

P-O Life

Life in the Pyrénées Orientales

Walk the Region
**THE MACKINTOSH'S
ENCHANTED VALLEY**

Perfect Picnics
PRIEURE DE SERRABONE

SPRING 2014
FREE / GRATUIT N° 43



**AMÉLIOREZ VOTRE ANGLAIS
AND TEST YOUR FRENCH**

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Edito

If you've wintered in the PO this year, you're probably feeling a little smug right now. Day after day of winter sunshine in January and February, early mimosa, daffodils, hyacinths, almond blossom and even a premature peek from some rather over confident cherry blossom...elle n'est pas belle la vie?

Hope the sun is still shining on you.

In another cracking edition of P-O Life, John Fairclough scours the airlines to lay out the spring flight choices, Louise and Fiona check out the restaurant scene, Linda cooks up some garlic soup, Elaine Koerner takes a bite of a Céret cherry and Henry explores the regional art galleries.

For walkers and ramblers, Katja says a little prayer for P-O picnics, Ted and Kate Hiscock take us on another stunning Port Vendres walk and I think you will agree that P-O Life is once again victorious when we visit Villefranche de Conflent with Victoria Barbé and the Marine centre at Banyuls sur Mer with Victoria Blyth.

As for me...I just love being a part of it all

Joyeux Printemps!

Kate

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Walk the region...

With Ted and Kate Hiscock



“VALL DE PINTES” OR “THE MACKINTOSH’S ENCHANTED VALLEY” (9km 5.5m) approx. 2.4 hours

The Walk: Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his wife Margaret called this “The Enchanted Valley” and considered it their favourite walk in the late 1920s when they lived in Port Vendres.

Start at the Place de l’Obelisque in Port Vendres, cross to rue de Pams and take the first ramp of steps on the right up to the second street, turning left on to Rue Louis Blanc to the Place Belieu, then follow the street Rue Pasteur down the hill and up the other side to the cross roads where you take a left into Rue Camille Pelletan, which soon opens out to a square.

Take the first road on the right, rue Paquebots, and after 100 metres an ancient relic of a cobbled path leads to the left, and up to a sharp bend in the road. Immediately in front, a survivor of the Belle Epoque majestically stands high above with its architectural



ornaments surprisingly intact considering the grim times it must have witnessed during 1944 when all around was blitzed as the retreating German army covered its tracks.

Turn left out of the cobbled path, the narrow road bends and drops down past a hotel and sleepy railway station.

Continue straight ahead into the Rue Val de Pintes.

Follow this road past the recreation park on the left and where a fork in the road appears, proceed left under the railway and as the land begins to rise, take the left track.

For the next ¾ km the track steadily rises. The verges are rich with wild flowers and herbs of all varieties whilst greenfinches and warblers sing in the pine trees.

As the track rises, it parallels the main N114 running almost inaudibly on a raised bank some

metres above until a hairpin bend in our track tears off to the left and rapidly climbs to immediately beneath the main road. Pass through a corrugated tunnel, take a sharp right turn on the other side, and once again walk parallel to the main road, but this time the road gradually rises higher than the speeding traffic.

As it rises, the climb becomes quite steep and the road quality rather dubious, but follow it until it passes across the mouth of the tunnel of Raixat and where the tarmac is completely replaced by chippings, ravines and stones, take the left track and climb steadily, winding steeply with a cork oak wood on the left.

As the steep incline levels at the top of the Coll d’en Raixat, walk a few metres to the right, to the road junction, for fabulous views.

Turn back and take the right fork, following the contours around the mountain in a slight but easy rise, passing a memorial to a brave young fireman who lost his life at this spot whilst fighting mountain fires in 1976.

Soon after this shrine, the track turns to the right and Tour de Madeloc looms on the skyline. The track drops down to the D86a and the route turns left on to tarmac again and gently rises between cork oaks and newly planted olive trees for a short distance.

It is then possible to take a footpath that drops to a few metres lower than the road

Don’t forget your sandwiches!
Did you know that the word companion (copain in French or compañero in Spanish) actually comes from the Latin ‘companionem’, meaning ‘one with whom you would eat bread’ - ‘con’ (with) and ‘pan’ (bread)?

but continues parallel to it, but the track is rough and exposed and at times of strong wind, the higher metallated D86a is safer as it winds along the southern edge of the Val de Pintes.

After about 2km, the road reaches a sharp turn to the left at the head of a V shaped valley “Coll de Perdiguer” Whilst the Randonnée signs go off to the right, our path follows a small, narrow, and rough footpath to the left, in the sharp bend of the road, which soon turns into



Look out for Ted’s fabulous exhibition of charcoal, ink sketches and paintings in gouache and oil, entitled ‘Vins, Vignes & Vignerons’ to be displayed in October in the museum of the old Nobel dynamite factory at Paulilles. More details in the autumn edition

a charming unspoilt ancient track between vines on the left, and garrigue to the right.

At the bottom of the hill, the path takes a sudden turn to the right and joins a modern but quiet road that rises to the new housing development to the right. Take this incline to the first corner where the path takes off to the left and drops down to the busy N114 where a right turn takes the walk to the road junction by Le Cedre Hotel and then a left winds down into Port Vendres along the harbour and back to Place de l’Obelisque.

ro.☀️

Did you know...?



April showers

Watch out for, 'une giboulée', quick and often heavy shower which can suddenly change a fine spring day back into winter.



Mayday flower power

On 1st May, offer a little bouquet of Lily-of-the-Valley (Muguet) to wish springtime happiness & good luck. This is the only day of the year in France that anybody can legally set up shop or stall and sell flowers.

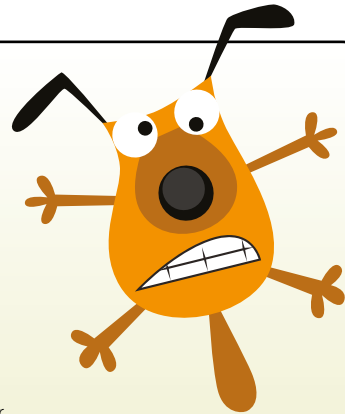
YOUPI, IT'S CARNIVAL TIME

It's carnival time in the P-O with processions all over the P-O – fancy dress, street parades, fireworks, singing, dancing.....along with the symbolic burning of evil spirits.

The word 'carnival' is often interpreted as coming from the Latin 'carne vale', meaning 'farewell to meat' but it is also believed to stem from 'carrus navels' the 'naval car' or ship, which carried the Gods to the winter feasts. The medieval Church reinterpreted this as the Ship of Fools, on which sinners sail to their deaths, and so was born the carnival float.



Pain in the grass!



Does your dog love running around in long grass?

Keep an eye out for signs of him shaking his head violently, or pawing his ear, as this could mean that a seed of foxtail barley or similar species of grass has entered his ear. If not removed, this can cause infection and even perforate the eardrum. Seeds can become embedded in the paw, or even eyes and nose, all of which can be very harmful to your dog (and to your wallet if you have to visit the vet). Take particular care where grass has been cut, and had time to dry

USAP honours

Aimé Giral, home ground of rugby team USAP, is named in honour of the young fly-half of the immediately pre First World War Perpignan team that won the French championship, and then went on to be wiped out in the following months of war. To this day, USAP play in a light blue jersey that is the same colour as that worn by the French soldiers in that conflict.



Getting down & dirty...

Look out for 'calçots' (pronounced cal-show), a variety of long, thick green onion (rather like skinny leeks) that have their peak season in January, February, and March. Or even better, watch the events news for a calçotada' in a village near you.

These delicious onions are normally cooked on a barbecue, turned until entirely blackened outside and soft and sweet inside, dipped into sauce, and held above the head before being lowered into the mouth. A delightful mess-fest.

Calçotadas

Toulouges – Sun 16th March

For charity – 04 68 85 04 53

Tresserre – Sun 9th March



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SPRING PARADES AND TRADITIONS



Procession de la Sanch Friday 18th April (Good Friday) Perpignan

The Procession de la Sanch takes place every 'Vendredi Saint', (Good Friday), and opens the celebration of the Easter Holy week. The brotherhood of "La Sanch" (the blood) was founded in 1416 by Vincent Ferrier at the church of St Jacques in Perpignan, its origin to assist and accompany the condemned to their execution. The death penalty has long since been abolished, but the Sanch lives

on in Perpignan, a procession of sinister black and red hooded and robed figures who march slowly through the silent streets of Perpignan. to the solemn beat of black veiled tambourines.

Night processions also take place in Collioure and Arles-sur-Tech (21h00)

Les Reginas Sunday April 20th (Easter Sunday) Ille-sur-Tet

Coll and Colomer were two talented composers from Ille-sur-Tet who wrote 'Réginas', religious music for Easter.

Whilst Perpignan, Collioure and Arles are parading death, Ille sur Têt announces life and the beginnings of spring. This age old Illois custom involves the solemn meeting of statues, and a 130 strong choir, accompanied by 40 musicians blasting out the Régina de Coll, and the Régine de Colomer, a moving spectacle for believers and non believers alike.



Festival of Sant Jordi, the book & the rose On or around April 23rd

"A rose for love and a book forever."

The rose: According to the legend, when Sant Jordi, Patron saint of Catalonia, killed the dragon, roses grew from the ground where its blood had been shed.

The book: April 23rd is the anniversary of the death of two great writers, CERVANTES (Don Quixote) and SHAKESPEARE, so it was not by coincidence that UNESCO declared this date the International Day of the Book, a day to read, honour and offer books to friends and loved ones.

Bank holidays

The many bank holidays in April and May are a joy to schoolchildren...but less so to parents, and trades people! Often extended into a long weekend if the holiday falls on a Tuesday or a Thursday, many businesses will 'faire le pont' and take the Monday or the Friday off as well. (Major chains unlikely to do this)

April 13th : Easter Monday (Lundi de Pâques).

1st May : May Day (La Fête du Travail)

8th May: La Fête de la Victoire 1945 (WW2 Victory Day)

21st May : Ascension - the fortieth day of Easter (Le Jour de l'Ascension)

31st May : Whit Sunday (Pentecôte)

1st June : Whit Monday (Lundi de Pentecôte)

School holidays for our region

Half term - 26th April - 12th May (Zone A)

Don't forget to turn your clocks forward - Sunday March 30th 2014

Clocks go forward one hour (during the night of Saturday/ Sunday morning).



Sunday, May 25, 2014



For Life's Journey

Benjamin Franklin once said:

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- Who will pay for your funeral and take care of the formalities?
- Do you want to leave money to loved ones other than your children?

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To find out more speak with Christophe on :

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Agence des Albères

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Fête du Muguet & Fête du Travail May 1st

As well as offering your loved ones lily-of-the-valley (Muguet) on May 1st, this date is also the Fête du Travail, historically a day of parades, protests and parties for workers to demonstrate or celebrate battles and causes fought and won in years gone by. In the 19th century, demonstrating workers would wear a red triangle to symbolise 8 hours of work, 8 hours of sleep, and 8 hours of free time, later to be replaced by the lily-of-the-valley.

May 1st officially became a public holiday after the eight-hour working day was introduced in France on April 23, 1919. Known as Labour Day in some parts of the world, it is also a day for protests marches....





THE ARTS

Reasons to be cheerful - thirteen

By Henry Shaftoe

For lovers of art, music and entertainment, there are plenty of venues in the P-O region offering high quality treats for the eyes and ears. I mention 13 such venues below, but for the superstitious it would be easy to add many more.

The big news is that Perpignan finally has its own bespoke "Centre d'Art Contemporain" in a freshly converted building at Place du Pont d'en Vestit (at the town centre end of rue Foch, near Place Arago).

From the end of February until mid-May, there is an exhibition dedicated to the philosopher, essayist and poet, Walter Benjamin, who tragically ended his life in Portbou in 1940, after being pursued across Europe by the Nazis. You could combine this with a visit to the nearby Musée Hyacinthe Rigaud in a beautiful old building on rue de l'Ange, where you will find a collection of masterpieces from the 13th to 20th centuries. To complete a town centre art circuit, check out 'La Maison de la Catalanité', behind the cathedral at Place Sebastien Pons. This under-publicised venue hosts free exhibitions of contemporary art and is worth a visit if you are in the

neighbourhood.

But you don't have to head into the heart of Perpignan to get your visual arts fix. Ceret's famous contemporary art museum is to be enlarged, as a result of state and regional funding. 'Espace des Arts' in Le Boulou showcases art from local artists and sculptors, with a permanent expo of the Battle of Le Boulou. And there is a delightfully quirky little modern art centre (Collection Desnoyer) in St Cyprien Village; well worth a visit if you can find it (Place de la Republique in the village centre, but best to ask a local when you get there!) The permanent collection is like entering a bohemian's boudoir and the temporary exhibition space is enlivened by the fact that the floor is a huge aerial



photo of the Côte Vermeille (or it was when I last visited!).

No survey of the Region's visual arts would be complete without reference to Collioure – from an urban design point-of-view, the town is a work of art in itself. This has been cleverly articulated by the placing of 'see-through' picture frames showing the views that various famous artists have painted.

As well as numerous private galleries (showing works of varying quality) there are two 'public' art venues in Collioure; one in part of the Chateau Royal (the massive great fortress in the middle of the town) and the 'Musée d'Art Moderne' by the Parc Pams at the southern end of the town centre, behind the Jardin de Collioure restaurant and 'Dominicain' winery. Both these venues host temporary exhibitions. The real bargain is for the over 65s amongst us: for a mere 2 Euros, you get access to the Chateau Royal and any exhibitions being held there.



For music and entertainment, in addition to Perpignan's prestigious Théâtre de l'Archipel and Palais des Congres, there are fine theatres in Thuir (Théâtre des Aspres), Canet Village (Théâtre Jean Piat), St Esteve (Théâtre de l'étang) and Toulouges (Centre Culturel El Mil-lenari), all of which offer a high quality range of live performances. ✨



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Restaurant Reviews

with
Louise Sayers

Au Remp'Arts Elne



Elne is often overlooked by visitors to the area but it was once the capital of Roussillon and has an interesting history, including the cathedral and cloisters, the Terrus Museum and the Maternité Suisse. Lovers of good food will enjoy Au Remp'Arts, a little gem, tucked away in Elne old town.

We wandered through a deserted Elne on a wintery Wednesday – myself and my 9 and 10 year old giggly companions – fully expecting to find an empty restaurant. Au contraire, this characterful place was packed, but a smiling face ushered us behind the bar to a second, intimate dining room, packed with quirky bibelots. The gigglers, aka my daughter and her best friend, loved it.

Christian Lubin, a native of the Auvergne, has been at the helm of Au Remp'Arts for the last two years, managing it with partner Eric Bordes. He offered us a welcome that, sadly, I experience all too seldom in this part of the world.

The Catalan chef, Julien, produces what Christian described as "homemade

Mediterranean" food based around fresh, seasonal produce. The set menu choices at 15 euros for 3 courses or 11 euros for two met everyone's approval.

I started with a clean, fresh herring and prawn salad. A salad is a salad and there's not too much that can go wrong but herring makes a welcome change from the usual salad options and the vinaigrette was good and generous. Thumbs up for the starter!

I followed fish with more fish – rare for me – and was not disappointed by the big lump of flaky cod atop a potato gratin with a smattering of vegetables. Fish and potato is not a revolutionary combination but the chef elevated this from the norm with an Indian-spiced crumble topping and

I'm full/I've had enough to eat
Say....

'je n'ai plus faim'

'j'ai trop/assez mange'

'je suis rassasié/e' (ra-saz-ee-ay)

Do not say... *'je suis plein(e)'* unless you are a pregnant animal or a drunk!

a hint of spicy brava sauce (usually paired with potatoes à la patatas bravas). These provided a great accompaniment to the fish without overpowering it.

My fellow young diners opted for the joues de boeuf which I presented to them as beef stew as we all know that little girls can be fussy. They were so excited to be part of reviewing the restaurant and so busy trying not to let on that we were there for that reason that they weren't really paying attention! Or so I thought. Halfway

through one pointed out to the other what they were eating but by then they were tucking in with gusto and weren't bothered. It was a good hearty meal of beef simply accompanied by potatoes, carrots and broccoli. Cheeks can be tough but these weren't, and in spite of the very big adult-sized portions, there



Au Remp'Arts
3 Place Colonel Roger
66200 Elne
04 68 22 31 95
www.remparts.fr



was little left over.

Full marks to the chef for the homemade desserts of banoffee pie, chocolate mousse and tiramisu, served in glasses. There were healthier options but pudding is all about indulgence for

me! The ten year old's verdict was "They were just too nice". They were indeed, although the biscuits in my tiramisu felt like they had been waved at the coffee instead of dunked in it, a very minor quibble about a really enjoyable meal.

The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner every day in summer but closes on Mondays and Tuesdays in winter. The evening menu costs 26 euros and Saturday lunch is 19

euros, ordering à la carte is, as you would expect, more pricey. While the choice is pretty standard for the region, the chef gives each dish a little touch of originality. ☀

About Louise

Louise Sayers provides administrative support and relocation services to homeowners in France and is also Marketing Director of estate agency, Med and Mountain.
www.france-sos.com/www.medandmountain.com.

Côté Saisons Laroque-des-Albères

A warm welcome awaits from dynamic husband & wife team, Ingrid & Nicolas in this delightfully renovated 1880s former 'maison viticole'. Now a light and cosy restaurant with modern Bistro feel, it has a leafy terrace and 5 attractive en-suite bedrooms if you want to make a night, a weekend of it, or go an extra drink or two over the limit.

Menus are presented on ardoises, (slates) and start at 24€ for two courses or 29€ for three.

The accent is on seasonal & local produce with fruit & veg from Laroque, fish from Argelès and Port Vendres, wine from Villelongue....

This is undoubtedly 'gastronomic cuisine'. Ingrid and Nicolas are aiming for the stars, and although recently opened, have already earned a place in The Bib Gourmand of the Michelin food guide, an award which highlights "good food at moderate prices"

My 'cochon confit de Mr Bonzom' (whose pigs apparently lead a happy life up in Saillagouse!),

with miel and gingembre, was tasty braised pork. I loved the sweet/sour honey flavour but was underwhelmed by the (lack of) ginger. This was accompanied by small potatoes and a delicious bed of fine braised lettuce with chestnuts. My dessert of pomme fondante, gaufre croustillante, sauce caramel was very tasty indeed.

If you enjoy well-presented, nouvelle cuisine, Côté Saisons is certainly worth a visit.

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LAROQUE-DES-ALBERES www.cotesaisons.com



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medium sauce made up of cashew nuts, peppers, onions, fresh mint and coriander, and Butter Chicken, lightly grilled au Tandoori. Both were accompanied by a fluffy pilau rice and an unusual nan au fromage. Our Indian ice cream desserts rounded off a very enjoyable meal.

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Garlic

With Linda Razell

Garlic is a little like like Marmite and Ryanair - you either love it or hate it!

Derived from the Anglo saxon gar (spear), referring to the shape of its leaves, and lac (plant), garlic is valued as

much for its medicinal properties as it's flavouring, and has been cultivated for so long that it is impossible to be sure of its country of origin. Certainly it thrives around the Mediterranean, and its perfume can be detected on a spring walk through the woods and hillsides of the P.O. Don't be tempted to eat this wild variety, as it is extremely pungent.

Garlic has a mystical and legendary past. Ancient Egyptians swore oaths by placing their right hand on a clove of garlic, Roman generals believed that it gave their armies courage and planted garlic fields in the countries they conquered. Ancient Greek travellers placed it on piles of stones at cross-roads, in offering to Hecate, goddess of crossroads, in return for protection from demons, perhaps a forerunner of the belief that it would repel vampires.

Many claims have been made for its medicinal use. Cure for anthrax, leprosy, tuberculosis, sunstroke, epilepsy and rheumatism, prevention against smallpox, the plague, and 'infectious fevers', (although this may be due to garlic breath keeping people at arms length, useful in an epidemic.) Its English country name, Poor Man's Treacle, refers to the use of garlic syrup as a treatment for chronic bronchitis.

During the First World War, garlic oil was widely used as an antiseptic. Modern herbals suggest it as a blood cleanser, with anti-cholesterol and anti-oxidant properties, and as a vermifuge, should you be unfortunate enough to suffer from worms or other parasites. For gardeners plagued by moles, it is said that they leap out of the ground if garlic is planted near their little mounds.

New garlic, available in the Spring, has a softer and less pungent flavour than the older, dried variety.

The following recipe may well convert professed garlic haters, and the parsley in it is said to remove the odour from the breath.

New garlic soup (serves 4)

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 bulb of new garlic (about 25 cloves) | 1 pinch saffron threads |
| 4 medium sized shallots, chopped | 40g butter |
| 2 tsp root ginger, grated | 2 tbsp olive oil |
| 2 celery sticks, chopped | 1 glass of white wine |
| 2 bay leaves | 1 litre vegetable stock |
| 1 tsp thyme, chopped | 1 bunch of parsley, roughly chopped |

Soften shallots and celery in the butter and oil for about 10 minutes; add the garlic, ginger and thyme and cook gently for 5 minutes more. Allow the wine to bubble for a few minutes before adding the stock, bay leaves and saffron. Simmer for about 10 minutes, then check for seasoning, as you may need to add salt, depending on your stock.

Take out the bay leaves and add the parsley; blend, keeping some texture.

Floating a spoonful of aioli makes the perfect garnish. ☀



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Out for the day...

UN OEUF IS UN OEUF

The Easter Omelette, or 'Omelette Pascale' is more than just a recipe in Catalonia – it's a whole tradition!

According to legend, Napoleon Bonaparte was travelling across southern France with his army, when he first tasted an omelette prepared for him at an inn near Bessières. He was so impressed that he had a giant omelette made for his troops the very next day. What a nice man!

Fact or fiction, the omelette de Pâques became a tradition to feed the poor at Easter. Choirs would roam the streets in traditional Catalan costume, singing 'goigs dels ous' (joy of the eggs), solemn Easter songs, and receive in exchange gifts of eggs,



black pudding, charcuterie, wine - everything they needed to cook up a delicious Easter omelette the next day, preferably over a roaring fire out in the open air, often as part of a picnic or get together to symbolise friendship and fraternity.

To help you avoid ending up with egg on your face, here is some useful eggy vocabulary.

jaune - yolk	oeuf brouillé - scrambled egg	coquetier - egg cup
coquille - shell	oeuf sur le plat - fried egg	œuf battu - beaten egg
oeuf dur - hard-boiled egg	œuf pourri - bad egg	blancs d'œufs - egg white
oeuf à la coque - soft-boiled egg	œuf en chocolat - chocolate egg	œufs de poules élevées en plein air - free range
oeuf poché - poached egg	œuf de Pâques - Easter egg	



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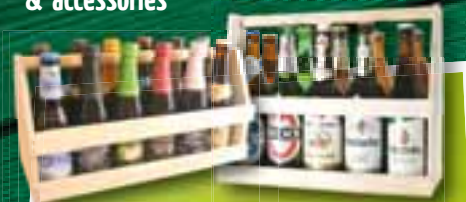
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Cherry Pickin'

with Elaine Koerner

The 2013 Céret Cherry festival was delayed due to inclement weather. Elaine Koerner chatted to local cherry farmers to find out more about the extremely delicate process of growing cherries.

First of all, exactly why was the crop late last year? Cherry-making is an extremely delicate process, say those in the know. For example, at the beginning of the season, wind plays an important role in pollination, and last season there was less wind than usual. In addition, and perhaps most significant, early spring temperatures were unusually low, delaying the unfolding of buds into blossoms.



Then there was the matter of a very dry spell followed by too much rain...and not enough sun didn't help matters, either. Given all these variables, it is surprising that last year's delay for the Cherry

Festival was only the second time it has occurred in its 20 year history. (The other year? It was 2005.)

A few more details about the science and art of cherry production. More than 30 varieties of cherries are grown locally, each with its own harvest cycle. Harvesting continues on into July. Approximately 40 days typically

elapse from blossom to harvest.

Once tiny green cherries begin to dot the branches of the trees, a close watch is required. The fruit near the bottom of the tree tends to ripen first. Each tree requires several 'pass-throughs' if each cherry is to be plucked (by hand, of course) at its peak. Moreover, when a cherry turns ripe, only a three-day window is available for removing it from the tree or it will over-ripen. Cherry pickers must also be careful to remove both the fruit and its stem intact to avoid rapid spoilage. All in all, a rather exacting job.

Just thinking about all that goes into the amazing process of cherry-making is sure to make my first cherry of this new season taste all that much sweeter when I pop it into my mouth. ☀

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On the other side of the port, just a ten minute walk from the hustle and bustle of the main, busy restaurant area, it's well worth the detour.

Oyster, seafood and wine bar, with shelves of seafood delicacies, condiments and wines, counters of fresh fish, seafood, soups, and prepared dishes, live lobsters and langoustines..... Vans and lorries come and go to and from this working fishing depot with fishing fleet based on the nearby quay.

You can't get fresher than that! And if you'd prefer to eat at home, magnificent seafood platters, cooked paella and bouillabaisse are available to take away for that al fresco lunch on the terrace or intimate soirée - leaving you to concentrate on the onerous task of chilling the white wine to the perfect temperature!

Or for the full Monty, a fishy feast followed maybe by a film, dine in style at their very own traditional marine restaurant opposite the Mega Castillet on the outskirts of Perpignan.

www.cotecatalane.net
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SOMETHING FISHY.....

Fish is quick to cook and scrumptious when fresh (really fresh fish should never smell too 'fishy') but of course, it helps to know what you're eating! Here is some useful vocabulary to help you choose your little fishy on a little dishy!

Aigrefin/Eglefin - Haddock
Anguille (Congre) - (Conger) Eel
Bar - Sea Bass
Cabillaud/Morue - Cod/salted cod
Carrelet - Plaice
Colin/Merlu - hake
Daurade/Dorade - Bream
Espadon - Swordfish

Lotte - Monkfish
Loup - Sea Perch
Rascasse - Scorpion Fish
Requin - Shark
Rouget - Red Mullet
Saint Pierre - John Dory
Seiche - Cuttlefish
vider - to gut (lit. to empty).

(court) bouillon - stock or broth
médaillon - small, round pieces (of fish/meat)
(sans) arête - (without) bones.
en papillote - cooked in foil.
darne - fish steak/slice
décortiqué - shelled or peeled
écailler - to scale fish



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Things you might need to know...



PROPERTY VALUATION

A new web site tool, available in the section 'particuliers' of www.impots.gouv.fr (section Rechercher des transactions immobilières) allows you to estimate the value of your property.

Managed by the 'Direction générale des finances publiques' (DGFiP), 'Patrim' assesses values for residential properties, and makes administrative information available which you might normally have to find at the mairie.

To use, type in: **type de bien** (eg flat or house), **superficie**, (surface area) **localisation**, (location) and a few other details.

LANDLORD/TENANT HELPLINE

The annual 'trêve hivernale' (winter truce), which prevents landlords evicting tenants during the cold winter months started on 1st November and ends on 15th March. If you are having problems with a landlord (or with a tenant - in theory this helpline advises both), you can ring the free telephone helpline, SOS Loyers Impayés, on 08 05 16 00 75



Mile high reading club

From early February, Ryanair passengers will be allowed to use electronic devices such as iPads, smartphones, e-readers and MP3 players during flights for listening to music, reading etc..... but not for making or receiving calls or texts.

YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE

Ex pats should be able to 'demonstrate a continuing interest in their home country's political life' by having the right to vote in their country of origin.

The European Commission has asked that Britain reconsider its laws, which presently take away the ex pat right to vote after 15 years abroad. It states that 'The right to vote is a fundamental political rights of citizenship... and democracy.'

The Electoral Commission has launched an international campaign to encourage Britons living overseas, who still have the right to vote, to register before the beginning of May and vote in the European Parliament elections on 22 May.

The commission 'urges people to take five minutes out of their day to visit their website and make sure they'll be able to have their say'. www.aboutmyvote.co.uk



Looking for a Ride?

Look out for www.covoiturage.fr now known as Bla Bla Car, which offers rides between France and England. This carpool site allows you to search for drivers travelling all over France and hitch a ride, or offer one. Simply type in your departure date, town and destination, to see a list of people offering lifts, or register your own offer. You can stipulate how much contribution you expect for petrol, how many places you have available, whether dogs are allowed, and even whether you will be expected to chat or just sit in silence!

Does your credit card have RFID (Radio Frequency Identification)?

More and more cards now have a tiny radio chip that allows you to simply swipe in front of a till or checkout without even taking it out of your bag or wallet. Rapid and easy, but did you know that anyone can buy a cheap, handheld scanner on the Internet and the clever ones can access your credit card information just by walking past you in a shop or on the street? Major credit card companies state however that RFID technology is safe



HEALTH TOURISM

In an attempt to prevent what is being tagged as 'health tourism', the British government plans to charge ex pats traveling back to the UK for medical care, believed to cost the NHS around £200 million a year.

Whilst this new ruling is mainly aimed at stopping abuse of the NHS and free medical care, it will nevertheless have an impact on ex pats. The areas where health tourism is reportedly most abused are maternity services, oncology, HIV services, infertility and the treatment of renal failure.

At present, though rarely applied, pensioners should not live abroad more than 3 months in any year if they wish to qualify for free health treatment on trips back to the UK.

Under the new ruling, ex pat retirees from the UK who live abroad for more than half the year will be denied free treatment, despite having paid tax and National Insurance in the UK. Only emergencies such as heart attacks, accidents or genuine sudden illness will be treated free of charge.

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Pretty Perfect P-O Pissini

With Katja Willemsen



PRIEURÉ DE SERRABONE

Prayer and working the land went hand-in-hand for the Augustine monks living at the Serrabone Priory in the 11th century.

They carved terraces into steep slopes, built long ribbons of dry stone walls and planted fruit orchards, vineyards and olive groves. Closer to the kitchen, the garden overflowed with herbs and

medicinal plants.

The Prieuré de Serrabone isn't far from civilisation, a mere 16 kms from Ille-sur-Têt, but within minutes of leaving Bouleternère, you're in the untamed wilderness of the Aspres. The mountains close in and the landscape turns from a tranquil valley to a schist-rugged gorge. The road is narrow but not

terrifyingly so. It twists and turns alongside the Le Boulès river then whiplashes right and left as it climbs up to the monastery. (See inset for detailed directions.)

Most guide books advise combining a visit to the priory with something else. Yes, the building is small and

Monastery, priory, abbey: what's the difference?

- Monastery is a generic term, priory and abbey are specific.
- A monastery is the building/buildings where nuns or monks live and worship. It can vary in size and accommodate a whole community or just a single hermit.
- An abbey is a monastery with at least 12 monks and/ or nuns.
- A priory is a smaller monastery, subordinate to an abbey, and often found in far-flung places.



your visit will take less than half an hour, but don't plan anything else. Pack a picnic and stay on to explore the botanical delights of the priory grounds.

The priory

is as masculine and stark on the outside, as it is feminine and beguiling on the inside. The interior's sensuous curves and shades of rose and earth will seduce you. The mélange of marble and schist, religion and pagan, man and beast will surprise you.

Records show signs of life as early as 1069 AD but within a few centuries, the monks had left, the stones crumbled, contents were looted, and the vineyards and orchards withered. The only flock seeking shelter would have been four-legged ones

and their shepherds.

Restoration of the building was completed after WWII but work on the grounds continues with two full-time gardeners nursing it back to the agricultural larder it once was. A variety of olive trees, vines and fruit trees have been planted over the past fifteen years. A labour of love in a harsh climate where water is scarce.

What better time to visit than Spring? From purple irises to fruit trees in full bloom, your senses will be tantalised.

Small trails curl everywhere. One slopes down to an expansive field, another leads into a fruit orchard full of almond, cherry, apple and peach trees. A path passes through scrubland of Spanish broom, juniper, wild lavender and thyme before entering a forest of oaks and pines. Yet another climbs gently to a shaded area perfect for a barbecue.

Find the path down to the steep south-facing bank below the priory and walk through the vineyard. The tender new leaves will be as green as Granny Smith apples.

Stroll through the olive grove and try to count how many olive varieties are planted there. Back at

the priory, perfect box hedges create zen symmetry around a herb garden filled with everything a cook or an ancient healer might need.

It is picnic heaven at the Prieuré de Serrabone. There are benches in the sun, in the shade, under trees, next to the fountain, tucked away near the forest, or with endless views over the valley. Whether you're à deux and looking for romance, or en famille with granny, grandpa and a dozen kids and dogs in tow, there's a perfect spot just waiting for your wine glass. ☀️



About the Priory of Serrabone

- "Serra bona" means "good mountain" in Catalan. A perfect name given its setting in the rugged Aspres mountains, just 16 kms outside Ille-sur-Têt.
- Famous for its 12th century pink marble tribune, a masterpiece of Romanesque art.
- The surrounding grounds are a delight to explore, with fruit trees, olive trees, vineyards, and other Mediterranean plants.
- Picnickers are welcomed, and there are special areas to set up a barbecue.

How To Get There

- Follow N116 from Perpignan, direction Prades. At roundabout after Ille-sur-Têt, take 3rd exit, D16, to Bouleternère/ Prieuré de Serrabone. From there the route is well sign-posted.
- A few minutes later, turn left into D618 and follow signs through village of Bouleternère.
- After Bouleternère, enjoy a spectacular 20 minute drive through the gorge until the turn-off to the Prieuré de Serrabone on your right.
- Another ten minute drive will take you straight to the Priory car park.
- Open every day from 10 am to 6 pm.

Read Shepherd's Prayer, Katja's fast-paced adventure set in Collioure.



Available on Amazon



Villefranche de Conflent

If ever there was a real life Brigadoon, for me it would be this perfect piece of past, nestled at the foot of the Canigo Mountain as if descended from the clouds.

This small medieval walled town is listed as one of 'les plus beaux villages de France', and best of all, is easily accessible by car, train and bus!

When Villefranche-de-Conflent was built in 1095 by Guillaume-Raymond, count of Cerdanya and Conflent, it was known as Villa Franca (town of free-trade) and allowed special tax privileges to attract skilled and assorted trades people. Settlers could live tax-free for three years, after which they could pay as little or as much as they wanted, whenever they chose. Nice!

Dominating the town is Fort Liberia, designed by Vauban, the Sun King's own engineer and military architect. The town is now one of the fourteen Vauban sites on the UNESCO world listing. Once within the walled town, head up to the Fort on foot or by Landrover 'shuttlebus' from the Café Canigou on the Place du Génie. With 734 underground steps up through the mountain, it is a steep walk,



whether you take steps or path.

We walked up the path, amidst stunning views of the valleys and mountains. Once at the fort, visit the Prison de Dames with its horrendous history of female criminals, most famously Anne Guesdon and La Chapelain who committed crimes most horrid, including poisonings and child sacrifices, and spent the rest of their lives chained to the wall of a cell. Their wax models sit there still.

We took the steps back down, known as 'les milles marches' (1000 steps), and built on the orders of Napoleon III in the 19th century. The seemingly endless, narrow and dimly lit tunnel sent chills down my spine thinking of the 22 men who fell to their deaths whilst building it.

Including all the steps of the passageway and those of the fort there are 1279 to climb and descend - a great aerobic workout if you're up for it!

The ramparts are also worth paying to walk around. In fantastic condition, you can see the architectural influences from the Middle Ages up to the 17th Century. Walk round alone, or with the aid of an audio guide. There is also the option of a

guided tour, as with the Fort.

The 11th century church of St Jaques is worth a visit, with pink-marbled façade, beautiful altarpiece by Catalan Master Sunyer and several pieces dating from the 13th and 14th century. There is also a small museum.

Delightful, individual, and original shops sell handmade crafts including jewelry, soaps and earthenware. Some sell handcrafted witch dolls, or 'poupées sorcières', believed to bring luck and protection when you hang them in your house or nursery! Look above many of the shops for the signs indicating a trade, forged from local iron.

The pre-historic cave, la Cova Bastera is located just opposite the walled Villefranche de Conflent, and the other two caves, Les Canalettes and Les Grandes Canalettes are within 500m of the town as the crow flies. In July and August there is a music show in the cathedral of Les Grandes Canalettes every evening.

A visit to these caves may also be welcome during the hot summer months due to their constant temperature of 14°C.

A very special time to visit this pretty town is Easter weekend, for the yearly Fête des Geants. The 'Goig dels ous de xocolat' sees musicians parading through the streets playing Catalan musical instruments (gralles, flaviol and tambourin) and asking for chocolate eggs from the inhabitants of the town in exchange for their music. They are accompanied by the 'geganter de Villefranche', enormous walking and dancing painted papier-maché figures, sometimes 14 or 15 ft tall, with traditional clothing and a person inside. A great family day out!

Check out exact dates and times at www.villefranchedeconflent.com

Also worth visiting, perfect for an energetic walk and a picnic, is the chapel of Notre Dame de Vie. Just outside Villefranche on the N116 after the level crossing, next to a small shrine, a rocky little footpath leads to a chapel beneath a massive cave in the cliff with splendid views all →



down the valley of the Rotja. The climb of about 45 minutes is steep, but if you make it to the chapel it is worth going on to the cave above it

To get there:

By car: N116 from Perpignan

Bus: 2 Euro Return from Perpignan Bus Station located next to the new side of Train Station. Buy tickets on the bus.

Train: 2 Euros Return from 'old side' Perpignan Train Station. Buy tickets from the red machines located in the hall. ☀



SOME VOCABULARY TO HELP YOU FILL IN THE PLANNING PERMISSION FORM

- agrandissement - extension
- aménagement - fitting out
- attestation - certificate
- batiment - building
- cadre réservé à la mairie du lieu de construction - official use only
- cas particulier - special circumstances
- clotures - fencing
- cochez la case - tick the box
- droits de construire - building rights
- engagement - commitment
- facultatif - optional
- fiche d'aide - help sheet
- identité du demandeur - Your name and address
- localisation - exact position (address)
- lotissement - estate
- maison individuelle - detached house
- mandataire - proxy, delegate
- menuiseries - joinery, doors and windows
- nature des travaux envisagé - type of intended building work
- plafond - ceiling
- précisions complémentaires - supplementary information
- propriété - property
- références cadastrales... get these references from your local mairie
- situation juridique - legal situation
- superficie totale - surface area
- Surface Hors Oeuvre Nette (SHON) - surface area taken up by the extension
- terrain - land
- toitures - roofing

Mantet Nature Reserve.

Just after Villefranche de Conflent, turn left onto the D6 through Fuilla, Sahorre, and Py. The road climbs and winds for about 20 km until the Col de Mantet at 1760 metres. From there you can see the tiny village below on your left. On your right, stone sheep graze. Go down to the village, and get information at the Maison de la Nature on wild life and walking.

Mantet was the last village in France to get electricity. The road only reached it in 1964 when the village had been resettled after all

its inhabitants had been expelled by the Nazis during the war.

The handful of current residents make a living from selling cheese and honey and guiding tourists amidst the stunning scenery. Mantet was an old smuggling hideout but is now the centre of a 3000 hectare Nature Reserve. Crossed by the GR10 there are any number of trails to follow. The GR 11 takes you over the 2412 Porteille de Mantet into Spain. Mountain streams provide ideal picnic spots, and wild flowers abound. ☀

Planning Permissions

Olivier, of TPM Pool and Project Management gives you some tips on extending a property, installing or renovating a pool, building a garage etc...

As with all French bureaucracy, there is loads of paperwork, both before and after – prepare yourself for churning out documents in triplicate and in quadruplicate!

First, take your rough plans to the mairie and ask to see the '*responsable de l'urbanisme*.' (Be careful – in smaller communes they may only be present one day per week) He or she will refer to the '*cahier de charge*' or '*code d'urbanisme*' with you, in order to check that your plans do not contravene any local or national regulations (colour of roof tiles and exterior walls, height restrictions, distances from neighbours...) He will also tell you what documents you need to provide for your application.

The two most common types of planning permission are the '*permis de construire*' for new build, extension, or changing of an existing structure with a surface area greater than 20 m², or the '*Déclaration préalable*' or '*Declaration de travaux*' for small improvements, between 5 and 20 m², which do not alter the use of the building.

For more info contact Olivier on [06 75 46 93 65](tel:0675469365)

Saints and Winners

St Thomas les Bains wins the P-O Life Peaceful Prize

Head up the N116, direction Andorra, turn left on the CD28 just after Fontpedrouse, and you arrive at St Thomas les Bains, oasis of peace and tranquility, where natural hot springs, (the warmest in the Pyrenees), make this the ultimate spa of natural health and beauty.

Or if you don't fancy the drive, take the little yellow train to the SNCF station at Fontpédrouse, just 3km from the spa, and pick up the shuttle bus (reservation 48h in advance)

Picture yourself slowly unwinding within a vast stone amphitheatre of steam and sauna, jacuzzi with tonifying horizontal and vertical jets, three outdoor pools with massaging jets, cooled to a steady 37°C, (great fun in the snow and rain), paddling pool for toddlers.....

Of course, total relaxation is not your only



goal. It has been scientifically proven that the sulphurous waters detoxify, maintain soft, smooth skin, and ease rheumatism, so along with a series of reasonably priced beauty and massage treatments, there really is no better après ski relaxation or winter warmer. Even when the snows melts, and you need a rest from the beach and sand in every orifice, cooler air and stunning mountain scenery make a trip to St Thomas les Bains an absolute pleasure. And from only 6,50€ for the outdoor thermal baths, this luxurious treat will not break the bank!

There's even a tea room! (scones and toasted teacakes not included)

Open daily from 10h to 19h40, and 20h40 in July and August

Bains de St THOMAS

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- Steam, Jacuzzis
- Health & Beauty treatment
- Massage & lifting treatments
- Authentica Beauté boutique



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tel : 04 68 97 03 13
www.bains-saint-thomas.fr

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Test your French

1 - T POUR TASSE!

Match up the words, all beginning with Ta with their definitions.
(Why not try to work them out first just from the definitions?)

tableau	1	a	trace de saleté
talon	2	b	couvrir de beurre
taureau	3	c	voiture électrique à la fête foraine
tamponneuse	4	d	l'arrière du pied
taille	5	e	objets mis les uns sur les autres
tartiner	6	f	tissu que l'on met sur le sol
tabouret	7	g	œuvre réalisé par un peintre
tas	8	h	gros mammifère à cornes
tapis	9	i	siège sans dossier
tache	10	j	grandeur de quelque chose

**Tongue twister
(Virelangue)
(Répétez trois fois)**

**Sarah chante
seul chez Suzanne**

Blague Bête

Un petit garçon dit à une petite fille :
Tu m'épouseras quand on sera plus vieux?

Je ne peux pas, répond la petite fille,
car chez nous on ne se marie que dans
la famille. Ma mère a épousé mon
père, ma grand-mère a épousé mon
grand-père et ma soeur a épousé mon
beau-frère!

(épouser - to marry ne (se marie) ...que
- only (marry))



2 MATCH UP THESE IDIOMATIC SAYINGS

Plein à craquer	1	a	Heads or tails?
On m'a posé un lapin	2	b	Unless I am mistaken
Ça me dit quelque chose	3	c	Easy come, easy go
J'essaie de me décrocher	4	d	That rings a bell
Occupe-toi de tes oignons	5	e	It will all work out
Sauf erreur	6	f	I'm trying to kick the habit
Ça va s'arranger	7	g	The bare necessities
Pile ou face	8	h	Bursting at the seams
Le strict nécessaire	9	i	Mind your own business
Ça va, ça vient	10	j	I've been stood up!

3 - FRENCH THE WAY MY SON SPEAKS IT!

BEWARE IN POLITE COMPANY!

accoucher	1	a	look at
capter	2	b	sleep
cleps	3	c	dog
kiffer	4	d	money
mater	5	e	hurry, get it out
meuf	6	f	girl, lady
pioncer	7	g	a drag
relou	8	h	wear, dress
saper	9	i	understand
tune	10	j	love

Vary your language

Don't just say 'oui' to agree with someone

Say

entendu
d'accord
tout à fait
absolument

pas de problème
bien sûr
évidemment
c'est clair

AVANT V DEVANT

Avant usually refers to TIME of doing

Il espère arriver avant midi

On mange avant la réunion

D'habitude, elle arrive avant moi

It is also used with 'de' before an
infinitive to express 'before doing
something'

Avant de partir, j'ai payé l'addition

J'aime goûter avant d'acheter!

Devant usually refers to PLACE or
POSITION

Garez votre voiture devant la maison

Il m'a gêné devant mes amis

4. A OR DE?

Many verbs in French need to be
followed by the preposition à or de
to link them to the infinitive

eg Il commence à pleuvoir

It is beginning to rain

Je refuse de chanter

I refuse to sing

It won't prevent the person you're
talking to from understanding you if
you do get it wrong, so don't make it
into a big thing....but you can be just
a little bit smug if you do manage to
throw in the right preposition!

Have a go now by filling in the à or
de for the following

- 1 J'apprends ___ parler français
- 2 Vous acceptez ___ payer?
- 3 Il continue ___ faire du vent
- 4 J'ai décidé ___ rentrer
- 5 Elle a hésité ___ appeler la police
- 6 Vous m'invitez ___ manger chez vous?
- 7 J'essaie ___ comprendre
- 8 Je passe du temps ___ faire du vélo
- 9 Tu as réussi ___ trouver la maison?
- 10 Je rêve ___ gagner la lotterie

Reflections

Pourquoi les
moutons ne
rapetissent-
ils pas sous
la pluie?

(rapetisser -
to shrink)



Améliorez votre Anglais

1 - Complétez les phrases.

- 1 People _____ watch too much television get square eyes
a) what b) who c) which d) that
- 2 It is useful to know a second language _____ it can help your career.
a) because b) because of c) although d) unless
- 3 The south of France is warmer _____ Scotland.
a) them b) than c) as d) to
- 4 If I had more time, I _____ learn Catalan.
a) will b) do c) am d) would
- 5 I don't have _____ money left.
a) some b) no c) any d) a lot

Virelangue

(Répétez trois fois)

Irish
wristwatch

Language Tip

Wait est toujours suivi de for devant un complément.

I'm waiting for the train.

We're waiting for the sun to come out



2 - QUELLE PRÉPOSITION ? UP/ON/OFF ?

- 1 Hold _____ (Ne quittez pas)
- 2 Set _____ (partir)
- 3 Keep _____ (Continuez)
- 4 Get _____ (S'entendre)
- 5 Break _____ (Se séparer, rompre)
- 6 Get _____ (Se lever)
- 7 Blow _____ (Faire exploser)
- 8 Throw _____ (Vomir)
- 9 Spot _____ (Tomber pile)
- 10 Take _____ (Enlever)

Bad joke

Why can't your nose be 12 inches long?
Because then it would be a foot!
(12 pouces = un pied)

Worse joke

Why is 6 afraid of 7?
Because 7 8 9!
(7 ate 9)

Worst joke

How does a pig get to the hospital?
In a hambulance!

Just plain silly!

What has a bottom at the top?
I don't know?
Your legs! (bottom - les fesses)

3 - Un peu d'argot! (A bit of slang)

Ces expressions argotiques s'emploient couramment en anglais contemporain. Pouvez-vous trouver leur sens en français ?

ace	1	a	fauché
keep your hair on!	2	b	merde, objet sans valeur
crack up	3	c	magasin de poisson frites
mate	4	d	embrasser
gutted	5	e	de qualité douteuse
crap (impolite)	6	f	copain
broke	7	g	formidable
snog	8	h	dégouté, déçu
iffy	9	i	éclater de rire
chippie	10	j	calmez-vous



Great quotes

"Last week I stated that this woman was the ugliest woman I had ever seen. I have since been visited by her sister and now wish to withdraw that statement."

Mark Twain

(ugliest - la plus moche withdraw - retirer)

PHRASE UTILE To jog someone's memory
(rafraîchir la mémoire de quelqu'un)

4 - B - is for Ballet

Trouvez les définitions des mots suivants, qui commencent tous avec la lettre B

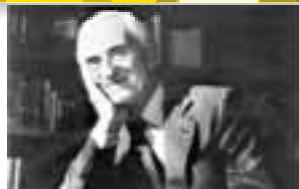
bee	1	a	little or no hair
bark	2	b	naked
bagpipes	3	c	covering of a tree
balance	4	d	grey animal with black stripes
badger	5	e	insect that stings
bald	6	f	forbid
beak	7	g	round, red root plant
ban	8	h	mouth of a bird
bare	9	I	remain steady
beetroot	10	j	musical instrument



British blague

What did the Daddy buffalo say when his son left for school?.

Bison!



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MASTER AND COMMANDER

You may know the film "Master and Commander", set on the shifting horizon of rolling seas, starring Russell Crowe as the dashing Captain Jack Aubrey of the Royal Navy. With his best friend, the Irish-Catalan surgeon Stephen Maturin, Aubrey confronts the enemy's marauding ships and blazing canons during the Napoleonic wars.

What may surprise you is that this high adventure flowed from the pen of Patrick O'Brian peacefully writing at his desk in Collioure. From 1969 until his death in 2000, O'Brian wrote 20 novels in the Aubrey-Maturin series in which his fictional duo are embroiled in actual historical events.

During the more than 50 years that O'Brian lived in Collioure he wrote a body of work including

translations, biographies and novels. Gildas Girodeau, who knew the writer well, will present "O'Brian in Collioure" at Caféclat on Friday 30 May. To celebrate the 100th anniversary of O'Brian's birth, a series of events, including concerts and screenings of the film will follow throughout 2014.

For updates and further details: www.cafeclat.blogspot.com or facebook. ☀



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For further information and to find out how to apply please call: Anne Isabelle on: **04 68 56 57 76**
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Global Marketing or International Hospitality and Tourism.

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FINDING NEMO

OK, so you might not find Nemo but you don't have to go half way across the world to see beautiful fish, when there are over 1500 species of marine life right here in the amazing underwater world of the P-O

The Côte Vermeille is particularly rich in flora and fauna thanks to the presence of a special warm current, known as the "Franco-Provençal", that comes up through the straits of Gibraltar.

Alongside the river Rhone, which also flows into this part of the Mediterranean, they produce rich nutrients which fish love, turning the region into a five star fishy restaurant!

And let's not forget the fishy disco as fish are also attracted to the coral, the light, the rock formations and the "falaises" (underwater sea cliffs). So what can you see if you're not a 'proper' diver?

Well, all you need is a mask, a tuba - and from past painful experience, I suggest some shoes or some flippers to avoid standing on spiky surprises. (Sea urchins also like our coast).

We can observe sea creatures throughout the year, even winter, when some species, such as the glacial star fish, which normally live in the deep, come back up to the surface. Unfortunately, you will need to be brave enough to withstand swimming in water that is only 12°C!

Spring and summer are the best snorkelling seasons, when the water is warm and there's a lot of action going on. This is the time when sea life reproduces so you get to see different behaviour - the males showing off to attract females (so no

change there then!) It's a good time to spot the baby fish too.

What can you see? Sar, octopus, cuttle fish, rock fish....and if you look carefully, sea cucumbers, dorade, mullet, loup, poisson lune, starfish, just to name a few!

Did you know that the 2nd biggest animal on earth, the fin whale, also lives in the P-O? Take a boat out about an hour from the coast and you can see sperm whales, fin whales, striped dolphins, common dolphins and even turtles! *Fantastique.*

Remember: never throw anything overboard as this can seriously damage our precious sea life. A turtle who sees a plastic bag floating in the water is likely to think it's a jellyfish and eat it. If the turtle is lucky, the plastic bag might eventually come out at the other end. If not the poor creature could become very ill indeed, and even die.

If you want to learn more, why not visit the Aquarium at Banyuls, which has been educating the public on wildlife and local marine flora since 1885. One of the oldest aquariums in France, it is not just a tourist attraction but a working laboratory, with scientists working to conserve and protect marine life through breeding programmes and research. Species counts are conducted annually and animals released into the wild are tagged and their progress monitored.

But don't take my word for it. Pack your snorkel and your sun cream, head off to the beach and see for yourself.



starfish



sea cucumber



sar



dorade



sperm whale



fin whale

2nd largest animal on earth



striped dolphin



common dolphin



loggerhead turtle

NOW YOU SEE ME... NOW YOU DON'T...



weeverfish



cuttlefish



octopus



EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Fire service (sapeurs-pompiers) - 18
 European emergency service - 112
 Samu (medics) - 15



FIRE AND FIREFIGHTERS!

The French fire brigade, les sapeurs pompiers, are not just called out for fires. Trained and equipped to deal with medical emergencies, they are very often the first responders to be called for both road and domestic emergency medical situations.

With approximately 250 thousand fire fighters throughout France, only 30 to 40 thousand are 'professionals' (SPP) on a regular salary - the rest are volunteers, (SPV) paid peanuts to risk their lives when fires break out! This is worth remembering next time you reach into your pocket to make a donation to a fire fighter event, or for the yearly Christmas calendar.

In smaller communes, the emergency sirens of the 'réseau national d'alerte' (RNA) blast out in short sequences to alert volunteer firemen to man their posts for fire or accident. However, most towns now use the more modern and somewhat quieter system of the beeper on the belt!

Don't panic though if you still hear the regular air raid sounding racket, as this national network of 4,500 sirens is tested out for one minute on the first Wednesday of each month at midday. DO panic if you hear the siren sound in three sequences of 1 minute each, separated by a silence of five seconds. This warns of imminent and major catastrophe! ☀

Some useful vocabulary

Help - Au secours!

It's an emergency - C'est un cas d'urgence

I need an ambulance - J'ai besoin d'une ambulance

I've had an accident - J'ai eu un accident

The house/car is on fire - La maison/voiture a pris feu

My husband has had a heart attack/stroke
 Mon mari fait une crise cardiaque/a souffert un AVC (accident vasculaire cérébral - pronounced ai vai cai)

My child is choking - Mon enfant s'étouffe.

I'm bleeding - Je saigne beaucoup.

I'm diabetic, I need insulin - Je suis diabétique, j'ai besoin d'insuline.

My wife is having the baby, her water has broken - Ma femme accouche, le bébé arrive, la poche des eaux a percé.

Debroussaillement

What exactly is debroussaillement?

Débroussailler means to cut and clear away dry branches, brush and any other easily inflammable materials lying around your property. *It does not mean cutting down trees.*

Why is it important to 'débroussailler'?

As well as protecting yourself and your possessions, a spreading fire will become less intense when it reaches a well cleared area, and the emergency services are able to respond more quickly.

If you are the owner of land which is less than 200 metres from woodland, brush land or moors, it is your legal responsibility to limit fire risk by clearing and cutting back all undergrowth within 50 metres of your property. This should

be completed by mid April, after which the ONF (Forestry Commission) can start imposing fines on everyone who has not cleaned and trimmed around their properties.

In towns and on housing estates (lotissements), it is the responsibility of the land owner to clear the land.

In rural areas, it is the responsibility of the person whose property may be at risk, even if he or she is not the landowner.

FAILURE TO OBSERVE THESE REGULATIONS COULD RESULT IN A FINE AND MAY AFFECT YOUR INSURANCE CLAIM AND PAYOUT IN CASE OF FIRE.

Check out www.prevention-incendie66.com for advice and information about fire prevention in the P-O. ☀

LES SAPEURS-POMPIERS

The word 'pompier' comes from the verb 'pomper' (to pump), referring to the manual fire pumps that were originally used at fires. 'Sapeur' probably comes from 'saper' meaning to undermine or destroy, as early firefighters often had little choice but to knock down whole buildings to stop a fire advancing.



AIRPORT NEWS

With JOHN FAIRCLOUGH



SPRING 2014

Well, we've come round to that time of year again where the airports have set their stalls out, the airlines have done their calculations and all the routes that are on offer for the Summer season are now published and available for booking.

Once again, all parties have been modest in their expectations. There are no new routes, or new airlines on the scene for 2014 as far as I can see, but a few old services have been reinstated. On the plus side, I'm not aware if any routes that have been closed compared to summer 2013.

I'll stick to the tried and trusted format for this report, but due to several requests from those whose centre of activity is to the north of the PO department, I've decided to include Toulouse airport into the mix for this summer. Also, as in previous years, please note that the stated routes/frequencies are for the Jul +Aug peak season. Outside this period, please refer to the airline's own site for precise details.

The refurbishment of **PERPIGNAN** airport

continues, but still no new routes have been forthcoming. So it's very much 'as you were'.

STANSTED	6x pw (Ryanair)
BIRMINGHAM	2x pw (Ryanair)
	1 x pw (FlyBe)
SOUTHAMPTON	1x pw (FlyBe)
DUBLIN	3x pw (Aer Lingus)

Another place to get the builders in over the winter has been **CARCASSONNE**, but again the routes on offer look to be the same as last year.

CORK	3x pw
DUBLIN	5x pw
BOURNEMOUTH	2x pw
EAST MIDS	3x pw
GLA PRESTWICK	2x pw
LIVERPOOL	2x pw
STANSTED	8x pw (All Ryanair)

The same story of continuity is evident at **BEZIERS** airport too.

BRISTOL	4x pw
EDINBURGH	3x pw
LUTON	4x pw
MANCHESTER	3x pw (all Ryanair)

Those who crave a service to Gatwick might find what they are looking for at **MONTPELLIER**.

GATWICK	14x pw (EasyJet)
LUTON	3x pw (EasyJet)
LEEDS BRADFORD	2x pw (Ryanair)
BIRMINGHAM	2x pw (Ryanair)
Glad to welcome TOULOUSE airport to this feature.	
HEATHROW	21x pw (British Airways)
GATWICK	26x pw (EasyJet)
BRISTOL	7x pw (EasyJet)
MANCHESTER	4x pw (Jet 2)
EDINBURGH	2x pw (Jet 2)
LEEDS BRADFORD	1x pw (Jet 2)
DUBLIN	4x pw (Aer Lingus)

There has been a lot of controversy at **GIRONA** airport following the loss of its direct service to Madrid, but as far as services to the UK/Ireland are concerned there are a couple of reinstatements.

CORK	2x pw
DUBLIN	5x pw
KNOCK	2x pw
BOURNEMOUTH	5x pw
BRISTOL	7x pw
EAST MIDS	2x pw
LEEDS BRAD	3x pw
LUTON	6x pw
NEWCASTLE	3x pw
STANSTED	7x pw (All Ryanair)
GATWICK	2x pw (Thomson)
BIRMINGHAM	1x pw (Thomson)
MANCHESTER	3x pw (Ryanair)
	2x pw (Thomson)

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P-O Life...

At the risk of sounding like a cracked record, and as in previous years, one still needs to make one's way to **BARCELONA** for the widest frequency and services to some of the British Isles' more far-flung airports.

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DUBLIN	9x pw

Finally, a brief word about transport to/from the airports. There are now half a dozen direct trains from Perpignan to Girona and Barcelona per day, with more promised by the rail companies once the summer arrives. The P-O Life website forum, www.takeme.com and www.covoiturage.fr, all allow you to search for or offer lifts to and from the airports.

I'm hoping that there may be a few new flights to report in time for the PO Life summer edition.

Bon voyage! ☀



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agents who picked him up.

He consequently filed a complaint against the Gestapo at the Prefecture of Perpignan which he has continued to fight to this day.

Despite an official letter of gratitude from the British government, which he holds very dear, Jacques has been unable to gain recognition from the French as being an active resistance member.

However, his claim against the Gestapo, and the state of Germany continues to drive him, despite being turned down in several court cases.

Test your French - answers p44-45

1. 1g 2d 3h 4c 5j 6b 7i 8e 9f 10a
2. 1h 2j 3d 4f 5i 6b 7e 8 a9g 10c
3. 1f 2g 3b 4a 5d 6c 7e
4. 1à 2de 3à 4de 5à 6à 7de 8à 9à 10de

Améliorez votre Anglais - answers p46-47

1. 1b 2a 3b 4d 5c
2. 1on 2off 3on 4on 5up 6up 7up 8up 9on 10off
3. 1g 2j 3i 4f 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. 1e 2i 3j 4b 5a 6h 7f 8c 9g 10d



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