RESIDENTS of Roquebillière were up in arms this week as government officials threatened to force them from their homes.

The future of the ancient village hangs in the balance after officials claimed it could be hit by catastrophic landslides which would see centuries-old houses slipping down the hillside with millions of tons of mud and rock.

Two thousand people live in the village, perched in the hills behind Nice, with 600 located in the ‘danger zone’.

Now it has been announced that homes in the danger area are likely to be compulsorily purchased by the state and then demolished.

But villagers are strongly opposed to the plan. “I would fight all the way if it came to it,” Janie Arnold, a British resident of Roquebillière, told The Gazette.

“Nobody told us about this threat when we bought our home. We took a big gamble after we married, moving to France to start a new life. We love it here and we’re very happy. Somebody should have told us,” said Janie, her voice trembling with emotion.

The threat is not new. In 1926 nineteen villagers were killed in a mud slide and authorities have been discussing what to do ever since.

“Because of the geological make-up of the ground there is a very high risk of a landslide,” Eric Vicet, a technician for the Nice branch of the Department of the Environment, told The Gazette.

“It could happen at any time. If I lived there, I would much rather move now than be buried in a landslide.”

But Didier Roux, vice president of the village association formed to fight the plan, told The Gazette: “A meeting is planned for September 15, and we’ll find out more about what is proposed. We don’t know if we’ll have a final decision then, but whatever the government decides, we are not moving.”

The decision has to be approved by three ministers – the interior minister, the minister for the environment and the finance minister – before the plan can be put into action.

In the meantime, residents are worried about getting a fair price for their property. Says Janie Arnold: “I’m sure all the publicity has affected house prices.”
DESTROYED: THREE FAMILIES,

WILDFIRES devastated the region again this week, leaving three firefighters dead, seven children fatherless, many more homeless and vast swathes of the region’s forests flattened.

Arson is suspected in both the Var and Cagnes-sur-Mer disasters. President Chirac has vowed to bring those responsible to justice.

“There is good reason to suspect criminal acts. I have told the government to launch an investigation that will end with the culprits being found and punished in an exemplary fashion... I have asked the justice minister to pay close attention to the sentences they get,” he said while attending a memorial service on Tuesday for the three firefighters killed on duty in the Var.

The three men lost their lives near la Garde Freinet when freak winds swept the fire towards their convoy, cutting them off and engulfing their fire engine. Two died in the cab, one on the ground outside. Two of the men were volunteers. The three leave widows and seven children aged from one and 12 between them. A dozen other firefighters were also injured.

In Cagnes-sur-Mer, residents who lost their homes in a 300 hectare

TRAGEDY ... loved ones mourn the Var fire's three victims

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CUTTING TIES, CUTTING TAXES

The recent publication of an extensive background paper on the tax treatment of non-domiciled individuals in the UK is the clearest indication yet that the government plans to immi-

tantly change the tax rules concerning non-domicile status. Currently non-UK domiciled individuals are exempt from paying tax on their overseas income — providing it is not brought into the UK. The media focus has been on the 60,000 wealthy UK residents with non-domicile status, but there are many UK expatriates who may find that the proposals affect them too.

What is ‘domicile’?

Under UK law you must have a domicile for tax purposes. This is usually the place with which you have the closest con-

nections — normally where you were born, rather than where you currently live. If you are not intending to return to Britain to live, you may be able to establish an alter-

native domicile. This means chalking off the UK as your domicile of birth and taking steps to show that your new home abroad is permanent.

Why become UK non-domiciled?

There are considerable tax ad-

vantages for UK nationals who are able to lose their UK domic-

icle. If you are not domiciled in the UK, you are only subject to UK inheritance tax (IHT) on assets situated within the UK. In contrast, if you are UK domic-

died, IHT is 100% of the total value of your worldwide estate (after allowances). You may also find that you are liable for estate duties in your country of resi-

dence and in the country where the assets are physically located.

Credit is frequently not given for tax paid in one country against tax due in another. This could mean that the total estate duty payable on your assets could actually amount to more than your assets are worth.

How do I lose my UK domicile?

The Inland Revenue will look for proof that ties with the UK have been cut and permanent ties with a new country esta-

blished. This could include pur-

chase of a house in the new country, relinquishing of rights to vote in the UK and establish-

ment of financial ties with the new country.

You can’t find out in advance from the Inland Revenue whether you are classified as non-domicile. The easiest way to test domicile is by setting up a discre-

dionary trust, making a ‘chargeable transfer’ into it over and above lifetime exemp-

tion and reporting this to the UK Inland Revenue. If there is no tax charge to lifetime I/T you are non-domiciled. If you receive a charge then you re-

main domiciled.

Act now before it is too late. Changes to non-domicile status will not benefit UK expatriates or wealthy non-domiciled indi-

viduals residing in the UK.

If you would like advice on the chances of obtaining non-

domicile, or further information about protecting your assets, please contact us.

The information provided in this article does not constitute advice and no responsibility will be accepted for any loss occa-

sioned directly or indirectly as a result of persons acting, or refraining from acting, wholly or partially in reliance upon it.

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61 HOMES AND 4,800 HECTARES OF PINE FOREST suspected in deadly blaze

Blaze on Sunday afternoon are furious that it took several hours for the fire fighting to properly begin. Four houses were completely destroyed and a further 18 damaged when fire broke out at around 2.30pm in the town’s la Buffe cemetery, on the D36 near the Route de Venasque. By 3.15 the fire was spreading fast across the Val de Cagnes, where it destroyed five houses and then spread onwards and eastwards across Val Fleuri towards St Laurent du Var, the southern outskirts of La Gaude and the 350 homes in the Domaine de l’Etoile.

“Someone phoned me to tell me the fire had reached our house, so I rushed straight home, pushed my way through the police roadblocks and ran into the house at 5pm,” Eric de Brocart told The Riviera Gazette. “The fire was only 20 metres from the house. The firefighters didn’t arrive until at least two to three hours after the fire had started. I was absolutely frantic. It was very scary, but once they arrived they were wonderful and put the fire out straight away.”

Two helicopters began water-bombing the fire early in the afternoon, and 300 firefighters were eventually mobilized. But the first of four specialist Canadian water bombers didn’t arrive on the scene until 6pm. Fire investigators suspect the blaze was not an accident, saying that either the fire ‘jumped’ several hundred metres or it was deliberately started in two places. The suspicion of arson is backed up by an eye witness who reports finding charred wood piled at the base of a burned tree in a third area of Cagnes that wasn’t otherwise affected by fire.

But Vincent Chery, directeur adjoint of the ONF 06 (Office National des Forêts Alpes Maritimes) told Nice Matin, “the fire spread in the direction of the wind and the phenomenon of fires jumping distances is well documented. During a large fire in the Tanneron, for example, the flames managed to jump right across Lac de Saint Cassien.”

A SEPTUAGENARIAN died in Nice on Sunday after being trapped against the wall when his fold-down bed folded itself away. The man, who was staying at his holiday home in the city, is thought to have been killed by lack of air. His wife was superfi-cially hurt in the accident.

Tart in the dock
A 24 YEAR OLD BULGARIAN prostitute is facing a one year prison sentence after being charged with soliciting in Nice. Although calls for a three year sentence in the town, this is the first time a charge like this has been brought in the city. The case is due to be heard next February.

Easy new route
LOW-COST airline Easyjet will operate a route from London Gatwick to Marseille from October 26.

Tickets are now on sale, starting from £21.80 one-way. The airline is also planning a new route between Gatwick, and Toulouse.
The heatwave across the country led to more than 11,000 extra deaths over the summer as temperatures soared to over 40 degrees, writes Jenny Paul.

And on Sunday, France's health minister predicted that the number could rise even further to 12,000. In Nice, CHU (Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Nice) recorded a 40 per cent rise in the number of deaths compared to August last year.

“The emergency room is relatively calm,” Geneviève Robiquet told The Riviera Gazette, “and we didn’t have any difficulties with our mortuaries. Thanks to the professionalism of our staff we had the situation under control. Staff volunteered to help if we needed them.”

Of the 32,065 deaths recorded in France during August, only 37 were at Nice’s CHU. Paris was hardest hit, leading some in the French media to claim it had a national problem but a Parisian one. However the scale of the tragedy nationwide became apparent as many of the bodies lay unclaimed.

“Last night there were 300 people who hadn’t been buried because their family had not turned up to claim the body,” that the government’s fault” added the state secretary for the elderly, Hubert Falco last week in response to accusations of bad management.

Many relatives have now been traced, and the final 63 unclaimed bodies, who do not have any family, were buried in paupers graves yesterday.

In the light of this shocking news, searching in the media the government has now proposed a plan to scrap one of France’s eleven bank holidays each year, with revenue generated from keeping the country ‘open for business’ for the extra day going towards helping the elderly.

THE Riviera Gazette Thursday 4 September 2003

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European Summers

Babooffed fixing the lawn

MOUGINS residents are being terrorised by a family of wild boars who have been destroying gardens and ruins lawns for the last two months.

“The same family has been coming and digging our garden up every couple of nights since June,” Julie Davies told The Riviera Gazette. “They seem to be working their way in a circle around Mougins and they’ve wrecked the lawn so many times that we’ve stopped fixing it now. Our next door neighbour has spent thousands on a new fence, but they still get in and dig the lawn up so he’s actually convinced that pigs really can fly!”

Bobbing off the grass

French flier to Britain

TWO new reports released this week offer an insight into the working habits of the French.

One revealed that French productivity is higher than that of the Americans, while the other points to young, educated French workers fleeing the country – the favoured destination being the UK. Young, educated French are trying to flee a rigid, over-regulated society. If they could do the same thing in France they would, said the institute’s Beatrice Sacvarieau.

“Overall, a lot of French émigrés are trying to flee a rigid, hyper-taxed, over-controlled and over-regulated society. They don’t want to do the same thing in France they would,” said the institute’s Beatrice Sacvarieau.

The other report, compiled by Geneva-based agency OIT (Organisation Internationale du Travail), claims that French people are more productive than Americans.

It claims that Americans generate an income of US$33 an hour, while the French produce US$35 an hour – but, of course, Americans tend to work much longer than 35 hours each week.

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American books look at cultural rift

TWO new books examining Franco-American relationships have just been published.

Sandy Mitchell’s much-mooted Can’t Be Wrong was written by two Americans after a two-and-a-half year stay in Paris.

“Our theory is the structure of France is consistent with the spirit of the French,” explain the authors. “From how the government works to how France handles social issues, and the social function of business, the French have the system they need.”

Another American book is hitting the bestseller lists in France – a translation of ‘112 Gribes About The French’.

The title, originally a booklet a fellow-American handed out to German workers who were stationed in France in World War II, covered aspects of French life that often confused the Americans.

Typically it answered “what have these frog eaters ever done for us?” with a three page list of “112 Gripes About the French.”

The book, published under the title Our Friends by Le Devoir, has already sold 15,000 copies.

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Golfers get Nookie night for charity

PLAYERS in the annual French Riviera Charity Golf Tournament will be teeing off from September 20 at the St Donat, St Endreol and Cannes Mandelieu golf courses. Highlights of the €300 per person event will be a spot of cheeky teddy bear Nookie in ventriloquist Roger de Courcy’s cabaret show and a champagne reception at Cannes’ Hotel Martinez beach bar.

The event is raising money for the UK-based charity SPARKS, which funds medical research for children.

SPARKS has funded 132 medical projects in the UK since 1991, spending £9 million to tackle conditions as diverse as cerebral palsy, meningitis, the dangers of premature birth, spina bifida, childhood arthritis and cancers.

“We have quite a few celebrities confirmed to play in the event including John Lodge, Minder star Dennis Waterman, Bill Curbishley (who managed the Who and Robert Plant), Clive Banks (manager of Marty Pellow and Mike Oldfield), ELO drummer Bev Bevan, ex-Radio Luxembourg DJ Tony Prince, Roger de Courcy and John McDermott, the Irish-Canadian tenor who will be touring Europe with Nana Mouskouri,” Barry Fitzpatrick, the organiser, told The Riviera Gazette.

“We already have too many visitors,” Vladimir Abbe, one of the island’s 27 monks, who are silent for at least twelve hours every day, told The Riviera Gazette by email.

“A lot of visitors leave rubbish and trash behind after their visit, which is very distressing for the monks,” Abbe added.

As the new school year starts, demand has continued to outstrip the supply of places at the region’s international schools.

The International School of Nice is looking forward to the rentree. “We had excellent IGCSE and A-level results this year. Catherine Gaonac’h told the Gazette, “There will be some new faces as we have five new teachers – including one former graduate – and lots of new students.

And at the CIV in Vallauris Andrew Derry told us, “Despite increasing our numbers to over 900 this year demand continues to exceed available places. In year six over 400 students sat the entrance exams for 65 places. We have employed two new teachers as well as three boarding superintendents to cope with demand. As usual, exam results were excellent.”

In Monaco, Angela Godfrey told us, “The International School of Monaco is proud to announce a 100 per cent pass rate in the recent International Baccalaureate examinations. One of our students gained the maximum possible marks of 45 points and our newly graduated students have all been admitted to the universities of their choice.”

And at Mougins school Sue Dunnachie told the Gazette, “We are starting this term with three new teachers and 410 students, but we still have a choice.”

“We had extremely good exam results this year with a 100 per cent pass rate at A-level and 98.7 per cent at GCSE. And we have a student who has won a place at Oxford.”

SA heads for Cannes

THE South African Film Commission is planning to promote its films at Cannes next year. “Having Nelson Mandela opening Cannes film festival would be a big plus for the South African film industry,” the commission’s president told reporters, although the former president’s appearance in Cannes has yet to be confirmed.

Ryanair pulls out

NO-FRILLS airline Ryanair is threatening to withdraw services to France after a dispute over airport subsidies. It plans go ahead the move will affect British second homeowners in the Dordogne, Biarritz and the Pyrenees.

Truffles snuffed out

THE summer heatwave is thought to have devastated France’s much awaited truffle harvest. The drought in July and August was fatal for the “truffelet”, or truffle embryos, which need humidity to develop.

Sea plunge

THE sea temperature locally plummeted from a warm 28 to a chilly 18 degrees over last weekend, and is unlikely to recover this year. High winds are blamed for “blowing the warm waters away” and bringing in hundreds of jellyfish.

Figs small and sweet

THIS year is proving to be exceptional for figs. The heatwave has made the fruit somewhat smaller than usual, say producers in Sollies-Pont in the Var, who are hoping to receive an appellation d’origine controlee (AOC) for figs.

More wine benefits

DRINKING red wine may combat the negative effects of smoking. Researchers have found that two glasses of red wine a day counteract the artery damage caused by one cigarette, but warn 20-a-day smokers against drinking gallons of wine in an effort to protect themselves.

OPEN FORUM

The financial debate

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Tuesday, 28th October
at 10:00 for 10:30am, until 12:00noon
Chateau d’Alagnon, Uzes

Wednesday, 29th October
at 10:00 for 10:30am, until 12:00noon
Chateau de la Police, Aix-en-Provence

For Cannes and Monaco contact
Rob Kay, Senior Partner
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Film maker Max Ryerson tells Jenny Paul about moving to Hollywood, working with the stars, and the excitement of making his first film ...

“I base myself wherever there is work and have homes in Monaco and LA. Last year was a very exciting year for me as I premiered my first film in Monaco. It’s called ‘Sempre Occultus’, that’s MI6’s first film in Monaco. It’s called ‘Monaco and LA’. I worked with a small budget and have to shoot a film a year or so. Any very pretty girls were usually kicked off the set when I’m not working! I like to go out on that, and I also love water-skiing. In winter I do some snowboarding in Idaho or Geneva if I have the time. When I go out I try to travel and see my favourite place is The Waterfront in Fortville. At the moment I’m in Monaco holding a two-day seminar on film making at the Cameo Academy of Dramatic Art on September 6 and 7, and I’ll cover everything from original film concept to final distribution. After that I am going to Brussels to look at options for a series of comic books and a novel called Ramseys by Christian Jacques, as I like the idea of making an epic film. It’s always been my dream to work in films. I’ve always wanted to be an actor or a director, so I’m very happy. But I do like living down here so I would like to do more work on the Riviera than in LA if I can.”

DIRECTOR...Max shows the way to his film making seminar in Monaco

PHOTO BY JENNY PAUL

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Character house, minutes from the sea.

Ref 8606

€ 2,660pw July/Aug

€ 350/pw inc. Short/long term.

€ 4,290/month

€ 1000/mo, radi-

€ 2000/mo, own pool, desk, PC. Ref 841

€ 2500/month, pool, prov.
town, 6 beds, own pool, spa/pool.

€ 3500/month, 5 beds. Ref 8605

€ 5000/month, own pool, spa/pool.

€ 7500/month, 6 beds, own pool,

€ 10000/month, 7 beds. Ref 8612

€ 10,000/mo, radiator/pool, desk,

€ 1050/week. 2mins

€ 100/mo, radi-

€ 120/mo, 2 beds. Backs corner, sea

€ 180/mo, 3 beds, box in sea view

€ 280/mo, 1 bedroom

€ 350/mo, 2 beds. Backs corner, sea

€ 350/mo, 2 beds. Backs corner, sea

€ 420/mo, 3 beds

€ 450/mo, 3 beds

€ 490/mo, 3 beds

€ 500/mo, 3 beds

€ 550/mo, 3 beds

€ 600/mo, 3 beds

€ 650/mo, 3 beds

€ 700/mo, 3 beds

€ 750/mo, 3 beds

€ 800/mo, 3 beds

€ 850/mo, 3 beds

€ 900/mo, 3 beds

€ 950/mo, 3 beds

€ 1000/mo, 3 beds

€ 1050/mo, 3 beds

€ 1100/mo, 3 beds

€ 1150/mo, 3 beds

€ 1200/mo, 3 beds

€ 1250/mo, 3 beds

€ 1300/mo, 3 beds

€ 1350/mo, 3 beds

€ 1400/mo, 3 beds

€ 1450/mo, 3 beds

€ 1500/mo, 3 beds

€ 1550/mo, 3 beds

€ 1600/mo, 3 beds

€ 1650/mo, 3 beds

€ 1700/mo, 3 beds

€ 1750/mo, 3 beds

€ 1800/mo, 3 beds

€ 1850/mo, 3 beds

€ 1900/mo, 3 beds

€ 1950/mo, 3 beds

€ 2000/mo, 3 beds

€ 2050/mo, 3 beds

€ 2100/mo, 3 beds

€ 2150/mo, 3 beds

€ 2200/mo, 3 beds

€ 2250/mo, 3 beds

€ 2300/mo, 3 beds

€ 2350/mo, 3 beds

€ 2400/mo, 3 beds

€ 2450/mo, 3 beds
Riviera Weather Tuesday 4

Thursday 4

Sunshiny

St Tropez

Beaulieu-sur-Mer is having its Heritage Festival today until Tuesday. The festival celebrates the history and traditions of the town with a fair, music and dancing. Tel: 04 93 02 02 21.

Castillon is having an open-air music festival with Anna and the Country Bears, the Catfish Joe and the Hochoch Cochim Men tonight and tomorrow starting at 18:30. The main entrance is free. Tel: 04 93 28 75 70.

LFT Buses to Cannes, Glandak, Grasse and St Tropez and the St Tropez antiques fair.

Saturday 6

The British Association of Monaco is having its Connoisseur’s Day Trip today. The coach trip will start with a guided talk by a professional artist on Rembrandt at his house and museum in Cagnes-sur-Mer. Then on to a guided visit of the wine cellars and the history of the Belle Epoque region ending with a wine tasting at Chateau de Cremat, and followed by lunch at a local auberge. Call Avenir: +377 93 10 19 53.

There’s a bric-a-brac sale with home made cakes and other refreshments at St Hugh’s Anglican Church, Arre de la Resistance in St Jean from 10:00. A bagpiper and a drummer will be providing entertainment throughout the day. Vullon-le-Pont has its port fair on the Place des Arcades today and tomorrow with workforce by amateur and professional potteries, and an exhibition in the Salle des Fêtes. Works by Rachael Korn would be on display in the Salle St- Eustep until September 15. Tel: 04 92 34 34 50.

St Laurent-du-Var is having its annual fête du tapis: the festival of regional products today at the Parc. Layet from 10:00 to 18:00. Stall will include cheese, meats, honey, jams and cooking ingredients. There is also a mini farm for the children. Tel: 04 92 12 41 15.

Dragons is having a sports day at the parc today at the hausman. There will be demonstrations of different sports and representation from the sporting associations. Tel: 04 93 40 33 11.

Le Cabrin Cricket Club is in Vallée de Thiéry playing a home today and tomorrow against Rotterdam VCC. Both matches start at midnight. Tel: 04 93 07 72 23.

LFT Buses to Glandak, Wascera and Wizences at 14:30.

Continuing today are Jazz in Nice, Barbies Dolls 2003, Beaulieu’s Heritage Festival, Homage to Picassos, Castillon’s music festival and the St Tropez antiques fair.

Sunday 7

Biggsrose’s 8th annual organic market takes place today at the Palais de Congres. There will be organic wines, vegetables and fruits with tables and demonstrations. A shuttle service to the market will leave every 15 minutes from the railway station car park. Tel: 04 93 05 15 30.

Monaco-Saint-Martin is having its gourmet market today with local delicacies in the main square from 9:00 to 19:00. Tel: 04 92 92 47 24.

LFT Buses to Cannes, Glandak, Krakow, Stockholm and Warsaw at 16:30.

Continuing today are Beaulieu’s Heritage Festival, Cabris cricket match, Jazz in Nice, the St Tropez Antiques Fair, Vullon-le-Pont’s pottery fair and Barbies Dolls 2003.

Monday 8

Monaco’s Prada Challenge is for classic yachts and classic motor boats starts today until September 14. Features on display include Cristina O. Tel: +377 93 10 63 06.

LFT Buses to Cannes, Glandak, Krakow, Stockholm and Warsaw at 16:30.

Continuing today are Beaulieu’s Heritage Festival, Homage to Picasso, and Barbies Dolls 2003.

Tuesday 9

LFT Buses to Cannes, Glandak, Krakow, Stockholm and Warsaw at 16:30.

Continuing today are the Heritage Festival, sculptures by Seward Johnson and Barbies Dolls 2003.

Wednesday 10

The Connoisseurs international pleasure boat fair starts today at the Palais des Festivals and includes around 450 boats on display in the Port de Cannes. Opening tomorrow is 10:00 to 19:00 daily and entrance to the show is €10. Tel: 04 99 39 24 53.

Monaco’s Stars & Bars is showing Stand Up Comedy direct from the London alternative comedy circuit this evening at 21:30. The two-hour show includes jokes, gags, ad libs, story telling and one-liners. Also on Thursday evening at La Galerie in Antibes, Friday at Les Arbousiers in Les Adrets and Saturday at Montreux Irish Pub in Cannes. Tel: 04 97 97 95 95.

LFT Buses to Cannes, Glandak, Stockholm and Warsaw at 16:30.

Continuing today are sculptures by Seward Johnson, the Prada Challenge and Barbies Dolls 2003.

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