

THE DREAM SCENE

Newsletter

Issue no. 20 1st of October 2008

Bienvenido and welcome to the autumn?? edition of the Dream Scene.

While the world's financial markets and some of its major institutions appear to be heading towards a black hole of uncertainty together with billions of taxpayers money, you would be forgiven for believing that this has all bypassed Dream Hills. The main topic of conversation among neighbours and in bars remains the 'goggle-box' and 'What are you going to do?'

Following a statement by the Guardia Civil last week, it is now generally accepted that Telmicro Levante will not be returning. Personally I feel that we have had a good run for our money and 18 to 20 euros a month was a bargain. No doubt the people who paid a year in advance are very angry and so they should be. Even after the arrests the company using Sol Productions as a communicator continued to issue positive statements. Aside from the re-broadcasting issue, deception and taxation fraud have finally emerged as the nails that will forever seal the companies coffin. Mindful of the snail-like pace of the courts in Spain it is likely that the case may no be heard for a year at least - who knows! Various corruption cases from the Costa del Sol which originated in 2002, have still not been heard, the accused in certain instances being allowed bail or weekends at home and/or conjugal visits!

With the Premier League starting its coverage of its millionaire participants, the bars were the first to chase up and install new television systems. These new systems varied from full Sky packages to an interesting Middle-Eastern one, which is apparently bounced off a cow's backside in Albania, then off a camel's hump somewhere in the Middle East to arrive finally in the Costa Blanca where we can all see Newcastle United head for the 'Championship League' in real time.

Of more interest however has been the surge among house and bungalow owners to research and install a new system, any system, as soon as possible. Facing a winter without TV people's patience finally succumbed and now if you look out over the roofs in Dream Hills, it resembles the scene with the chimney-sweeps from the film 'Mary Poppins' with people installing a myriad of different systems, some no doubt with a limited life span. Some quads are festooned with dishes looking like mini GCHQs while others are exploring small community systems for 4 or so quads. The Internet message boards devote much space to the question of community aerial systems and the different independent systems but of course the installers are now having a very welcome pre-Christmas boost and some of the prices being quoted are extortionate.

Last month's Dream Scene broke-even financially, thanks to re-fill laser cartridges and our generous advertisers. Thanks also to John & Margaret O. for the sub and generous donation.

Angela's Cartoon will be back next month. Best Regards to all, Mick, Editor.

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Italian Stallion

After returning from his honeymoon in the 'States with his new bride Virginia, Luigi stopped by his old barbershop to say hello to his friends.

Giovanni said, "Hey Luigi, how wassah de treepa?"

Luigi said, "Everytinga wassah perfecto except for da traina ride down to aFlorida."

"Whadda you mean, Luigi?" asked Giovanni."

Well, we boarda da train at Granna Central Station. My beautiful Virginia, she packa bigga basket a food. She broughta vino, some a nice cigars for me, and we were looking a forward to da trip. Everytinga wassah okey dokey until we getta hungry and open uppa da luncha basket. The conductore comma by, wagga hissa finger at us an say, "no eat in dissa car. Musta use a dining car." "So, me and my beautiful Virginia, we go to dining car, eat a bigga luncha and start to open a bottle of nice vino! Conductore walka by again, waga hissa finger and say, "No drinka in dissa car. Musta use a club a car."

So, we go to club car. "While drinkin vino, I start to lighta my biga cigar. The conductore, he wagga hissa finger again and say, "No smokin in dissa car. Musta go to smokin car. We go to smokin car and I smoka my biga cigar."

"Then my beautiful Virginia and I, we go to sleeper car anda go to bed. We just about to go boomada boomada and the conductore, he walka through da hall shouting at da top of hissa voice, "Nofolka Virginia! Nofolka Virginia!"

"Next time, Ima gonna takea da bus!"

WHAT'S UP?

The government have banned a number of political parties in the Basque area of northern Spain, one being the political voice of ETA, the Basque terrorist organisation. This has prompted ETA to launch a series of bomb attacks in which several people have been injured and one soldier killed. All the attacks were carried out in the northern part of the country. Some ETA outrages were expected on the Costas during the summer, but the police had saturated the coastal areas during the summer months with numerous check-points and searches.

The Spanish Minister for Tax and the Economy has just announced an austere budget. Spending will only increase by 3.3% next year and many government departments will see cut-backs. The only areas which will not see cut-backs are infrastructure, research, housing and the new dependency law benefits. Taxpayers will have to 'fork-out' an extra billion euros next year because the tax bands have not been increased in line with inflation. Nationally, new car sales are down by 41% and despite the recession, the Murcia region continues with its intensive programme of golf club development. Of the 41 golf courses planned, to date there are 27 courses currently operating, under construction or about to begin. One unusual effect of the economic slowdown is that some 5% of divorced couples are opting to carry on living together as they cannot sell their home. September is apparently the busiest month for divorces in Spain - start of the football season???

Unemployment continues to rocket-up with the young being particularly hardest hit. Unemployment among the under 30's is now 17.24% compared to 10.50% in the general population. The leader of the main opposition party, the P.P. complained that it was intolerable that while 180,000 foreigners collected unemployment benefit here, 20,000 Andalusians had to go to France to work in the grape harvest.

The Málaga Chamber of Commerce has said that the local construction industry will be at a complete standstill in two months time, as work is completed on those sites where it is already underway. Because of the financial crisis Madrid City Hall has decided to put on hold all the building works planned and budgeted for during the current legislature which have still not been put out to tender.

To his credit PM Zapatero has once again criticized the judges and judicial system in Spain. This was as a result of the appalling consequences in the Marie Luz case where the alleged murderer, a paedophile, was due to be incarcerated for previous paedophile attacks but the judge forgot to sign the order. The paedophile alleged that the killing of his niece Marie Luz was an accident. It occurred while the accused should have been in jail. The negligent judge was fined 1,200 euro and allowed to continue in his job.

The Spanish Minister for Health has confirmed that legislation is being prepared relating to assisted suicide. The Minister told the press that 'the owner of your body is you' and that everybody had the right to a dignified death and not have to be 'submitted to torture.'

A tremendous argument has developed between the Minister for Industry and the Minister for Science. The problem? - they cannot agree who is responsible for 'Space Police' and be represented at the European Space Agency. I guess they both want to be Captain Scarlet!

Nose reconstructions are up 15% in the Valencia Health Authority area largely due to cocaine use. The health authority now says that it will not carry out the operations until the person has been clean for a year.

The government will plant 45 million trees during the 2009-2012 period as part of a 90 million euro plan to combat desertification and the effects of climate change.

Geordie sport fans are no doubt disappointed to hear that Newcastle United Football Club will be cancelling their nativity play for this Christmas. Apparently their 'Messiah' has 'pissed-off' and all they are left with is one 'wise' man and eleven donkeys!

Rodney J. tells me that Ryanair will start flying to Alicante & Girona from Leeds this October.

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Whats Up? continued

Banco Santander continues its acquisitions in the UK. They have now agreed to purchase the deposit accounts and the 197 branches of the Bradford & Bingley. The B&B offices will be re-branded under the Abbey name.

Whereas we all enjoy reading about Spanish 'oddities', the UK has shown that it is also capable of producing some gems. Abuse of 999 emergency calls has always produced some notables. This year a woman dialled 999 to report that a rabbit she had bought had the wrong ears! After buying the bunny she found that its ears were not floppy as shown in the ad and dialled the emergency number to complain. Another caller to the emergency number reported being splashed by cars in wet weather and one caller asked for the postcode of Grangemouth police station.

Meanwhile, back in the peninsula — A man who tried to set his girlfriend on fire at an Alicante petrol station last year, will spend five years and six months in a psychiatric centre and not prison. It follows a plea deal reach with the accused who claimed mental problems brought on by the use of drugs, saying on the day concerned he had taken pills, cocaine and nearly a litre of alcohol. The man locked his girlfriend in the car, set it alight and sat down to watch the flames. She since pardoned his behaviour and even visited him in jail on two occasions to have intimate relations with him, dropping her charges and right to any compensation. She suffered second degree burns to 30% of her body in the attack and needed surgery on several occasions taking two months to recover. What was she thinking!!!!???

During the recent ETA bombing campaign one policeman drove his car for 10 kilometres unaware that there was a limpet bomb attached to the underside of his vehicle. The bomb was not noticed until he arrived at the police station near Bilbao. I wouldn't think that his mates would be too keen on accepting a lift with him in future. 'No, honestly, that's OK, Paco, I think I will take the bus today!'

A large scale riot broke out on a Madrid commuter train, one Sunday morning at 6.35 am in September. 26 people, all of them foreigners were arrested, 14 of them being under the age of 14. The 17 Columbians, 6 Ecuadorians, 2 Romanians and a Bolivian were in possession of three machetes and a foot long knife.

In the Almería in early September a Moroccan van driver telephoned the police to report that he and his wife had been forced out of the van while on the motorway and the van hijacked. The van was located within half an hour being driven by a 71 year old with a previous record of drug trafficking. However, the Moroccan owner omitted to inform the police that there was 778 kilos of hashish in the back of the van. Although he initially denied any knowledge of the drug, police retrieved film from a petrol station showing him loading the drugs into the van!

Two Air Europa pilots in uniform were found drunk and fighting each other in the streets of Vigo early one morning. When questioned by police they said that they normally sorted their differences out this way. They were due to take the early morning flight to Madrid! They were not breathalysed or arrested by the police 'as they had not committed a crime.'

Exam


A college teacher reminds her class of tomorrow's final exam. "Now class, I won't tolerate any excuses for you not being here tomorrow. I might consider a nuclear attack or a serious personal injury or illness, or a death in your immediate family but that's it, no other excuses whatsoever!"

A smart-alec in the back of the room raises his hand and asks, "What would you say if tomorrow I said I was suffering from complete and utter sexual exhaustion?" The entire class does its best to stifle their laughter and snickering. When silence is restored, the teacher smiles sympathetically at the student, shakes her head, and sweetly says, "Well, I guess you'd have to write the exam with your other hand."



Ye-Haw!!

One day, a young cowboy and a cowgirl decided to get married. He was a man of the world and she was an innocent bride with no experience. On the first night of their honeymoon the couple started to get ready for bed. When they get into bed things were going fine until the bride discovers her husband's appendage. "Oh my", she says, "What is that?" "Well, darlin", the cowboy says, "That's ma rope". She slides her hands further down and gasps, "Oh my goodness. What are they?" she asks. "Honey, them's my knots", he answers. Finally, the couple begin to make love. After several minutes, the bride says, "Stop honey. Wait a minute". Her husband, panting a little, asks, "What's the matter honey? Am I hurting you?" "No", the bride replies.

"Just undo them damn knots. I need more rope!"



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Calle Lagunas de Ruidera.

When the main road running through Dream Hills was named as above, I am sure that you, like me, were curious to find out where the name came from and why? I spoke to many people in and out of the urbanisation, including some who you think should know - but to no avail. Finally I thought that I would just have to accept that the road was called 'The Lagoons of Noise' or 'The Noisy Lagoons.' Still an intriguing name but thankfully it was not named by the probably well-meaning bureaucratic idiot who named a street in La Florida - Calle Cancer! However, I was as 'pleased as punch' to come across the original 'Lagunas de Ruidera' this month while researching a nearby town for an article in a future issue of the Dream Scene.

Situated near the edge of the great plain of La Mancha is the small peaceful village of Ruidera. The village has about 600 inhabitants and lies on the N 430 between Albacete and Ciudad Real. The village is situated in the Lagunas de Ruidera Natural Park in Castile-La Mancha. As pretty as the little village is, it is the nearby lakes or lagoons that draw many visitors every summer. It is an oasis in the great dry plain of La Mancha.

Here 15 natural lagoons are located and are often called the 'Mirrors of La Mancha.' However all the lagoons form a chain and are connected by waterfalls and small rivers, and it is the noise from these that gives the lagoons their name. The distance between the first and last lake is about 25 klms, while the slope drops around 120 metres and there is also a small dam at Lake Peñarroya. These lakeland waters are considered to be the source of the Guadiana River.

The majority of the lake areas can be walked save for those reserved for wildlife. There is an abundance of birds and ducks in the area and the waters are home to barbel, carp, pike, tortoises and water snakes (not dangerous). As a wetland area it is one of the finest in the peninsula and the clarity and colour of the water is just incredible. Many of the tourists swim in the lakes during the summer and boats/canoes can be hired locally. In winter the temperatures can drop to minus 13° and there have been heavy snowfalls in the area.

The abundance of good quality water has always encouraged humans to the area. Man-made stone structures called Las Motillas, which are in abundance in the area, date back to 1,800 BC. The Romans used the area as a rest-stop/stageing area on trips from the south to Zaragoza and of course Rome. The nearby ruined castle of Rochafrida is mentioned in Spanish medieval romances. The Knights Templar once owned the land (and water) in the area, but when they were dissolved (or murdered more likely), ownership of all their lands passed to the Knights Hospitaller's of St. John. In the 1590's Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, Spain's most famous writer is believed to have written Don Quixote while working in the area as a tax collector for the Knights of St. John and it is from this book that we get the names of the lakes. In the book he describes how Don Quixote went underground (the nearby Montesinos Cave) to meet the heroes of his ever-romantic imagination: Montesinos, Belerma and Durandarte. Here he learns that the inhabitants of the cave, Guadiana and Ruidera together with their seven daughters and two nieces, have been transformed into a river and several lakes by that wandering Welsh troublemaker, Merlin the Magician!

Cervantes was jailed however following certain discrepancies in the accounts. Seems that some local habits just don't die out!

Sad!

Doctor! Doctor!

Two carrots were walking down the street when suddenly a car raced around the corner and flattened one of them. Soon enough, the ambulance got there, scraped him off the road and took him to hospital. Several hours later, the other carrot was still in the hospital waiting room, anxiously anticipating any news about his mate's condition. A doctor came up and told him to sit down. "He's going to live" said the doctor, "But he'll be a vegetable for the rest of his life."

I went to the doctor today to talk about contraception.

She said "You could try French letters".

I said "What's that?" She said "Condoms"

I said "I don't like them".

So she said "You should try the French Army method then".

I said "What's that?"

She said "You pull out before you get into trouble!"

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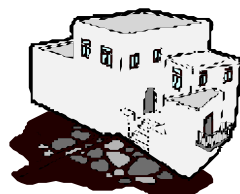
In his book 'Knowing the Law in Spain', Harry King puts the essence of community owners very clearly. 'A community of Property Owners is a mechanism of self-regulation common in continental Europe and in the USA but unusual in the UK except in up-market apartments. When a number of people own land or buildings in such a way that they have exclusive use of part of the property, but a shared use in the remainder, a *comunidad* is created.' 'In a *comunidad* the owner holds the house or apartment outright and shares the use of the remaining areas as part of a community of owners.' This is of course not just pools, community TV aerials but also parking spaces, lighting systems and private roads etc. 'While members of the community are each responsible for their own home, they collectively agree the action required upon the common areas and become responsible for paying their share of common expenses.'

The property contract, the *escritura* and the Law of Horizontal Property (*La Ley de Propiedad Horizontal*) binds an owner to the actual community regulations and when they sign their property deed they sign that they accept this responsibility. The quota or community fee is the charge allocated to a particular property, and since all properties within an urbanisation may vary in size, the exact percentage to be charged will be outlined in the *escritura*. The overall community spending plan is set out at each year's AGM, however it is not uncommon for an extra assessment to be placed on owners to preserve services in the event of non-payment of fees or emergency works. One urbanisation close to Dream Hills recently had to pay an extra assessment for the upgrading of the community Spanish TV system from analogue to digital. Full payment of the community charge is not an option but a legal requirement.

Non-payment of community fees will mean that, in due course, the remainder will have to pay more to maintain the services to the community, otherwise streetlights would be switched off, contracts cancelled, pools closed with the image and marketability of the urbanisation suffering greatly. I think it is shameful that three members of the previous committee have not yet paid their urbanisation fees. Non-payment now will mean that the rest of us will have to pay more next year. There are owners in Dream Hills who have not paid in years and YES they are being pursued through the courts. This year's committee is determined to put pressure wherever possible to reduce even the short term debtors.

The budgeting in Dream Hills has always been 'close to the bone.' While this is admirable management and keeps the annual charge down, it has been artificially low for the past few years and has not really been to our advantage in the long run as it does not take into account non-payment by some owners. Non-payment has meant that the mandatory surplus (reserve fund) has had to be spent each year on paying utility bills, leaving nothing in the community reserve coffers for emergencies or unanticipated expenditure. Now the handover of the urbanisation is completed there is no running to the builders expecting them to pay anymore.

I detail hereunder the annual fees paid by 17 urbanisations in the Torre vieja and Orihuela Costa areas. Some of the people who supplied the information asked that their urbanisation not be named, so I have decided to just print the first letter of all the urbanisation names, otherwise the survey would have no credibility.



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Restaurant Review - Hotel Masa International

We are out anyway, so let's eat! (By She - who must be obeyed!)

How many times have you been in this situation? It happens to us frequently. The other day, being exactly in this position, we headed off to one of our local favourites at lunchtime - 'El Refugio 2,' only to find that at present it only opens evenings. So where to next? Lets head for Magani's (good tapas) on the outskirts of La Mata. At the traffic lights on the hill by the Hotel Masa, I said I had heard good reports on the restaurant there. Now we must be honest, we did not use an agent when we purchased our house but the name Masa makes us think of Atlas, Iberian, carefully escorted suckers, buying off-plan and a myriad of property agents who are long on promises and short of the truth, so we were rather put-off from visiting the place. But, as it was approaching 2 pm and I was famished, we reversed quickly into a parking place and went in.

Immediately we could tell by the decor, the bar and looking into the restaurant that it was definitely not a 'menú del dia' place and a quick glance at the menu confirmed that it was on the pricey side. Having just bypassed our 35th wedding anniversary without celebration, we decided we should treat ourselves to an expensive meal to compensate.

We were placed at a table in the empty restaurant by massive windows of curtained glass, giving us a terrific view of the coast and the sea for miles in every direction. The decor of the restaurant is tastefully subtle, the wall of glass being the focal point. The attentive waitresses served us freshly baked rolls and butter while we made our selection. The menu consisted of a superb choice of starters with soups from 7 to 13 Euro and a variety of European starters up to 21 Euro each. We both selected different types of 'revuelto' dishes. I had scrambled eggs with prawns, asparagus and mushrooms and he had scrambled eggs with Serrano ham, baby broad beans and asparagus tips, both priced at 13 Euro each. When the food arrived they were large portions; my prawns were plump and tasty, and his ham was plentiful. Each dish was also accompanied with six generous slices of deep fried bread. We enjoyed every mouthful and ate the lot as I worked on the assumption that as is often the case in Spain, the starters are often more substantial than the main course!

For the main course we had ordered the 'chateaubriand', which cost 50 Euro for two people minimum. It's arrival was impressive and beautifully presented. It was carved at our table and served on piping hot plates with roast & herb potatoes and oven roasted vegetables which included courgette, aubergines, carrots, beans, tomato and salad garnish. The fillet was beautifully tender and there was plenty of it. I can honestly say that it was the best piece of beef I've eaten in five years while living in Spain. We would have loved to have eaten every morsel as it was so good, but after the large starters we just could not manage it and that's really saying something for us. For wine the 'grouch' ordered a bottle of Merlot-Cabinet from Bodega Pirineos, at 13 Euro reasonably priced, which he said was most enjoyable. The total bill including water and service charge (included) came to 92.80 Euro. The meal was faultless - a Five Star meal in a Three Star hotel!

We have in the past been very disappointed with the more expensive restaurants in Spain we have visited. All too often the food in these venues has been average at best, the only thing memorable about them being the price. This one is definitely worth visiting when that special occasion warrants it and the extra spend needs to be justified. But remember when you book to insist on a table by the window.

A History of Spain - Part 2, Hannibal & the Romans.

The peaceful settlements founded by the Phoenicians around the mouth of the Guadalquivir and along the south and south-eastern parts of the peninsula contributed greatly to the cultural and economic well-being of the areas and introduced a period of relative stability and cultural advancement. The Phoenicians are reputed to have also sailed around the peninsula, reaching the Devon/Cornwall areas no doubt attracted by the reports of tin and silver mining in those areas. Meanwhile the Greeks, also great seafarers and traders, founded Massalia (Marseille) in Gaul around 600 BC and several trading settlements down the eastern coastline of the Iberian Peninsula, notably Akra-Leuca (White Summit/Mountain, now Alicante), Aloni (Benidorm) and Emporion (Émpuries).

There has been much written about a mythical/actual Tartessian civilisation which reportedly flourished in the southern peninsular area for a few hundred years between 2,000 & 1,000 BC and then inexplicably disappeared. Some say that it was the original 'Atlantis' but in any event there remains very little to confirm that this 'lost civilisation' actually existed and to what extent it contributed to Iberian civilisation.

Whereas the peaceful interaction between all these different races and the native population in the peninsula did not signify political unity or cohesion - as the Iberian's first loyalty was to their individual tribes, it nevertheless greatly improved the economic well-being of these areas and provided a stimulus for the enhancement of native culture, particularly sculpture. This can be seen in the spectacular funerary statues, the Dama de Baza and the Dama de Elche, which date from the high period of Iberian culture, around 500 BC. The Phoenicians also brought literacy to the peninsula by introducing an alphabet. With the cooperation of the Iberians, silver-mining around the south coast produced massive amount of the metal and it was not long before foreign-eyes would view the peninsula as an easy source of glory and wealth.

Ironically the first major hostile and predatory invasion of the peninsula came from the city state of Carthage - descendants of the Phoenicians, who under Hamilcar Barca invaded in 237 BC. It was the first of a succession of foreign invaders who would occupy most of the peninsula for a continuous period of more than 1,700 years!

Smarting from their defeat by the Romans in the First Punic War, the Carthaginians invaded Iberia, not the least because the wealthy Iberian mines would allow them to finance their territorial ambitions and fund mercenary armies. Although Carthage had signed a peace treaty with Rome agreeing that they would not go beyond the Ebro River in Iberia, the Carthaginians - particularly the warrior Carthage family of the Barcas or Barcids, had no intention of 'knuckling-under' the Romans. Hamilcar Barca made his sons, Hasdrubal, Mago and Hannibal swear that they would 'never be a friend of Rome' and the defeat of Rome remained the principal goal of the Barcids. While building up a war-chest and armies, Hasdrubal founded the port and city of Qart Hadast (Cartagena) - Punic for 'new city' in 228 BC and later Barcino (Barcelona) named after the family name - Barcid.. One could not describe the rule of the Barcids as benign or humane. One native ruler was tortured, blinded and crucified following a difference with the family. However many of the Carthaginian elite, including Hasdrubal and Hannibal, married local Iberian princesses in an effort to stabilise relations with the local tribes and maintain some form of harmony. The silver mine at Cartagena produced about 140 kilos of silver per day and at its peak employed up to 40,000 men.

Following a dispute with the Romans over the town of Saguntum (Sagunto) - a Roman protectorate south of the Ebro, Rome declared war on Carthage. Hannibal was now the leader of the Carthaginians in Iberia. In the spring of 218 BC, after leaving three armies to guard Iberia, he gathered an army of 62,000, 12,000 horsemen with 37 war elephants. Adapting a plan devised by his brother-in-law he set off on his famous march over the Pyrenees and the Alps to try and conquer Rome. While travelling through Iberia and Gaul, Hannibal was constantly harassed by the native tribes who depleted his forces. He had to leave 22,000 troops in northern Iberia, half to garrison the area and the remainder at the Pyrenees because they did not want to leave Iberia.

The Romans also launched an invasion of Iberia in 218 BC hoping to cut-off Hannibal's advance. They landed at Empuries with two legions - about 10,000 soldiers (not counting auxiliaries) and 15,000 allied troops, but Hannibal was gone. When Hannibal reached Italy, he had less than half the soldiers he started out with and only a few elephants - who quickly succumbed after crossing the Alps.

Next month - Part 3, The Romans.

You Said What?

A 92 year-old man went to the doctor to get a physical. A few days later the doctor saw the man walking down the street with a gorgeous lady on his arm. At his follow up visit the doctor talked to the man and said, "You're really doing great, aren't you?"

The man replied, "Just doing what you said Doctor, 'Get a hot mamma and be cheerful'."

The Doctor said, "I didn't say that. I said you got a heart murmur. Be careful."

Hannibal's Elephants

The war-elephants which the Carthaginians brought to battle were not the large African or Indian elephants, the latter capable of holding a small tower with a couple of soldiers on their backs. The elephants used were the much smaller North African type, which are now extinct. These elephants were only 8.5 ft tall at the shoulder and were ridden by a man much the same as a horse and although intimidating on the battlefield were not as terrifying as the Indian species. African elephants were considered untamable. The elephants were fed figs before going into battle as this caused an eczema which made them extremely badly humoured. The soldier riding the elephant always carried a hammer together with a spike which he would drive into the animals brain if it turned and attacked the Carthaginian soldiers.

Out & About

The Panaché Hair & Beauty business in Via Park V has now been taken over by Kelly Brown. Julie is also remaining so there should be plenty of familiar faces. The business is now known as 'Brown's Hair and Beauty' and there will soon be new signs. The old telephone number still applies and there is a lift to the top floor. Jane & Gordon from The Cavern have raised more than 200 euro for the AECC from their giant bottle of copper coins. This makes it more than 670 euro raised for the AECC this year alone! Georgio & Yuri from Christina's tell me that they have now introduced a home delivery service for their delicious pizzas and full menu, and Kevin & Kas of the R Bar are now adding a 'Liver & Bacon and Bangers & Mash' night on Wednesdays. Dave & Anna of the Pasty Shack have reintroduced their popular London style Pie & Mash for the winter. Dave also tells me that they have gathered more than 400 signatures on the petition for the return of the market to Via Park V and are working hard to get a favourable decision.

The table-top/car-booth sale has returned to the Celtic Isle on Wednesdays, but I understand that although the items for sale should be restricted to second-hand goods only, nobody seems to be taking any notice of it. They have also got permission to hold the sale on Sundays but have decided not to go ahead with it until they see how the current Wednesday sale progresses. When I passed it last Wednesday it was heaving! Although not my scene, many people love to potter at these things; I can go into a supermarket for an onion and come back out with just an onion! Different matter if it is a *patisserie* though. I could be in one of those for a month!

Elsewhere work on the N332 continues and the improved road will cause some major disruption to some businesses along the Punta Prima to Cabo Roig route. I was very conscious of the lack of safe crossing points for pedestrians along this route during the summer. It really is scandalous for such a dangerous road. I hope the new works will incorporate many new crossings. The holiday makers deserve better.

The beaches of Playa La Glea, Playa Flamenca and Calle Capitan have now been awarded the 'Q Flag.' There will be sub-aqua divers in the sea off these beaches on the 12th, 19th and 26th of October cleaning the sea bottom. Work on the new high school in the Villamartin area is scheduled to begin this winter.

While checking-out various bulletin boards, I came across a posting from a concerned lady owner in the Cabo Roig area. They had a spate of burglaries including a series of seven break-ins over three successive nights. The owners determined that most of the burglaries took place around 4 AM in the mornings. Of great concern however was the fact that their president found a common link between most of the burglaries. Many of the victims had hired a car from the same car-hire outlet in Alicante airport. Now before the writs start to fly in I must say that these are unfounded allegations and obviously have no truth in them what so ever, but the name of the alleged firm has the Spanish words for 'Sun' and 'Sea' in it.

The Salud at Cabo Roig has introduced a new system for repeat prescriptions. You can now bypass the doctor and just take your covering white prescription sheet and your card to the desks to the right of the main desk who can issue you the repeat prescriptions. You can also use this service outside the peak hours, early evenings are ideal as there are no queues.

Sportsman's Double

I pulled an older woman at a club last night.

She was a right sort for 54, we drank a bit, had a bit of a snog & she asked if I'd ever had the sportsman's double - a mother and daughter, 3-some? I said no.

We drank a bit more, then she says that tonight was my lucky night. I went back to her place.

She put the hall light on & and shouted upstairs:

"Mum you still awake? Put your teeth in and come down! "

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Letters to Dear Aunty Ange.....

Q: My husband is handsome, rich and attentive. He buys wonderful presents and gives me a dress allowance. The problem is after we make love he just lies there smoking and breaking wind loudly.

What would you suggest?

A: You have a real problem there my dear. I know, I've had to tell him about it several times.

Q: Since the TV went off, my wife has changed so much. She won't knit or go to Bingo. All she wants to do is take me drinking, dancing and dining out every night, then come home to hours of erotic lovemaking! Can you help?

A: And your problem is??

Q: I'm so worried about my husband. He insists on going out alone 3 nights a week, and when he comes home in the early hours, he smells of cheap perfume and whisky. I'm convinced he's using the girls on the Punta Prima roundabout!!

A: You silly girl, don't worry! I think you've got the completely wrong end of the stick! The girls at Punta Prima don't wear cheap perfume or offer clients a drink. It's quite obvious he's going to Guardamar!

Q: My husband never shows me any affection and he goes out every night. I'm convinced he's seeing another woman. What should I do?

A: Do you really want to be with someone who treats you like dirt, doesn't love you and is constantly unfaithful?

I know my first husband didn't!

.....

Letters to Dear Aunty Carol.....

Q: I have 2 brothers, one works in Carrefour and the other is serving life for murder. My mother was committed for insanity, my 2 sisters are roundabout girls and my father is a drug dealer. I met a girl whom I like very much and want to take the relationship further. What should I tell her about my family?

A: Most people can handle bad news, if true love is there, so don't worry but to be on the safe side, don't mention the brother who works in Carrefour!!!!

Q: My elderly father-in-law is due his annual medical examination and I am dreading it because he has to provide urine and "stool" samples. He always acts up and causes a dreadful scene in the surgery. What do you recommend?

A: Leave your father-in-law at home and take his underwear instead!!!!

Vulgar Joke?

Two women are walking home after a girlie night out. They are very drunk and the walk home is taking some time due to their intoxicated state. Eventually, they find themselves desperate for a wee. At that particular moment, they are passing a church and decide to go behind the headstones in the graveyard. As they finish they both realise they have nothing to "freshen up" with so the first woman decides to use her knickers and then throw them away. The second woman is wearing very expensive underwear and is reluctant to lose them, when she notices a new grave nearby with lots of fresh flowers, amongst which is a very lavish bouquet with a thick soft ribbon. "Just the job!" she decides and without another thought, duly drags the bouquet over and uses the ribbon. Their task is completed, the women continue staggering home. Next morning, the husband of the first woman phones the husband of the second. "We need to keep eye on our wives. Mine came home with no knickers on last night".

"You think you've got problems" exclaims the second husband. "My wife came home last night with a card stuck to her bum that said, "We'll Never Forget You - From All the lads at the Fire Station"

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Did you hear about the chap who mated a bulldog with a shitzu?
 He ended up with a bullshit.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Notes from La Casita

We are pleased to report that the Autumn Timetable for events in La Casita is now 'up & running'. Please check out the notice boards for days and times of all our regular events.

The Kalooki which takes place on Monday evenings, is a card game that is easy to learn and anyone is welcome to come along and join in. It is a great way to meet new friends.

The Pilates group would also welcome a few more people. Petanca continues at the later start time - 5 p.m. When the clocks change at the end of October we will revert to our earlier playing with a 3 p.m. start. M.N.

U.K.Department of Work and Pensions

The British Consulates in Malaga and Alicante together with the Department for Work and Pensions are holding a series of open events in the Malaga, Alicante and Murcia areas to talk about issues that matter to the majority of British residents. The Department for Work and Pensions will provide essential information on UK pension, benefit and healthcare entitlements in Spain and the services that their team in Spain can offer. Seating is limited and the places should be booked online at: www.ukinspain.fco.gov.uk/en/help-for-british-nationals/pensions-benefits/open-day. Local dates are as follows -

8 October at 11.00 hrs, Virgen del Carmen Theatre, Torrevieja; 29 October at 11.00 hrs & 5 November at 11.00 hrs, Orihuela Costa Town Hall, Orihuela Costa.

Local Spanish Taxes

SUMA are holding lectures in English on local taxation in the Ayuntamiento on Orihuela Costa at 10:30 am on the 6th of October. If you would like to attend please contact S. Pokroppa on 966760000 ext 34.

Television

Children Should watch more television. Television depicts adults as rotten SOBs, given to fistfights, gunplay and other mayhem. Kids who believe this about grown-ups aren't likely to argue about bedtime.

P.J. O'Rourke

I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book.

Groucho Marx

It's the cult of the moron. Bob Geldof on 'reality' TV.

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