

THE DREAM SCENE

Newsletter

Issue no. 25 1st of March 2009 ** Second Edition **

Would you believe that this is the start of a third year of the Dream Scene? Where does the time go?

The recession is still in its early stages, here in Spain. The Minister for the Economy, Sénor Sobrés, now believes that it will not be until 2011 before significant improvements to the economy will be apparent. The banking sector here in Spain has now started to 'wheeze' and the saving's banks have been receiving substantial bail-out funds. Expect several amalgamations of these saving's banks. Banco Viscaya has asked for approval to 'freeze' one of its property investment funds for four years. The bank has been experiencing a run of withdrawals on the 2 billion euro fund. Unemployment continues to rocket in Spain and there is a lot of apprehension concerning the European banks exposure to Eastern European country debt. Probable defaults in this area could precipitate a second banking crisis. Austrian banks alone are owed 220 billion euro from this sector.

The local authorities in Spain are being encouraged to spend substantial amounts of money this year in construction projects which must be completed within the year. Orihuela town hall plans to spend several million euro on Orihuela Costa this year. This will be a new sports centre in the Las Piscinas area. This will include a new football pitch with stands, two tennis courts, four pádel courts, some multi-use courts for basketball, etc., and probably a small indoor heated swimming pool. A additional larger pool is planned within the next two year. An indoor gymnasium is also included. Four badly needed new pedestrian bridge crossings will be placed on the N332 at Cabo Roig, Dehesa de Campoamor, La Zenia and Alameda del Mar. In a major new project the hairpin bend by the entrance to the Los Ramblas and Campoamor golf courses will be removed and a new bridge erected. A new bridge over the AP-7 motorway will connect the Entre Golf/Villamartin area to the Dream Hills 2/Los Altos side. This provides a parallel route to the N332 from Los Altos to Campoamor but will no doubt increase the traffic through Dream Hills. Improvements to the sewage and drainage system at La Zenia, outside the town hall and at the Barranco Rubio in Campoamor are planned.

The foundation stone on a new secondary school at Playa Flamenca has already been laid and hopefully the new police station at La Zenia will soon 'get off the ground.'

A new two million euro garden maintenance contract is expected to be awarded by the town hall in the next few months, which will we hope bring some attention to the neglected 'green' areas around Dream Hills. A new rubbish/garbage removal firm should also be starting in May. Let's hope we get the missing bins back at Via Park 5 by the summer.

Don't forget that the English Mother's Day is on the 22nd of March. With St. Patrick's Day coming up, March 17th, I have included some extra Irish jokes. A new years subscription of the Dream Scene begins with this issue, so if you want to continue to receive your copy delivered to your home, mailbox or by e-mail, please make arrangements to settle your sub now. Thanks to all who have already donated. Again thanks to all our advertisers, who carry most of the cost for the Dream Scene, and to Angela for her wonderful original cartoons. Happy St. Patrick's Day to you all! Mick.

FIRST CHOICE

MINI MARKET

VIA PARK V

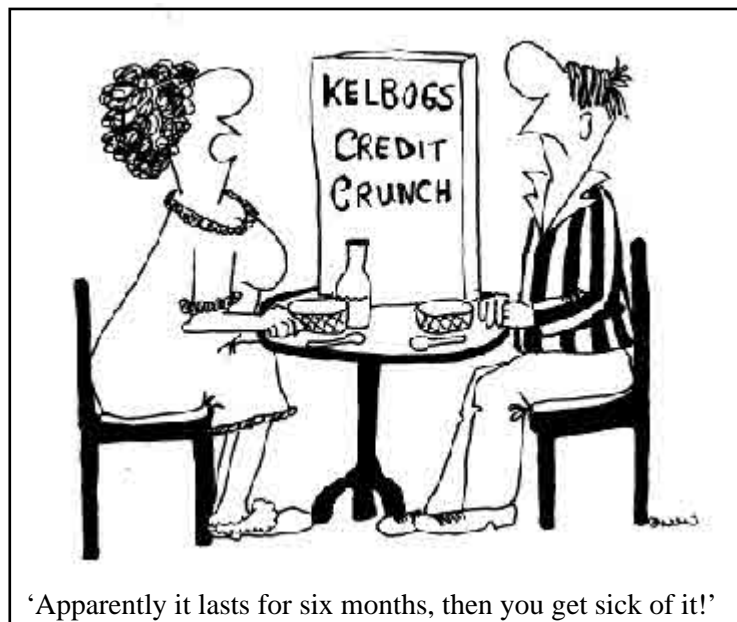


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WHAT'S UP?

STOP PRESS! There will be a St Patrick's Day Festival on the parking area near the Mercadona at Playa Flamenca from the 16th to the 18th of March. It will be a mix of exhibition, market and fiesta! It is organised in conjunction with the town hall and will include food, children's play area, Irish dancing, entertainment, music, market stalls etc.

According to data from the Immigration Permanent Observatory, the number of foreign residents with a valid residency in Spain on December 31 2008 was 4,473,499, up 12.4% or 494,485 in a one year period! 40.18% of the total are EU nationals, 29.87% from Latin America, 20.66% from Africa, 6.95% from Asia, 2.75% from non EU European countries, 0.45% from North America and 0.04% from Oceania. The most recent spurt in immigrants has been from Latin America. The cities with the largest number of foreigners of working age are Madrid with 684,826 and Barcelona with 549,301. Alicante is the Spanish province with most foreign residents, swelled by EU nationals, aged over 64 at 45,012. This number is far larger than the second placed province - Málaga with 22,414.

A third report by the European Parliamentary Petitions Commission on real estate and land law abuses in Spain, is to go before the European Parliament in March. This is the third such report, earlier reports being in 2005 and 2007, all critical of building law in Spain and in the Valencian province in particular. Both PSOE and PP Euro-MPs have tried unsuccessfully to modify and tone-down the report. The report carries the suggestion that aid be withheld until the deficiencies are corrected.

There has been a dramatic fall in the sale of second homes to tourists in Málaga province as the economic crisis continues. The number of second homes sold in a year has fallen from 12,400 in 2007 to just over 1,000 in 2008. There were towns on the Costa del Sol which did not see a single new building licence granted over last year. 1,200 construction jobs were lost in the province in January '09 alone.

The Valencia regional government is to spend 35 million euro in making tourism across the region "more dynamic." This represents an investment increase of 45% in tourism. It is hoped that the extra spend will bring more 'prestige' to the area and plan to create an additional 15 tourist offices.

Figures released by the Spanish Ministry for Tourism this week, have revealed that visits from overseas tourists dropped by 10.1% this January compared to the same month last year. Arrivals from the UK were down more than 20%. Interestingly, visitors from Ireland to the Costa del Sol were up in January this year by around 8%! Concerned at the fall in British tourists, the tourism authorities are to spend an additional two million euro this year, on promoting the Costa Blanca in the U.K. The extra money will be spent on adverts on buses, on trains, in cinemas together with street billboards. (I have just read that RyanAir have conducted a study to see if they could charge for use of their toilets!)

Poor ol' Málaga suffered again on February 1, when a tornado with winds between 180 and 220 kph hit the city. The tornado, which was the strongest seen in Spain for 150 years, caused considerable damage along a 4 km corridor. Trees were uprooted and the roofs torn off warehouses. The main bus station was damaged together with over 250 homes and 400 cars. A two-year-old Yorkshire terrier was sucked out of a sixth floor window by the tornado and has still not been found. By the way his name was 'Cuqui' not 'Toto'!!

The largest mobile phone fair in the world was held in Barcelona in mid Feb. More than 700 mobile phone operators from 218 countries and as many as 200 manufacturers were present. Apple did not attend. The mobile phone manufacturers have now agreed on a universal charger – the device will come into use this spring.

Some time ago you may remember me mentioning that the Marbella Town Hall owed 'shed-loads' of money to both Social Security and the *Hacienda* - The Spanish Inland Revenue. The amount owing is in the region of 280 million euro. The town hall has now agreed to begin monthly repayments of 400,000 euro, to be divided equally between both parties. Monthly repayments are due to increase to 600,000 euro in 2010, just the sort of news a town hall needs to hear during a recession. All council staff bonus payments have been cancelled.

The Irish multi-national clothing chain, Primark, plans to open stores in Elche and Alicante soon.

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SHHHHH!

A burglar enters a house through a window, and hears someone say, "Jesus is watching!"
 The burglar gets nervous and stands perfectly still in the dark, waiting a couple minutes but he hears nothing & decides to move. Again he hears "Jesus is watching!"
 He sees a parrot and asks, "Was that you?"
 The parrot answers "Yes."
 The burglar, with great relief, asks the parrot, "What is your name?"
 The parrot says "Clarence."
 The burglar chuckles, "What idiot names his parrot 'Clarence'?"
 The parrot replies, "The same idiot that named his rotweiler, 'Jesus.'"

What's Up? continued

The DGT traffic authority in Spain has announced a new mobile phone SMS and email alert system to inform drivers if they have been fined. They say they want to modernise the notification procedure, but both individuals and companies would have to sign up voluntarily to take part in the new scheme. Don't all rush!

Eight people have been arrested following disturbances in Santiago de Compostela. It came after a demonstration in support of a bilingual Galicia, 'Galicia Bilingüe', where those who attended claimed that the Galician language was being imposed on them in the region. The protestors were stoned by nationalists. The police charged rioters and rubber bullets were fired at the crowd.

In a change of policy, the Spanish government has decided not to go ahead with the new animal protection law, this is despite a recent poll showing that eight out of ten Spaniards want to see a unified law implemented throughout the country to protect animals. This despite a petition of 1.3 million signatures for such a law last year. This has meant that animal protection remains the responsibility of the regions, where the laws and fines differ greatly. For example, abuse or the abandoning of animals carries a fine of 3,000 € in Navarra but the fine is up to 150,000 € in Aragón. The El Refugio animal charity has said that nearly 400 cats and dogs have been killed by the Madrid Regional Government collectors and just dumped on the rubbish tip. Workers at the tip say that many more than 400 dead animals have been left there over the past year and a half.

The unemployment rate in Spain in December was already at 11.3%, five points more than the OECD average of 6.1%, and a whole point higher than the second placed country, Slovakia, which actually saw a fall in unemployment last year, along with Poland, Germany and Holland. Latest numbers here show that the numbers of long-term unemployed has risen 56% in a year, and that nearly 700,000 of these have been looking for work for more than 12 months.

The Spanish newspaper El Mundo, has revealed that one of the threatened Iberian Lynx being bred in captivity in the Doñana nature park, managed to copulate 80 times in 48 hours! Too much 'lynx-porn'?

The trials of the various ex-GIL party councillors from Marbella continues to surprise and entertain. One can talk about padding expenses, but these guys brought it to a new level. One councillor, Tomás Reñones claimed 293,325 km's travel allowance in 1999, that is equivalent to him driving seven and a half times round the world. One former councillor, who is still on the run, claimed €123,000 as 'costs for sports' centres' without any explanations or receipts. It is alleged that close to 42 million € of Town Hall funds were diverted into private accounts by companies, controlled by the accused, which invoiced for projects which were never actually carried out. More than 90 different frauds are alleged to have been carried out. The Marbella Town Hall has asked for a total 268 years in prison for the 33 people who are accused.

Story Update: The Supreme Court has confirmed the guilty sentence against the Valencian anaesthetist, Juan Maeso, who has been found guilty of deliberately infecting 275 patients with the Hepatitis C virus between the years 1988 and 1999. His is expected to be sentenced shortly.

One of the smaller TV providers on the Costa (not Torresat!), recently had their 'collar felt' by the 'boys in blue' or rather 'green'! This will probably result in another British provider closing down with many unhappy ex-customers!

A youngster was arrested in Murcia for allegedly making 15,000 false emergency calls, from two mobiles, over a seven month period.

Three British youths have been arrested in La Florida. One, a 13-year-old was detained by residents around midnight after he and another youth were caught breaking off wing mirrors on five vehicles. Two others, aged 20 and 14 were arrested by local police after throwing several burning rubbish bags into a private garden causing damage to tiles and the facade. The two younger youths were taken home to their families and will face action later. The 20 year old was taken to the Guardia Civil in Pilar de la Horadada.

It has been revealed that the next reform to the Traffic Law in Spain, is due shortly. We will see an amendment which will give a discount of half price for those who pay their traffic fines at the scene or in 15 days. 75% of all fines issued by the traffic police remain unpaid.

Up to Par?

A young couple got married and went on their honeymoon. They quickly head for the bedroom and get down to business. The young bride looks deep into her husband's eyes and says 'I have a confession to make. This is not the first time I have had sex. A few years back I met Tiger Woods at a bar and we went back to his room and made love.'

'I can understand that', the man replied. 'Tiger is talented, rich, famous, handsome & a thoroughly nice guy'. So the young couple get down to it and when they finished the man got up and went to the phone. 'What are you doing?' she asked. 'I'm ringing room service, I'm famished', he replied. 'Tiger wouldn't do that,' she said. 'Tiger would make love to me again'.

So off they went again, and once more the man got up and moved towards the phone. 'Tiger wouldn't do that. Tiger would make love to to me one more time,' she said. So once again the man goes back to bed and makes love. As they finished for the third time the man got up and picked up the phone.

'Are you going to ring room service?' the girl asked.

'No,' replied the man. 'I'm ringing Tiger Woods, I want to ask him what par this hole is?'

Who's Next?

Man walks into a bar with an alligator under his arm and puts it on the bar.

"If I can keep my wedding tackle in the alligator's mouth for five minutes will everyone here buy me a drink".

There was a murmur amongst the crowd and then they all nod.

He pulls the alligator's jaws apart, drops his pants and puts his tackle in the gator's mouth, closing it gently. Five minutes later, he picks up a bottle and whacks the gator over the head and it opens its mouth.

Out comes his bits, perfect.

Cheers from the crowd and the drinks appear in front of him.

"Has anyone here got the guts to do that", he asks the crowd.

A blonde steps forward, "Yes, I will", she says, "But don't hit me over the head with a bottle".

SPANISH VIGNETTES

Ratoncito Pérez

Many of you will have grandchildren who visit you, or you may be bringing your own young children here for holidays. If so, let me give you one piece of advice. The 'tooth fairy' does not cross the English Channel!! In France, Italy, Spain and in South America, it is the tooth mouse that carries-out such an important role.

In Spain he is called Ratoncito Pérez, the little mouse Pérez, who will burrow under your pillow and exchange the little milk-tooth for a coin. (I am not sure what the going rate in Spain is, probably a shiny euro.) Pérez later polishes the tooth down to make a little pearl.

Although a 'tooth mouse' has been around for several hundred years, it was the Jesuit priest and writer, Luis Coloma, who placed the mysterious mouse in Spanish folklore. In 1890 he was asked by the Queen of Spain, Maria Cristina de Austria, to write a short story for queen's young son, Alfonso XIII, popularly known as '*el rey Bubi*' who had just lost a tooth. Padre Coloma used the many different versions of the fable 'The Vain Little Mouse' as inspiration and wrote a short story about the tooth mouse, Pérez, who by magic transformed the young king into a mouse and together they had many adventures.

The short story was not published until 1911 and since then every Spanish child knows that Ratoncito Pérez wears a straw hat, gold spectacles and carries a red satchel on his back. The mouse Pérez lives in a biscuit tin with his family at Calle Arenal 8, in Madrid. This building is now a museum dedicated to the little mouse and there is a plaque on the wall commemorating his 'birthplace.'

Two movies have been made featuring the mouse, which were called *El Ratón Pérez 1 & 2* and the English versions were called 'The Hairy Tooth Fairy'.

Ratoncito Pérez has been used to advertise toothpaste in South America and Spain. If you watch some Spanish television programs you will also have probably recently seen a modern version of the mouse advertising a Chrysler people-carrier.

The Ratón Pérez museum website, most of which is available in English and where you can view a short cartoon about the mouse and '*el rey Bubi*' is at

<http://www.casamuseoratonperez.es/>

The Spanish website at <http://cvc.cervantes.es/actcult/raton/> is also worth visiting.

The Vain Little Mouse

(From a Popular Spanish Fable)

A small Mouse lived in a beautiful little house. One day , when she was sweeping the floor , she found a coin.

She said , "With this coin, I am going to buy a nice red bow for my hair - I'll look beautiful!" She was really beautiful with the red bow in her hair. She sat next to the window so that everybody could see her.

" Little mouse , you do look pretty" , said the donkey. "Will you marry me?"

And she asked , "What will you do at night?" "I will bray like this" , said the donkey. And he brayed.

"Oh no , I'll get frightened" , said the mouse. Then the dog asked her," Little mouse , you are beautiful. Why don't you marry me?"

"What will you do at night?" asked the mouse. "I will bark like this" , said the dog . And he barked.

"Oh no , I'll get frightened" , said the mouse. Finally, the cat asked her , " Beautiful little mouse , will you marry me?"

"And what will you do at night ? " asked the mouse.

"I will sing like this" , said the cat . And he sang a beautiful song .

"Yes , I will marry you" , said the mouse. So they got married , but on their wedding night, guess what ? The cat did not sing his beautiful song . He ate the vain little mouse.

(Submitted by Maribel)

Tell that to the Marines

A Royal Marine camp in Afghanistan received a new commanding officer. After a few months, the new commander asked one of the NCOs what the men did for 'nookie'.

'Well,' replied the NCO, 'they use that camel you see tied to a tree at the edge of the camp'. 'How disgusting', he thought.

However, after a few more months that camel was not really looking too bad, especially if he squinted his eyes and pretended the camel was a hairy Britney.

So one dark night the officer led the camel into his tent and let 'abnormal' nature take its course. Suddenly the NCO walked into the tent and was totally shocked by the scene before him, AND it is almost impossible to shock a marine!

'No need to be so shocked,' said the officer, 'isn't this what the men do?'

'No!' replied the NCO, 'we usually just use the camel to ride into town!'



Two views of Ratoncito Pérez

Out & About

Short of space this month so I have to be brief.

Early on Wednesday morning two houses were broken into in the 280's to 300's in Dream Hills. Two cars, one a hire car, were stolen and two other cars were broken into. The robbers were interrupted in one of the houses by one of the holiday makers, who unfortunately did not notify either the police or the security guards at the time of the incident. This is thought to be the work of a professional gang and the guards have warned that the incidence of cars 'cruising' the urbanisation has increased significantly. Please be aware and never drop your guard.

No changes or closures in Via Park 5, but in Via Park 3 Liberty's have now moved-in to what used to be Honey's Bar. Also there are now two full size snooker tables in the Welcome Inn. Day membership is available.

The traffic police in Orihuela Costa now have *grúa* vehicle removers at their disposal. So do take care with your parking, otherwise you may have to reclaim your vehicle in Orihuela after paying a substantial fine!

Off the N332 in the Calle Mosca area, the smaller building now being erected next to Burger King is supposed to be a new bar. The nearly-completed large warehouse type building nearby is to be a *bricolaje*, a DIY, possibly an Ardy's.

Work on the N332 expansion is progressing rapidly with available parking spaces now severely restricted to

The Gunfighter

A Cowboy sitting in a saloon one Saturday night recognized an elderly man standing at the bar who, in his day, had the reputation of being the fastest gun in the West. The young cowboy took a place next to the old-timer, bought him a drink and told him the story of his great ambition.

"Do you think you could give me some tips?" he asked.

The old man looked him up and down and said, 'Well, for one thing, you're wearing your gun too high, tie the holster a little lower down on your leg.'

"Will that make me a better gunfighter?" asked the young man.

"Sure will," replied the old-timer.

The young man did as he was told, stood up, whipped out his 44 and shot the bow tie off the piano player. 'That's terrific!' said the hot shot, "Got any more tips for me?"

"Yep", said the old man. 'Cut a notch out of your holster where the hammer hits it, that'll give you a smoother draw'

'Will that make me a better gunfighter?' asked the younger man. 'You bet it will,' said the old-timer.

The young man took out his knife, cut the notch, stood up, drew his gun in a blur, and then shot a cufflink off the piano player. 'Wow!' Exclaimed the cowboy 'I'm learnin' somethin' here. Got any more tips?'

The old man pointed to a large can in a corner of the saloon.

"See that axle grease over there? Coat your gun with it.' The young man went over to the can and smeared some of the grease on the barrel of his gun. 'No,' said the old-timer, 'I mean smear it all over the gun, handle and all.'

"Will that make me a better gunfighter?" asked the young man.

'No,' said the old-timer, 'but when Wyatt Earp gets done playing the piano, he's gonna shove that gun right up your arse, and it won't hurt as much!

Ve have vays of making you integrate!

The CoastRider, or what should now be called the Claro Times, caused a ruckus by using a press release from CLARO which misquoted comments made by Stefan Pokroppa during an interview in Spanish with EFE, a Spanish press agency. Most of the remaining English freebie newspapers then jumped on the bandwagon after being fed with sensationalist, pre-written copy from the smaller and powerless opposition parties.

Only one newspaper came out with a balanced report - The Leader, where the editor, Dave Bull, chided the other newspapers for being sensationalist and being overloaded with interpretation and hearsay! The cause of the 'outrage' was an alleged statement by Stefan that the 'English speaking residents do not integrate with the Spanish.' Never!?!?!?

You will recall that the CoastRider wrote a number of sensationalist articles on Dream Hills last year. That an English 'newspaper' should write so much drivel about the internal affairs of an urbanisation was unprecedented. They had never done such reporting previously and have not done so since. It was purely done to embarrass Mr. Pokroppa who was president of Dream Hills at the time & Coordinator for European Residents.

I went to a 'Meet the Public' meeting held by the Socialists Party (PSOE) at the Asturias Restaurant last year. There, (Surprise! Surprise!) at the top table, were two of the reporters who wrote sensationalist articles about Dream Hills, and who were there plainly as members of the Socialist PSOE.

You can fool some of the peopleetc, etc.

Hold Your Horses!

The first thing that strikes you when you enter **Stallion's** is the exquisite decor. This is not a bar turned into a restaurant but a purpose designed dining room using top class materials ranging from the lighting to the floor tiles, producing a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere and a dining area with a touch of quality.

Karen & Mark are your hosts in this delightful restaurant, where you can also dine *alfresco* or just sit outside with a chilled glass of wine and watch the kids trying to drown each other in the pool below.

The menu is very varied ranging from their popular steaks to lamb and salmon or pastas and if you are feeling really adventurous why not try one of the kangaroo steaks?

In keeping with the times, Stallion's now also offer reasonably priced specials nightly which are guaranteed to satisfy and will not do too much damage to your wallet!

Stallion's also provide an excellent three course Sunday lunch at €9.50 for adults and €6.50 for kids, where a selection of perfectly cooked fresh vegetables are served separately to accompany the meat course.

Don't forget that Mother's Day is on the 22nd March, so book now to avoid disappointment.

Stallion's Steak House is in Via Park V and they can be contacted on 965991047 or 609955902.

EU Tourist Pensioners.

Spain has been given an ultimatum by the European Commission to correct a fault in health procedures for foreigners within two months, or face being taken before the E.U. Justice Tribunal.

It relates to Spain's refusal to supply free medicines to retired people from other EU countries who are on holiday in Spain.

Brussels says that is discrimination and breaks EU norms on social security rights for EU citizens who travel on the continent. Foreign residents are not affected.

The Spanish Ministry for Health contends that the European health documents do not confirm whether the person is a pensioner or not.

The European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Vladimir Spidla, has said they were acting to guarantee the tourists of other E.U. countries would enjoy the same rights as residents. He continued that Spain was one of the main tourist destinations in Europe, but the Spanish regulations currently impose extra administrative formalities to E.U. pensioners who could need medicines during a temporary stay.

The Spanish authorities currently demand an extra document, from the home Social Security which certifies the person is collecting a state pension. Spain contends that residents also have to produce such a document to prove they are receiving a pension, and so there is no discrimination against tourists.

They add that foreigners often present a document which is 'illegible or in an unintelligible language' and that is not taken as being valid proof that they are pensioners.

E.U. legislation calls on all E.U. citizens who are visiting another member state to have the same access to health as residents of that country. They claim demanding extra documentation goes against the principles of the EU Health Card.

Costa Blanca SAMARITANS

902 88 35 35

The Costa Blanca Samaritans (CBS) have asked me to pass on the following information.

The Costa Blanca Samaritans offers a completely confidential, telephone-based emotional support service for any English speaker of any age who may be experiencing distress or despair, and who might be feeling suicidal. The helplines on 902 88 35 35 are open on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. From 19.00 - 22.00, and their intention is to deliver a 7 day service as soon as possible.

We need more volunteers to help us achieve this, and in return for your commitment we will train you to the highest standards, and continuously support you in your work.

If you feel you might like to undertake this valuable work, please e-mail your details to the CBS at joinus@costablancasamaritans.com or alternatively call us at our office on 96 626 04 20 and we will do the rest. For any other enquiries about our work, please e-mail us at info@costablancasamaritans.com

Costa Blanca Samaritans is registered with the Generalitat Valenciana as a 100 per cent not-for-profit organisation, and it staffed entirely by volunteers.

Bad Debt

Town and City Halls in Spain have a total debt of 25.054 billion € The situation was dramatically highlighted in the Madrid town of Loeches last week when a local contractor threatened to set himself on fire outside the Ayuntamiento if he did not get paid. He finally picked up half the money he was owed. Madrid has the largest debt, more than 6 billion alone, nine times that of Barcelona, and is followed by Valencia which owes 769 million. The autonomous regions of Spain owe a further 60 billion €

Mum?

Guy walks into a bar and says to the barman, "I want something tall, icy cold and full of gin".

Barman opens the door to the kitchen and shouts, "Oi, Doris, someone here looking for you."

St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. Revenge of the Irish.

Did you hear

..about the Welsh woman who thought that Sugar Diabetes was a heavyweight boxer?

..that the English football team were examined by a team of medical specialists and found to be fit for F.A.?

..about the Scot who though Slim Panatella was a Country & Western singer?

Start of a Scottish cake recipe:

'First, borrow a couple of eggs.....

A Scottish woman walked into her butchers and asked, 'What's the cheapest meat you've got?'

'Whale-meat,' he replied, 'at 80 pence a pound.'

'80 pence a pound,' she said, 'well I'll have a quarter and throw the head in for the cat!'

The Welsh shepherd's wife gave him a plate of grass for his dinner.

'What the hell's this?' he exploded.

'If it's good enough for your fancy woman, it's good enough for you! she replied.

Two Irishmen, two Scots, two Germans and two Englishmen were shipwrecked on a desert island.

After three months the two Germans had built a boat, the Scots had built a distillery and the two Irish had knocked the Scots and each other senseless after drinking most of the whisky.

The two Englishmen still hadn't spoken to each other! (Peter F)

Q: What's four miles long and five feet high?

A: The dole queue in Swansea.

Two English women were on a cruise and one says to the other, "This is my first cruise you know, and my husband saved for months to send me."

The other woman says, quite snooty, "Oh this is my twentieth so far. My husband works for Cunard".

"Well", says the first woman, "My husband works very hard as well".

Kevin Welcomes you to the



R Bar

Via Park V
Tuesday - Fun Darts
 COMIC RELIEF March 13th
 Come along and watch the show
 & help raise funds for a good cause
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Holy Cow!
 There's 2 cows in a field, One cow looks at
 the other cow and says 'moooo.'
 The other cow looks back and says.....
 "Oh! I was just going to say that!"

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Careful what you wish for!

An Irish man, English man and a Scottish man are walking along a beach in Cabo Roig when they find a lamp. The Scot picks it up, rubs it and out pops a Genie. Seeing that there are three of them the Genie gives them only one wish each.

The Scot says 'Ok, I want enough money to keep me happy for the rest of my life.' So the Genie snaps his fingers and the Scots man has a bank balance that would embarrass a politician.

The English man says, 'I'm sick of all the 'mucking baskets' coming into my country and taking our women and jobs. I want you to put a great big mucking wall around England so no foreign 'baskets' can ever enter England again. I'll be happy to never enter England again, so long as I know it's protected.' So the Genie snaps his fingers and a wall, 1000 ft high and 200 ft thick, springs up around the whole of England. Nothing can get in or out again.

The Irish man says to the Genie, 'Are you sure that wall around England is strong and NOTHING can escape?' The Genie replies, 'Absolutely, nothing will escape'. So the Irish man replies 'Ok then, fill the whole bloomin' thing up with water'.

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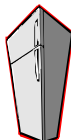
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The History of Spain. Part 5 - The Birth of the Reconquest.

If the Moors had concentrated on conquering the whole of the peninsula, and not been distracted by their quest for booty and glory beyond the Pyrenees in France, the Iberian Peninsula would still probably be Muslim today. Moorish troops were diverted from mopping-up to do battle with the Franks.

As we saw in Part 4, Pelayo, a bodyguard or sword-bearer for the deceased Visigothic King Roderic or Roderick, escaped to the north of Spain together with other Christians fleeing from Muslim rule in the south. According to legend, Pelayo and 30 of his followers defeated an army of 40,000, some say 400,000! Moors in the valley of Covadonga in Asturias. One account states that the 400,000 Muslims were miraculously killed when all the weapons they hurled flew back at them! In reality it was probably just a skirmish, however Pelayo was referred to as 'that savage ass' by one Arab writer and he continued to be a thorn in the side of the Moors. 'What harm can thirty savage asses, who live on honey like wild beasts, do to us?', one Moorish general reported. Nevertheless, Pelayo's constant harrying of the Moors wore them down and they eventually left the area. The Moors then put a number of military outposts manned by Berbers in Galicia and the north. However, following a disastrous famine in the north and a revolt in the south during 739 between the Berbers and their Arab masters, the Berbers vacated the garrisons in the north for the warmer climes of the south. Both the Arabs and the Berbers found the climate and remoteness of the north extremely inhospitable. Also they never conquered the Basque area believing that the Basques were wild animals.

Pelayo created a great dynasty when his daughter married a local chieftain named Alfonso, founder of the kingdom of Asturias. Alfonso 1 reigned for 18 years and won back extensive property. At the time of his death in 757 the Christians had re-occupied almost one-quarter of the peninsula. This was the beginning of what would later become known as the Reconquest or *Reconquista*,

After several failed attempts by the Franks, Charlemagne's son, Louis of Aquitaine, captured Barcelona in 801 and established a Frankish protectorate between the city and the Pyrenees, known as the *Marcha Hispanica* or 'Spanish March.' (Many Spanish now put down the stubborn and intransigent nature of the Catalonians to their French genes! Catalonian nationalists still believe that Rossellon in France should be part of Catalonia.)

Around 840, the Vikings appeared in the peninsula. First they raided Galicia in the north and then Lisbon in search of slaves and booty. They then sailed up the Guadalquivir to Sevilla where for one murderous week they held the city and indulged in a week long orgy of murder and pillage. However, an army of Moors soon put them to flight and the Vikings limped back to sea with less than half their fleet.

The Muslims moved their capital from the old Visigothic centre of Toledo much further south to Córdoba. They felt much more secure closer to Africa from where there was a constant flow of slaves and gold, and of course soldiers. As with the Romans, slaves were an essential element of the Muslim civilisation. Many were forced to serve in the Moorish armies. One Moorish prince had a retinue of 5,000 boys for his (ahem) pleasure.

The harems of the Moors were also well stocked with beautiful women. They preferred the fair women of the north, probably Celts, particularly those from Galicia. During periods of Moorish dominance, the small Christian kingdoms were often obliged to pay an annual tribute of young virgins for the harems. The continued interbreeding between Christian and Moor diluted the Arab blood so much that in time, many Arab rulers had to dye their hair black so they could 'look the part'. Eunuchs also played a vital role in regal affairs and often rose to high government posts in the Moorish world. Castrated males were considered safe and trustworthy. Although castration is prohibited in the Koran, the Moors bought the 'finished product' from Jews and Christians. Many 'fresh' eunuchs were imported from the south of France and Lucena, south of Córdoba, had a thriving trade in castrations and eunuchs. Certainly not a place you would want to get lost in!!

Compared to the natives, the Moors were renowned for their cleanliness. The Visigoths, not known for their personal hygiene had destroyed most of the Roman baths. The Moors built hundreds of public baths. Later many Christians associated dirtiness with goodness and especially for Spanish monks, physical dirt became a test of moral purity and faith. Some wore the same unwashed clothes for years to express their devotion. There was a Moorish saying at the time: 'Christians were sprinkled with water at birth and thus relieved from washing for the rest of their lives.'

(More next month)

Fancy a Trip?

Father Murphy walks into a pub in Donegal, and says to the first man he meets, "Do you want to go to heaven?" The man said, "I do Father." The priest said, "Then stand over there against the wall." Then the priest asked the second man, "Do you want to go to heaven?" "Certainly, Father," was the man's reply. "Then stand over there against the wall," said the priest. Then Father Murphy walked up to O'Toole and said, "Do you want to go to heaven?" O'Toole said, "No, I don't Father." The priest said, "I don't believe this. You mean to tell me that when you die you don't want to go to heaven?"

O'Toole said, "Oh, when I die, yes. I thought you were getting a group together to go right now."

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The Actors' Studio (acting for Alzheimer's)

Our local amateur dramatics group, 'The Actors' Studio', wishes to thank again all Dream Hills residents who attended our evening of comedy and dramatic sketches, 'Laughter and Tears,' on 20th Jan., and to inform you that €1,320 was raised to support the Alzheimer's Association.

Forthcoming events include a repeat performance of "Laughter and Tears" at the Quesada Theatre on 17th April, a fashion show - including sketches - at the Club Nautica, Torrevieja, on 24th April and a Ladies Lunch event at the Rendezvous Restaurant, Via Park 3 on 2nd April at 2 p.m. See the next Dream Scene and other local publications for more details. Once again, all money raised at these events will go to support the Alzheimer's Association.

'The Actors' Studio' seeks new members with any of the following creative interests - acting, costume-making, hair and make-up, prop-making, lighting, sound and public relations. Speak to Joyce, Jo, Pam or Matias (all Dream Hills residents), or Sue at 'All Bar Sue', or ring David Whitney on 966 704 097 if you are interested in joining us. (Joyce Sinclair)

The editor can be contacted at mick.dreamscene@gmail.com or at No. 586 Dream Hills.

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Sold Your Property?

If you were a non-resident and sold your property in Spain, between 2005 and 2006, and were charged 35% capital gains tax, you have a good case for a refund of around half of what you have paid.

The European Union declared that the practice of charging 35% on capital gains to non-residents, implied discrimination, as residents only had to pay at the rate of 15%.

As a result the Spanish changed the law on January 1, 2007, introducing a new capital gains rate of 18% for both residents and non-residents and making it retrospective. In practice this has meant that those non-residents who paid 35% were entitled to a refund plus interest on the amount.

However lawyers are urging caution. Although in one case a British couple were refunded their overpaid tax, he advised that this was a sentence and sets a precedent but that it does not create jurisprudence. It requires more favourable sentences to do this.

Nevertheless the case is thought to be a solid one. If you require more information, go to www.aliagalegal.com/index.htm

They offer a 'no win - no fee' scheme. (This article is not an endorsement.)

Primary & Secondary Education on the Orihuela Costa

The Director of Education in Orihuela, will be giving a presentation in the Orihuela Costa ayuntamiento in the near future. If you would like to attend, please contact Stefan on 619488293 or at stefan@orihuela-costa.eu http://www.orihuela-costa.eu/schools_in_spain.php for schooling info.

Is your mobile registered?

The Spanish Ministry of the Interior has launched a campaign, 'Identificate', to get more than 15 million pre-paid phone-card users to register their mobile phones before the deadline of November 7, 2009.

On this date, unidentified mobile phone users will be cut off. This legislation was passed October 2007 as a consequence of the terrorist attacks on the trains in Madrid on March 11 2004, when pre-paid phones were used to activate the bombs.

To register your pre-paid card mobile you are asked to go to a sales point of your phone operator, taking along a DNI or NIE or Foreigners Residency card/paper, while companies will have to show their fiscal identification card. This can be a problem as some operators have no or few sales' points. Some operators are trying to speed up the process by sending SMS messages to their users - but these will be in Spanish.

The number of fixed phone lines in Spain has fallen for the first time, because of the recession and the advance of mobile communications. The mobile phone market remains saturated, with 112 phones for every 100 residents.

Frog on Frog

Frenchman walks into a bar with a toad on his head.

"What the Hell's that?!", exclaimed the barman.

The toad replies, "I don't know, it started as a wart on my backside".