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Corfu's English Language Monthly Magazine

January 2009

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No. 217



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ear to the ground

HALFWAY THROUGH A THOROUGHLY COSY CHRISTMAS AT A FRIEND'S HOUSE, with a roaring log fire and satellite TV, we decided to indulge in a slodge of nostalgia, and turned the channel to ITV, where Mary Poppins was playing.

For those of you who don't know the plot, it's set in London in the early years of the 20th century. Two naughty young children, with lawrgely absent parents require a nanny, and on cue Mary Poppins (Julie Andrews) famously descends from the sky with an umbrella. Together with Bert, a chimney sweep (played by Dick van Dyke with a very shaky cockney accent), they go on various magical adventures, until the parents duly see the error of their ways and bond as a family.

Watching this 1964 film for the first time since I was a kid, I really do believe that someone at ITV has a very well developed sense of humour. Did a programme scheduler realise that Mary Poppins can be read as a metaphor for our time? This can be encapsulated in 'A British Bank', sung by Father (Norman Tomlinson):

A British bank is run with precision

A British home requires nothing less!

Tradition, discipline, and rules must be the tools

Without them - disorder! Chaos!

Moral disintegration!

In short, we have a ghastly mess!

and

The children must be molded, shaped and taught

That life's a looming battle to be faced and fought

So, without tradition and discipline, come disorder and moral disintegration. With broken families, feral children, teenage knifings and shootings, many in the UK would agree with that!

Towards the end of the film, there's a run on a bank, due to the bankers refusing to hand back tuppence to one of the children, because he prefers to use it to 'feed the birds'. Sooo Northern Rock. The bankers are portrayed as grasping, much as - post crash - they are viewed today. You can even read references to the fiat financial system and the banking cartel.

It makes you wonder whether the Mary Poppins author was prescient... or perhaps we are arrogantly assuming that our current woes are unique to our time...

THAT MANY KIDS TODAY WOULD BE BORED BY MARY POPPINS was another thought that crossed my mind while watching the movie. The great set pieces (The 'jolly holiday' through Bert's pavement art and the rooftop sequence with the sweeps) go on far too long for modern tastes. Post-MTV, youf has lost the habit of concentration; apparently, programme makers work on an attention span of just three seconds before the shot has to change. Oh dear, it's also rubbed off on me, judging by the slight feelings of irritation I experienced whilst watching the film ('Get ON with it, will you?'). How times have changed.

THERE IS MUCH IN THIS ISSUE to show how times indeed have changed. We look back at 1817, via a letter home from a traveller, full of patronising colonial commentary! Writing about New Zealand in the 1970s, Lionel Mann laments the post-war failure of Britain - which today has reached its nadir. Still, there's always hope, so we wish you:

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Sundays 10.30 Holy Communion
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REGULAR EVENTS

Tuesdays 10.00 Library & Coffee Morning
Wednesdays 10.00 Coffee & Kids
Wednesdays 12.00-14.30 Lunch Box
Wednesdays 19.00 Scrabble Club (last Wed. in the month)
Thursdays 10.30 Bible Study, the Old Testament (new series)
Fridays 10.30-12.00 Informal Prayer Meeting

Current locum Chaplain is the Revd. Canon John Philpott. We are being joined by a new locum, Bruce Lyons, by February 8th (his first Sunday) 2009 - Bruce and his wife Eileen will then stay with us until after Greek Easter.

THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL 2008

I am delighted to inform everyone that the total amount collected for the 2008 Poppy Appeal came to:

2,186.97 euros (1,870 pounds, seven pence).

I would like to extend, once again, my sincere thanks and appreciation to each and every person around the island who gave so willingly to this very worthy cause. It is comforting to know that, in this day and age, we still care about those less fortunate than ourselves.

On behalf of the Royal British Legion, I thank you all for your very generous and valuable contributions.

Lucy Steele, M.B.E.
Former British Vice Consul, Corfu

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This month's name days

01. Vasilis
06. Theofanis (Fanis), Fotis, Fotini, Iordanis
07. Yiannis, Prodomos
11. Theodosios
12. Tatiani
17. Adonis, Antipas
18. Thanasis, Kirillos
19. Makarios
20. Evthimios
21. Anthi, Maximos, Neofitos
22. Anastasios, Timotheos
24. Xeni
25. Grigorios
26. Xenofon
31. Evdoxia

Name-day tradition dictates that you visit the home of the celebrating person, who will be holding an 'at home' - no invitation required. Take along a gift (alcohol, flowers, cake) and you will be offered a drink, nuts, cake, and possibly a meze.

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Tourism Prospects for 2009

UK consumers will continue to earmark cash for their annual holiday in 2009 - at the expense of short breaks and pub and restaurant outings, a new study shows. The study also indicates that destinations which target the older market will see success.

The PricewaterhouseCoopers findings come against a backdrop of recession and a reduction in spending.

PwC head of travel Malcolm Preston said: 'It will be a white knuckle ride for the travel industry as they adapt to the changing shape of the UK consumer's holiday. Those who are flexible and switch the emphasis from the discretionary short break to the semi-discretionary main holiday, and provide value for money for those who still have cash, will maintain a strong market position. However, it seems for many travellers the recession is still hovering in the background. The key question is whether current intent towards spend is aligned with next year's reality.'

Consumers ranked holidays and short breaks as the top two spending priorities for 2008, six places higher than debt repayment, when asked in April.

PwC asked the same question in November, but looking ahead to 2009. The latest results saw debt repayment (credit cards, loans and overdrafts) rise to first place (20%) but with large holidays sticking close by in second (16%). Only one per cent of people say they will prioritise eating and drinking out, which fell eight places from fourth in April to

12th in November.

Preston said: 'During the boom era we would expect to see a far higher proportion of people prioritising travel and holidays, so undoubtedly the industry is not immune to the downturn. However, these results show the UK consumer is still set on escaping the recession depression and [aside from paying off unsecured debt] refuse to sacrifice the summer or family holiday.'

But short breaks plummeted between the two polls from second to eighth place in the league table and only two per cent surveyed will put cash aside first and foremost for these trips.

Preston added: 'As consumer confidence has fallen over the last six months, the popularity of short, city breaks is dropping. This is a result of the UK jet set culture reverting to reliance on one, long holiday. We expect to see people being more cost conscious during this period and also reducing their main holiday by a matter of days.'

The over 65s are the most concerned about the recession, having experienced economic turbulence before and being cash dependent. But they are also the most determined to prioritise holidays in 2009, with 27% putting holiday spend first, and only 15% focused on unsecured debt repayment.

'Pensioners have the least debt and most time on their hands with which to travel, which should offer hope to travel companies that target this demographic,' said Preston.

From Travelmole.net

Pensioners have the least debt and most time on their hands with which to travel, which should offer hope to travel companies that target this demographic

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A Barren Landscape

✍️ John Philpott

Imagine a Greece without outward signs of faith: bearded papas, monasteries, churches with their bell towers, candles and iconostases. Imagine a Corfu with no roadside shrines, no processions in celebration of Saint Spiridon and no fireworks at Easter. Imagine a Corfu without any Holy Trinity to attend or not attend, depending on choice.

Imagine a Greece or Corfu where the only icons are the logos of supermarkets, the signposts to a marina or beach, hotel or taverna. The noises to be heard would be of souped-up boy racers, chugging scooters and the various tongues of tourists. Apart from the sheer beauty of this Ionian idyll, such a landscape would be bereft of those signs which point beyond themselves to the eternal. The signs of transcendence would be lacking.

The outwards signs of the Christian faith - white Orthodox churches and bearded papas for example - aren't all that would be missed if the landscape of Corfu were indeed totally lacking in the presence of the eternal. Not only does the faith transform the life of individuals and not only has the Christian church brought enormous blessings to societies (education, health, social reform), but there is another level at which the Christian faith blesses the society in which it is set. It is the level which Roger Scruton, a conservative radical philosopher who has recently returned to the faith, describes as the subterranean. The Christian faith is rather like an iceberg - what is seen on the surface is but a small part of what is actually there. Thus if the outward signs of faith were lost, that would not matter as much as if the under-the-surface faith was lost.

Therefore use your imagination to conceive of a society in which:

- ~ there was no need for forgiveness because no one recognised that forgiveness was an issue
- ~ there was no faithfulness because everyone had been reduced to living for themselves
- ~ there was no awareness of a heavenly power to restrain the unbridled use of earthly power
- ~ there was no sense in which the ends did not justify the means
- ~ there was no height to people's lives because there was nothing to glory in and no depth because emotions were controlled with chemicals
- ~ there was no sense of love or of grace because everything was ours as of right
- ~ there was no possibility of discerning truth because words only meant what we wanted them to mean
- ~ there was no sense of personal being because we had been scientifically analysed into separate component parts
- ~ there was no sense of God, because we had all agreed with Nietzsche that, 'God is dead.'

Roger Scruton's antidote to this barren landscape is Psalm 100 - *O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands; serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with a song.* In the barren landscape of consumerism there is ultimately little satisfaction and scientific advances are a mixed blessing. But being joyful in the Lord, serving him with gladness and coming into his presence with a song will make the most barren of landscapes blossom. The church's task (to mix metaphors most horribly) is to get the parts of the iceberg under the surface into the barren landscape so that once more it might blossom.

Revd. Canon John Philpott is Holy Trinity's Locum Chaplain

Winter Walks

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- SATURDAY, 3 JANUARY **Dafni and the Stalactite Cliffs** (2 1/2 - 3 hours *** NEW!). Meet at the Night Owl, Afionas, 10.00 for 10.30 start. Lunch at the Night Owl.
- SATURDAY, 10 JANUARY **Giannades & the West Coast** (2 - 2 1/2 hours *** NEW!). Meet Giannades Square, 10.00 for 10.30 start.
- SATURDAY, 17 JANUARY **Lakones and Mount Arakli** (2 hours ***). Meet Lakones, 1st coffee bar, 10.00 for 10.30 start. Lunch at Doukades.
- SATURDAY, 24 JANUARY **Upper Roman Path and the Nun's Trail** (2 1/2 - 3 hours **** steep descent). Meet Freddo Bar, Acharavi, 10.00 for onward car journey at 10.30. Lunch at Skondros Taverna, Acharavi.
- SATURDAY, 31 JANUARY **Varipatades Valley** (2 - 2 1/2 hours ** NEW!). Meet at the Bus Terminal in Kouramades, 10.00 for 10.30 start. Lunch at Kostas Taverna, Agios Ioannis.
- SATURDAY, 7 FEBRUARY **Two Beaches, a Hinterland and a Headland** (3 - 3 1/2 hours *** long but not tough NEW!). Meet at Arillas Seafront, 10.00. Lunch at the Night Owl.
- SATURDAY, 14 FEBRUARY **Benitses, Stavros and the Waterworks** (2 - 2 1/2 hours ***). Meet at Benitses Seafront in coffee bars, 10,00 for 10.30 start. Lunch at Paxinos Taverna, Benitses.

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 - ** easy with some climbing
 - *** moderate, some steep climbs
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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

Fairmont Hotels takes over Club Med *New luxury brand for Corfu*

The former site of Corfu's Club Mediterranee near Ipsos is set to be developed by Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, a world leader in the hospitality industry. The 26.5 hectare site, which occupies a promontory between Ipsos and Dassia, has stood empty since Club Med closed its doors almost a decade ago. In this spectacular location, Fairmont Corfu Resort & Spa is scheduled to open in 2012.

The 240-room resort will feature six food and beverage outlets, 1,800 square meters of banquet and meeting space and a 1,500 square-meter Willow Stream Spa featuring 17 treatment rooms and health club. Willow Stream Spas are award winning luxury spas with spaces inspired by the energy of the location. They specialize in authentic spa treatments and create social gathering places and private nurturing spaces. The complex will also include 10 Fairmont-branded residential villas, a beach club, a Tennis Academy and a marina.

DEVELOPMENT

The project is being developed by Corfu Gardens SA, a subsidiary of Austria-based Akirin Holding GmbH. Akirin Holding's activities include commercial, residential and leisure developments in Russia, energy and logistics projects as well as investments in the Baltic region and Central Europe. The company's principal activities are hydrocarbon production and refinement in Western Siberia and Central Russia, property development and management in major cities throughout Russia and agricultural activities in Central Russia. The Corfu project, noted for its beauty and ideal location, is the company's first tourism venture.

'Fairmont's history of hospitality and responsible tourism made it ideal to operate this resort,' said Vladimir Toporkov, Managing Director of Corfu Gardens S.A. 'We are pleased that the Fairmont Corfu Resort & Spa will join a collection of iconic and legendary hotels across the globe.'

Thomas W. Storey, President, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts said, 'The addition of Greece expands our European collection with a Mediterranean resort, a perfect complement to our portfolio. This allows us to provide luxury-seeking travelers with enriching and memorable experiences reflective of this very distinctive island destination.'

PORTFOLIO

Fairmont Corfu Resort & Spa joins a number of recent announcements across the globe, including Fairmont Marakkesh, Morocco; Fairmont Hyderabad, India; Fairmont Roco Ki, Dominican Republic; Fairmont Haitang Bay Resort, Sanya, China; Fairmont Abu Dhabi Creek and

Fairmont Makati, Philippines; and the future Fairmont Kyiv, Ukraine. The Canadian-based company's portfolio includes 56 distinctive hotels, with plans to develop over 25 new properties in the coming years in destinations as diverse as Shanghai, Morocco and Anguilla.

Fairmont is owned by Fairmont Raffles Hotels International, a leading global hotel company with 91 hotels worldwide under the Raffles, Fairmont and Swissotel brands. They include the Fairmont Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten, Hamburg; Fairmont St. Andrews, Scotland; Fairmont Monte Carlo; and London's Savoy, reopening next year following an extensive restoration. The company also manages Fairmont and Raffles branded Residences, Estates and luxury private residence club properties.

MAKING HISTORY

The Fairmont brand was born in 1907 with the opening of the landmark Fairmont San Francisco. As the collection of elegant hotels grew, guests came to associate the Fairmont name with luxury, unrivalled hospitality, and authentically local experience. Fairmont hotels and resorts have hosted the rich and famous,

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PEOPLE IN THE NEWS

kings and queens, presidents and prime ministers, and stars of the stage and screen. Many of Fairmont's iconic properties have been integral in the development of cities, had an impact on the course of history or even altered their communities' social fabric. A pattern of creating memorable moments has resonated through all Fairmont properties, and includes the signing of the United Nations charter was signed at the Fairmont San Francisco, while Tony Bennett first sang 'I Left My Heart in San Francisco' at the hotel's famous nightclub, The Venetian Room. More recently, in 1969, John Lennon and Yoko Ono held their Bed-In for Peace at the Fairmont The Queen Elizabeth in Montreal.

With its Corfu project, Fairmont is again investing in history. The Ipsos Club Med, opened in 1953, was the corporation's first hotel outside France, and one of the first in Greece to open under an international brand name. It pioneered many of the features of the island's modern tourism industry, such as 'Greek Nights' and all-inclusive style accommodation.

SUSTAINABILITY

In 1999, Fairmont merged with Canadian Pacific Hotels, creating a leading luxury hotel company which aims to 'think globally and act locally'. Indeed, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts was founded on an enduring connection to the land and communities where they do business. In 1990, they pioneered the Green Partnership programme, comprising a comprehensive commitment to minimizing the hotels' impact on the planet, which was accompanied by a guidebook on sustainable best practices in the lodging industry. This green philosophy has grown to become a core value of the company.

The Fairmont Green Partnership programme allows management to meet and exceed guest expectations of operational sustainability. It focuses on improvements in waste management, sustainability, and energy and water conservation at the properties, and innovative community outreach programs involving local groups and partnerships. Operational improvements bring environmental benefits such as reduced utilities consumption, recycling and organic waste diversion in the hotel's kitchens and energy-efficient lighting. They also include such activities as redistribution of household goods and food to those in need, purchasing green power and employing sustainable energy technology.

The company also runs joint hotel and community projects - known as Eco-Innovation signature projects - which are designed to offer unique travel experiences that encourage guest interaction and learning. Examples include clean air awareness in California, coral reef protection in Hawaii, and international efforts in the conservation of endangered species, such as North Atlantic right whales, peregrine falcons and sea turtles. The company is also involved in efforts to address deforestation and river conservation, as well as green space and trail development.

WORLD HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP

Fairmont's choice of Corfu for its latest project was influenced by the recent inclusion of the Old Town on the UNESCO's World Heritage List. Since 2006, Fairmont has been working in partnership with the World Heritage Alliance, a joint initiative of the United Nations Foundation and Expedia, Inc., to promote conservation, sustainable tourism, and economic development for communities located in and around World Heritage sites. It aims to preserve world treasures at the same time as enhancing visitors' experiences, by showcasing the destination's heritage and culture and cooperating with the local community to develop smart and sustainable business endeavors.

The Ionian Bank (Banknote Museum), one of the lovely buildings of the Old Town World Heritage Site



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A Novel Way of looking at Corfu

by Angela Papageorgiou & Hilary Paipeti

Editor's Note: A version of this article was published in June 2001 - it has now been updated to include new novels.

Corfu has inspired cookery books, guidebooks, reflections on history ancient and modern, and reminiscences of those who have lived here for a brief while. Less well known are the novels it has inspired, for the most part the work of English or American authors.

Erica James, a regular summer visitor to the island, has set several books partly or mainly in Corfu. In 'A Sense of Belonging', her heroine bids a reluctant farewell to an inconclusive love affair with a local and returns to England to deal with her ailing but stubborn mother and a new love interest. The action of another, 'The Holiday', takes place entirely in Corfu, with a cast of characters drawn from those who own, or would like to own, villas here. Needless to say, romance is never far away. Well-drawn, often recognizable, characters and a well-observed picture of Corfu in summer make this a most pleasant read.

Back in the nineteen-sixties, Mary Stewart wrote a thriller that appealed to everyone who had ever visited the island: 'This Rough Magic'. The Castello, then a hotel, was the inspiration for the large villa that formed the centre of the action, but it was transported to a different location nearer the sea. 'An animated adventure story in which suspense and romance are expertly intermingled,' said the Observer critic at the time, and quite rightly too. The plot, interwoven with strands from Shakespeare's *Tempest*, is a novel which, unlike many others, has stood the test of time, and indeed has inspired later authors.

Prominent among them is Greek/American author Ekaterine Nikas, who in 2001 published 'The Divided Child', a novel very much in the romantic-suspense genre perfected by Stewart. With a plot leaping between the Old Fortress, an unrecognizable location somewhere north of Ipsos, Kassiopi, and Agios Stefanos (Arillas) and Pagi, the book finds room for many other well-known spots, like the Hilton, the Achillion (written in as the Casino), the Corfu Palace and Tripa Taverna. Ekaterine makes deliberate reference to Mary Stewart; her indomitable heroine is called Christine Stewart, and several of her protagonists share names with the earlier author's characters.

The storyline is full of action, keeping its momentum right up to the end. Lots of misunderstandings and revelations mean that the question of who is the hero and who the villain (another trick used frequently by Stewart) becomes clear only in the last few pages. And in true Mary Stewart style, the heroine gets her man.

Like in 'The Divided Child', part of the allure of novels set in Corfu, for those of us who live here or come here on holiday, is trying to identify the actual houses and real people that have discreetly inspired the authors. This can give rise to bewilderment, however. Elizabeth Harris, for example, in her book 'The Sun-Worshippers', (publ. early nineties) has converted both the Reading Society building and the Achillion into private houses. Moreover, Ms. Harris's Corfu appears to be largely populated by gods and satyrs - surely nothing to do with the Corfu we know and love?

In the seventies, Dennis Wheatley made Corfu the setting for one of his thrillers, 'Dangerous Inheritance', and D. Faralla wrote 'Children of Lucifer'. Corfu perhaps unsurprisingly has always been a popular setting for novels of magic, fantasy and the supernatural (J.K. Rowling, take note! Send Harry Potter here on holiday).

Anne Hampson set one of her romantic novels here - 'Gold is the Sunrise', and E. Farnes wrote 'Enchanted Island' (evidently more magic), while N. Fisher produced a thriller, 'Rise at Dawn'.

Between 1975 and 1979, three more novels appeared which featured Corfu - two thrillers, 'Rex Mundi' by George Sims and 'High Hostage' by V. Maxwell. In addition, D. Alexander wrote 'Olivia'.

In the eighties, Corfu as a Muse appeared to languish, and featured in only two books, one a thriller (W. Haggard's 'Heirloom'), and one perhaps a romance - 'Madonna of the Island' by M. Seymour.

>12

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PLACES OFF THE MAP

The Church of Agios Ilias, Korakiana

by Hilary Paipeti

I had only ever seen this romantic hilltop ruin on a painting by Yiannis Metallinos, a resident of nearby Gazzatika. Now, having wandered round in circles, viewing it from a distance from various angles but unable to find a way up the forested knoll, I was finally there. In the end, I had asked olive pickers, and they had directed me to some chevron arrows painted on the road which I had noticed earlier and disregarded.

The building is only partially a ruin, for the church which forms its heart is intact, if wobbly in places. Two narthexes are slowly collapsing, and the campanile is crumbling, but tucked around the back (in fact, under the steps to the church door) is an intact barrel-vaulted cell which a monk may once have inhabited in days long gone.

Once, this may have been an even more ancient site. Agios Ilias is the Greek name for the Prophet Elijah, who ascended to heaven in a fiery chariot. Many hilltop religious sites are dedicated to the Prophet; all of his churches are in high places, so as to be close to the heavens, to the Sun. For, just as Zeus temples became churches of the All-Conquering Christ (Pantokrator) and Apollo temples evolved into ones dedicated to the Archangels of Light (Taxiarchis), the Sun God Helios, who rode a fiery chariot, became the Christian Agios Ilias *. Was the Sun once worshipped here, as was Zeus on the Pantokrator summit?

The ancient inhabitants would certainly have been able to see it, for the knoll, if not lofty, is elevated well above the surrounding forests of olive and oak. An all-round view stretches down to Ipsos and Dassia, and on to Corfu Town, also inland; and the vista is only part-obsured by two of the largest oak trees I have ever seen.



Yiannis Metallinos captured the magic of the scene. Now I have found it for myself - and for our readers. And I shall certainly go there on Agios Ilias name-day, 20 July, when the church will be open.

* Note the similarity between the names Helios, Ilias and the modern Greek word for sun, ήλιος (ilios).

WALK TWO CHURCHES & A VIEW: ANALYPSIS TO AGIOS ILIAS

Starting Point: Analypsis Church, behind Ipsos *

Time: 1 1/2 - 2 hours **Ascent:** 100 metres **Terrain:** Minor road, tracks, field path

Rating: Easy to Moderate **Shade:** Partial

Set off from the square in front of the church by taking the road inland. Soon it divides, and you fork right, uphill on concrete and past two large stone ruins on the left. Further on, the way forks again, and you take the left hand road, downhill and past an old stone well. Crossing a culverted stream, you climb again. After the way flattens out, look on the road surface (now asphalt) for white arrows pointing right. Here leave the road and head up the olive grove on a path (which depending on the time of year may be poorly defined). At the top of the grove, the path becomes clearer and heads steeply uphill. Through another olive grove, keep to the left close to the forest edge and you join a wider path, where you continue straight on uphill. Soon you are on top of the hill and, through a break in the fence, approach the part-ruined church of Agios Ilias.

To continue, head back down the way you came, but keep to the wide path as it switchbacks downhill through forest. Eventually, you meet the road again, where you turn right. Now proceed to where you see some abandoned houses on the left, where the road is bordered by a long stone wall, at the end of which a track goes left (ignore it). About 50 metres on, look on the right for a wide path heading downhill. Take this well-defined path through fields (muddy in winter; you can detour around wet patches). Eventually, you see a track ahead. Make for this, ignoring a path heading left. When you reach the track, turn right and follow it through woodland and on the level. The track then descends briefly and you reach the junction near the old well. Here go left and soon you are back at your starting point at Analypsis Church.

* To get to Analypsis from Ipsos, take the narrow road directly beside the Town Hall on the seafront. To get there from Korakiana, take the road which runs past Luna d'Argento. On this road (before it as you come from Kato Korakiana) a road on the right is signposted to the Church of Saint Ilias. This road, part of which is your walking route, will take you directly to Analypsis, the first settlement you reach.

>10 In the early nineties, Simon Brett, a respected author of crime novels, wrote 'Mrs Pargeter's Package', and for once Corfu was represented without veils of fantasy and hints of the occult. A straightforward, enjoyable murder mystery set in a recognizable location.

Writers of romantic novels have not infrequently used Corfu (and Paxos) as a setting, with varying degrees of success. One that Amazon turned up for me was 'Captain from Corfu', by Muriel Maddox, featuring a Greek cruise boat captain and his American lover. The Internet again revealed that a certain Roberta Gellen has written a book called 'A Delicate Balance' featuring Corfu.

Occasionally, authors get it badly wrong. I remember one shameful novel (I shall not name it), written in the early 80s, which treated the local people and their customs in such a patronising manner that I threw the book across the room! In contrast, local writers are sure to get it right. In 'The Cat of Portovecchio', an enthralling depiction of life in a seaside suburb of Corfu Town, Maria Strani-Potts brings us her own experiences of the mores and customs of the early 1950s. With caustic wit, she spares no-one, from Camilla, an interfering English animal lover who wants to 'save the entire Hellenic animal kingdom', to glamorous Joy, who 'drew long, curvy lines above her dark brown eyes where her eyebrows had been before she plucked them out.' In each chapter, one of the characters cooks, and the recipe becomes part of the motivation or the plot; for example, Father Antony's Savouro is the reason why Mamee, the cat of the title, always follows him - which has repercussions in the very last paragraph of the book.

Non-resident writers must replace experience with research, and one recent novel in which care shines through is Deborah Lawrenson's 'Songs of Blue and Gold'. Set mainly in Corfu, the novel can be enjoyed as a straightforward story; but it can also be read as an allusion to Lawrence Durrell and his works (reflecting Mary Stewart's allusions to Shakespeare, and Ekaterine Nikas' to Mary Stewart!). A multilayered plot (like many of Durrell's) mingles four timeframes (two are purported biographical studies) as an Englishwoman searches for the truth of her mother's life. At the centre is the larger-than-life personality of Lawrence Durrell, Julian Adie in the book. Though Lawrenson explains that Adie is a fictional character, for Durrellians the book is a veritable treasure trove of similar references, including a very funny parody of a magazine article by Durrell called 'Oil for the Saint', and a polymath character with elements of Durrell's friend and mentor Theodore Stephanides. It's a subtle and well crafted novel which deserves close attention, but you won't lose out by treating it simply as a finely written story in which Corfu takes one of the starring roles.

We cannot leave the subject of Corfiot fiction without mentioning one of the island's own writers, Spiros Plaskovitis, some of whose works are available in an English translation.

Corfu has everything a novelist could ask for - a fascinating history, outstandingly beautiful scenery, colourful locals and mysterious foreigners, lawless neighbours, literary references, seafaring adventures, romance galore. It is one thing to the romantic, another to the cynic. Corfu is cultured yet chaotic, endlessly reinvents itself yet remains largely unchanged. Many more plots await!

I love this doctor!

QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

Q: I've heard that cardiovascular exercise can prolong life; is this true?

A: Your heart is only good for so many beats, and that's it... Don't waste them on exercise. Everything wears out eventually. Speeding up your heart will not make you live longer; that's like saying you can extend the life of your car by driving it faster. Want to live longer? Take a nap.

Q: Should I cut down on meat and eat more fruits and vegetables?

A: You must grasp logistical efficiencies. What does a cow eat? Hay and corn. And what are these? Vegetables. So a steak is nothing more than an efficient mechanism of delivering vegetables to your system. Need grain? Eat chicken. Beef is also a good source of field grass (green leafy vegetable). And a pork chop can give you 100% of your recommended daily allowance of vegetable products.

Q: Should I reduce my alcohol intake?

A: No, not at all. Wine is made from fruit. Brandy is distilled wine, that means they take the water out of the fruity bit, so you get even more of the goodness that way. And beer is made out of grain. Bottoms up!

Q: How can I calculate my body/fat ratio?

A: Well, if you have a body and you have fat, your ratio is one to one. If you have two bodies, your ratio is two to one, etc.

Q: What are some of the advantages of participating in a regular exercise programme?

A: Can't think of a single one, sorry. My philosophy is: No Pain...Good!

Q: Aren't fried foods bad for you?

A: You're not listening... Foods are fried these days in vegetable oil. In fact, they're permeated in it. How could getting more vegetables be bad for you?

Q: Will sit-ups help prevent me from getting a little soft around the middle?

A: Definitely not! When you exercise a muscle, it gets bigger. You should only be doing sit-ups if you want a bigger stomach.

Q: Is chocolate bad for me?

A: Are you crazy? HELLO cocoa beans! Another vegetable. It's the best feel-good food around!

Q: Is swimming good for your figure?

A: If swimming is good for your figure, explain whales to me.

Q: Is getting in shape important for my lifestyle?

A: Hey! 'Round' is a shape!!!

Well, I hope this has cleared up any misconceptions you may have had about food and diets. So enjoy the New Year and all it brings - without guilt!

Sent in by Lionel Mann

We do it yesterday

✍️ *Lionel Mann*

Prominent amongst the posters that adorned the wall of my classroom was one reading:

WE DO IT YESTERDAY;
TODAY IS TOO LATE.

From the end of 1945 to 1948 I was stationed with the British Army of the Rhine in Germany. In the space of rather over two years I saw utter devastation replaced by bright new villages, towns, cities. The whole German community, men, women and children, united to slave at rebuilding their shattered homeland. That was before the introduction of Marshall Aid, which far from being a humanitarian gesture was merely a product of the USA's paranoid attempt to check the spread of Communism.

Then in 1948 I returned to a 'victorious' Britain with most of its bombed sites still festering and stinking, its economy in tatters, the glorious social unity of wartime purpose in shreds through the 'divide and rule' philosophy of the brainless nonentities of a government spreading greed and dissension, political ideology overriding the desperate need of recovery - a thoroughly disgusting contrast to the vibrant drive that I had witnessed amongst the 'defeated'.

Years later during my time in New Zealand, probably the most loyal of our former colonies, I saw the disastrous decline in Britain's trade with that country. A friend of mine owned a chain of automobile retail outlets. He had the British Motor Corporation franchise, but stopped importing British cars because they were not only over-priced but mechanically unreliable. Shoddy workmanship spelled the doom of that industry as with so many others. Instead, Australian and Japanese brands captured the markets.

On my very first day there I was introduced to their lack of faith in British products. With six hours to spare before my flight to Wellington, where I was going to be Music Director of St. Mark's Church, I took a taxi into Auckland city. The Head Office and main factory of the organ builders were there and I wanted to discuss the specification of the large three-manual and pedal pipe-organ that was going to be installed in St. Mark's, a beautiful new building replacing the former wooden structure.

"You're getting all these parts from England?" I asked.

The manager shook his head. "Oh, no. We use only the best. Pipework will come from Germany, electrical components from Holland."

Personally, I suffered as a result of British indolence and dilatoriness. Working with the NZ Department of Education, I was asked to recommend a supplier for one-hundred-and-fifty pianofortes for use in schools. In misplaced patriotism, I named a British firm. The instruments were ordered in February for delivery within twelve months, February being the commencement of the school year. Time passed and nothing arrived. Anxious queries elicited excuses of 'shortage of parts' and 'labour troubles'. My credibility slumped.

I was rescued by a representative of Kawai pianos, a Japanese firm, for whom I had given demonstration concerts on their

instruments. He visited my office. "You are in difficulties?"

I assented and sent him along to the Requisitions Department. Within a month one-hundred-and-fifty Kawai pianos were being unloaded at Auckland. They were first-rate instruments, each cheaper than the six shoddy inferior ones shipped from the UK before the order had been cancelled. A large music firm for whom I acted as adviser imported their instruments from Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, South Africa, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Greece (bouzoukis!), Russia, Holland and Spain, but never from Britain.

It is no surprise to me that Britain has never recovered its former leading place amongst the industrialised nations, and continues to slide, when I have seen over past decades the damage inflicted by misrule, mismanagement, misinformation and irresponsibility amounting to treachery. Nobody who suffered unemployment in the latter half of the twentieth century has anyone but himself and his foolish 'leaders', on shop-floor, in board-room and at Westminster, to blame. There was no attempt to promote efficiency or even simple competence. There were even times when jobs went unfilled because of the lack of skilled dedicated reliable British personnel. Workers were recruited from abroad to fill vacancies.

One evening in the mid-eighties, I mentioned to the bank manager father of one of my pupils my concern over the demise of genuine British industry. He replied that Britain now relies upon 'service industries' for its trade. However, the great majority of 'service industries' do not create wealth; they merely push wealth around while it loses its value.

Throughout my entire teaching career I tried to instill into my pupils, from the very youngest, a sense of urgency and responsibility.

ABANDON SLOTH ALL YE WHO ENTER HERE
Mannte Alighieri

read a sign over my form-room door. It was not pleasant, but nevertheless necessary, to counsel those going on to Grammar Schools at eleven (in seventeen years every pupil but one!): "Get what qualifications you can in Britain and then go into Europe, to countries where learning and skill are encouraged, valued and rewarded, to top them up. Try Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia or Russia. But steer well clear of the USA; that can be a real can of worms."

Walking through a nearby town one day, I was accosted by a teacher in the local Grammar School. "We can always recognize your former pupils; they are halfway through the first exercise before the others have even opened their books."

Inevitably some later fell prey to the all-pervading idleness but, having recently joined an organization that enables me to make contact with ex-pupils, I have been tremendously gratified to find how many have taken my advice and now hold top positions in commerce, industry, administration or academia around Europe and further afield. They have done it yesterday! Life is far too short, and therefore valuable, for us to throw away even a minute in laziness, slipshod activity or ill-directed effort.

Corfu in 1817

From 'Narrative of an Excursion from Corfu to Smyrna' by Thomas Robert Jolliffe
Published by Black, Young and Young; London, 1827

Corfu, March 29, 1817.

We arrived here about a week since, having proceeded from Naples direct to Bari, intending to pursue a route from thence along the coast, and to embark at Otranto; but, as the passage across the Adriatic is much more uncertain from that point than from Mola, - a small town about fifteen miles below Bari, - we acted on the suggestion of the Commandant of the latter place, and hired a light vessel for seventy-five ducats, which, on the third morning, brought us within the beautiful harbour of this town.

The quarantine regulations prevented our debarking our effects under four days, though we were allowed to quit the boat the next evening, and walk on an esplanade, which stretches from Lazaretto about a hundred yards into the bay. The port is thronged with small craft from the neighbouring coast and islands, but both the vessels and their navigators look in a most slovenly condition. Our sailors are here termed *i dei del mare*, and their appearance, as opposed to the Greeks and Italians, seems almost to justify the phrase. It is, indeed, scarcely possible to conceive a greater contrast than that presented by the active crew of a British man-of-war's barge, and the yawning, indolent mariners who paddle about in the waters of Corfu.

The city appears for the most part in a decayed state; the streets are dark and narrow, and in some instances rendered particularly gloomy by heavy and disproportioned piazzas. There is not a single building, either private or public, which merits any particular description; - not even the residence of the Governor, though designated *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, the Palace; - all that can be said for it is, that it is an extensive pile, and capable of being strongly fortified [This was written before the construction of the Palace of Saint Michael and Saint George as the Governor's Residence - Ed.]. Sir T. Maitland [Sir Thomas Maitland - Ed.], the present 'Lord High Commissioner,' has won the attachment of the stranger and the native, by his dignified and cordial hospitality.

Of the seven islands which constitute the Ionian Republic, - (Paxos, St Maura, Corfu, Ithaca, Cephalonia, Zante, Cerigo) - Corfu, though less than Cephalonia, is incomparably the most important. The identification of their interests with those of Great Britain is very justly regarded by the inhabitants as an advancement in the political scale, and they attend with great anxiety the development of a constitution, which has long engaged the consideration of the Governor. Its outlines are said to be as follow:- There is to be a legislative assembly chosen by the electoral body, and a senate chosen by the legislative assembly - the law officers are to receive their appointment from the senate. The elections are to be made for five years; the Lord Commissioner is to have the power of convoking or proroguing the parliament, but not of dissolving it, except by virtue of an order from the government of England. Each island is to have a local government - the dominant religion is to be the Greek

church - the language Greek. A general print office will be established at Corfu, under the direction of the senate, and the superintendence of the Secretary-General; and no other printing establishment is to be allowed in any of the islands, without the express permission of the senate, and the approbation of the Lord Commissioner.

The annexation of these islands to the British colonial possessions naturally adds to the interest which it is scarcely possible not to feel, on visiting any one of them; your friend, Captain E-, who belongs to the Governor's staff, has accompanied me to those parts of the interior of this, with which a residence of some months here has familiarised him. The figure of Corfu has some resemblance to a bow, the extremities of the chord pointing to the east and west. Its length was anciently considered to be nearly one hundred miles; the minuter accuracy of modern surveys has, I believe, reduced it to something less than sixty; and the greater breadth does not exceed twenty-four. The most ancient name of this island is Phaeacia; but it has been successively termed Drepane, Scheria, and Corcyra; which last designation it received from the daughter of Aesopus, who was buried here. Besides the magic fictions of Homer, there are many historical recollections, which hastily pass in review, as the eye ranges amidst the varieties of this enchanting scenery. The emotions so minutely detailed by Thucydides awaken only melancholy reflections, and the imagination hurries to the plains of Olympia, where the citizens of Corcyra were frequently rewarded with the wreath of victory. It was Corcyra that Alexander selected for his residence, on his temporary retreat from the court of Philip - it was here also that the interview took place between Cicero and Cato, after the death-blow to their hopes at Pharsalia - and here were solemnized those ill-fated nuptials between Antony and Octavia, which were destined to convert the torch of Hymen into a brand of discord, that would shake the civilized globe.

The governor's country-house commands an extensive view of the approach to the town and the opposite shore of Albania; - the inland scenery presents a landscape which requires the descriptive talents of a pencil rather than a pen - but to do justice to its multiplied beauties is a task which might defy the combined powers of both.

Another interesting point is a projection which there are two pieces of ordnance, in advancing to which a lake of fresh water appears stretched out in the distance to the right. Further down, through a romantic defile, is the "one-gun battery," from whence, at a slight distance, is seen an insular rock, which, from some imagined resemblance to a vessel, is called Ulysses' ship [View of Mouse Island from Kanoni - Ed.]. Here the fancy may easily adjust the scene of Nausicaa's interview with the Prince of Ithaca. Nothing surely, in the annals of chivalrous gallantry and refinement, can exceed the elegance of the address, with which Ulysses presents himself to the daughter of Alcinous [...] The

melody of the beautiful passage is successfully preserved in the graceful translation by Pope:

'If from the skies a goddess, or if earth,
Imperial virgin, boast thy beauteous birth,
To thee I bend! - if in that bright disguise
Thou visit earth, a daughter of the skies,
Hail, Dian, hail! - the huntress of the groves
So shine majestic, and so stately moves,
So breathes an air divine! - But, if thy race
Be mortal, and this earth thy native place,
Blest is the father from whose loins you sprung,
Blest is the mother at whose breast you hung,
Blest are the brethren who thy blood divide,
To such a miracle of charms allied:
Joyful they see applauding prizes gaze,
when stately in the dance you swim th'harmonious maze.
But blest o'er all, the youth with heavenly charms,
Who clasps the bright perfection in his arms!'

There is hardly any spot in this part of the island, on which the eye may not dwell with unmixed gratification; the only defect is a want of variety in the foliage, the olive being almost the sole plant that vegetates in any luxuriance. But perhaps some little abatement to the pleasure of the eye may be found in the dissonant croakings with which the ear, at this season, is incessantly afflicted from the marshes and stagnant pools -

"While hoarsest frogs their amorous descant sound."

It would be impossible to convey, by any assemblage of letter, a description of the very peculiar noise produced by this continuous gabble. The jargon in Aristophanes, Βρεκεκεκέξ, κούξ, κούξ, does not, by any mode of pronunciation, either ancient or modern, that I have heard, present more than a faint resemblance to it [...]

A fantastical ceremony took place yesterday in honour of the patron saint, Spiridion, whose relics are said to have been discovered many years after his interment, uninjured by any of those ravages which "flesh is heir to."

Bell-ropes in this country there are none; but the music of the steeples is produced by striking the metal with an iron bar; an office performed by grave personages, whose garb and action give them a resemblance to the grotesque figures that decorate the dial of St. Dunstan's in Fleet-street. At the dawn of day every belfry was in full activity, and an universal clattering continued till about eleven, when the procession began to pass through the most public places in the city. The body of the saint was borne in a palaquin, and displayed with the most impartial ostentation both to the profane and initiated; and as the venerable mummy (sic) moved along, the crowds which came out to pay it homage went through their various Catholic evolutions with infinite effect and precision.

Absurd as all this may appear in England, it is considered of such importance here to humour the popular prejudices, that the English troops were required to assist in the solemnity, and actually bore very conspicuous parts in the exhibition [A few years later, British troops and brass bands were forbidden to take part in the procession, a decision which resulted in the locals' taking the initiative to form the island's first band, the Old Philharmonic - Ed.].

Under so imperfect a system as marked the successive tyrannies of the Turkish, Venetian and French dominions, where the only passion addressed was that of fear, it is scarcely to be wondered that vices the most abject and degrading should have become generally prevalent: it is only from the union of conciliation and firmness which characterises the existing government, that a gradual amelioration may rationally be expected in the disposition and manners of the people. Society will thus eventually become remodelled: the influence of English habits will necessarily extend itself to all the various classes in the community; which the powerful genius of the protecting state, infusing new spirit into the heart of the people, will cause its life-blood to circulate with health and vigour "through every artery of the constitution." [Patronising colonial attitudes of the time: Turks, Venetians and French imposed 'tyrannies', whilst of course British rule was a light-handed 'protectorate'. - Ed.]

The packet for England will be made up tomorrow. We hope to embark for Prevesa the day following.

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RECIPES

Sprouts for Ever!

I think it was Patrick Leigh Fermor who defined the Mediterranean as the place where the Brussels sprout no longer appears on the table. Some people view its role in the Christmas meal as a typically British masochistic penance for the rest of the seasonal goodies. Despite these opinions - and as long as they're not boiled to death, it's a shame we only eat Brussels Sprouts once a year! Sprouts should be for ever, not just for Christmas! Especially as they're packed with Vitamin C. Here are a few less usual recipes.

Glazed Baby Carrots and Sprouts

1 kilo baby carrots, 1 kilo prepared or frozen Brussels sprouts, 1 1/2 cups chicken broth, 6 tablespoons butter, 1/3 cup packed brown sugar, 1 tablespoon ground black pepper

Blanch the carrots in a large pot of boiling salted water until crisp-tender, about 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer them to a bowl of ice water. Return the water to boil. Add the sprouts and blanch for about 5 minutes. Transfer to another bowl of ice water. Drain the vegetables, and refrigerate if making ahead.

Bring the stock, butter and brown sugar to a boil in a heavy large skillet. Stir until the sugar dissolves. Boil until reduced by half, about 7 minutes (you can prepare to this point 6 hours ahead; return to boil before continuing). Add the carrots. Cook until almost tender and the sauce begins to coat, shaking the pan occasionally, about 6 minutes. Add the Brussels sprouts and pepper. Cook until heated through, stirring occasionally, for about 4 minutes.

Brussels Sprouts and Mushrooms

2 cups halved Brussels sprouts, 3 bacon strips in 1 cm pieces, 1/2 cup finely chopped onion, 1/2 cup sliced fresh mushrooms, 1/4 cup chicken broth, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1/8 teaspoon pepper

Place the sprouts in a saucepan, cover with water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 6-8 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain and keep warm.

In a skillet, cook bacon over medium heat until crisp. Remove to paper towels. Sauté onion and mushrooms in the bacon drippings for 3-5 minutes or until tender.

Add the broth, season and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, for 3-4 minutes or until broth is reduced by half. Stir in the Brussels sprouts and bacon.

Brussels Sprouts with Chestnuts and Orange

*3 cups Brussels sprouts, 1 cup ready chestnuts *, 1 large peeled and segmented orange, 1/2 cup chicken broth, 1 tablespoon olive oil, salt and pepper to taste*

Preheat the oven to 175°C.

Place the sprouts in a steamer over 2 inches of boiling water. Steam, covered, for about 10 minutes or until crisp-tender.

Remove them from the pot and allow to cool. Cut each sprout in

half and place in a casserole dish. Layer the chestnuts on top of the sprouts. Place the oranges on top of the chestnuts. Pour on the broth. Drizzle the casserole with oil. Grind in pepper and salt. Bake for 15 minutes or until oranges are soft.

* Cooked and vacuum-packed chestnuts are available at AB in Kontokali. Just open the bag and use.

Brussels Sprouts in Creamy Mustard Sauce

2 tablespoons cornflour, 1/4 cup water, 1 teacup chicken broth, 500 gr Brussels sprouts, 2 teaspoons prepared Dijon-style mustard, 2 teaspoons lemon juice

Dissolve the cornflour in the water and set aside.

Place the sprouts in a baking dish and pour on the chicken broth. Bake in a pre-heated hot oven for 20 minutes. Remove the sprouts. Stir the mustard, lemon juice and cornflour mixture into the liquid in the baking dish. Return the sprouts to the dish and bake for about 10 minutes until the sauce is really creamy and the sprouts almost glazed.

Brussels Sprouts

with Lemon Seasoning and Almonds

500 gr halved Brussels sprouts, 2 tablespoons melted butter, 2 tablespoons lemon juice, 2 teaspoons grated lemon peel, 1/4 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon black pepper, 1/4 cup sliced toasted almonds

Bring a saucepan of water to the boil and throw in the sprouts. Cover and simmer for 6-8 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain well. Stir in the butter, lemon juice, lemon peel, and salt and pepper. Sprinkle with the almonds and serve.

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Savoury Brussels Sprouts

500 gr Brussels sprouts, 1 tin condensed cream of chicken soup, 3 tablespoons milk, 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme, 1/4 cup sliced toasted almonds

Cook the sprouts in boiling water for 6-8 minutes until crisp-tender, and drain. Place the soup, milk and thyme in the pan and heat through. Return the sprouts to the pan and stir to coat. Transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle with the almonds.

Sesame Sprouts

500 gr halved Brussels sprouts, 2 cups water, 1 chicken stock cube, 2 teaspoons sugar, 2 teaspoons cornflour, 8 teaspoons soy sauce, 3-4 finely chopped garlic cloves, 2 teaspoons toasted sesame seeds

In a large saucepan, cook the brussels sprouts in 1 1/2 cups of water and the stock cube for 6-8 minutes or until crisp-tender. Drain and keep warm. In the same pan, combine the sugar, cornstarch, soy sauce, garlic with the remaining water until blended. Bring to a boil over medium heat; cook and stir for 1 minute or until thickened. Add the sprouts and toss to coat. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.

Sprouts with Bacon and Chestnuts

375 gr Brussels sprouts, 25 gr butter, 4 rashers smoked chopped streaky bacon, 200 gr chestnuts, salt and freshly ground black pepper

Place the sprouts in a large pan of boiling water and cook for 6-8 minutes until crisp-tender. Melt the butter in a large frying pan and add the bacon. Fry until crispy. Add the chestnuts and drained sprouts and cook for a further minute, mixing well. Season to taste.

Sauteed Sprouts in Wine

750 gr Brussels sprouts, 50 gr butter, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, 1 tablespoon medium-dry white wine, 1 tablespoon lemon juice

Cut each sprout in half lengthwise, and then thinly slice them crosswise. In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Saute the sprouts until they begin to turn golden, then add the salt, pepper and wine and cook for about 4 minutes more, or until barely limp (the wine will change the cooking method from sauteing to steaming). Stir in the lemon juice, taste for seasoning, and serve immediately.

Four Noble Truths

Maureen McNamara

- Buddha taught the four noble truths which are the basis of all his teachings. These are:
- true sufferings, true origins, true cessations and true paths. Our environment, pleasures and bodies are seen by higher beings as the nature of suffering, Buddha said 'you should know sufferings, you should abandon origins, you should attain cessations, you should meditate on paths.
- Once we realize true sufferings we can resolve to eliminate them by abandoning their main cause - true origins, by attaining true cessations, by meditating on true paths.
- True sufferings can be divided into internal and external. Internal sufferings are within the body and mind continuum of all beings of this world and external sufferings are our many pleasures and environments; although we view most of these as enjoyable, they are ultimately the nature of suffering as they become painful experiences when they cease. Our uncontrolled rebirth in this world, our impure bodies and minds, pain and pleasure, are all true sufferings. At a basic level we can think about the sufferings caused by anger. It destroys our outer and inner peace and is the basic cause of all wars and conflicts both on a worldly scale and a personal one - our relationships, reputation and harmony. Most of our differences with family and friends are a result of anger. It destroys our virtuous potentialities, the positive karma produced by previous virtuous actions and causes us to commit heavy negative actions.
- Realizing how anger causes us to suffer we can resolve to abandon it by practising patience and thus attain a permanent cessation of this negative emotion. Therefore the sufferings caused by anger are true sufferings, anger itself is a true origin, our patience is a true path and the permanent cessation of anger is a true cessation. We can apply this reasoning to all other sufferings. All our delusions are true origins. We have to realize the existence of suffering - not to avoid or deny it but confront it as a means to overcome it. Birth, aging, sickness and death, sadness, jealousy, worry, anxiety, fear and despair all cause us pain, as also does being parted from loved ones and being with people we hate, desirous attachment and danger to our bodies. Through ignorance, we cannot see the truth and become caught up in in all these negative states of mind. Understanding these truths brings an end to all our grief and sorrow and gives rise to peace and joy.
- The path which leads to this happiness is the middle way. Buddha advised us to avoid the two extremes - not to plunge ourselves into sensual pleasure nor to practice austerities, for both lead to failure. The middle way can therefore lead us to understanding, liberation and peace.
- These teachings may appear pessimistic, stressing only suffering, pain and unhappiness which are inherent in us, but it is quite the opposite. They show us realistically what is unsatisfactory and how to overcome it.

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LETTERS

WHERE TO PUT THE RUBBISH?

Was the connection between pages 5, 10 and 20 in your December edition entirely fortuitous? On page 5 we had an account of the residents of Lefkimmi protesting violently against the establishment of a rubbish dump in their vicinity, while on page 20 we read a letter protesting against the proliferation of refuse in some areas of the island.

Do not all these protesters realize the great extent of the difficulty? It is about the greatest concern that plagues the authorities. Corfu is a comparatively small island and, though not yet densely populated, has to dispose of the very great amount of refuse produced these days by the 'consumer society'. Moreover, not only the summer visitors but also every one of us who has settled here exacerbates the problem - where to put the mountains of rubbish that we generate. It ill befits any of us to complain.

Even the animals mentioned on page 10 add to the problem. Along with many others I will never turn away an abandoned cat and as a result have collected quite a 'family' that consumes at least thirty cans of cat-food weekly. How many cans of cat-food are used weekly around the island? A veritable mountain, yet that in itself is but a minute part of the weekly deluge of garbage. Yes, tins are recyclable, but recycling is an expensive business and much of the revenue raised locally through tourism is purloined by the mainland.

It is very common these days for persons to expect 'them' to solve problems that those persons have caused. The complaints by Mr. Whyles (November) and Mrs. Robertson are fully understandable, but I wonder if they appreciate their responsibility in this matter. Certainly they both commendably dispose of litter in their area, but can they suggest a more complete solution to the problem? Have they a suggestion for the site of a rubbish tip in their locality?

The authorities most definitely recognize the gravity of the situation and are making a praiseworthy attempt to deal with it. Note our large number of blue-flag beaches. The municipality in which I live has effected a very considerable improvement over the last decade. Our rubbish bins, steam-cleaned regularly, are emptied daily; every month the disposal of larger waste is arranged; operatives regularly clear streets and public places as well as before and after events; hedges and verges are trimmed when necessary; unsightly casual 'tips' have been cleared; recycling has been introduced. Visitors have commented very favourably.

Last summer the daily collection of our rubbish was twice suspended for a day or two because of a dispute over a tip, but that was quickly resolved - without riot police being needed! However, it served to underline the chief difficulty facing the authorities - where to put the waste. Why not invite concerned persons to send constructive suggestions to these columns?

Dr. Lionel Mann
Agios Ioannis

ACTION, BUT NO 'ACTION GROUP', PLEASE

I understand totally the frustration expressed by Val Robertson last month about the rubbish problem on the island. I know how you feel when you spend ages clearing the rubbish, only to find it back again within a few days.

I think it is great that, like us, others also spend their time picking up litter. But I have to disagree with the idea of an action group as I do not think this would be appreciated by any officials, and it is also not our place to interfere.

We clear rubbish all the time on a beach near us. To start with we thought it was caused by the people visiting but in general most comes in from the sea. Either from boats or - dare I say it - Italy.

Last year we counted about 90 large black bags and this year fortunately during the summer they council employed someone to collect the rubbish. They are hoping to have the area designated as a Blue Flag beach. But now in the winter no one comes and we are guessing there are well over 80 bags again.

Where we lived before people used to dump lots of rubbish in a certain area and a local Greek man painted on a piece of wood the words 'No Rubbish' in Greek and English, nailed it to a stake and stuck it in the ground. I would suggest this is what you do in the areas that most of the rubbish is left. People in general will pay attention to that.

Also it may be worth asking at the Town Hall if it is possible to have bins put there or near there as lack of them may be the problem. Keep up what you are doing if you can as I am sure there are also many other people doing the same thing - which in the end will add up to a lot of rubbish clearing.

Marina
By email

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10 Key Things to Look For in a Good Web Designer

When you are investing in a new or newly refurbished website you need to find a company to get that website up and running. This means more than simple design. You also need someone who can help you conceive and write copy; plan functional site structure; get a domain registered; upload files; set up email accounts; and deal with other technical details. Below are ten things to look for when choosing such a company.

EXPERIENCE You will need someone with all the techniques, tools and tricks that will help you prepare your web site and accomplish your online goals. Ask all prospects for a portfolio and find out how many years of experience each one has.

CUSTOMER SERVICE As important as experience is a mindset and attitude of making customer service a priority. If a designer/developer is too busy to answer e-mails or phone calls, will they be able to keep the production schedule? Ask for references, and make a point of actually calling them. Ask the prospect's previous clients if the web developer was responsive, on time and effective.

ORIGINAL COPY AND DESIGN Creating professional and 100% original web graphics separates the men from the boys every time. Anyone can do some quick copy writing and slap it on a page with some pictures and hyperlinks. On the other hand, a talented and veteran designer will demonstrate knowledge of page layout, have a way with colour and know how to place elements on a page for best appearance and web site performance.

CREATIVITY You need to decide right away (before you even start talking to designers) just how much the designer you find will be involved in the conceptual process. Your designer may need to help you with some of the "big picture" questions, such as marketing, web copy writing (for search engines) and how to generate traffic. You want someone creative, but who can also work with your ideas to bring them to fruition.

MARKETING EXPERIENCE The easiest way to find out if your prospective web designers are good at marketing web sites is to view their website and their portfolio. You'll want to ensure that you can find what you're looking for on their site quickly and easily and that you can do the same on some of the sites in their portfolio.

COST For a full picture of all the costs involved in the project, ask for all the costs to be broken out individually - domain name and hosting, graphic design work, marketing fees and web development matters. You may need to place a deposit if the job is large enough, and you should have all payment terms worked out before work starts. Get every detail in writing, including deadlines and how many revisions are included.

JOB TIMELINE After you ask the developers how long the process will take, make a point of asking references if their project was, in fact, completed on time.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS Don't hire anyone who insists on speaking to you in "computer-ese" or won't explain unknown terminology. You have to communicate with this person about things that are important to your business, so you need to be clear at all times.

FULL SERVICE There may be one or two things that your designer/developer cannot do and will have to buy in from a third-party, but for the most part you should be able to find a reasonably-priced professional who can handle just about everything.

AVAILABILITY Are these prospects full-time web professionals? Or are they moonlighting from some other job, even a completely unrelated one?

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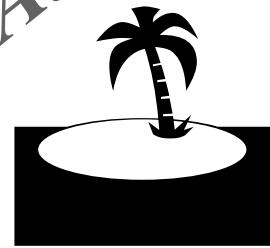
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