

THE DREAM SCENE

NEWSLETTER

Helping to keep expat's informed.....and smiling.

Issue no. 73 1st of March 2013

Bienvenido a todos and welcome to the start of the seventh year of The Dream Scene. Thanks to your support and our generous advertisers we are now on our 73rd issue, with a circulation that includes expat' hot-spots in Los Balcones, San Miguel, Los Montesinos, Los Altos, and lately the Entre Naranjos & Via Park 2 areas. The printing costs of producing the hard-copies is now almost €200 per month but the balance between ad income and expenditure remain on a knife-edge, which is fine by me. It is after all a hobby, though a time-consuming one!

Here, the winter has been wonderful so far, but it is now turning quite a bit chillier, largely due to very cold northerly winds. Life remains very enjoyable in Spain, although one wonders who can be trusted anymore. Corruption now seems endemic, from the Socialist government in Andalucia and the ruling PP government in Madrid to the Left in Catalonia and the 'mixed bag' in the Balearics. I had always thought that the most corrupt period of modern Spain was during the Socialist rule of Felipe González during the 80's & early 90's. But now I am not so sure. And then there is of course the 'horse-meat scandal' which has also come home to roost here. Big brand names such as Nestlé, Findus and many others, have been putting pieces of *Equus ferus caballus* in your beefburgers, pizzas and canalone! The Courier also reported a story in which 15 tons of dead dogs were held in a warehouse in a Galician town. It is thought that these remains, together with the carcasses of dead sheep, were to be processed into animal feed. So if you feel decidedly dodgy about having the odd sausage or burger, just think what might be in poor old Fido's dinner bowl! Certainly, the individual seems to be very badly served at the moment, largely down to the greed and incompetence of politicians and corporations. And don't even mention the banks!

The incidence of flu in the Valencia Region, during February, has been increasing between 5 and 22% depending on the week. The most seriously affected have been children between ages five and 14 years. The age group with the least incidence of flu was the over 65's, because most of them have had the correct 'jab'!

The Spanish get rid of their 'winter blues' by holding the February Carnivals. There have been wonderful processions with magical floats, together with elaborate and beautiful costumes, and lots of happy faces! The *Falles* now starts in Valencia, running well into March. Although incredibly noisy and smokey, the *ninots* - the giant and often satirical effigies - are worth the trip alone. The image here shows PM Rajoy dressed as a pharaoh with plenty of gold; then Merkel getting others to 'jump through hoops' for the euro and King Juan Carlos with a dead elephant, not the one he shot last year!



If you pay tax in Spain and have assets including property abroad or if you are paying business rent, you should read page 11; page 15 has important pension-related news if you are currently working in Spain and have also worked in another EU country. Thanks to Lee B for some helpful tips on water pipes in Spain, on page 19.

Sincerest thanks to George, Con & Trish, Pat & Laurie and the Acott family for their very generous donations towards costs, last month. A big 'Thank You' also to Angela for her wonderful original cartoons last year and to Steve Hodgetts for hand-delivering most of the Dream Scenes locally.

Have a great month! Mick & Tid.

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The Barcenas 'slush fund' and corruption continues to dominate the news. While in Berlin, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy stated that all the information that has been published by the media "is untrue — except for some things". Hardly reassuring! Between 2006 and 2011, Rajoy's salary from the Popular Party (PP) rose from an annual gross of 146,000 euros to 200,000 euros, which is a 36% rise. This was in addition to his salary from congress. The prime minister's annual salary in Spain is 75,000 euros, the lowest for a head of government in the entire European Union, the Irish Prime Minister's being, I believe, the highest. Barcenas, the former treasurer of the PP is now being investigated and is of course being hounded by the media, who he recently responded to singularly as you can see from this photo! It seems that when Barcenas was sacked by the PP, he was allocated a compensation payment of €400,000, which he asked to be paid to him monthly including his social security payments. These were kept up until December 2012. Barcenas is now suing the PP for wrongful dismissal after he admitted he held €8 million in Swiss accounts. The Treasury have refused to grant him the tax amnesty he applied for last year accusing him of 'cheating.'



Starting in June, all buying and leasing contracts for homes must come with energy certifications that classify the properties at different levels according to total power consumption. The measure will be applied across the EU even though Spain tried to resist for fear of a negative impact on the power market. Although certification will be required, there is no fixed price or scale for the certification. In Europe the amounts collected vary between 500 euros for a 100 square metre flat in Germany to 250 euros for a same-sized property in Italy. The new charge will surely hurt consumers' spending power, and it arrives at an unfortunate time given the real estate market's recent struggles. Source: eleconomista.es Beware 'cowboys & chancers' who will no doubt be offering 'dodgy' certifications. Further news on this as it develops.

Investment bankers at Morgan Stanley are taking a very up-beat view on Spanish economic prospects. They believe that the current corruption scandals are insufficient to cause a change of government and that the policy changes and reforms which are currently under way will take Spain out of recession by 2014. They even go so far as to state that Spain could be the 'next Germany' within the European Union. Heady stuff!

The Paramount Theme Park in Murcia continues to be a catalogue of broken promises and missed deadlines. Bearing in mind that Paramount themselves are not prepared to invest any money into the project (very wise), the paucity of investors must surely mean it is doomed. Also the possibility of the proposed giant EuroCasino, which is being fronted by billionaire Sheldon Adelson, may go ahead in Madrid, will probably funnel most of the clever money into this project.

The government, in the face of considerable opposition, have toned-down the court charges they announced last year. One of the charges that has drawn the most criticism about the recently approved fees: the infamous €100 traffic fine that now costs €200 in court fees to appeal. From now on, it will cost €50. The new legislation also reduces the extra variable part of the court fees for any given legal procedure. In the last two months, this variable amount (calculated as a % of the value of the assets at stake) could be as high as €10,000; following the latest changes, it can never go higher than €2,000 for individuals.

The government are having a re-think on evictions and mortgage law due too pressure from the public and a worrying increase in suicides.

Spain's so-called bad bank has started marketing the first batch of properties seized from troubled lenders to cleanse their books even though it is itself still bogged down in internal debates and doubts over its business plan. The bad bank - SAREB - said it was putting 13,000 properties, which were once owned by rescued lender Bankia, up for sale. SAREB took on €7 billion worth of troubled real estate assets - land, foreclosed homes, half-built developments and loans to developers - at the end of December from four nationalised banks, including Bankia. The lenders received bonds in exchange, but also European rescue funds to help rebuild their capital.

Switzerland is seeking ways to limit the influx of immigrants from certain European countries, specifically, from Spain, Italy and Portugal, which will be considered as 'second (class?)' Immigrants. According to the French newspaper, Les Echos, "Switzerland does not want to accept the misery of Europe." This safeguard has already been used by the government of Bern earlier this year to control the entry of immigrants from Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Czech Republic.

Spain's parliament voted on Feb' 12 to consider protecting bullfighting as a cultural asset, angering animal rights campaigners and authorities in two regions where the sport is banned. Members of the ruling Partido Popular, which has an absolute majority in the parliament, voted to debate a petition signed by 500,000 members of the public. Under the proposal, bullfighting would be promoted and Spain would push to have it recognized by UNESCO as part of its heritage, joining world cultural symbols such as China's Dragon Boat Festival and the Castells human tower formations from the northeastern Spanish region of Catalonia.

Spain is next to Germany among European countries that make significant use of wind power, and it has just passed a major milestone in green electricity generation. Since the beginning of November, wind power has accounted for more than a quarter of Spain's total energy generation – for the first time moving ahead of nuclear and coal power.

There are 100 employees of NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) at a monitoring station at Robledo de Chavela outside Madrid. They have now decided to go on strike. The reason? Well, the government, in their wisdom, decided to cut the extra Christmas wage payment in 2012. The employees say that this is absurd as they are paid by the North American Space Agency and that all costs of the facility, even down to the waste paper baskets, are covered by the US government. Robledo de Chavela is the only NASA monitoring station in Europe.

A majority of deputies in Congress have approved amendments to the Coastal Law. Basically it means that more than 3,000 homes and 10,000 bars get a reprieve from the bulldozer for a further 75 years. One of the stipulations is that none of these properties are to be modified further; as if anyone will take notice of that!

There is a marked increase in the number Spanish companies being expropriated in Latin America. These have occurred mainly in Bolivia and Argentina but also in Venezuela. Many Spaniards see these as 'dubious seizures' intended by the populist leaders to divert attention from their internal problems.

Wine production in Alicante fell by 4.5% last year. However, you can all sleep well as the quality is said to be very good.

He was so thick he couldn't tell which way a lift was going if he got two guesses. *Roy Chubby Brown.*

His mother gave him a see-through lunchbox so he could tell whether he is on his way to work or on his way home. *R. Klein.*

What's Up? continued

There were 24 bogus kidnappings in Spain during 2012. This was twice the number for 2011. It seems that individuals have been pretending to be kidnapped in order to extract money from their own families, relatives or friends. In one case the parents of a child reported that she was kidnapped and taken to Egypt. They stated that a ransom was demanded or she would be killed. The police travelled to Egypt but it soon transpired that the parents wanted to raise some money themselves. In another case, a young Swedish chap in Marbella, ran out of money on New Year's Eve, so he faked his own kidnapping for a ransom of just €3,000! Regrettably, there were also 17 serious kidnappings here last year, but all were resolved satisfactorily.

Police have arrested a woman from a kiosk next to a school in Orihuela for selling cannabis cigarettes to some school kids. They were selling at €2 each. This reminds me of a little story I forgot to include last month. A pensioner friend of mine, who has to use a mobility scooter to get around, was stopped by police in Los Balcones in late January. The police fined him €30 for not having a reflective jacket. Now before you start 'harumping' at his treatment, he also told me he was stinking of booze and 'grass' at the time and, all things considered, felt he got off very lightly!

30 people have been arrested in towns around the Bay of Cadiz for stealing the protective copper shielding to lighting cables in the streets. Several streets are now without lighting and more arrests are expected. This is a crime which is now endemic in Spain, a number of local urbanisations suffering similar thefts.

There were several large 'drug busts' last month. Police intercepted a trailer loaded with 2,600 kilos of cannabis in Huércal-Overa, Andalucía, and detained the Irish driver, two Dutch and two Spanish.

Then, just two weeks ago, police discovered 4.3 tons of cocaine in an industrial estate in nearby Elche. See photo. This has a street value of €242 million and is the largest seizure in Spain for the past 15 years. A number of weapons were also confiscated.



And just last week, a major joint operation between the Guardia Civil and the National Police arrested 63 in Alicante in a drug-gang related operation. Among those arrested was a prison officer - who supplied drugs and mobile phones to prisoners - and a policeman - who provided safe passage for the transport of hashish. Assorted drugs to the value of €3.2 million was also impounded, together with €16,000 in cash, 11 weapons, 13 vehicles, 10 boats, three jet-skis and stolen items to the value of €260,000. This was a particularly dangerous gang made up of several nationalities; although they imported their own supplies of drugs, they were also adept at stealing them from other gangs. They are now accused of more than a hundred crimes including some homicides.

An 85-year-old from Albaterra near Crevillente, died after he fell off his moped last month. Now, what the heck was an 85-year-old doing on a moped? Maybe wheelies!

Good Health!

A health specialist is giving a talk on well-being in a village hall. 'The best way to start the day is to do five minutes light exercise, and five minutes of deep breathing,' says the specialist. 'Then I take a hot shower, and feel rosy all over.' A voice from the back of the hall shouts, 'Tell us more about Rosie!'

A man goes to his doctor with a sprig of green sticking out of his bottom. 'Doctor, I think I have a lettuce growing out of my backside,' he says. The doctor examines the greenery and says, 'I'm afraid I have bad news - it's only the tip of the iceberg.'

My grandfather used to drink a glass of liver salts every single day of his life. At his funeral we had to beat his liver to death with sticks.

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National Police have arrested six suspects accused of extortion and blackmail. The six are members of the Kurdish Workers Party, the PKK. Four of the six arrests were in Madrid, one in Barcelona and one in Murcia. French police have arrested a further 16 suspected terrorists. €8,000 and two firearms were recovered and more arrests are expected. In 2008, six people were killed and two injured in an attack on the US embassy in Istanbul, Turkey by them. The PKK are considered a terrorist organisation by the EU and the US.

You may not get on with some of your neighbours, but hopefully things don't get as bad as they did in the neighbourhood of José Antonio, Alicante, during mid-Feb'. It seems that during a heated dispute between two families, at least 10 shots of 9 mm ammunition were fired. Fortunately no one was injured, but no suspects have been arrested yet.

A 30-year-old Serbian, who together with his accomplice tried to rob a jeweller in the "Milla de Oro" in Madrid at knife-point, was shot in the chest and groin by the jeweller. (I suppose there is a certain irony in a jewel-thief being shot in the 'jewels'!) The injured man then tried to get in a taxi, while his partner ran away, but the driver refused to take him. The seriously injured man then collapsed and was attended to by the emergency services. Shortly afterwards, a second man reported in to the emergency department in a nearby hospital with two bullet wounds to the stomach and one to the forearm. The would-be robbers had sprayed the jeweller in the face with pepper-spray, which probably upset his aim a tad. The police reported that the jeweller had a firearm licence but his response may yet be considered by the authorities as excessive. If people are approaching you with knives, I don't think they mean to do you much good!

Talk about being caught red-handed! Police in Orihuela stopped and arrested a 31-year-old man who was carrying 12 pots of marijuana containing one-foot-high plants in his car. 'Honest! I thought I was just taking some parsley to my gran's!'

A container-load with over 500,000 cigarettes and 5,000 cos lettuces has been stolen in Almeria. The Guardia Civil are reported to be looking for a rabbit with a bad cough!

The local council in Orihuela continues to implode. What was a tripartite is now a bipartite! In a surprise move, the mayor, Monserrate Guillén, expelled Pedro Mancebo, President of the Clr/CLARO party, from the government. Mancebo was councillor for the coast, beaches etc. The remaining Clr councillor, Lopez-Bas, in the local government then resigned, as did the Internation Residents' representative at the Playa Flamenca town hall. Some may feel that this was a bit of 'poetic justice' for Mancebo, as last year he sacked Bob Houliston and Asun Mayoral from the ruling council. The new ruling council are now very much in a minority and it will be very difficult for them to govern effectively. One piece of good news is that the National Police presence is to be reintroduced at Playa Flamenca town hall and will now be next to the Guardia Civil there.



Mayor Monserrate Guillén The Greens, on right and head of the PSOE, Antonia Moreno, on the left. Only the Socialists and the Greens remain in the ruling council.

Orihuela town hall also plans to evict the judges and staff from the courthouse. The problem here is that the council should have been compensated for re-housing the regional justice departments with three million euros and the old court building, but this has not happened. It will be interesting to see what develops. Meanwhile, the opposition PP have taken control of all the committees.

Pepa Ferrando, the president of the PP in Orihuela, released her list of 70 officials, who would be appointed should the PP take control now. Amazingly, there is not one non-Spanish European on the list. So much for integration.

The phone scandal continues to drag on in Torrevieja. The courts will now probe to see if mobile phones used by councillors could have been used in a criminal fashion, misappropriating public funds. The councillor for sport resigned last year after it was alleged that he placed 200 calls to prostitutes; and the councillor for police has given back €88 after bills showed subscriptions to porn channels on his council smart phone.

Cut-backs has resulted in the local police in Torrevieja doing lots of overtime to get the job done. 16 policemen there received a total of €63,000 in overtime; one officer in a desk-job getting €1,688 extra during the year for sorting-out traffic records.

Five new ten-story towers are to be built in La Mata. €91,370 is being spent to improve the roads in Los Montesinos. The Diputación de Alicante is providing 80% of the funds, the town council the remaining 20%. The work is expected to last around 6/7 weeks.

I decided to take up a life of crime, but I can't decide which political party to join.

Roy Chubby Brown.

In late January, eight police cars rushed to an accident in Los Altos, not far from the hospital, where a man reported a car crash caused by a man waving a gun. When the police arrived, they found a large van on its side, with the driver and passenger still inside, as 'drunk as skunks.' The call was a hoax as they were trying to deflect the blame for the accident which they caused themselves.

Local police in Pilar de la Horadada and local farmers have designed a security plan to prevent attacks on crops. The campaign aims to curb the theft of celery, broccoli and artichokes and, within a few weeks, peppers. Why anyone would want to steal artichokes I just don't know. I cannot understand the Spanish fascination with them. They are not a vegetable, they are a weed!

The city of Valencia has been having dreadful problems with arsonists. In 2012 alone, 150 cars were burnt in the city, more than 12 a month! But it is the rubbish containers/bins which bear the main brunt of the arsonists' attacks, 300 bins being destroyed last year at a cost of €1,200 each. The fires tend to peak during the *Fallas* period, when the effigies are 'officially' set on fire. So far this year, according to *El Mundo*, 60 rubbish containers and 12 vehicles have been destroyed by fire.

And speaking of smoke, for two years Rodrigo Arroyo, owner of the Bar Rodrigo in Valencia, has allowed his customers to smoke in the bar. Now, due to the recession and the fines he incurred, he has been forced to close the doors. The fines to date - €40,000! Rodrigo plans to open the bar, when the economy improves and he has no intention of paying the fines.

Are you in an urbanisation where you are concerned at the level of administrator's fees you are paying?

They have compiled a comparative price study in DH2, which Conrad A. has kindly sent me. The analysis covers quotes from 15 administrators for an urbanisation of up to around 120 dwellings. If you would like a copy of the study, email me at mick.dreamscene@gmail.com

No timewasters or administrators please.

Ryanair are re-introducing 17 of the 18 flights they cancelled at El Altet last October. These will include Bournemouth, París, Nuremberg, Wroclaw, Katowice, Budapest, Kaunas, Knock, Oslo, Smaland, Hausegund, Angelhough, Kerry, Malmoe, Cork and Tampere. The big news is that a Norwegian airline has decided to open a base in Alicante with two overnights planes every day which will connect El Altet with 20 airports in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and the UK (London).

Are you there, Luigi?

A woman goes to a séance to try and contact the spirit of her dead husband. The clairvoyant sit the woman down at a small round table and gets some details. 'What was your husband's name and occupation?' asks the clairvoyant. 'His name was Luigi,' replies the woman, 'and all his life he worked as a waiter in a restaurant.' The clairvoyant puts her hands to her brow, closes her eyes and points her face upward. 'Luigi. Luigi,' she cries. 'If you can hear me, make yourself known.'

A distant voice calls out. 'I can't. It's not my table.'

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Choosy Redneck!

A reporter is interviewing a Redneck farmer. 'Y'know,' he says, 'there are some folks who think that you farmers have sex with all kinds of animals: goats, pigs, cows, chickens.....'

'Chickens?' protests the farmer. 'What kinda pervert has sex with a chicken?'

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Out of the mouths of babes.....

Carly took her four-year-old daughter to church one Sunday. During the sermon, the priest extended his arms towards heaven, and with a rapturous look on his face said, 'Dear Lord, without you we are but dust.....'

He would have continued but the congregation dissolved into hysterics when the little girl asked her mother in a very audible voice, 'Mom! What is butt dust?'

Remember: Life isn't about how to survive the storm, but how to dance in the rain. (Pete Dudman)

The Goya Awards 2013

Sunday February 17, saw the 27th Annual Goya Awards. Named after the famous Spanish painter, Francisco Goya* (1746-1828), these awards are the Spanish equivalent of the Oscars & Baftas, but are mostly related to Spanish film only.

Of the 30 awards which were 'up for grabs,' one movie, *Blancanieves* (Snow White) grabbed 10, including Best Picture. This is a retelling of the old fairy tale, but this time with a particularly Spanish flavour to it; for example, although the 'poison apple' remains, this time there are seven dwarf bullfighters! The film is also shot in black & white and is silent, much like the award-winning *The Artist*. Three British thespians were nominated - Ewan McGregor, Naomi Watts and the promising young Tom Holland, who all appeared in that excellent movie 'The Impossible' - but neither won an award. Naturally, Spanish performers tend to be favoured and often the bias is regional.

It is a real shame that many excellent movies from France, Germany, Spain and other European countries get little promotion beyond their own national cinemas. There are some real gems there which come, far too infrequently, to Film Four, their only UK medium.

Although organisers of the three-hour-long ceremony attempted to keep 'politics' out of the Awards, as funding to the film industry was drastically cut by the present government and the IVA rate for entertainment increased to 21%, there was little chance of this. Several actors from the Actors Union and others voiced their objections, with the host and former Goya winner, Eva Hache, giving a speech 'loaded with schrapnel' and having a go at the government, the Royal Family, banks and industry.

An honorary Goya went to 73-year-old Concha Velasco, who has appeared in more than 80 films since the 50's. See photo.

Best Hispano-American Award went to a Cuban film, *Juan de Los Muertos*. Yet another zombie-film, which was produced in 2010. Similar to *Sean of the Dead*, it concerns a lazy good-for-nothing Cuban who starts a new business of killing zombies. There was one major *faux pas* during the gala. One dozy presenter read out the wrong name for 'Best Song'! The unfortunate hopefuls were actually on the stage when they were told to go back to their seats and the correct winners invited up on stage. CRINGE!!!

All the awards, photos and some trailers can be seen here - http://www.elmundo.es/especiales/premios_goya/nominados.html

*One very interesting anecdote about Goya came up during my research for the history articles. As a painter, Goya is regarded as the last of the Old Masters and among the world's greatest. Towards the end of the Peninsular War against the French, (War of Spanish Independence) of 1808-1814, Goya painted Wellington's triumphant entry into Madrid. However, this very outspoken general criticized Goya's painting when it was presented to him. Goya then had to be physically restrained from shooting Wellington! So, if Wellington was shot and didn't get to Waterloo and trounce Napoleon, we could all be wearing berets now and selling onions! The horror!!

The Nervous Patient.

A young woman has terrible toothache but was reluctant to go to the dentist because she was frightened of his drill. Eventually, however, she was in such discomfort that she decided to pluck up courage. 'I really am scared,' she told the dentist as she entered the surgery. 'I don't know which is worse - having a tooth filled or having a baby.' 'Well,' said the dentist, 'make up your mind before I adjust the chair.'

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Rob and J.J. would like to thank all their customers and friends for their kind help and support during Margaret's current difficulties.

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The Pope.

"The Pope said he was stepping down at age 85 because he could no longer handle the job physically. To which Lance Armstrong said, 'I've got some stuff that can help you with that.'" -Jay Leno

"Actually, when the voting's done, the cardinals burn their ballots. People wait outside the Sistine Chapel to see what colour the smoke is. If it's white smoke, they've agreed on a Pope. If it's black smoke, no decision's been made. If it's green smoke, Willie Nelson has somehow gotten into the Sistine Chapel." -Craig Ferguson

"The Vatican was struck by lightning after the Pope announced he was retiring. That really happened. Sounds like someone's not handling the breakup well." -Conan O'Brien

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LIME BAR GOLF SOCIETY, LOS ALTOS, ORIHUELA COSTA

The golf societies venue for the 9th January 2013 was held at the Vista Bella Golf Course. The weather was fine but very cold with a strong wind which made play difficult; the course was in fairly good condition.

The competition was in the Stableford format and the main prize on this occasion being the Presidents Cup.

The President of the society, Pete Rushton, teed off to lay the marker for the Presidents Drive, which was won by Len Henderson, Nearest the Pin in two on the par 4, 12th hole, was won by Stewart Coleman.

Best guest was Charlie Kohn Winkley.
 Silver Class 3rd place was Norman Dobson.
 Silver Class 2nd place was Nev. Greenwood.
 Silver Class 1st place was Andy Mc Donald.
 Gold Class 3rd place was Steve Cottle.
 Gold Class 2nd place was Charlie Mc Gonagle.
 Gold Class 1st place and winner of the Presidents Cup was Dave Gill with a score of 33 points.



A very enjoyable day's golf in pleasant company; thank you to Captain Mick Slater and Vice Captain Stewart Coleman for organising the event and also thanks to the Staff at The Lime Bar for a most enjoyable meal. Anyone wishing join our friendly society just needs to phone Mick on 659866468 or Stewart on 966180003.

UP-COMING FIXTURES

Fixtures for the next three months of 2013 are:
March 13th, Altoreal – 35 Euros;
April 10th, Curtis Cup at Vistabella – 35 Euros;
May 8th, Captains Day at La Torre - 50 Euros.
All games include green fee, buggy, prizes and buffet.



Krazy Kid!

A young teenage boy is so crazy about cricket his parents send him to a psychiatrist. 'All I ever do is dream about playing at Lord's,' says the boy. 'Really?' says the psychiatrist. 'Don't you ever dream about girls?' The boy replies, 'What, and lose my turn to bat?'

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The Nun's Habit.

A man is enjoying a drink outside a bar in Torrevieja when a nun comes along and lectures him on the evils of booze. The man argues back and it turns out that the nun has never had a drink in her life. 'Tell you what,' says the man, 'I'll buy you some alcohol, you drink it, and tell me what you think.' 'Out of the question,' replies the nun. 'I could never be seen drinking in public. But I suppose if you put the liquid in a coffee cup, I might have a sip.' The man agrees, goes inside and orders a double brandy in a coffee cup. 'Oh no!' Replies the barman. 'It's not that bloody nun again, is it?'

IMPORTANT: Tax Declaration Deadline.

If you are an expat' officially resident in Spain, you are obliged to disclose the value of all the assets you own outside of Spain, as at December 21, 2012. The deadline for reporting this has been extended for a further month, and must now be reported by April 30, 2013.

Assets to be reported must be classed into three groups:

- Bank and any financial accounts.
- Investments, ISA's, bonds, trusts, QROPS, annuities and life insurances.
- Properties abroad.

If the total in any one of these three asset groups is more than €50,000 per person, then a declaration must be made. Life insurance policies with no surrender value do not have to be declared.

Failure to make the declaration will result in an immediate fine of €10,000 plus a further €5,000 for each undeclared piece of information.

As this return has to be made online and with an electronic signature, it is strongly recommended that you approach a competent *gestor* or tax accountant to help you with the return this year.

Did you know.....?

•If you are a movie fan, Cines IMF in Torrevieja are now showing films with an English soundtrack without headphones (and with Spanish subtitles) every Thursday at 6.00pm. A newsletter with promo's is available and there is more information at www.torrevieja.com

•If you spend more than €25 on products bought directly from amazon.co.uk (and not from a third party), they will send the items to you in Spain carriage/postage free.

•For some months now Cotton Traders have been offering a three-day delivery service from the UK to Spain for purchases of their popular in-stock items of clothing and shoes. This service costs just £6.95. See www.cottontraders.co.uk

•A total of 24 outlets are participating in the IV Crevillent d'Tapas Contest which continues until March 31st. 40 different tapas are available for just €1.50 each. There are cash competitions and also a prize of dinner for two and your weight in beer! More details in Spanish, including participating bars/cafes can be found here - <http://www.comunitatvalenciana.com/ag/crevillent/iv-concurso-crevillent-dtapas-0>

•The University of Valencia is now offering a degree course on corruption. This is a first for Spain, the course being organised and tutored by officials from the Faculty of Criminal Law and the Criminology Institute. There is also an additional diploma course on the prevention and suppression of money laundering. There are now more than 300 Spanish politicians on various charges of corruption at present, so there will be no shortages of case studies available.

•Iberdrola have opened up a new representatives office in Los Dolses near La Zenia. The office is opposite Lidl's and is just around the corner from deBassus and Lloyds International. If you have read previous articles here, you will know to be very careful with what you sign at Iberdrola and beware false promises. If you don't understand the forms, take a copy to someone who does before committing yourself. Remember, the only truly efficient way to save on electricity costs except for using less power, is to move to the dual tariff (night-time) rate; but only if this particular schedule of hours suits you!

•The Simon Morton Breakfast Show is on Sunshine FM 95.6 & 102.8 every weekday. Local Stefan Pokroppa is interviewed every Friday at around 10:10 when he provides a rundown on local and national political breaking news. It is well worth tuning in to catch some of the issues.

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Pressure on Retail Rents.

AXA Real Estate, Europe's largest real estate fund manager, who manage €43 billion of property assets, has reported that 'European shop landlords will have to accept lower rents in coming years to help besieged retailers cope with the rise of online shopping and weak consumer spending.' This comes in their report, '*Retail will never be the same again.*' The report also stated that property investors had underestimated the impact of internet shopping and the economic downturn left them "unable to differentiate between the weakening of physical sales due to the shift online from those resulting from the current recessionary environment.

'Spain is likely to see sales per unit area fall by 5.7% by 2016, ahead of France, Italy and Germany at 5.5%, 4.4% and 3.2% respectively,' they report. Such declines would spur retailers to slash property costs to remain profitable, forcing rents to fall. Occupancy costs in Spain, for example could decline by as much as 18% over the period, while costs in France could drop by 17%.

"Retailers will be forced to reduce occupancy costs ... For some retail units where profits are, in an economic sense, exceptional, rents will be maintained, but for others, affordable rents could drop close to zero," AXA said. That means it would be unviable for retailers to operate from such units unless they were not charged rent.

When I speak to retailers here on the Costa Blanca, I am amazed by the high levels of rent some are paying. Some landlords take a practical approach and reduce rents in a difficult economic climate, while others show no understanding at all, some renters even being persuaded to pay the landlord's tax on the rental!

You can read the full report here -

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/02/18/net-us-onlineretail-property-idUSBRE91H0GG20130218>

And there is a video on the report here - <http://www.axa-im-webtv.com/realestate/home/media/mediaId/1503/mediaTitle/retail-will-never-be-the-same-again>

Keep taking the pills.

After receiving his medication from the pharmacist, the customer inquired, 'Are these time-release pills?' 'Yes,' said the pharmacist, 'they begin to work after your cheque clears.'

First man: 'I tried to kill myself yesterday by taking 1,000 aspirin.'

Second man: 'What happened?'

First man: 'Well, after the first two, I felt much better.'



Football gets dangerous!

The Spanish take their football very seriously, much as the English do; but recent events in Spain indicate that the sport here may much in common with free-fighting or kick-boxing, that is at least for the referees.

Last month, during an amateur game between the Andalucian teams of Marchena Balompié and Los Molares, the referee sent-off two players from the Marchena team. Then in the 72nd minute of the game, the ref showed the 'red card' to the coach from the Marchena side and suspended the game while he called the police. Marchena were, at this stage, trailing 0 - 1 to Los Morales. After half-an-hour wait, the police still hadn't arrived and one of the Marchena supporters punched the linesman several times. The ref then returned to the centre of the pitch for safety. However at this stage a further 20 Marchena supporters chased the poor referee who got cornered in one of the goals by the netting. Here he received several blows together with what is known in certain circles as 'a good kicking!' See photo. The referee then had to be helped off the pitch - see lead photo. The police never arrived.



But then last week there was another incident, this time in Valencia. On this occasion, during another amateur game between Los Silos and el Mislata UF, the 17-year-old student & referee sent off one of the Mislata players and awarded a penalty to Los Silos. It was close to the end of the match, with the score at two



goals each. The Mislata player (see photo; obviously a sweet and sensitive soul) who was sent off, is a 27-year-old policeman, who is also a member of the National Police Safety & Security Unit. He punched the 17-year-old referee to the ground and kicked him several times in the side and back. The teenage ref had several broken ribs and

lost his spleen, together with three litres of blood! The assailant has been arrested and has already appeared in court after spending the night in jail. It seems this chap has also been 'yellow-carded' 21 times previously! And you thought Millwall games were tough!

Footie!

Charlie was a huge fan of United. When he died, he put in his will that he wanted to be cremated - and his ashes scattered over a City supporter.

In last Saturday's match between Celtic and Rangers, fighting in the stands had to be postponed after football broke out on the pitch.

Our local football teams are rubbish. It's a wonder that they have any fans at all. Last week a groundsman saw three kids trying to climb the boundary wall - he told them to get back inside and watch the game.

The two stuffed dogs.

One should not take the English language for granted. Paddy took two stuffed dogs to the Antiques Roadshow. "Ooh!" said the presenter, "This is a very rare set, produced by the celebrated Johns Brothers taxidermists who operated in London at the turn of last century. Do you have any idea what they would fetch if they were in good condition?" "Sticks?" Paddy said.

(Pete Dudman)

Lime Bar Fishing Sunbathing Club.

It's all change at the Lime Bar Fishing Club.

During the AGM in February we stitched up a new chairman, a new secretary, an anti-social secretary & a match committee. I'm sure we will all muddle through with as much enthusiasm & panache as our predecessors!!!! Thank you Bob for last year's leadership & Mike "the quill" for all your efforts over the past several years.

A bleak day at the Eden.

Our February "competition" was fished at the Eden Canal. The conditions were not good, the water being very low with no flow and little sign of life. After lunchtime, the water even started to flow "uphill".

Luckily, it was a glorious sunny day with a light breeze and 21°. If anyone had a bite, it was missed it as we dozed off in the sunshine! Geordie did claim that he had his maggots sucked!

I blame "scary" Dave for the lack of fish. He was seen prowling the bank in his jockeys & sunhat. OMG!

Mike the "quill" (furthest peg from scary) caught the only "fish" A bleak (fleeing from scary), launched onto his size 18 hook. The fight lasted milliseconds as the quill snatched the monster from the water.

John, our new chairman, arrived for the weigh in. Laughing, he went to the Lime Bar to hear the tales of the ones that got away.

Anti Baz (anti-soc. sec.), claimed that the quill should be disqualified, as a bleak is not classed as a real fish where he comes from.

Oh well!

A bit of admin. Subs are now due, so pay up or don't fish! Dosh to scary Dave (the Fagin).

Next meeting & summer comp' registration is at The Lime Bar @ 17.30 Mon 4 March.

Fishy fingers!

The Ghost.

•Give a man a fish, feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he'll want to come along and drink all your beer.

Smart Ass!

A Guardia Civil sees a man fishing by the river and goes over to have a word. 'Senor, you need a permit to fish here,' he says.

'No thanks,' replies the fisherman. 'I'm doing okay with the worm.'



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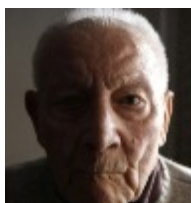
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PEOPLE

Cheating the Devil.

Sometimes, you just have to 'fly the flag' for people, even if nobody has ever heard of them and probably never will. Last month, Antonio Ballesta (photo) died peacefully surrounded by his family in his native Alicante at the ripe old age of 102. Reaching 102 is newsworthy enough I suppose, but, in spite of his history, it is remarkable.



Antonio fought for the defeated Republican side during the Spanish Civil War, 1936-39. Rather than face the merciless revenge of Franco, he decided to escape to France with several thousand other Republicans following the Nationalists' victory. Eventually he was told he couldn't remain in France unless he either joined the French Foreign Legion or joined the work gangs working on the Maginot Line, which were defensive barriers against a possible invasion. He chose the latter. When the Germans invaded, he was captured and sent to Mauthausen concentration camp within days, together with large numbers of other Spanish Republicans. Despite the horrific treatment in Mauthausen, Antonio survived his incarceration there between 1941 and May 1945, when the camp was finally liberated by US soldiers. Antonio placed himself in the middle of the working gangs there to avoid being beaten, a 'key to his survival' he said. Another survivor, a Polish doctor, calculated that the SS and kapos had 62 different ways of killing people there. Check out 'Mauthausen' on Wikipedia' if you are unfamiliar with that charnel house; but only if you have a strong stomach.

It was revealed recently that two Spaniards who were born in Torrevieja, one aged 36 and the other aged 18, died in Mauthausen.

You're Bugging me!

This is Alicia Sánchez-Camacho. Alicia is the Catalan Partido Popular leader, who are in opposition to a Socialist-Catalanist-Green coalition known as the Tripartit in Catalonia. One day in 2010, Alicia was having lunch with María Victoria Álvarez, ex-girlfriend of Jordi Pujol Ferrusola, a Catalan businessman and son of former Catalan premier Jordi Pujol. The Pujol clan, an historic dynasty in the leading Catalan party Convergència Democràtica de Catalunya, is presently caught up in a whirlwind



of accusations of financial corruption. However, the two ladies were unaware that their conversation was being 'bugged' through a microphone in a flower vase on their table. The conversation, which was only reported in a newspaper last month, contained allegations that Jordi and his ex-girlfriend Maria, transported substantial amounts of cash (money laundering) to an offshore account in a bank in Andorra. The conversations were bugged by a detective agency, Método 3. Sánchez-Camacho is now suing the detective agency. But the real story here was what followed. It seems that this detective agency has been involved in a comprehensive spying campaign of public figures. Some reports stated that the secret dossiers were commissioned by the present CiU government of Catalonia, or by their predecessors, the Socialist-Catalanist-Green coalition known as the Tripartit. Yet others alleged that the spies were paid by the Catalan Socialist Party. Judging from the fact that Método 3 has an acknowledged total of 20,000 files on individuals in Spanish business and politics, all reports could be true, with the agency working for all parties against each other. Last week, the founder of the agency and three of his senior detectives were arrested and their homes and business premises searched in Barcelona and Madrid. The police took away ten vans of documents to investigate. More here - <http://iberosphere.com/2013/02/spain-news-catalan-spy-game/7987> I get the impression that telephone-bugging is very common in Spain. You will recall that last year, Spain's most famous judge, Baltasar Garzon, was suspended for several years after he admitted bugging the conversations of defendants and their lawyers.

What a kid I got! I told him about the birds and the bees, and he told me about the butcher and my wife.

Rodney Dangerfield.



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Housework.

- That is the most disgusting bathroom I have ever seen!
- Well, we tried to clean it once, but the bacteria ate our
sponge.

The Drew Carey Show.

The only day I enjoyed ironing was the day I accidentally
put gin in the steam iron.

Phyllis Diller.

Where there's a Will.....!:

Should you hold any assets in Spain, and most of our readers will probably own some property, it is imperative that you have a Spanish will completed. When you finally pass away, which is after all inevitable, the lack of a Spanish will cause your survivors time consuming, endlessly bureaucratic and expensive legal problems. When people are enjoying themselves and their health is good, they rarely think about such things, not realising that dying *intestate* creates further unnecessary misery for their heirs.

Making a will in Spain is slightly more involved than in the UK, but it is still a relatively easy and inexpensive thing to do. We requested Alwyn of Mar Services, see advert on page 2, to help us out. Alwyn, a law graduate who is also multilingual, drew up a couple of wills for us, one side of the will in English, the other in Spanish, and accompanied us to the Notary in Torrevieja. After signing in the presence of the Notary, the will is registered centrally in Madrid.

The total cost, including all fees and an English translation of the will, is just €150 per person. So, if you don't have a Spanish will, there is no excuse. To not do so, is practically irresponsible. Call Alwyn on 0034 658 549 029.

Do you live in *Entre Naranjos*?

No doubt you are enjoying life 'among the orange trees.' But I wonder if you have ever heard about the other '*Entre Naranjos*'?

This was a book written by the famous Spanish novelist, Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, 1867 - 1928. Vicente was a prolific Spanish writer, who produced more than 35 novels. The most widely read European writer of his time, he saw seven of his novels adapted to film in the 20's. These included 'Blood and Sand' & 'The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse' with Rudolph Valentino, and *Entre Naranjos*, which was filmed in 1926 as 'Torrent' and featured Greta Garbo in her first Hollywood role. However, *Entre Naranjos* was made into a TV mini-series of three episodes by RTVE in 1968. This had it all: elegant costumes, smouldering looks, sensual glances, twitching nostrils and heaving bosoms. You can see a short clip of the series on You Tube here -

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmEUFCDhzOE>

If you want to see all three episodes in Spanish, try <http://www.rtve.es/television/entre-naranjos/>



The Lawyer.

A woman walks into a post office and sees a man standing at the counter placing 'Love' stamps on bright pink envelopes. When an envelope has been stamped he sprays scent on it and posts it. The woman goes up to him and asks him what he's doing. The man replies, 'I'm sending out 1,000 Valentine cards signed "Guess who?" 'But why would you do that?' asks the woman. The man replies, 'I'm a divorce lawyer.'

The Truth.

A judge addresses Mr Jones the defendant in a court case. 'Mr Jones, do you understand that you have sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?' says the judge. 'I do,' says Mr Jones. 'Good,' says the judge, 'now, what have you got to say in your defence?' 'Well,' says Mr Jones, 'under those limitations, nothing at all.'

Silly Villains, Nasty Villains and Dumb Courts.

Our first candidate this month, comes from Peru. This lady, a 53-year-old Peruvian, was a worker in a restaurant in Jerez called the 'Palacio de Oro' - Golden Palace. Probably one of the most beautiful and luxurious restaurants in Spain, it is owned by a German and is absolutely 'choc-a-block' with good quality art and ornaments. Or at least it was.



As the German owner was away since last October, the Peruvian, Juani, decided to help herself, and drain some of the expensive artefacts, an estimated €800,000 worth, from the establishment. But how could she possibly cover it up? She decided to stage a robbery and kidnapping. She alleged that she was bound and gagged by a gang of six robbers, who then left her tied in the bathroom for several days, while they ransacked the place. The Violent Crimes Unit, who took over the investigation, were immediately suspicious of her story and, when the majority of the pieces stolen, ranging from paintings and lamps to jewellery and furniture, were discovered in various antique stores throughout the province of Cadiz, the lady confessed. You can see some more images of this exotic restaurant here - <http://ocioyturismocadiz.es/principal/palacio-de-oro/>

Certainly a rogue, but the following are real villains.

Last month, the National Police in Alicante, arrested two people, a 67-year-old man and a 42-year-old woman. They were charged with fraud and impersonating doctors. They operated out of the San Juan beach area practicing homeopathy, falsifying analytic tests and providing dubious 'medicines' to treat such serious illnesses as cancer and hepatitis. They charged patients €250 for a blood test and allegedly sent the blood to laboratories in Germany and Austria. Police say that the blood samples never left the labs and that the test results given to the patients were fake. The majority of the victims came from the region of Alicante and it is thought that they made at least €140,000 from the fraud.

But here is the real 'kicker.' The couple were previously arrested in 2002 after a Guardia Civil investigation revealed that they were selling products to treat cancer, aids, hepatitis and arthritis. However, seven years after the original arrest, the case against them was dropped. And now? The couple have been released on bail!

As Mr. Bumble said in *Oliver Twist*, 'The Law is a ass.' Take this incident from a court in Alicante last month. In this tragic case, a 46-year-old Ecuadorian was found guilty of murdering his wife by stabbing her 30 times while in the street. She was stabbed in the face, chest and vital organs. After he confessed to the crime, he was sentenced to 23 years in jail. BUT, the prosecutor than asked the judge to reduce the sentence to 17 years as the murderer, 'directed the knife against the vital organs with intent to cause death' and that 'it was not intended to make her suffer in an unnecessary and disproportionate manner.' Consequently, 'no cruelty had been demonstrated.' Well, I guess that's all right then; no real harm done. The judge reduced the sentence by six years! An appeal, if any, has to be lodged in four weeks. Words fail me.

More than 2,000 judges and prosecutors went on strike on February 20th, against legal reforms recently introduced.



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Important: Spanish pensions not being calculated correctly for EU migrant workers.

The European Court of Justice on February 21, 2013, ruled that Spanish rules for calculating the state pension benefits of workers who have also worked in other EU member states violate European legislation. The same court in November also ruled that Spanish regulations on state pensions discriminate against part-time workers by requiring them to make a disproportionate amount of social security contributions.

The latest ruling relates to a Spanish worker who paid Social Security contributions for 10 years in Spain and five in Portugal. She had requested and was granted the right to a state pension by the Social Security system in Spain with effect from the start of 2006. Her monthly pension amounted to 337 euros. The minimum number of years for entitlement to a contributory pension in Spain is 15.

The Social Security system took into account the 10 years of contribution she had made in Spain, but they ignored the time she had worked in Portugal, which included a period of five years' contributions at a zero rate. This greatly reduced her entitlement. The worker demanded that the actual contributions she made in Portugal be included in the calculation of her pension. If that had been the case, her monthly pension would have been 864 euros.

When the Social Security system rejected her demand, she took her case to the Galician regional High Court, which then passed it on to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The Luxembourg court in turn ruled that Spain had breached the free of movement of labour principle and the right to residence anywhere within the bloc, as enshrined in the EU Treaty. "Migrant workers should not suffer a reduction in their social security benefits as a result of having exercised their right to freedom of movement," the ECJ ruled.

The ruling is binding and also applies to other EU nationals resident in Spain. Source: El Pais.

Comment: If you have worked in another EU country and are now working in Spain, this is a very important as it may effect your final pension amount favourably if you remain in Spain. Similarly, if you are working in Spain and move to another EU country, contributions made here should be taken into account in the final calculation of your pension.

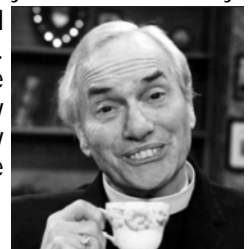
It will be interesting to see how the Spanish authorities will react to this. Despite several EU warnings, the discriminatory treatment of non-resident EU nationals in relation to Inheritance Tax in Spain has not been corrected yet. It may take a few more court cases but hopefully, these anomalies will be corrected in the near future.

The Church Organist.

There was a small church in Numbnutt Throbwell, Somerset, England, that had a very big-busted organist, by the name of Bunty. Now, Bunty's breasts were so huge that they inadvertently bounced and jiggled the entire time she played the organ. Unfortunately, this distracted most of the congregation considerably, both male and female. The very proper church ladies of the Women's Institute were appalled. They said something had to be done about this or they would have to get another organist. So, one of the ladies approached Bunty very discreetly, and told her to mash up some green persimmons and rub them on her breasts and maybe they would shrink in size or firm-up, but warned her to not eat any of the green persimmons, 'because they are so astringent they will make your mouth pucker-up and you won't be able to talk properly for a week!'

Bunty, the perky organist, agreed to try rubbing the persimmons on her massive mammaries.

The following Sunday morning, Tarquin the Vicar got up in the pulpit and said... 'Dew to thircumsthanthis bewond moi contwol, we wi not haff a thermon tewday.'



(Simon K, Pete D and others)

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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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Misinterpretation?

An elderly couple, who were both widowed, had been going out with each other for a long time. Urged on by their friends, they decided it was finally time to get married. Before the wedding, they went out to dinner and had a long conversation regarding how their marriage might work. They discussed finances, living arrangements and so on. Finally, the old gentleman decided it was time to broach the subject of their physical relationship.

'How do you feel about sex?' he asked, rather tentatively.

'I would like it infrequently' she replied.

The old gentleman sat quietly for a moment, leaned over towards her and whispered..... 'Is that one word or two?'
Stefan P.

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Letters to the Editor



Hi Mike,

Could you find a little space in your March edition of 'Dreamscene' for the following, please.

'On behalf of all dog owners/walkers in our urbanisation, Bill & I would like to say a very big THANK YOU to David, Terry, John and Steve for all of their hard work in disposing of the deadly processional caterpillars which invade the pine trees at this time of year. Many, many thanks.'

Thanks,

Kath Allen.

Hi Ho, Silver!

Tonto goes missing and after two days of searching, the Lone Ranger finds him lying on the ground. 'What happened?' says the Lone Ranger. Tonto replies, 'White men come this way, on four horses, also have stagecoach with lady in black. Third horse only wear three shoes.' The Lone Ranger is impressed. 'Tonto, I'm amazed. You can tell all this from listening to the ground?' 'No, Kemo Sabi, replies Tonto, 'they ran me over two days ago.'



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Special Offers!

A man walks into a bar and orders a beer. 'Certainly, sir,' replies the barman. 'That'll be one penny.' 'One penny for a beer!' exclaims the man. 'That's incredible! How much is the food in this place?' 'I'd recommend the steak dinner,' says the barman. 'You get a 16-ounce steak, potatoes, salad and a dessert for three pennies.' 'That's amazing,' says the man. 'How do you manage to make a profit with such low prices?' 'You'd have to ask the owner,' replies the barman. 'But he's not here right now, he's upstairs with my wife.' 'What's he doing up there?' asks the man. 'The same as I'm doing to his business,' replies the barman.

From April 1781, the Spanish kept up a massive and almost constant bombardment on Gibraltar from the isthmus leading from Spain to Gib'. The Spanish forward lines there were reinforced with trenches, forts and gun batteries with around 114 individual pieces of heavy artillery. Much of the town of Gibraltar was destroyed by the Spanish bombardments. This the British regarded as inhumane in terms of contemporary warfare, forgetting that they did much the same when they laid siege to and destroyed most of the city of Quebec in 1759.

By September 1781, the Spanish continued to advance their fortified trenches in a 'zig-zag' pattern closer to the British positions. Although the British defensive fire was accurate and murderous, the Spanish continues to advance closer, building further gun batteries and protective trenches mainly at nighttime.

Following intelligence gained from some Spanish deserters, the British commander of Gibraltar, Governor Eliott, suspected that an all-out ground attack by the Spanish across the isthmus was imminent. The Spaniards had an army of 12,000 ready for the attack and there were reports that more were on the way. With less than 6,000 troops, Eliott decided to organise a sortie against the Spanish forward lines, which could capture the initiative, destroy the enemies forward positions and boost moral on the Rock.

On the evening of November 26 1781, he ordered all the taverns and liquor outlets closed. While outwardly maintaining the normal routine so as not to alarm the Spanish, Eliott quickly organised an attacking force of 2,534, comprised of British and Hanoverian (German) troops, almost half his total garrison. Each soldier was issued with a musket and bayonet, 36 rounds and a spare flint. No swords were issued as sword-fighting was now being seen as 'a thing of the past.' At 2am on November 27, the troops advanced in three columns with the utmost stealth towards the Spanish lines. Although some Spanish sentries sounded the alarm, the three columns quickly dispatched any of the defenders who did not take flight, with the musket and bayonet. In one case an 18ft high parapet had to be climbed to get to the battery, which was then routed. The sortie or raid was an outstanding success with the forward or advanced sector of the Spanish front lines now in control of the British force. Part of the British force now took up defensive positions in case of a counter attack while the remainder of the force began to destroy and burn the fortifications as quickly as possible. The cannons and mortars in the captured batteries were spiked and rendered useless and the magazines and stores were set alight. The Spanish camp were shocked and dismayed to see their advanced lines now being reduced to a pile of rubble in the distance, the fires illuminating the whole area. The Spanish now opened fire, but as their guns were elevated to shoot on the town and onto the Rock itself, all their fire went over the heads of the British. At 3.45am in the morning, the British started to return to their own lines while the remaining Spanish advanced lines were blown up. The Spanish were still in shock and never mounted a counterattack. 40 Spanish cavalymen made a brief appearance without firing a shot before they retired.

The British casualties were very low, four men killed and 25 wounded and not a musket nor tool was lost except for one Scottish trooper who lost his kilt! Now, what was he up to? Spanish losses were estimated at around 200.

It is worth mentioning that around this time, the then British island of Minorca was also under siege by the French and Spanish. In February 1782, the British on Minorca surrendered. Disease and particularly scurvy weakening the besieged garrison enormously. The loss of Minorca was a major setback for the British in Gib' as they would now expect to see additional French and Spanish forces joining the established siege.

The artillery duels continued at the Rock without pause. Times of stress can often result in human inventiveness. In this case it was German engineering on the British side. During the siege a Hanoverian officer fighting for the British invented the Koehler Depressing Carriage. See drawing. This innovative design was revolutionary, allowing the cannon to shoot downwards at steep angles. The cannon was mounted on a sliding carriage allowing the gun itself to recoil upwards rather than the entire carriage.

(Continued in next column.)

The cannon could also be rotated sideways from the base, allowing safer reloading from the side and not the front.

Although there were a number of elevated British gun positions on the Rock, tunnelling did not begin until May 1782 when four guns were placed high up in a tunnel overlooking the north face of the Rock. The defensive British bastions overlooking the Bay - King's, Montague's & Orange, were also substantially fortified.

In June 1782, the French arrived in force with 70 transport ships carrying troops. They took over the siege operations under the command of Marshall de Crillon, who was now confident after his success over the British in Minorca. He planned a grand assault, by sea and land to finally take the prize. The Spanish/French land army alone facing the Rock had 35,000 troops; the British now with about 7,500 men.

Word of the coming 'grand assault' permeated throughout France and Spain. By September 1782, around 80,000 'tourists' crowded the hills to the east of the Rock to get a grandstand view of the attack and defeat of the British.

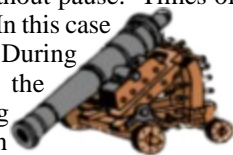
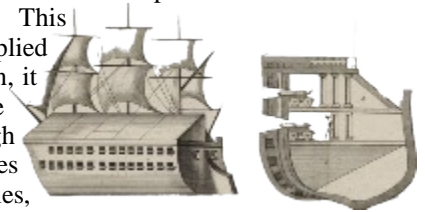
On September 12, 47 Spanish/French (the Allies) ships-of-the-line under the command of Admiral de Cordova entered the Bay of Gibraltar. Nearby, Algeciras had another 15 large fighting ships, 10 floating batteries and 300 additional boats to transport the French troops.

On September 13, 1782, the 'grand assault' began. Ten floating batteries were sailed opposite the British coastal defences on the Rock and anchored in a horizontal line to the British guns. These batteries, see drawings below, had 212 guns manned by 5,260 sailors. When they opened fire, the land based Spanish artillery, more than 200 heavy-calibre guns, also commenced firing. Governor Eliott now ordered the British to place their cannon balls furnace grates and ovens. This way the guns could be supplied with red-hot shot. By noon, it rained red-hot shot on the floating batteries. Although initially the red-hot projectiles had little effect on the batteries, soon, the 'hot-potatoes' as the British called them, slowly began to take their toll. As the batteries were anchored with their sails shot away, they were unable to move and made easy targets. By six in the evening, two of the battery ships were on fire, but incredibly, de Cordova failed to launch his 47 fighting ships in support to rescue his stranded men. He argued that 'the wind was blowing the wrong way!' With red hot shot continuing to rain down on the floating batteries, their crews were now ordered to set fire to the remaining batteries and abandon ship. Few sailors on that period were able to swim. Many died in the fires or in the subsequent magazine explosions or were drowned. Ironically, it was the British who rescued several hundred crew from the doomed floating batteries as the Spanish and French Navies were afraid their remaining ships would catch fire in the conflagration.

By the afternoon September 14, 1782, the final floating battery succumbed to fire. The grand assault had failed and the 'audience' who had camped on the hills to the east, went home. British fatalities during the assault came to a mere 15.

In mid-October, Lord Howe's relief fleet of 65 vessels, reached the British. The Allies continued to launch attacks against the British in early 1783, punctuated by flags of truce, which the British considered duplicitous, responding with red-hot shot. On February 5, 1783, the firing stopped and after three years, seven months and twelve days, the Great Siege was over. The Rock's garrison losses were 333 killed in action but more than 1,000 died from sickness, mainly scurvy. Total Spanish French losses were estimated at around 6,000 killed, captured or wounded.

Footnote: Governor Eliott was rewarded with many honours afterwards. In 1790, the health-conscious 72-year-old veteran went to a spa in Aachen to recuperate from an illness. There, after consuming too much mineral water, he passed away.



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Careful with those pipes! By Lee B.

Please stop banging nails into the wall between your living room and kitchen. I know it's a lovely place to hang the family portrait but there's pipes in them-there walls and the already leaky pipe work on Dream Hills (and other urbanisations) is not really improved by banging nails through them. If you are insistent on knocking nails in, go into the kitchen, measure from your tap to the outside wall, measure the same distance in from the outside wall in the living room and don't nail or drill within a foot of that vertical line, the pipes then run, inside the wall, parallel to the ceiling, usually 6 inches to a foot down to the corner where they run to the downstairs shower room, again, not good places to drill holes.

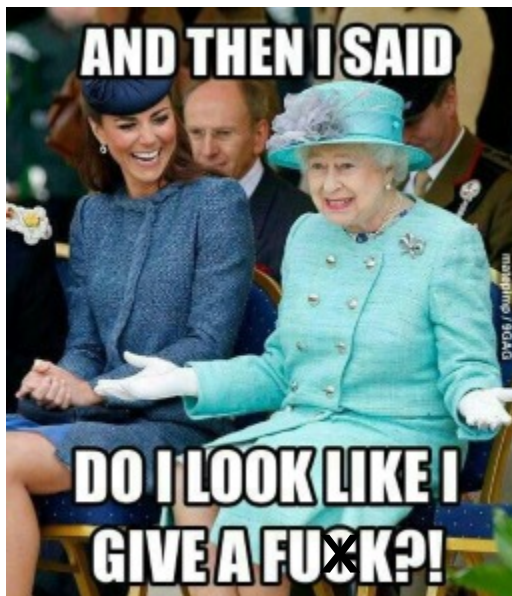
It's worth watching that outer kitchen corner, it's a favourite place for leaks and noticing a small damp patch early on can save a lot of bother! Talking of leaks, it's also worth watching the isolator valves in the kitchen and shower room, as quite a few "weep" slightly, as some have seen a slight leak on the ones behind the fridge leads to damp patches and black mould not only behind the fridge but in the downstairs bedroom and in some cases on the wall by the archway in the living room. The good news is that the faulty valve cores can be removed, the original valve seat re-cut and a new valve core fitted fairly cheaply. Talking of taps and valves, there's been a spate of problems with outside taps in the past year and its often the ones which are on the sunny side of the houses; they're not a difficult DIY job, but those with a few years in the sun seem to go crumbly (that's the technical term) and shear off at the first sight of a wrench; or maybe people are turning them the wrong way and not admitting it, but the end result is the same: part of the tap is left in the wall and requires surgery with a hammer and chisel before the fitting can be got at for removal and replacement.

And don't forget your tap filters: removing them, rinsing them through and putting them in vinegar to soak overnight can greatly increase the amount of water that comes out of the tap. If they're in a bad condition, new ones from the *Ferreteria* are only a couple of euros and simple to fit.

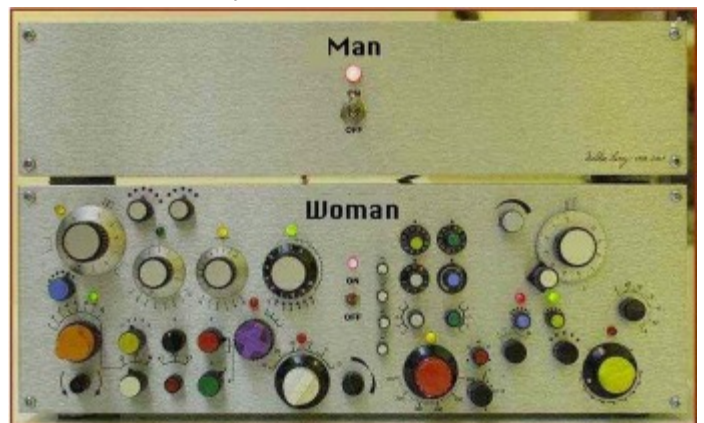
{Crumbly, Lee? Sounds like most of our readers....and me! Lee runs the Facebook page Dream Hills - Costa Blanca. Ed.}

The Plumber.

A doctor calls a plumber in the middle of the night. 'Why are you ringing me at this hour?' asks the plumber. 'Look, it's an emergency,' says the doctor, 'if it was the other way round you'd expect me to come out, wouldn't you?' 'Okay,' says the plumber, 'what's the problem?' 'The toilet's broken,' says the doctor. The plumber says, 'Give it two aspirin and call me again if it's not better in the morning.'



One woman's sexual harassment is another woman's night off. *Karen in Will & Grace.*



The Godfather.

The Godfather, accompanied by his attorney, meets with his accountant. The Godfather says to the accountant, 'Where's the three million bucks you embezzled from me?' The accountant doesn't answer. The Godfather pulls out a gun and says, 'If you don't tell me where it is I'll shoot you in the head and splatter your brains against the wall!' The attorney interrupts, 'Sir, the man is a deaf mute, but I can interpret for you.' The attorney, using sign language, asks the accountant where the three million is. The accountant signs back, 'The money's hidden in a suitcase behind the shed in the backyard.' 'Well, what did he say?' asks the Godfather. The attorney replies, 'He says he doesn't think you have the guts to pull the trigger.'

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Food! Glorious Food!

A fiend of mine drowned in a bowl of muesli. A strong currant pulled him in.
Tommy Cooper

In Mexico we have a word for sushi - bait!
José Simon

Cured ham? No, thanks pal - cured of what?
Tommy Sledge

My friend, Lily, can recognize 157 different types of cheese just by looking at the labels.
Mrs Merton

Krispy Kreme Doughnuts : Konsult Kardiologist.
David Letterman

When I make lobster, I just boil the water and play some Michael Bolton tapes. It commits suicide.
Wendy Liebman

I didn't squeak about the steak, dear. I merely said I didn't see that old horse that used to be tethered outside.
W.C. Fields

Chopsticks are one of the reasons the Chinese never invented custard.
Spike Milligan

I just heard I won a competition. The prize is a year's supply of Marmite - one jar.
Tim Vine

Why is it all the things I like eating have been proven to cause tumours in white mice?
Robert Benchley

Ever hear the phrase, 'chocolatey goodness'? Know what that means? 'NO F**KIN' CHOCOLATE.'
George Carlin

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