

# THE DREAM SCENE

## NEWSLETTER

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

Issue no. 81 1st of November 2013.

*Bienvenido a todos* and welcome to the November edition.

October has been a glorious month with temperatures beautifully warm, particularly in the evenings. Alicante and other coastal regions enjoyed evening temperatures on occasions which did not go below 23 degrees - the highest for 92 years. The west wind raised temperatures to 24 degrees plus in some areas. Daytime temperatures have, on occasion, reached the 30's.

Once again a very mixed bag this month. Lee Bell has kindly submitted another helpful article, this time on Bathroom Conversions, which in this area are as common as wrinkles! Also some more info' on Spanish inheritance tax, and other issues which are likely to effect or interest expat's. Unfortunately there is no 'Idiot of the Month' included this month, not because there were none - we are up to our necks in them - but because I don't have the space! But I can briefly inform you that there were two leaders for the title last month. First was the government who over-reported the countries annual debt to the media by €10 billion! Then there was the 72-year-old pilot, (yes, 72!) who piloted his plane into an electric pylon within a few yards of the airfield at Mutxamel in Alicante. Maybe an appointment at *Specsavers* for 'Biggles' might be appropriate. Also this month another original and topical cartoon from Angela. So creative!

Spain's 2.8 million public workers will see their wages frozen again next year. This is their fourth year without an increase. In 2010, under the socialist government of Zapatero, their wages were reduced by 5%. However, the government will relax some of the restrictions on replacing civil servants who retire or leave the public payroll. Currently, a replacement rate of 10% was only applicable to members of the security forces and civil servants involved in the fight against tax fraud. This has now been extended to other areas of the public sector, such as health and education.

One of the big news items in the Spanish media last month has been the succession of earth tremors suffered by coastal towns off the eastern province of Castellón. It is generally believed, but unproven, that these tremors are caused by an offshore natural gas storage facility called *Castor*. Here, a depleted oil field located 1,800 meters below sea level is being used to store liquid gas. In a commando-like raid, the Guardia Civil stormed the offshore platform and the gas operation was shut down until the origin of the quakes are established. Recent tremors have reached 4.2 on the Richter scale, which is enough to crack walls. Despite being run by a private company, the project was put in motion by the government, as a way to cover 30 to 40% of Spain's daily demand of natural gas for a period of up to 50 days. The objective of the facility is to cover peaks of consumption or interruptions in supply. The Industry Minister then tried to get the courts to annul the clause which obliges them to compensate the company but the Supreme Court rejected the appeal. The owner of the Castor gas storage plant, ACS, will have to be paid 1.7 billion € by the Government if the plant is closed.

If you live in the Orihuela region, there is now a website where you can access and report any environmental issues/problems in your area. This is at [www.lineaverdeorihuela.com](http://www.lineaverdeorihuela.com) but you have to register online to participate.

**For your diary: Do take note that the only British brass band in the Costa Blanca, JB Brass Band, will be performing at 6pm at Zenia Boulevard on December 1. Do check them out as it will lift your spirits!**

Have a great month and we hope we will see you soon. Mick & Tid



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### Angela's Cartoon



"I really miss the grandchildren when they go home!"

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Did you know that .....

...following legislation in October, an employer can now read his employee's emails. This follows a Spanish case of industrial espionage.

...surgeons in Spain can now do thyroid operations through the armpit. This means that there are no scars on the patient's throat.

...menthol cigarettes will be banned in the EU from 2021. Other flavoured cigarettes will be banned within the next three years.

...that unscrupulous sellers of olive oil will add chlorophyll to make them look greener and purer and hence more expensive. A firm in Taiwan was discovered doing this by blending cheaper oils and adding chlorophyll, then selling it as Extra Virgin.

....around 700,000 in Spain are infected with the Hepatitis C Virus and almost half a million of those infected are unaware of their condition. Those born in the baby-boom in Spain, from 1945 to 1965 are advised to get tested. Around 300,000 are thought to have Hepatitis B.

... Engineers at a research centre in northern Spain have admitted using human bodies for their accident simulations because they can't afford the €150,000 a crash test dummy costs. The research centre, part of the University of Zaragoza, now has its very own morgue in which to store and prepare the corpses for crash tests.

....a systematic review by researchers at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore (USA) of dozens of studies on the use of statins to prevent heart attacks shows that the commonly prescribed drugs are not a threat to short-term memory and may even protect against dementia when taken for more than a year. A Mayo Clinic study revealed that when taking the drug for more than a year, the risk of dementia is reduced by 29%.

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Her: 'I can't believe how stupid you are paying €100 for two snails!'

Him: 'It's not my fault. The bloke in the pub swore blind that they were day-old tortoises!'

*It is better to be a mouse in the mouth of a cat rather than a man in the hands of a lawyer. Spanish Proverb.*

The big news item last month has been the overturning of the Parot Doctrine by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The Parot Doctrine was a scheme set up by Spain's Supreme Court whereby prisoners' entitlements to certain benefits for good behaviour etc such as early release were restricted. In a test case before the ECHR, a female ETA terrorist, Inés del Río, who was originally found guilty of 23 murders, was ordered to be released immediately and compensated with €30,000! The prisoner was released the day after the ruling. Now another 36 jailed ETA terrorists have lodged appeals similar to del Río. Since del Río's release, a second convicted ETA terrorist and a serial rapist, who was not due out until 2025, have also been released. Both the government and victims' association are incensed, but there is little they can do about it. Britain ignored an ECHR order in 2005 giving voting rights to prisoners. On Sunday Oct' 27, a crowd of 200,000 demonstrated against the ECHR/Strasbourg ruling in Madrid. People feel ETA are still getting away with murder! See page 20 for update.

A survey of average household electricity prices throughout the EU for May 2012 (before 2013's four price hikes) showed how Spain's €0.228 per kW was the 3rd most expensive of the 35 Countries surveyed, behind Germany and Denmark. By comparison, the cost of household electricity recorded for the same period in the UK stood at €0.179 per kW.

About 1,500 angry protestors turned up in Madrid in pouring rain to demonstrate against the Monarchy. They had planned to camp outside the Oriente Royal Palace, but were moved-on by a substantial police presence. They read-out a statement calling for the abolishment of the monarchy, which they called 'illegitimate and corrupt.' The demonstrators stated that the police presence was 'disproportionate' and have filed a complaint. (Best of luck with that one!) After most of the demonstrators dispersed, a smaller group of protestors chanted 'To the sharks with the Bourbons!' in reference to King Juan Carlos's dynasty. Plagued by scandals, including the ongoing criminal inquiry into alleged embezzlement of public money by royal son-in-law Iñaki Urdangarín, the monarchy has seen its lowest approval ratings since democracy was restored in 1975. King Juan Carlos's own popularity rating hit an all-time low in April 2012 when it emerged that he broke his hip during a expensive hunting trip to Botswana just months after he told Spaniards on Christmas Eve that the country's youth unemployment rate "kept him awake at night." Regular readers of the 'history page' will be aware that the Bourbons were thrown out of Spain twice during the two previous centuries.

The recent visit by the Troika - EU, IMF & ECB, revealed that between 2008 and 2010 many Spanish banks and savings banks did not cover their risks and that this information never reached the Bank of Spain! Spain's central bank is now scurrying around rushing in more new banking control systems. The President of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, has expressed his confidence that the Spanish banks will be 'well prepared' for the stress tests which the ECB will carry out next year.

The National Commission for Market Values, want Jaime Botín, the main shareholder in Bankinter and a former president and CEO of the bank, to be fined for allegedly misleading shareholders. El Mundo quotes a fine of €500,000.

The ABC newspaper reports that religious teachers in schools in Andalucía are forbidden to supervise the children on the school playgrounds. The instruction came from the regional Ministry of Education. This is eerily similar to the behaviour of the Left during Spain's disastrous Second Republic. See current history article.

After putting up the maximum payment for social security for businessmen and workers by 5%, the Government will now be taking 2% more from the self-employed *autonomo* workers, following a 1% increase in 2013. The average monthly payment will be nearly €270 and the maximum will rise to €75.70.

The Minister for Hacienda, Cristóbal Montoro, admitted that the income from taxes was not as high as forecasted. Tax cuts promised by the Government, specifically PM Rajoy, for next year will now have to wait until 2015. Surprise, surprise!

The government has released details of the budget for next year. The hardest hit in the 2014 budget is health, with an amazing 35.6% less next year compared to this. This is a major cut which will have significant ramifications and undoubtedly a major deterioration in service.

The total spending of all the ministries for next year is €66.335 billion, 5.6% more than this year. But if we exclude Social Security, and the Public Employment Service, with the costs of electricity, the budget is 4.7% lower. The Interior Ministry will see a budget of 7.3 billion € up 1.2% on this year. The money will be used to strengthen the presence of the police on the streets, to attack the new forms of delinquency, as well as to fight domestic violence and corruption. The largest cost on the Interior Ministry is for the personnel at €7.72 billion.

Pensions will go up by only 0.25% next year but despite that the payment of pensions takes 35.9% of the total budget, and the government will have to use 11 billion € from the reserves. Social Security predicts spending on pensions will cost 124.8 billion next year.

Despite the dramatic cuts in health spending, the State will be giving €3.2 million to the Catholic Church every month. In total they will receive €158.4 million as an advance for the 0.7% of the tax payers who mark the cross in the income tax return. If at the end of the year they have not received 249 million € the Government will pay the balance in 2016. €309,500 will go to religion in prisons and the Islamist church in Spain will get €3,930. Naturally, non-Catholic religions are very unhappy with this financial favouritism to a single creed. I am surprised others haven't complained to the EU.

PM Mariano Rajoy's monthly wage will be €6,515.42, the same as PM Zapatero in 2010. This is perfectly reasonable for a head of state I think. But ex-Prime Ministers will keep their €75,000 a year gratuity payment.

Although the budgets for everything else will be cut, financing of the political parties will be up by 28%, at €84.75 million supposedly because of the European elections. El Mundo says that Madrid is to remove 90% of the funding given for training to the UGT and CCOO unions. The paper says the regional government will give only €96,000 compared to €2.6 million in previous years. There is ample evidence that money given to the unions for training in some areas was used for other things.

The Parador state-owned hotels are expected to lose €8 million in 2014, twice as much as this year. The government is studying the business model and may introduce franchises. The *Paradores* were introduced by the dictator Primo Rivera in the 1920's, in an effort to kick-start tourism in Spain.

Spain's bad bank failed to attract high enough bids in its first sale of commercial real estate and will cut the size of the portfolio being offered to make it easier to sell, according to sources. The bad bank, known as SAREB, received more than 30 offers for the portfolio that were lower than it expected, said one observer. It will reduce the number of buildings in the package known as Corona to 4 from 7. Spain created SAREB last year to absorb €50 Bln of real-estate assets from lenders that took aid as part of the nation's European bailout. Its failure to attract high enough bids may undermine growing optimism in Spain as the stock market has surged 21% this year.

I hear that there's a cross-eyed burglar going around Los Balcones. If you see him peering in your window, warn the people next door!



#### 4 What's Up? continued

AENA, the Spanish Airport Authority, will give incentives to airlines that open new routes in 2014, and increase the traffic in their airports. The measure will be added as an amendment to the State Budgets. Airport taxes will be paid by AENA at 100% for the airlines who bring more passengers on new routes. AENA hopes to catch 4 million additional travellers next year.

Spain has sold 16 secondhand decommissioned Mirage F-1 to Argentina for €170 million. Half of these have air-refuelling capability. The Spanish air force is replacing its ageing Mirage fleet with Euro-fighter Typhoons. Spain has downplayed a recent report that they were going to use a combined diplomatic approach regarding the Falklands and Gibraltar.

A Barcelona court has named the former chairman of Caixa Catalunya, Narcís Serra, and the former general manager Adolf Todó of the now nationalized savings bank along with 52 (yes, 52!) other board members as official suspects in a case involving huge bonus and severance packages they awarded themselves despite the critical state of the lender's finances, judiciary sources said Friday. The move comes after the anti-corruption prosecutor in Barcelona accused Serra, Todó and the other members of the board of awarding themselves "disproportionate" emoluments in relation to the level of the bank's solvency before it was taken over by the state's Orderly Bank Restructuring Fund (FROB). The prosecutor said the action of the board could constitute criminal mismanagement.

The FROB has injected over 12 billion euros of taxpayers' money into the savings bank's commercial banking arm, Catalunya Banc, after it became unstuck due to over-exposure to the real estate sector, and is looking to offload the lender. The bank also wants to lay off 2,500 workers to reduce its workforce to 4,700. Two directors, Serra, who was a member of former Socialist Prime Minister Felipe González's Cabinet and mayor of Barcelona, and Todó, were questioned by the judge on October 21 along with three other former directors. (El País)

The Socialist mayor of Benidorm, Agustín Navarro, is being investigated for a number of offences. It seems that between 2010 and 2011 he allocated €4.5 million in 50 contracts to his close family, members of his government, or activists of the Valencia Socialist Party.

Following the disastrous train crash in July which cost 79 lives, the Development Ministry has decided to spend €50 million on introducing automatic braking systems in trains on priority lines. A clear case of 'shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted.'

26 people have been arrested after thieves tunneled through a wall to get to a safe in a 'secure' Health Depository in Malaga Port. 120 kilos of seized cocaine was stolen and is still not recovered.

Two experts from the government's tax agency have come to the surprising conclusion that the alleged illegal donations made to the ruling Popular Party in the period 2007-2008 are not subject to corporate income tax. The experts adhere to the letter of the law on party funding, which states that "private donations made by individuals or legal entities" are not subject to corporate tax, regardless of the legality of the source of the funding.

Three British men were arrested in Mallorca in connection with an organisation which has already defrauded €120 million in VAT payments throughout Europe. The Guardia Civil operation is linked to the German police, who have already charged 161 individuals in what is called *Operation Diva*. These included people from Spain, Germany, Italy and Holland. The fraudulent scheme involved setting up fictitious businesses relating to the import/export of technological products and claiming VAT payment credits. The money was then laundered in offshore accounts.

A Madrid court has fined the former head of the Spanish Federation for Mentally Handicapped Sport €5,400 for fielding athletes without any disability at the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney. The Judge found Fernando Martin Vicente guilty of fraud and ordered him to pay both the fine and return €142,355 received from the government intended to subsidise the promotion of sports for the disabled. Of the 200 Spanish (handicapped) athletes at Sydney, at least 15 had no type of physical or mental handicap.

As one would expect the cut-backs to the Spanish national health service is taking its toll. Alicante General Hospital now has a waiting list of 4,632 patients. Although the average wait for an operation during the summer dropped from 127 to 90 days, the number of people waiting for surgery is increasing. The unions report that the waiting lists are being understated by the health service.

However if you are waiting for a vasectomy in the Alicante region, it will be quite some time before you will be 'firing blanks!' There is now a three-year wait for the procedure with over a thousand men waiting for the 'snip'. The Department of Health have stated that the 'snip' is not a priority operation and other procedures are prioritised to alleviate other pathologies.

A 43-year-old worker suffocated after five tons of grapes fell from a loading hopper at a vineyard in Tomelloso in central Spain. Tomelloso is considered the capital of wine growing in Spain's Castile-La Mancha region.

A Spanish teacher of religion recently confessed to killing his brother and hiding the chopped up remains in a freezer. He showed remorse as he detailed the grizzly attack in a Majorca court room. The suspect told police his 32-year-old brother had moved in with him about a year ago, leading to heated quarrels. He went on to explain how he had then gone to a local shop to buy a freezer in which to place his brother's body. When he realized his brother would not fit into the domestic appliance, he decided to chop him up and place the remains in plastic bags.

A 16-year-old was arrested on Oct' 6<sup>th</sup> for the murder of his mother in their house in Zaragoza.. Minutes before the murder, the 16-year-old had told his friends on the social network, *Whatsapp*, that he would be in the news. Later he went on *Whatsapp* again and stated 'Goodbye everybody. You are going to see me in the news. I have killed my mother, Goodbye to this life'. He then phoned his father, who phoned the emergency services. The argument was about shared custody, the boy being adopted from India when he was four. Initially the boy will be placed in closed custody for youths for a period of up to eight years, but this is usually modified after a year.

Brussels has confirmed that it is investigating Spanish football clubs for allegedly receiving public money. Among the teams mentioned, Real Madrid, Barcelona, Athletic de Bilbao, and Osasuna. There are also cases of where regional administrations have also acted as guarantors for football club banking loans, the Valencia Region under Camps being one of the most notable.

The number of \$ millionaires in Spain has increased by 13% during the last six months of 2012 and first six of 2013. A report from Bank Credit Suisse, calculates that 402,000 Spaniards have a wealth of over a million dollars (€740,000). Meanwhile *Caritas*, the global Catholic charity, reveals that three million Spaniards are living on less than €75 per week. The number of people who attended *Caritas* help centres has increased from 370,251 in 2007 to 1.3 million in 2012.

#### The Genie.

An Englishman, a Scotsman and an Irishman had been stuck on a desert island for years when they find a bottle with a genie inside it. The genie gives them each a wish. 'I wish I was back home in London,' says the Englishman and in a flash he's gone. 'I wish I was back home in Glasgow,' says the Scotsman and in a flash he's gone. 'Oh, its a lonely place here now,' says the Irishman. 'I wish my two mates were still here with me.' Whoosh!

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Arnold Schwarzenegger's body is like a condom full of walnuts.

Clive James



It seems that the Orihuela Town Hall is taking eight months to process building applications, whereas according to current legislation it should not take longer than three months. Construction companies and developers report that they often have to start projects without the necessary approval only to have the works halted by a council which just cannot 'get its act together.' Developers state that the delay "is a genuine outrage" which is hurting the planned investment in the Orihuela Costa area, which is creating jobs and generating wealth.

The councillor for town planning, Antonio Zapata, has revealed that building inspectors in the Orihuela Costa area record between 150 and 200 planning offences every year. Most of these involve a solarium being turned into a bedroom or lounge by building walls, illegal fencing, facade changes or illegal basements. 'Sometimes the building works are legal,' he stated, 'but the owners did not ask for a licence.' The council has six building inspectors in all, two of which are posted permanently in Orihuela Costa. It seems they drive around the urbanisations and building sites regularly to check for illegal works. Illegal building works attract a fine, which can be substantial, and a demolition order. A local government committee meets weekly to discuss infringements and authorise fines and demolition orders. During one week in October, several demolition orders were approved, together with several fines, each amounting to €12,000. Owners are informed of the judgements/decisions by registered post and the names of the property owners is also published in the BOP - the official bulletin of the provincial government. (CBNews)

The Orihuela Town Hall is planning to replace the two existing shuttle bus lines on the coast with a new *a la carte* minibus service. The new service will be provided by a company called Skybus and will operate like a car sharing/on demand service. Bookings will be made through a Skybus website, mobile phone application or a call centre. Routes, timings etc can all be changed to suit the demand - provided of course people register their preferences. To do this you must go to [www.oriuelabus.es](http://www.oriuelabus.es) and complete the survey, which is in Spanish, English and German. The 29 questions in the survey will help determine opinions, travel requirements. Once again, if you don't participate in this process, don't moan about it afterwards! Non residents can also take part in the survey, but you will need your NIE number to complete it. The current service costs €200,000 per annum.

Credit is due to the current administration in Orihuela who have discovered that around 1,000 properties in the area failed to pay the property tax (IBI) in recent years. This was largely down to the ineptitude of the previous PP administration in collecting it. There are many other properties which were not properly registered with the council. By mid-2014 there could be as many as 4,000 additional properties paying the IBI who were not doing so in 2012. Inspections are carried out using aerial mapping.

I had to smile while reading the Costa Blanca News in early October. It featured a front page photo of a re-enacted battle between the Carthaginians and the Romans - part of a big annual fiesta held in historic Cartagena. The photo zoomed in on the two leaders of the factions who were going at it '*hammer & tongs*' with their swords. Normal, you might think, except the Carthaginian soldier was wearing spectacles! Well, maybe Hannibal had a 'Specsavers' franchise then.

The new €300 million desalination plant in Torrevieja has begun to transfer 'fresh' water to the lake at La Pedrera. This is part of the testing process which began in April. At present there is no real demand for the treated seawater due to its price.

The Valencian Region has six hospitals in the Top 20 List of Spain. Torrevieja Hospital is one of them. A total of 162 hospitals were surveyed, 127 public and 37 private.

*If electricity always follows the path of least resistance, why doesn't lightning only strike in France?*

A nursing home in Alicante had to evacuate 200 residents and 30 staff after a 75-year-old man lit a cigarette in his room - which also housed an oxygen bottle. Five people had minor burns, including the would-be smoker, who also suffered, ironically, from smoke inhalation.

There now seems to be a rail accident every month, this time thankfully not a serious one. A commuter train travelling between Lorca and Aguilas (Murcia), was hit by a lorry. Of the 60 passengers on the train, 12 were taken to hospital with minor injuries. The accident happened at a level crossing without barriers.

In a deliberate arson attack, over 100 palm trees were destroyed between nearby Jacarilla and Bigastro in early October. It took three fire crews to control the fire. Two local farmers say that they have already suffered arson attacks caused, they believe, by the same offender or offenders.

Although this is not really a local news item, it still has loose local connections. Once a year during October, shepherds are allowed to walk their sheep through parts of Madrid City in what is called *La Fiesta de la Trashumancia* (photo).

Transhumance refers to the seasonal movement of livestock from one grazing ground to another, usually from lowlands to highlands or *vice-versa*. It is a practice which is still very common worldwide, although trucks are now usually used to move the animals. This *Fiesta* has been carried out in Madrid for 20 years now and, although a novelty, can you imagine all that sheep-shit being traipsed through bars, restaurants and hotels? Bit like a Wales away-game. Closer to home, if you ever travel the N332 between Torrevieja and Alicante, you cannot miss the road signs which state 'Cañada', meaning 'a path for passing herds.' (photo). These refer to the ancient 'right of way' which existed (and possibly still does) for the movement of livestock across the area. The thought of any animal now crossing the N332 would surely mean that its would only be a matter of moments before it would end up as *bolognese sauce!*

However, I would like to draw the attention of any amateur anthropologists out there to a new form of 'transhumance.' In this a great number of migratory species arrive at Alicante airport. They arrive in droves and are instantly recognisable as they wear socks, sandals and Manchester United T-shirts. They then migrate to the lower land of the Costa Blanca where they appear to graze solely on 'all-day-breakfasts' and drink copious amounts of amber liquid. Though normally sedentary during the day-time when grazing, care should be taken when approaching them, as after the twilight hours following what the anthropologists call a 'draw' or a 'lose' their behaviour can be quite unpredictable and can lead to indecipherable grunting and/or the spilling of copious amounts of one's 'claret\*.'

*Australia has just had a general election. The main concern was about the number of illegal immigrants there are there. Government sources suggest around 60,000.*

*Aboriginal sources say it's more like twenty two and a half million of the b\*stards!*

\*Blood!





# LIME BAR



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## LIME BAR GOLF SOCIETY, LOS ALTOS, ORIHUELA COSTA

The golf societies venue for the 9th October 2013 was held at the Saurinas De La Torre Golf Course in Roldan, Murcia. About thirty players took to the course on a sunny but cooler day. The condition of the course was good although fairly demanding and unforgiving if mistakes were made. The competition was in Stableford format and the scores recorded are as follows.

Nearest the Pin in 2 on the 7th Hole was Alan Jackson.

Nearest the Pin on the 10th hole was Ed Alldred.

Nearest the Pin in 3 (par 5) on the 13th hole was Ken Sutton.

Best guest with a score of 18 points was Ed Alldred.

Silver Class 3rd place was Barry Shawyer with a score of 29 points.

Silver Class 2nd place was Alan Jackson with a score of 30 points.

Silver Class 1st place was Dave Kirk with a score of 30 points. (on count-back)

Gold Class 3rd place was Kevin Jackson with a score of 30 points.

Gold Class 2nd place was Bill Denne with a score of 31 points.

Gold Class 1st place was Les Henderson with a score of 38 points.

The Match Play Final between Dave Cahill and Graham Mitchell resulted in Dave Cahill being the winner 2 and 1.

Christian Denne has been appointed as Lime Bar Golf starter on the first tee to assist in organising the procedures.

A very good day in pleasant company, with thanks to Captain Mick Slater for organising the event and also thanks to the Staff at The Lime Bar and ladies for an enjoyable meal. Anyone wishing join our friendly society just needs to phone Mick on 659866468.





## SURELY THIS BIRD WILL NEVER FLY?

The Regional Government of Murcia may be forced to delay the opening of Corvera International Airport - promised for the summer season of next year - due to the tender process to find a new manager for the facility needing to be extended until January. (This despite there being numerous false starts to date!)

Regional Vice President and Minister of Economy and Finance, Juan Bernal, said that the difficulties in settling the contract with Aeromur, taking full and legal ownership of the facility, and finding a suitable replacement to operate the airport have not yet been fully overcome, which has caused delays.

The new operator - whoever that may be - will have to assume responsibility for the €180 million loan and €200 million guarantee on top of making payments to the region - some of which will be returned to the former concession holder. These payments, together with the financial uncertainty of the financial climate for the 40-year contract to operate the airport, makes the airport something of a gamble for any would-be investor.

On top of this, the regional government also expects any new operator to directly compensate AENA to the tune of €36 million for the closure of San Javier airport, as well as take responsibility for the transfer of employees to the new facility. A new operator will also have to negotiate the transfer of employees across to Corvera from San Javier together with the privately owned contractors who service the ancillary elements at the airport - all of whom have contracts with AENA. This will include relocation and compensation costs.

Meanwhile Sacyr, majority shareholder of Aeromur - the former concession holder of the airport - have invoked legal action against the Regional Government for the recovery of the cost associated with building the airport - possibly around €50 million, whilst the Government in turn are claiming damages suffered by the people of Murcia in the delays in bringing the airport into operation. But of course now the matter will be going to the courts, it may be some years before it is resolved.

Now I ask you, who would take on such a debt-laden project? Only the dumbest of the dumb surely.

## A RE-THINK ON AIRPORT TAXES!

Spain will cut the tariffs airlines pay to use the country's airports and remove the charge entirely in some cases in an attempt to boost falling traffic, the government said. The cuts will reverse increases made over the past two years, which doubled tariffs at Spain's two largest airports in Madrid and Barcelona and prompted budget airline EasyJet to close its Madrid base and Ryanair to reduce flights and routes.

The measure could increase traffic in Spain's 46 (Operational, State-run) airports by about 2%, or almost 4 million passengers, Public Works Minister Ana Pastor said. Passengers were down 4.9% year on year in the first nine months of this year, or by 7.5 million travellers, on falling demand for domestic flights in the midst of an economic slump and the elimination of routes across Spain.

The reduced tariffs will take effect from Jan. 1, 2014, and will be applicable to new routes and for any moves by airlines aimed at increasing air traffic, Spain's airport regulator AENA said. Rates charged per passenger on routes that carry additional travellers will be cut by 75% and new routes will have the tariffs removed completely. More flights into San Javier please!

**FOUND:** To the person who lost a bundle of 50 20-euro notes wrapped up in an elastic band in Iceland Supermarket today, please get in touch as I've found the elastic band.....

## OTHER SPANISH NEWS.

Sometimes, the little guy wins. In 2006, at the height of Spain's crazed real estate boom, the municipal council of Jumilla, a small town a long way from the coast in Murcia, approved a plan to build 15,000 homes around two golf courses, in an area with little water. The plan included the compulsory purchase of 30 hectares of land belonging to a stubborn local shepherd called Pascual Carrión (photo), whom the developer assumed could be won around with money like all the rest. Carrión was offered €2.6 million for his land, but didn't trust the developer, so refused to cooperate. Other small landowners in the area who went along with the proposal were never paid, according to Spanish press reports.



Carrión went to court to block the development, which pitted him against the powers-that-be in his corner of Spain. Millions of euros were at stake, and I can only imagine the pressure he must have been under from locals with vested interests. The Spanish justice system moves at a snail's pace, which is why it has taken seven years to reach a decision. A judge has ruled the project cannot go ahead because there is not enough water to support the number of homes planned, as argued by Carrión. For Carrión, the victory has come at a high personal cost. "I get to keep my land but I've also had heart surgery for my troubles," he told the press.

In the meantime, the development has long since ceased to be viable, now that banks aren't throwing money at any old project. It has no chance of getting finance, and the developer went into administration back in 2008. The crash was going to put a stop to the project anyway. But some people don't know when to give up. The developer plans to appeal the decision and present a new plan with a smaller footprint that doesn't include any land belonging to Pascual Carrión, according to press reports. (SPI)

A judge at a Spanish Court has angered women throughout the country after ruling that a driving school was within its rights to charge women more for lessons due to the reason of men being better drivers. Judge Javier Albar was ruling on an appeal whether a driving school in Zaragoza was discriminating against women in their pricing made in advertised a deal men aged 22 could get as necessary to pass whereas the same women cost original case, the was fined €4,000. They reasoned that - in general - women required an average of an extra five lessons to pass their test. A feminist group plans to appeal the decision to the Constitutional Court.



Fagor, the electrodomestic equipment manufacturer and a household name in Spain have called in the receivers. The company, which **FAGOR** operates from the Basque Region, has been unable to find financing for its €800 million debt. Its revenues have fallen by €600 million since 2007 due to the economic situation and competition from low-cost competitors in China, Turkey and South Korea.

## Your Good Health!

- Yesterday, my friend Harry accidentally ate a bowlful of mini Brillo pads which he's mistaken for Shredded Wheat. The news from the hospital is good though; they expect him to scrape through.
- A nurse is paying for some groceries at a supermarket checkout. She takes a biro out of her pocket to write a cheque, but finds she's holding a rectal thermometer. 'Well, that's great,' she says. 'Some asshole's got my pen!'
- An apple a day keeps the doctor away - but you have to throw it quite hard.



## INHERITANCE TAX & YOU. WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW. Part 2.

This month we take a brief look at tax free allowances applicable to family heirs. Obviously, if you wish to limit the tax payable it is better to bequeath your assets to as many close family members as possible, availing of the tax free allowances. Last month, in example number two, we looked at the case of non-resident married couple where the husband 'popped his clogs.' The surviving widow then inherited his portion of the estate, which was valued at €75,000. On this she would pay approx. €6,128, whereas a resident, because of the increased tax free allowance, would have nothing to pay, see table below. However, if the deceased left his portion of the estate to be divided equally between his non-resident wife and his two non-resident children, then the amount of tax payable would be greatly reduced because of their ability to each claim the individual tax free allowance of €15,956. (There are occasions where it may not be tax-efficient to divide the estate equally.) The three beneficiaries would then have to pay inheritance tax of approx. €700 each. From this you will see the importance of exploring inheritance tax planning before making a Spanish will. Once funeral expenses are also deducted, then the final tax bill should be negligible. But don't forget that you will still have to pay lawyers, notaries and the Land Registry.

### HEIRS TAX FREE ALLOWANCES.

If the inheritors are	Non-residents	Residents of Valencian Region.
<b>Parents</b>	For each heir €15,956.87	For each heir €100,000
<b>Spouse</b>	For each heir €15,956.87	For each heir €100,000
<b>Children</b>	For each heir €15,956.87	For each heir €100,000
<b>Siblings</b>	For each heir € 7,993.46	For each heir € 7,993.46
<b>Unrelated</b>	0	0

### Inheritance Tax, continued.

When you have to pay inheritance tax, it must be paid within six months of the deceased having passed away. If after six months the tax has been unpaid, during the next three months there will be a 5% penalty. During the following nine months the penalty is 10%. After one year the penalty is 20% plus interest. This is unreasonable as these matters can take some time, particularly if there is no will or if the property has to be sold to pay the tax bill! And let's be honest, Spanish bureaucracy is mind-bendingly slow.

If the heirs (who must have NIE numbers) don't have enough money to pay the tax, it can be paid in instalments according to ones ability to pay. Interest is also charged at the then legal rate, which is 4% at present.

There have been many instances where the beneficiary has renounced the inheritance, but I will cover this aspect and others at a later date.

Next month we will look at some examples of resident inheritance cases and the additional allowances that apply.

### Letters to the Editor



Dear Mick,

#### An Unfortunate Experience!

I have been renting cars for 30 years in different countries but recently was 'ripped-off' as never before in Spain. I stayed in a friends apartment near VillaMartin. He recommended I look-up spain.com. They turned out to be the brokers who booked me with Dickmanns who I found were operating out of a van in the car park opposite Murcia airport. As usual I refused additional insurance but they did not just scan the credit card but took 600 euros! Still I thought nothing was likely to happen in a week. On the second day when I was parked for 30 minutes outside a supermarket, the glass and one section of a wing mirror was taken. It had been removed very deftly and without damage! I went to the Police but they were unhelpful saying I needed an interpreter.

After returning the car to Dickmanns, they took €200 for the mirror and €45 for the car 'as it was not available for rental for a day.' So one week's rental cost €77 plus €0 for petrol (used less than half a tank) plus €200 plus €45 - a total of €412. Later I looked on the internet and found numerous very bad reports about Dickmanns. I strongly suggest people take heed of all this.

Regards,  
Brian Cooper.

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NO VARIATIONS; EXTRA VOUCHERS CANNOT BE EXCHANGED FOR EXTRA WINE!  
CUT-OUT AND PRESENT WITH ORDER.**



Harry is chatting to Tom. 'I like your new suit,' says Tom. 'Thanks,' says Harry. 'It was a surprise present from my wife. I came home early last night and found it hanging over a chair in the bedroom!'

### Energy Efficiency Tests - an update.

Following last month's article on Energy Certification in Spain, I thought you might be interested in the following which has been reported by *spanish propertyinsight.com*

The majority of Spanish homes 'fail' the energy efficiency test that measures how well they use energy and avoid carbon emissions, according to a survey of owners, and analysis of 5,000 certificates by Alquiler Seguro, a rental agency that also provide energy certificates for landlords. Though EU-wide energy certificates were introduced in June for all owners who wish to sell or rent their homes for long lets, they have been widely ignored so far outside Barcelona and Madrid.

The energy efficiency is certified on a scale from A (best) to E (worst), and typically cost a few hundred Euros from a certified professional based on an inspection.

55% of homes received an E grade, followed by 29% with a D. If you count D & E grades as a fail, then 84% of Spanish homes fail the energy efficiency test. Just 0.16% of homes got a B grade, and 0.49% an A, so less than 1% got an A or B.

This is not a big surprise. Many old homes in Spain are poorly insulated, whilst the quality of construction of new homes built during the boom was lacking, as you would expect in period driven by speculation. Luckily, the pleasant climate on the coast means that poor insulation isn't perceived as a big problem. Noise is a different story.

Most of the owners surveyed see the energy certificate as first and foremost a way for the Government to raise money, even though it has been imposed by the EU. Few landlords see it as an advantage for attracting tenants, who care far more about rental prices and locations. Survey respondents were also critical of the hassle involved in getting a certificate, with a different bureaucratic process in each of Spain's seventeen autonomous regions.



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## LATE NEWS.

### Mayor heads for 'clink.'

The former mayor of Torre Vieja, Hernandez Mateo, has lost his appeal to the Supreme Court and will have to serve a prison sentence of three years. The original charges related to the fraudulent award of the €9.6 million rubbish contract for the town in 2004.

### Search for non-contract workers.

The Valencian police have been checking businesses throughout the Vega Baja region for 'illegal' workers. Their searches so far have uncovered some illegal aliens and many firms who have not been paying the *autonomo* for employees, i.e. no contract. A number of businesses in the Playa Flamenca Commercial Centre have been fined. But then I noticed that the Costa del Sol has also been invaded by their regional inspectors. Last week they concentrated on Torremolinos. Aside from checking the easy targets of bars and restaurants, they are also checking with administrators of urbanisations who will often use a retired resident to do various maintenance tasks in the community without a contract. It is good to know that the situation in DH has been regularised now for some time. The inspectors/police in the Costa del Sol intend to carry out 300 visits to various municipalities in the area.

### Ryanair Ruling.

A Madrid commercial court has declared a number of clauses in the terms and conditions of carriage of low-cost carrier Ryanair null and void. Among these is the airline's 40-euro fee for the reprinting of a passenger boarding pass at the airport.

In a press release posted on its website, the Spanish consumer protection group OCU said Thursday that the Irish airline's practices "violate consumer-protection legislation," explaining, for example, that in some cases the charge for printing the boarding pass is greater than the cost of the ticket. The ruling came in response to a suit filed by OCU in 2011 against what it argued were abusive clauses included in the travel conditions of Ryanair, Iberia, Spanair and Vueling.

The court has thrown out a total of eight clauses, including Ryanair's insistence on the production of certain identity documents before allowing passengers to travel. OCU said this clause causes a lot of problems for passengers travelling with small children, who can be denied the right to board a plane because they are carrying the Spanish Libro de Familia (family book) for their youngsters rather than the passport or Spanish identity card required by the Dublin-based airline.

It also declared null and void Ryanair's requirement that all legal complaints against the carrier be filed with the Irish authorities, as well as the carrier's requirement that tickets should be paid for at the airport using a debit or credit card and not in cash. The court also ruled as abusive the airline's refusal to accept items in baggage such as money, jewelry, precious metals, keys, cameras, computers, medicines, spectacles, sunglasses, contact lenses, watches, cellphones and personal electronic devices.

The judge also ordered Ryanair to publish its ruling in one of the three major newspapers in Spain. Ryanair can now appeal the court's decision. OCU said it does not believe Ryanair will comply with the judge's ruling and urged the authorities to take action against the airline if it persists with its abusive practices. (El Pais) In a separate story, Ryanair have announced that they are going to stop all advertising on their planes and allow passengers to take two bags on board! Be still my beating heart!

### The Widow.

A widow comes back from her husband's cremation and tips his ashes onto the kitchen table. She then says to the ashes, 'You see this diamond ring. This is the diamond ring I always wanted but never got, so now I've bought it myself. You see this crocodile handbag. This is the crocodile handbag I always wanted but never got, so now I've bought it myself. And see this fur coat. This is the fur coat I always wanted but never got, so now I've bought it myself.'

The woman then leant over the table and blew her husband's ashes all over the floor and said, 'And that's the blow job you've always wanted but never got!'

## HUMOUR IN THE DREAM SCENE.

I have noticed in recent years how, particularly in the UK, over-sensitivity and political correctness are gradually eroding away at people's ability to enjoy humour which may have a little 'edge' to it. A typical example of this is the latest Marmite advert which has caused many to choke on their Pot Noodle and complain to the advertising authorities. You can see it here - cut & paste - and it is a creative gem!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHjssdNNzP0>

I am very careful with the jokes in the DS. Not careful that I don't offend - because it is impossible to keep everybody happy - but careful that I will include some jokes in each issue which will demolish political correctness and its ilk but at the same time not be too vulgar or cruel. It can often be a fine line.

Most people, women usually, comment that they enjoy the jokes in the Dream Scene. They rarely comment on anything else in it! One lady keeps telling me she likes the Dream Scene but doesn't read the jokes...and if you believe that you will surely believe that Corvera Airport and Paramount Theme Park will soon be up and running! No matter. Once an older chap asked me quite loudly in a bar - 'Are you the man who writes the dirty jokes?' Then 30 heads turned at once to look at me! It is very important that we all laugh often and also have the ability to laugh at ourselves as well.

I am Irish but I also enjoy good original Irish jokes, but I will only print them if they are simple enough for the English to understand! I certainly don't take offence from them. They are just jokes and like all jokes, they play up to stereotypes. I will pass on jokes that 'have a go' at every religion, race, political belief, etc., providing they don't go beyond what I consider as acceptable, as it is after all my newsletter. We all need to laugh more, 'smell the roses' and not be so 'thin-skinned.'

Muslim jokes, or jokes about Muslims are very popular in the UK and US of A. Some are genuinely very funny but it is unwise and unkind to 'tar all people with the same brush.' Let's not forget that it was a British Muslim chap, Mitul Shah, who gave his life to save others in the mall attack in Nairobi. So, forget the stereotypes; not all Muslims are ignorant terrorists and not all Scottish people are tight-arsed misers. (Although the jury is still out on Scottish generosity!)

Then I got an email from a lady a few weeks ago, complaining about a joke which I included in the last issue about 'Scousers' - Liverpoolians. She thought it was disgusting and requested an apology. I offered to print her email, anonymously or otherwise, but got no reply. This is the first complaint I have received in 81 issues - more than six and a half years and more than 800 jokes. Not a bad run really! But I am afraid that there will be no apologies and the political incorrectness will continue. I plan to grow old disgracefully and have lots of fun on the way. However, I might reconsider an apology if my car hub-caps are returned to me.

And if you don't like reading the Dream Scene might I suggest you read something else.... or take the advice of the former newspaper editor of the New York Post and The Sun, Kelvin MacKenzie, - 'Go take a flying f\*\*k at a rolling doughnut.'

Mick, Editor.

## THE MALAYA CASE.

The big Malaya Case in Andalucia has finally drawn to a close - almost! The investigation, which began in late 2005 into what then was Spain's biggest corruption case\*. Although nearly 100 people were originally charged, 45 have now been acquitted. The sentencing document ran to 5,000 pages, but the key elements are as follows: Juan Antonio Roca, the ex-Marbella Town Hall Real Estate Assessor and mastermind of the affair, was found guilty of continued passive bribery, money laundering as head of the organisation, fraud, and perversion of the course of justice. He was given an 11-year-sentence, fined €240 million and banned from public office for 34 years. He is believed to have had an empire of 71 'ghost' companies with a value of €110 million.

Corulla, an associate of Roca, was jailed for four years and fined €30 million. Two women, one the ex-mayor of Marbella was given a six-year jail sentence, while the other, an ex-Socialist councillor, was given four years and a fine of €700,000. Both were found guilty of a number of offences which included bribery and the altering of prices in auctions.

Another former mayor, Julián Muñoz, received a two-year for fraud but he has already been convicted of 52 offences, and sentenced to 45 years in prison in relation to other real estate crimes. Two of the surprising and worrying things about this case are the sentences and the lack of them. The jail sentences given were significantly less than that requested by the prosecutors - 16 years asked but only four given! Also very few of the businessmen involved were punished. Three of the originally charged ex-councillors went 'on the run' with one, Francisco Javier Lendínez, returning just a day after the verdicts were announced. The whereabouts of the other two are unknown - one was sighted in Argentina.

\*The biggest corruption case in Spain at present is still in Andalucia with the ERE retirement slush-fund scandal, where the investigation is ongoing. See page 16 of this issue.



### KEEPING YOUR OLD NUMBER!



Spain's Telecoms Industry watchdog - the CMT - has announced the introduction of new measures to allow consumers to change phone providers, and take their old number with them within one day! So-called 'Local Number Portability' (LNP), usually referred to as simply 'porting', will take effect on November 11th, and see the procedure being reduced from five days to just one. However, consumers looking to change their fixed line and broadband operator at the same time will need to wait longer due to the complexities involved with changing broadband suppliers. According to the CMT, for the month of July some 153,117 fixed numbers were ported - this is up by 21.3% on July 2012, with a total of 1.2 million fixed numbers being ported in the first seven months of the year. (Tumbit.)

Loosing one's original phone number when changing your provider has always been a hassle. It should be painless but some suppliers such as Telefonica, do drag their heels on the matter and will

### The Special Deal.

A petrol station owner in Dublin was trying to increase his sales.

So, he put up a sign that read, 'Free Sex with Fill-Up.'

Soon Paddy pulled in, filled his tank and asked for his free sex. The owner told him to pick a number from 1 to 10. If he guessed correctly, he would get his free sex.

Paddy guessed 8, and the proprietor said, 'You were so close. The number was 7. Sorry. No sex this time.'

A week later, Paddy, along with his friend Mick, pulled in for another 'Fill-up'. Again he asked for his free sex.

The proprietor again gave him the same story, and asked him to guess the correct number. Paddy guessed 2 this time. The proprietor said, 'Sorry, it was 3. You were close, but no free sex this time.'

As they were driving away, Mick said to Paddy,

'I think that game is rigged and he doesn't really give away free sex.'

Paddy replied, 'No it ain't, Mick. It's not rigged at all, at all. My wife won twice last week.'

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### THE CHINESE TOURISTS ARE COMING!

Although non-EU, the growth of the Chinese population in Spain can be surprising to some, particularly in the large cities. Now with the easing of residency regulations for rich Chinese property owners, and an increase in the number of wealthy Chinese travelling abroad, the Chinese National Tourism Administration has launched a new 64-page guidebook to behaving abroad, including Spain, for Chinese tourists. This is a wise move as there has been the odd incident in other countries which has raised a few eyebrows - these include throwing sweets at North Koreans, carving up a 3,500-year-old Egyptian relic, eating endangered sea creatures and making off with airline cutlery. Last year, Chinese tourists made 83 million trips overseas, 18% more than in 2012.

Vice President Wang Yang has urged Chinese tourists to behave in a civilised manner taking heed of Spanish customs. The guide notes that 'Women in Spain should always wear earrings in public - or else be considered naked.' The picking of one's nose in public and excessive nose hair is taboo, as is picking one's teeth with fingers. Travellers are also recommended not to occupy public toilets for long periods of time, not to stand on the toilet seats and leave footprints, and not to spit or pee in swimming pools. (I thought the latter was compulsory in Spain.)

When leaving the airplane, Chinese tourist are also urged not to steal the lifejackets as they maybe needed in an emergency later. (I would guess that the Romanians have already had them anyway!) Other advice includes - 'Do not lie down in public and remove your shoes and socks; don't spit phlegm or gum, throw litter, urinate or defecate wherever you feel like it.'

Might I just add one more - 'Please don't eat our dogs!'

### Poor Johnny!

Little Johnny's father asked him, "Do you know about the birds and the bees?"

"I don't want to know!" little Johnny said, bursting into tears.

Confused, the father asked little Johnny what was wrong. "Oh dad," Little Johnny sobbed, "At age six I got the 'there's no Santa' speech. At age seven I got the 'there's no Easter bunny' speech. Then at age eight you hit me with the 'there's no Tooth Fairy' speech! If you're going to tell me now that grown-ups don't really f\*ck, I've got nothing left to live for!"



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**(The Telegraph, July 12, 2013)**

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**One - Nil.**

A Jewish man and two Arabs sat next to each other on an airplane. The Jewish man takes his shoes off much to the displeasure of the two Arabs. The Jew asks one of the Arabs if he can get him a coke. The terrorist replies, "Okay idiot, get me a coke." While the Jewish man is gone the Arab spits in his shoe. The man returns and asks the other Arab if he too would like a coke. The Arab answered, "Okay, idiot, get me a coke." While the Jewish guy was gone the other Arab spits in his other shoe. At the end of the flight the unfortunate man puts on his shoes and realizes what has happened.

The Jewish man turns to the Arabs and says "When are we going to stop all this...this calling us names...this spitting in shoes...this pissing in cokes?!"



**BATHROOM CONVERSIONS.**

Quite a popular modification on the quad houses, and indeed in the apartments, is the removal of the bath and fitting a walk-in shower in its place, would it suit you? Read on and find out...

As would undoubtedly seem obvious, first the bath is removed, often not an easy task, and disposed of. Many customers take the opportunity to remove the bidet at the same time, not essential but gives better access to the new shower. Most people also decide on a new shower unit with a thermostatic valve, so it is necessary to raise the feed pipes 4 or 500 mm to suit and the drains are re-sited using the new trap that the customer has hopefully remembered to obtain when they bought the new shower unit. Just a word on traps; that's the bit that the water runs out of and into the drains, usually a similar one to what you have in the standard shower is supplied but most people are happy to spend €20-30 on the more stylish items with built-in, easily cleaned filters to catch hair etc and I must confess they do look very attractive and add extra elegance to the finished job.

A shower tray fitting the area of the bath is formed in concrete which is later tiled using non slip tiles, my own favourite is the mosaic tiles similar to those often seen on swimming pools. These are available in several colours and look stunning when finished. A low, tiled edge, usually around 20-25 cms high, forms the inner wall of the shower tray although the height of this as well as the width of the actual shower tray is to suit the customer.

There are no tiles behind the bath and it is necessary, at a minimum, to re-tile from the border down to the new shower tray in the area where the bath was. The original tiles are not available (for DH bathrooms) so the customer often decides on a similar or contrasting tile; many in fact decide to have the whole bathroom below, and sometimes including, the border re-tiled. When starting with only the above border, usually silver gray tiles leaves a virtual blank canvas for those with a taste for a colour theme change.

The shower screen can then be built, most popular is the glass block wall, coloured blocks are available and look very attractive with a small number among the translucent ones. The height of the block and tile wall and the glass block wall are to the customers requirements and it is possible to move the existing washbasin or fit a new one with storage underneath creating more floor space and storage at the same time.

Worth considering at the same time? Think about lighting, anything from simply replacing your overhead light with cool LED spotlights - they're very bright and cheap to run, to lighting over the washbasin. Valve changes, many of the main valves (the two beside the WC in quad houses) and check-valves on the basin, WC, and bidet (if you decide to keep it) are getting very tired and often seized up, and storage. There's loads of choice; maybe fit a cupboard where the bidet came out.

As usual, if you have any questions or want a free consultation please call me on 653553715 or email [dreamhillsplumbing@gmail.com](mailto:dreamhillsplumbing@gmail.com) (Advert opposite.)

**THE NATURAL GAS OPTION.**

Now that the price of electricity is rocketing and the threat that solar power option will become more expensive in Spain, why not consider Natural Gas. This will be coming shortly to areas in the Los Altos / Dream Hills locations, providing there are sufficient applicants. The main trunk-routes have already been laid. Should you wish to know more, please call Virginia (speaks perfect English) on 645 113 316 for more information without obligation. There are still good deals on offer.

**Physical!**

During a lady's medical examination, the doctor states: "Your heart, lungs, pulse and blood pressure are all fine. Now let me see the bit that gets you ladies into all kinds of trouble."

The lady starts taking off her underwear but is interrupted by the doctor. "No! No! Don't remove your clothes!... Just stick out your tongue!"  
Simon Kennefick



Los Balcones, opposite Mercadona.

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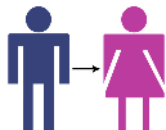
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**FANCY A CHANGE?**

No, I don't mean a change of car, house, holiday or even partner. I mean a change of sex! Feel you are a woman trapped in a man's body or vice versa? Well it seems it may be more common than you would think.

There is a condition called *gender dysphoria* or *gender identity disorder* which is a condition in which a person feels that there is a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity and can often occur at an early age.



Sex change operations were considered a crime in Spain until 1999. Malaga became the pioneer for those wanting the operation and performed 300 such procedures in the first ten years after it became legal. The operations are also now available in Cataluña and Madrid and can, depending on certain circumstances, be charged to the national health service.

But, if you are funding the 'transition' yourself, to change from a man to a woman will cost you €15,000. However, if you want to change from a woman to a man, you will be expected to pay between €30,000 and €35,000!

Still, it might make an interesting Christmas present for Auntie Fred!

## THE WOLVES IN SPAIN

No! I am not talking about those grubby, greedy politicians. I mean the real ones - *Canis lupus signatus* - The Iberian wolf, unfortunately an endangered species unlike the other ones!

In the 50's and 60's, wolves in Spain were classified as pests by the Franco government and a bounty was offered for dead ones. Their numbers were reduced to around 400 by 1970, these in isolated pockets in the northwest, in Andalusia's Sierra Morena and on the Portuguese border. However, during the last four decades their numbers have gradually revived and experts believe that there may now be around 250 packs of Iberian wolves (see photo) with possibly 2,000 individual animals.



Although wolf hunting is banned in Portugal, above the River Douro in Spain, wolves may still be hunted but below that they have been 'in theory' protected since 1992. At least one pack is now living in a natural park within 85 kilometres northeast of the capital, Madrid. These are the first wolves in this area since the 1940's. But of course the farmers and livestock owners are not very happy. So far in 2013 there have been 14 reported wolf attacks on livestock in the area, resulting in the deaths of 28 sheep and a

cow. However, out of a total of 40,301 cows and 16,367 sheep in the wolves' range, the impact has been minimal. In 2012, €30,000 was set aside by the regional authorities to compensate farmers, but only €6,650 was ever claimed.

The Iberian wolf is smaller and lighter than the grey wolf. An adult male Iberian wolf weighs around 35 kilos, while females are smaller, weighing around 30 kilos. A 46 kilo male was discovered in the Sierra de la Culebra in the northwest.

With Iberian wolves only the alpha male and female will breed in order to maintain the strength of the pack. Female wolves can usually begin breeding at one year, but don't fully mature until they reach five years. Breeding season is at the end of winter. The litter is usually 5 or 6 pups that are looked after by the entire pack until autumn when they join in with the others. They must be protected from eagle owls and golden eagles for the first few weeks.

These wolves have an innate fear of humans and will avoid them. But wolves view domestic dogs as competitors or territorial intruders and will attack and kill them, especially in remote areas. If you would like to read more about this elusive and beautiful animal, there is an informative article here -

<http://www.wildlifeextra.com/go/world/Iberian-wolf.html#cr>

## ERE SCANDAL CONTINUES TO SHOCK.

It is fair to say that the ERE (retirement fund) scandal in Andalusia has reached new heights - or should I say depths! It is now the biggest corruption scandal in Spain. Whereas the ruling Socialist junta are knee deep in the matter, it now seems that the unions have also been dipping their 'sticky fingers' in the slush fund as well. (This was a fund set up by the region to help Andalusian private companies with redundancy/ early retirement packages.) The wives of two senior officials in the UGT union were paid €109,203 and €109,050 respectively, being early retirement payments supposedly due for the period they worked at a textile factory, Hytemasa Malaga. But the investigating judge has now found that these ladies never worked for the firm or indeed for any textile business.

But this is just the latest in this massive fraud relating to a fund which was in excess of €1.2 billion. Although a number of people are already in jail awaiting trial, the revelations continue. The latest is that the unions, insurance companies, lawyers etc, who 'supervised and approved' the payments also claimed hefty commission fees. The Guardia Civil found that in one investigation of a group of workers who received ERE payments, the CCOO and UGT unions were paid commission fees of €7,648,815! They have tried to justify these fees as being for 'data collection work and/or counselling' but the police say they have not found any work done by the unions to justify the massive fee. It has also been revealed that the unions would not approve a single retirement/redundancy policy unless they were paid a commission.

A commission rate of 4.6% was the normal charged by the mediators, often an insurance company. But the police have now revealed that in one tranche of policies handled, commissions of more than €8 million were paid, which equated to a charge of 13.6%!

In a totally separate report, it was revealed by El Mundo that a company set-up by a senior UGT union official received €8 million to organise training courses for the unemployed. How much of that reached them is anybody's guess.

The judge in this case, Mercedes Alaya, has been the subject of considerable intimidation. Up until recently this came from the Socialist junta in Andalusia. Now it is also coming from the large unions - CCOO & UGT. But their anger is misplaced. They have seen that they are just as corrupt as the PP barons in Madrid.

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## Yikes!! Be Careful!



The scorpion above was discovered on the driveway of a house in the 500's in Dream Hills near the pools. Always check your shoes and pet baskets if you leave them outside. You never know what 'guests' might be lurking inside!



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## TOURISM REVENUE IN SPAIN THIS YEAR TO DATE.

International tourists pumped another six billion euros into Spain during September, an 8% increase over the same month last year. This brings the haul this year so far to €47 billion, up 7.3%!

The British continue to represent the 'biggest spenders' bringing in 22.6% of the total take - 9.7 billion euros. Next are the Germans with a spend of €7.49 billion.

France is in third place with €4.8 billion, then the Nordic countries with €4.2 billion. The much vaunted Russian market lies in fifth place with just €2 billion, but this is a decline of -13.8% as opposed to healthy increases in all the other major sources of tourist income. There has been a lot of hot air talked about the Russian market within Spain, but in reality it is the existing European tourists who are the important ones and should not be overlooked.



### Some quickies from Pete.

At the Irish wedding reception the D.J. yelled...  
"Would all the married men please stand next to the one person who has made your life worth living."  
The bartender was almost crushed to death.

I think it is just terrible and disgusting how everyone has treated Lance Armstrong, especially after what he achieved, winning 7 Tour de France races, while on drugs. When I was on drugs, I couldn't even find my frig'n bike.

A guy broke into my house last week. He didn't take my TV, just the remote control. Now he drives by my house and changes the channels. Sick bastard!!

Just got scammed out of €25. Bought Tiger Woods DVD entitled "My Favourite 18 Holes". Turns out it's about golf. Absolute waste of money! Pass this on so others don't get scammed too.

Doctor asks a pregnant prostitute, "Do you know who the father is?" "For heaven's sake, if you ate a can of beans, would you know which one made you fart?"  
(Pete Dudman)



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*When I told jokes about cystitis, people would write in and say, 'I've got cystitis and it isn't funny,' so I would reply, 'Well, send it back and ask for one that is.'*

*Victoria Wood*

### The Philosopher, with some sage advice.

I mowed the lawn today, did a bit of weeding and after working up a thirst, I thought to myself "I fancy a drink", so I sat down and had a lovely cold beer.

The day was really quite warm and beautiful for October, and having a drink facilitated some deep thinking on various topics.

After some meaningful and deep thinking ideas, I finally I thought about an age old question: Is giving birth more painful than getting kicked in the nuts?

Women always maintain that giving birth is way more painful than a guy getting kicked in the nuts. Well, after another beer, and some heavy deductive thinking, I have come up with the answer to that question. Getting kicked in the nuts is more painful than having a baby. And here is the reason for my conclusion.

A year or so after giving birth, a woman will often say, "Wouldn't it be nice to have another baby?" On the other hand, you will never hear a guy say, "You know, I think I would like another kick in the nuts."

I rest my case. Time for another beer.

(Kevin Wood)



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My daughter just walked into the living room and said "Dad, cancel my allowance immediately, rent my room out, throw all my clothes out of the window, take my TV, and stereo, and iPhone, and iPod, and my laptop. Please take all of my jewellery to the Salvation Army or Cash Converters. Then sell my new car, take my front door key away from me and throw me out of the house". Then disown me and never talk to me again. And don't forget to write me out of your will and leave my share to my brother. Well, she didn't put it quite like that... she actually said... "Daddy, this is my new boyfriend, Mohammed."



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Intuition: the strange instinct that tells a woman she's right, whether she is or not.

*Oscar Wilde*

Women: you can't live with them, and you can't get them to dress up in a skimpy Nazi costume  
and beat you with a warm squash.

*Emo Phillips*



**Apologies to the history buffs!** As we have had two separate family groups visiting us during the past two weeks, I have been unable to devote the necessary time to this month's history article. This is a particularly important one as it deals with the polarisation during Spain's Second Republic and the contributing causes of the Spanish Civil War; certainly not one to be rushed. See it next month.



**Speed dating in New Zealand.....and possibly Wales.**

### WHERE?

A British woman purchased a ticket to Granada, Spain and by mistake found herself on the way to the Caribbean city of Grenada. The distance between London and Granada is 1,571 km and to Grenada about 7,000 kilometres. The flight to Spain takes two and a half hours, while the flight to the Caribbean takes ten.

Lamenda Kingdon, photo, has always dreamed of visiting the Alhambra, and to walk through the streets of the city, after the doctors diagnosed breast cancer and a brain tumour, she decided she deserved to treat herself, so she brought the plane ticket.

During the journey Lamenda ate breakfast on the plane and afterwards decided to have a gin and tonic. Excited about landing in Granada, she said to the woman sitting next to her, just how excited she was. The woman replied, 'Not on this flight!' Lamenda's surprise was even greater when the woman inspected her ticket and she realised she had made a mistake.

Once the crew was advised they suggested a 'technical landing' in Santa Lucia from where Lamenda could get a flight back to Gatwick, and later onwards to Spain.

She booked her ticket through the Avios company which then paid for her ticket to Granada and although the journey this time was only two hours, it felt far too long for the excited Lamenda, but she blamed that on the time difference. (The Mail & Typ. Sp.)



### IMPORTANT TAX JUDGEMENT

In a very welcomed decision, the High Court of Valencia has ruled that the revaluation method used by the Spanish Tax Office is not valid. The judgement found that the method used by the Tax Office to review and re-evaluate the prices/values declared on deeds of purchase, gifts or inheritance is not valid, as it is based on cadastral details and on general values approved and issued by the same taxman for tax purposes.

The High Court states that these values could be used as guidance only and that valuations must be done individually, as the cadastral value sometimes does not match reality and that the inspectors do not visit the properties individually.

This is a welcomed move as the Tax Office will arbitrarily increase the value of an unseen property to maximize their tax, which is very unjust and usually costs the owner several thousand euros. Although the property market has taken a precipitous dive, at this very moment the Tax Authorities (Oficina Liquidadoras) are revaluing and revising the declared values and prices upwards.

So, if you receive a letter from the CONSELLERÍA stating that the value you declared on your purchase, gift or inheritance has been reviewed, and is now higher and therefore you need to pay extra transfer tax, gift or inheritance tax DO NOT PAY IT until you obtain advice from a competent professional, who will undoubtedly contest the assessment. (white-baos.com)

### PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF VICTIMS.

The public outrage following the Parot Doctrine (page 3) has caused the Spanish Cabinet to quickly draft a law protecting the rights of victims.

This is just a discussion of possible changes, but the plan is to allow the victims of terrorist crimes, homicide, injuries and crimes against sexual freedom take action against their aggressor who has been in jail for five years. Terrorist and other victims will be able to appeal against conditional release and prison passes for their aggressors.

The right of the victim to be accompanied is also recognised, and the right to be informed about an open criminal case even if the victim does not go to court.

The Justice Minister, Alberto Ruiz Gallardón, has come up with these proposals and the Government Deputy Prime Minister, Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría has said the law intends to offer victims and their families the widest answer possible, 'not only judicial, but also social' to all the problems which they may face.

When (and if) this law is approved it will give victims more procedural rights. For example a victim can appeal against the archiving or dismissal of the case without being present in the court. The time that such questions have to be asked, goes up from 3 to 20 days.

The system where the victim gets his or her assets returned after a theft is to be regulated.

According to the draft bill, this type of mediation can only be possible if the victim consents and offender recognises their responsibility. In any case all the conversations will be confidential. If the victim is in another European Union country, immediate testimony can be taken by video conferencing. And one of the main effects of this draft bill will be contact between the victims and their families with their aggressor will be eliminated. (typicallyspanish.com)

*David Hasselhoff has gone on to sell more records in the reunified country of Germany than Madonna. Who says the Germans don't have a sense of humour.*

*David Batty*



## Lime Bar Fishing Sunbathing Club.

The Dream Scene has gone to press before Baz's Bash @ Bocados, so I'll report on that next month. Here is another date for the diary. Our "Presentation Evening" - where the good anglers collect their trophies - will be held at the Lime Bar on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November.

The first round of the winter competition was fished at the Eden. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> match using the new "points" system, but it didn't change the result, with the same old faces catching most fish. 1<sup>st</sup> = 3 rod Geordie, 2<sup>nd</sup> = Hustler Ron, 3<sup>rd</sup> = Fagin Dave.

Read the account of the Rio Ebro expedition below, courtesy of Keith (the roving reporter).

Do you really believe your husband when he says he goes fishing every weekend?

Why wouldn't I?

Well, maybe he is having an affair.

No way! He never returns with any fish.

Next meeting is at The Lime Bar @ 17.30 Mon 4<sup>th</sup> November.

Fishy fingers!  
The Ghost.



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*There's a fine line between fishing and just standing on the shore like an idiot.*

### THE EBRO EXPEDITION.

The Lime Bar 'Sunbathers' expeditionary force of John, Geordie, Davey & Keith set out for the Ebro Valley with high hopes of countless heavies – catfish, carp, zander etc etc etc.

Expectations were raised on arrival at the Riverside Lodge complex, which, from an avid fisherman's point of view was almost perfect.

The Chalet accommodation was approximately 100 metres from the riverbank, as were the bar and restaurant.

Mine Host Paul, a one time professional match angler from Barnsley, was helpful, courteous and always obliging.

Having coped with the vagaries of Benijofar, the Eden and the Sweetwater, the 250-metre-wide Ebro did not daunt the eager quartet. Appetites were sharpened that first evening when 2 anglers, already insitu, landed a 20lb plus carp.

The temptation to wait until morning was too much for Geordie: he wet a line and with the help of half a dozen maggots from Keith and landed 2 Bleak. Darkness forced all to retreat for sustenance, both solid and liquid.

All four were on the bank as daylight broke next morning to find the gentle flowing Ebro somewhat transformed: a lot more water pushing through with large rafts of weed passing at regular intervals.

Even the 8oz leads could not anchor a bait for any length of time, such was the amount of weed collected on the lines where the cast was a mere 12 to 15 metres, which, we were assured was adequate for success; this did not prove to be correct. Geordie managed to lighten the mood when having just taken in hand a lunchtime cold pint on the riverbank, decided to move his chair into the shade: back legs of the chair not fully back: result, Geordie going base over apex, **BUT** not a drop was spilt: a remarkable feat. Davey's breakfast beans kept the atmosphere *electric* (Keith in tears...of laughter)

River conditions improved in the afternoon, but superhuman effort by all was only rewarded by Geordie's "Kitten" of 13lbs, and John's lost fish. This bit of action kept everyone alert until food and drink were essential.

**Second Day:** same scenario, much to the disappointment of all. The afternoon improvement saw Geordie and John both lose good fish, suffering from snapped 50lb braid; probable damage from razor sharp **cebra mussels** resident in the river, and Davey landing a 14lb Kitten. Keith's only amusement was the continued "balmy breeze".

**Third Day** dawn was promising and river conditions good but fish still uncooperative until Keith landed a 25lb Kitten and followed this in the afternoon with another of 18lbs.

Overall, the trip was enjoyed by all despite the fish being uncooperative.

**No one broke much delph!!!!**

Keith Todd.

### Watch Out!

After a few pints down at the local, talk got round to who had the most expensive watch. I showed mine first.

"That's a Rolex Oyster, worth two and a half grand," I grinned.

My mate John smiled and proudly pointed to his wrist.

"This is a white gold Patek Phillipe. I paid the best part of twenty grand for it."

Dave rolled up his sleeve to show his watch.

"What do you think of that then? This watch cost me £200,000."

John & I stared a while... then I said, "Dave, That's a Casio."

"I know," he sighed. "My ex-wife bought it for me, but then found it in her sister's bed."

*Remember, you're fighting for this woman's honour - which is probably more than she ever did.*  
Groucho Marx

### The Property Portfolio.

Morris Schwartz is dying and is on his deathbed. He is with his nurse, his wife, his daughter and two sons, and knows the end is near. So he says to them:

"Bernie, I want you to take the Beverly Hills houses."

"Sybil, take the apartments over in Los Angeles Plaza."

"Hymie, I want you to take the offices over in City Centre."

"Sarah, my dear wife, please take all the residential buildings downtown"

The nurse is just blown away by all this, and as Morris slips away, she says to the wife, "Mrs. Schwartz, your husband must have been such a hard working man to have accumulated all this property.

Sarah replies, "Property shmoperty...the schmuck has a milk route."  
(Pete, Brian & others)

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half, of a cola and a Spanish red wine, the cheapest the better apparently, but with lots of ice and a slice of lemon or lime. The New York Times called it 'the poor man's sangria' and the Huffington Post highlighted it as well, only to be surprised to find that it is already being enjoyed throughout the States in various forms. It is also apparently the 'official' drink of the San Fermin (bull running) Fiesta and an ideal summer drink. Variations of it are available throughout Spain, Italy and Eastern Europe.

The drink, I hesitate to call it a cocktail, is also in great demand with the Spanish youth during the 'bottelon' parties. Here the partygoers will empty a two-litre bottle of cola into a plastic bag and add two litres of cheap red wine. They can then either dip-in or tie the bag around the bottle neck and fill it up as required. It is a very refreshing drink, some say a little like Cherry Coke. Others add a shot of blackberry liquor.



### The Spanish Property Market

Spanish house prices (resale) have fallen 59% since they peaked at the start of 2007, say Tecnocasa and the research team at Pompeu Fabra University, based on the analysis of real sales prices from transactions handled by the Tecnocasa network. They plunged by 13% in the first half of 2013 alone (to an average of 1,439 €/m<sup>2</sup>). This contrasts with official figures showing prices (resale and new) down around 30% since the peak. Official figures are based on valuations or prices recorded on deeds, which are often not the real price. Personally, I believe that a figure closer to the 50% figure is more realistic. Despite the mortgage-dearth, properties are still selling locally, often within a few weeks, providing the asking price is not stupid. Again locally, I am amazed by the number of new owners who are Norwegian, but this does not seem to be a factor nationally.

Nationally, it is foreign buyers who are keeping the market alive, the British market share Quarter 2 was 15% (down from 39% in Q 2, 2007!), followed by the French (11%), Russians (9%), Germans (8%), and Belgians (8%). Cash buyers now account for a large proportion of the market, being between 58 and 60% of all transactions.

### Property Auction Mafia.

The government plans to introduce a new online portal to auction foreclosed homes and other assets. The problem with the previous system was that *subasteros* had rigged public auctions in their favour, scaring off outsiders. *Subasteros* are members of a closed club who dominate public auctions, and are notorious for the practises they use. According to Vice-president Soraya Saénz de Santamaria, 'Once up and running buyers will only have to register once to get access to all auctions, which will reduce the cost of buying. It will be possible to bid "almost anytime, anywhere".'

An attempt by the previous socialist government to launch a similar portal in 2011 failed. Such a venture would require some very tight and secure software. Time will tell if it gets off the ground.

There were 72,000 properties sold at auction in 2012.

### KALIMOTXO.

Personally, I have never seen one of these locally. Kalimotxo (pronounced cal-ee-MO-cho) is a drink which is supposedly a Basque Country classic. (You know it is Basque because it has an 'x' in its name, like explosive!) Basically, it is a mix, half 'n

### The Sensuous (and Smart) Wife.

"Have you ever seen twenty euros all crumpled up?" ...the woman sensually asked her husband. "No" ...said her husband.

She gave him a sexy little smile, unbuttoned the top four buttons of her blouse...and slowly reached down into the cleavage accentuated by a soft, silky push-up bra...and pulled out a crumpled twenty euro note.

He took the crumpled twenty euros from her .....and smiled.

"Have you ever seen fifty euros..... all crumpled up?" ... she then asked her husband in hushed sexy voice?

"Uh...no, I haven't" ...he said (with an anxious tone in his voice).

She gave him another sexy little smile, pulled up her skirt, and seductively reached into her tight, sheer panties... and pulled out a crumpled fifty euro note.

He took the crumpled fifty note... and started breathing a little quicker, beads of perspiration on his brow, his cheek twitching.

"Now" .....she said. "Have you ever seen 30,000 euros all crumpled up?"

"No way" ...he replied, getting very excited and a little flushed.

"Well, go look in the garage!"...she said.

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NIGHT**



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I came home from the golf course today.

My wife had left a note on the fridge:

"IT'S NOT WORKING, I can't take it  
anymore!! Gone to stay with my Mother."

I opened the fridge, the light came on, and  
the beer was cold...What the hell is she  
talking about? (Pete D.)

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**For Dream Hills residents: I have been informed by a member of the  
committee in Dream Hills that a resident property owner has wilfully  
butchered three trees planted by volunteers around the second swimming  
pool area & close to Via Park V. This is wonton vandalism and an insult to  
the volunteers who have done so much to improve what used to be a barren  
wasteland owned by the council and transformed it into what is now a lovely  
planted area, one of the nicest in Orihuela Costa. The committee is aware  
who is responsible and will consider whether legal action is appropriate. The  
culprit will also be 'named & shamed' if this anti-social behaviour continues.  
Why is it when most of us are enjoying our retirement or leisure time in this  
wonderful spot that the occasional jerk pokes their head above the surface  
and tries to spoil our fun?**

### INSULTS etc.

Unless you're served in a frosted glass, never come within four feet of my lips.

Karen Walker, *Will & Grace*

If your I.Q. Was any lower, we'd have to water you.

Anne Robinson

When you go to a mind-reader, do you get half price?

David Letterman

I'll ruin you! You'll never waitress in Torquay again!

Basil Fawlty

- You're fired.

- But, my lord, I've been in your family since 1532.

- So has syphilis. Now get out!

Blackadder II & Baldrick

Go, and never darken my towels again!

Groucho Marx

If I found you floating in my pool, I'd punish my dog.

Joan Rivers

Some guy hit my fender, and I told him, 'Be fruitful and multiply.' But not in those  
exact words.

Woody Allen

When you said you went to university, presumably it was to be studied by others.

Anne Robinson

He's not unlike Hitler, but without the charm.

Gore Vidal

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