



THE DREAM SCENE



Newsletter

Issue no. 46 1st of December 2010

Bienvenido to the December issue of the Dream Scene.

I had planned to write a report on the welcome return of wildlife to Dream Hills and its environs, but once again because of immediate events, the report has to be postponed to a later issue.

The Dream Hills urbanisation has enjoyed the benefits of security guards from Praetorian for the past three years with the guards making an excellent contribution towards the protection of the urbanisation, providing priceless hands-on help during a number of emergency situations and establishing a good relationship with the local police and Guardia Civil.

Security guards are subject to inspections by the National Police. The Praetorian guards have been inspected on our urbanisation previously with no problems arising. However following a surprisingly thorough inspection recently (even the cupboards in the Casita were checked), the National Police visited all the urbanisations and commercial centres in this area where non-Spanish owned security firms were employed and allegedly told the presidents that unless the firms' contracts were terminated within one month, the presidents would be fined. Naturally, this is extremely upsetting and threatening to the various presidents. However, no contact was made at any time by the National Police with the various offices of the security firms and efforts by the security firms' lawyers to get any clarification have been fruitless.

This is not the first time that Praetorian have come up against obstacles set by the establishment. When their directors decided to upgrade the training of their guards to 'vigilante' status, the Spanish inspectors kept 'moving the goal-posts,' eventually making the final registration impossible by demanding from the company, copies of the guards Spanish school' s certificate! Although the firm spent a huge amount of money on the relevant Guardia Civil courses, the message was clear, 'We don't want you!' Praetorian got the message and had to walk away.

Many of you will be aware of the lack of flexibility and protectionism which exists in the Spanish labour market. Everyone from the President of the Bank of Spain to the IMF have stated that the labour market requires drastic revision. The rates charged by Spanish security firms make them unaffordable to any urbanisation, largely because of union pay scales. Also, have you ever seen a tobacconist or a pharmacy operated by a non Spanish owner? You may also recall the closing-down of Telmicro, an act later condemned by the investigating judge. But of course there was a Spanish firm waiting to take over the cancelled Telmicro contracts. More recently there have been ructions at the Torre Vieja Football Club where the large English supporters club were subject to racial abuse and harassment from the minority Spanish supporters and, believe it or not, the Spanish players which are paid by the British supporters. Although the 2,000 strong British 'Torry Army' funded, built-up and saved the football club, the Spanish have said quite clearly that they now want it all back.

If this matter concerning the guards is not resolved soon there will be at least three serious consequences. Firstly the urbanisation will be missing a level of security coverage it has enjoyed for several years. Secondly, a large number of English, Scottish and Irish security guards, (many of whom are ex-servicemen) with mortgages and other financial commitments, will be unemployed with little chance of further employment in a deteriorating economic environment. Finally, what appears to be blatant protectionism is being reinforced once again. What's next? Iceland Supermarkets?



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Thanks you to Val and Ken from Inspiration for their very kind additional contributions towards printing costs. Also would the individual who put €5 in one of our flower-pots, please let me know who you are in case I inadvertently cancel your sub?

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all our advertisers and the Dream Scene team.

Mick, Editor



Some of the big stories to hit the headlines during the month have been the Pope's visit, civil disruption in the former Spanish colony/protectorate of Western Sahara, now part of Morocco, and fear of contagion to the markets and interest rates following developments in Ireland.

The Spanish Stock Market took a 'hammering' last week following news of the rescue to Ireland. Spain's savings banks were hugely exposed to bad debt accumulated during the property boom, and have now undergone a restructuring process via government funding and a wave of mergers, which has reduced their numbers from 45 to less than 20. The Spanish government has set up an €9bn fund to help its banks, however only €2bn of this is pre-funded and €1bn has already been drawn down, meaning the country will have to borrow more from the bond market to fund the rest. Spain is the big worry for EU policymakers because it accounts for around 10pc of the euro-zone economy, in contrast to Greece, Ireland and Portugal, which account for less than 2pc each. "Spain is a bit too big to be bailed out," explained Antonia Garcia Pascual, of Barclays Capital. "The size of rescue required would use up all the funds available and then you have Italy with contagion as well." Many commentators believe that if the IMF ever get within sniffing distance of Spain's books, particularly the banks' true exposure, it will be 'game over!'

The Government plans to change the priority given to fathers' surnames in Spain, considering that it is unconstitutional. The new law, which is expected to give preference to alphabetical order, is described by the Government as 'neutral and objective' and comes in the defence of equality.

It now seems that from 2014, figures for prostitution, smuggling and drug-trafficking will be included in the official statistics in Spain. It is estimated that they contribute about 3% to GDP, about €30 billion a year, but these figures are of course highly speculative. But how can you possibly get accurate figures for these areas? Even though prostitution is legal in the Netherlands, the Dutch do not include the revenue to their GDP figures because when your GDP increases so does your economic obligations to the EU.

An ETA terrorist has been sentenced to 30 years in prison for the murder of a PP councillor in the Basque Region in August 2000. The PP councillor, who was also a baker, was shot 14 times while working in his bakery.

In a special fiesta weekend on 20-21 November, a disco in Valencia called *Sala Cuomo* handed out 300 vibrators to the ladies but gave the batteries to the men. You can just imagine the chat-up line, 'Hey Sweetcheeks, would you like to check-out my Triple A's?' To which the response would probably be, 'You know where you can stick 'em!'

The Spanish Government has announced a Law for a Dignified Death for terminally ill patients to be introduced next year, with the cabinet hoping to have the legislation ready before March 2011. The new legislation is intended to guarantee the rights of patients, their families and doctors. A dignified death is considered as one 'without pain'.

The amount of money being lent to motorway toll companies in Spain to help them face lower traffic levels has been put by the Minister for Development at 80 million € in 2011.

Camps, the allegedly 'doggy' president of the Valencia Community has approached Ferrari asking them to build a 'Ferrari World Theme Park' here, similar to their indoor park in Abu Dhabi. Theme Parks in Spain have a very patchy performance; Benidorm's Terra Mitica for example, being a financial disaster. It is worth noting that the Paramount Company will not be investing any of its own money in the new proposed park near Murcia. All they propose to do is grant licences (at a hefty fee) for the use of names and images. Solid information on the project is still very, very vague.

Parents of children in Spain who have cancer or other serious illnesses will now be compensated by the state, when they are forced to give up work to attend to their children. The compensation will range from at least 50% of the wages lost to 100% in some cases. However, only working parents who are contributing to the social security system are eligible and they must dedicate at least half of their working day to the child.

The La Razón newspaper reports that PM Zapatero has doubled the help given to the trade unions since the PP administration under Aznar. The paper says they now get nearly 30 million € in grants annually compare to 13.5 million in 2004. The same newspaper notes the PP has given a warning to Rubalcaba (the Deputy PM), saying that when they reach government they will declassify documents on GAL (a period when it is alleged that some of the Cabinet gave the go-ahead to assassinations of ETA suspects) and on the Madrid Train Bombings (where much forensic evidence was ignored or hidden).

The number of new mortgages being awarded in Spain has seen its fifth consecutive monthly fall. Data for September shows a 15.9% fall compared to the same month last year. House sales in Spain have fallen again after eight months of rises. The Bank of Spain has announced that banks in Spain have until the end of March to inform them of their exposure to real estate loans. This would indicate that the full effects of the property debacle in Spain has not yet been quantified as the savings banks are suspected of hiding massive debt. No doubt more horror stories to come.

The DGT traffic authority in Spain has announced that it is to phase out 5,400 roadside breakdown phones. They are to go over the next three years in a program of cost-cutting, although they will remain in tunnels and areas where there is poor mobile phone coverage.

A 55-year-old man was arrested in Sevilla for using his mobile phone to take pictures under women's skirts at street markets and other busy places. He was found to have 250 photos of different women in the phone's memory. Perv!

What's Up, Doc?

A man goes to the doctor with a swollen leg. After a careful examination, the doctor gives the man a pill big enough to choke a horse. "I'll be right back with some water," the doctor tells him.

The doctor has been gone a while and the man loses patience. He hobbles out to the drinking fountain, forces the pill down his throat and gobbles down water until the pill clears his throat. He hobbles back into the examining room.

The doctor comes back with a bucket of warm water. "Ok, after the tablet dissolves in it, soak that leg for at least 30 minutes."!!!!

Cigarette sales in Spain over the first nine months of the year were 11% down on the same period in 2009.

Mahou beer, the most popular beer in Spain, has now arrived in the U.K. The company Mahou-San Miguel has reached a distribution agreement with Carlsberg to distribute barrels and 33 cl bottles throughout Britain.

The Spanish Government has decided to change the rules on the manufacture of chewing gum to make it less sticky and the cleaning up of pavements easier. Chewing gum must now be made from a new synthetic polymer, copolymer of vinyl acetate and vinyl laurate. Mmmmm! Sounds delicious!

The National Police in Madrid have arrested a 74 year old woman and her two sons, aged 46 and 42, for selling cocaine from their home in the Hortaleza district of Madrid and from a small moped. Police say the woman had several regular clients and in a search of the property found 7,500 € in cash. There was also a large amount of gold, watches and perfumes recovered along with other items and documents. The drugs had been hidden in packets of detergent and Havana cigars.

As I mentioned in a previous issue, drug seizures are very common in Spain, but the month of November brought three 'chart-toppers.' The first was the seizure of a Dutch registered boat, 120 miles off the Cadiz coast. The boat was found to contain 20 tons of hashish and the crew of four were detained. The coastguard noted that the boat first visited Galicia (a major drug smuggling area over the years), then travelled to Morocco, where over a period of three days the drugs were loaded. The Spanish police also broke up a massive drug smuggling gang in 'Operation Guadaña.' 65 arrests were made, 40 of them in Madrid and Galicia. 65 top of the range vehicles, six speed boats and €5.5 million in cash were also seized. The operation also uncovered 3,500 kilos of cocaine in Argentina and Brazil which was due to be shipped to Spain concealed in boxes of apples marked with a 'Donald Duck' logo. Finally 2.2 tons of cocaine was recovered from containers in the port of Valencia. Local workers were each paid €150,000 to 'assist the consignment.' I have now just heard that 50 kilos of cannabis has been discovered in the boot of a stolen car found locally in a La Zenia urbanisation and last week five tons of cannabis was found hidden in a consignment of couscous from Morocco destined for Belgium, in a container in the port of Cádiz. The country seems awash with the stuff.

As they say, 'It is an ill wind that doesn't blow some good.' One Spanish newspaper, El País, reports that the recession has taken 200,000 Spaniards off cocaine, as use here has fallen for the first time in 15 years. However police have reported a marihuana growth boom, particularly in villas inland. Under Spanish law the growth of marihuana is prohibited 'from the first plant', with punishment ranging from a simple fine to 12 years in prison in the case of trafficking. The excuse 'It is only for my own use' is not a defence.

You may recall last month's article on the whorehouse in La Jonquera. Well, within just nine days of opening, they have had their first raid from the police who discovered five Brazilian 'working girls' whose papers were not in order. The police also checked the identification of the remaining 125 prostitutes and 188 clients. Maybe this would be a solution to the empty spaces in Via Park V. Turn one of the floors into a 'knocking-shop.' The introduction of 'Happy Hours' and 'Dish of the Day' would then take on a new meaning; as would 'Tonight, I think I fancy some Chinese!'

You may also recall my previous reports on the Mayor of La Línea, Alejandro Sánchez, famous for his plans for his plans to levy a toll on all traffic making its way to Gibraltar, then saying he was going to charge for the fibre-optic cables running through his town. Now he is interfering in the construction of a new northern access road to Gibraltar airport. He wants more money for the use of the municipal land which is needed for the construction of the northern access to the new Gibraltar airport terminal. La Línea Town Hall is broke and cannot afford to put local police cars through their ITV/MOT tests! You have got to give him an A+ for perseverance.

A 74-year-old widow travelled from Luton to Menorca with a rusty axe in her hand luggage! How the axe went undetected is a mystery, when you consider all the palaver about removing belts, X-rays, etc. (The toughest airport security-checks I ever experienced was believe it or not at Cork Airport, although I believe the checks at Israeli airports are quite onerous.) The airline was Monarch, who have been attracting more criticism among expat's because of hidden charges etc.

The Spanish Supreme Court has ruled that bicycles can now be ridden on pavements and in pedestrian zones. This overturns an earlier ruling by the Andalucía High Court. The cyclists must, however, respect the priority of pedestrians.

The Catalan Government has approved new regulations which say that owners of flats rented out to tourists will now have to apply for a municipal licence and pay a fee. This may in time be extended to other parts of Spain. It also means it will be far easier for the Spanish taxman to take his share.

A male carer has confessed to the murder of three pensioners in a residential home in Girona province. The deaths were certified as being from natural causes at the time! The police are to exhume a total of eight bodies for examination.

The parish priest in the Castellon town of Vilafamés, has been arrested for downloading more than 21,000 files of paedophile material, which occupied approx., 600 gigabytes of disc space! Hardly an accident!

Ah! Smell the flowers!

While attending a Marriage Encounter Weekend, Maureen and Kevin listened to the instructor declare 'It is essential that husbands and wives know the things that are important to each other.' He addressed the men. 'Can you each name and describe your wife's favorite flower?' Kevin leaned over, touched Maureen's arm gently and whispered, 'Self-raising, isn't it?' Thus began Kevin's life of celibacy.



As tensions heighten between North and South Korea a new level was reached today as France decided the time for action was here. They have now formally surrendered....., to both sides, just to be sure.

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Spanish Vignettes - The CORI Party

Regional elections were held in Cataluña on November 28. To say that certain elements of the various party campaigns were outlandish would be an understatement. The right of centre PP (or possibly their opponents) put a computer game on-line where one can bomb immigrants. (A PP candidate stated that all unemployed non-EU emigrants should return to their own country.) Not to be out-done, the left-wing PSOE had a TV advert where a lady who voted for them appeared to have an 'orgasm' at the ballot box!

All very eye-catching, but it is the CORI party, *Coordinadora Reusenca Independent*, who appear to 'refresh the parts other parties can't.' The CORI party in Cataluña, is led by an Elvis Presley impersonator, Ariel Santamaría, who happens to be a councillor in the town of Reus in Tarragona.



Number 2 on the CORI list is a transsexual, Carmen de Mairena, who aside from having a history of prostitution, has the misfortune to also have a face that would surely challenge a mother's love. (The house where Carmen currently resides has had four of the seven bedrooms there closed on suspicion of prostitution.) But Ariel is no slouch either when it comes to 'headline grabbing.' To date he has already stripped naked twice during campaign meetings.

Ariel has finally released details of the CORI manifesto. First of all they want to tackle 'Law & Order' by giving the *Mossos d'Esquadra* regional police, smart berets to wear. Nor is the environment neglected; they also plan to plant grass on all the green areas of the Catalan capital including the roundabouts, the grass being marihuana! Marihuana would of course be made legal, and the 'Barrio Chino', a notoriously bohemian part of Barcelona,, would be declared a 'Heritage Site of Mankind'.

CORI also plan to send Catalan sausages (*Butifarra*) to Mars, and public buildings called 'Follódromos' would be made available for young people to go and have sex; spaces that, in the words of Santamaría, "not to be confused with brothels, but would be more about relationships where people could make love in a playful scenario in any neighbourhood."

However, Carmen de Mairena has come up with a sure-fire winner. She wants a polygraph lie-detector to be placed in the Catalan Parliament. Now that is something which could catch-on!

LATEST: The CORI Party got more than 7,000 votes in the election!



The Christmas Joke by Pete Dudman

This is a story about a couple who had been happily married for years. The only friction in their marriage was the husband's habit of farting loudly every morning when he awoke. The noise would wake his wife and the smell would make her eyes water and make her gasp for air. Every morning she would plead with him to stop ripping them off because it was making her sick. He told her he couldn't stop it and that it was perfectly natural. She told him to see a doctor as she was concerned that one day he would blow his guts out.

The years went by and he continued to rip them out. Then one Christmas Day morning, as she was preparing the turkey for dinner and he was upstairs sound asleep, she looked at the innards - neck, gizzard, liver and all the spare parts - and a malicious thought came to her. She took the bowl and went upstairs where her husband was sound asleep and, gently pulling the bed covers back, she pulled back the elastic waistband of his pyjamas and emptied the bowl of turkey guts into his pyjama bottoms.

Some time later she heard her husband waken with his usual trumpeting which was followed by a blood curdling scream and the sound of frantic footsteps as he ran into the bathroom.

The wife could hardly control herself as she rolled on the floor laughing, tears in her eyes! After years of torture, she reckoned she had got him back pretty good this time.

About twenty minutes later, her husband came downstairs in his bloodstained pyjamas with a look of horror on his face. She bit her lip and asked him what was the matter. He said, 'Honey, you were right. All these years you have warned me and I didn't listen to you. You always told me that one day I would end up farting my guts out, and today it finally happened. But by the Grace of God, with some Vaseline and two fingers. I think I got most of them back in!'



Other Spanish Stories

Never give up!

In 1989 Antonio Meño underwent a plastic surgery operation on his nose in Madrid. There were problems during the operation and Antonio has been in a coma ever since, 21 years. The clinic where the operation took place, *Nuestra Señora de América*, claimed that Meño choked on his own vomit.

Antonio's elderly parents took the clinic to the Supreme Court in 2008, but their case failed and the couple were ordered to pay €400,000 in costs. This of course meant that the couple would at least, have to sell their home to meet the costs.

To draw attention to their case the couple, together with their comatose son, have been living in a tent camped near the court for the last 506 days! The old couple's demands to have the case reopened have finally been met as there is new evidence that the clinic's anaesthetist was at fault and that there was 'fraudulent machination' of evidence. It seems that there was a student doctor present in the operating theatre at the time, noticed that the tube which provided oxygen to the patient had come loose during the operation.

The couple now no longer have to pay the costs and are expected to reach an agreement with the clinic regarding compensation.

10-year-old gives birth.

A 10 year old girl from Romania has given birth to a 2.9 kilo baby in Jerez, Andalucía. Both are doing very well. The mother arrived in Jerez just two weeks before the birth, while her mother, the child's grandmother, arrived in Spain nine months ago. The father of the baby, a Romanian, is just 13 years old and has decided to remain in Romania. (See, this is what happens when you take their Nintendo DS away!) The baby's grandmother, who has herself still not reached the age of 30, commented, 'This is a joy, not a drama. At this age we get married in Rumania.' She went on to admit that the relationship between the 13 and 10 year old had now ended.

It seems the family wanted the child to be born here so it would automatically be granted Spanish nationality. More than 100 girls aged 14 or under give birth in Spain each year. Since the year 2,000 there have been 1,290 such births.

The case has reopened debate on the age of consent in Spain. The penal code establishes 13 as the minimum age that boys and girls can have consensual sexual relationships with an adult, which is stupefying!

Changes to Pharmacy procedures.

The regional health authority in Valencia (ours!) has announced a new service for people who have to take medication regularly and who cannot get to a chemist. Under the scheme, around 20,000 people in Alicante Province will be eligible to have their medications delivered to their homes provided they can fulfil the requirements set by the health authority.

The scheme would entail two visits per month from a chemist who would bring the medication to people's homes in special packs. Anyone wishing to be included in the scheme will first have to apply via their local medical centre to be assessed as to whether they qualify. It is planned to launch some test cases in February and March 2011. The scheme is dependant on the pharmacies upgrading their dispensing software significantly and reaching an agreement with the authorities concerning payment.

The regional health authority also plan to reduce its annual bill for medicines by cutting back on wastage. Many patients who take multiple amounts of medication end up hoarding pills, which are never used and eventually run out of date. By giving them only the precise amounts they need, the overall bill to the region will be reduced.

I promise to keep you up to date on any developments in these areas.

Bank Charges

Banks in Spain are increasing their commissions, both on savings and current accounts, as a way of compensating for their fall in profits as more money is put aside to face bad debt. Charges applied to debit and credit cards are also on the up, as is the charge to start a new mortgage.

The new charge for credit cards is 34.39 € and the average charge for a current account is now 21.89 € compared to 21.07 € recorded last December. A debit card now typically costs 17.30 € a year. These charges are per person, per card. Couples will pay double.

Like many of you, I have funds transferred from the UK to Spain regularly. Up to six months ago if I issued transfer instructions to our bank in the UK by 11.00 am, the funds would be in our Spanish bank account by 4 pm same day. This is what you would expect with normal S.W.I.F.T. (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecom's) payments.

However now although the Spanish banks still receive the transferred funds on the same day, they now hold onto the money for a full day before transferring it to our account. This means they have the use of the funds overnight. Multiply what I send by the several thousand other transfers remitted by other expats and the amount of our money the banks invest overnight on their own behalf is substantial.



Problems with Telephones and Internet?

Many of you are having terrible problems with your carriers at the moment. Lines going dead, Internet too slow or not working properly, no support when you call up and even then they are not cooperative nor speak your language.

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WATCH OUT!

Mobile phone scams 'costing users five times more than PC scams' according to a leading security firm. As the number of people using the mobile internet continues to rise rapidly, criminals are exploiting new technologies with increasing efficiency, the latest research suggests. With smart-phones predicted to outsell PCs in 2011, a survey, commissioned by mobile security firm AdaptiveMobile, indicates that traditional spam email successfully persuades fewer than one in a million users to visit the site it's advertising.

So-called "conversion rates" of mobile spam are often higher than one per cent, however, and one SMS text message spam attack can generate more than \$10 million in just three days. The types of scam the firm found ranged included sophisticated attacks that exploit smartphone capabilities to connect to the internet – the results included "click fraud" on adverts or mobile viruses. Simpler scams included SMS messages claiming the recipient had won a prize and fooling them into replying via a premium rate call or text. "With spammers finding ways of avoiding the cost of sending bulk SMS, the traditional barrier to receiving spam on mobiles has been removed," said Simeon Coney, vice-president at AdaptiveMobile. (Source: Daily Telegraph)

There have been several thefts by pickpockets in our area in the last month. Some of these have occurred in the Mercadona in Los Balcones as well as in Lidl's and Aldi's. Whereas the staff in Mercadona can be helpful and cooperative, staff in the latter two will do nothing but ignore you. Always be on your guard and be suspicious of anyone in a supermarket who does not have a basket or trolley. Remember that women and children can also be pickpockets.

The Power Balance company which makes bracelets and has claimed health benefits from them, has been fined 15.000 € by the Junta de Andalucía for misleading advertising. The adverts claimed that the bracelet improved 'balance, strength and flexibility'. However the consumers' organisation FACUA has described the size of the fine as 'ridiculous', noting that the bracelets remain on sale, and saying they will launch an appeal. More than 300,000 have been sold in Spain, where even the new Minister for Health, Leire Pajín, has one. The fact that David Beckham also wears one should however put most off.

The 'Mail Online' carried an interesting story last week. It referred to a British couple who purchased a holiday apartment in Southern Spain in 2004. They obtained a mortgage from Banco Sabadell for approx £145,000. When repayments became difficult last year, they offered to give the apartment back to the bank, but it refused to accept – and instead launched a bid to seize their British family home. In October, Banco de Sabadell obtained an EEO (European Enforcement Order) from a notary in Spain and have now taken a charge on the property through the County Court. Although the Halifax hold a first mortgage for £250,000, Banco de Sabadell can, if it wishes, enforce the sale of the property.

An EEO is meant to be used for uncontested claims in civil cases across EU borders, but evidence has emerged that Spanish officials have stretched the meaning of 'uncontested' to allow banks to fast-track claims on UK property. In Spanish law, a buyer taking out a mortgage gives up the right to contest the debt, and this is taken as evidence of agreeing to the claim. A spokesman the European Commissioner for Justice confirmed there was no obligation to notify debtors. He added that 'in principle, no appeal is possible' against the issuing of an EEO.

Over 30 Pakistanis were injured following the collapse of a number of bunk beds in Bradford, yesterday. Police sources have stated that they suspect that this is the work of 'Al Ikea.' (Lyn)

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Out & About

Congratulations to Neil of *The Welcome Inn* on winning the local 'Hand-Gliding Championship' at Via Park V, and hoping he recovers soon.

Driving around the Orihuela Costa I was struck by the fact that many of the urbanisations look like *ghost towns* at this time of year. The roads are also incredibly quiet. All that is missing is the tumbleweed!

On Sat 27 I went to the official opening of the new Sport's Centre in Calle Niagra near Playa Flamenca. There was a big crowd there with a number of kid's teams (bussed-in) on the football pitch. There were lots of demonstration teams on the various courts and it all looked very good. I suspect that the heated indoor swimming pool will be very busy during the winter!

A traditional German Christmas Market is being held on the Playa Flamenca beachfront. This is probably the closest the area has to a town square. The market will run from noon on the 13th to the 23rd of December.

The event, organised by a local German association, will feature a choir singing carols accompanied by a brass band, a giant Christmas tree and lots of decorations, lights and lots of market stalls. There will be German beers, Bavarian sausages, spiced wine and a hog roast. Santa Claus will also be there, handing out presents and taking the Christmas orders no doubt. Parking may be a problem in the area.

This is Jim and Thelma from Dream Hills II. Recently, they raised an admirable €745 at The Phoenix in Via Park V for The Royal British Legion charity. This figure does not include the amounts in the collection boxes. I hope to have a report from them in the January issue.

Once again 'Well Done!'



And finally on the right are Chris and Pam, who run the Dream Hills Book Swap, every Thursday morning between 10:00 am and 12:00 noon.

Bring a book and take one, or bring several and take several!

Don't forget that the Book Club Christmas Get-together will be held on Thursday, December 9th from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon.

So come along and enjoy a glass of wine and a nibble!



This is to introduce Peter and Jackie on the left. They live in Dream Hills and are the coordinators for the activities at La Casita. These range from Spanish language classes to card and darts' night.

If you have any suggestions for further activities at La Casita, Peter and Jackie can be contacted on 966 189 065.

Ladies, don't forget that there is a Coffee Morning every Friday morning between 10:30 am and 12:30 pm at La Casita.



RANT!

I hate having Tourette's. It makes you shout out things you don't want to shout out. For example, yesterday I was walking along the road when I spotted a Pakistani guy walking on the other side of the road and I shouted out, "Good morning, sir. I hope you are well."

I also hate Somali pirates, sailing around Africa stealing white people, they're like Madonna in reverse...

Prince Harry and his Father are said to be overjoyed at the Engagement of William and Kate.....So is Prince Charles.

I bumped into a man crying uncontrollably outside a department store in Liverpool yesterday, and all he could go on about was how he hates this time of year, dressing up in a ridiculous red outfit and embarrassing himself in front of thousands of people. I said, "Look, Mr.Gerrard, you chose to play for Liverpool!"



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Cruel!

20/20 vision?

A large woman, probably German, and wearing a sleeveless sundress, walked into a bar in Dublin. She raised her right arm, revealing a huge, hairy armpit as she pointed to all the people sitting at the bar and asked, "What man here will buy a woman a drink?"

The bar went silent as the patrons tried to ignore her. But down at the end of the bar, an owly-eyed drunk slammed his hand down on the counter and bellowed, "Give da ballerina a drink!"

The bartender poured the drink, and the woman chugged it down.

She turned to the patrons and again pointed around at all of them, revealing the same hairy armpit, and asked, "What man here will buy a lady a drink?"

Once again, the same little drunk slapped his money down on the bar and said, "Give da ballerina another drink!"

The bartender approached the little drunk and said, "Tell me, Paddy, it's your business if you want to buy the lady a drink, but why do you keep calling her the ballerina?"

The drunk replied, "Any woman who can lift her leg dat high has got to be a ballerina!"

Steven Hawkings went out last night on a blind date; the first date in many years.

When he failed to return last night police were informed and sent out search parties to look for him; he was eventually found this morning laid in a street and in a sorry state. He had broken glasses, a chipped front tooth, a broken right wrist, skinned knees and a twisted left ankle.

Police are working on the theory that his date 'stood him up.'

Dangerous Dogs & other Dog News.

Five people have died in Spain this year following attacks from dangerous dogs. In the latest incident which happened mid-November, two dogs, one a Rottweiler, and the other a Rottweiler-Pitbull cross, killed a 55 year old man and injured the man's 29 year old son in Carcabuey, Córdoba. The man in charge of the dogs at the time is now being charged with negligent homicide and injury. The dogs were being used to guard a dairy when they escaped. In the same week, a Rottweiler puppy savaged a five year old girl in Cádiz.

During the last month there have been at least two serious incidents involving dangerous dogs in Dream Hills. In the first a Dream Hills resident was walking his and a neighbour's dog when one of his dogs was attacked by two Pitbulls, who had escaped from Los Balcones. The Pitbulls were not muzzled nor on leads. After the attack the dogs ran off. The injured dog was later treated by a vet and is now recovering.

In another incident two wandering Rottweilers attacked another dog being walked by her owner. The owner managed to lift his dog over a wall and the police were called. The police took the dangerous dogs away and a *denuncia* has been made. It is thought that these dogs may have attacked two young girls on a previous occasion.

Personally, I am perplexed as to why anybody would want to own a dangerous breed. They are intimidating and threatening and have no place in a modern urban environment. At the risk of attracting 'incoming' I have to question the reasoning of owners who want to keep these dogs. Aside from this, none of us should be subject to threats or attacks from these animals. Dangerous dog breeds in Spain must be registered, on a lead and muzzled, and also be covered by civil responsibility insurance. Few are. More dog news:

The authorities in Gandia (to the north of Benidorm) have introduced tough fines for irresponsible dog owners. Failure to pick up your dog's poo will now get you a fine of up to €750. Speaking as a dog owner, I wish they would extend this law to the remainder of Valencia, and then enforce it rigorously.

An animal rescue shelter in the Costa del Sol, the Parque Animal Rescue Centre, has been raided by the police. SEPRO-NA, the Environmental wing of the Guardia Civil, say that 2,230 pets suffered a 'slow and painful death' because the owners of the centre lowered the dose of the euthanasia medicine 'to save costs'. It is also alleged that they carried out "mass slaughter" of up to fifty dogs and cats at a time, and not via intravenous injection but a much quicker but cruel subcutaneous injection, which would have prolonged their agony, according to sources close to the case. The deaths occurred 'without any type of veterinary control nor training' in a 'continuous, massive, deliberate and unjustified' way. The director, Carmen Marín, and two other workers, are also accused of forging the signature and stamp of a vet in the documents of the animals which were killed, and used blank prescriptions to obtain the euthanasia drug used. It is also believed that they did not carry out promised cremations. The centre also charged pet-owners €60 for 're-housing' their pets, then killing the animals later. The centre has over 900 signed-up members, and like many of these centres does well out of bequests, particularly from the British. A vet has now been put in charge of the centre by the local council.

We all love to see our dogs run free, however the small print on many pet insurance policies state that a dog will not be covered for anything which happens when it is not on a lead!

Why chocolate is bad for dogs (and cats!).

Many of you may already be aware that chocolate is bad for dogs. It turns out that, for dogs, a toxic chemical in chocolate called **theobromine** is the source of the problem. Theobromine, a naturally occurring stimulant found in the cocoa bean, increases urination and affects the central nervous system as well as heart muscle. It is especially toxic not only to dogs but also to horses, birds and cats, especially kittens, because they are unable to metabolize the chemical efficiently. (Interestingly, during my research for this article, I came across the surprising fact that cats cannot detect 'sweetness' having no sweet taste receptors! Maybe that's why they are so..... well, wierd?) Chocolate, by the way, is a banned substance in horse racing because of the boost it will give to the horse. Theobromine is toxic to a dog when it ingests between 100 and 150 milligrams per kilogram of body weight.

Different types of chocolate contain different amounts of theobromine. Cocoa, cooking chocolate and dark chocolate have the highest levels while milk chocolate and white chocolate have the lowest. It would take 20 ounces of milk chocolate to kill a 20-pound dog, but only 2 ounces of baker's chocolate or 6 ounces of semisweet chocolate! A large dog can consume a great deal more chocolate than a small dog before it will suffer ill effects. A small amount of chocolate will probably just give your dog an upset stomach. He may throw up or have diarrhoea. Large amounts though, will have a more serious effect. In sufficient quantities, theobromine can produce muscle tremors, seizures, an irregular heartbeat, internal bleeding, or a heart-attack.

There is no specific antidote for this poisoning and veterinary care is essential. The half life of the toxin is 17.5 hours in dogs. Induce vomiting in the first 1-2 hours if the quantity is unknown. Administering activated charcoal may inhibit absorption of the toxin. An anticonvulsant might be indicated if neurological signs are present and needs to be controlled.

The amount of theobromine found in chocolate is small enough that chocolate can generally be safely consumed by humans. However occasional serious side effects may result from the consumption of large quantities, especially in the elderly and young children.

At Christmas, there is usually chocolate in abundance around the home, certainly far too much temptation for a dog or cat. I do not think that giving your animal the odd pet 'chocolate-drops' is a very good idea. Firstly it may encourage your pet to develop a taste for chocolate and secondly, if you cannot trust what manufacturers put into say a sausage or pie, why trust what they put in pet-chocolate! Best to keep all chocolate safely tucked away from your pets!

I love selling stuff on the internet to people who don't know me.

I've already sold the same homing pigeon 24 times on eBay.

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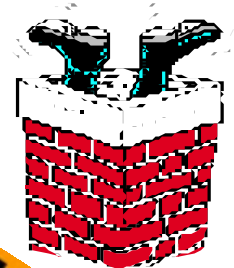
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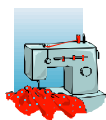
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Little Angel

A friend, who worked away from home all week, always made a morning available when he would take his 7-year old granddaughter for a drive in the car for some bonding time, just him and his granddaughter.

One particular Sunday however, he had a bad cold and just wanted to stay in bed. Luckily, his wife came to the rescue and said that she would take their granddaughter out in the car.

When they returned, the little girl anxiously ran upstairs to see how her Grandfather was.

'Well, did you enjoy your ride with Grandma?'

'Great, Grandad' the girl replied, 'and do you know what? We didn't see a single tosser, blind bastard, dick-head or wanker anywhere today!'



The History of Spain. Part 19, The Expulsion of the Moriscos and the Reign of King Philip III

Succession to the Spanish throne was always a problem. Generations of inbreeding, childhood illnesses, plagues, and of course the habitually partisan and devious nobles, all seemed to conspire against the orderly transference of power.

Philip II eldest son, Prince Don Carlos, was his natural heir. However, even as a boy, Don Carlos was infamous. He used to enjoy roasting hares alive and would blind and flog horses to death. Once while out walking he was splashed with some water thrown from a house. Don Carlos immediately burnt the house down! His frail body was as warped as his mind due to the Habsburg penchant for inbreeding. He had a hump on his back and one leg was shorter than the other, a sunken chest and one shoulder higher than the other. At 17, while chasing a servant-girl, he fell down a flight of stairs and injured his head so badly that surgeons had to remove part of his skull. This seemed to only increase his bad behaviour. He made a bootmaker eat a pair of boots and would wander the streets of Madrid spitting and shouting obscenities at women. (Bit like Playa Flamenca on a summer Saturday night I suppose!) Philip had enough and confined his son to a tower where he died six months later. Don Carlos became the subject of a play by Schiller and an opera by Verdi, both titled *Don Carlos*, neither of which bore much relationship to reality.

When Philip II died in 1598, bells tolled throughout the land for nine days. He was much loved by his people and was a 'hard act to follow.' Neither of the two subsequent monarchs, Philip III and Philip IV, had his drive nor 'hands-on' approach in managing the empire. Both preferred to use court favourites (*validos*) as Chief Ministers, to whom they delegated most of their authority; the Duke of Lerma in the case of Philip III and the Count-Duke of Olivares in the case of Philip IV. Whereas under Philip II, all decisions relating to the Spanish Empire were made by himself in Madrid, now in the absence of strong leadership from Madrid, the proconsuls abroad decided to make decisions themselves. More often than not these decisions were self-serving and did little to help shore up the empire.

By the time Philip III's reign commenced, the Spanish treasury was empty and debt was approaching 100 million ducats, an enormous sum. Still smarting from the defeat of the Invincible Armada, Spain had some unfinished business with England. In 1601, in an attempt to stir up a rebellion in Ireland and draw the English forces from the Low Countries, Philip sent 6,000 troops to Kinsale near Cork to link up with the Irish rebels. Due to bad weather only 4,000 reached Kinsale, which was then put under siege by a reinforced English army. After three months the Spanish surrendered and were allowed to return back to Spain. The death of Elizabeth I and accession of James I in 1603, facilitated a peace between England and Spain and in 1609, Spain signed The 12 Year Truce with the Low Countries.

Freed, at least temporarily, from the draining wars with the English and the Dutch, Philip's first domestic task was to address the problem of the *Moriscos*, the 'converted' Muslims in Spain. The idea of cleansing Spain of what was perceived as an 'evil sect' was promoted to the king by Juan de Ribera, the Archbishop and Viceroy of Valencia. Originally de Ribera wanted the entire *Morisco* population to be enslaved and forced to work in the galleys, mines and plantations abroad. When this proposal was rejected by King Philip, he then proposed that at least the children of the *Moriscos* be enslaved and Christianised 'for the good of their souls' and their parents exiled abroad. In 1609, Philip issued a decree that all *Moriscos* were to be expelled from Spain. (In France, Cardinal Richelieu called the expulsion 'the most barbarous stroke in human annals.') The king also decreed that all *Morisco* children under the age of five had to remain in Spain, but that they would be free from the threat of enslavement, rejecting de Ribera's more extreme suggestions. (Juan de Ribera was canonized (made a saint) by Pope John XXIII in 1960, which begs the question, 'What was he thinking?')

From 275,000 to 350,000 *Moriscos* were expelled from Spain between 1609 and 1614. Their expulsion was popular among most of the population as the *Moriscos* had never assimilated with the Christians. They were also suspected of colluding with the Barbary Pirates, who regularly raided the Spanish coastline. The economic impact of their departure had a devastating blow on the economies of Aragon, Valencia and Murcia. The supply of cheap labour and the number of rent paying property owners in these areas decreased considerably, as did agricultural outputs.

Spain was now beginning to slide downhill. The government were forced to debase the coinage with copper, what today we would call printing money or quantitative easing. Moral standards declined in Madrid and by 1650 there were 500 brothels. Visitors to the capital were shocked and although laws were passed to curb immorality - carriages could not be used with the curtains drawn, for example - they were ineffective. The Duke of Lerma's personal enrichment was becoming a scandal and eventually he was deposed by a palace intrigue carried out by his own son, Cristóbal de Sandoval. As a protection Lerma persuaded Pope Paul V to make him a cardinal and then retired to his palace in Lerma.

When the dying Philip III was presented with a list of prisoners and exiles to be forgiven, he granted grace to all except the cardinal-duke of Lerma.

Taliban TV Guide



6.00 G-Had TV. Morning prayers.
 8.30 Talitubbies. Tinky-Winky finds a Stinger missile and Dipsy has lost his rocket-launcher.
 9.00 Shouts of Praise. Flag burning and more prayers.
 11.00 Jihad's Army. The Kandahar-on-Sea Battalion repulse another attack by evil, imperialist, Zionist backed infidels. (Repeat)
 12.00 Ready, Steady, Jihad! Celebrities make scrummy gerbil dishes.
 12.30 Panoramadan. The programme reports on America's attempts to take over the world.
 13.30 Xena: Modestly dressed housewife, Xena, stays at home and cooks some couscous.
 14.00 Only Fools and Camels. Dhal-Boy offloads some dodgy Chinese rocket launchers to Hamas.
 14.30 Black Peter. The total of Kalashnikovs bought by the milk-bottle-top appeal is revealed.
 15.00 Strictly No Dancing. Believers sit around drinking coffee. No foot tapping!
 15.30 Cash in the Cave. Abdul scours the cave for items to sell so he can visit his brother in Tipton.
 16.00 Question Time. Members of the public face questions from the Religious Police.
 17.00 Koranation Street. Deirdrie faces execution by stoning for adultery.
 17.30 Middle-East Enders. The entire cast is jailed for unIslamic behaviour.
 18.30 Top of the Prophets. Will the Koran be No.1 for the 63,728th week running?
 19.00 Who wants to be a Mujahadin? Will contestants phone a mullah, go 'inshallah', or ask the Islamic council?
 20.00 FILM: Shariah's Angels. The three burkha-clad sleuths go undercover to expose an evil scheme to educate women.
 21.30 Big Brother. Who will be taken out of the house and executed this week?
 22.30 Whose Hand is This? Contestants try to guess who the body parts belong to. Fun for all the family.
 23.30 Ask the Doctor. Female circumcision, the advantages of home-surgery.
 0.00 When Imams attack! Amusing footage shot secretly in mosques. (The cameramen were also secretly shot later.)
 00.30 a.m. The West Bank Show. Arts programme looking at anti-Israel graffiti art in the Occupied Territories.
 01.30 Bhuffi the Infidel Slayer. Bhuffi chops off many Infidel heads & hands. (Suitable for children.)
 02.00 A book at bedtime. The Koran..... Again.



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BREAKING NEWS: Sir Bob Geldof has just confirmed that a fundraising concert for Ireland will be held in Ethiopia this Christmas!

Two Old Guys

Two old guys, one 80 one 87, were sitting on their usual park bench one morning. The 87 year old had just finished his morning jog and wasn't even short of breath. The 80 year old was amazed at his friend's stamina and asked him what he did to have so much energy. The 87 year old said, "Well, I eat rye bread every day. It keeps your energy level high and you'll have great stamina with the ladies."
 So, on the way home, 80 year old stops at the bakery. As he was looking around, the lady asked if he needed any help. He said "Do you have any Rye bread?"
 She said, "Yes, there's a whole shelf of it. Would you like some?"
 He said, "I want 5 loaves."
 She said, "My goodness, 5 loaves ... by the time you get to the 3rd loaf, it'll be hard."
 He replied, "I can't believe it, everybody knows about this shit but me." (David Purdy)

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Tough Kids

While visiting Glasgow, a woman sees a small boy leaning against a wall smoking a cigarette and taking nips from a hip flask. 'Shouldn't you be in school?' says the woman. 'School' says the boy, 'you must be joking. I'm only four.'

A salesman rings the doorbell of a house. The door is answered by a young boy smoking a cigar, holding a glass of beer, with a copy of *Play-boy* tucked under his arm.

'Is your mother at home?' asks the man.

The boy taps the ash off his cigar and says, 'What the hell do you think?'

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Little Johnny

A Grade 3 teacher is giving a lesson on nutrition, and she decides to ask her students what they had for breakfast. To add a spelling component, she asks the students to also spell their answers.

Susan puts up her hand and says she had an egg, 'E-G-G'.

'Very good', says the teacher.

Peter says he had toast 'T-O-A-S-T'.

'Excellent.'

Johnny has his hand up and the teacher reluctantly calls on him.

'I had f*ck all', he says, 'F*-C-K A-L-L'.

The teacher is mortified and scolds Johnny for his rude answer.

Later on in the lesson she asks the students some rudimentary questions on 'geography.'

Susan correctly identifies the Capital of Canada. Peter is able to tell her which ocean is off Canada's east coast.

When it's Johnny's turn, the teacher remembers his rude answer from the nutrition lesson, and decides to give him a very difficult question. 'Johnny,' she asks, 'Where is the Pakistani border?'

Johnny ponders the question and finally says, 'The Pakistani boarder is in bed with my mother. That's why I got f*ck all for breakfast.'



(Pete Dudman)

Remember that you can get your own copy of The Dream Scene delivered to your property or post box locally, or on-line, for a tiny contribution towards costs by contacting me at number 586 DH or at mick.dreamscene@gmail.com

Diabetic?

If you have been diagnosed as a diabetic there is a very successful support group, which meets on the last Wednesday of every month at 11am at Hoggies Bar in San Luis. The support group is fully funded by the Help Association Vega Baja, so there are no fees. This is a large group and the support and advice is first class.

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The editor, Mick, can be contacted at mick.dreamscene@gmail.com or at 586 Dream Hills.