

To benefit the Village Dans l'intérêt du Village

August 2010

2010 - the holiday at home year

President's word / Le mot de la Présidente

This has been the most unusual of all the 20 summers that we have enjoyably spent in Marseillan.

Until the end of school the whole area was quiet... restaurants were barely ticking over. There just were no visitors.

Few from France, and almost none from northern Europe. Even the long-haul folk from Canada and Australia were noticable by their absence.

Then at the end of June it changed!

Mike swears that the French influx in just seven days was enough to lower the Languedoc by a couple of centimetres.

Probably he exaggerates (!) but his sentiment is accurate. We have never experienced such a skewed holiday population.

July and August must have been 95% French with just the odd foreign vehicle.

Two examples:

- Going to Marseillan Plage one evening we passed a continuous line of vehicles coming up to the village. The line was 4.2km long and there was just one foreign car in it.
- Market day parking by the theatre on August 3: 300 plus cars, three non French!

Obviously we have suffered in terms of overall numbers. Our tours are still very popular, but we have been taking groups of 3 or 4 instead of 8 to 10.

But it is noticeable how many return with a friend saying "She must do the walk, and I'll go again".

And the good news is that the joint is jumping. Lots of people are having a good time.

So the unusual season continues. We wonder if the snow geese will fly south once the kids are back at school.

We hope so.

Cet article sera très court! Je vous prie de bien vouloir m'en excuser. Notre correspondante a été très occupée, accueillant de son coté beaucoup d'estivants.

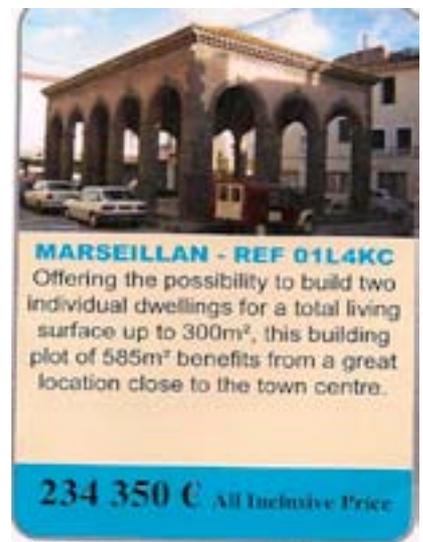
En bref, cette saison estivale a été dominée par les visiteurs Français, le tourisme étranger s'étant fait rare. De notre coté, nous avons été très sollicités au travers du <Visitors' Centre>, pour les visites accompagnées du vieux village et du Port.

Nous avons noté une diminution dans le nombre des personnes formant les groupes - seulement trois à quatre personnes, alors que les autres années nous notions huit à douze!

Nous espérons vivement revenir à la normalité dès la rentrée.

Patricia.

English Consternation!



We were inundated within minutes of this ad appearing in an Estate Agent's brochure targeted upon the British.

How can the mayor possibly allow such desecration? Surely this cannot be allowed? Has the village gone mad?

Relax!

The agent used the picture to indicate a site in our commune, not in the village. An odd thing to do, granted, especially when the actual building site is well out of the village on the road to Florensac.



New Tourist Information Point
Open through July & August
in the little garden on the corner of
ave. la marine

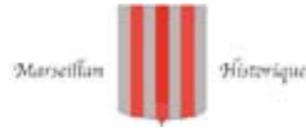


Oddments Sale
Loads of bargains of items donated to M.H.
Unfortunately not too successful,
French ladies drive very hard bargains!

Stamp price increases From July 1

Under 20g	
Priority	58 from 56
Second class	53 from 51
Within the EU	75 from 70
World	87 from 85

Still best to enclose a card
in an envelope.



The Languedoc is changing...



1990: Vineyards all the way.

The Languedoc is undergoing staggering changes. Only 10 years ago one left Montpellier airport and one was in vineyards.

It was vines all the way to Narbonne and up into the foothills of the Masif Centrale. Today there is State and EU encouragement to abandon vineyards. So many vines are being replaced with corn, olives are making a come back and sunflowers are growing in profusion on the higher ground.

The vendange is now a matter for the combine harvester as well as the traditional grape picking.!

That is unless the site has residential value.

Housing estates are springing up on the outskirts of most villages. Unfortunately they are of functional boxes in the main.



2010: Corn



Have some sympathy for English Teachers

By Margaret Shephard & Clive Collins

English is a wonderful language to teach but it can be difficult to explain some of its idiosyncrasies to students.

Yes, sweetmeats are candies but sweetbreads are meat.

No, there isn't any egg in eggplant, ham in a hamburger or apple or pine in a pineapple.

One goose, two geese. So one moose, two meese?

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square and a guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

Why is it that writers write but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce and hammers don't ham? If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth, beeth?

Why can you can make amends but not make one amend?

If you have a bunch of odds and ends and get rid of all but one of them, what do you call it?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?

If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat? Why can we recite at a play and play at a recital? Ship by lorry or train and send cargo by ship?

Have noses that run and feet that smell? How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

I must find ways of explaining why you fill in a form by filling it out and why an alarm goes off by going on.

English was developed by people and it reflects the creativity of the human race, which, of course, is not a race at all. That is why when the stars are out they are visible but when the lights are out they are invisible.

I give up! Unless readers can think of suitable explanations??!

With thanks to the Languedoc Sun magazine



THERE are some very interesting properties in the old village.

If you would like to help Patricia with some research on your or other property please make contact in October.

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Why Marianne ?

Some believe that the name came from the name of the Jesuit Juan de Mariana, the 16th century Monarchomach, a theoretician of tyrannicide. Others think it was the image of the wife of the politician Jean Reubell: according to an old 1797 story, Barras, one of the members of the Directoire, during an evening spent at Reubell's, asked his hostess for her name—"Marie-Anne," she replied—"Perfect," Barras exclaimed, "It is a short and simple name, which befits the Republic just as much as it does yourself, Madame."

A recent discovery establishes that the first written mention of the name of Marianne to designate the Republic appeared in October 1792 in Puylaurens in the Tarn département near Toulouse. At that time people used to sing a song in the Provençal dialect of Occitan by the poet Guillaume Lavabre: "La gariou de Marianno" (French: "La guérison de Marianne"; "Marianne's recovery"). At the time Marie-Anne was a very popular first name; according to Agulhon, it "was chosen to designate a régime that also saw itself as popular."

The account made of their exploits by the Revolutionaries often contained a reference to a certain Marianne wearing a Phrygian cap. This pretty girl of legend inspired the sans-culottes, and looked after those wounded in the many battles across the country.



The name of Marianne also appears to be connected with several Republican secret societies. During the Second Empire, one of them, whose members has sworn to overthrow the régime, had taken her name.

Finally, at the time of the French Revolution, as the most common of people were fighting for their rights, it seemed fitting to name the Republic after the most common of French women's names.

Marseillan's Marianne is the oldest in France. She was funded by public subscription, created by the sculpter Taillefer and inaugurated on 1st November, 1878.

She is listed as a National treasure.

Patricia's own space



It's late, darling...
Time you should be stopping...
OK.

Could you just sweep the patio first... ?

HE: Your birthday is coming up any idea of what you'd like?

SHE: I want a divorce.

HE: I wasn't planning to spend that much.

Lido update

The Lido scheme is looking more bizarre as each stage is reached. The picture shows what used to be the road from Marseillan Plage to Sète, and is now dead-ended with a roundabout but also with a link to the new inland road.



To make matters worse the road is progressively reduced in width from three lanes to just one. (To add insult to injury a new double width cycle track has replaced one lane of the road.)

The other day Mike was up at the roundabout wanting to turn into the slip road, but the bus from Sète was wanting to enter the roundabout. Traffic was backed up. Gridlock! Where is the logic?

To make things even more farcical the old coast road now has a no entry sign, even though it is dead-ended. (Confused ?)

But the camper vans go up there, of course. How else can they get to the beach?

The new road is now (at last) open all the way from Sète. A long, boring, speed restricted and single track stretch of tarmac.

Car parks are on what were the dunes. To access it is necessary to drive a km from Sète, turn at a roundabout and enter the park. (Or, from MP enter the park but have a km drive when exiting. Clear?)

Finally, one of the car parks is about 2km long, but just wide enough for single parking in echelon.

There are plenty of walkways up to the beach, but it is quite a hike - especially with all of a family's beach necessities.

Finally (until next time) don't break down. There is no emergency vehicle access.

REMINDER
Email is now sfr, not Orange

Major changes are forecast, and actions are well in hand to cope with them

Population growth

National surveys show that there is a marked shift in the population, with people from northern Europe moving south. INSEE, the national statistical agency forecasts over 9 million new French residents by 2050, with most heading south and west. Languedoc-Roussillon's population is expected to grow by over a third. This equates to around 100,000 new residents each year.

Tourism

Some 15 million short-time visitors arrive in LR each year. They account for 103 million nights and a spend of nearly 7 billion euros. Traditionally many of these nights were spent in open air sites, but there has been in recent years an increase in the numbers seeking indoor accommodation.

Consequently the tourism industry is of crucial importance. George Frêche, LR's President, has made it very clear 'our absolute priority is tourism'.

Transport

Plans are far advanced for a high speed line from Montpellier to Perpignan and later to Barcelona.

The autoroute A75 has now linked with the A9 at Béziers. Thus there is a tariff free route down the centre of France that provides direct access to the region. The spur to Montpellier is behind schedule and no firm date has been quoted for completion.

Béziers Cap d'Agde airport is providing direct access from, in particular, the south west of the UK.

Cyclists are being well supported. More than 300km of cycle tracks are being created.

Communes are encouraged to add cycle tracks to as many routes as possible.



Vineyard road.....

Recent changes in Marseillan

* The Langue d'Oc is now officially a second language in the village. Street signs in Oc are in place alongside the French names.

* Interesting sites are to receive plaques in several languages. These will be linked by a tourist walking guide.



* Safety rails have replaced the awful round bollards that caused so much damage to vehicles because the drivers could not see them.

* There is a new toilet behind the theatre. The fountain is running again.

* Comfortable seats have been installed at the port.

* Tabarka Plage has been created by clearing the bank of the Etang between the park and the fishers' port. It has a beach and comfortable seats.

* Social activities include the Semaine d'Europe in May, and the three Fêtes Locale. These now have specific programmes, with encouragement and support from the Hôtel de Ville.

* An annual Christmas Fayre involves all the traders, and is proving very popular.

* An artisans' market opens every Thursday evening in July and August.

* Marseillan Historique's Visitors' Centre, has opened.



.....has become

* Bi-lingual staff now man the Tourist Centre at Marseillan Plage.

* A Tourist Information kiosk operates at the port through July and August.

* International links are being forged with - so far - reciprocal visits to Britain, Ireland and Belgium. There is a long-standing link with Caudete in Spain.

* A new Careenage has been built at port Tabarka. The only one on the Etang de Thau, and close to the Canal du Midi it is doing good business and is a welcome asset.

* Plans for new bridges across the Canal du Midi and the Pisse Saumes at the Plage have been set back.

* Camper vans are coming under far stricter control. Height barriers are appearing at parking areas so that the vans have to use designated sites.

* Traveller sites are now a legal requirement. Marseillan has built one on the Agde road, opposite the tip. Agde has one beside the Canal du Midi and has cut a dramatic dual width road along the route of what was a delightful lane through the vineyards.

* Cereals, olives and some fruit trees are steadily replacing vineyards, and changing the face of the countryside. Gone are the days when it was vines all the way from Montpellier to Spain.

* Every commune is now adding a housing development. In the main these are of smaller properties, often terraced, and with a tiny space for a garden.

Road 'improvements' usually accompany these developments. There seems a policy of restriction so that traffic is forced to comply rather than allowing drivers to exercise prudence as they have until now. But does this forced compliance breed frustration?



Even cycle tracks have their full range of control signs.