

The Agiot

9th Edition

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Agiot Lite!

By Peter H.
Contributing Editor

This month we have a much reduced Agiot, mainly due to our esteemed Editor and general

managers' business commitments. This is actually a good thing, since it means that he is busy showing future Agiots their prospective villas and land. As

such we have prepared a smaller, more compact edition, but we hope you will enjoy it all the same...

Living on the Q.T. in Corfu

By Peter H.
Contributing Editor

With society going generally south in our Great British Isles (a nice, warming metaphor for things going to hell), there must be many of you who would love to 'get-out', but are afraid to make the commitment - this is a quite natural human reaction; *too many unknowns*. That is where this column is aimed to help! Although hundreds of thousands are making an official departure each year, there are ways to make a temporary jaunt without burning all one's bridges - although once you step into Agiot-land, there is no real checking-out - so beware of The Village!

The first warning is; if you do not have a good source of income, forget it. Unless you are prepared to live like a pauper, in a tent, then the mere thought about moving here shouldn't even begin to speculate about the merest possibility of crossing your mind. I am sure this valid warning will not stop some of you, and to be honest you are probably the types to make life interesting around here - so

come all the same. You can always beg, borrow or steal (not from me, please) your way home if things get too bad.

Next; it rains here during the winter. Don't expect hot, balmy evenings in January. Maybe you should try another island, like Crete - although I don't personally know anyone there and I understand they all carry guns. Some Januarys are wonderful, like the first year I moved here in 2001. It was wonderfully warm and I walked around in shorts, although the locals just took me for a mad Brit with some neurological disorder. I don't do silly things like that any more, not even in summer.

Find yourself somewhere to rent in any of the wonderful villages outside of Corfu town (renting in Agios Ioannis is very difficult, but we may be able to help). Villagers are normally more than happy to rent without any formal (written) agreements - be wary of those who do - they are sure to stick it to you should you decide to leave before the fantastically optimistic departure date that you first gush

forth. Corfu town has many 'resting' lawyers who are more than happy to oblige the injured party - I know... The locals generally have you tied down for two types; those who are on Holiday, and those who are 'going to stay forever'. There is nobody in between, so forget explaining you are just over for six months to see if you like the place. If you can't stand it any more after six weeks, you can always bemoan the fact that both your parents died in a fatal car accident and have to go home to Blighty. Nobody will think the worse for seeing you at a nearby villages' Panigyri (village festival) later that same year.

Once you have found somewhere to call home, things basically get back to normal. Normal for Corfu, that is. If your landlord likes the look of you, he or she will normally help you get a telephone line in their name. Depending on where you are, this can take up to a year (or more if he or she simply lies to you about having ever asked for one). Mobile coverage is pretty good over most of the Island, although

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things get sketchy in the South. If you are lucky enough to get a land-line, then ADSL is available almost everywhere, although in some villages things can take a while. The 3G infrastructure is very good and you can get a 3Mbit capped 30 Gigabyte link for around 40 quid/month. Deals for as low as 15/quid per month are available for more moderate users. Mega users can pay another 40 quid/month for a 24Mbit satellite down-link, which can be used in conjunction with either a dial-up, GPRS or 3G uplink.

Apart from the telephone, almost your only other (bi)-monthly outgoings will be the combined electricity / TV /

rubbish collection bill (TV and rubbish together – the Greeks have it right). Amounts range from the absurd (20 quid/month) to a more modest 60 quid/month. No council taxes here! There are lots of English films and TV series on the Greek channels, so don't feel cheated for the miniscule license-fee!

Water bills will depend on your landlord. Try to get these included in your monthly rental agreement. Chances are they will be waived as he dreamily fantasises about the absurd rent you will be paying – little does he know that you will take a bath every night – don't let on!

Wow! That's it. As long as living in this beautiful Island is all you want to do, then you can forget about all the

other formalities. You can drive around in your UK registered car for six months before you MUST take a weekend trip to Italy – a fun experience, and very necessary if you don't want Customs to relieve you of your 4-wheeled beast. Hell, they have some great pasta and good wine in Brindisi, make a day of it.

Next month; More tips for living on the Q.T. here in Corfu.

Village News

By Dr. Lionel Mann
Contributing Editor

Stella and Barry Knight, together with family and friends have arrived. They were the winners of our Holiday Raffle at "A Place in the Sun" Exhibition. Other arrivals include Paul and Sally Grove, Mickey Clark, Martin Stuart, Elke Hornig (complete with flute), Ian Greig, Jim Peroutka from Minnesota via Iceland and London, Sheila McIlroy with family and friends, Linda Oxlee with sister and daughter, and a host of Dutch cyclists.

Aegli and Alexandra visited for Easter, both delighting in giving Alfie exercise – or was it the other way round?

Nicola is making a good recovery, is now allowed to drive and has resumed teaching.

Although summer seemed to be rather late in coming this year the display of flowers is now in full spring, the annual kaleidoscopic explosion. It is not the only explosion: kittens, puppies are proliferating as well as children milling around the plateia.

Kathy, stayed in Kassiopi and threatened to descend upon the village. Kosta was preparing evasive action, but it was not necessary as Ray and Frances were

both taken ill and Kathy was occupied with ministering to the ailing.

Anne and Ray from Brantford in Canada, on a Mediterranean cruise, will be calling in at the village on the 29th, hoping meet friends from their stay in 2005. Kosta is searching for his Maple Leaf apron.

May 21, Agios Konstantinos, is an important holiday in Corfu; they celebrate the occasion in 1864 when the British handed over the governing of the Ionian Islands to the inhabitants. There is a great parade in Town as well as smaller ones in the villages.

Don't Shoot the Pianist!

By Dr. Lionel Mann
Contributing Editor

My first teaching post in the early fifties was at a Secondary Modern School in an industrial area of a Home Counties town. I had not known what I was letting myself in for. After having obtained a hatful of qualifications I could have remained at university to gain a higher degree, but at the time I was tired of living on the pittance that the government allowed, whilst watching completely unqualified persons earning princely money. The post-war government, themselves mostly semi-literate or less, were not at all interested in education until they suddenly became aware of the terrible problem posed by the "Baby Boom" and then panicked into producing two-year trained teachers, anyone who could add two and two and produce any answer from three to five. The result of their negligence is still being seen today as many contemporary teachers have inherited the failings of their own teachers, a knock-on effect. I had received four years training, which in itself was minimal compared with the seven years required at that time by the "defeated" Germans!

Nothing in my own schooling had prepared me for the hostility that I encountered from some pupils at that school. At my primary and grammar schools we had all set our hearts on learning, cooperated with the staff, but here many of the boys were merely "marking-time" until they could leave school and collect the dole, and in the meantime they were going to cause as much disruption as they could. However, there was one important difference from today's similar situation; in those days a teacher could defend himself against attack.

Before I set a foot in the classroom the headmaster, "Pop" Stone, a great old fellow from whom I learnt more about teaching in one term than in all my time at college, invited me into his study. "The first handicap that most children have to overcome is their parents - and

the second is their teachers," his opening words. "These boys were taught nothing worthwhile at that 'enlightened' dump next door." (Referring to the local primary school.) "We must try at least to give them skills that will make them employable. Actually about a quarter of them go on to Grammar School from here. We're really proud of that." I was told that three music teachers had been chased from the school in the previous two terms! "But you were a sergeant in the Army so you should be able to look after yourself. Don't worry, I'll back you up." Before I left he walked over to an umbrella stand that was sprouting a number of sturdy canes. He selected one. "You'll need this. Make it tell."

That became very relevant three days later when a hulking great fifteen-year-old, the school bully and operator of a "protection racket", took a swing at me. I had been warned and he was bigger than I so I had no compunction about ducking his blow and delivering one of my own.

I went back to the piano, "Right, we'll sing it properly now, shall we?" Goggle-eyed, they did!

I carried on with the lesson and presently my attacker picked himself unsteadily off the floor. I merely pointed to his place. He staggered to his chair and collapsed on to it.

When the class left at the end of the period some boys stopped in the doorway. "Sir, were you in the army? Did you shoot anyone?"

"No. I was a sergeant in War Crimes, sending Gestapo and S.S. thugs to the gallows." They appeared suitably impressed!

My appearance in the staff-room at break was greeted with a howl of merriment and the Deputy Head came over to me. "Don't worry. 'Pop' knows and he's thrilled. You won't have any more trouble." - I did not!

However, a few weeks later I was standing behind the piano and playing whilst

a second form, a bright A-stream, was singing delightfully, when there was a sharp crack and a little round hole appeared in a pane of the window in the door behind me.

'Pop' Stone burst in. "Are you all right, Mr. Mann?" He looked very anxious, but was obviously greatly relieved to find us no more than very clearly astonished.

He examined the pane proudly. "Look. Dead centre!"

Earlier he had been told of a boy who had brought an air-pistol to school. He called the boy from a classroom up the corridor facing the door of my Music Room and confiscated the weapon. "These things can kill." Never even dreaming that the boy had had the pistol in his pocket not only loaded but cocked, Pop sighted on the pane in my door and pulled the trigger!

For a minute or two the pupils helped me to search for the ball-bearing that had neatly drilled through the glass, but we never found it.

"What have you done wrong? Pop sometimes tells us off, but he has never yet shot one of us." That staff-room was a very cheerful place, full of laughter; I never heard a cross word exchanged. Apart from a leaven of five older Department Heads, we were all in our twenties, mostly in our first appointments.

The next morning, when I opened up the grand piano on the stage in the hall I found a long strip of paper stretched along the keyboard bearing the legend, "DON'T SHOOT THE PIANIST - HE'S DOING HIS BEST."

I took it into the staffroom and held it up, "Who did this?"

The room erupted in a storm of laughter. Nobody claimed responsibility.

There was only one place for that gem. I laid it on the table on the stage upon which the headmaster's reading desk stood.

Pop entered and stalked down the length of the hall, a truly imposing giant.

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Don't Shoot the Pianist! - *Continued from page 3* Everybody stood. He mounted the steps to the stage and took his place behind the table.

I saw his shoulders tremble momentarily and then he solemnly announced the hymn.

Everything proceeded as usual: hymn; reading; prayers; announcements, including a warning of the dire penalties to be expected by any pupil daring to bring any sort of weapon to school. Pop left the stage taking that strip of paper with him.

At morning break Pop's secretary came into the staffroom cackling. "I've never heard him laugh so much. He went into his study, closed the door and roared with laughter for minutes."

The great majority of the pupils were the sons of Welsh miners who had been removed to the local trading-estate during the Depression of the thirties. "They were depressed then and have been depressed every since," one of my colleagues informed me on my first day there.

However it had its advantages for me. One morning when 1A were singing "All through the night" I saw a boy whispering to his neighbour.

I stopped playing. "What's going on there?"

"He's singing it in Welsh, sir."

"Oh, great! Will you let us hear it, please, Owen?"

The boy sang it beautifully. "We sing at home every Saturday and Sunday, sir."

"When we form a School Choir you'll be a foundation member."

"Can I too, sir?" There was a flood of requests and the lesson became an auditions session.

I went to the Head and told him that I had the makings of a choir - all thirty of Form 1A. He suggested auditioning 2A also and a week later we had our first rehearsal. I never needed to call another rehearsal. Every day I would be finishing my lunch in the staffroom when there would be a knock on the door. "Please, sir, the School Choir is waiting in the

Music Room." I would take my cup of tea to sip while rehearsing!

Possibly those boys enjoyed being spared the ordeal of the playground aggression sometimes directed at "swots" as much as I enjoyed being excused playground supervision in return for this extra teaching.

We entered the secondary and grammar schools' section of the town Music Festival and came away with the Cup as well as performing at the public concert given by the winners of each section in the Town Hall the following Saturday evening. Encores were supposed to be forbidden, but ceaseless applause gained us one - to the consternation of the organizers!

Pop came with us. "That did 'em in the eye," he grunted with gleaming eyes as we boarded the school bus afterwards. "They think we're rubbish."

I thoroughly enjoyed my first two years of teaching there, English, Mathematics and History as well as Music, until Pop retired to be replaced by a "Counsellor" from one of the new Comprehensive Schools who condemned and forbade our "repressive methods". Within a term anarchy took over. We could no longer protect those who wanted to learn from the coercion of those who did not. No break passed without some boys needing medical attention resulting from violence. The School Choir, who had also won the Cup in Pop's last year, was disbanded as being "elitist". Of course it was; real singing (not pop grunting, moaning or screeching) requires intelligence, skill, training, hard work.

There was almost a mass exodus of staff and, having satisfactorily completed my compulsory probation in a state school, I departed into the independent sector, rather like emerging from murky night into glorious sunlight! It says a lot for Pop's training of his staff that many of us later became head teachers. Moreover I never gave any boss reason to try shooting me!

For Sale



Vernoukos

The two-storey three-bedroom centrally heated home stands high above the sea, an infinity pool lies between it and the forested terraces which tumble away to the shore.

The often overused accolade 'Location, Location, Location' is richly deserved here.

Price: € 1,200,000

For Sale



Coastal near Giannades

This is a quite magnificent development overlooking the sea from a raised position, a short distance from the old village of Giannades. The property is secluded. Set on a piece of land approximately four stremmas [1 acre] in area, there are two detached villas with landscaped terraces dropping down to an infinity pool.

Price € 1,300,000

For Sale



Agios Ioannis

Set in the village of Agios Ioannis, 5 miles from town, is this new development of 4 linked-detached houses, set in a quiet corner of the village. Plans are drawn and approved and available. Building is due to commence shortly. Each house is of two storeys, comprising 100 square metres altogether, and each has its own small garden.

Price € 175,000

For Sale



Akharavi

Not far up into the hills above the lively and attractive resort of Akharavi, nestles these two detached villas, set in 1/4 acre of secluded garden. The villas are 80 and 90 square metres respectively. The smaller is two - bed roomed, the larger, three - bed roomed. In the garden also stand a small wooden house and a shed, and a barbecue.

Price € 350,000

For Sale



Kokkini Village

This well-preserved bungalow was built in 1991/2 and stands on a crest in the village of Kokkini, overlooking the valley below and the mountains fringing the sea in the west. It is 96 sq. metres with 2 bedrooms, lounge, mahogany kitchen. Outside it is surrounded by a verandah [60/70 square metres], giving splendid views.

Price: € 270,000

For Sale



Giannades

This detached house of 144 square metres lies in gardens which include a 25 square metre garage.

There is plenty of room for a swimming pool.

Price: € 280,000

For Sale**Varipatades**

This is a great little cottage in Varipatades with a lovely orchard garden and a very large outbuilding, crying out to be a grand kitchen.

See it!

Price € 70,000

For Sale**Ano Korakiana**

In an idyllic old world location, amongst the cottages of Ano Korakiana, not far from the National Paleokastritsa highway leading swiftly to town, is this splendid detached house, nestling on the mountain slopes with lovely views below. The spacious three storey house requires renovation but is very sound structurally.

Price € 77,000

For Sale**Faery Cottage**

This is definitely the time that land forgot and this one small picture is to entice the romantic amongst you to seek out this idyllic spot amongst the northern, olive-clad mountains. Come and live in this stunning terrain, and yet only ten minutes by car to the northern beaches and shops.

Price € 120,000

For Sale**Spartilas Bargain**

This cottage tucked away in the sleepy lanes of the mountain village of Spartilas is a good buy for the person who wishes to revive it to its former condition. It is basically sound and therefore well-priced. Spartilas is perched on the mountainside above Barbati with beautiful views to the sea. Well worth viewing.

Price € 30,000

For Sale**Panorama Development**

Stunning, innovative, moulded to the terraces villas, enjoying unspoilable views across the valley. Both three-bedroom villas are one hundred square metres basic with extra covered area in the linkage. The villas are centrally heated and feature spiral oak stairwells.

(See WWW site for details)

Price: € 326,000

For Sale**Hoek / Ropa Valley**

Are you adventurous? Would you like something slightly out of the ordinary? Set in a paddock of 4000 square metres, surrounded by beautiful countryside and yet only seven miles from Corfu Town, is a timber-built house dating from only 2004 together with a separate holiday cottage. The owners have further enhanced this fascinating property by adding a balcony.

Price: € 185,000