

The Agiot

43rd Edition

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4 Square Return to Agiotfest 27th August

By The Minstrel



"4 Square at Agiotfest 10"

We are thrilled to have these exciting youngsters back for the second consecutive year. Many of you who returned questionnaires from 2010 rated them highly. They will be supporting Jimmy James and the Vagabonds.

The fiery and inventive sound of alternative-folk quartet 4Square was conceived in a freezing farmhouse on the outskirts of Rochdale in the winter of 2006. Despite such humble beginnings, the band have achieved a great deal in a relatively short space of time.

Not only has 4Square's music matured into one of

the most unique and distinctive sounds you shall hear from the British folk music scene today; they have also shared stages with the likes of Steve Winwood, Joe Brown, Fairport Convention, Richard Thompson and Seth Lakeman.



"4Square...who are they?" were the words on the lips of festival-goers before Fairport's 2009 Cropredy Convention took place. Despite this, after an astounding 80 minute set and encore before an audience of 20,000 people, 4Square then went on to sell every last one of their debut album, 20.20 Manchester, becoming The Cropredy Convention's 2nd biggest selling band of all time!



Having stole the hearts of Fairport's Cropredy Convention in 2009, the preceding year was a fruitful one. They released their second album *ChronicLes* in June 2010, and in July and August 4Square took Europe by storm, playing at festivals in Denmark, The Czech Republic and Corfu in 2010, where they were very well received. They also kept up appearances in the UK, playing at several regular festival fixtures.



Sychrov CZ, August 2010

Village News

By Dr. Lionel Mann
Contributing Editor

Our new mayor has decreed that, "as a means of economising in these times of financial stringency," there shall be "black nights" when the street lights will not be switched on, doubtless to compensate for those occasions in the past when the lights have been on all day because somebody has forgotten to turn them off. It is not as bad as it sounds; during wartime "blackout" we soon found that there are very few nights so dark that "you cannot see your hand in front of your face" as long as you wait for your eyes to adjust to the dark. Into whose pockets the "saved expenditure" will be diverted has not been disclosed.

Paul and Sally Grove arrived for a long weekend in the sun, the first of the season's visitors, to be closely followed by Martin Stuart, taking

advantage of the first EasyJet flights. Paul and Sally, with Micky Clark, bringing Australian friends Stephen and Penny Beardsley with their children, returned to share in our Easter festivities. Carole and Derek Pullen, Tony Barker and Ricky Collier were also among the guests at the taverna feast.

This month follows custom by producing two public holidays, Mayday and Saint Konstantine's Day on the 21st.

Mercifully British expats have not yet introduced the primitive custom of prancing round a maypole on the former knees-up.

The celebrations on the 21st are particularly relevant to the Ionian Islands; on that day in 1864 the British, last of a long succession of occupying powers, departed, at last leaving the Corfiots to govern themselves, reunited with the mainland. That there are now at least eight-

thousand of us on the island in no way detracts from their enjoyment; we just maintain a low profile.

The Roman Emperor Konstantine is regarded as a saint only in the Eastern Orthodox Church. He was first proclaimed by his troops in York and needed to defeat in battle other claimants before acceding. He legalised Christianity throughout the Empire and moved its capital from Rome to his newly-built Constantinople, later also known as Byzantium or Istanbul, call it what you will. Understandably the Western Church has always taken a rather dim view of such junketings, especially as Constantine the Great, known to his friends as Kosta or Dino, arranged the death of his own wife and son amongst others, but clearly such practices are not universally frowned upon. Not even a saint may be expected to be perfect.

Corfu Weather Statistics

April 2011

Month's Rainfall: 25 mm
Maximum Temperature: 24C.
Minimum Temperature: -2C
Average Temperature 16C
Maximum Windspeed: 55 km/h.

Photo Corner



"Alice in Wonderland"



Springtime



Pottering in Peloponnisos

By Paul McGovern
Editor

Chapter 3: Nafplio



We stayed in the hotel this morning in Patras, as we had some work to do on the laptop and some e-mails to sort. Plugged into the room wire and away we go. It is soon mid-day and we have to vacate. Downstairs to the lounge area where we cannot get a connection. However, we discover that plugging in to the hotel network has neatly translated Office Word into the Greek language!?

After this strange experience we decide to down tools and settle our bill. We are off at 2.30 pm. Lula (softie) gives a Euro each to two Afghani beggars, only young boys in an alien environment.



We get on the toll 'motorway' Patras to Athens shambles, popu-

lated by unpredictable road-works and danger. Later on we encounter rain and dark. We splice off towards Nafplion and soon enter this oddly-laid-out town along a narrow, winding approach road. Lula scouts out a suitable hotel with a room for 50 Euros per night. Friendly concierge Dimitri, who obviously knows nothing of my Patras reputation, recommends the Kapadistra pitta parlour, which we walk to past an incredible smell of human urine near the small port. We take away our victuals to dine like princes on our small but adequate balcony.

We had set aside the following day to bring some paperwork up-to-date so it was fortunate that solid rain set in for long periods. This dampened our site-seeing ambitions. Instead, apart from a buffet breakfast downstairs at which the only other guests were two withdrawn Americans, the rest of the day we extracted full value from the cost of our Nafplio room. True, Lula popped out for two short expeditions, during the first of which she had her hair blow-dried. Apart from that our bed-sit, shower-room and small balcony were our entire universe. Brought my accounts up-to-date on my lap-top, which was perched upon the little bedside cabinet. But, try as I may, even with Pete's help over the phone, I could not establish a wi-fi connection with the hotel. And furthermore, the Word on my evil computer remains stubbornly in Greek and now takes centuries to open. Oh hum! I wrote up some ten pages of Log, and spoke on the phone to Kostas (my younger son) in England. It was good to speak to him,

though not in the Russian he is currently studying.



This afternoon music and voice was reaching us, loudly, from a P.A. system. It was coming from the nearby Nafplio football stadium. From our balcony and through the intervening trees could be glimpsed tiny patches of play, in small clearings in a jungle. Quite surreal. Pete thinks Nafplio are in the Fourth Division of the Greek league.



Ron had texted from England, 'Paul, I have made some progress but things take a long time to heal and the older you are the longer it takes. In about ten weeks from now surgery on my shoulder might be an option. It's all wait and see at the moment'.

Aunty Lula's Love-bites

Cheese and Tomato Pizza

Ingredients

For the Dough:

300g Plain Flour
1x 8g Sachet of Dry Yeast
1 tsp Sugar
½ tsp Salt
2tbsp Olive Oil
175ml Warm Water

For the Topping:

250gr Passata with 2tsp Sugar
and ½ tsp Salt added
200gr Mozzarella Cheese cut into

small pieces
10 leaves of Fresh Basil, torn
into pieces
100gr Edam Cheese, grated
2tbsp Olive Oil
A pinch of Salt and Pepper

GO:

1. Preheat the oven to 230C.
2. Combine dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl and add oil and water.
3. Knead on a floured surface until soft and pliable.
4. Return to the mixing bowl and cover with cling film and leave in a

warm spot for 30 minutes. The dough should double in size.

5. When it has risen, punch the dough once to remove air bubbles.

6. Remove from the bowl and knead gently for 1 minute.

7. Roll the dough out to desired size and spread the passata over the dough.

8. Sprinkle evenly with the mozzarella. Dot with the Basil and sprinkle with the Edam Cheese, salt and pepper and Olive Oil.

9. Immediately place the Pizza in the oven and bake for about 15 - 20 minutes or until the crust is golden brown and the cheeses are melted and bubbly.

Bon Appetit!!

Nymfes Cats in Up - Roar!!

Response to Coast to Coast article published last month:

Dear Andy (dog),

you pratt, you cannot make such harsh comments about the lovely cultured village of Nymfes. When you and your human relations were only briefly passing through. It is a village full of character and comes to life at specific parts of the day, the community are very hard working and very close knit .

From your feline friends
Its meow for now
Smokey, Thomas, Tiger, (Toms)
Pepper & Salt. (Females).



"Cats of Nymfes"

Andy, dog of the North replies:

Hello Smokey, Thomas, Tiger, Pepper and Salt,

Thank you for putting me right. You must realize that I spend most of my time cocking a leg or with my nose in the bushes and so perhaps therefore did not do Nymfes full credit.

I shall return again if I can persuade my owners to come with me and have a proper look round.

My Dad says to tell your Dad that a coach would be a great idea for the Agiotfest- 7 Euros sounds fair- and we should talk about it next time we meet.

Barks for now,

Andy.

News From the North

By Uncle Bulgaria
Contributing Editor

Easter coming, and the weather looks like it will be good. Obviously I am writing this just before Easter. I was in Scontos and Dimitra supermarkets today, is it only me I ask? but the price of simple vegetables seems to have nearly doubled in the last two weeks. Is this because a Holiday is coming and they want to capitalise, or is it just the trend and economy.

Personally, all flowers in my garden are out and I have now planted vegetables of all kinds. It is amazing what you can squeeze into a small plot. Naturally, the missus will keep it all watered!!

Just returned from Bulgaria, Have to go over once a year to pay taxes and cut the grass on my little house there. Just a small losing investment purchased when things were good. Now wish I hadn't of course. But as I have written before there were compensations with the trip. Mainly every thing seems much cheaper especially in the Hypermarkets. Every year I load the car with Vodka and bring it back, this is not duty free but tax paid, at only 10 Euros a litre for Absolute be silly not to. Never had a border problem before Bulgaria after all is EU. This time We were stopped at the Bulgarian border when leaving by the Border Police not Customs, and they searched the car.

What's in this box? the cop grunted, Vodka says I, this box?, Vodka, this box? Vodka and so on.

Big problem sez he, what sez I,

you are only allowed to take out of Bulgaria one litre of spirits. Well I nicely and gently argued that Bulgaria and Greece are EU, if there was a problem surely it would be with Greece bringing it in, not taking it out. this went back and forth for 10 minutes, he cleared of with our passports to the main building for what seems ages, then come back and said " problem ".

well, by now I am dropping hot bricks, I offered cash as an on the spot penalty, and was treated to a filthy look and rejection, maybe he thought it was a bribe!!!!

By now there is a massive build up of vehicles behind and horns are blowing so he gives back the passports and give me a wave of the hand which appeared a cross between go and park over the road and go. well we went and parked over the road waited 5 minutes and nobody seemed interested so we buggered of. then of course we get to the Greek border, where the guy glanced at the passports from a distance and waved us through so into gear just as the barrier came down , whoops the other guy in the office is on the phone and waving us to stop, BUM!! so over to the office with all documents and they come out to look in the car, but was given the all clear to proceed. WHEW!!

When I got home I check on the Internet and sure enough 1 litre of spirits duty free is all that is allowed, but looking further depending on which site you look at duty paid can be up to 10 litres per person, so I still have not managed to sus out the allowances.

I only know next year there will

be no Vodka. However Lamb over there is 5 Euros a kilo against about 11 Euros a kilo here in Corfu. This trip I bought 4 Lambs back, Next year as I will have extra room I will bring more because I could not see any restrictions on that. Baaa Baaa.

Well I hope that's not bored you, anybody wanna a buy a Cheap detached house on the Black Sea??

I am and always will be,

Obnoxious Al

Βρεκεκεκέξ κοάξ κοάξ

By
Simon Baddeley

Frog chorus from Aristophanes: *Ah, no! ah, no! Loud and louder our chant must flow. Sing if ever ye sang of yore, When in sunny and glorious days Through the rushes and marsh-flags springing On we swept, in the joy of singing Myriad-diving roundelays. Or when fleeing the storm, we went Down to the depths, and our choral song Wildly raised to a loud and long Bubble-bursting accompaniment. Brekekekex, ko-ax, ko-ax Brekekekex, ko-ax, ko-ax Brekekekex, ko-ax, ko-ax*

Tell me some lies. I am working on a modern plot for a revived version of Aristophanes' comedy 'The Frogs'. It is September in Greece. There has been one hour of rain since April. On the beautiful Ionian island of Corfu the authorities have been so anxious about water they have considered turning away the summer geese rather than face the health hazards of such gigantic flocks lacking water for their pleasures.

The gods have surrounded this paradise with a multitude of small coves facing crystalline sea, gifting men with winter rain in abundance to replenish reservoirs of water deep in the island's rocks, but the geese in their eccentric yearnings have found sea-girt shores inadequate and so, for their delectation, men have dug thousands of concrete swimming pools across the island which they fill and refill with hard water from the island's aquifers, laced, for cleanliness, with chlorine.

A progressive architect is seeking, in these times of apprehension about this waste of precious water, the coarseness of concrete swimming pools which lie empty for the winter months collecting leaves and moss, and the hazards of chlorine - revealed by EU risk analysis - to promote

[pools that imitate nature](#); pools that do not need annual emptying, regular scrubbing and refilling from mains water. He has, as an experiment, constructed, beneath the eaves of his house, which views the sea through the tops of olive trees, a [shallow edged irregular rain fed pond](#) which, in draught, he can top up economically from the mains. It is arboured by climbers, edged by flowers, with lilies, papyrus and purifying reeds lining its shallows. Above it swallows swoop. Colourful fish, small and large, swim happily in its deep but limpid centre, surfacing excitedly when anyone approaches. This pond, sun-stippled through the overhanging vine, adorns the house, providing its occupiers and their guests with the pleasure of bathing or paddling in clean, often soft, water or dipping their feet to enjoy the cool toe-kissing of golden carp. At night frogs visit. In spring it is their trysting place. The wide adoption of such ponds could solve the island's looming water crisis since they keep themselves clean all year round, need no chlorine and no refilling, making full use of winter rain, stored in adjoining sternas or reservoirs for dryer months, harbour fish that eat mosquito larvae and frogs and, being shallow edged, are safer where children are about. The architect's once friendly neighbour, has, under the goading of his envious soul and a covetous wife preoccupied by disparities in stremas between the two properties, been transformed into a [Lopachkin](#) type of orchard-chopping self-made bread-hater. The Gods, who have schemed to have the island destroyed by an over proliferation of summer geese as a lesson to men, now use him as a gadfly to punish our hero and frustrate his plans to solve the island's water crisis. Achilles, overtaken by fits of uncontrollable rage begins to hurl of impre-

cations over his neighbour's wall, then rocks, and - as the play opens one warm winded moonlit midnight - he climbs the wall, naked, hair awry, and makes a mad violent midnight physical attack on the architect and his lover, while his wife, her hair streaming, urges him on from the top of the wall, screaming through the night that she is a sorceress who mates with frogs. The police - comedic figures - have been unhasty in reaction to the gradual break down of civility, but, following report of this dramatic incident, they take note of the architect's plea for their protection. They phone Achilles from their station in the nearby town, hoping to effect a reconciliation of neighbours. However, Achilles, in his rage, uses such porcupine language to the police, the chief beetle is provoked. He rises from his night desk, summons aid, and in the gendarmerie 4x4, drives out along the dark olive lined roads to arrest Achilles and bring criminal charges against him. In the second act, Achilles' lawyer, Photis Serendipitos, an opportunist rare in his profession, has drawn up a simultaneous civil charge sheet, under article 989 AK, against his client's victim. It claims that Achilles was provoked 'beyond reason' by 'sleep deprivation' caused by the 'noise pollution of croaking from his neighbour's frog farm' which has led, collaterally, to an 'invasion of mosquitoes and toxic smells threatening his client's well being', making life 'so intolerable for him and his family' that he seeks to have his neighbour sent to prison or fined thousands of euros on each of several counts, and asks the court's permission to take such 'drastic measures' as may be necessary to end this menace (*to be continued*). *

* *

A Correction

By Dr. Lionel Mann
Contributing Editor

As one who was around at the time, I am anxious to correct the widespread popular fallacy that Britain was saved from invasion in World War Two through the participation of the U.S.A. and that the U.S.A.'s contribution affected the final outcome of the conflict against the Nazis in any way, except by hastening their defeat.

Britain was saved from invasion by the outstanding heroism and skill in the Battle of Britain of the immortal Few fighter pilots, including a half-dozen U.S. volunteers as well as Poles, Czechs and French, with Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, South Africans, Rhodesians, who in the summer of 1940 eventually rendered the daylight skies over and around the island untenable for the Luftwaffe. Lacking the protection of an air umbrella any invasion force would have been destroyed by the Royal Navy and the R.A.F. well before reaching our shores. Our enemies very wisely never risked the slightest attempt. Although coast defences were erected and the Local Defence Volunteers, later the Home Guard, was formed, we never seriously feared seeing Nazis on our doorsteps. My father was one of the first members of the LDV, "Dad's Army", and we were never deeply concerned for his safety.

My British relatives quickly rejected the offer of sending me and my sister to the security of Canadian cousins' homes, to my great relief; I was very happy and doing well at my Grammar School and had recently become organist and choirmaster of a choir of twenty-four boys at a suburban church locally famous for its music. I was

definitely not disposed to let a mindlessly ranting, moronic jumped-up ex-corporal disrupt my life. All round Britain, even after severe air-raids, "business as usual" prevailed. Through the autumn term of 1939 we attended school one day weekly, but once adequate shelters had been completed by January 1940, schooling was never disrupted; we worked in the shelters when the rare alarms were in force.

That, until airborne radar became reliable, the Luftwaffe was able to conduct mass "terror" raids under the cover of darkness was no more effective against the population than the later much more severe retaliation by the R.A.F. and the U.S.A.A.F. All inflicted damage and casualties, sometimes horribly severe, but they only served to enrage the recipients and to stiffen resolute resistance, enemy as well as friend, proving utterly false the claim that air attack itself could win a war. We underwent our terrible "Baedeker Blitz", but otherwise attacks were by single hit-and-run raiders and actually directed at legitimate military objectives, until the random V1s and V2s arrived, though we always took shelter "just in case".

Moreover, while I was sheltering under the stairs during our Blitz, as Nazi bombers cruised overhead, releasing their lethal loads, the U.S.A. was actually selling weapons, munitions and supplies to both sides, assisting the dropping of those bombs. Hitler paid with funds looted from Occupied Europe, but "The Great Champion of Democracy" bankrupted Britain to the extent that in desperation we purchased fifty obsolete destroyers, of which only five were immediately seaworthy without extensive modifi-

cation, solely by ceding to the U.S. naval bases in the Caribbean. Lend-Lease was only reluctantly granted when we were unable to pay. Until Hitler foolishly ensured his defeat by attacking Russia, a steady stream of shipping flowed from U.S. west coast ports to Vladivostok, where their cargoes were dispatched via the Trans-Siberian railway all the way to Germany, thereby avoiding our naval blockade of mainland Europe from the west.

Too, throughout the entire war some U.S. firms were sending supplies to our enemies, ostensibly to South American countries from where they were conveyed to Spain in neutral shipping and thence through occupied France to Germany. This evil treachery continued even later in the war when eventually the "Johnny-Come-Latelies" had been dragged into participating in Europe by Hitler's incredibly stupid declaration of war against the U.S.A., thereby hastening his already certain defeat. When the Luftwaffe was hacking U.S.A.A.F. bombers from the skies at the cost of thirteen or eleven lives a time there were still U.S. businesses clandestinely selling supplies to the Nazis. Hail, Holy Dollar! This skullduggery was hushed up in Britain "to preserve Allied unity", but French Resistance workers finding U.S. material in their trains were not so reticent.

Living near U.S. bases, many times I watched large orderly formations assembling overhead before setting out on a mission and hours later saw fewer aircraft returning, scattered all over the sky, some trailing smoke from burnt-out or still-raging fire, others with drooping undercarriages or feathered propellers, with holes visible from the ground.

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A Correction
Continued from Page 7

There were crash-landings all around the county. Although both the R.A.F. and the Luftwaffe had learnt the hard way that it was almost impossible for bombers to survive in enemy skies by daylight without substantial fighter escort, the arrogant and ignorant U.S. "top brass" would not listen until their losses became insupportable. Even then there was always plenty of brainless willing cannon-fodder available Stateside; it was just taking too long to train them.

The U.S.A. has always been prodigal with the lives of its young. Their armies also suffered needlessly heavy losses through having been ill-prepared for contemporary conflict. True, there were times when we wondered whether the cure were not as bad as the disease when we were invaded by a bovinely-chewing, loud-mouthed, foul-mouthed horde, "over-paid, over-sexed, over here", but no-one could dispute their blind courage.

It is doubtful that the U.S.A. would even have become involved in Europe had not Hitler declared war

on them in support of his Axis partner, Japan. The attack on Pearl Harbour and its sequels gave the U.S. plenty to worry about nearer home in the Pacific without any unnecessary distraction elsewhere.

All this, together with the great waste of lives when eventually the Allied invasions of Europe from south and west took place, was merely expediting a foregone conclusion. Anyone who attacks Russia is on a hiding to nothing. Whole armies are eroded in its vast expanses, the climate fights for the defenders, their resources in manpower and material are virtually limitless. Once the Red Army had recovered from the treacherous onslaught of "friends" with whom they had recently concluded a treaty, and halted their assaultants at the gates of Moscow, in December 1941, (when at last the U.S.A. belatedly became involved through the Japanese attack, though a whole further year elapsed before any U.S. force was anywhere near effective in the West) the outcome was inevitable. For three years the enraged Russians implacably, irresistibly, despite suffering horrific casualties, fought the thousand miles from

Moscow's suburbs to the heart of Berlin, an average of about a blood-soaked mile a day, crushing through sheer weight of numbers the most perfect military machine that the world has ever known, bringing the Nazis to abject defeat.

Sure, the U.S. involvement certainly hastened the end of the war in Europe, but to say that that without their help the British would now be speaking German is typical American arrogant hogwash. We had stopped worrying about invasion long before the U.S. was involved, although their stupid Ambassador in London (a Kennedy, no less), seeing the City burning during the "Blitz" in the winter of '40-'41, had sent back reports that we were finished. We were only just starting. Our true allies throughout the whole war were our former colonies whose young men and women flocked to fight alongside us from the very first day, 3rd September, 1939., and especially in 1940 and early 1941 when we were standing alone against Nazism while the craven U.S.A. enriched itself at our expense.

That summer: Corfu 1973

By David Orkin,
Courtesy of The Independent
Saturday, 5 July 2003

'I fell in love with the hostel, the village, the taverna...'

In 1974, at the age of 16, I bought a ticket for a two-week charter flight to Corfu and wrote to both of the island's youth hostels asking about availability for my chosen dates. Though I've yet to receive a reply from the Kondokali hostel, I did receive a friendly, positive letter from Vasili Combolitis, the manager at Aghios Ioannis. The hostel was housed in a three-storey villa built by the British in the 1860s and sur-

rounded by fields, gardens and olive groves. At the top of a hill in the centre of the island, both the building and the adjacent palm tree were visible for miles. The beaches were well over an hour's walk away.

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dens and olive groves. At the top of a hill in the centre of the island, both the building and the adjacent palm tree were visible for miles. The beaches were well over an hour's walk away.

I immediately fell in love with the place: the hostel, the village, Costa's taverna where we ate every evening, the beaches (especially Pelekas and the unspoilt Myrtiotissa), the sunny days and balmy evenings, the life. So much so that I found myself going back year after year. Sometimes I camped in the garden. You could also pitch a tent below the village in Costa's fields (known as Strawberry Fields and Cactus Hilton). There was no charge, the understanding being that you would eat your meals at his taverna.

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That summer: Corfu 1973
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Costa's taverna was the centre of village life, especially in the evenings: the food was excellent and cheap, and he, wife Nitsa and daughters Lula and Anna were loved by everyone who passed through. There was a jukebox which, in addition to a few Greek dancing favourites, had the cream of late Sixties and early Seventies rock, including classics by Neil Young, Hendrix and the Doors. Outside wobbled a heavily used table-football game - in later years we'd buy souvlakis from Nikos the Kebab Man just so that we could use the greasy paper they were wrapped in to oil the table's metal rods and keep the wooden players spinning freely.

Brits, Germans and Swedes flocked to Aghios Ioannis. Long-haul air travel was fearsomely expensive in those days, and Greece was a much-used hub on overland and sea routes. Corfu was offered as a free stopover on all the ferries between Italy and Greece. Many travellers came to the island intending just to break their journey for a night or two and ended up staying at Aghios Ioannis for the summer - and returning the following year.

In the evening, in the village, people would sit at the taverna's long tables and swap stories of their recent experiences in Goa, Malindi, Phuket, Bali, Kathmandu or Cuzco over dinner. They'd pause occasionally to feed a few drachs into the jukebox, or to wander off for a discreet smoke. Local Greek guys would strut their funky stuff, dancing with a glass on their head or perhaps a table or chair clenched between their teeth. When they'd stopped eating the furniture, they would promise undying love to any passing female traveller.

Eventually, in the small hours, Costa would turn off the jukebox and close the taverna. We'd adjourn to the hostel garden. Someone would produce a guitar and massacre the latest hit by Cat Stevens, James Taylor or Dylan.

Finally, a road down to Pelakis beach was started. The game was up.

On my last visit (in 1981) I turned up to find that the hostel had closed. I didn't have a tent with me, much to the

delight of the mosquitoes and sandflies. The Corfu bubble had finally burst.

For a few years afterwards I'd hear bits of Corfu news through the grapevine - the table-football game had fallen to bits, the jukebox had gone, the hostel had reopened as a hotel - but it eventually faded.

More than 20 years on, I decided to go back. I disembarked from the ferry to Corfu Town's harbourside. After two decades would there be any remnants of how things had been?

I found the bus stop with ease but was surprised to see that its sign said "Aghios Ioannis - For Aqualand Water Fun Park". Though Corfu is a lush and verdant isle, the village had long been known for its chronic water shortages: coming back from the beach and going for a shower only to find the water off was a daily irritation.

On the bus ride I saw that the builders had not been idle. We passed Aqualand, an incongruous, multicoloured monstrosity that looked strangely like the Pompidou Centre. It had been built on the site of a marshy pond in a field about a mile from the village.

At the Aghios Ioannis bus terminus things were familiar: Dino's Taverna (our alternative to Costa's in the evening) had become "Dino's Supermarket" and looked to have closed down relatively recently. More new buildings on the 10-minute walk to the village proper: I paused before rounding the last corner.

Amazingly it didn't look that different. The "hostel" was now the Hotel Marinda, freshly painted and with flags fluttering outside. The taverna had new white plastic tables and chairs, and there were a few more cars around. And there was Costa wiping down a table.

He saw me as I drew nearer, shouted to the kitchen and his wife and two daughters appeared. Costa was now well into his seventies. I asked about accommodation. Anna, his daughter, offered me a nice, simple room in her pension just behind the taverna, for £10 a night.

Over the next few days she helped fill in the missing Corfu years. The discovery of underground water had put an end to the shortages, and helped to

create Aqualand.

The final nail was hammered into the coffin of the "old" Aghios Ioannis nine years ago when Costa stopped allowing camping in his fields.

Anna's sister Lula had brought her English husband back to live in the village. The two women, and Anna's husband, help in the taverna. Costa still works from early morning until midnight every day.

The taverna's inside walls are covered with hundreds of photos of past revellers. A Dutch holiday company had "discovered" Aghios Ioannis and block books the rooms in the hotel (now managed once again by Vasili, and named after his daughter).

Pelekas beach has a big hotel and lots of apartment buildings: there still isn't a sealed road down to Myrtiotissa but a lot of cars and motorbikes bump down the dusty steep dirt road to the beach, where you can now hire sunbeds and umbrellas.

Virtually unknown when I'd last been there, Myrtiotissa was already busy in the middle of June. Anna said that quite a few "old-timers" still come back to visit, often bringing their partners and children to show them the mythical place associated with so many happy, faded memories.

Before the jukebox had been taken away, a bunch of Irish regulars had taped all the records on it and left the tapes at the taverna for posterity.

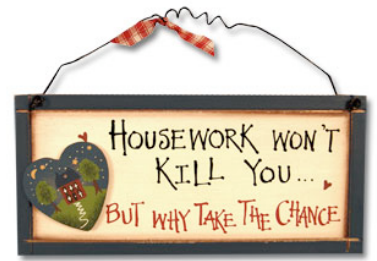
On the last evening of my pilgrimage, I sat with my back to the taverna building, persuaded Costa to play one of those tapes and looked around. The taverna's tables were occupied by quiet Dutch families with young children. The cicadas still buzzed and the evening air was full of remembered scents of jasmine and wild herbs.

It was great to come back, wonderful to see Costa, Nitsa, Lula and Anna again, to know that Myrtiotissa hadn't yet been completely ruined and that village life still meant tranquil mornings and lazy afternoons. Though I should have known better I couldn't help hankering after the crazy days I remember so well. Aghios Ioannis had grown up and mellowed, but I suppose I haven't.



Scherzando Says

Keeping Nursery Rhymes going with a Modern Update?!!!



Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall
The structure of the wall was incorrect
So he won a grand with Claims Direct.

My Living Will

Last night, my kids and I were sitting in the living room and I said to them,

“I never want to live in a vegetative state, dependent on some machine and fluids from a bottle. If that ever happens, just pull the plug.”

They got up, unplugged the computer and threw out my wine!!!

Inside every older person
is a younger person --
wondering what the
hell happened.

Cora Harvey Armstrong

Nobody can
make you feel
inferior without
your permission.

~Eleanor Roosevelt~



Of all animals in God's creation,
man is the only one who drinks
without being thirsty, eats
without being hungry and talks
without having something to
say.

John Steinbeck

When man feels
compassion
towards all living
beings, then he
will be noble.

Buda.

Complaints to Various Councils ... was this you?

- 1.. It's the dogs' mess that I find hard to swallow
- 2.. I want some repairs done to my cooker as it has backfired and burnt my knob off.

A country or civilisation can
be judged by the way it
treats its animals.

Mahatma Gandhi





Come and join a small friendly group and make a beautiful mosaic in sunny Corfu !

Learn the basics of mosaic - beginners and more experienced mosaicists welcome.

Morning workshops on a vine-shaded terrace and afternoons free to spend relaxing, walking or swimming.

Course led by Luciana Notturmi from Ravenna, North Italy - www.mosaicschool.com

North-east mountain village location with fabulous sea views, close to unspoilt beaches, olive groves and Ano Perithia, UNESCO World Heritage site.



One Week Mosaic Course in Corfu

led by Luciana Notturmi

**Sunday 26th June -
Friday 1st July 2011**



The cost of 400euros includes :

- **an evening introduction to mosaic**
- **personal tuition and support for the five mornings 9.00 - 1.00pm**
- **all the materials needed to make and carry home a beautiful mosaic**
- **refreshments including a light lunch during the course**

Village accommodation and car hire can be recommended.

**For more details
please e-mail Jane and Thelma at
corfucourses@gmail.com
or call +44 0208 852 2865**