

The Agiot

16th Edition

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MUSIC WEEK SEPTEMBER 09



On the 7th SEPTEMBER 2009 the sixth annual Agios Ioannis Music Week is taking place in our village, at the location of the New Cactus Hilton.

We are very excited at the prospect of welcoming the Dylan Project for the climax of this musicfest, on the Saturday, 12th September. Ticket sales are imminent and the Agiot will be publishing details shortly, as will the Corfiot magazine. An attendance of 1000 is hoped for, there would no doubt be many more if we had the capacity—a situation we are already reviewing for 2010.

There will be a number of outlets across the island for the sale of tickets, details will follow in this on-line magazine. The price of each ticket will be 20 Euros for the Saturday night, but a special Earlybird ticket will

be available, again details to follow. Orders will be possible on-line.

Food and refreshments will be sold on this day at the venue.

Fairport Convention was formed in 1967, in suburban north London. The group gained its name from a house named Fairport, family home of rhythm guitarist Simon Nicol, where the band rehearsed. By 1969, with regular work at several underground venues, a record contract, and four albums under their belt, the band was inventing its signature 'folk-rock' sound, a hybrid of imaginative revivals of traditional material with modern instrumentation and rhythms. The next LP, *Liege & Lief*, was a classic, arguably Fairport Convention's finest album, and one which established British folk-rock as a distinct and influential genre. Critics say that it marked the transition of the band from one that used folk music as an influence on their sound, into a group that specialised in reinterpreting traditional English music, and described the

album 'one of the monumentally great records of the last 40 years.' In 2006 *Liege & Lief* was voted 'Best Folk Album Ever' by Radio 2 listeners, and in the same year it was awarded a Gold Disc for continuing sales.

Fairport Convention is still one of the busiest bands around. The current line-up of Simon Nicol (lead vocal, rhythm and electric guitars), Dave Pegg (backing vocals, bass guitar, and mandolin), Ric Sanders (violin), Chris Leslie (lead vocal, fiddle, bouzouki, and mandolin) and Gerry Conway (percussion and drums) still packs venues on its frequent tours. Each year starts with Fairport covering the length and breadth of Britain on its Winter Tour. In August, the band stages Fairport's Cropredy Convention music festival in Oxfordshire. Most years, there is a tour in the USA and Canada and UK tours by the Fairport Acoustic line-up and by spin-off band The Dylan Project. It is said that 'Fairport did for real ale what the Grateful Dead did for LSD.'

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Music Week September 09

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The line-up for the Agios Ioannis Music Week is expected to be Simon Nicol, Dave Pegg and Gerry Conway from Fairport Convention, joined by Steve Gibbons and PJ Wright, who together with Dave Pegg form the trio Dylan Project.

Born in 1950 and brought up in North London, Simon Nicol was a founding member of Fairport Convention. He has been the band's main guitarist and lead singer since 1975. He has also released two solo albums and has toured with a number of well-known artists, including Art Garfunkel. Born in Birmingham in 1947, Dave Pegg joined Fairport Convention in 1969, after having been involved in the vibrant local rock scene throughout the 60s. In 1980, he joined Jethro Tull as bass player and spent 15 years with the band (when Fairport Convention toured the USA with Jethro Tull, Peggy had to play bass twice every night!). Dave has also co-organised Fairport's Cropredy festival since the early 1980s. From small beginnings, it has grown into a major event that attracts 20,000 fans each August. He is also an accomplished mandolin player.

Born in 1947 and brought up in London, percussionist Gerry Conway joined Fairport Convention in 1998. He played with Cat Stevens for six years, touring all over the world, and also spent a year on the road with Jethro Tull. His session credits include Paul McCartney, Steeleye Span and Ralph McTell. Steve Gibbons has been playing with rock bands since 1960, and formed the Steve Gibbons Band in 1971. The band worked the pub and club circuits until 1975 when they were spotted by Pete Townshend of The Who. They subsequently toured with The Who in

Britain, Europe and the USA, and continue to tour in their own right today. At the end of the 1990s, Gibbons formed the trio Dylan Project, innovatively using fretless bass, guitars, accordion and piano to perform classic Dylan songs, as well as his own material. PJ Wright is best known as guitarist and lead vocalist with Little Johnny England, slide and pedal steel guitarist with The Dylan Project and sideman with Steve Gibbons. He is also a talented songwriter, with an ability to blend a poetic sensibility with an understanding of traditional song. He has released a solo album, Hedge of Sound, and he supported Fairport Convention on their 2006 Winter Tour.

In conjunction with the main Agios Ioannis concert, the musicians plan to perform in various combinations at other localities on the island during their visit. Referring to promotional aspects, Philip Mawson said: 'We are hoping to set up an interview with band members, and a CD will be distributed to Corfu/Greek radio stations. In principle, TV rights and a sensibly priced DVD of the Festival could be used to further future interest. There is so much scope, and with the right enthusiasm and interest this event could become a household name in the music world akin to a mini-Glastonbury. It will be, I trust, a little more controlled but it should provide an opportunity for those involved in the Corfu tourism business and local entrepreneurs to flourish, and as a result it may be considered another aspect of eco-tourism which will boost not only the economy of Corfu but the national one.' Holiday companies will be encouraged to offer packages based around the event, and the new expanded EasyJet services, now flying from Manchester and Bristol, will allow individual travellers ac-

cess to the Festival.

This year's Music Week is the sixth to take place at this inland village close to the Aqualand Water Park. To date, the event has featured three concerts of diverse music, ranging from classical recitals by organist Lionel Mann and flautist Elke Hornig to evenings of folk and pop with Jim Knight, Richie Henderson, and Russ Bartlett and the Good Old Boys. Given an anticipated audience of over a thousand for the Fairport gig, a new open-air venue will be used instead of Villa Theodora. Blessed neither with proximity to the beach nor spectacular surroundings, Agios Ioannis seems an unlikely venue for an event which will attract a new category of visitors to the island - and not those in search of a cheap package of sea, sun and booze. But in fact, the village was one of the very first to cater for tourists; in the early sixties, young 'hippies' would pitch their tents in the olive groves near the square, and this area is still referred to as the 'Cactus Hilton'.

Soon the old mansion was converted into a Youth Hostel, while some of the cottages along the main street became holiday apartments. More recently, a Dutch cycling company moved in, attracting from April to October family groups who enjoy the novelty of cycling up and down the hills that their homeland lacks. A further ingredient went into the Agios Ioannis tourism cocktail with the conversion of an edge-of-village ruin into the luxurious Villa Theodora, venue to date for the Music Week, which was the brainchild of English/Greek owners Paul and Lula. Unlike at Pelekas - another 'touristic' inland village - development has hardly changed the appearance of the settlement, and summer visitors blend with the local scene.

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Music Week September 09
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Kostas Taverna - 100 years old and now run by the third generation of the family - is the sole facility in the village centre and combines the character of a traditional kafenion with home-made local and international cuisine.

As illustrious as our new friends are, we must never forget our other musicians and friends, whose loyalty, friendship and continued support is the backbone of our dream.

Richie Henderson [the Popmaster] is back by popular demand for his third consecutive appearance. He is a true AGIOT, having been coming here since 1742. It is not known at present whether he will have his 'own night' or be appearing alongside the Dylan Project. Look out for the March Newsletter for a personal message from Richie.

Lionel Mann and Elke Hornig are expected to provide some cultural diversity on organ and flute. Their evening is likely to be Tuesday the 8th of September.

There may in addition be some musical surprises but you won't know unless you come, as nothing will be pre-advertised.

The Tuesday and Thursday performances will include a buffet as per normal. Prices this year will be 18.50 Euros inclusive.

A Special 'all events ticket will also become available.

An event of this size and ambition cannot occur without a useful team, so a special thank you is in order for the following people [in no particular order] for their various contributions, which are ongoing in many cases. This list of supporters is likely to grow:-

Jackie Dickinson, who is the Event Manager. Contact details will be published in March for her and other relevant participants.

Hilary Whitton-Paipeti for her monthly articles in the Corfiot.

Phil and Liam Mawson, Phil for his humanity and his original introduction of Dave Pegg and friends. Liam is to set up a dedicated website for this year's bash.

Barry and Stella Knight, for the free and substantial assistance they afford in catering and organization.

Rich and Karen Quilter for super logistical support and catering.

AJS for brow-beating the North of the island into submission.

Lula for covering so much ground in that amazing and truly island manner.

Ron Woolven for his love and interest, and active participation with the musicians and transport arrangements.

Janet and Lionel at Ocay for constant effort.

Kristos Angelis for his pure enthusiasm for the event.

Jo Sperling for the T-shirts

Apologies if anybody has been omitted but it will be rectified down the weeks.

So, keep tuned in and watch this space.

Village News

By Dr. Lionel Mann
Contributing Editor

Already the end of winter is in sight with white blossom appearing on the plum trees and the large mimosa in Villa Theodora garden presenting a blaze of golden bloom. There is never a time on the island when no flowers are showing, but now the brave little vanguard of the magnificent spring explosion is tentatively peering out.

Too, the carnival season is upon us. This year Easter, and therefore also Lent, is early. We enjoy three

carnivals - Corfiots never do things by halves! These carnivals take place on the three Sundays immediately preceding the beginning of Lent on Clean Monday, the Orthodox Church's equivalent of Shrove Tuesday (except that we chew squid instead of pancakes). The first carnival is scheduled for 15th February, the second for 22nd and the third, really big one, for the 1st March. All the bands take part; there are numerous floats; interspersed with these are squads of marching girls and groups of dancers in fancy dress.. Many of the spectators are

also wearing exotic garments. Town goes quite wild; it's great fun!

The roads from Town are still in a chaos of works with much delay to traffic, but hopefully that means that they will be sorted by the beginning of the holiday season. When passing one observes a single operative working, watched and advised by five or six others. It seems to improve neither the quality nor pace of working.

The facelift of the taverna interior is proceeding apace. It is acquiring a very attractive décor at the hands of Nikos, assisted from time to time by Alfie when he can spare the time from pilfering cats' food and chewing their plastic plates.

WITH THE MONKS AT MOUNT ATHOS

Part 2
By Paul Mc Govern
Editor

Brother David was set to meet with Monk-Priest Ephraim after services on the Saturday morning. These started at 5.00A.M. this day, finishing by around eight, yet we were a little later on parade. He described the interior of the church as breathtakingly beautiful in the dawn light. A simple pilgrim's breakfast was on offer, taken in a separate room from the holy men.

Ephraim set him to work washing and dusting off all the pews in the church. He was given a coffee, but this had to be consumed outside. David was happy to finish the last of the cleaning before getting into a long chat with the Father, who was interested to discuss David's occupation as a psychologist. It soon became apparent that this employment did not meet the priest's approval. 'Your methods do not attend to the soul', Ephraim clearly regarded the science of psychology as the devil's spawn.



"Within Grasp"

'Where is Paul?' he asked. 'Oh, he's contemplating'. 'Good, work is good and so is contemplation' Really I was just off for a walk. Was I letting the priest down, my conscience questioned me abed? Even so, I took consolation from the

priest's words the previous night, 'we each have the freedom of choice, as long as we choose good' Thus absolved I was off through the gates as the sun poked his head; to walk out for the day on an unknown path, with no food-getting really religious now – but with enough water. Five hours outward, then the return should get me home before they bolt the gates.

The hick town is full of building work; it's hard to navigate out of the debris in the lanes, emerging at last into the beautiful yet sad countryside. A staff is needed and soon I chance upon such a companion. After a while a mountain stream appears tumbling from a gully of rocks high above. Under an overhang a chilly strip for my toilette. Why is it always so good to be alone with nature? After a while it's time to move on, eastwards towards the coastal Monastery of Iviron. I can look down on its majesty from above-it doesn't look that far, yet the winding deserted lanes never seem to draw me any closer. By the clock I figure its time to turn around, when it is so tantalizingly close, teasing me with its mystery by the blue sea.

On the way back I see many homesteads amongst the wooded hills, several with work in progress. These are inhabited mostly by hermit monks. Some are very orderly and pretty [the houses that is], yet an uneasy feeling pervades. What is missing? Of course, no women, no children. A house is not a home in these circumstances; at least not when every one of those houses has the same loneliness. Even the country is sad. Hardly a bird to be seen or heard, incredible for such a wild



"Real Workers"

and wooded landscape. It's getting dark so I'm relieved to reach Karyes before night falls. Three monks I'd watched at dawn pushing impossible loads in barrows up runways to the top of new clerical offices, were falling into their truck, no doubt headed for a cold shower and meal before a long haul of prayers, bed, then up again at three in the morning for Sunday services. This does not happen in the Anglican Church, Corfu. Straight to our cell and straight into bed, tired but content. David comes back from dinner soon afterwards. He did not enjoy his meal today as he was surrounded by, er, enthusiastic diners. We swapped our tales of the day until he went off for a bit more praying – his keenness is worrying. But it is not long before he's back and we start to settle for the night.

Knock, knock. It's Father Ephraim, he has come to visit, or maybe check the truth of David's explanation that I am fatigued. He perches on David's bed – my friend is on the spare – and talks to us for a long, long time. He seems lonely, especially for his mother-tongue. He talks of his religion, his absolute faith in the notions of God and the Devil, his conviction that all are damned for Hell who do not follow the only true path; Greek Orthodoxy.

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With the Monks at Mount Athos
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“Orders”

The Roman Catholics got it all wrong in the translation of the original Greek to Latin, he then befuzzles us with a technical explanation of the Holy Trinity. So, we learn we are all Heretics, and must recant to be admitted above. ‘What happens if I die in this bed right now?’ I enquire. ‘Am I doomed?’ He looks thoughtful for a moment. ‘Well’, he opines, ‘I could perform an emergency Baptism I suppose’.

Finally he leaves and we are left to contemplate our fate. Sleep. A bell is clanging very loudly in the corridor outside our room. The Monks are keen to make us earn our bread. It is three o’clock and time for the Sunday service. We

tarry as long as we may. There is no truth in the a rumour that the water jug has been tampered with overnight, but it is a long way for a pee down the stone corridors to the bathroom, which, incidentally, has cold running water only.

Shoes located in the corridor, where they must stay whilst we sleep, and we are off for another round of praying. Then a simple breakfast which tastes delicious after 40 hours of self-imposed fasting. We have a last introduction to the Holiest of Relics with our Monk-Priest friend. A brief farewell and a hug, and we are away to our bus, the small port, the escape from this weird yet wonderful land. It seems as if we have been here for months, not a few days.



“The Cutthroat”

THE MARINA

Many people on the island have concerns over the architecture and construction of the new Marina in the old town. Here is the link for any interested in pursuing such interest. Press down ‘Ctrl’ key and click on link.

http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/corfu_old_port_marina

CORFU WEATHER - STATISTICS

Here is a snapshot of the weather experienced on the island during January of this year.

214.6mm of rain fell

There was rain on 22 days of the month.

In 2008 the hottest temperature was recorded on 15th August; 37.1 celsius

The coldest was -0.9 c on the 18th February.

In 2008 the most rain fell on the 21st December, a very puddly 183.2 mm

Aunty Lula’s Love-bites

Leek and Cheese Crepes

Ingredients

(makes about 8)

Pancakes:

- 100g plain flour
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 eggs
- 300 ml milk

Filling:

- 400g butter
- 700g leeks (trimmed and chopped)
- 2 garlic cloves (peeled and crushed)
- 225g Greek Mizithra crumbled
- 100g Edam cheese
- Salt, pepper
- Oil for frying

Go:

To make the pancakes: place flour, salt, eggs and milk into a food processor or liquidiser.

To cook the pancakes: Heat a little oil in a 20cm (about) pan and swirl enough batter over to thinly cover the base of the pan. Cook for 1 minute until lightly golden.

Pre-heat oven to 180°C.

To make the filling: Melt 25g of the butter in a frying pan, add the

leeks and garlic and cook until tender. Stir in the cheeses and cook until the Edam melts. Add seasoning.

Divide the filling between pancakes. Fold pancakes in half and half again to make a cornet shape. Arrange in a shallow dish, dot with remaining butter and bake for 10–15 minutes until piping hot and golden.

Bon appetite!

Local News: [TEMPLONI LANDFILL]

There has been much controversy raging on for what seems like years, concerning the Landfill at Temploni, Corfu.

Matters reached a head recently - there may be many more heads to reach before this saga finishes - after picketing by local residents and other interested parties.

Police intervention occurred in the form of the arrests of fourteen

people, after the due warrants were obtained. The Police Chief spoke to local residents, explaining that the obstruction of the access to the landfill formed a criminal offence and that they were liable to prosecution. The people living close to this over-extended and potentially dangerous place are, understandably, not happy with their lot. Yet neither are the folk from other areas

whose rubbish continues to pile up uncollected from the street sides. All of this is connected with the huge row down south, with plans afoot for a new dumping ground at Lefkimmi.

The Supervisor of Public Health at the Prefecture is aware of the risks to public health from the accumulation of rubbish on the streets of Corfu.

News From the North

By Uncle Bulgaria
Contributing Editor

Hi all Look at this, February already, another month or so and hopefully the tourists will be on their way. However. Every one up here is asking, What sort of a season are we going to have?

Well we all know us Brits, 2 weeks summer holiday is a religion, I think we will be almost as busy as usual, people wise, but, I think there will be a lot of in studio/apartment cooking as opposed to going out to restaurants.

When people do go out especially with kids, it will be "Elo Cheapo" fast food. Drinks will be cheapest large beer and 2 glasses, and kids will be one pop and 3 straws.

Credit cards that are not already maxed out, WILL be maxed out by the time they go home BUT, the holiday will still have been had. Hey! Were Brits!!!

Up the North here the ongoing saga with the new drainage system is still underway, BUT (my favourite word) I am shocked, gob smacked even, despite leaving the

roads in a dangerous state due to not bothering to tarmac yet, They are pushing forward in leaps and bounds. Who knows maybe there is hope here in the North that road chaos will be avoided for the season. (Ho Ho) Good for the local De'mos well done.

I see TIM, the owner of Island Radio which has been off air for some weeks, (Due to a lightning strike) is back from his travels, (he seems to have been gone all winter), and will be back on the air this month, this will be good news for the North end of the Island as it is full of chat and they even play some 50s, 60s music for us old farts on a Sunday morning. I wait to see if the frequency will be the same. The good old rumour mill sez it wont. Any way I am sure I will bump into him on one of my drunken, debauched nights out in Rhoda.

Like most of us I like to have a winter project, and I am translating a handwritten recipe book starting about 150 years ago. I am cooking every recipe and putting it all with photos into modern book form.

What fun, phrases like "Sprinkle thickly with VERUICELLA" come up. What the hell is that? It is not the obvious one that springs to mind, ie. Vermicelli, and despite heavy internet research it's a no go. Any ideas out there please? I am, and always will be Obnoxious Al.

Correction

For those keen observers amongst you, you will have noticed the error in part one of Mt. Athos last month. Agios Oros is of course on the Eastern peninsula and not the middle finger as reported.

This has been corrected now.

Our apologies.

Our House And Other Ruins

By Rich and Karen
The Continentals!



Well, where do we start? 2005 it was and a chance conversation, one cold, wet UK winter day with a work colleague, gave us a glimpse of a sunnier land surrounded by brilliant blue sea and sky, to bring colour to ones face and heart at the lowest of times. Not something to be easily forgotten so, the following August break saw us enjoying a holiday in Agios Ioannis, basking in the sun and spending some of the time exploring old ruins, new builds and pieces of land around the island of Corfu with some new acquaintances, soon to become close friends.

We saw many tempting places but we had a limited budget and the views we



loved we couldn't afford and then, there it was, our hidden "Gem". It seemed the obvious way to go as there was or could be a real view and, as a very old, dilapidated ruin it shouldn't cost too much. We talked long and hard about it, counted our pennies and finally, reached a decision to buy in October 2005. The Gem, as it was being called by now, finally became ours in February 2006.

At Easter we came over and hav-

ing cut the rusted old wire holding rotting doors together, we gingerly stepped into our entrance hall for the first time. It was one of those moments which you will never forget, as a lump forms in the back of your throat and tears are perilously close, well for me anyway! There was this thought, I think, in both our minds, that it was almost unreal, had we really done this, made this momentous decision, was it the right one?!



We had a pile of roof tiles spare; we thought we might need those! Mind you the roof had kept much of the house dry for many years. The property was actually made up of two typical, very old village houses with a barn beneath and with one living room above. Many years before, one family had taken both places and joined them together at the front. It had now stood empty for at least fifty odd years and was being shared by the local animals, bats, cats, pine martens, house martins, scorpions and of course, spiders.

There were many hurdles to be overcome and I think the fact that we had committed ourselves to the house purchase (some were already saying we should be!) did help us to keep going when yet another stumbling block got in our way, as we would lose money which we were determined wasn't going to happen!!



The first major problem suddenly loomed when the land that we had thought of as ours, well it was on the topography that



came with the purchase of the house wasn't it, suddenly wasn't! Two pieces near the house belonged to different people, one was shared by three locals whose soak away it was and that had to be negotiated first. Then the over-grown lemon and orange trees (all two of them) belonged to an elderly village man, who would, apparently expect rights to come and sit with his trees, as was his way, over a proposed patio and pathways belonging to us! Can you imagine, "Kalimera Mr.Lemon Tree man", as you lie, peacefully in the next to nothing? Not quite what we wanted, delightful though he may be!? These proved to be the most expensive two trees in the whole of Corfu, we believe! Not only did it take a lot to prise these trees from our little old man, it also lead to subsequent sellers saying, "Pay me what you paid him!" Not ideal when you are forced into buying other bits along the way!

Patient negotiation prevailed, thank god for a Greek speaker on our side! As we were back at work in the UK we had organised Power of Attorney so that Lula could act on



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Our House and Other Ruins
Continued from Page 7

our behalf for buying, selling, electricity, telephone and water; very necessary if you are not on hand to sort this out for yourself. Lula struggled to bring family members together long enough to agree and sign the necessary paper work, no mean thing in Corfu!

Then we discovered that we needed to get other pieces of land, which we only had right of access over at present. We really didn't want to test the theory as to whether this access was for one and half metres for a donkey or two metres for a car, if the owners decided to be awkward! It was important to ensure we could have proper access to our house on the lower levels below us, as only a donkey could get through to our front door! This is when one or two of the villagers thought they had the golden goose who could lay the golden egg! Thank you Mr. Lemon Tree man! So more negotiation by Lula and finally, we owned nearly all our approach! It was necessary to find the money for these pieces of extra land but we knew it had to be done to achieve what we ultimately wanted.

Having got access properly to the property we could now begin to work out how to preserve what we could while producing a home which was comfortable with the mod cons we would need. I had always wanted to design my own house (here was my chance) and our son Luke is also creatively inclined and gradually, ideas were discussed, knocked backwards and forwards between the three of us, we had a local engineer draw the first plan to give us some idea how the different levels worked within the framework of the house and I began to draw.

It was quite a challenge to work within the constraints of an existing framework. Where do you fit toilets in a house that has never had them, let alone lighting and heating? Lula and Paul began to get the team together, work out costings for the renovation of the Gem. Having agreed a figure, deposits of cash amounts at strategic periods of time during the coming year were organised and my summer holiday was spent completing drawings in Agios Ioannis. The mechanics approved the plans and we had to leave for the UK again. Luckily, with the

technology we have these days we were able to talk regularly with Paul and Lula over the internet (Skype) and as queries arose we could deal with them quickly with scanned plans scurrying from the UK to Corfu to try and help the builders see what we were after. Everything was dropping into place and the build got under way in October 2006 as the "A team" finished another job and were finally "ours and The Gem's".

It was about to become a reality and take over our waking thoughts as well as our dreams; I suspect also, Lula's, Paul's and maybe the builders' too, may be their nightmares too!?



Rich and Karen
(Continued next month)

Obituaries

David Jack Smith



David passed away on or about the 6th of February, 2009, as reported

here in our News section a few days ago. He was 58. He died alone in his apartment in Maidstone, Kent, after police were alerted to his non-communication, and the agitated state of his cat, mewing at the door.

He had been poorly for several years and was diagnosed with emphysema, amongst other ailments. He was much-loved by a wide circle of friends, who appreciated his great talent for writing and song-writing, his carpentry skills, his love and kindness towards animals, his keen and dry wit.

David leaves a brother, Miles, in Australia and a thousand smiles. David had lived in Agios Ioannis between 2002 and 2006.

Ruth Connell

It is with sadness we report the passing of English teacher Ruth Connell, inhabitant of this island for several years, following a stroke. Anybody at her funeral at the British Cemetery, could not have been unaffected by the droves of her young Greek students in tears. Condolences to Jim, her husband.

APHRODITE FOR TOTAL RELAXATION



A new and special place is available for holiday renting through Ocayholidays this summer.

Villa Aphrodite lies on the borders of Kokkini and Agios Ioannis, exactly two miles into the hills from the plateia of Agios Ioannis. The marvel of this deceptive building is the blanket of peace, solitude and serenity which descends upon anybody lucky enough to stay, and wander into the acre of olives, gaze towards the cliffs of Ermones in the west.

We are proud of the villas we let out, which include Theodora, Per-

sephone, and Rosemary, and we are lucky to have many returnees who seem to share this view, but we are now blessed with more fortune still with the addition of Aphrodite.



There is a good track, partly surfaced, leading up from the Ropa valley road below, the villa nestles aloft its grove overlooking the mountains and sea in the distance. Nearby is a listed Chapel, used once a year for private services. A car or other transport is advisable, unless your intention is to close off the outside world completely.

This 'Tardis' sleeps eight people, with two double bedrooms downstairs, a Family Gallery bedroom upstairs, with a double and two singles. There are two shower-rooms, one is en-suite. Air-conditioning is fitted.

The kitchen is equipped, including washing-machine for example, there is a cosy fireplace with hearth. Hopefully, you won't need it.

Outside is a spacious verandah for dining and relaxing, and a few short steps to your right is the 32 square metre pool, currently under construction, due for completion by June 09.

If you are interested in sampling this truly unique location we recommend you go to www.corfuvillas.org and check out the availability, before it goes.



BARGAIN BASEMENT PRICES FOR BUYERS IN CORFU LICENSED ESTATE AGENTS FOR YOUR PROTECTION

Ironically, the Global Economic Trough which is affecting us has engendered a flipside on our verdant island.

Before the reality of this financial correction permeated into our Corfu, prices being asked for new and old properties alike were creeping – and not always only creeping-ever higher.

But things are changing, and at that fairly rapidly. Although some islanders are still stubbornly holding out for 'top dollar' - and indeed some can afford to - there is a growing realization that if there is a genuine desire to sell, something must give i.e. the PRICE.

So we now have a situation whereby truly exceptional opportunities are appearing on the market, especially amongst the lower-priced properties.

Several character cottages in character villages are well worth the effort in exploring and appear here on our

'featured property' section. Some need renovation works before they can be inhabited, yet some others are ready to live in, albeit they require a certain amount of work to bring them up to scratch.



We can show you a selection of such opportunities when you come over, and lead you through the process to secure the property in your name. Each step of the way we will explain procedures and more importantly costs. When you have completed pur-

chased we can handle any rebuilding, renovation or minor works which may be required.

The most important aspect for us is to retain what we already have, a sound reputation in an Island-wide industry that does not always give precedence to its customers. We do not wish this to sound boastful, we merely wish to impress on prospective buyers the importance of obtaining references from any firms, such as ourselves, BEFORE enlisting their services.

With this in mind we encourage you to take up references with our existing customers to find out what other people have thought of the way we operate. It always amazes us how few people take a simple step such as this, which could save disappointment and heartache along the way.

We have been building and rebuilding in Corfu since 1990.

Economy

Last week saw some well needed respite and recovery for Sterling over the recently mighty Euro. The landmark events were of course the interest rate decisions on Thursday afternoon, and what seemed like for once in a long time there were absolutely no shocks. So expected was the 50 basis point cut from the B of E and the all hold firm by the

ECB that currency traders looked beyond the immediate potentially negative effects of a base rate cut and instead viewed this as a positive move coming for the British economy. Coupled with this what can only be said to be disastrous data from Germany where industrial output plummeted by 4.6% in December, the worst slide in like for like information since 1989 then we can begin to see why Sterling had such a good week. Indeed it may well continue to do so for part

of this week to come. What will be seen as concerning for Sterling are the Inflation and Unemployment reports on Wednesday and indeed the EZ GDP release on Friday. Whilst it is tempting for those looking to buy euros from Sterling to punt on last weeks trends continuing, if the need for the currency is still some time off then utilising a forward time option under current market conditions would certainly seem a calculated move.

THE SECRET SERVICE

By Dr. Lionel Mann
Contributing Editor

One evening after I had seen my boarders to bed I was in my study dealing with outstanding mail when I received a telephone call from the vicar of a small parish church in the wilds of deepest, darkest Suffolk. He apologized for the short notice but wanted to know if my school choir would sing Matins at his church on Sunday about four weeks ahead. Rather intriguingly he said that, apart from discussing the music, he could not tell me the reason that he wanted us to visit. Even more interestingly he said that parents, who often attended when our choir went out singing, could not accompany us this time and I was not to tell anyone, except our tame coach driver, where we were going. The last bombshell - the County Police would contact me.

I knew the church. We had sung there a few times before for Carol Services and Harvest Festivals. Its acoustics were good and the organ was a reasonable instrument, both thereby satisfying our prerequisites. The churchyard adjoined the grounds of a stately

home whose children were pupils of our school.

Although the School Choir was currently rehearsing for concerts, including a performance with a local choral society, we dropped everything to prepare for "Mystery Matins". A visit by a couple of very high-ranking police officers removed the mystery as far as I was concerned, but I was strictly enjoined to divulge neither destination nor purpose of our excursion.

Every boy in the school from the age of seven or eight was in the School Choir. No girls? Definitely not! In the sixties I had been privileged to meet Sister Mary Leo of the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Auckland, New Zealand. That sparsely-populated land has provided far more than its fair share of leading singers in the world's opera houses and concert halls and almost all of them, as well as many of other nationalities, have at some time consulted or been trained by that diminutive nun. At the time that I met her she was in raptures concerning her latest pupil, a young lady called Kiri, who was beginning to build a considerable reputation.

"You take your little boys at six, seven or eight, and train them intensively until when they are ten or eleven they are singing beautifully and are excellent musicians, small miracles. Then after a few years their voices break and some of them become good tenors or basses. But with girls it is different; I never start to train them seriously until they are twelve or thirteen, and even then it is slowly, slowly." There was no way that I should ever disagree with the dictum of anyone of Sister Mary's awesome credentials. It is foolish to ignore the indisputable fact that women and girls are physiologically and psychologically different from men and boys, and that it is both arrogant and stupid for either to trespass upon the others' preserves.

After removing a couple of incompetents I had secured the services of a first-rate Nursery Class teacher, British but educated and trained in France, who was not only highly skilled in detaching four-year-olds from doting mothers and getting them seated at desks to learn to read and write, but who also taught French throughout the school and Music to the fours, fives and sixes. She was a very good pianist. Her own children travelled to London

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every Saturday to attend junior classes at the Royal College of Music. By the time I took over teaching Music to the seven-year-olds they could all sing in tune and read music!

The school was a miniature United Nations and I derived much quiet amusement from time to time at the sight of young Hindus, Sikhs, Moslems, Confucians, Taoists, Jews, or Jehovah's Witnesses and of every branch of Christianity, dressed in the gowns and medals of the choir, singing Matins, Evensong, Christmas carols, Easter anthems, Harvest hymns in Anglican churches. When not required for choir duty the boys attended their own places of worship and we made no attempt to convert; who were we to claim our way to be better than theirs? Our interest was simply musical and it was understood that the requirements of the choir were paramount. Not only the boys but also their parents were very proud of their sons' membership of both school and choir. We also provided the choir for "society" weddings and no chorister ever complained of the five pounds or more that he received, often in addition to a very substantial feast!

Lunch break at school was one-and-a-half hours, the first half-hour lapping up the delicacies provided by our gem of a cook, the next half-hour a quiet reading period in classrooms and the last half-hour free time. However for the choir the middle period was choir practice on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, or more often if needed.

Of course one officious mother was not certain that she could let her sons come with the choir "if I don't know where they're going".

She was trying to wheedle information from me, but I merely shrugged my shoulders. "It's up to you, but they will probably regret it if you don't let them come." The silly female tried a number of wild guesses, one or two close to the mark, but I gave her no satisfaction.

The Sunday arrived and sixteen little boys climbed excitedly into the mini-coach that we always hired for such occasions. Too there was a thirteen-year-old former pupil, a very promising "assistant organist", who came to play before services, leaving me free to see to the choir. We set off.

"You're going to sing for the Queen and Prince Philip this morning," I remarked casually.

Seventeen pairs of eyes popped. Seventeen jaws dropped.

"I'm not playing!" My "assistant" tried rebellion.

"You don't think that you're coming just for the ride, do you?" Rebellion was nipped in the bud.

"Bow your head as in church and say 'Your Majesty' first time and 'Ma'am' thereafter, Your Highness' and 'Sir' thereafter." A quick course in etiquette.

The entire area around the church was thick with police, some in uniform, others in plain clothes. Our coach was directed to park some distance from the church and we were aware of close scrutiny as we made our way, the boys in orderly pairs, to the medieval building. An interloper would have been immediately spotted anyway, as all but myself wore the school uniform, mid-grey everything except white shirts, crimson and gold socks, cuffs, ties and cap-badges. We had arrived an hour early for our customary "sing-in" before the congregation started to arrive, but even that had an audience of a few police who seemed to appreciate the boys' vitality. There was nothing

"precious" about our music; I trained to robust Continental-style, yodel-based singing that I had learned on my travels.

Their Majesties were attending church while spending a few days' holiday incognito at the stately home of friends. The congregation, invited "top-brass" of the county, started to arrive quite early and we were condemned to wait in silence in the vestry for nearly a half-hour while my assistant performed most of his "party-pieces" before I took over and the choir processed to their places in the chancel.

"Don't forget, you never look at the congregation, even if your deaf old millionaire granny is there. You have eyes only for your books and the opposite Leading Chorister." Despite my usual admonition I am sure that eyes swivelled, although heads faced front, when all stood as punctually, the church clock chiming the hour, Their Majesties entered and took their places in a front pew. We launched into 1662 Book of Common Prayer Matins in all its imposing solemnity. At this distance in time I cannot recollect what music we sang, except of course the National Anthem.

Afterwards, playing while the congregation dispersed, I missed the fun. The boys were chattering all the way home about the cheerful way that Prince Philip had chatted and joked with them. There were sixteen fervent little royalists of various races in the coach. All that afternoon I received telephone calls from parents requiring substantiation of their sons' claims of acquaintance with royalty. The next day we posed for press photographs accompanying accounts of what was no longer a Secret Service.