

THE DREAM SCENE



Issue no. 61 1st of March 2012



Bienvenido and welcome to the start of the sixth year of The Dream Scene.

The warm weather is continuing here although we had two very cold weeks at the beginning of February. It was so cold here, I had to chisel our dog off a local lamppost. Even the local 'flasher' was describing himself to women! But all these blue skies carry a price - no water! According to the Spanish met office, the quarter December to February is the driest since the 40's. It has not rained in Barcelona for 44 days!

There was a mild earthquake here on Feb 5 at 05:43 in the morning. It reached 3 on the Richter Scale, the most intense in this area for several years. Its epicentre was in the Med' about 5 km south east of Torrevieja and 11 km deep.

The national economy continues to deteriorate. 2011 ended with a deficit of 8.51% of GDP, much higher than expected and significantly more than the 6% target. Madrid will have to impose further sacrifices of nearly €50 billion to meet the 4.4% target demanded by Brussels for the end of this year. A request to get this figure raised was refused by Brussels. The government will therefore have to introduce draconian measures to even get close to these targets. 2012 will be a very, very tough year, particularly if you are in business here, as belts will continue to be tightened.

The recession has also hit a number of local businesses. Oliver's Mini market, Butterflies Cafe in Via Park III and 2GB Indian Restaurant in Via Park V have all closed their doors. A number of local businesses are clearly under pressure and as the saying goes, 'use them or lose them.'

As was anticipated, the local Orihuela Town Council is beginning to implode; the head Socialist, Moreno, saying that it is unlikely to last more than a couple of months. Bob Houliston, the CLARO councillor, has resigned from the Government team. He was marginalized by the remaining coalition members with his responsibilities and status severely diminished. However, now that he is out of the 'team' there could possibly be an alliance between him and the PP. This would probably mean the return of Lorente as mayor but at a price which might suit the coast. Time will tell.

Plants are still being stolen from the planted areas in our vicinity. This could be theft by an individual or a business. If you see one of the culprits in the act just shout 'Ladron!'

The famous Valencia Fallas Week commences on March 12. Don't forget St. David's Day on March 1 and St. Patrick's Day on March 17. A number of events have been arranged for the latter on the Orihuela Costa. Also, for the first time, Los Montesinos will also be hosting a St. Patrick's Fiesta.

If you get your copy of the Dream Scene delivered to you electronically, to your post box or house, your subscription is now due. I know many of you have already settled, thank you. I will send out a PayPal request for subs shortly. Thanks to Stewart of Macklin's Welcome Inn for his continued generosity and to Rob and J.J. for theirs. Thanks also to Carole & Barry for their generous donation.

Hoping you are all keeping well and that we will see you soon, Mick & Tid.

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Angela's Cartoon



'Couldn't you just slap him!'

What's Up?

There have been demonstrations in 57 cities throughout the country last month, the largest in Madrid and Valencia. These have been against the austerity measures and the new labour reforms. Some violence has been reported and many arrests, some of them underage. One newspaper, La Razón, claims that the 'left are agitating the streets' and reports that the UGT, one of the two main trade unions, is urging its members to protest against the PP. During one student protest, 25 were arrested - none of them students.

Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy says he does not plan any additional tax hikes as his government tries to meet stringent deficit targets this year. However he said the same thing just a week before raising the income tax. Spain's value-added tax is lower than in many European countries and many economists and financial analysts expect the government will have to raise it to try to cut the deficit to 4.4 percent of gross domestic product, its current objective.

The number of bankrupt families in Spain has fallen by 3.9%, but the number of companies to go bust is up 16%. The figures for 2011 show that 5,821 companies applied for bankruptcy during the year, and 934 families applied for a suspension of payments.

The Spanish Government is trying to negotiate a two year extension with the banks for those people who find they cannot make their mortgage payments. Minister for the Economy, Luis de Guindos, has drawn up a code of good practice for the banks, and said he will be modifying the law to reduce 'abusive bad debt rates' in mortgage policies. The banks have responded so far by saying they will be generous with the repossessions and evictions in certain cases, which is far too arbitrary. While accepting it becomes voluntary for them to take over the property, they claim that changing the legislation will be 'very damaging.' But who could possibly trust the banks in these situations?

There has been a large fall in leisure spending in Spain. Over the past five years as many as 12,000 bars and restaurants have closed according to the Nielsen consultancy. 220,000 still remain, the same number as seen in 1997.

The hidden health debt in the regions has risen to 4.1 billion €. This refers to the deals made with private hospitals and external services, and does not account for assistance services or medicines. If medicines and technology debt are added the debt jumps to 11.6 billion. A new report states that health costs now represent 32.2% of the total budgets in Spain's autonomous regions.

The Generalitat of Catalonia has decided to delay the imposition of a 'tourist tax' until after the summer season. The proposed tax will be at the cost of between one and two euros per person, per night, and applied to all accommodation offered throughout the tourism sector. The over 65's, those with disabilities and the under 5's will be exempt from the charge, with those between 5 and 16 being charged at 50% of the standard rate.

Telefónica has announced it is expanding its operations in Britain (God help the Brits if the customer service will be similar to that in Spain!). The company purchased O2, the old BT Cellnet firm based in Slough, in 2005, but now it is to establish a new digital services division with a 300 strong staff at headquarters in Regent Street, London, and new offices in Silicon Valley, Sao Paulo, Tel Aviv and Madrid.

The Spanish Cabinet has announced the decision to cut public sector salaries, and cap all salaries for senior executives at a maximum of €105,000 per year, which in many cases would mean that the senior directors of larger public companies would see decreases of as much as 30%. Directors of medium sized companies would have capped earnings of €80,000 per year, with the directors of smaller public companies having salaries capped at €55,000 per year. The number of directors are also limited to the size of the company.

At the end of 2011 the regional administrations in Spain had run up a debt of 706.34 billion €, according to the Bank of Spain. This debt is causing a great deal of difficulty for suppliers, who are often small businesses or the self-employed. Companies and individuals willing to accept a discount on the amount that they are owed from *ayuntamientos* could be given priority in the waiting list, meaning that in exchange for a reduction in the amount of debt owed, creditors could find themselves leapfrogging other companies who had been waiting for payment even longer, but could not afford to take a reduction.

A new report from Cáritas says that more than 11 million people in Spain are at risk of poverty. The secretary general of Cáritas, Sebastián Mora, said 'Poverty is more widespread, more intense and more chronic', and the Cáritas report states that the poorest areas of Spain are the SW of the country and the Canaries, while the least poor are Navarra, Euskadi and Asturias. Spain is five points above the European average poverty index, and there are now 580,000 homes with no kind of income.

Carrefour, already facing a fall in sales and loss of market share in Spain, has now been denounced for selling 'loss-leaders'. Such a practice is prohibited by Spanish legislation. Oddly the complaint has come from the franchises owned by the company, such as Carrefour Express. (There have been some product recalls from Carrefour. See back page.)

Over 200 children, who were in-class at a private school in the Chamartín area of Madrid, were shocked when bailiffs arrived and started taking the furniture, including desks and blackboards - even the chalk - from the classrooms. It was Social Security who sent the bailiffs in because of non-payment of social welfare contributions - €992,000! Not very social of them! Nevertheless, it is odd that the authorities seem unwilling or unable to take similar action against the public state schools who are allowed to run up even higher levels of debt.

The spending cuts in Cataluña have resulted in a two speed health service. Most public hospitals are renting out their theatres to the private sector to compensate for a lack of income.

A woman knelt in the confessional and said, 'Bless me Father, for I have sinned.' 'What is it, child?' 'Father, I have committed the sin of vanity. Twice a day I gaze at myself in the mirror and tell myself how beautiful I am.' The priest turned, took a good look at her, and said, 'My daughter, I have good news. This isn't a sin - it's only a mistake.'

A greengrocer in Chiclana de la Frontera, Cádiz, has sold a client an unexploded hand grenade with a kilo of potatoes. The grenade, which dates from the Second World War, was picked from a potato field on the Belgian frontier. It was described as being petrified, which led to its 'appearance of a potato'. 'Would you like some shrapnel with those carrots, Luv?'

The strike by the dustbin men in Orihuela is over, at least for the present. Over 500 tons of rubbish were removed after five days of strikes.

A Royal Decree passed on 27th January, has cut financial incentives for all new 'alternative' electricity production facilities using co-generation, renewable energy and residual waste. It also freezes subsidies for existing facilities. While these measure had been anticipated by the sector, the decision to cut wind energy subsidies was unexpected.

Terra Mitica, the loss-making theme park near Benidorm, has around 450 employees, 15% of them temporary staff. Around 50% of the permanent employees are to be made redundant. Theme parks in Spain have been largely unsuccessful; that includes Warner Bros in Madrid and PartAventura south of Barcelona.

In Murcia, they believe that the proposed Paramount Studios Theme Park is going to be a panacea for all their ills, causing property prices to shoot up and investment to flood the area. Even if all goes to plan, the theme park is unlikely to be open before summer 2015, and, together with Corvera Airport, they may never fulfil the potential expected. There is now a new hiccup in relation to the Paramount project as a number of the plots being purchased were not free from outstanding charges. This will delay the acquisition of the land required by at least a month. Why this was not detected earlier is a mystery?

El Mundo says that the Nóos Institute (see previous issues), owned by the 'dodgy' Duke of Palma - Iñaku Urdangarin, paid a youngster €600 for a report which he copied from the internet, and then sold it on for €690,000. The paper says many deals were done in cash and that Urdangarin diverted money from the 'non-profit making' Nóos Institute to accounts in a Swiss bank, to Belize, Luxembourg, Switzerland and other countries, as a means of hiding funds from the Hacienda. The Duke was questioned by the judge for 18 hours last Sunday and blames his partner for any wrongdoing. He says that his wife, the king's daughter, is innocent and took no part in the business. He was evasive in his answers in court, stating 'I can't remember' to most of the questions. When asked why his 3 and 4-year-old children were partners in some of his businesses, he stated 'I always wanted a family business.'

El País has discovered that the CV of the number two in the Department of Employments is fake. Tomás Burgos, 'is a doctor and an expert in health management' according to an official statement; but in fact the Secretary of State for Social Security is not a doctor.

The former mayor of Torrevieja and the PP regional deputy, Pedro Hernandez Mateo, has denied before the High Court of Valencia that the municipal waste collection contract was awarded irregularly.

The state broadcaster, RTVE, has announced that they will no longer send football commentary teams to away matches in the Champions League. Instead, in an effort to save money, they will remain in Spain, and give the commentary as they watch television. Cue some very pissed-off sports' reporters!

A Málaga businessman, Benjamín de la Mata, has been telling the press about his nightmare of spending 17 days in prison in Algeciras for a crime he did not commit. A police sniffer-dog detected eight kilos of drugs hidden in his Seat Córdoba car, which his brother had purchased secondhand ten years ago from a car rental company. Benjamín was given the car as a gift from his brother five or six years ago. 'I've been locked up with killers and rapists', he said, but added that he did make two friends there who saved him, probably big gay Juan again! A release order was finally given as what was found in the car could not be considered drugs, as it was so old that it had lost all its active ingredients. Obviously the sniffer-dog disagreed!

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The town hall in Benalmádena in the Costa del Sol have imposed new stringent regulations - 46 in all - for their beaches. The placement of towels or parasols between the sea and the sun-loungers is banned and bathing in the sea is also banned before 11.00am! The Socialist controlled administration says the objective is to fine unsociable behaviour on the beach. Also, those who operate the the sun-loungers will now have to ensure that no peddling takes place in the area - not the 'pedalos' but the 'peddlars'!

Spanair workers have rejected an offer of employment from Ryanair. There are two reasons for their rejection, the obligation to pay taxes in Ireland, and to 'open an account in Gibraltar to collect their wages'. The basic monthly salary offered of around €620 also received little enthusiasm.

According to a Eurobarometer survey, 88% of Spaniards consider corruption in Spain to be a serious problem. Presumably the other 12% are quite happy with the 'brown envelopes.'

Primark are opening a new store in Alicante this month.

Lufthansa are pulling out of El Altet airport in Alicante. Instead, 22 flights per week will now depart from Valencia's Manises airport to Berlin, Munich and Dusseldorf.

I bumped into an old mate yesterday who I haven't seen for years.

He said, "What you doing these days?"

I said, "I help hand over clothes to poor people."

He said, "That's very charitable."

I said, "Not really, I'm just a checkout assistant in Primark."

How do you get a man to exercise?

Tie the TV remote control to his shoelaces.

Other News

These two on the left are being tried for the Santa Pola bombing which took place on August 4, 2002. They are accused of planting 100 kilos of explosives in a Ford Escort outside a Guardia Civil barracks in Santa Pola. The resulting explosion killed a six-year-old little girl and a 57-year-old man from Torrevieja, who was waiting at a bus stop. 55 other bystanders were also injured and over 20 houses damaged. The terrorists were arrested in France in September 2002, carrying forged documents, together with a video and photos of their target. One has already confessed but has now retracted his confession. Both do not recognise the court and refuse to testify. In a dramatic encounter, the mother of the murdered child gave evidence calling the two accused 'murderers, cowardly assassins and sons of bitches!' The public prosecutor is asking for 1,180 years in prison for the suspected terrorists Andoni Otegi and Oscar Zelarain.



A senior union activist who has an annual salary of €181,000 (which is due to increase to €198,000 this year) is leading the protest in Madrid against the labour reform. This is more than the PM and the Governor of the Bank of Spain receives. José Ricardo Martínez, a regional leader in the UGT union, is paid the money by Caja Madrid thanks to a political agreement! Whereas José sends both his children to private schools (as do many of his left-wing peers), he has been active in organising demonstrations and strikes within the state educational system. Sources: Libertad Digital & El Mundo. The ABC newspaper has reported that the two main trade unions in Spain, the UGT and CCOO, earn more than €10 million a year from business interests, and have assets of €240 million. The complete article is here in Spanish -

<http://www.abc.es/20120227/economia/abcp-sindicatos-20120227.html>

The Government has announced that it is going to do away with the licence needed before you open a small shop. From June, 'auto-licence express' will allow you to open a business with just three documents. Firstly a technical report in which the qualified person verifies that he or she meets the requirements needed for the opening. Secondly a document in which the shopkeeper guarantees he or she will meet the conditions for the type of business he wants to open, and that he has any corresponding town planning licence from the Town Hall. And thirdly the payments of the taxes needed. The Government is making it clear that there will be no reduction in the income from such taxes for local town halls.

Currently the documentation can take between 6 and 18 months to be obtained, and while you are waiting you have no guarantee that a licence is going to be granted. (How the above can be called 'express' I just don't know.)

Spain's new government has given the banks an extra year to recognize losses if they agree to merge, as it tries to overhaul the financial industry crippled by the collapse of the nation's property boom four years ago. Banks have a year to make 50 billion euros of provisions against real-estate assets, according to a decree passed by the Cabinet in February. If they agree by the end of May to merge, they get a further 12 months to take the charges and can tap the state's bank-bailout facility for funds. PM Mariano Rajoy is trying to restore the flow of credit to Spain's shrinking economy and improve confidence in lenders saddled with 175 billion euros of troubled real-estate assets. The government wants to remove doubts about the way assets are valued to enhance banks' access to financing while shrinking the oversized industry.

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Stricter laws on smoking have not been sufficient to reduce the number of smokers in Spain. A new survey was taken a year after a blanket smoking ban was introduced last year. The results showed that there has been slight rise in the number of smokers aged 13 and above, to 20 percent of the population. "The prevalence [of smokers] is not influenced by the law," said Separ vice president Juan Antonio Riesco, who added that smoking among younger people is on the rise, "which indicates that prevention is not working." Among children, nine percent are passive smokers and of these, 51 percent are exposed to smoke in their own home.

The survey showed that 22 percent of men and 18 percent of women smoke, with consumption showing a "slight decrease" to 12 cigarettes a day on average. Riesco said that during the past 12 months only 27 percent of smokers had tried to quit; 14 percent of these didn't last 24 hours and 72 percent fell back on the habit within four weeks. (El Pais)

(I am pushing 60. That's enough exercise for me.)

Mark Twain

Changes to Labour Laws in Spain.

Here are some of the highlights of measures recently approved by the Cabinet, but it is by no means a comprehensive outline:

Severance payments: Compensation for workers on permanent contracts who are unfairly dismissed is reduced from 45 days per year of service up to a maximum of 42 months to 33 days and a maximum of 24 monthly payments. Severance payments for the period up until the new legislation takes effect will be paid at the old rate of 45 days, and at 33 days thereafter.

Layoffs justified by objective causes such as economic reasons normally processed through so-called labour force adjustment plans, or EREs, will carry compensation of 20 days pay for every year worked up to a maximum of one year's salary. Companies will be able to sack workers when they can demonstrate actual or forecast losses, or have booked three consecutive quarters of falling sales.

Temporary contracts: Temporary contracts cannot be extended for a period of more than 24 months. The employer thereafter must offer the employee a permanent contract. The previous Socialist government had introduced this limitation but suspended it in a labour reform introduced last year. The measures also introduce a new form of contract for companies with under 50 employees, under which workers receiving unemployment benefit can continue to receive part of this entitlement alongside wages.

Hiring incentives: Companies with under 50 workers hiring employees under 30 years old will receive a tax reduction of 3,000 euros per worker. Youth unemployment in Spain currently stands at around 48 percent.

Companies hiring workers aged between 16 and 30 years will receive a discount in the social security contributions they have to make of up to 3,600 euros over three years.

Firms hiring workers over 45 years old who have been in long-term unemployment will be entitled to a discount in social security contributions of up to 4,500 euros per worker over three years.

Collective bargaining: Agreement reached at the company level will be given priority over those at sector or territorial levels. Companies in difficulty will be freed from the obligation of adhering to sector or territorial agreements. Once a collective agreement expires, labour representatives and employers will be given a maximum of two years to negotiate a new contract. Currently, agreements that have expired remain in place until a new accord is reached. The new rules state that after two years the old agreement will cease to be valid.

Job placement: Temporary employment agencies with large networks of job placement centres and experience in the market are authorized to help find work for the unemployed.

Other measures: Men up to the age of 30 and women up to 35 who plan to go freelance can receive their unemployment benefits in a one-off lump sum. The reforms also aim to tackle absenteeism and cases of fraud in which a worker finds employment in the black market while receiving unemployment benefits.

Many would argue that these reforms still do not go far enough and that the Spanish labour market is still uncompetitive when compared to the rest of Europe. The new government may of course introduce more changes over the next three years, but even the above limited changes have already seen a furious response from the trade unions.

My Wife & I

- ♥ I spent a full hour defrosting the fridge last night.....
or as my wife calls it 'foreplay'!
- ♥ I put my chips on the table knowing that she was about to fold.
She said, "Move your dinner whilst I sort these clothes out."
- ♥ I'm having a real problem with nuisance phone calls at the minute.
Usually from my wife when I'm down the pub.
- ♥ My wife asked me to bring home some stuff for the pancakes last week.
She wasn't happy when I came back with a push-up bra.
- ♥ My wife has always proclaimed that there is nothing more painful
than childbirth. Clearly never trodden on a plug in the middle of the night then!

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Phoenix Golf Society

The society turned out on a sunny but cold windy morning at Roda.

The overall winner was Rob Hughes with a total of 36 points, followed by Richard Hirst, winner of the gold category.

Silver went to new captain Pete Brain and bronze to Jim Waddle, a first I believe for Jim.

Nearest the pin winners were Rob Hughes on the 7th, Pete Brain on the 11th and nearest in two on the 15th was Graham Mitchell

The Must Try Harder award went to Ken Sutton (hard luck Ken), and the two free games on offer were drawn by Terry Dunn and Mike Heighway.

Details of the society can be found in the Phoenix Bar, Via Park 5, Dream Hills. (John Bradbeer)

Tell the truth!

A married man was having an affair with his secretary.

One day, their passions overcame them and they took off for her house, where they made passionate love all afternoon. Exhausted from the wild sex, they fell asleep, awakening around 8pm. As the man threw on his clothes, he told the woman to take his shoes outside and rub them through the grass and dirt. Mystified, she nonetheless complied. He slipped into his shoes and drove home.

"Where have you been?" demanded his wife when he entered the house.

"Darling, I can't lie to you. I've been having an affair with my secretary and we've been having sex all afternoon. I fell asleep and didn't wake up until eight o'clock."

The wife glanced down at his shoes and said, "You lying bastard! You've been playing golf!"

Capitalism - Spanish Style

A senior Catalan politician was removed from his post at the provincial authority of Barcelona Friday on suspicion that he may have re-directed over 900,000 euros of public money to his private company over the course of nearly a decade. Josep Maria Matas, coordinator and number two of the Diputación de Barcelona, is being investigated for embezzlement after an investigation by EL PAÍS broke the story two weeks ago. Between 2003 and 2011 his firm, Parés i Solé SL, accumulated over 920,000 euros, mostly from a single client, the Catalan Association of Municipalities (ACM), of which he was also secretary general. The company has no employees and no office, and investigators believe it overcharged grossly for work such as press releases, advertising management and market studies (This is very similar to the still running 'dodgy' Duke of Palma story, money being received for invisible services. It makes you wonder about the quality of the internal and external auditors, that is if there are any!) Matas is also president of the party Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya (CDC) for the Barcelona county of Osona. CDC and Unió Democràtica de Catalunya together form a coalition known as CiU that has ruled Catalonia for most of its democratic history. Red faces all 'round in Catalonia.

Carlos Fabra, the ex PP President of the Diputación in Castellón was granted a 98 year mortgage by the Bancaja savings bank. It was an extension of a loan granted to him to buy a flat in the Plaza de Las Salesas in Madrid, next to the Supreme Court. There are allegations that Fabra was purchasing property as a way of laundering money, and now he will have to declare in the courts in Castellón on three separate charges. Bail has been set at 4.2 million €.

Rodríguez Ibarra, the ex Socialist President of Extremadura and another 70 teachers who took early retirement, are now being paid more than had they stayed in their posts. Ibarra approved his own pension and bonus before retiring.

The Bank of Spain is to prosecute 49 executives and directors of CAM Bank for alleged irregularities committed between 2008 and 2011. Hopefully this will also include the directors who awarded themselves 'performance' bonuses.


Members of the Ruiz-Mateos family put up their wages just days before their Nueva Rumasa group declared bankruptcy. A document has revealed the strategy followed by the family, intended to avoid them facing any embargo and allowing the payment of their mortgages. José María Ruiz-Mateos has 13 children and each one saw money diverted to them. Also under investigation is the claim that a few days before bankruptcy the family ordered the 'cleaning of professional offices' and the destruction of all compromising documentation.

A High Court judge has indicted the former president of the employer's confederation (CEOE) president Gerardo Díaz Ferrán and an associate on charges that they embezzled 4.4 million euros from his Marsans travel agency. (Ferrán's disastrous management practices has appeared in these columns before.) The judge backed prosecutors' charges that Díaz Ferrán's mismanagement forced the sudden closure of Viajes Marsans in the summer of 2010, leaving some 4,700 people out of work in the middle of a dire economic crisis and accumulating some 400 million euros in debts. Diaz Ferrán and his partner Gonzalo Pascual face between one and six years in prison if convicted.

The Prompt!

A woman has just finished her shopping and is taking a shortcut home through the park. Suddenly a man jumps out of the bushes, opens his raincoat and exposes himself. The woman takes a deep breath, looks down at her shopping bags, slaps her palm to her forehead and says: "Of course! I forgot the shrimps!"

Fred came home from his first day at school. 'Nothing exciting happened,' he told his mother, 'except the teacher didn't know how to spell "cat" so I told her.'



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My dog is really tough. I've been interrogating him for hours and he still won't tell me who is a good boy. We went for a walk in the park. As we watched a brass band playing, the dog stared at the conductor and thought....."Just throw the f**king thing!"

The lead actor in the local Pantomime production of Aladdin, was 'rogered' by the gay genie on stage last night.To be fair the audience did try to warn him.

Retirement is twice as much husband on half as much money. (Bette Midler)

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Some images from the Carnival
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The Airline Subsidies

Almost half of all Spanish airline subsidies paid over the last 5 years have been made to Ryanair, who received just over €100 million of the €250 million total paid out.

A recent report from the National Competition Commission examined subsidies paid by 23 Spanish airports to 15 different airlines between 2007 and 2011. Catalonia alone have paid out €40 million to Ryanair in subsidies since 2002, and have recently made a further deal with the airline to guarantee a further €40 million over the next 5 years, if certain conditions can be met.

The main beneficiaries of the 15 airlines were Ryanair and Air Nostrum, as the subsidies paid to the remaining airlines did not exceed €5 million - and in some cases €1 million. These included Lagunair; Vueling; Air Berlin; Air Europa; Spanair; Wizz Air; Plaza; Iberia; EasyJet; Transavia; Islas Airways; Jet2 and Andalus.

The report also noted how the 15 airlines who subsidies were paid out to carried more than 60% of all the passengers arriving in Spain over that period.

Ryanair received an average of 60 cents per person for their 34.7 million passengers carried in 2011, whilst Air Nostrum received an average of €3 per person for the 8 million passengers they carried in the same period.



Judging the judges. The Garzón case.

As I have mentioned before, there is little in Spain that escapes the often grubby embrace of politics. When the Partido Popular won a comfortable majority in congress late last year, one of their first actions was to replace ten of the top 13 police officials in the country. Now if this happened in Northern European countries, there would be ructions in the media, accompanied by histrionics in the various parliaments. Here however, it barely got a mention in the press. When the Socialists came to power some nine years ago they did exactly the same thing. And the approach is similar with the senior judiciary. Every newly formed government believe they have been treated unfavourably by the previous establishment and this is not always unfounded. The Spanish political arena can be savage, but it is also fascinating.



Last month, one of the main front page stories was the trial of a judge - Baltasar Garzón. Garzon (see left) was an investigating judge in Spain's central criminal court, the Audiencia Nacional. A champion of the Left, Garzon was rarely out of the limelight, dealing with terrorism, organised crime, corruption and money laundering.

Garzon first came into prominence during the investigations into GAL, Grupos Antiterroristas de Liberación. This was a state-run terrorist group organised by senior members of the PSOE, the then Socialist ruling party. This investigation in the late 80's led to the jailing of seven senior government and police officials, one of them the PSOE Minister for the Interior.

In 1990, he led successful investigations into several drug smuggling operations in Galicia which were linked to the Medellin drug cartel in Columbia. Flushed with the success and publicity from these particular cases and one who actively courted publicity, he was elected as a member to Congress for the Socialist party in 1993. Garzon was then made a Secretary of State and appointed head of the National Plan against Drugs by the Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzales. However, shortly after being appointed, Garzon resigned from the post complaining of lack of support from the government.

Back in the judiciary, he came to international prominence in 1998, when the former dictator of Chile, Augusto Pinochet, arrived in London. Garzon applied for an extradition order to bring Pinochet to Spain to be tried here for the murder and torture of Spanish citizens in Chile. The then British Home Secretary, fellow socialist Jack Straw, showed himself to be a man of straw by refusing the extradition on health grounds, a mercy Pinochet would never have extended to his many victims.

The former mayor of Marbella was then successfully prosecuted for corruption by Garzon. The ex-mayor, Gil, died in prison two years after his conviction. This was followed by a number of trials against alleged ETA members and supporters which had limited success, but did include the banning of a number ETA-backed political parties.

In 2007, Garzon led the investigation into the Gürtel case. This led to accusations of bribery, money laundering and tax evasion implicating a circle of businessmen and politicians belonging to the *PP*, including Camps, the President of the Valencian Community. The alleged illicit activities related to party funding and the award of contracts by local/regional government in Valencia, Madrid and elsewhere. However Garzon was taken off the case after being indicted for violating lawyer-client privilege by recording conversations between detained suspects and their lawyers. Despite a robust defence, a panel of seven judges in the Supreme Court of Spain on February 9, 2012, found Garzon guilty of illegal wire-tapping. One trial judge described Garzon's action as appropriate to a dictatorship and sentenced him to 11 years disqualification from judicial activity and fined him over €2,000.

Two other cases were also brought against Garzon at the same time. The first related to allegations of bribery for dropping the case against Emilio Botin, the head of Banco Santander. However this case was archived as the 3-year statute of limitations in this case was exceeded by 25 days which tell you much about the professionalism of the relevant lawyers who missed this.

In the outstanding case, Garzon's competence in investigating the disappearances and crimes of the Franco regime was questioned, particularly as the 1977 General Amnesty Act barred any investigations related to criminal offences with a political aim previous to 1976. (Interestingly, during Garzon's early career, he vetoed an investigation against Republican atrocities because of the same act.) On February 27, he was cleared of this charge, but declared to be 'in error.'

Garzon has certainly made many enemies during his career. The 'right' in Spain have rejoiced at his downfall, believing that the publicity-seeking, self-aggrandizing left-wing agitator has finally got his comeuppance. The 'left' see him as another martyr, disgracefully treated by a right-wing establishment.

A Town Hall job!

A chap goes for an interview at the town hall in Orihuela.

"Do you have any allergies" asks the interviewer.

"Yes, caffeine" the guy replies.

"Do you have any disability?" asks the interviewer.

The bloke replies "I was in the army in Afghanistan, and an IED exploded next to me and blew my testicles off".

"Fine" says the interviewer, "you've got the job, the hours are 10 till 2, but you can start at 12".

"Why's that", asks the bloke.

"Well" says the interviewer "for the first two hours we stand around drinking coffee and scratching our balls, so there'd be no point you being here."

Saw a black prostitute with teeth-braces at the Punta Prima roundabout last weekend.

Apparently she's a black and decker pecker wrecker.

Getting Old!

She's single...and beautiful....and she lives right across the road.

I can see her bedroom from my lounge.

I watched as she got home from work this evening.

I was surprised when she walked across the road and up to my door.

She knocked on the door...

I rushed to open it, my heart beating!

She looked at me, and said: "I just got home, and I am so horny! I have this strong urge to have a good time, get drunk, and make love all night long! Are you busy tonight?"

I immediately replied (voice cracking!): "No, I'm free... I have no plans at all!"

Then she said: "Oh good! In that case, could you look after my dog?"

Bugger! It's no fun getting old!!! (Kevin Wood)



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Just a Thought!

Seems to me like most rioting in the world happens in the countries with the least bacon. I was out collecting money for a sponsored walk last week..... I collected so much that I got a taxi instead. My wife and I are a fastidious couple. I am fast and she is hideous.

Spanish Chat-up Lines.

St. Valentines Day has gone, but now with Spring approaching, as Alfred, Lord Tennyson said "In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove; In the Spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love." So, as you may be sallying forth 'on the make' with love in your eye (and mud on your trousers), you might find the following phrases helpful when dealing with the opposite sex, or same sex depending on your preferences. I copied the following from a blog by Sarah Gooding of Cactus Worldwide Ltd.

I love No. 5. Good Luck!

1.) **¿Crees en el amor a primera vista o me tengo que acercar otra vez?**

- Do you believe in love at first sight, or should I walk by again?

2.) **¿Estoy muerto? Porque esto debe ser el cielo y tú un angel.**

- Am I dead, Angel? Cause this must be heaven!

3.) **Hola, soy un ladrón y estoy aquí para robarte el corazón.**

- Hello, I'm a thief, and I'm here to steal your heart.

4.) **¿Dónde te has metido toda mi vida?**

- Where have you been all my life?

5.) **Debes estar bastante cansada porque has estado corriendo por mi mente toda la noche.**

- Your legs must be tired because you've been running through my mind all night.

6.) **Haces que me derrita como un helado.**

- You make me melt like hot fudge on a sundae.

7.) **He perdido mi numero de teléfono ¿Me das el tuyo?**

- I lost my phone number, can I borrow yours?

8.) **¡Eres tan dulce que vas a dejar el azúcar fuera de circulación!**

- You're so sweet, you're going to put sugar out of business.

9.) **¿Tienes una tiritita? Porque me he hecho daño al arrodillarme por ti.**

- Have you got a plaster? Because I hurt my knee falling for you.

10.) **¿Puedo invitarte a una copa?**

- Can I buy you a drink?

Ole' Ole.

Ole was hunting geese up in the Minnesota woods. He leaned the old 16 gauge against the side of a tree to take a leak. As luck would have it, his frisky dog knocked the gun over ... it went off ... and Ole took most of an ounce of buckshot in the groin.

Several hours later, lying in a hospital bed, Ole came-to ... and there was his doctor, Sven.

"Vell, Ole, I got some good news and some bad news."

Sven went on, "Da good news is dat you are going to be okay. Da damage vas local to yer groin ... dere was very little internal damage and I vas able to remove all of da buckshot."

"What's da bad news?", asks Ole.

"The bad news is dat dere vas some pretty extensive buckshot damage to yer pecker, and I'm going to have to refer you to my sister, Lena."

"Well, I guess that isn't too bad," says Ole. "Is yer sister a plastic surgeon?"

"Not exactly," Sven says. "She's a flute player in da Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra. She's going to teach you where to put yer fingers, so you don't piss in your eye." (Pete Dudman)

"So, how's life in North Korea?"

"Well, I can't complain."

Environmentalists tell us that every day an area of rainforest the size of Wales is destroyed. Why is it never Wales? (Jimmy Carr)



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The New Mona Lisa.

The vast holdings of the Prado Museum in Madrid have yielded one of the most significant discoveries ever made in art history. Curators at the Madrid museum have unearthed a replica of Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa that was painted at the same time as the original by one of the master's favourite pupils, probably Andrea Salai or Francesco Melzi.

Experts at the Prado have spent months analysing, cleaning and removing the dark overpaint that covered the painting, which for years had been considered just another copy of the famous Mona Lisa. Now, though, it has been re-catalogued as a landmark in art history.

Although many copies of the Mona Lisa exist, this is the earliest known replica, given that it was painted virtually at the same time, inside Leonardo's studio, and not after his death as previously believed.

The painter of the replica made changes as he went, adapting to the original Mona Lisa even as it was taking shape beside him. The size of both paintings are practically the same.

The original on left, the 'new' one on right





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I'm Irish. We think sideways.
 Spike Milligan

Hang on a minute!

A bloke sees a notice in a shop window 'Talking Centipede 50 Euro'. He goes in, buys it and takes it home in a little box.

Later that day he says to the centipede, "Do you fancy going out for a pint" ? He gets no answer. He repeats the question & still no answer.

Then thinking he's been ripped off he shouts, "I SAID DO YOU FANCY GOING OUT FOR A PINT OR NOT?"

To which the centipede replies, "Hang on, I'm still putting my f**kin' boots on!"

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Nice-guy Nadal Nobbled!

Hacienda tax authorities are demanding that the companies owned by tennis star Rafael Nadal leave their tax refuge status in the Basque Country. Nadal's companies have enjoyed six years in Gipuzkoa in the Basque Region, taking advantage of special tax regimen there, despite the fact that neither is his income generated nor managed there. Nadal reached an agreement with Hacienda in December to change his 'domicilio' to the Balears, and to pay several million € to regularise his fiscal situation, according to tax sources. Nadal had assets of €56 million, and was paying only 1% in tax.



(Nadal: 'New balls please!')

Castellon Airport, more nonsense.

Further to the recent announcement that the runway at Castellon is too short, it has now been revealed that the regional and national authorities were aware of this fact as early as April of last year. The Aviation Safety Agency of Spain (EASA) confirmed that the existing runway was not only poorly constructed, but too short to allow planes to safely land, taxi and take off and any remedial work undertaken to correct the runway would amount to an estimated €80 Million. Despite Aerocas, the promoter and developer of the airport headed by President Carlos Fabra, being aware of this defect, the airport was still inaugurated in March of 2011 and various contracts for a number of services awarded - again despite the knowledge that no aircraft was likely to ever be given permission to land.

Further to the required runway re-modelling, a brief account of further spend at the airport includes :

- * The Salary of the Director of Castellon airport, Juan Garcia Salas, being paid more than the PM , despite having no air traffic to be responsible for.
- * The Airport spending some €30 Million on promoting tourism in the region, despite no tour operators or airlines being contracted to the airport.
- * Aerocas commissioning a €300,000 statue of their President (see right), Carlos Fabra, to welcome visitors to the airport. Despite there actually being no visitors.
- * A contract of €450,000 for Falconry being awarded, at the rate of €90,000 per year over a five year term - the Falcons being intended to keep wild birds away from the non-existent aircraft on take-off and landing.

A few weeks ago, the airport faced a demonstration by 3,500 protestors gathered at it's gates against the rising debts of the Valencian regional government. With austerity cuts becoming ever more severe in the region, it is easy to see why Castellon is such an easy target for those looking to vent their anger and frustration. The waste is shocking. (Source:Tumbit & El Mundo)



A Fair Cop!

My girlfriend dressed up as a police woman last night and giggled, "You're being charged with being good in bed..." After ten minutes she said she was dropping the charge due to lack of evidence.

Restaurant review - El Gallego at Pilar de la Horadada by Tid Steak & Fish Specialities

We have not covered a restaurant review for some time now, quite frankly because we have not enjoyed a meal memorable enough at a new venue to report on for some considerable time; that is until a couple of weeks ago, when I really fancied a good steak. Decent steaks in Spain are few and far between, tend to be overpriced and one is quite often disappointed having spent sometimes €18 to €21 for the experience. We have enjoyed the fish at this restaurant in the past, but had never tried the steaks, vowing to do so, but was unable to get a table at short notice until recently.

El Gallego is very, very Spanish, so don't expect garnish, onion rings etc., because you won't get them! I ordered a fillet steak, which was a good 10 ounces, served with a few fries and, oddly, a small mould of white rice. He ordered the T-bone, which was massive and weighed more than a pound. Both steaks were beautifully tender and juicy and cost just €14 each. I also ordered a blue cheese sauce with mine which cost €1.50. There were some excellent sirloins on offer at €12 each, chicken dishes from €8, pork chops €8 and leg of lamb at €14. If you fancy some veg' with your steak, then you have to order a plate from the starter menu at €7.

All the meat is displayed in a chilled cabinet in the restaurant, with the steaks pre-cut so that you know exactly what you are getting. The fresh fish is in a separate chilled cabinet in the middle of the restaurant, both looking very impressive! On a previous visit we had the mixed plate of fish for €22 and it was excellent. (The 'grouch' cut into a large red prawns which squirted red goo all over the front of his white shirt. He looked like a victim from the 'Chain Saw Massacre!')

The menu offers the usual array of Spanish starters from 5 - €12, with shareable salads from €6. The Spanish are communal eaters and expect their party to share the starters and main courses. We witnessed a table of four of them sharing some lamb and a T-bone, adding extra meat courses as the meal progressed. We then saw a party of six Brits' arrive, who ordered the Menu del Dia - soup and pasta! This was a bit like going into an ice-cream parlour and ordering a slice of toast!

Desserts range from €4 if you have any space left, a large beer is €3.50, soft drinks €1.60 and the house wines are priced at €8.

You really have to book here, even at lunchtimes, to be assured of a table. It now appears that the owners have acquired the adjoining Indian restaurant and will be expanding into that space in due course. To get there travel along the N332 to Pilar and turn right at the Carrefour Express roundabout. Go through the first set of light (not working), then straight through the crossroads lights, then second left (directly opposite the kebab shop) off the High Street. You will find El Gallego on the left hand corner of the side street. Tel: 96 535 1442 or 673 35 03 23 for bookings.



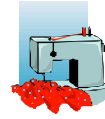
I dare say that the image on the left might cause some republicans to catch their breath. Surely not Franco in a freezer or cola display cabinet? Thankfully, the old bast**d has not been resurrected. This sculpture is entitled 'Always Franco' and is the work of the artist Eugenio Merino. He says the figure symbolises that Franco continues in the minds of the Spanish. It is now on display at ARCO art fair in Madrid. The artist/sculptor produced another controversial piece last year titled 'Stairway to Heaven.' (See right) This featured an Arab on his knees praying, while a Catholic priest is on his knees on the Arab's back, and there is a Rabbi standing on the shoulders of the priest. That sold for €50,000.



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Football, the latest.

John Terry won't be facing trial for racial abuse until after Euro 2012. So he's free to lead his country into Poland.....just like his hero did.

A pound coin was thrown onto the pitch at Portsmouth football ground. Police are trying to determine whether it was a missile or a takeover bid.

When Thierry Henry was signed to play at Arsenal again they said, "You'll feel right at home here, everything's just as you left it.....including the trophy cabinet. "

What's the difference between Emile Heskey and Fernando Torres?
About £50m.

My son scored '0' in his math test at school.

"Son, if you don't score, how will you live up to your idol?"

"I already am living up to him."

"Really? Who is he?"

"Fernando Torres."

Tough game for Liverpool tomorrow. Football.

Dave: "Mum, I've got the biggest penis at primary school, is that because I'm a big boy?"

Mum: "No, it's because you're 45 and the headmaster. Now watch out before you 'slobber' your spaghetti down your new Chelsea top."

Remember there is such a thing as a bad winner. Just look at the Scottish Premier League.

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Be on the lookout for.....

The bogus gasmen are doing the rounds again. Tell them to buzz off. Similarly, the chap who asks if you can lend him some money to pay for a locksmith as he has locked himself out of his house.

When the weather improves, the collectors for children's charities will come calling. They will be probably be wearing suits, carrying photos of children and they will say that your neighbour down the road gave them some money. Again, they are bogus. It is also illegal to try and collect money from the public like that. They feel that the expat is a 'soft touch' when it comes to kids and animals.

Please take care when driving down 'Cardiac Hill' towards the roundabout by Aldi's. Cars race down the hill far too fast and through the roundabout taking little notice of the 'yield' signs. Unless drivers take greater care, there will be a serious accident.

The processional caterpillars are back, please take care with your pets and young 'uns.

Dig in!

A hungry cowboy walks into a seedy cafe in Saratoga, Wyoming. He sits at the counter and notices an old cowboy with his arms folded staring blankly at a full bowl of chili.

After fifteen minutes of just sitting there staring at it, the young cowboy bravely asks the old cowpoke, 'If you ain't gonna eat that, mind if I do?'

The older cowboy slowly turns his head toward the young wrangler and says, 'Nah son, you just go ahead.'

Eagerly, the young cowboy reaches over and slides the bowl over to his place and starts spooning it in with delight.. He gets nearly down to the bottom and notices a dead mouse in the chili. This shocks the wide-eyed cowpoke and he immediately 'barfs-up' the chili back into the bowl.

The old cowboy quietly says, 'Yep, that's as far as I got, too.'

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The Constitution of 1812 and the return of Ferdinand II.

During the French occupation, Cádiz became the seat of Spanish government. This was the country's leading Atlantic port, separated from the mainland by a narrow peninsula easily defended from French assault, protected and provisioned by the British and Spanish fleets. Here the assembly, or *cortez*, drew up Spain's first constitution in 1812. At that time Cádiz was the most liberal city in the peninsula, and open to foreign influence, living off the American trade, led mostly by a middle class that had made its money from commerce and not landed dominion, the Cádiz environment gave a decisive liberal thrust to constitutional reformism.

For its time, the new constitution was radical and a frontal attack on the social, political and economic organisation of the old regimes. Although Ferdinand II was recognised as head of state, sovereignty was declared to reside in the people and their elected representatives. Article 2 of the Constitution declared, 'The Spanish nation is free and independent and it is not nor can it ever be the property of any family or person.' Regional differences and privileges were to be abolished in favour of a unitary centralised state; primary education was to be free for all and although Catholicism was to remain the state religion,

heresy was still punishable by law, the Inquisition was to be abolished and part of the material wealth of the Church seized. The degree of support for the Constitution in the country at large was uncertain. Scarcely more than 10 percent of the population were literate at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the lower classes lacked political consciousness. On the other hand, it was clear enough that in a number of regions the peasants stood directly behind liberal reforms insofar as they promised the abolition of feudal restrictions which were tantamount to slavery. However the conservative landowners, aristocrats and the clergy were dismayed by the thrust of the new, fearing that increased state control would reduce not only their domination of Spanish society but their wealth as well. By the time the last French troops had deserted the peninsula, Spain was an arena of sharp political strife between supporters and opponents of the constitution.

The immediate future of the Spanish political system depended on the attitude of the heir to the throne, who returned from French exile in April 1814 to begin his reign as Fernando VII. He proved in many ways the basest king in Spanish history. Cowardly, selfish, grasping, suspicious, and vengeful, Ferdinand seemed almost incapable of any perception of the commonwealth. He thought only in terms of his power and security and was unmoved by the enormous sacrifices of Spanish people to retain their independence and preserve his throne. At a time when other, more enlightened western European rulers strove to forget past grievances and come to terms with change, Fernando VII thought only of returning to the situation as it had been before 1808. Though originally required to swear loyalty to the constitution, he found as his triumphant homeward journey led him nearer Madrid that powerful forces in the army, society, church, and former bureaucracy would support a return to absolutism. Hence he gave his blessing to the first direct military intervention in modern Spanish government, the overthrow of the constitutional system by the army command in April 1814. The Madrid rabble was aroused to paroxysms of enthusiasm for its restored sovereign, giving vent to cries of "Long live the absolute king" and even a few of "Long live our chains!"

Absolute monarchy was restored on the terms of 1808, and all the changes wrought by the Cádiz Cortes were swept away. The liberals were persecuted, some executed and many were imprisoned or chased out of the country. The regime was not at first bloody, but it was tyrannical, suspicious, and above all, administratively inefficient. The king regularly failed to back up his own government appointees. Between 1814 and 1820 the average length of tenure for cabinet ministers was approximately six months. The treasury lay in a state of total disarray and the debt increased steadily. There was one attempt at tax reorganization in 1817, when provision was made for a simplified single contribution on land by all classes, cutting across seigniorial dues and rents, but it was not effectively implemented. Absolute monarchy proved completely unable to meet its own obligations.

Meanwhile, during the decade 1810-1820, most of Spanish America was lost to the independence movements that had emerged in major areas throughout the colonies at a time when the Spanish government was suffering virtual atrophy amid war and reactionary absolutism. The Cádiz Cortes had wanted to extend parliamentary representation to the colonies, but insisted on continued centralization of government and administration while refusing further *de jure* liberalization of trade. In most regions the Spanish-American independence movement was limited mainly to a Spanish Creole or Spanish-mestizo minority of the landed upper classes and commercial elite who insisted upon the right to conduct their affairs independently. With certain exceptions, the lower classes in America tended to be neutral or even pro-Spanish. Only the collapse of the Spanish state under the weight of the French invasion had made it possible for the revolts to achieve success. After 1814, Fernando's corrupt and incoherent regime was incapable of a major effort to restore Spanish control. The empire was lost mainly by default. Just as the sixteenth-century conquest had been a largely private enterprise that received only marginal assistance from the royal government, so the nineteenth-century independence movements met only marginal opposition from the Spanish homeland.

After 1825, all that remained of the great Spanish empire was Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the island possessions in the Pacific.

(Acknowledgement:: Normally I collate the 'History of Spain' articles from several sources. This month I have used just two - Simon Barton's A History of Spain and Stanley G. Payne's A History of Spain and Portugal, Volume 2.)

CLASSIFIED ADS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ETC.

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Two guys in a health club, one is
putting on sexy lace knickers.
"Since when do you wear women's
pants?"
"Since my wife found them in the
glove compartment!"

Two Arab mothers were watching
their children playing in the park; one
says to the other, 'You have to enjoy
them at this age...they blow up so
quickly.'

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The **express bus service** between Torrevieja and Alicante airport will continue
to operate during the winter period. Tickets €6.79. The timings are as follows -

TORREVIEJA – AEROPUERTO ALICANTE

09.00 – 11.00 – 13.00 – 15.00 – 17.00 – 19.00 Hrs

AEROPUERTO ALICANTE – TORREVIEJA

10.00 – 12.00 – 14.00 – 16.00 – 18.00 – 20.00 Hrs

Product Recalls: The Carrefour chain has issued a recall for two electrical items.
The first recall is for a clothes dryer, Bluesky BSL602W-10. It is also sold under
its own brand as Carrefour Home CSL602W-11. The second is for a deep fat
fryer with the name Carrefour Home CDF27-11.

If you have any of these items, stop using them immediately and take them to the
customer service point in your local store.

URGENT: CAM Bonds.

CAM Bank is offering €900 million to repurchase two issues of subordinated
debt. These relate to the bond issues of 400 million maturing on September 29,
2016 and another 500 million maturing on April 26, 2017.

The savings bank is offering to pay 75% of their value BUT the tender offer will
end on March 5, 2012 at 17.00 hours peninsula, while communicating the final
results will be published as soon as possible after March 6. The settlement date
of the offer is March 8. The securities benefiting from the offer will be cancelled
and the rest will remain in circulation.

If you are unlucky enough to hold some of these bonds please consult a competent
professional immediately.

The original article is here in Spanish -

<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2012/02/24/economia/1330087107.html>

The Jocks & the Micks

The Scots are a really tough people. They have drive-by headbuttings.

In Glasgow a sweatband is considered a silencer.

(Emo Philips)

Get yer haggis, right here! Chopped heart and lungs boiled in a wee sheep's
stomach. Tastes as good as it sounds. (Groundskeeper Willie, The Simpsons)

Demolishing a house in Dublin last year, workmen found a skeleton with a medal
round its neck. The inscription read: Irish Hide and Seek Champion 1910.

Frank Carson

Good Guess!

I was telling a girl in the pub about my uncanny ability to guess the day a
woman was born just by feeling their breasts.

"Really?" she said. "Go on then... try."

After about 30 seconds of fondling she began to lose patience.

"Come on," she demanded, "What day was I born on?"

"Yesterday?" I replied.

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