



## To benefit the Village Dans l'intérêt du Village

April 2011

### 2011 A slow start

#### *President's word*

Things have certainly progressed through the first months of the year, although the village has been unnaturally quiet.

Very few 'foreign visitors' (which includes French), and certainly no British. But we have suffered road works everywhere: from the major development in the church square (see over), and the Mayor's Bridge, to road schemes that seem focussed on restricting traffic flow.

No doubt about it, authority is determined to slow traffic down and we are suffering kilometre after kilometre of single carriage road.

We hope we don't break down or have a puncture since how can a breakdown service get to one ?

The road by the post office is now single carriageway towards the parking, a most odd decision that appears to make no sense. Just one more example of traffic engineers looking for work perhaps ?

We are seeing many more fences to separate pedestrian and automobile, but the road surfaces could do with urgent attention that they are not receiving.

Easter was almost a wash-out. We had glorious weather until the Thursday.

Then rain overnight and into Friday. The whole week-end was reasonable for weather, but a bit grey and overcast.

Then it cleared on the Tuesday.

There were good sailing winds, however, good for the Optimist sailing boats that came to Marseillan to compete in the World Championships over Easter.

With all the best for the summer.

Patricia

#### *The Mayor's Bridge*



This is the narrow bridge across the Canal du Midi across which all traffic has to pass. It has long been too narrow for modern usage and work is now well under way to build a new bridge.

This will be alongside the old and be of contemporary style. The changes in the Region are characterised by concrete and plastic - economic but vastly detracting from the historic character of the area. One supposes it is inevitable given

the massive population changes that are taking place, but one can deplore the methodology nevertheless.

The work is costing 1,9M€ and will take a full year. Fortunately the Département is paying. The bridge is scheduled to open in December 2011 by which time work will also have been done on the tow paths to open them to pedestrians and cycles. One hopes the design will not be too awful !

#### *Border Pets*

CHANGES to European Union rules on pet transport come into force at the end of this year, which should mean that pets will no longer need to get a rabies test and wait six months before travelling. Pets will also no longer need tick and tapeworm treatments before travelling to the UK.

However, the UK Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has not yet decided how it will approach the change, which marks the end of the UK's opt-out of the EU harmonised pet travel scheme.

If the UK decides to abide by the new regime, pet owners will be able to enter the UK from the EU 21 days after a rabies vaccination and with just a valid pet passport and microchip.

A Defra spokesman said: "The UK's derogation from the EU's harmonised pet travel scheme is due to finish at the end of 2011. To ensure UK controls remain effective, we are now considering how to approach this issue."

A decision is awaited

#### *Subscriptions*

Yes, it is that time again. Please send your renewal to the address overleaf.  
10 or 25 Euros

### No school Wednesdays

Ever wondered why?

The answer lies in the fact that State education was nationalised in the early 1800s. The church resisted the take over and two concessions were made.

Children were released for religious education on Thursdays (now Wednesdays), and private schools were allowed to remain open. Today some 5% of French children are educated in private schools... often religious or community-oriented.

### The Old Cemetery

The old cemetery in Boulevard Roqueblave is undergoing a face lift. The walls are being repaired and made good, but there is a problem with the main gateway.

The gateway has not been maintained over the years and is now in a poor state. The cost of restoration is high and that, balanced against other expenses in this time of austerity, means that the work may have to be delayed.

Many people will say that it is a good thing that the cemetery cannot easily be redeveloped. Each plot was individually sold, and so there are many owners, not all traceable. Thus Marseillan will have it's two cemeteries for - probably - many years to come.

When the work is done we do hope, and have asked, that the old cemetery will be opened to the public. But for now we have to wait upon events.

### Routes to the Plage

Both routes to Marseillan Plage are now operative under new road conditions. Go along the Etang and you face a 30kph speed limit and seven traffic calming humps. You also have to circumnavigate a roundabout so tight that to turn right one has to make a complete circle.

Go by the more northerly, and more direct route and a tiny second-gear roundabout blocks your path. (On the return journey a narrow chicane forces careful steering at low speed.)

Then there is a second-gear roundabout before the railway bridge.

Not Good !

### Onglous



The Canal du Midi enters the Etang de Thau at Onglous point. It is a decent walk around the shores of the Etang, in the general direction of Marseillan Plage.

Nothing has been done to the area for many years and it is a bit wild and uncared for. In conjunction with the Voies Navigables de France the village has begun a feasibility study as to how to re-vamp the site whilst retaining the integrity of the Canal as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

We await their deliberations.



### Church square

The transformation is going on apace. At a cost of 450,000€ the whole of the square is being transformed. Everything has been cleared, and a 10 inch layer of concrete has been laid.

Now about a quarter of the square has been covered in modern cobblestones to match the first half of the project. (This transformed the area round the covered market and up past the Hôtel de Ville about three years ago.)

The artist's impression indicates intention, we await the actual result... all seems smart and satisfactory at the moment.

Our only problem with all the modernisation is whether Marseillan's ambience will survive. Or is the village following the tourist route to sanitized visiting?

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