

IMCZ NEWS



APRIL / MAY 2021

EDITORIAL

With the change of hour behind us and the lighter evenings, it's starting to feel like spring. Of course, we're suffering the usual schizophrenic early spring weather – a mix of warm days, late snow, heavy rain, wind and sometimes just dull conditions. But the trend is warmer and I, for one, welcome this. I've already had the bike out and, dodging lying snow, have managed a few tours this year. I'm looking forward to more.

For most of us Covid-19 and its consequences remains a dominant issue. It severely limits our ability to do the things we want to do and stops us going to the places we want to visit. Hopefully the ever-accelerating vaccination programme here, and in Europe and the US generally, should free us from many of our constraints within the next two months or so, and things can start to return to some form of normality. Fully normal conditions will take longer of course and I expect we'll need additional vaccines against different mutations of the virus before this pandemic ends. In the meantime we'll just have to suffer the Swiss scenery and leisure opportunities. There are worse places to be stuck!

So look on the bright side, enjoy what you can and be patient. In the meantime, remember the Thursday evening Zoom sessions we're running while we're not able to meet in person. I look forward to seeing as many of you there as can make it.

Take care
Alan



EVENTS

Corona continues to limit what we can do. We have our weekly Zoom Stammtische meetings at 18:00 on Thursdays – for joining details, see the club website Events section (<https://imcz.club/Events>)

On Thursday 18th March Harry Fuchs gave a special Stammtische on German language. Harry is the director of [softlanding](#) language school in Baar. He gave lots of hints for beginners and he also digressed into some of the history and origin of German. I certainly learned something from his interactive presentation. Thanks a lot to Harry for his interesting Stammtische.

As soon as things start to open up, we will organize in-person events once again.



IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1

- Editorial

HEALTH P.2

- Intermittent fasting superior to energy-restricted dieting!

SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY P.4

- An Excursion into the human mind

TRAVEL AND LEISURE P.5

- The Douro Salamanca, Part 1
- The Crossing - The Night I Knew – For Certain – I Was Going To Die

SPORTS P.10

- Under the Fangs of the White Spider

BUSINESS / FINANCE P.13

- Investment Commentary

HUMOUR P.14

TITBITS P.16

- Member's Marketplace
- IMCZ Rates
- Corporate Space

STAMMTISCH AT HOME

Whenever until whenever
Safely in your own home
Cheers.



Intermittent fasting superior to energy-restricted dieting!

Remo P. Jutzeler van Wijlen, Head R&D Sponser Sports Food
Ing.Appl Food Sciences, MAS Nutrition & Health ETHZ

Probably ever since being overweight became a world-wide public-health issue, together with the growing awareness of concomitant health implications, a wide range of dieting regimens have emerged. These are often linked to lifestyle and aesthetically driven perception of the "ideal" in our present world. Every other year, a new magic regimen becomes popular, proving successful for some, failing likewise for others. However, a plethora of different regimens, widely varying study designs, diverse subject characteristics (overweight / obese / lean), lifestyle (sedentary / active), or macronutrient composition of the diets make it very difficult to compare and state clear benefits of one calorie-restricted diet over another.

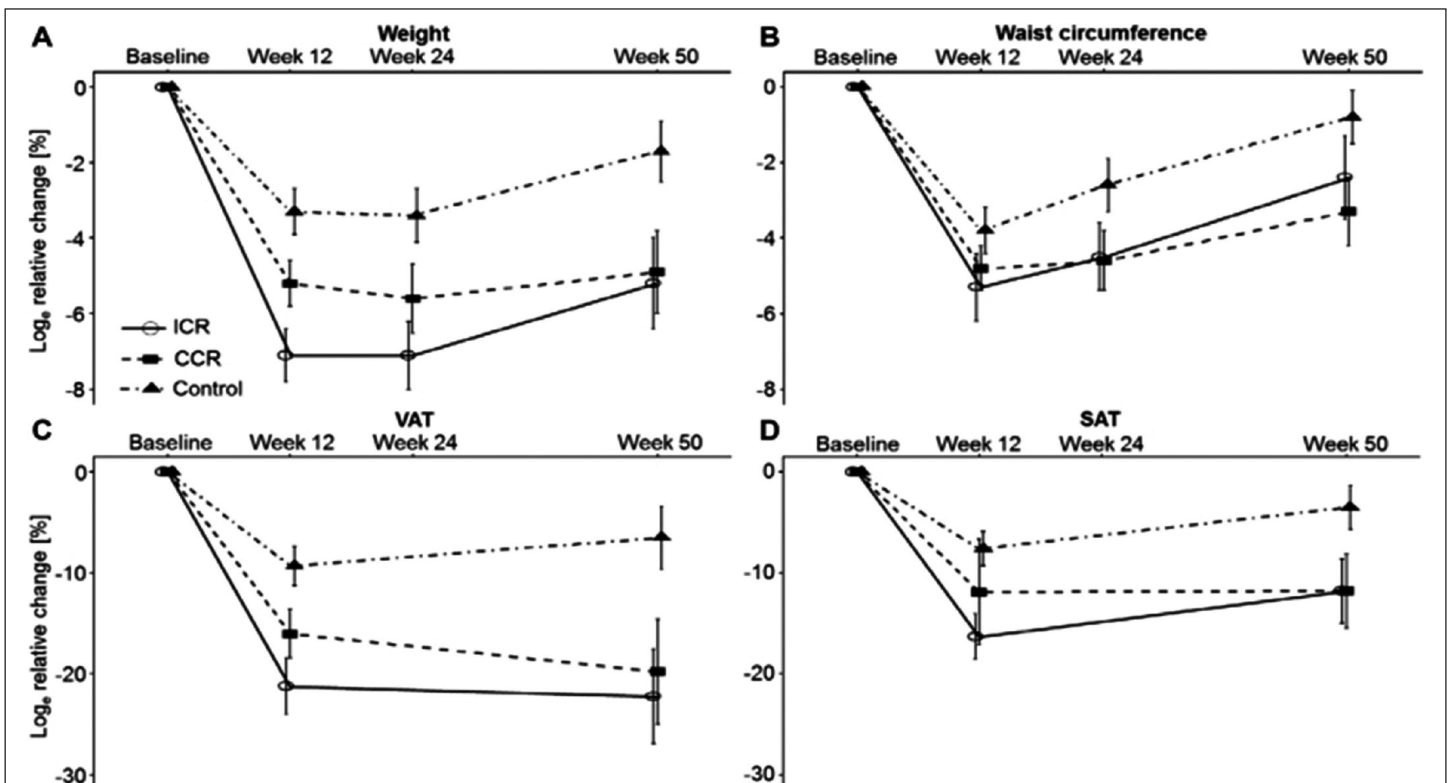
Lately, so-called "intermittent fasting" (IMF) diets have become popular. However, even within an IMF regimen many variations are possible by

combining time-restricted feeding (e.g. 8h per day), alternate day fasting, and week cycles (e.g. 1d/1d alternating for 4,6,8, etc. days). All these differences may have their consequences on perceived satiety, hunger feelings, metabolism, and hence adherence to the diet and, ultimately, efficacy. Furthermore, the daily occupation of a dieting individual, like having a sedentary or physically energetic job, may be detrimental to the suitability and subsequent success of a certain energy-restricted diet. Against that background it is hardly surprising that comparisons of the popular IMF diet versus classic continuous caloric restriction (CCR) mostly fail to find clear advantages. For example, a 50-week-study in 2018 on 150 overweight and obese participants (BMI 25-40) failed to demonstrate significant inter-group differences between CCR and IMF restriction



regarding weight reduction and prevention of metabolic diseases (though borderline in favour of IMF, see graph & Schübel 2018).

On the other hand, potentially health-relevant metabolic differences in the effects of IMF vs. CCR have been identified recently (Antoni 2018). In their study, the scientists observed significantly more pronounced improvements in blood pressure, as well as postprandial glucose and lipid metabolism (C-peptide and triacylglycerol response) in the IMF group,



IMCZ BOARD MEMBERS Thumbnail biographies of board members can be found on our website www.imcz.club under 'About Us' section	PRESIDENT Bill Lichtensteiger 079 378 63 26 president@imcz.club	NEWSLETTER EDITOR Alan Cattell 079 340 25 51 newsletter@imcz.club	SECRETARY Geoff Watson 079 946 37 27 secretary@imcz.club	TREASURER Lindsay Johnston 079 276 78 03 treasurer@imcz.club
	MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Anthony Haroutunian 076 328 09 32 membership@imcz.club	WEBMASTER Roger Brooks 079 583 99 35 webmaster@imcz.club		

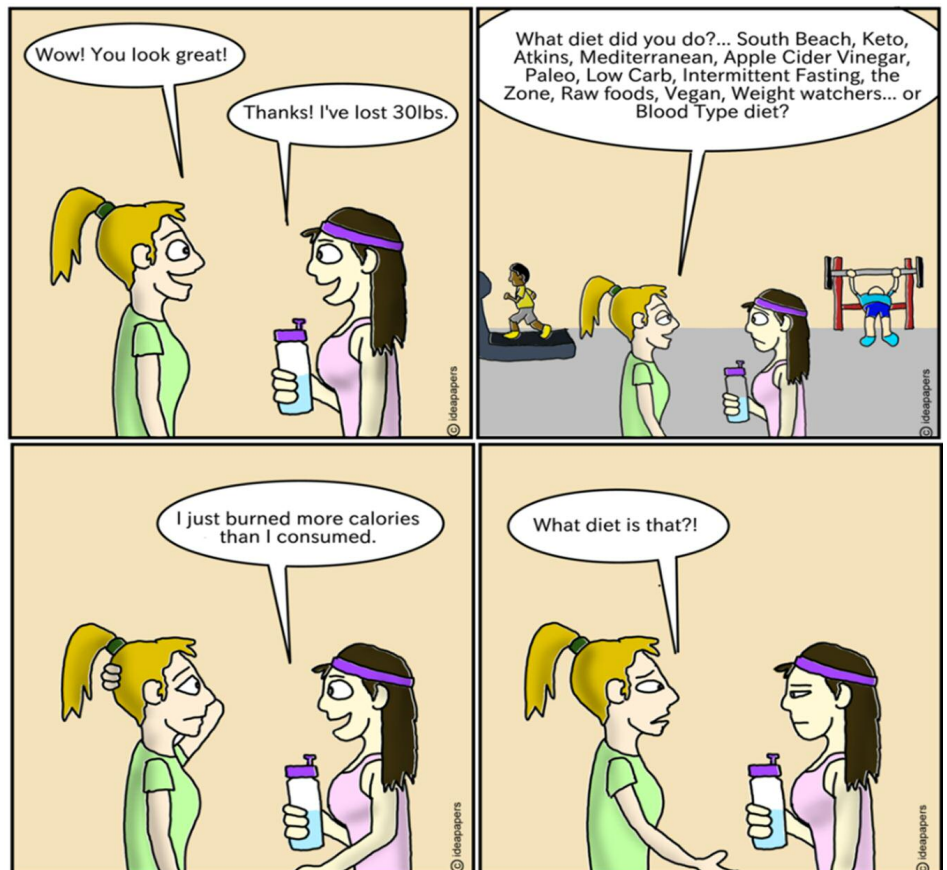
which dieted for only 2/7 days of the week, at a similar weight loss of 5%. Furthermore, the same researchers also showed in a small pilot study that time-restricted feeding, i.e. IMF, may trigger significant reductions in energy intake in overweight subjects on an *ad libitum* (=eat as much as you want) diet (Antoni 2018). The simple difference between the intervention and the control group was that the former postponed breakfast and preponed dinner for 10 weeks, which resulted roughly in a 16/8 hours fasting/feeding day pattern. As simple as this change may appear, it may have a significant impact on one's social life which would make it difficult to sustain in the longer term.

The best diet will always be the one to which you can best adhere. If that is alternate day fasting for 2 or 3 days a week, other time-restricted IMF regimens, or continuously energy-restricted dieting, it should primarily depend on your individual preferences and constraints. IMF may have significant advantages, also on metabolic health markers, for some. However, if you know you risk falling off the wagon on days with an energy deficit of ~75% or overcompensate on the *ad libitum* dieting days: forget the IMF approach. On the other hand, if you are happy that you can eat as much as you want every other day while able to stay in a level or even a marginal energy deficit, go for it. If skipping breakfast allows you to effortlessly reduce your energy intake by 500kcal/day - do it. Do not worry, though, if intermittent fasting just does not seem to work for you even after you have given it enough time (2 weeks+) for your biological rhythm to adjust.

In conclusion, when comparing IMF and CCR, the main driver of any induced weight loss seems to be the caloric deficit you are generating, either way. The most crucial factor is therefore to find a regimen that you can most easily comply with. Second, add some resistance exercise and ingest sufficient protein (2.0-2.7 g per kg of body weight daily) with your diet. Such increased protein

intakes will help to slow down muscle loss, which is – to some extent – a side effect of dietary energy restriction. Third, be aware that calorie reduction and weight loss are accompanied by changes in circulating hormones and energy metabolism that serve to minimize the energy deficit, attenuate weight loss, and promote weight regain (Trexler 2014). From an evolutionary point of view a survival mechanism, such metabolic adaptations

include altered thermogenesis, energy metabolism efficiency, energy expenditure, satiety, and hunger, and make weight loss increasingly difficult despite low energy intake and high physical activity. It's therefore all the more important to find the diet most suitable for your circumstances, and not just try to stick stubbornly to general dietary recommendations and nutrient values if a regimen does not work for you.



Sleep, both in quality and quantity, is important for a good physical and mental health.



HOFKLINIK

Wach- & Schlafmedizin

Snoring, sleep apnea, restless legs are just a few of the many possible problems to disrupt our sleep and reduce our daytime functioning.

Hofklinik für Wach- & Schlafmedizin
 Löwenstrasse 16a | CH 6004 Luzern
 T +41 41 242 16 16 | F +41 41 242 16 17
 info@hofklinik.ch | www.hofklinik.ch

An Excursion into the human mind

Contributed by IMCZ honorary member Muthana Kubba

An eye-catching title, but an infinitely intricate and complicated subject. Sometimes I wonder how, and where, our minds store very old memories; childhood memories come back vividly to me time and again, but from where? And how??

The analogy between our brains and super computers is completely irrelevant and unhelpful. We do not have a central processing unit with peripheral memory units. However, research has shown that certain portions of our brains are specialized to perform certain tasks. One must realize that it is extremely difficult to perform useful research in this field on living humans. Our best and only approach is to monitor externally and discover which parts of the brain are active when performing what tasks.

Building Blocks

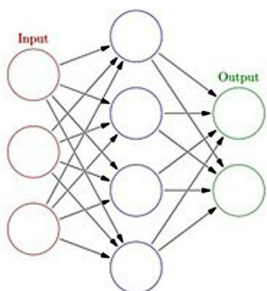
The basic building block of our brain is the neuron. A mouthful, but all it means is a neural junction cell. They are connected by extensions (axons) to other neurons via interfaces called synapses. They form a dense network of around 90 billion cells which make up the basic structure of the brain.



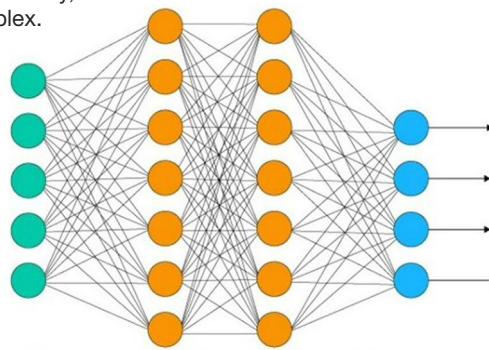
Interconnected Neurons

The secret of it all, how we learn, how we see, how we think, all lies in the way the synapses connect with each other. But why? We still do not really know. It is remarkable that exactly the same pattern of interconnections is to be found in all facets of nature, be it the brain of a bird, the rudimentary nerve centre of insects or the human brain. May be one day we will wire our computers the same way and then expect them to think for themselves.

Let us take a quick look. In both figures below, there is an input and output. The inputs are the stimuli: e.g. information from the eyes, ears, fingers etc. The outputs are the orders, which go to the various muscles and carry out the instructions of the brain. Of course, this is hugely simplified. In real life, the complexity is many, many orders of magnitude more complex.



Simplified network of neurons



● Input Layer ● Hidden Layer ● Output Layer

Dense interconnection of intermediate "layers"

You may recall the name of Professor Henry Markram at the EPFL University of Lausanne. Altogether, his name was mentioned three times already on the pages of our previous Newsletters: May 2013, January 2015 and December 2017. In all of them, it was in connection with his "Blue Brain" project. The project aimed at solving the brain puzzle: how do we manage to think, where is the information stored and how is it retrieved.

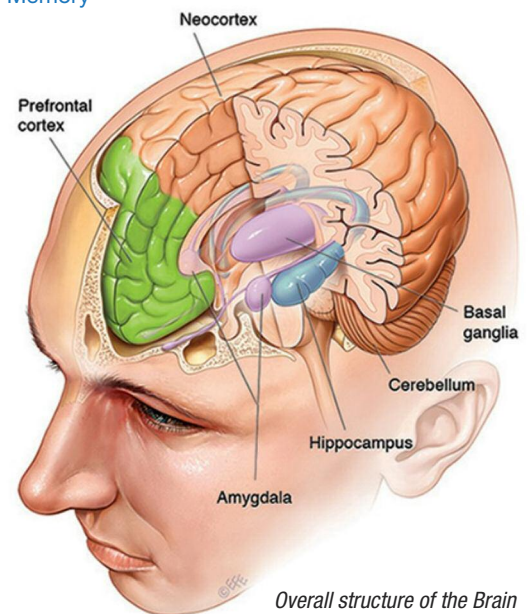
The European Union has funded the Blue Brain project to the tune of USD 1300 million, but so far, we are nowhere nearer to understanding how our brains work. Markram was trying to simulate the cell connections for a tiny chunk of rat brain tissue; in other words he was trying to 'reverse engineer' the brain. After less than two years, dozens of PhD's granted and huge sums of money spent it was established that the project was mismanaged and its claims overblown, Markram was asked to step down.

Back to square one, however one relevant facet was established, namely that certain chemical substances have a direct influence on memory of both mice and humans. They include *Adrenaline*, *Cortisol* or *Melatonin*.

So how does the brain work? Certainly, our experience with computers and their memory is not relevant. What is certain, however, is that permanent memory in the brain is formed by specialised regions. In fact memories are not stored in just one single part of the brain. Different memories are stored across different interconnected brain regions. Implicit memories, such as motoric memories rely on the basal ganglia and cerebellum and short-term memory relies heavily on the prefrontal cortex.

Further reading

[Wikipedia Human Brain Project](#)
[The Chemistry of Memory](#)



Overall structure of the Brain



The Douro Salamanca, Part 1

Contributed by IMCZ Webmaster Roger Brooks with photos courtesy of Margareta Pfander

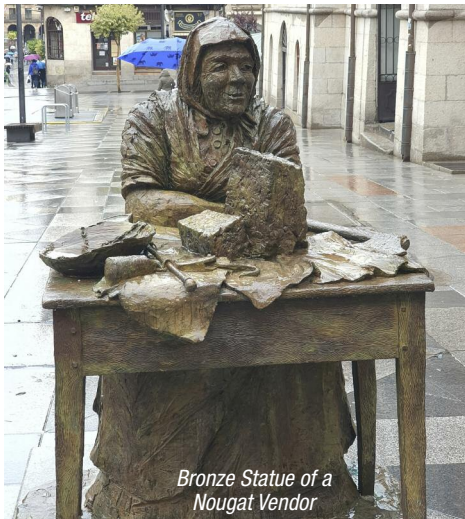
Salamanca is in western Spain, over 100 km east of Barca d'Alva. Nonetheless, Douro river cruises generally offer excursions to Salamanca, and ours was no exception. Salamanca is situated on a plateau near the Tormes River, a major tributary of the Douro. It is considered one of the most spectacular Renaissance cities in Europe. It is nicknamed La Ciudad Dorada on account of the color which the sandstone buildings have acquired over time. Major highlights are the Puente Romana (a Roman bridge), the University of Salamanca (one of the oldest in Europe) and the Plaza Mayor (a huge square nicknamed "the living room of Salamanca").

History

The site was first settled by Celtic or perhaps pre-Celtic tribes in pre-Christian times. Hannibal conquered it in 220 BCE, but after the Roman conquest of Carthage, it became an important trade center under Roman rule. In the first century CE, the Romans built an enormous bridge (the Puente Romana) across the Tormes, which survives to this day. Salamanca was conquered by the Umayyads in the 9th century CE and reconquered by Christians in the 10th century. However, it didn't recover from the depopulation which took place during the years of war until the 11th century. The University was founded in the early 13th century, making it the third oldest in Europe. Salamanca's heyday was the 16th century, during which the University achieved international renown. The city was heavily damaged during the Napoleonic wars and served as Generalissimo Francisco Franco's headquarters during the Spanish Civil War. In 1998, the old city of Salamanca was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The current population is estimated at around 150,000.

Walking Tour

A roughly 2-hour bus ride brought us from Barca d'Alva to Salamanca. We stopped at the Hotel Alameda Palace, on the outskirts of the old city for a comfort break and then formed



Bronze Statue of a Nougat Vendor



Plaza Mayor de Salamanca



Mercado Central de Salamanca

into four groups. We joined a group for a walking tour of the old city. The old city is garnished with whimsical statues, of which we passed several on our way.

Mercado Central

Our first stop was the Mercado Central (Central Market). The market offers all kinds of food, but mostly fish. I always enjoy seeing what's on offer in local markets, especially fish markets, even though we are seldom in a position to buy. The market was built in the early 20th century by the architect Joaquín de Vargas y Aguirre, who also designed the Casa Lis (more about that later), and was restored in 2001.

Plaza Mayor

The Plaza Mayor may well be the largest town square I have ever seen. It is also said to be the most beautiful in Spain. It occupies a portion of what used to be the even more spacious Plaza San Martin (see below). King Felipe V commissioned it in the early 18th century to be used for bullfighting, a purpose it served until the mid-19th century. It was designed and built over more than 25 years by the Baroque

architects of the Churriguera family in their eponymous style and features 88 arches and 6 entrances. The large building which dominates the north side of the (not quite square) square is the city hall (Ayuntamiento). It was the last part of the perimeter to be completed.

Iglesia de San Martín

Our next stop was the Church of St. Martin de Tours, just south of the Plaza Mayor. It is a Romanesque church, which was commissioned by the Count Martin Fernández. It was built in the 12th century on top of a chapel dedicated to St. Peter. It has been renovated countless times since and has a rectangular floor plan with three naves and three apses. The church once occupied a corner of the eponymous Plaza San Martín, but the Renaissance-era Puerta del Mediodía on the south side (shown in the picture) now faces the Calle Quintana and the original Romanesque west portal faces the triangular plaza del Corriollo. Both portals feature sculptures of St. Martin sharing his cloak with a pauper above the entrance. The church is now hard to see

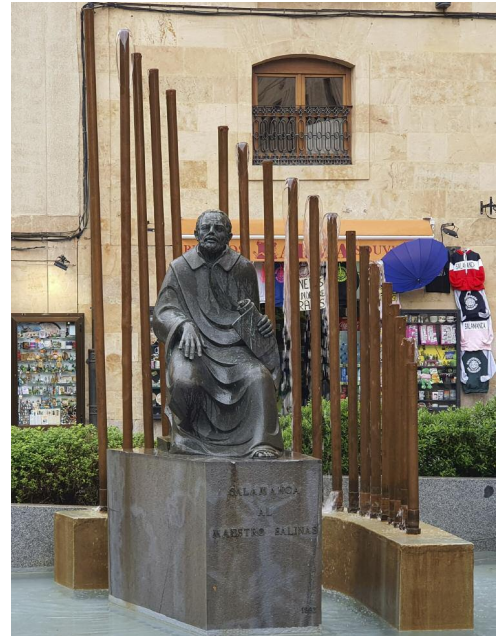
Church of St. Martin de Tours



Edificio de las Tres Culturas



Statue of Francisco Salinas



among the more modern buildings, but it is nonetheless considered the best example of Romanesque architecture in Salamanca, next to the Old Cathedral. It was declared a National Historic-Artistic Monument in 1931.

Edificio de las Tres Culturas

On our way to La Clerecía (a Baroque Catholic church) we paused at the “Building of the Three Cultures” at #17, Rúa Mayor. It was built in the mid-19th century in neo-Arabic style, a style which enjoyed great popularity in Salamanca in the late 19th and early 20th century. It is most remarkable for combining the symbols of all three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. We also passed a statue honoring [Francisco de Salinas](#), who taught Music at the University of Salamanca in the 16th century, and is still remembered for his contributions to [microtonality](#). He mathematically derived a scale of 19 equal-tempered tones to the octave, the next number of intervals after the familiar twelve which adequately approximates the natural harmonics (see Muthana’s article in the previous newsletter).

La Clerecía, Casa de las Conchas

The Baroque church, [la Clerecía](#), and la Casa de Las Conchas (the House of Shells) face each other across the Calle Compañía. The church whose full name is “El Real Colegio del Espíritu Santo de la Compañía de Jesús” (Royal College of the Holy Spirit of the Jesuit Order) was built in the 17th and 18th centuries by order of Queen Margarita of Austria, wife of Philip III of Spain. It is particularly known for its towers, said to provide some of the best views over Salamanca. The nearly 200 steps up to the towers are known as the [Scala Coeli](#) (Latin for “Stairway to Heaven”). We would normally have found this irresistible but passed on account of the inclement weather.

La Casa de las Conchas is much older. Its construction was started at the end of the 15th century by Rodrigo Maldonado de Talavera and finished in the early 16th century by his son, Rodrigo Arias Maldonado. It owes its name to the more than 300 shells that decorate its façade, which combines Gothic, Renaissance and Mudéjar styles. The shell motif will be familiar to anyone who has travelled on the Camino de Santiago (St. James’s Way), as it is the symbol of St. James. The decoration may have been chosen by the senior Rodrigo Maldonado, who was a knight and Chancellor of the Order of St. James (Orden de Santiago) during the house’s construction. However, a more romantic theory maintains that his son chose the shells to demonstrate his love for his wife Juana, whose family, the Pimentel, used the shell as a family symbol. The house was declared a national monument in 1929 and became property of the city of Salamanca in 1967. It now houses the Salamanca Public Library.

University of Salamanca

One of the high points of our tour was visiting the [University of Salamanca](#). The university was founded in the 12th century and received its royal charter in the early 13th century and papal recognition as a university shortly thereafter, making it the third-oldest in the world (after Bologna and Oxford). University scholars helped Christopher Columbus to get financial support from the crown for his voyages of exploration and also proposed full rights for the indigenous peoples of the New World, a radical position at that time.

Classes were originally held in the cloister of the (old) cathedral, in other churches, and in houses rented for the purpose. The main building of the university today, the Edificio de las Escuelas Mayores (building of the upper, or in English, graduate school) was built over more than a century, starting in the early 15th century. The architectural style is known as [Plateresque](#), invoking the detailed ornamentation of the silversmith’s art. Salamanca is known for many



examples of this style, which include the aforementioned Casa de las Conchas. The building was enlarged in the 19th century and the façade was renovated shortly before our visit in preparation for the school's 800th anniversary.

New students (and tourists) are traditionally challenged to find a frog in the ornate 16th century façade of the University's main entrance. Students who find it (without help) are said to be sure of passing their exams. An apocryphal story maintains that the three skulls represent those of three children of the Catholic monarchs Isabel and Fernando who died shortly before the facade was built. The frog, whose nickname is "la Parrita", is thought to represent Doctor Parra, who vainly tried to save them. Another hypothesis is that the frog represents scepticism during the Spanish Inquisition of the Catholic doctrine of resurrection on the Day of Judgment, invoking the Spanish proverb "when frogs grow hair" (i.e. never, the equivalent of the English "when pigs fly"). One of the university's most renowned scholars, [Luis de León](#), had his teaching career interrupted by 4 years of imprisonment at the



Façade of the University of Salamanca



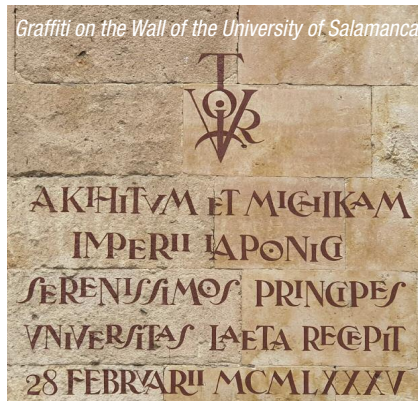
Souvenir Frog from Salamanca



The Famous Frog on the Façade of the University of Salamanca

hands of the inquisitors. The frog has become a symbol of Salamanca, and the souvenir shops offer frogs in all shapes and sizes. Instead of a replica of the frog perched on a skull, we opted for a more whimsical model.

Students who graduate (presumably because they were able to find the frog without help), traditionally painted graffiti on the university walls using a mixture of oil and bull's blood. This is said to be still the case, but most of the graffiti we saw was quite faded, except for this 1985 example. We were treated to a tour of the interior of the University as well. It is quite extensive and many of the rooms still contain well-preserved furnishings from the renaissance period and are still used as assembly or lecture halls. A law school classroom is one of the more impressive ones. A recurring architectural motif endemic to Salamanca is the two-pointed arch, which can be seen in the courtyards of the Casa de las Conchas, the Escuelas Mayores and the Escuelas Menores (lower, or in English, undergraduate school).



Graffiti on the Wall of the University of Salamanca



Second Floor of the Escuelas Mayores

Next Issue

Cathedrals, the Roman Bridge and more

Further Information

[Historia de la plaza Mayor de Salamanca](#)

[La Plaza de San Martín](#)

[La estructura de la iglesia de San Martín. Salamanca.](#)

[Rúa, 17: cerrado a cal y canto](#)

[Casa de las Conchas: The House of Shells](#)

[Plateresque Style in Spain's Golden Age](#)



Law Faculty Classroom of the University of Salamanca



The Crossing

The Night I Knew – For Certain – I Was Going To Die

Contributed by IMCZ Member Wayne Clark (Captain Tubs) with input from Emma Mae II

Background

Despite having been born and raised in Durban (by-the-sea), South Africa's largest shipping harbour and yacht haven, I was never interested in sailing. My brother-in-law Adrian was a keen sailor and kept nagging me to join him on weekends to challenge the waves off Durban's seashore. He eventually gave up on me.

My interest in sailing was sparked many years later, in the French Alps of all places, as far away from Durban by-the-sea as one can imagine. In her book *Mediterranean Adventure*, Emma Mae captures the scene when me and my three mates (Simon, Graham and GT) were plotting our escape from reality. In her Introduction *Emma Mae* wrote

Nestling in the snow-covered peaks above Tignes, the popular French ski resort, a little cabin was being battered by an unseasonal snow storm. Inside, an open log fire crackled and popped, the flames dancing shadows over the rug-scattered floor and across the rustic stone walls.

Four young men huddled around a table close to the fire. An oil lamp swayed gently over their heads. They were alone in the room yet spoke in low, almost whispered tones. Outside, the wind howled. A cork popped. Another bottle of fine claret had just been opened. A dozen more bottles stood unopened on the floor. It was going to be a long night, but they were in no hurry.

The storm was preventing them from going anywhere. They had ample food and wine and, after all, one simply does not rush into making important decisions, especially on the magnitude these lads were planning.

The plan being hatched in that log cabin was as daft as it was beautiful. The four of us planned to buy a sailing yacht. A yacht big enough to ensure each of us had our own private cabin. We would leave our respective jobs/businesses and explore the world. We decided we would see more of the world by sea than if we travelled over land or by air. There was one small draw-back. None of us had any sailing experience. Undeterred, three of us enrolled in a sailing school on our return to England – the intention being that we would all acquire the same level of competency before setting sail. GT was, among other things, a fisherman and claimed didn't need to learn the finer points of sailing.

The plan soon collapsed. Simon, who later became a world-renowned sailor in his own right, got married. Graham (Kingly) had the misfortune of being violently sea-sick every time he stepped onto a boat and offered to meet us anywhere in the world, provided he earned air-miles in the process. GT could not justify the financial commitment.

That left me, the most reluctant sailor of us all. I was by far the least competent and had little confidence in myself as a sailor. However, having come this far I wasn't going to throw in the towel completely. Exploring the world wasn't really an option for me, particularly alone. I had fallen in love with the Mediterranean countries and islands the moment I first arrived in Europe in the summer of 1973 and often visualized sailing in that part of the world. My decision to explore the Mediterranean (rather than the whole world) was an easy one – and I would do it alone if necessary.

Preparing for my Mediterranean Adventure

It took me a few months to find the perfect yacht for exploring the Mediterranean, at the price I could afford. When I was finally introduced to *Emma Mae II* it was love at first sight. She was perfect. *Emma Mae II* is a 27-foot Jaguar with a spacious interior (I could stand comfortably without cracking my head). She has two keels (with a one-meter draft), which allows her to sit comfortably on the mud when the tide is out and enabled us to navigate the shallow rivers of Brittany and the canals of Western France (Canal du Midi). To the disgust of the yacht broker, I made an immediate offer very close to the asking price. The deal was done and I was the proud owner of the lovely *Emma Mae II*. That was April 1993.

Preparations for the passage to the Mediterranean were frantically under way. The route had to be carefully planned and my foolish friends who insisted on being part of this epic voyage had to be allocated time-slots. Managing arrival-departure locations was a bit of a nightmare, but we all finally agreed preferred legs of the passage and time-slots. My first priority however, was to get to know *Emma Mae* early and to practice single-handed sailing (essential for what transpired later). I was planning to set sail in June, just a few short months away.

With the help of my friends Graham (Kingly) and Robert (Bob) Taylor and some 'shake-down' adventures between the Solent and Plymouth on England's south coast, I began to feel comfortable with *Emma Mae* and confident she was suitable for the journey. But I was not feeling as confident about me being suitable as her skipper. My late and dear friend, Commander David Gay helped boost my confidence by calmly guiding me through my passage planning, ensuring I always monitored the weather, kept a watchful eye on the mood of the sea, regularly considered alternative routes to suit the ever-changing weather and sea conditions – and most of all, to listen to *Emma Mae*. David's advice proved invaluable in every way, especially my decision to sail 'through' rather than 'around' Brittany.

Sailing from England's Fair Shores

The planning, organizing and panicking finally over, *Emma Mae II* skippered by 'Captain Tubs' (*Emma Mae*'s nick-name for yours truly, which sadly stuck for too long) set sail from Lymington, Hampshire, Southern England on the morning of 17 July 1993.

The voyage from England to Mallorca, the charming Spanish (Balearic) island in the western Mediterranean, turned out to be one of the most wonderful experiences of my life, especially as I was forced to travel at walking pace for the entire journey. As such, I was able to appreciate the finer aspects of life we so often miss living life in the fast-lane day-in, day-out. This delightful adventure is portrayed in some detail in my scrapbook (*Emma Mae II - Passage to the Mediterranean - Summer of 1993*).

For most of the journey, across the English Channel to France, the Channel Islands, through Brittany, the Bay of Biscay, the rivers Gironde, Garonne and the Canal du Midi – I had friends with me at various stages along the way. They were all good fun, a great comfort and much needed help for this rookie sailor.

The final leg of my adventure, from Carcassonne on Canal de Midi, the French port of Gruissan (near Narbonne), through the often-treacherous Gulf de Lyon then across the sea to Mallorca, was the only part of the journey I was alone. The single-handed rookie sailor. Quite a daunting task and, as it turned out, more than a little frightening.

My first attempt at the 'crossing' to Mallorca was thwarted by a weather front (storm) that arrived 24 hours sooner than it was supposed to. I was forced to shelter in a little fishing port on the Costa Brava, *Sant Feliu de Guixols* (don't ask me to pronounce it) for five long, lonely, wet and very bumpy days and nights.

The morning of 21 September 1993 dawned clear and bright. Blue skies and a blissfully calm sea. I set a course for Mallorca at around 08:00. The 150-mile crossing would take about 30 hours, the estimated arrival time in Mallorca being early afternoon of the following day. Insha'Allah.

The Crossing

The first few hours were uneventful. The sea was flat and calm. No wind. Blue skies. We (*Emma Mae* and Captain Tubs) motored steadily towards our destination. Mallorca.

The only slight concern I had was the CLOUD.

¹ Emma Mae II (her official name) – my delightful 27-foot sailing yacht. We spent 10 wonderful years together (well together a lot of the time)

² Graham Trevarthen from Cornwall (known as GT to avoid getting confused with Graham 'Kingly')



It was rather big, particularly angry looking – and it was lurking straight ahead of us, well, just a little to the left. To the east, or as the sailors say, a little to port. The cloud appeared to be drifting in an easterly direction, away from us. So, nothing to be terribly concerned about.

Maybe nothing to worry about, but I kept a wary eye on that monster cloud anyway.

By mid-afternoon we had drawn level with the monster, which had grown alarmingly and hadn't really moved much further east, as it was supposed to. Now definitely something to be concerned about.

For the first time since leaving the Costa Brava I felt a knot in my stomach. However, talking to myself, trying to calm my growing anxiety, I tried persuading myself that if I continued at a steady speed and on the course I had set for Mallorca, we should be passed the monster in a couple of hours – and be set for a very pleasant sail under the wondrous Mediterranean night sky.

Was that a flash of lightning? No, it couldn't be. Just the vivid imagination of a rookie single-handed sailor, very much alone – and feeling lonely. Not another vessel in sight.

No. It was not my imagination. That was definitely a bolt of lightning dancing between the cloud and the sea. The monster cloud had become quite dark and the lightning menacingly frequent.



I was no longer concerned. I was frightened. And with good reason. The monster cloud had changed course and was now heading our way. Or was that also my vivid imagination?

I just sat there. Mesmerized. Terrified.

The monster was teasing us. Getting closer, skipping alongside us. Moving away for a while, then back towards us again. Each time inching closer and closer. The bolts of lightning growing stronger and more frequent.

Then I noticed something odd. Something I had never before seen the likes of. A cone-like

part of cloud was protruding from the base of the monster, moving ever so slowly in a downward direction. Very strange.

Then something else caught my eye. Movement in the water directly below the cone-like formation. I couldn't believe my eyes, the sea was splashing upwards, forming into a funnel and steadily climbing to join the cone.

Then it struck me. Well, not literally. A bloody WATERSPOUT had formed before my very eyes.



My fear turned to panic. Hold on, I'm not allowed to panic. Sailors don't panic. Not even rookie sailors!!!

Trying to remain calm, I began preparing *Emma Mae* for a possible strike – or possibly two strikes, the waterspout and/or the lightning. Maybe both.

Retrieving cushions from below, I covered as much metal as I could (it's amazing how much metal there is on a plastic boat), secured the life raft on the deck and packed emergency rations in case I did have to take to the life raft.

I had no radio contact with the world. The maximum range of *Emma Mae's* radio was 30 miles. I had no-one to call for help. There was nothing I could do, except sit, watch and wait for the inevitable.

One more visit below for a blanket. Bloody Hell!!! In the few seconds I was below a second waterspout had formed and, the monster cloud was now almost directly over us. Bolts of lightning seemed only a few meters away.

It was then that I knew for certain I was going to die that night.

A good friend gave me a "bon voyage" present before I sailed from England. A recent issue of the National Geographic magazine. The cover photo of the magazine looking very much like what I was witnessing. The sub-title of the cover: *Lightning and waterspouts. A sailor's worst nightmare.*

Thank you very much, Mr. King.

For five long hours the monster cloud and its entourage (the waterspouts and bolts of lightning) continued to tease us. Drifting towards us, away from us, back again towards us, then away again. Staying close, keeping company. Far too close for comfort.

All I could do was sit and stare. And pray. I'm not much of a believer, but that night I prayed to my dearly departed mother, father, sister and grandmother – and to whoever else may have been listening and hopefully, watching over us.

Every time I thought the monster was drifting

away, it would charge back at us. I was convinced I could hear it laughing at this petrified rookie sailor. The light was beginning to fade, but the vivid bolts of lightning made sure I knew the monster was still hanging around.

Gradually, ever so gradually and after what seemed an eternity, the monster began slipping away, further and further away. Thankfully, the waterspouts seemed to have twisted themselves out and the lightning was fading.

I started to relax for the first time in about eight hours. The monster and its entourage were no longer a threat.

Making one last survey of the surrounding sea, ensuring there were no ships lights anywhere in sight, checking that *George*, our automatic pilot, was still on course for Mallorca, I decided to go below for a half-hour snooze.

Three hours later I was woken from a deep sleep. *Emma Mae* was calling me: "Wake up Captain Tubs. Look. Mallorca – dead ahead!!!!".

Mallorca

The sun was rising and the sky was a beautiful shade of red. *Red sky in the morning, sailor's warning.* A little too late for that warning, and I didn't give a damn. The island of Mallorca was on the horizon. What a beautiful sight.



My friend Graham (GT) – who had been waiting impatiently for me to sail into Porto Pollensa, north-west tip of Mallorca, was waiting to take *Emma Mae's* lines.



"Perfect sailing weather" he shouted "what took you so long?" Malaka.

Postscript

As I often tell Ruth, who I met on the Greek island of Corfu a few years after sailing into Mallorca, and who I later married, I sincerely believe the Greek Gods had a plan for the two of us – and they were not going to let a monster storm-cloud, deadly lightning or a couple of destructive waterspouts spoil their plan.

And yes, I'm still here to tell the story.

³ The make of the yacht – or 'sail-boat' as my American friends Muri and Gracie call a 27-foot yacht

⁴ *Emma Mae's* top speed was around 5 nautical miles per hour

Under the Fangs of the White Spider:

Skiing Beneath the Eiger's Fearsome Murder Wall

Contributed by IMCZ Sports' editor Joseph Dow



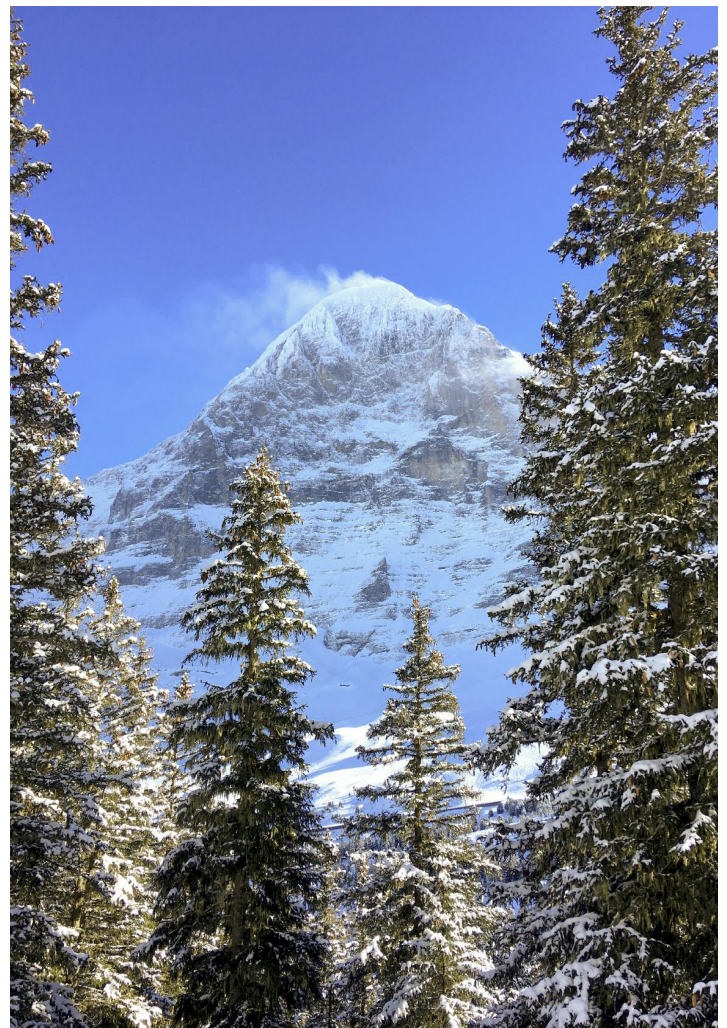
Eiger - North Face

With the possible exception of Zermatt's iconic Matterhorn and surrounding "Imperial Crown" of four-thousander peaks, no other scenic destination in Switzerland, and perhaps in all of Europe, can compare with the sight of the famous **Eiger**, **Mönch**, and **Jungfrau** mountains. On most clear days, the trio located in the Berner Oberland can be seen even from the shores of the Zugersee, but the view is much more impressive staring straight up at the Eignordwand from just below. More than once I've written about hiking around the area, including on the Eigerwand Trail along the bottom of the remarkable vertical wall (e.g., *Jungfrau Region: Hiking Eignordwand - November 2012*, *The Bachalpsee - August 2013*). So, being a ski fanatic, I always wanted to return in the winter and document the skiing and the **Jungfrau Ski Region**.

Towns & Villages

Grindelwald and **Wengen** share the main ski area and the village of **Mürren** across the Lauterbrunnen Valley has its own separate area, **Mürren - Schilthorn**, which deserves a stand-alone article in the future. Along with **First** on the other side of Grindelwald, these three ski stations make up the Jungfrau Ski Region. The tiny village/train stop of **Kleine Scheidegg** (2061 m ü. M.) lies high-up at the foot of the Jungfrau massif in the heart of the main Grindelwald-Wengen ski area. In more normal times, it's a nice place to get some lunch or buy souvenirs and begin the train ride up through the Eiger to the **Jungfraujoch** observation area (3463 m ü. M.) (*no pisted skiing from up there*). There are many good restaurants at Kleine Scheidegg and the one at the historic **Hotel Bellevue des Alpes** is a little bit of luxury at altitude.

Grindelwald is bigger and busier but not as quaint as Wengen. However, it still has a pleasant atmosphere and spectacular views. The pretty, car-free village of Wengen has its own railway station and lies below the **Männlichen** (2343 m ü. M.) Down in the valley that separates Wengen from Mürren is **Lauterbrunnen**, which I thought was a bit dark because of the high walls on both sides of this village which is situated in a deep, glacier-formed U-shaped, valley. A bit further down, between the twin lakes of **Thunersee** and **Brienzersee**, rests the city of **Interlaken**, which is a fun place to shop but not recommended for a ski stay unless you don't mind a crowded 30 to 45-minute train ride to begin and end the day's skiing.





Eiger and Mönch

Mountain Scenery

The three famous peaks of the Jungfrau-Massiv dominate the scenery:

Eiger (3970 m ü. M.) and its infamous north face, the **Eigernordwand**, have a storied history and deadly reputation. With the biggest vertical wall in Europe, rising for 1,800 meters, the Eiger lures climbers from all over the world into the clutches of the **Weisse Spinne**, the treacherous ice field below the summit. First successfully climbed in 1938, the crumbling limestone of the **“Mordwand”** (Murder Wall) *along with routes on other faces of the mountain* have claimed 64 lives so far, most recently in 2012.

The **Jungfrau Railway line** rolls through a tunnel inside the Eiger and **Mönch** (4107 m ü. M.) up to the Jungfraujoch, the highest railway station in Europe. Since 2016, the **Eigerwand station** at 2865 m ü. M., inside the mountain and behind the Eigerwand, is no longer in use. I have been told the stop was eliminated to allow additional trainloads

of paying tourists up to the Jungfraujoch. Well, that may have been the plan until the coronavirus. Hopefully, the train stop will open again because I thought looking out the “windows” *(large holes opening out to the face, allowing a look down the Mordwand)* was the most fascinating, frightening and unique part of the entire tour.

There is a claim of an old myth telling the story of the **Jungfrau** (4158 m ü. M.), the virgin, being menaced by the Eiger (Ogre) with the Mönch (Monk) standing between them, protecting the maiden, but this may not be true, although it makes for a nice tale.

Other notable peaks to be seen in the area:

The shimmering, windswept curved peak, the **Silberhorn** (3695 m ü. M.), is one of the most beautiful in the world, admired by J. R. R. Tolkien, Mark Twain and many others (including me). Further down towards Grindelwald, the frightful **Schreckhorn** stands at 4078 m ü. M.

with the sinister **Finsteraarhorn** in the background. Situated in one of the most remote areas in the Alps with glaciers all around, the Finsteraarhorn towers at 4274 m ü. M., making it the highest mountain in the Bernese Alps and Switzerland’s most topographically prominent and third most isolated peak. At the end of the line, the jagged **Wetterhorn** (3692 m ü. M.) is also a stunning mountain and holds her own against the other famous peaks.

Ski Area Infrastructure

The new, ultra-modern **Grindelwald Terminal station**, the train stop/shopping center and car park before the Grindelwald Bahnhof, and its **V-Bahn** replace the very slow, old cable car from Grindelwald to Männlichen, which took 30 minutes, with a new gondola cableway and also adds the fantastic **Eiger Express** tram, which forks over up to the **Eigerletscher station**. From Wengen, the ski area is reached by aerial cableway up the Männlichen. Grindelwald – Wengen also has many fast, modern chairlifts with bubble windscreens.



The Skiing

Grindelwald – Wengen

The major ski area of the region is that shared between the two villages of Grindelwald and Wengen under the stare of the White Spider clinging to the Mordwand. There are a lot great cruising runs in this area, so bring your race carver skis. The main sectors are the area between the Eigerwand and Kleine Scheidegg with the three chairlifts: Eigernordwand, Arven and Honegg; the steep runs from Eigergletscher down to the Fallboden chair; the runs between the Lauberhorn lift, the Wixi chair and Kleine Scheidegg; the runs from Männlichen off the Männlichen and Läger chairs; the runs back down to Grindelwald from the bottom of the Männlichen chairs and the Tschuggen drag lift; and the legendary Lauberhorn downhill course into Wengen.

The Lauberhorn Downhill Race, unfortunately canceled this year due to Covid concerns, is the longest and one of the two most famous downhill races in the world with the other being the infamous Streif in Kitzbühel, Austria. This is the big event in the Jungfrau Region and happens in January. Normally, I suggest watching it on television and going there on the Sunday, the day after, to ski. The crowds are so huge that not everyone can get up from Interlaken on the train in time for the race on Saturday, but the ski pistes are practically deserted the next day with only a few hung-over revelers stumbling around the town in Wengen.

Grindelwald – First

A smaller ski area on the other side of the town of Grindelwald, First has some good pistes and a delightful, gentle run back to the valley.

Hotels

Grindelwald:

Jungfrau Lodge Swiss Mountain Hotel
– cozy hotel with a good restaurant

Wengen:

*Wengener Hof, 4** – luxury hotel with a historic feel

Hotel Edelweiss – pleasant family hotel

There is a Ski Depot at Central Sport ski shop, next to the Männlichen tram, where you can leave your skis overnight for a reasonable daily fee (usually it gets filled up quickly by British tourists on certain holiday weeks during the season)

Kleine Scheidegg:

*Hotel Bellevue des Alpes, 4** – luxury up on the mountain in the middle of the ski area

Food

This topic is unfortunately not applicable this season with the situation with Covid and the government forcing restaurants to close for all but take-out dining. Accordingly, I chose the half board option at my recent hotel, Jungfrau Lodge Swiss Mountain Hotel, in Grindelwald, which was excellent in a cozy dining room. On previous trips, I had a gourmet lunch at the Hotel Bellevue des Alpes in Kleine Scheidegg, which was always quite delicious.

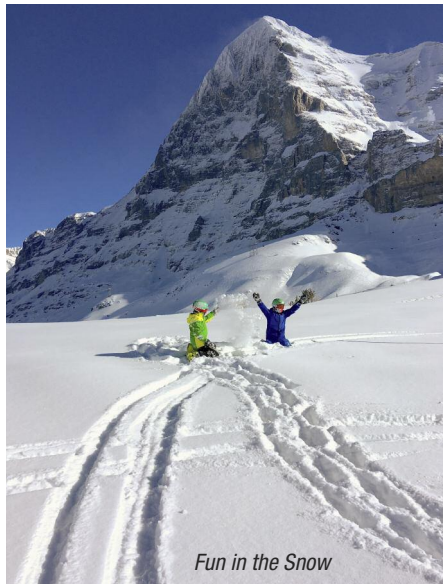
Ski Area Statistics

Grindelwald – Wengen

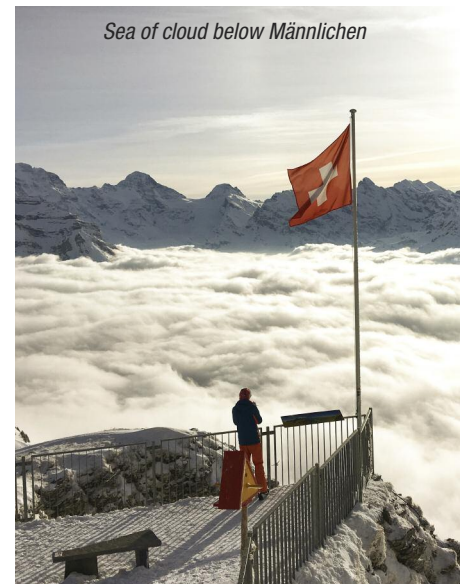
1,034 – 2,320m
approximately 155km of pisted runs
Lifts (including 3 rack railway trains): 20

Grindelwald – First

1,034 – 2,500m
50km of pisted runs
Lifts: 7



Fun in the Snow



Sea of cloud below Männlichen

Getting There By SBB Train

Zug – Zürich HB – Bern – Interlaken Ost – Grindelwald Terminal, approximately 3 hours

Zug – Zürich HB – Bern – Interlaken Ost – Lauterbrunnen – Wengen, approximately 3 hours 20 minutes

Additional Information

Jungfrau Top of Europe: jungfrau.ch

Eiger & Nordwand: eigernorthface.ch

Grindelwald – Wengen Ski Area: www.jungfrau.ch/en-gb/jungfrau-ski-region/grindelwald-wengen/

V-Bahn and Eiger Express: v-bahn.jungfrau.ch

Lauberhorn Ski Races: www.lauberhorn.ch/en/home

Grindelwald – First Ski Area: www.jungfrau.ch/en-gb/jungfrau-ski-region/grindelwald-first-ski-area/

Eigerwand Railway Station: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eigerwand_railway_station

Jungfrau Lodge Swiss Mountain Hotel: www.jungfraulodge.ch/en/

Hotel Wengenerhof: www.wengenerhof.ch/en

Hotel Edelweiss: www.edelweisswengen.ch/

Hotel Bellevue des Alpes: https://swiss-historic-hotels.ch/en/hotels/kscheidegg_bellevuedesalpes.php

SBB Snow 'n Rail Jungfrau: www.sbb.ch/en/leisure-holidays/ideas/offer.html/snow-n-rail/jungfrau-ski-region

Central Sport Wengen (Ski Depot): www.facebook.com/centralsportwengen/



Investment Commentary WAGNER & ASSOCIATES Investment Consulting

Contributed by IMCZ member Christian Wagner

APRIL 2021

ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

The recent USD 1.9 trillion help and economic program in the USA is unique for several reasons. Its goal is to contain the Covid pandemic and, simultaneously, to boost the weak economy. Worth around 9% of GDP, it's aimed directly at ensuring social protection for the population. As the first G-7 country, the UK has presented a new budget in which finances should be brought under control again. Key points are corporate tax increases from 2023 onward and freezing tax allowances and progression thresholds which have increased with inflation up to now.

BOND MARKETS

The prospect of the return of inflation is spooking markets, and experts are divided on what to do about it. The ECB has decided to increase the buying of national debt substantially for at least the next quarter. This is within the pandemic emergency program PEPP which has virtually no limits. The Fed announced that it would not change its extremely easy monetary policy, but it has increased reserve requirements for banks.

EQUITY MARKETS

Higher inflation is currently even positive for stock markets, and it will take time until higher interest rates make bonds a viable investment alternative. However, should inflation prove to be long-lasting, the recent shifts within the market could become more pronounced. The NASDAQ-Composite, predominantly consisting of growth stocks, has underperformed the general market. Especially important will be the question of whether technology stocks can hold up.

CURRENCIES

Contrary to expectations, the USD has apparently bottomed out and is even heading higher. Better growth prospects and higher interest rates are the obvious reasons for a new assessment, but the unexpected success of the vaccination program is also positive. Last but not least, the effects of a new team in the White House should not be underestimated.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Greensill is making headlines, not least because Credit Suisse is also involved with 4 supply-chain-finance funds worth roughly USD 10 billion. The questions raised are if financial products are not being examined for risk and if the term "for qualified clients" is sufficient. The efforts by rating agencies to have invoices passed on to reverse-factoring-companies like Greensill to be disclosed are welcome. Since liabilities with regard to such a financial intermediary are not booked as debt, poor financial standings can be covered up (Carillion bankruptcy in 2018).

Christian Wagner,
Schönggrund 11, CH-6343 Rotkreuz,
Tel. +41 (0)41 790 35 81



Dangerous DIY

Rosie Hall buys a self-assembly, flat-pack, cupboard from her local Homebase store. Reaching home Rosie reads the instructions carefully, counts the pieces then assembles the cupboard in the bedroom. It looks really great and she is delighted. Now, Rosie lives near a railway line and as the train passes by the cupboard collapses. Undaunted by this misfortune she re-reads the instructions and reassembles the cupboard. Once more, another train passes and the whole cupboard collapses again. Rosie now frustrated and thinking that she must have done something "wrong" re-re-reads the instructions and re-assembles the cupboard. Shortly, a train passes and the whole cupboard collapses yet again for the 3rd time. Rosie is now fed up, cross and rather angry so she 'phones the customer service department. She is told that this is quite impossible and that they'll send along a fitter to take a look. The fitter arrives and assembles the cupboard. Again, a train passes and the cupboard collapses. Completely baffled by this unexpected event, the fitter decides to reassemble the cupboard and sit inside it to see whether he can find out what causes the cupboard to collapse. At this point, Rosie's husband comes home, sees the cupboard and says, 'Oh, that's a splendid looking cupboard,' and he opens it to look inside. The fitter, who had been wondering how to explain his position in Rosie's bedroom cupboard, blurts out, 'You probably won't believe me, but I'm standing here waiting for a train.'



A Second Career

Fred Gibbs was in his early 60's, retired and had started a second career in catering. However, he just couldn't seem to get to work on time. Every day he was 2, 3, 5 minutes late. However, he was a good worker, really clever, so the owner was in a quandary about how to deal with it. Finally, one day he called Steve into the office for a talk. Fred, I have to tell you, I like your work ethic, you do a top class job, but you're being late so often is quite a worry.' 'Yes, I realise that, sir, and I am working on it.' replied Fred. 'I'm pleased to hear that, you are a team player. It's odd though, you're coming in late. I know you're retired from the Royal Navy. What did they say if you came in late there?' 'They said, "Good morning, Admiral".'

Humour in shorts

The King of Spain has been quarantined on his private jet. In other words, the reign in Spain stays mainly on the plane.

A hobbyist built himself a motorcycle with a wooden frame, wooden wheels and a wooden gas tank. Unfortunately, he couldn't ride it. It wooden start.

Had I known in March that it was the last time I would visit a restaurant, I would have ordered dessert.



Did you know that there are no canaries on the Canary Islands? Furthermore, it's the same on the Virgin Islands: no canaries there either!

Pharmacist dispensing a prescription to a customer: You may experience irritability and pain in the hands and wrist, and that's just from trying to open the bottle!

I find these days that most of my conversations start out with: "Did I tell you this already?" or "What was I going to say?"

I never wish death on someone who wrongs me; I wish them sudden explosive diarrhea and sneezing attacks, preferably while on a date. Golf is the adult version of an Easter egg hunt.

I finally bought myself a new pair of house-shoes with memory insoles. Now I won't forget why I walked into the kitchen anymore.

You never appreciate what you have 'til it's gone. Toilet paper is a good example.



As I get older, I remember all the people I lost along the way. Maybe a career as a tour guide was not the right choice.

A man walks into a magic forest and tries to cut down a talking tree. "You can't cut me down," the tree complains. "I'm a talking tree!" The man responds, "You may be a talking tree, but you will dialogue."

I told my girlfriend she drew her eyebrows too high. She seemed surprised.

I have a joke about trickle-down economics. But 99% of you will never get it.



It's important to have a good vocabulary. If I had known the difference between the words 'antidote' and 'anecdote,' one of my good friends would still be alive.

I'll never forget my Granddad's last words to me just before he died. "Are you still holding the ladder?"

My wife and I were out to dinner and the waitress started flirting with me. "She obviously has COVID," my wife said. "Why?" I asked. My wife replied with a sneer, "Because she has no taste."

A recent study has found that women who carry a little extra weight live longer than the men who mention it.

A son tells his father, "I have an imaginary girlfriend." The father sighs and says, "You know, you could do better." "Thanks Dad," the son says. The father shakes his head and goes, "I was talking to your girlfriend."

My grief counsellor died the other day. He was so good at his job, I don't even care.

Despite the high cost of living, it remains popular.

I don't have a boyfriend, but I do know a guy who would be really mad to hear that.

I doubt, therefore, I might be.

Your dinner vs. you're dinner: one leaves you nourished, the other leaves you dead. Correct grammar: it saves lives.

"A woman, without her man, is nothing"
"A woman: without her, man is nothing."
Punctuation is powerful.

Don't use "beef stew" as a computer password. It's not stroganoff.

And two for the geeks among us

A programmer's wife tells him, "While you're at the grocery store, buy some eggs." He never comes back.

A cop pulls over Werner Heisenberg and says, "Sir, do you know how fast you were going?" Heisenberg responds, "NO, but I know EXACTLY where I am."

1. The sport of choice for the urban poor is BASKETBALL.
2. The sport of choice for maintenance level employees is BOWLING.
3. The sport of choice for front-line workers is FOOTBALL.
4. The sport of choice for supervisors is BASEBALL.
5. The sport of choice for middle management is TENNIS.
6. The sport of choice for corporate executives and officers is GOLF.

From this progression we see that the higher up in a hierarchy, the smaller the balls.

What do you want to bet that a lot of people in Washington, D.C. are playing marbles?

1. How things change (some of this is peculiar to the U.S.):

1966 : Long hair

2021 : Longing for hair

1966 : KEG

2021 : EKG

1966 : Acid rock

2021 : Acid reflux

1966 : Moving to California because it's cool

2021 : Moving to Arizona because it's warm

1966 : Trying to look like Marlon Brando or Liz Taylor

2021 : Trying NOT to look like Marlon Brando or Liz Taylor

1966 : Seeds and stems

2021 : Roughage

1966 : Hoping for a BMW

2021 : Hoping for a BM

1966 : Going to a new, hip joint

2021 : Receiving a new hip joint

1966 : Rolling Stones

2021 : Kidney Stones

1966 : Screw the system

2021 : Upgrade the system

1966 : Disco

2021 : Costco

1966 : Parents begging you to get your hair cut

2021 : Children begging you to get their heads shaved

1966 : Passing the drivers' test

2021 : Passing the vision test

1966 : Whatever

2021 : Depends

2. The new generation:

Most of those who are starting college in the U.S. this fall were born in 2003.

They are too young to remember the space shuttle blowing up.

Their lifetime has always included AIDS.

The CD was introduced 7 years before they were born.

They have always had an answering machine..

They have always had cable TV.

They cannot fathom not having a remote control..

Popcorn has always been cooked in the microwave.

They never took a swim and thought about Jaws.

They don't know who Mork was or where he was from.

They never heard: "Where's the Beef?" or "I'd walk a mile for a Camel"

They do not care who shot J. R. & have no idea who J. R. even is.

Mc Donald's hamburgers never came in Styrofoam containers.

They have only seen typewriters in museums.



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Are you **selling** your yacht (harboured in Piraeus)?
 Your Aston-Martin old-timer with the roll top roof?
 A gorgeous view of the Bay of Biscay,
 with a little bit of house attached?
 Or are you cashing in the half of your stamp
 collection that is finally worth something?
 Perhaps you're **looking** for all of these things?

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The Members' Marketplace is reserved for unformatted advertisements of 150 characters (approx. 3 lines) of text. These are free of charge to IMCZ members. Advertisements must be submitted as illustrated below. Longer advertisements cost CHF 30.-

Example: FOR SALE: gorgeous view of Bay of Biscay with stunning sunsets and high waves. Wee house (12 rooms), dock and yacht included. Call Bill at 041 123 45 67.

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