



Rival station boss takes action over 'exclusive' claim

I'LL SUE RIVIERA RADIO FOR \$5m

A RIVAL broadcaster is preparing to sue Riviera Radio over its claim that it is the only English-language station in the region.

The president of Radio International, Jack Kelly, says Riviera Radio's claim means his station misses out on the chance to bid for advertising business and that this has hit future income and the value of his company by upwards of five million dollars.

EXCLUSIVE

by Riviera Gazette staff

Mr Kelly told *The Riviera Gazette* that he has asked Riviera Radio to change its advertising claims several times in the three years since Radio International launched.

He said the last straw came when Riviera Radio's new boss, Marc Dugimont, was quoted in a local paper last week as saying "I really believe Riviera Radio is in a unique position. It is the only English-speaking station catering for the ever-growing English-speaking population on the Riviera."

Dugimont continued: "Normally I welcome competition. But if you find yourself in a unique position, why not take advantage of it?"

Kelly told *The Riviera Gazette* "Twelve months ago I told them that if they kept repeating these claims there would be legal consequences."

"At the moment it is a question of venue [for a court case] and the amount of damages we will be seeking. Probably somewhere north of \$5 million."

This week he wrote to the station's US parent, Morris Communications, saying "I am now formally demanding that Riviera Radio immediately cease and desist the dissemination of deceptive and false promotional matter in any form."

Kelly is also demanding that Morris issues a policy statement to Riviera Radio saying that the station will always

compete fairly, and that Riviera Radio sends a letter of clarification to all current clients and prospects.

"We are prepared to take action to seek redress," Kelly concludes.

The newspaper article also says that Riviera Radio "has an estimated audience of nearly a quarter of a million listeners."

In a fax sent out to Riviera's advertising clients after the article appeared, Kelly says "Riviera Radio has no evidence whatsoever of any measured audience."

"Of course, they do have listeners but there is no quantifiable data on the size of the total audience or the amount of minutes per week contributed to Riviera Radio by its listeners."

But Dugimont is confident that the figure is not inaccurate. "It's not too crazy. I think I'm not far off the mark" he told *The Riviera Gazette*.

He also stands by his description of Riviera Radio as 'unique'.

"As far as we are concerned we are really the only radio station" he said. "I don't see them as competition... people just have to tune into him and they'll see the difference."

Dugimont, 32, joined Riviera Radio last month from Luxembourg-based broadcasting giant RTL, where he was in charge of its non-French radio stations.



RINGO'S PEACE OF HISTORY

RINGO Starr chills out after playing at the Rose Ball in Monaco where, for the first time, he performed with his sons Zak, 36, drummer with The Who, and Jason, 34. The ball traditionally opens the Monaco season and guests included Ursula Andress and Karl Lagerfeld. Profits go to the Princess Grace Foundation.

Ringo, 61, who has a sea-front flat in Monte-Carlo, performed Beatles favourites With A Little Help From My Friends and Yellow Submarine — or should that be Mellow Submarine?

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PALESTINIANS HIDE IN BETHLEHEM CHURCH

PALESTINIAN militiamen were last night hiding from Israeli troops in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

The church is built on the spot where Jesus is believed to have been born – and the events are as potent a symbol of the human tragedy unfolding in the Middle East as one is likely to see.

Israel's prime minister Ariel Sharon has embarked on a military solution to the threat of suicide bombers. But with each tank that rolls in to the West Bank cities the desire for bloody revenge amongst Palestinians grows.

It is clear that only the USA has the ability to broker a peace between the two sides. But the US administration has been sending contradictory signals in recent days.

European Union leader Romano Prodi now bluntly accuses America of failing in its attempts to secure some kind of settlement between the warring factions.

President George W Bush has gone on record as supporting the Israeli actions. "He supports and respects the right of a sovereign nation to defend itself," said a White House spokesman.

Only 48 hours previously though, the US supported a United Nations resolution calling for the withdrawal from Ramallah of the Israeli army that has kept Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat a prisoner for over a week.

The inconsistencies of the approach occur because American minds are now merging the Middle East crisis into the broader glob-

By Chris Brown

al war against terrorism. The Bush government is being driven by three forces towards a more aggressive pro-Israeli position. First, Christian fundamentalists, well represented in the Republican party in Congress, are emphatically pro-Israeli, taking justification from the Bible's assertion that the Promised Land belonged to the Jews.

Second, conservative forces within the party see Israel as the most important strategic ally of the US in the Middle East against a host of "enemy" Islamic states, such as Iraq, Syria and Iran.

Finally, the Israeli government has done enough to convince the US government – and US public opinion – that the suicide bombers of September 11 are of the same breed as those attacking civilians throughout Israel.

But splits have emerged between the US State Department and the Pentagon in recent days, confusing the US position still further.

A State Department spokesman said that: "Terror will never advance Palestinian political aspirations and continued confrontation cannot bring genuine peace and security for Israelis. There is no military solution to this conflict."

This suggests a deep split with the hawkish defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld who has argued forcefully that anti-Israeli terrorism formed a central part of the broader US war on terror.



Light beams tribute to September 11 victims

New York lit its 'Tribute in Light' memorial, consisting of two shafts of light to represent the twin towers of the World Trade Center, on March 11 – six months after the terrorist attack that destroyed the buildings. Photo: AFP/Stan Honda

Goodbye...

DURING the last month we said goodbye to **Barry Took**, 73, comedian and scriptwriter who, with Marty Feldman, wrote BBC Radio's 'Round the Horne'; **Ben Hollioake**, rising England international cricketer, 24; **Milton Berle**, 93, comedian and top-paid superstar in the early days of US television; **Billy Wilder**, 95, Oscar-winning film maker who directed 'Sunset Boulevard' and 'Some Like it Hot'; **Dudley Moore**, 66, actor, comedian and gifted pianist who worked in the UK with Peter Cook before moving to Hollywood, where he starred in '10' with Bo Derek and 'Arthur' with Liza Minelli; **Kenneth Wolstenhome**, 81, sports commentator dubbed 'the voice of football' and famous for uttering "they think it's all over – it is now" at the close of England's 1966 World Cup Final victory over West Germany; **Maude Farris-Luse** of Michigan, US, the world's oldest woman when she passed away at 115; **Jean-Paul Riopelle**, Montreal-born abstract impressionist painter and sculptor who spent many years in France and is regarded as the founding father of Canadian art, 78; **Thomas Shaw**, 102, Northern Ireland's last WWI veteran; and **James Tobin**, the Nobel prize-winning American economist, 84.

Bronze Age 'Venice' sunk by flood is found

A BRONZE Age 'Venice' full of canals and huts built on stilts that was wiped out by a flood 3,500 years ago has been discovered in southern Italy.

Some 700 people probably lived in the river port village near the current town of Poggiomarino, south of Naples, between 1500 BC and 600 BC. Survivors are thought to have founded the Roman town of Pompeii.

Swiss come in from the cold to join UN

SWITZERLAND has ended centuries of international isolation by agreeing to join the United Nations. A referendum produced a 54.6 per cent vote in favour.

On a roll, Zurich has also been voted the world's most desirable city to live in the annual survey by human resources consultancy William M Mercer. Geneva tied with Sydney for fourth place and Berne finished tenth.

Monkey moves cursor by power of thought

A MONKEY with an experimental brain implant has astonished scientists by moving a computer cursor by the power of thought.

The discovery is the latest advance in work on the link between man and machine carried out by researchers at Browns University in the US. They hope it will help the paralysed and infirm to work with technology.

LONDON DIARY

By Gerd Treuhaft

Pill in water 'causes infertility'

THE contraceptive Pill may be to blame for the rise in male infertility as it enters the drinking water system through recycling, reports Chris Brown.

The Environment Agency says that half of all male fish in low-lying English rivers are changing sex due to water pollution.

Scientists say the urine of women taking the Pill carries an "exquisitely potent" form of the female hormone oestrogen, which may be flushed through sewage works and into rivers. This is being linked to the effects

on fish, and they fear the chemical could contaminate the UK's drinking water – one third of which comes from rivers.

A group of Northern Ireland scientists have been working on a way to combat it using photocatalysis. The process uses titanium oxide and ultraviolet light as the last stage of water treatment, and promises to remove a wide range of pollutants.

But the water industry strongly denies any threat to humans and says no such chemicals have been found in drinking water.

● TONY BLAIR has scrapped plans to buy an £80 million luxury jet to avoid a row with the Queen. Number 10 pulled the plans for the aircraft – dubbed Blair Force One – after fears Buckingham Palace would refuse to share the cost. A spokesman said "It was just too expensive and so the PM has decided not to go ahead."

Britain remains the only major Western Power without an official Prime Ministerial aircraft. Mr Blair currently charters Boeing 777s from British Airways, but they cannot be fitted with anti-missile defences. Plans for Blair Force One included the latest sophisticated defence equipment.

Brits the vain of Europe

BRITONS have the most plastic surgery in Europe.

Doctors carried out 24,335 operations in 2000, more than double the number performed in Germany, a survey shows.

In Europe only France came close, with 21,221 operations.

Worldwide only Americans and Brazilians have more.

Britons spend up to £180 million each year on facelifts, breast enlargements and nose jobs. Botox injections to ease wrinkles are the most popular treatment.

Pensions will fall short

PEOPLE in Britain are not investing enough for their retirement, with only 12 per cent saving outside their pension.

They are also leaving it late to begin additional saving for when

they stop work, with 22 per cent not starting until they are 45, according to the Birmingham Midshires building society.

The Pensions Policy Institute has warned that 25-year-olds will have to work until they are 72 or greatly increase contributions to retire on the same income a 65-year-old would expect today after 40 years in a final salary pension scheme.

Fearful sleep with guns

THOUSANDS of Britons are so worried about crime they sleep with a loaded gun by their bed.

Six out of 10 questioned by a poll said they would use a weapon against intruders. Half would kill to protect family.

Up to a tenth have a weapon near them at night, most commonly a baseball bat or golf club.

Eight per cent of those with a weapon admit having guns, said home security firm Micromark.

Twice as many women as men have guns and people in rural areas are more likely to be armed. But 89 per cent said they felt as safe as this time last year.

No hear we go...

FOOTBALL players may soon have to wear ear plugs to protect them from the roar of the crowd.

The plan, to be considered by the European Parliament, would force employers to give staff ear plugs if noise levels climb above 85 decibels. Noise at big football games can top 110.

Scientists believe that two hours exposure to the noise from the terraces could mean lasting hearing damage. Bar staff may also have to wear them.

Teen boys off reading

TEENAGERS in Britain spend just 20 minutes a day reading as television and computer games take over, a survey reveals.

Boys of 15 and 16 spend 2.3 hours a week reading for pleasure, a study made just before World Book day shows. They watch TV for over 11 hours a week and spend over nine hours on computer games.

Travel chaos costs £2bn

LATE trains and traffic jams cost British business almost £2 billion a year.

People delayed by travel lose 5.7 working hours per month on average, according to a poll by Barclaycard. Health is also affected – more than half the 2,500 polled said travel was the most stressful part of their day.

● MEDICS in developing countries are left to treat the world's most serious diseases with inferior medicines because drug firms are concentrating research on more lucrative treatments for impotence, slimming or pet care. Just \$500m of the \$70bn spent on research worldwide each year goes into treating killer diseases such as malaria, says the medical aid organisation Medecins sans Frontiers.

● DOCTORS have told Baroness Thatcher to stop making speeches. The former British Prime Minister has suffered a number of small strokes in the last year and medical advisers say the strain of public speaking is too much for the 76-year-old. However, last week she told the BBC that she is 'fighting fit'.

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Britons mourn as 'nation's grandmother' passes away peacefully in her sleep

QUEEN MOTHER DIES AT 101

QUEEN Elizabeth the Queen Mother died peacefully in her sleep on Saturday March 30 at Windsor, aged 101.

Nine days of official mourning will end with her funeral at Westminster Abbey on Tuesday 9 April.

The Queen was at her mother's bedside. Prince Charles and his two sons were on a skiing holiday at Klosters, Switzerland and returned home the next day. The Prince is said to be completely devastated by the news.

Coming just weeks after the death of Princess Margaret, it is the second tragedy to hit the Royal Family in the Queen's Golden Jubilee year.

A statement from Buckingham Palace said that the Queen Mother had become increasingly frail since she suffered a chest infection at Christmas.

Her condition deteriorated during the morning and her doctors were called.

Her death, although not a surprise considering her age and state of health, has shocked the Royal Family

by Chris Brown

and the country. Prince Charles had left for his annual skiing holiday just two days before, believing his beloved grandmother was in good health.

"I had dreaded this moment" said Prince Charles afterwards. "Somehow I didn't think it would come."

"She was quite simply the most magical grandmother you could possibly have, and I was utterly devoted to her."

Tributes from around the UK reflect that the Queen Mother was seen as a national institution.

Prime Minister Tony Blair described her as "a symbol of decency and courage".

Lord St John of Fawsley, a close friend, said "She carried the traditional values of the nation - courage, determination, dedication, a profound sense of duty and a love of family and friends."

"At our darkest hour of all time in 1940 she helped to turn it into our finest," he said.



NATIONAL INSTITUTION... The Queen Mother at her 101st birthday celebrations last year

The Queen who saved the Royals

THE Queen Mother was prepared for war. She had read Mein Kampf, had learned to use a revolver, and was not persuaded to go to Canada to escape.

"The children could not leave without me, I could not leave without the King, and the King will never leave," Queen Elizabeth announced in 1940.

It was her visits alongside George VI to the burned ruins of the East End in London that re-established the position of the Royal Family. The Second World War, and her response to it, could be argued to have saved the monarchy.

This was a new kind of war, with a home front, and the royal couple were dedicated to helping the nation. She had experience as a nurse during World War I, but as Queen she visited hospitals, factories, military establishments and areas damaged in the Blitz.

She was to retain extensive links with the military for the rest of her life. Her last public appearance was at a ceremony to re-commission the aircraft carrier Ark Royal in Portsmouth on 21 November last year.

The visits to the East End went down in folklore. It was said that she would stop her car and nip out to mingle amongst the crowds, talking to them.

She won the respect and affection of her subjects, and this increased the popularity and sense of trust between the Royals and the British people at large that had broken down so badly during the abdication crisis.

The gift of mingling, which her husband tried to copy, their desire to be seen with the people and to sympathise with them combined to change the monarchy forever. What Royal trip these days does not involve the now famous walkabout?

This is not to say that the "levelling" effect was total. The Royal couple would retreat to Windsor every evening to escape the bombing. Champagne was still served at dinner during the harsh days of rationing.

Peace eventually came, but George VI's health was broken. After an operation in 1949 for arteriosclerosis, he weakened and died of lung cancer in 1952. Their daughter, Elizabeth, ascended to the throne.

The Queen Mother, as she was now to be called, would hand over to her daughter a rejuvenated monarchy.

Scandal that left her a widow

KING Edward VIII's determination to marry an American divorcee is a story of legend. But the Queen Mother felt it made her a widow at just 51.

In 1937 Edward VIII abdicated his throne, choosing instead to marry his lover, Wallis Simpson. At the time it was unthinkable for a King to marry a divorcee.

Edward's brother - and Elizabeth's husband - Albert became King George VI. He was a shy and reluctant King.

The abdication crisis brought the Royal Family closer to its destruction than any other single event. It was not just a political and constitutional upheaval - it was an emotional crisis that left deep scars for the Queen Mother.

As late as the 1970s, the BBC scrapped a documentary about the Queen Mother because she refused to take part if the abdication was mentioned. Even now, hundreds of official documents relating to the crisis are under lock and key. They are kept secret because officials concede

that publication would have caused her distress and embarrassment.

The wrangling over income and titles for the exiled Edward and his wife were to weigh upon the new monarch. There was a determination that the exiles should not set up an alternative court.

Despite her wish to see Edward be happy, bitterness grew between Elizabeth and Edward and, especially, his new wife.

It was the death of her husband, known to her as 'Bertie', that made the estrangement permanent. She believed the strain brought him to an early grave. As one courtier put it: "The Queen Mother believes that Mrs Simpson shortened her husband's life and she has never been able to forgive her."

The abdication thrust the Queen Mother to the head of the Royal Family, but left permanent scars. She was never able to fully accept the marital difficulties of her grandsons Charles and Andrew, and would forever be reluctant to accept the remarriage of divorcees.



QUEEN MUM... Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon holds Elizabeth, her firstborn, in 1926 under the loving gaze of her husband, then the Duke of York. He became King George VI in 1937

WORLD LEADERS PAY THEIR RESPECTS

LEADERS from around the world immediately paid tribute to the Queen Mother.

There were tributes from many Commonwealth countries, including Canada and Australia where the Queen is head of state.

"Although we mourn her passing, it is an occasion to give thanks for a very long and special life," said Australia's Prime Minister, John Howard.

Canadian Prime Minister Jean

Chretien said: "All Canadians join me in expressing sorrow that a symbol to the world of abiding grace, dignity and personal courage has been taken from us."

"The life of the Queen Mother spanned more than a century of breathtaking change and global transformation. Throughout, she was a touchstone of timeless values and continuity."

US President George W Bush was among the first to send con-

dolences. The White House said Mr Bush and his wife Laura were "deeply saddened" by her death.

But some of the most poignant messages were sent by European leaders. French President Jacques Chirac sent one of Europe's warmest tributes in a personal letter to the Queen saying the Queen Mother was part of the "fabric of the century" and praising her "courage and her simplicity".

"The French learned to love her

during the sombre and trying times when our two countries were fighting side by side for freedom."

Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf expressed his sadness, saying she "served Britain with humour and elegance to the end".

South African President Thabo Mbeki said the Queen Mother had been an "example in public life of steadfastness and commitment."



TRIBUTES... The Duke of York looks at flowers placed along The Mall in London in memory of his grandmother

National News

Frozen bodies in cellar banned Ooh-la-la, wife swapping is in Just the ticket

A COUPLE whose bodies are stored in a freezer in the basement of their Chateau must be properly buried or cremated, a court has ruled.

Dr Raymond Martinot, a biologist who believed that advances in medical science would one day enable he and his wife to be revived, froze his wife's body after she died in 1984 and left instructions that, when he died, son Remy should freeze his body too.

Martinot had received permission from the authorities to bury his wife at the family home but, although he is reported to have given tours of the cel-

lar where the body was stored at -60°C, they say they weren't aware until Martinot died last month that the body had been frozen.

French law stipulates that bodies may only be cremated or buried. Alain Fouquet, the lawyer acting for Remy Martinot, unsuccessfully argued that the law does not expressly forbid the freezing of bodies. The court found that "the civil code only envisages the burial or cremation of deceased persons within a time limit of six days after death" and that the bodies must now be buried or cremated.

A GOVERNMENT funded study into the sex lives of the nation has found that the image of the French as world leading lovers may well be justly deserved.

"Nothing is forbidden anymore" concludes author Janine Mossuz-Lavau, a sociologist who has spent two years researching her 466 page study "La Vie Sexuelle en France".

"People are tolerant, and fairly pragmatic. So long as no-one is being forced to do anything, anything goes"

In her survey, which included interviews with people aged 17 to 72 from

across France, Mossuz-Lavau found that wife-swapping, spanking and group sex are all on the increase.

And its not just the younger generation who are becoming more adventurous. In Clermont-Ferrand, she found a wife-swapping circle devoted only to those over retirement age.

Mossuz-Lavau interviewed both heterosexuals and homosexuals for her survey and found that, contrary to popular belief, their sex lives are not so very different.

Homosexuals "are not at it like rabbits", she says.

VILLEFRANCHE-sur-Saone has stopped issuing parking tickets in the run up to the presidential election.

It has become a tradition in France for a newly elected President to announce an amnesty on all outstanding tickets.

"Everyone knows that after the election there will be an amnesty. So why should good citizens pay when those who flout the law know they'll get away with it?" Mayor Jean-Jacques Pignard explained.

Those concerned that the move would create parking chaos have been proved wrong. No increase in parking offences has been recorded so far.

Canal Plus sues Murdoch company

FRENCH pay TV firm Canal Plus is suing rival NDS, part of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, for criminal conspiracy, intellectual property violation and unfair competition.

Canal Plus says that NDS cracked its Pay TV access security system and then published details on the internet, allowing a flood of fake Canal Plus access cards to be produced.

Over a billion dollars in unearned income and in development costs for a new security system have been lost, Canal Plus says.

NDS has dismissed the Canal Plus claims as "outrageous and baseless".

3m live without adequate housing

THREE million people are now without adequate housing, and the type of people afflicted by the problem is increasingly diverse, says a new report by the Fondation Abbé-Pierre.

Of these, 86,000 are homeless. Half a million are in temporary lodgings and a further 200,000 are in long-term bed and breakfast accommodation or are staying with friends or relatives.

The remaining two million are housed in accommodation which lacks even the most basic facilities, says the report's authors.

French pilot is first Euro space walker

PHILIPPE Perrin, 39, will be the first European to make a space walk when he sets off in the space shuttle Endeavour in May.

Perrin, a graduate of the Ecole Polytechnique and a former F1 Mirage pilot, has spent the last five years in training at the Johnson Space Centre in Houston.

On his first mission he will become the first non-American to perform a NASA-sanctioned space walk.

Look, mum, I'm in the nudes

PUPILS at one of France's top schools hit the headlines after they appeared on the cover of their school magazine in the nude, protected only by bits of strategically placed sticky tape.

The five girls and boys, pupils at the 200-year-old Henri-IV lycée, decided to pose for the photograph to illustrate a special edition which focused on sex, prostitution, homophobia and pornography.

McDough ...

FRANCE is now McDonalds' fastest growing marketplace. Sales are up 9.3% and profits have risen to match.

The rise is in sharp contrast to McDonalds' overall profitability. Worldwide, the company's profits are down 17% this year on sales of \$14.9bn.

CHIRAC AND JOSPIN NECK AND NECK

WITH less than three weeks to go, the two main candidates in the presidential election are neck and neck in the opinion polls and trading places on a daily basis.

For voters though, there is frustration. The policy programmes of sitting president Jacques Chirac and prime minister Lionel Jospin are as close as the gap in the polls.

The result is a campaign where personality not policy, style not substance, is the defining issue for the first round of voting on 21 April.

Both candidates have set out manifestos that seek to reach beyond their core support to try and gain the middle ground. In the case of Jospin, the word socialism has barely been mentioned. For Chirac, state intervention stands side by side with his cherished free market beliefs.

As voters struggle to find a real difference between the two, both are being urged to appeal more to their core vote. This promises to polarise the two in the last few weeks, especially in economic policy.

Prime minister Jospin has pledged to focus on job creation - he has promised 900,000 more jobs by 2007, with 200,000 workers over 50 brought back into employment.

President Chirac has aimed his fire at tax. He has promised to lower income tax by a third, lower corporate

By Chris Brown

tax and cut VAT payments for specific sectors such as catering.

The prime minister's 40-page manifesto has been a success and a hindrance in equal measure. He has been accused of confusing voters with such a weighty message. But Chirac's biggest worry comes from attackers who say he has only flimsy ideas which sound grand in principle but have little or no detail to back them up.

So the focus is now on who can provide the best performance, rather than who has the most inspiring message.

Observers have noted that Chirac, now 69, is far less energetic in this election than in previous campaigns and has shied away from the more personal attacks of Jospin. Chirac has told his supporters that he believes the voters do not want a vitriolic campaign, but it is more likely that he is worried about being dragged into a slanging match in which his opponent has far more mud to throw.

Revelations in the French press this



LE PEN... jubilant after gathering 503 nominations

week point to further scandal, but Chirac has been dubbed 'the Teflon president' as it becomes clear that the electorate takes the view that all politicians are corrupt.

For one of the most famous, National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, this could be his last campaign. His support base has shrunk in recent years to elderly white couples, and his campaign atmosphere has been described as nostalgic rather than a menacing far right movement.

One effect of the election could be

an overhaul of the antiquated nomination system for candidates. Each must persuade and cajole 500 "grand electeurs" - a mix of 46,000 people who hold elected office at home and abroad - to nominate them.

This could prove to be a problem for President Chirac. After having to work very hard to secure the necessary nominations at the last minute, Le Pen accuses Chirac supporters of trying to persuade grands electeurs not to nominate him, and has threatened to instruct his supporters to cast a spoiling vote against Chirac in the second round of voting.

The race is tight but history may be on Jospin's side. Since the Fifth Republic was created in 1958, any candidate ahead in March has gone on to win the race.

A further 14 candidates are taking part in the election.

Killer leaps from fourth floor police station window

LONER WHO SHOT DEAD 8 KILLS HIMSELF

AN INQUIRY has been opened after a 33-year-old man who shot dead eight people and injured 19 others committed suicide by throwing himself from a fourth-floor window at a police station.

Richard Durn died two days after the opening fire and "shooting and shooting" at a council meeting in the Paris suburb of Nanterre.

Durn had known psychological problems and had threatened to attack a psychiatrist four years ago.

His mother says that he frequently talked of killing, was often suicidal and craved greater recognition.

Durn, who had no criminal record, was a keen amateur marksman and held a sporting gun licence.

Despite a 1998 social services report and his known psychological problems, no action had ever been taken to have the licence withdrawn.

A frequent visitor to the public gallery of Nanterre council, where he often listened in to council meetings, on March 27 Durn had sat in the pub-



CRAVED RECOGNITION... Richard Durn

lic gallery through a six-hour late night council meeting.

At 1.15am, as those attending the meeting started to put on their coats to go, he calmly stood up and opened fire with an automatic weapon.

"He just kept shooting and shooting" said Nanterre's deputy mayor

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Original cast member shows she still has what it takes

High kicks round off a roaring ISN show

A NIGHT at the theatre does not often end with a 79-year-old from the audience climbing on stage to perform a high-kicking dance routine, writes Sarah Smith.

But then The International School of Nice's rendition of *The Boy Friend* last month was far from ordinary.

The 28-strong pupil cast gave a slick performance which was rounded off perfectly on the last night by the surprise announcement that a member of the play's original cast, from when it opened in London 50 years ago, was in the audience.

And plucky French actress Violetta, the show's original maid, came forward and performed a lively dance.

Violetta later said: "It took 50 years off me, much better than anything a doc could give me!"

The cast did not know she was there and the surprise was reflective of the fun of the evening.

The Sandy Wilson play was the result of months of rehearsal and deservedly sold out twice during its three night run.

Set in the Roaring Twenties, the costume-makers clearly had a ball and the toe-tapping song and dance routines were performed admirably.

Special mention must go to the cast's own maid Nancy DeLaughter for her fantastic facial expressions, David Light as Lord Brockhurst and Pandora Todd as Maisie.



79 YEARS YOUNG... Violetta on stage with the ISN's maid, Nancy DeLaughter, 15

Metro Nice raises tax by up to 234%

EMPLOYERS in all but two of the towns which make up the new metropolitan area of Nice Côte d'Azur are facing substantial increases of up to 234 per cent in the rate of tax professionnelle, reports Sarah Clark.

It is a local tax which is chargeable as a percentage of a business' total annual payroll bill. And, as predicted by the seven towns that campaigned against being forced to join the new authority, it is the smaller towns that are being hit hardest.

Under national legislation, all the towns that make up a metropolitan area must have the same rate of tax professionnelle. Rates in the 22 towns which make up Nice Côte d'Azur currently vary widely and most have a substantially lower rate than Nice.

But Nice is by far the largest employer of the 22. This means that lowering the rate in Nice to meet the rates of the smaller towns would be

impractical, since it would result in a major reduction in the overall budget of Nice Côte d'Azur.

So the authority has decided to set a rate across the towns of 21.02%, slightly lower than Nice's existing rate of 22.59% - but higher than all the other towns apart from La Trinité.

Worst hit is Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, where the new rate is four times the current level of 5.02%.

In Beaulieu, where the Mairie mounted a strong campaign against being made to join the metropolitan area, the new rate of tax professionnelle is double the existing charge of 10%. La Gaude, Saint-Blaise, Levens and Villefranche-sur-Mer will also see steep rises.

The new rate will be introduced gradually, with incremental increases or decreases taking place each year until the rate is uniform across Nice Côte d'Azur by 2013.

Mean machines are all heart

THE Nice chapter of the Harley Owner's Group held a charity day in the centre of town late last month.

Bikers turned out in Place Massena on around 50 of the big American bikes and spent the day giving rides to the public at €2 a go. The money was donated to Les Restaurants du Coeur, a charity that aids "those in material or moral difficulty".

Locally, this means feeding the homeless. Restos organiser Annie Castel told *The Gazette* that volunteers in Nice currently serve around 730 people with six meals a week, at a cost

to the charity of €1 per meal. Nice HOG member Ken Stubbs, 56, rides a top-of-the-line Harley Davidson Fatboy. He told *The Riviera Gazette* "Events like this show we're not a motorcycle gang. The club has a heart."

"A lot of the guys speak English, and the club has changed my life for the better - I met a wonderful lady the first time I went."



RIDING HIGH... Ken Stubbs with Resto de Coeur's Annie Castel as pillion on his Fatboy

NICE PORT PROTESTORS GET INQUIRY RE-OPENED

OPPONENTS of plans to extend the port of Nice so that it can handle more and larger ferries and cruise ships have scored a series of important successes this month.

Jacques Tibéri, the communist vice-president of the Conseil Régional and an opponent of the scheme since day one, has persuaded Transport Minister Jean-Claude Gayssot to reopen the inquiry, supposedly completed on 30 January, so that further investigations into the impact of the port extension plans on the local urban environment can be per-

By Sarah Clark

formed. Environment Minister Yves Cochet has also got involved. Rare marine life could suffer if the port is extended, he says.

Meanwhile a committee of local residents, the majority of whom fiercely oppose the plans, have applied to the Minister of Culture, Catherine Tasca, to request that the sea wall be listed as a site of historic importance and that the port area as a whole be redesignated as a 'zone naturelle excep-

tionnelle'. Local historic buildings experts have added weight to the committee's stance by explaining that the sea wall and the port area are already protected due to their proximity to existing listed buildings and the Vieux-Nice conservation area.

Under French rules, the area 500 metres around a listed building is also automatically given protection.

This ensures that both the building itself and its environment are safe from unsuitable development.

Any plans to redevelop the port of Nice must be submitted for approval

to the architect in chief of Bâtiments de France, the experts say.

Questions are now being asked about why four million francs has been spent on holding a public inquiry when so many aspects of the scheme are yet to be resolved.

Cynical locals suggest that delaying a decision until after the elections may be the reason that the ministers are all getting involved now.

Delay it until May, they say, and responsibility for taking an unpopular decision can be passed on to the new administration.

Hotel baby: autopsy reports still not out

FINAL autopsy results, which were expected last month, have not yet been released on the dead baby found in a Cannes hotel room in February, reports Shane Stokes.

Prosecutors claim the mother, a 21-year-old Irish woman, killed the baby shortly after its birth. She claims her son was born dead.

The woman, a student who hid her pregnancy from friends and family,

was staying at the Miramar Beach Hotel with her 36-year-old partner, her former convent school teacher. She has not yet been interviewed due to her fragile state.

Her partner has been released on bail. The woman says he is not the father. He denies charges of failing to help someone in danger and not disclosing a crime. He says he did not know she was pregnant.

Bin Laden brother's Cannes home raided

POLICE conducted a search of the Cannes Californie villa of Osama Bin Laden's half-brother Yeslam last month.

The raid was carried out on the orders of Paris judge Renaud Van Ruymbeke.

He is investigating claims that Swiss firm Saudi Investment Company, run by Yeslam Bin Laden, is involved in money laundering.



SEARCH... Police leave the Californie villa

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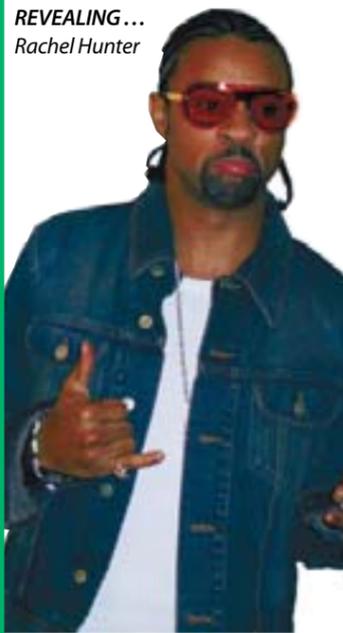
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Rachel reveals almost all at evening for top-selling singers

LESS IS MORE Models go skimpy for music awards



REVEALING...
Rachel Hunter



THUMBSTHEWORD... rapper Shaggy



I HAVE SURVIVED... Gloria Gaynor received a Legend Award for her contribution to world dance music

THE world's top selling music stars gathered in Monaco last month for the 2002 World Music Awards, but it was the revealing outfits of some of the other celebrities there that stole the show.

Rachel Hunter, one of the stars presenting the awards, wore a figure-hugging sequined dress which was completely see-through.

Swedish-born model Victoria Silvstedt also left little to the imagination with a plunging black dress which showed why she was once a Playboy pin-up.

Rachel was in a more relaxed mood than the night before when she is said to have been overheard criticising her ex-husband Rod Stewart's new love whilst she enjoyed a night out in the Casino.

The New Zealander allegedly suggested Penny Lancaster, 30, looked more like a man than a woman.

Rachel, 31, who split from Rod three years ago after nine years of marriage, supposedly said that she could not understand what he saw in Penny.

But she was all smiles as she took the stage at Le Sporting to present some of the awards.

Rapper

Among the top names honoured were Kylie Minogue, Shaggy, Enya and Alicia Keys.

Kylie was named as the best-selling Australian artist.

American rapper Shaggy was the world's best selling male artist and Enya the best selling female artist.

Best selling female pop artist was

By Sarah Smith, photos by Mike Clark

Dido, who did not attend the evening. Enrique Iglesias, son of singer Julio, took the best selling male pop artist award.

Destiny's Child won both the number one group and pop group awards.

Alicia Keys scooped the new artist award, hot on the heels of the five Grammys she picked up in Los Angeles just the week before.

Shakira, riding high at number two in the UK charts at the time, was best Latin female artist.

Aptly for Monaco, the awards were given for the performers whose records had made the most money over the past year. They are based purely on international record sales, with no element of voting or judging.

Among the guest presenters were HSH Prince Albert of Monaco, Omar Sharif and singer songwriter Michael Bolton.

Pose

Supermodel Naomi Campbell was also there to hand out awards but, unlike Victoria and Rachel, was unwilling to pose for photos.

The top model did not take part in the photo call, preferring to sneak in behind the photographers.

She then left in a hurry, shouting 'no comment' to the waiting press pack.

A special 'Legend Award' was given to Gloria Gaynor for her contribution to dance music. US music writers have

voted her song 'I will survive' the best dance song ever.

Cash from ticket sales for the awards, which are the 14th to be held, will be used to construct a Princess Grace medical centre in Morocco.

Profits from sponsorships and television rights will be used to build an orphanage in India.

The ceremony was expected to be seen by over a billion viewers throughout 160 countries.



TAKING THE PLUNGE... Former Playboy Playmate Victoria Silvstedt, above, stands out in a low-cut dress while Kylie Minogue, right, dazzled in matching jewellery



FINE IN LIME... French actress Arielle Dombasle, above, chose a striking lime outfit. All girl band No Angels, above right, wore jackets to show off their award but earlier posed in bikini tops - and the boys in new US Band O-Town, right, just could not stop smiling



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INSURANCE

Airline war hots up as Nice-Paris hits €22.50

THE arrival of Easyjet and Air Lib on the Nice-Paris route has kicked off a price war that looks set to revolutionise the cost of travel between the South of France and the capital.

Air Lib, the new airline created from the ashes of Aom Air Liberté, launched its service between Nice and Paris Orly Sud on 31 March. It offers up to eight flights a day with prices starting at €29 one way.

From June 18, Easyjet will operate four flights each day between Nice and Paris Charles de Gaulle. Its prices start at €22.50 one way. The airline is also launching services from Paris to Liverpool, Geneva and Luton.

Additional flights are also being added to the company's Nice-

Liverpool and Nice-Geneva services. From 1 May, there will be two flights a day to Liverpool and three flights a day to Geneva.

Air France has responded by introducing a new Nice-Paris return fare of €81 for bookings made at least two weeks in advance and including a Saturday night stay.

Nice-Paris is the single most important route on the Nice airport timetable, accounting for 34% of all journeys made last year.

Swiss, the new airline born from the collapse of Swissair and Crossair, has also announced its Nice-Switzerland schedule. It will fly once a day to Basle, three times a day to Zurich and four times a day to Geneva.



WALKIES... Valbonne's CIV School recently held its annual 'Walkathon' sponsored walk in aid of the Biot guide dog training school. Hundreds of pupils and dogs turned out on a Saturday morning to put in laps of the four kilometre circuit. Last year's walkathon raised €12,000, enough to train an extra guide dog. Our picture shows walkers with tireless fundraiser Julie Davies (kneeling, centre), friend Gerard Stuerger (left) holding his guide dog Ortega, and Jaqueline Rafalli of the Biot guide dog school (back left).

Probation proposal for new drivers

A NEW law could see a two year probationary period imposed on new drivers.

During this period a driver committing a serious road offence would have his license revoked and have to sit a re-test before regaining the roads.

The proposal has been put forward by Rudy Salles, the Alpes-Maritimes deputy to the National Assembly.

Salles says that offences carrying this penalty should include not stopping at a red light, drink driving and crossing solid white lines in no overtaking zones.

30% grant for drivers who go electric

THE Monaco government is offering residents a 30% grant towards the cost of buying an electric car or bike. The move is part of a bid to get more people using electric vehicles.

More 'park and charge' stations are also to be installed. Electric cars will cost an average 35% less to park than other vehicles. Businesses have been able to get grants to purchase electric vehicles since 1994, but so far there are only 128 in the principality.

Food prices to rise

BASIC food and household products are set for price rises of between three and eight percent now that the temporary ban on price increases during the switch to the Euro is over.

Supermarkets say their suppliers are increasing wholesale costs of products and that they will have to put up prices to compensate.

Highest rises are expected on groceries, dairy products and frozen goods.

Watch out, corniches get speed trap

VILLEFRANCHE-sur-Mer's mairie has bought new speed trap equipment in a bid to reduce speeding on the Moyenne and Basse corniches.

The town will also lend the portable speed trap to the neighbouring communes of Eze, Beaulieu, La Turbie, Cap d'Ail and Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat.

The trap will be deployed across the towns on a rolling schedule.

Electoral reform for Monaco

MONACO is to get a multi-party parliament from February 2003, following a revision of the constitution which will allow eight of the 24 seats to be allotted on a proportional representation basis.

Monaco gets new school and crèche

A NEW 200-pupil school and crèche for 45 toddlers are to be built on Monaco's Boulevard de Belgique at a cost of €7.4 million.

Monaco vicar leaves church

THE Reverend Keith Kimber has relinquished his position as chaplain of St Paul's in Monte-Carlo from the end of April, in what is being called "an extended leave of absence."

The move follows a crisis at the church during which the council passed a vote of no confidence in Kimber.

From the end of April, the Right Reverend Dr Geoffrey Rowell, Bishop of Gibraltar, will take personal pastoral control of St Paul's in a bid to resolve its problems once and for all.

The Bishop, in charge of the Church of England's European churches, will make an Episcopal Visit to Monaco from April 26-28. He will be accompanied by his Legal Secretary.

An investigation carried out by Bishop Frank Sergeant in February concluded that there was nothing in the various allegations that had been levelled at Reverend Kimber.

But the breakdown in relations between the vicar and the church council, and the strain that this has caused to both Reverend Kimber and his wife, has led the Bishop of Gibraltar to decide that "in my pastoral judgement... it is best for them both and the Chaplaincy that they withdraw at the earliest opportunity".

BODY OF MISSING EX-COUNCILLOR FOUND IN CELLAR

A BODY matching the description of a missing Beausoleil man has been discovered in the basement of the home of a man accused of being involved in his murder.

An autopsy showed that the man had been shot in the head.

Claude Bichet, 47, a former Beausoleil town councillor, disappeared in April 2001. His girlfriend, 47-year old Béatrice Edouin, is accused of hiring two hitmen to have him killed.

Three years before his disappearance Bichet left his wife of 17 years to move in with Edouin, but their relationship was stormy.

On one occasion he is believed to have hit her, leaving her with a scar on her chin.

The prosecution says that she wanted vengeance and, via a friend, arranged for Bichet to be murdered. Two men, Michel Caux, 36, and Laurent Romeo, 34, are said to have agreed to carry out the killing for a fee

Girlfriend admits paying 'hitmen' F200,000 to 'teach him a lesson'

of F100,000 each. On the day of his disappearance, Bichet is known to have visited the property where the body has been discovered, at the invitation of a friend who said that he was interested in buying the property. The prosecution says this was a trap.

Following Bichet's disappearance, a court order allowed investigators to put Edouin under observation and to tap her phone line.

The phone tap recorded her speaking about "the contract" on several occasions. She was also seen in a bar in Nice handing over F5,000 to one of the men accused of killing Bichet.

Edouin initially maintained that she was simply settling a bill for repairs to her car but then admitted to hiring the

men to teach Bichet a lesson. However, she denies having him killed. Caux and Romeo deny any involvement with the case.

The owner of the property where the body was found, Jean-Jacques Gros, is accused of 'complicité d'assassinat' (accessory to murder). Gros, who was sentenced to 18 years in prison for the murder of a Menton jeweller in May 1990, also denies having any involvement in Bichet's disappearance.

Official confirmation of the identity of the corpse must wait for the results of DNA testing. But the body has the same physical appearance as Bichet and was in similar clothes to those worn by him on the day of his disappearance.

Region's poorest areas to get €229m upgrade

THE region's poorest and most crime ridden areas are the focus of two new long-term investment programmes, designed to improve social housing and the quality of life of those living there.

OPAM, which manages over 20,000 council homes in the region, will spend €229 million over the next ten years in a comprehensive renovation of its properties, two-thirds of which are in Nice. At the same time, the city of Nice has begun an invest-

igation into how life in Ariane, the city's most disadvantaged area, could be improved.

Three teams of experts will conduct in-depth studies of the area's problems. The teams, each including sociologists, economists, geographers, architects and landscapers, have been briefed to get to grips with Ariane's underlying problems and present workable solutions. The results will form the basis of a twenty year improvement programme.

Cannes grabs Port Canto

PORT Pierre Canto, a privately owned marina, has been seized by the City of Cannes, reports Alison Craddock.

The 650 berth port, built by Pierre Canto in 1965, was Europe's first privately owned marina.

French law dictates that ownership of ocean shore property can only be granted by the governing Mairie in the form of a fifty year lease.

However, as a safety-net, should any administrative irregularities be proven, the lease can be nullified.

A family dispute led a part-owner of a Port Canto berth to take his

grievances to the Administrative Tribunal of Nice four years ago, setting in train an investigation which culminated in the tribunal's decision last month to cancel the port's lease thirteen years before its natural expiry.

This is an unprecedented move, and it is unclear what effect the decision will have on the owners of Port Canto berths.

Owners fear that, having already bought and paid for their berths, they will now be forced to lease them again from the City of Cannes, probably at considerable expense.

The Riviera Gazette

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Illustrated London News Picture Library • 18 April 1891

CARNIVAL QUEEN ... Queen Victoria shows a girlish streak during a Battle of the Flowers in Grasse in 1891. She would pelt revellers from the balcony of her hotel, only to get staff to retrieve the fallen blooms from the street below so she could do it all again.

WE ARE N UNLESS O

On the day she died Queen Victoria said "Oh, if only I were in Nice I should recover," such was her love of the city. Michael Nelson, the former General Manager of Reuters, discovered while browsing in a bookshop that Victoria had stayed in Nice's Excelsior Hotel. He began researching the nine visits she made to the area over twenty years. His book 'Queen Victoria and the Discovery of the Riviera' is the first on the subject. Here he writes exclusively for *The Riviera Gazette* not only about Victoria but also the other foreigners who "invented" the Riviera.



BY ROYAL APARTMENT ... The Excelsior Hotel in Cimiez, Nice, as it was in Queen Victoria's Day. She stayed there on three occasions.

Injured GIs start beach craze

AMERICAN soldiers played a leading role in the invention of the Riviera as we know it today as they showed us the joys of its beaches.

During the First World War Nice received many wounded GIs who recuperated in the hotels the French government had requisitioned.

To the amazement of locals, as they got better the Americans started to take to the beaches in the warmer months, a sight never before seen.

When the war ended the American government wanted to keep the "doughboys" away from the fleshpots of Paris. It therefore expanded a programme of "Leave Zones" where it sent soldiers for one-week stays and the Riviera proved the most popular.

The Nice government was so happy with the infusion of rich Americans that it even made the seaside promenade exclusively for their use and changed the name of part of it to Quai des Etats-Unis - United States Quay.

By May 1919 when the programme ended 150,000 GIs had spent over 50 million francs basking in the sun.

There had, of course, been Americans on the Riviera since the eighteenth century.

One of the most distinguished was Thomas Jefferson, later to become American President, who toured the Riviera in 1787, when he was a minister in Paris. He went to Hyères, Fréjus, Antibes, Nice, Monaco and Menton.

He was surprised to find the locals generally well clothed and fed.

Americans later went to the Riviera because that was where European royalty and aristocracy went. There was a great social round of carnivals, gambling, horseracing, yachting, tennis, concerts, opera and balls, where the American girls were thought the most beautiful and the Russians the most elegant. Russians were important. In 1860, of the 704 foreign families who spent some of the winter in Nice, 128 were

Russian, 37 German, 22 American, 172 French and 252 English.

Until the 1920s the Riviera season ran from September to the end of April. It was considered unhealthy for the rest of the year. But with memories of the fun summer in the Riviera "leave zone" the Americans created a new summer season.

In 1922 the song writer Cole Porter rented the Chateau de la Garoupe on the Cap d'Antibes for the summer and invited illustrious figures to stay, including the well-off American expatriates Gerald and Sara Murphy, Pablo Picasso, Rudolph Valentino, and F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald.

The guests dug out the seaweed, about four feet deep, from the nearby beach of La Garoupe, creating one of the Riviera's few sandy beaches.

The Murphys built a villa and Scott Fitzgerald immortalised their drunken parties in *Tender is the Night*.

The revolution in the hotel industry came in 1923 when Gerald Murphy persuaded the owner of the Hotel du Cap to stay open through the summer.

The only guests were a Chinese family, the Murphys and the Picassos. But the die had been cast, other hotels copied and the summer season began.

That same year sunbathing received its accolade when the designer Coco Chanel strolled off a yacht "as brown as a cabin boy." No longer was a tan the mark of a peasant - it was beautiful.

Queen Victoria

THE British mainly came to the Riviera for health reasons. It was Queen Victoria who showed the world you could visit for holidays as well as convalescence.

She first visited in 1882 with her son, Leopold, who was a haemophiliac but her other eight visits were for holidays. Queen Victoria did not visit the

NOT AMUSED — ON THE RIVIERA

Queen Victoria's love of Nice played a major role in shaping its history, as did wounded GIs' penchant for sunny beaches



HOME WITH A VIEW... Looking west over Cannes as seen from the Villa Edelweiss, where the Queen stayed in 1887. She disapproved of the town because it was where the Prince of Wales indulged in his womanising. She only visited because her youngest son Prince Leopold, a haemophiliac, had died there after a fall in 1884. She overcame her displeasure because she wanted to see the Church of St George, which was built in his memory.

Britons lead the way and cholera outbreak benefits Cannes

BEFORE the arrival of the Americans the Riviera was mainly created by the British.

It had been a backwater until they started to settle here in the eighteenth century. At the time of Queen Victoria's death a century and a half later it was one of the most developed parts of France and Europe.

In the eighteenth century Nice and the Comté de Nice were ruled from Turin by the kings of Sardinia of the House of Savoy. It did not become part of France until 1860.

Britain had had an alliance with Sardinia since the seventeenth century as part of its Mediterranean policy following the conquest of Gibraltar and Minorca. Young Britons went to the

military academy of Turin. During the War of the Austrian Succession from 1743 to 1748, Britain supported the Austro-Sardinians and British army officers stayed in Nice in the winter and came back as visitors after the war.

However, the first English people to 'discover' Nice were probably Lord and Lady Cavendish, who visited in 1731. Lady Cavendish was pregnant when she arrived and gave birth to a son, Henry, later to be a famous chemist.

There had been occasional English travellers to Nice in the mid-eighteenth century, including the artist Joshua Reynolds who, coming from Venice, stayed in Nice in 1752. Arthur Young visited Antibes in September 1789 but, unable to hire transport, had had

to walk from Cannes. He noted that the winter before there had been 57 English visitors to only nine French. Italy, not France, was then the place for the Grand Tour.

One of the first visitors to France after travel became possible again following Britain's victory over France in the Seven Years War was Dr Tobias Smollett, MD. In 1763 Smollett, ill with incipient tuberculosis, journeyed to Nice with his wife, seeking a kinder climate than England.

When he returned to England he published a book of his experiences, *Travels Through France and Italy*, which revolutionised the travel habits of the British. The role of the British was underlined in 1834 when cholera

in Provence led, by chance, to the founding of Cannes as a major resort.

Lord Brougham, a former Lord Chancellor of England, was on his way to Nice with his sickly daughter and on December 28, 1834, was stopped at the Sardinian frontier because of the outbreak. He stayed in the little fishing village of Cannes and liked it so much that he built a villa. He easily encouraged his friends to build there too and so the British colony in Cannes began.

The British dominated the Riviera to such an extent that when the writer Alexandre Dumas asked an innkeeper what the nationality the guests who were just arriving were, he said they were all English, but he was not sure if they were Germans or Russians.

a shows winter sun good for holidays as well as convalescing

Riviera until she could come by train. The arrival of the railway – to Cannes by 1863 and to Menton by 1869 – transformed tourism for the area.

The visits to the Riviera by Queen Victoria, the monarch of the world's most powerful empire, were important to the area and to France because they affirmed and strengthened the

Riviera's role as the leading holiday centre for Britons, other Europeans and peoples of the Americas.

The importance of her presence is shown by the increase in visitors during the two decades of her visits and the concern of the French at the damage which would be done to the tourist industry if she were to cancel her trip

in 1899 because of bad relations between France and Britain.

It is also reflected in the many hotels, cafes and roads named after her and the number of statues erected to commemorate her.

'Oh, if only I were at Nice, I should recover', she said as she was dying. The entries in her journal of May 1, 1899,

might have been written by a tourist coming to the end of a holiday on the Riviera today:

"Alas! My last charming drive in this paradise of nature, which I grieve to leave, as I get more attached to it every year. I shall mind returning to the sunless north, but I am so grateful for all I have enjoyed here."

About the author

MICHAEL Nelson was browsing in a bookshop in Cannes in 1997 when he came across a centenary history of the Excelsior Hôtel Regina in Nice, which had just been published.

As he dipped in he was surprised to discover that Queen Victoria had stayed in the hotel three times.

He had heard about her many visits to Balmoral in Scotland and to the Isle of Wight, but not to the Riviera.

Further investigations showed that she had visited nine times and no-one had ever written a book on the subject. Nelson had just published *War of the Black Heavens: The Battles of Western Broadcasting in the Cold War* and was looking for a new subject.

He and his wife moved their French residence to Opio from Lake Annecy in Haute-Savoie in 1994 because of the better weather. They also live in Notting Hill, London.

Nelson was formerly General Manager of Reuters, the international news organisation.

'Queen Victoria and the Discovery of the Riviera' is published by I.B.Tauris and is available at English-language bookshops throughout the Riviera. His website is at www.michaelnelsonbooks.com



MICHAEL NELSON

Coffee Time

STARS

with TV's John Garland



April 2002

AQUARIUS

20 January–18 February

Romance glows after the 20th, and family affairs will improve after the 12th. Until then, career or other complications loom. It will become obvious that less speed and more care will strengthen your hand. The 6th, 16th and 25th are perfect for business deals or ironing out any financial wrinkles. Do not allow any delays to weaken your resolve. Remember that your sense of humour always works wonders.

PISCES

19 February–20 March

Emotionally, there will be clouds and joys. Show loved ones that Pisceans can be just as strong on attachment as detachment between the 1st and 14th. Money and career issues will offer more gains than losses. As always there's a 'but', and it's don't overspend! Property repairs, home and domestic priorities will benefit enormously from your creative input. Meanwhile, if you're single, expect to be charmed by someone special.

ARIES

21 March–20 April

Stay one step ahead of the competition, especially on the work front. Otherwise, the spotlight will fall powerfully on relationships and family activities. Be discreet and patient if you intend to get things on a level footing. After the 20th, be prepared for extra expenses, so start saving now! Nevertheless, brilliant opportunities are in the wind, but don't rush to say 'yes' until you've weighed up the long-term consequences.

TAURUS

21 April–20 May

The more creative and inventive you are, the better. Let events follow their natural flow and there'll be fewer problems. A number of discussions and ideas will begin to make sense, especially if you upfront your efforts on the 6th, 21st and 27th. Happiness comes in various ways, and if you're single, explore fresh social paths, particularly between the 20th and 28th. Maximise your goals and you won't regret it.

GEMINI

21 May–20 June

Taking control of your own plans, will be the only way to get things done. Negotiate, reorganise and self-motivate between the 1st and 12th. Even if it goes against your rules and beliefs, try to get on with those who disagree or don't do things how you expect them to. A touch of Gemini charm could work miracles, and even open another window of opportunity. Keep networking!

CANCER

21 June–20 July

Unless you're clear about your needs, you could run into a series of snags. At work, facts and figures will show better signs. However, where profits are concerned, you might have to consider other ideas. Avoid any conflict and don't push your luck on the 5th, 11th, 12th and 25th. Like last month, the stars shine brightly on both career and personal stepping-stones.

LEO

21 July–21 August

Chill out around the 7th, 13th and 28th. In fact, be subtle and sensitive towards those who aren't on your wavelength. If you're unattached, be as outgoing as possible between the 4th and 15th. But be warned, anxieties not of your own choosing will remind you to take care. Also, curb your cashflow. Otherwise, your hopes and wishes are on course for interesting prospects.

VIRGO

22 August–22 September

Revitalise your Virgo magnetism, so that interviews, meetings and other ambitions are given the go-ahead between the 3rd and 14th. Play it safe on the 2nd, 10th, 16th and 29th. Demonstrate your talents and be enterprising on the 4th, 14th and 23rd. Work for a common aim and your career and financial interests will shine. Meanwhile, unwind and prepare for some fun.

LIBRA

23 September–22 October

Guard against any hostile attitudes on the 5th, 12th and 18th, and show that you won't stand for any nonsense. Better still, reserve the right to do what you feel is best. More importantly, don't swing back onto your indecisive Libran see-saw. Toughen up and you'll go far! Circle the 9th, 12th, 19th and 27th for tackling money matters. Spotlight the 4th, 11th, 15th and 24th for romantic connections.

SCORPIO

23 October–22 November

You aren't an ostrich, so don't bury your head in the sand. It'll just make matters worse. Deal with any inconvenience or personal dilemmas swiftly and fearlessly. Relationships will go from strength to strength, provided you are fair to yourself. How others see you, will decide whether you get the green light, or stay stuck in a rut. Put your Scorpio magic to work!

SAGITTARIUS

23 November–20 December

Fight for whatever is rightfully yours and you'll get the backing you need. This is a superb month for romantic quests, especially between the 14th and 17th. Try not to worry too much over any major or minor quandaries. Positive discussions will attract worthwhile progress. Explore new options after the 13th, but spend wisely. Career and creative pursuits are excitingly starred between the 14th and 18th.

CAPRICORN

21 December–19 January

Keep checking that you haven't overlooked any important details. Not only because your mistakes could lead to trouble, but also because you could see something to your advantage. You will have to work harder to get whatever and wherever you want to be, but at least you can rely on a satisfying outcome. Socially and financially, your most potent period is between the 1st and 14th.

Hagar the Horrible

by Chris Browne



Pooch Café

by Paul Gilligan



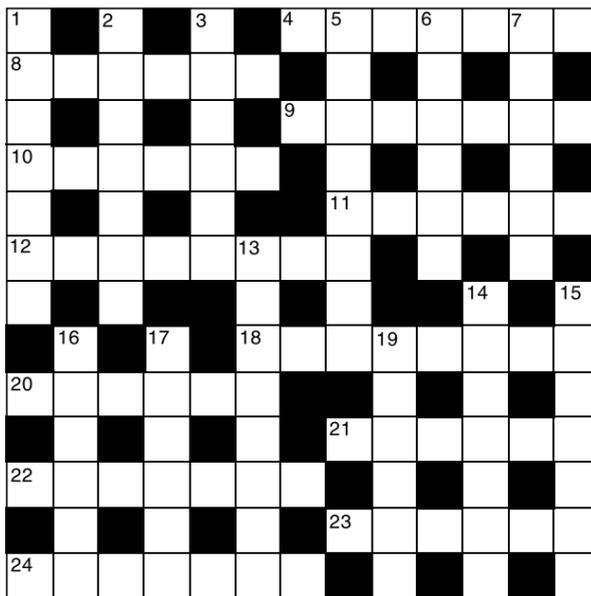
Dilbert

by Scott Adams



DOUBLE CROSSWORD

No 10,003



CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

4. How to fight miserliness? (4,3)
8. Makes a run to clinch the match (6)
9. It's the least one can expect (7)
10. It should get you into hot water (6)
11. A need to include fifty covered in oil (6)
12. Strange patterns found in church (8)
18. Abandon royal dignity (8)
20. Here you have to acknowledge defeat (4,2)
21. Sleeps soundly (6)
22. A commodity extensively used (7)
23. He may supply you, provisionally at least (6)
24. Evidence of a leak? Tell the attendant! (7)

DOWN

1. Matters of some gravity (7)
2. A struggle to maintain faith (4,3)
3. People mending pipes (6)
5. Shaken and upset (8)
6. Greeted in stony fashion? (6)
7. Unaccustomed to being new? (6)
13. Passing pleasing, perhaps (8)
14. Cheer ironically from a military quarter (7)
15. America turns up in simple setting as a rule (7)
16. Something fishy that is of help to a sportsman (6)
17. Establishes upsets, perhaps (4,2)
19. Disregard some sign or emblem (6)

SOLUTIONS TO PUZZLE 10,002

QUICK
Across: 1 Stereoscope; 9 Cow; 10 Decompose; 11 Elfin; 13 Recited; 14 Enrich; 16 Please; 18 Avarice; 19 Sweet; 20 Exhibited; 21 Lei; 22 Predecessor.
Down: 2 Tow; 3 Rodin; 4 Occurs; 5 Comical; 6 Prostrate; 7 Accelerates; 8 Dead certain; 12 Forgather; 15 Climbed; 17 Hectic; 19 Sides; 21 Leo.
CRYPTIC
Across: 1 Undesirable; 9 One; 10 Destroyer; 11 Elbow; 13 Shingle; 14 On duty; 16 Detour; 18 Re-elect; 19 Mated; 20 Promotion; 21 Per; 22 Oddly enough.
Down: 2 Nee; 3 Endow; 4 Insist; 5 Air-line; 6 Lay a ghost; 7 Come to grips; 8 Free traders; 12 Bad second; 15 Trefoil; 17 Strike; 19 Mango; 21 Peg.

The grids are the same, but the answers are different. Have fun!

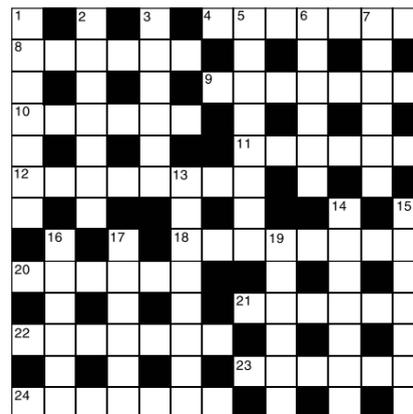
QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

4. Nominal (7)
8. Above board (6)
9. Pacify (7)
10. Serviette (6)
11. Hypothesis (6)
12. Talk (8)
18. Depose (8)
20. Grumble (6)
21. Believe (6)
22. Scent (7)
23. Shrew (6)
24. Make good (7)

DOWN

1. Join (7)
2. Snake (7)
3. Floodgate (6)
5. Powerless (8)
6. Rough (6)
7. Affirm (6)
13. Saviour (8)
14. Hearty (7)
15. Garland (7)
16. Mourn (6)
17. Equipment (6)
19. Recluse (6)



RIVIERA PEOPLE



COOKING UP A TREAT ... cake stall ladies Emma Way, Anne Price, Caroline Good and Gillian Barnes with some of the goodies



BUILDING BUDDIES ... Lukas Roncalli, 3, and Hamish Paul, 6, enjoy the afternoon sun

Buckets of fun

THE sun came out perfectly for the first meeting of The Forum children's club in Juan les Pins recently.

The club, formed by mum Jenny Paul, will be a way for English-speaking children and parents to meet up for outings and social activities around the area.

Jenny told The Riviera Gazette the children had a great time building sandcastles and playing games on the beach at Port Gallice - and the sunshine rounded it off perfectly.

She hopes the club will put families in touch and prove as successful as the Forum's evening get-togethers. "I want to give English-speaking kids of all ages a chance to broaden their circle of friends and meet outside of school," she explained.



WELL READ ... Jenny Paul and The Gazette

Sale raises sweet €17,500

A MOUTH-WATERING display of cakes and sweets were among the delights on sale at the Sunny Bank Anglo-American Association charity sale in late March.

Clothes, toys, jewellery, bric-a-brac and books were also on offer, helping to raise around €17,500. The sale, at the Palais des Congrès in Cannes, was held to raise funds for a new nursing and retirement home,

primarily for the English community, on the Riviera. Association chairman Peter Durlacher, left, said negotiations over a possible site were progressing well.

The sale has been held every two years since the 1960s. Mr Durlacher said: "The hall was packed and the total is fantastic. I'm very grateful to all the volunteers and donors who made this sale possible."



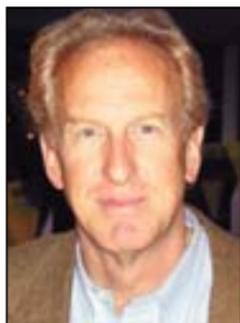
New man heads Monaco USA

MONACO USA, the club for Americans and 'friends of America' met last month to welcome their new president, Mike Powers.

Mike, 51, is a well-known local businessman who has lived in the principality since 1960.

His company, Monte Carlo Entertainment, runs Monaco's annual Invitational Pro-Celebrity Golf Tournament. He was also involved in starting the Stars'n'Bars restaurant with his sister Kate.

He plans to build the membership of Monaco-USA from its current base of around 100. He also wants new events including barbecues and baseball games to attract younger members.



PRESIDENT ... Mike Powers



NEW ROLE ... Josephine Fellows

British Association's new President has eye for culture

THE Nice branch of The British Association of the Alpes-Maritimes and the Var has appointed Josephine Fellows as its new President.

Mrs Fellows, 58, the marketing manager of the International School of Nice, took up the position last month. The association, which has 110 members, was set up to help British subjects in difficulty, which can range from tourists with lost passports to residents who need welfare help and advice.

Mrs Fellows, who has British, Canadian, and French nationality, has also been involved with Nice Chamber of Commerce for 20 years.

In her new role she plans to expand the social side of the association to include more history-related and cultural events. On April 19 there is a lunch at the Studio of the Victorine in Nice which will be followed by a tour of the associated film studios.

British and non-British residents are welcome. For more information call Mrs Fellows, during evenings only, on 04 93 87 43 24.



HOUSE ABOUT THAT ... Hamptons' top brass flew in from London to join the Nice office's John Weaving (second from left), Anne Marie Tua (fourth from left), Olivier Morvan (third from right) and Edith Sommerville (far right) for their launch party

HAMPTONS MOVES INTO NICE

UPMARKET British estate agent Hamptons has opened an office in the port of Nice.

"Normally, foreign agencies operate through an independent affiliate," branch manager Olivier Morvan told

The Riviera Gazette. "But that means you don't have so much control over the level of service offered to your clients. With our own office, we can make sure everything is handled the way our clients expect." Morvan has

spent the last five years working in Hamptons' Knightsbridge office.

"I hope my experience of working in estate agency in France and in the UK will ensure that we can offer our clients the best of both worlds," he said.

New face on BCC board

THE British Chamber of Commerce re-elected its board at its AGM during March.

Faulkner International's Mike Lorimer is the only new face. Lorimer is tasked with recruiting new members, along with fellow board-member William Collie.

The BCC is a networking and support club for British run local businesses.



ON BOARD ... Lorimer

Re-prints
High-quality prints or digital images of any photo on this page, as well as many others appearing in The Riviera Gazette, can be ordered by telephoning 04 93 09 66 43.

Riviera Diary

What's on

Your guide to this month's events on the Riviera

Plenty happens on the Riviera, but how often have you only heard about something *after* the event? You need never miss out again with The Riviera Gazette's comprehensive diary listings...

Listings

Info for readers...

- ◆ before a day shows the event's final day.
- after a listing signifies the last day of an event.

Info for contributors...

Please submit listings in writing at least ten days before publication. Please include dates, prices, times and a contact phone number. Listings can be sent by post or fax (04 93 09 66 53) or by email to diary@theriviergazette.com. Listings appear free of charge, but inclusion is at the sole discretion of the listings editor.

April 2002

5 Friday

Holiday on Ice Ice skating spectacular at the Salle Nikaïa in Nice. Performances start at 20:30 tonight, 14:00, 17:30 and 21:00 tomorrow and 14:30 on the 7th. Tickets €31 for adults, €19 for children, available from www.nikaia.fr or by calling 08 92 69 42 00 ◆ Apr 7

1er Salon Mer & Vigne et Gastronomie A gourmet's delight. Eighty exhibitors offer top quality sea food, wines, chocolates and other foods, at direct-from-the-producer prices. At the Palais des Congrès Europa in Mandelieu La Napoule. Open 10:00 to 21:00 today and tomorrow, 10:00 to 20:00 on Sunday. Tel: 04 72 43 06 17 ◆ Apr 7

An evening with Colm Tóibín The Princess Grace Irish Library in Monaco is hosting an evening with Irish writer and Booker shortlisted author Colm Tóibín from 20:30. Tóibín will also be signing copies of his books at the Fnac store in Monaco on April 6 from 14:00 to 14:45. Contact the library on +377 93 50 12 25 ◆ Apr 6

4e Salon de l'Art Moderne Annual modern art exhibition at the Salle Escoffier, Villeneuve-Loubet, featuring the work of local artists. Tel: 04 92 02 60 50 ◆ Apr 12

11th Festival Musical du Grand-Hôtel du Cap-Ferrat The festival concludes tonight with a performance by the Orchestre Régional Provence Côte d'Azur at 20:00. Tickets €30, or €120 including dinner. Tel: 04 93 76 50 50 ■

Rally of Tunisia The port of Nice is traditionally the departure point for this week-long rally through Tunisia. Today the teams gather at the port for pre-race checks, tomorrow sees the prologue race at Saint-Isidore and the departure of the teams for Tunisia ◆ Apr 6

6 Saturday

Nota Bena Free entrance today and tomorrow to all municipal museums across the Côte d'Azur ◆ Apr 7

22nd Fête des Plantes Plant festival at Parc Floral Phoenix, Nice. Featuring flowers from around the world, on display and for sale. Open from 09:00 to 19:00 today and tomorrow. Tel: 04 93 18 03 33 ◆ Apr 7

Salon de l'Esthétique, du Bien Être et de la Beauté Health, good looks and well being exhibition at the Palais des Congrès in Grasse. Tel: 04 93 40 32 07 ◆ Apr 7

Concours de Boules Boules competition at Breil-sur-Roya's Place de Gaulle at 14:00. Tel: 04 93 04 91 05

Trio Esperanza Brazilian music at the Casino Ruhl, Nice at 21:00. Tel: 04 93 03 12 22

Football: Monaco v Metz Division 1 match at Stade Louis II, Monaco at 20:00. Tel: +377 92 16 61 16

Football: Cannes v Besançon French national championship match at Stade Pierre de Coubertin, Cannes at 20:00. Tel: 04 92 19 50 50

Basketball: Antibes v Bourg Men's Pro A national championship match at Espace J Bunoz, Antibes at 20:00. Tel: 04 93 33 32 32

Open de Squash Rackets de Monaco 2002 Takes place at the Salle Omnisport G Médecin today and tomorrow. Tel: +377 92 16 61 ◆ Apr 7

Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo Soprano Felicity Lott and pianist Graham Johnson perform works by Schubert, Purcell and others at the Auditorium Rainier III, Monaco at 21:00. Tel: +377 93 15 83 03

Chamber Music Concert Violin and piano concert at the Théâtre de la Photographie et de l'Image, Nice at 16:30. Tel: 04 93 97 31 64

4e Salon de l'Art Moderne See Apr 5

1er Salon Mer & Vigne et Gastronomie See Apr 5

Colm Tóibín See Apr 5 ■

Rally of Tunisia See Apr 5 ■

Holiday on Ice See Apr 5

7 Sunday

Fête du Printemps Spring festival in Mouans-Sartoux featuring a procession of floral floats. Tel: 04 93 75 75 16

The Forum Kids' Club Informal lunchtime gathering on the beach at Port Gallice, Juan-les-Pins. Tots to teenagers, and their parents, are all welcome. Bring a picnic and drinks.

Fête Patronale de Notre Dame du Brusuc Festival celebrating rural life takes place next to the Romanic Church in Chateaufort de Grasse today. Folklore, dancing and local food will be on offer. Tel: 04 93 42 50 32



GRABBING AIR... Nearly every day you can watch young skaters honing their skills on Nice's Promenade des Anglais, but on April 20th and 21st the Prom will host the first round of the French in-line roller skating championship. The Nice Roller Cup will see around 150 contestants competing over 17 laps of a 2.5km circuit.

Orchestre Régional de Cannes PACA Concert with Olivier Charlier on violin at the Théâtre Claude Debussy, Palais des Festivals in Cannes. On the programme are works by Leonard Bernstein, Samuel Barber and Antonin Dvorak. Tel: 04 93 48 61 10

Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo The Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra performs Messiaen's Turangalila Symphony at the Auditorium Rainier III, Monaco at 18:00. Tel: +377 93 15 83 03

Sailing: Coupe Internationale de Printemps International Spring Cup, Olympic 470 class yacht racing with top level race crew from 14 nations. 11:00 to 15:00 daily. Prize giving Saturday 13th at the Cannes Yacht Club at 18:00. Tel: 04 93 43 05 90 ◆ Apr 13

Salon de l'Esthétique, du Bien Être et de la Beauté See Apr 6 ■

Holiday on Ice See Apr 5 ■

1er Salon Mer & Vigne et Gastronomie See Apr 5 ■

Open de Squash Rackets de Monaco 2002 See Apr 6 ■

4e Salon de l'Art Moderne See Apr 5

22nd Fête des Plantes See Apr 6 ■

Nota Bena See Apr 6 ■

8 Monday

Festival du Hip-hop The first Nice hip-hop festival takes place at venues across the city until April 13th, including the Théâtre Lino-Ventura, the Forum Nice-Nord and the Forum Massena ◆ Apr 13

Trio Wanderer Chamber music concert, part of the Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo series, with Paul Meyer on clarinet at the

Salle des Variétés, Monaco at 21:00. Tel: +377 93 15 83 03

4e Salon de l'Art Moderne See Apr 5

Sailing: Coupe Internationale de Printemps See Apr 7

9 Tuesday

Festival du Hip-hop See Apr 8

4e Salon de l'Art Moderne See Apr 5

Sailing: Coupe Internationale de Printemps See Apr 7

10 Wednesday

Sailing: Coupe Internationale de Méditerranée et de l'Amitié Yacht racing, 420 dinghy class, for ages 15 to 20. 11:00 to 15:00 daily. Prize giving Sunday 14th at the Cannes Yacht Club, 18:00. Tel: 04 93 43 05 90 ◆ Apr 14

Festival du Hip-hop See Apr 8

4e Salon de l'Art Moderne See Apr 5

Sailing: Coupe Internationale de Printemps See Apr 7

11 Thursday

12th Festival du Bateau d'Occasion et du Motonautisme Over 180 second hand boats, jet skis, speedboats, new boats and boating accessories for sale at Mandelieu's Port La Napoule for the 12th Second Hand Boat and Speedboat Festival. Open daily from 10:00 to 19:00. Call 04 92 97 80 89 for more information ◆ Apr 15

La Traviata The Verdi opera, performed by the Royal Wallonie Opera and the Washington Opera at the Nice Opera House at 20:00 tonight, 14:30 on the 14th and 17th and at 20:00 on the 20th. Tickets from €6 to €67. Box office: 04 93 13 98 53 ◆ Apr 20

Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo Concert with the A Sei Voci ensemble and the Ensemble Tavagna at the Eglise Saint Charles, Monaco at 21:00. Tel: +377 93 15 83 03

Sailing: Coupe Internationale de Méditerranée et de l'Amitié See Apr 20

Festival du Hip-hop See Apr 8

4e Salon de l'Art Moderne See Apr 5

Sailing: Coupe Internationale de Printemps See Apr 7

12 Friday

The Mike Stem Band Jazz-rock group performs at the Cedac in Cimiez, Nice at 21:00. Tel: 04 93 53 89 66

Ensemble Baroque de Nice give a concert at the Eglise St Martin in St Augustin, Nice at 20:30 tonight and 16:30 on April 14th. Tel: 04 93 80 08 74 ◆ Apr 14

Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo Religious and secular music from around the Mediterranean with Angélique Lonatos, Hela Karaindrou and Mikis Theodorakis. At the Salle des Variétés, Monaco at 21:00. Tel: +377 93 15 83 03

12th Festival du Bateau d'Occasion et du Motonautisme See Apr 11

Festival du Hip-hop See Apr 8

4e Salon de l'Art Moderne See Apr 5 ■

Sailing: Coupe Internationale de Printemps See Apr 7

Sailing: Coupe Internationale de Méditerranée et de l'Amitié See Apr 20

13 Saturday

Tennis Masters Monte-Carlo The world's top ranked men's tennis players arrive in Monte-Carlo for the annual Tennis Masters competition. Tickets from €16 for one day, €175 for a pass valid for the whole event. Call 04 93 41 72 00 for reservations ◆ Apr 21

Le Week-end des Insectes Exhibition of insects of all types, including insects for sale. At the Salle Polyvalente in La Gaude today and tomorrow, 10:00 to 18:00. Tel: 04 93 24 47 26 ◆ Apr 14

Dinner with the Auld Alliance Followed by Scottish dancing, at Les Mosquetaires in La Gaude. Call Brian McDowell for information and reservations on 04 93 08 32 78

Football: Nice v Martigues Will OGC Nice make it into Division 1 next season? A highly charged atmosphere is guaranteed for tonight's match, the last but two of the season. Support them at the Stade du Ray tonight at 20:00 as they bid for promotion and the chance to have France's top teams play Division 1 matches in Nice next year. Box Office: 04 92 07 06 06

Nuit Imperial Themed ball at the Hôtel de Paris' Salle Empire in Monaco from 21:00. Part of the Fêtes Impériales week which celebrates the music and times of Napoleon III and the Second Empire. Tel: +377 93 30 48 39

Rizwan Muazzam Qawwadi Sufi music concert at the Salle des Variétés, Monaco at 21:00. Part of the Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo series. Tel: 04 93 15 83 03

Skiing: Grand Prix Interclub Ski competition at Isola 2000. Competitors include the members of the French national ski team. Tel: 04 93 23 15 15 ◆ Apr 14

12th Festival du Bateau d'Occasion et du Motonautisme See Apr 11

Festival du Hip-hop See Apr 8 ■

Sailing: Coupe Internationale de Printemps See Apr 7 ■

Sailing: Coupe Internationale de Méditerranée et de l'Amitié See Apr 20

14 Sunday

Semi-Marathon International de Nice 2002 The eleventh Nice half-marathon, plus shorter 10km and 3km races, takes place today around the city centre and along the Promenade des Anglais. The Half-Marathon and 10km runs are official qualifying races for the 2002 World Championships, but the serious athletes will be hugely outnumbered by the 6,000 or so amateur and fun-runners who are also expected. To take part call 04 93 26 19 88 or see www.NiceSemiMarathon.com

Journée des Enfants Day of children's activities in Cagnes-sur-Mer. In the afternoon, kids get a chance to decorate their bicycles with flowers and join in a procession. Part of the towns' 46th Expo Fleur flower week. Tel: 04 93 20 03 04

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Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo The Monte-Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra and the Berliner Rundfunkchor perform Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* at the Grimaldi Forum at 18:00. Tel: +377 93 15 83 03

Musique des Equipages de la Flotte de Toulon Military orchestra plays Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, Forte and Strauss at the Palais de l'Europe, Menton at 17:00. Tel: 04 92 41 76 76

Concert Soprano Myriam Piguët, baritone Edwin Crossley-Mercer and the Regional Vocal Choir of the Cote d'Azur sing at the Eglise St Martin, St Augustin in Nice. Tel: 04 93 80 08 74

Classical Music The Orchestre Régional Cannes PACA performs music by Purcell and Brahms at the Théâtre Palais Croisette at 16:30. Tel: 04 92 98 62 77

Orienteering: PACA Challenge Regional orienteering competition in the forest of St Vallier. Call 04 98 97 93 90 for details.

Tennis Masters Monte-Carlo See April 13

12th Festival du Bateau d'Occasion et du Motonautisme See Apr 11

La Traviata See Apr 11

Sailing: Coupe International de Méditerranée et de l'Amitié See Apr 20 ■

Ensemble Baroque de Nice See Apr 12 ■

Skiing: Grand Prix Interclub See Apr 13 ■

Le Week-end des Insectes See Apr 14 ■

15 Monday

Ice Skating: Tournée 2002 The French national ice skating team, including Olympic Ice Dance gold medallists Marina Anissina and Gwendal Peizerat, perform at the Nikaïa in Nice tonight as part of their national tour. Tickets cost from €27.50 to €41.50 from www.nikaia.fr or 08 92 69 42 00

Les Lundis du Conservatoire The Nice Philharmonic Orchestra performs Bach and Mozart at the Palais des Congrès in Juan-les-Pins at 18:30. Tel: 04 92 90 54 40

Indonesian Music Concert At the Faculté de Sciences Valrose, Nice at 20:30. Tel: 04 93 72 47 60

Tennis Masters Monte-Carlo See April 13

12th Festival du Bateau d'Occasion et du Motonautisme See Apr 11 ■

16 Tuesday

Foire de la Basse-Cour Farmyard animals in Guillaumes village centre during the morning. Tel: 04 93 05 57 76

Récital Special Charles Aznavour Daniel Vélia performs a tribute to Charles Aznavour at the Théâtre Francis Gag in Nice at 20:30. Tel: 04 93 62 00 03

Organ and Flute Concert At Vence cathedral at 17:00. Tel: 04 93 58 06 38

Ensemble Angelloz Organ and flute concert at the Eglise du Sacré Coeur in Beaulieu-sur-Mer at 21:00. Tel: 04 93 01 02 21

Tennis Masters Monte-Carlo See April 13

17 Wednesday

BAM Cannes branch Spring Lunch The Cannes branch of the British Association of the Alpes-Maritimes and the Var is holding its Spring Lunch today at the Le Manuscrit restaurant in Vallauris. New members always welcome – call Delene Stevenson on 04 93 09 09 68 for further information.

Les Clownesques Festival of laughter with films, performances and activities at the Salle des Fêtes in Valbonne. Tel: 04 93 12 91 88 ♦ Apr 21

Tennis Masters Monte-Carlo See April 13

La Traviata See Apr 11

18 Thursday

Be Irish Music Tour 2002 MacMahon's Irish Pub in Nice hosts a night of traditional Irish music, featuring Celtic Hangover, Blackwater, Tinkers, Fir Breaga, Mirror Field, Boxty, violinist Ian McCamy and singer Gillie McPherson Tel: 04 93 13 84 00

Kronas Quartet Contemporary music concert, part of the Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo series, at the Salle des Variétés, Monaco at 21:00. Tel: +377 93 15 83 03

Ensemble Europa Galante Baroque music concert at the Cathedral in Grasse at 19:30. Tel: 04 93 19 37 40

Tennis Masters Monte-Carlo See April 13

Les Clownesques See Apr 17

19 Friday

Journée Chevalet A chance to meet local painters and buy direct at this artists' market. In Place du Grand Jardin, Vence. Tel: 04 93 58 41 05 ♦ Apr 21

Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo Montreux Jazz Festival themed evening tonight and tomorrow at the Grimaldi Forum at 21:00 Tel: +377 93 15 83 03 ♦ Apr 20

Nastaran: Mélodies et rythmes d'Afghanistan Five musicians and singers perform traditional Afghan songs and music at the Musée des Arts Asiatiques in Nice at 19:00. Tickets €7.60. Tel: 04 92 29 37 00

Hungarian Music Concert Music from the early Romance period at the Eglise Collégiale, St Paul de Vence at 20:30. Tel: 04 93 32 11 92

Football: Cannes v Toulouse French national championship match at Stade Pierre de Coubertin in Cannes at 20:00. Tel: 04 92 19 50 50

Tennis Masters Monte-Carlo See April 13

Les Clownesques See Apr 17

20 Saturday

Nice Roller Cup The first round of the French in-line roller-skating championship takes place on the Promenade des Anglais today and tomorrow. The organisers expect 150 to take part in the 42.5km race, over 17 laps of a 2.5km track. Tel: 04 92 14 48 00 ♦ Apr 21

Fête de l'Huile Nouvelle Traditional festival celebrating the new season's olive oil. All day from 9:30 with music in the afternoon at the Place de Gaulle in Cagnes sur Mer. Tel: 06 03 08 62 86

Mode à Juan Vintage Car, Motorbike and Fashion Show. 1920's cars, today, and motorbikes, tomorrow, on display at les Pinèdes, by the beach in Juan-les-Pins from 11:00 until 11:30. They then drive through Juan-les-Pins and Antibes, returning to les Pinèdes for 14:00. Fashion shows from 14:00 with beach wear and summer styles from local boutiques and regional designers. Tel: 04 92 90 53 00 ♦ 21 April

Salon du Bien-Être Health and well-being exhibition with 250 exhibitors, workshops and demonstrations. 20,000 visitors are expected. Open daily at the Nice Acropolis until April 23rd from 10:00 to 8:00, entry €7. Tel: 04 93 19 37 17 ♦ 23 April

Soirée Brésilienne Brazilian evening at the Base Nautique, Cap d'Ail from 20:30. Tel: 04 92 10 59 50

Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo: "Montreux Jazz Festival" See Apr 19 ■

Tennis Masters Monte-Carlo See April 13

La Traviata See Apr 11 ■

Les Clownesques See Apr 17

Journée Chevalet See Apr 19

21 Sunday

Gospel Music Concert At Vence cathedral, 15:30, in aid of the local retirement home. Tel: 04 93 58 06 38

Decouvertes Jeunes Soloists of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Nice perform Mozart at the Nice Opera House at 11:00. Tel: 04 92 17 40 40

Anne Sophie-Uorens Classical guitar recital at the Théâtre de la Cité in Nice at 18:00. Tel: 04 93 16 82 69

Forum des Musiques Sacrées Weekend of concerts at Eglise Réformée, Cannes. Tel: 04 93 72 47 60

Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo The European Soloists, Luxembourg perform music by Brahms, Haydn, Ives and Slavicki at the Auditorium Rainier III, Monaco at 21:00. Tel: +377 93 15 83 03

Golf: Coupe Prince Pierre de Monaco-Stableford At the Monte-Carlo Golf Club. Tel: 04 92 41 50 70

Golf: Coupe Barclays At the Cannes-Mandelieu Golf Club. Tel: 04 92 97 32 00

Golf: Trophée Lalique At the Cannes-Mougins Golf Club. Tel: 04 93 75 79 13

Mode à Juan See Apr 20 ■

Tennis Masters Monte-Carlo See April 13 ■

Nice Roller Cup See Apr 20 ■

Les Clownesques See Apr 17 ■

Salon du Bien-Être See Apr 20

Journée Chevalet See Apr 19 ■

22 Monday

Salon du Bien-Être See Apr 20

23 Tuesday

Basketball: Antibes v Limoges Pro A national championship match at Espace J Bunoz, Antibes at 20:00. Tel: 04 93 33 32 32

Salon du Bien-Être See Apr 20 ■

24 Wednesday

Sechs Tanze The Ballet de Monte-Carlo performs a new ballet, "No More Play" at 16:00 and 20:30 daily. Tel: +377 99 99 30 00 ♦ Apr 28

25 Thursday

Foire Agricole Agricultural fair all day in the Place du Village, Puget-Theniers. Tel: 04 93 05 05 05

Jumping International de Monaco Top show jumpers compete at the 8th International Show Jumping Trials at Espace Fontvieille until Apr 27th. Tel: +377 93 50 95 60

Sechs Tanze See Apr 24

26 Friday

Jazz au Village Jazz at the Salle Escoffier in Villeneuve-Loubet, starting at 21:00. Tel: 04 92 02 60 50

Festival of Sacred Music With the Russian Quartet and the Cantores Bonmani Choir. At the Eglise de la Sainte Famille, Cagnes Sur Mer at 21:00 tonight and April 28th. Tel: 04 93 20 61 64 ♦ April 28

Nice Philharmonic Orchestra Performs works by Prokofiev and Tchaikovsky at the Nice Opera House at 20:00. Tel: 04 92 17 40 40

Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo Concert with soprano Marie Devellereau, pianist Jean-François Zygel and cellist Xavier Philips at the Salle des Variétés. Tel: +377 93 15 83 03

Football: Nice v Istres OGC Nice's penultimate league match of the season kicks off at the Stade du Ray at 20:00. Box office: 04 92 07 06 06

Jumping International de Monaco See Apr 25

Sechs Tanze See Apr 24

27 Saturday

Twelfth Annual French Wine Growers Exhibition

Find wines from 210 vineyards at direct-from-the-producer prices. Foie gras, cheeses and cured meats will also be available. The €7 entry charge includes free tastings, a souvenir wine glass and presentations on wine tasting given by award winning sommelier Franck Thomas. Open daily from 10:00 to 20:00 at the Hippodrome in Cagnes sur Mer. Tel: 04 94 52 80 08 ♦ May 1

Fête des Fraises Strawberry festival all day today and tomorrow in Carros to celebrate the start of the local strawberry fruiting season. Strawberries and other local produce will be for sale and there's a programme of music, dancing and other activities in the afternoons. Tel: 04 93 29 20 50 ♦ Apr 28

Kermesse de l'Amitié Charity sale at the Eglise du Sacre-Coeur, Monaco with upmarket secondhand clothes, linen, lottery and toys. Open 10:00 to 20:00 today, 09:00 to 18:00 tomorrow. Tel: +377 93 15 83 03 ♦ Apr 28

Vence Fête ses Cultures Cultural festival in Vence old town and Place Clemenceau. Tel: 04 93 58 06 38

Fête de la St Marc Folk festival in the Place Hôtel de Ville, Villeneuve-Loubet today and tomorrow. Tel: 04 92 02 60 50 ♦ Apr 28

Bourse à la Puériculture Sale of second hand baby clothes, equipment and toys at the Stade in La Gaude. Tel: 04 93 24 47 26

Fête de l'Olivier Olive festival at the Bibliothèque Municipale, Vallauris today and tomorrow. Tel: 04 93 63 73 31 ♦ Apr 28

Football: Monaco v Auxerres Division 1 match at Stade Louis II, Monaco at 20:00. Tel: +377 92 16 61 16

Tennis: Fifth International Women's Open Tournament Open to ladies ranked from 50 to 150 in the world, this is one of the six top tournaments in France. At the Tennis Club

de l'US Cagnes-sur-Mer. Tel: 04 92 27 03 66 ♦ May 5

Sailing: Coupe des Capitanes de Flotte Yacht racing. Features Dragon 22, 1st class 8, Nitro and Monotype classes. 11:00 to 15:00 daily.

Prize giving Sunday 28th at the Cannes Yacht Club at 18:00. Tel: 04 93 43 05 90 ♦ Apr 28

Sailing: Défi Yacht Club du Monaco-Gstaad Yacht Club Sailing competition in Monaco today and tomorrow. Tel: +377 92 16 61 16 ♦ Apr 28

Sailing: Régate de la Baie des Anges Sailing regatta in the Baie des Anges, Nice. Tel: 04 93 89 39 78

Soirée Country & Line Danse A country music and line dancing evening at La Colle sur Loup's Salle du Jeu de Paume, organised by le Nashville Gang. The evening kicks off at 19:30, entry is €5. Reservations must be made in advance by calling 04 93 32 55 04 or 06 64 31 77 03

Susana Baca Sings Billy Holiday hits and a mixture of sounds from the Andes, Spain and Africa at the Théâtre de Grasse at 20:30. Tel: 04 93 40 53 00

Concert Exceptionnel III The Orchestre National de Lille performs music by Strauss and Bizet at the Opera de Nice at 20:00. Tickets from €6 to €21. Tel: 04 93 13 98 53

Challenge Denape International Archery tournament at the Stade de Football de la Maison des Jeunes, Antibes today and tomorrow. Tel: 04 93 65 97 17

South African Club Dinner at La Petite Sirène, Rue Maccarani, Nice at 20:00. Confirm to Judit Kiraly, Tel: 06 16 56 50 35

Festival of Sacred Music See Apr 26

Jumping International de Monaco See Apr 25 ■

Sechs Tanze See Apr 24

28 Sunday

Fête du Miel Honey festival in Mouans-Sartoux village centre. Tel: 04 93 75 75 16

Marché de Poteries Potters' market in Biot village. A chance to meet and buy direct from local artisan potters. Tel: 04 93 65 15 15

Grande Foire Artisanale-Commerciale Sale of craft and local artisan products in Roquesteron. Tel: 04 93 05 92 92

Orchestre Régional de Cannes PACA Concert at the Théâtre Palais Croisette, Cannes at 16:30. Tel: 04 93 48 61 10

Tea Dance At the Palais des Congrès, Grasse. Tel: 04 93 36 66 66

Golf: Trophée Jézéquel At the Cannes-Mandelieu Golf Club. Tel: 04 92 97 32 00

Golf: Coupe Werup-Medal At the Monte-Carlo Golf Club. Tel: 04 92 41 48 00

Golf: Coupe Roederer At the Opio-Valbonne Golf Club. Tel: 04 93 12 00 08

Kermesse de l'Amitié See Apr 27 ■

Fête de la St Marc See Apr 27 ■

Fête des Fraises See Apr 27 ■

Fête de l'Olivier See Apr 28 ■

Festival of Sacred Music See Apr 26 ■

Sailing: Coupe des Capitanes de Flotte See Apr 27 ■

Sailing: Défi Yacht Club du Monaco-Gstaad Yacht Club See Apr 27

Tennis: Fifth International Women's Open Tournament See Apr 27

Twelfth Annual French Wine Growers Exhibition See Apr 27

Sechs Tanze See Apr 24 ■

29 Monday

Tennis: Fifth International Women's Open Tournament See Apr 27

Twelfth Annual French Wine Growers Exhibition See Apr 27

Sechs Tanze See Apr 24 ■

30 Tuesday

Juggling Show Spectacular Mime sketches, musical performances and lots of juggling at the Théâtre de Grasse from 19:30. Tel: 04 93 19 37 40

Concert de Musique Traditionelles Turques Traditional Turkish music at the Faculté de Sciences Valrose, Nice at 20:30. Tel: 04 93 72 47 60

Tennis: Fifth International Women's Open Tournament See Apr 27

Twelfth Annual French Wine Growers Exhibition See Apr 27

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SHINY... Giant mosaic figures in glass, ceramics and mirror tiles by French-American artist Niki de Saint-Phalle can be seen around Nice until October 27. They're promoting an exhibition of 325 of her works now running at Nice's museum of modern and contemporary art, the MAMAC. Above is Michael Jordan, on the Promenade des Anglais. Miles Davis is outside the Negresco, and Louis Armstrong can be seen at the airport.

Riviera Diary

Pick of the month

The Riviera Gazette's guide to unmissable events in the month ahead

Wines from 210 vineyards will be available at direct-from-the-producer prices at the **12th French Wine Growers Exhibition** at the Hippodrome in Cagnes-sur-Mer from April 27th to May 1st. The €7 entry price includes free tastings and access to presentations given by award winning local sommelier Franck Thomas. The exhibition also offers stalls with traditional French produce to taste and buy – including foie gras, cheeses and cured meats. Over 35,000 people are expected and around 200,000 bottles of wine will be for sale.

The next production from the Riviera Amateur Dramatic Association is a set of **three one-act plays**, to be performed at Mougins School on May 9th, 10th and 11th. On the programme are *The Reading Group* by Fay Weldon, *Albert* by Richard Harris and Richard Tydeman's *Ask A Silly Question*. Tickets are €10 and can be bought at the English Book Centre in Valbonne, or by calling Lena Walsh on 04 97 01 08 94.

Two Riviera restaurants have been awarded an **extra Michelin star** in this year's edition of the Guide Rouge. In Mougins, Roger Vergé's Moulin de Mougins has regained its two star status after being demoted to a single star in 1997. Rising star Bruno Cirino now also gets two stars at his Hostellerie Jérôme in La Turbie. Cirino got his first star in 2000, only a year after opening.

A series of **residential workshops for writers and actors** is being offered this summer at the Château du Reclos in the Var. The week-long courses are organised by writer David



GOING OVERBOARD... The Antibes Raft Race takes place on May 4th. Teams of yachties compete for best raft, 'best dressed crew' and quickest round the harbour on home-made rafts. The charity race starts at 12:30. Entry is €100.

Chandler and actress Hanna Waite, half of the husband and wife team that set up the Maison des Arts in La Colle sur Loup. For further information on the writers and artists workshops or on the residential painting courses offered at the Maison des Arts, contact Hanna Waite on 04 93 32 32 50.

Carros' annual **strawberry festival** takes place on April 27th to celebrate the start of the local strawberry season. Last year, eight tonnes of new season strawberries were sold at direct-from-the-producer prices. As well as strawberries, there will be stands selling other locally produced foods, including honey and cheeses, and local potters will display their wares. There's also an afternoon programme of music, dancing and other festivities and activities.

This month the Negresco Hotel is offering diners the chance to find out that there's a lot more to Chinese cooking than sweet and sour pork and special fried rice.

Five top Chinese chefs will be flying in from Shanghai on April 17th to offer a week-long series of haute cuisine menus, Chinese style. A set menu is on offer each night until April 22nd, priced at €70 per person.

The Provençal way of life during the time of the Gauls is the theme of a **new exhibition at the Musée Archéologique** in Cimiez, Nice. Scale models and over a thousand objects from the period show visitors how Asterix and Obelix really lived. The exhibition is open 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm until June 2nd. Entry is €3.80 for adults; children get in free.

La Petite Ferme at Marineland on the RN7 near Biot is offering hands-on **chocolate making sessions for kids** of all ages until April 30th. There's no extra charge – participation is included in the standard entry price of €9 for adults, €7 for children.

The 30th Salon d'Antiquités takes place in Vieil Antibes until April 15th. This top-quality

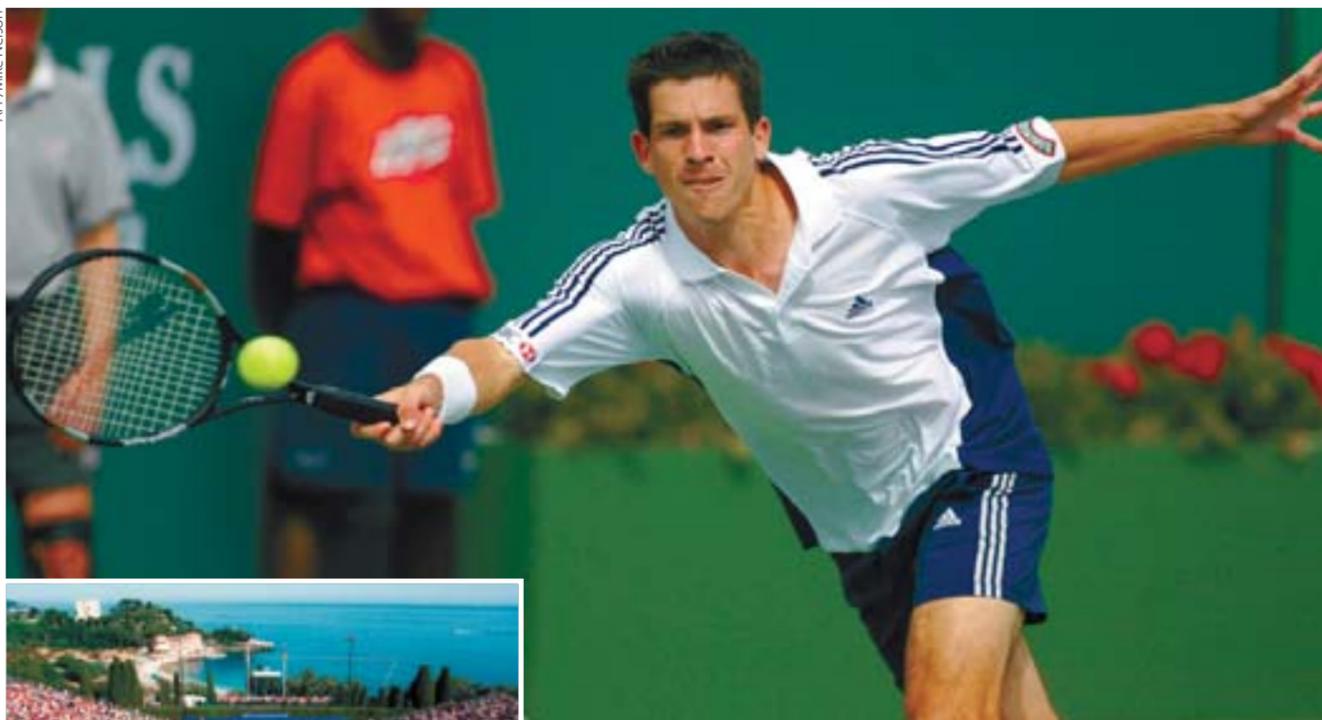
antiques fair has 150 local and international exhibitors offering rare and unusual furniture and objects ranging from rare Lalique glassware to ancient artifacts such as a jade disk dating from the Neolithic period. The show is open daily from 10:30am to 7:30pm. Entry costs €8.

Next up from the Red Pear Theatre is **Dillie Keane**, founding member of Fascinating Aida, in her hit production "Back With You". Described as "a Joyce Grenfell for the post Bridget Jones generation", Keane plays two nights at the Antibea Theatre in Vieil Antibes on May 3rd and 4th. Tickets are €23. Call 04 93 61 01 71 for reservations.

Over **180 pre-owned boats**, from eight to 22 metres, will be on display and for sale at Mandelieu's Port La Napoule for the 12th Second Hand Boat and Speedboat Festival this month. Last year, the event attracted 25,000 visitors. This year it includes a new section for speedboats. There'll also be a number of smaller new boats, jet-skis and boating accessories. The show is open daily from April 11th to 15th, from 10am to 7pm.

Cars and motorbikes from the 1920s mix with the **latest fashions** for summer 2002 at Mode à Juan. The event is at les Pinèdes in Juan-les-Pins on April 20th and 21st. The cars tour through Juan-les-Pins and Antibes on Saturday, followed by the motorbikes on Sunday.

Local potters will be displaying their wares at a **Potters' Market** in Biot old town on April 28th. It's a chance to see the work of the different potters in one place, and save money by buying direct.



TIM'S IN TOWN... The world's top mens tennis players, including Tim Henman (above), Andre Agassi, Pat Rafter, Lleyton Hewitt, Greg Rusedski and Pete Sampras, are in Monaco this month for the Monte-Carlo Tennis Masters 2002. 64 players are competing for \$2.45 million in prize money. The main action begins at the Monte-Carlo Tennis Club (pictured left) on April 15, with the final on the 21. Tickets start at €20 and passes for the whole week cost from €175. Henman, currently ranked world number two, has been in top form – but clay is not his favourite surface.

EX-PATRIATE
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Send letters to The Editor, The Riviera Gazette, 738 Route Notre Dame, Cidex 47, 06330 Roquefort les Pins, France, or by fax to 04 93 09 66 53 or by email to letters@therivieragazette.com

Letters should not be more than 250 words and must carry the writer's full name and address (even if not for publication) and a daytime telephone number to check any queries. Anonymous letters will not be considered and those giving a full name and address for publication will normally take priority. Letters may be edited or cut at the Editor's discretion.

Cannes I play your piano?

Madam,

I live in London and have been visiting Cannes for many a year now; twice a year in March and October. This is the first time I have seen The Riviera Gazette and bought it immediately, hence the letter.

I have recently taken up the piano again, but have been unsuccessful in locating a practice room in Cannes, or even someone who is prepared to rent out their private piano so that I can practice those few weeks when I am there.

If any reader can help, it would be greatly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,
K J KALIS

London, England

Health answers

Madam,

I read with interest Tim Turner's letter entitled 'Health Queries' (The Riviera Gazette, Feb 2002).

As part of my work I advise people on healthcare options in France, and it is a subject on which early advice is recommended.

This is particularly true since the Couverture Maladie Universelle (CMU) legislation took effect on January 1.

With certain exceptions, permanent legal residents of France are now obliged to affiliate with the French health service and it is indeed illegal (under pain of fines and/or imprisonment!) to take out private insurance that would grant cover which would otherwise be provided by the State. 'Mutuelles' and 'Policies complémentaires' are not affected by this legislation.

My website gives useful information on the subject at <http://www.expathealthdirect.co.uk>

Yours faithfully,
PETER OWEN
Ex-Pat Health Direct Ltd

Seillans, France

Madam,

I work locally as a BUPA advisor, and as such I feel I can shed some light on Tim Turner's questions.

1. The law requires those resident in France to join the Social Security system, but not specifically the CMU.

2. The CMU's primary targets are the poor without work or pension. Our clientele are caught in the CMU only if they have no earned income in France or a French State pension.

3. EU citizens in this category may transfer their rights to the same level of cover as a French citizen with the aid of a relevant E form. This is done at the International Section at the CPAM (Caisse Primaire d'Assurance et Maladie) head office in your Département (locally, its at Avenue Roi Robert in Nice). The French authorities use the CMU as the regime for this class of registration.

4. Unfortunately those ineligible for an E Form, i.e. non EU citizens or EU citizens under retirement age, have to register under this same CMU law. These people have to pay 8% of their worldwide income over and above the fixed income thresholds relating to the number of people in their family:

- 1 person pays 8% after €548.82 income per month;
- 2 people pay 8% after €823.22 income per month;
- 3 people pay 8% after €987.87 income per month;
- 4 people pay 8% after €1152.51 income per month.

This law is unfair since it has no upper limit (although there are conflicting reports of an upper limit being introduced), and some of the wealthier people amongst us have to pay vast amounts. The CMU was not designed for these people but, since it covers them, the government is happy to accept their money.

5. People in the category described in point four will have to register at their local CPAM office. This may prove difficult; counter staff can be ill-informed, and an appointment will be necessary as generally there is only one CMU specialist in each office. Good luck!

Yours faithfully,
ROY COX

Roquefort-les-Pins

riviera sport

Formula One races back to Var circuit

Re-vamped Paul-Ricard opens for testing

THE glory days of the Paul-Ricard racing circuit at Le Castellet near Bandol in the Var are set to return.

The circuit was purchased by Excelsis, a company controlled by Formula One boss Bernie Ecclestone, in 1999 for a rumoured \$11m. Since that time it has been undergoing extensive modernisation and remodelling.

It has now re-opened with world leading Formula 1 test and support facilities in place.

The 5.8 kilometre track has 42 different circuit combinations, designed to push all types of racing cars to the limits. A four-star hotel and an airport able to handle the biggest transatlantic business jets have been built.

So far, only Toyota F1 has confirmed that it will be creating a test base at Paul-Ricard, but other teams

are expected to follow. European teams currently test at Silverstone, Barcelona, Valencia and Estoril during the winter, and the circuit is expected to pursue this business.

Circuit Paul-Ricard was home to thirteen Formula One Grand Prix races between 1971 and 1990 and saw famous wins by Niki Lauda in 1975, James Hunt in 1976 and Mario Andretti in 1978.

In 1991 the French Grand Prix was moved north to the Circuit de Nevers Magny-Cours and Paul-Ricard was sidelined.

But Magny-Cours is a rural circuit which has trouble with race day access and offers little local accommodation.

Excelsis is expected to bid for the right to host the French Grand Prix at Paul Ricard when Magny-Cours' contract runs out in 2004.



Volley Girls Lift Euro Cup

THE ladies of the Racing-Club de Cannes volleyball team have become the first French club to win the European Champions League. The team, six-time winners of the

French national volleyball championship, clinched the title on March 17 in Istanbul, Turkey, by beating Italy's Foppapedretti Bergamo by three sets to one.

OGC NICE SET FOR DIVISION ONE BUT STAND ROW LOOMS

A 3-0 WIN over Amiens on March 22 put OGC Nice into third place in Division 2 of the French football league.

With only four matches left in the season, the win puts the Black and Reds within striking distance of promotion to Division One, France's top division, for next year.

But the celebrations are being marred by a ruling that the Nice ground, the Stade du Ray, is not up to Division One standards.

The Football Leagues' stadiums inspectorate has also dashed hopes that the team could be given time to make gradual improvements to the ground over a number of years. Stade

By Sarah Clark

du Ray is simply not up to scratch, they say.

Plans to play at the Charles Ehrmann sports park have also been ruled out as the ground is unsuitable.

There is a plan on the drawing board for OGC Nice to get a new €76 million, 30,000 seat stadium, to be built on the Stade du Ray site.

But this would require the existing stadium be demolished first. Construction work would not be able to begin until 2003, and the stadium would only be ready for the start of the 2005-2006 season.

In the interim, the options are look-

ing very limited. Monaco's Stade Louis II does meet Division 1 standards. But Nice fans, jubilant that France's fifth largest city may at last have the Division One team they feel it deserves, are not expected to be happy with the idea of Monaco as a venue for OGC Nice matches.

That tiny Monaco has a top division team, whilst a city the size of Nice could only boast a minor league team, has long been a source of friction.

But first, Nice have four more matches to play.

First up is an away match against Le Havre on April 6.

This year's season draws to a close on May 3.

Double tragedy hits English cricket

ACCIDENTS have claimed the lives of two English cricketers in the space of ten days.

Late last month Ben Hollioake, the 24-year-old Surrey all-rounder, was killed in a car crash in Perth, Western Australia, robbing the game of one of its brightest young talents.

Members of the English squad, who were on tour in New Zealand, were allowed to fly to Fremantle to attend the funeral the day after they drew the second test match with the Kiwis in Wellington. Hollioake's death

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overshadowed the match. Captain Nasser Hussain said afterwards that the lunch interval on the third day of the Test was hard to bear.

"When you're out there in the morning you've got a mate called Ben and when you come back at lunch-time you haven't," he said.

Police are continuing their investigation into the cause of the crash prior to submitting a report to the coroner, who will then decide whether to hold

an inquest. Police said there was no obvious reason for the crash and no marks on the road to indicate excessive speed.

Then, last week, Sussex all-rounder Umer Rashid drowned whilst on a pre-season tour of the West Indies.

The 26-year-old died trying to save his brother Burhan, 18, who disappeared underwater whilst swimming in a 17 metre-deep pool at the foot of the Concord Falls in Grenada.

The Sussex team cancelled the remainder of its tour and flew home.

WORLD SPORTS ROUND-UP

FOOTBALL The FA Cup semi-finals draw could see an all-London final on 4 May at Cardiff. On 14 April Fulham will play Chelsea in a west London derby at Villa Park, while Arsenal take on Middlesbrough at Old Trafford.

• Everton have sacked manager Walter Smith, replacing him with Preston boss David Moyes. The Scot was dismissed after a humiliating FA Cup quarter final exit to Middlesbrough.

• Robert Pires, Arsenal's French winger, will miss the rest of the season and the World Cup with a serious knee injury.

• West Bromwich Albion were awarded three points by the Football League for a win over Sheffield United — despite the match being abandoned because there were too few players on the pitch. It is the first time in league history that a match has been abandoned like this.

FORMULA 1 Michael Schumacher won a nail-biting Brazilian Grand Prix last Sunday, beating brother Ralf by just half a second. Next race is the San Marino GP at Imola on April 14.

F1 DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Michael Schumacher, Ferrari, 24 points; 2 Ralf Schumacher, Williams, 16; 3 Juan-Pablo Montoya, Williams, 14; 4 Jenson Button, Renault, 6; 5 David Coulthard, McLaren, 4; 6 Kimi Räikkönen, McLaren, 4; 7 Eddie Irvine, Jaguar, 3; 8 Nick Heidfeld, Sauber, 2; 9 Mark Webber, Minardi, 2; 10 Mika Salo, Toyota, 2; 11 Felipe Massa, Sauber, 1

F1 CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Williams BMW, 30 points; 2 Ferrari, 24; 3 McLaren Mercedes, 8; 4 Renault, 6; 5 Jaguar Ford, 3; 6 Sauber Petronas, 3; 7 Minardi Asiatech, 2; 8 Toyota, 2

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Peugeot are the team to beat, with Gilles Pannizzi winning the Rally of Catalunya. The next rally is in Cyprus, April 18-21.

WRC DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Marcus Gronholm, Peugeot, Fin, 21 points; 2 Gilles Pannizzi, Peugeot, Fra, 20; 3 Richard Burns, Peugeot, GB, 13; 4 Tommi Makinen, Subaru, Fin, 10; 5 Carlos Sainz, Ford, Spa, 9; 6 Philippe Bugalski, Citroen, Nor, 7; 7= Sebastian Loeb, Citroen, Fra, 6; 7= Harri Rovanpera, Peugeot, GB, 6; 9= Colin McRae, Ford, GB, 5; 9= Petter Solberg, Subaru, Nor, 5; 11 Alister McRae, Mitsubishi, Swe, 2

WRC MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Peugeot, 52 points; 2 Ford, 25; 3 Subaru, 20; 4 Mitsubishi 6; 5 Hyundai, 1

CRICKET Shane Warne, Australia's legendary spinner, has played his 100th test match. He took 6-161 in 70 overs in the second innings against

South Africa in Cape Town — the most overs he has ever bowled in a test match innings.

• Andrew Caddick became the 9th English bowler to take 200 test wickets during the third test against New Zealand in Auckland.

GOLF World number one Tiger Woods remains upbeat ahead of this month's US Masters at Augusta, despite a poor showing in his last outing at the Players Championship at Sawgrass. The world number one finished six shots off the pace on Sunday after posting a disappointing two-over-par 74 in his final round.

RUGBY New Zealand faces being dumped as co-host of next year's Rugby World Cup. Australia's bid to host the competition alone is likely to be accepted by the International Rugby Board on April 12.

A row erupted over New Zealand's inability to provide 'clean' stadiums, free from existing sponsorship deals. New Zealand claims the IRB is being greedy and acting outside its powers by demanding that existing sponsorship deals should be scrapped for the tournament.

The IRB claims that the New Zealand Rugby Football Union knew about the requirements for clean venues as long ago as 1999. It added that they accepted these demands by agreeing "in principle" to the same stadium provision terms as Australia last November.

TENNIS Goran Ivanisevic is set to retire from the game — but only after he has defended his Wimbledon crown. The Croat has admitted defeat over a shoulder injury, but says he will play no tennis until Wimbledon so that he can defend the title he finally won last year.

BOXING The long-awaited fight between British heavyweight Lennox Lewis and Mike Tyson will finally take place in Memphis on 8 June. The pair will earn at least \$17m each.

ROWING Oxford won last week's 148th University Boat Race by just two seconds, against the odds. After a poor start, Cambridge settled into their rhythm and led at every marker along the way. Despite having the inside line at the last bend, Oxford's oarsmen overhauled them in the final seconds to give the closest finish since 1952.

ICE SKATING Russian Irina Slutskaya captured her first World Figure Skating Championship title in Nagano, Japan. Her victory helped ease the disappointment after she was beaten to gold at the Winter Olympics by Sarah Hughes, who did not compete at this event.

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