

IMCZ NEWS



JULY - SEPTEMBER 2021

EDITORIAL

The summer solstice is now behind us for 2021. Hopefully we can now start to get some reliable summer weather so we can enjoy the Great Outdoors more fully. The rain and low temperatures have been record breaking. I'm just waiting for our garden to slide into the neighbours because it's so waterlogged.

With the Corona restrictions being lifted for many countries in Europe, hopefully we can have a "nearly normal" summer. Of course, there's the lurking threat of the Delta (and other) Variants, but if enough of us get fully vaccinated, hopefully that should be manageable.

Eagle-eyed readers will have noticed that it's been 3 months since the last Newsletter. That's because, in a cost cutting action, the IMCZ Board decided to go to a quarterly Newsletter. You'll still get the same content, just a little less than before. If you have any concerns or suggestions regarding the Newsletter, please let me know.

There's a lot written in the press (of all polarities) about people being intolerant, judgemental, rude and self-interested. Over the past two months I've had occasion to encounter something rather different. Unfortunately we've experienced a family tragedy, but the response from others to this has been incredible. The generosity, kindness, practical support and the understanding we've experienced has been astonishing to me. It's come from everyone, left or right, famous or not, richer or poorer, and from all flavours of religion (or not). This has been a truly revealing experience. So, the reported death of kindness and community has been exaggerated. We can still rely on most of our friends, neighbours' and colleagues in times of crisis. It's good to know.

Enjoy your summer.

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1

- Editorial

EVENTS P.2

HEALTH P.3

- Nitrate promotes health, mouthwash mortality...?

SCIENCE/TECHNOLOGY P.6

- Artificial Intelligence and Protein Structure

TRAVEL AND LEISURE P.8

- The Douro Salamanca, Part 2
- Excitement On The Rivers Of Bordeaux

SPORTS P.14

- Wrapping up 2020-21 on the Snow:

BUSINESS / FINANCE P.17

- Investment Commentary

HUMOUR P.18

TITBITS P.20

- Member's Marketplace
- IMCZ Rates
- Corporate Space





EVENTS

Dear members,

We have all endured another tough year so far, with Covid related socialising restrictions, working from home, travel complications and general planning uncertainty. Many of us international types have been unable to see our family members face to face for over a year now and have had weddings disrupted, funerals delayed and bonding between grandkids and grandparents prevented. Luckily, Switzerland has been more fortunate than many other countries and we have been able to enjoy the wonderful outdoors that we have here, with the wide range of leisure and sports activities. Things are now opening up again and the Covid restrictions are being lifted by the BAG, which means that the IMCZ can now slowly return to normal again. We have already enjoyed several physical Stammtiches this year, including a joint Stammtisch with our Sister Club, the ZIWC. Both IMCZ and ZIWC will be coordinating more closely going forwards with the aim of increasing the number of joint events. Unfortunately, our usual venue, the City Garden Hotel, is currently unavailable for regular Stammtisches due to the "food only" policies of the new temporary management there. Hopefully, we can return there as normal later this year for Stammtishes, once the management has changed back again.

Special Stammtisches in the Garden Room should still be possible. Meanwhile, we have had to be innovative, choosing some new Stammtisch venues and organizing our own BYO drinks events by the lakeside and in members' garden allotments (thank you Wolfgang!).

Our Summer Party signature event will be taking place as usual this year on the 29th August. We have chosen Greece as our theme and as well as traditional Greek singing and Sirtaki dancing with audience participation, the 6-piece band Triple Bypass will keep things swinging throughout the day. This will be a big event with heavy Club sponsorship, as a reward to our members for enduring the lean Covid times. Our other Wolfgang will be on hand preparing his special cocktails again! I encourage you all to register as soon as possible to avoid disappointment, in case we have to limit the numbers later on.

Please also volunteer to help out on the day if you are able. You will enjoy a discounted entry price (subject to my approval). We also need volunteers for the general running of the Club. In particular, we would like someone to step up as our Events Coordinator, to help organize more events and Special Stammtisches with presentations on topics of interest. We are also seeking a PR Coordinator, to help promote and expand the Club membership. Please contact a Board member if you would like to help out. Finally, I would like to thank you all for your continued support this year and I look forward to enjoying more events with you. See you at the Big Greek Summer Party!

All the best,
Bill, IMCZ President



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
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Nitrate promotes health, mouthwash mortality...?

Remo P. Jutzeler van Wijlen, Head R&D Sponser Sports Food
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I previously wrote about the topic of dietary nitrate and its health implications via nitric oxide (NO) metabolism quite some years ago in this column. Meanwhile, the beneficial vasodilative (blood vessel widening) effects of NO and, consequently, on blood pressure in hypertensive persons have been repeatedly documented as has improved endothelial function. Furthermore, muscle function, brain perfusion and cognitive function depend on, and benefit from, optimised NO supply, too.

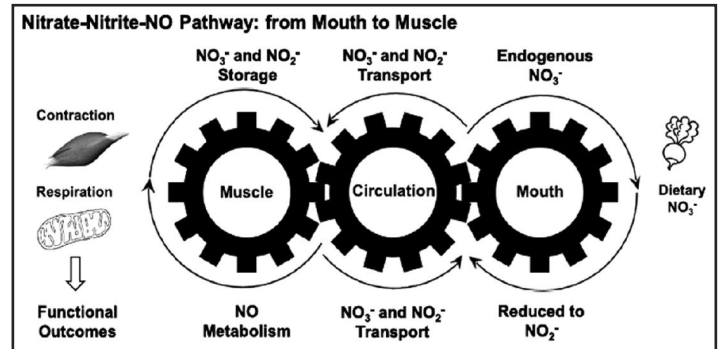
Recently, it has been established that nitrate concentration in muscle is quite sensitive to dietary nitrate deprivation and supplementation (Jones 2020). Muscles seem to have an important nitrate storage function, with a tightly regulated homeostasis while also showing “supercompensation” post nitrate deprivation.

Due to its various physiological functions inorganic nitrate must be considered a natural micronutrient, which is abundant in a vegetable-rich diet. Vegetables particularly high in nitrate are, for example, spinach, lettuce, and beetroot. However, present food law regulations still mirror an outdated perception of high nitrate (NO₃⁻) levels in vegetables being a health risk, rather than a benefit. Unsubstantiated upper limits for nitrate in vegetables are still in force, and some decades-old public health advice encourages one to refrain from consumption of lettuce during wintertime due to the use of nitrate-containing fertilizers in indoor-culturing. Truly, there are some concerns regarding (cancerogenic) nitrosamine formation of the intermittent metabolite nitrite (NO₂⁻) after its enzymatic breakdown from NO₃⁻, in the presence of amines/ammonia (from protein sources), acid and heat treatment. However, such a process milieu can be controlled during industrial food production (e.g. curing meat) while it is not an issue during salad or vegetable (cooked or uncooked) consumption.

Notably, nowadays there are even nitrate-based drugs to treat high blood pressure! And besides medical application, nitrate loading (via beetroot juice supplementation) has become established practice for many athletes, backed by sports performance studies. It is recommended by,

for example, the Australian Institute for Sports as an A-supplement under suitable, specific conditions. This is because vasodilatation is supposed to be helpful for muscular oxygen supply. More muscular work can be performed per unit time for the same oxygen cost, implying enhanced energy efficiency of muscle contraction, most beneficial under hypoxia/anaerobic conditions, e.g. in high altitude, underwater, or during anaerobic high-intensity and/or intermittent strain. In consequence, enhanced performance, decreased perceived exertion, and accelerated recovery may be expected.

Human cells have only limited ability to reduce nitrate to the biologically active NO. Instead, we depend largely on our resident oral microflora to reduce dietary nitrate to nitrite, the latter being further reduced to NO in the circulation and various tissues, thus ensuring NO bioavailability. Epidemiological data has shown that a disturbed oral microbiota – and poor oral health – are associated with systemic disorders such as cardiovascular, metabolic and kidney diseases, rheumatoid arthritis, and Alzheimer’s disease.



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



HOFKLINIK

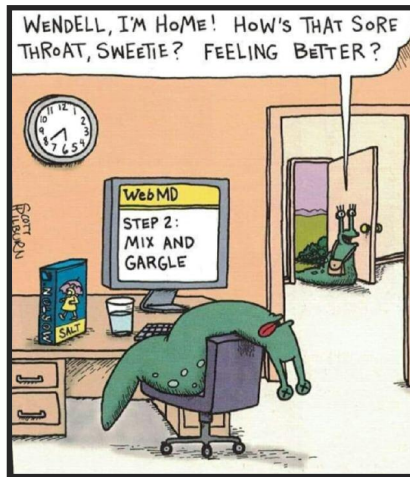
Wach- & Schlafmedizin

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

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The importance of a functional oral microbiota becomes evident when using bactericidal mouthwash, which blunts the increase in nitrite concentration and the decrease in blood pressure after nitrate intake (Kapil 2013, McDonagh 2015). Furthermore, the regular use of mouthwash is linked with an increased risk of approx. +50% of developing prediabetes/diabetes during a 3-year follow-up, possibly due to chronic attenuation of microbial nitrate reduction in the oral cavity (Joshi 2017). Therefore, diet, oral hygiene practice and the composition of an individual's oral microbiota may have far-reaching effects on systemic health, due to dependence of the host-microbiome interactions. The following paragraph is copied from a very recent publication, which offers quite a startling hypothesis (Blot 2020, Intensive Care Medicine):

“Meta-analyses and several large cohort studies have demonstrated that antiseptic mouthwashes are associated with mortality in hospitalized patients. A clear pathogenic mechanism is lacking, leading to controversy and a reluctance to abandon or limit the use of antiseptic mouthwashes. Here, we generate the hypothesis that a disturbance in nitric oxide homeostasis by antiseptic mouthwashes may be responsible for the observed increase in mortality risk. Nitric oxide is essential in multiple physiological processes, and a reduction in nitric oxide bioavailability is associated with the occurrence or worsening of pathologies, such as atherosclerosis, diabetes, and sepsis. Oral facultative anaerobic bacteria are essential for the enterosalivary nitrate–nitrite–nitric oxide pathway due to their capacity to reduce nitrate to nitrite. Nitrate originates from dietary



sources or from the active uptake by salivary glands of circulating nitrate, which is then excreted in the saliva. Because antiseptic mouthwashes eradicate the oral bacterial flora, this nitric oxide-generating pathway is abolished, which may result in nitric oxide-deficient conditions potentially leading to life-threatening complications such as ischaemic heart events or sepsis.”

The author of the cited narrative review mentioned a 2018 study with 82'274 patients (11'139 receiving chlorhexidine oral care), which showed an independent association with mortality in both low- and high-level exposure, with an increased odds of +161% (OR 2.61) and +173% (OR 2.73) to untreated patients! Another multi-centre study comprised 186 US hospitals with 64'904 ICU patients, thereof 14'333 with oral chlorhexidine exposure. After eliminating confounding factors, the resulting odds ratio of 1.25 still indicated a +25% increased, independent risk factor for mortality.

Antiseptic mouthwash use is commonplace in many hospitalized patients and nursing home residents. Oral chlorhexidine use has become general practice in many Intensive Care Units (ICU), and is partly even recommended against Covid-19 spread. Given that cardiovascular diseases (CVD) are the number one cause of death globally by far, becoming even more dominant due to aging demographics, compared to the risk of dying with Covid-19, it seems a delicate decision for CVD patients to take in favour or against antiseptic mouthwash. Not to forget, CVD patients are not only the main risk group for serious Covid-19 outcomes, but possibly also prone to a disturbed NO homeostasis.

Hiding behind a Facemask Contributed by Honorary Member Muthana Kubba



The common mouth or facemasks in use today in order to minimise virus transmissions have proven their effectiveness in limiting the spread of the dreaded Covid 19 virus. Out of pure curiosity, I wanted to find out how effective they are in limiting the spread of viruses. A quick check on the Internet reveals that the surgical face-masks are not meant directly to limit or reduce the number of viruses that an infected person exhales which you might inhale, but in the first place, they serve to prevent you from spreading aerosol droplets, which may carry the virus and thus infect others.

The effectiveness of these masks in limiting the spread has been contested, but failing a better alternative, it has been adopted almost everywhere, as prophylaxes against spreading the virus. The CDC (Centre for Disease Control) recommends the use of surgical facemasks at all times. It is claimed that they are also effective for preventing influenza and the common cold.

How to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Facemasks

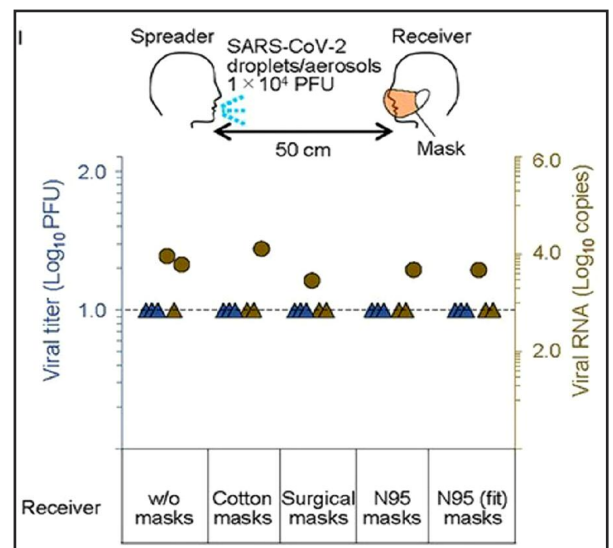
There is quite a lot of articles on how effective facemasks are in preventing or reducing the danger of viruses. However, most do not corroborate their conclusion with any experimental evidence. Basically, the majority of the evidence available is statistical in nature but still very relevant. In an article published in the Journal of Clinical Microbiology, it is claimed that cotton masks reduce the uptake of virus droplets/aerosols compared to no mask by up to 70%.

It seems fairly obviously that failing an effective treatment or prevention, wearing facemask is a very sensible course of action.

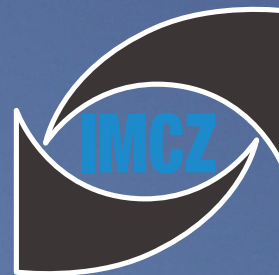
Needless to say, we are still at a very early stage in our knowledge and understanding of this new and very dangerous virus. With time and more clinical studies our knowledge database will expand quickly and more effective methods and recommendations will evolve.

Further Reading

- <https://www.healthline.com/health/cold-flu/mask>
- Centre for Disease Control and Prevention
- Journal of Clinical Microbiology



The International Men's Club of Zug
invites you to our
Big Greek Summer Party
on the Lakeside of Zug!



Sunday, 29th August, 2021

**11:00 – 18:00 at the Siehbachsaal
Chamerstrasse 33, 6300 Zug**



FEATURING
Triple Bypass rock band.
"The beat goes on"!

Beer: SFr 3
Wine: SFr 5 glass / SFr 20 bottle
Cocktails: SFr 10
Ouzo: cost price



**Greek Singing and Sirtaki Dancing, Quiz, Raffle with Prizes.
A selection of Greek culinary specialties**

Admission (including food and soft drinks) :
60 SFr for IMCZ & ZIWC members and partners, 70 SFr for guests,
30 SFr for children 8 -12 and designated helpers, children under 8 free.

Please register at: <https://imcz.club/Club-Events>

Artificial Intelligence and Protein Structure

Contributed by IMCZ member, Alan Cattell

Artificial Intelligence background

There is a lot written about Artificial Intelligence (AI), in many cases by people with limited knowledge of the subject. I'm not going to try to explain the full scope of AI in this article, rather I'd like to illustrate one case showing how it can be used for positive purposes.

Traditional computing calculates answers to numerical problems deterministically. If you want the answer to $12,567 + 4,976$ then a computer can deliver this precisely in tiny fractions of a second. However, if you want to see how many slices of salami are on the pizza being produced, this is a more difficult challenge. It's not deterministic. You need to train a system to recognise salami slices (even when partially covered with topping), distinguish them from other "slices" (e.g. tomato), shadows etc. This is a trivial task for a person, but for a computer its more difficult to implement. This is where AI comes in. It uses rule based methods and training by example to make decisions or predictions, usually in a non-deterministic way.

Hopefully, from the above example, it's clear that AI as such is a neutral technology. It can be used for positive or negative purposes. To demonise AI because you don't like some applications of the technology, such as facial recognition, is not appropriate. In this article I want to give a brief outline of AI being applied for positive reasons – to predict protein structure.

Proteins – natures LEGO

Proteins are astonishing. Every protein is made up from one or more chains of amino acids. The amino acids are joined together by peptide bonds, hence the term *polypeptide* which is often used as an alternative. Peptides and proteins are chemically the same, but when the number of amino acids in a chain is under 50 or so, we use the term peptide. Proteins can be very large, up to around 3 MDa (million-Daltons – where one Dalton is the mass of a Hydrogen atom).

Proteins (and peptides) fulfil many functions. They may be enzymes which catalyse particular reactions vital for life. They may be antibodies, they can be structural elements of cells..... Much of our biochemistry relies on proteins.

All proteins are made up from only 20 amino acids. The main thing which distinguishes proteins from each other is the sequence in which these amino acids are linked. Determining this is not trivial; only a fraction of the proteins which exist have had their structures clarified. These are documented in a Protein Data Bank¹ which is freely available to all.

A critical aspect of what makes a protein function is the way they fold into their characteristic complex shape. This "shape" creates the topology of the binding sites and surface chemical structure which gives the protein its specific properties. One can think of a "lock and key" type of arrangement where the structure for which the protein is active fits the protein like a key in a lock.

An example of a protein structure is shown in figure 1. This diagram uses a convention for describing the elements of a protein in 3-D. It's not a space filling model.

Proteins are normally characterised as having four structural levels.

The primary structure of a protein is the linear amino-acid sequence, as previously mentioned.

The secondary structure is the formation of what are called alpha-helices and beta-sheets which are stabilised by hydrogen bonding. (see the helices and ribbons in the diagram.)

The tertiary structure is where the whole assembly folds into its characteristic shape, determined by hydrophilic or hydrophobic regions of the secondary structure.

Finally, some proteins have a quaternary structure, where two or more polypeptide chains are incorporated into a single protein to enable the required functionality.

Antibodies (e.g. IgG or immunoglobulin G, the most common type) are examples of complex proteins with a quaternary structure. They are large, approximately Y shaped structures where the binding site against the specific antigen to which they are tailored is on the tip of each upper branch of the Y. An example is shown in Figure 2.

As you can see from the description, predicting the structure of a protein is not a trivial task.

Determining Protein Structure

There are many different experimental techniques for determining the structure of a protein. Obviously this does not include optical microscopy as the structure elements are well below the wavelength of visible light and cannot be resolved. Perhaps the most important method is X-ray crystallography. A crystal of the protein is grown and an x-ray beam is used to "illuminate" the crystal. The x-rays interact with the electrons in the crystal lattice and, with a lot of experimental effort, it is possible to deduce the structure of the protein.

Because no single experimental method is 100% accurate, different methods are often used on the same proteins to reduce uncertainty. There is a fairly good high level summary of these methods in the Wikipedia article in reference 2.

Calculating Protein Structure

In 1972, Christian Anfinsen postulated that the amino-acid sequence of a protein should completely determine its structure. This "vision" triggered an immense amount of activity which has been running for the last 50 years.

The holy-grail of protein structure determination has been to find a way to calculate the structure reliably. Like the holy-grail, this goal was considered to be rather mythical. Nobody expected results in the near future. In 1994 a biennial competition was established to allow research groups to test their ability to predict protein structure using the models they have developed. CASP (Critical Assessment of protein Structure Prediction) provided all participants with the amino acid sequence of "trial" proteins in a double-blind procedure.

Recently "solved" proteins are identified and the sequence information is made available. Neither the CASP organisers nor the competing organisations know anything else about the protein. The structural information is kept confidential by the Protein Data Bank till after the competition.



Figure 1 – Example: 7k35_assembly-1 from Protein Data Bank

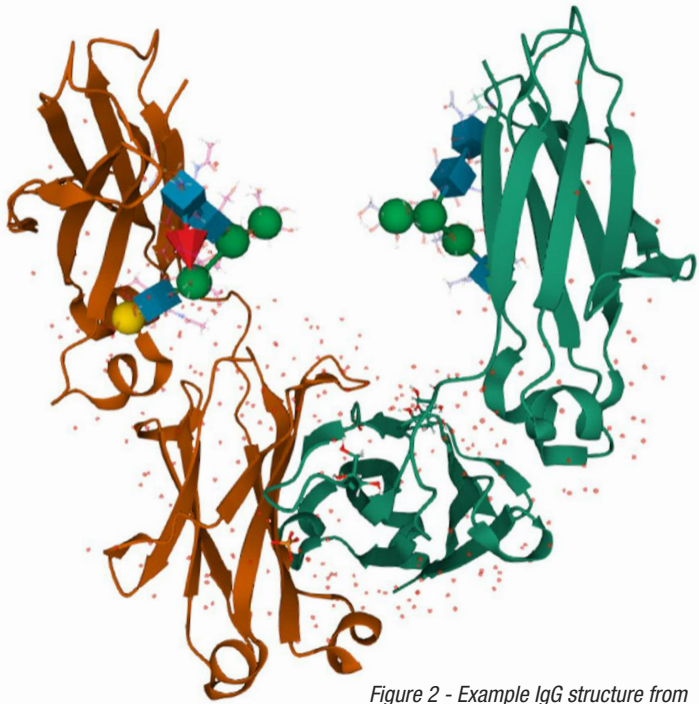


Figure 2 - Example IgG structure from Protein Data Bank

In the early years of CASP the results of the predictions were dismal, and even a few years ago most teams were very happy if they could determine the structure of only a few (single digit) percent of the simpler target proteins.

For CASP 13 in 2018, AlphaFold 1 based on Google's DeepMind was the competition winner. The quality of the predicted structure was hugely improved over the best previous results.

For CASP 14 in 2020, AlphaFold³ 2 made such progress that some observers described the problem of protein structure determination as being solved. Though this might be a (slight) exaggeration, what is clear is that AlphaFold 2 can predict structure to around 90% plus accuracy. This is roughly equivalent to the single-experiment accuracy for structure determination.

To verify performance further, AlphaFold 2 has also now been used to look at particularly challenging protein structure problems which had not previously been solved, to great effect. Moreover, the ability to work from more reliable predictive data to design specific experiments to confirm protein structure can greatly speed up the work of defining the structure of a "new" protein.

So using this technology, we can expect huge progress in the next few years in clarifying many of the most challenging problems around protein structure.

The Benefits

The ability to calculate protein structures should help with the development of new drugs and new drug-delivery mechanisms. It should help reduce the amount of trial-and-error work needed for new treatments and enable new, highly targeted, solutions. Better knowledge of protein structures should also help to improve vaccines and improve vaccine efficacy to natural mutations of diseases.

There is also a class of problems which arise from misfolded proteins⁴. For example, many neurodegenerative diseases are believed to arise from such improperly folded proteins. (e.g. Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Huntington's, Creutzfeld-Jakob, cystic fibrosis) These misfolded proteins cause cellular toxicity. A deeper understanding of protein folding may well help to clarify the triggers and mechanisms leading to these conditions.

Artificial Intelligence – the future

The solution to the problem of protein folding is yet another example of the type of problem which can be addressed by AI. The technology is clearly powerful and can be used for both positive and negative purposes – as can most technology. While few people could have an issue with a publicly available Protein Data Bank, I suspect that most would have an issue with ubiquitous facial recognition data bank, state-controlled or private. Thus, it's interesting that one section of the DeepMind website is a section on Ethics & Society. I have no doubt that this is going to become a major area of concern for us in the years ahead. To me this looks like a difficult problem, particularly since AI is so poorly understood, both generally and by politicians in particular. In addition, it's not a very "visible" technology. The AI functionality is buried in software / firmware and is hard to "verify". But one thing is clear, the technology is already out there so we need to find a way to live with it.

References

- Protein Data Bank - <https://www.rcsb.org/>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protein_folding
<https://deepmind.com/blog/article/alphafold-a-solution-to-a-50-year-old-grand-challenge-in-biology>
<https://translationalneurodegeneration.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40035-017-0077-5>

The Douro Salamanca, Part 2 Contributed by IMCZ Webmaster Roger Brooks with photos courtesy of Margareta Pfander

Cathedrals, Old & New

Our next destination (and the end of our walking tour) was (or were) the Cathedral(s) of Salamanca. The uncertainty of expression arises from the fact that the (not so) New Cathedral (Catedral Nueva de la Asunción de la Virgen) was built on to the north side of the Old Cathedral (Catedral Vieja de Santa María). Each cathedral took over 200 years to build. Construction of the old cathedral began in the 12th century and finished in the 14th century. The earlier Romanesque portion was completed in the 13th century, but the church was subsequently enlarged with Gothic elements. Its main dome is crowned by the octagonal Torre del Gallo, so called on account of its weathercock. In the 14th century, the cathedral was a traditional cruciform basilica with transept, but the left-hand (northern) arm of the transept was subsequently amputated to make room for the new cathedral. Normally the old cathedral would have been demolished to make room for the new one, but this would have left Salamanca without an adequate worship space for its growing population during the construction of the new cathedral, so the old cathedral survives.

The new cathedral dwarfs the old one. Construction began in the early 16th century and was not completed until the mid-18th century. In order to harmonize with the old cathedral, it was first conceived in Renaissance and Gothic styles, but the dome, bell tower and interior were ultimately completed in Baroque style. Close examination might reveal a further anachronism to the watchful eye: on the left-hand side of the Puerta Ramos (the side entrance on the northern side, which also serves as the entrance for tourists) one can find a carving of an astronaut. Is this evidence for Erich von Däniken's "Chariots of the Gods"? Hardly! A cathedral can never be considered



Northern Façade of the New Cathedral

really finished, as it requires an endless stream of maintenance work. As it turns out this was the work of Jeronimo Garcia, a stonemason who worked on a major renovation in the early 1990s and, as is customary, was permitted a bit of artistic license in his work. He also added a satyr eating an ice cream cone.

Visque de Perigord, who presided over Salamanca during its repopulation, after the wars of reconquest, during the 12th century. He was the initiator of the construction of the old cathedral. Unfortunately, we didn't have time for the tour, as we were due back at the Hotel Alameda Palace for lunch. I can only hope that we find a future occasion to visit Salamanca and take the tour.

Jeronimus Tower Tour

The bell tower serves both cathedrals. It is the northern one of two towers at the western end of the old cathedral and was built up to serve as the bell tower for the new cathedral and reinforced to help buttress the old cathedral against the side load of the new cathedral. The tower was renovated extensively in the 18th century after damage from fire and from the Lisbon earthquake. There is a tour of the towers and upper levels of both cathedrals named after the French bishop Jerónimo

Iglesia de San Sebastian and Palacio Anaya

On our way back to the hotel, we paused briefly to admire the Church of San Sebastian and the Anaya Palace, just across the Plaza Anaya from the New Cathedral. The Church of St. Sebastian (Iglesia de San Sebastian) was built on the site of a 15th century church which had to be torn down due to structural problems. The current church was built in the early 18th



Astronaut Carving on the Puerta de Ramos of the New Cathedral



Iglesia de San Sebastian and Anaya Palace (right)

century and features two statues by the sculptor José de Lara Churriguera, a nephew of [José Benito de Churriguera](#) (founder of the Churriguera family and style mentioned in the last article). In addition to a statue of the eponymous [St. Sebastian](#), there is a statue of [St. John of Sahagún](#) (San Juan de Sahagún), who has his own church in Salamanca, a bit further north.

The Anaya Palace was built in the second half of the 18th century and is one of the few neoclassical buildings in Salamanca. The name comes from Diego de Anaya y Maldonado, the 14th century founder of the College of St. Bartholomew (where St. John of Sahagún studied), which previously occupied the same site and was heavily damaged by the 1755 Lisbon earthquake. The new building now houses the Philology Faculty of The University of Salamanca.

More Statues

On the way back to the hotel, we passed statues of Remigio González Martín, alias “Adares” and Vicente del Bosque. Adares was a 20th-century Spanish poet. He grew up during the Spanish civil war, moved to France in his late thirties and to Salamanca in his forties. He was a popular local figure, reciting and selling his poetry at the Plaza del Corillo, just south of the Plaza Mayor. The statue, by Agustín Casillas, depicts him in his seventies, shortly before his death. [Vicente del Bosque](#) was born to an aristocratic family in Salamanca in 1950. He became a soccer champion and later a coach and manager, who led Real Madrid and later the Spanish national team to many victories. The statue, by Fernando Mayoral, was commissioned by the city government and unveiled at the Plaza del Liceo in September 2018 in a ceremony which del Bosque attended.



Statue of Vicente del Bosque, Plaza del Liceo

Iglesia de San Juan de Sahagún



Statue of Remigio González Martín (Adares) in the Plaza del Corillo



Flamenco at the Alameda Palace

After a sumptuous lunch at the [Hotel Alameda Palace](#), we were treated to a Flamenco performance. Flamenco is thought to have originated from the confluence of Andalusian and Romani (Gitano or gypsy) folk traditions and traditionally includes song and dance accompanied by guitar and various percussion instruments. The flamenco performances at the Hotel Alameda Palace are evidently included in the Douro River Cruise excursions of various cruise lines. I didn't have the presence of mind to take any pictures, but it is probably just as well. [This YouTube video](#) shows that the lighting is sub-optimal.

Archive of the Spanish Civil War

After lunch, we headed toward the Roman Bridge (Puente Romano), at the southern end

of the old city. On our way, we passed the [General Archive of the Spanish Civil War](#) (Archivo General de la Guerra Civil Española), which is housed in an 18th century building which formerly belonged to the College of St. Ambrose. Since Salamanca had served as Franco's headquarters during the war, the archive was established here by royal decree in 1999. The archive included many documents and possessions which had been confiscated from Republicans and suspected Communists. These were kept secret for many years after General Franco's death in 1977. Finally, in the early 21st century, many of these were returned to their original owners (or their heirs). A large part of the collection consisted of documents confiscated from Catalonia, which were returned to Barcelona in 2005-2006 amid great controversy (see [Salamanca Papers](#)).



Archives of the Spanish Civil War



Roman Bridge, Bell Tower and Dome of the New Cathedral



Verraco del Puente

Puente Romano

The Roman Bridge is situated at the southern end of the old city, spanning the River Tormes. It was originally built in the 1st century CE and was subsequently renovated many times. Popular mythology ascribes the original construction to the demigod Hercules. A parallel bridge, the **Puente de Enrique Estevan**, was built east of the Roman bridge in the early 20th century to serve road traffic, but the Roman bridge continued to serve as the main road into the city from the south until the 1970s, despite having been declared an **Artistic Historic Monument** in 1931. The construction of the Puente de Sánchez Fabrés to the west in 1973 finally allowed the Roman bridge to be closed to automotive traffic. Today Salamanca boasts a half-dozen bridges, not counting the Roman bridge. Only the northern half of the Roman bridge (nearest the city) rests on original Roman arches; the southern half was rebuilt after historic floods in the 13th, 15th and 17th centuries. A fortification at the middle of the bridge affords a view of the old bridge and the cathedrals.

Verraco del Puente

There is a stone statue (verraco de piedra) at the northern end of bridge, which dates back to pre-Roman times. Although “verraco” is most often translated as “boar”, the statue is said to represent a bull. Since the head is missing, it’s a bit hard to tell now, but the horns are mentioned in a vignette from the 16th-century novel, *Lazarillo de Tormes*. The pre-Roman, celtic Vettones created many such verracos. There are many theories about their significance. Some say they were religious symbols; others think that they were boundary markers. The Vettones occupied the central high plains of the Iberian peninsula during the Iron Age, resisting the Carthaginians but ultimately assimilating into the Roman Empire.

Lazarillo and Santiago

Also near the northern end of the Roman bridge are a church and a statue. The statue depicts the aforementioned Lazarillo de Tormes (the smaller figure) leading a blind man (el ciego). The eponymous 16th century novel

was a daring and cynical satire of the class and social structures of the time and was therefore published anonymously. It was immensely popular despite (or perhaps because of) being immediately banned. It is considered the first picaresque novel, a genre whose best-known examples include *Don Quixote*, *Tom Jones* and *Huckleberry Finn*.

The church is the Church of St. James (Iglesia de Santiago). The Roman bridge belongs to a section of the Camino de Santiago (St James’s Way) known as the Via de la Plata, whose name is often translated as “The Silver Route”, although it is more likely derived from an Arabic “false friend”: “Balata” is Arabic for “paved” or “cobbled”.

Casa Lis

Our next stop was the **Casa Lis Art Nouveau and Art Deco Museum**, just north of the Roman bridge. The industrialist Miguel de Lis, who loved all things modern, commissioned the building by the architect Joaquin de Vargas in 1905. After Miguel’s death, the property passed through many hands and fell into disrepair. In 1992, it was acquired by the City of Salamanca with the intention of restoring it, a project made possible only by the donations of Don Manuel Ramos Andrada, which included both funding and many of the objets d’art on display. Don Manuel died in 1998, but the museum continues to be managed by the eponymous Foundation.

The collection is incredibly diverse, including dolls, toys, paintings, jewelry and sculptures in a variety of media. I particularly enjoyed the glass sculptures, but the most notable are those in chryselephantine, a combination of metal (usually bronze or gold) and ivory. We weren’t allowed to take pictures of the artefacts on display, but many pictures can be found on [the museum’s website](#). Unfortunately, few of the site’s pages are available in English at present due to a recent renovation of the site. The building itself is a work of art, as illustrated by this photo of the cafeteria.



Statue of Lazarillo de Tormes and el Ciego in front of the Iglesia de Santiago



*Cafe in the Casa Lis
(Museo Art Nouveau y Art Deco)*



Iglesia de San Marcos (St. Mark's Church)

Iglesia de San Marcos

After a couple of hours at the Casa Lis, it was time to return to the Hotel Alameda Palace for the long bus ride back to our anchorage in Barca d'Alva. However, I couldn't resist a slight detour to glimpse a few more landmarks before leaving town. The Church of St. Mark ([Iglesia de San Marcos](#)) is a Romanesque church notable

for its round shape. I didn't have time to go in, but there [is a brief virtual tour on YouTube](#). Despite the circular form the interior imitates a traditional basilica with three naves ending in three apses. There is some dispute about its exact age, but most sources place its construction in the 12th century.

Further Information

[3 mysterious hidden carvings in Salamanca](#)

[Catedral de Salamanca](#)

[Catedral Vieja de Salamanca](#)

[Catedral Nueva de Salamanca](#)

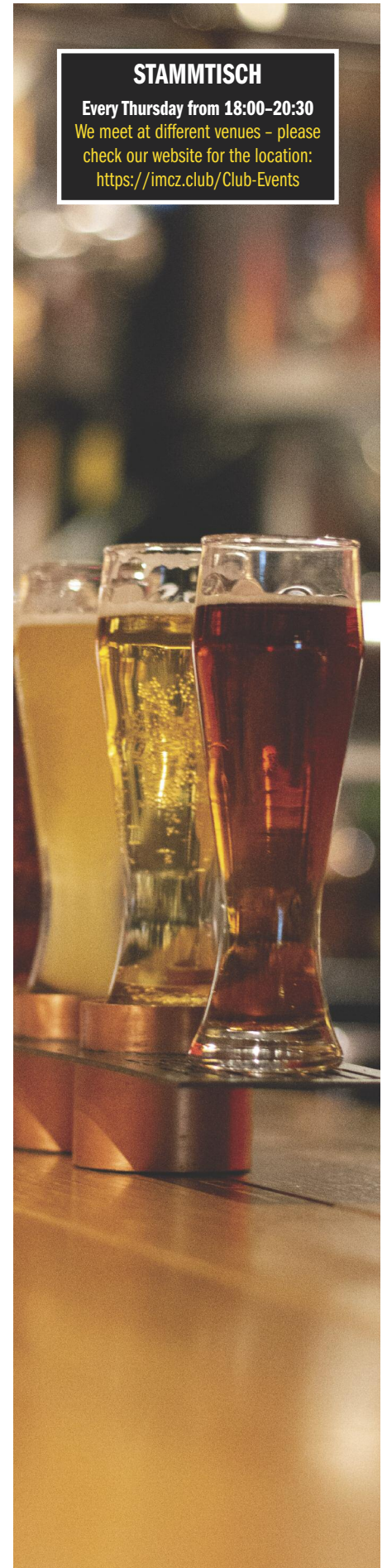
[Ancient Aliens? Mysteries of the Salamanca Cathedral Astronaut Carving Revealed](#)

[Ieronimus: The medieval towers of Salamanca cathedral](#)

[Lazarillo de Tormes: Summary](#)

[Picaresque novel](#)

[Via de la Plata \(The Silver Route\)](#)



STAMMTISCH

Every Thursday from 18:00–20:30
We meet at different venues – please
check our website for the location:
<https://imcz.club/Club-Events>

Excitement On The Rivers Of Bordeaux

Contributed by Wayne Clark

Forward

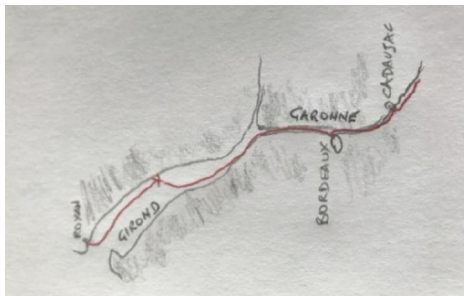
Excitement on the Rivers of Bordeaux is an extract from my sailing adventure from England to Mallorca in the summer of 1993. A chapter from the book I'm in the process of writing. My yacht *Emma Mae* is a 'twin-keel' Jaguar 27 (twenty-seven feet long). She draws only one meter (depth of her keel), which allowed us to navigate some of the rivers and canals of France.

Having navigated her way through Brittany and part of the Bay of Biscay, *Emma Mae* arrived in the little port of Royan situated at the mouth of the river Gironde (*La Gironde*) in north-west France.

This extract tells the story of some 'exciting' moments while navigating the two notorious rivers *Gironde* and *Garonne*, en-route to the more tranquil Canal du Midi. On board *Emma Mae* for this stage of the voyage was Captain Tubs (a nick-name given to me when I acquired *Emma Mae*) and Captain Tubs' friend Geoff from Perth, Australia. Geoff is referred to throughout as 'Uncle Geoff'. Another story.

Departure from Royan

It was late when Uncle Geoff and Captain Tubs finally got to sleep on the night they arrived in Royan, but they were up early next morning, both with clear heads. The next stage of the voyage, negotiating *La Gironde* and *La Garonne*, was going to require both Captain Tubs' and Uncle Geoff's full attention.



Rivers Gironde and Garonne

Captain Tubs was studying the pilot book. Considering the difficulty entering Royan (the pilot book was two years out of date), he was reluctant to follow the pilot's advice on navigating these two rivers. The pilot's recommendation was to immediately cross the wide mouth of *La Gironde* and keep within the channel along the west bank of both rivers until Bordeaux, *Emma Mae's* destination that day.

For the first and only time, Captain Tubs chose to ignore the recommendations of the pilot book. He decided to leave Royan two hours earlier than suggested. Rather than cross the mouth of *La Gironde*, they would navigate the east bank of the river for a few hours, then cross to the west bank for the rest of the passage to Bordeaux.

In the wrong place at the right time

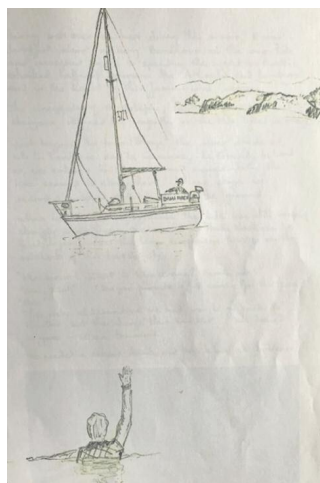
Having departed Royan and steering *Emma Mae* up the east bank, the wrong side of *La Gironde*, Captain Tubs was relieved to see a local yacht, *Melanie*, sailing sedately ahead – also on the wrong side.



Melanie

Melanie's skipper, puffing away at his pipe, seemed quite content and waved pleasantly as *Emma Mae* motor-sailed past. A little later, while Captain Tubs was down below checking and re-checking the charts for any possible dangers, Uncle Geoff called out 'Wayne, I think there is a bloke swimming in the river. He must be bloody mad swimming in this cold water with its horrendous tides.'

'Too bloody right mate' answered Captain Tubs, who was quickly joined Uncle Geoff on deck. 'I think our boy may be in a bit of trouble Geoff, let's steer towards him and find out' suggested Captain Tubs. Sure enough, as *Emma Mae* approached the young man in the water, it was clear all was not well.



Young man 'swimming' in La Gironde

As *Emma Mae* came closer, the lad started shouting incoherently at both Uncle Geoff and Captain Tubs. Of course, he was crying out in French. He needed rescuing. This was more than obvious.

Uncle Geoff, for whatever reason, decided to name the lad 'Jean-Claude'. It took quite an

effort to pull Jean-Claude out of the river and onto *Emma Mae*. He was fully clothed, with a warm jacket and heavy boots. Strange swimming gear.

The poor lad was in a terrible state. Freezing cold and shivering uncontrollably. Close to hypothermia. Jean-Claude must have thought he had been rescued by a couple of perverts as Uncle Geoff and Captain Tubs stripped him naked. Captain Tubs took Jean-Claude below, towed him dry, wrapped him in a duvet and made him sip tepid water. While drying off and sipping water, Jean-Claude was trying desperately to tell Captain Tubs something, something urgent. Despite the language barrier, it seemed clear to Captain Tubs that the lad was saying someone, probably his father (as he kept calling Papa, Papa), was in the river.

Captain Tubs tried calling the French Coastguard on *Emma Mae's* radio. No response. He then tried Royan Harbour Master. No response. Finally, Captain Tubs sent out a message he had only done once before. A distress-call. *Pan-pan, pan-pan, this is Emma Mae, Emma Mae.....* There was an immediate response from the French emergency service *Sapeurs-Pompiers*. By then Jean-Claude was a little calmer and able to talk to *Sapeurs-Pompiers* on *Emma Mae's* radio. His father was still in the river.

The search began. *Melanie's* skipper had obviously heard the exchange on *Melanie's* radio and had dropped the sails and changed course, searching for Papa. The likelihood was that the tide would have swept Papa in the direction of the sea, so Captain Tubs asked Uncle Geoff to steer *Emma Mae* back towards the mouth of the river.

In no time at all, a *Sapeurs-Pompiers* helicopter arrived and joined the search. A few minutes later, a rescue boat arrived. They found Papa. He was alive. Jean-Claude was beside himself with relief. So too were Uncle Geoff and Captain Tubs. They motored over to the rescue boat and handed over Jean-Claude along with his wet clothing.

Suddenly, it was all over. A little while later, Captain Tubs received a radio message from *Sapeurs-Pompiers*. Jean-Claude and Papa were going to be fine. Neither Uncle Geoff nor Captain Tubs spoke for quite a while.

The tide had already turned in their favour and it was time to cross *La Gironde*. To find the channel that would take *Emma Mae* and her crew to Bordeaux.

The vineyards of St-Estéphe, Pauillac, St-Julien and Margaux sped by as the tide lifted *Emma Mae* rapidly along. Just beyond the town Blaye, the rivers divide into *La Dordogne* and *La Garonne*. Bordeaux is situated on *La Garonne*. As soon as *Emma Mae* entered *La Garonne*, the tide seemed to strengthen. Captain Tubs noted with slight alarm that *Emma Mae* was

recording a speed of 13 knots over the ground. Almost three-times *Emma Mae's* maximum speed. They arrived in Bordeaux early. Too early. The tide was still flowing powerfully, making it more than a little difficult to moor alongside the only available pontoon situated in the strong-flowing river.

Captain Tubs met the owner and driver of the crane. The crane that was to once again lower *Emma Mae's* mast and rigging. Monsieur 'le crane driver' Uncle Geoff called him. "Monsieur!" exclaimed Captain Tubs. '220 Francs to hire the crane for half an hour! Surely not?' 'Oui, 220 francs' replied Monsieur le crane driver. Captain Tubs booked the crane (*le grue*) for 10am the next morning. Payment in advance, naturally.

Holding his breath, Captain Tubs edged *Emma Mae* alongside the pier that housed the crane. Monsieur le crane driver guided Captain Tubs to ensure *Emma Mae* was properly secured to the mooring rings on the end of the pier. Give Monsieur le crane driver his due, he knew what he was doing. In no time at all, *Emma Mae's* mast was lying on the cradles designed and constructed by Dave and Polly, back in Dinan (an earlier chapter in my book).

Suddenly, *Emma Mae* was tilting rather badly. Monsieur le crane driver was waving his arms frantically and shouting something Captain Tubs couldn't hear over the noise of *La Garonne*. It finally dawned on Captain Tubs. The tide was ebbing at such a rate, the level of the river was dropping rapidly. *Emma Mae's* lines had to be loosened. Not possible. The lines had jammed in the cleats. *Emma Mae* was literally 'hanging' from the pier.

Monsieur le crane driver came to the rescue. Clambering down from le crane, he loosened the lines from the mooring rings. *Emma Mae* was floating once more. With mast and rigging safely on the deck, Captain Tubs released *Emma Mae* from the pier and they were immediately swept downriver on ten knots of tide.

With *Emma Mae's* engine at full throttle, smoke pouring from her exhaust, she eased ever so slowly back to the pontoon. Captain Tubs prayed *Emma Mae's* little twelve horse-power engine would not fail. Engine failure at that delicate stage would have sent *Emma Mae* crashing into the rocks at the base of the suspension bridge pier, a mere 300 meters downstream.

Outstretched hands grabbed *Emma Mae's* mooring lines and apart from a little 'bump' against a steel pontoon pier, *Emma Mae* was safely moored once again.



Emma Mae safely moored for the night

After the traumatic experiences of the past two days, a day off is what Uncle Geoff and Captain Tubs needed. They couldn't have chosen a nicer city to relax. After an early breakfast on board *Emma Mae*, it was on the bus to explore the beautiful city of Bordeaux.

A surprise was waiting for them at the newspaper kiosk. The headlines of an English tabloid read

'Emergency call by British yacht saves father and son from perishing in la Gironde'

British yacht Emma Mae was instrumental in saving a man and his son from drowning yesterday when their small fishing boat capsized in la Gironde, ten kilometers south of Royan.

The current in this notorious river was flowing strongly towards the Atlantic Ocean when Monsieur Chance's boat sank, leaving him and his son Jean-Claude at the mercy of the raging river.

Jean-Claude was sighted by Emma Mae's helmsman Geoffrey Howard from Australia, about one kilometer off the eastern bank near 'Meschers-sur-Gironde'. Jean-Claude was suffering from hypothermia when plucked out of the river, but managed to convey to the English-speaking sailors that his father was still in la Gironde.

Getting no response from the Coast Guard and Royan Harbormaster, Emma Mae's skipper, Wayne Clark transmitted a PAN-PAN (an emergency message requesting immediate assistance) on his yacht's radio.

The response to this emergency call was immediate and an air-sea rescue helicopter was on the scene within minutes. Assisted by a following French yacht Melenie, Monsieur Chance was discovered two kilometers down-river from where his son was rescued by Emma Mae.

Father and son, both suffering from shock and hypothermia, are recovering in Royan General Hospital and are expected to be allowed home tomorrow.

Both Uncle Geoff and Captain Tubs experienced a strange mix of feelings. Delight that both Jean-Claude and his Papa were safe and well; amazed that had fate placed them in the wrong place at the right time; and a mix of pride and humility that their actions saved two lives.

White river rafting under the bridges of Bordeaux

It was time to leave the delightful city of Bordeaux. Captain Tub's next challenge was to steer *Emma Mae* through one of the several arches under the bridge 'Pont de Pierre'. Every arch had a 'no entry' sign. 'Bloody hell' exclaimed Captain Tubs. 'Which to choose? No time to think about it' decided Captain Tubs. 'Any one near the center of bridge will have to do'.

Holding his breath - again, Captain Tubs took the plunge. White-river rafting on the Colorado River will be simple compared to the rapids in the arches under the 'Pont de Pierre'. Rocks to the left of them, rocks to the right of them, *Emma Mae* 'shot' through the arch, soon settling back in the relatively calm waters of *La Garonne*.

'One more overnight stop and we will be out of this treacherous river' Captain Tubs assured Uncle Geoff, who had been uncharacteristically quiet and was looking a little pale. 'According to my research, there is a rather pleasant medieval town called 'Cadillac' or something like that, between here and Canal du Midi. I think we should moor there for the night' suggested Captain Tubs. 'Sounds good to me' whispered Uncle Geoff, still looking rather pale.

Tidal Bore

There was only one other yacht moored on the pontoon at Cadillac. The skipper and crew were students having a good time. A friendly bunch who all agreed Cadillac was a town worth exploring. The little Uncle Geoff and Captain Tubs saw of the medieval town that evening convinced them they should spend the next morning exploring the place before setting sail for Canal du Midi.



Peaceful evening moored in a tranquil river

A strange sound woke Captain Tubs. It was early. 7am. It wasn't Uncle Geoff's snoring. Captain Tubs knew that noise. This was a hissing sound. Very strange indeed.

Suddenly, *Emma Mae* was being lifted. Then "crash". *Emma Mae* was being tossed around as if in a severe storm on the ocean. Another crash, even louder. Uncle Geoff had been tossed out of his bunk. 'What the f*** is happening?' screamed Uncle Geoff.

Then, as if nothing had happened, all was calm.

They had experienced a tidal bore, a sort-of mini tidal-wave. Apparently not uncommon in rivers like *La Garonne*. Captain Tubs checked *Emma Mae* for any damage. No damage to *Emma Mae*, but Captain Tubs wasn't too sure about their hearts or Uncle Geoff's leg, or was it his bum? when he fell off his bunk.

'Let's forget about our tour of Cadillac and get the hell out of this river' suggested Captain Tubs. 'Bloody right mate' replied Uncle Geoff.

Wayne Clark
(AKA Captain Tubs)

¹ A tidal bore is a tidal phenomenon in which the leading edge of the incoming tide forms a wave of water that travels up a river against the direction of the river's outgoing tide.



Wrapping up 2020-21 on the Snow:

How the Mask Saved the Swiss Ski Season

Contributed by IMCZ Sports' editor Joseph Dow



From Trockener Steg - Zermatt

«Die Schweiz fährt Ski!»

This winter, the Swiss definitively proved their unrivaled passion for, and adoration of, the sport of skiing. Standing in the face of intense international pressure, Switzerland defiantly refused to surrender the season to Covid 19. Except for an eleventh hour shut down of some resorts for Christmas week, which was worrying in general and infuriating for those with reservations that had just become uncancellable, the Swiss did not waiver.

Vindication came by late February with no super-spreader events at any of Switzerland's ski areas. "There were no big [virus] outbreaks, no ski resort became a hotspot, there was no major reputational damage for Switzerland – none of these fears materialised," said Martin Nydegger, head of the Switzerland Tourism organisation.

Despite this more liberal attitude towards ski operations, Swiss authorities did subject visiting British enthusiasts to some rather draconian measures. Due to alarm over the more contagious UKB variant, Swiss officials suddenly ordered UK travelers into isolation in their hotel rooms. In a cheeky move, under cover of darkness, a number absconded, on the run with law enforcement hot on their heels. When it comes to skiing, it seems Brits believe, "Who Dares Skis."

Thank God for the mask!

That piece of cloth saved the season. It became the visible representation of the ski areas' Covid safety concept plans required by their Kantons to allow continued operations. I'm still skeptical that masks did any good against the disease in a skiing scenario, but they were the symbol needed to show a panicky non-skiing public that the areas were doing something to be safe against Covid and to counter significant public calls to shutter the ski areas. Nothing else was consistent, not spraying the gondolas, not social distancing, not limiting capacity in the cabins or on the chairs, just the masks. I still cannot understand how it is possible to properly wear a mask while dealing with ski gloves, goggles and a helmet and carrying heavy ski gear all over the place. People were frequently touching, adjusting, taking them up and down, and applying hand sanitizer regularly just wasn't practical.

When it comes to choice of mask, why did so many people insist on wearing those horrid light blue disposable surgical masks? Why not a stylish, high-tech mask for chrissake? We didn't need to be reminded constantly of the plague, seeing everyone skiing



Matterhorn in snow



Arosa



Obersaxen Trees

behind the out-of-place blue surgicals! Those are the exact same color as the Taliban's polyester burqas of Afghanistan. That blue is the color of lockdown and oppression. There were also many militant liftees, crazed with power, yelling "**Maskel!**" at people with incorrectly positioned masks, slamming on the lift's brakes, stopping the swinging chair, and jumping down in front to administer a severe tongue-lashing at the slightest infraction. Yes, many probably feared for their jobs, if photos of maskless skiers made their way to the news media, but some definitely took mask compliance to a draconian extreme. It is no wonder that signs were placed warning of the consequences of "abusing" the lift staff over mask rules.

It was a season for the ski purist, all about the act of skiing and nothing more. There were no parties and après-ski at which to dance, sing, and drink; no restaurants in which to indulge; no lodges to huddle, warm up and relax; no ski shops to browse (other than strict equipment rental); no Glühwein, no cocoa; not even a lousy bench upon which to organize your gear and sit to cram into your ski boots! It was rough, but pure and glorious with pleasant weather and record amounts of snow (660cm deep up on Titlis with beautiful conditions all the way down to Trübsee through the weekend of May 22-23rd). In the end, I am very thankful and fortunate, unlike our neighbors in France, Italy, Germany and to a lesser extent, Austria, with forced, canceled seasons. I can't imagine the frustration and despair from missing an entire year of skiing. It is unthinkable to a ski fanatic like me.



Davos to Schatzalp

Despite the significant hassle, the winter was a marvelous time in the Swiss Alps! So, heat up a batch of Schümli Pflümli, pull up your mask between sips, enjoy these photos from the season, and think snow.

Mask Update: Livinguard Tube Mask Lite – Works well when wearing a helmet, good breathability, a bit tight. Easier to pull up and down compared to the Fitness Mask, which is better for wearing while actually skiing.



Mask-up – or else!



Sports Mask



Livinguard Tube Mask Lite



Danger Sign

Additional Information

«Die Schweiz fährt Ski!» campaign:

www.seilbahnen.org/de/Service/Corona-Virus

www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss-tourism-boss-says-ski-resort-openings-have-been-justified/46393370

www.dw.com/en/covid-19-switzerland-to-track-british-tourists-on-ski-slopes/a-56032937

www.foxnews.com/world/britain-travelers-swiss-ski-resort-quarantine

<https://planetski.eu/2021/02/01/majority-of-swiss-want-ski-resorts-to-close-if-covid-19-worsens/>

Livinguard Tube Mask Lite:

livinguard.com/tubemasklite/

www.eliko.ch/products/livinguard-tube-maske-lite



Investment Commentary JUNE/JULY 2021 WAGNER & ASSOCIATES Investment Consulting

Contributed by IMCZ member Christian Wagner

May 28, 2021

ECONOMICS AND POLITICS

As expected, the numbers for economic growth in the first quarter have to be scrutinized. US GDP growth was +0.4% versus the same quarter last year, but impressive +6.4% when annualized. It's different in the Euro-area where the numbers are -1.8% and -2.5% as well as in the United Kingdom with -6.1% and -5.9%. In the USA much larger support measures and the consumer were beneficial, while non-uniform Covid strategies and Brexit penalized Europe.

BOND MARKETS

At the moment, both the Fed and ECB are ignoring the unwelcome consequences of their extremely stimulative monetary policy. In the USA, they hope that April's +4.2% inflation is only an aberration, in Europe that March's 8.1% unemployment will drop with the success of the vaccination campaigns. In sharp contrast, the People's Bank of China has become restrictive over the past few months.

EQUITY MARKETS

Markets have lost steam, and experts are arguing about the reasons. There is a consensus on a good economic outlook, but Covid numbers in Brazil and India raise questions. Earnings for 2020 and the first quarter of 2021 were much better than expected but the even higher expectations are hardly realistic. Inflation fears are a logical

consequence of a booming economic recovery but mean that the expected earnings stream has to be discounted by a higher number.

CURRENCIES

The major currencies mirror the growth of indebtedness over the last 18 months. The three trillion-dollar-programs in the USA worth over USD 6 trillion have led to new currency weakness. But the USA is not alone; the gross indebtedness of the developed countries has jumped from 108% of GDP in 2018 to 127% end 2020 and is higher than after WWII.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

With Covid-19, we had to go through 2 or 3 waves over the past 18 months before reality caught up with wishful thinking. With inflation, it doesn't look much different, and soothing statements cannot deny the facts. Too much money is already inflationary, built up demand cannot be contained indefinitely, supply bottlenecks cannot be bridged by pushing a button and investors will be demanding a return sometime. Inflation will keep us preoccupied.

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Vocal Emotions is Looking (or Listening) for a Few Good Men!

The mixed chorus Vocal Emotions needs bass and tenor singers. The repertory covers a wide spectrum, including gospel, jazz and pop, and most of the lyrics are in English. If you like to sing, why not drop by for a rehearsal!



In August the chorus will resume rehearsals for concerts in December and a church and anniversary concerts next year. The chorus can also be booked for other performances. Rehearsals are conducted in Swiss German, usually on Tuesday nights from 19:45 to 21:45 at the protestant church in Baar. For further information, please consult [the Vocal Emotions website \(vocal-emotions.ch\)](http://theVocalEmotionswebsite.com), write to info@vocal-emotions.ch, call the President, [Ruedi Wey](mailto:RuediWey@vocal-emotions.ch) (fluent in English, 076 330 09 71) or talk to our Webmaster, [Roger Brooks \(roger.b@vocal-emotions.ch\)](mailto:RogerBrooks@vocal-emotions.ch), who sings tenor.

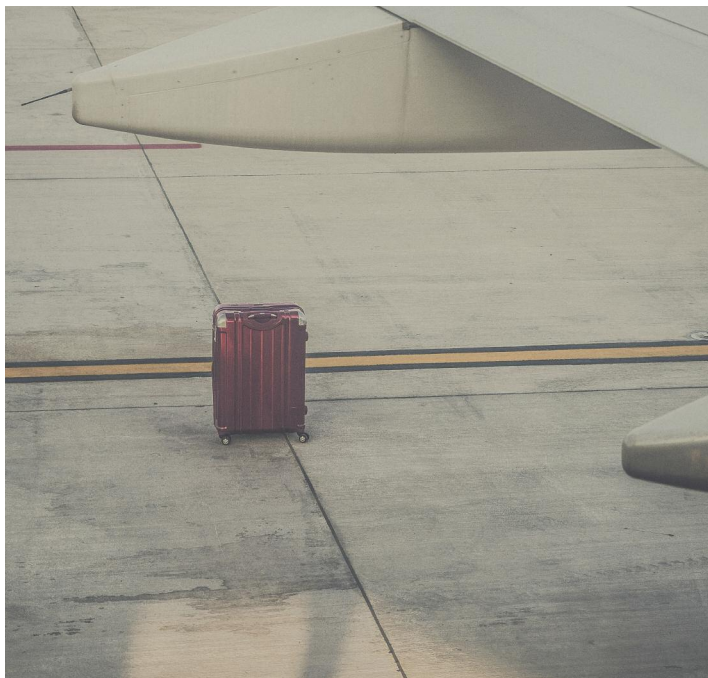
The problem with age

When I went to lunch today, I noticed an old man sitting on a park bench sobbing his eyes out. I stopped and asked him what was wrong. He told me, 'I have a 22 year old wife at home. She rubs my back every morning and then gets up and makes me pancakes, sausage, fresh fruit and freshly ground coffee.' I continued, 'Well, then why are you crying?' He added, 'She makes me homemade soup for lunch and my favourite biscuits, cleans the house and then watches sports TV with me for the rest of the afternoon.' I said, 'Well, why are you crying?' He said, 'For dinner she makes me a gourmet meal with wine and my favourite dessert and then we cuddle until the small hours.' I inquired, 'Well then, why in the world would you be crying?' He replied, 'I can't remember where I live.'



Gatwick Arrivals

After his return from Rome, Will couldn't find his luggage in the London Gatwick airport baggage area. So he went to the lost luggage office and told the woman there that his bags hadn't shown up on the carousel. She smiled and told him not to worry because they were trained professionals and he was in good hands. 'Now', she asked Will, 'has your plane arrived yet?'



Deductive Reasoning...

Deductive reasoning is a lot simpler than many people realize. Just see if it isn't:

Neighbour 1:

"Hi, there, new neighbour, it sure is a mighty nice day to be moving."

New Neighbour:

"Yes, it is and people around here seem extremely friendly."

Neighbour 1:

"So what is it you do for a living?"

New Neighbour:

"I am a professor at the University, I teach deductive reasoning."

Neighbour 1:

"Deductive reasoning, what is that?"

New Neighbour:

"Let me give you an example. I see you have a dog house out back. By that I deduce that you have a dog."

Neighbour 1:

"That is right."

New Neighbour:

"The fact that you have a dog, leads me to deduce that you have a family."

Neighbour 1:

"Right again."

New Neighbour:

"Since you have a family I deduce that you have a wife."

Neighbour 1:

"Correct."

New Neighbour:

"And since you have a wife, I can deduce that you are heterosexual."

Neighbour 1:

"Yup."

New Neighbour:

"That is deductive reasoning."

Neighbour 1:

"Cool."

Later that same day...

Neighbour 1:

"Hey, I was talking to that new guy who moved in next door."

Neighbour 2:

"Is he a nice guy?"

Neighbour 1:

"Yes, and he has an interesting job."

Neighbour 2:

"Oh, yeah what does he do?"

Neighbour 1:

"He is a professor of deductive reasoning at the University."

Neighbour 2:

"Deductive reasoning, what is that?"

Neighbour 1:

"Let me give you an example. Do you have a dog house?"

Neighbour 2:

"No."

Neighbour 1:

"You must be gay then."

CONCLUSION



So Drunk He Can't Stand Up...

An Irishman's been drinking at a pub all night. When he stands up to leave, he falls flat on his face. He tries to stand one more time, but to no avail. Again, he falls flat on his face. He figures he'll crawl outside and get some fresh air and maybe that will sober him up. Once outside, he stands up and, sure enough, he falls flat on his face. The Irishman decides to crawl the four blocks to his home.

When he arrives at the door, he stands up and falls flat on his face. He crawls through the door into his bedroom. When he reaches his bed, he tries one more time to stand up. This time, he manages to pull himself upright but he quickly falls right into bed. He is sound asleep as soon as his head hits the pillow.

He awakens the next morning to his wife standing over him, shouting, "So, you've been out drinking again!"

"Why do you say that?" he asks innocently.

"The pub called. You left your wheelchair there again."



Montana Grizzly Bear Notice...

In light of the rising frequency of human/grizzly bear conflicts, the Montana Department of Fish and Game is advising hikers, hunters, and fishermen to take extra precautions and keep alert for bears while in the field.

"We advise that outdoorsmen wear noisy little bells on their clothing so as not to startle bears that aren't expecting them. We also advise outdoorsmen to carry pepper spray with them in case of an encounter with a bear. It is also a good idea to watch out for fresh signs of bear activity. Outdoorsmen should recognize the difference between black bear and grizzly bear poop. Black bear poop is smaller and contains lots of berries and squirrel fur. Grizzly bear poop has little bells in it and smells like pepper."



Some really bad shorts to groan over

There's a fine line between a numerator and a denominator.

Did you hear about the fire at the circus?
It was in tents!

Why do ducks have feathers?
To cover their butt quacks!

What's the difference between a hippo and a zippo?
One is really heavy and the other's a little lighter.

Why should you never trust stairs?
They're always up to something.

When does a joke become a 'dad' joke?
When it becomes apparent.

What does a house wear?
Address!

Two windmills are standing on a wind farm.
One asks, 'What's your favourite kind of music?'
'The other replies, 'I'm a big metal fan.'

I took the shell off of my racing snail,
thinking it would make him faster.
But if anything, it made him more sluggish.

My teachers told me I'd never amount to much since
I procrastinate so much.
I told them, "Just you wait!"

How did the hipster burn his mouth?
He ate his pizza before it was cool.

Why don't blind people skydive?
Because it scares their dogs.



Members' Marketplace

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?

**Then ADVERTISE here,
 in the IMCZ News;**

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.

GRATIS - Freestanding satellite dish with SKY UK HD set-top box, including cables.
 Phone John Arnold at 079 664 0854

IMCZNEWS Advertising Rates

The IMCZ newsletter is delivered bi-monthly to about 200 members representing 20 nationalities. IMCZ members have personal or professional interests in both the international community and in the canton of Zug.

Format: A4 vertical, full color.

Ad content delivery: electronic by e-mail, .pdf, .jpg, .gif

Advertising Rates:

- Full page, A4 vertical (19 x 27.7 cm), Fr. 200.-
- 1/2 Page, A5 horizontal (19 x 13.5 cm), Fr. 110.-
- 1/3 Page, vertical (6.3 x 27.7 cm), Fr. 85.-
- 1/3 Page, horizontal (19 x 9.2 cm), Fr. 85.-
- 1/4 Page, A6 vertical (9.2 x 13.5 cm), Fr. 60.-
- 1/4 Page, horizontal (19 x 6.9 cm), Fr. 60.-
- Business Card (9.2 x 6.45 cm) Fr. 45.-

Extra costs may be incurred for typesetting, special formatting, etc. IMCZ Members receive a 20% discount on advertisement costs.



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