

P-O Life

Life in the Pyrénées Orientales

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Wow, what an exquisite autumn this has been! Always my favourite season, it has surpassed itself this year, with temperatures in the low 30s in late October, sea swimmers smiling instead of shivering, and daily generous doses of that magnificent light to boost our spirits and chase away those winter blues.

In this edition, following many requests from Corrie-starved readers, Allan Wallis examines the different ways of receiving UK TV. Mike Rhodes takes us walking near Villefranche de Conflent, batty Linda Razzell goes nuts, (or should that be nutty Linda Razzell goes bats?) Katja brings us another Perfect Picnic at the Tour de Massane, and John continues to scratch around for new flights to the P-O.....pas évident du tout!

We also have the great pleasure of publishing winter in the P-O through the eyes of our readers. Fabulous. Please send more!

Whether you're heading for the ski slopes, or curling up in front of a log fire with a good book, we wish you a Happy, Healthy and Lucky winter season here in our beautiful region.

Fins aviats

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Kate



PS My favourite bad jokes of the year

Que demande un douanier à un cochon qui passe la frontière?
Son passe-porc.

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"Avez vous de l'after-chèvre?"

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"Tu me donnes ton e-miel"

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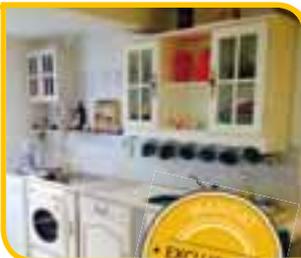
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CERET Center: Charming 3 bedroom village house with 2 bathrooms and large terrace. PLUS Recently renovated 1 bed duplex apartment with large kitchen/diner/living area

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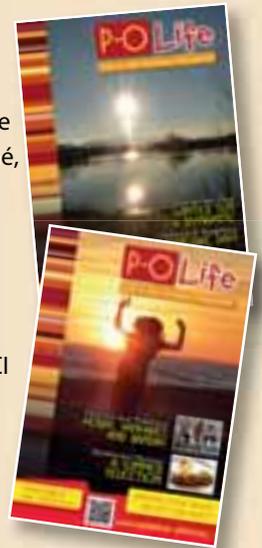
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Walktherregion...

The spectacular walled town of Villefranche de Conflent is well known to residents of the P-O but above the crags that tower over this Vauban designed town lies a whole range of walking trails, collectively known as Le Coronat. One of my favourite walks starts and finishes in the pretty south facing village of Jujols, (960m. GPS 31N442187E 4713433N.)



👉 The Walk: This walk follows good paths, but does climb 800m and requires a reasonable head for heights traversing the cliffs. With stops and lunch, allow 5-6 hours. Views both on the walk and across the valley to the south are stunning.

👉 To get to Jujols: Follow the N116 from Perpignan, past Prades and Villefranche. Just before Olette, Jujols is signed to the right. After 5 kms of climbing, enter the village, but do not go straight. Jujols has VERY narrow streets. Turn left at the information panel and then right into a parking spot. Retrace your steps to the info panel and walk N up the main street. The start of the walk is way marked but easy to miss. Aim for a path that traverses into the obvious stream valley to the right. Leaving the tarmacked streets of this fascinating village, pass an old laverie with the water coming from an underground source. Follow the path just

above and to the L of the stream. Depending on the time of year, look out for a huge and varied range of wild flowers and butterflies.

The path climbs gently for 750m, passing a track to the R, but we stay on the LH side of the stream, climbing easily for another 350m to a steeper section of zig zags which lead to a stream. Ignore the rough track climbing to the L but cross the stream and follow the path crossing the hillside to the R. The path climbs and turns a ridge heading into a second stream valley. Continue on the track on the other side of the valley and you will join a wide 4x4 track. Ignore any paths going to the L or R and keep the trees to your L. The path comes out into open hillside and then turns sharply to the L. At

this hairpin, leave the 4x4 track and take a small path climbing straight up the hill side, passing a ruin at 1387m. Continue N past a shepherd's hut and up to the Refuge de Roque Fumade, (1465m). It is possible to stay in this



DID YOU KNOW

The pharaohs - fun guys?

*Enjoy your mushroom gathering in the P-O
- it used to be illegal!*

According to ancient hieroglyphics, the Ancient Egyptians believed mushrooms to be the plant of immortality. In fact, they were such a hit with the pharaohs that common people were banned from touching or eating them.

unguarded refuge but you need to arrange for a key. If walking to Villefranche, take the track to the R of the refuge but we go to the L for 350m to join a wide 4x4 track. At this junction we have a choice of routes.

1. Take the track to the R for 1k and then a track to the R for another 500m past a ruined but stunning building made of unusual red stone. This track ends in an old red marble quarry with huge slabs of perfectly cut marble just waiting to be used. Interesting detour - but now we must retrace our steps 1.5k.

2. This is the route we will take, whether we do the detour or not. From the junction a small path (signed) climbs up the hillside for a short distance and starts to traverse to the L through a series of cliffs on one of the most spectacular paths in the area. Good but narrow in places, and needs a steady head. At the end of the traverse, the path starts to climb again under more cliffs and then enters the forest.

👉 The path descends and then climbs gently as it traverses through the forest and descends to the Col Diagre (1462m) with a small shelter and info panel. Across the road is a beautiful, cold water source. Now it is downhill all the way to the car so follow the path by the water source until you meet a 4x4 track which can be followed all the way to Jujols or short cut some of the bends by taking paths. You will arrive in Jujols just by the car park.

👉 Take a little time to explore Jujols as it has



some really pretty streets and houses and a superb pottery with the lady owner speaking some English and a selection of oven-to-table wear pottery. Unfortunately despite a lot of renovation taking place, there is still no café in the village but it does have an Auberge and lots of self catered accommodation. Dependent on conditions, this is a walk that can be done most times of the year and is especially good in the late spring when the wild flowers are at their best. ☀️



Mike Rhodes is an International Mountain Leader / Accompanateur de Montagne,

lives all year in Les Angles and specialises in guided walks in the high mountains and

Snowshoe trips in winter. He can be contacted on +33 (0)4 68 04 37 28

email: mike.rhodes@free.fr web site: www.pyrenean-trails.com

Events festival traditions....



PANCAKE DAY

Don't wait for Shrove Tuesday to toss your first pancake of the year. The '**Fête de la Chandeleur**' (Candlemas), also known as the 'jour des crêpes', dates back to Roman

times and is celebrated 40 days after Christmas on the 2nd February.

Originally a religious festival, the name chandeleur actually comes from the word chandelle (candle), probably because this Christian occasion involved much lighting and blessing of candles. The English word 'chandler' also derives from chandeleur – a sort of grocer who specialised in ship supplies and equipment, and presumably dealt in candles too.

LET THEM EAT CAKE!

The tradition of eating a '**Galette des Rois**' actually dates back to the 14th century, and was said to "draw the kings" to the Epiphany. These frangipane filled tarts, complete with paper crown and '**fève**' or trinket baked inside, can be found in patisseries and supermarkets throughout January, and are usually eaten around the 6th, the twelfth day of Christmas. Not surprisingly, during the French Revolution, the name was replaced with '**Gâteau de l'Égalité**' (equality cake) – not a good time to be a king in France!



Curious Catalan Christmas Culture

El Pessebre is the representation of the traditional Nativity Story, but don't forget to look out for the '**caganer**' (pooper). This small statue of a Catalanian peasant stands with trousers down 'fertilising' the land, and is usually tucked away somewhere in Nativity scenes. Finding this unique hidden figure is a popular game for children.

El Caga Tio is a hollow wooden log with smiley face painted on one end, wearing traditional Catalan red hat. He is covered with a blanket and 'fed' throughout December. At Christmas he is hit with a stick to make him 'poop' out the sweets and gifts stored inside his wooden tummy!

The '**Home dels Nassos**' (man of noses) has a nose for every day remaining in the year according to Catalan legend. He can only be seen on the streets on December 31st, so we only ever see him with one big one! One of his relatives is the 'home de les orelles', (the man of ears), who appears on the 30th.

School holidays for our region

Christmas Holidays

21st December – 6th January 2015

February Half Term

7th – 23rd February 2015

Catalan Christmas saying

Beure molt i anar dret no pot ser (Boire beaucoup et marcher droit est impossible)
Excessive drinking and walking straight are impossible

Vide Greniers

Visit our site at www.anglophone-direct.com for an up-to-date list of the vide greniers in your area.

Did you know?

Useful phrases in Catalan for the festive season

Pau I salut !

(paoo ee saloot)

Cheers (lit : peace and health)

Vols ballar amb mi ?

(bolz beuya um mee ?)

Would you like to dance with me ?

Què voldrien beure vostre?

(keh vuldree-en bayoor, boostess?)

What would you like to drink?

El compte si us plau.

(ell conte see ousse plow)

The bill please.

T'estimo. (tesstimoo)

I love you.



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Things you might need to



Coming to 'thermes' with illness.

The medicinal and healing properties of the waters at the many 'thermes' in the PO are taken very seriously in France. If your doctor recommends a spa treatment which would be beneficial for your health, the cost is reimbursed by the Caisse d'Assurance Maladie in the same way that fees for doctor, hospital and prescription is reimbursed. Your doctor will provide you with the necessary paperwork which you should send to your local Caisse d'Assurance Maladie.

Chenille processionnaire

If you have pine trees with Processionary Caterpillar nests on your property, you are advised to cut off the branch of the tree and burn the nest. If the property has a large quantity of nests, ask advice at your local mairie. Take care. Apart from the damage caused to the trees, the caterpillars have fine hairs on their back containing a protein which causes severe irritation and dermatitis, and in some cases an allergic reaction (anaphylactic shock) to both humans and animals. Even after the caterpillar is dead, the hairs remain toxic. Take care when walking your dog in areas where the caterpillars may be, or have been. Initial symptoms to watch out for in your pet may include vomiting and tongue swelling.



Hello Nursey!

If you need a visit from a district nurse for injections, dressing changes etc, you can look in yellow pages and pick somebody nearby - although it's always best to get a recommendation where possible. At the end of the visit, or the course of visits, you will need to pay by cheque or cash and will be presented with a 'feuille de soins' in order to claim back the payment. Do not expect a smart uniform - your nurse will probably arrive in jeans or shorts - but it won't affect the quality of the treatment!

On the Buses

If you want to do a bit of sightseeing without actually having to get behind the wheel, it's cheap and easy with the Conseil Général public transport, which will take you anywhere in the region for just ONE EURO. Full information can be found at www.bus1euro.cg66.fr

Pay your 1 € when you get on the bus, and the ticket is valid for 2 hours, so you can change buses within that time and not pay again.

All tickets can be purchased at the bus station in Perpignan and the weekly and monthly ones are available on the bus itself. The annual ticket requires a photo. In case of bad weather, ring 04 68 826 826 to check if your bus is still running

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM OUR FORUM AT
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“ I very nearly hit two extremely large wild boar that ran in front of my car this morning. Made me wonder what I should do with bodies of such roadkill. Do you just leave it? Report it? Eat it? ”

If you hit one, the chances are that it will survive and run off, as they are very tough, and probably die later if it is badly wounded.

If you hit one and kill it you should report it to the police and either ask them to get someone to collect it, or take it home and eat it. It is very important to report it if you are taking it home as you can be prosecuted for poaching if found with a dead boar in your vehicle without a validated permis de chasse and a good story and have not informed the authorities!

Last year a monster 240 kilo boar was hit by a lorry in La Jonquera, and found dead later. This is

exceptional, as they don't usually exceed 150 kilos around here.

If you are going to eat boar from this area, it should be frozen for a minimum of 6 months and well cooked, as they can be infected with some quite nasty parasites.



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Due to a marked increase in customers searching for property in the Pyrénées-Orientales, we are looking for professional people to join the expanding Artaxa team. If you think you can help to provide our unparalleled service to those customers, particularly around the Albères, then please get in touch!

Buying or selling throughout the Pyrénées-Orientales?

We look forward to hearing from you!

Mark Sayers & the bi-lingual Artaxa Perpignan team

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Naturele Magick in the Pyrenees

by Cindy le Sauvage Guilbert

In this treasure trove of recipes, remedies, folklore and magick of commonly found herbs and flowers, Cindy explains how to use the plants of the P-O, with instructions for making tisanes, decoctions, tinctures and compresses. She describes the 'magic five' edible flowers and wonderful ways of using them, and the 'language' of flowers, so that you can make meaningful delights and gifts for yourself. The book is interspersed with original mandala artworks and regional photos, and concludes with a chapter on the colours, culture and traditions of Catalunya.

Cindy explains the inspiration for Naturele Magick "My maternal Grandmother, who lived with us, was a unique lady. She read my palm, tea leaves and playing cards, put half an onion, lavender and eucalyptus leaves under her pillow when she thought a cold was coming on, and taught me to make rose and lavender water at the age of four or five.

I have continued throughout my life to use herbs

and flowers to create fun and exciting delights, and

learned more and more about the amazing properties of so called 'weeds' as well as many beautiful flowers and plants.

It really is incredible what Mother Nature provides us with. For instance when making a salad I jolly up the Mache leaves with the flowers and leaves of Nasturtiums, Pansies, Violets, Dandelions and Strawberries from my garden. These are full of vitamins and goodness, and create a feast for the eyes as well. Simple and effective.

It has taken me a while to write, edit and publish this book. At times I never thought I would get it to print, so complicated was the process, and I admit that there were times when I was very tempted to throw the computer out of the window! However, here it is at long last. Naturele Magick. Enjoy!

Rosehips

A great accompaniment for cheese, charcuterie, pate and also good in your sauces and gravies, particularly duck and greasy meats, to cut down the fat.

This fruit of the rose, come in a variety of shapes and sizes but the most usual ones are the teardrop shaped ones seen on bare branches of wild and cultivated roses. They contain 50% more vitamin C than oranges, and a single tablespoon of the pulp gives an adult more than the recommended

Naturele Magick in the Pyrenees



A Treasure Trove of
Recipes, Remedies, Folklore and Magick
Cindy le Sauvage Guilbert

Contact Cindy on
naturele.magick@gmail.com

DID YOU KNOW?

The Mackintosh Trail

Charles Rennie Mackintosh is famous of course as an architect and furniture designer but in the later years of his life, from 1923, he lived and painted water colours in the P-O. The Mackintosh Trail follows in his footsteps from the Mediterranean coast to the high mountains of the Cerdagne. Robin Crichton's bilingual book 'Monsieur Mackintosh', part art book, part biography and part tourist guide, presents a voyage of discovery through this stunningly beautiful country. Visit www.crmackintoshfrance.com to find out more.

daily allowance of 60 mg. They can be eaten raw, after being put through a blender, or soaked in water overnight and then cooked in the water for about half an hour. Because of the high vitamin C content they are an excellent immune system booster, and are often used as a supplement to prevent or treat a cold. The pulp from rose hips may be used in sauces or made into jellies and relishes.

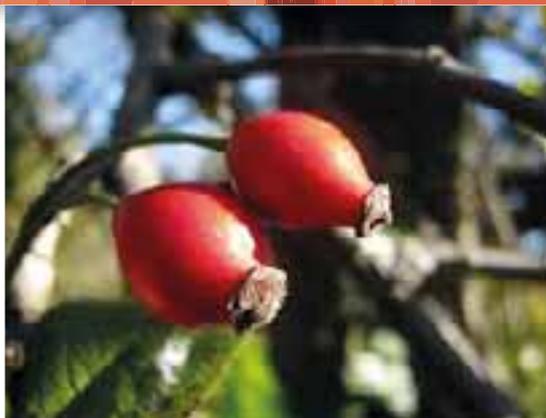
Rosehip Relish

2lb / 1 kilo de-seeded rosehips
 6 fl oz / 175 ml distilled malt vinegar
 10 fl oz / 275 ml water
 ½ vanilla pod
 1 lb / 500g sugar
 Juice of 1 or 2 lemons

Put rosehips, vinegar, water and vanilla in a large pan.

Simmer until soft, add sugar until thickened and add lemon juice to taste.

Remove vanilla pod and pour into sterilised jars.



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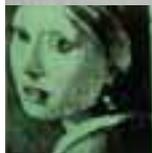
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 free to pop in
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Restaurant Reviews

with Kate and Mates

A Winter Selection...

I am no gourmet 'foodie' but I know what I like. Fresh, tasty food, good and friendly service, clean cutlery, crockery and loos, and prices that don't send me into shock compared to the quality of the meal. The following reviews are not adverts, they are just restaurants that I have enjoyed, or that friends have recommended. **Bon appétit.**

LA TRAMONTANE, Port Vendres..... with Kate and Papa

On the port next to the Tourist Office in Port Vendres, not-so-distant sails flapping in a light breeze, lunch out in late September with my elderly Papa was a delight. The proof? He found nothing whatsoever to complain about! The service was excellent: friendly, interested but not intrusive, and the prices very affordable. The quality and quantity were well above my expectations, particularly for my moules frites, after several disappointing moule experiences this summer in the P-O. After humming and hawing over a wide choice of fresh fish, meat and salads, Papa went for the hot and cold goat's cheese salad at 11 euros, chosen from the hors d'oeuvre menu but as big and varied as any main course salad I have seen. My 'moule-frites' were perfect. Once again taken from the hors d'oeuvre menu, the friendly waitress informed us they were the size of a main course – and she was right. Served with chips that were piping hot and home made, the sauce was so good that I gorged myself on bread to soak it up long after I was poggled. House wine was a couple of euros for a good sized glass of fruity Côtes Catalanes rouge. This review doesn't do this restaurant justice as, never big eaters at lunchtime, we were frugal, but the fresh fish and seafood looked superb, and the home desserts on the



next table nearly pushed us to the brink. Just one disappointment which came after the writing of this review – a grumpy owner who was rude and unhelpful on the phone when I later rang to check if they closed over the winter period – so you'll have to find that one out for yourselves!

2, Quai Forgas, Port Vendres

04 68 82 01 51

Please bear in mind that reviews are based on the subjective opinion of the reviewer. Times, dates and prices are correct at the time of writing but you are advised to ring ahead and check Bon appétit



to see more resto reviews visit
www.anglophone-direct.com

2



LA BAHIA, Arles sur Techwith Polly

A little jewel in Arles sur Tech, this restaurant/bar/mini-golf venue has been taken over by Guy Travé and his wife Rapha. The popular mini-golf course remains but the reputation of Le Bahia is now growing in leaps and bounds thanks to its delicious, freshly cooked food, the warmth of the welcome and the view from the terrace looking down on Arles, across to the Canigou range and right along the valley towards Prats de Mollo! The traditional menu changes regularly, and although not extensive, the choices are creative, varied and well planned and everything on your plate is locally sourced and produced, and freshly cooked to order. Expect to pay around €30 for three courses, €24 for the two-course Formule, or around €14 to €18 for one of the four choices of 'mains', which will include a fish dish, mouth-wateringly tender beef or lamb or even an authentic steak tartare, all served with imaginative and tasty fresh vegetables. Guy will also provide a delicious and good value vegetarian option, but remember to mention this when you book. Clearly sign-posted from the bridge on the main road into Arles from Amélie. Closed Tuesdays, and throughout January.

**Le Bahia, Route de la Baillie,
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Closed Mondays

www.cotecatalane.com

Les Abeilles St Jean Pla de Corts

One of those rare village restaurants that is hardly ever empty, Les Abeilles have got it just right. It's not posh or gourmet, it doesn't pretend to be nouvelle cuisine or art deco, it couldn't be classed as fine dining.....but it's pleasant, straightforward, well cooked fresh food at a price that is easy on the

pocket! At 13€90 for 3 courses at lunchtime you cannot help but be impressed with the value for money and the consistently good standard that is maintained day in day out. Evenings and weekends the price goes up to 21€50 for 3/4 courses and there is always a good choice of red meat, white meat or fish – plus a vegetarian option.

There is a good local wine list, and the service in this popular, family run. restaurant is friendly and efficient. Throughout winter, they are open every lunchtime apart from Monday, every Friday and Saturday evening AND OPEN FOR LUNCH CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S DAY! Booking recommended.

**1 Rue du Boulodrome,
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Le Chat Qui Rit, Reynes

At first glance, this clean and roomy restaurant, run by 'toque blanche' chef Hervé Montoya, appeared to lack atmosphere decor-wise, but it certainly didn't lack flavour or thought once the food started to arrive.

Complimentary 'amuses bouches' of little tuna 'cakes' and cherry tomatoes in toffee, just like mini toffee apples, were a fun beginning to the meal. My starter of chestnut and pumpkin soup was absolutely delicious, and my friends' pan fried charcuterie on a bed of shredded vegetables and mussel salad with turmeric and sardine fish cake were also given the thumbs up.

A main course of pork cheeks with lentils may sound simple, but was juicy and bursting with flavour. Our other mains were organic chicken breast with caramelised chestnuts and shallots and a thick fillet of beautifully cooked red snapper.

Home made desserts, amongst which moist citrus cake with chocolate mousse and ice cream on a bed



of quince, (and the option of home made Byrrh, Muscat or rousquille ice cream) brought the meal to a very satisfactory end.

The house wine choice from Domaine Piquemal is always a safe bet.

Lunch time menu of 16€ (2 courses) or 18€ (3 courses) on weekdays and 28€ for 3 courses eves and weekends. A 'Menu degustation' at 44€ wasn't very well described on a rather confusing menu in general, but our young English waiter, Cameron, also an apprentice chef at the restaurant, was a cutie.

Closed first week in December, Christmas week and a further week in January to be confirmed.

1 La Cabanasse, Reynes 04 68 87 02 22

Did you know?

UGLY FRUITS

Watch out in your local Intermarché for the «fruits et légumes moches» in which they are selling ugly (moches) or poorly sized fruits and veg at reduced prices!

Their appearance may not be as pretty or wholesome looking as we have come to expect from our fruit and veg but the Intermarché message is that ugly fruit and vegetables taste just as good as the lookers! It is estimated that 40% of fruit and vegetables, not up to the standards of beauty imposed by the buyers, ends up being thrown away.

Fruit and vegetables have feelings too. Save one today!



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Winter Fruits

L'arbousier (Strawberry Tree)

Native to the Mediterranean region, Western Europe and Ireland, these pretty fruit trees can often be found growing wild around the south of France.

A tough, easily grown and trouble-free plant, the arbousier is surprisingly tolerant of strong winds, making it a great success in this region! From a distance, the colourful fruits (les arbouses) look a little like strawberries, hence the common name Strawberry Tree. However, the taste is most certainly nothing like the strawberry, and has been described as 'sweet but insipid'.

Interestingly, its Latin name of 'unedo' translates as "I eat (only) one", so maybe coming back for seconds of this particular fruit is not to be recommended.

In November and December, the strawberry tree produces masses of beautiful white flowers, after which the fruits start to fall off the trees. If you wish to pick them before they fall, you should wait until

they are deep red in colour and very soft to the touch. They need to be eaten within 24 hours as they start to decay very quickly.

Whilst the fruits can be eaten fresh, their lack of flavour means that they are more often used to make jellies and jams, particularly due to their high pectin content, which allows for rapid setting without additives. They are also used to ferment and make drinks such as "medronheira" (strawberry tree firewater), a Portuguese brandy- like drink with a very high alcohol content

Health benefits

It is said that if you eat too many of this fruit, it ferments in the stomach and makes you feel giddy drunk! However, to combat that, it is supposed to have antiseptic, astringent and diuretic properties which have not yet been researched as thoroughly as they deserve



Kakis (Persimmons)

Another winter fruit adding a splash of colour to our landscape is the persimmon (kaki in French.)

Introduced from China into Europe in the mid-19th century. The fruits are sweet with a soft and occasionally fibrous texture. They have high tannin content, making them fairly bitter until the fruit matures and the tannin levels are reduced.

The colour of the fruit varies from light yellow-orange to dark orange-red and can weigh

more than a pound! There are many varieties of persimmon, split up into two categories - astringent and non-astringent.

The persimmons which grow in the P-O are non astringent, requiring hot summers, and may be eaten whilst still crisp, although the sweetness improves with maturity. An unripe fruit can be ripened by placing it with other ripening fruits.



Did you know?

Real Life P-O Horror stories

We've had a few days of heavy rain this autumn, mixed in with the usual 'été indienne' but none to match the 20th May 1868 in Molitg les Bains when 313 mm fell in one hour.

According to the 'bulletin météorologique' records of 1900, a man sheltering from the rain near the River Têt was cut in half by a large

rock dislodged from the mountains by the heavy rain. Half of his body was found under the rock and the other half 12km away near Eus. Not a drop a rain fell in Perpignan that day.



Living off the land

Health benefits

Persimmon pulp and peel are both good sources of fibre. Rich in anti-oxidant vitamin C, which our bodies need to help protect against cell damage and to increase absorption of iron, they also contain a good amount of beta carotene, which is converted into vitamin A in the body, helping us to maintain healthy skin, good vision, and strengthen immunity. ☀



Persimmon Chutney

- 12 persimmons
- 6 lemons
- cup oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp chilli sauce or powder
- 2 tblsp finely chopped fresh ginger
- 3 cloves chopped garlic
- 2 cups cider vinegar
- cup currants (optional)

- Cut up lemons and soak in vinegar overnight.
- Blanch persimmons in boiling water for 5 minutes, then peel and dice.
- Add the lemons with all other ingredients and bring to boil.
- Continue boiling for about 40 minutes or until the mixture starts to thicken. Allow mixture to cool, bottle and seal.

Did you know?

Byrrh apéritif Catalan

Created by the Violet brothers from Thuir in 1873, and otherwise known as 'vin tonique et hygiénique au quinquina', Byrrh used to be a world renowned Catalan apéritif. The brothers apparently started off as travelling salesmen, selling various things including 'tonic'. With the arrival of the railway in Perpignan in 1858, they saw the chance to take full advantage of the new industry that it brought to the region, and put together the recipe for Byrrh, which was to become famous throughout the world. It is created from good quality Roussillon wines and quinine water, and said to be medicinal. You can visit the winery in Thuir, which takes in what they claim to be the largest wooden vat in the world



Did you know?

**A W O R D I N
Y O U R E A R**

A useful scrabble word (!) the 28 letter word *antidisestablishmentarianism*, meaning opposition to the disestablishment of any organization or relationship, is the longest 'official' word in English. However, its root is French, as it comes from Old French *establi*, which in its turn, comes from the Latin, *stabilis*. Apparently, Old French didn't like words beginning with S followed by a consonant, so it added an E to the beginning of the Latin *stabilire*, to stabilize).

PS For the obsessive such as myself, the 29 letter '*floccinaucinihilipilification*' (the act of constantly estimating things to be worthless is worth) is absolutely worth memorising, as well as the 34 letter '*supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*' (fantastic) and the massive 45 letter '*pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis*' (a supposed lung disease).




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on the road running parallel to the seafloor*

A winter dish from the Cerdanya

Trinxat

Cabbage and Potato cake -

Trinxat, in Catalan, means chopped or shredded and was traditionally eaten in the mountains in winter to keep the cold out. A economical and tasty dish, with several variations.

Ingredients

- Savoy or green cabbage
- 10 thick slices of salt pork or bacon, diced
- 2 lbs. potatoes, peeled
- 3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and minced

Boil the cabbage and potato until well done and very tender.

Mash both ingredients together with a potato masher.

Season to taste with salt, and set aside.



In a frying pan, lightly brown salt pork or bacon on both sides, drain on kitchen roll and set aside.

Fry garlic, in olive oil until soft, 2-3 minutes; then add oil and garlic to cabbage mixture, mixing until thoroughly combined, but still a bit chunky.

Stir in the bacon or salt pork

Drop the mixture into hot oil by large spoonfuls, pat into smooth patties with a spatula and fry until browned on both sides, or mound onto a serving platter without frying and garnish with any left over bacon.



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Food Britannia?

After living and working in England, French couple Marj & Richard have created a 'corner that is forever England', in the heart of Céret, an amazing range of sensibly priced British food and gifts. The store oozes all the charm and character of the quintessentially British corner shop of a bygone era. The shelves are packed with everything you miss and much that you'd forgotten that you missed! From Boddingtons to Bakewell Tarts, Yorkshire Puddings to Sherbet Dips (yes, they still make them!) - whatever you secretly long for is waiting for you chez Richard & Marj.





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Labus d'alcool est dangereux pour la santé, à consommer avec modération

BATTY ABOUT BATS?

by Linda Razzell

Bats in your belfry? Be grateful! Bats are important. They keep down the pests in our gardens and fields, play a huge part in pollination and distribute fruit seeds. If the bees continue to desert us, we're going to need to befriend the bats unless we wish to see whole ecosystems collapse.

Their greatest threat of course is you and me. We disturb and destroy their habitats, build wind turbines, high speed roads and railways, all potential bat killers.

Bats are a gardener's friend, just like snakes, frogs, toads and many other 'things that make you go eugh!'. A single little brown bat can eat one thousand mosquitoes in an hour. In fact, bats are nocturnal insecticide bombs! What's not to like?

Our knowledge of bats tends to stem more from fiction than from fact - they will fly into your hair, suck your blood, carry rabies, frighten your sheep - but these beliefs come from lack of education (ours) and discreet habits (theirs).

Facts about bats

- they bring up their babies in a 'nursery' for warmth (fathers do not share child care)
- they are the only true flying mammal (they are NOT rodents)



- there are over one thousand species
- they are nocturnal and 'see' by echolocation (sound waves bouncing back to them)
- the earliest bat fossils go back 52 million years
- their dung makes rich fertilizer, and was used to make gun powder in the American Civil War
- bats do not bite, and do not suck the blood of humans

Finally, if you're still not convinced, take a look at Mexico where bats pollinate the flowers of the agave cactus, and remember that without them, there would be no tequila!

So next time you're sipping a Marguerita on the terrace, drink a toast to bats and millions of years of evolution to bring you a cocktail!



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Le Portofino English Spoken

NUTTY ABOUT NUTS?

This has been a bumper year for nuts in the PO. Chestnut trees were bowed down with fruit quite early, falling with the first strong winds. Walnuts rained down without any help. Unusually, I have also seen large stands of hazel nuts this year.

The 'English' walnut, *Juglans regia*, can grow to an enormous size here, with a full spreading canopy and a well developed root system. It will easily grow three metres a year if it likes the spot - and it certainly likes the PO.

Walnuts contain protein, omega 3, fatty acids, anti-oxidants, vitamin E, B complex and minerals. They are said to be brain food – well, they look like little brains, don't they? - and studies suggest they can ward off Alzheimers (if you can remember where you put them), lower cholesterol, and protect against heart disease and diabetes.

Some care needs to be taken over storage as they spoil easily if not cool & dry.



Walnut stuffed dates

Perfect with a glass of wine in front of a roaring fire on a cold winter's eve.

Ingredients

- 12 dates, pitted
- Pinch red chili flakes
- 12 walnut halves, toasted
- 4 slices lean bacon, cut crosswise into three equal pieces

Carefully make a lengthwise slit in each date, open gently and sprinkle with chili flakes; fill with a walnut half, close the date around the walnut. Wrap the bacon around the date and secure with a toothpick. Arrange on a baking sheet.

Roast or grill on high heat, turning until crispy, about 8 to 10 minutes, pat dry with kitchen roll, and serve immediately.

Rosbifs the original froggies!

It seems that the much maligned Frogs' legs which gave the French their playful nickname of 'froggies' were actually eaten first by Brits up to 8,000 years ago.

Archaeologists working on a site close to Stonehenge discovered

the charred leg bone of a toad dating back to between 6250 BC and 7596 BC. A spokesperson for the University of Buckingham described it as "the earliest evidence of a cooked toad or frog leg found in the world".



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for

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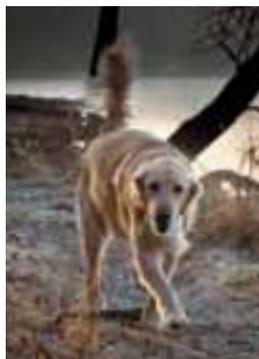
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Did YOU KNOW?

Pass the salt!

One of the most hated, unfair and unpopular taxes in France during the Middle Ages was the salt tax or 'gabelle'. Collioure was famed for its anchovy production, which involved a great deal of salt and the anchovies were a royal favourite, so in 1466 King Louis XI of France exempted the town from the much hated 'gabelle' in order to ensure continued production of the tasty little fishy!



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SKI CATALAN....



Did you know?

Living in Llivia

When the Treaty of the Pyrenees (1659) handed over Roussillon and 33 communes of the Cerdagne to France, Llivia somehow managed to remain Spanish and is, to this day, a little piece of Spain surrounded by France. Its other claim to fame is the 'Oldest Pharmacy In Europe' with medieval containers, antique drugs and ancient prescriptions, now a small museum.



Don't forget your snow chains or snow tyres.

They are a legal requirement and the 'gendarmes' will prevent you from continuing and very likely dole out an on-the-spot fine if you do not have suitable security for the snow. Put them on as soon as you see the signs.

For up to date weather call 3250, for road conditions call 04 68 38 12 05 or visit

www.i-cerdanya.info

www.dirso.fr/viabilitehivernale/

Letsgetphysical...

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Les Angles offers 45 pistes catering for all levels, and an impressive Snowpark. From the top of the télécabine, black, red, blue and green ski runs bring you through the pine forests to the old village itself (the only resort in the Pyrenees that does this)



In brief

Advanced skiers ★★★★★☆
Intermediate ★★★★★☆
Beginners ★★★★★☆
Snowboarding ★★★★★☆

Tourist Office: 04 68 04 32 76

www.lesangles.com



CAMBRE-D'AZE

St Pierre dels Forcats (linked to Eyne) is the first resort on the way up the mountain from Perpignan, & nestles at the foot of the impressive glacial cirque of Cambre d'Aze. Good for beginners and families.



In brief

Advanced skiers ★☆☆☆☆☆
Intermediate ★★★★★☆
Beginners ★★★★★☆
Snowboarding ★★☆☆☆☆

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www.cambre-d-aze.com

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In brief

Advanced skiers ★★★★★☆
Intermediate ★★★★★☆
Beginners ★★★★★☆
Snowboarding ★★★★★☆

Tourist Office: 04 68 30 68 30

www.font-romeu.fr



LIZARDS AND BUTTERFLIES

Heading up to the ski slopes this winter? Spare a thought for the 60 or so 'joncétois', residents of Joncet who have watched 5000 vehicles per day, many of them lorries, thunder through the tiny village for many a ski season. After a twelve year struggle, Joncet, controversial village on the RN16 main road up to the mountain ski resort is to have its bypass. Accident blackspot and traffic bottleneck up to the ski slopes, the 'déviation' has been held up by protected species of lizards and butterflies. Yes, really!

At a cost of 20 million euros, with an estimated finish date of 2016, the by pass will run parallel to the RN 116 via a 1,5 kilomètre loop.

SKI CATALAN.....

PORTÉ PUYMORENS

Just a 15 mins from Pas de la Case, it is often overlooked by skiers rushing to buy cheap booze & cigarettes. However, it offers a variety of different levels for such a small resort, & its vast snow park attracts young snowboarders from all around.

 **50km downhill**
20km Cross Country



In brief

Advanced skiers ★★☆☆☆☆
Intermediate ★★☆☆☆☆
Beginners ★★☆☆☆☆
Snowboarding ★★☆☆☆☆

Tourist Office: 04.68.04.82.41
www.porte-puymorens.net

PUYVALADOR

With its lake of the same name, Puyvalador is the last village before the P-O drops into the Aude and boasts a chairlift which is open most of the year. Not the biggest skiable domain but in the right conditions provides some good "thru' the trees skiing

 **2 Snowparks**
4km Cross Country



In brief

Advanced skiers ★★☆☆☆☆
Intermediate ★★☆☆☆☆
Beginners ★★☆☆☆☆
Snowboarding ★★☆☆☆☆

Tourist Office: 04 68 04 44 83
www.puyvalador.com

LA QUILLANE

A family resort made up of just three small green and one blue runs, La Quillane is fabulous for first timers or nervous beginners!

 **Tiny!!**



In brief

Beginners ★★☆☆☆☆
Snowboarding ★★☆☆☆☆

Tourist Office: 04.68.04.22.25
www.laquillane.fr

FORMIGUERES

4kms from the village, with a free shuttle in school holidays. All runs return to the base where a large cafe with vast terrace, and hire shops. There's a free button lift for those who are not yet sure if they are skiers.

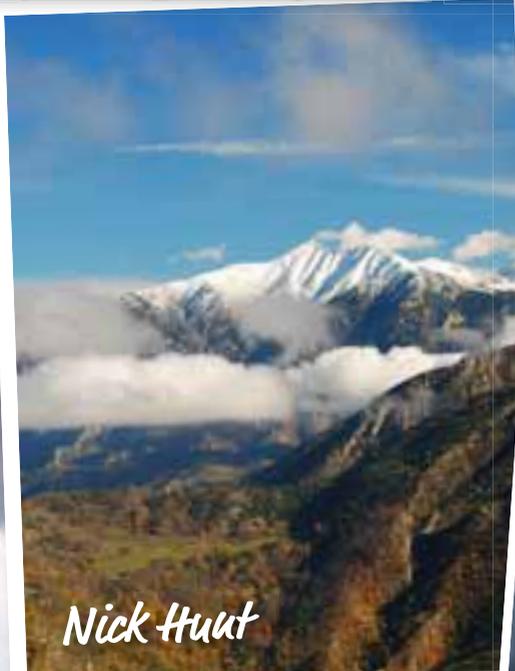
 **22km downhill**
20km cross country
Pistes



In brief

Advanced skiers ★★☆☆☆☆
Intermediate ★★☆☆☆☆
Beginners ★★☆☆☆☆
Snowboarding ★★☆☆☆☆

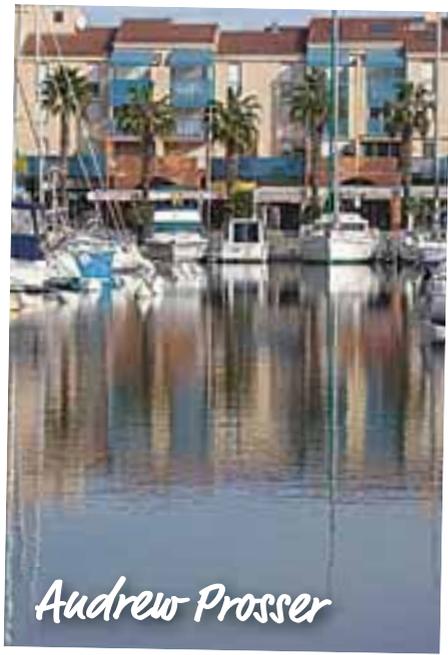
Tourist Office: 04 68 04 47 35
www.formigueres.com



Nick Huat



Sue Holmes



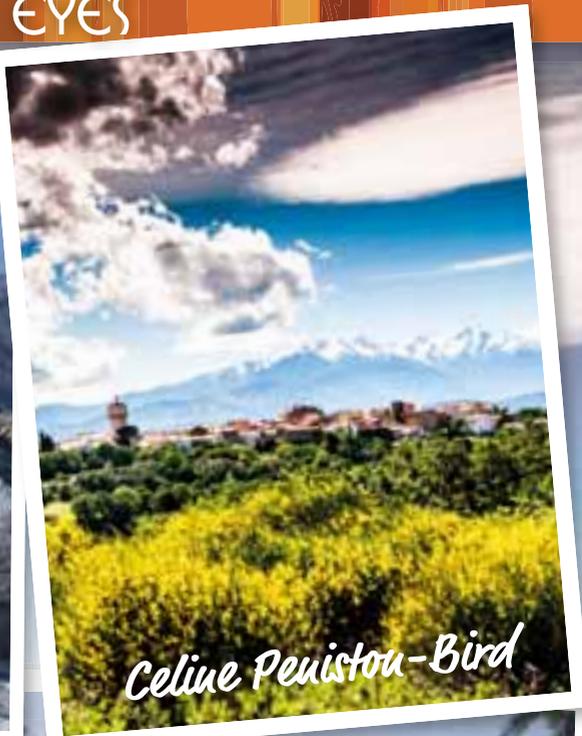
Andrew Prosser



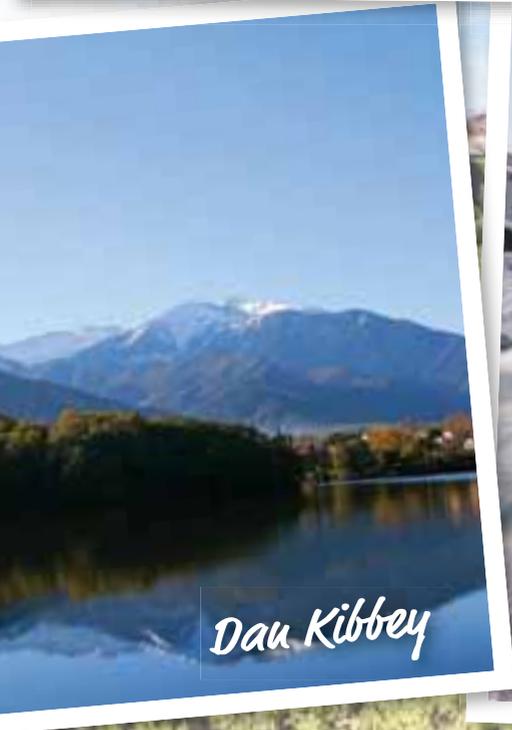
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P-O Picnics

With Katja Willemsen



TOUR DE MASSANE

Red flames blazing from the Massane Tower in the 13th century spiked the adrenaline of even the most hardened guard. It meant only one thing: Collioure's Royal Castle was under threat. The King of Majorca would have rushed into the castle's safe room, the "donjon", and horsemen would have sped up the mountain to find out exactly where the danger lay.

Before phones and social media, fire was the fastest way to communicate. The crumbling watchtowers dotting our mountains formed a powerful surveillance system built by the kings of Majorca. When you stand next to the Tour de Massane, you see how ideal it is for monitoring enemy activity up and down the coastline, and deep into the Roussillon plains.

A little-known sand road gives you a head start to

our picnic spot, with your car doing most of the climbing. From the 'voie rapide' to Collioure (D914), take exit 13 which feeds onto a small roundabout. Take the concrete slipway to Mas Christine, and 100 metres later, turn right. After roughly 8 kms (see inset for more detailed directions), the road stops dead and it's time to walk!

Park your car and follow the first yellow hiking trail sign, "Torre de la Maçana", on the right. It says 30 minutes to walk 1.5 kms to the top, but rather take your time and aim to do it in an hour. Parts of the hike are steep, but they're short and tough rather than long and breath-stealing.

After a bit of a scramble at the start, the path weaves comfortably between winter-bare chestnut trees. Dry leaves pop 'n crackle under your boots, and



Out for the day...

Mother Nature's lacework of stark branches criss-cross the sky above.

When the path hairpins upwards into a climb, don't panic! It's brief and your reward is the first spectacular coastal view.

At the Forêt de la Massane nature reserve sign, go right, and at the tree circled by a low stone wall, keep right.

The terrain turns into a slow easy rise where massive chunks of mountain lie strewn amongst the trees like marbles tossed by the gods. If you come across cattle, keep your distance just in case one is a grumpy bull.

Keep following the yellow signs and before you know it, you'll see the Massane Tower's dark outline against the sky. Even from far, it looks both grand and frail, as if a nudge might send it tumbling over the cliff.

One last short uphill and you're out of the trees and walking on the sparse scrubland that flows down from the peak. If it isn't too windy, climb up the stone steps to the tower's platform. The 360° are breathtaking.

Blue-black peaks serrate the skyline on the Spanish side, the Roussillon plains sprawl all

the way to the Corbière mountains, and the sea seems to stretch to the end of the world.

An excellent vertical orientation table outlines the coastline, and just in front of you is the Tour de Madeloc, the main tower with which the Tour de Massane exchanged fire signals.

On the other side of the platform, just past the tower gate, the old perimeter wall is a perfect table for your picnic. **Bon appétit!**

P.S: If you're adventurous and equipped with torches, go up in the afternoon for sundowners, but choose a clear day with no risk of wind or storms. At dusk, the sky darkens into indigo blue and the mountains and sea shimmer in reds and oranges straight from Matisse's palette. Santé!



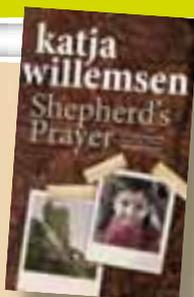


How To Get There

- From Perpignan, take exit 13 off the voie rapide to Collioure (D914). At small roundabout, take concrete slipway to Mas Christine.
- (If on D914 from Port Vendres, take exit 13 and at 1st roundabout, take 5th exit to cross voie rapide. At next roundabout, on other side of bridge, take concrete slipway to Mas Christine.)
- A mere 100 metres later, turn right at sign “Elevage chèvres Mohair Cabrilaine”
- After about 5-10 minutes, the road becomes a sand track, keep left, following “Elevage chèvres Mohair Cabrilaine” sign. After this, drive past any “mas Christine” and “élevage chèvres” signs and don’t deviate from this bumpy but driveable road until it stops dead. It’s time to walk!
- Note on hike: it’s well sign-posted (“Torre de Maçana/ Tour de Massane”) but there are occasional junctions where it’s not clear whether to go right or left. Don’t worry. They’re loops created by cattle and always join up with “official” path.
- Walking back: follow signs to “Coll de la Plaça d’Armes”



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



Available on Amazon

Out for the day...

VERNET-LES-BAINS

Photos © Emilie VEBER



Highly fashionable 'station thermale' at the start of the XX century, today a pretty Catalan village with steep, narrow, flower decked streets, leading to the XII century church of Saint Saturnin attached to the castle, a visit to Vernet-les-Bains is a delight on a bright winter's day.

Recommended for respiratory and rheumatic disorders due to its sodium sulphur waters flowing down from the very heart of Canigou, it also makes a great base for exploring, whether driving or walking. The Cady valley and surrounding countryside is spectacular, and Canigou omnipresent.

The devastating floods

of 1940 destroyed much of the flora and fauna in the area, when the River Cady poured out of the gorge at Casteil, rose to six metres, and burst its banks. Locals reported seeing the river carrying

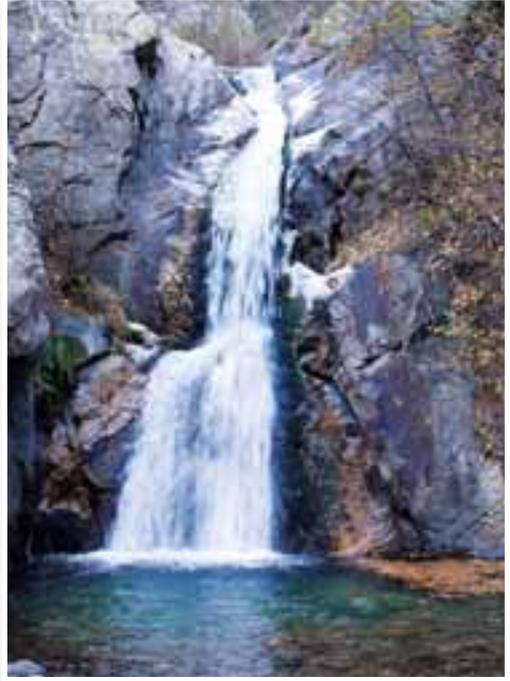


'apple trees, cows on their backs, sideboards, wardrobes full of clothes and even a hotel, which floated for a few seconds before sinking into the water'. On October 21st 1940, the headline of the Indépendant was 'Vernet-les-Bains, yesterday Paradise of the Pyrenees, today Dante's Inferno'.

After much restoration work, Vernet became the first 'Village Arboretum' in France with over 2,000 identified and listed trees in the village, and a promise that for each new child born in Vernet, a tree would be planted by the parents.

For the geologists, a visit to the geological museum (only open in the summer) with its collection of rocks, minerals, fossils and crystals must not be missed out.

Famous British visitors to the resort in the early 20th century included Rudyard Kipling, the Princess of Battenberg (daughter of Queen Victoria, nothing to do with the cakes), Lord Roberts and his wife, Scott O'Connor. Facilities for visitors were improved, magnificent hotels were constructed



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Out for the day...

around the park, and sparkling evening parties held in the casino, built in 1880 by architect Viggo Dorph Petersen.

Today, Vernet remains a lively tourist resort, with bars and restaurants, casino, and of course its hot spring baths.

Take a 3km walk from the centre on a dry and sunny winter's day to the 'Cascade des Anglais' waterfall, following signs just off the D27 to Fillols, leading to a parking on the right. This wooded walk

will bring you first to the waterfall of St Vincent and then, framed by rocky cliffs, La Cascade des Anglais.

Starting at the tourist office, stroll around the 'Kipling circuit', a short walk around Vernet with illustrated panels and quotations from Kipling's own writings - the village seen through the pen of the celebrated author.

Look out too for the 'Entente Cordiale' monument next to the mairie, the only one of its kind in France, sculpted in Canigou granite by Roussillon sculptor Gustave Violet and representing France and Britain. Proposed in 1912 in honour of the wealthy Brits who frequented the fashionable spa town, the monument was completed at the end of WW1,

"I came here in search of nothing more than a little sunshine. But I found Canigou, whom I discovered to be a magician among mountains, and I submitted myself to his power... I watch him with wonder and delight. Nothing that he could do or give birth to would now surprise me, whether I met Don Quixote himself riding in from the Spanish side, or all the chivalry of ancient France watering their horses at his streams, or saw (which each twilight seems quite possible) gnomes and kobolds swarming out of the mines and tunnels of his flanks."

Rudyard Kipling

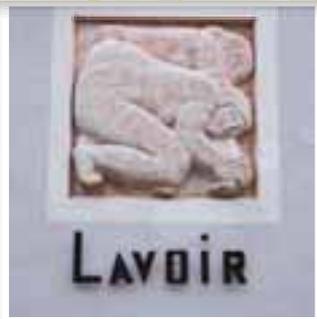
and dedicated not only to the Entente Cordiale, but to the memory of those killed during the war.

In 1914, the "thermal plankton" deposit found on rocks where the spring water emerges was used to make a beauty cream marketed under the name of "La Vernétine" and presented as a "miracle cure for skin disorders"! One hundred years later, in November 2014, Vernet launched Vitherma, a range of creams and cosmetics, with the subtle perfume of Roussillon fruit, based around

the magical waters of the spa.

Over the centuries, the hot spring waters of Vernet have been drunk, bathed in...and even used for heating.





Today, one of the hot springs flows out of the ground at 66° from its source at the Hotel Portugal, (gracious and

peaceful retreat for servicemen past and present) and heats part of the casino, and a local crèche, before flowing on to an ancient and fascinating 'lavoir' opposite the Hôtel Princess.

With delightful paintings by Dégas on the walls (copies of course!) and a striking 'trompe l'oeil' around the sinks, this wash house is one of only a small number in Europe where you really can wash your dirty linen in public.

Locals and visitors still use the natural hot water for washing their smalls - and for a bit of fun, swipe

your iPhone (or grab someone else's if you're not an iPhone owner!) on the codes on the walls and listen to the sounds of the washroom as it comes to life.

For more info on this dynamic little resort, check out the Tourist Office website, soon to be available in English at www.vernet-les-bains.fr

WANTED: SHORT PLUMP SKIS!

It seems that young females are the most at risk on the ski slopes; in fact they are 3.5 times more likely to sprain a knee or ankle than the male of the species! Apparently, this is partly down to the female form whose pelvis is "horizontale" as well as over-reliance on their quadriceps muscles and under reliance on their hamstrings. But never fear! You can now buy skis adapted specifically to the female shape. No rude comments please!



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A winter stroll along the Canal de Bohère to St Michel de Cuxa...

The Canal de Bohère runs from Serdinya above Villefranche de Conflent and ends near the lake of Vinça. Parts of its 42 km length provide the perfect flat winter walk, with glimpses through the naked trees of stunning views across the valley.

Take the D35 Clara road out of Prades, crossing the canal after 2.5 km. Park on the right, climb the bank and turn right onto the footpath. The canal, about 2 m wide and 20 cm deep, winds under little bridges, past gardens, orchards and woods of chestnuts, cherries, walnuts, acacias and figs. As it twists and turns you catch glimpses of Prades, Eus, and finally the beautiful Abbey of St Michel de Cuxa before the walk ends at an impressive spurting siphon. Now you can choose to make

the easy descent to the peaceful and beautiful 940 Abbey dedicated to St Michel, and refresh the soul, (and body - cheese, honey and home made jam are on sale in the shop) or simply retrace your steps back along the canal to your car. →



...and a winter drive to the top of the world.....

Spot the customs official

While you're at Pic Neoulous, look out for 'La Reyne de las Founs' - man made rock formation surrounding a source coming out of the mountain, forming a pretty waterfall and stream. Inscribed with 'les douaniers ici trouvent souvent ce qu'ils cherchent' it was used by smugglers to indicate, via cleverly coded pebble formations, where the customs officials were and how many were about!

This delightful drive to the Col d'Ouillat above Le Perthus twists and turns ever upwards through ancient, gnarled cork oaks, chestnuts, and beech till you arrive at the top of the world - or so it seems.

Take the RN9, le Boulou - Le Perthus road, and just before entering Le Perthus, look out for the filter lane on the left, the D71 towards St Jean d'Albère.

Suddenly the tree lined road opens up to wide and spectacular views. Keep climbing and you will arrive at a perfect picnic and BBQ area. Park

up, grab some of that winter sun, light up a fire for your steaks, unpack your sandwiches and wine, sit on the terrace of the on-site 'Chalet de L'Albère', where there are loos for the disabled, with a warm drink or a cold beer. For an easy stroll, drive a little further until disabled signs welcome you to a small parking area, and a newly created path on your left specially adapted and equipped for the disabled, prams, wheelchairs....., A flat, ten minute woodland stroll brings you out at a stunning viewpoint with orientation panel. On any day, it is spectacular. On a clear day, it will take your breath away. ☀



Test your French

1 - T POUR TRAIN!

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

| | | | |
|---------------|----|---|--|
| traîneau | 1 | a | liquide qui sort de la peau |
| trajet | 2 | b | inquiéter |
| trèfle | 3 | c | petite plante à trois feuilles |
| traversin | 4 | d | court voyage |
| trac | 5 | e | grand oreiller en forme de cylindre |
| transpiration | 6 | f | côté droit du bateau |
| tracasser | 7 | g | pour garder des papiers ensemble |
| trempe | 8 | h | peur |
| tribord | 9 | i | petit véhicule qui glisse sur la neige |
| trombone | 10 | j | très mouillé |

Tongue twister
(Virelangue)
(Répétez trois fois)

Douze dangeureuses
douches douces

Blague bête

Deux gendarmes
discutent

Tu fais trop jeune
pour être flic. C'est
quoi ton secret?

Une crème qui fait la peau-lisse
(Tu fais - you look flic - cop
peau - skin lisse - smoothe)



Hair Raising!

In case you weren't confused before.....

Hair - cheveux?... or poil?... or even pelage?

Cheveux - hair on a human head.

Poils - body hair (face, underarm etc), animal hair

Pelage - animal coat



2

And of course, there are some hairy expressions, which don't have anything to do with hair! Can you find their English equivalent?

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---|------------------|
| de bon poil | 1 | a | to lisp |
| pile-poil | 2 | b | naked |
| reprendre du poil de la bête | 3 | c | to perk up |
| avoir un cheveu sur la langue | 4 | d | in a good mood |
| à poil | 5 | e | spot on, exactly |

3 - CAN YOU MATCH UP THESE USEFUL PHRASES WHICH ALL INVOLVE BODY PARTS?

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|----|---|--------------------------------------|
| Mettre le pied dans le plat | 1 | a | To have lots of influence |
| Un coup de tête | 2 | b | Get out on the wrong side of the bed |
| Avoir le bras long | 3 | c | To put your foot in it |
| Prendre ses jambes à son cou | 4 | d | Yeah, sure (disbelief) |
| Se lever du pied gauche | 5 | e | Up yours! |
| Avoir un coup dans le nez | 6 | f | To leg it/leave quickly |
| C'est le pied | 7 | g | A whim |
| Donner sa langue au chat | 8 | h | To give up trying |
| Mon œil! | 9 | i | to be drunk |
| Faire un bras d'honneur | 10 | j | It's great! |

New Word VAPOTER

To smoke an
electronic cigarette



The Brits may have a bit of a boozy reputation but the French have a long tradition of toasts with body parts.

Here is one of the most famous drinking songs. Ask any French friend for the simple tune. You will note that the body parts mentioned have been 'latinised'. Can you work out what they are?

Language Tip

Apprendre à faire quelque chose

To learn to do something

eg J'apprends à parler Français

I'm learning to speak French

Enseigner à quelqu'un de faire quelque chose

To teach someone to do something

J'enseigne à mon mon fils de tirer la chasse

I'm teaching my son to flush the loo (He's only 21!)

Bjr Snta!

Une mère demande à son fils :
Tu as fais ta lettre au Père Noël ?
Mais non, je lui ai envoyé un texto !



Il est des nôtres (He's one of us)

Ami [name] lève ton verre, et surtout,
ne le renverse pas
et porte le
du frontibus
au nasibus
au mentibus
au ventribus
au sexibus
et glou et glou et glou

Chorus

Il est des nôtres
Il a bu son verre comme les autres
C'est un ivrogne
Ca se voit rien qu'à sa trogne

renverse - spill
ivrogne - drunkard
trogne - face (mug)



Améliorez votre Anglais

1 - How to make the perfect cup of tea

Put these instructions for making a perfect cup of tea into the logical order

- Add milk and sugar if required
- Enjoy your cuppa
- Pour the tea into the cup
- Bring the kettle to the boil
- Fill the kettle with fresh water
- Put the tea in the teapot.
- Leave the tea to brew for five minutes
- Warm teapot with hot water and pour away
- Pour the boiling water into the teapot

Tea



Virelangue

(Répétez trois fois)

Hack away the
edge of the hedge

Arghhhh, that English humour!

Were you long in the hospital?

No, I was the same size I am now!

Et encore...

Did you hear about the frog who
broke down on the A9?

He got toad away

(toad - crapaud towed - dépanné)



2 - Un peu d'argot...

Trouvez la bonne traduction

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----|---|--------------------------|
| Best of British | 1 | a | Je suis écaeuré |
| I am cheesed off | 2 | b | Tout |
| Cheerio | 3 | c | Au revoir |
| I'll have a bash | 4 | d | Bonne chance |
| I am gutted | 5 | e | c'est une blague |
| It's a wind-up | 6 | f | J'en ai marre |
| I'm trying to suss it out | 7 | g | j'essaie de comprendre |
| What a fluke | 8 | h | Quel coup de chance |
| I'm hitting the sack | 9 | i | Je me couche |
| The full Monty | 10 | j | je vais tenter ma chance |

3 - Testez votre 'English' idiomatique.

1. If something is expensive it costs.....
 - a) an ugly shilling
 - b) a pretty penny
 - c) a pathetic pound
2. If you are 'full of beans' you are...
 - a) a good cook
 - b) lively
 - c) full of wind
3. If you are 'at a loose end' you are...
 - a) overweight
 - b) bored
 - c) a bad loser
4. If you are making an effort to be polite, you should...
 - a) mind your Ps and Qs
 - b) look after your A to Z
 - c) recite the alphabet
5. If somebody is described as being 'all bark and no bite', they are...
 - a) very hairy
 - b) harmless
 - c) vegetarian

Faites un nouvel ami.

Demandez à un anglais (n'importe qui, choisissez un étranger dans la rue, it's more fun) pour expliquer la blague suivante!

What does the Lone Ranger say when he takes out the garbage?

**To the dump, to the dump,
to the dump dump dump.**



4 - C - is for Cat

Trouvez les définitions des mots suivants, qui commencent tous avec les lettres Ca

| | | | |
|------------|----|---|---------------------------|
| cello | 1 | a | run after |
| century | 2 | b | high, steep piece of land |
| chop | 3 | c | small piece of dried food |
| clap | 4 | d | easy to use |
| cliff | 5 | e | large violin |
| cobweb | 6 | f | shiny brown nut |
| chestnut | 7 | g | hit hands together |
| crumb | 8 | h | fine net of sticky thread |
| chase | 9 | I | one hundred years |
| convenient | 10 | j | cut up |

Useful word

Whatever !

ouais, ouais... c'est ça...

Fun word

Discombobulated

Confused

Useful expression

Let bygones be bygones

Le passé c'est le passé

AIRPORT NEWS

With JOHN FAIRCLOUGH



Car share Visit our forum at <http://forum.anglophone-direct.com> to offer or request lift shares to local and regional airports.

WINTER 2014

At the time of writing, the winter flight season has hardly got underway, but a trawl through the various airline and airport schedules for the post Christmas period throws up little change to the pre Christmas offering published in the autumn edition of PO Life.

I'm indebted to a couple of sharp-eyed readers who have brought to my attention the addition of a Jet 2 Glasgow Int'l to Barcelona route twice a week from Feb 2015 onwards. Though not direct flights, there is further good news for Scottish based readers in that, following the demise of Virgin's short lived 'Little Red' domestic operation, Ryanair have decided to start services to/from both Glasgow Int'l and Edinburgh to Stansted. This means that, along with EasyJet, there are at least 6 flights per day from the Scottish cities to the Essex hub, thus enabling more flexible transfer opportunities onto one of Ryanair's flights to our region at Stansted.

The lack of any new services to announce again allows me space to examine another of the aspects of flying I get asked about regularly - seating. These days, an airline ticket entitles you to little else than a seat on the plane, but for those willing to part with a little cash, the 2 hr flight can be made a bit more pleasant. All the airlines offer the chance to pre-reserve the seats on their aircraft with more leg

room and personal space, usually for around 10-15€ per seat per flight, and referred to as 'Premium' seats or similar. In nearly all cases these are the seats in the front (bulkhead) rows and those adjacent to the over wing emergency exits. It's worth noting that these are NOT available to children or people with restricted movement.

Ryanair have recently followed EasyJet in offering a premium ticket known as 'Business plus'. Costing approximately 3 to 4 times the price of a basic ticket, during the booking process, you will be offered the chance to upgrade to this fare which will entitle you to a Premium seat (described above), priority boarding, unlimited changes to your flight up to the day of departure, 20kg hold baggage, and fast track security clearance at selected airports, though it does NOT allow access to the Business lounges. As an example, on a Stansted to Perpignan flight in mid December, when I checked the fares, a standard ticket cost £19.99 and a Business Plus fare cost £64.99.

Did YOU KNOW?

Happy New Year : One of the suggestions for the origins of the word Hogmanay is that it comes from the French 'au gui mener' or "lead to the mistletoe" and was adapted by the Scots – with a slightly different twang to it!

Transporting Christmas Crackers

Airline Partypoppers?

Thinking of celebrating British style this Christmas and New Year? You'll go crackers when you read the following!

Flybe?

Maximum of ONE box of 12 crackers per passenger, sealed in manufacturer's original packaging and placed in hold.

EasyJet?

Maximum of TWO boxes of crackers per passenger may be taken onto the aircraft, sealed in manufacturer's original packaging. Crackers containing novelty items normally prohibited in hand baggage (how can we tell without pulling the crackers?) must be checked into the hold.

The rest?

NO crackers are permitted on the following airlines: **Aer Arann, El Al, Monarch, Ryanair, Thomson, Wizz Air**



Party Poppers

NOT permitted on ANY airline

Christmas cakes, puddings and pies can of course travel in your hand luggage but the accompanying brandy butter and custard must travel in the hold.

Train timetables available at <http://en.voyages-sncf.com/en/> 🚂

For a safer solution, and to avoid any possibility of subsequent water boarding following onboard capture with crackers, buy them here in the P-O from....

5 Continents, Mas Guerido, Cabestany 04 68 67 59 07

Marj & Richards Store, Cérét 04 34 10 28 31

Hurry while stocks last!

A promotional advertisement for the Catalans Dragons' 10th anniversary season ticket campaign. The background shows a large stadium filled with spectators. In the foreground, two players in red and white kits are embracing; one player's jersey has 'MOUNIS 13' on the back. The top left features the team's dragon logo with 'DRAGONS CATALANS' text. Below it is a '10 ANS' anniversary badge. The main text reads 'SEASON TICKET CAMPAIGN SUPER LEAGUE 2015'. At the bottom, it states 'Season tickets from 20 € for kids and 120 € for adults' and provides the website 'www.catalansdragons.com' along with social media icons for Facebook and Twitter, with the text 'Follow us on @DragonsOfficiel'.

SEASON TICKET CAMPAIGN
SUPER LEAGUE 2015

Season tickets from 20 € for kids and 120 € for adults

www.catalansdragons.com | Follow us on @DragonsOfficiel

Me and my girls Alpacas in the P-O



Celine Peniston-Bird and her husband, Simon, moved from Surrey to the P-O, delighted to have found sun, sea and mountains so perfectly packaged together in one beautiful region. Their aim to find a home with enough land to raise sheep, pigs and chickens was a challenge, but they finally settled in Banyuls-dels-Aspres, near Le Boulou.

Their first purchase of Cameroon sheep came from a friend in the Hauts de Céret, along with some precious breeding advice. This rare breed of sheep, also known as Dwarf Black Belly, originates from West Africa. Hardy and disease resistant, Cameroon sheep are hairy rather than woolly, an ideal breed to own in the P-O, as they do not require shearing and cope better with hotter climates than woolly sheep.

After the birth of their second son in 2013, it was time to increase their growing farmyard family too.

Celine began to research other animals that could live happily in our P-O climate - and a few months later alpacas arrived in Banyuls-dels-Aspres!

These hardy, agile animals with dense, high quality fleece were bred in the UK by a reputable breeder, and transported to their new home in the P-O. Celine now has 'her girls' - 6 pedigree alpacas, 3 pregnant adult females with their 3 female cria (baby alpacas).



The 'girls' were chosen for their light colouring (five are white and one is light fawn) as they deal better with heat and their wool can be dyed.

The new 'cria' are due late spring/early summer of next year and they are hoping for some superb white babies. UK

Daddy is an undefeated supreme champion male so their bloodline is assured.

Celine has not yet found any other alpacas in the PO, so this could be an exciting first in the department.

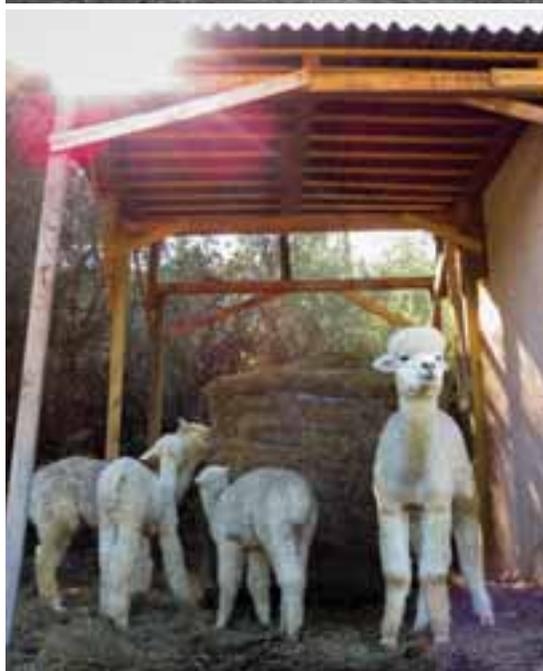
Some alpaca facts

- Alpacas originated in Peru, where their fleece was cherished by members of the Inca civilization. They are hardy, healthy and easy to care for, and live to an average of 20 years old.
- There are two different alpaca types, the suri and the huacaya. The suri has fleece (also known as fiber) that grows quite long and forms silky, pencil-like locks. The huacaya has a shorter, dense, crimped fleece, giving it a very woolly appearance.
- They produce some of the silkiest fleece known to man, in 22 shades, ranging from white through to various shades of brown and grey and finally black.
- Although mainly quiet animals, they communicate with each other through humming.
- They are gentle and curious but do have an occasional 'spit-off' amongst themselves to show their displeasure. First, they will air spit, if still disgruntled they will spit saliva, and finally they may regurgitate their stomach contents!
- Alpacas love water and will stand happily under a sprinkler in summer, or use a water trough as a foot spa!

So what does the future hold for Celine and her girls?

Well, fortunately for them, alpacas are not part of the food chain in France, so there'll be no 'alpaca à l'orange' on the Peniston-Bird dinner table. Some alpaca breeders do make a living out of breeding and selling the animals but for most it's more of a hobby, as large scale breeding requires large scale land, capital and time. Celine will also sell their fleeces, which are perfect for spinning enthusiasts who wish to create their own wool. And of course, if you like the idea of having a cute, low maintenance exotic lawnmower, contact Celine to find out more.

www.fermetramuntana.com ☀





“HOW DO I WATCH THEE, LET ME COUNT THE WAYS”

An update on UK television in the Pyrénées-Orientales *By Allan Wallis*

The satellites that broadcast British terrestrial channels (BBC, ITV etc.) have now all been replaced with newer models. These focus their transmissions on the British Isles, their intended reception area. To receive these channels, we now need a much larger satellite dish, at least 150cm in the North of the region and 180cm South of Perpignan.

However, since the changeover many people have come up with ingenious ways to watch UK television, mostly streamed from the Internet. The

principle service used is Filmon, which offers a basic service free of charge, or an upgraded service for a fee. Filmon can be watched on a variety of devices, including PCs, Macs, iPads and Android as well as Smart TVs and Blu-ray players that offer internet connectivity.

BBC, ITV and the other main broadcasters all offer their programs on-line or as catch-up services – BBC iPlayer, ITV-Player etc. These all require you to be in the UK - or at least appear to be. To fool them you

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*Un oignon suffit à faire pleurer les gens,
mais on n'a pas encore inventé le légume qui les
ferait rire.*

*(faire pleurer - to make (you) cry)
faire rire - to make (you) laugh)*

need to subscribe to a VPN (Virtual Private Network) or a SmartDNS. For most people a SmartDNS is the simplest and best option. The main ones are Overplay and UnoTelly but there are many more. My personal preference is for Overplay as I know it works with a wide variety of services but I am sure there are others that are just as good. The average price is around €4 a month.

With a SmartDNS, you have access to a wide variety of TV services including Sky Go if you have a Sky account (or a friend's login details).

Of course you probably don't want to watch TV on a computer and there are many ways of getting the program onto your TV screen. Some devices can be connected to a TV via a cable but to do so wirelessly you generally need an Apple TV, an Android TV box or a Google Chromecast, all devices that you leave permanently connected to your TV. An Android TV box is a self-contained solution, whereas Apple TV and Chromecast are used in conjunction with another device such as an iPad or Android tablet.

Don't throw your dishes away just yet

There are still several hundred English language channels available on Sky, you just need a subscription. A Sky subscription starts at £21.50 a month. It cannot directly receive the terrestrial channels but most programs are available on Sky Anytime, their catch-up service. You simply tell it to record a past program and it appears in the program guide like any other recording. The quality is the same as the original broadcast with

no buffering. If you are not bothered about watching programs live then this is a very elegant solution and it skips most of the adverts for you.

Sling your TV.

Well not literally, but if you have a home in the UK as well as France then you can plug a device called a Sling Box into your set-top box in the UK and

connect it to the internet. You then watch it from anywhere that has an Internet connection. If you have a subscription to Sky or cable TV, you can do everything in France that you could do in Britain, including sub-titles.

To watch it you need a PC, Mac, iOS or Android device. Even if you don't own a home in the UK, a →



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P-OLife...



A silly quote
Il est plus facile de jouer au mikado avec des spaghettis crus qu'avec des spaghettis cuits.

Philippe Geluck

crus - raw cuits - cooked

friend or relative might help but remember, you are taking over the box and if someone is watching it in the UK, they might get upset if you change channels!

A lower cost alternative to a Sling Box, is a Belkin @TV Plus, £39 on Amazon, not quite as slick as the Sling box but works perfectly well.

The good thing is that you don't need a fast Internet connection. These work perfectly well at

speeds under 1Mb which would render most on-line systems useless, and there is no ongoing cost.

Zattoo may be all you need.

Zattoo is a Switzerland based service that shows UK TV live. Fortunately, clever Overlay easily fools it into thinking you are in Switzerland and the UK, at the same time. There is a free service (with adverts) but Zattoo really comes into its own however when you pay a subscription ranging from €6.60 for a month to €54 for a full year. You get a higher quality service, a 7 day catch-up service and almost →



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DID YOU KNOW?

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Every year, thousands of starlings, (étourneaux) on their way to Africa choose Perpignan as their ideal stop-over holiday destination. Food 'à volonté' of fruit, grapes, olives... mild climate, and well lit town with tree lined streets put our capital of Catalan culture at the very top of the starling 'Must visit' hit list.

Clouds of the feathered fiends swoop down on the fields and pillage seedlings, corn and crop. All sorts of preventative methods have been deployed, with a yearly anti-starling plan including loud speakers imitating their predators, eagles, fireworks, bright lights, cutting down of trees, and more recently a fake 'starling town' on the outskirts to tempt them out of the town centre - mostly in vain.

Agricultural menace, hygiene and health risk, (did you know that each starling produces one gramme of poo per day, according to ornithologists?), there is also the high risk of arriving in Perpignan a brunette, and returning home a blonde!!



unlimited recording. You can only subscribe to Zattoo through the Google Play store, or with a Swiss Bank Account. Certainly this is one of the best services that I have looked at.

On-line TV service providers.

If you are a true technophobe and want someone else to set everything up for you then there are lots of services aimed at you. Herman of Sky Digi (www.skydigi.fr/) was kind enough to loan me a set top box connected to a service provided by Skycards.EU. This provided access to the normally free to view UK channels and it worked pretty well. I connected on a 2MB Orange ADSL line without significant buffering. Changing channels was as easy as pressing channel up or channel down and the lag between choosing a channel and it playing wasn't too bad. Picture quality wasn't



marvellous but may have been better on a faster connection.

When I got the box their catch-up service was down but it was restored after a few days, I also had a few problems with the box not starting up when powered on but nothing serious. Sky-Digi charges up to €320 to supply the box and set it up with all necessary cables and connectors, the service is then €18 a month or €200 for a year.

An interesting variant on this is that they will rent boxes for a week at a time for €15 a week, this may well be of interest to people with holiday home owners or agents. ☀



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Oreiller Pillow

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Penderie a hanging wardrobe

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Test your French

- answers p44-45

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

Améliorez votre Anglais

- answers p46-47

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



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OR

Maggie on 04 68 96 55 46

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CSF - Sud de France (11,09,66) Association no. W 112000594

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and at our Book Exchange at Café des Artistes, Laroque des Albères 10H30 to 12 noon Third Monday of the month



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| Police emergency | 17 |
| Fire service emergency | 18 |
| European emergency line | 112 |
| SOS Doctor 24/24 | 08 20 20 41 42 |
| Emergency vet | 04 68 55 55 83 |
| Anti-poison centre | 04 91 75 25 25 |
| Perpignan hospital | 04 68 61 66 33 |
| CPAM (English spk serv) | 0811 36 36 46 |
| Cancer support France | 04 68 69 01 37 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Directory enquiries | 118 008 |
| International directory enquiries | 118 700 |
| International Mastercard | 08 00 90 13 87 |
| Local weather forecast | 08 36 68 02 66 |
| GDF (gas problems) | 08 10 43 30 66 |
| EDF (electricity problems) | 05 56 17 40 70 |

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| www.artaxa.fr | |
| Cayrou Immobilier , Laroque-des-Albères | 04 68 37 06 65 |
| www.cayrou-immobilier.com | 06 08 31 09 50 |
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www.leportofino-restaurant.fr

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