

MAY 2012

fao
Casa
gazette

San Marino e San Leo

Family History, the Filmers

Crossing Africa on Two
Wheels: Cape Town to Lusaka

Earthquake Collection for
Japan

Bloom Where you're planted

Recipe:

Lasagna with fish Ragù

Paella Mixta

Mensile - N. 5 2012 - Reg. Trib. N. 574 dell'8/10/1990



The Birth of Dawn

Earth our mother, breathe forth life
all night sleeping
now awaking
in the east
now see the dawn

Earth our mother, breathe and waken
leaves are stirring
all things moving
new day coming
life renewing

Eagle soaring, see the morning
see the new mysterious morning
something marvelous and sacred
though it happens every day
Dawn the child of God and Darkness

(Adapted from Alice C. Fletcher; "The Hako, a Pawnee Ceremony")

Sun Rays

See!
there across the sky
the Drawers-of-straight-Lines
flash their furrows of fire.
It is the Mind of the Father
on the borderland of Time,
the Father,
yearning,
yearning for his children
turned from the sky

(Adapted by Ina Sizer Cassidy)

Poems published in the collection titled **NATIVE AMERICAN WISDOM**

(A spiritual tradition at one with Nature) Edited by Alan Jacobs

fao Casa gazette

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Typewritten electronic contributions for the FAO CASA Gazette are welcome. These can be in English, French, Italian or Spanish - articles, poems, drawings, photographs, etc. in fact anything interesting that staff members and/or their families in Rome or the field may like to contribute. No anonymous material will be accepted, and the Editor reserves the right to choose and/or reject material that is not in keeping with the ethics of the Organization. Send contributions electronically to the Editor at jill.stevenson@fao.org or leave signed copies with the COOP Office on the ground floor of Building E. The deadline for editorial material is due on the 1st of the month preceding the date of issue. The Editor may schedule articles according to the priorities and editorial requirements of the FAO Staff COOP. The FAO CASA Gazette is published every month.

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UN WEEKEND A TUTTA STORIA, TUTTA CULTURA, TUTTA
NATURA, TUTTO GUSTO E A..... TUTTO SHOPPING...

..alla scoperta delle bellezze di
San Marino e San Leo
gioielli nostrani

by *Enrica Romanazzo*



Sentivo spesso parlare di San Marino, piccolo gioiello incastonato nella cornice delle meraviglie Italiane, che vanta luoghi sospesi nel tempo, in bilico tra storia e leggenda... San Marino, la piccola repubblica indipendente, arroccata sul monte Titano mi appariva come un luogo inaccessibile e leggendario che non sembrava far parte della mia realtà. Ma l'incontro con il Sig. Francesco Brigante, Sales Manager della Convention e Visitors Bureau di San Marino, che ha saputo descrivere mirabilmente le peculiarità del territorio e raccontarmi la storia di questo piccolo ed importante centro, ha acceso la mia curiosità e suscitato in me grande interesse per un luogo simbolo di libertà ed indipendenza, oggi entrato a pieno titolo a far parte delle Nazioni Unite e del Consiglio d'Europa, dove opera in difesa dei diritti dell'uomo e della pace. Sullo stemma della Repubblica di San Marino campeggia il motto **Libertas** che si ispira alla volontà del Santo Fondatore, Marino, il quale lasciò il suo popolo libero da ogni potere. E' per merito della saggezza che ispirò i reggenti dell'antico **Terrae Sancti Marini** che il corpo sociale seppe fronteggiare pericolose situazioni e consolidare la propria autonomia. Su queste basi si è sviluppata la storia ed il fascino di un luogo davvero speciale che merita una visita per la sua arte, per l'architettura, per la civiltà che raccontano i suoi edifici pubblici, per la bellezza dei paesaggi che la circondano, per i sapori di una terra fertile ed ospitale.

Ho passato due giorni interessantissimi, a zonzo in un piccolo mosaico di strade su cui si affacciano torrioni, palazzi, chiese, tra un susseguirsi di negozi coloratissimi... una vera cuccagna per gli amanti dello shopping, della cultura, del buon cibo e del buon vino. Durante il mio soggiorno a San Marino (**a cui dedicheremo un'ampia illustrazione nel prossimo numero della gazette**), ho avuto anche modo di visitare lo splendido borgo di San Leo, che si trova nelle vicinanze. Sembra che il monte Titano e il colossale masso su cui sorge San Leo siano elementi di un unico banco di una placca calcarea, che a seguito di moti tettonici, si frammentò dando origine a massi sparsi che hanno disegnato l'affascinante paesaggio della Val Marecchia.

SAN LEO



A pochi chilometri da San Marino, arroccata su una massiccia roccia tufacea esiste un posto stupendo dal fascino antico ... Percorro la ripida strada che porta al borgo guardando dal basso i torrioni dell'inespugnabile Forte di San Leo abbarbicato sulla cima, meglio conosciuto come il Castello di Cagliostro, che qui fu imprigionato e che qui morì tra atroci sofferenze. Nel suggestivo percorso che si snoda lungo le pareti della roccia, mentre osservo le sue rughe e le linee delle sue ferite che salgono fino ai massicci torrioni, vengo assalita da foschi pensieri. Perché la rocca, con il suo imponente e maestoso splendore, evoca tempi bui di persecuzioni ed atroci torture.

Ed invece, meraviglia delle meraviglie, varcata la porta d'ingresso che immette nella grande piazza del paese, mi imbatto nell'atmosfera lieta di un borgo in cui opera una comunità vivace ed organizzata.



E' immediata la sensazione di pace, di eleganza, di pulizia e di giovialità che regna sul ridente ed ampio spazio del centro storico da cui si dipanano austeri edifici religiosi. Qui gaiezza ed austerità convivono in perfetta armonia ed equilibrio. Entrare in questa piazza è come respirare la santità che vive in misteriosi tracciati che le pietre e le forme dei meravigliosi esempi di architettura civile e religiosa contengono e che rimandano al visitatore come un eco. Una visione che mi porta a ripercorrere a ritroso nel tempo, la storia di epoche in cui il mondo era pervaso dalle perenne ed unificante armonia della Parola ... Mi sono immediatamente immersa nell'atmosfera mistica delle chiese romaniche, che ti avvolge insieme al silenzio dell'immensa e quieta Val Marecchia che circonda l'enorme masso roccioso su cui sorge questo splendido borgo medievale. Sia nel paesaggio circostante che nelle forme architettoniche del luogo, domina il richiamo del trascendente. Qui di fronte alla meraviglia del creato che si rivela agli occhi del visitatore, è possibile osservare la ciclicità

(continued on page 8)

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(continued from page 6)

delle stagioni e percepire la strettissima relazione dell'uomo con la terra e la sua posizione nel cosmo.

Non so resistere alla tentazione di smarcarmi dal piccolo gruppo che mi accompagna, per indugiare e rivolgere lo sguardo verso i dolci profili delle colline che declinano verso il mare. In un grandioso colpo d'occhio, le pareti verticali della rupe che precipitano a picco nella valle, si stemperano tra i morbidi rilievi collinari, per perdersi nel verde mosaico di fazzoletti di terra fertile che rimandano al profumo di tartufo e funghi. Che dire della quieta bellezza di un luogo fuori dal tempo e dolcemente imprigionato in esso, in cui si respira pace e spiritualità? Stupefacente: questo lembo di terra fra Romagna, Marche e San Marino che profuma di storia antica, sembra davvero sospeso nel tempo.. e nel cielo!!! Perché dalla punta più alta dello sperone, lo sguardo si perde verso azzurri orizzonti, alla ricerca dell'impercettibile linea di demarcazione tra cielo e mare. L'Adriatico, verso cui degradano le verdi valli sembra essersi allontanato da questo masso di roccia che assomiglia ad un'isola emersa dalle acque ... Forse in un lontano passato, quella che oggi è una verde e rigogliosa vallata era solo un immenso fondale ... Forse secoli di assestamenti geomorfologici hanno trasformato un affascinante passato di vita marina in una terra fertile, su cui campeggiano San Leo e San Marino, due preziosi gioielli nostrani, arroccati su picchi rocciosi che custodiscono i segni di una storia millenaria. La mia fantasia vaga attraverso paesaggi primordiali ... Ma a distrarmi dalle mie fantasticherie, sono le voci dei miei amici che mi invitano a raggiungerli per andare a mangiare ...



Strozzapreti agli STRIDOLI

Ed è in questo preciso momento che mi accingo a fare la mia conoscenza con gli **STRIDOLI** usati come condimento in un gustoso piatto di **Strozzapreti** (pasta fatta in casa) serviti con preziose scaglie di tartufo nero ed una generosa spolverata di **PECORINO DI FOSSA**, un formaggio grasso, friabile e gustoso dal sapore caratteristico e particolare che al primo approccio sembra dolce, ma che si fa via via più piccante ed intenso durante la degustazione.

TONI E NOTE nello SPARTITO DEL GUSTO ispiratomi da Gioacchino Rossini

Gli strozzapreti agli stridoli sono deliziosi. La morbidezza della pasta si sposa perfettamente con la consistenza delle erbe e con la cremosità del formaggio. E' un piatto perfetto ed equilibrato che racchiude i segreti del sottobosco. Il gustoso aroma del formaggio di fossa mi accarezza il palato con le note speziate del legno, del tartufo e del muschio... Sapori e profumi in *armonia*, come *musica* per le mie papille gustative. Il *tocco* delicato degli stridoli, gli *accenti tonici* del tartufo, il *guizzo* deciso del formaggio di fossa, mi hanno talmente colpita tanto da suggerirmi la possibilità di scrivere una personalissima canzone che ho subito annotato tra le righe dello spartito del gusto...



Ho pensato di creare una nuova canzone ispirata al credo di Gioacchino Rossini, nato a Pesaro (quindi in zone limitrofe...) che considerava l'arte del mangiare alla stregua dell'arte dei suoni ... Non è forse la musica nutrimento dell'anima e del cuore? Non è forse l'appetito per lo stomaco ciò che l'amore è per il cuore?

Scriveva Rossini:

“L'appetito è per lo stomaco ciò che l'amore è per il cuore.



*Lo stomaco vuoto rappresenta il **fagotto** o il **piccolo flauto**, in cui brontola il malcontento o guaisce l'invidia; al contrario, lo stomaco pieno è il triangolo del piacere oppure i **cembali della gioia**.*

Quanto all'amore, lo considero la prima donna per eccellenza, la diva che canta nel cervello cavatine di cui l'orecchio si inebria e il cuore ne viene rapito.

Mangiare e amare, cantare e digerire: questi sono in verità i quattro atti di questa opera buffa che si chiama vita, e che svanisce come la schiuma di una bottiglia di champagne.

Chi la lascia fuggire senza averne goduto, è un pazzo.”

LA NUOVA CREAZIONE

Lincontro felice con gli **STRIDOLI**, erba che nasce spontanea nella fascia collinare della zona del Montefeltro, mi ha suggerito una nuova creazione da inserire nel mio album tra gli spartiti del gusto. Trattasi di ricetta rivisitata e corretta. Del resto ogni piatto nuovo indica la strada maestra per l'uso dei prodotti autoctoni di qualità. Ma le varianti, le sfumature di diversità dipendono dai prodotti reperibili sul proprio territorio e dall'estro personale. Conquistata dalla gradevolezza dagli strozzapreti agli stridoli, ho riprovato a casa la ricetta, utilizzando degli agretti cotti al dente, la cui consistenza si avvicina molto a quella di queste erbe che crescono spontanee nei pascoli e nei prati dalla costa alla fascia collinare. Quindi ho condito la pasta fatta in casa con gli agretti leggermente scottati nell'olio d'oliva (giusto il tempo di insaporirli dopo averli lessati e scolati al dente), ho aggiunto due cucchiaini di crema di tartufo di ottima qualità e delle scaglie di formaggio di fossa che è reperibile oggi presso gli alimentari più forniti. Al riguardo ho scoperto un banco al mercato di Piazza Epiro (box 25) che vende splendidi prodotti nostrani e che organizza degustazione di prodotti tipici e specialità regionali (www.francescoloreti.it). Qui ho trovato un eccellente formaggio di fossa di Roncofreddo, località situata nella vallata del Rubicone, prodotto dalla famiglia Brancaleoni, depositaria di un'antica tradizione casearia che ha permesso loro di rappresentare l'Italia ai Mondiali del settore nel 2005 e nel 2007 ottenendo la medaglia di bronzo al “CASEUS AWARD” di Lione in Francia.



Ed ho scoperto anche varie specialità casearie della nostra penisola come una vasta gamma di deliziosi pecorini e gorgonzola cremosi dalle sfumature dolci e retrogusto piccante. Provare per credere.

GLI STRIDOLI



Sono piante dal fusto eretto con foglie di color verde bluastrò. Devono il nome al caratteristico stridio che producono le foglie strofinate fra di loro. La definizione “orecchie di lepre” deriva, nel tipo selvatico, dalla forma delle foglie più rotondeggianti. Le foglie vengono utilizzate in cucina per la preparazione di primi piatti, frittate, zuppe di stagione. Le giovani foglie primaverili si possono consumare crude nelle insalate

FORMAGGIO DI FOSSA

Il formaggio di fossa è un formaggio prodotto in tutta la zona del Montefeltro e del Metauro; la sua produzione coinvolge, quindi, tre province (Forlì-Cesena, Rimini e Pesaro-Urbino) e due regioni, l'Emilia Romagna e le Marche.

La pratica di conservare il formaggio nelle fosse risale all'epoca malatestiana. Per conservare i generi alimentari a lungo e in luogo sicuro e preservarli dalle razzie dei soldati, la popolazione iniziò a scavare delle fosse nel tufo sotto i pavimenti delle abitazioni. Tali fosse venivano nascoste ripristinando la pavimentazione originaria sopra di esse. Come ci rammenta il nome stesso, il formaggio di fossa deve la sua principale peculiarità alla stagionatura nelle fosse. Una volta pronte, infatti, le forme di formaggio vengono avvolte in teli di cotone bianchi e riposti nelle fosse che vengono prima disinfettate con un falò, poi pavimentate con il legno e rivestite alle pareti con paglia, fieno ed erbe varie, infine sigillate in modo che l'aria non possa filtrare e che il formaggio possa respirare solo l'aria che traspira dal tufo.



Grazie a questa particolare stagionatura, e del processo di fermentazione anaerobica avvenuto, la pasta è compatta e friabile di colore giallo paglierino. Il profumo del formaggio di fossa è decisamente erbaceo, ricorda il fieno, il muschio e il sottobosco bagnato, ed il suo sapore è delicato e quasi dolce appena lo si assaggia ma mentre lo si assapora si fa sempre più piccante ed intenso, a tratti amarognolo.

Il formaggio di fossa è un ottimo ingrediente della cucina. Avendo un sapore fortissimo, è di fatto in grado di insaporire in modo incredibile molti piatti con una quantità minima di calorie, in quanto ne bastano pochi grammi ■




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THE FILMER FAMILY

by Angela Whitby

This is a record of my research into one family name which originated from what was known as the 'French' side of the family. My parents had told me I descended from French aristocracy and I wished to prove or disprove this theory.

I began my research with family papers and found a letter written by my father's cousin referring to a Comte de Filmer. I knew that the maiden name of my great grandmother, Susannah, was Filmer and that she had married in 1864. In order to discover her parentage I checked the censuses of 1841, 1851 and 1861 and found her with her parents and siblings – she had been born in Shoreditch in 1840. Her birth certificate then confirmed her parents' names.

The 1851 and 1861 censuses told me that Susannah's father, William Cooper Filmer, had been born in Canterbury. However, he had moved to London as he was married in Christ Church, Spitalfields in 1833. My next step was to check the 1871 census where I found William at the French Hospital in Hackney working as Cook to the Institution. This was the first mention of any French connection.

As my research had now taken me beyond civil registration, I decided to check the parish records held at Canterbury Cathedral Archives. I had an idea of William's year of birth from the censuses and from his death certificate, and searched film of the different parishes in Canterbury, in one instance having to use the Bishops' Transcripts as the parish records had been destroyed in the War. I eventually found

him in the records of St George the Martyr with his parents and siblings. During my search I came to realise that Filmer was a name common to Kent. I then searched for his parents' marriage and found a Thomas Filmer had married a Susannah Leibe in 1799. At this stage I was beginning to wonder whether it was Susannah who was French, although I thought her name sounded German.

I then decided to find out what I could about William Cooper Filmer and the French Hospital and found a number of references on the internet. It offered sheltered accommodation to French Protestants and their descendants who had fallen on bad times. I also discovered that the Huguenot Society had been founded in 1885 by the Directors of the French Hospital, one of the Society's tasks being to preserve and maintain its records. I had noted from the census that William Cooper Filmer had been a Cook at the French Hospital but wondered whether he also lived there as a French Protestant descendant. I therefore contacted the Librarian at the Huguenot Library and arranged a visit.

I spent a fascinating day looking through the records at the library and soon found that Filmer was not a Huguenot name but that Leibe/Liebe/Leab/Lieb was and found several Liebes listed in the registers of the Huguenot churches in Canterbury, Threadneedle Street and Spitalfields. The records covering the inmates and applicants to the French Hospital proved very rewarding and I found a page solely allocated to William. He was a Cook

employed to weigh the meat and bread and to carve the inmates' dinners for a weekly salary of 5s. It showed that in 1870 he presented a petition to enter the hospital as an inmate as he had been supported by his daughter and she had no longer been able to do so. He was also in bad health. In order to be accepted as an inmate you had to prove descent from French Protestants. The information showed that he was the son of Thomas Filmer of Hackney, a boot maker, and Susannah Liebe. It confirmed Susannah was the daughter of Philip Liebe, a French Protestant refugee. A number of family documents were held by the hospital, including a baptismal certificate confirming that Susannah was the daughter of Philip and Mary Leab (sic) and that she had been baptised on 28th April 1771. They also had the marriage certificate of Thomas and Susannah. I had at last found without doubt the French connection.

The same extract listed a number of other documents held by the hospital, including a request following William's death for assistance in paying his funeral expenses – it was agreed that a sum of £4 12 6d, the cost of a funeral of an inmate, be contributed. A much later document was a letter, dated 1895, from William's granddaughter asking for evidence of descent to support her daughter's application to the French School. All this information was exciting as I now knew much more about William, my great-great-grandfather, and that he was a pauper. The extract also mentioned that he had been a member of the Christian Providence Society for 33 years. There was also a Certificate from the City of Canterbury admitting William to the "Freedom" of the City in 1830. On re-visiting Canterbury Archives I checked the Freemen registers held there and found that he had been admitted by paternity. His father, grandfather, greatgrandfather and great great grandfather had all been

craftsmen and Freemen of Canterbury.

I ordered a copy of William Cooper Filmer's Will from the Probate Office. This showed all his separate bequests to his children and gave me further insight into him and his family, one poignant bequest was to leave his bed and mattress to one of his sons.

I am in the process of trying to find out more about his father, Thomas Filmer. The records of the French Hospital referred to him as Thomas of Hackney. So far I haven't been able to find his baptism but considering Filmer is a Kent name I think he was born in Kent. Perhaps he had died in Hackney and I have therefore been searching the burials but so far without success. I did obtain a death certificate of a Thomas Filmer, a shoemaker, of about the right age, who died in St Thomas' Hospital in 1838. I then decided to search the records of St Thomas' Hospital which are held at the London Metropolitan Archives in the hope this would give me an address or perhaps a widow's name. I found a record of his admission, solely a name and date, and then asked to view the Register of Deaths. Unfortunately, this document was too fragile to be handled by the public and had been assessed by the Conservation Department as necessary for repair. The LMA will let me know in due course when the work is likely to be carried out.

When I re-visited Canterbury Archives I searched for Thomas Filmer's baptism but again without success. I did, however, find Susanna Liebe, along with the records of her two brothers. It showed her parents as being Philip and Mary, whose marriage I found in 1767 – her mother being a Mary Martin. Susanna had a son named John Martin Filmer and I believe he was named after his grandmother. Before my visit to the Archives, I had found a Philip Leab born in 1740 in Canterbury on the IGI

(International Genealogical Index). However, if he was Susanna's father, being a French Protestant refugee I would have expected him to have been born in France. Finally during this visit, I checked the probate records and found a Will for a Philip Liebe written in French which is currently being translated.

From another branch of the Filmer family there is a family story that Thomas was a relative of Sir Edmund Filmer and that he used to visit him. They also believed that he had had a brother who had lost a leg at Trafalgar. I have not been able to prove the connection with Sir Edmund Filmer but have discovered that he had a brother John who was buried on 24th August 1806 aged 27 at St George the Martyr, Canterbury. On the internet I found there was a John Filmore (Filmer is often spelt Filmore in earlier generations), a Gunner on HMS Orion at Trafalgar so this could well be true.

It has been fascinating to have found a Huguenot link and learn more about their history, noting that my great-grandfather lived in two of the major Huguenot settlement areas in England – Canterbury and Spitalfields. The records show the Liebes originated from Picardy in France, a place I hope one day to visit. Although I do not know Philip Liebe/Leab's occupation, his name is not included in the list of surnames of major Huguenot families and although it is not an exhaustive list I consider the family would probably have been included if he had been an aristocrat. Therefore I believe I have reached my initial goal of finding whether I was descended from French aristocracy and am obviously disappointed to have reached a negative conclusion. However, perhaps the family story had a basis in truth and that there is a chance the connection is with a titled Kent family.

SAMPLE OF THE FAMILY LAYOUT

William FILMER (Bricklayer)

bp.8.4.1711 St. Mildred, Canterbury
bur.22.10.1854 (?) St.Mildred, Canterbury
m. 25.3.1734 St. Mildred, Canterbury

Mary Marlew

b.
d. Apr. 1788 Canterbury

|
Thomas Filmer (Linenweaver)

bp.7.3.1735 St.Mildred, Canterbury
m. 5.12.1770 St. Mary the Virgin, Dover

Martha Rouse

bp. 31.7.1737 St.George the Martyr,
Canterbury
d. 1814 (?) Canterbury

_____|_____
|
Thomas Filmer jnr

**(My Great Great
Great Grandfather)**
(Bootmaker/Cordwainer)

b. 1771
m. 24.02.1799
St.George the Martyr,
Canterbury

Susannah Leibe

bp. 28.04.1771
Orion???)
St.Mary Northgate,
Canterbury

|
John
bp. 14.02.1779
St. Mary the Virgin

Dover
bur.24.8.1806 (27)
St.George the Martyr,
Canterbury
(Lost leg Trafagar
21.10.1805??)
(Gunner, HMS

|
William Cooper (Oilman/Packer/Cook)
(My Great Great Grandfather)

bp. 28.07.1809 St.George Canterbury
d. 18.02.1879 Bow
m. 13.07.1833 Christchurch, Spitalfields

Elizabeth Stokes

b. 18.12.1813
d. 16.08.1863 Shoreditch

|
Susannah (My Great Gandmother)

b. 28.06.1840 Shoreditch
d. 20.04.1896 Greenwich



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Crossing Africa on Two Wheels: Cape Town to Lusaka

by Peter Steele

To travel northwards from Cape Town in South Africa to the point where the Caprivi Strip in Namibia makes contact with four other Central African countries – Angola, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe – is to navigate the emptiest and most isolated parts of ‘developed’ Africa. Cross the Zambezi and you shift from the stark emptiness of the south to the vitality of the people of sub-Saharan Africa – in all their youthfulness, energy, exuberance and presence. The story follows the two motorbikes and the four riders as they begin their 90-day ride to Cairo in Egypt; crossing Africa on two wheels.



Fish River Canyon. Empty moon-like country devoid of people and vegetation and, reputedly, the worlds’ second largest canyon of its kind. Scale becomes an issue – the country is so vast and the distances difficult to appreciate from the observation deck. Take the five-day trekking route and see the canyon in all its many different moods.

Story so far

We’d bought two 10-year old Suzuki DKZs 400 cc motorbikes on eBay, replaced some of the parts (e.g. chains, sprockets, etc.), fitted guards on everything vulnerable and panniers to carry our basics – tools, camping gear, clothes, spare parts, oil, etc. – and shipped them to South Africa from London. They left mid-February and were waiting for us when we took delivery courtesy of the shipping agent for the second week of March. It took an hour to clear the paperwork, connect the batteries, put petrol into the tanks, fire them up and leave the docklands. Four days later –

three up - we were heading north out of Cape Town. The 15,000 km journey to Cairo was scheduled to take three months, following the classic south-north route up the east coast of the continent – but first we had to cross west to east for we had started by heading north into the emptiness of the Western Cape and Namibia.

One week later in Windhoek, Anna caught her plane to London – to return to work for a spell – and then there were just Kristian and I for the ride to Lusaka, when Anna would return. Early April and we had ridden more than



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***Bikes.** You can travel Africa (the world even) with just about any bike you choose – and people regularly do so – from Vespa scooters to the BMW GS series (a current RTW favourite – ‘gelande/strasse - off road/road’). The Suzuki DKZs represents a good compromise - technically simple, good off-road capabilities, light weight and low-cost. Thus far the bikes are looking good.*

3,000 km, taken about one-third of the time planned and covered about quarter of the distance to Cairo. We had taken side trips into the Fish River Canyon, to the sand dunes at Sossusvlei, to the Atlantic coast for the German colonial legacy town of Swakopmund and made a circuit of the Etosha National Park (but this time in a hired car – to preclude the lions from eating us – needless to say, we didn’t see a single lion).

Three weeks after putting Anna on her Lufthansa flight she was back again courtesy of Kenya Air, and ready for the ride to Nairobi. Two flights, four movies, a couple of meals and two hours sleep later and I was back in Rome via Dubai courtesy of Emirates – with the characteristic bark of that single cylinder motorbike engine still ringing in my ears. It was all rather surreal, and too quick to appreciate the many changes involved.

What people want

You don’t have to be a motorbike enthusiast to make a journey of this kind, but you do have to like people; travel by motorbike and you are

exposed to the roads and the communities that live alongside them. And Africans, like people everywhere, chose to live on a practical bus route with access to schools for their kids, shops where they can buy those essential goods and, for preference, somewhere where it’s possible to earn a living. You *can* grow your own crops and raise livestock (assuming you have access to a patch of land), but it’s a deal easier in a modern world to work, earn a wage and buy what you need. That way you don’t have to work every waking hour – and there’s time on hand at the end of the day or at the week-end to ‘take-time-out’ and have fun – for this is the reality and value of some personal time.

Sure, this may be the approach of the younger sector of the population – but, in a handful of years – these same people and their way-of-life will dominate, and the cell phone rather than the agricultural hoe will come to exemplify the vision of what people want from their lives in this most ancient and traditional of continents.



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LA BIOSTHETIQUE
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People tell you this as you pass by; stopping to buy food, petrol and accommodation for the night. Sure, this means that you're exposed to the hustlers, those seeking a fast dollar (rand or kwacha) or simply those who find you a novelty – someone different to talk with during what has been a pretty ordinary day. And South Africa and Namibia – Zambia too – are full of people who speak your language and, in some cases, have travelled and want to share their stories with you.

Personal stories

'I remember when I first went to England for training to be a vet', said the middle aged man who wandered over from his car in the petrol station just behind the bus station in Lusaka. We never did catch his name, and he's not described in our blog story (at: www.crossafrica.wordpress.com) but he's typical of the modern-day middle classes that make up a significant proportion of urban African populations in mid-2012. They exemplify the enrichment of social development in many parts of the continent; and the shift from the overwhelming masses of poor people that once crowded out the pavements, shop entrances, bus stations and cafés accosting those who looked as if they would provide a handout.

Not that these people have completely

disappeared, but they can't easily be identified as they once were from appearances – apart from the kids, these people look much like you and me. Well, sometimes they looked a deal more affluent than we did. *'Sir, I don't steal or threaten anyone, but I don't have a job and need money to live'*, said one young man in the affluent V&A Waterfront tourist area of Cape Town – just round from where you buy the boat tickets to Robben Island (where Nelson Mandela was incarcerated for 18 of the 27 years he served in prison).

Handling kids

At other times a bunch of kids would stop to look at you and the bikes – we'd stop outside the supermarket, for example, to buy our food for the day, with one going inside and the other watching over the bikes. You could buy the services of a *'parking attendant'* (and they wore special jackets confirming their status), but if we had loaded bikes, we always preferred to watch them ourselves. Of an evening with the camp set up for the night – we'd ride back into town and shop together; and then the lad in the car park could earn a dollar or two (Namibian dollars, of course, with ten to the euro).

Notices posted tell you not to encourage the kids by offering them small gifts, money, etc. but this is difficult - we are all susceptible to



Capricorn. A favourite photo-shot; we couldn't resist it. On the other side of the road a coach-load of travellers pulled in and more than 50 people got out for a similar shot.

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Attracting people. Stop for a moment, and you attract the mainly interested and curious young men; Lusaka bus station, where we received several offers to buy the bikes.

small kids with big saucer eyes. We've carried a bunch of ball pens for just this kind of occasion, but even this is unbeatable. For example, stopping for a lunch break at one of those ubiquitous shaded picnic tables and seats thoughtfully provided by the Namibian road authorities every 10 km or so – countrywide too (just imagine the number) – we'd handed out a pen to each of the three kids hanging around. Five minutes later there would be another dozen kids on hand – messages travel quickly.

Motorbikes are hot and dusty

So, motorbikes expose you to people and their environment – and when this is hot and dusty – you tend to look not unlike the local people themselves – brown, sweaty and tired strapped into your protective jackets and trousers with heads in a crash helmet and eyes behind a solar plastic screen. There is no easy way to access pockets, etc. for those handouts; whether at the request of local kids or the more prosaic demands of local plod. Spot fines are a case in point, and woe betides you should you run a light or stop sign in town or radar trap on the open highway. Pay up and move on.

So, 'development' brings with it the same micro-management of local society that you get back home; only the fines, payments and

more tend to reflect local values. Fail to buckle up in your car and you'll be up for a euro 150 fine in Windhoek – the roadside advertisements with the seriously unsmiling policewoman confirm this point.

Empty roads

What you do get by riding the Western Cape in South Africa and the entire length of Namibia are empty roads – that differs significantly from riding in Europe. This is the Earth as it once was – geologically old and devoid of people – reds, yellows and greens that cover the land and reflected the end of the rain season this year. A pristine environment when seen from the road, with an over-arching deep blue sky heavy with cumulus rain clouds and distant showers that demonstrated the enormity of this empty land. You can ride with your eyes on the horizons around you – and let your mind wander into the beauty of this land.

Stop the bikes on a high point and look out over those low distant hills, and appreciate the quietness of the wind in the trees and those occasional bird calls. High overhead, a couple of birds with 2 metre wingspan make lazy circuits on the thermals. (*Looking back over photos taken in places like this – and you realise how difficult it is to capture this kind of moment.*)

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Gravel roads

Empty roads or not, you can't escape gravel roads in Namibia – wide, smooth and fast. Anna & Kristian seemed to manage them OK, but I never seemed to have the confidence to gun the engine and ride those patches of loose surface with the same speed and competence. I kept losing my front wheel and it was scary. Once back on the bike (when I'd actually come off), I tended to slow down and you are supposed to do exactly the opposite. And *all* the interesting main sights are off the tar seal. I needed more gravel road experience to handle this particular downside. (*But, at least, I didn't have the challenge of mud roads during the month – everything was dry – probably not so as the riders enter East Africa.*)

Appreciating people

The generosity, openness and hospitality of the people whom we met in Cape Town and all places north throughout the Western and Northern Cape was a bonus – representing that 'rainbow nation' descriptor that is widely used in modern-day South Africa. But it was the predominance of the Afrikaner-speaking people that stands out in the memory; we probably met more of them than any other

single easily identifiable group, and just about everyone – blacks and whites - was speaking Afrikaner and most of the public announcements were written in Afrikaner. This came as a pleasant surprise - the strength and resilience of this traditional heritage language.

There have been no downsides to the ride so far – apart from the ambient heat in Southern Namibia when we stopped moving. There is a measure of superficiality with seeing Africa from the road, but it's the best we can do with the time available. You reflect, for example, on the wide disparity of wealth seen between the different socio-economic groups living adjacent to each other in southern Africa. And the challenges that this raises into the next period for the burgeoning (and mainly black) middle classes, as redistribution of wealth becomes more important. And then, one utopian day, people may not need to live behind those two metre 18-strand electrified fences that seem to dominate neighbourhoods everywhere in this part of the world.

Meantime, appreciate what you see and experience.



Home from home. We tended to stopover in backpackers lodges in the main centres, sharing in the communities of people of all ages and picking up the stories for our ride north - lots of information to be gained. This is the Backpackers Unite Lodge in Windhoek – where Anna finished her first ride.

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You will find the results on page 29 Good Luck!

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(Translation)

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**to the Japanese people in overcoming the consequences of the
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Rome, 11 March 2012

**Masaharu KOHNO
Ambassador of Japan**

In Riconoscimento

per l'amicizia e la solidarietà mostrate dal
*Food and Agriculture Organization
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al popolo del Giappone nel superare le conseguenze del
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Roma, 11 marzo 2012



Masaharu KOHNO

Ambasciatore del Giappone in Italia

“Bloom Where You’re Planted”

by Suzy Saint

I recently noticed that some leaves (not weeds!) were growing in a crack between the paving stones in my front garden. Then a flower appeared and I realized it was a cyclamen. A seed from a nearby plant had somehow ended up there and taken on a life of its own!

Apparently, seeds can be dispersed in a number of different ways. They may be carried by wind, water or animals. Some plants even shoot the seeds out explosively.

The Bishop of Geneva, Saint Francis de Sales (1567-1622) is credited with the quote, “bloom where you are planted.” Later Mary Engelbreit (a graphic artist and children’s book illustrator) made the phrase popular, and countless Biblical references seem to point to various verses in the Bible that carry a similar notion. The “ancient” times when this phrase emerged undoubtedly reflects the fact that changing your location, where you lived, was not nearly as easy as it is today.

The saying, therefore, means that we should seek to be fruitful wherever we are. Sometimes we may find ourselves providentially planted where we would rather not be. A true test of character is whether we wilt or bloom in these places. At first glance, the phrase would seem to be entirely positive and inspirational but basically it boils down to, “do the best with what you have, wherever you are.” Not always an easy task!





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Lasagna with Fish Ragù

by Edith Mahabir

Ingredients

1 carrot
50 gr celery
1 onion
1 bunch parsley
1 bay leaf (lauro)
80 gr melted cheese
100 gr cooked clams (or chipchip)
200 gr triglia fillets or red snapper
200 gr seppie cleaned (or squid in pieces)
Black pepper ground
Salt
250 gr lasagna (fresh or dry)
40 gr extra virgin olive oil
1 glass dry white wine
200 gr shrimp cleaned
400 gr tomato pulp chopped
500 gr bechamel sauce



Method: Clean and wash the vegetables and cut into very small cubes. Place them in a casserole with the oil and simmer a few minutes then add the seppie and the triglie or red snapper cubed. Stir well and cook together a few more minutes, then add the white wine and allow it to evaporate.

Now add the bay leaf and chopped tomato pulp, add two glasses of water, a little salt, mix well and then cover casserole. Cook over moderate heat turning occasionally for about 20 minutes. Then add the clams and the diced shrimp; and incorporate delicately the chopped parsley. Remove the bay leaf (lauro) then turn off the fire.

In a large pot with abundant salted water boil the slices of lasagna a couple at a time 3-4 minutes, drain and cool under running water. Lightly butter a suitable oven dish (pirofila) and distribute evenly the inside with bechamel sauce, then cover with slices of lasagna pasta, cover these with more bechamel, then distribute evenly some of the fish ragù and some slices of the melted cheese. Repeat these stages until all the ingredients have been used up.

Bake in a hot oven at 200°C for about 30 minutes. Serve hot immediately.



Paella Mixta (carne y pescado)

Ingredientes:

300 gramos de arroz
200 gramos de salchicha
2 muslos de pollo
2 costillas de cerdo
1 cebolla
2 dientes de ajo
1 pimiento morrón
Aceite "evo" (????) cuanto baste
100 gramos de guisantes congelados
7-8 tomatitos
Dado "granular" cuanto baste
200 gr mixto de mar congelado
5-6 cigalas congeladas
1 cucharada de Pimentón picante o Paprika
1 sobre de azafrán
Perejil picado



Preparación:

1. Empezamos poniendo la carne en una sartén con poquísimo aceite
2. Dejamos dorar bien la carne a fuego alto, dejando después que se cueza bien a fuego lento
3. Cuando la carne está ya cocida, la separamos del fuego dejándola en la sartén para que se mantenga caliente.
4. Ponemos en otra sartén un poco de aceite donde haremos un sofrito de cebolla y ajo bien picados
5. Añadimos junto con la cebolla y el ajo, el pimiento cortado a rajitas, los tomatitos cortados a la mitad y la carne cocida anteriormente.
6. Añadimos el arroz y lo hacemos tostar
7. Cuando el arroz esté tostado le echamos alrededor de 600 cl. de agua en la cual habremos disuelto 2 cucharaditas de dado granular
8. A este punto añadimos los alimentos congelados, o sea, los guisantes, el mixto de mar y las cigalas
9. Añadimos también el pimentón picante o la paprika, el perejil y el azafrán
10. Tapamos la sartén o paellera hasta que el arroz esté cocido (a fuego lento)



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