon and salt.
3. In another bowl stir together the apple, dates, Kum Quat or glace cherries, walnuts, eggs, syrup, oil and juice.
4. Carefully fold the flour mixture into the fruits mixture and stir well. At this stage add a touch of milk to gain right

consistency. The mixture should not be too dry or too runny.

5. Spoon into the basin(s). Tie double pleated foil on to the top of the basin(s). Place in boiling water and boil for 2 - 2½ hours.

Bon appetit!



Corfu Weather Statistics

Read more at:

http://www.wunderground.com/history/airport/LGKR/2013/9/1/MonthlyHistory.html?req_city=NA&req_state=NA&req_statename=NA#PFq1VRYHlbugcTGf.99



| | Max | Avg | Min |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|---------|
| Temperature | | | |
| Max Temperature | 27 °C | 20 °C | 14 °C |
| Mean Temperature | 21 °C | 16 °C | 10 °C |
| Min Temperature | 18 °C | 12 °C | 3 °C |
| Degree Days | | | |
| Heating Degree Days (base 65) | 16 | 5 | 0 |
| Cooling Degree Days (base 65) | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Growing Degree Days (base 50) | 19 | 11 | 0 |
| Dew Point | | | |
| Dew Point | 18 °C | 12 °C | 3 °C |
| Precipitation | | | |
| Precipitation | 19.1 mm | 3.1 mm | 0.0 mm |
| Snowdepth - - - - | | | |
| Wind | | | |
| Wind | 222 km/h | 10 km/h | 0 km/h |
| Gust Wind | 84 km/h | 46 km/h | 26 km/h |
| Sea Level Pressure | 1027 hPa | 1013 hPa | 998 hPa |

The Paleokastritsa Monastery

AN EXTRACT
by Aleko Damaskinos

(From the booklet "Rock of Ages" by the late John Forte M.B.E who had asked me many times to post this.

I do this now in memory of a very dear friend of mine)

The Monastery was built in the year 1228 because an icon was found on the then uninhabited promontory upon which the local citizens of Paleohora built a church.

There is no actual documentary evidence to support this date but the following facts are significant :

Venice after the Fourth Crusade (which resulted in the fall of Constantinople) was not strong enough to consolidate her gains and communications and after 1210 she was obliged to allow Michael Angelos, Despot of Epirus to look after her interests on Corfu

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONASTERY

The Monastery consists of a group of buildings on two tiers within a walled courtyard.

Outside the courtyard stretches a kitchen garden of about one acre and across the way is the old nunnery now occupied by female domestic staff, erroneously referred to as nuns!) which leads to a farm and the monks' burial ground.

The main steps lead to a square, in the centre of which stands the Church surrounded by twelve monk's cells and the Abbot's quarters and gardens.

Attached to the Church is an impressive belfry and a nearby wishing well.

ICONS

The Church like the majority of

Corfu Churches is built with a tiled wooden roof and flat (not domed) ceiling dating from 1722 when it was reconstructed.

It is a single-naïve Basilica without any architectural pretences.

Nearly all of the 80 icons and paintings are of Cretan art dating from the 15th to the 18th century, notable exceptions being two very large paintings hanging on either side of the women's gallery by the Corfiot Demetrios Foscalis, dated 1703.

Each depict four scenes from Genesis, the one on the South wall portraying the Creation of the World and the one on the North wall shows Adam and Eve being evicted from the garden of Eden.

Another notable exception is a beautiful icon of All Saints hanging over the Northern wall, the work of another Corfiot, George Chryoloras, dated 1752.

Over the Metropolitan's Throne there is an icon of the Virgin with hands crossed on her breast. There is no signature, but it bears the date 144.

Nearby hangs the most treasured and most valuable icon, the famous Saint Mary of Paleocastritsa by another unknown iconographer, worked in solid silver relief.

This icon is deeply revered as a miracle worker and is adorned by a multitude of gold and silver votive offerings.

RELIGIOUS CELEBRATIONS

Services

Mass is celebrated on Sundays at 07.30 and also on principal Saint Days.

FEAST DAYS

There are two feast days which attract pilgrims and excursions from all over the island.

The first feast of the year is known as "Nea Paraskevi" (New Friday), being the first Friday after Easter.

This feast commemorates an ancient custom (ceased 200 years ago) when a procession from the village of Potamos would set on foot on Easter Monday morning arriving at Paleokastritsa late afternoon.

The labarums and icons of the procession were laid up in the Church until the following Friday when a "Te Deum" was held after which the procession would return to Potamos.

There is a silver lamp hanging in front of the Northern entrance, dedicated by the "Potamites" and bears the inscription "Prayer of the devout people of the village of Potamos".

The second major feast is held on the Virgin Mary's names-day on the 15th August when the villagers of nearby villages partake in the traditional ceremony of lighting the lamp of the Virgin with the new olive-oil of the season, from the new thick black olives which ripen many months earlier than all the others and are known as "Kalokerides" (Of the summer).

Both feasts attract hundreds of pilgrims and spectators and later there is a traditional "panigiri" (Village festival).

Visit the Church, especially adorned for the occasion to light a candle!

Later you can dance to a string band alternating between Greek music, old fashioned dance music and pop!

Hawkers are peddling trashy trinkets and of course the inevitable lambs on the spit and of course lashings of local wine.

Check out this months Property Feature



Saint Nicholas Villa
(P105) - €2,700,000

This amazing villa is located in Saint Spyridon on the north east coast of the island. The villa is 370 square metres and is set on a 5300 square metres plot. The villa consists of three floors. On the ground floor there is a double garage, a storage room, a sauna, a Jacuzzi, a games room with pool table, a gym, a lift and a double bedroom with bathroom and shower. On the first floor there is a double bedroom with en suite bathroom, a dining room and an open plan kitchen with seating area which has access to the outdoor verandah and infinity pool which with amazing views. The top floor consists of three bedrooms all of which have en suite bathrooms and two of which have Jacuzzi baths. All of the balconies have breath-taking views. The property is surrounded by amazing gardens which among others feature a children's playground, a heated pool, a Jacuzzi, a brick BBQ with gazebo and three outside dining areas. Finally there is a pathway which leads down to two private beaches one of which has its own private jetty. The property is designed to be as private as possible. Overall it is an amazing villa which provides every single thing someone would need. The villa was completed in 2005 and the selling price consists of everything in the house.



Please go to our property website for more details on this property and many other properties for sale:

www.propertycorfu.org

VISIT LYDIA'S RETREAT FOR AN ECONOMICAL HOLIDAY IN THE HEART OF CORFU



Lydia's Retreat:
From €350 (£300) per week all year

This sensibly-priced little apartment gem is ideal for four people, wishing to stay within a stone's throw of the unique plateia with its traditional taverna. It is situated in the centre of Corfu, just 15 minutes from the airport and 10 minutes from the golden beaches of Corfu's west coast.

This Corfu holiday apartment comprises one double bedroom, one twin-bedroom, an open-plan lounge and a well equipped kitchen/diner. Outside, secluded, is a charming patio with table and chairs, potted plants and flowers in a south-facing situation. This is a great retreat for breakfast or evening drinks. Beyond a low wall is a large expanse of open area, within the borders of the property.

The village of Agios Ioannis has slumbered for centuries under the olive and orange groves. It is now a centre for quiet family holidays. Some thirty years ago it was one of the first places on the island to be 'discovered' by visiting back-packers who set up the tents amid the olive groves in what is still known as 'The Cactus Hilton'. Some of those earliest visitors still return bringing their children or even their grandchildren, certain of the warm welcome that the residents extend to every tourist who comes to enjoy our pleasant climate and beautiful environment.

Its central location, just 15 minutes from the airport and in the very centre of the island, means that nothing is far away. For instance it is five minutes to Aqualand Water Park, a large water park with pools, slides and rides for all ages; 10 minutes to Corfu Golf Club (where we can obtain reductions on normal prices); the same distance to the fabulous sandy beaches on Corfu's west coast; and just 15 minutes to Corfu Town, the airport and ferry port.

Lydia's Apartment is available for bookings throughout the year. A reduction of 10% is offered for two-week reservations and a 10% reduction is applied for a repeat booking from a former guest. Please contact us for further information. To enquire contact Ocay Villas. Phone number: (0030) 2661058177, email: info@ocayvillascorfu.com, Website: www.ocayvillascorfu.com

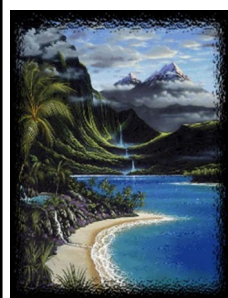


Nick the Clock's World

One day a man decided to re-tire...



He booked himself on a Caribbean cruise and proceeded to have the time of his life, that is, until the ship sank.



He soon found himself on an island with no other people, no supplies, nothing, only bananas and coconuts.

After about four months, he is lying on the beach one day when the most gorgeous woman he has ever seen rows up to the shore.



In disbelief, he asks, "Where did you come from? How did you get here?"

She replies, "I rowed over from the other side of the island where I landed when my cruise ship sank." "Amazing," he notes. "You were really lucky to have a row boat wash up with you."

"Oh, this thing?" explains the woman. "I made the boat out of some

raw material I found on the island. The oars were whittled from gum tree branches. I wove the bottom from palm tree branches, and the sides and stern came from an Eucalyptus tree."

"But, where did you get the tools?"

"Oh, that was no problem," replied the woman. "On the south side of the island, a very unusual stratum of alluvial rock is exposed. I found that if I fired it to a certain temperature in my kiln, it melted into ductile iron and I used that to make tools and used the tools to make the hardware."

The guy is stunned.

"Let's row over to my place," she says "and I'll give you a tour." So, after a short time of rowing, she soon docks the boat at a small wharf. As the man looks to shore, he nearly falls off the boat.

Before him is a long stone walk leading to a cabin and tree house.



While the woman ties up the row-boat with an expertly woven hemp rope, the man can only stare ahead, dumb struck. As they walk into the house, she says casually, "It's not much, but I call it home. Please sit down."

"Would you like a drink?"

"No! No thank you," the man blurts out, still dazed. "I can't take another drop of coconut juice."

"Oh, it's not coconut juice," winks

the woman. "I have a still. How would you like a Tropical Spritz?"



Trying to hide his continued amazement, the man accepts, and they sit down on her couch to talk. After they exchange their individual survival stories, the woman announces,

"I'm going to slip into something more comfortable. Would you like to take a shower and shave? There's a razor in the bathroom cabinet upstairs."

No longer questioning anything, the man goes upstairs into the bathroom. There, in the cabinet is a razor made from a piece of tortoise bone. Two shells honed to a hollow ground edge are fastened on to its end inside a swivel mechanism.

"This woman is amazing," he muses. "What's next?"

When he returns, she greets him wearing nothing but some small flowers on tiny vines, each strategically positioned, she smelled faintly of gardenias. She then beckons for him to sit down next to her.

"Tell me," she begins suggestively, slithering closer to him, "We've both been out here for many months. You must have been lonely. When was the last time you played around? She stares into his eyes.

He can't believe what he's hearing. "You mean..." he swallows excitedly as tears start to form in his eyes,

!
!
!

"You've built a Golf Course?"



The World of Simon

By
Simon Baddeley

'...setting the scene...'

Richard Pine loves Greece, lives in Corfu, and is someone whose friendship is a source of pride. His conversation is sparse, amusing, educated and to the point. This article, one of his regular 'Letters from Greece' to The Irish Times, chills me, piercing through my reflexive optimism about the capacity of Greek democracy and the Greeks to weather this relentless unending crisis. Now the experience of relative tranquillity looks more and more like that eerie peacefulness to be found in the eye of a storm. Comments on his article criticise Richard for lack of balance, for not providing evidence (in a short essay he actually refers to much evidence for his despondency) - but neither do those who comment, failing to offer any robust rebuttal of reflections based on Richard's acute knowledge and direct experience of Greece and its history as well as the sequence of events by which Weimar Germany, one of the most civilised states in Europe, popularly elected the demise of its own democracy...because these things are unthinkable they are not thought about, and for those who do not remember they are unimaginable...

'Many Greeks would prefer stability to democracy'

Under the present regime, the country as a whole is unsustainable



Protesters from the Communist-affiliated trade union PAME shout slogans during a rally yesterday against the government's plans for cutbacks in medical staff and hospitals in Athens. Photo John Kolesidis/Reuters

I would not be surprised or even shocked to see tanks rolling into Athens to signal the advent of a military junta. Apprehensive, but not surprised. It will almost certainly not reach that point, but citizen apathy at the poverty of political life, and despair at the continuing economic decline, are setting the scene for a potential takeover by forces including the military, police and far-right political parties such as the fascist Golden Dawn (GD). A coalition of such forces would offer not only stability - a one-party state or even a no-party state - but no-nonsense determination to deal with the conditions of a country which sees no way forward under present dispensations. A judicial investigator, attempting to assess the culpability of Golden Dawn MPs in relation to a recent murder and membership of what is in effect an illegal organisation, has stated that the party's aim is "the dissolution of the democratic system of government". That system

has been abused by successive governments to such an extent that its suspension would be welcome to many disillusioned Greeks. Meanwhile, the call by the union of reserve military personnel, for abolition of the government, repudiation of the bailout programme, the expulsion of illegal immigrants and the establishment of a government of national unity, chimes chillingly with GD's policies.

A coup in 1967 led to a military junta for seven years. Greece became a police state. One of its leaders declared categorically, "whoever is interested in human rights in Greece is a communist". So much for democracy. Its anti-democratic behaviour included disappearances and torturings, as reported in gruesome detail by this newspaper's Peter Murtagh in his book *The Rape of Greece*. But that was several years before Greece joined the EU in 1981. If it happened today, the EU would most likely expel Greece, which would certainly exit the euro zone, a step which would upset few Greeks. The bailout was (as the IMF admits) a mistaken panic measure to save the euro rather than saving Greece. Today, the people among whom I live don't give a damn about the euro, and they look enviously at the likely end to the Irish bailout.

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The World of Simon
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Today, the passivity of citizens, already exhausted by successive waves of austerity and degradation led by Brussels and Berlin, would reduce the likelihood of any meaningful opposition to military rule. Many Greeks, quite apart from the fascists, would agree that the prospect of stability and a dependable vision of the life to come is more important than democracy, and better than the life they currently lead. It would, nevertheless, be a police state. It is widely believed that the police have been infiltrated by GD (this is under investigation), thus creating a strong ideology and a threatening presence on the streets. A police state would be Europhobe, xenophobic, and brutally harsh on its opponents. A government spokesman recently said, "We have used up all the fat in the economy" - referring to Greece's

inability to reduce public finances any further to meet troika demands. With the fat has gone the elasticity and resilience of the man in the street in both financial and intellectual terms. It is unrealistic and unfair to compare Greek statistics with the EU norm, even with the similar Irish financial mess. Unemployment, the banking crisis, tax evasion and corruption are specifically Greek problems. Under the present regime (or lack of it) the country as a whole is unsustainable - politically, economically, socially, culturally and morally. A hardline government could be achieved by the expulsion of the existing middle-of-the-road cosy coalition of New Democracy and Pasok, the so-called socialists. The chief alternative is a coalition of the left (Syriza), the possibility of which has increased the rightist vote.

Public opinion has moved slightly away from GD. Parliament has voted to remove immunity from nine of its 18 members, and suspend state financial

support for GD as a political party. But current opinion polls still place GD with 7% of the national vote, down from 12% at its highest. This would still leave it with three more seats in parliament than it already holds. And it is not only politicians who are decrying the status of Greece. At a London conference in mid-October speakers referred to the risk Greece runs of becoming "a failed state" unless it addresses "ineffective governance and lack of public confidence". It was argued that "targeted constitutional correction and an internationally-sponsored programme of economic reform" is the only way to save Greece and the euro zone. Whether an attempted, failed coup would give the government a sufficient wake-up call is unlikely. Greece is a tragedy waiting to happen.

Whistleblower

By
Dr. Lionel Mann

Way back in the Fifties, at Hammersmith where Lonnie Donegan with his Skiffle Group was rocking the nation, informing us that his old man was a dustman and enquiring whether our chewing gum was losing its flavour when stuck on the bedpost overnight, I was teaching at nearby Latimer Foundation School.

The school had been established in 1492 in the crypt of St. Paul's Church, for the education of "six poor boys" by Edward Latimer, an eminent London businessman. Over the ages his successors proved

to have equal business acumen; pupil numbers increased and they emerged blinking into the sunlight to take over a nearby site. By the middle of the nineteenth century the foundation's funds were so great the Upper Latimer School, a boys' grammar school, Latimer Goldolphin School, a girls' grammar school, and Edmonton Latimer School, a primary school in that borough, were set up, but Latimer Foundation School survived to maintain its founder's intentions.

When I taught there there were just over three hundred boys aged from seven to fifteen in eight classes on the roll. It will be seen to have been that such was an anachronism in an age when uniformity is

sought. It also presented the interesting situation that, because most of the eleven-year-old pupils left upon gaining entry to grammar schools, there was a new intake of pupils for the senior forms. I never found out what criteria were used in selecting pupils, except that preference was given to relations of former pupils and there were plenty of those. There were no fees; all was free. Boys came from all over London for in those more-civilised times it was quite safe for even a seven-year-old, especially one wearing distinctive uniform, to travel unescorted by bus and Underground.

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Whistleblower

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At Hammersmith there was no need to cross any street between school and the tube station with its subway connections to bus stops.

Today's teachers would throw up their hands in horror at the size of our classes, forty-eight boys in each of the four junior ones and thirty in each of the seniors, but, in common with most other pursuits such as business, the arts and sciences, communal activity, education flourishes only in an orderly, organised, disciplined environment and L.F.S. was definitely orderly, organised and disciplined. As well as teaching English and Mathematics to my own class which varied from year to year, I taught Music throughout the school and trained the school choir.

At many schools Music teachers are treated with contempt, but here pupils and staff alike made my life very pleasant. When on my second day a twelve-year-old came up to me in the playground asking, "Sir, why didn't Brahms make more use of the great tune in the Fourth Movement of the First Symphony?" I realised that I had come to somewhere rather special.

In my eleven-year-old class the son of a Jewish businessman and the son of an Arab diplomat, both good scholars, shared a double desk. Although they could never meet outside school they were firm friends, their link a fanatical interest in civil aviation. The school lay under the flightpath of Heathrow and at every break the pair would huddle in a corner of the playground, oblivious of the mayhem around them, scanning the endless succession of passing aircraft, checking the time on their watches, consulting and making entries in notebooks; they seemed to know the flight number, its origin or destina-

tion, type of every one. It would not have surprised me had they known the pilots' names!

Their parents also conversed affably when they met at the school, but they would never leave together. It is horrible to think that today the pair may be shooting at each other, trying to kill. How utterly evil are politicians with their pernicious 'divide and rule' policies.

Another year I had charge of the seven-year-olds. How to cope with forty-eight? I divided them into twelve groups with the twelve brightest boys as group leaders. We had excellent textbooks and after teaching each new concept I was able to give each group individual attention at least three times a week for both English and Maths. Any leader who experienced difficulty would soon have my help by writing his group number on the blackboard. On alternate days when the boys' homework was English I took their Maths workbooks home for marking and the other way round on the other days so keeping an eye on each pupil's progress. The system worked perfectly and won the Head's commendation. A prestigious music job took me away the next year, but I used a similar system, modified as required at all my future teaching posts.

Every class elected a Form Captain at the beginning of each year. That of those little ones was a bright imp named Terry. One day soon after the start of the second term I was leaving the room to await the call to lunch when I saw Terry blowing on a tiny plastic whistle from a Christmas cracker and then sucking it back into his mouth to be pushed out again with his tongue and blown once more.

"Take care that you don't swallow that, Terry," I warned.

Hardly had I seated myself in the staffroom than there came a knock

on the door.

Another little one was admitted. "Please, sir, Terry has swallowed his whistle."

Across the road immediately opposite the school was a hospital. I took Terry there and sat with him whilst the Head phoned the boy's mother. Terry was quite calm and regarded being X-rayed as an interesting adventure. His mother arrived and I went back to the school for hunch.

Afternoon school had just started when Terry returned, led in by his mother. "Here you are, Mr. Mann, you're welcome to the little horror. The wretched whistle's plastic so it didn't show up on X-ray. Anyway it's so small that the doctors say that it will just pass through the usual way and he's sure he didn't breath it into his lungs. If he has any pain just take him back and call me." She left, Terry rather sheepishly went to his place and the lesson continued.

About a half-hour later a ten-year-old from the Deputy Head's class knocked and entered. "Sir, Mr. Wikinson is taking us out for football in the playground. He wants to know if he may borrow your built-in referee."

Peals of shrill laughter rocked the room. Latimer Foundation School was always a very happy place.

Some twenty years later I was guest organist for Sunday morning service at a the venerable old church in a picturesque Sussex village. After the service a couple came to me, introducing themselves again as Terry's parents. Both Terry and his older brother, whom I had also taught, were now teachers and already headmasters. I regret that I forgot to ask if Terry called his pupils to their classes by blowing a whistle.