

Var Village Voice

THE Var's English Language Newsletter

DISEASE THREAT TO OLIVE INDUSTRY

SEPTEMBER 2017



CAVAL'AIR JAZZ FESTIVAL – 6 – 10 SEPTEMBER

Wednesday 6 September – 11 am & 17h00 - Electro Deluxe

Friday 8 September – 17h30 – Manouche

Sturday 9 September – 17h30 – Sarah Lenka & 21h00 Rhoda Scott
& Lady Quartet

Sunday 10 September – 19h00 Boogie-Woogie Night, with Jean-
Pierre Bertrand, Lluís Coloma Trio, Axel Zwingenberger.

www.cavalairejazz.fr

PIANO RECITALS AT THE MOULIN DES ARTS – ENTRECASTEAUX – 9 & 10 September, with Pierre-Yves Plat

Saturday 9 September at 20h30, and Sunday 10 September at
16h. at the Ancien Moulin à huile, 17 rue du Lubac,
Entrecasteaux.

Tickets €15 for members, €20 for non-members, including glass
of wine.

Pierre-Yves Plat's repertoire runs from Chopin to Ray Charles,
from Bach to Stevie Wonder, adapting classic works to Jazz, a
fun concert in view.

Also there will be a piano recitals by the London pianist
Cordelia Williams-Parker, Saturday 23 September and Sunday 24
September. Do get your bookings in.

Res: 04 94 69 58 07 or e: mrkucko@yahoo.fr

BLEVINS  FRANKS
INTERNATIONAL TAX & WEALTH MANAGEMENT

BLEVINS FRANKS FINANCIAL SEMINAR – LES ARCS – WEDNESDAY 13 SEPTEMBER

Blevins Franks tax advisors are holding a series of Financial
Seminars starting in September and running into October.
Var residents will be pleased to know one of the first of
these is to be held at Chateau Roseline, Les Arcs,
Wednesday 13 September, from 10h30 to 12h00 am.

Reserve your place now, don't miss out on some good
advice. The Seminar will concentrate on: Brexit, Macron,
Healthcare, pensions, Inheritance Planning, timing, tax,
markets, etc.

Blevins partners taking part are Rob Kay, Mike Marsden, and
their regional South Eastern representative – and VVV's own
Rugby correspondent – Simon Eveleigh.

As Blevins franks say: They offer:

“Investment advice tailored for you

Our specialist expertise can make sure your finances are
structured as tax efficiently as possible with an investment
strategy tailor-made for you.

We start with an objective assessment of your risk profile so that
we can recommend portfolios designed around your personal
situation and objectives. We have access to some of the world's
best investment managers to make sure your money works as
hard as it can for you.

Speak to Blevins Franks to take full advantage of the tax and
investment opportunities available to British expatriates living
in France.

ARRANGE A FREE CONSULTATION WITH YOUR LOCAL
ADVISER NOW”

Res: enquiries@blevinsfranks.com and 04 94 93 00 17 80



QUATUORS A CORDES EN PAYS DE FAYENCE – 15 – 17 SEPTEMBER

Another three days of exceptional String Quartet Concerts await one in the Pays de Fayence.

The programme starts Friday 15 September with a concert at the Eglise, Callian, by the Quatuor Bela, at 20h30, works included are by Bach to Britten.

Saturday 16 September, concerts entitled B for Bartok, are at the Eglise in Montauroux, at 15h30, and the Chapelle, Montauroux, at 17h30, by the Quatuor Vision, works by bach, Beethoven and Bartok.

The concert Sunday 17 September, is of Jazz, Pop, Fusion, at the Eglise in Mons, at 16h00 by the Quatuor Bela , works by bach, Beethoven and Brahms.

An early concert Friday 15 September by the Quatuor Bela, with Frederick Audibert, cello, is at the Chapelle des Penitents, Callian, at 18h30.

More information from the website, www.quatuors-fayence.com



JOURNEES EUROPEENNES DU PATRIMOINE – 16 – 17 SEPTEMBER

Look up events at www.journeesdupatrimoine.fr

One local event is at Chateau St Martin, where one can visit vestiges of Gallo-Romain remains, and also a visit to the wine caves, and a pig BBQ roast for €20.



OPERA DE TOULON – ORCHESTRAL CONCERT – A NIGHT ON BROADWAY - SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER

A grand orchestral concert, under the direction of Larry Blank, and featuring singers Rebecca Trehearn, soprano, and Doug Labrecque, tenor, kicks off the Opera de Toulon autumn season with a superb concert devoted to A NIGHT ON BROADWAY. One can just imagine the plethora of musical hits they have to choose from, which should make for a wonderfully entertaining and musical night out

www.operadetoulon.fr, and 04 94 92 70 78



CHATEAU DE MENTONE JAZZ EVENTS SATURDAY 16 SEPTEMBER

Chateau de Mentone, above St. Antonin village is celebrating the Journees Europeene du Patrimoine, with a day devoted to Jazz events.

The day kicks off with group Sweet Witness, at 11 am in the Chapelle St. Lambert, with gospel music, this is followed at 18h00 with an Jazz Apero, with guitar and accordeon quartet, on the Terrasses de la Ferme-Auberge, winds up with a concert by the Didier Lockwood Trio, in Hommage to Stephane Grapelli, in the Salle de la Magnanerie.

Information 04 94 04 42 00 – there is a formule for a meal and concert, reservation required, 30 per person –

info@chateamentone.com

SEPTEMBER BOOK SWAP 20 SEPTEMBER

The September Travelling Book Swap will be once more at Pat and John Toohey. Plenty of room to park, coffee/tea etc, and lots of books/DVDs. Wednesday 20th Sept. Usual time 10-12. La Magdeleine, Les Arcs, - 06 60 73 29 48;

La Magdeleine, can be found almost immediately off the N7, at the roundabout coming out of Les Arcs (note the new cave of Le Cellier des Archers opposite), turn right, direction Vidauban, cross the Argens & turn immediately left (there is a filter lane) into the Chemin de la Magdeleine; if you see the Maison des Vins, you've gone too far! Go past the Ferronnerie on your right, (about 50 metres), turn left after 300 metres, and then immediately left onto a dirt track lane to Pat & John's house. There is a postbox at the end of the lane & we will have the usual balloons to show you the way.



'Of course, Kate. Now that he's retired completely I'm sure he'd love to babysit a few days a week. I'll ask him.'

All Grandparents will sympathise with this cartoon!



Of Myth and Magic

BY TRENCHERMAN

Most of you will remember the heat that early August brought. Not quite a 'canicule' but not far off, it did pop just over 40c on our terrace. The cats were not pleased and they were certainly not pleased as they watched us pack our bags for a quick escape.

We landed in Cork on a slightly overcast day with the temperature reaching a delightful 16c and when pressed on the upcoming weather, our taxi driver said " ah sure in Ireland it only rains twice a week, once for three days and once for four", we were filled with anticipation.

We had been invited to join some wonderful friends on their boat for a cruise around the south west of Ireland and we were starting in Cork, actually in the centre of Cork, as far up river as any boat could navigate and by the time we arrived, the myth of the boat and who might be on board was already up and

running. The only thing that flows faster than Guinness and the rivers in Ireland, is myth and gossip.

Our first stop after Cork was Kinsale, a charming old fishing village where, over the years, I have spent a lot of time and had many adventures, the one about the 'Widow MacNiece' is a particularly good one, but perhaps for another time.

Our magical hostess had booked a table for dinner at a restaurant called Bastion, which is now in its third year. Everything on the menu is fresh every morning and so changes daily, everything on the menu from the bread to the 'gourmandise' is made on the premises, and everything we ate that evening was delicious and beautifully dressed and presented. I had the best and freshest piece of cod that I can remember. The wine list is extensive and the service was near perfection and the prices were very user friendly

I doubt many of you will be hot footing it to Kinsale but should you have the opportunity, you have been told.

We sailed onward to Baltimore, Bantry, Kenmare and the beauty of Parknasilla. One morning, in company with mine host, I took to a bicycle and chased him up hill and down dale for over 15kms, it was 40 years since I had last sat upon a bike and may be a while again, the saddle having left a significant impression upon me, however I was impressed and the fact that the bicycle was electrically assisted did not diminish my sense of achievement, the fact that the only way I could get off the bike was for the saddle to be removed and for me to back off was merely a matter of expedience.

The Magical Mystical tour was over all too soon and we returned to tragically dryer and much warmer conditions here but conscious of my need to provide a service to the Var, I set off to a restaurant which had been recommended in Lorgues, Bistrot Chez Ludo.

Lorgues is a proper Provençal town, local shops, a good market, evening markets, art galleries, and a long list of bars and restaurants.

It is a place which has been settled by English and Dutch, in fact it is said that the third most common language spoken in Lorgues is French, as if to reinforce this, as we approached the restaurant, my chum and long time Lorgues resident, said he would order what he always orders there, the Brochette Anglais! and why not?

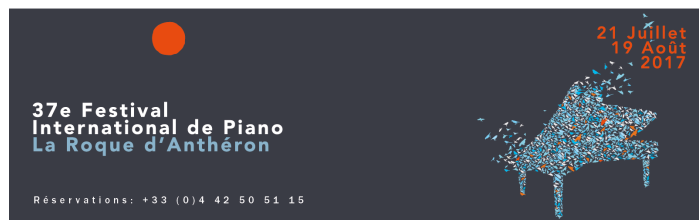
The terrace was busy, packed actually, and we were lucky to be seated and quickly given menus, wine lists and the menu du jour, which, at 17€, represents a pretty impressive deal.

Having been given a tip, I ordered a starter of the 'Carpaccio des Tomates avec rocket, parmesan, and mustard dressing'. It was fresh and tasty but not on the *menu du jour* and therefore 12€. I followed this with an *Andouillette AAAAA* at 23€.

My chum, true to his word, ordered the *Brochette Onglet*, always a tasty cut. She who must be listened to, ordered the *Thon mi cuit* and pronounced it good. We drank the rather decent wines of Saint Martin, both white and red and with a dessert and two coffees the total was 50€ per head. Not bad.

I understand that there is a good reason to visit Lorgues, on market days, there is a chap who offers summer truffles for 9€ each! Now if that is not a myth, it is certainly magic.

Pip, pip



MUSIC NOTES

By ROBERT TURNBULL

Two recitals at the piano festival at Laroque d'Antheron in the heart of the Luberon really caught my attention this year. The Toulouse-born Adam Laloum is increasingly a force to be reckoned with and in his native France seems to be viewed as one of the next titans of the instrument, in the tradition of Alfred Cortot and Samson Francois. His manner is unassuming, his style introspective, and yet he communicates a strong personal feeling about the music that draws one in. One really listens hard to his carefully, intimately playing.

Superb in chamber music - he runs a festival for this repertoire in Lagrasse, Aude, where incidentally I have my own piano festival - and brings the creme de la creme of Parisian talent with him. There he plays the masterpieces of Faure, Ravel and Saint-Saens. But it is really his work as a soloist devoted to early romantics like Schumann and Schubert that have resulted in his expanding fan base.

For his recital in the gorgeous Romanesque Abbaye de Silvacane, he chose to play two very famous Beethoven sonatas as well the late C minor Schubert without a break. That's was brave. The Pathetique's powerfully controlled outer movements sandwiched a seriously sonorous slow movement. But it was in Beethoven's gargantuan Waldstein Sonata that Laloum's approach really paid off, as he turned what can often sound like a series of ferocious technical exercises into pure lyricism and poetry. The slow movement he took at the kind of pace that dramatized Beethoven's use of silence, those long questioning pauses between phrases.

In the Schubert Sonata one was immediately struck by another of Laloum's gifts - the ability to play very quietly while projected melodic lines. Again one felt his searching the in the music, for clarity and beauty and meaning.

Charles Richard Hamelin is perhaps a case of a second prize winner who, some would say, should have come first. The Canadian won second Prize at Warsaw Chopin competition - it was won by the Korean Seong Jin Cho - and a rather nervous final concerto stage, but anyone visiting all the other stages on Youtube can only be impressed. Hamelin's no interval recital for Laroque began a Mozart D minor Fantasy impossible to imagine played with more subtlety and precision. One rarely hears new insights into a piece as well-known as this. This he followed with four Chopin Impromptus crafted to perfection through impeccable musicianship as well as quite dry but nimble fingerwork. He ended with Schumann's riveting first sonata, in which the composer pays obvious homage to Beethoven and even quotes the Hammerklavier Sonata in the first movement allegro. Yet this was Schumann at his most idiomatic, the composer's famously contrasting moods beautifully judged with a variety of moods and colours assembled with dramatic flair as well as with moments of heart-breaking intimacy.

EUROPEAN OLIVE INDUSTRY THREATENED BY DISEASE



Helen Mirren throws weight behind campaign to halt disease devastating Italy's ancient olive trees

Her portrayal of the monarch was acclaimed as thoughtful and sympathetic; now Dame Helen Mirren has turned her attention to another venerable queen – an ancient olive tree in southern Italy.

The British actress has thrown her weight behind a campaign to halt a deadly bacteria that is affecting hundreds thousands of olive trees in the region of Puglia, where she has a second home. At the weekend she laid her hand on one of the region's most ancient trees, nicknamed by locals La Regina or The Queen, which is believed to be up to 2,000 years old.

More than 45ft in circumference at the base of its trunk, it is a symbol of the great age of many of the olive trees that are now under threat in Puglia's Salento peninsula, in the heel of Italy's boot.

"We need to help the Salento to save its ancient olive trees. They are plants which have an extraordinary value for agriculture and for the landscape. Some of them are more than 2,000 years old, and now they are dying," the actress told Ansa, Italy's national news agency.

"It is incredible that these olive trees could have been seen by Virgil and the Emperor Augustus, as history recounts. This is a terrible tragedy and it is important that the whole of Europe sees it as I have seen it. We need the commitment of everyone in order to try to stop the disease."

She called for more economic aid from the government to help farmers who have seen their trees, sculpted and twisted by age and the elements, wither and die.

"We can't leave them alone. The Salento peninsula has been cultivated for centuries by the same families and this must be allowed to continue," the award-winning actress said. The gnarled olive, which grows outside the tiny village of Vernole di Struda near the town of Lecce, was in danger of being chopped down earlier this year – a fate that has befallen thousands of other trees.

But experts believe they have saved it by grafting on branches from a variety of olive tree which is much more resistant to the pathogen, xylella fastidiosa.

"For now, this is the only way we know of saving the tree and promoting the regrowth of the leaves – there is no cure for

xylella," said Giuseppe Brillante, a regional official with Coldiretti, Italy's principal farmers' association.

Olive farmers and the mayors of towns in the affected region are delighted that the actress, who won an Oscar for her performance in *The Queen*, has taken an interest in the devastation wrought by the disease, which is transmitted by an insect called the meadow spittlebug.

They now hope that Ms Mirren may persuade other Hollywood friends to get involved in the campaign to halt the bacteria and save the region's trees, including Brad Pitt and Richard Gere.

There are four other 2,000-year-old trees just in the countryside around the hamlet that she visited.

Each has a different name, including *The King*, *The Lion* and *The Pharaoh*. She confessed that when the blight was first reported a few years ago, she underestimated the threat that it posed.

"At the beginning I didn't understand that xylella was such a devastating problem. I was thinking, it will probably pass, they'll be able to do something about it. Instead we've got to this situation, which is very sad indeed," she said.

Puglia boasts around 60 million olive trees, two million of which are now infected. The disease was first detected in the southernmost tip of the region in 2013 and has been steadily creeping northwards ever since.

Mr Brillante, from the farmers' association, said: "A celebrity with the level of international prestige as Helen Mirren can really help us. She has shown that she loves the Salento region unconditionally."

Ms Mirren and her American husband, Taylor Hackford, have owned a 16th century "masseria" or traditional Puglian farmhouse for more than a decade near the village of Tiggiano.

They spend up to four months a year at the historic property and have planted hundreds of pomegranate trees in the garden.

They have around 80 olive trees but most have not yet been affected by the disease. The olive trees lend Puglia a wooded, park-like landscape, which has helped attract an increasing number of second-home owners, including many Britons.

But the distinctive landscape is now under grave threat. *Xylella fastidiosa* is "one of the most dangerous plant bacteria worldwide, causing a variety of diseases, with huge economic impact for agriculture," according to the European Commission.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION – ACTIONS

Transmission of the disease in the EU takes place through cicada vector insects that are widespread in the entire Union territory. As a consequence, the risk that this pest is spreading further to other parts of the EU is very high unless strict control measures are taken immediately after any new outbreak is detected.

According to the EFSA Plant Health Panel, there is currently no method available to cure a diseased plants in the field. Changes in cropping systems (e.g. pruning, fertilisation and irrigation), could have some impact on the disease development but this is not enough to cure plants.

In Apulia, severe pruning of infected olive trees resulted in the emission of new sprouts from the base of the tree but so far, this has not been shown to cure the plants and prevent them from further decay and dying after a shorter or longer period depending on the susceptibility of the variety of olive trees.

The control strategy has to focus on the insect vector and on the removal of infected plants that, if left on the field, can act as a reservoir for the bacterium inoculum. For the control of the vector population, proper phytosanitary treatments are required, such as the removal of weeds needed for the accomplishment of the life cycle of the cicada insect, but also the targeted use of plant protection

products, especially prior to the removal of infected plants. Such treatments have to be jointly implemented, with appropriate agricultural practices.

It is important to note that asymptomatic hosts, asymptomatic infections or infections in early sage can easily escape surveys based solely on visual inspection and even based on laboratory tests because of the low concentration or heterogeneous distribution of the bacterium in the plant. This is the main reason for the implementation of strict eradication measures (e.g. clear cut of all [host plants](#) around infected plants) for any new outbreaks.

There are currently two research projects funded on *Xylella fastidiosa* within the HORIZON 2020 EU Framework:

POnTE - Pest Organisms Threatening Europe. The project addresses among other pests also *Xylella fastidiosa* with a budget of around 2.3 million € for the period 2015-2019. It aims to increase knowledge on *Xylella fastidiosa* and its vectors in olive, grapevine, citrus, stone fruit, ornamentals and landscape trees of high socio-economic importance.

XF-ACTORS - *Xylella Fastidiosa* Active Containment Through a multidisciplinary Oriented Research Strategy. The project was funded in November 2016 with an overall budget of around 7 million € for the period 2016-2020. Proposed actions will be complementary to those carried out under the Project POnTE. More specifically, the project aims to promote a comprehensive package of activities to increase the knowledge of the bacterium and develop options for its prevention and control along with tools for risk assessment and plant health policies.

See:

https://ec.europa.eu/food/plant/plant_health_biosecurity/legislation/emergency_measures/xylella-fastidiosa_en

So the Cicada, long the emblem of Provence, is not proving a friend to the olive industry, as it apparently acts as vector of disease.

LATE AUGUST – MALLORCA THREATENED WITH HAVING TO RAZE ALL VEGETATION TO STOP THE PROGRESS OF THE DREADED OLIVE BACTERIA

The Spanish island of Mallorca could be virtually razed of vegetation under an EU plan to halt the march of a deadly bacteria known as “ebola of the olive”, farmers in the region have warned.

The bacteria *Xylella fastidiosa*, which has infected thousands of olive trees in southern Italy, is now raging across the Balearic Islands with carrier species multiplying, according to a recent assessment by the European Union.

In July, it was detected for the first time on the Spanish mainland in almond trees in Alicante, raising fears it could wreak havoc in the world's largest producer of olive oil. The EU and the Balearics government are now discussing a containment plan which could force eradication of all vegetation within a 100 metre radius of infected plants. With infections confirmed at 156 separate points across Mallorca, agricultural groups say the measure would mean the almost complete destruction of the island's plant life.

The bacteria, which can infect some 300 species, was first discovered in a cherry tree in a Mallorca garden centre in October. After tests elsewhere on the Balearic Islands came back positive, the local government declared the entire archipelago an outbreak zone, banned the export of live plants and began destroying infected specimens.

But a June assessment by the European Food Safety Agency (EFSA) came back with alarming news: the response had been too limited, and even with the total application of EU measures, eradication will now be “very difficult” to achieve.

The number of carrier plants was also growing, it said, now taking around a dozen species including grape vines, almond and plum trees and lavender.

In Alicante, local authorities and agricultural groups have backed eradication as the only option. But resistance among some farmers is growing: last week protesters blocked machinery brought in to fell trees around an infected plant, El Confidencial reported.

However razing all vegetation from the island, might well precipitate soil erosion and other repercussions.



After destroying entire olive groves in Italy and last year appearing in the Balearic Islands, the first case of the destructive bacterium *Xylella fastidiosa* has been confirmed on mainland Spain, making farmers worry in the land where olive oil is liquid gold.

“Clearly, we are not going to be able to stop this; it’s a question of time before it reaches us,” said Luis Carlos Valero, leader of the ASAJA farmers’ union in Jaén, after the plague was confirmed as having been detected in Alicante last week.

The fact that the first affected plant on the mainland was an almond tree is no consolation for olive growers; more than 300 European plant species have proved to be susceptible to *Xylella*. In Italy around a million trees are reported to have been killed by ‘olive quick decline syndrome’ after being attacked by bacteria that can be carried by various common meadow insects.

In Spain, which has 350 million trees and where half of the world’s olive oil is produced, industry representatives fear the impact could be catastrophic.

“We should try not to over-dramatize, but the situation is worrying,” Eduardo López, a spokesman for the COAG farmers union told the digital newspaper El Confidencial.

Mr López and other representatives of the farming community want Spain’s authorities to announce a compensation scheme now, before the disease spreads further and the painful preventive uprooting of trees begins in earnest.

“It’s very important that the government compensates affected farmers because, otherwise, many will be tempted to keep it quiet to avoid losing their crop,” argued Ramón Mampel from the Valencia ULR union. “That’s what happened in Italy; the producers did not want to lose money and they kept their mouths shut, and now they find themselves absolutely ruined and with two million olive trees to be ripped out.”

The Valencian regional government has followed European Union guidelines when faced by the destructive bacterium, clearing all plants in a 100-metre radius around a dozen affected almond trees in Guadalest, Alicante. But there is no agreement on compensation, with the standard maximum offered by Valencia of €7,429 for each hectare lost falling well short of the maximum demanded by growers of €27,000.

Andalucia, with 60 per cent of Spain's olive groves, is the most vulnerable region to a massive Xylella attack. "It has appeared on an almond farm in Alicante, but imagine what it could do here in Andalucia with our olive trees and the continuous carpet of forest across thousands of hectares in Jaén, Córdoba and Granada," warned Mr Valero.

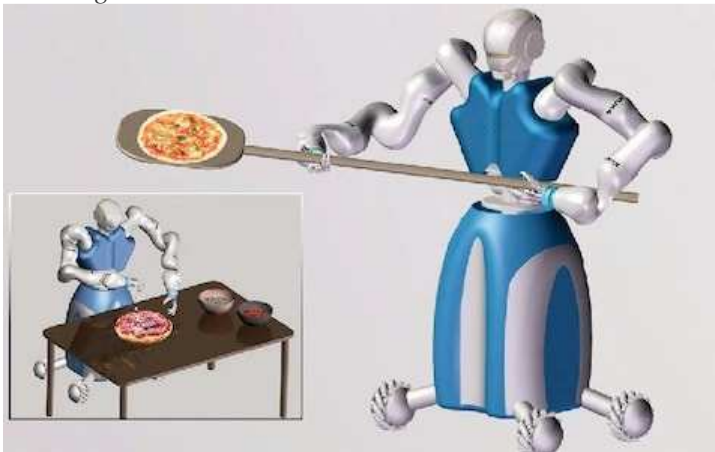
"This could be a huge disaster if we don't act immediately when we detect the first sign."

ROBOTS TAKE OVER THE EU !

You think that title is funny, it's not all that risible after all. Apparently the EU, that bunch of free spending plutocrats, careering round the world in chartered private jets at our expense, have been spending, and I quote: "The European Union is spending millions of euros on developing a robot that can make pizza.

""The robot has visual sensors in its head to "see" in real time and uses software to train itself to act like a pizza chef. It is learning how to knead, stretch, toss and twirl dough, add ingredients and slide the pizza into an oven.

The robot has visual sensors in its head to "see" in real time. RoDyMan, which is short for Robotic Dynamic Manipulation, is a five-year project supported by a **€2.5 million grant from the European Research Council**. The Council was set up by the European Commission in 2007 and funds scientific and technological research.



"Preparing a pizza involves an extraordinary level of agility and dexterity," Bruno Siciliano, who directs the robotics research group at the University of Naples Federico II told Scientific American.

Researchers hope the project will lead to a more precise and responsive generation of robots.

RoDyMan is learning how to toss and spin pizza dough, without tearing it. The more it practices, the better it gets at the delicate technique, which is beyond the abilities of existing technology. Researchers hope the project will lead to a more precise and responsive generation of robots.

To guide the robot, Mr Siciliano's team recruited master pizza chef Enzo Coccia to wear a suit of movement-tracking sensors.

RoDyMan will make his public debut at the Naples pizza festival in May 2018 but, according to Mr Siciliano, will never replace the real thing.

Despite the so-called lofty aims of the original programme, Senor Siciliano, like a good Italian should, said: **"I would never eat a pizza made by a robot," he said. "It would not have the taste a real pizzaiolo, with his soul, would put in it."**

So ok, just €2.5 million euros is really pretty small beer in the scale of things, a spit in the ocean, but perhaps €2.5 million euros could have gone to teaching real human beings how to make pizza dough, how to spin it. How about teaching some of the hundreds of immigrants landing on Italian, Greek, and now Spanish shores, giving them the possibility of a living.

Because basically devising more and more complex schemes utilising robots, deprives more and more thousands of human, living beings of employment. Yes, it is progress, and I hate to appear to be a luddite, but when thousands upon thousands of immigrants are landing each day on the shores of Europe, and the EU, led by "Theresa" Merkel pretends to be solicitous, all caring. Etc. etc. I find their attitudes hypocritical beyond belief. The immigrant crisis has been going on for the past, more than five years, and still the EU twiddles its thumbs, making token statements, holding token meetings (at vast expense of course to the EU taxpayer!)

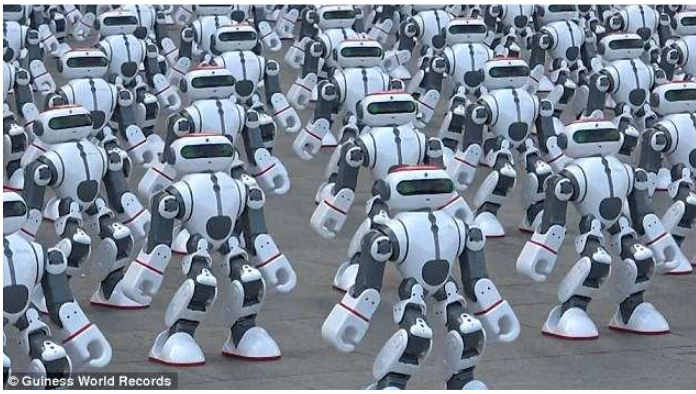
This past few months has seen Italy receiving - it right now being the top of the immigrant target list - approximately 85 per cent (96,400) arriving there since the start of 2017 - come on let's call it just under a 100,000. How can Italy cope with that load, they have been calling on the EU to deal, to cope, to help from month upon month, and still it is ""promises, promises, promises"" And wow, now, they are landing in Spain, whoopee, that will speed up things.



Two dozen or so immigrants from N. Africa recently landed at beach near Cadiz and promptly disappeared into the hinterland, before police arrived.

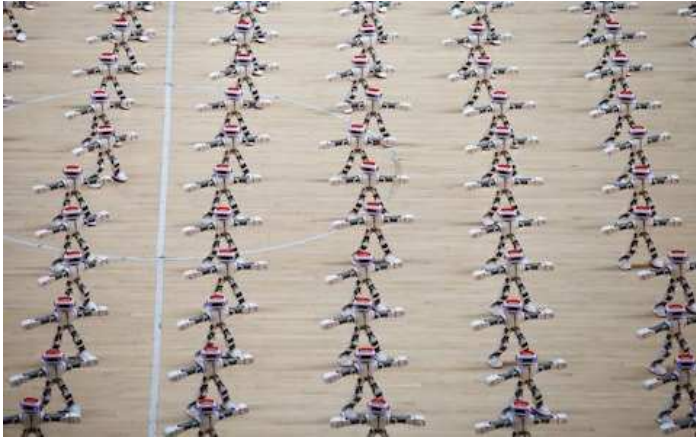
""Those hoping to cross into Europe are trying their luck by heading for Spain, according to the International Organization for Migration. Almost 8,200 migrants have landed on Spain's shores so far this year, more than have arrived over the whole of 2016.""

""The European Union is more than aware of the scale of the problem, judging by a confidential report that emerged in May from the bloc saying **that over 6 million migrants** were gathered on the southern Mediterranean coast, waiting to make the journey to Europe. **However, its leading lights are more keen on finding someone to blame, rather than a lasting solution to the migration crisis.** "" Let me repeat that figure - **Over 6 million migrants** are gathered on the shores of the Mediterranean, wanting to push into Europe!!



© Guinness World Records

1000 DROIDS DANCING ENSEMBLE - I thought I was making it up – apparently I wasn't!



Robots in another dance competition in China – where else?

Continuing the Robot theme:

“”ROBOT COMMITS SUICIDE BY DROWNING !””



This was the headline that flashed round newspapers recently. A robot used for patrol duties somewhere in Washington DC by misadventure, dived into a pool. It's makers/controllers said NO, it had not committed suicide, which might have been quite credible, after all robots must get bored too, it had merely tripped over a pebble. So maybe the solution to fight back against robots is to go for uneven flooring, especially in pizza restaurants.

Saint-Tropez gets sinking feeling as number of yachts in its marina plunges

Saint-Tropez, the glittering Riviera resort favoured by celebrities and the super-rich, is lamenting a decline in the number of yachts berthed at its marina this summer.

Luxury yacht owners tend not to be short of funds, but increasingly they are shunning the Côte d'Azur's upscale resorts because of prohibitive costs. Instead of Saint-Tropez or Antibes' renowned "billionaires' harbour", many are choosing less expensive destinations in Italy or Spain, where berthing fees, fuel prices and crewing costs are lower.

The high costs on the Riviera are blamed partly on France's strict enforcement of EU regulations on the sales price of marine diesel and a new requirement for high French taxes and social contributions to paid for crew members which was introduced in March.



As concern mounts for local businesses and jobs, the Riviera's three most prominent politicians, Renaud Muselier, the president of the Riviera region, Christian Estrosi, the mayor of Nice, and Hubert Falco, the mayor of Toulon, issued a plea for help from President Emmanuel Macron on Wednesday.

"The gravity of the economic situation of the yachting sector in the Provence-Alps-Riviera region makes it necessary for us to appeal for your direct intervention," they said in an open letter released to the media.

Revenue at the iconic marina in Saint-Tropez has fallen by 30 per cent since the beginning of the year, while Toulon, a less glamorous destination, has suffered a 40-per-cent decline, they said.

Complaining that the EU is allowing Italy and Spain to undercut the Côte d'Azur, they called for the "urgent harmonisation of tax and social regulations at the European level".

They added: "Refuelling a 42-metre yacht in Italy (instead of France) gives a saving of nearly €21,000 (£18,800) a week because of the difference in tax... while the additional cost of maintaining a seven-person crew in France is €300,000 (£268,000) a year. They said hardly any French sailors were being hired to crew yachts and sales by the four largest marine fuel vendors had fallen by 50 per cent this summer.

Laurent Falaize, head of the Riviera Yachting Network, said: "The British and the Americans are sending their yachts to refuel in Italy or Spain, where the interpretation of European tax rules is different from ours in France."

Franck Dosne, manager of Port Vauban, a yachting harbour in Antibes, said: "The fall in visits can easily be seen simply by

looking at a map showing where yachts are berthed in the western Mediterranean."

He said that national insurance, health and other compulsory contributions which boat owners pay for crew members had increased from 15 to 55 per cent of their wages.

The open letter cited the example of the Monaco Maritime boatyard, which recently lost a lucrative contract for a 152-metre mega-yacht to a Spanish rival.

The complaints by marinas and boatyards echo the grievances of winegrowers in the south of France who complain that they cannot compete with cheaper wines from Spain, where wages and payroll taxes are lower.

Tens of thousands of jobs depend on the yachting industry. Mr Macron, who has promised to reduce France's high unemployment, has yet to comment on the Riviera's woes.

The region has been hit by a spate of wildfires amid sweltering weather, which have deterred some British holidaymakers, although the blazes caused no deaths or injuries.



MACRON POPULARITY AT ALL TIME LOW - FOR A PRESIDENT!

It was not exactly a surprise when newspapers splurged the information that Emmanuel Macron had spent €26,000 (£24,000) on makeup during his first three months as president of France. The 39-year old centrist leader, whose popularity is not just waning, but has dived below the even all time low recorded for President Hollande. Le Point reported that his personal makeup artist - referred to only as Natacha M - put in two bills, one for €10,000 and another for €16,000.

The Elysee Palace defended the high fee saying: "We called in a contractor as a matter of urgency". (One wonders what the urgency was, an outbreak of spots!) The same makeup artist also applied foundation to Mr Macron during his presidential campaign. Aides said that spending on makeup would be "significantly reduced".

It may seem like a stratospheric sum for a president who has described his style as "Jupiterian" - lofty in the spirit of the God of Roman gods. The gross figure is higher than the €6,000 euro salary Mr Hollande paid his staff makeup artist, but it is less when social charges are added. Le Point put the overall figure for Mr Hollande's makeup at €30,000 per quarter.

Nicolas Sarkozy, meanwhile, paid a whopping €8,000 per month for his, according to Vanity Fair.

Admittedly all these sums pale into comparison with the £99,000 Mr Hollande paid his personal barber. The huge amount sparked accusations of "shampoo Socialism".

The hairdresser, Olivier Benhamou, was hired to work at the Elysée Palace in 2012 for the duration of Mr Hollande's five-year term. Mr Benhamou also reportedly enjoyed a housing allowance and family benefits.

However President Macron seems to be carving a path for himself, which commentators alternate between describing as Jupiterian, Napoleonic, and a few other choice epithets.

""Brigitte Macron, France's first lady, has urged the French to 'have faith' with her husband Emmanuel as his approval ratings have collapsed to 40 per cent - a huge drop since the start of the summer.

The slide in the polls comes just two days before Mr Macron's government is to unveil the details of crunch labour reforms to unions.""



Bearing mind that a minor percentage of the voting population actually voted for him, whereas a far larger majority actually voted against le Pen, his stunts such as dressing up in a tight fitting, practically showing off the family jewels in an air crew suit, a la Tom Cruise, then getting himself winched down into a French military submarine, all with the greatest publicity

coverage, and this considering he has never done military duty, has not impressed the French public.

As the TIMES reported: **“Mr Macron’s difficulties were compounded as soldiers’ wives demonstrated in Paris on Saturday against his decision to cut the defence budget this year by €850 million. The protest was relatively small, about 500 people, but commentators said it was the tip of an iceberg of discontent in the armed forces.”**

It’s hard to believe, but significant that military wives protested, a bit unheard of, however, even before Macron dismissed General Villiers, word of mouth has it that 95% of the military detest Macron.

His forays into Eastern Europe have hardly met with unqualified success, as he tries to wrangle other East European countries to toe the line on **“posted workers”** which he terms **“social dumping”**. He elicited a somewhat half hearted response from Bulgaria, more response for Austria who are also complaining about **“social dumping”** particularly from Hungary, but it was noticeable that in his whirlwind tour, accompanied by his wife, that he did not venture to beard the Poles in their home state, nor Hungary, merely making inflammatory statements, to which the Polish prime Minister responded by saying that his attitude and statements smacked of **“arrogance and inexperience”**, rather like a new Cock in the farmyard.

Poland for example right now dominates the European haulage and cabotage market, by at least 76%, as well as supplying the majority of workers on many a French work site.

As Polish Ministers rightly pointed out Macron’s statements were directed more at his home audience, in an attempt to prove to French unions that he is looking after their interests. As Polish Ministers pointed out, he has yet to come to meet with French Trade Unions, despite all his promises to reform the over 600 page Code de Travail, labour reforms, working hours, etc. the proof will be in the pudding, this September with La Rentree. We shall see, whether he can force through decrees, which the Unions are determined to oppose.



The SPECTATOR cartoonist despicts him as the Emperor with no clothes. Somehow I think we are in for an Autumn and Winter of discontent, with strikes galore. Chancellor Merkel is also heading for re-election this September, the polls say she is way ahead and should sweep in, however polls have been known to be wrong, and as several commentators have pointed out, at least 50% of German voters still have not made up their minds how they will vote, which makes one wonder where the polls get their figures? September will be interesting.



A bloodied Chris Ashton gives RCT the lead.

FLYING START TO GALTHIE’S TENURE

By SIMON EVELEIGH

After barely a pause for breath over the summer, the 2017/18 season got underway over the last weekend in August and it was a very successful start for Toulon, as they beat Pau 41-14.

There has been a fair amount of change at Stade Mayol since RCT lost to Clermont in the final of the Top 14 at the beginning of June. New coach Fabien Galthié has arrived, with a promise that Toulon will be daring and inventive. Some of Toulon’s best performers in recent seasons have moved on to pastures new and a fresh influx of talent from around the world has arrived on the Var coast.

The intention to play an expansive brand of rugby can be seen from the new signings Toulon have made; former England wing and record try scorer in the European Cup, Chris Ashton, ex All Blacks Luke McAlister and Malakai Fekitoa, rising French star Hugo Bonneval and South African wing JP Pietersen.

The opening exchanges were all a bit frenetic, as is often the way in early season games when new team mates are getting to know each other, but gradually Toulon took control, scoring two tries and going in at half-time 23-0 up.

After the break, either Toulon took their foot off the gas a bit or Pau got a dressing down and reacted accordingly. Whatever the truth of the matter, Pau scored two tries and narrowed the gap, before Toulon turned on the style, eventually running out quite comfortable winners. Their two second half tries were scored by Ashton, showing that his sense of being in the right place at the right time has not diminished. The only regret for Toulon was not scoring a fifth try which would have given them a bonus point.

Montpellier, who are many people’s favourites for the title this year, were the only team to get a bonus point win, and Toulon sit in second place and will be pleased that their campaign is up and running in such a positive way.

Toulon play five times in September, with visits to two of their main rivals, Clermont (3rd September) and Montpellier (17th). They also travel to Paris to play Stade Français on 24th September and have home games against Toulouse on 10th September and La Rochelle on 30th.

The observant amongst you may have spotted that Toulon’s first five games of the season are all on Sundays, something which president Mourad Boudjellal certainly has noticed.

Ever fearful of conspiracies against his beloved RCT, Boudjellal has accused the rugby establishment, aided and abetted by Canal+, of trying to force Toulon out of business, as people are less likely to come to watch matches on Sundays at 5pm than Saturdays at 3pm.

It is a familiar story for anyone who watches football, with matches being scheduled at times to suit the armchair viewer rather than the people who come through the turnstiles, but professional sport needs the telly dollars and can hardly complain when the broadcasters want their pound of flesh.

As well as the post match variety, it is common now for rugby coaches to give brief interviews during the course of the match. Whether you feel these add anything to the entertainment is a matter of personal preference, but even if you had wanted to hear Fabien Galthié's views during the Pau match, you would not have been able to, as the club banned any of its employees from talking to the devil that is Canal+.

As with all things Toulon, you get the distinct impression that this is another marketing ploy to get other people to notice that RCT are still there. If Boudjellal's plan of attack had been solidarity with the poor supporter then he may have got a bit more sympathy. It is true that for Pau supporters who made the trip to Toulon, by the time they got home they would not have had much chance to sleep before their Monday morning alarm rang.

Canal + pay €74 million each season for the broadcasting rights. Small beer compared to Premier League football, but a tidy sum, nevertheless. Boudjellal wants his team to be the draw card, so can hardly now complain that they are on TV more than other teams.

Talking of rugby on television reminds me that the last time I wrote I had just watched New Zealand comfortably beat The British & Irish Lions in the first test and feared the worst for the two matches to come. Oh ye of little faith!

Helped by the ridiculous challenge from Sonny Bill Williams on Anthony Watson that earned him a red card, the Lions dug deep in the second test and held their nerve at the end to run out 24-21 victors, the first team to beat The All Blacks in New Zealand since France did so in 2009.

That set things up nicely for the series decider and in a match that see-sawed a 15-15 draw meant that the Lions shared the series, something which even the most one-eyed of supporters would not have thought possible after that first test loss.

New Zealand remain the benchmark, but teams the world over will sense that there is a chink in the armour, exposed by Ireland in Chicago last year, twice by The Lions and, again, albeit in defeat, by Australia in the last round of matches in The Rugby Championship.

The All Blacks come to Europe in the autumn and play France twice, Wales and Scotland.

Wales had plenty of major contributors in The Lions test team and they will try to take that experience into camp in November. Scotland on the other hand had no representatives in any of the tests and, therefore, may not be able to call upon the Lions factor come their match up with The All Blacks.

French rugby really is in a mess and they were humiliated in South Africa in the summer and their supporters will fear the worst when they face the mighty New Zealanders. As I said, they play them twice, on Saturday 11th November and again on the following Tuesday.

Obviously the same teams will not line up in both matches and many feel that France's only hope of salvaging any respect would be to play their first team against New Zealand's second string.

Before those internationals, there is a fair amount of Top 14 action to watch and French fans will be hoping that one or two of their younger stars force their way into the reckoning. One of those youngsters could be Toulon's Antony Belleau, who confirmed his good end to last season with a commanding display in the opening match against Pau.

Over the coming months you will be able to follow his progress and all RCT news here.

THE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT NETWORK OF THE VAR (BSN)

This organisation exists to support not only the bereaved, but also those who are terminally ill, & their families/friends.

If you, or someone you know, could benefit from our confidential support, then please contact Sandra- 04 94 84 64 89 / 06 32 35 31 24 - email info@bsnvar.org

or go to our web site www.bsnvar.org for further information.

L'Oasis Christian Fellowship

LORGUES

Part of the Anglican Church

of Lorgues with Fayence

2nd Sunday at "Arc-en-Provence"

1801 Chemin des Pailles Lorgues

4th Sunday at Notre Dames des Anges

17 Avenue des Quatre Pierres - Lorgues followed by bring & share lunch.

Contact Rev Peter or Shirley Massey

04 94 73 93 37 or 06 87 94 04 83

Website www.lorgueswithfayence.org

Fellowship of the Ascension

MONTAUXOUX

Part of the Anglican Church

of Lorgues with Fayence

1st, 3rd Sundays 11 am at The Presbytery Montauxoux 37 Rue St Brigitte, followed by bring and share lunch

Contact Rev Peter Massey 0494 739337

or Hilary Rost at 0494 477067

Website www.lorgueswithfayence.org

St. John the Evangelist –

Ave Paul Doumer - St Raphaël

Holy Communion every Sunday at 10.30 a.m. followed by refreshments.

Details Andrew Hayward Andrew.hayward@sfr.fr 04 94 60 88 07

Or: 04 94 60 87 05

Grimaud Village Church

1st Thursday each month 11am

Ring 04 94 60 87 05 for details

www.sjevar.com

Is ALCOHOL a problem for you?

Did you know that there are local

Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in English,

weekly in Lorgues, St. Tropez &

St. Raphael. Information

08 20 200 257

& www.aariviera.org

The Blevins Franks Autumn Seminars

Seminar

Brexit, Macron, Healthcare, Pensions, Inheritance Planning, Timing, Tax, Markets...

What to consider in moving to, staying in or leaving France.

book your seat now

04 88 78 21 03 aix@blevinsfranks.com

Online booking is also available from our website

www.blevinsfranks.com

Wed 13 Sep LES-ARCS

Registration 10 for 10.30am start, until 12 noon

BLEVINS  FRANKS

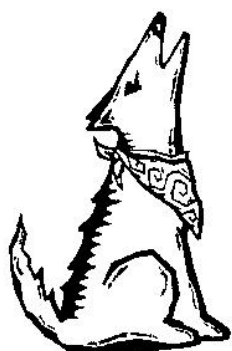
TAX • ADVICE • INVESTMENTS • ESTATE PLANNING • PENSIONS

Blevins Franks Group is represented in France by the following companies: Blevins Franks Financial Management Limited (BFFM) and Blevins Franks France SASU (BFF). BFFM is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority in the UK, reference number 179731. Where advice is provided overseas, via the Insurance Mediation Directive from Malta, the regulatory system differs in some respects from that of the UK. Blevins Franks France SASU (BFF), is registered with ORIAS, registered number 07 027 475, and authorised as 'Conseil en Investissements Financiers' and 'Courtiers d'Assurance' Category B (register can be consulted on www.orias.fr). Member of ANACOFI-CIF. BFF's registered office: Parc Innolfin, 3 Rue du Golf, CS 60073, 33701 Mérignac - RCS BX 496 800 465 APE 6622Z. Garantie Financière et Assurance de Responsabilité Civile Professionnelle conformes aux articles L 541-3 du Code Monétaire et Financier and L512-6 and 512-7 du Code des Assurances (assureur MMA).

Var Village Voice

Read all about what happens in the Var, where and When! with the VAR VILLAGE VOICE! Plus entertaining articles! Plus important News for Expats.

Why not give it as a Gift?



month!

Don't forget Subscribers can advertise their rental property for FREE on the VVV Website

www.varvillagevoice.com

"Villa Rentals"

Don't miss out - Use the VVV website - Look at the Stats. hits going up by the

Tell your friends -

So easy to subscribe:

€20 only Internet issue

contact Editor:

**Anita Rieu-Sicart,
1142 Route des Miquelets,
83510 LORGUES.**

**anita@varvillagevoice.com
or: 04 94 04 49 60
www.varvillagevoice.com**