

Travelogue No 22



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World Economy In Meltdown

Gross corporate greed in Wall Street has dragged down Stock Markets across the globe. Initial lending between banks caused by the failure of sub-prime mortgages result in the inevitable collapse of household banking names. Bad debts rampant, home repossessions and bankruptcies are now the order of the day.

European and Asian markets have disintegrated with Iceland going bust. Where will it all end ? There is little sign of stability following the Federal Reserve's intervention and the markets have continued to fall exponentially. The Dow Jones has fallen 40% in exactly one year and the FTSE over 30%. The knock on effects for pensioners and retired folk relying on stocks and shares is catastrophic.

And what are governments doing about it ?? For one thing, they are using tax payers money to create a slush fund to rescue all those lame duck banks who have gotten us into this disaster in the first place. Apart from allowing the likes of Lehman Brothers to accrue vast bonuses for their 'key' staff, little or nothing is being done for the unfortunates who have paid into the pension pot over many years.

Where are the guaranteed payments to those who no longer work and rely on a monthly pension ?? Sorry mate, we have had to dip into your investments to bolster the fat cat brigade and rescue the banks from oblivion. What a disgrace, and they still rake in vast bonuses. Thanks to the Yanks, we will all suffer from this cataclysm.

**The Truth, The Whole Truth
And Nothing Like The Truth -
You Be The Judge !!**

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Goats Freed From Prison Nightmare

A herd of wrongly-imprisoned goats have been freed from jail by a Congolese minister.

The herd of goats was found during a routine prison visit. Deputy Justice Minister Claude Nyamugabo discovered them during a routine prison visit. He said the animals, which were charged with being sold illegally by the roadside, were held illegally in a Kinshasa prison cell.

The herd was due to appear in court in the capital. The minister said that

the mistake had arisen because police officers had gaps in their knowledge of the law and they would be sent for retraining in North Wales.

Prisoners in Kinshasa jails have complained of torture, but it was only the goats who were deemed to have been wrongly imprisoned.



WANTED



Active Gambler In The Neighbourhood

He is 30 with lank, greasy hair, travels by bicycle, lives locally and gambles with other people's money. He will con you with sob stories, ransack your wallet and lose your inheritance. Please contact Insp. Dean 'Dingo' Morrison if spotted or conned, on +4478790532148 Vigilance pays !!!!

A Swiss adventurer flew into the history books Friday by crossing from France to Britain on only a jet-powered wing, describing afterwards how he felt "like a bird" over the English Channel.

Yves Rossy, 49, touched down in a field on top of the white cliffs of Dover after completing the 35-kilometre (22-mile) journey over one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. "I have proved it is possible to fly like a bird," he said with a big grin, adding: "My aim (was) to realize the dream. You have an idea in your head, and to actually achieve it is the most gratifying thing you can do."

Asked how he felt, he joked: "It's a mixture of ecstasy and trying to stay concentrated -- because I was thinking, the water is pretty cold down there." With the carbon wing strapped to his back, Rossy had leapt out of a small plane at an altitude of 2,500 metres over the French coast before jetting off at speeds of more than 200 kilometres per hour.

Against a backdrop of picture-perfect blue skies, he ended his adventure around ten minutes later by cutting his engines and deploying a green and blue parachute at an altitude of some 1,500 metres over the English coast.

After landing in a ploughed field, the daredevil -- a pilot with Swiss International Air Lines -- was visibly thrilled as he was helped out of the wing structure



into which he had been strapped for the flight. "It was great. I feel a lot more calm now than before the flight. It was perfect conditions," he said, after being mobbed by journalists who rushed from the planned landing site nearby to pepper him with questions.

Rossy had never flown for longer than ten minutes and had to calibrate his equipment and weight to perfection since even the addition of a few hundred grammes would have affected his flying ability.

His trip was broadcast live by two light aircraft and two helicopters which flew alongside him across the channel.

Although it appeared perfect, in fact Rossy did not arrive at the intended landing site -- apparently after he tricked his support staff. "He didn't land where he was supposed to because at the last minute he played a trick on me," said Jean-Marc Colomb, pilot of the plane which dropped Rossy over the French coast and then tailed him across the Channel. "He put on his booster engines to shake me off and I couldn't follow him, and then he did a nice spiral as he came to earth and the plane can't follow that."

Stephane Marmier, a skydiver and part of the support team, told AFP the flight had gone without a hitch. "He's experienced a little bit of air turbulence, but otherwise it was the perfect flight," he said. Rossy, who calls himself FusionMan, was originally scheduled to make the flight Wednesday, but postponed twice due to bad weather.

In 2004, he became the first man to fly with jet-powered wings. He was aiming to trace the route of French inventor Louis Bleriot, who became the first person to fly across the English Channel in a plane 99 years ago, taking 37 minutes for the trip.

Asked what the future could bring, Rossy added: "Why not do flights like this with teams of people? Imagine the Red Arrows (the aerobatics team of Britain's Royal Air Force) like this. It is an exciting prospect.

"This is just the start."

Truffle Hound Terrorizes Woman

A pig the size of a young Water Buffalo has trapped an Australian woman in her village home, the national broadcaster reported Tuesday.

Caroline Hayes, 63, has tried leave her house in Puki in northern New South Wales to use the outdoor toilet but says the animal has bitten her and shoved her back inside. "It's a beautiful truffle hound but he's just so big and such a boar," she told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Rangers from the local Murwillumbah Council tried to rescue her but could not



capture the huge animal. "The rangers came out to my house yesterday with a dog cage and this pig is that big, it's like trying to put an elephant in a dunny," she said. "They tried for a little while and they couldn't do it. They got his snout in but he just backed off and went back to my dam, where he was hav-

ing a lovely time in the drinking water."

Hayes said she and her neighbours began feeding the pig, whom they named Bigunit, when it showed up at their homes 10 days ago after its owners could not handle it and let it loose in the rainforest. But it became aggressive, demanding more food and biting her on the leg when she tried to go to the toilet.

"It started getting very pushy, shoving me around. I got a bit frightened, to the stage that it began knocking on my door at four o'clock in the morning, by head-butting it," she said. "This morning, I wanted to go to the dunny, which is outside. I opened up the door and the pig pushed me so hard that it I stumbled back into my room, where I fell over," she said. The rangers were due to try to recapture the pig.

Looks Familiar



Rag Head Beaver



Dutch Beaver



Canadian Beaver

Too Tight To Call

Anyone For Lunch ??

Michel Lotito (France) (b. 15 June 1950) of Grenoble, France, known as Monsieur Mangetout, ate metal and glass from 1959 until his death last year. His diet since 1966 included 18 bicycles, 15 supermarket trolleys, seven TV sets, six chandeliers, two beds, a pair of skis, a low-calorie Cessna light aircraft and a computer. He is said to have provided the only example in history of a coffin (handles and all) ending up inside a man. By October 1997, he had eaten nearly nine tons of metal. He was eventually cremated and his remains sent to a local foundry. He had much trouble in airports !!!



Michel Lotito tucking into a tasty clutch housing assembly

Fly Me To The Moon - Pilots Doze Off On The Job

Captain Scott Oltman, 54, and First Officer Dillon Shepley, 24, dozed off during the brief midmorning flight from Honolulu to Hilo, on Hawaii. The Federal Aviation Administration suspended the men for the careless and reckless operation of an aircraft. Both were fired by Hawaii's Go airlines, operator of the February 13 flight which was carrying 40 passengers.

Mr Oltman was also cited for failing to maintain radio communications and banned from flying for 60 days. Mr Shepley had his flying licence suspended for 45 days. Both completed their suspensions earlier this month but an FAA spokesman said he did not know if they were flying again with a different airline.

The men had been given a 15 hour break before their shift, nearly double the FAA minimum. Mr Oltman was later diagnosed with a severe obstructive sleep apnea, a sleep disorder which can lead to extreme fatigue. An investigation found no obvious explanation for why both men fell asleep. There were no problems with the aircraft's pressurisation system or carbon monoxide levels.

Over a period of 17 minutes, air traffic controllers made nearly a dozen unanswered calls to the men. In re-

cordings obtained by The Associated Press, the controller is heard repeatedly trying to contact the pilots and speaking to the pilot of another Go flight. "I'm worried he might be in an emergency situation," the controller says. Radio contact was finally established 44 minutes into what is usually a 45-minute flight. By this time, the plane had overshoot Hilo airport by 15 miles. The flight crew was ordered to return and landed safely.





North Wales Chaos as Rampant Ram Routs Routers

North Wales Police said the animal had to be stopped for the safety of motorists after it ran on to a major road. The out-of-control ovine had been running across both carriageways of the A55 near St Asaph, one of the busiest roads in Wales.

A spokesman for North Wales Police said that the force had received "numerous calls from concerned motorists reporting the ram as a major disruption. Officers attended and to ensure the safety of the motorists, a decision was made to utilise the Taser," said the spokesman. This was successfully done and the ram was then returned to its owner uninjured. The ram was later returned to the farmer's field."



The RSPCA has expressed concern over the incident. A spokesman said: "One of our inspectors will look into it and try to find out what the circumstances were and what the rules and guidelines are for the user of a Taser."

Last year the North Wales Police chief constable Richard Brunstrom volunteered to be shot with a Taser. He said that people who were hit by the stun gun "would not enjoy the consequences."

The animal, which has made a full recovery, has now been returned to its field. Its lawyers have been informed of the incident and are currently considering a claim of unlawful assault. Police Chief Brunstrom made no further comment and reiterated his desire to be shot.



Dead Poet's Licence



Friedrich Schiller, one of Germany's favourite poets and playwrights, has received reminders to pay his television licence - despite having been dead since 1805.

Two notices were delivered by GEZ, a licence-collecting agency, which threatened to mount legal action against the literary hero, who is best known for his poem Ode to Joy, which was put to music by Beethoven, unless he quickly settled his monthly €17 bill.

They were sent to a primary school bearing Schiller's name in Weigsdorf-Kerblitz, a town in the eastern state of Saxony.

The second came despite the school's head teacher sending the agency a letter informing them that "the addressee is no longer in

a position to listen to the radio or watch television". GEZ replied saying Schiller would only be exempt if he could prove he did not own television or radio sets.

After the confusion was settled, a spokesman for the agency apologised. "We have to deal with such a huge amount of data, that something like this can happen, and the name Friedrich Schiller is not so unusual that it stood out as strange," she told The Guardian. "We will now alter his status in our computer system."

Michael Binder, the head teacher, said: "I told the GEZ that Herr Schiller has not been with us for quite some time, and included his curriculum vitae with my letter."

Wombats At Lakeside





Gallery - CM Sixes 2006



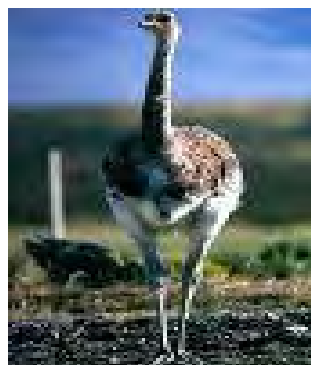
The five foot tall rhea escaped from its enclosure after a fox disturbed it and another bird during the night.

But, while one of the birds stayed in the area of the farm, in Lochanhead, Dumfries, one of the creatures ran off.

Rheas belong to the same category of birds as ostriches and emus, and whilst they can not fly they are said to be inquisitive, friendly and

Xmas Lunch Escapes

graceful creatures.



A spokeswoman for Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary said the bird, which is white, is not aggressive. However police are advising anyone who spots the bird to contact them, rather than approach it, as it may become alarmed and run off. It can easily outstrip a human as its top speed is more than 30 mph. Constable Dutchy Verhagen is pursuing the matter. *Errr, slowly !!*