

THE DREAM SCENE



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Bienvenido a todos!



As I write this we are in the middle of a general strike. As usual, the degree of success of the strike depends on whose figures you believe. It is similar with the protest marches, the largest being in Madrid and Barcelona. The unions will quote a large figure of participants while the police will generally reduce that to a fifth of the union number. However the economy is entering its second recession in three years heralded by soaring unemployment and rising borrowing costs. Some economists are predicting a lost decade of growth similar to the one experienced by Japan in the 1990's from which it has never fully recovered. And on March 30, PM Rajoy is to present what he calls 'a very, very severe budget.'

Except for the deluge on March 20, the weather here has been beautifully sunny with blue skies. However there is a chilly wind in the evenings still, so it is wise to carry a jumper or cardigan if going out.

Locally, it is good to see that the Indian restaurant in Via Park V, 2GB, has reopened. Hopefully with Easter approaching, general business everywhere will improve with the tourists and visitors. What used to be the Vidal supermarket, has now reopened as, yes, you guessed it, another Chinese store. A large new store has also opened up at the start of the Cabo Roig strip. Thankfully this is not another Oriental bric-a-brac store but a large lighting emporium.

Thank you to all those who have renewed your Dream Scene subscription. We all know that times are tough but I would especially like to thank Dave & Justine, David & Ellen, Beryl & Dennis, Patsy & Arthur, Bill & Kath, Margaret Oliver, Patricia & Con and Stewart of Macklin's Welcome Inn for their very, very generous donations.

For many, one of the least enjoyable aspects of living in warm countries is the abundant presence of cockroaches. These little blighters are tough, fast and always seem to appear when and where you least expect them. Conventional spraying can only keep them under control at best. However help is at hand. Researchers in the University of Nariz Grande in Benalmadena, Andalucia, have discovered that a chemical constituent in green dye has properties which are obnoxious particularly to the hardy cockroach. The Emeritus Professor at the university, Dr. Pedro Culo-Melenudo, explained, 'The triarylmethane dye - Brilliant Green (*Viridis nitentis spirituososa*) - has many medicinal qualities although it is toxic when ingested. Laboratory tests have shown that cockroaches in particular have a strong aversion to the substance.' The professor goes on, 'Fortunately for us humans, there are high concentrations of the dye to be found in green toilet paper. Consequently, one of the most effective and cheapest means of clearing the 'roaches' from the pipework and drainage in your vicinity is simply to use green toilet paper in place of other colours.' These findings have now encouraged many urbanisations in the Andalucian region to amend the rules of the urbanisation to state that owners should now only use green toilet paper. Look out for some new rule changes at our next AGM! The Rendezvous on the top floor of Via Park III carry a small supply of the paper, and there is a full list of stockists included in page 17 of this issue.

Competition: Where on the N332 in Orihuela Costa is 'Adolph's House'? If you know the answer, email me at mick.dreamscene@gmail.com or drop your answer into the DreamScene postbox outside 586 Dream Hills. A bottle of Bailey's to the winning entry picked at random from the bunch.

A Happy Easter to you all from Mick & Tid.

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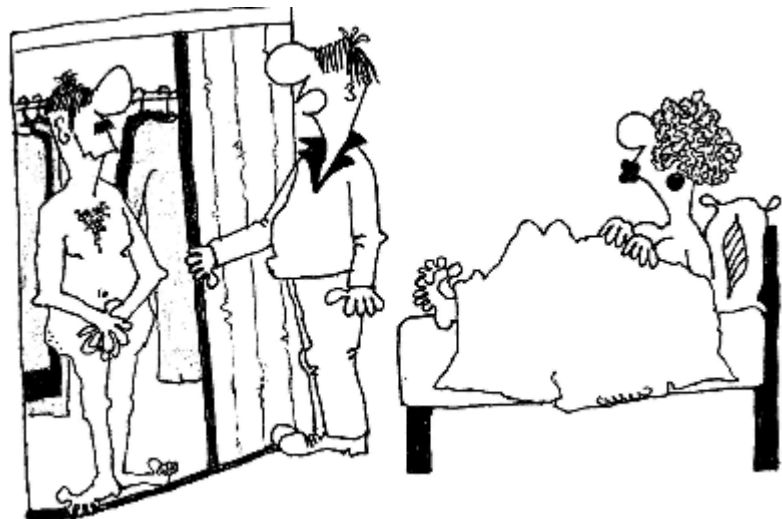
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Angela's Cartoon



"Whadya mean 'April Fool'?"

What's Up?

There was a general strike in Spain on March 29. There were over 30,000 pickets in Madrid and many arrests.

It has emerged that the European Union has sent inspectors to Spain to examine the public accounts. The European Commission has complained that the figures for the public deficit for last year 'are changing continuously' i.e. 'We find it hard to believe you!'

The sale of properties in Spain fell by 26.3% in January when compared with the same period in 2011, amounting to 33,087 transactions. This marks the 11th consecutive month of falling statistics. More than half (57.1%) of all property sales in January occurred in Andalusia (5,644 operations), Catalonia (4,627), Madrid (4,411) and Valencia (4,221). Property sales decreased 29.3% in 2011 over the previous year, with 347,305 operations, which is similar to the figures for 2007.

A recent study by Catalunya Caixa has revealed that there are currently an estimated 818,000 unsold new properties throughout Spain. An estimated 53% of those aged between 16 and 34 are currently living with their parents - 2.9 Million of the 5.7 Million in this age group. The lender suggested that the glut of unsold properties is down to the number of young people being forced to live with their parents for financial reasons. The study also attributed the increase in empty properties to a decline in the population and recommends the introduction of schemes to help young people buy or rent their first homes.

The Catalans have finally introduced their 'tourist tax.' The expected taxes are 2.5 € a night for five star hotels and cruise liners, 1.25 € for four star hotels, and the rest of the establishments will see a 75 cents daily charge in Barcelona and a 50 cents charge in the rest of Cataluña. They have also introduced a €1 prescription charge. The rush by the Catalans (who do not consider themselves Spanish) to introduce these new taxes is because they do not want to see Madrid introducing their new taxes in Cataluña, preserving their 'independence' as much as they can.

Jaume Matas, the ex PP President of the Balears, has received a six-year jail sentence for perversion of the course of justice, misuse of public funds, falsification and fraud. Antonio Alemany, a journalist for El Mundo and the author of his speeches, got 3 years 9 months as a beneficiary of the scam. Although Matas is going to appeal, he has another 15 charges to answer.

Germany has said it wants to close its borders to people from Greece and Spain who go there in search of work. The German cabinet has decided to remove the regular €364 unemployment benefit which it has been paying previously to European citizens who arrive in the country without a job. The 'frogs' are also having a re-think. Sarkozy is threatening to leave the Schengen Agreement. (The UK and Ireland are not part of the Agreement.) He is insisting that the EU revise its immigration strategy and wants protectionist measures against third countries.

One of my 'favourites,' the SGAE, the Spanish copyright and performing rights society, is back in the news again, but as usual, not for anything laudable. Back in May 2007, the SGAE decided to commission a new theatre project in Sevilla called the Auditorio Al-Ándalus (see photo on right). This had a budget of €30 million. However, the project remains incomplete and to date €71 million has been spent on it. The unfinished building is now up for sale.

Last year, the Mayor of Los Barrios, in the Costa Calida, could not pay his council staff their wages because of lack of funds. His solution? He obtained a loan of €1.5 million from a contact on Facebook. The person who granted the loan was a resident of Algeciras who had recently won six million € in the ONCE lottery. However, the interest rate charged by this 'good Samaritan' is 28% p.a.! Certainly extortionate, but who is daft enough to lend money to a local council?

Premusa, the developer behind the Paramount Pictures Theme Park project, have run into further problems. You may recall that last month some of the plots they wished to purchase had charges against them. It now appears that they were only able to purchase around two thirds of the required land area for the project. Premusa said in a recent statement that they were only able to purchase around one million square meters of land, worth 10.3 million euros, but need to purchase a further 550,000 metres at a later date. The regional spokesman for the IU-Verdes in Murcia complained that the Arab investors that the developers of the park had promised, were still not forthcoming and neither had the first stone being laid. He referred to the project as being "just a name" and that to date it had been "a Pantomime." He also stated that the Corvera Airport project was a 'risk.'

This would appear to be confirmed by the Spanish newspaper, La Verdad. They have reported the possibility that the new Corvera International airport may miss its original scheduled opening date of July, and instead not open until the Autumn or Winter of 2012. The main reason given for this is the break in negotiations between Aeromur and AENA due to the change of Government following the November general elections. The issue was further complicated by the appointment of new key personnel at AENA. Although it is estimated that work at the new airport will still be complete by the summer, certain procedural issues such as the training and employment of new staff, the transfer of staff and operations from San Javier airport, and the reclassification of airspace are still to be resolved. However 17 more weekly flights for the summer were announced for San Javier on March 23!

Bernie Ecclestone has confirmed that the Valencia and Barcelona Formula One Grand Prix are to alternate from 2013. This season will be the last to see two races in Spain. The Formula One chief said the decision had been taken simply as a way in which they could help Valencia which has major economic and financial problems. The current contract with Valencia was to have ended in 2014.

Wayne Rooney has visited Fabrice Muamba in hospital. "It's great, he can almost string a sentence together,"said Fabrice.



The debt to Hacienda (Spanish Inland Rev.) of football clubs in Spain has risen to €752 million. This has increased by 150 million euro over the last four years. The *Primera* or Premier clubs account for 489 million of the total debt.

Ryanair is to introduce a six Euro surcharge on all flights purchased in Spain from April 15. This will appear as 'coste de gestión' (management charge) and will be added to the final ticket price with the rest of the charges. The charge is a strategy to promote the airline's new Ryanair Cash Passport, a MasterCard debit card which will give passengers a six € discount.

The Ministry of Health is investigating the largest outbreak of leishmaniasis disease in humans which is centred in Fuenlabrada, Madrid. The illness is usually restricted to dogs, but can be transmitted to humans and the number of cases to do so has increased from 15 in 2009 to 118 last year. At the end of February the number of cases reached 228. It is believed that between 6 to 8% of dogs in the Madrid region are infected with this disease. The problem for us here is if the Madrileños bring their untreated dogs with them on holidays.

The Moroccan Imam of Terrassa in Barcelona, Abdeslam Laarusi, is being investigated for instructing his faithful on how to hit a woman. He advises the use of a stick, the fist or the hand so no bones are broken and no blood is drawn. The Mossos D'Escuadra regional police recorded some of his sermons and the Prosecutor considers that the crimes of incitement to violence and discrimination against women has been committed. The Mosque at Terrassa is one of the largest in Cataluña, and attracts more than 1,500, many of whom are now denying to the press that they have ever heard such things being said. The Imam refused to plead to the court and now faces between one and three years in prison if found guilty. Back in 2004 there was a similar case with the Imam of Fuengirola who was given a 15 months prison sentence and fined 2,160 € on the same charges.

The Spanish Government has revealed that it wants to increase the tax on diesel vehicles because they 'contaminate more'. The change will be a modification on the vehicle matriculation tax.

Yoigo, Vodafone and the virtual operators led the new signings for mobile phone services in January which saw a new record for portability as nearly 540,000 lines changed operator. The big losers over the month were Orange and Movistar who lost nearly 80,500 lines between them. The number of mobile lines in Spain in January was 58.88 million, 3.2% more than a year ago. This is remarkable when you consider that the total population is 46.7 million!

The economic crisis in Spain has resulted in a sudden jump in the number of men getting the calling to become a priest. There are currently 1,278 applicants to the priesthood. The Archbishop of Sevilla commented, 'There's no unemployment here'.

A 22-year-old man who was playing five-a-side football match in Barcelona, was 'kneed' in the testicles during a dispute in the match. The player, from the Club Esportiu Terra Negra team, lost one of his testicles and has now denounced the assault, by a player from the Jesús i María club. (These Jesus & Mary blokes must be as hard as nails!)

Electricity prices will rise between 5% and 7% on April 1. The increase is to meet a Supreme Court ruling which obliges the Government to up the tariff to clear the deficit (subsidised by the electricity companies) which has been growing for years. The Government considers that consumers could not support the clearing of the deficit in a single step; that would result in 40% larger bills!

The SEPLA pilots union in Iberia say they will go on strike on every Monday and Friday from April 9 to July 20.

Four years after more than 150 kilos of cocaine vanished from the main police station in Sevilla, last week it was discovered that about 30 kilos of the drug has gone missing from the National Institute of Toxicology and Forensic Science in Sevilla. The drug was waiting to be analysed by the technicians before it would have been destroyed.

3

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A local policeman who kept a wallet which had been forgotten by a woman has been sentenced to 21 months in prison. She had left the wallet in the Traffic department in Almuñecar, Granada. The policeman extracted more than 2,000 € on the credit cards in the wallet and was charged with fraud and making illegal extractions.

The Socialist mayor of Albox in Almeria has run up a bill of €23,000 on the Town Hall Visa card for 120 meals! The mayor, who has an Audi A6 as his official car also spent €1,100 on the card in a luxury hotel in Madrid. Meanwhile, the Town Hall is so short of cash that some of the employees have not been paid.

The National Police have arrested 55 security guards in Madrid, Toledo, Cuenca and Badajoz who worked for 30 different companies. The guards were said to be working fraudulently with forged qualifications, with some guarding explosives and VIP's and one controlling access to a nuclear facility. Some of those arrested also had previous criminal records.

A survey in Spain has indicated that 90% of children here say they have heard about the crisis, surprising a higher percentage than have heard about Messi. The study, carried out by the Institute for Psychological Orientation shows that they have noted that their parents are stressed and say the best things to do now are to kiss, hug, play and sleep more. So, 'pucker-up!'

I'm a 'double bagger.' Not only does my husband put a bag over my head when we're making love, but he also puts a bag over his own head in case mine falls off.

(Joan Rivers)

From the sublime to the ridiculous in Catalonia.

"If we hadn't operated on her, she would have died," says Doctor Julio Moreno, a specialist at Sant Joan de Déu hospital in Barcelona.



Moreno was the man in charge of a pioneering procedure that saved the life of a 26-week-old fetus, which weighed just 800 grams inside her mother's womb at the time of the operation.

"It was a delicate procedure but the results are satisfactory," Moreno said at a press conference with the now-16-month-old Alaitz. This beautiful girl (see photo) is expected to live "a completely normal life," according to the medical team that took part in the surgery. This was the first time that a doctor anywhere in the world had tried to operate on the bronchial tubes of an unborn fetus, according to Moreno. Alaitz, whose name means 'happiness' in Basque, was on the verge of dying because of a genetic defect preventing the fetus from

getting enough oxygen. It is a rare condition that blocks the bronchial tube to the lung. Doctors say that in approximately 90 percent of such cases, the fetus dies. Because of this birth abnormality, the bronchial tube is paralysed and begins to swell, preventing the lungs from properly developing, according to the medical team, which included specialists in fetal medical and therapy from the Barcelona Clinic led by Eduard Gratacós and Josep Maria Martínez, and surgeon Montserrat Castañón, as well as Moreno, the neonatologist. "It is a complicated procedure because you lose a lot of liquid and the heart can stop and you have to get it beating again," said Gratacós. The entire procedure lasted 30 minutes. (Source: El Pais)

Although the Catalans do seem to push the boundaries in the medical field, as always, there are some in the profession who would make better window-cleaners. Following a botched surgery to close her fallopian tubes, Isabel Mercedes suffered excruciating pain for 19 years. Between the age of 25 and 43, she made 150 visits to the hospital emergency department. She was called 'crazy' and a 'hypochondriac,' and they told her to visit a sexologist saying her lack of sex drive dated from her infancy (?), and 'do some yoga.' Finally she turned to private medicine at the Dexeus Institute, where Dr. Santiago Dexeus said she had myoma and endometriosis as her fallopian tubes had been cut in the wrong place. He operated successfully, but Isabel was left with a bill of over €10,000 which was paid by her family. After all that, she decided to take legal action against the Catalan Health Service, and she has now been awarded €300,000.



It has been revealed that those who eat more than 20 grams of *chorizo* or other *embutidos* a day could have adverse reactions and in severe cases suffer a chronic obstruction to the lungs, known as Epoc. It's thought that the cause of the problem comes from the nitrates which are added as preservatives. The warning comes from CREAL, the Centre for Research in Environmental Epidemiology, who have published their study in the European Respiratory Journal. They say that more than 18,000 people die from Epoc each year.

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Tarzan.

After living in the jungle for some time, Jane wanted to partake in some 'horizontal jogging' with Tarzan and asked if he knew what sex was. "What's that?" he asked.

She explained to him what sex was and he said, "Oh, Tarzan use a hole in the trunk of tree!" Horrified, she said, "Tarzan you have it all wrong! I'll show you how to do it properly."

She seductively took off her clothes and lay on the ground.

"Here," she said, "Do to me what you do to the tree"

Tarzan removed his loincloth, stepped closer, and then gave her an almighty kick in the crotch.

Jane rolled around in agony. Eventually she managed to gasp, "What the hell did you do that for?"

"Tarzan check for wasps first!"



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The worst company in Spain.



Movistar (part of Telefonica) have been announced as "The Worst Company in Spain". A Whopping 37% of all votes placed online at the FACUA consumer action group's third annual award for the worst business in Spain, went to the Spanish telecommunications giant. Movistar also won the award on the two previous occasions - 2010 and 2011. To win the annual award once is bad enough, but to win it three years running is almost.....admirable!

This year's runners up in this category were Vodafone (In 2nd Place with 32%) followed by Bankia; CAM Bank and Ryanair.

Movistar also took first prize in a second category at the awards : The "Worst Ad of the Year", taking 35% of the vote.

Sadly, the Telecomms giant was unable to do the triple by winning the third category : The "Worst Business Practice of the year", with 37% of all voters choosing to vent their ire at the Executives of many of Spain's bailed out banks. Consumers were angered by their decision to award themselves million-euro pay outs at the expense of the tax-paying public through the public money sponsored FROB (Fund for Orderly Bank Restructuring).

The Guest.

John went to his friend's house unannounced, and he wanted to spend the night. His friend was sorry that he could not offer him a whole room, so he said, "You can sleep on the floor in the living room, or you can sleep in the room with Baby."

John said that he would prefer the floor.

The next morning he went to the bathroom, and there he met a gorgeous young blonde. "Hi," he said, "who are you?"

"I'm Baby, and who are you?" the blonde asked.

"I'm stupid".

Problems with damp?

The downpour we experienced in March reminded me of the problems we have had with damp in one of the bedrooms on the first floor, close to the overflow pipe. Any heavy rainfall resulted in large damp/wet patches after a bout of heavy rain. When Torrevisa (the original builder) were solvent we brought them in to correct the problem. They spent a full day here but when the rain returned so did the damp and mould.

We then decided to contact Eco Build (advert above) to see if they could remedy the situation permanently. Fortunately, they were well experienced in correcting the problems and shortcomings we all experience in some Spanish building work. The team arrived, headed by Gary, addressed and corrected the problems rapidly. I also thought the price they charged was very reasonable.

For several months now and despite the heavy rain on March 20, the ceiling and walls have remained as dry as a Quakers wedding. I believe in giving credit where it is due and can recommend their services. If your property is suffering from damp, give Gary a call for an evaluation and free estimate.

Father O'Flaherty.

Mrs. Donovan was walking down O'Connell Street in Dublin when She met up with Father O'Flaherty.

The priest said, 'Top o' the mornin to you! Didn't I marry you and your husband two years ago?'

She replied, 'Yes, thank you Father...'

'Well,' said the priest, 'I'm just off to Rome and I will light a 'fertility candle' for you and your husband.'

They then parted ways.

Some years later they met again.

The priest asked, 'Well now, Mrs. Donovan, how are you doin' these days?'

She replied, 'Oh, very well, Father!'

The priest asked, 'And tell me, have you any wee ones yet?'

She replied, 'Oh yes, Father! Two sets of twins and six singles, Ten in all!'

The Father said, 'That's wonderful! And what is yer lovin' husband doing now?'

She replied, 'He's gone to Rome to blow out yer fookin' candle.'

(Pete Dudman)

Other News

The Regional Government of Valencia cut the **holiday period** for teachers in public schools. As from next year teachers will only be permitted to take the 1st to 31st of August as holiday, whereas previously they also had July as a month free from work. The Regional Department of Education issued a statement detailing how the school year will be increased to allow greater flexibility of classes with regards to family and work commitments, with afternoon classes being held in June and September, when children in infant and primary schools in the region are generally closed.

In an ominous move, the branch line to the **Warner Theme Park** in Madrid is scheduled to close in April this year. The line, which was opened in 2002, cost €85 million to build and €3.3 million annually to maintain, and carried a daily average of only 190 passengers. Although the Madrid regional government invested a further €160 million in the Warner Theme Park, it has been an utter failure. This should at least cause a 'sharp intake of breath' to the investors in the proposed Paramount theme park in Murcia.

High class **prostitutes** (if there is such a thing?) In Madrid have decided not to attend to bankers. They state that there will be no 'horizontal jogging' until the bankers 'open the credit tap to families and businesses.' The working-girls suspect that the bankers are now saying that they are 'architects' or 'engineers' so that they 'can get their bell rung!'

'Catch of the Day' in Torrevieja last week turned out to be a very odd fish indeed. The trawler, 'Nuevo Pedro y Loli' caught a four-metre long WW2 German G7 **torpedo** (see photo) in its net on March 27, four miles off the coast. Fortunately the torpedo did not have its explosive charge, which was usually 300 kilos of TNT. The salvaged torpedo with the propulsion system weighed 800 kilos which caused the trawler engine to overheat on its return to Torrevieja.



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Love & Marriage

A woman ran excitedly into her house one morning and yelled to her husband; 'John, pack up your stuff. I just won the lottery.' 'Shall I pack for warm weather or cold?' he said. 'Whatever. Just as long as you're out of the house by noon.'

Marriage is like the witness protection programme: you get all new clothes, you live in the suburbs and you're not allowed to see your friends anymore.

Some help from some banks!

The Government has approved a voluntary code of good practices in early March, to try and reduce the number of people being evicted from their homes because they can't keep up with the mortgage.

Those families where all their members are unemployed can opt for this initiative if the value of the property is below €200,000. There are three alternatives – restructuring of the debt, writing off a part of the debt, and the 'dación en pago' when the family leave the property back to the bank knowing that any debts associated with the property have been cleared. Under the last option they would also have the right to pay rent for two year and stay in the property at a rate of 2%. So if they owe €100,000, the monthly quota for rent would be €250.

Bankia and another five banking groups say they will sign up to the Government's new Code of Good Practice. They are Bankia, CaixaBank, Ibercaja, Unicaja, Kitxabank and the BMN group. The CECA, the Spanish Confederation of Savings Banks, say they hope the rest of their members will also sign up soon. The plan means that when a property worth less than €200,000 is about to be repossessed for the lack of mortgage payments, the bank can offer refinancing which will give families a four year period when they only pay the interest, extending their policy to a maximum of 40 years.

No doubt the schemes on offer will vary from bank to bank. However, because it is a voluntary code, don't expect the banks to drop all their 'sharp practices.' It will be interesting to see in the coming months if the code has any real effect.

The Deputy Prime Minister stated, "These measures seek to alleviate the dramatic situation of many Spaniards who have lost everything," Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría said. She noted that there 1.5 million households in Spain with all of their members unemployed. Judicial sources advise that there have been 150,000 foreclosures during the current crisis, while another 300,000 are pending.

It is now almost impossible to get a mortgage from a Spanish bank unless you choose a property from their own portfolio.

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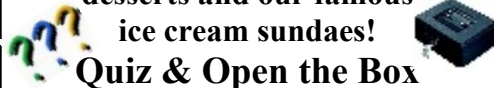
I'm not proud of some of the things I've done in my life. I'm not proud of having a poor education. I'm not proud of being an alcoholic. I'm not proud of being a drug addict. I'm not proud of biting the head off a bat.
But it could be worse. I could be Sting. (Ozzy Osbourne)

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The Bar Staff

- A bartender is just a pharmacist with a limited inventory.
- What a barman! When I asked for something tall, cold and full of gin, he called his wife out.
- A white horse goes into a bar and orders a pint of bitter. 'Blimey,' the barman says, 'we sell a whiskey named after you.' 'What, Eric?' says the horse.
- A penguin walked into a bar and asked, 'Have you seen my brother?' The bartender said, 'I don't know. What does he look like?'



Torrential rain in both Torrevieja and Orihuela Costa led to severe flooding, making many of the roads impassable. With over 130 litres of rainfall per square metre on March 20, many cars were either stranded (see above) and abandoned. The lack of adequate storm drainage in both areas means that this will be a reoccurring problem. 90% of the flooding problem in Torrevieja could be solved with an investment by the Ministry of Development of 45 million euros. This would also save some of the water, rather than divert it all into the sea. This is most unlikely in the current economic climate. Similarly, the conversion of the N-332 by Torrevieja into a four-lane road would cost at least 38 million euros. But again, there is no money for this.

Ironically, Spain is demanding that Brussels forward €5.5 billion in aid because of the drought. However the European Commission is demanding that the costly desalination plants which it financed in Spain be switched on. The Commission has reminding Spain that it spent €1.5 billion on the plants, which are currently working at only 16% capacity. Only 17 of the 51 installed plants are currently operational. Despite costing more than €296 million, the Torrevieja desalination plant is still not operational.

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Archaeologists have discovered a new mummy in Egypt, embalmed in chocolate... experts say its the remains of Pharaoh Roche.

"Yesterday the prime minister of Ireland made President Obama an honorary Irishman. As a result, President Obama awoke this morning with a hangover and a job at the fire department." –Conan O'Brien



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QROPS PENSION WARNING !!!!!!!!!

Due to impending Inland Revenue rule changes , anyone who has transferred their pension into a QROPS may be left with a large tax bill after April 5th.
 If you think that this may be something that affects you then contact me urgently on 966844979 or mike@maypolefs.co.uk

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A good deal!

A man walks into a brothel in Madrid and asks, "What can I get for €100?"
 The Madam says, "Humiliation."
 The man replies, "What will I get?"
 The Madam responds, "A Liverpool F.C. shirt."

Lime Bar Golf Society, Los Altos, Orihuea Costa.

The golf society's venue for the 14th March 2012 was held at Peraleja Golf Course.

The weather can only be described as perfect for golf, the course was in reasonable condition considering the very dry weather we are sustaining. For most of us it was the first time playing the course which proved interesting with a number of balls falling into the various water traps. This resulted in fairly low scores but did not diminish a very enjoyable day.



The competition was in the stableford format, and the scores were recorded, as follows:-

Best guest Phil Bribham with 26 points

Nearest the Pin on the 2nd was Barry Shawyer. which I may add he was down in 2 shots

Nearest the Pin on the 9th was George Reilly.

Nearest the Pin on the 12th was Don Martin.

Nearest the Pin on the 16th was Bob Addair.

Silver Class runner up was Paul Abbott with a score of 30 points.

Silver Class winner was Don Martin with a score of 34 points

Gold Class runner up was Damien Stead with 33 points.

Gold Class winner was Bob Adair with a score of 33 points on the count back better back 9.

Best score of the day was Don Martin with 34 points and wins a free game at Peraleja Golf.

It is a pleasure to play with the guys at the Lime Bar, always friendly and ready to go out to enjoy themselves, and also thanks to the Staff at The Lime Bar for a most enjoyable meal. Anyone wishing to join our friendly society just need to phone George on 693 789 082 or the Lime Bar at Via Park III Los Altos. (Colin Clarke)



The General Court of the European Union has refused to register a number of trademarks for the distillery Federico Cortés del Valle S.L. They object to the naming of some of the drinks produced by the company, such as 'Don Fart,' 'Why don't you shut up?' and 'Son of a bitch' (see above) on the grounds that the latter word in particular is perceived as insulting and offensive and therefore "contrary to morality in a part of the European Union." (I wonder which part?) An earlier attempt by the company to register the trade name '69, The Dog's Boll**ks' also failed.



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PHOENIX GOLF SOCIETY

Our monthly outing for March was at Vista Bella with a good turn out and fierce competition for various prizes on offer.

The course was in good condition with plenty of bunker play displayed and very tricky greens.

Over all winner - Captain Peter Brain.

Gold category - Robert Hughes. Silver category -

Dave Wightman. Bronze Category - Jim Waddell.

The must try harder trophy went to Tony Hardie.

The free games drawn out of the hat were won by Ken Sutton, Terry Dunn and Tony Hardie.

Details of the Society can be found in the Phoenix Bar at Via Park 5. (Robert Hughes)

{Unfortunately John Bradbeer broke his arm last month...but is now the current holder of the Dream Hills (Allcomers) Hang Gliding Championship.}

The 'Dear John' Letter.

A British soldier serving in Afghanistan was upset to receive a letter from his girlfriend breaking off their engagement and asking for her photo back. So he collected a stack of unwanted photos from the rest of the regiment and sent them back to Britain with a note saying: 'Sorry, can't remember which one is you - please keep your photo and return the others.'

Go to bed!

Last night I got so drunk that when I got to the bottom of the stairs, I took off my shoes, coat, shirt, trousers and underwear.

Then I crept upstairs very quietly, so as not to wake the kids or my wife.

It was only when I got to the very top I realised I was still on the bus home!



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Choosing a wife.

A man wanted to get married. He was having trouble choosing among three likely candidates. He gives each woman a present of \$5,000 and watches to see what they do with the money.

The first does a total makeover. She goes to a fancy beauty salon, gets her hair done, new make up; buys several new outfits and dresses up very nicely for the man. She tells him that she has done this to be more attractive for him because she loves him so much.

The man was impressed.

The second goes shopping to buy the man gifts. She gets him a new set of golf clubs, some new gizmos for his computer, and some expensive clothes. As she presents these gifts, she tells him that she has spent all the money on him because she loves him so much..

Again, the man is impressed.

The third invests the money in the stock market She earns several times the \$5,000. She gives him back his \$5,000 and reinvests the remainder in a joint account. She tells him that she wants to save for their future because she loves him so much.

Obviously, the man was impressed.

The man thought for a long time about what each woman had done with the money he'd given her.

Then he married the one with the biggest tits.
(Phil Herdman)

Children

I was at a dinner party where one actress had adopted a child from Africa and she was saying: 'I want my children to know their heritage.' I said: 'Lock them in a room and throw them a jar of flies.'

(Joan Rivers)

They held up my son and I went, 'My God! He is hung like a bear!' They said, 'That's the umbilical cord.'

I said, 'Don't cut that, let him dream for a while.'

(Robin Williams)

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Celibacy

Celibacy can be a choice in life, or a condition imposed by environmental encounters.

While attending a Marriage Encounter Weekend, Walter and his wife Peg, 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 name and describe your wife's favourite flower?"

Walter leaned over, touched Peg's arm gently and whispered, "Home Pride Self Raising, isn't it love?"

And thus began Walter's life of celibacy. (Cath Forbes)

The brother-in-law.

Arthur is 90 years old. He's played golf every day since his retirement 25 years ago.

One day he arrives home looking sad. "That's it," he tells his wife. "I'm giving up golf. My eyesight has become so bad that once I hit the ball I couldn't see where it went."

His wife makes him a cup of tea, and says, "Why don't you take my brother with you and give it one more try."

"That's no good" sighs Arthur, "your brother's a hundred and three. He can't help."

"He may be a hundred and three", says the wife, "but his eyesight is perfect."

So the next day Arthur heads off to the golf course with his brother-in-law. He tees up, takes a mighty swing and squints down the fairway.

He turns to the brother-in-law and says, "Did you see the ball?"

"Of course I did!" replied the brother-in-law. "I have perfect eyesight".

"Where did it go?" says Arthur.

"I don't remember."

(Mel Bettell)

More on the ERE Scandal

I have been reporting for some months on developments in the ERE (retirement payment) scandals in Andalucia. This is now coming to a head with the first appearances in the courts. Although the main culprit in the affair appears to be Javier Guerrero, the Director of Employment in the Andalucian Junta, some interesting tit-bits have been emerging as the following extract from El Pais shows: "The former chauffeur of an ex-official in the Andalusian Socialist administration at the head of an alleged multimillion-euro layoff scam involving public funds said on Tuesday that he and his boss spent tens of thousands of euros of the region's money on cocaine every month.

Juan Francisco Trujillo, the then-driver of regional employment office chief Javier Guerrero, told Judge Mercedes Ayala that he and his boss spent around 25,000 euros a month on cocaine that they shared in "marathon sessions." They consumed up to five grams a day.

Trujillo received 1.3 million euros from a 650-million slush fund managed by Guerrero that was allegedly used to pay generous but unmerited early retirement packages to friends, family members and political allies. (Some were awarded retirement packages from firms they never worked with.)

The fund was meant to be used to help ailing companies pay the severance pay of surplus workers they laid off.

Of the 1.3 million euros he received, Trujillo shared 450,000 euros with a former Socialist mayor, and apart from 500,000 euros to buy property, spent the rest on cocaine and luxury items. Trujillo told the judge he made up "little bags" of cocaine for Guerrero. He said he purchased the drug in a neighbourhood in Seville from the son of a hotel owner.

The former driver also said he received 6,000 euros for compiling two fake reports for two companies whose layoffs had been subsidized by the local authorities. Trujillo also confessed to falsifying the signature of his mother in order to receive a pay-out from an insurance policy worth 122,000 euros, which he also spent on cocaine.

The events took place when he worked for Guerrero from 2003 to 2007. Trujillo faces 11 charges, including bribery, influence-peddling and document fraud."

The investigating judge, Mercedes Alaya, now states that the amount of money distributed illegally reached 933 million € with companies belonging to the ex President of the Junta, Rodríguez de la Borbolla received 9 million €. The judge sent Guerrero to prison making him the first of the 50 indicted in the case to be sent to prison. There are also well-founded suspicions of a cover-up in the case. The junta refused calls for an investigation in February 2011 with reports of the illegalities being 'thrown in the trash.' The PP candidate for the next President of the Junta has stated that the size of the fraud may eventually reach 1,500 million euros. On March 29, La Razon reported on a fraudulent ERE payment of €30 million to the two main trade unions.

The Right Numbers

Old Jakob Leibevitz buys a lottery ticket every Saturday. He's had a difficult life, and sometime or other his luck must change. Well change it did when he won a double roll-over jackpot!

Being 84 and a holocaust survivor, he is invited down to London to be presented with his cheque in a glitzy presentation ceremony by Dale Winton. After getting his cheque, Dale asks old Jakob if there is anyone he wants to mention, and old Jakob said actually there was a few people he wanted to thank.

"Firstly, I'd like to thank my dear wife who has stuck by me through thick and thin" Says old Jakob, "We met in Belsen when I was sent there at 14, and although we lost both our families, we have stayed together ever since, if it wasn't for her I would have given up long before now"

Clearly moved, Dale asks him to go on.."Secondly, I'd like to thank the Rabbi for his unstinting support, and helping me through some dark days. His door is always open, and if it wasn't for him, I would not have maintained my faith"

Dale's bottom lip is going big time and he says to old Jakob, "Anyone else?"

"Yes, Mr Patel, in the corner shop, opening his shop all day and all night. If it wasn't for the service he provides to the community, I would never have been able to buy the ticket, and finally, my sincere thanks to Adolf Hitler"

"Adolf Hitler?" says Dale completely shocked, "a man widely regarded as the most evil to have walked the planet, a man who ordered and oversaw the extermination of 6 million of your brethren! Why ever would you want to thank him?"

Undoing his cuffs and rolling up his sleeves, Old Jakob says "Well, without these numbers....."

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The New Transparency Law

In what is a historic and indeed admirable move, the Spanish cabinet have approved the draft for a new Transparency Law which will oblige the Government to report on where your tax is spent. The legislation will also sanction any politicians who hide *facturas* or required documentation. The new law will oblige politicians to inform where they spend public money, and allow the citizens to consult information about grants, contracts or wages of public sector workers on the internet. Those in administration who fail to comply or who publish false data could be given a ban from work in the public sector for 10 years. It's hoped that increasing the transparency in an administration will strengthen the responsibility of the government and administration workers and should also have a dramatic effect in reducing corruption.

There is still far too much kept secret in Spain; for example, Reports on toxic contamination, for example from Mercury, are not released by the Ministry for the Environment.

Judicial resolutions which punish the errors of judges are not made public by the Justice Ministry.

Death rates from people who die from hospital infections are not made public. Health is one of the main opaque areas and waiting list times remain a mystery for most. Only Madrid and Andalucía at least offer some data to the public but the other regions release practically nothing. Neither the political parties nor the unions give data on the public money they receive.

The Ministry for the Interior does not release the number of police who have been fined or disciplined, and neither does it publish detailed statistics on robberies or rapes.

Perhaps of most surprise the Ministry for Defence does not list the soldiers who are killed or injured on missions.

Hopefully the new legislation will filter down to the regional and local authorities. This is where the real waste and corruption is.

There is a website, in Spanish, at www.leydetransparencia.gob.es which also allows you to input your views.

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Correction: In the history article in the March issue, I referred to Ferdinand II. It should have read Ferdinand VII. The history article will be back next month.

Due to budgetary constraints and cut-back, the light at the end of the tunnel will be turned off until further notice. (Anon)

State Subsidised Holidays for Pensioners.

It is far from being a Spanish state secret, but many Expat Pensioners living here in Spain are often unaware of the fact that they are entitled to a yearly holiday, subsidised by the Spanish Government.

Those claiming a Pension have the entitlement to take advantage of such subsidised / sponsored holidays regardless of their nationality, on the condition that they officially have residential status here in Spain.

The Scheme in question is referred to as an "Imerso" Holiday.

What is Imerso?

During the off-peak season, from October to June, cheaper holidays are made available to all pensioners resident in Spain.

There are a number of different destinations available from mainland Spain to the Balearics, Canary Islands and Portugal. The holiday can be between 8 to 29 days long and includes full board at three to four star hotels.

Who is eligible?

The scheme is available to those who are :

- * Resident in Spain
- * Over the age of 65
- * Aged 55 or over and receiving a widow's pension
- * Aged 60 or over and receiving a government invalidity pension or early retirement pension

You can take a companion with you - and they do not have to be eligible for any of the above conditions.

What does each holiday include ?

- * Transport to and from the capital city of the province where you live (for example, Alicante) to the hotel
- * Full board in a double or single room (with supplement)
- * Group Travel Insurance
- * National Health medical attention in the hotel
- * Entertainment
- * Three or four star hotels

How much will it cost ?

Here are some examples of holidays offered in 2010/2011 :

- 8 Days in Portugal - €180 per person
- 10 Days in the Canary Islands - €250 per person
- 15 Days in Andalusia - €300 per person
- 29 Days in the Balearics - €560 per person

(How much will it cost you to heat your home this winter ?)

How can I apply?

All you have to do is complete an application form which includes the following information about you and your companion :

- * NIE number
- * The type of pension and monthly income you receive.
- * Your preferred destinations.

You will then receive a letter confirming that you have been accepted onto the scheme and giving you your reference number. Once you have this you can go to a participating travel agent and book your holiday, or you can book on line. (This is taken from an article by Aboco, Solicitors. If you have legal representation, your solicitors would be happy to complete the application form for you for free. The forms are available at the town hall, I believe.)

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• I got a job working for the Samaritans. It was ok for a while until one day I phoned in sick..... and they talked me out of it!

• I went into a bookstore and asked the saleslady where the Self-Help section was.

She said: 'If I told you, it would defeat the purpose.'

• My wife stormed into Hnos. Garcia. 'I've come to return this rug which I bought from you last week. You promised me that it was in mint condition.'

'So it is,' said the salesman. 'Look at that hole in the middle!'

Remember, you can have a colour copy of the Dream Scene sent to you by email each month for just €5 for one year. Black & white copies can be delivered to your postbox for the same amount.

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Dave Hope of Home From Home, would like to thank all his customers for their support of his business during the last two years. Dave and family have now returned to the UK for personal reasons.

Bus Route Change: The route Linea E 'Torrevieja - Los Balcones - Lago Jardin,' has now been extended to take in the Habaneras shopping centre and Sports City, but will no longer serve the bus station or the Centro de Salud de Lomas. There is also a new stop at Lago Jardin, Laguna Azul. The bus will leave every 40 minutes from October to May (Monday to Friday, from 7.30 to 22.00 hrs) and every 65 minutes from October to May (weekends and holidays, from 7.30 to 22.00 hrs. From June to September the bus service will operate every 40 minutes, daily between 7.30 and 23.00 hrs.

Airport bus service: The Torrevieja to Alicante airport express bus service has been put out to tender once again. The councillor for tourism in Orihuela, Pedro Mancebo of the Clr party, has met with officials from the Valencian government to request that this service be extended to take in Orihuela Costa.

Quickies!

• Scottish Police have been inundated with emergency calls concerning sightings of giant fireball in the sky.

A police spokesman said, "There's no need for panic, it was just the sun".

• Two Chinese gangsters were plotting a break in at a Scottish distillery.

One says to the other "Is it wiskey?"

"Yes," the other one replies "But not as wiskey as a bank wobbawy"

• I noticed a blind bloke walk up to one of the shelves, pick up a can, shake it, and then spray it under his left arm and sniffed. Then he picked up another can and gave it a good squirt under his right armpit. Again he sniffed.

As he sprayed a third can across his chest, I asked, "Can I help you?"

"Er, have you got any deodorant that doesn't smell like paint?" he said.

"You could try Boots next door," I replied. "This is Motor World."

• Sometimes I spice up my marriage by getting my wife to wear a long black nightgown with buttons on it. Makes her look just like a remote control!

Some sad news from Australia....the inventor of the boomerang grenade died today.
(Johnny Carson)

Thomas Edison spent years trying to invent the electric light.....Finally, late one night, he got the bulb to glow. He ran out of his laboratory, through the house, up the stairs to his bedroom.

'Honey,' Edison called to his wife, 'I've done it!'

She rolled over and said, 'Will you turn that light off and come to bed!'

(Ron Dentinger)

According to legend, Telford is so dull that the bypass was built before the town.
(Victor Lewis-Smith)

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