By JENNY PAUL

A 22 year-old ‘environmentally-friendly’ tyre recycling scheme is coming adrift and is fast becoming a threat to shipping and Golfe-Juan’s undersea ecology.

Twenty thousand used tyres and three condemned ships were submerged off Golfe-Juan in 1980 to make a low-cost artificial reef to provide a habitat for marine life. But this penny-pinching ‘pneu’ idea may now be dead in the water.

After twenty two years on the sea bed, strong currents caused by bad weather have dislodged many of the tyres. They are regularly turning up as surprise catches in fishermen’s nets. Marie Caroline Nicolas from the Vallauris-Golfe-Juan department of the environment told The Riviera Gazette “The tyres coming away from the reef is not good. If fishermen are catching tyres in their nets, they are too close to the 50 hectare protected marine zone. They are not allowed within one kilometre of the area.”

Most fishermen are happy the tyres are there as the reef draws fish to the area, meaning they catch more" she continued. "However, the degeneration of the rubber is not good and we really need to lift the whole lot out. But this will cost maybe several million euros. There has been a public inquiry and for the moment there is no pollution and nobody has a problem with the reef. Everybody’s opinions were noted and filed. But we all agree that the tyres should come out, and the Conseil Générale in Nice are looking into finding the money. “They should have a final answer next month”. A spokesman at the Capitanerie in Golfe-Juan’s old port said “This protected zone is a huge problem for us and the Antibes port. It causes trouble for ships going in and out of the harbours. If this no-go zone wasn’t there a major navigation problem would be solved.”
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Snoozy 9mm

A DISABLED man from Nice is in police custody this week after shooting dead a friend at his home.

The pair had lunch together before killer Gerard Louis, 45, went off for a nap whilst the unnamed victim, 60, went outside to do some gardening.

Shortly afterwards Louis, an invalid, leaned out of his bedroom window and shot his pal dead with a 9mm pistol.

Police looking for a motive say they are baffled by the killing.

Vallauris appeals phone mast ruling

VALLAURIS council is taking its fight to stop a mobile phone network putting up transmitter masts in the town to the Department of Health.

Last week the high court ruled that the town did not have the right to stop network operator SFR putting up antennae on private land, so long as the land owner agreed.

But Alain Gumiel, mayor of Vallauris, will continue the fight by making an appeal on health grounds.

Ferry good news

THE number of cruise ship and ferry passengers arriving at Nice and Villefranche harbours this year is up 17% on 2001, despite concerns that last year’s September 11 terrorist attacks would lead to a drop in cruise ship visitors.

14 points in one day

AN UNLUCKY Calvados man faces a driving ban after collecting 14 penalty points on his license in just one day.

First he was stopped in the early hours for drink-driving, then later the same day he was nabbed whilst speeding at 184 Km/h in a 110 Km/h zone.

The Riviera Gazette weekly Gazette

OVER 200 party guests turned out in Antibes last Thursday evening for a glittering bash to celebrate the launch of The Riviera Gazette’s new weekly editions.

So nobody could miss the good news, servers in bars all around the town were wearing bright red Riviera Gazette t-shirts, and bus shelters everywhere were plastered with two metre high posters announcing the birth of the new paper.

And during the last few days an extra 100,000 copies of last week’s issue have been dropping into letterboxes all over the Riviera.

A more modest minimum of 18,000 copies of The Riviera Gazette will distributed each week in the future - but that still makes it by far the biggest circulation English publication in the region.

Guests at the party included readers, clients, representatives of local clubs and associations, the many who have gone out of their way to help the Gazette get established, and contractors & staff – including The Gazette Girls, a bevy of blonde babes who can be seen at major events and venues handing out chery smiles and free copies of the newspaper.

Thank you to our friends at Oasis, Club d’Antibes and Clifton Nurseries for all their help with the party!

You think it’s all over... it is now!

The French tax authorities are well known and highly respected for their attacking approach in tracking down tax evaders, including foreigners living here. New exchange of information laws in the offshore centres and other EU countries will make their job that much easier.

The UK government has given “full guarantees” that their dependent territories will adhere to the new information exchange system. Don’t get caught offside - contact us NOW to discuss legitimate, tax efficient solutions.

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* Rob Kay, Senior Partner on 06 93 00 17 80 - rob.kay@blevinsfranks.com

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RIVIERA FETES

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Thank you to our friends at Oasis, Club d’Antibes and Clifton Nurseries for all their help with the party!

CHEERS... Edith Snae from Hamptons International, canines, toasts the Gazette.

ROSE OUTLOOK... Vicky Morris, Richard McCrery, Mike Morris, Liz Morris and friend Sandrine

GROUP HUG... Julia from classified, joined Gabby and Nat from our sales and reporter Jenny in a toast to the Gazette’s future.

T-SHIRTY... International Crew Recruitment’s Stephen Bellinger, pictured here with the Gazette’s Alison Craddock, thoughtfully came along in his Riviera Gazette t-shirt.

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FOURSOME OUTLOOK... Valérie, Jules, Robin and Gabrielle enjoying a RIVIERA FETES night out in Antibes.

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BUDGET: TAXES TO COME DOWN, PETROL TO GO UP

THE 5% cut in income tax promised during the presidential election campaign will be honoured when the government unveils the 2003 budget on Wednesday, observers now believe.

This is despite a slowdown in the French economy which has led to concerns President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin would have to abandon the tax cut plan.

The tax break, worth €2.6 billion to French taxpayers, will be financed by keeping the national debt at €44.6 billion - and by increasing indirect taxes.

Petrol prices are set to be raised by €0.01 per litre and smokers face tobacco tax hikes too.

“The promised personal tax cuts will be of benefit to almost everyone and are at least a start in reducing the tax burden on the individual in what is one of the highest tax regimes in Europe,” Bill Blevins, Managing Director of financial consultants Blevins Franks International, told The Riviera Gazette.

“The prevailing personal tax rates and the combined level of social welfare contributions are a serious handicap in creating long term jobs and reducing costs of the ‘black economy’, which are substantial.”

But even with the indirect tax increases, it is still not clear how the government will balance the books.

“It is hard to see how the current budget deficit is going to be rectified in a timely manner with both tax cuts and promises to increase public spending,” says Blevins.

“The EU is adamant that France balances her books by 2004 or she will face the possibility of huge fines. Whilst the latest budget statement seems to indicate that the Government will ‘attempt to meet this target, there seems lit- tle chance in my view that she will meet the EU requirements by the deadline date.

“Indeed it has been suggested in some quar- ters that there is little chance of France meeting the EU requirement of a balanced budget before 2007.”

“The new Government will need to be res- olute if they are to make the kind of changes that are required.”

SYRINX SINGS... Ensemble Vocal Syrinx director Errol Girdlestone (left) and president Jo Walker (third from left) lead other English-speaking members of the choir in an impromptu performance.

A LOCAL choir is seeking new members – and in par- ticular it’s after more men!

Choir president Jo Walker told The Riviera Gazette “Ensemble Vocal Syrinx is a high-quality choir based in Cagnes-sur-Mer. Our director, Errol Girdlestone, is a profes- sional who has worked with well known choirs all over the world.”

Syrinx performed Brahms’ German Requiem in the Basilica at St Maximin on November 3 in Cagnes to celebrate the choir’s tenth anniversary.

“The choir rehearsed in Cagnes every Friday and gives around six performances each year. The choir was formed in Monaco on December 16; otherwise the next major perfor- mance is at the Cathedral in Marseille on March 10 and at the Paris Conservatoire on March 23.”

“If you’ve not experienced the beauty of a large choir in action, you really should come and see us” said Jo.

Call her on 04 93 32 10 06 to find out more.

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Chouz Laurent
1 Place du General Leclerc, 06110 Le Cannet

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Chouz Laurent
1 Place du General Leclerc, 06110 Le Cannet
Swiggin’ in the rain

THE VAR branch of the British Association kept a stiff upper lip as their long-planned picnic at a Lorgues winery looked like being washed-out last Friday, reports Collin Antrim.

“We’ve decided to be madly British and go ahead all the same,” said organiser Sheila Glick as the rain teemed down on the central Var. And go ahead they did, with a record-breaking crowd of 155 – half as large again as any previous self-catered event in their calendar – found their way to the Domaine St Marc des Omèdes near Lorgues.

Summer clothes were prudently topped with anoraks and plastic macs. Members were greeted by proprietor Lindsay Phillips, who boasts he runs the smallest British wine domain in Provence. His 2½ hectares produce some 14,000 bottles a year of Côtes de Provence red and white wine, along with vin de pays and two grades of rosé.

Disaster

As the weather veered from fairly bright to rain and back again, Lindsay doled out samples of his finest wines. Meanwhile disaster threatened his vineyard below: late rains mean growers face the unappealing choice of picking the wet grapes, with weaker alcoholic potential, or letting them rot on the vine.

Lindsay and wife Anne-Marguerite have owned and operated the domaine since 1994, after he retired from a career with IBM. “It was about as far from wine as you can get,” he laughs. “When I joined the company it was Quaker-owned and all official functions were catered event in their calendar – as large again as any previous self-record-breaking crowd of 155 – half as large again as any previous self-catered event in their calendar – found their way to the Domaine St Marc des Omèdes near Lorgues.

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PULP FICTION... members scooped armfuls of books from the ever-present second-hand bookstall – if they could identify favourite authors under the swathes of plastic

ORGAN DONORS WANTED

TWO churchgoers will walk from Menton to Nice next Friday, September 27, in a bid to finish paying back a loan which was used to restore the church organ.

Tom Tennant, 63, a retired banker and the treasurer of Nice’s Holy Trinity church, will be accompanied by friend Geoff Treloar, 56, on the 30 kilometre hike.

“We’re calling this ‘the last lap’,” said Tom. “We’re trying to finish paying back a loan that was used to restore the church organ. If you’d like to help by sponsoring the pair, please contact Elisabeth Calmes on 04 93 72 97 08 or Father Ken Letts on 04 93 87 19 83.

The church was given an interest-free loan of some €25,000, says Tom. “If we’d started a year earlier we’d be relatively flat, but it’s still a very long way,” he added.

“So it will be rewarding our efforts by sponsoring us!”

From those that would like to reward our efforts by sponsoring us!”

Furthermore, the pair hope to raise funds for the repair of a church organ at Holy Trinity said Tom.

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My Riviera

Monaco impresario Jason Keable talks to Sarah Clark about the Cameo Theatre and his life on the Riviera...

“My PARENTS moved here 14 years ago. Dad ran hotels and casinos in the UK, but when the doc told him to move to the sunshine he chose Monaco. I was 19 and decided to stay in London. But we’re a very close family and I came over often to see my parents and my sister. Like many people here I had a spell working in the City, but I just couldn’t see where my life was heading. I started looking for other outlets.

I invested in a radio station in Ventimiglia, Star 108. We played house and dance music, because that’s what I was into, and we had three minutes of news every twenty minutes. It failed, but I learnt a lot from it.

I went back to London, to drama school at the Webber Douglas Academy of Dramatic Art. I acted for two years, with lots of stage work and a part in the award winning Channel 4 film ‘Cold Turkey’. Four years ago Dad died, my agent had a heart attack and I’d had no work for six months. I was unhappy. I had no control over my career as an actor and it was time to go back into business.

My new venture, The Cameo Academy of Dramatic Arts, opens in January 2003. It will offer full-time courses for English-speaking actors and for French actors who need to perfect their English. It will give classical London training, as I was taught at Webber Douglas. There’ll also be courses for children from five onwards on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Drama is very much training for life. It’s taken 18 months from conception to finding premises and getting a licence. It’s wonderful, because it allows me to marry up my business instincts with my love of acting and theatre.

Cameo is also putting on a series of English-language productions. The first is on October 8 and 9, An Evening with Clement Freud. I’ve kept the tickets as reasonable as I can, at €35, because I want it to be accessible to all. My favourite restaurant is Le Grill at the Hôtel de Paris – it’s expensive, but you do get what you pay for. I love it for slightly exotic food with a younger, smarter crowd or, for great Italian food in a relaxed atmosphere, I go to Portunella.

I gave up alcohol four years ago, but I still go to the Sass Café and I’m regular at the Scala Green Café for breakfast, lunch and dinner. It’s just downstairs from my bachelor pad in the Palais de la Scala, and you can always trust the Plat du Jour. On Sundays it’s church in the morning then to the Country Club for a workout or off for a big lunch somewhere in the country – maybe in one of the hilltop villages in Italy, or in Mougins.

In the summer, I love to take visitors exploring in the countryside behind Monaco or St Tropez and I’m Corsica mad. It’s the most beautiful place.

My top tip for anyone moving down here is to always get everything checked out by an expert you trust. There have been so many financial scandals, you really need to be sure you know what you’re doing. I’m 33 and still single. But life is pretty good. The pace here is stress-free and I love being able to have breakfast with my nephew. The one thing I would change if I could? Well, I do miss being able to get the Sunday papers on time!

CAMEO ROLE . . . Jason’s new drama school opens in Monaco in January

My Riviera

My Riviera
ATHLETES TO BE TESTED IN NICE

OVER two thousand triathletes will descend on Nice this week-end as the Côte d’Azur hosts two triathlons. The gruelling events involve long distance swimming, cycling and running trials. Nice’s customary long course championship on Sunday has been joined by an International Triathlon Union World Cup on Saturday, making for a huge weekend on the Baie des Anges. Sunday’s events include the world’s top athletes looking for qualifying points for the 2004 Athens Olympics. It will be run over Olympic distances – a 1.5 km swim followed by a 40 km cycle ride and a 10 km run.

Among the stars of the course will be the usual suspects – local athletes looking for qualifying points for the 2004 Athens Olympics. It will be run over Olympic distances – a 1.5 km swim followed by a 40 km cycle ride and a 10 km run.

The main event is on Sunday, when up to two thousand competitors set off from the Promenade des Anglais at 1.15 pm for the long distance championship.

The Nice triathlon course, rated one of the toughest in the world, passes through four kilometres of swimming, 120 kilometres of cycling and 30 kilometres of running.

The course record, set in 1986, is 5h46'10".

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 Wrestlers

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 UK SCREEN and stage star Christopher Biggins will be in Old Antibes to narrate a Celebration of Sondheim at the Théatre Antibita this weekend.

This new production from Hilary King’s Red Pear Theatre is based on Stephen Sondheim’s hit ‘Side by Side’, but with additions and editions.

The cast includes Anna Nicholas, Gay Soper, Garth Barudley and Red Pear veteran Stefan Bednarz. Biggins, of Poldark and Rocky Horror Picture Show fame, says ‘Tell in love with Sondheim in 1972 when I attended the first night at Her Majesty’s. I couldn’t possibly miss all my time favourite show of his, “Company”.’

“When Hilary suggest

ed to come this evening ening energing little theatre to do a tribute to the great man, I jumped at the change."

Saturday night’s tickets are nearly sold out, but there are still seats available for Sunday at £25 each. Book direct with Red Pear, in English, on 04 93 61 01 71.

THE 4th Festival de Flamenco takes place on Tourrettes-sur-Loup this weekend, with a top flamenco artist as the star attraction.

The festival begins at 5pm on Saturday with an introduction to Flamenco by the Spanish Embassy’s Francisco de la Rosa, followed by tassas and sangria in the grounds of the Château.

The festivities move to the Salle des Fêtes for a concert featuring flamenco guitarists, fandangos and stomos – and the voice of Ines Bacan, a member of one of flamenco’s leading dynasties. She has performed at the London’s Barbican, the Paris Opéra and in the US.

On Sunday afternoon visitors get the chance to join in a flamenco dancing or singing course at the Salle des Fêtes from 3pm. A performance of Misa Flamenca at Saint-Gregoire church at 6pm on Sunday brings the event to a close.

Tickets for Saturday night’s concert cost £18, Sunday’s concert in the church costs £10. Call 04 93 59 27 14 to book.

SINGING FLAMENCO... Ines Bacan

ATHLETES TO BE TESTED IN NICE

The Riviera Gazette

What’s On and Where To Go...