



# THE DREAM SCENE

Issue no. 69 1st of November 2012

**TRICK  
OR  
TREAT**



Bienvenido a todos!

After an excellent summer, we are now well into the autumn with temperatures dropping to around 20° during the day, with lows in the evenings around 16 to 18°. Aside from the heavy rain experienced at the end of September, we have only had a few showers recently.

Spain celebrated its National Day on October 12, the day in 1492 when Christopher Columbus discovered the Americas and the day which is dedicated to Nuestra Señora del Pilar, Our Lady of the Pillar, the patron saint of all Hispanic peoples and of the Spanish Civil Guard. The day is celebrated in Latin America as the Día de la Hispanidad and is known as Columbus Day in the United States. Madrid also celebrated 'the bath' on Oct 12. This was because the Palace Hotel in Madrid was the first European hotel to have an en-suite bathroom, and that was installed 100 years ago.

Although expats tend to be ensconced in their own communities, it is still difficult to avoid the recession and the cut-backs. Inflation has increased to around 3.6% with the price of petrol and diesel rocketing.

A second general strike for this year has been called for November 14. The Spanish civil servants' union, CSI-F, have said that they will not be joining the strike, as they describe it as a political one. The Catalan pharmacies closed for a day on October 25 in protest at the non-payment by their regional government. Unemployment has now reached the staggering figure of 25% and there is little chance of a reduction as the recession will continue well into next year at least. Despite assurances from government officials, property evictions by the banks continue, one family in Madrid - a husband, wife and two children - being evicted over a €6,000 debt!

Locally there was consternation when the health authority cancelled 14,000 health cards without informing the cardholders. The first the SIP cardholders got to hear of it was when they went to the *Salud* for an appointment or prescriptions. Unfortunately they got no explanation, just a shrug of the shoulders, and were told to go to the health offices at either Orihuela or Torreveija. Then followed the usual forwards and backwards with new forms and photocopies. Many of the people who have had their SIP cards withdrawn had been legitimately registered, in need of urgent medication and should never have been removed from the lists. The 'customer service' ethic seems to have largely passed the Spanish by; bureaucratic expediency taking the place of caring and professionalism. Why the expats are so docile in the face of this sort of treatment I do not know. They need to get better organised and a lot more vocal! Being very vocal is the Spanish way. Maybe we should adopt it?

Okay. Rant over! A sincere thanks to the lovely Laura in the 200's and to Belushi's for their kind donation towards printing costs.

Diary Note: I've just heard that there will be a new Christmas Market this year in San Miguel de Salinas on December 6 & 7. It will be held near Plaza Jaime, not far from Market Street Restaurant.

Hoping you have a wonderful month.

Mick & Tid

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## Grub Up!

Mother Teresa goes to Heaven and meets with God.  
He asks if she is hungry, and she says yes, so he  
opens a can of tuna, takes some bread and makes  
sandwiches.

While they are eating, through cracks in the floor,  
she sees what appears to be Hell. There are flames  
everywhere, horrible beasts, but the people down  
there are eating steaks and lobsters and having  
sherry trifle for dessert. She keeps seeing people  
eating gourmet food all day, but when she meets  
with God, he just opens up a can of tuna fish.

'God. It's not that I'm complaining,' she says. 'I'm  
grateful for everything I've been given. But I can't  
help but wonder, why are they eating all that lavish  
food down there, and we are just having tuna  
sandwiches?'

'Well,' God says. 'With just the two of us up here,  
I figure, why cook?'

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The economy continues to dominate the news. However the issue of Catalan independence has pushed this off the front pages on many occasions. The region of Catalonia (Cataluña) is, like many other regions, broke and cannot pay its bills including wages in hospitals and social centres. The region's pharmacists went on a one-day strike on October 25, demanding payment of the €190 million they are owed for July and August! The Catalan treasury has run out of funds twice in three months and Madrid has already injected more than a billion € into the region with another four billion plus to come.

Meanwhile the premier of Cataluña, Artur Mas, is using the crisis to deflect attention from their economic failures and has once again pushed the 'independence' issue to the fore, organising a massive demonstration in Barcelona to promote this. He has also called regional elections for late November and has threatened Madrid that they will unilaterally hold a referendum on independence in the future. Mas met with Prime Minister Rajoy in mid-October and threatened that unless the Catalans got a 'fiscal pact' with Madrid, 'there would be consequences.' (At present the Catalans collect taxes which are then paid to central government, who then disperses part of these back to the region. A fiscal pact would reverse this, the Catalans keeping the taxes and paying Madrid a portion.) Whether the Catalans have a case for independence we can look at in other issue and there is no doubt that the Catalan economy is massive, about 20% of Spain's total. However, talk of unilateral declarations and illegal referendums is more than just annoying to those who do not want to see the break-up of Spain. There have been 'grumblings' amongst some of the Spanish military associations and one head of a political party in Catalonia, has asked Madrid for an assurance that the army will not be asked to intervene.

Luis María Linde, the governor of the Bank of Spain, said that the government can choose to either revalue pensions or meet the deficit. It cannot do both he argues. He said more cuts were needed to achieve the deficit objectives.

Pensions, unemployment and, above all, public debt 'eat' six out of every ten euros of budget expenditure planned for 2013, as stated in the draft State Budget (PGE) for next year.

In general, the state's investment in the regions in 2013 will fall by 16.10 percent compared to this year. Navarre, Balearic Islands, Valencia and the Basque Country are the biggest losers, while investment will only increase in Cantabria, Murcia and Castilla y León. According to the Minister of Finance and Public Administration, Cristobal Montoro, the State will distribute in 2013 a total of 13,030.32 million euros between the 17 regions, including Ceuta and Melilla in North Africa.

The allocation of the State Budget of 2013 to fund political parties for the Ministry of Interior will be reduced by almost half over this year, going from the 113.7 million euros for 2012 to 66.2 million euros next year. Government accounts for next year includes a provision of €2.7 million to cover security costs of political parties, €600,000 less than this year, when 3.3mil were budgeted. Last December, after taking possession, the new PP government announced a 20 percent cut in grant allocations to political parties, trade unions and employers.

A survey by the World Bank of 185 countries and the ease of doing business there revealed that although Spain ranked 44<sup>th</sup> overall, when it came to starting a business it ranked only 136<sup>th</sup>. Singapore came first. More on the survey next month.

The age of sexual consent in Spain is just 13 years, one of the lowest in the world. The UN has suggested that Spain raise the age to 15. The whole legal system in Spain is being reviewed at present by the Minister for Justice, Gallardon. Let's hope that this is one of the many shortcomings to the system he will rectify.

La Razón reports that two million morning-after pills have been used over three years in Spain.

The *estancos* - (*watertight* as in tight monopoly) tobacco - shops will now be selected by auction and not by competition. Those who already have an *estanco* will be respected. Spanish tobacconists are one of the oldest regulated commercial institutions in the world, with nearly 400 years of history during which they have assisted the collection of taxes for the state through the sale of manufactured tobacco. The current network consists of 16,049 retail establishments.

The Government wants to stop the contraband cigarettes coming over from Gibraltar, and has introduced a law which says you can only take a maximum of 80 cigarettes from Gibraltar into Spain. The sale of illegal tobacco in Spain has jumped from 0.4% to 9% in three years.

Electricity prices have dropped by 2.29%, a gas *bombona* is 4.6% cheaper in price, and the gas price is stable. At the last energy auctions the cost of energy fell by 4.6%. Despite a 36% fall in income from Spain for Iberdrola during the first six months of this year, its profits rose by 12% during the same period, largely due to its international business.

Following the torrential and widespread floods in the south and east of Spain the Insurance Pool has put the damage at 120 million €. The figure comes after some inspectors have been taking their first look at the damaged land. The Valencia Community calculates compensation at 62.7 million €, 42 million € in Andalucía and 15 million € in Murcia. Twelve people died in the floods and two are still missing.

The 1000 specialist hamburger restaurants in Spain are doing well with a rise of 6.7% in cash flow last year. MacDonal'd's plan to open another 60 outlets here. However pizza restaurants are not doing as well, their numbers falling steadily. Consumption of coffee has also fallen, with the the number of sacks of coffee falling from 3.232 billion sacks in 2010 to 2.149 billion sacks in 2011.

In the first seven months of this year only 75,000 new homes have been constructed in Spain. This figure is 29.5% lower than for the same period last year. House sales rose in August after 17 months of falls according to data from the National Statistics Institute. It was a 3% increase, of which 49.8% were resale properties and 50.2% were new builds.

AENA, the Spanish Airport Authority, will give early retirement to 1,500 workers with an ERE payment of 85% of their wage when they reach the age of 55. But the Government is trying to stop early retirement or at least make it more difficult.

Telefónica is to sell its planes, and cut back on colour photo copying and coffee to reduce its debt. The plan is expected to bring savings of 35 million. Telefónica is the Spanish company with the most private planes. It intends to sell four of the jets.

Airport taxes are to rise by about 7% in 2013, as a consequence of the State Budget for 2013. This means an extra €1.40 on your ticket. The Spanish Airlines Authority already has a debt of 16 billion €

Another budgetary tax increase has been directed against the Spanish lotteries. Any future win in excess of €3,500 will be taxed at the rate of 20%!

The increase in the rate of IVA implemented at the beginning of September has caused a surge in the rate of inflation to 3.6%.

I come from a big family. Four of us slept in the same bed. When we got cold, Mother threw in another brother. Bob Hope

I have one brother, five sisters. I had to wear a tampon just to fit in. Dane Cook



## What's Up? continued

In an effort to combat the Chinese Mafia in Spain, the police launched a massive operation - Operation Emperor - on October 11, which resulted in 120 searches and 108 arrest warrants being issued. Most of the arrests took place in Madrid, Barcelona, on the Costa del Sol and Valencia. The Chinese Mafia form one of the four largest organised crime organisations in Spain, the others being the Russians, Columbians and the Italians. It has been reported that Chinese gangs launder between two and three hundred million euros annually. Over one hundred million euros in cash and 202 vehicles were also seized in this operation. Some weapons were also seized, including several rifles with telescopic sights. Among those detained were some Spaniards, which included a porn star, Nacho Vidal, a police inspector and the Socialist councillor in Fuenlabrada, Madrid, José Borrás. The suspected ringleader is alleged to be Gao Ping, a heretofore respected Chinese art dealer in Madrid.

A 42-year-old Spaniard has been arrested in Alicante for throwing a live dog onto a railway track before an oncoming train. The dog, which the man had obtained from a rescue centre, died on the track. Wouldn't you love to get that jerk alone in a room?

Hundreds of kilos of drugs, cocaine and hashish, have been taken from the official security deposit in Cádiz. The thieves made



a hole in the bunker to gain access. Security at similar establishments is now in doubt after similar thefts in Sevilla and Málaga. In Cádiz neither the cameras nor the sensor detected anything. The robbery in Cádiz has called great commotion in the National Police. In fact the custody of these drugs are not the responsibility of the National Police. It is the Heath Service of the Government Sub-delegation who are responsible for the necessary security. The 'secure' depository is located in

the basement garage of the car fleet protected by an armoured door. Unfortunately none of the walls to the depository/bunker were reinforced, which is how the thieves got in. Lets hope that all the cash confiscated during the raid on the Chinese Mafia is held in a place of appropriate security.

The Valencia High Court of Justice has indicted Rafael Blasco, a former PP councillor in Valencia, as the alleged author of six crimes concerning the theft of more than six million € from the aid budget which the Valencia Government should have sent to developing countries. Blasco was called to court on October 18 on the charges of grand fraud, perversion of the course of justice, bribery, influence peddling, misuse of public funds and the falsification of documents when he was the Councillor for Solidarity and Cooperation, between 2008-2011.

A businessman based in Orihuela and 75 others have been arrested in a 'sting' operation. This chap formed five fictitious companies which did not trade. He 'recruited' around 700 people for these companies in less than four years and sold them employment contracts. The 'staff' were then sacked so that they could claim unemployment benefit. In another scam, 120 Moroccans were given false employment contracts so that they could regularise their status in Spain. The police estimate that €1.6 million is owed to the Social Security as fees for the discharged 'workers.'

So I was in the jungle and there was this monkey with a tin opener. I said, 'You don't need a tin opener to peel a banana.' He said, 'No, this is for the custard.'

Tommy Cooper

I wouldn't say my husband was stupid - but when he went to a mindreader they gave him his money back.

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## What's Up? Continued

In early October, the municipal police in Madrid were conducting a routine check of vehicles when one particular driver was acting very nervously. The 39-year-old driver gave a negative breath test but continued to act nervously which caused the police to take a closer look at his vehicle. The police noticed that part of the trim to the rear of the vehicle could be manipulated, which when removed revealed a small storage area. Inside this was a bag containing almost €600,000 in cash, mostly in 500 euro notes. The driver could not specify the origin of the money and was arrested.

The Valencian Government owed the 2,200 pharmacies in the region a total of €600 million. More than 2,000 employees in the pharmacies have lost their jobs; 200 pharmacies are bankrupt and the Government owes an average of 250,000 euros to each establishment. Money owed throughout Spain to these establishments for the period January to September is said to around 2.3 billion euros.

### The Lie Detecting Robot.

A father buys a lie-detector robot that slaps people when they lie.

He decides to test it out at dinner one night.

The father asks his son what he did that day.

The son says, "I did some schoolwork."

The robot slaps the son.

The son says, "Ok, Ok. I was at a friend's house watching movies."

Dad asks, "What movie did you watch?"

Son says, "Toy Story."

The robot slaps the son.

Son says, "Ok, Ok. We were watching porn."

Dad says, "What? At your age I didn't even know what porn was."

The robot slaps the father.

Mom laughs and says, "Well he certainly is your son."

The robot slaps the mother.

Robot for sale!

Dave Purdy

The new Zenia Boulevard shopping complex has certainly been a hit with the public. Although it is still early days it has 'put the wind up' other trading centres. The Habaneras Centre and other retailers in Torry are trying to launch a joint marketing strategy to combat the threat of the new complex. I have noticed that Carrefour have taken front page space on some English 'freebe' newspapers offering specials. One, a litre of Famous Grouse scotch for around € was a particularly good offer I thought.

In mid-October, a 47-year-old Russian doorman working in San Pascual Street in Torre Vieja, was shot four times in the leg and stomach. The shooting took place at 2am one morning outside a bar/club. The Russian is now reported to be out of danger as no vital organs were damaged. A Romanian has since been arrested.

And, as we are having a look at Torry, it is worth having a look at the other bandits, the politicians. Okay, I am wrong. It is unfair to tar them all with the same brush. But still, they are a difficult bunch to like. For some weeks now, we have all been amused by stories concerning the ruling PP Torre Vieja council's use of mobile phones. It seems that just two months mobile phone bills for the ruling PP totalled €12,043. Now this is certainly bad news if you are a tax payer in Torre Vieja, but then came the *pièce de résistance*. It seems that some of the PP councillors were running up monthly mobile bills in excess of €300 but also some councillors were ringing up sex-lines and equally nefarious services. One councillor, Daniel Plaza, is alleged to have called 49 prostitutes in one month. Plaza, who is ironically an Olympic Gold Medallist and the councillor for Sport and Education, has denied the allegations saying someone else must have used his phone. Yes Daniel, we believe you! Between 2007 and 2010 the PP councillors and advisers spent nearly 350,000 euros on mobile phone calls!

Then on October 26, the former mayor of Torry, Mateo Hernandez, appeared in court to answer charges of fraud and forgery relating to the award of the rubbish disposal and cleaning contract for the city in 2004. This contract was for ten years and totalled €8 million. Marteo, who had been mayor for 25 years, denied the allegations saying that he often signed deeds and decrees without reading them. He now faces three years in prison and 11 years disqualification if found guilty of rigging the contract.

Which brings us on nicely to Orihuela and Orihuela Costa. The former mayor of Orihuela, Monica Lorente, appeared in court in October, also in connection with the rubbish and cleaning contract for Orihuela. Once again allegations have been made regarding the alleged irregular awarding of this contract as well. Lorente has denied the charges. More recently, Lorente has resigned as president of the local PP - Partido Popular. There has been a lot of criticism within her own party regarding the lead up to and handling of the last local election. Whereas in the remainder of the country the PP romped home in what were often 'safe' Socialist seats, in Orihuela the PP lost their overall majority and handed the council over to a disparate group of Greens, Socialists and a Liberal/Expat alliance. There is no thanks for coming second in politics. This, together with the the unproven criminal charge, could mean that her political career is over.

One bit of good news is that the massive amount of rubbish which was dumped between Dream Hills II and Entre Golf urbanisations has now been completely cleared, and in record time. Well done to whoever is responsible.

The local Orihuela council are now actually in a minority with the opposition outnumbering the ruling tripartite. The diminishing numbers in the ruling government is largely down to Pedro Mancebo, boss of the Clr party. First he sacked fellow councillor expat Bob Houliston. He then fired his own party coordinator, Pablo Vidal and fellow councillor, Ascunción Mayoral. Mayoral, a lawyer, is now suing the remaining 11 ruling councillors for 'massaging' the firing process illegally to ensure that she couldn't vote against them.

Politicians are people who, when they see the light at the end of the tunnel, order more tunnel.

John Quinton



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### Local News continued.

Councillor Mancebo is also expected to face court proceedings brought by three of his expat former clients regarding misappropriation of funds. The complaint was filed in Aspe in October 7th 2010, five years after the alleged incident following Mancebo's alleged refusal to repay the money or even give an explanation as to where it went.

The recent auction of municipal land in Orihuela Costa failed to raise the anticipated 13 million euros. Only two plots were sold, one in Los Altos and one near Villamartin, raising only €1.3 million, a tenth of what was expected. 40% of these funds were due to be spent on the coast, but as usual it is Orihuela who will get the cash. One million of the sale proceeds will be spent on improving the link between Avenida Teodomiro and the train station and the remainder will be invested in an electric bus. The opposition believe that all these sales are illegal as the auction went ahead despite a majority on the council rejecting the auction.



The above is some of the salt from Torre Vieja destined for Norway, who will shortly receive six thousand tons of the stuff. Thirteen thousand tons are due to be delivered to Belfast in Northern Ireland and five thousand tons are to go to Scotland. The 'Jocks' never put the salt on their roads; it is too expensive. They put it all on their porridge!



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Living in Spain there is always easy access to good quality olive oil. Most of you will be aware of the health benefits associated with this wonderful oil. Recent studies also show that daily consumption of the product is a simple way to prevent bone destruction. Additionally there is also evidence that liquid gold promotes the the production of insulin. ([www.elmundo.es/elmundosalud/2012/08/14/nutricion/1344963969.html](http://www.elmundo.es/elmundosalud/2012/08/14/nutricion/1344963969.html)) The Organization of Consumers and Users (OCU) has now advised that nine brands of olive oil on sale are misleading consumers by selling products labelled 'extra virgin' when the actual category should simply be "virgin" which is normally sold around a euro a bottle cheaper. The brands identified are Aliada, Olisone, Condis, Arteoliva, Consum, Ybarra, Coosur, Hojiblanca (in a plastic bottle) and Eroski. Now there is nothing wrong with these olive oils, other than they should be branded as 'virgin' and not 'extra virgin' according to the OCU. They are perfectly enjoyable and safe to eat. (And I don't want these people calling round my house like Aldi's did!)

The OCU study also revealed that two brands of oil being sold as olive oil, 'Maeva' and branded virgin 'Olilán' are actually oil suitable for lamps only. Best you check the cupboard!

The best extra virgin olive oils (excluding the very high end products) according to the OCU survey were Oleoestepa, Ybarra Gran Selección Afrutado, Hacendado (Mercadona) in a plastic bottle, and La Española Gran Selección. More details here in Spanish -

<http://www.abc.es/20121025/sociedad/abci-marcas-aceite-oliva-virgen-201210251311.html>

## Take my advice!

A woman accompanied her husband to the doctor's office. After his checkup, the doctor called the wife into his office alone. He said, 'Your husband is suffering from a very severe disease, combined with horrible stress. If you don't do the following, your husband will surely die.'

Each morning, fix him a healthy breakfast. Try to be pleasant in general, and make sure he stays in a good mood. For lunch make him a nutritious meal. For dinner prepare something nice and healthy again. Don't burden him with chores, as he probably had a hard day. Don't discuss your problems with him, it will only make his stress worse. And most importantly, make love with your husband several times a week and satisfy his every whim. "If you can do this for the next 1 to 2 months, I think your husband will regain his health completely."

On the way home, the husband asked his wife, "What did the doctor say?" "You're going to die," she replied.

## What has Julio been up to?

Julio Iglesias, the subject of a recent article here, has raised a few eyebrows in his home country due to a couple of recent revelations. In the first, he performed a concert in Equatorial Guinea, a former Spanish colony on October 8. The main issue here was that the country is now run by a repressive dictator, Teodoro Obiang Nguema. Julio has decided to limit his public appearances as he is now 69. The price of a single ticket for this concert? The equivalent of €750!

Then while being questioned by a Dominican judge (cooperating with an instruction judge in Valencia, who was investigating an alleged crime of document falsification and the misuse of public funds); Julio admitted that in May 1997 Eduardo Zaplana, the then P.P. President of the Valencia Government, gave him 990 million pesetas, equivalent just under six million € in a hidden payment. Julio Iglesias said he was contracted as Valencia wished to promote the city. This related to one contract, the other contract being for a series of concerts.

Julio stated, 'All those concerts were recorded, and are left to posterity, and this has helped greatly in the growth of Valencia and the development of the investments.'

*Be careful Julio. Your head has got so big you might just fall over!*



## Newsy Bits! Student Bomber

A 21-year-old electronics student in the Palma Polytechnic has been arrested in Palma de Mallorca. The student, José Manuel Morales Sierra, planned to blow up the Balears University. Police discovered 140 kilos of chemicals suitable for making explosives in his flat. His diary revealed that he planned to seed the university with bombs and commit suicide afterwards. This lunatic, who tried on a number of occasions to purchase illegal weapons, was an admirer of the perpetrators of the Columbine massacre in 1999 and had a hatred for society, particularly university students. The police traced his whereabouts following some of his blog entries.



## Dodgy Caravans

A judge has acquitted 25 ITV inspectors in Alicante and Benidorm for alleged involvement in a scam to sell caravans which were scheduled to be scrapped. In September 2008, 414 caravans were destroyed by flooding in France. See photo.



The vehicles were declared a total loss and were to be sent to the Czech Republic to be scrapped. However the caravans received a facelift with new plates and identification numbers. A company in Alicante purchased 33 of these at a price of €9,000 each and sold each one for €40,000 in 17 different locations throughout Spain. Investigations are continuing.

## Mosquitos



The City of Torrevieja has awarded a contract of €400,000 to CTL to help combat mosquitos and other pests in the area. CTL have catalogued over one hundred

mosquito outbreaks in the area since 2010. Mosquitos are endemic to the lakes/lagoons and surrounding areas. Three types of these pests are now found in the area; *Aedes caspius* - the most common, *Culex pipiens* and the dreaded tiger mosquito, an invasive species imported from Southeast Asia. As reported last month, the plan to use bats to help combat this nuisance is well advanced and the company have also introduced new equipment to help in the scheme, see photo. Leaflets will also be distributed to educate the public on best practices. Unfortunately there is no similar program in Orihuela Costa.

## Arsonist.



An arsonist has been at work around this area in early October, burning cars. Three were destroyed in Pilar de Horadada, four in Cabo Roig and one in Campoamor. Some shop awnings were

also damaged in the fires. No arrests reported yet.

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Six stages of married life:

1: Tri-weekly.

2: Try weekly.

3: Try weakly.

4: Try oysters.

5: Try anything.

6: Try to remember.





**Airports - What's New?**

At El Altet airport in Alicante, you can now hire digital tablets, credit-card sized routers and other modern digital devices from 'ConnectedtoGo', who are situated in the arrivals area of the airport. Prices for these devices range from seven euros a day for a tablet and eight euros a day for a router. However you can buy a new tablet from Amazon for around 50 quid!

Sacyr Vallehermoso, S.A., one of the largest companies in Spain, but in this case the 60% shareholder in Corvera International airport, is reportedly trying to force the closure of nearby San Javier airport. SACYR are the majority shareholder in Aeromur, the private consortium behind the new airport. Although the consortium have advised that Corvera airport will open in April 2013, SACYR fear that the possibility of San Javier remaining operational beyond this date may impact upon the potential profitability of the new facility. But looming large on the horizon is the €200 million loan the company arranged through the Murcian government for the project and guaranteed by Murcia for a period of two years. Now the Murcian guarantee is about to expire, the financial institutions, Aeromur and the local government are scrambling around trying the refinance the deal. Although the local government have paid the annual interest - €2 million - none of the loan capital has been paid, and the €200 million debt remains a large contingent liability of SACYR. Last year, Repsol had to assist their major shareholder, SACYR, to the tune of €2.6 billion to help them deal with large loan maturities. They do seem to be in a 'bit of a pickle,' their share price diving from €5.61 to €1.54 in less than a year.

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A man who was fond of wine was offered some grapes at dessert after dinner.  
'Much obliged,' said he, pushing the plate aside, 'but I am not accustomed to take my wine in pills.'  
(JA Brillat-Savarin)



The following is an excellent blog by Mr. Grumpy, which was placed in tumbit.com on 24/06/2011. It's all too familiar!

The Ayatolla and I have been quite fortunate in our move to Spain, in that the vast majority of our visitors have always been thoughtful and respectful and have never really taken advantage of the 'free holiday' in any way at all. But I know from talking to friends and neighbours that this isn't always the case with those visiting from the UK. It's usually only after an expat has been settled in Spain for a few months, and has made it be known that he has a spare room, that the visits begin. It is always nice to have visitors come over from the UK to stay but maybe a check-box which popped up on the computer screen when confirming flight details online would be a good idea - Tick appropriate box for reason of visit : Holiday / Business / Visiting expat friends.

Upon ticking the 'Visiting friends' bit, an etiquette guide should then automatically be dispatched to the corresponding email address along with the flight confirmations. The guide would inform the visitor of the appropriate behaviour and etiquette when visiting friends in Spain from the UK :

- 1) Although I live a 2 hour drive to the nearest airport, there is no need for you to hire a car. I am sure I will have nothing better to do than to wait in an airport arrivals lounge for you ready to ferry you back to mine. I've nothing better to do than taxi you around all week.
- 2) Don't worry about contributing to the cost of the petrol or motorway tolls, it's fine.
- 3)The weather in Spain is always hot. All year round. It never changes. Don't express surprise if you turn up in your shorts and tee shirt in November and find it a little chilly. Rain does happen occasionally.
- 4) You may be on Holiday, but some of us have work and schools etc.. to get up for in the morning. Excuse us if we don't wish to stay up drinking wine with you until 4am in the morning.
- 5) If we walk into the village in the morning to grab a coffee or something, Please God, do not wear those ridiculous shorts, the bum-bag and the sandals with socks underneath. I have to live here all year round.
- 6) As a rule of thumb, dress like I do. Wearing Bermuda shorts and a string vest to nip to my local bar is not appropriate at 11 O'clock on a Friday night - would you do that at home in the UK ?
- 7) When I am in a bar / shop / restaurant etc... and talking in Spanish, please wait for the appropriate moment to interject in the conversation and speak English. Even if the person I am speaking to does not speak English, you should not assume that they do not understand it. Proclaiming that the produce in the local shop looks way below standard won't exactly improve my standing in the community once you have gone back to blighty.
- 8) If you have a spare corner in your suitcase please let us know. Although we can readily get tea bags etc... over here, have you seen the prices ?
- 9) Excuse us if we don't want to come to the beach or sit around the pool with you every single day that you are here - we've seen it before and once a week is quite enough, thank you.
- 10) Ditto, eating out at a restaurant every night
- 11) No, honestly, a midnight flight arrival time is fine. I'm more than happy to wait 40 mins for you to arrive and get your bags and then drive the two hours back to mine, ready for me to start work at 8 o'clock in the morning. Not a problem.
- 12) You might be on Holiday, we're not. We can't fall into the same mentality. You don't, and we don't expect YOU to when we return to the UK to visit you...
- 13) Please, make the effort to say "Gracias" when the waiter brings you your drink. I don't expect you to order in Spanish, or hold a conversation on the state of the economy, but the use of one little word can't really hurt, can it ?
- 14) Ditto Shouting. Not necessary when ordering a drink at the bar in broad English.
- 15) No, go on, please tell us again how warm / wet / windy it has been in the UK this last week, we're fascinated.
- 16) Read point 5 again. It's very important.

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### **Baby Snatching**

A Madrid provincial court has ordered the reopening of a 34-year-old baby-snatching case, ruling that there is no statute of limitations on "illegal detention charges" under Spanish law.

"This is a very important ruling because it states that the main charge [illegal detention] has no statute of limitations and neither do the overt acts linked to this crime," said lawyer Guillermo Peña, who filed the case.

The allegations involve the 1978 birth of a child to Felisa Tomico Orusco and her husband Juan Antonio Panadero Galiana. After delivery at the Casa de la Madre clinic on Goya street, a nun named "Sister María" told the husband that the child had died but would not let him see the body.

The mother said that she cannot be sure whether it was the same Sister María Gómez Valbuena of the Sisters of Charity Order who was charged earlier this year in connection with a 1982 baby-snatching case.

"I will never forgive those who took my baby," Felisa said, adding that the pediatrician who examined her said the fetus was fine.

The father attended the baby's funeral but never got a chance to see what was inside the little white coffin.

"I always suspected that they took our child but I had to overcome my own obsessions so as not to destroy my marriage," he said.

The Madrid provincial court decided to reopen the case after finding serious discrepancies in the burial license and the baby's death certificate, which states that the child died at eight months and 15 days of gestation when in fact the mother had carried the baby for the full nine months.

Hundreds of people have approached prosecutors across Spain to report possible instances of baby-snatching during and after the Franco era. (El Pais.)

### **Diets**

He's lost six pounds. Mind you, that's like throwing a deckchair off the *Queen Mary*. (Bill Parcells)

Remember, there were people on the *Titanic* who turned down the sweet trolley. (Jonathan Ross)

### The Human Castles!

Many of you will be already aware of the many weird and wonderful fiestas in Spain - La Tomatina, Moors & Christians - there is even one dedicated to wheelchairs! One of the least known, especially among non-Spaniards, is the *Concurs de Castells* - Castle Competition or Human Castles. The competition, which has been going for 24 years takes place in Tarragona, Catalonia. The competition took place on October 6th and 7th with 32 colourful teams taking place this year. The object of the competition is to create human towers of different shapes and heights. As the tower gets taller, the climbers get lighter and younger - see child on right who topped one tower. I believe the tallest tower to date was ten people high in 2000 and you can see it here - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsETW-k68jc&feature=related>

The following is also worth looking at -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?NR=1&v=KscD4aBALk&feature=endscreen>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsETW-k68jc&feature=related>

Even watching it on YouTube, you will find the excitement infectious; surely one of the 'must see's' in Spain!

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### The Russians are coming!

A special real-estate event is being organised in Torrevieja. It is being directed at Russian investors and will run from November 21 until November 24. 50 exhibition areas/booths will be available at a cost of €3,000 each for three days, if you care to have a stand to promote your business. The auditorium in Torrevieja will also be available to those who wish to use its facilities in marketing their products at the cost of €900 per hour.

An extensive program of leisure activities has also been arranged for the 'Ruskies.' This includes a visit to Guadelest, a spa and massage at the Hotel La Laguna, a day of sailing and lunch at the Royal Yacht Club, a visit to Zenia Boulevard and a meal and tour in Alicante City.

The trouble with Freud is that he never played the Glasgow Empire on a wet Saturday night after Rangers and Celtic had both lost.

Ken Dodd





## Lime Bar Golf Society Los Altos, Orihuela Costa



The golf society's venue for the 10th October 2012 was held at Vista Bella Golf Course.

Again the weather can only be described as perfect for golf, the course was in good condition. There were just over thirty golfers playing which resulted in about one of the largest number of competitors with the society.

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

Nearest the Pin in two on the 1st hole was Graham Mitchell.

Nearest the Pin on the 4th hole was Mick Slater.

Nearest the Pin on the 8th hole was Arthur Jones.

Longest drive on the 17th hole was Stewart Hunter (guest)

Silver Class 3rd place was Nev. Greenwood with a score of 25 points.

Silver Class 2nd place was Dave Everson with a score of 25 points (on count back).

Silver Class 1st place was Andy McDonald with a score of 30 points

Gold Class 3rd place was Bob Adair with a score of 35 points.

Gold Class 2nd place was Tim Ryan with a score of 36 points.

Gold Class 1st place was Dave Cahill with a score of 41 points.

Best Guest was Stewart Hunter with a score of 36 points.

Yet again a very enjoyable days golf in pleasant company, thank you to Captain Mick Slater and Vice Captain Stewart Coleman and also thanks to the Staff at The Lime Bar for a most enjoyable meal. Anyone wishing to join our friendly society just needs to phone Mick on 659866468 or Stewart on 966180003.

(Colin Clarke)

### **Likely Story!**

A woman starts dating a doctor. Before too long, she becomes pregnant and they don't know what to do. About nine months later, just about the time she is going to give birth, a priest goes into the hospital for a prostate gland infection and a hernia operation. The doctor says to the woman, "I know what we'll do. After I've operated on the priest, I'll give the baby to him and tell him it was a miracle."

"Do you think it will work?" she asks.

"It's worth a try." he says. So, the doctor delivers the baby and then operates on the priest.

After the operation he goes in to the priest and says, "Father, you're not going to believe this."

"What?" asks the priest, "what happened?"

"You gave birth to a child!"

"But that's impossible!" says the priest.

"I just did the operation," insists the doctor, "it's a miracle! Here's your baby."

About fifteen years go by, and the priest realises he must tell his son the truth. One day, he sits the boy down and says, "Son, I have something to tell you. I'm not your father." The son says,

"What do you mean, you're not my father?" The priest replies,

"I am your mother. The archbishop is your father!"

You may speak of love and tenderness and passion, but real ecstasy is discovering you haven't lost your keys after all. *The Optimist Mag.*



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**Thursday's - Sarah's Bingo from 3pm**

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Quiz prizes for winner & loser,

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Friday Evening ....Mixed Grill & Chop Night

Saturday Evening.....Steak & Wine Night

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**HALLOWEEN PARTY**

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### “Fifty Shades of Grey Hair”

The missus bought a paperback  
down Dymocks, Saturday,  
I had a look in her bag;  
T’was “Fifty Shades of Grey”.

Well I just left her to it,  
At ten I went to bed.  
An hour later she appeared;  
The sight filled me with dread.....

In her left hand she held a rope;  
And in her right a whip!  
She threw them down on the floor,  
And then began to strip.

Well fifty years or so ago;  
I might have had a peek;  
But Doris hasn’t weathered well;  
She’s eighty four next week.

Watching Doris bump and grind;  
Could not have been much grimmer.  
Things went from bad to worse;  
When she toppled off her Zimmer!

She struggled up upon her feet  
A couple minutes later;  
She put her teeth back in and...  
Said.... I must dominate her!!

Now if you knew our Doris,  
You’d see just why I spluttered,  
I’d spent two months in traction  
For the last complaint I’d muttered.

She stood there nude, naked like;  
Bent forward just a bit ....  
I thought what the hell, stepped forward,  
and stood on her left tit!

Doris screamed, her teeth shot out;  
My god what had I done?  
She moaned and groaned then shouted out:  
“Step on the other one!”

Well readers, I can’t tell no more;  
About what occurred that day.  
Suffice to say my jet black hair,....  
Turned “Fifty Shades of Grey”.  
(Stewart Pickles)

My wife and I have Olympic sex.  
Once every four years.  
Rodney Dangerfield

I love to shop after a bad relationship. I buy a new outfit and it makes me feel better.  
Sometimes when I see a really great outfit, I’ll break up with someone on purpose.

Rita Rudner

### TRANSLATOR & COMPUTER TRAINER

If you find computers too complicated or need assistance in your everyday Spanish life, then, I’m your man!

Computer training and translations are my speciality. I live in the Dreams Hills area. I’m originally from Spain, and have two years of experience as a translator, and many years dealing with computers, since I have two computer-related college degrees from the US.

Please, let me know if you need any assistance with the following:

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- UNOFFICIAL WRITTEN TRANSLATIONS
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- DRIVING LICENCES
- COURT
- TOWN HALLS
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### Wall Street Journal Praises Mercadona



“Spain’s unemployment rate is near 25% while retail sales have declined for 25 straight months and the country is edging closer to an international bailout. Yet supermarket chain Mercadona SA hired 6,500 employees last year, more than any other Spanish company, and its sales increased by 8% and remain on the rise.

The secret to its success: a German-style recipe for higher productivity that includes flexible working conditions, extensive employee training and performance-linked bonuses—a rare mix in Spain. The workers are trained to keep an eye on the needs of the client.

The wages are higher in Mercadona than in other retail chains and absenteeism is only 1%. The company is now exploring an expansion out of Spain, with the first port of call being Italy.

As a result, the family-controlled retailer fast is becoming a model in a country urgently trying to rewrite the rules for its economy.”

Over the last few years, I have noticed that Mercadona has been ruthless in promoting its own brands, to the extent of keeping many household names off the shelves. This policy seemed to have reaped dividends. (In 2009, Mercadona was voted the 9<sup>th</sup> most reputable firm in the world by Forbes Magazine.) Mercadona 1,356 supermarkets in Spain.

By contrast, Carrefour seems to be entering stormy waters with falling sales worldwide. The opening of Zenia Boulevard must cast a shadow over their supermarket on the N332 in Orihuela Costa. I do hope it remains. We need another Chinese *todo* like a hole in the head.



# Fly Screens 4 U!!

'Feel the breeze not the bites'

Bernie, Michelle and family arrived in Spain September 1999. After commuting to the UK every month with Bernie's business commitments, it was getting very stressful. So in 2003 Bernie and Michelle looked at insect screens rather than high-maintenance rollers and sliders; after extensive research over a 12 month period they invented their unique 100% magnetised and totally flexible, frameless fly screen system for any shaped windows and doors.

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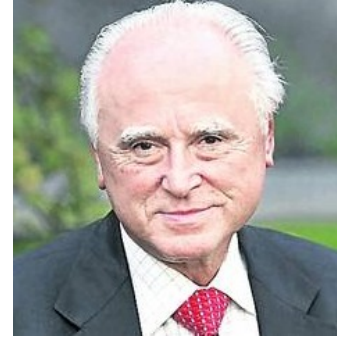
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## Idiot of the Month Award



The above is a photo of José Manuel Castela. One look and you would say, 'What a venerable, intelligent and sensitive looking white-haired senior!'

Senior Castela, a 71-year-old Spanish-Argentinian lawyer, was appointed by the present government to the position of President of the General Council of Citizenship (Spanish) Abroad. Previously a PP deputy in the Galician parliament and later managing director of the Galician Emigration Foundation; Senior Castela attended a meeting where his appointment was to be ratified. The committee indicated that he lacked one vote to qualify. Castela allegedly responded, 'No pasa nada. ¿Hay nueve votos? Poned diez... Las leyes son como las mujeres, están para violarlas'. ('It's okay. Are there nine votes? Put down ten.....Laws are like women, they are there to be raped!')

Castela remained in the new job for three days when he resigned for 'personal reasons.' You can read more here in Spanish - <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2012/10/05/espana/1349460552.html>

### A Snack?

A man goes into a barber's shop and notices a little dog is watching the barber intently. 'That dog seems very interested in what you're up to,' says the man.

'He's hoping for a treat,' replies the barber sharpening his razor. 'If I sneeze he sometimes gets a bit of ear.'

## Watch out for....

Do you use the Vodafone 'todo en uno' deal? This is a package which includes ADSL, land line and mobile phone. Well, if you are thinking of leaving it, it could cost you €726. The Spanish consumer organisation, FACUA, has warned of the penalties if you want to get out of the deal. It seems that Vodafone has invented the 'inverted penalty' clause. That means that if you wish to cancel the contract before it expires, the fine is higher the closer you get to the end of the contract! FACUA says that these penalties are abusive & illegal and that Vodafone should be fined.

Telephone numbers beginning with 920. There has been a certain amount of debate lately on the actual cost of using these numbers. Some say that it is a 'Premium Rate' line, although Wikipedia advises that it is more expensive than a local call but cheaper than the normal inter provincial rate. 920 numbers are used by the sales section of a number of companies, one of the most famous being a 'direct line' insurance company. Even if your comm's package includes free phone calls, you will still be charged for these calls.

Ladies, be careful while walking in public wearing gold necklaces etc. There has been an increase in the incidence of 'jewellery grabbing', the most recent near Via Park V. Although this type of offence was never a rare occurrence, the growth of the 'gold buying' shops has encouraged it. The police have started to be more investigative concerning these shops, but the robberies continue.

Identity theft continues to be a problem everywhere. One must continually be on one's guard. The Spanish media put it as high as 15% of the public being effected, the perpetrators often being organised gangs. Tear all old correspondence into small pieces before disposing of it, never ever give your bank account details over the phone or internet, particularly if they are masquerading as your bank. Do not get drawn into offers of prizes or lottery wins, particularly if you have not even entered the competitions! There are plenty people out there who want to separate you from your 'hard-earned.'

**PEOPLE**



Pictured on the left is the La Casita Art Group from Dream Hills, who, last month, presented a compilation painting to Pedro Mancebo, Councillor for Tourism & the Coast. The painting, a watercolour, features ten scenes from the Orihuela municipality including the Oriole Bird, Moors & Christians and the tower at Cabo Roig. The art group is made up of expats who meet every Monday morning at La Casita in Dream Hills. The original artists of the painting are Margaret Nelson, Marian Walton, Christine Longworth, Daphne Martin, Judth Hiskett, Joyce Sinclair, Jackie Nebbin, Wendy Warner, Linda and Katie Palmer Northgate.

Pedro Mancebo thanked the group and informed them that the painting would be placed in the Ayuntamiento in Orihuela Costa. (Well done, ladies! Source: teleorihuela.com)

Even the most sceptical and biggest whingers amongst us must surely agree that the London 2012 Olympics, and the subsequent Paralympics, were a tremendous success. The ceremonies and the events themselves were hugely enjoyable and inspiring and were full of 'feel-good' moments. A large part of the success of the whole venture was down to precise nanosecond-like timing and very efficient organisation and management. The major contributor to this were the 70,000 volunteers or Games Makers who tied the whole thing together. Local residents David and Joanna (Jo ) Rich, (see photo) who live on the Dreamhills II urbanization, have recently returned from working as Games Makers.



Jo takes up the story from here - "We spent 6 weeks there and had a really fantastic time. I was based at Terminal 5 Heathrow Airport as part of the 'meet and greet' team welcoming the athletes, officials, International Olympic committee members, world press and media and many more people who were connected and involved with the Games. I worked with some great people and saw many famous faces including Venus Williams, Bruce Forsyth, Cherie Blair, Christopher Dean, Russell Brand and Yoko Ono. We also welcomed the football teams of Brazil, Argentina and the Ukraine.. The Australian and New Zealand rowing teams were in particularly fine physical form! (Steady on Jo!) Lord Seb' Coe also called in to thank us.

David was a driver based at the Olympic Park driving personnel to and from the Olympic Village or their hotels. He drove the Croatian ambassador to his country's embassy; the Trinidadian javelin gold medallist to the airport and the Canadian sprint relay team to the Olympic village.

The 'icing on the cake' had to be when we went to the rehearsal for the opening ceremony two days before the games began. It was fabulous and we just couldn't believe that we were sat in the stadium watching it all unfold; you just didn't know what was coming next! This was a magic time for us and we both feel proud and honoured to have been part of the London Olympics. After the Games, we were presented with certificates signed by Lord Coe together with engraved silver batons, replicas of the ones used by the relay runners. All in all we had a fabulous time and now have memories that will last a life time."

**The Contrite Parrot**

A guy had a pet parrot but this particular bird had a very bad attitude and a profane vocabulary. Every other word the bird said was obscene. Any woman who was foolish enough to be in the same room as the poisonous psittacine, soon rushed out red-faced to a chorus of 'Get your t\*ts out, sweet cheeks!'

The man tried everything to calm the bird down, change of diet, soft music, repeating polite words, but nothing seemed to work. Finally in desperation during a particularly noisy and swear-laden tirade by the parrot, the man grabs the bird and throws it into the freezer. For a few minutes there was squawking and swearing from the freezer - and then silence. Feeling guilty, the man opened the freezer and the bird flies into the man's arms and says: 'I'm sorry about my language and promise never to swear again. Can you forgive me?'

'That's okay,' the man says. 'I forgive you.'

'Thank you,' the parrot says. 'Now may I ask what the chicken did?'

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### **What an opportunity!**

An old man wakes up in the middle of the night and finds that his pecker is as hard as a rock for the first time in years. He wakes his wife and shows her his 'totem pole.'

'Look at this?' he exclaims happily. 'What do you think we ought to do with it?'

His wife replies, 'Well, seeing as you've got all the wrinkles out, now might be a good time to wash it.'

## My SatNav

I have a little satnav

It sits in my car

A satnav is a driver's friend

It tells you where you are.

I have a little satnav

I've had it all my life

It's better than the normal ones

My satnav is my wife.

It gives me full instructions

Especially how to drive

"It's thirty miles an hour", it says

"You're doing thirty five"

It tells me when to stop and start

And when to use the brake

And tells me that it's never ever

Safe to overtake.

It tells me when a light is red

And when it goes to green

It seems to know instinctively

Just when to intervene.

It lists the vehicles just in front

And all those to the rear

And taking this into account

It specifies my gear.

I'm sure no other driver

Has so helpful a device

For when we leave and lock the car

It still gives its advice.

It fills me up with counselling

Each journey's pretty fraught

So why don't I exchange it

And get a quieter sort?

Ah well, you see, it cleans the house,

Makes sure I'm also fed,

It washes all my shirts and things

And - keeps me warm in bed!

Despite all these advantages

And my tendency to scoff,

I do wish that once in a while

I could turn the f\*\*\*\*r off.

(Anon)

## Q & A

Q: How many Freudian psychiatrists does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: Two. One to change the bulb and one to hold the penis - I mean ladder.

## Lorca Earthquake 'man-made'?

A report published in the Nature Geoscience Magazine has concluded that the Lorca, Murcia earthquakes of 2011, were "man made".

A research team headed by Dr Pablo Gonzalez from the University of Western Ontario in Canada has concluded that the seismic activity was caused by the result of excessive amounts of water being drawn from underground sources to feed domestic and agricultural supplies. This loss of water - according to Gonzalez - caused a stress change in the earth's crust along a known major fault line, which was enough to trigger a rupture in the rock.

The result was that in the late afternoon of the 11th of May 2011, an earthquake of 4.5 on the Richter scale was followed minutes later by a quake measuring 5.2 which destroyed many historic buildings and claimed 9 lives.

Dr Gonzalez has spent months using satellite data to map the ground deformation caused by the activity before carrying out computer simulations of the fault slip. The results showed a pattern that correlated with stress changes due to loss of groundwater.

Since the 1960s, natural groundwater levels in the region had reduced by 250 metres.

The scientist concluded that "The presented data and modelling results are consistent with a groundwater crustal unloading process, providing a reasonable explanation for the observed fault slip pattern..."

The subject of water availability and supply has always been a contentious issue for the region of Murcia, where dozens of golf courses demand an increasing amount of water supply. The fact that the Paramount Pictures theme park at Alhama de Murcia also promises to bring an increased number of tourists to the region can only serve to place a greater strain on demand. If the issue of groundwater extraction is allowed to go unchecked how long must we wait for the next activity? The area's meagre water resources have been plundered for decades but there is still no responsible water management program. This is not just a problem which is unique to Murcia. Regrettably many other areas, particular in the south and south east of Spain appear to be unable to plan beyond a 12-month scenario.

## Lorca rebuilds at snail's pace!

The municipal, regional and national responses to the Lorca tragedy have been appalling. There are more than 2,000 people still living temporary accommodation around the city, a number of which are in mobile homes erected on sports grounds. Despite the promises from politicians, many families have suffered huge financial losses, with most insurance settlements being way below the original purchase price of the property, due in part to the crash in the market.



Many are also finding that the settlements do not cover outstanding mortgage repayments. Because of this shortfall in compensation many properties with superficial damage are still in a state of disrepair, due to the owners lack of funds to finance

any repair. Furthermore, an opportunity to provide much needed employment in the area have been cast aside, as the authorities have brought in a number of contractors to repair and rebuild the city from outside the area, meaning that the funds that the regional and central governments have made available has been sent elsewhere.

A pithy observation by many of the residents of the town has been how the first of the few buildings to be demolished and rebuilt has been the barracks of the Guardia Civil!

Many local residents in the San Fernando area of the city were forced to leave their apartments due to public safety worries, yet not one of these apartment blocks has been demolished yet. Whilst the local government have cited reasons for being a lack of forthcoming funds from the regional and central government, many believe that the area is being considered for redevelopment, leaving local residents out of pocket and homeless.

(Source: Tumbit mostly)



### The History of Spain. Part 30. *Pronunciamiento* after *Pronunciamiento*.

In the previous article we saw that General Baldomero Espartero wrested control of the regency from Queen María Cristina in 1840. Espartero was typical of the new breed of soldier-politician and the use of the *pronunciamiento* (pronouncement or coup) heralded the militarization of Spanish politics.

During the 116 years between Riego's *pronunciamiento* in 1820 to Mola and Franco's putsch in 1936, there were more than one hundred military rumblings of various types and *pronunciamientos*, the latest being on February 23, 1981, when Lieutenant-Colonel Tejero Molino stormed the Congress in Madrid and held the deputies at gunpoint! But in the majority of cases in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the military acted with public support, not against it, although in reality, the civilian politicians became increasingly peripheral to the process of political change.

Espartero was a progressive liberal, the *progresistas*, and was constantly at odds with the Moderates, *Moderados*. Whereas previously only one tenth of one percent of the population were entitled to vote, Espartero increased this to over 500,000 and forced the sale of Church lands. A flamboyant womaniser (one British lord remarked, 'He wore out more sheets than shoe leather'), he was also politically naïve. His high-handed manner alienated both Moderates and progressives alike and in 1843, a coalition of Moderates and disgruntled Progressives, led by General Narváez ousted General Espartero.

Once in power, Narváez introduced a new queen, 13-year-old Isabel II; dumped his Progressive supporters and ensconced his Moderate associates in power. These Moderates would not be in the category of the 'liberal moderates' that we have today; right wing conservatives would be a better description. They cut the suffrage dramatically to just over 97,000 citizens, less than one per cent of the population, and then rigged the elections so that they remained in power for the next ten years. The Moderates did all they could to undermine the local power bases of the Progressives: elected town councils were replaced by centrally appointed mayors; restrictions were placed on freedom of speech; trial by jury was abolished; and the National Militia, seen as a tool of the Progressives, were dissolved.

But the Moderates also implemented a series of reforms which would create the framework for a modern, centralised state. A uniform system of taxation was introduced which doubled revenues; the National Bank and the education system were reformed; postage stamps were introduced and the *peseta* was adopted as the national currency. In 1851, the Moderates signed a deal with the Vatican whereby Rome retrospectively accepted the sale of the Church lands by the Espartero regime in return for state recognition of Catholicism as the 'sole religion of the Spanish nation.' The state would also fund the secular clergy and confirm the Church's key role as educators.

In 1844, Narváez created a new paramilitary police force, the *Guardia Civil*. The *guardias* were introduced to bring the bandit-infested countryside under control and recruits could not be natives of the districts they served in. This reduced the opportunities for corruption. This rural police force would stifle any local influences objectionable to Madrid and the large landowners, and soon became unpopular with much of the public they served. They made things 'safe' for the 'upper classes' and defended the *status quo*. This made them enemies of regionalism and of working-class movements.

Narváez increased the army to 150,000 soldiers which accounted for 55% of the national budget. Although this gave his administration a strong arm, there was mounting opposition from radical Progressives and the Carlists in Catalonia rose in rebellion in 1846 - 9. There were also a number of *pronunciamientos* against the Narváez regime, but these all failed due to a lack of support from the Progressives, who feared that a popular revolution would lead to anarchy. Nevertheless, internal factions within the Moderates forced Narváez out of office in 1851.

Narváez was replaced by an arch-conservative Juan Bravo Murillo. He planned to reduce the electorate to a mere 25,000; to reduce the cortes/congress to a mere advisory role; to put an end to corruption and factionalism and to bolster the authority of the state. However this did not sit well with his fellow Moderates and he was forced from office in 1853. The following year there was another *pronunciamiento* by a group of generals which triggered a series of risings in Madrid and the provincial towns. These were supported by an uneasy alliance with the Progressives, Democrats and urban workers. Mindful of her own vulnerability to risings and revolutions, Queen Isabella saved her position by dismissing the government and invited Esparto and the Progressives to take 'centre stage' and the reins of power again.

Isabel II could not, as you can see from the photo, be described as anything other than 'challenged' when it came to female pulchritude. However this generous and good-hearted monarch was above all passionate, rivaling Catherine the Great of Russia as history's most lascivious queen. Isabel's many amorous affairs concerned the royal councillors greatly, as they feared that an heir might arrive on the scene before a husband. A search for a suitable husband pushed her Bourbon cousin Francisco de Asis into the hot-blooded arms of the queen. In fact Francisco, or 'Paquita' (roughly translated as 'Fanny') as the public would soon call him, may have been as gay as a pink cravat. He had a high, squeaky voice and songs and jokes questioning his sexuality were common. One stated 'It's a big problem in the Court, to determine whether the Consort, when he goes to the toilet, pee pees standing or sitting.' Even the not too choosy Isabel complained bitterly about her husband's effeminate habits after their first night together: 'What can I say of a man who on his wedding night wore more lace than I.' Nevertheless, Isabel gave birth to twelve children, so if Francisco was unable to 'rise to the occasion' there were obviously many others willing to do their royal duty.



Once Espartero was back in control, he attempted to restore some of the many civil liberties suppressed by Narváez. He also gave the go-ahead to the creation of a national network of railways. But factionalism remained within the Progressives, the radicals demanding wholesale political and social reform. Rising food prices, industrial recession and epidemic disease stoked an upsurge of violent social disorder in 1856. In July 1856, a new *pronunciamiento* by a general with the unlikely name of Leopoldo O'Donnell forced Espartero from power once again. General O'Donnell replaced the Progressive regime with a broad based political grouping that might appeal to the Moderates and Progressives alike.

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H. Allen Smith

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### A Tall Order!

Nelly the elephant was walking through the jungle when she got a nasty thorn stuck in her foot. Unable to extract it, she gave up all hope when an ant, known to his mates as 'Horny Harry' came along the same path. 'I don't suppose you could get this thorn out of my foot, could you?' asked Nelly.

'I'll pull the thorn out of your foot if you let me screw you,' said the horny ant.

Nelly's foot really hurt and she thought that she wouldn't even notice the over-sexed ant screwing her, so she agreed to the arrangement.

Horny Harry deftly removed the thorn from the elephant's foot and then squealed, 'Are you ready to get nailed, elephant.' True to her word Nelly agreed while the ant lifted the elephant's tail and got on with it.

High up in a nearby tree a monkey witnessed the whole episode and was so upset by the absurdity of the whole situation, he started throwing coconuts at the unlikely couple, coupling below. One of the coconuts hit poor Nelly on the head and she howled in pain.

'Yea! Take it all, bitch!' squealed the ant.



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The editor, Mick, can be contacted at [mick.dreamscene@gmail.com](mailto:mick.dreamscene@gmail.com) or at 586 Dream Hills.

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### The Best Advice



Start off each day with a smile and get it over with.

W.C. Fields

Let a smile be your umbrella, and you'll end up with a faceful of rain.

G. Carlin

For sincere advice and the correct time, call any number at random at 3.00 am.

Steve Martin

Never be afraid to try something new. Noah was an amateur; the *Titanic* was built by professionals.

James Prentice

Always be wary of any helpful item that weighs less than its operating manual.

Terry Pratchett

If you've got them by the balls, their hearts and minds will follow.

Military motto

If you want to get rid of somebody, just tell them something for their own good.

Kin Hubbard

When I asked my accountant if anything could get me out of the mess I am in now, he thought for a long time.....'Yes,' he said. 'Death would help.'

Robert Morley

It is better to give than to lend, and it costs about the same.

Philip Gibbs

Always look out for number one and be careful not to step in number two.

Rodney Dangerfield

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