

The Agiot

76th Edition

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Village News

By Dr. Lionel Mann

The bottom seems to have dropped out of the thermometer, but we have not had any snow, just plenty of rain and wind.

Waldo, Danielle, Lukke and Stella have returned from spending Christmas in Holland. They did not go skating on canals. Stella had just celebrated her second birthday, is walking and talking with complete assurance.

Mandy is growing fast and it is becoming difficult to distinguish between her and Andy except that he behaves with peternal dignity and Mandy frolics around the place.

The first carnival will be held on the 16th February.

A few days ago we had an earthquake, 5.7 magnitude beneath Kefalonia where there was some damage and no casualties. Here in mid siesta the bed rocked gently for about a minute. Two cats dozing quietly beside me woke up, sat up glared accusingly at me, turned round, curled down again, went back to sleep.



Family get-together at Villa Sofia



Football at Nimfes

ED.

In early January, our friend and neighbour Wolfgang Matthiesson suffered a stroke, and was hospitalised. We are pleased to report, he is now back home in Agios recovering, though has suffered some damage to one hand. We wish him a full recovery.

Sadly, Nicestray is no longer with us, having been banished by his temporary owner. He is missed upon the early-morning walks. Wherever he is on the island, we wish him some happy times.

See "Fleishpots of the North" for Mark's prize competition.

Video Corner

Another Island, Another World
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dOnnHoFp5SE>

Possibilities for performers and Pic-Nic at Agiotfest 14
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvjltldQ3-4>

Nigel Supports Greece
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQQx-epSblk>

The Two Als
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VyRfmYCcdI>

Letters to the Editor

[Simon Baddeley](#) commented on a [link](#) you shared.

Simon wrote: "Aside from their love of Greece and their respect for their Greek neighbours I see in the British people that we know here none of the ignorance, arrogance or patronising opinion that has sometimes - too often - characterised the

attitude of British living among 'foreigners'. We also know far more of the cruelty exercised against animals in our so-called 'animal-loving' mother country. So when seeing local examples of neglect, carelessness and outright cruelty to animals, we hesitate to judge. Rightly. But Paul, married to a Corfiot, living and working here for many

years, part of the life of Corfu, has not a smidgin of that old 'Tom' Maitland prejudice. It warms my heart to see this story, Paul. Thanks for posting it. I shall, respectfully, sign this Greek-originated petition to establish a national animal police."

Hallo and very Happy New year to you.

I used to enjoy receiving your newsletters, they were always cheerful and uplifting. It was always good to hear how Lionel Mann was, many years ago, he taught me music at Latymer Foundation. He was most certainly a very big influence on me as I have always been an active musician and have been a full time organist in Denmark since 1988 bur retiring at the end of the month.

How is Lionel?

Very best wishes

James Lally



James Lally

Hello James,

Sorry that you do not hear from me these days. Since my eyes went I have not been able to send emails. I wish you a happy retirement. Why don't you come and visit me here? It is probably warmer than Denmark.

With best wishes,
Lionel

Corfu Weather Statistics

	Max	Avg	Min
Temperature			
Max Temperature	20°C	16 °C	11 °C
Mean Temperature	17 °C	12 °C	8 °C
Min Temperature	16 °C	9 °C	3 °C
Degree Days			
Heating Degree Days (base 65)	20	11	2
Cooling Degree Days (base 65)	0	0	0
Growing Degree Days (base 50)	12	4	0
Dew Point			
Dew Point	14 °C	9 °C	1 °C
Precipitation			
Precipitation	130.1 mm	8.6 mm	0.0 mm
Snowdepth - - - -			
Wind			
Wind	45 km/h	9 km/h	0 km/h
Gust Wind	64 km/h	47 km/h	37 km/h
Sea Level Pressure	1025 hPa	1015 hPa	993 hPa

Read more at:

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

When Nitsa was Young

By
Lord Biro

Chapter 8: Civil War

After the German retreat of October 1944, Greece was immediately enmeshed in political turmoil erupting into a cruel Civil War, which rattled on for three years. The vacuum left by the Occupiers was quickly filled by those who would replace them.

The prelude of the civil war took place in Athens, December 1944, less than two months after Germans had retreated. A bloody battle (the "*Dekemvriana*") erupted after Greek government gendarmes, with British forces standing in the background, opened fire on a massive unarmed pro-EAM rally, killing 28 demonstrators and injuring dozens. The rally had been organized against the impunity of the [Nazi collaborators](#) and the general disarmament ultimatum, signed by [Lieutenant-General Sir Ronald MacKenzie Scobie](#), which had excluded the left-wing forces. The battle lasted 33 days and resulted in the defeat of EAM after the heavily reinforced British forces sided with the Greek government.

Athens was divided, the EΔΕΣ forces occupying the Acropolis and firing their cannons down on the city and the EAM supporters below. The British were horribly entangled. Scobie had been sent in 43 to expel the Germans, but he ended up mixed up in this new war, which dragged on. EΔΕΣ had superiority, backed by British arms, but their opponents would not relinquish their guns despite many were killed.

It was a bitter conflict. As the right-wing forces gradually asserted themselves many of their oppo-

nents were incarcerated on barren Aegean islands, many fled to the mountains and from Northern Greece as many as 70,000 emigrated to Eastern Europe

Corfu was affected along with the rest of the country. There was destruction of property in town, beatings and killing. The infamous 'Corfu Incident' occurred which killed many British sailors, when their ships struck Albanian mines.



'The Corfu Incident'

Agios Ioannis was mostly spared these horrors, occasionally Police came to the square to check for guns, as Kostas' family were EAM supporters. [The gun which Kostas brandishes on selective Holy Day celebrations in the village, he acquired 30 years ago, but he has a couple of older side-arms which the family had at the time of the Civil War].

Life here continued much the same way, with the working of the olives at Capri, and the keeping of sheep and cows. [At this point in Kostas' recollections, he suffered a cramp in his thigh, and was followed around the kitchen table by Nitsa, trying very hard to catch him to administer massaging relief.]

Economically, things were tough but improved after the implementation of the Marshall Plan. The Kafenia-now the Taverna-never sold

beer in those long-off days, but a coup of wine could be had for half a Franka [Drachma].

Poor economy or not, in 1948 Kostas was taking a shine to young Nitsa, who he said was a 'hard case' [maybe he meant a hard nut to crack] and in 1953 they were engaged. His expenses were further increased by the need for him to assist his father in providing a dowry for Kostas' sister Sofia in 1950; 12,000 Drachmas were amassed and she was purchased a house in Anemomilos. This was a larger investment than in Koula, another sister, who ten years previously had been given twelve gold coins for her marriage in Kontokali.

The enlarging of the tiny airport began in 1954. From 1959 to 1961 Kostas worked there.

In 1957 Kostas and Nitsa married..



'Kostas'

Hilary's Ramblings

By
Hilary Paipeti

In the end, the game wasn't over. I wrote in last month's *Agiot* that my explorations of the little valley where I live would be curtailed by the arrival of rainy weather. But within a day or two, water in the ditches and the gravel-bottomed river drained away, and I was able to continue my explorations.

I discovered that beyond the sheer-sided ditch which blocked the onward route, forcing me onto the road, another set of landscapes awaited. I crossed the watercourse on the culverted road and found that I could head straight off the road again, continuing through pastures and a maze of vineyards, before hitting the road just 50 metres below Tristrato. I had made it!

On another occasion, I skirted the vineyard maze and sought the course of the river. Working my way along the precipitous bank, I came upon a tramped groove down into its gravelly bottom - and a vague track leading up the far side. Of course, if there's a track into a river bed with only a path out the other side, it follows that the said track comes from somewhere. I thought I knew exactly where, and I was correct - it joined the Corfu Trail lane near its meeting point with the main Giannades road. Thus I made a full circuit, almost asphalt-free.

I am now in the process of scouting through the fields on the far

(east) side of the river, parallel with the track which carries the Corfu Trail. Even though this strip of grassland is only about 100 metres wide, there are a couple of different ways along - and three places to cross the river to link with the

paths on the other side.

So, including the road and two paths along the mountainside to the west, I now can tramp no fewer than seven routes along the valley. Dog walking is no longer a bore!

In mid-January I led the Saturday Walkers along the valley, starting near the Golf Club entrance. We took the field paths, crossed the river near Tristrato and returned by way of the Corfu Trail track along the foot of the Theotoki Estate's 'mountain'. Despite heavy rain a day or two before, it was quite dry underfoot. Our favourite doggie-friends had a great run, and even Khan the Golden Retriever played a lollopy chase game on the grass (it can't be kind to walk dogs on asphalt and gravel all the time).

The unwelcome news is that we must all pray for rain. There really hasn't been enough so far this winter, which is why the ditches are draining quickly even after heavy precipitation. This time last year, the roadside ditches were flooding onto the asphalt, the fields squelching under the boot. Lionel tells me that he has written in this issue that there's been a lot of rain. No, there hasn't, compared with other years. Corfu used to be known for its winters of '40 days' of rain. This winter it's just been sporadic (has it gone to Somerset?).

Ditches, hollows and ruts will only fill when the land around is saturated and cannot soak in any more water; at this point, the rain seeps into the ditches and then slowly drains away into larger watercourses and finally to the sea. That's why the Ropa Plain is no longer a swamp - because the wetlands were drained by man-made ditches. When ditches are empty of water,

the land is too dry to fill them. If we do not get sufficient rainfall - and consequently brimming ditches - we may be looking at a summer of shortage.

But meanwhile, the relatively mild weather and the few downpours have provided perfect conditions for Corfu's flora to take advantage of the climate, and the process has kick-started the Spring Bloom. Just before Christmas, some clumps of purple Cranesbill were already in flower on a sunny bank, and wild Marigolds have been abundant in sheltered spots all winter. The first Anemones made a rather ragged appearance at the year's turn and are now appearing in the meadows.

In early January, we saw our first winter Iris, with its beautiful purple- and yellow-streaked petals. The late Lady Holmes - a botanical artist - was of the opinion that the wild Iris which grows in Corfu is a sub-species of the more general Mediterranean flower, since the configuration of the petal markings are slightly but consistently different. I am informed that the Iris will grow in gardens if the bulb is transplanted, although it needs a couple of years to settle before it blooms.

But even with the few early stipules of gold and purple, the ground is a vast canvas of green, awaiting the miraculous palette of Spring.

Fleashpots Of The North

By
Mark Thompson

A regular reader of this column, if such a creature exists, might think that I spend my entire time amongst the *demimonde* of the north-east of the island in the smoke-laden bars, gambling dens and other louche establishments, with which Acharavi, Roda and Sidari are all so amply provided, to bring you tall tales of those places and their *habitués*.

I think that the words of Oscar Wilde are apposite here: 'We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars' - Lady Windermere's Fan. Therefore just before Christmas and by way of change I whisked the current Mrs. Thompson into the sumptuous luxury that is Corfu town to celebrate ourth wedding anniversary.

For us all trips to town must now include a visit to the ubiquitous Marks and Spencers, both the clothing store and the bijou food hall. Though there was method in my apparent madness as will be seen later. I don't care to indulge in the conspicuous consumption that seems epitomes Christmas in the UK, or at least it did when I was last there and I'm sure things have only got worse in the last 7 years.

Nonetheless it being the Saturday before Christmas there was something of a party atmosphere around the town centre, but as this is Greece it found its expression in the bars and cafes with people not rushing to make further and unnecessary purchases but rather taking the time to greet friends and family and linger over coffee. In fact it was much like Corfu town most of the time, but only more so.

Last minute, vital, purchases secured we adjourned to our chosen (boutique) hotel the Siorra Vittoria, near Ionian parliament building, the property being the former home of the Metaxas family. What a delightful and tasteful job was done in the course of the refurbishment. Having dressed for dinner we enjoyed, by way of an

aperitif, a splendid pink Cava accompanied by nuts, crisps and snack all courtesy of M&S.

We dined at La Famaglia an Italian ristorante, albeit Greek-owned and managed. When shopping we tend to lunch in town at one of the traditional cafes such as Rouvas or Nino's and quite frankly I enjoy a change from the ever-present *slovakies*, *that(their) ziki*, *red sauce and so on*. What your average Italian might think of the food troubled us not one jot as enjoyed our meal in the company of any number of Greeks, couples, family groups in one case with a small child ,a hi-chair was produced without demur.

One can well imagine being in England in such circumstances when both the staff and customers would 'tut-tutting' about the age of the child, suggesting that it was way past his bedtime. No doubt the evening would have been made complete by some helpful soul telephoning social services to report 'child abuse'.

Having let slip that we were celebrating an anniversary the staff generously made a slight discount to the bill and I can say, with confidence, that a good time was had by all, including the child.

To aid digestion we then had a stroll round town, illuminated as it was with fairy lights in the trees. It was an attractive spectacle, all the more so in that streets were quiet we didn't walk in fear of young men in 'hoodies', we didn't have to steer clear of aggressive drunks and/or panhandlers. In fact it was something of a surprise to me that so little was open and so few people on the street, though I'm not complaining.

As we walked through the park to the Liston I idly speculated what things would have been like in any major city of the UK at that time and concluded that I wouldn't have wanted to be back there. I know many think that here in Corfu we live in a semi-tropical paradise and we spend our time 'eating grapes to the sound of softly plucked

guitars', that might not always be the case but I have no strong desire to visit 'Blighty'.

As the snow line retreats up the mountain behind our house, the long icicles have melted from our guttering and we longer have daily visits from the council snow-plow it looks in all likelihood that spring is, hopefully, just around the corner. Certainly the sap is rising on my grape vines and by the time you read this an almond tree close to our house will be in full bloom.

At this time a young man's heart turns to, yes you've guessed it, world cup football. May I take this opportunity to wish 'all the best' to my team-Brazil? It seems only right that Brazil should win the cup as the tournament is being held in that country. If you think that this loyalty is short term and determined by 'home-field advantage', think again I've supported the team for over 40 years. It only remains for me to persuade Paul that the Agiot needs a correspondent 'on the ground' and I'll be on the first 'plane out to South America, my bags already packed.

As my wine continues to mature apace I'm able to offer a brief, one question competition this month. So only one winner, therefore you'll need to be quick.

Tell me what links a well-known winter festival (sometimes) covered in snow and Sasa Stolic?

Mark Thompson

No slush in the fleashpots, but don't eat the yellow snow.

Agiotfest August 30th 2014

In Association with the 100+ Club



“The Music Goes On”

The 10th draw was held today at Jelatis, Perithia. Spiros the proprietor, a none member, drew out the number.

The winner was Lisa Harris, winning 70€
Number of people present 12.
Members present 7.
1 new member joined the club

Excellent afternoon thank you to all who attended.

A big thank you to the 61 members who support The 100+ Club, also a big thank you to,

Paul & Jan Scotter central area coordinators, Sally Tinkler Ipsos area Co-ordinator, North area Co-ordinators, Louise Taylor & Sandra Klouda. Hovoli Acharavi, Mediterranean Corner Mkt Roda, Chippy Chippy Sidari, Darryl Bill Butchers shop Perithia, Sally’s Bar Ipsos, UK iM-PORTS, Sidari, Corfu Barber, Sofias 41, 49100 Corfu, Scoobys Bar Sidari, for supporting The 100+ Club.

A big thank you to the hosts, Spiros and family who donated 20€ split between the two charities, The Smile of The Child and The Red Cross

The 100+ Club, representatives, Ken & Jan Harrop, Project Leaders

and Sally Tinkler Ipsos area co-ordinator.

If you are interested in supporting The 100+ Club please contact us on Tel 6946949545

the100plusclub@groups.facebook.com

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/the100plusclub/>



“An Agiotfest Fan”

Aunty Lula’s Love-bites

Stuffed Potatoes

Ingredients

10 Large Potatoes
250g Edam Cheese, grated
125g Butter
2 tbsp. Chopped Parsley
4 tbsp. Milk
Salt & Pepper
300g can of Sweetcorn, drained

Go:

1. Make a slit along one side of each potato and bake in a pre-heated oven about 200°C for 1½ hours ,or until cooked.
2. Halve the potatoes lengthways. Scoop out the flesh into a bowl and mash with half the cheese, the butter, parsley, milk, salt and pepper to taste. Mix in the sweetcorn.
3. Spoon the mixture into the potato shells, sprinkle with re-

maining cheese and return to the oven for 15 minutes or until golden.

4. Serve hot.

Bon appetit!



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Property Feature

Villa Rosa



This beautiful modern villa is located in the area of Vasilika in the village of Agios Ioannis. The villa is located up a quiet lane off the main road at the top a hill. Corfu town is 15 minutes away while the most beautiful beaches on the island are only a 10 minute drive away. The villa features a comfortable nicely- furnished living room/ kitchen area with an open fireplace. There are two bedrooms in the villa and two bathrooms, one of which is en-suite. At the front of the villa there is a garden and a parking area while the back garden features a small splash- pool with a beautiful patio and bbq area with amazing countryside views. Perfect for an all year home or holiday house.



Please go to: www.propertycorfu.org for more information

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL

CORFU & LEFKADA 2013

Dear Friends of The Royal British Legion

Once again I can happily report that the total amount collected for the 2013 Poppy Appeal amounted to **€1,865.16** which converted to **£1,550.02** (more than 6% increase on last year's amount!)

A very fitting honour for our serving troops at home and abroad.

We have, again, proved ourselves to be more than generous in remembering those who gave so much for so few in order to safeguard us all.

I would point out that in 2012, I appointed Jackie Dallos as my Poppy Appeal Organiser for the Lefkada area. She is enthusiastic and worked very hard to produce a good collection. For 2013 she worked even harder (in a smaller community than Corfu) and collected an amazing increase of **43%** up on 2012.

For this effort I would like to pass on my personal thanks and appreciation to Jackie.

On behalf of The Royal British Legion Annual Poppy Appeal I thank you all (both here in Corfu and our friends in Lefkada) for your continuing kindness and support. It is very much appreciated
I can assure you.

Yours very sincerely

Lucy STEELE, M.B.E.
Former British Vice consul
Corfu

Nick the Clock's World

Airports are often terrible places to be. There are too many people rushing somewhere combined with too many cranky folks leaving somewhere mixed with annoying obstacles in the form of TSA security and rolling luggages. But it's just like that for us normal folk. For first class flyers? It's like being a rock star. [One genius man took advantage of his rock star status](#) and used one single first class airplane ticket to eat food for free for an entire year.

It's an absolutely brilliant ploy. You see, when you have a first class ticket, you can stroll into the fanciest VIP airport lounge and grab whatever you want because once you're inside that VIP lounge, anything you want—yes, including food—is free.

[News.com.au](#) relays a report

from Kwong Wah Yit Poh of a genius man in China who took advantage of the free perks of those airport lounges. He booked a first class ticket on China Eastern Airlines and went to the VIP airport lounge at the Xi'an airport in Shaanxi, China and ate a delicious meal before his flight. Just like any first class traveler would. Except he never takes the flight. After he finished eating, the man changed his flight's departure for another day and went back home. Until tomorrow. Armed with a brand new first class ticket for a new day, he comes back to the airport lounge, eats another fantastic free meal and after he finishes up, yep, pushes his flight back again. Lather. Eat. Repeat. For free.

In fact, he pretty much got a year of free meals out of this trick be-

cause he changed his flight itinerary over 300 times in the same year. The man sure knows how to work a loophole.

The best part though? When China Eastern Airlines started investigating this heroic man for changing his flights too many times, he simply canceled his airplane ticket and got a full refund. Well done, sir. Well done.

IS THIS A MOSQUITO?

No. It's an insect spy drone for urban areas, already in production, funded by the US Government. It can be remotely controlled and is equipped with a camera and a microphone. It can land on you, and it may have the potential to take a DNA sample or leave RFID tracking nanotechnology on your skin. It can fly through an open window, or it can attach to your clothing until you take it in your home.



"Is this a Mosquito"



**CORFUDOGS
(and Cats)
CALENDAR
2014**

All proceeds from the sale of this Calendar will assist in the care of these animals until they find a forever home

This calendar assists in raising funds for the abandoned and stray animals of Corfu

The World of Simon -

By
Simon Baddeley

CHAPTER I

Divisions upon Greek Ground

'No tongue: all eyes: be silent.'
The Tempest

Somewhere between Calabria and Corfu the blue really begins. All the way across Italy you find yourself moving through a landscape severely domesticated – each valley laid out after the architect's pattern, brilliantly lighted, human. But once you strike out from the flat and desolate Calabrian mainland towards the sea, you are aware of a change in the heart of things: aware of the horizon beginning to stain at the rim of the world: aware of *islands* coming out of the darkness to meet you.

In the morning you wake to the taste of snow on the air, and climbing the companion-ladder, suddenly enter the penumbra of shadow cast by the Al-

banian mountains – each wearing its cracked crown of snow – desolate and repudiating stone.

A peninsula nipped off while red hot and allowed to cool into an antarctica of lava. You are aware not so much of a landscape coming to meet you invisibly over those blue miles of water as of a climate. You enter Greece as one might enter a dark crystal; the form of things becomes irregular, refracted. Mirages suddenly swallow islands, and wherever you look the trembling curtain of the atmosphere deceives.

Other countries may offer you discoveries in manners or lore or landscape; Greece offers you something harder – the discovery of yourself.

10.4.37

It is a sophism to imagine that there is any strict dividing line between the waking world and the world of dreams. N. and I, for example, are confused by the sense of several contemporaneous lives being lived inside us; the sensation of being mere points of reference for space and time. We have chosen Corcyra perhaps because it is an ante-room to Aegean Greece with its smoke-grey vol-

"The start of Lawrence Durrell's first book *Prospero's Cell: A guide to the landscape and manners of the island of Corcyra* 1945"

The sublime and the ridiculous are often so nearly related, that it is difficult to class them separately. Thomas Paine

I'm pretty confident Lawrence Durrell's family didn't engage in anything so banal as completing a local tax return when they lived here long ago, nor needed 'pink slips'...

...as sure as I am great Achilles didn't have to tear off the fiddly strips of silver paper on top of small cartons when adding milk to his coffee, if he drank coffee or would have drunk it as anything but *skirto* ...unless this seems a cheap trick it's a memo to myself that the membrane between bathos and the sublime is permeable, sometimes as brittle as courtship – a looking glass - but mostly an ever-present screen through which musings flow as easi-

ly in both directions as a stand-up who dies one night and brings the house down the next...

A friend sent this to us:

If you have to declare income in Greece this year, you will need a lot of patience. From this year onwards, all tax returns will be submitted only online, but this will not facilitate the process. To the contrary, you will not get away with waiting in queues at the tax office or with the bureaucratic madness, which we are familiar with at present. The only way to deal with another administrative obstacle is to find information and a lot of patience....To be able to fill in the tax return in Greece, you must have a code to use the online state tax system TAXIS. How to obtain this code:

1. Go to <https://www1.gsis.gr/registration/chooseRegistrationType.html>

2. Choose "Initial registration" (Αρχική εγγραφή)

3. Choose whether you will fill in the tax return as an individual person or as an entity

4. Fill in the requested information

5. Then, go to your local tax office to obtain the codes to fill in the tax return. Since the beginning of the week, the queues at the tax offices for obtaining the access codes to the system have been enormous. People have been waiting for hours to be able to return home and start filling in the tax returns online...GR Reporter 28 May 2013 [Tax pains 2013](#))

Lin found [a guide to the Hellenic tax system](#):

From p.5 *Tax Guide For Residents Abroad*' Directorate General of Taxation, Directorate General of Customs and Special Consumption Tax, Athens, June 2008 *Greek tax guidance*

Continued on Page 11

The World of Simon
Continued from Page 10

2. WHO MUST FILE A RETURN? *More specifically, those residing abroad must file a tax return in Greece, if ...Regardless of whether they have a taxable income in Greece, they shall file a return when...(e) they have purchased real estate or constructed a building in Greece...*

Our Greek accountant in Corfu town is excellent but once he had dealt with the fines we needed to pay for a few years unsubmitted tax forms (ignorance of the law, as everywhere, being no excuse for its breach) it made sense that rather than waste his fee submitting further annual confirmation that we earn no money in Greece, we should ourselves file a return to this effect, doing it, as is now possible and indeed *required*, on-line.

The first step Lin and I learned from our friend Cinty was to get a one-time key code from the tax office to access and register ourselves with the Hellenic tax office website.

"Where's the tax office?"

"In the Town Hall just off San Rocco Square, opposite the Theatre"

Ah yes, down St Dessilas or Manzarou Streets off G Theotoki, where they meet Samaras Street. These offices are not to be mistaken for the Municipal Assembly building which is half-way along N.Theotoki. We needed to meet the bureaucracy.

We rose at dawn to get there early and were in the foyer of our target building by just before 9.00am, ranging the dim-lit space like sniffer dogs, in our case seeking signage. I poked my head into a small open plan on the ground floor "Tax office, please?"

One of two women sat in shadow turned from her small crowded desk to gaze at us before peering upwards.

"Up a floor, I think" I said to Lin.

At the top of two flights was a long screen with a few people at windows talking through to people behind. Promising. We assayed an eastward corridor. There were numbers on doors, titles, notices in abundance but nothing indicative. I knocked hopefully on a door and heard an invitation to

enter.

"Where do we go for tax?"

A hand was stretched out and a finger pointed back where we came, with a suggestion we wind leftwards beyond the head of the stairs we'd climbed. Round a corner in the colourless gloom we came upon a ragged queue of people standing and seated near a half-open door in a cul-de-sac - a corridor of powerless.

"Excuse me. Does anyone speak English?"

Silence of the waiting, then a lady smiled and said "Yes"

"Where do we go to file our tax?"

"Here" She indicated the door marked with a number 9 - handwritten - just opposite where she sat. Was she at the head or the end of the queue?

"Can we do it on the computer?"

"Yes. But you need a key"

"Can we get that here?"

"You must ask an accountant I think"

"We would like to do it ourselves"

"Yes but you need an accountant to get you a key"

"Perhaps we should cut our losses at this stage" I murmured to Lin and we turned to descend.

"A moment" I said "I *really* want to see what this room looks like"

I insinuated myself through the queue breathing English apologies and put my head round the door. The room was smaller than I expected with less than four desks and screens - long ones with cathodes.

"So sorry" I gazed around with as much pathos as I could manage "Does anyone speak English?"

Two women head-gestured me to the woman nearest the door "Georgia" She was already with a client.

"What do you want?"

"We need a key to file a tax return"

"Wait a moment. You have your tax numbers?"

"Yes yes. All that and passports. Shall we wait outside now?" "No no"

Urgently I call Lin to join me.

"Quick quick" I made apologetic gestures to the woman already waiting.

Lin read out our tax numbers.

"Your passports"

Lin handed them over.

I felt excited; made more apologies to the other client who smiled in a sweet way "No problem"

"Thank you. Thank you so much"

My heart was full of a grateful supplicant's deference and amity as we left after a short telephone exchange that brought us our one-time keys and passwords.

"Is the website also in English?" Lin asked as we left

"I think so"

Looking away from the queue by the door we headed down to the street



'Outside the tax office "yes"'

"Blimey blimey" I gasped as "we've been in there less than 30 minutes"

Lin sparing with praise said "Well done that Baddeley"

We drove home via Sally's Bar at Ipsos where Lin found the site as well as a [tax guide](#) that could be downloaded as a PDF. It was in English but the website was in Greek.

"Cinty's place?"

Back in the village Cinty made us tea and coffee and sat with Lin as she entered our key numbers and registered...

"We're in!"

Clicking on the options for the forms we needed, none, said the computer in red text, applied to us.

"Oh well. We've done alright so far and the return doesn't have to be until May"

"Put a request for help on [Corfu Grapevine](#) on Facebook" suggested Cinty

Guernsey

By
Dr. Lionel Mann

In the early sixties for the first time in more than twenty years I was able to enjoy holidays at Christmas and Easter. The day after his induction the new incumbent of the

Anglican church where I had been organist and choirmaster had informed me that he did not like it that the place was known as that where Lionel Mann has charge of the music. Every summer I had toured with the sixteen boys, treble and alto choristers, and we had gained a musical reputation far beyond our Thameside locality. That we also had packed congregations to the extent that the police turned out to control parking and to keep the main roads clear did not seem to register with the young upstart. That summer we went on a concert tour of Sweden that had been already been booked and then I told the petty vandal what he could do with his church. Most of the boys transferred to another church to which my deputy removed. Six years later I was organist and master of choristers at a large cathedral while the stupid cleric had become a clerk in an estate agent's office and that church congregation had shrunk to a tenth of their former size.

In the meantime, however, I had been promoted to resident deputy headmaster of the junior boys' school where I had been teaching part-time and my sole musical activity was being taken during their term every Saturday for choir practice and every Sunday to play for morning Mass and evening Benediction in the chapel of a nearby large Catholic public school. Both

new enterprises were very enjoyable. The school relished full eleven-plus passes and merely to enter the college was to be enveloped in a warm aura of active lively assurance with calm happy serenity. In the three years that I went there I never heard a harsh word nor saw an unkind action; the thirty or so Salesien brothers of the staff from Father Superior down and all the four hundred pupils made me welcome. As well as playing in the chapel I wandered round conversing with staff, boys, visitors or watching rugby or cricket. In later years as a headmaster I tried to reproduce such an environment in my schools.

Now, once I had completed my holiday tasks in two or three days of hard work, I was free to go on vacation during school holidays.

In 1940 the future parents of one of my former choristers had escaped from Guernsey just ahead of the arrival of the invading German army. Engaged to be married, they had already purchased as the site of their future home a large paddock high on the west cliffs of the island with a view way out to sea, over beaches to north and south and over a wide panorama to the east. When my former choir, for which their young son has been a keen member, collapsed they had felt free to return to the island and had had his scholarship at our local grammar school transferred to a very prestigious school there. They found that the Germans had recognised the strategic values of their site and had constructed a massive emplacement for a very large piece of artillery with all-round traverse plumb in its centre. In common with many other structures in the

so-called West Wall the emplacement was built so strongly that it would be deemed impossible to demolish it without inflicting considerable damage upon the surrounding area. Their architect therefore designed a circular house to be built upon the emplacement which then became garage, laundry, boiler-room, workshop and storeroom. The house was designed as having twelve segments each allocated to rooms, one for foyer, two for kitchen-diner, three for a very spacious lounge, one for study one for bathroom-toilet and the remainder for various bedrooms, every room enjoying a spectacular view.

They had given me a standing invitation to visit them and when I contacted them they suggested that I should come at Easter.

I flew out on the Monday of Holy Week. My only previous experience of flying had been a flip round London from Heathrow in a DH Dragon Rapide twin-engined biplane twelve years earlier. This flight was a four-turboprop Vickers Viscount. I had a window seat and was very worried to see the wings waggling. Had nobody else noticed it? I was very relieved when we landed safely in Guernsey!

Robert and his parents met me at the airport and drove me the short distance to their new home where they proudly showed me around before we had supper and spent the evening catching up with each other's news. Thirteen-year-old Robert undertook to show me around the island and next morning we started at their local village church.

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Guernsey

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It had been arranged that I might play the organ during my stay and while I was trying the reasonably standard sweet-toned two-manual-and-pedal little instrument the vicar came in. It did not take him long to ask me to give an organ recital after Evensong the next Sunday. I had brought no music with me, but I could hardly refuse, so a bus trip to the main town, St. Peter Port, was needed. Understandably the sole music shop had only a small selection of organ music, but I managed to find enough to build a programme. Daily practice would be needed!

There was still plenty of time for Robert to show me around and every time we passed by the airport we stopped by the wire fence at the end of the runway. Winter had been rather severe, spring was late and Easter was early. There was a dearth of spring flowers in Holland, but in warmer Guernsey there were fields of golden daffodils. A steady stream of KLM Douglas four-engine aircraft ferried cargos of daffodils to the Netherlands.

They needed every yard of the runway and we thrilled to the roar of the monsters charging towards us and passing low over our heads.

The big garden around the house had only been partly cleared; most of it was overgrown and every day Robert and I set to work for an hour or two with sickles, but we needed to be careful. Manning that gun must have been thirsty work almost every cut exposed an empty wine bottle or two or more. Already a wide shining drive from front gate to foot of the steps leading to the front door and round to

the garage had been paved with bottle set neck down in concrete and a large growing stack was being collected to extend the drive around the house and to form a patio for sunbathing.

We all went to Evensong in the little church on Easter Sunday. Every inch of the place that was not packed with congregation was crammed with daffodils. I had to remove two bowls from the end of the organ stool to make room for Robert to perch to turn my music for my recital for which almost every one stayed after the service. It was well received. I never play anything outrageously avant-garde and I was usually invited to return.

Robert had shown me most of the island including visits to the massive German fortifications. We had walked miles. Now he came with me on a couple of day trips, one to Aldernay and the other to Sark, the former rather austere business-like, the latter more decorative. We had enjoyed good weather throughout my stay.

I flew back on the Friday and watched the wing waggling. Perhaps it was meant to; birds' wings waggle, don't they?

Two footnotes:

Why did I leave the College when I was enjoying playing for that choir of keen youngsters? Two years after I was invited to play there the Second Vandal Council struck and five hundred years of glorious music to Latin texts was made redundant overnight to be replaced mainly by grot. Most clergy of all denominations are musically ignorant and easy prey to commercial exploitation. Brother Francis the Director of Music told me, "Lionel, you're welcome to keep coming as long as you like. We like having you and we're not trying to convert you, but you're wasting your time here now. Why don't

you go back to your own Church? There must be somewhere where the rot has not set in." Some months later I bade the College and school farewell and took off to the other side of the world to enjoy six more years of Anglican music until the rot reached there and I quit for broadcasting and television, playing organ or harpsichord with orchestras, choirs, solo instrumentalists and singers, giving solo performances.

The school where I was teaching was near Heathrow, and lay under its flightpath. Many of the boys' parents were aircrew. Whenever aircraft noise interrupted my teaching I would say, "Please ask dad not to do that again." It was always good for a chuckle. At a school function soon after my visit to Guernsey I was chatting with three fathers, all airline pilots, and mentioned my concern over wing waggling. They roared with laughter. "It's the wings flexing to air currents. The time to start worrying is when they stop waggling. Do you think we're going to take one of those things up if we're not sure that we can bring it down again in the right place?" They could not stop laughing. Very reassuring.