

# THE DREAM SCENE

## NEWSLETTER

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

Issue no. 75 1st of May 2013

Bienvenido and welcome to the latest issue of the Dream Scene. I was about to call it the 'start of the summer edition' after the wonderful weather we have had for most of the winter and April, but it has almost rained continuously for the last three days! Still, there were days in April when temperatures of up to 25° led to packed beaches, particularly in Torrevieja. Over the winter I have noticed that the temperatures in this area of the Costa Blanca have been higher than those recorded in the Costa del Sol.

The 'April Fool' on the front page of the last edition did catch some people out.....which was the idea!

Problems relating to the new airport at Corvera and the proposed Paramount theme park in Murcia continue to plague these projects. Start dates and deadlines have been scheduled and rescheduled again. No one believes the press releases anymore and it is all a bit of an embarrassment.

As the weather improves and owners and holiday-makers flood back, so do the con-men, pickpockets and assorted villains. The 'gas bottle certifiers' are still around. They now target people with non Spanish names in the telephone directory and get an English person to ring up and make an appointment with them. They can be very persistent and as I have said about these people before, there is no point in being polite to them as they see it as a weakness. The latest scam is the 'Iberdrola Man.' This is again a plausible looking individual with a photo ID card who will request personal details and possibly cash as well. If you provide your bank account details it will be robbed. It seems that anyone including the tax collectors can have access to your account in Spain! Also remember that the man or woman who stands at your gate collecting for children's charities is also a 'chancer.'

Locally, our volunteer gardeners and landscapers in Dream Hills - the best urbanisation on the Costa! - have been working very hard before the weather gets too hot. Two weeks ago they planted 18 new rose bushes, only to find that 14 of them were stolen one evening. Please be vigilant. There are lots of people out there who want what you have.

I always run out of space with The Dream Scene. I normally sacrifice the history article to include more news stories, but during the last two months, more people said they enjoyed the history articles than those who said so in the last six years! I particularly wanted to write about 'good & bad' judges in Spain, the sports' newspaper *Marca*, the new Energy Certification and the *Romería de la Santa Faz* this month, but 24 pages is as big as this beast is going to get!

Take a look at the toy inflatable boat in the photo. It is not uncommon for would-be immigrants to try and row from North Africa to Spain in these toy boats. Can you imagine their desperation?

You can now in Spain order online from Marks & Spencer. The delivery charge is a standard €4.95 and the web address is -

[http://www.marksandspencer.eu/en\\_ES](http://www.marksandspencer.eu/en_ES)

Many thanks to Alan & Pat, Bill & Kath, Mike Duncan, Anne & Roger and anon' for their kind donations.

Remember that today, May 1<sup>st</sup>, is a 'Red Day.'

All the best for now and have a great month.

Mick & Tid.



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*Angela's Cartoon*



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A man walks into an army surplus store and asks if they have any camouflage jackets. 'Yes, we do,' replies the assistant. 'But we can't find any of them.'

The population of Spain has fallen for the first time since 1966. The fall was 205,788 and puts the population at 47.1 million inhabitants. Interestingly, the numbers of foreigners living in Spain has also dropped by 216,125 to reach 5.5 million inhabitants. According to the figures, 11.7% of people registered in Spain are foreigners and 2.4 million of them come from the European Union.

Spanish unemployment levels increased to 27.16%. That's 6.20 million unemployed. Youth unemployment has reached a staggering 57.2%. This is only marginally behind those of Greece, in 1st place with 55.4%.

The European Commission has issued a warning to Spain for "serious risks" to economic imbalances. The country has been ordered to submit a "corrective action plan" to Brussels by the 26th of April, with Brussels asking for an increase in the rate of the lower rate of IVA, together with an increase in fuel taxes, and a continuation of labour reforms. If Brussels considers Spain's reforms insufficient, it will consider taking sanctions in late May, which could include a fine of up to €1 billion.

37% of the town halls in Spain have managed to keep their accounts in the black, while the others have accumulated a total debt of €35.29 billion. The more successful administrations tend to be the small and medium sized municipalities. Cáceres, in Extremadura, is the province with the most healthy councils, and Castilla y Leon is the region with most town halls in debt. Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia are those with the greatest debt.

Although PM Rajoy promised in January 2013 that the party accounts would be audited by a firm of external auditors, any firm approached so far has shied away from it. The reason? Well, they say that the Courts of Auditors, *Tribunal de Cuentas*, can only do the audit. But this is not true. Article 4 of the Organic Law governing the functioning of the Court of Auditors provides exclusive jurisdiction to audit the accounts of the institutions that make up the public sector: the state administration, state government, local government, the managing Social Security, autonomous agencies and public corporations and other enterprises. But it expressly excludes political parties. So why do you think these private companies will not audit the PP accounts? Answers on the back of a fairly thick brown envelope please.

As the *Barcenas* case rumbles on, you can now buy cuff-links and T-shirts with illustrations of the ex-PP Treasurer's handwritten notes on cash payments to serving high-ranking PP politicians. See photo.



Expiry dates will no longer appear on yogurt products in Spain. They will now show a 'best before date' which will generally be around 28 to 35 days after manufacture. In 2012, 454,948 tons of yogurt were consumed in Spain, together with 269,234 tons of other fermented milk products and products with bifidus, according to the National Federation of Dairy Industries.

The board members of Spanish low-cost airline Vueling have unanimously recommended that shareholders accept an improved takeover offer from International Airline Group (IAG). IAG, which already owns 45.85% of Vueling as well as British Airways and troubled Spanish airline Iberia, had last month raised its takeover offer by almost one third after the Barcelona-based carrier rejected a previous bid. The offer of €0.25 per share places the value of the Airline at around €277 Million.

The number of prescriptions billed by the public in the Valencia province during the month of March has fallen by 2.1 million. This rises to 15.5 million less prescriptions cashed during the last twelve months with a savings over nine months of €29 million, following the launch of new drug delivery system in July 2012 and the new charges.

The high-speed train link to Alicante, the AVE - Alta Velocidad Española - should be up and running by June this year. Estimated travel time to Madrid will be around two hours and 15 minutes.

Vandalism during the Valencia *Fallas* this year has cost the council more than €270,000. Rubbish bins and containers were set alight - 1,103 small rubbish bins were destroyed - at a price of €3 each while the destruction of 104 large rubbish containers cost €1,200 each. Damage in the parks and gardens amounted to €87,525. The municipal spokesman for the Esquerra Unida party, Amadeu Sanchis, has made a call to the Government to see how measures to control vandalism can be toughened up. He recognised the advances made over recent years, but lamented the misuse of gunpowder which caused most of the damage during the fiesta.

Although trade at Mercadona remains buoyant - the company was recently valued at €3.1 billion - Carrefour are not doing so well, their trade during this year's first quarter in Spain down 5.1% on the same period last year.

The government has come up with a draft bill that would amend the Civil Code regarding nationality requirements. Some 100,000 people file papers each year seeking Spanish nationality. According to Spanish news agency Europa Press, government officials are still discussing with Education Ministry officials what form the standardised test should take. The Popular Party in its campaign platform had already announced plans to ensure that new citizens are capable of reading, writing and speaking the language. At present, candidates are expected to get high marks - 27 or more - during an assessment interview which lasts about ten minutes and contains about 30 questions demonstrating they have "integrated into Spanish society." A Senegalese applicant who has been living in Spain for fifteen years failed the test because he couldn't name the wife of PM Rajoy! He has now paid €68 in legal costs to present his appeal. Spain's Ministry of Justice felt the decision may have been unjustified and has waived an additional €400 in judicial fees which would normally be required to review the case. I recall one applicant was asked to name four post war Spanish poets - a tall order even for an academic!

The ancient city of Alcala de Henares, Madrid, is reportedly seeking new ways to tax the properties and commercial activities of the Catholic Church. This comes despite Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy telling journalists last week that Spain's 1979 treaty with the Vatican would remain in place. In theory at least, any commercial activity undertaken by the church is supposed to be taxed in line with any other business activity in Spain, however this is rarely applied in practice and councillors are looking at this as a means to generate more revenue for the City. Whilst the City is not seeking to tax the charitable works, the Church owns and rents out a number of residential and commercial properties throughout Spain which it uses to generate income for itself. Taxing these assets would generate an additional €3 Billion in revenues alone. For their part, the Church insists that they should be extended the same deal as other non-profit groups, such as the Red Cross, and that they have been singled out because of the value of their assets. Meanwhile, the City of Alcala de Henares, with less than 200,000 residents, is struggling with debts of more than €300 Million.

The ruling Partido Popular, PP, in Madrid are going to name a street after Margaret Thatcher. The Left are, as one would expect, apoplectic.

*What's the definition of Australian aristocracy?  
A man who can trace his ancestry back to his father.*

## What's Up? continued

On the evening of Easter Sunday, an Eastern European who was guarding an orange orchard in Cheste (Valencia), was shot in the face by an orange thief. The injured man has since died. The incident occurred about 20:00 on Easter Sunday evening. It seemed the deceased surprised a gang trying to steal oranges. The thieves then drove off but one returned and shot the man some hours later. There was a witness who was hiding at the time.

A 72-year-old British man has been arrested in a camping site in Cartagena for being in possession of 5,000 child pornography files. The operation (Operation Spade) to catch the pornographers started in Canada when a Toronto businessman was selling videos of young boys being abused. Young children from the Ukraine, Romania and Germany were used in the making of the videos. There have been 28 arrests to date. These perverts remind me of a regional new's story in April, when a man 'exposed' himself in a Spanish paediatric hospital ward. Unfortunately for him, there were also two gypsy families in the ward at the time, who were so incensed they tried to lynch him on the spot. Fortunately for him, the police arrived before he expired.

Be rest assured that The Dream Scene will always get to the bottom of things. And this time we are talking about toilet paper. It seems that the Spanish, or at least people in Spain, are the heaviest users of toilet paper per capita in Europe. It seems that here every individual uses around 14 kilos of toilet paper each year, preferring to use good quality. (Does anybody remember Izal toilet paper? At a pinch it could be used as sandpaper!) Everyone of course has their own preference. Popular are four-ply-rolls, soft and caressing as rose petals. You can also



get toilet paper printed with kisses or sudoku puzzles. Personally, I like mine to have pictures of Country & Western singers on it. What would you have?

Spain's most famous living diva, singer Isabel Pantoja, has just received a 24 month prison sentence and a fine of €1,147,148.96 for the crime of money laundering. Her boyfriend, the former mayor of Marbella, Julián Muñoz, received a sentence of four years six months for money laundering and an extra continuous sentence of two years and six months in prison for bribery. In addition, Muñoz must pay two fines totalling €3,893,854.9 and will be disqualified from serving in public office for a period of seven years. This is a bit of a joke as he will be in jail anyway. Why these people don't get life-time bans is beyond me.

A 37-year-old Spanish national was chased by police for speeding on the Madrid - Badajoz motorway. The man, who was driving a high-end BMW reached speeds of 242 kph, that's more than 150 mph, during the chase. When the driver eventually stopped, he was found to have twice the permitted blood-alcohol level and now faces six months in jail, a driving ban of two years and his vehicle may also be confiscated.

The Spanish government is upping the legal age of marriage from 14 to 16. Still low I feel, but unfortunately there appears to be no mention of raising the age of sexual consent beyond the current age of 13, the lowest in Europe. If deceit is used in gaining the consent of a minor under 16, an individual can be charged with up to two years in prison. But sentences of two years or under are very rarely served in Spain for first offences. Interestingly, the age limit for gun ownership in Spain is 14!

Thanks to EU meddlers, from next year, bars, cafes and restaurants in Spain will no longer be allowed to keep the olive oil on the tables in refillable bottles. They state that these type of containers lead to fraud. Non-refillable olive oil bottles are already in use in Portugal and Italy.

- Who is that man riding in the carriage with the portly Queen of Tonga?

- Her lunch.

Noel Coward.

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### How would you say it?

An English professor writes the sentence. A woman without her man is nothing' on the blackboard and tells his student to punctuate it. A male student writes, 'A woman, without her man, is nothing.' A female student writes, 'A woman: without her, man is nothing.'

### What would you do?

A man is trying to console a friend who's just found his wife in bed with another man. 'Get over it, mate,' he says. 'It's not the end of the world.' 'Yeah? It's easy for you to say,' answers his friend. 'But what if you came home one night and caught another man in bed with your wife?' The man ponders for a moment, then says, 'I'd break his white stick and kick his guide dog up the arse!'

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### Married Bliss!

A woman is sick of her husband's drinking and decides to teach him a lesson. She dresses up as Satan, and when her husband returns from another bender, she jumps out on him from behind a door. 'You don't scare me,' slurs the man. 'I married your sister.'

A woman's house has been ransacked but she doesn't report the crime 'till the next day. When the police officer calls round he asks her why she delayed reporting the robbery. 'I didn't know I had been robbed,' replies the woman. 'When I came in I thought my husband had been looking for a clean shirt.'

The old couple next door are having a 'Football Romance'; each is waiting for the other to kick off so they can get some action.



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A woman walks into a bar and asks for a double *entendre* - so the barman gives her one.



During late March, a dance marathon was held in the central square at Zenia Boulevard. This was a six-hour endurance event lasting from 12 noon to six in the late afternoon. Contestants could

only take a single five-minute break every hour. Although there were over 100 participants at the start of the competition, only 35 lasted until the end. A lottery was then held to select the final winner, which was Ana Evelyn Jimenez, a Dominican, who has lived in Spain for the last twelve years. The prize was €4,800 in gift vouchers, to be used at the rate of €400 per month for the next twelve months. Ana was very pleased with her prize saying that she could now buy 'a nice present for my 15-year-old daughter.'

The various political combatants in Orihuela continue to snipe at one another. On the evenings of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of April, a painting of the Republican flag measuring 17 metres long and four metres wide was painted on a



high wall near the seminary overlooking the town. The Right are 'outraged' and quick to point out that the offending 'graffiti' has still not been removed after almost two weeks adding that any other flag would be removed immediately.

But it would be wrong to view Orihuelano politicians as an under-achieving contentious bunch. The president of the High Court of Valencia, Pilar de la Oliva, recently outlined the politically related corruption cases being investigated by the courts in the Valencian community. The number of cases total a whopping 141. Of these, the courts in Ibi are investigating 17 cases; in Nules & Denia 11 each; and 7 cases in Torrevieja. However, Orihuela tops the list with 43 cases! Keep it up Orihuela, you may get into the Guinness Book of Records yet!

The Clr Supporters' Group, led by Raymond Kearney, hold a question and answer session every month with Pedro Mancebo, Clr councillor and former councillor for the coast. I went to the session in April. There, I thought that Mancebo effectively demolished the damaging allegations made against him by CLARO relating to client's funds. I was, however, less satisfied with the answers concerning the penal attitude of the Law towards entertainment in bars. I had suggested that proper noise-testing equipment could be supplied by the bars to circumvent unfair noise claims and shut-downs. The only response really was that bars should apply for the correct licences. What a pity that our local politicians don't follow the example of those in San Fulgencio when it comes to entertainment in bars and restaurants. Clr have launched a couple of petitions locally. One is to take away the toll station at La Zenia which is a great idea. If you would like to attend one of these public meetings contact Raymond Kearney at coast.clr@gmail.com for details.

Orihuela Town Council are to put stickers on the rubbish bins to encourage people to deposit their bagged rubbish in the green bins ONLY between the hours of 20:00 and 24:00 in the winter and between 21:00 and 24:00 in the summer. From May, to do so outside of these hours risks a fine of up to €750! The stickers will also provide a contact number at the town hall where you can arrange for old furniture and appliances to be collected from your home at no charge. The council is also launching a program to encourage pet owners to pick up their dog's poo. The slogan is 'Your dog is your responsibility' and from June, pet owners can be fined up to €750 for offending.

San Jaime Hospital has changed its name to Quirón Hospital.

National Police have arrested a 27-year-old man in the Valencia town of Gandía, for 'grooming' some 300 children over the Internet. The Spaniard is accused of several crimes, including exhibitionism and child pornography. It seems that the arrested man first pretended to be a child to gain the confidence of the victims; when he managed to get their friendship, he brought up the subject of sex. Police say that he showed his victims pornographic pictures over his webcam. In some cases he took photos of his victims undressed and then he tried to arrange a physical meeting with them, something he never achieved.

During 2012 the staff of the seven centres of the Department of Health in Orihuela conducted a total of 39,067 home visits, an increase of 4.19% with respect to 2011 when 37,493 visits were carried out. "The rise of chronic diseases in the population, along with increased life expectancy and the inability to travel to the health centre due to physical deterioration suffered by elderly people, are some of the causes of this increase" said Carlos Arenas, Department Manager.



The Norwegian Club in Gran Alacant, (above, and yes, we do have Norwegian readers) donated €2,100 to be divided equally between three local charities in Santa Pola - Caritas, Red Cross and Aracelia. This is just one of many donations made by this generous group to the many deserving causes during recent years. These donations were made just as a UNICEF study disclosed that in Spain, child poverty now stands at 20%. The study which covers the decade 2000-2010, calculates child poverty rates by measuring the percentage of children living in families with incomes below half the national average. The only industrial countries with a child poverty rate worse than Spain's were Latvia, the USA and Romania. There is every reason to believe that the situation has worsened in Spain due to the last few years of austerity and those yet to come.

Alicante Airport will be renamed Alicante-Elche Airport by the summer. Although signage will be changed in due course, the airport will keep its FTA identity as El Altet.

A wife, being the romantic sort, sent her husband a text:

"If you are sleeping, send me your dreams.

If you are laughing, send me your smile.

If you are eating, send me a bite.

If you are drinking send me a sip.

If you are crying, send me your tears. I love you!"

The husband, typically unromantic, replied, "

"I am on the toilet. Please advise." Pete Dudman

Paddy says to Mick, "I found this pen, is it yours?"

Mick replies "Don't know, give it here"

He then tries it and says, "Yes it is"

Paddy asks "How do you know?"

Mick replies, "That's my handwriting."

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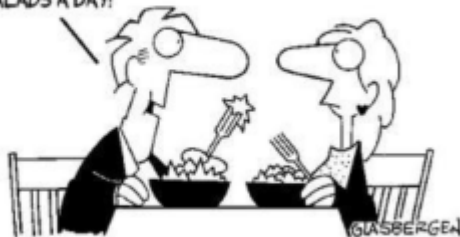
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**The Miracle?**

One morning a man hobbles into a church on crutches. He stops in front of the holy water, splashes some on both legs, then throws his crutches away. An altar boy witnessed the scene and runs into the rectory to tell the priest. 'Son,' says the priest, 'you've just witnessed a miracle. Tell me, where is the man now?' The boy replies, 'Lying on his back in the font.'

**SE VENDE** **ASTRID'S** **SE ALQUILA**  
**SALES & RENTALS**  
**IN THE ORIHUELA COSTA AREA**  
**URGENTLY REQUIRED!**  
**REASONABLY PRICED**  
**PROPERTIES FOR MANY**  
**CASH BUYERS.**  
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 OF THIS NEW LETTUCE,  
 BUT NOW I'M EATING  
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#### Yellow 24!

A man goes into the doctors feeling a little ill. The doctor checks him over and says, 'Sorry, I have some bad news, you have Yellow 24, a really nasty virus. It's called Yellow 24 because it turns your blood yellow and you usually only have 24 hours to live. There's no known cure so just go home and enjoy your final precious moments on earth.'

So he trudges home to his wife and breaks the news. Distraught, she asks him to go to the bingo with her that evening as he's never been there with her before.

They arrive at the bingo and with his first card he gets four corners and wins £35. Then, with the same card, he gets a line and wins £320. Then he gets the full house and wins £1000.

Then the National Game comes up and he wins that too getting £380,000.

The bingo caller gets him up on stage and says, 'Sir, I've been here 20 years and I've never seen anyone win four corners, a line, the full-house and the national game on the same card. You must be the luckiest man on Earth!'

'Lucky?' he screamed. 'Lucky? I'll have you know I've got "Yellow 24".'

'F\*\*k me,' says the bingo caller. 'You've won the raffle as well !!' (Kevin Wood)

**Review: Che, Argentinian Restaurant at Zenia Boulevard by Tid**  
 Something new and a bit different, currently my favourite eating venue, very reasonably priced for good quality food and excellent service. After three visits I decided it was a good restaurant to share with you all.

Che is situated on the top floor above the main square in Zenia Boulevard. On arrival after taking your drinks order, you are served with a small but tasty *empanadilla* - a small pastry usually filled with meat. Your table will also receive a bowl of salad, a basket of bread, and individual bowls of rice and chips together with a small bowl of spicy *chimichurri*, a South American dipping sauce for grilled meats. Then shortly an array of waiters will come around to all the tables, first with some grilled vegetables, then with long skewers of different meats. These will include two types of Spanish sausage; chicken wrapped in bacon; chicken wings in a creamy sauce; joints of roast pork together with beef - rare and well done, pork ribs and much more. The staff will just keep coming round until you have had your fill. The service is attentive and quick and you will also be asked if you require more of anything including the chips - which are very good by the way. If you have a sweet tooth you can choose one of their sumptuous desserts, which are illustrated on your place mat for only €1.50 extra each. These include not only delicious calorie-laden guilt-inducing fare but also a very good fresh fruit salad.

Wine is a little on the expensive side, the house wines priced at €10 a bottle, the red being particularly enjoyable; a small beer will cost you €1.80.

Prices at lunchtime Mon' to Fri' are €10.95; lunchtimes at weekends €13.95 and in the evenings it costs €16.95 per person. Lamb and fish are also served in the evenings but not during the cheaper periods.

You cannot book a table at this restaurant, but at lunchtimes, if you are in there by 1:30 pm you should not have a problem getting a table. I would thoroughly recommend this venue for good quality food, service and price - a great place to take family and friends for something just a little different from the norm.

#### Clearing out the kitchen!

You may recall the article in last month's edition on Ferran Adrià and his plans to raise some capital. The world famous Spanish chef plans to set up his new food foundation were looking particularly promising last month after an auction to raise funds in Hong Kong for the venture. Among the 6,518 lots up for sale was an exclusive gastronomic tour and dinner with the renowned Catalan chef, for which one anonymous bidder paid 22,000 euros - over five times the starting bid-price of 40,000 Hong Kong dollars (around 4,000 euros). The 48-hour guided tour was set to culminate in a dinner with three others at Adrià's brother's restaurant.

Another high-earning lot featured 10 French wines from the cellar of Adrià's now-closed El Bulli restaurant in Catalonia, which were sold for over 150,000 euros.

Other items auctioned off at Sotheby's Hong Kong included kitchen equipment and marketing paraphernalia from El Bulli.

In total the auction raised 14.1 million Hong Kong dollars (1.4 million euros) for the El Bulli Foundation, a quarter of the budget needed to set up the centre. "We are going back to Barcelona very pleased," the chef told newswire Efe after the auction. "Without doubt this is a good way of starting the El Bulli Foundation."

Adrià plans to open the culinary research center on the site of his formerly three-Michelin-starred restaurant, which shut its doors in July 2011.

Does anyone else feel a tinge of British pride when they see people drinking pints of lager in the airport before it's turned 8am?

Richard Bacon

I'm not an alcoholic, ..... alcoholics go to meetings, I go to the pub.  
 (Anon)





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Coming Soon!

**THE FULL  
MONTY**

**Postman, postman, don't be slow!**

- Two postmen are standing on the pavement, chatting after finishing their routes, when one notices a snail crawling by. In a rage he stomps on the poor creature. 'That was cruel,' says the other postman. 'Why'd you do that?' The first postman replies, 'That little bastard has been following me around all day!'
- People usually get what's coming to them - unless it was mailed.

### Idiot of the Month Award - The Demon Drink!

Following the activation of the alarm in a locked bar in Majorca's capital Palma, the police accompanied the owner to check-out the bar early one Tuesday morning in April. There, to their surprise, they found an inebriated 50-year-old man fast asleep and snoring on a couch in the bar. It seems this chap broke a window with a chair and climbed into the bar. The alarm was set off but the would-be robber took advantage of the 'free bar,' got drunk and fell asleep on a couch. When the police arrived and searched the man they found several top-of-the-range mobile phones, stolen credit cards, lipsticks (?) and several make-up cases! The man told the police, 'I was so drunk I didn't know what I was doing. I've no idea how I ended up sleeping on that couch.'



This incident reminds me of a somewhat similar incident in the UK. In this case I knew a local individual who had just been released from prison after serving several years for arson, considered a very serious crime in the UK. It seems that this chap was house-sitting for a friend who was away for a couple of days. Whilst in the house, he took a real liking to the owner's collection of miniature bottles of alcoholic spirits.....and decided to drink the lot! Then, drunk and filled with remorse, he in his inebriated wisdom decided that the best way to cover his tracks and hide his tipping was to burn the house down.....which he did! He would like to spend a couple of weeks in Spain. Anybody like to put him up?

### Torreveija Desalination Plant

Many of you will be familiar with the seemingly dormant new desalination plant in Torreveija. Well, after six years of stoppages the €297 million plant, the largest in Europe and the world's second largest, is now drawing small amounts of seawater from the ocean for performance testing of the equipment. This will probably take some months as the equipment has been lying idle for three years. Shortly before the infrastructure was completed, someone finally asked, 'Where do we plug this thing in?' Unbelievably, it seems that everybody had forgotten that a plant of this size needed its own electricity sub-station. Work on this is now well advanced at a cost of €7 million. Another problem was the then PP mayor of Torreveija, Snr. Mateo. As the desalination plant was an initiative of the Socialist national government at the time, Mateo (now appealing a jail sentence), would do nothing to assist the project and would not permit the extension of the pipeline into the sea at Torreveija. This resulted in a further delay of some years. A change of national government has now removed this objection. The EU has also ploughed €50 million into the project and was most anxious that it wouldn't remain a monument to political intransigence.

When operating at full capacity this desalination plant can produce up to 80 cubic hectometres annually; this, for those of us who are used to imbibing our preferred liquids in more recognisable containers, is over 169 billion pints! But it is most unlikely that the desalination plant will ever operate at full capacity – none in Spain do. It is likely that the treated water will be split between irrigation requirements and supply to towns in Alicante and Murcia provinces.

A mother is preparing pancakes for her sons, Kevin, five, and Ryan, three. The boys begin to argue over who gets the first pancake and their mother sees the opportunity for a moral lesson. 'If Jesus were sitting here,' she says, 'He would say, "Let my brother have the first pancake. I can wait."'

Kevin turns to his brother and says, 'Okay, Ryan. You be Jesus.'



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UEFA  
CHAMPIONS  
LEAGUE



Paradise?

An Englishman, a Swede and a North Korean are looking at a painting of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. 'Look at that beautiful garden,' muses the Englishman. 'Only an Englishman could grow a garden as beautiful as that.' 'Nonsense,' says the Swede. 'They're naked and unashamed. They must be Scandinavian.' 'Rubbish,' says the North Korean. 'No clothes, no house, one apple between them, and they're told it's paradise - definitely North Korean.'

### Madrid Prostitution Scam.

Patrons of a well-known Madrid nightclub described being left 'like zombies' by a prostitution ring that drugged clients in order to secure large amounts from their credit cards. In some cases the victims were relieved of up to €40,000 without being conscious that they were being robbed, according to the National Police. There have been 11 arrests in the case and 17 reported victims, but the latter number is expected to rise. The police estimate that the ring stole around €30,000 over the past year.

The chosen club in the Colón area of the capital was frequented by celebrities and members of the judiciary. The prostitutes, mostly from Cuba, Argentina and Romania, would take their clients from the club to an hourly rental apartment where they would offer a luxurious catering & 'bonking' service. There they would serve drinks and food containing a potent cocktail based on what police believe to be scopolamine, a mind-altering sedative derived from the scopolia genus of plants native to Central America.

Once victims had divulged their financial details under the influence of the drug, their cards would be cleaned-out using various payment machines the ring possessed. In some cases, the doped victim also provided a PIN number. When they regained their senses, the clients would find themselves wandering 'like zombies' in the street or in a taxi.

The alleged ringleader, Antonio M. de P., 47, had no previous arrests on record. He was aided by his mother, an aunt and another accomplice. The police seized 15 credit card machines and 70 grams of the sedative substance. (Abridged from El Pais)

### Remember Eating in the U.K. in the 1950's? Part 1.

By Judy

**Pasta** had not been invented.

**Olive oil** was kept in the medicine cabinet.

All **crisps** were plain; the only choice we had was whether to put the salt on or not.

The only **vegetables** known to us were spuds, peas, carrots and cabbage; anything else was regarded as being a bit suspect and probably French.

**Rice** was a milk-pudding, and never, ever part of our dinner.

**Oil** was for lubricating your bike, not for cooking; fat was for cooking.

**Brown bread** was something only poor people ate.

**Soup** was a main meal.

**Left-overs** went in the dog.

Eating **raw fish** was called poverty, not sushi.

None of us ever heard of **yoghurt**.

If you had eaten **bacon, lettuce and tomato** in the same sandwich we would have been certified.

**Eating outside** was called a picnic.

**Cooking outside** was called camping.

We bought **milk and cream** at the same time in the same bottle.

**Muesli** was readily available in those days; it was called cattle-feed.

We thought that **baguettes** were a serious problem the French needed to deal with.

**Prunes** were medicinal.

### Police Stop!

An elderly man was stopped by the police around 3 a.m. and was asked where he was going at that time of night.

The man replied, "I'm on my way to a lecture about alcohol abuse and the effects it has on the human body, as well as smoking and staying out late."

The officer then asked, "Really? Who's giving that lecture at this time of night?"

The man replied, "That would be my wife.....Hic!" (Kevin Wood)

### Lime Bar Fishing Sunbathing Club.

Winter Final at Nancy's 28<sup>th</sup> March

Welcome back to Bob & Jim.

Spring must have sprung! 25°, coot chicks & terrapins swimming about and I saw my first snake this year.

Not only that – we had no (that's zero) dry nets! Yeahhh!

For once I got up early (just to stop Big John from getting a good swim). I was on the bank at 07.30 and guess what, my 1<sup>st</sup> fish was at 10.30. That's the last time I go fishing without breakfast! Totally upset my beauty sleep.

Anyway, as I'm only a part time fisherman, I disappeared at lunchtime. The fish then started throwing themselves at the hooks! See, turn up at 11.00 & you can still win!

Well done to Scary Dave who "retains" the trophy. 2<sup>nd</sup> was Big John & 3<sup>rd</sup> was Keith.

We've got to do something to knobble Scary! But, he is NOT keeping it if he wins it a 3<sup>rd</sup> time.

### Summer Monthly Comp'

Due to the high river levels, the 1<sup>st</sup> of the summer round was fished at Nancy's again on 8<sup>th</sup> April.

We had a good turn out & the conditions were good. However, the fish were having a lay in & hard to find! This may have had something to do with the shag torpedoing up & down the swim.

Can you guess who won from the same peg as the winter final? Yep! Scary Dave the b\*\*\*\*\*!

Hopefully our next comp will be elsewhere – just for a change of scenery.

Granddad told me another joke.

**Who is the best girl to take fishing? - Annette.**

**What is Annette's boyfriend called? - Rod.**

Next meeting is at The Lime Bar @ 17.30 Mon 6 May (another bank holiday!).

Fishy fingers!

The Ghost.

Kanny Kid.

Attending a wedding for the first time a little girl whispers to her mother, 'Why is the bride dressed in white?' Mother decides to keep things simple and replies, 'Because white is a happy colour and today is the happiest day of her life.' The girl thinks for a second, then says, 'So why is the groom wearing black?'



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**WITH MEAT RAFFLE,**  
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## LIME BAR GOLF SOCIETY, LOS ALTOS, ORIHUELA COSTA The Curtis Cup.

The Vistabella Golf Club was the venue for the Lime Bar Golf Society's April meeting, playing their first pairs' competition in Stapleford format for the Curtis Cup.

It began early that morning, the first task of the day being to erect the Curtis Cup banner alongside the first tee; and for the teams going out to have their photo taken alongside and behind the banner.

On a bright and sunny day, it was tee-off time at 9.15 am. 36 players had made the short trip to take part at the Vistabella. The conditions were perfect, the greens were very quick, but it was a good test of golf with some very good scores. All players then made their way back to the Lime Bar at Via Park 3, meeting up with their wives, partners and friends for refreshments. The presentation was made and thanks to all who had taken part. Thanks to Chairman Peter Rushden who was in charge of the proceedings. We were then looked after very well with a great barbecue, which included burgers, hot dogs, onions and chips, on the terrace of the Lime Bar. A great time was had by all.

Much appreciation of those who made it all possible with many thanks to Peter Rushden, President; Mick Slater, Captain, and to our sponsors on the day, namely Mick the Grip of Mobile Golf Club Re-gripping & Repairs, not forgetting Sue, Mark, Carly, Angie Slater; also Tony Chapman and our lucky mascot for the day - Charlie Bason.

Prizes were given out for nearest to the pins on the green in two shots, etc. But the winners of the pairs, Stapleford format, using combined scores gained, were in First Place Alan Hewitt and Mark Taylor. In Second Place were David Latham & Bill Denni. And in Third Place Mick Slater, Captain & Dave Kirk.

The best individual score on the day was by Bob Adair with 37 points. Well done Bob.

A great day was had by all and we are looking forward to holding it again next year. Once again many thanks go to all the unsung heroes that made it a very special day. You know who you are! (S.F. Coleman)



**UP-COMING FIXTURES**  
**Fixtures for the next month of 2013 are:**  
**May 8<sup>th</sup>, Captains Day at La Torre - 50 Euros.**  
**All games include green fee, buggy, prizes and buffet.**

**MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 22.**



**IMPORTANT  
VOTING AT THE DREAM HILLS  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MAY 17, 2013**



Property owners in Dream Hills should by now have received their invitation to the AGM together with a voting paper and other information. Here I just want to talk about the voting paper.

In previous years, the committee and administrators encouraged non-resident owners to vote by sending them a ballot form. Although there is no provision for voting by post in the Law of Horizontal Property, the voting forms were sent to all non-resident owners so that they could exercise their democratic right to contribute to decision making process in their urbanisation, a basic right. This process included the voting for president and other issues.

This year however, the administrators received a letter dated March 26, 2013, objecting to the postal vote and also objecting to the requirement that a 'Curriculum Vitae' be provided for those who wanted to apply for the role as president of the urbanisation. The letter was signed by three owners, possibly Spanish and/or South American.

Now, why would anyone want to remove the voting rights of non-residents and also reduce the scrutiny process - a safeguard - for those who would want to take the responsible job of urbanisation president?

This became clear when, on April 12, 2013, the administrators received another letter, this time signed by four people, stating that they wanted to be included in the election for president and committee of the urbanisation. No C/V's or details were provided. Interestingly, three of the four signatories were those who signed the original letter objecting to the voting by non-resident owners and the C/V requirement.

The long and the short of it is, this is a blatant attempt to remove the rights of non-resident owners and to ensconce a number of 'unknowns' to run the urbanisation.

So what can you do about this?

If you cannot get to the meeting your vote is most important. On the voting slip near the top of the form where it says **MR./MRS.** fill in the name of **Stefan Pokroppa** and where it says '**dwelling number**' write in **557**. Alternately, you can fill in '**Terry Dunn**' and '**dwelling number**' **503** in the relevant spaces. You can of course fill in the name of another representative who will be attending the meeting if you wish. Then fill in your choice/tick to the three proposals on the form but don't forget to complete the bottom of the form fully with your own name, house number and your signature.

Then post or fax your completed voting form to the administrators making sure it gets to them by May 14, 2013. Both Stefan (partner of the president) and Terry (committee member) will ensure that your vote is used to re-elect the existing president, Maribel Jimenez Morales, and that a vote is taken at the meeting to recognise and reintroduce once again the voting rights of non-resident owners.

If you live locally and have mislaid your voting form, copies may be collected at Belushi's Bar & Restaurant or from Stefan or Terry.

If you do not cast your vote, there is a danger that you will just be an observer in the running of your own urbanisation and not a participant.

*Letters to the Editor.*

Year on year residents of Dream Hills see the benefits of our street controllers. Especially in the past year when they have been on duty seven nights a week. With the mounting unemployment and financial crisis, they are aware of the chance of more opportunistic crime. They not only patrol and take care of our houses, streets and properties, but they are always on the look-out for any signs of aluminium cable and car part theft. They keep a good rapport with all the local police services and the ambulance service. For the elderly, infirm and those living alone on Dream Hills, they can be a life-line. In the event of any assistance being required while they are on duty, just ring and they will attend. If you require their contact mobile number please stop them and ask. They will endeavour to help in any situation. They give peace of mind to the residents of Dream Hills. I would like to say **THANK YOU** to all staff of Control Mar Menor for all their help and their efficiency in the past year.

N.H.W. Report .We DO still have a Neighbourhood Watch Team on Dream Hills - albeit small in number, but it still keeps us aware of what is happening crime-wise around the Orihuela Costa; especially through the local police services, the town hall and other groups on the Costa. Helping us to help you. Thank you for all your on going support.

Jan Rennison.

**The G20.**

A driver is stuck in a huge traffic jam on the motorway as there is a G20 meeting in a nearby city. Nothing is moving. Suddenly a man knocks on the window. The driver rolls down his window and asks, "What's going on?"

"Terrorists down the road have kidnapped PM Cameron, PM Rajoy, PM Merkel and President Hollande! They're asking for a £10 million ransom. Otherwise they're going to douse them with petrol and set them on fire. We're going from car to car, taking up a collection."

The driver asks, "How much is everyone giving, on average?"  
"Most people are giving about a gallon."

**Smart Stereo.**

A lady bought a brand-new, top-of-the-range BMW, but three days after she took delivery, she returned it to the dealer, complaining that she could not get the stereo to work. "This is what we call a 'Smart Stereo', madam", explained the salesman. "You just tell it what you want to listen to, and it will play it for you. If you want to listen to Beethoven, just say 'Beethoven'. If you want the news, just say 'News'"

After trying it a few times the lady drove away delighted. Some days later she was sitting in her car at a set of traffic lights. The lights changed to green and she started to pull away. Just then, a white van came screaming through the next lane and cut straight in front of her. Breaking hard, she narrowly avoided hitting him.

"Wanker!!" she yelled at the speeding van, whereupon a voice from the stereo announced; "There now follows a political statement from the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Ed Miliband".



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## New Spanish Mortgage Regulations

Last week the government introduced new mortgage regulation. Although some historic problems have been addressed, the new regulations contained little to appease the ever-growing anti- eviction lobby. One of the main problems which dates back to the beginning of the last century remains: handing the property back to the bank will not necessarily clear the outstanding loan commitments and the mortgagor and guarantors can still be held liable for any deficit. Like many of the recent government reforms, they only go so far and a chance to introduce real beneficial change has been missed.

The main changes are as follows:

- Loans/mortgages will only be awarded up to the amount of 80% of the appraised value of the property.
- The life of the mortgage may never exceed 30 years.
- The mortgager will be required to sign a statement stating that they are aware of the risks associated with the deal.
- More power is given to notaries to stop a particular mortgage process if he/she determines that some of the clauses are unfair. However, events locally such as the *Tecnologia Urbanistica* episodes and others, have shown that notaries were quite capable of ignoring 'dodgy dealings' and not really protecting the public. If you give a notary two bars of soap he will never wash himself; that is because he will have to make a decision which soap to use!
- The mortgager/buyer can select his own appraiser to value the property. The bank will have to accept this valuation. I can see problems in this particular area, especially if commercial property is involved.
- Default interest will be limited to a maximum of 12%. This is considerably lower than the amounts of between 20 and 25% that was often being charged. The default rate has to be an affordable rate and it will not be capitalised so that one is paying interest on interest.
- Previously, once the bank auction procedures were initiated, the borrower could not interfere with the process. Now, if the bank is in the process of reselling the property and the borrower finds a buyer, he can introduce the buyer which will in turn also reduce the bank costs.
- People of 65 and over and people with a disability rating of 33% or greater can seek a 'redesign' of their mortgage, which can also be beneficial to their dependants. And I have no idea what this means in real terms!!

These new regulations will probably take effect around June this year. If you would like to read more detail of the changes, they are here in a detailed 29-page document in Spanish - <http://estaticos.elmundo.es/suvienda/documentos/leyhipotecaria.pdf>

## The Greedy Monkey!

A man walks into a bar with a pet monkey. While he's drinking, the monkey runs around looking for something to eat, jumps on the pool table, grabs a cue ball and swallows it whole. The man apologises for the monkey's behaviour, pays for the cue ball and leaves. Two weeks later the man returns with the monkey and orders a drink. The bartender watches as the monkey runs around looking for something to eat. The monkey finds a cocktail cherry on the floor, examines it carefully, then pushes it in and out of its bottom before swallowing it. The bartender asks the man why the monkey would do such a thing.

'Well,' says the man. 'Ever since that damn cue ball he makes sure it comes out as easy as it went in.'



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### Grisly events in Benijofar.

In the nearby town of Benijofar, events took a grisly turn in early April. There, a veterinary clinic run by 45-year-old Argentinian, Marcelo Gurruchaga (left) and his 46-year-old wife (above) was a favourite among pet owners from Germany and the UK. Then about three weeks ago, Marcelo's daughter, 25, and his 19-year-old son, noticed that their mother was missing for several days. Initially their father insisted that she was travelling away, but after his children persisted he confessed that his wife, their mother, was dead. He then went to the police station, with a box of ashes and explained his story.

He stated that his wife died in the clinic following an overdose of prescription drugs due to depression over her weight. He said that he tried to revive her for over three hours. He never called emergency services but then placed the body in the trunk of the car for a couple of days. He then took the body to his home where he cut the body up into pieces, the cutting instruments in the clinic not being strong enough, placing the remains in several bags. He then called the animal incineration centre nearby and stated that he had the remains of a large dog to be incinerated. He asked that the bags not be opened due to their advanced state of decomposition. He warned operators that it was a disagreeable sight. He also asked to get the ashes back. The vet waited patiently inside the building until the cremation was over, then carried the boxes with the ashes over to the trunk of his car. A company spokesman admitted that the operator did not check the contents of the bags because "there is no protocol on the issue."

Although Marcelo has been charged with murder José Luis González Cussac, a professor of criminal law at V, Valencia University, stated that "without a corpse, it is very difficult to hand down a homicide sentence." The alleged killer could face no more than a small fine for illegal exhumation.

*David, whose advert appears above, has a short e-book entitled 'Why are we always late in Spain?' You can get a free copy by just registering at his web address above; the book is enjoyable and informative.*

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### Alan's Mum.

Bert and Alan are having a drink together in a City wine bar to celebrate Alan's recent promotion. They have been drinking for some time when Bert begins to insult Alan. He shouts, 'I slept with your mother, Alan, and she was a great ride!'

There is a hush in the bar as everyone listens.

Bert again shouts at Alan, 'I slept with your mother, Alan.'

Alan replies, 'I know. Why don't you go home now, Dad, you're pissed!'



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- Trust me, there is only one man who can satisfy a woman in two minutes: Colonel Sanders. Sylvia Fine, *The Nanny*
- Paddy thinks his new girlfriend is the one for him. However, after a quick look through her underwear drawer, he reconsiders. "What made you change your mind?" asks Murphy
- "Well" says Paddy "when I looked in her underwear drawer, I found a nurses outfit, a French maids outfit and a police woman's outfit and to be honest, if she can't hold a job down, she ain't the one for me....."
- The Invisible Man married an invisible woman. The kids were nothing to look at.
- Men should be like Kleenex: soft, strong and disposable. Cher
- He, labouring away, pauses to ask, 'Are you nearly there?' 'It's hard to say,' she says. He plunges on. 'If you imagine it as a journey from here to China, where would you be?' She considers. 'The kitchen.' Jenny Lecoat

## NATURAL GAS & DREAM HILLS - UPDATE.

Well, I seem to have at least one 'cock-up' in every issue. Last month I gave the incorrect email address for Elecnor; it should have read [comercialelecnor@gmail.com](mailto:comercialelecnor@gmail.com)

Last month's Dream Scene carried a full report on the proposed installation on page 21.

Basically, property owners have two cost options in relation to the installation. Under **Option 1**, Elecnor will install natural gas in your property and waive the normal installation charge of €1,089. They will connect the natural gas supply to up to two devices for you, say if you have a gas boiler and a cooker or a gas fire, for just €18.98. Although the main and side roads will have to be dug-up to cover the natural gas pipelines, the supply line within your property will be over-ground so there will be no need to dig up your driveways or tiled patios. This one-off connection fee of €18.98, together with a regular monthly standing charge of €2.25, will be debited from your bank account around two months after the actual installation. I also understand that the installation engineers will also reset the gas-jets on your cooker and boiler as part of the deal, providing your equipment is not ancient.

Under **Option 2**, Elecnor will install natural gas to a connection in your garden or patio and cap it. The normal installation charge of €1,089 will be waived and approx. two months after the installation, a monthly standing charge of €2.25 will be applied to your bank account.

Property owners of course have a third option which is to do nothing. Personally, I believe that the question of having the natural gas installed or not is a 'no-brainer.' The bottom line is this. You can have a cost-effective energy source - a natural gas supply - brought to your property for just €2.25 a month! Even if you do not have any gas appliances, this keeps your options open and it will be a major advantage if you wish to sell your property in the future. It's a 'Win, Win' situation.

**Should you wish to know more about the scheme or to sign up to it, Virinia and David, who have been canvassing around this and other local urbanisations, are representatives of Elecnor, speak perfect English, and would be pleased to meet with you and answer any questions you might have. It is important you register now. They can be contacted: Virinia on 645 113 316 and David on 685 610 553 – to visit you in your home. They can also be contacted at [comercialelecnor@gmail.com](mailto:comercialelecnor@gmail.com)**

There is no pressure to sign-up to the scheme, but if you do sign-up (as we did) you will need the following from one of the property owners: NIE certificate and copy; passport and photocopy; bank account number (for direct debits) and copy of paid bill showing bank account number; e-mail address and brand name and model of gas boiler (if you have one).

I really believe that this is an excellent opportunity to upgrade to efficient and cheap energy supplies at minimum cost; an opportunity that may not arise again.



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## Bear with me, it's a long story!

A Catholic Priest, a Baptist Minister and a Jewish Rabbi get together for their weekly coffee and general discussion on all things religion. During their little debate, the Priest said that it wasn't too difficult to convert people to God, but if they were to convert a Grizzly bear then that would be a real religious feat indeed. The Minister and Rabbi agreed and the next day set out for the forest wilds to see if they could convert a Grizzly bear to their respective Gods.

A few days later they were together again, but this time in the same hospital ward telling of their adventures of converting a Grizzly.

Father O'Flannery had his arm in a cast with a few scratches and bruises and was first to speak. "I went into the wilds and found a huge Grizzly who wasn't entirely impressed to see me. He rose up on his huge hind legs and let out a roar that I feared may wake the demons, then lashed out with a huge paw and broke my arm! But as quick as a flash I pulled out my Holy Water and sprinkled him in the name of the Lord, and lo and behold, the giant bear and we sat and I became calm for the rest of the day as the beast rocked back and forth in a holy rapture."

The Baptist Minister, Billy Bob Johnson, who had both arms in slings and had lost skin from a major body, was next to tell of his experience in the forest with a Grizzly.

"I too went into the deepest wilds and found a Grizzly bear who wasn't at all pleased to see me either, so he reared up and set upon me, but as I had the Lord Jesus with me, I wrestled that huge bear up a hill then down the other side where we tumbled together into a stream and I immediately baptised him in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord! I then preached to that bear for the entire day as he too rocked gently back and forth in a state of holy rapture!"

The Rabbi was the last to speak, and he was by far the worst for wear after his experience in the wild forest. He was in traction, bandaged from head to toe with multiple broken bones and connected to all manner of life-saving machines. "I too found a Grizzly in the deepest darkest part of the wild forest who was none too pleased to see me either." The Rabbi croaked painfully, "In hindsight, maybe it wasn't such a good idea to start with a circumcision."



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### A Taxing Time!

This is the time of year when many people are chasing around gathering their income information for the 2012 Tax Year. The return has to be made by July 1 this year, and late returns are penalised. Increased income tax rates in troubled European economies continue to eat away at our income. There have been hefty increases in VAT and personal income tax in Spain and things are particularly onerous in France where one resident described the current tax regime there as 'Cuba, without the sun!'

An additional *bugbear* for resident expat's this year in Spain has been the requirement to declare individual assets abroad which were in excess of €50,000. This particular return had to be submitted by the end of April 2013. Some have no doubt complied with this but I would also guess that many have not, either because they were not aware of the requirement – which was poorly publicised, or because they consider it an infringement of their rights. An action-group has already been banging on the EU door stating that this latest demand by the *Hacienda* goes against the EU charter.

Don't forget that when a resident is paying their normal tax bill for the previous year, they are allowed to pay it in two tranches – around two thirds of it in June 2013, and the remainder in November 2013. This can be done by direct debit, and especially if things are a bit tight, give you a few more months to gather those *shekels* together.

Anyway, here I just want to put forward some ideas relating to tax hints in relation to the *Renta* (Income) statement for last year's tax which I spotted in a Spanish newspaper. There are seven individual links (in Spanish) within this one link and all are helpful. But remember, these are for general interest only, I am not a tax accountant, neither is the newspaper! The link is here - [http://www.diarioinformacion.com/especiales/renta-2012/2013/03/pagar-declaracion-renta-n193\\_30\\_3780.html](http://www.diarioinformacion.com/especiales/renta-2012/2013/03/pagar-declaracion-renta-n193_30_3780.html)

First of all, you can now download a software program from the *Hacienda* called *Padre*, which allows you to complete your tax return and send it online to the tax authorities. You can also save the data and program to your hard-drive, which makes the data compilation in future years much easier. The link to download the *Padre* software for the 2012 return is here – <http://www.agenciatributaria.es/AEAT.internet/renta2012/padre.shtml>

Due to the austerity program, 2012 is the last year that one can claim deductions for mortgage relief on your residential property. It is also worth checking to see if your fire policy and mortgage-linked life policy premiums are also deductible. There is some income relief if you declare any income received from rentals. But if you rent to individuals between the ages of 18 and 35, this relief can be 100% of the income received providing certain criteria is met, which is included in one of the above links.

If you pay into a pension plan, for every €1,000 you pay in, between €24 and €43 is recoverable.

If you donate to a political party, union or an NGO, around 25% of the donation is recoverable. Incredibly, both unions and political parties continue to receive funding from the state. This is a hang-over from the immediate post-Franco days and is now an unwelcome burden on the taxpayer.

If your income is below €53,007.20 (don't ask!), and you have had works carried out to the house which are related to energy conservation, accessibility and/or access to the Internet or digital TV services, you can claim a 10% allowance of the costs. This should include double-glazing I would hope. One can also claim some rebate for installing equipment and building works which facilitate the disabled. So I would think that ground floor shower rooms and stair lifts would be included in that, if one or both parties are infirm. It is certainly worth checking-out.

Remember, just because you are paying someone to complete the return for you, doesn't mean that they are competent. It is often the 'juniors' using simple input software in the so-called 'legal' offices who complete these returns for expats. But maybe you get some comfort from having your tax return completed by a Justin Bieber fan!

*I once made love for an hour and 15 minutes, but it was the night the clocks are set ahead.*  
Garry Shandling

### Johnny's Grandad.

Teacher asks the class " I want a story with a moral to it"

Little Emily raises her hand and says " Don't count your chickens before their hatched".

" Well done" says the teacher. "The moral is that you shouldn't expect things."

Little Johnny raises his hand. "Go on then" says the teacher.....tentatively.

"Well, my grandad was in the trenches in the war, and before he went, they gave him a bottle of whiskey, a 12 inch bayonet and 12 bullets for his gun. So, he drunk the whiskey, went over the top and killed 12 Germans, one for every bullet he had. He then stabbed 12 Germans, one for every inch of his bayonet" and then Johnny stopped the story.

" That's very interesting" said the teacher, " but what is the moral to that story?"

" Don't f\*\*k with my grandad when he's pissed."



"I'll be needing one of your legs as well!"

### The History of Spain. Part 31 - King Amadeo I and the First Republic.

General O'Donnell did his best to unite the disparate political groupings including the radical Left by restoring some freedom to the press and extending male suffrage. Although Spanish foreign policy remained defensive trying to protect the few colonial possessions they had left, O'Donnell (a descendant of an old Irish royal family O'Donnell of Tyrconnell) committed Spain to a number of fruitless military involvements abroad, hoping that it would bolster public support for the government. Between 1858 and 1863, the Spanish assisted the French conquest of Indochina, intervening in Mexico in 1861 and between 1862 and 1866 the Spanish fleets took part in the War of the Pacific. Although this war had a profound effect on Chile, Bolivia and Peru, it achieved little for Spain. However Spain's efforts in Morocco during 1859-60 were more productive, capturing Tétouan in 1860. However in 1863, the ruling coalition in Spain fell apart. O'Donnell resigned and Queen Isabella (photo and what a gorgeous creature she was too!) unwisely appointed a series of reactionary conservative governments to office, sacking the Liberals.



By 1868, the Spanish had enough of Isabella's 38-year reign. Her love life continued to outrage her subjects with a parade of paramours passing like a conveyor belt through the royal palace. It is believed that one, an American dentist named McKeon, may have fathered Alfonso, the first Prince of Asturias and future king. The *London Times* reported: 'Isabel is guilty of high treason against the cause of virtue and morality.' But the royal family as a whole were up to their neck in shady dealings and corruption. The queen mother was dabbling in the Cuban slave trade and in railway construction. (Her involvement in the latter may explain why the railways being built in Spain at that time were a different gauge to the rest of Europe!) Spoken of as *la ladrona* (the thief), the queen mother was even caught trying to switch the palace's silver for pewter imitations. When the increasingly obese queen took a new lover, this time the son of an Italian pastry cook, the public had enough. When both O'Donnell and Narvaez died, her main supporters were gone and the Liberals planned her overthrow. Then in 1868, the progressive General Prim 'pronounced' and Isabella fled to France. It appeared that the Bourbons were finished after 168 years in Spain.

The so-called 'Glorious Revolution' of 1868 heralded 'six revolutionary years', a period of acute political and social turmoil. A compromise constitution was launched in 1869 to try and accommodate the various political factions. It provided for a revamped constitutional monarchy, yet also offered sufficient radical changes - universal suffrage for all males over 25, religious freedom, the right of association, the introduction of the jury system, and an end to press censorship. Although these provisions made Spain one of the most politically progressive countries in the world, the radical majority broke away in disgust to form a federalist Republican party, believing that the revolution had been betrayed. This led to a revolt by the new Republicans in Catalonia, Aragon and the Levante, which was crushed by the government. When order was restored, the hunt began for a new king.

Given Spain's declining glory and its unstable political outlook, the European nobility saw the position as a 'poisoned chalice' and many declined the invitation. Finally General Prim offered the crown to a son of King Victor Emmanuel II of Italy, Amadeo of Savoy, who was proclaimed Amadeo I (1870-3) in November 1870.



Unfortunately Amadeo I's (see left) sojourn in Spain was not a happy one. On the very day of his arrival General Prim was assassinated by extremist Republicans. Amadeo was seen as a foreign interloper from the start and treated with disrespect and hostility. Even on his first day at the royal palace he asked for breakfast at eight, only to be curtly informed that he would get nothing until eleven, as was customary. He had to go out to a cafe for breakfast! Now a few years earlier this sort of treatment would have resulted in several severed heads preceded by many hours on the rack! The Church saw Amadeo as a liberal 'godless' monarch and Amadeo and his wife were publicly snubbed by the aristocratic *Alfonsistas* (those who championed the dynastic rights of the exiled Queen Isabella's

13-year-old son Alfonso. He was also now shunned by the Carlists, who rose in rebellion in the north-east in 1872 in support of a new pretender, the self-styled Charles VII. As the Spanish army was now in disarray, the Carlist's won a series of victories - the Second Carlist War, in 1872.

Amadeo's problems in Spain were compounded by a full-blown colonial rebellion in Cuba which was a major drain on Spain's resources and which would not be suppressed until 1878. Lacking any support among the political classes and facing hostility from the nobility, Amadeo abdicated in February 1873, thanked Spain 'for the great honour it had bestowed on him' and promptly left for Portugal.

In the absence of any viable alternative, and in the face of mass abstention by the conservative monarchists, a Republic was proclaimed - The First Republic. This would prove to be, as did the Second Republic in the next century, a disaster for Spain.

More next month.

#### Need help with the rent?

On April 5th the Spanish Government announced it would introduce measures to help families on low incomes to pay their rent as a part of its Housing Plan 2013-2016, approved by a meeting of the cabinet earlier in the day.

Spain's Minister of Public Works, Ana Pastor, confirmed that families earning below €1,597 per month would be able to benefit from this measure, providing the rent does not exceed €600 per month, with the financial aid covering a maximum of 40% of the rent.

Families will be able to claim this financial aid for 12 months up to a maximum of €4,200, with the possibility of extension under certain circumstances.

According to Pastor, renting houses is "a suitable way to access housing, especially for those who have lower incomes." The minister predicted that around 133,000 Spaniards could benefit from these measures.

The Cabinet also approved the 2013-2016 housing plan, which forecast an investment of €2.311 billion for renting aid and also for "housing rehabilitation" and improving the energy efficiency of older buildings. (Source: Tumbit)

What if the French had successfully repelled the Germans in 1940? They would have become a vainglorious, pompous, rude people with a ridiculous sense of their importance in world affairs.

Jeff Chostner

# GALLERY

Winning Pair.



Second Pair.



Third Pair.



Photos above taken after the Curtis Cup Pairs' Competition held to celebrate the life of Curtis Coleman. There is a full report by the Lime Bar Golf Society on page 14.



Orihuela

These photos relate to the Easter processions held throughout Spain. These are very solemn events, not at all like the fiestas, and they are always very, very impressive.



Cox.



The Spanish Foreign Legion in Malaga.



Torrevieja.



Two *mantilleras* during the procession of the Brotherhood of Christ of the Gypsies of Granada.

Several Nazarene Brotherhood in Malaga.



I didn't have space for the photos below last month, but thought they were worth including now. Below left is one of the contestants, 25-year-old Saida Prieto, for the Carnival Queen Competition in Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Saida suffered burns to 42% of her body due to a contestant's faulty pyrotechnics. See small photo. She has just been released after two months in hospital.



Below, a beach at noon in Torrevieja, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013, and 21<sup>st</sup> 2



(Images from El Mundo, Efe, Informacion.)



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**Legal Advice.**

On my first day of law school, my professor said two things. First was: 'From this day forward, when your mother tells you she loves you - get a second opinion.' And: 'If you want justice, go to a whorehouse. If you wanna get f\*\*ked, go to court.'

Lawyer in *Primal Fear*

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### Taxes!

The taxpayer - that's someone who works for the federal government but doesn't  
have to take a civil service examination. Ronald Reagan

One third of a pint of beer is tax. Not until about halfway through your pint do you  
stop drinking for the Government and start drinking for your self. Al Murray

The difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion is the thickness of a prison  
wall. Denis Healey

We all hate paying taxes, but the truth of the matter is that without our tax money,  
many politicians would not be able to afford prostitutes. Jimmy Kimmel

I always put a dab of perfume on my tax return. Considering what they're doing  
to me, I might as well get them in the mood. Bob Monkhouse

The creed of the Inland Revenue is simple: if we bring one little smile to one little  
face today - then somebody's slipped up somewhere. David Frost

Why won't sharks attack tax inspectors? - Professional courtesy. Anon.

There was a fire at the main Inland Revenue office in London today, but it was put  
out before any serious good was done. Ronnie Corbett

### Donde?

During a frustrating round, a golfer said to his caddie: 'Will you stop checking  
your watch all the time - it's distracting me.'

The caddie replied: 'It's not a watch - it's  
a compass.'

Two junior doctors were involved in a fight in the hospital. The senior surgeon had  
to pull them apart. 'What's this all about?' said the surgeon angrily. 'It's the Internal  
Revenue inspector in G ward,' said one. 'He's only got two days to live.'

'He had to be told,' said the second doctor.

'I know,' said the first, 'but I wanted to be the one to tell him!'

Pelicans, penguins and the Inland Revenue all have one thing in common: they can  
all shove their bills up their arse. Oz from *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*

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