

Getting the flavour of...

Ash boarding in Nicaragua

For a country the size of England, Nicaragua has more than its fair share of volcanoes, says Caroline Phillips in *The Independent*. Indeed, some 19 volcanic cones “run down its spine”. Their craters provide a home for parakeets that use the heat to incubate their eggs, while the slopes provide thrilling terrain for “ash boarders”. Kitted out in boiler suit, goggles and gloves, you climb through a hot wind and the smell of rotten eggs to the top, then plunge down into a “beautiful new

world”. It’s similar to snowboarding, except for the “ash in your nose and ears”. *Journey Latin America* (020-3582 8958, www.journeylatinamerica.co.uk) provides tailor-made trips to Nicaragua. An eight-day itinerary starts at £2,189pp, including flights.

Sir Jocelyn's temper

Although a sign on his office door reads "the floggings will continue until morale improves", Sir Jocelyn Stevens, Chairman of English Heritage, denies he's "the fascist cannibal beast" he's made out to be. "I don't like being thwarted," he told *The Express*. "There are incidents of which one is terribly ashamed ... [but] I'm a perfectionist, driven mad by people who don't get it absolutely right." Once, he fired a secretary over the Tannoy; another time, he threw Lady Rendlesham's typewriter out of the window after sacking her. "I was helping her clear her office," he explained. Sir Jocelyn puts his toughness down to his unusual childhood. His mother died in childbirth, leaving him a £1m inheritance. "I bought myself up largely. I had my own little household with a nanny, a chauffeur [and] two grannies who'd fuss over one. I was always dressed in white satin."

Ingrams on death

Richard Ingrams, the former editor of *Private Eye* and now editor of *The Oldie*, has been dwelling on mortality. "A lot of people have been dying – Peter Cook, Willy Rushton, Jeff Bernard. You start thinking it's your turn next," he told Caroline Phillips in *The Express*. Ingrams's own life has been touched by tragedy. "I've lost my parents, two brothers, a son... Maybe we're just one of those unlucky families." He is still coming to terms with the recent death of his mother. "It was a great shock. Your mother is your last protector, the person who always sticks up for you. She didn't like the *Eye* but would always defend me, write letters to Dempster when he attacked me and read my *Observer* column, which nobody else does."