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103rd Edition

# The Agiot



## Lionel at home

by Sophie Jensen

### This Month

Lionel.  
Pages 1-6

Village and Island News.  
Pages 6-9

Aunty Lula's Love-Bites.  
Page 10

Saturday Walks.  
Page 10

Letters to the Editor.  
Page 11

OCAV Villas.  
Page 12

Weather.  
Page 13

Video Corner.  
Page 13

Nick the Clock's World.  
Pages 14-15

Hilary's Ramblings.  
Pages 16-17

Agiotfest 2016.  
Pages 17-19

Advertisements.  
Pages 20-21

Bespoke Constructions.  
Page 22

The world of Simon.  
Page 22

Gooner's Gags.  
Pages 23-24

Conversations with Dr. McGoo.  
Page 25

The Big Bang  
Pages 26-27



# Lionel



By  
Paul McGovern

It comes to one of those times when a door closes in life. This time the door that closes is Lionel's.

It is hard to know what to say, where to start. As many of you probably know he had been ill for some time and, following medical tests on April 6th, we knew he did not have long among us.

He wanted to attend his regular meetings at the Anglican church but it was not to be; he was too weak and, day by day, he was losing appetite and growing feebler. Soon he was confined to bed and in the last couple of days he was refusing all sustenance. He passed away quietly at about 9.00. p.m. on the 20th April.

He was removed from Agios and his funeral was held on Saturday, 23rd April at the British Cemetery in Corfu Town.

A good throng of fifty or more came to say goodbye. The service was conducted by the Chaplain Jules Wilson, who gave this eulogy for Lionel [compiled by Vickie, Paul and Jules] on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, [St. Lionel's day] under majestic trees.



Lionel's Coffin  
courtesy of Mark Farrow

'It may have seemed fitting to hold his service in one of England's great Cathedrals - with the organ thundering and shaking the stones and the choir bringing the music of heaven to earth. But I know that he would be pleased that his beloved Corfu was his Cathedral - and the sounds of the life he loved here, his music.



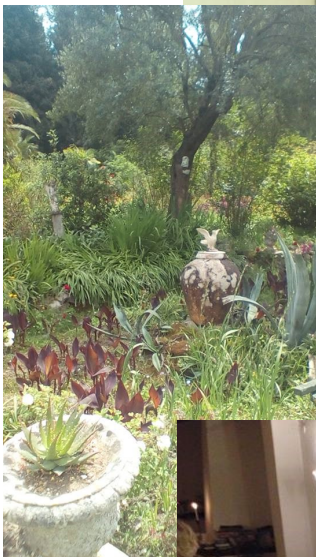
A few words about his life...

Lionel was born on March 25th, 1927 and lived in Norwich Norfolk England where at the age of 10 began his long life as a very accomplished organist and educator right through to the time of his death. I remember him telling me how he directed choirs at a very early age and as a teenager getting up at 6 am to celebrate the Saints days - leading the worship before he continued onto school.

Continued on Page 3



< British Cemetery



'Lionel's Last Christmas'





Lionel  
Continued from Page 2



From 1945 to 1948 Lionel was in the military. Sgt. LF Mann RASC was very proud of his military career and had very fond memories of that time. He was recognised for his talent during this time and became involved in the very difficult work of reconciliation and justice after the war ended. He dealt with stories that both challenged and matured his faith and outlook on life.

1948 to 1952 - After his military career he took up the scholarship he had been offered and went as a student to the Royal College of Music in London - and throughout his studies alongside some great musicians - he continued to serve his local churches as an organist.

From 1952 to 1964 he worked and taught in England after which he moved to New Zealand to take up a headship - and of course a post in one of its Cathedrals. While there, not only did his school do well, but his reputation as a musician grew and he became involved in many services for the media. From 1976 to 1994 Lionel returned to England, again to take up a new Head Master. Again, he achieved tremendous results for the children he taught and did so through excellent relationships and high expectation and belief in the children he taught. He believed in them - so they believed in themselves.

In 1994 Lionel retired and on November, 11th 1994 Lionel took up residence in Corfu. To say he loved the island is an understatement. He found friendship and family here and right into the last year of his life enjoyed his life to the full. The love and care surrounding him in his beloved village of Agios Ioannis during the last weeks are testament to the fact that in every sense, he was at home. He would always have a story to tell of some get-together or celebration in the village when he came to play on Wednesdays mornings at Holy Trinity. By now his sight was failing but that did not stop him knowing the Book of Common Prayer Service off by heart and playing the hymns from memory.

And I think too, we should remember his cats. A mixed blessing to those on the outside (!) but for him, companionship and warmth during the chilly winter nights.

Lionel was a gifted and talented man, travelled, accomplished and loved.

But maybe the two things that I will remember, even more than the beautiful and deeply spiritual

music he was able to contribute to our worship here, are these:

Firstly, his greatest delight was in the achievements he had been able to inspire others to reach. Those he taught and those he led. This, to me, is a sign that his gifts he used for others.

Secondly, the tears in his eyes when we discussed dark events in this world and the pain and sadness humanity still unleashes up on itself. This is the sign of a child of the light - a man of genuine, deep compassion and love.

So we can celebrate today a life lived well, with conviction and to the full.

Vickie, Lionel's cousin in Canada offers these words from Socrates:

*"Be of good cheer, and do not lament my passing. When you lay me down in my grave, say that you are burying my body only, and not my soul"*

### **Bible reading from the vision of John - The Revelation**

*Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels surrounding the throne and the living creatures and the elders; they numbered myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, singing with full voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slaughtered to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!'*

*Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing,*

*'To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might for ever and ever!'*

*And the four living creatures said, 'Amen!' And the elders fell down and worshipped.*

*A picture of worship in heaven - all singing glory - with full voice (Lionel would approve) - to the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who gave his life that we could know that each of us has an invitation to join that heavenly choir. And it isn't too difficult to imagine another voice there now, in the communion of the saints.*

*Lionel discussed his faith with me and described himself as a convinced Anglican! We all know he had strong opinions! But if I understood him correctly, I think he meant, as in the reading, that he believed His God deserved the very best that we can offer to Him. Not out of duty or as down payment on one of those many mansions we hear about in heaven - but out of awe and love for One who is the very source of our lives. Anything less, was simply not enough.*



Lionel  
Continued from Page 3



*And he lived by that. His life was a life, quite literally, lived in worship – think of the hours he spent in expressing the love of the divine through music – a life that created beauty and enlightenment – invoking moments of heaven on earth.*

*It meant that he could be misunderstood, that his decisions and views could create ripples around him. But this we can all be sure of. He gave the best of his God-given gifts back to God. So let us hope and pray that when we pass through the transformation of death to the life eternal, we too can say the same.'*

Rev Jules Wilson.

Chaplain, Holy Trinity, Corfu.



*'Lionel and friend'*

Ed:-

Some days before Lionel died he had stressed to me that he did not want grieving after the burial. He wanted a Wake! So that is what he got. About twenty people came back to the taverna in the plateia. The Chaplain, Jules, came too. Alexandra had brought along her laptop and, fixed up to a couple of speakers, it played a collection of Bach, Brahms and other Classics. There was abundant food and drink and the whole tone of the afternoon was jolly, just as he would have liked. The Canada Gold whiskey brought over by his cousin, and reserved by him for a special occasion, was supped by his friends to the last molecule.

We are going to miss him, that is for sure. He turned up at our back gate with a grin in 1995, and has been part of our furniture ever since Lula has been crying a lot since he died. She had been such a good

friend to him for many years, or more like a mother-hen on occasion.

In his last days he had lots of comfort and visits from Jackie and Jenny, Hilary and Lorraine from the church. One day near the end he was boasting to me that several members of his 'harem' had been ringing him.

Vickie was one, from Canada, as he was slipping away. She was just in time to talk into his ear with the phone held for him. She has been an Angel to him down the years, from far-off Canada, along with her friend Mary Ann. She would certainly have been here for the funeral if she was not herself having some health issues.

So, now he is gone. It is half past one in the morning as I type this. The room is quiet. I feel sad. I don't want to type any more for now. I'll leave it for some of his friends who sent these messages:

Alex Porteous 'He will be missed Lionel R.I.P.

Maureen Flaherty; 'We'll miss Lionel - a gentleman of the old school.'

Christina Ramage; 'R.I.P. Lionel, you will be missed by all who were fortunately blessed to have known you. ( Sarah,s mum, as I was referred to) and Sarah who adored you x'

Mel Sperling; 'Rest in peace old friend God bless you.'

Neil Hendriksen; 'Very sad to hear this news. His Agiot contributions compiled would provide a wonderful testament to his life.'

Colette Tart; 'Keith sends his condolences, we will always remember Lionel playing the organ when we stayed at Villa Theodora x'

Tony Dunford; 'You are always in my heart Lionel.'

Emily Picoulas; 'paul, am so very sorry to hear about lionel. may you always remember all the good that he was and as much a friend as you were to him..x'

Diane Carden; 'A lovely English gentleman and a pleasure to have been many times in his company. RIP'

Continued on Page 5





Lionel  
Continued from Page 4



Heather Skinner; 'far too many iconic 'big' deaths this year so far, but what's affected me more have been the ordinary 'smaller' deaths of friends that don't get the media publicity, so RIP Lionel, you wonderful talented amazing and musically supportive man from the centre of this mad little island, without you I would never have made it to sing at my first (and so far ONLY) live outdoor festival. You will be sadly missed, and next Christmas, the Carol concert will not be the same without you.'

Claire Sesay; 'What a week ... Victoria, The Purple One and in a tiny Corfiot village we heard that Dr Lionel had left this world too.

I don't know Victoria or Prince apart from their part in me knowing myself.

I know Dr Lionel because he loved cats and when I was in the Village that Time Forgot he was always sat in the sunshine outside his house or sat in the Square outside Kosta's. He recognised folk by their voice xxx

A true true gent and my love is sent to Paul and Lula on the loss of their beautiful musical friend xxx  
Lots of Love xxxxxxxx.'

Graeme Tickle; 'My St George's Day celebrations will be muted, as today in Corfu they lay to rest a fine true gentleman. God Rest Dr Lionel Mann.'

Douglas Heath; 'i know it will effect you lula and the boys more than anyone.

You made him part of your family and kept him going with your jokes.

Thanks to you and Lula for making him feel special and wanted.

That's what Lionel would want to say.'

Christopher Grossmith; 'Jules's eulogy was really excellent Lionel would be very satisfied.'

Jackie Rawlinson; 'So glad Lionel past peaceful and with no pain at end of amazing 89 yrs, very apt service and wake.. He will not be forgotten that is for sure bless him R.I.P Lionel x'



*'Lionel pictured by Paul Grove'*



*Organisation*



*Goodbye music*



*Lionel's supply*

Lionel  
Continued from Page 5



Lionel Mann  
2016



## Village and Island News

By  
The Editor

What a strange month, this April has been. A bitter-sweet one. Too many deaths, far more than the norm. Both celebrities and personal friends and relatives. It has been a cloud hovering over Agios, which we should prefer blew away.

I'm given to natural optimism, fortunately, but this month has been too sad.

It did not start that way. There was a birthday in the groves which I enjoyed muchly-the bits I remember, and a first dip in the pool this year, which I slightly remember. It was nice to have Lennart and Sanna along, the day before their five-month Corfu experiment ended.

*'The Party is  
Over' >*



We were due to take Lionel to the Doctor on the 1st of the month but, yet another death got in the way; Lilis, who used to bring his fruit and vegetables into our square in an old truck with a smoker's-cough horn, adorned in English with the sign 'Fruit and Uequetables'.

So, Lionel got to go on the 4th and then for full tests on the 6th, which turned out to be the beginning of the end.

Continued on Page 7



*Village and Island News*  
Continued from Page 6

So much happened around these major events, I can't recount them all; Suffice to say the beginning of April was a period of paper-chasing around the Corfu bureaucracy, replacing broken mowers, talking of tales of Cuba with my younger son, baby-sitting, reading, socialising, gardening, dog walking, replacing my old laptop, which finally joined the recent trend, and died, and going for personal blood tests-the results not as bad as they might have been.

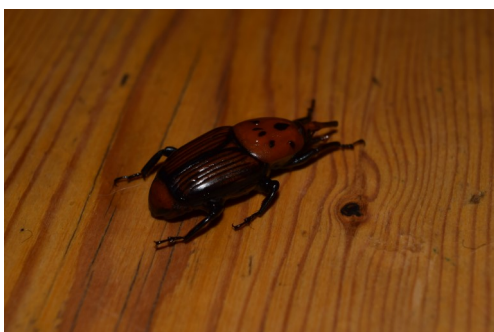


*'Dog walking  
in Spring'*  
<

*'Nautilus  
Nosh'*  
>



In the midst of death is life. The phoenika tree is struggling to throw out new fronds. Has the cure worked? We were surprised by the appearance among our washing-up by the sudden appearance of the little chap below, a culprit in this tragedy. We capture him under glass and name him Ringo. [well he-or she probably-is a Beetle]. Quite pathetically we cannot decide on his or her fate; Execution? Liberty? Life sentence? Introduction to our dogs? We don't have long to dither. Ringo passes away after a couple of days.



*'Ringo'*  
<



*'New  
'fronds'*  
<

Peter visited Prague with friends during these times. I think my two sons compete with each other for the most countries visited!

A mention for Agiot Charlie Clegg. He represents his college St. John's Oxford. They got all the way to the Final before losing to Peterhouse, Cambridge. Brilliant brains from Agios.



*'Charlie Clegg and proud family'*

I took a nice long walk to town one day; It took one hour and fifty minutes. It was so interesting to notice all the little crooks and crannies on the way in, which are rushed by in ignorance in a vehicle. On Lionel's funeral day I walked in again, though without quite the same spring in my step.

We were going to pop away on Lula's birthday [the 14th] but there is no way she would venture far from an ailing Lionel, so we had a simple lunch in the beautiful 'Unplanned and Spontaneous' Tsipourathiko in town. Lionel survived Lula's birthday, but her Aunt Katina did not, passing away on the very day.



Village and Island News  
Continued from Page 7



'Unplanned  
and  
spontaneous'  
<



'A weedless wall'  
<

'An  
enchanted  
lunch'  
>



'Villa Theodora  
ready'  
>



'Birthday  
lights'  
<



'Facelift at Anna's'  
<

Lionel's condition deteriorated as the month wore on, and the hours spent attending to him increased.

Had a last wood-fire in the lounge cosiness and read [from cover to cover] *The Tailor Of Panama*.

Sandwiched in a tooth extraction before the holiday is with us.

On the 19th Lionel takes his last-tiny-sip of Ouzo and is sedated by the Doctor. The next day he dies. And the most of the rest of April is taken up with funeral arrangements, house-clearing, cat catering and the disposing of his large organ. This latter has gone to the University [Musical Department] Thank you to Vivienne Pittendrigh for helping this to happen. On the 28th a truck came and with the hands of a half-dozen men, the hefty Ahlborn 3-manual electronic organ was hoisted onto the flat-bed, and taken away. It was as if it had never resided there for all those years.

We go to the taverna at mid-night to break Lent, but most revellers have left by now. However, Micky and his friend are there, so too are family members, Ioannis and Elsa from the plateia and Spiros the Dancer-escaped from Alison for the night!



'Corfu Easter - Liston by Sandy Karagainni



## More Easter Pictures



*'Courtesy Fotini Hatzianastasiou'*



*'Easter lights'*



*'Danilia'*



*'Smashing'*



*'The Liston'*



# Aunty Lula's Love-bites

## FIG AND HONEY DESERT PUDDING

### INGREDIENTS:

4 fresh or canned figs.  
450g strained Greek yoghurt  
4 tbsp honey  
2 tbsp chopped pistachio nuts



GO:-

1] Chop the figs and place in the bottom of four glass serving dishes.

2] Top each glass of figs with half a tub of the yoghurt. Chill until ready to serve.

3] Just before serving drizzle 1 tbsp honey over each one and sprinkle with pistachio nuts.

καλή όρεξη

## Saturday Walks

**Saturday, 7 May.** Saint Spiridon: The Headland (2 hours \*\*). Meet at Saint Spiridon Beach, 10.30 for 11.00 start. Lunch - Picnic. Please bring a dish to share with everyone (not your own sandwiches please), plus your choice of drink. NOTE: We shall picnic at a beach for swimming if the weather is nice.

**Saturday, 14 May.** Liapades: The Olive Groves (2 hours \*\*). Meet in Liapades Square, 10.00 for 10.30 start (Please park below and walk up as space is limited). Lunch at Cricketers Taverna, Liapades Beach. NOTE: Several options depending on temperature, possibly a beach.

**Saturday, 21 May.** Kato Garouna: The Parachute Walk (2 hours \*\*\*). Meet in the main square, Kato Garouna, 10.15 for 10.30 start. Lunch at Chris Place, Pentati.

NOTE: Much of this walk is in shade. Unbeatable views - Agios Gordis like a map!

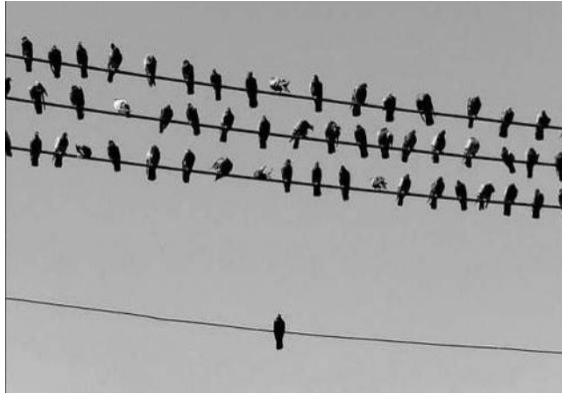
That's all Folks. See you on 24 September!



**"I always bring Rusty with me.  
A 10 minute walk equals a  
70 minute walk in dog years!"**



# Letters to the Editor



**Hilary Paipeti from Corfu mailed;**

'Happy Birthday! Hope you enjoyed your family meal at lovely Tristrato.

Saw your cars as I passed to go home after the walk - couldn't stop as the dogs needed to get home.

Your presentation of my flowers guide was wonderful. A lot of trouble went into that and I am grateful.

Hilary xx

**ED:-** You should have stopped! You are always welcome. The only reason I did not invite you was I imagined you to be stuck up in the north on your post-walk luncheon. It was a lovely day; the bits I remember! Had my first swim of the year. Tristrato was, as you say, lovely. I am glad you liked the photos, it was a pleasure and also interesting to match words with realisation. Xx

As a tribute to Lionel we are publishing his first ever article for The Agiot from August 2007

**From the Ed:-**

We were sorry to lose during the month of April;

Lillis, our former vegetable and fruit deliverer, who passed away on the first of the month.

Lula's Aunty Katina, who suffered a heart attack on 14th April.

Old Agiot Colin Wallace, who died in Edinburgh on the 27th, after a brave fight with cancer. He married his love Elaine on the day of his death, He was admitted to St. Columbus Hospice, Edinburgh on April 6th.

This was posted on Facebook by their friend Bev Wood; *I'd like to share this beautiful memory of [Colin Wallace](#) and his beautiful new wife Mrs [Elaine Wallace](#)! Sadly as we know Colin passed away last night but before he left this world Colin and Elaine made their final commitment to each other and got married at st Columbus hospice yesterday! I don't think we should overlook this as Colin didn't leave as a single unit he has left half of him behind..... as they*

*were very much a pair  
This is what  
unconditional true love  
looks like and its such  
a magical beautiful  
thing that lasts .....  
Forever no matter were  
you are you'll always be  
together! Your so  
missed Colin already  
but you now live on  
through the minds and  
hearts of many.... But*



Elaine and Colin Wallace

*especially through your beautiful dedicated wife Elaine! Shine on you crazy diamond ☺☺ Love never dies! Xx*

**AGIOS IOANNIS SAYS GOODBYE TO ANOTHER OLD FRIEND.**

You would imagine that should be enough for one year, let alone one month. But it wasn't. My dear and old friend **A n g e l o L a Bombarda**, from Italy, died on the 28th of the month.

His daughter Valeria phoned with the news. I had no words. I had known him since my mid-twenties; He was very much a second father to me. When I moved to Corfu we kept in touch; he had moved his family back to Italy from England on retirement. But it was only last year that he visited-with some of his family and friends-us here in Agios. It was a very, very special time. I'm so glad I got to hug him again. There was no sadness at our meeting because his illness was undiscovered until the Autumn. He is pictured here with his lovely wife Vittoria. [Momma].



Vittoria and Angelo

Check out our new website at [www.ocayvillascorfu.com](http://www.ocayvillascorfu.com) and Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/ocayvillas](http://www.facebook.com/ocayvillas).

For all the latest news you can subscribe to our website at the bottom of the homepage or like our Facebook page.

Thanks!

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Take a look at some of our photos of Lydia's, right in the heart of Agios Ioannis, and available for letting this summer. The improvement of this fine villa with integral apartment is almost complete. It is ideal for small parties of up to four adults [ Lydia's Apartment], up to six adults [Lydia's villa] and both combined, absolutely the space for larger family/friends groups.

Enquire here.



### Special Golf Package for Villa Guests

**€ 40** per person\*

Including:  
 18 holes **greenfee**  
 ½ set of **clubs**  
 ½ lt. mineral water  
 330ml beer or soft drink

Please ask your **Local Agents** for more information.

Book your **tee time** and...

Pay the fee on arrival at the **Club!**

*Pre-booking of the golf car is necessary*

*\*Retail price, greenfee and clubs € 65. Buggy, €30*



18-Hole International Championship  
 «One of the greatest courses in Europe» Encyclopedia of Golf  
 TSAOISSOGLIOU ENTERPRISES owners of CORFU HOLIDAY PALACE



*All new floors*



*Completely new interior*



*Fully-equipped*



*Large and safe play area*



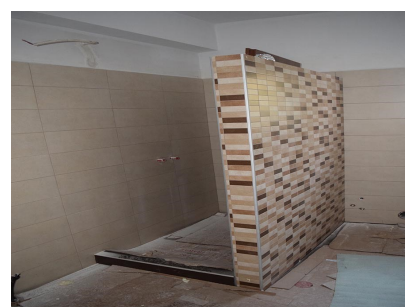
*Loads of space*



*Magnificent 50 square metre pool*



*More kitchen*



*Spacious showers*



*Undercover for the very occasional shower*



## Corfu Weather Statistics - April 2016

	Max	Avg	Min
<b>Temperature</b>			
Max Temperature	27°C	22 °C	14 °C
Mean Temperature	20 °C	17 °C	12°C
Min Temperature	16 °C	12 °C	7°C
<b>Heating Degree Days</b> (base 65)	10	3	0
<b>Cooling Degree Days</b> (base 65)	2	0	0
<b>Growing Degree Days</b> (base 50)	18	13	4
<b>Dew Point</b>	17°C	12°C	5°C
<b>Precipitation</b>	22.1 mm	1.8 mm	0.0 mm
<b>Wind</b>			
Wind	47 km/h	7 km/h	0 km/h
Gust Wind	58 km/h	46 km/h	37 km/h
<b>Sea Level Pressure</b>	1023 hPa	1013 hPa	1000 hPa



'Tickles blackmailed'

### Read more at:

[http://www.wunderground.com/history/airport/LGKR/2013/9/1/MonthlyHistory.html?req\\_city=NA&req\\_state=NA&req\\_statename=NA#PFq1VRYHlbugcTGf.99](http://www.wunderground.com/history/airport/LGKR/2013/9/1/MonthlyHistory.html?req_city=NA&req_state=NA&req_statename=NA#PFq1VRYHlbugcTGf.99)



'Fox on Corfu' - Contributed by Jenny Bignold

## Video Corner

Varafakis talking sense.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKqySLaxK4U>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIjfyGIO4xA>

STOMACH FAT LOSS

<http://www.justnaturallife.com/1-cup-a-day-melts-1cm-of-stomach-fat-away/>

Martin Armstrong ahead of the game.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin\\_A.\\_Armstrong](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_A._Armstrong)

CORFU

<https://www.facebook.com/AlternativeCorfu/videos/488972091295683/?fref=nf>

The Panama Papers

<https://projects.icij.org/panama-papers/power-players/index.html>

Overpower [Band]

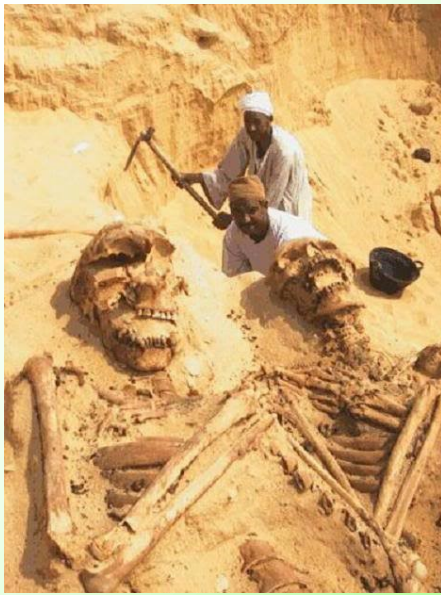
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mwx3QXMCI0U>

The Trail of the Troika

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLB3uu1IXM0>



# Nick The Clock's World (The Comic With A conscience)



This is NOT fake, not Photoshopped, no Camera Tricks and NOT the so-called "Forced Perspective"

This is one of the only three real photos of giant humans that escaped from being hidden from the public. They were secretly leaked to the Internet by rebellious Archaeologists.

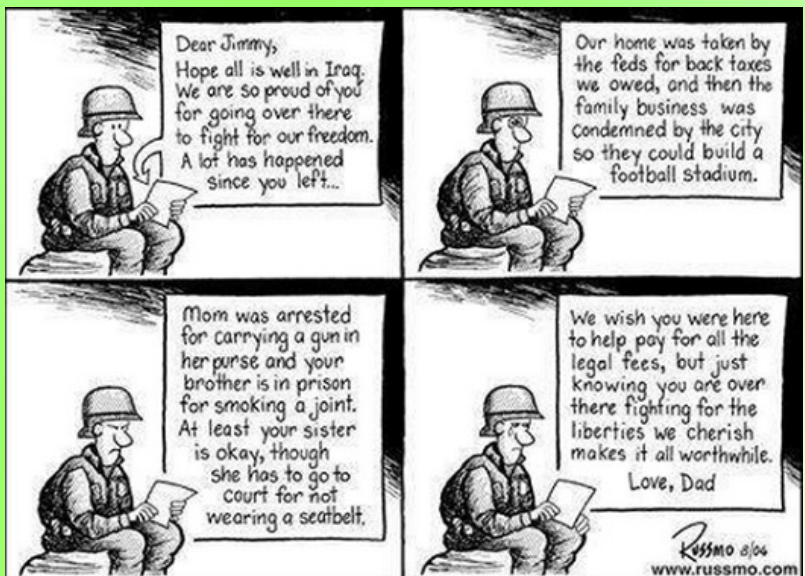
Kigali, Rwanda — According to a scientific report filed by a team of anthropologists digging in Central Africa, up to 200 gigantic alien bodies entombed for five centuries have been unearthed.

Upon the discovery, village elders urged the people to flee and some women fled screaming clutching their infants. But the African find is only the latest in a string of alien body discoveries stretching back some seventy years.

Of course these Giants were the Nephilim and they are being kept secret cause it would interfere with the lies and fake myths already made up and displayed in the media and in Greek mythology.

SO, THEY CAN  
SPEND  
**\$6,445,883**  
ON A  
COMMERCIAL  
FOR  
STARVING  
KIDS, BUT  
CAN'T FEED  
THEM?

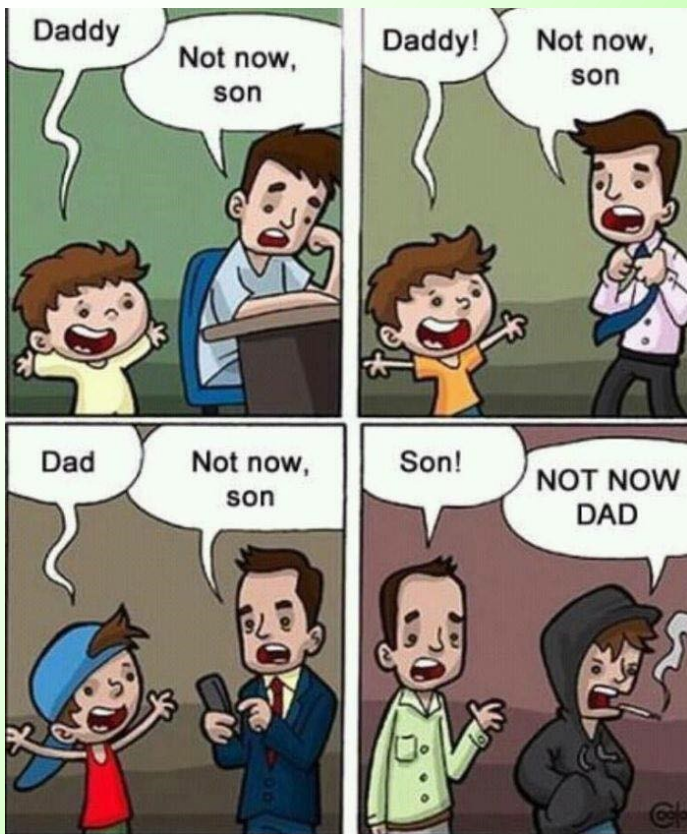
 anonews





# Nick The Clock's World

Continued from Page 14



## Two blokes are playing golf...

One of them is about to chip onto the green when he sees a funeral procession pass the course.

He stops in mid-swing, takes off his cap, closes his eyes and bows in prayer.

His friend says, *"That is the most touching thing I have ever seen. You truly are a kind man."*

The man replies, *"Yeah, well we were married 35 years."*



facebook.com/grumpyoldgits

**grump**  
© Backland Media 2016

**Paddy met Mick in the street and said, 'Paddy, in future you should draw your bedroom curtains before making love to your wife!'**

**'Why?' Paddy asked.**

*Keep Calm And Oh Feck It Enjoy Some Craic*

**'Because,' said Mick, 'all the street was sniggering when they saw you two making love yesterday.'**

**Paddy replied, 'Nosey feckers, the laugh's on them. I wasn't even home yesterday.'**

## The Bells The Bells

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oV8cUyx7uOc>

A wife treats hubby by taking him to a Strip Club for his birthday...At The Club, The Doorman Says, "Hi Jim, How are You?" The wife asks, "How does he know you?" Jim says, "Oh dear, I play football with him." Inside the Bartender Says, "The Usual, Jim?"

Jim says to Wife, "Before you say anything, He's on the Darts Team."

Next a stripper Says, "Hi Jim! Do You Crave the Special Again??"

The Wife storms out dragging Jim with her & jumps into a taxi...

The Taxi driver Says, "Hey Jimmy Boy! You picked up an ugly one this time...."

Jim's Funeral is on Sunday!!!

## The clever one

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GhwzqsCawk>

## Why bother with Taxes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E2dOIVHLiB>

***That's All Folks!***

# Hilary's Ramblings

Contributed by  
Hilary Paipeti

I WAS SURPRISED AND ENORMOUSLY DISAPPOINTED to read a recent report that the Greek government is supporting the establishment of a massive mosque in Athens. The measure will be taken on the grounds that it will be easier to supervise Muslims who congregate in a central location, rather than those worshipping in basements and back rooms, where radicalisation can go unchecked. That worked well in the UK, didn't it?

I really believed that the Greek Orthodox Church, not famed for its ecumenical nature, would protest strongly, as would its members, who in theory constitute most of the country's population. Still, this is a nation whose current prime minister was the first in history to be sworn into office in a non-religious ceremony. And I guess that the massive protests of the past against any decline in the influence of the Church are just that - in the past. I remember a good few years ago when a EU edict demanded the removal of the 'religion' category from Greek ID cards, prompting huge demonstrations at what was perceived as an attack on national and religious identity. Ironically, the demonstrators (a large proportion middle-aged and elderly women) seemed unaware that the category had been added to the 'papers' by the Nazis during their WW2 occupation in order to differentiate the Greek Orthodox from the Jewish. I guess most of them are now beyond protesting, and their places in the population have been taken by urban demi-atheists who really can't be bothered if the odd minaret appears.

I fear the Athens mosque will be the top of a very slippery slope.

MEANWHILE, THE POPE 'ADOPTS' SEVERAL MUSLIM FAMILIES, leaving Christian ones behind in Greece's island and highland camps, a vain (in both senses of the word) and empty 'grand gesture'. Not quite as grand a gesture as Merkel's open invitation of half the world to Europe, though; a gesture which has been partly responsible for the misery of those vast camps, and the hundreds of futile drownings of people thus given a false hope of welcome and wealth.

You can only do good in minute particulars, not grand gestures, remarked a very wise man.

The grandest gesture of all - and perhaps the biggest con in world history - is symbolised by New York's Statue of Liberty, a misnomer if ever there was one. The poor and oppressed of Europe who were promised streets paved with gold (sound familiar, Merkel?) were intended as no more than corporate cannon-fodder, and burdened with wage slavery instead. Only a very small fraction of the hopeful immigrants gained the promised land of riches; the

rest became nameless cogs in the vast machine of wealth production for someone else, until they were (to mix metaphors) chewed up and spat out, according to corporate convenience. Read 'The Jungle' by Upton Sinclair (available as a free e-book) to see this tragic process in action. US-style 'liberty' (now rampant in Europe too) is the belief you have a choice when the only way forward is more of the grindstone, just so you can feed the corporate maw. And all you're offered in exchange is an illusion of choice.

The poor and oppressed of the Middle East are learning the same 'grand gesture' lesson, which will do most of them no good at all.

How do the antithetical 'minute particulars' help, then? When the Albanian concrete curtain came down in the early 90s, Corfu was suddenly inundated with a wave of migrants. These genuinely were desperate people: skeletal, dressed in rags, footwear falling apart and meagre possessions in a tatty plastic bag. (Not the 'desperate' ones of Syria and places east: well fed, dressed in designer clothes and trendy sports shoes, carrying smart rucksack and smartphones.) At our office arrived one, with his small son. We put them up in a little back room and gave the father some basic work, just to tide them over until he found something better. It was a breathing space, and our adopted migrant soon found himself a paying job in the market, which in turn led him to start his own business. As a result, a local philanthropist sponsored his two sons' education in the UK, and his wife - a talented musician - secured a top post in the Ionian University.

Another migrant, a woman, arrived with nothing but two daughters and a talent for needlework. We set her up in a tiny backstreet basement with a sewing machine, and she took it from there. Freed from want and worry, her daughters made advantageous marriages and, once grown up, her son, with his own hard work and care, eventually built a waterfront hotel in Saranda.

We put up a Tirana couple in my home for a fortnight while we arranged some medical intervention not available in Albania. Unfortunately, the required result (a baby) was not forthcoming, but that 'minute particular' which was the offered hospitality might have been a life-changer for them as well.

These three examples demonstrate how a small act, whose cost in terms of money and time may be minimal - and more importantly an act that hurts no-one - can give real positive help; while in contrast the grand gesture, in Merkel's case empty political posturing, actually condemns the majority to chaos and penury.

...Continued on Page 17



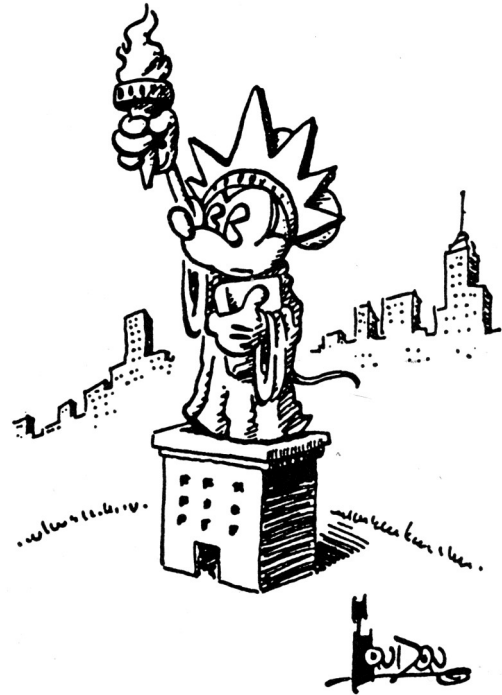
Hilary's Ramblings  
Continued from Page 16

WE USED TO CRITICISE THE LOCALS for leaving their preparations for the tourist season to the last minute. They have all winter to get ready, but never even bother to start until the first flights are imminently expected, we carped. But when you've been here a while you understand. What's the point of cleaning and painting and generally tidying, when the next storm could undo all your labour? As it does. So it's lovely to view all the locals madly at work this last April week, preparing for the opening of their hotels and businesses in time for the first arrival, which this year coincides with a very late Easter.

And it's not just their own interests they attend to. There seems to be an unspoken agreement in place, which requires no council intervention or endless indecisive committee meetings, to take care at the same time of the general resort surroundings. So someone will pick up litter, another will get out the strimmer and trim the verges, and someone else will whitewash pavement edgings and communal walls. A couple of years ago a resident got sick of the rash of potholes on his local road, and took it upon himself to fill them in with shovels of concrete. And there's always a handy guy with a chainsaw around when a tree blows over and blocks the road (the joke now goes: If it takes two men two hours to clear a fallen tree, how long will it take the council to do the same? Answers on a postcard etc.)

Maybe David Cameron should pay a 'working' visit, and find out how Big Society really functions.

MY 'PUPPY' BRAMBLE (two this month - where did the time go?) must be the greediest creature in creation. If Earth were made of dog biscuits I'm sure we'd have no planet left by now; and there'd be a gigantic black canine floating in Deep Space, wondering where his next meal was coming from. Mars? Mmmmm...



Mouse126

## KAFE SAS AND KAFE SAS TOO: GATEWAY TO THE SOUTH.

We are very pleased to announce that a new distributor has joined our ranks; Harriet Lioumba of Kafe Sas and Kafe Sas Too from Agios George [South] has now availability of tickets. Long has Agiotfest needed a committed southern partner and she looks just the ticket.



<https://www.facebook.com/Kafesas-Too-Music-Bar-St-Georges-South-292592180760952/?fref=ts>

Facebook

<http://www.kafesas.com/> website

### Harriet says this;

We have two places;

'Our other place is at the other end of St George from the taverna, it's more a tourist restaurant rather than the traditional Greek taverna. I work wherever I'm needed but based in Kafe Sas Too, ( that's what it's called). Kafe Sas taverna is quite a famous little place, it was recommended in the brochure on all Aegean flights in 2015; there has been a lot of Greek TV and music stars visit, also a lot of doctors and lawyers are regular customers from town. The food is all homemade from scratch and all the fish is delivered daily from numerous fishermen.'

Harriet is in the perfect Geographic position to look after our Southern friends. As well as being a ticket distributor, she will arrange a Southern Coach for the event. In the summer Kafesas hosts charity-based events , which I'm confident will open a new, mutually beneficial, co-operation between the south and Agiotfest, similar to the one we enjoy in the north with our colleagues at the 100+ Club.

Thank you Harriet for your belief!



Firstly, a grovelling apology to all Agiotfest fans for the admin being behind this year.

It will be caught up with this month. I am afraid a combination of life events, including funerals, a temporary loss of material through

the death of a laptop, and a very full Spring programme, has set the Admin back a bit. But not the event itself, which is an exciting prospect.

This month all Junior Sponsors will be contacted and Early-bird tickets reserved will be sorted.

The line-up will be announced. Expect the run-in over the next four months to be very lively. This is going to be some show.

## TICKET DISTRIBUTORS FOR AGIOTFEST 2016

**OCA Y Services RING (0030) 6974932408 or enquire with one of the following distributors:**

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## Agiotfest Losers' Cup

To get the ball rolling why not come to the Losers' Cup on Thursday, 19th May?

### 2016 Annual Corfu Losers Cup.

**In Support of this year's Agiotfest.**

**Ensuring good music stays alive on Corfu!**

### Great fun day for all!

Event to be held at Brook Meadow, in the village of Agios Ioannis.

On Thur 19<sup>th</sup> May, starting at approx. 11:00hrs.

Entrance by free ticket, contact 6948285043 or 6974932408 for tickets.

Or by E-mailing [3157woods@Gmail.com](mailto:3157woods@Gmail.com)

Or [mcgovern@otenet.gr](mailto:mcgovern@otenet.gr)

Closing date for tickets Mon 16<sup>th</sup> May.

Take part in the fun and laughter in competing for the famous "Corfu Losers Cup"

This year, all events at the one venue.

### Events to include -

Sack Race - Three Legged Race

Lawn Darts - Pitch & Putt

Tin Can Alley - Boules

Plus surprise events.

Entry to events not compulsory but come along and support a good cause, your support will be appreciated.

Practising before the day is strictly prohibited under Rule 19 Sub-section 2 Paragraph 19.

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Raffle to be held and all funds raised to help support this years "Agiotfest"

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*This could be you!*



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Corfu Beer

### Sunrise Cars

Discover the hidden beauties of the island with the hospitality and security of Sunrise Rent a Car. Situated on the main road opposite the customs buildings at the New Port, this company has been operating since 1980 and due to its experience can offer the best services and prices

### Nikos Pouliasis

A local and much-respected architect and Mekanikos, Mr Pouliasis has been designing houses across Corfu for many years. He is always kind, patient and fair-minded. Also, his rates are consistently competitive!



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David, Cecilia & Jackie Dickinson  
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Hotel Telesillas, Kontokoli  
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## Traditional Olive Soap

Throughout modern history soap has been a necessity in developed societies, as the primary means of hygiene and cleanliness. It also found application in medicine and pharmacology for its healing and antiseptic properties. Though things have changed, traditional soap still has the benefit of having passed the test of time: It has offered its services for many successive generations, improving the quality of life while being environmentally friendly throughout production and use. Furthermore pure soap is considered the most thorough skin cleanser since it unblocks the skin's pores by effectively removing dirt, oily substances and dead cells.

The "PATOUNIS Soap Works" with a history of over 150 years, still make handcrafted soap by traditional methods from locally produced olive products. The Corfu plant built in 1891, preserved with its functioning tools and equipment, constitutes a living memory of a splendid old local tradition.

The following soaps are made here:

- **Olive Oil Soap** is made totally of pure virgin olive oil. It has limited lathering capacity but is distinguished for its mild action on sensitive skin.
- **The Green Olive Soap** is made of olive pomace oil which contains the olive chlorophyll, is acclaimed for its disinfecting properties and wide range of applications (also good for hair and scalp, provided you use it with soft water).
- **Olive-Palm Soap** is made of 80% pure virgin olive oil and 20% edible palm kernel oil thus a mild soap with rich smooth lather.

The above soaps are made using only the basic raw material of traditional soap manufacture, i.e. naturally occurring oils, soda, sea salt and water.

## Bespoke Constructions From Ocaj Property

Since 1999 we have been improving-some call it renovating-older Corfu properties.

Following on from there we have been mixing this with the construction of brand new villas, always with an eye on traditional style.

Every one of our builds is unique, we do not duplicate a pattern, and each is a combination of the customers' dream and our own enthusiasm.

From these two points we think we have created something warm and special in providing people with their ideal Corfu home at a cost they are comfortable with from outset. We make it a point of providing a quote, rather than estimates, with most of our building work.

For those of you living in the U.K. or Continental Europe, we send reports and photographs, on a weekly basis.

You need to know what is happening with your investment, when you are not here.

The builds are conducted at the pace you want and with an instalment plan to suit the individual. We can supply references from satisfied customers with their e-

mail addresses.

There are suitable plots of lands at reasonable prices in Corfu, on which we offer an A-Z service in your purchase of and development.

We can lead you through the whole process, inclusive of banks, tax offices, lawyers, utility companies etc...

Mail in with your enquiry and interest and we can take it from there.

We are dedicated to fulfilling your Corfu dream with a home which stands apart from the ranks.



*'A dream coming true'*

## The World of Simon



Amy and Guy and my grandchildren arrived earlier. Now we'd just picked up Richard, my son, from Kapodistria. Adding a special spice to my joy at having most of my family with me on Corfu we headed south to the hill on which Pelekas is built. Winding up we

come to a pleasant summit next to the Levant Hotel with in late April room to park and stroll, and a terrace on which to enjoy drinks and coffee. A strong chill wind drove us inside the wood panelled bar where Richard and I played chess while Oliver tried to understand names like 'knight' and 'rook', 'bishop' and 'pawn'. We'd already enjoyed clambering up to the ever-so-slightly vertiginous structure - Kaiser's Throne (if only that had been all he wanted) - that offers a panorama of most of the centre of Corfu from the northern ranges of Trompetta to Pantokrator, the Ionian Sea from Nisaki opposite Albania, to the distant mainland beyond Igoumenitsa, round, via a distant view of the city, to the island's west coast cliffs facing the white horses of the rolling Adriatic.



# Gooners Gags

Dogs can sleep anywhere

<http://www.someecards.com/cute/animals/15-photos-that-prove-dogs-can-fall-asleep-anywhere/>



*Old London*

[http://www.youtube.com/embed/O\\_me3NrPMh8](http://www.youtube.com/embed/O_me3NrPMh8)

*Whoever stole my trainers whilst I was on the bouncy castle, just grow up!*

*Just bought an ABBA toilet....what a loo!*

*I've swapped our bed for a trampoline. My wife hit the roof!*

*Got a new Jack Russell pup today. He's mainly black and brown with just a small white area. I've called him England.*

A group of 2nd, 3rd and 4th graders, accompanied by two female teachers went on a field trip to the local racetrack to learn about thoroughbred horses, but mostly to see the horses.

When it was time to take the children to the bathroom, it was decided that the girls would go with one teacher and the boys would go with the other.

The teacher assigned to the boys was waiting outside the men's room when one of the boys came out and told her that none of them could reach the urinal. Having no choice, she went inside, helped the boys with their pants, and began hoisting the little boys up one by one, holding on to their 'wee-wees' to direct the flow away from their clothes.

As she lifted one little guy, she couldn't help but notice that he was unusually well endowed. Trying not to show that she was staring, the teacher said, "You must be in the 4th grade."

"No, ma'am," he replied. "I'm riding Silver Arrow in the seventh race, but I appreciate your help."



## Gooners Gags Continued from page 23

*Sarah was in the fertilized egg business. She had several hundred young pullets and ten roosters to fertilize the eggs.*

*She kept records and any rooster not performing went into the soup pot and was replaced.*

*This took a lot of time, so she bought some tiny bells and attached them to her roosters. Each bell had a different tone, so she could tell from a distance which rooster was performing. Now, she could sit on the porch and fill out an efficiency report by just listening to the bells.*

*Sarah's favourite rooster, old Butch, was a very fine specimen but, this morning she noticed old Butch's bell hadn't rung at all! When she went to investigate, she saw the other roosters were busy chasing pullets, bells-a-ringing, but the pullets hearing the roosters coming, would run for cover.*

*To Sarah's amazement, old Butch had his bell in his beak, so it couldn't ring. He'd sneak up on a pullet, do his job, and walk on to the next one.*

*Sarah was so proud of old Butch,*

*she entered him in a Show and he became an overnight sensation among the judges.*

*The result was the judges not only awarded old Butch the "No Bell Peace Prize" they also awarded him the "Pulletsurprise" as well.*

*Clearly old Butch was a politician in the making. Who else but a politician could figure out how to win two of the most coveted awards on our planet by being the best at sneaking up on the unsuspecting populace and screwing them when they weren't paying attention?*

*Vote carefully in the next election. You can't always hear the bells.*



# Conversations with Dr McGoo

BY LANCE MAGNUSSON

## Dr Magoo Goes to the Cinema

I can't say I am enamoured in any way by the cinema. After all, my career in Deep Philosophical Thinking has not left me much time to indulge in such lowbrow pursuits.

Someone once took me to see a documentary about the sinking of some large ship called the Gigantic, or something like that (of course, I only agreed to go along because it was a documentary - from which I could learn something to add to my fabulously large fount of knowledge - not one of those dreadful American movies!). I understand that at the time it was the top-ranked documentary ever made, though I can't think why! It must have been filmed when the ship was holding some sort of theme party, because everyone was dressed in funny old-fashioned clothes. The ship didn't look like one of those down at our port here in Corfu, either, but I suppose some marine designers remain steadfastly old-school in their concepts. But what I really don't get is why, when the Titanic or whatever it was called (who cares, anyway?) hit that iceberg, not a single person on the ship had a mobile phone to call the coastguard! You really can take a theme party too far, but - I ask you - didn't even the camera crew have one between them? And judging by the number of different shots of the proceedings, there must have been an awful lot of cameramen!

I like railway documentaries better than maritime ones. When I was a teenager, my favourite was 'Wagon Train' on the TV, though for some reason the carriages were pulled by horses not by steam engines, and they didn't have rails like they do in the UK. Still, that's the stupid Americans for you - they take a perfectly decent invention of ours and stuff it up!

Someone said that as I like trains I should watch some programme called Brief Encounter, which apparently happened in a railway station somewhere in the North of England. I hadn't realised that the railway system extended as far as that, because according to some romances my horrid sister likes, by three soppy bimbos who live in that area, no-one even has cars up there! One day I noticed that Brief Encounter was on the telly (this was when I lived in Blighty, before I fully integrated with the population of Corfu, somewhere in Europe) and I thought: I'll give it a go, as it is about trains. Well! What a disappointment! The 'trains' I had expected were not at all like the ones I grew up with. They floated in the air and moved around very fast and had lots of bright lights, and I couldn't follow the plot anyway. One bit was about some guy building a mud mountain in his lounge - I ask you! What's that to do with anything? I don't understand why modern documentaries can't just stick to the subject - trains! - instead of jumping about all over the place. And why do they insist on placing this fascinating subject matter (namely trains, albeit very modern ones with bright lights, that don't need rails!) into some silly narrative involving the main characters meeting bald people in silvery suits. Was it another theme party?

They didn't do this in Charlie Chaplin's day! There was a documentary presenter who shows up today's amateurs! Held up a true mirror to the plight of poverty-stricken folk in America! Though I can't understand why they didn't call for a McDonald's or KFC or Pizza Hut if they were so hungry.

I was invited to a home here once, because they wanted to show me a documentary that was partly filmed in Corfu, at the Aching-Lion Palace (I guess Empress Sisi, who built it, named it like this because she was really really sad, and because she liked to collect statues of large females). It turned out to be yet another of those themed thingies, where everyone was in old-fashioned clothes again - similar to the ones in the Totemic programme; did they recycle the costumes? It was in German. Great language, invented by the greatest, most industrious people the world has ever known, and is ever likely to know! Pity I don't speak a word of it. As a result, I wasn't sure exactly what was going on, being better versed in science than current affairs (as reflected by my world-exalted Doctorate in Theoretical Particle Physics - but I've already mentioned that a couple of times in passing). Mine host pointed out that one of the people in the documentary was the King of Germany. I replied, I didn't realise that they had a king in Germany. He sighed (most patronisingly - do these stupid ignorant Greeks think they are cleverer than us or something?) and replied, Germany USED to have a King, but it doesn't have one today. Oh, I get it, I declared! That guy in the funny clothes USED to be the King of Germany, and now he's appearing in a documentary! Why didn't you say so in the first place?

Though I prefer them as a genre to stupid fictional movies, one aspect I can't stand about documentaries is that they are often confusing. There's a bloke or a bird in a studio talking to people, then suddenly they are out on the street talking to different people. How did they get there so fast? Did they sprint? Maybe that's what commercial breaks are for - so they have more time to get from place to place. Or location to location as those in the know, like me, say.

Back to my favourite train documentary - Wagon Train! I always liked those scenes when the train forms a circle (you can do that if you don't have tracks - one advantage the American railroad system has over ours!) and all the Indians ride around and around getting shot. I am quite surprised, though, at how many of those Indians signed up to take part in this documentary series, knowing they could possibly be killed. This of course must be how the Americans got rid of the continent's native peoples. It's all perfectly obvious when you're as brainy as me!



# The Big Bang

By  
Dr. Lionel Mann

I wonder if today's schoolchildren realize of how much fun, adventure and learning they are being deprived by the current insistence upon over-regulation, feather-bedding, egalitarianism, "freedom" and litigation, "Perry Mason claims". Remembering how we used to race around the streets, the heath and woodland on our bicycles without any protective wear, at the expense of grazed knees, noses and elbows; climb trees or anything else that offered a challenge; play cricket and hockey with no padding; in the light of today's thinking it is amazing that any of us lived to become eighteen let alone nearly eighty. I have recently discovered that many of my school-fellows have also reached impressive ages. At Grammar School even we Classics pupils worked in pairs in Science laboratories at benches equipped with sinks and Bunsen burners, taught to handle razor-sharp and needle-pointed instruments, toxic chemicals, highly corrosive acids, and a wide range of apparatus. In the woodwork and metalwork shops we used chisels, files, drills, lathes without any protective clothing save an apron and goggles and gloves when at a lathe or soldering and welding. True, we obeyed our teachers, for the cane, birch or expulsion were powerful deterrent of disobedience, but also we were desperate to gain university entrance in an age when such was an eagerly-sought, hard-earned privilege not a cheap "right". Moreover we respected our teachers for their erudition together with their obvious utter devotion to our welfare and learning. Learning under such conditions was fun and adventure. On the Classics side we received eighty-minute lessons weekly each of Biology, Physics and Chemistry. Our Science brethren received forty minutes extra weekly of each subject but were deprived of the delight of learning Latin for equivalent time. One never-to-be-forgotten morning our Chemistry master set up an apparatus for producing hydrogen and another to produce oxygen. We watched as he filled an old sturdy elliptical fizzy-lemonade bottle with two-thirds of the first, one-third of the second. Then he banished all thirty of us to the far end of the laboratory while he donned protective clothing. Holding the bottle at arm's length out of the window, he removed the stopper and plunged a lighted taper inside, resulting in a very satisfactory explosion. "That's the oxygen-hydrogen explosion, almost certainly how

the water, H-two-O, on the earth was formed in the Big Bang that started the universe." That started me thinking: air contains oxygen and the coal gas then piped into most homes contained hydrogen; how to bring them together without reducing No.1 Heath Road to a pile of rubble? Because mother had left us and father was away supervising building airfields for the Ministry of Works I was living with my grandparents. One Saturday afternoon when both, as well as Aunt Louise and Uncle Lionel, were out I scavenged an empty cocoa tin from the dustbin and knocked a nail-hole in its base. With a finger over the hole I held it inverted over a ring of the gas-stove in the kitchen and turned on the gas for about five seconds to fill the tin by upward displacement, coal gas being lighter than air. Placing the tin, still inverted, upon the stone floor but slightly tilted with a matchstick under the rim, I withdrew my finger and applied a previously lighted taper to the hole. Pop! The tin fell on its side. It worked! Next time I tried ten seconds of gas, resulting in an even louder POP and the tin jumping about a foot into the air. Emboldened I went for the big time and tried thirty seconds of gas. To my surprise when I applied the taper a small tongue of flame ignited from the hole. As I watched the flame diminished until it was merely a flicker and I was about to pick up the tin when, with a very satisfying BANG, it shot up and made a circular indentation in the ceiling. Inspecting the tin I saw a few droplets of moisture inside it - water! Again I filled for thirty seconds, slid a piece of card beneath the tin and took it outside the back door. Once more applying the taper produced a steadily reducing tongue of flame and I realized that it was simply excess gas burning away until the critical two-to-one proportion of gas to air was reached. The resulting explosion sent the tin up to the height of the bedroom windows. That was enough for one session. I just hoped that nobody would notice the circle on the kitchen ceiling and was virtuously playing the piano when grandparents returned. "Lionel, can you smell gas?" Grandmother's anxious query. I sniffed. "No, I think it's grandfather's cigars." The old boy practically chain-smoked mini-cigars that permeated the entire house with a rather pleasant aroma.

Continued on Page 27



The Big Bang  
Continued from Page 26

Grandmother was apparently satisfied and nobody ever mentioned the circular mark on the kitchen ceiling. Continued on page 4 AUGUST 2007 SINCE AUGUST 2007 Page 4 Whenever opportunity presented itself over the following months I graduated from cocoa tins, through powdered-egg tins, dried-milk tins (wartime “delicacies”) and one-gallon paint-cans to two-gallon paint-cans. Until the war had conscripted his employees grandfather had run a building business; plenty of relics remained. It was a two-gallon can that led to my downfall. Grandparents and uncle were out and aunt was thought to be engrossed in her tapestry-work in the lounge at the far end of the big house. I was sending that can soaring above the rooftops. “Lionel, has the air-raid warning sounded?” Aunt Louise erupted from the back door. “No. Why?” A picture of innocence. “The windows rattled. What are you doing?” I tried unsuccessfully to enthuse my aunt to the sight of a can flying around the chimneys. Further “experiments” were forbidden. The way of a pioneer is always hard. A few weeks earlier our school music master had been rushed to hospital with peritonitis. He was also organist-choirmaster of a suburban church locally renowned for its music. As they were wheeling him out to the ambulance he gasped, “Phone Mann. He’ll play at St. Martin’s tomorrow.” Thus at the tender age of twelve I became an organist and choirmaster of a choir of twenty-four boys, some older than I and many bigger. They regarded me dubiously, but were determined to maintain their high standard and made sure that I learnt my job quickly. Certainly our standing-room-only congregations at choral services did not diminish. It was a custom at St. Martin’s that after Evensong on the first Sunday of every month each church organization in turn would give an entertainment in the church hall. Before long it became the turn of the choir. Naturally we should sing a song or two, but the boys also wanted to stage a play, rather prophetically about blowing up Hitler. I declined an acting role; play-reading in school had shown that anything even remotely ludicrous reduced me to helpless giggles, unable to participate further. But they wanted an explosion; I undertook to provide that, citing long experience. It was right up my street! Rather than to bring anything from home I prospected local resources. The door to the hall kitchen was right next to the stage and in the kitchen I discovered a gas-stove, a table and a five-gallon tea urn. It exceeded my greatest wishes; I fairly drooled at the thought of what I could do with such bounty. However I refused to provide an advance demonstration. “Just time your script and tell me when you are ten minutes from explosion time.” The producer-prompter stuck his head through the doorway and hissed, “Ten minutes.” I already had the urn, lid

removed, still damp from having produced more than two hundred cups of tea, inverted over a ring on the stove. For five minutes I left the gas tap on, filling the urn. It was all very rule-of-thumb business, but by now I was fairly confident that I could judge these matters with reasonable accuracy. However when I had carefully lifted the urn on to the table, pencil under the rim to tilt it slightly, affording entry to air, and turned on the tap, now near the top and facing upward, I was amazed at the size of the two-foot tongue of flame that resulted when I lit the escaping gas. Anxiously watching the slowly diminishing flame I kept glancing at my watch. Had I guessed correctly? I heard the punch-line, cue for the explosion, and the prompter looked urgently through the door. The flame was now a mere flicker in the mouth of the tap and I nodded. The punch-line was repeated. There was an almighty crash as the urn exploded. The bottom (now the top) peeled back as if by a massive can-opener; the tap shot off to imbed itself in the brick wall; two windows, protected against shattering by strips of transparent adhesive tape, vanished completely, frames and all; the entire audience, from experience of having been bombed, threw themselves face down on to the floor, hands covering backs of necks; the cast was paralytic with laughter. When the boys had recovered they crammed into the kitchen. Their mouths moved but I could hear nothing, temporarily deafened. However it was obvious that they had revised their opinion of me. I would suit them down to the ground. Very few choirs had mentors who made Guy Fawkes look a rank amateur. Entry to my form-room at school the next morning was met by a howl of merriment and then a flood of questions. News had travelled fast; some of my choristers attended the same school as I. Later in the morning, moving along a corridor between lessons, I came face-to-face with the Chemistry master. He just pointed at me and roared with laughter. Already my hearing was almost back to normal. A new urn was purchased, the kitchen repaired, but I was not even reproved for my expensive sound-effects. After all the choir was largely responsible for the overflow attendances at St. Martin’s and the resulting very sound parish finances. Moreover a couple of weeks later the churchwardens enjoyed a much wider reading than usual for their Annual Report by starting, “Our organist has demolished the church hall kitchen, using an explosive tea-urn.”