

THE DREAM SCENE

Newsletter

Issue no. 27 1st of May 2009

Bienvenido and welcome to the May issue.

SEE COUPON ON PAGE 7

The summer seems to have started at last after what felt like an unusually cool winter.

Many of you will have noticed that the Dream Hill's (1) web-site had been down for over a week. Read the following update from Pat Farnaby-

Recently the web site and message board went down because of an attack on the systems of the company that hold the site on the Internet. They have closed their systems down and are insisting that I move everything to a new location they are providing, and amend and recreate the message board

This is much more difficult as I am in Spain until July and do not have access to my backup files or Broadband connection

At best we will lose all the messages and new members who joined since early February, at worst It may be that the cost and work involved are more than I am prepared to commit to - I will keep you informed.

Pat - 25th April 2009

In the meantime, you can access the Dream Hills information, minutes etc, but not the messageboard, at the following address, until matters are sorted-out - <http://preview2.namesco.net/heddon.co.uk/dhills/comm.htm>

Still dealing with communications, I see that Telycom have 'pissed off' their clients by changing all the local subscribers telephone numbers. Many people were also left without a telephone service for weeks. This includes some of our advertisers so please check the ads for the new telephone numbers.

In early April I spoke with one of the postmen who was delivering mail to our postboxes. I asked him to clarify the **postal address for Dream Hills**. I live at 586, so my correct postal address he informed me is M. Clifford, Calle Lagunas de Ruidera 6, Dom. or Pta. 586, 03189 Orihuela Costa. He told me twice that there was no reason to put in either 'Dream Hills' or 'Lago Sol.'

Don't forget the A.G.M. for Dream Hills (1) is being held on Wednesday 6th May at the Montepiedra Restaurant in Campoamor at 10.30 a.m. Looking forward to seeing you there. Please allow sufficient time to register.

Another 12 page issue this month, I hope you enjoy it. Do note the information relating to this year's tax forms on the back page and the Spanish car-tax deadline. Congratulations to The Actors' Studio on their very successful fundraising for Alzheimer's.

Mick, Editor.



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'How did you manage to make such a cheap dinner?'

WHAT'S UP?

During April, Prime Minister Zapatero re-shuffled his cabinet. Pedro Solbes, the Minister for Tax & Finance lost his ministerial job. The job is now being done by the new minister Elena Salgado. Pedro will continue as a deputy for Madrid, which together with his two pensions - one from being an ex-minister, and another as ex-Euro-MP, - bring his monthly income to €13,494. You've got to love socialism!

Some 'junket' trips by the Spanish Congress Deputies are being cancelled as a sign of austerity during the current crisis. A trip to China has been cancelled, together with one to the Canaries, where 60 deputies were to visit to learn about growing bananas! Spain budgets about €7.2 million annually for such trips.

Marbella Town Hall is to introduce fingerprint time-clocks for its staff in June. Workers who have not 'clocked-on' for a full day's work will be docked wages. (I am sure you can suggest loads of places where this would be a good idea - House of Commons, Spanish Congress, Dail Eireann, etc.)

Hoteliers on the Costa Blanca are demanding an end to airport taxes at the El Altet airport in Alicante as a way of fighting the fall in tourist numbers. The Chairman of the Servigroup, the main hotel group in the Valencia region, said the example of Greece should be followed where airport taxes have been cancelled. He also noted the current taxes in Spain are the highest in Europe.

French hypermarket company Carrefour has announced a 5.6% fall in sales in Spain, with its supermarkets seeing the largest reduction, with sales down 9.8%. A large new supermarket, Vidal, will be opening shortly in Calle Mosca.

PC City (PC World) is to close ten stores in Spain, including the Alicante branch. Pizza Hut is to close over 100 of its 132 restaurants in Spain - problems between Pizza Hut and the main franchise owner here, the Zena Group. On the other hand, MacDonaldis are to open another 90 outlets nationwide.

Bankinter now has 100% control of Línea Directa, the Spanish Direct Line insurance company. It paid 426 million € for the 50% previously held by the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Another savings bank, Cajasur, has admitted bad debt levels which are much higher than that of Caja Castilla-La Mancha which ceased trading earlier this year. The bank, based in Córdoba and linked to the Catholic Church, now has a bad debt level of 6.43%, the highest for any bank or savings bank in Spain - so far!

Still no solace on the economic front. Unemployment has jumped 800,000 during the last quarter bringing total unemployment in Spain to in excess of four million. Around 9,000 people are losing their jobs every day and the government says that matters are not expected to improve until July this year. The unions have complained that in the Alicante province, 60,000 unemployed are not receiving any form of state benefit. Total unemployed in the province is now 204,000, 22% of the working population. The National Statistics Institute has reported that property re-sales were down more than 45% and sales of new homes were down almost 30% over last year, which was a poor year anyway.

The number of mortgage payment defaults in Spain in 2008 was 58,686, more than double the 25,943 seen in 2007. Experts consider the number of defaults this year will increase to more than 76,000. The new data has just been released by the CGPJ, the General Council for Judicial Power, and it means that in each case the bank or creditor has the right to auction the property to recover the money lent, plus interest.

Buildings and urbanisations in excess of 1,000 sq. metres will soon have to appoint someone to scrutinise energy consumption with a view to introducing efficiencies, according to the government..

Watch your language!

Little Johnny was walking home from school, when in the field next to him he saw a black bull humping a white cow. He ran home and shouted to his dad, 'Dad! Dad! I just saw a black bull ***king a white cow'. His dad, after giving him a whack said, 'Don't use that kind of language in front of your mother and sister, - say the black bull surprised the white cow.' The next day, little Johnny came running in and shouted, 'Dad! Dad! The black bull just surprised the white cow'. 'That's better son' said his dad.

'Yeah, he walked right past the white one and ***ked the brown one.'

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For the fourth year running, the El Bulli restaurant (reported on in a previous issue) in Roses, Girona, - hosted by the Spanish chef, Ferrán Adrià and famous for his 'molecular gastronomy,' - has been chosen as the best restaurant in the world. Three other Spanish restaurants are in the top ten this year – the Basque restaurants, 'Mugaritz' in fourth and 'Arzak' in eighth, and the Catalan restaurant 'El Celler de Can Roca' which came in fifth. The Fat Duck (Heston Blumenthal) at Bray came second, despite being closed for several months due to suspected food poisonings.

The City of Girona has drawn up some interesting new laws in relation to the care of pets. Under the new laws dog owners who do not take their animals for a 20 minute walk every day will be fined. Owners who keep their pets tied up for more than six hours a day, or who keep them in very small areas also face a fine. It will be prohibited to be in the street with your dog without a lead, or to feed wild animals such as cats; doing so will bring a 150 € fine.

Also in Girona, an inspector with the Catalan autonomous police force, the Mossos d'Esquadra, has been arrested for renting out his flat as a brothel. He was fully aware what his flat was being used for and charged the pimps 2,000 euro in rent per month.

Allegations concerning the police in nearby Rojales using the services of local whores, drinking on duty and holding road races were made by a fellow officer who was transferred out of the area. Looks like 'Porky's' meets 'Police Academy'! Meanwhile four policemen and one Civil Guard in Ronda, Andalusia, are facing a total of 39 years in prison for turning a blind eye to brothels, fraud and for demanding money and sex for ignoring deportation proceedings. The officers were originally arrested at the beginning of 2007!

Still on 'law & order,' it has emerged that Bernard Madoff, the multi-billion-buck swindler, had sent 150 million dollars to a bank in Gibraltar a month before his arrest. Spain has accused Gib., of inefficient money- laundering controls on a number of occasions in the past.

A Peruvian national, who was kidnapped in Barcelona in 2005 and then held by his captors for eight days in Madrid, was sentenced to 10 years for stabbing one of his kidnappers to death with a ham knife. The Supreme Court judged that although the stabbing could be considered legitimate self-defence, the fact that the kidnapped man stabbed the kidnapper six times was considered 'excessive' and 'unnecessary'. His sentence has now been halved to five years. This might all seem a bit odd but it has since transpired that both parties may have been involved with drug gangs.

A 64-year-old British man has been arrested in the Horizonte urb., in Orihuela Costa. He demanded owed rent from his British tenants while allegedly threatening them with a replica firearm. Whereas such behaviour is inexcusable, one can imagine the frustration as the law in Spain strongly favours tenants and it can take up to a year + to evict a non-payer.

A 21-year-old man has just been arrested in Los Dolses urbanisation for allegedly beating up his 62 -year-old grandfather. The dishevelled and visibly upset victim took refuge in a neighbour's house. A small amount of cocaine was found on the assailant.

61% of all the crime in the provinces of Málaga, Granada, Jaén and Almería takes place on the Costa del Sol. The situation is not helped by police levels being only around 80% capacity.

The police in Cataluña are making a list of companies managed by Arabs. The move is justified because it is thought that Islamic militant movements are collecting funds from the Muslim community to finance their international jihad. ETA, the Basque terrorist organisation, regularly extort money from local business men in the Basque country.

The newspaper ABC notes that the Government has started the process which will allow private broadcasters on the TDT digital terrestrial television network to start charging for their services. Coded broadcasts will be allowed, and applications are now being accepted from broadcasters. The free-to-view element will of course, remain free.

The two major building works locally, the N332 widening and the new desalination plant, both seem to be progressing satisfactorily. The desal' plant people have finally agreed a route to the sea with the Torre Vieja town hall.

Mum?

Aye, Aye!

A pirate walked into a bar, and the bartender said, "Hey, I haven't seen you in a while. What happened? You look terrible!"

"What do you mean?" said the pirate. "I feel fine."

"What about the wooden leg? You didn't have that before."

"Well, we were in a battle, and I got hit with a cannon ball, but I'm fine now."

"Well, ok, but what about that hook? What happened to your hand?"

"We were in another battle. I boarded a ship and got into a sword fight. My hand was cut off. I got fitted with a hook. I'm fine, really."

"What about that eye patch?"

"Oh well you see, one day while we were out at sea, and a flock of birds flew over. I looked up, and one of them shat in my eye."

"You're kidding," said the bartender, "you couldn't lose an eye just from some bird-crap."

"Arrr, true", replied the Pirate, "But it was my first day with the hook."

A chap shopping in Iceland noticed a little old lady following him around. If he stopped, she stopped. Furthermore, she kept staring at him. She finally overtook him at the checkout, and she turned to him and said, "I hope I haven't made you feel ill at ease; it's just that you look so much like my late son." He answered, "That's okay."

"I know it's silly, but if you'd call out "Good bye, Mom" as I leave the store, it would make me feel so happy." She then went through the checkout, and as she was on her way out of the store, the man called out, "Goodbye, Mother." The little old lady waved and smiled back at him. Pleased that he had brought a little sunshine into someone's day, he went to pay for his groceries. "That comes to €21.85," said the clerk. "How come so much .. I only bought 5 items?" The clerk replied, "Yes, but your Mother said you'd pay for her things, too!"

Do not trust all little old Ladies.

Spanish Vignettes - El Clásico

Rivalry between different football teams and their supporters is taken as read. However some rivalries can take on a much grander scale encompassing not just football but also politics, religion and even race. In the U.K. it is probably the Celtic/Rangers games or even England / Scotland contests which fall into this category. But these come nowhere near the emotion and drama generated by what is known in Spain as **El Clásico**. This refers to the epic confrontations between two of the world's greatest clubs, Real Madrid and FC Barcelona.

These clubs are based in the two largest cities in Spain and both have totally different outlooks, politics and languages. Madrid, seat of the central government and conservatism, is home to the monarchy and 'Spanishness' with Castilian Spanish the dominant language. Barcelona on the other hand is fiercely republican, anti-monarchist, federalist and with an understandably marked favouritism for the Catalan language (a mixture of French and Castilian Spanish) together with an unquenchable desire for an independent Cataluña.

FC Barcelona was founded in 1899 by a Swiss football pioneer called Joan Gamper, together with a number of British and Swiss businessmen, who missed the recreational game from their own home-countries. The team was often referred to as *los ingleses* by the locals and adopted the colours of the Swiss team of FC Basle as their own - blue and burgundy-red. Now popularly known as Barça, the club has become a Catalan institution, hence the motto '*Més que un club*' (More than a club). Barça's ground is at *Camp Nou*, the largest stadium in Europe with a seating capacity of almost 100,000. Barça fans refer to themselves as *cules* (asses).

Real Madrid was started off as club Football Sky in 1865, by professors and students of the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* in Madrid. The founding members also included a number of Oxbridge graduates. In 1920 they changed their name to Real Madrid, after King Alfonso XIII granted the title of Real (Royal) to the club. The club wear white as their home colours and their home is the *Santiago de Bernabeu* Stadium in Madrid, which has a seating capacity of 80,000. Its high profiled players such as Beckham, Zidane and Ronaldo were referred to as *Galacticos*.

To understand the root causes of the conflict between the two teams one must delve into the history of Spain. The Catalonians have maintained that they were independent from the rest of Spain since the 800's. An attempted rising in 1713 was brutally suppressed by Madrid; Catalanian autonomy and administration were ended and the Catalan language was replaced by Castilian Spanish. During the dictatorships of Miguel Primo de Rivera in the 1920's and Franco's from 1939 to 1975, regional cultures and traditions were suppressed and it was forbidden to fly the Catalan flag at Barcelona matches or anywhere else for that matter. During one game in Barcelona in 1925, the *culés* drowned out the playing of Spain's national anthem with whistling. The dictator Primo de Rivera ordered an army general, Joaquin Milans del Bosch, to close the stadium for six months and levy a fine on the club. 11 years later some Barça anarchist fans seized and executed the now retired 90-year-old general 'as revenge for his crime.'

One Catalan journalist, Josep Sunyol, explained that the mission of the club transcended football, saying 'To speak of sport is to speak of race, enthusiasm, and the optimistic struggle of youth. To speak of citizenship is to speak of Catalan civilisation, liberalism, democracy and spiritual endeavour.' Sunyol became President of FC Barcelona but was executed without trial by Franco's soldiers. During the Civil War the team wisely went abroad to play and raise funds for the Republic. Most never returned.

In the post Civil War years under Franco's rule, FC Barcelona continued to be discriminated against. Government agents regularly cooperated with Real Madrid to ensure that any foreign stars contemplating signing with Barça encountered 'visa problems.' The famous Portugese player di Stefano, originally came to Spain to play with Barça, but was diverted to play for Real Madrid instead! In the 50's and 60's Spanish television largely ignored FC Barcelona but covered most of Real Madrid's matches. There was also considerable intimidation at some of the Barça away matches.

Post-Franco, tempers and attitudes have eased slightly but much passion and enmity still remain. On occasions even foreign players and managers have shamelessly 'played to the crowd,' notably Johan Crujff, who was a player at Barça and later manager. He pandered to the Catalans by saying that he could not play for Real Madrid as it was associated with Franco. He also gave his son the Catalan name Jordi and won many more 'brownie points' from the locals. More recently ex-Arsenal player, ThierryHenry, caused some controversy by commenting that Catalonia had a right to independence, which is a bit rich seeing he is French.

Each of the clubs have more than 100,000 paid up members and are among the richest in the world. Both teams have an extensive range of supporters clubs throughout the country and their bi-annual clashes are eagerly awaited by the fans and dreaded by the police. Telepizza reported that they delivered two and a half million pizzas during the televised '*El Clásico*' in December 2008. To date, Real Madrid are slightly in front with 68 wins, FC Barcelona with 59. The next '*El Clásico*' takes place this Saturday 2nd May.

British Managers of Real Madrid: Arthur Johnson 1910-20, Robert Firsh 1932-34, Welsh - John Toshach 1989-90 & 1999 .

British Managers of FC Barcelona: Jack Greenwell 1917-24, Ralph Kirby 1925-26, Vic Buckingham 1969-71, Terry Venables 1984-87 and Sir Bobby Robson 1996-97.

True Colours

Groom on stag night, says to his mate, "I'm wearing a kilt tomorrow for me weddin'."

Mate says, "Och, aye? wot's the tartan?"

"Oh, she'll be in white....."

Humorous Stuff!

A golfer in Ireland sliced his drive into the rough. While looking for the ball he came across a leprechaun trapped in some brambles. Using his driver as a lever he freed the leprechaun. "For what you have done Leprechaun Law requires that I grant you three wishes".

"I don't believe in that sort of thing" said the golfer and strode away which left the leprechaun with a problem. The only solution was to arrange three good things for the golfer using leprechaun magic. He decided to improve the golfer's health, improve his golf game and improve his sex life.

Several months later the golfer again sliced into the rough and came across the wee man.

"Hi" said the leprechaun "remember me?"

"May I ask you some personal questions?"

"How is your health?"

"Much better" said the golfer "I used to suffer from severe arthritis but all that has gone now"

"How is your golf game?"

"Tremendous improvement. I am now the club champion"

"What about you sex life?"

"It's O.K."

"What do you mean 'O.K.'? How often do you have sex?"

"About once a week."

"Once a week !! Surely a good looking man like you can do better than that?"

"For a parish priest in a small village it's not too bad."

It takes your food seven seconds to get from your mouth to your stomach.

One human hair can support 3 kg (6.6 lb).

The average man's erect penis is three times the length of his thumb.

Human thighbones are stronger than concrete.

A woman's heart beats faster than a man's.

There are about one trillion bacteria on each of your feet.

Women blink twice as often as men.

The average person's skin weighs twice as much as the brain.

Your body uses 300 muscles to balance itself when you are standing still.

If saliva cannot dissolve something, you cannot taste it.

Women reading this will be finished now.

The men will still be busy checking their thumbs.

Cops & Robbers

George Phillips of Meridian, Mississippi was going to bed when his wife told him that he'd left the light on in the garden shed, which she could see from the bedroom window.

George opened the back door to go turn off the light but saw that there were people in the shed stealing things.

He phoned the Police, who asked "is someone in your house?" and he said "no". Then they said all Patrols were busy, and that he should simply lock his door and an officer would be along when available.

George said "ok" hung up, counted to 30, and phoned the Police again. "Hello, I just called a few seconds ago because there were people in my shed. Well, you don't have to worry about them cause I've just shot them all." Then he hung up.

Within five minutes three Police cars arrived, an armed response unit, and an Ambulance showed up at the Phillips residence and caught the Burglars red-handed.

One Policeman said to George. "I thought you said that you'd shot them."

George said, "I thought you said there was nobody available."

(Pat Chambers)

Text of a letter from a kid from Eromanga to Mum and Dad.

(For those of you not in the know, Eromanga is a small town, west of Quilpie in the far south west of Queensland, Australia)

Dear Mum & Dad,

I am well. Hope youse are too. Tell me big brothers Doug and Phil that the Army is better than workin' on the farm - tell them to get in bloody quick smart before the jobs are all gone! I wuz a bit slow in settling down at first, because ya don't hafta get outta bed until 6am, but I like sleeping in now, cuz all ya gotta do before brekky is make ya bed and shine ya boots and clean ya uniform. No bloody cows to milk, no calves to feed, no feed to stack - nothin'!!

Ya haz gotta shower though, but its not so bad, coz there's lotsa hot water and even a light to see what ya doing!

At brekky ya get cereal, fruit and eggs but there's no kangaroo steaks or possum stew like wot Mum makes. You don't get fed again until noon and by that time all the city boys are buggered because we've been on a '15 mile route march - geez its only just like walking to the windmill in the back paddock!!

This one will kill me brothers Doug and Phil with laughter. I keep getting medals for shootin' - dunno why. The bullseye is as big as a bloody possum's arrse and it don't move and it's not firing back at ya like the O'Reillys did when our big scrubber bull got into their prize cows before the Ekka last year! All ya gotta do is make yourself comfortable and hit the target - it's a piece of bloody cake!! You don't even load your own cartridges, they comes in little boxes, and ya don't have to steady yourself against the rollbar of the roo shooting truck when you reload!

Sometimes ya gotta wrestle with the city boys and I gotta be real careful coz they break easy - it's not like fighting with Doug and Phil and Jack and Boori and Steve and Muzza all at once like we do at home after the muster.

Turns out I'm not a bad boxer either and it looks like I'm the best the platoon's got, and I've only been beaten by this one bloke from the Engineers - he's 6 foot 5 and 15 stone and three pick handles across the shoulders and as ya know I'm only 5 foot 7 and eight stone wringin' wet, but I fought him till the other blokes carried me off to the boozier.

I can't complain about the Army - tell the boys to get in quick before word gets around how bloody good it is.

Will wright again soon,

Your loving daughter,
Sheila

Domestic Violence in Spain

Approximately 400 women found the courage daily, to face up to their aggressors in Spain last year and complain to the police. This is one of the few positive aspects of domestic violence throughout the country during 2008. On the negative side, a total of 70 women lost their lives at the hands of their husbands or partners. This was one less than in 2007, with seven cases still being investigated.

As far as the number of police reports made, the high level of 2007 continued throughout 2008. In the first nine months of 2008, a total of 108,261 reports were made, which was an increase of 15.9 per cent with respect to the same period in 2007.

With regard to the person who made the reports, most (75.6 per cent) were the direct victims of domestic violence, followed by people who witnessed the violence at first hand (12 per cent), medical reports made out by doctors attending victims (11 per cent) and reports made by members of the victim's families (1.4 per cent). By region, most women were murdered in Madrid (11), followed by Cataluña (10) and Andalucía (9).

(SurinEnglish)

Stand Up!

A new teacher was trying to make use of her psychology courses. She started her class by saying, "Everyone who thinks you're stupid, stand up!" After a few seconds, Little Johnny stood up. The teacher said, "Do you think you're stupid, Little Johnny?" "No, ma'am, but I hate to see you standing there all by yourself!"

Own Goal?

The Glasgow Rangers foreign-scout flies to Baghdad to watch a young Iraqi play football and is suitably impressed and arranges for him to come over to Scotland.

He's signed to a one-year contract and the kid joins the team for the pre-season.

Two weeks later Rangers are down 2-0 to Celtic with only 10 minutes left. The coach gives the young Iraqi the nod and he goes in. The kid is a sensation - scores 3 goals in 10 minutes and wins the game for Rangers!

The fans are thrilled, the players and coaches are delighted, and the media are in love with the new star.

When the player comes off the pitch he phones his mum to tell her about his first day of Scottish Premier League football.

'Hello mum, guess what?' he says. 'I played for 10 minutes today, we were 2-0 down, but I scored 3 goals and we won. Everybody loves me, the fans, the media...'

'Wonderful,' says his mum, 'Let me tell you about my day. Your father got shot in the street and robbed, your sister and I were ambushed, raped and beaten, and your brother has joined a gang of looters, and all while you were having such a great time.'

The young Iraqi is very upset. 'What can I say mum, I'm so sorry?'

'Sorry? You're sorry?' says his mum, 'It's your fault we moved to Glasgow in the first place!'

Police in Barcelona have arrested a 63 year old man who allegedly passed himself off as a cosmetic surgeon and carried out the surgery in filthy conditions in his home using veterinary instruments. Three dogs, a cat and a parrot lived with him in his flat in the El Raval area of the city. He is said to have performed breast and buttock implants for between 250 and 500 €, and injected liquid silicone with a type of instrument which is normally used by vets on animals. The instrument uses reusable needles, but officers found no facilities for sterilising them on the premises. Another concern is that the liquid silicone used on patients is not of the type which can be injected.

The accused does not have a licence to practice medicine and is understood to have a history of similar offences in the past. His arrest came about from a complaint from a doctor in the Basque Country regarding a breast implant performed on a patient.

In another case, a bogus paediatrician was arrested in Andalucía. The 65-year-old had no medical qualifications whatsoever and had presented forged medical certificates to the health authorities in Andalucía, Cataluña and Murcia. The bogus doctor had worked for 662 days in the Andaluz Health Service. A string of misdiagnoses and his behaviour towards patients aroused suspicions amongst his colleagues at a hospital in Pozoblanco, Córdoba. There were scores of complaints from patients in relation to misdiagnoses and wrong prescriptions.

I went to a bookstore and asked the saleswoman, "Where's the self-help section? She said if she told me, it would defeat the purpose.

Just think how much deeper the ocean would be if sponges didn't live there.

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Second Opinion?

Two doctors meet at a bar during a major
medical conference, one male and one
female. They both talk and one thing leads
to another and both doctors were in a hotel
room. Before undressing the female doctor
washed her hands, after sex with the female
doctor she washed her hands again.
The Male doctor says "Let me guess,
you're a surgeon."

The female doctor asks "How'd you
know?" The guy goes "You keep washing
your hands."

The female doctor replies, "You must be
an anaesthesiologist." The guy doc asks
"Howdo you know?" The lady replies,
"Because I didn't feel a thing."

First in the queue!

A young man, after being wounded in Afghanistan, was on a first date with a lady at a restaurant. As they were sitting and talking, what looked like an elephant's trunk comes up from under the table near the man and grabs a bread-roll. "What the hell was that?" said the woman.

"Well," said the man, "I lost part of my 'trouser-trumpet' in an explosion in the 'stan and the doctors transplanted part of an elephant's trunk in its place."

"That's incredible" said the wide-eyed young lady, "Can I see it again?"

"A little later," said the man, "I don't think my backside could take another bread-roll right now."

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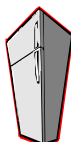


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Sshhhhh!

Believe it or not, Wednesday 29th was World Anti-Noise Day.

As expected no one took any notice of it in Spain, except in Valladolid, where a mime group handed out 4,000 leaflets and 500 ear plugs to the public.

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Out & About

We seem to be coming out of an unusually cold winter and it has been strange to see oranges being picked from trees which are still heavy with orange-blossom. It seems the growing seasons are slightly out of kilter. Nevertheless, the fragrance from the orange-blossoms is intoxicating and guaranteed to lift one's spirits.

As the desalination plant in Torrevieja is nearing completion, contractors are now laying the pipeline to carry the treated water. For some reason they started to lay it by Via Park 3. As the pipes are around five feet in diameter there is some disruption to the roads and traffic with half of the main road along Los Altos being cordoned-off and dug-up in stages.

At the time of writing there was considerable traffic disruption at Cabo Roig. If you need to go to the *Salud*, you will have to drive down to the new roundabout by the garages at Campoamor, turn around and head back for entry into Cabo Roig. The bridge over the road has been closed-off due to the road works.

During late April there was a 'Tapas Trail' in Torrevieja. In the many participating locations you paid just €2 and got a glass of wine and a tapa - excellent value and very enjoyable.

For those of you who like a bit of leather and indulge in some slapping - no, not what you are thinking - there was a German beer festival in Playa Flamenca during the month. It was very enjoyable, if you like that sort of thing, but it went on for almost two weeks. A week should surely be enough - a human being can only take so much yodeling. There was also a St George's Festival organised in the same location. It is good to see these types of events being organised. Hopefully there will be more in the future.

Locally, it was good to see more visitors over the Easter period. It hopefully boosted the trade in the local Via Parks. Jenny & Gordon McCadden organised a treasure-hunt open to all, which was based around Via Park V and Dream Hills. It was very successful, attended with more than 15 teams with about 50 people taking part, both children and adults had a great time. Copious amounts of refreshments were imbibed at the Phoenix and other establishments, and the R Bar's barbecue could hardly keep up with the demand.

The Pirate Bar in Playa Flamenca has unfortunately closed down. Once visited it was never forgotten and it was probably the only venue where those of us who liked our 'rock' with a bit of 'blood & sinew' got our 'fix.' I can remember Charlie telling me once at the Pirate Bar, 'It's not that we don't do karaoke here, we don't do any ****ing karaoke here!' Charlie is now working at the 'Phoenix Nights,' which is on the top floor at Playa Flamenca, where he is introducing some jam sessions etc.

What used to be the Cavern Bar in Via Park V, is now the Raheny Bar. The premises have been completely redecorated and a dancing/performance area has been added. I spoke with the new manageress, Tracey, and she told me that they plan to have live music, quizzes, bingo, auctions and food will also be available. Two, of a number of draft beers will be Carling and Worthington Creamflow. Tracey plans to open in early May, so do pop in to welcome her and enjoy a 'cold one.'

A new bus route has been added to Orihuela Costa. This covers the La Zenia, Villa Martin and Campoamor areas. The service on the old route will now change from every two hours to hourly. There will also be a night bus service during the summer months between July and September. Leaflets outlining the routes and timetables will be delivered to every house in the region, or so they say!

'Hats off' to the security guards. One night last week after midnight, they were called to a house by a distressed male. His partner has badly cut her head. The guards applied first aid and called the emergency number - 112. No response (Madrid call centre) - call held in a queue. Guards then called the Policia Local, who arrived with an ambulance in less than five minutes! The lady was taken and admitted to the hospital.

Walking

Walking can add minutes to your life! This enables you, at 85 years of age, to spend an additional five months in a nursing home at £3,000 per month. My grandpa started walking five miles a day when he was 60. Now he's 97 years old and we don't know where he is. I like long walks especially when they are taken by people who annoy me. The only reason I would take up walking is so that I could hear heavy breathing again. I have to walk early in the morning, before my brain figures out what I'm doing.

I joined a health club last year, spent about 400 quid. Haven't lost a pound! Apparently you have to go there. Every time I hear the dirty word 'exercise', I wash my mouth out with chocolate. I do have flabby thighs, but fortunately my stomach covers them.

The advantage of exercising every day is so when you die, they'll say, 'Well, she looks good doesn't she?'

If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country. I know I got a lot of exercise the last few years; just getting over the hill. You can run this over to your friends but why not just e-mail it to them!

We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story and I'm sticking to it. (Ann Ball)

Your Spanish Ancestors.

I suppose people from many countries can look at their genetic make-up and find that there is a certain element of 'foreign blood' in their melting pot. Spain, or rather Iberia, in particular, had many contributors to its gene pool, most of whom stayed long enough to intermarry and assimilate with the indigenous population.

First they were visited by the Phoenicians and Greeks. Then came the Celts followed by the Carthaginians who were ousted by the Romans. Later came the Alans, Suevis, Vandals and Visigoths. The Moors, a mix of Arab and North African tribes arrived, gave the Visigoths a 'pasting' and remained for more than 700 years. Add to this the Franks, who came during the Moorish period and settled in the Spanish Marches and Barcelona, and there was also a French Occupation from 1808 to 1813. By any standards, this is an incredible mix.

Don't tell the locals, but the hordes of British holiday-makers who visit Spain every year, are in fact, returning to their ancestral home! I came across much of the following in the archives (2006) of the 'Independent.'

A team from Oxford University has discovered that the Celts, Britain's indigenous people, are descended from a tribe of Iberian fishermen who crossed the Bay of Biscay 6,000 years ago. DNA analysis reveals they have an almost identical genetic "fingerprint" to the inhabitants of coastal regions of Spain, whose own ancestors migrated north between 4,000 and 5,000 BC. The discovery, by Bryan Sykes, professor of human genetics at Oxford University, will herald a change in scientific understanding of Britishness.

People of Celtic ancestry were thought to have descended from tribes of central Europe. Professor Sykes, who published the first DNA map of the British Isles, said: "About 6,000 years ago Iberians developed ocean-going boats that enabled them to push up the Channel. Before they arrived, there were some human inhabitants of Britain but only a few thousand in number. These people were later subsumed into a larger Celtic tribe..... The majority of people in the British Isles are actually descended from the Spanish."

Professor Sykes spent five years taking DNA samples from 10,000 volunteers in Britain and Ireland, in an effort to produce a map of our genetic roots.

Research on their "Y" chromosome, which subjects inherit from their fathers, revealed that all but a tiny percentage of the volunteers were originally descended from one of six clans who arrived in the UK in several waves of immigration prior to the Norman conquest.

The most common genetic fingerprint belongs to the Celtic clan, which Professor Sykes has called "Oisín" (descended from Iberian fishermen who migrated to Britain between 4,000 and 5,000 BC and now considered the UK's indigenous inhabitants.)

After that, the next most widespread originally belonged to tribes of Danish and Norse Vikings. Small numbers of today's Britons are also descended from north African, Middle Eastern and Roman clans.

These DNA "fingerprints" have enabled Professor Sykes to create the first genetic maps of the British Isles, which are analysed in *Blood of the Isles*, a book published in September 2006. The maps show that Celts are most dominant in areas of Ireland, Scotland and Wales. But, contrary to popular myth, the Celtic clan is also strongly represented elsewhere in the British Isles.

"Although Celtic countries have previously thought of themselves as being genetically different from the English, this is emphatically not the case," Professor Sykes said. "This is significant, because the idea of a separate Celtic race is deeply ingrained in our political structure, and has historically been very divisive. Culturally, the view of a separate race holds water. But from a genetic point of view, Britain is emphatically not a divided nation."

So there you have it. If like us, you have retired here, then you have just come home to your roots!

Now! If we could only wrangle a Spanish pension as well!

A recent and separate genetic study has claimed that one in five Spaniards have Jewish ancestors, and one in ten have genes inherited from Muslims. In fact a third of Spaniards have genetic evidence of other cultures with a further one in ten with genes from the inhabitants of the North of Africa.

The study was carried out by scientists at Leicester University in the UK and the Pompeu Fabra University from Barcelona, and led by Briton Mark Jobling. They studied the Y chromosome of residents of the peninsular and the Balearics and compared them to samples from North Africans and Sephardic Jews to reach the conclusion that one in three Spaniards has Moorish or Jewish ancestors. The Y chromosome is only present in men and is passed from father to son. They took samples from 1,140 people in Spain to reach their conclusions. The complete study is published in the *American Journal of Human Genetics*.

The Lord Provideth.

Sitting by the window of her convent, Sister Grace opened a letter from home one evening. Inside the letter was a €100 note her parents had sent.

Sister Grace smiled at the gesture. As she read the letter by the window, she noticed a shabbily dressed stranger leaning against the lamp post below.

Quickly, she wrote, "Don't despair. Sister Grace," on a piece of paper, wrapped the €100 note in it, got the man's attention and tossed it out the window to him. The stranger picked it up, and with a puzzled expression and a tip of his hat, went off down the street.

The next day, Sister Grace was told that a man was at her door, insisting on seeing her. She went down, and found the stranger waiting. Without a word, he handed her a huge wad of €100 notes.

"What's this?" she asked. "That's the €8,000 you have coming, Sister," he replied. "'Don't Despair' paid 80-to-1."

The History of Spain. Part 6 - Moorish Consolidation.

After being defeated in France, the Moors relinquished their ambitions in the remainder of Europe and concentrated on **al-Andaluz**, the name they called the occupied four fifths of the Iberian peninsula. (This is not to be confused with modern day Andalusia, although it did encompass it.) The movement of their capital southwards to Córdoba and continual revolts among the Arabs themselves and with the Berber tribes, encouraged the leaders to take a 'hands-on' approach, particularly in the southern half of the peninsula.

This gave a welcome breather to the Christian north and gave rise to a number of small kingdoms. These were Galicia, León and Asturias in the north/north-east, Castille and Navarre (Basque area) in the north and the Spanish Marches and Cagtalonia in the north-east. At this stage these minor kingdoms were as happy to fight each other as the Moors.

These Christian societies in the north were neither wealthy nor sophisticated. Their economies were based on subsistence agriculture and pastoral activities. Although royal centres such as Oviedo, León and Pamplona developed, they were little more than fortified settlements; trade was sluggish and based on barter; industry was non-existent until the tenth century. There were insufficient revenues to pay armies, warrior nobles (knights) being relied upon to fulfil this role. There was constant raiding for slaves by the Moors from the south and the Vikings continued to do, what they did best, and devastated much of coastal Galicia during the early 800's.

Around 840, one of the pivotal events in Spanish history occurred. A shepherd, guided by a star, found in the mountains a marble coffin whose contents were believed by many to be the remains of the Apostle James, the brother of Jesus. A chapel was built on the site, and later a splendid cathedral. This became known as *Santiago de Compostela* - 'St. James of the Field of the Star' - and became an inspiration and a goal of Christian pilgrimage, which continues to this day. The sacred bones were invaluable in raising morale and funds for the holy war against the Moors. The battle cry of the Christian knights became '*Santiago*' and St. James was made the patron saint of Spain.

The ecclesiastical hierarchy formed a second nobility, taking little notice of Rome. Political disunity was rife between the petty northern kingdoms. In 930, the knights of Castille refused to obey the kings of León or Asturias and formed their own independent state with its capital in Burgos. When the Christian kings did manage to unite some of the other kingdoms with their own - whether by marriage or by force - they inadvertently undid all their good work by dividing up the kingdom between their sons on their death. This ensured that the sons continued the tradition of internecine war amongst themselves and the other Christian kings. This happened twice following the deaths of Fernando I and Sancho the Great; the former dividing a united Christian kingdom between three sons and the latter between his four sons further fragmenting the kingdoms with endemic civil wars. All this merging, separating and merging again, made sure that the *Reconquista* continued at a snails pace.

Meanwhile al-Andalus developed both economically and culturally and became the envy of Europe. Under the rule of the Umayyad Caliphate, particularly the vigorous leadership of 'Abd al- Rahmán III, some unity was brought to the Muslims, even though the Berbers were still treated as 'second class citizens' by the Arabs. He also led a number of successful raids into the northern Christian states, not seeking to conquer them but to assert his authority, to gather slaves and such booty as there was, and to deter future Christian raids.

Thanks to a booming commercial sector, huge revenues in Moorish Spain were amassed from custom duties, levies on personal wealth and property, and with the taxes paid by all non-Muslims, these amounted to something in the region of six and a quarter million gold dinars a year, a huge amount. This enabled the caliph to recruit bigger and better armies, including large numbers of Berber and Christian mercenaries. This helped reduce his dependence on tribal levies and the resultant *quid pro quos*. He also reduced his dependence on the old families of *al-Andalus* by recruiting large number of Jews, Christians and *muwallads* (converts to Islam) to senior positions in the bureaucracy.

The agrarian wealth of the caliphate was transformed and revitalised in the 200 years since the invasion, with the Roman irrigation systems upgraded with Middle Eastern technologies. A whole range of new crops were introduced which included citrus fruits, bananas, artichokes, cotton, rice and sugar-cane. In the highland areas, vines, olive groves fig trees and cereals predominated although some wheat had to be imported from North Africa. The effects of this 'green revolution' caused populations to rise and the increased profits stimulated industrial and commercial activity. The towns of al-Andaluz became important centres of industrial activity, producing textiles (particularly linens, cottons and silks), ceramics, glassware, metalwork, leather goods and paper. Urban centres, always the fulcrum of Islamic society and economy, began to expand. By far the greatest was Córdoba, which by the tenth century had become one of the great cities of the Mediterranean world with a population of around 100,000, while London had less than 8,000.

Córdoba was not merely the seat of the Umayyad government and administration, but also the cultural and religious epicentre of al-Andaluz. The Umayyad rulers were enthusiastic and generous patrons of the arts and sciences. Important works in Astronomy, Mathematics and other sciences were published or translated from other languages such as Greek and Persian. Christian scholars and monks also visited Córdoba to study and translate, in what was acknowledged as the greatest repository of knowledge, cultural and scientific, in the western world. Superb mosques and palaces were also built, some of which remain to this day.

As the British historian, Richard Fletcher, stated in his compelling book, 'Moorish Spain,' 'For nearly a century al-Andaluz had been the richest, the best-governed, the most powerful, the most renowned state in the western world. The tenth century was the pinnacle of Córdoba's glory.'

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Why did kamikaze pilots wear helmets?

Why are they called 'stands' when they're made for sitting?

The Actors' Studio (acting for Alzheimer's) - Update

On 2nd April we performed three sketches at the Ladies Lunch at the Rendezvous Restaurant, Via Park 3. Our thanks go to Karen and Linda who cooked and served a delicious lunch and to our appreciative audience who raised €7.90 for the charity. Thanks also to Julia for organising the event and donating raffle prizes.

The 17th April saw us perform our 'Evening of Laughter and Tears' in its entirety at the Quasada Theatre. We appreciated the audience's enthusiastic applause and complimentary comments. €50 was raised for A.F.A. This would have been more but for the fact that thieves stole €100 of the ticket money from one of the outlets.

This setback caused us to redouble our efforts to raise funds and on 24th April we performed four of our sketches and modelled some beautiful leisure wear and evening dresses in the glamorous surroundings of the Real Club Nautico in Torrevieja. On the night more than €1,000 was made from admission and raffles and donations continue to arrive.

We thank Scampi's and Galadriel of Via Park 5 and Restaurante Vegeteriano of Calle Pedro Lorca, Torrevieja, for their generous donations of raffle prizes.

'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, Sandi 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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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.

Final Reminder: If you drive a car in Spain, you should have received 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

Tax Tips

The Agencia Tributaria has warned that the tax forms they have sent out this year contain more than 544,000 errors, including incorrect maternity and child deduction grants. Over 40,000 forms have wrongly calculated joint mortgage allowances. Another 150,000 forms contain errors in relation to the one-off €400 deduction allowed to last years tax bill.

If you do pay tax in Spain, do ensure that someone competent checks your tax form carefully this year.

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Take Care in the Sea

Groups of up to 40 Portuguese Man o' War 'jellyfish' have been spotted on three occasions off San Pedro de Pinatar beaches. They usually live in the Atlantic, and none have been seen on the Murcia coasts since 1989. They are not considered to be common in the Mediterranean, but their sting can lead to serious consequences and between 30% and 50% of those stung needing hospital treatment for heart, breathing problems and other symptoms.

DISCLAIMER

Please note that any information provided is of a general interest & often also of a frivolous nature. You are advised to contact a professional for advice specific to your circumstances, in relation to legal, financial, health, medical or any other matters. The Dream Scene, its editor or any of its contributors, do not accept responsibility for any claims by advertisers, purchasers or anybody - and remember the old adage - "If something looks too good to be true - it generally is!" You must be really bored if you are reading this! Dream Scene is plagiarized from a multitude of sources, however no part of this publication may be used or reproduced without the consent of the editor - so there! No animals were harmed in the making of this newsletter, except for that brown tabby, who I caught crapping in my back garden and is now in orbit.