

# THE DREAM SCENE

## Newsletter

Issue no. 26 1st of April 2009

Bienvenido and Welome to what should be the 'Spring' issue of the Dream Scene.

There are 2.500 earthquakes every year in Spain. Most of them are so weak that people do not notice them, but they are all registered by the seismological stations. Only when an earthquake has an intensity of more than 4 degrees on the Richter scale do we risk damage; inside the house cups and glasses move, while outside roof tiles or part of house walls and chimneys fall into the street. The strongest known earthquake on the Iberian peninsula happened in 1755 and had its epicentre in Lisbon. Thousands were killed in the city by both the quake and subsequent tsunami wave. The quake, was 8.7 on the Richter scale and did serious damage also in Spain. 85% of the buildings in Sevilla were affected and two children were killed in Madrid when part of a facade fell on them. Thousands of people along the coast of the province of Cadiz were killed by a "tsunami-wave" with a height of 10 meters. In 1829 there was a very serious earthquake in the general Torrevieja area, 7 on the Richter scale, which killed 400 and demolished 3,000 dwellings.

The African tectonic plate collides with the European-Asian plate along a fault going from the Azores islands and passing into the Mediterranean over the Gibraltar strait. The African plate pushes Spain 4 millimetres to the north-east every year. (Source: Ciudadanos Europeos) The European Union is financing scientific investigations of the seismic situation in this region and the possibilities of further important earthquakes. Spain has strict legislation on construction, aiming at making the buildings resistant to earthquakes.(??)

Gardners may have noticed that certain parts of their garden in this area just will not grow anything despite regular care and fertiliser. Similarly pets will shy away from certain parts of the outside property. It is thought that this is a result of certain gases being released from the tectonic-plate fault movement in our area known as the 'Tihslub Fault.'

Help is now at hand with a new product to highlight these noxious gases. In a joint venture between the research laboratories of the University of Santo Poco and *Industriales Tonto*, a simple spray can has been produced which, when sprayed at a suspect area will highlight the gases. Although the spray and gases are colourless, when combined they show up as the colour green. The spray should not be used indoors as the gases will not penetrate floor tiles. but it is possible to check the outside of buildings where the outside walls meet the ground tiles.

The spray goes by the name of T.D.S (Tectonic Detection Spray) retails at €9.95 and is available from 'First Choice,' other quality retailers and El Corte Ingles.

The Dream Scene spoke to one happy customer, Dream Hills resident and cat lover, Mrs. Brunhilda Von Großer-Nasenfettesel. 'I have to be very careful where I put my pussy,' Brunhilda said, 'these nasty gases can make it change colour.' Nice to see a happy customer!

(No room for the History article this month, but it will be back next month with the story of El Cid.

Mick.)

### **BROWN'S** **HAIR & BEAUTY**

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Ladies & Gents



**'FORGET IT, GEORGE!'**

# WHAT'S UP?

There were two major regional election results reported last month, in Galicia and the Basque Region. Although the regional parties in these areas are very strong, the PP pulled off a surprise victory in Galicia and it looks likely that both the PP and the PSOE will form a coalition against the Basque nationalists. The Spanish newspaper El Mundo has made the shocking claim that Juan José Ibarretxe, President of the Basque Nationalist Party, PNV, and previous President of the region, paid ETA family members before leaving power. The paper says he ordered the payment of 225,081 € before the regional election, so it could not be blocked by any new administration.

The internal spying scandal within the PP in Madrid is gradually being swept 'under the carpet.' Of great interest however have been the allegations against the president of our own Valencia region, Senior Camps. Camps, who has often been referred to a 'tailor's dummy' because of his sartorial elegance, is now being accused of having his suits bought for him in return for favours.

Spain's High Court is considering whether to extradite the 58-year-old chairwoman of a Catalan company to Panama. The Panamanian authorities say that the firm sold them a large consignment of toxic glycerine when used in a cough medicine in their country killed more than 142 people. The Catalan company say they bought the product from China and stated that they are traders not chemists.

What the Spanish call a '*lapsus*', a slip of the tongue, was carried out by the Prime Minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, as he was giving a joint press conference in Madrid with the visiting Russian Prime Minister, Dimitri Medvedev. When speaking about the good relationship between the two countries, Zapatero spoke of the agreement which they had signed to increase tourism. The Prime Minister said that 500,000 Spaniards had travelled to Russia last year, (God knows why as that seems an unbelievable number) and that the agreement was 'para estimular, para favorecer, para follar' – 'to stimulate, to favour and to f\*\*k'. Zapatero had meant to say 'para apoyar – to support'. And you think you've got problems with your Spanish?

Unemployment is still rocketing-up in Spain, 154,058 losing their jobs in February. The Social Security System lost more than a million contributors in the past year. There are now more than 3.5 million unemployed.

The International Monetary Fund predicts that the Spanish deficit will reach 6.1% of GDP this year and will be 6% next year. If the forecast is correct, only the United States, India, the U.K. and Japan will have a larger deficit. The I.M.F. considers it will take some years for things to return to normal.

A new El Corté Ingles to be built in Madrid and is scheduled for completion during the first half of 2011. It will have 22 floors. All we need now is some money!

The president of the General Council for Judicial Power, CGJP, the regulatory body for the judiciary, has warned that the economic crisis will lead to an increase in criminality and result in an increase in the volume of work with which the already strained courts are finding it impossible to cope. The government has just announced that it is going to spend 600 million € in modernising the judiciary system over the next three years. The whole system will be computerised under the new improvements.

The cabinet has approved by Royal Decree, a proposal from the Ministry of Health to place heart defibrillator machines in public places across the country. This could include airports, shopping centres, railway stations etc. I would suggest that both butcher's shops and 'knocking-shops' be added to the list as both, I am led to believe, are capable of inducing heart seizure; one from the beef prices, the other from the 'exertions'. Not counting those occurring in hospitals, 24,500 heart attacks take place in Spain each year. The Ministry of Health state that there is a 90% chance of recovery if the machine is used in the first minute of a cardiac arrest. Even though these machines are idiot-proof, training will be given.

It is interesting to see that the Jade Goody circus also reached the Spanish media. One newspaper, El Mundo, reported on its front page 'Jade dies, the queen of rubbish TV who sold her agony.'

Micheal Jackson has just announced his dates for the UK tour. They are Joe aged 5, Bob aged 4, Dave aged 5, Colin aged 6 and Andy aged 4.

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**No Tan?**

Two young ladies from Los Altos went on a fortnight's holiday to Jamaica. When they arrived at the airport they were 'picked-up' by a charming local taxi driver. They really hit it off and all three spent the whole holiday shacked up in the hotel, living off love, rice & peas. When the girls were being driven back to the airport, one asked the driver, 'Look, we have spent a superb couple of weeks with you and we don't even know your name.' 'Snow,' he replied, 'John Snow.' The girls burst out laughing and when he asked why they were being so rude, one replied, 'Sorry, John, but we came to Jamaica for two week's sun and all we got was 10 inches of snow! (Peter)

As mentioned in a previous issue, drug seizures are commonplace these days in Spain and hardly bear reporting. However, the following are just a few of the odd ones picked out from last month. A 51-year-old Ecuadorian man was arrested at El Prat airport in Barcelona after he was found to be carrying four kilos of cocaine in his luggage on the arrival of a flight from Colombia. The drug was disguised as 52 bars of chocolate, perfectly individually wrapped as the Jumbo brand, one of the best known in Colombia. The drug was hidden below a thin layer of chocolate on each bar. In another case, a plaster cast on a genuinely broken leg of a 66 year old Chilean man, on a flight from Santiago de Chile at Barcelona El Prat (sic) airport, has been found to have been made-up out of five kilos of cocaine. He was also carrying beer cans filled with cocaine. Police believe he had his leg broken deliberately to make it look realistic! And, in the port of Almería, three children were found with seven kilos of hashish taped to their bodies. A fishing boat carrying more than five tons of cocaine was intercepted by the Spanish authorities 800 miles from the Canary Islands. Although the boat was flying a Venezuelan flag, the Venezuelan government gave the Spanish navy permission to search the boat which was carrying Colombian cocaine. Earlier the navy had intercepted a speedboat full of gasoline trying to rendezvous with the vessel.

Police are investigating after 300 huge metal anchors went missing from the port of Novo Sancti Petri near Chiclana. The anchors – each measuring more than two metres and weighing up to 350 kg – were lifted more than a month ago but the news has only just come to light. Sources say it would have taken at least five haulage lorries to move the heavy load, making secrecy impossible. The total haul was worth about 300,000 euro. This kind of anchor is used by local fishermen along the coast during the *almadraba*, the 3,000 year-old method of fishing for tuna that has remain unchanged since the time of the Phoenicians.

The savings banks in Spain are demanding an emergency plan be drawn up by the Minister for the Economy, Pedro Solbes, in case the recession is extended. Mr. Solbes has now stated that there is sufficient public funds to re capitalise the banks if required. Savings Banks in Spain have predicted that unemployment will reach 4.5 million this year, some 17.2%, and increase to 19.8% in 2010. This is much higher than the government estimates. After the Bank of Spain investigated one savings bank, the Caja de Castilla-La Mancha savings bank, they considered that loans amounting to 3 billion € awarded by the bank were now 'unrecoverable'. Their proposed merger with Unicaja is now on hold. (Pity Lloyds didn't do the same with HBOS.) See Page 5 for the latest news on this.

The main construction companies in Spain have stated that they have not started on any new projects during the last two months. For the first time in ten years, rental accommodation in Spain has fallen in price – down 8% over 2008. The fall is a result of the increase in availability as people rent property they are unable to sell.

the economic crisis has resulted in the number of people applying to join the army increasing to six applicants per place. For the first time 40% of them have Bachillerato qualifications (similar to A levels).

Despite all the brouhaha it now seems that the electricity overcharging has been exaggerated, at least in Málaga Province. Here, a total of 425,000 euro was refunded to 850,000 clients resulting in an average refund of 50 cents!

Another sign of the recession, demand from industry for electricity, was down 18% last year, taking it back to levels last seen in 1997. On a positive side nearly a third of the electricity used in Spain now comes from renewable energy sources. A remarkable achievement.

Telefonica now offers a 50% discount on bills to its clients who are registered as unemployed. A discount of up to 20 euro each on both fixed line and mobile bills is available. The scheme will last for one year.

The Bank of Spain reports that two million € worth of pesetas were exchanged in January this year. The Bank estimates that there are still 943 million € in peseta notes and 818 million € worth of coins still out there.

Police in the Torremendo area of Orihuela are investigating the gruesome death of a 53-year-old British man found with a crossbow bolt in his chest and a crossbow close to the body. The corpse has been partially eaten by his dog. The man was known to collect weapons such as crossbows.

#### Quick News:

Hay-fever sufferers take care, as the pollen count this spring is predicted to be the highest for ten years!

From the 1st of April, the cost of a bottle of gas comes down three euro to 10.50 €

As predicted last month, another British TV signal supplier has ended up in the 'chokey.'

The number of fatal accidents in the workplace in Spain fell to 1,089 last year, which is still almost three a day!

Mindful of the slowing economy, Carrefour has announced a 25% permanent price cut on 10,000 lines.

Two couples were arrested in Torrevieja for being in possession of 20 kilos of high grade Goma 2 explosive. Terrorism is not thought to be involved as it is believed that the explosives were due to be sold to criminal gangs.

A gang of 50 Britons have been arrested throughout Spain in connection with counterfeiting of documents and fraud.

Orihuela is to get a new bull ring capable of seating up to 8,000 spectators.

Some blue flamingos have just arrived at the salt lakes.

**Note:** This month subscribers from Dream Hills 2 & all e-mail subscribers get an extra two pages, one showing a map of the new street names in Dream Hills 2 and the other a brief description of the history behind the street name.

A lady was picking through the frozen turkeys at the grocery store, but couldn't find one big enough for her family. She asked a stock boy, "Do these turkeys get any bigger?" The stock boy replied, "No ma'am, they're dead."

Q: What is the difference between an Italian Grandmother & a hippo?

A: About two stone and a black dress.

## Spanish Vignettes - *Semana Santa*

*Semana Santa* - Holy Week, what we call Easter Week is one of the most important events in the Spanish calendar. Although one certainly would not call it a 'fiesta', it is nevertheless an annual opportunity for the Spanish faithful to express their religious fervour in processions carrying floats which present the story of the Passion of Jesus Christ. The processions, which are organised almost daily during the week, are a mix of religion and theatre, sufficiently dramatic and moving to make the hairs stand out on the back of the neck of the most secular. The tradition dates back to the 16th Century, when in 1521, the Marqués de Tarifa returned to Spain from the Holy Land and institutionalised the Stations of the Cross (*Via Crucis*) in Spain. From then on the holy event was celebrated by a procession evolving through the centuries to the magnificent and breathtaking event it is today.



*Semana Santa* celebrations in Andalusia are probably the most impressive and extravagant, particularly in Malaga and Seville. However Spaniards from outside that area will say that Andalusia's version is not the true *Semana Santa* and that the authentic versions are held in the region of Castilla-Leon, in particular Zamora and Valladolid, where the events are more sombre and solemn, but also in Salamanca, Avila and Segovia. Although the celebrations in Madrid are considered somewhat muted, those in Toledo are very impressive.

Although the style and mood can vary from place to place, the basic components are the same incorporating processions with elaborate wooden floats (*pasos*) - see photo, of superbly crafted religious scenes from the *Via Crucis*, together with brass bands playing funereal and religious music. The floats are extravagantly decorated, some dating back to the 1600's, and they are very heavy, usually weighing over a ton. All the floats are carried by men on their shoulders walking in sync with a peculiar but well practised swaying motion. These men are called *costaleros*, literally 'sack men' because of the traditional headdress that some of them wear, and there can be as many as 100 *costaleros* carrying a float depending on its size and weight. Some of the processions can last up to 14 hours! One of the floats in the Torrevieja procession weighs more than 1,500 kilos and is carried by up to 100 *ex pats*.

The "pasos" are set up and maintained by the various *hermandades* and *cofradías* - religious brotherhoods, confraternities or sodalities, which precede the '*pasos*' dressed in penitential robes. On occasions there can be as many as 2,000 members from a single brotherhood taking part in the parade, all dressed in costumes, carrying candles, rods or banners depending on their level of seniority. The most senior of each brotherhood is the president who carries a golden rod. Although every participant wears a costume or tunic, some of the most striking are those of the *Nazarenos* (penitents) who wear tall conical hats (*capirotes*) to conceal the identity of the wearer - see photo. Some of the *Nazarenos* will wear shackles and chains on their feet or walk barefoot as a penance. (The *capirotes* are worn by the penitents to signify mourning at the death of Jesus Christ, are taken off to celebrate the resurrection on Easter Sunday.) Sometimes during the procession the parade will halt in silence to hear an individual in the crowd or on a balcony sing a very sad song called a *saeta* (arrow or dart). This used to be a spontaneous event. Now it is generally planned but it is still moving nonetheless.



Despite all the preparation and hard work which goes into these processions, if it is raining the parade is cancelled. This is because the *pasos* are too valuable (and sacred) to be damaged by the rain.

Processions are held in Torrevieja and in Orihuela. The procession in *Cartagena* is very impressive and differs in many ways from the other Spanish processions, one difference being that some electro/mechanical floats are used together with some very creative and colourful lighting systems.

If you want to experience the 'real' Spain, this is not to be missed.

### Little Kathy

There was a power cut just as Kathleen's mum was just about to give birth to a baby.

The paramedic had no option but to ask young Kathleen to hold the torch so that he could assist with the delivery. When the beautiful baby boy was born, the paramedic lifted him by his feet and smacked his bottom.

Little Kathleen, still holding the torch, was wide-eyed at the whole proceedings, but without missing a beat said - 'Smack him again! He shouldn't have crawled in there in the first place!'

(Lowri)



### Spanish Saving's Banks and the Economy.

Standard and Poor's have shattered the claim that Spain's banks have escaped the credit crunch with the ratings for CajaMadrid, Sabadell, Popular and Ibercaja all being reduced by the ratings agency to A or A+. Their exposure to loans linked to real estate and construction companies is the reason for the reduction in confidence. Standard and Poor's say they are also keeping a close watch on the two largest banks in Spain, BBVA and Santander.

Spanish banks are now reportedly asking for more than just a stable income to grant a mortgage. Now purchasers are being obliged to take out an insurance policy to cover them against any future unemployment, and another life policy. The new demands can add an additional 900 € cost on the signing of the mortgage. Consumers organisations have sounded a voice of alarm. Stable door, horse and bolted come to mind.

**LATEST:** The Bank of Spain has announced it is to intervene in the Caja Castilla-La Mancha savings bank to avoid its bankruptcy. The Chairman of the bank, Juan Pedro Hernández Moltó, met for hours on Sunday afternoon with Directors of the Bank of Spain and the Government called an extraordinary cabinet meeting. Finally the Bank of Spain dismissed the board headed by the Socialist, Hernández Moltó, and put three civil servants in control together with a rescue package of 9 billion €. The bank was losing 18 million euro a day in deposits.

Minister for the Economy, Pedro Solbes, admitted the failure of several months of merger talks with Unicaja or another savings bank. He said on Monday that there are no other entities at risk, but the system 'is not immune'. Despite the Minister's comments the Spanish Stock Market took a tumble today, Monday 30th, as traders feel that there may be more interventions in the various saving's banks to come. Solbes is famous for the 'double take,' - first saying 'Things are not too bad,' followed some time later by 'I did not realise things would get this bad!'

Depositors' savings are safe thanks to the Guarantee Fund which covers up to 100,000 € per account holder. It is the first large intervention in a Spanish bank since Banesto in 1993.

### Stop That Noise!

Early this year, a survey of the Alicante Province revealed that 32% of the sample taken believed that noise in the province was at an unacceptable level. Particularly effected were residents who lived close to roads and the towns of Alicante, Villena, Montforte del Cid, Petrer, Torrevieja and Orihuela worst affected. Houses next to the A-31 and N-332 often suffer noise of more than 55 decibels, the limit fixed by the World Health Organisation. Building (surely now a thing of the past) and local bars were also seen as major offenders.

In Málaga, new regulations introduced by the Junta de Andalucía, will mean that you cannot practise a musical instrument in your home! If you do, it can attract a fine of 600 euro! The Junta has now regulated that noise reaching neighbours must be less than 45 decibels and less than 40 decibels in bedrooms. They describe 40 decibels as the level of noise found normally in a library. Obviously a Spanish library, which would be like a party anywhere else! 'Coches-discotecta' – car drivers who have loud music coming from their vehicles, could also have their vehicles impounded. The current crackdown in Málaga is probably because of the high awards made against the council last year, when 18 residents of a block of flats opposite some noisy bars in Torre del Mar, were each awarded 156,000 euro after taking their case to the Supreme Court. Apparently they had suffered years of noise.

Murcia are also being tough on noise. Late last year 19 bars in the city were fined amounts ranging from 300 to 1,800 euro for leaving either a door or window open. These noisy bars were in a part of the city which had received 128 complaints relating to noise from neighbours.

Elsewhere, the anti-noise responses continue, for example, in Barcelona, the owner of an 'Irish' bar, María del Carmen Ahijado Villarroel, received a five and a half year jail sentence for causing excessive noise to three of her neighbours who lived above her bar. This was the first such ruling that has resulted in a jail sentence in Spain.

### OUCH!

A 14 year old daughter of a P.P. Councillor in Getafe, Madrid, Blanca Rosa Alcántara, managed to run up a bill of around 30,000 € last year using the 3G mobile internet card which the Ayuntamiento had assigned to her mother.

The councillor said in a press conference in Madrid that she had not noticed beforehand as they have a flat-rate tariff for the internet at home, and she promised she would return the money to the council, complete with interest, although she lamented that the irregular use had not come to light earlier.

It's understood the daughter ran up such a large bill downloading all the episodes of the TV drama 'Lost' - known in Spain as 'Perdidos'.

### The Raffle

Young Paddy, moved to Roscommon and bought a donkey from a farmer for €100.00. The farmer promised to deliver the donkey the next day. The next day he drove up and said, 'Sorry son, but I have some bad news, the donkey died.'

Paddy replied, 'Well, then just give me my money back.'

The farmer said, 'Can't do that. I went and spent it already.'

Paddy said, 'Ok, then, just bring me the dead donkey.'

The farmer asked, 'What are you going to do with him?'

Paddy said, 'I'm going to raffle him off.'

The farmer said, 'You can't raffle off a dead donkey!'

Paddy said, 'Sure I can. Watch me.. I just won't tell anybody he's dead.'

A month later, the farmer met up with Paddy and asked, 'What happened with that dead donkey?'

Paddy said, 'I raffled him off. I sold 500 tickets at two euros a piece and made a profit of €98.00.'

The farmer said, 'Didn't anyone complain?'

Paddy said, 'Just the guy who won. So I gave him his two euros back.'

Paddy now works for the International Monetary Fund. (Pat Chambers)

### Local Government Corruption

Unfortunately there has been a major upsurge of local authority corruption cases throughout Spain recently. These are not isolated incidents. Municipal corruption is a serious and chronic institutional problem. Local governments appear to view land re-zoning, even if illegal, as a legitimate method of replenishing municipal and personal coffers. In the Málaga province more than 12 towns and villages are the subject of investigations relating to real estate corruption and irregularities on both the coast and inland. Many of the cases relate to the illegal granting of planning permission for so called 'rustic' land. Some of the cases of real estate corruption in the province are as follows:

Marbella – the Malaya & Saqueo 1 cases, probably the most infamous cases in Spain, with the GIL party in the centre, this case has been dragging on for some years with huge amounts of money involved. In just one of the many related charges 36 million euro of public funds were allegedly diverted to private accounts.

The socialist PSOE mayor of Alcaucín, José Manuel Martín Alba, a labourer, was found to have 250,000 € in the bank and another 160,000 € hidden in his mattress, all allegedly received as bribes for allowing as many as 20,000 homes to be built illegally on rustic land in the area. The total number of people charged in this case is now 24.

Rafael Sánchez, Sierra de Yeguas: PP. Accused of: Violation, sexual abuse and coercion.

Juan Vera, Tolox: Convergencia Andaluza. Accused of approving licences for homes which were apparently illegal.

Juan Martín Serón, Alhaurín el Grande: PP. Accused of: bribery, planning corruption and money laundering.

Joaquín Villanova, Alhaurín de la Torre: PP. Accused of: environment crimes and government exam corruption.

Francisco Hidalgo, Fuente de Piedra: PSOE. Accused of environment crimes.

Antonio Sánchez, Mijas: PSOE. Accused of: Corruption, for refusing a successful candidate a place on the Local Police force.

Antonio Benítez, Alfarnatejo: PSOE. Accused of: Embezzlement of public funds.

José Luis Navas, Sayalonga: PSOE. Accused of: Planning crimes, corruption and bribery involving allowing houses to be built on rural land.

José Manuel Aranda, Canillas de Aceituno: PSOE. Accused of: Approving illegal building licences for houses.

Juan Millán, La Viñuela: PSOE. Accused of: Approving building licences for detached homes on rural land.

Gaucín - where the ex Partido Andalucista Mayor has been banned from public office for seven years.

Cómpeta - where the PP ex Mayor has been banned for seven years.

And Sayalonga – where the Socialist Mayor is charged with corruption.

Elsewhere throughout Spain there has also been major replenishing of private coffers. The Socialist regional councillor for Industry and Technological Development in the Cantabria government has resigned after being indicted for perversion of the course of justice. The Prosecutor is calling for a three year prison sentence.

The Mayor of La Muela, in Zaragoza, María Victoria Pinilla, from the Partido Aragonés, has been arrested along with 19 others and faces nine charges relating to corruption, bribery, influence peddling and money laundering. She had promoted the construction of 9,000 new homes in four sites in the town, despite opposition from the provincial real estate authorities and the regional government. The Town Hall is also alleged to have paid for trips to Cancún for many local residents. Very nice of them. (If Monica Lorente, the mayor of Orihuela, would like to send me and/or 'She - who must be obeyed' to Cancun for a couple of weeks, I would be eternally grateful.)

Closer to home the Socialist mayor of Elche is to appear in court to respond to allegations that he used public money (35,000 euro +) to fund his party's election campaigning in 2006 and 2007.

In many cases it is foreign buyers who are the victims of real estate regularities and corruption and ultimately it is the environment which also suffers. I really do not believe that local politicians 'give a fig' for the care or renewal of the environment - despite all their lip service and protestations. But it is important to understand that corruption is not the propensity of any one particular party. They all have had their 'noses in the trough' at some stage, even individuals from the smaller independent parties such as the AIM in San Fulgencio. Here, it is interesting to note that amongst the whole council of AIM, Socialist and other 'also ran' councillors, the only two councillors NOT to be arrested were the two British AIM councillors. But it is also important to realise that everyone is innocent until proven guilty. More than three years ago the 'greens' made allegations against the former mayor of Orihuela. Late last year, he was found not guilty on all charges. Justice was served but a political career was probably ruined - not that he did much for us here on the coast. Here, in Spain, there is no end to 'political mischief' and it is never over 'till that 'fat lady... etc., etc.'

#### We were very amused!

The Queen, God Bless Her, was visiting a Military Hospital and came to a squaddie who seemed to be very fit.

"My man, why are you here?" Her Majesty asked. "I've got a nasty boil on me boll\*\*\*s", says the squaddie. (I think he was REME.) The Queen passed on without a comment.

The Matron went ballistic. "Don't you ever say anything like that again", she said, "Tell them you've got a bad back or something".

A week later, believe it or not, Princess Anne visited as well and when she got to the squaddie's bed she said "And what is your problem, now, my man".

"I've got a bad back", mumbled the squaddie.

"Oh, Good", said the princess, "I'll tell my mother the boils on your boll\*\*\*s are cured".

#### Here comes the Judge!

"Mr. Clark, I have reviewed this case very carefully," the divorce court judge said, "And I've decided to give your wife £400 a week." "That's very fair, your honour." the husband said "And every now and then I'll try to send her a few quid myself!"

Kevin Welcomes you to the

## R Bar

Via Park V  
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\*\*\*\*\*

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\*\*\*\*\*

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### When?

A young woman was appearing in court to face a public disorder charge. The charges were read out, and she was asked how she pleaded. "Not guilty," the woman answered emphatically.

The prosecution council then approached the woman and said: "Is it true that on the 11th of December, last year, you committed an act of gross indecency with a one-legged blind dwarf - who was waving a union jack - on the roof of a car, whilst travelling at over 100mph through the centre of London, in a blizzard?"

The woman composed herself, looked straight at the prosecution council and calmly asked: .....  
"What was the date again?"

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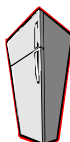


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## Tourism in Spain - the latest.

Hotel reservations on the Costa Blanca are down 40% so far this year. Data for the San José bank holiday showed 90% occupancy in Benidorm but only 50% in Alicante.

Spain's tourism industry may not recover until next year and cutting prices alone will not attract visitors to the country's resorts and cities, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (WTO). "We don't see any sign of recovery in 2009," Geoffrey Lipman, assistant general secretary of the WTO, said in a televised interview with Bloomberg. "Spain knows that simply slashing prices is not going to solve the problem."

Lipman said the industry needs to cut costs without damaging investment or neglecting workers, while using innovation and marketing to lure visitors.

Overseas arrivals in Spain in the first two months of the year were down 13.1 percent at 5.4 million, due to a sharp downturn in the economies of its main markets, which are Britain followed by Germany. This was reflected in the hotel occupancy rate in February, which dropped 14 percent from a year earlier to 40.3 percent.

Leading Spanish hotel group Sol Meliá is planning to reduce investment by 75 Million euro and is looking for another 25 million in cost savings in response to the crisis, Sebastián Escarrer, executive vice president, said in an interview Friday with financial daily *Cinco Días*. Tourism accounted for 10.7 percent of Spain's GDP in 2007. Spain is the second most popular tourist destination in the world. (ElPais)

### Definition– GDP. – Gross Domestic Product or Economics 101.

Like it or not, the expression or abbreviation GDP has been appearing a lot in newspapers lately when referring to the economies of various countries, (If you see it in either the Sun or the Star – you win a prize!) and will no doubt continue to do so as these economies weaken or strengthen. So what does it mean when you read about rises or falls in the GDP and why is it important? Well GDP or gross domestic product (sometimes called gross domestic income) is one of the measurements of country's national income and output, the market value of all final goods and services from a nation in a given year, in other words it is a measurement of its domestic economy.

But how is it actually calculated? Although there are various methods of calculating GDP we will look only at the most common method, the expenditure approach. This method is made up by adding four elements, first Consumption, which is the largest component of the GDP. Consumption is added by adding all goods and services expenditure. It is unaffected by the value of imported goods. Next is Investment which includes investments in fixed assets and increases in inventory. Then Government Purchases which is equal to all government expenditures less government transfer payments such as unemployment, pension and welfare payments.

Finally Net Exports, which are exports minus imports, since GDP is defined as the output of the domestic economy.

So  $GDP = Consumption + Investment + Government Purchases + Net Exports$ .

PHEW! So now you know. The CIA Factbook has quoted the actual GDP for the following countries for 2008 (in millions of US\$) – U.S.A. 14,330,000: Germany 3,818,000: UK 2,787,000: Ireland 285,000: Iceland 19,020: Spain 1,683,000. So if you live in Iceland where the country's foreign debt is five times its GDP, you know that you are on the 'way to hell in a hand-basket.' Similarly, if you have a negative growth in the GDP of a country for two successive quarters, you are classed as being in recession.

The European Union has just announced changes in National accounting to be introduced in 2011 or 2012, under which activities such as prostitution, contraband and drug trafficking are to be included in the calculations of each country's Gross Domestic Product! No. This is not an April Fool, that was on the front page!

**Stop Press:** The new building by Lidl in Calle Mosca is going to be a new Supermarket not a *bricolaje*.

### Yee-Haw!

A cowboy in Texas gets pulled over by a State Trooper for speeding. The trooper started to lecture the cowboy about his speeding, and in general began to throw his weight around to try to make the cowboy feel uncomfortable.

Finally, the trooper got around to writing out the ticket. As he was doing that, he kept swatting at some flies that were buzzing around his head.

The cowboy sez, "Y'all havin' some problem with circle flies?"

The trooper stopped writing the ticket and said, "Well yeah, if that's what they're called. But I never heard of circle flies."

"Well, sir," the cowboy replies, "circle flies hang around ranches."

They're called circle flies because they're almost always found circling around the back end of a horse."

The trooper says, "Oh," and goes back to writing the ticket. But, a moment later he stops and says, "Are you callin' me a horse's hind end?"

"No, sir," the cowboy replies, "I have too much respect for law enforcement to call y'all a horse's back end."

"That's a good thing," the trooper says and goes back to writing the ticket.

After a long pause, the cowboy, in his best Texas drawl says, "Hard to fool them flies though."

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### Out & About

Well what a month! Around mid-March the weather was really beautiful and there was a spate of parties. First of all there was a Red Nose evening in the R Bar which was great fun. <http://picasaweb.google.com/mick.dreamscene> for some photos. A massive 510 € was raised for the children's charity Apanee in Torry.

Then next day Brian and Chrissy threw his 60th. Started at 3 pm and lasted 'till well after midnight! Plenty of 'gargle' and an excellent buffet too. Then that evening Kay from Scampi's celebrated her 40th in the restaurant. Everybody was invited and it was a great night with a buffet, disco and karaoke. Then there was a three day St. Patrick's event down near the Playa Flamenca Mercadona. It was packed but impossible to get parking there.

Just when I was thinking of booking into the Betty Ford Clinic, there a surprise party for Bill Mc's 60th at the R Bar on the 30th. Again another excellent evening, with music provided by Dream Hills entertainer Johan.

After all that beautiful weather we have had what can only be described as a monsoon during the past two days. It bucketed down and there were the usual floods. What a pity all that water can't be collected - such a waste!

Quickly to finish off - one of the things which has really gotten up my nose during the last few years was the graffiti on the sub-station in the spare ground at the bottom of the public road with house numbers 396 to 421. Although this is nowhere near our humble abode, I have always felt that it was a bit of an eye-sore & depressing. It being on council land, if the committee had it painted there would be squeals from the 'begrudgers' complaining that that's the councils job - who, of course, wont do anything about it. Using some of your Dream Scene subscriptions and the willing help of David and Terry, the three sides facing DH have been painted out. If you see new graffiti on the walls, collect the paint and rollers from me at 586 and touch it up yourself! Bye for now, Mick.

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### G.O.M.

I've got a G.O.M., I didn't know I had it,  
It wasn't here yesterday, but now it's like a habit.  
If I pretend it isn't there it sulks and grumps around,  
But if I want to talk to it, it will not make a sound.  
It wanders round from room to room; kitchen, diner, bedroom.  
It's rude to friends and family, I wouldn't give it shed room.  
It seems to be a little deaf, and it's as stiff as a brush.  
It does what it wants, whenever it likes, and never in a rush.  
I think it's with me forever now - it's common so I'm told.  
I guess I'll have to keep my Man even though  
he's Grumpy and Old.  
By Irene Browne (Submitted by Elizabeth G)

### The Defective Parrot

A couple who had recently lost their cat were browsing round a large pet store. They came across a parrot who didn't appear to have any legs. The guy says. "I can't see any legs on this parrot." His wife replied. "Me neither, I don't think he can have any." Surprisingly, the Parrot speaks and says, "That's correct, I'm defective, I don't have legs." The couple are astonished at this show of intelligence and the guy says. " That's amazing, I thought parrots just mimicked."

The parrot says. "That is true of course, but I am able to speak fluently in English and also have a very good grasp of Spanish. I am able to hold an intelligent conversation on many subjects. Economics, philosophy and politics to name a few, I even have a good store of anecdotes and jokes."

The guy says. "I am really impressed, but how do you stay on the perch, without legs and feet?"

The parrot whispers, " I curl my little willie round it like a hook, it can't be seen, my feathers cover it. Look, you seem like a nice couple. Why don't you buy me? I promise you won't regret it."

The wife says. "How much are you?"

The parrot replies, "£599, but make an offer of £50. They can't sell me, no one wants a parrot without legs, so I'm positive they'll do a deal."

The couple made a great deal for both the parrot and his cage and took him home and true to his word, the parrot was a great conversationalist and proved to be a great companion.

Several months later, the guy came home from work early and his wife was still not home. The parrot waved him over with it's wing and says. "I'm going out of my mind with worry and I feel that I've got to tell you something about your wife"

The guy asks "Why? What happened?"

The parrot says, "When the milkman came this morning, your wife answered the door dressed in a see through nightie, wearing nothing else."

"Good God.....what happened?"

"Well," says the parrot, "she let him into the house and took him into the lounge, but the door was ajar and I could still see."

The guy is frantic now. "What the heck happened?"

"Well.....he took off her nightie and started to kiss her."

"The '\*\*\*\*\*', what then?"

"He started kissing her all over and she was moaning and groaning."

The raging guy stammers. " Go on! Go on ... what the \*\*\*\* did they do then?"

The parrot squawked .....

"I haven't got a clue.. I got a hard-on and fell off the perch."

### Spanish Mortgage?

The Euribor, the rate with which most mortgage repayments in Spain are calculated, is falling but that does not mean that all home owners will reap the full benefits of the decline. Ausbanc (the Association of users of banking services) has warned that the small print of around 90 per cent of mortgages in Spain includes a "collar" that prevents the interest from falling below a certain amount, normally between three and five per cent. In other words, while the Euribor had slipped to below two per cent on Monday, customers whose tracker mortgage has a collar of three per cent will not benefit. The collar can also work the other way and protect home owners if the rate goes higher than a certain limit. While Ausbanc says that writing in a collar clause is perfectly legal, as the bank and customer sign the agreement before a public notary, they add that few people know that these limits exist. (Surinenglish)

### Tax Tips.

A tax break which was cancelled ten years ago is to be reintroduced. If you pay rent you can now claim some deduction from your annual tax bill. Some regions already allow a similar deduction, but now this can be added to the new state one. For example those who live in Madrid can now claim a deduction of approx. 1,700 euro a year by adding the state and province allowances together.

Also, in an effort to stimulate more investment in public debt in Spain from abroad, a Royal Decree has been announced which will grant total impunity to non resident owners of the investment. In addition such money will not be subject to tax, and the Royal Decree also cancels the obligation to declare the identity of the owner if non-resident, its country of origin, and the amount involved. Resident individuals will still have to pay 18% tax on the investments, and companies 30%. (Check with a financial professional before taking any action.)

### Warning!

Reuters have just reported that Al-Qaida have highjacked a consignment of tinned 'alhabetti-spaghetti.' Police are concerned that if the tins are not recovered, it could spell disaster!

### Picture of health.

A woman walks up to an old man sitting in a chair outside the Lime Bar and soaking-up some rays. "I couldn't help but notice how happy you look," she said. "What's your secret for a long, happy life?"

"I smoke three packs a day, drink at least twelve pints of beer, eat fatty foods, and never, ever exercise," he replied.

"Wow, that's amazing," she said, "How old are you?"

"Twenty-six," he replied.

### Going deaf?

Patient. "Doctor, I think that I'm going deaf."

Doctor. "Describe the symptoms."

Patient. "Homer is the bald fat one and Marge has the blue hair."

### Landmark Ruling on Tobacco

In the first case of its type in Spain, the Spanish Supreme Court has rejected the first civil claim presented in Spain against the tobacco company Altadis, previously Tabacalera, by the family of a smoker who died of lung cancer. The court ruled that there was no responsibility on the part of the tobacco company as a contractual relationship between them and the smoker, Carlos Carramiñana, was not proved.

The widow of the victim, África Pulgar, said her husband smoked three packets a day, and was demanding 90,000 € in damages. Her claim was rejected despite an admission by the Supreme Court that tobacco is a legal substance which 'can generate certain illnesses'.

### Frying Tonight?

Many of us who live on Dream Hills have probably grown accustomed to and generally enjoy Spanish food. However, I defy anybody, except probably a 'dyed-in-the-wool' vegan or vegetarian, not to be seduced by the occasional plate of good quality 'fish & chips' together with the optional 'mushy peas.' It is comfort food at its best and we are fortunate to have our own 'chippy' - **Scampi's** in Via Park V. Kay and Steve ably assisted by their son Luke and daughter Jade are your hosts at this welcoming establishment.

But this is not a pokey little take-away outlet. Scampi's is a spacious and pleasantly decorated restaurant where you can enjoy your meal with full service and a bottle of wine or beer. The restaurant is non-smoking but there is the facility to eat and smoke in a smaller adjoining dining area, where you can also watch the best or worst of the English football leagues. There are also tables and chairs outside on the patio where you can also dine *al fresco* and watch the world go by while supping on an ice-cold draft lager.

The range of good food at Scampi's however goes beyond just fish & chips. There are also some excellent meat-filled large pies on offer, together with a range of other enjoyable items from their delicious battered mushrooms to hamburgers.

Scampi's also provide very reasonably priced breakfasts and their Sunday Roasts have proved to be very popular. If you have a private function or party coming up, both Steve and Kay would be delighted to advise you and cater for your needs. Scampi's can be contacted on **692 331 262**.

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**Dream Hills A.G.M. is to be held at on Wednesday 6th May 2009, at the Montepiedra Restaurant, Campoamor, Orihuela Costa, 10:30 hrs in the first assembly and 11.00 hrs in the second assembly.**

**Reminder:** If you drive a car in Spain, you should have got a reminder by now that your car will need taxing (Suma) between 02/03/2009 and 08/05/2009. If you have not got a reminder, why not pop along to the Suma office in Playa Flamenca, who are very helpful. Suma also have a very useful web-site in English at [www.suma.es](http://www.suma.es)

**Costa Blanca SAMARITANS****902 88 35 35**

The HELPLINE on 902 88 35 35 for the Samaritans is now available Monday to Friday evenings from 8 p.m. until midnight. The 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](mailto:joinus@costablancasamaritans.com) or alternatively call us at our office on 96 626 04 20 and we will do the rest.

**Take a deep breath!**

An man is stumbling through the woods, totally drunk, when he comes upon a preacher baptising people in the river.

He proceeds to walk into the water and subsequently bumps into the preacher.

The preacher turns around and is almost overcome by the smell of alcohol, whereupon he asks the drunk, 'Are you ready to find Jesus?'

Taken with the enthusiasm of the moment the drunk shouts, 'Yes, I am.'

So the preacher grabs him and dunks him in the water.

He pulls him up and asks the drunk, 'Brother have you found Jesus?'

The drunk replies, 'No, I haven't found Jesus.'

The preacher shocked at the answer, dunks him into the water again for a little longer.

He again pulls him out of the water and asks again, 'Have you found Jesus, my brother?'

The drunk again answers, 'No, I haven't found Jesus.'

By this time the preacher is at his wits end and dunks the drunk in the water again, but this time holds him down for about 30 seconds and when he begins kicking and struggling he pulls him up. The preacher again asks the drunk, 'For the love of God have you found Jesus yet?'

The Drunk wipes his eyes and catches his breath and says to the preacher - 'Are you sure this is where he fell in?'

**The Actors' Studio (acting for Alzheimer's)**

Our local amateur dramatic's group will have a repeat performance of the very well received "Laughter and Tears" at the Quesada Cultural Centre Theatre on Friday, 17th April at 7 pm. Tickets cost 5€ and are available from the Alzheimer's Charity Shop, Torrevejea (behind the tobacconist's in the church square.)

There will be a glamorous fashion show called Fashioniversary which will include sketches, Spanish dancing and raffles at the Real Club Nautico, Torrevejea on Friday 24th April at 7 pm, tickets at 5€ are available from the Alzheimer's Charity Shop.

Finally don't forget the Ladies lunch event at the Rondevous Restaurant, Via Park 3, on Thursday 2nd April at 1 pm. Delicious wine, scrumptious food and an afternoon of 'Laughter and Tears' guaranteed. 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](mailto:mick.dreamscene@gmail.com) or at No. 586 Dream Hills.

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