

THE DREAM SCENE

NEWSLETTER

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

Issue no. 86, 1st of April 2014.

Bienvenido a todos and welcome to the April edition.

It is still very dry here in this region of Spain. Although it has been a good start to the Spring, chilly strong north winds are keeping the temperatures from being balmy. Lots of stormy weather and 8-metre waves in the north and there was even a heavy fall of snow in Majorca.

Via Park III now welcomes some new faces with the opening of O'Neill's Irish Bar, Los Lobos Bar & Restaurant and a very welcome new Spanish cafe bar, Bar Kalimotxo. While driving past Zenia Boulevard the other day, I noticed the new purpose-built structure next to it on the Via Park I side. I thought it was going to be a car showroom, but it turned out to be - you guessed it - just another Oriental supermarket. We are drowning in these wretched things!

It is probably appropriate to mention that Adolfo Suárez González has passed away. He was the first prime minister of the democratic era, the man who guided the transformation of Spain after the Franco dictatorship. Suárez had also served in the Franco government but made the transfer to a democratic one almost seamlessly. During his tenure he built a broad consensus that enabled sweeping political, social, legal and economic reforms in just a few years. A truly decent man, he deserves more space than I can give him here. Madrid's Barajas airport is to be renamed Adolfo Suarez Madrid-Barajas in his honour.

It is difficult to keep up with all that is happening in Spain at present; lots of new legislation, demonstrations, protests etc. The recovery is still just a trickle and the levels of unemployment remain devastating. Although there appeared to be some improvements in the home eviction arena last year, it now seems that the number of court-ordered home evictions for non-payment of mortgages, rent or other legal reasons reached 67,189 last year, according to judicial statistics. This is an average of 184 evictions a day in Spain!

The government commissioned a panel of 'Wise Men' to take a look at the whole question of fiscal reform in Spain. When they reported, their findings were quietly rejected by the government. Although they submitted some good ideas such as equalising Inheritance Tax throughout the regions, they also recommended the doubling of the IVA rate of 10% to 21% and other dumb ideas which would only cause you to spill your cocoa while reading them. Their spokesman admitted that most of his ideas had come from the recommendations of international bodies, the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the OECD.

April 18, Good Friday, is a *Red Day*. April 21, Easter Monday' is not a *Red Day* but is a 'day of regional celebration,' while April 28 is a local fiesta day in Torrevieja. Last month I stated that March 19, San Jose/Father's Day was not a Red Day. It wasn't, but most of the shops were closed anyway! It may not have been a 'Red Day' but I had a red face!

Thanks to all who renewed their subscriptions and a great big hug or manly slap on the back, to all those who, in some cases, donated some very generous amounts towards printing costs, which are now €290 per month: Muchas gracias a Con & Pat; Alan & Tracy; Laurie & Pat; David & Ellen; Dave & Justina; Ann & Roger; Derrick & Elizabeth; Mr. & Mrs Les B and Bob E.

Thanks also to those who wished Tid well in her op'. She is now recovering at home.

Happy St. Georges Day, April 23, 2014.

Wishing you all a great month. Mick & Tid.



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Jed Larson

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- COURT
- TOWN HALLS
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Did you know that

...the New Guinea flatworm, *Platydemus manokwari*, has been discovered in a hothouse in Northern France. The problem is this flatworm is considered to be among the top 100 of the 'Worlds's Most Invasive Alien Species.' Its discovery in France has set alarm bells ringing, because if it were to spread it would destroy the indigenous snail species and deprive the 'frog-munchers' of one of their favourite delicacies. The French consume 33,000 tons of snails every year. But of course the Spanish are also keen on their *caracoles*, particularly in their paella. The New Guinea flatworm is common around the Western Pacific Rim and Northern Australia. It is the leading cause of snail decay in over 15 countries. In Hawaii, it is estimated that it has destroyed around 90% of the 750 species of land snails there.

... the traffic-fine discount of 50% for early payment has now been extended from 15 to 20 days. Also, the basic drink-driving fine is now €500, but if your blood/alcohol level is double the permitted level then the fine is €1,000. The fine of €1,000 also applies to drug consumption.

...Aldi's, next to Entre Golf & Dream Hills II, is open on Sundays from 10 am to 3 pm.

... Amazon.es has launched a new service in Spain allowing customers to collect parcels at 1,200 pick-up points throughout the country. Customers will now be able to choose between having their purchase delivered to their home for the standard rate of €2.99 or else picking up the parcel themselves at their most convenient pick-up point in terms of location and opening hours. Amazon Prime customers can collect their order free of charge. The pick-up points are part of the Kiala network of UPS, some of which will be open 7 days a week.

... as from the 7th of April, the cost of a UK passport for Expats is due to be reduced to £83 for adults and £53 for children. All overseas passports are now issued in UK, and as a result a portion of the cost savings in processing the paperwork centrally - approximately 35% - have been passed over to the applicant.

...Greece has the largest number of pharmacies per capita? 97 for every 100,000 people. Spain comes in at number six with 46 and the UK no. 24 with 21.6.

What is the difference between a barrow boy and a dachshund?

The barrow boy bawls his wares on the pavement - and the other.....has blue eyes.

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What's Up?

The proposed abortion legislation and the controversial draft Citizens Security Law continue to attract considerable criticism in Spain and abroad.

Tens of thousands were bussed into Madrid for a demonstration on March 22/23. The protest was against a whole range of issues from unemployment to corruption. It was called the March of Dignity, but there was little of that to be seen. Several riots developed but the anti-riot response was poorly coordinated. Plain clothes policemen had to assist their colleagues in several instances. The anti-riot police have now demanded the resignation of their Chief Commissioner and the Chief Inspector. It is worth taking a look at the following link which shows some of the problems, with a Barclay's Bank branch getting a bit of a hammering. See link <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ieXrS3jvUI#t=173>

The problem with illegal migrants attempting to enter the Spanish enclaves of Mellila and Cueta in North Africa is becoming critical. In mid-March 1,100 attempted to cross the border into Mellila, with 492



succeeding. The detention camp there is now holding four times its supposed capacity. The Spanish border guards here are almost powerless in the face of the border assaults; their effective responses being restricted by their own government and EU busybodies. The border guards are to be boosted by an additional 100 police shipped from the mainland and the heads of police in both Mellila and Cueta have been replaced.

Matters concerning the illegal migrants in Melilla has been complicated by the discovery of meningitis in a 19-year-old migrant. As a precaution 226 people who were in his vicinity have also received medical attention. Although meningitis is rare in Spain, it is much more common in parts of Africa. It is hoped that the cramped conditions in the refugee centre will not encourage its spread.

Spain's Constitutional Court has ruled that the sovereignty declaration passed by Catalonia's regional parliament early last year is unconstitutional. In a unanimous vote on Tuesday, the highest court in the land ruled that the Catalan government cannot continue with its plans to form separate institutions based on this declaration of independence. The conservative majority on the bench pushed to annul the declaration because of its unconstitutionality while the liberal minority said the statement was never legally binding, and the court should have dropped the entire case in the first place.

The President of the Catalan Generalitat, Artur Mas, has said 'We don't rule out a unilateral declaration of independence.' In response the General Secretary of the PP, María Dolores de Cospedal, has described the comments by Mas as 'irresponsible and dangerous'. She went on to guarantee the 'unity and integrity of Spain'. In my opinion, Mas has boxed himself into a corner on this independence issue. He is attempting to distract from the real issues in Cataluña such as the ever-worsening health service there. The region has 180,000 patients on waiting lists. The waiting time has been reduced to seven months, although 3,000 people have been on the waiting list for three years!

Cataluña wants to charge the banks €26 million for empty properties in the region. The Generalitat is designing a new tax which will affect 15,000 empty properties which the banks have in 70 Catalan municipalities. If the Generalitat detect a 'strong demand' in a particular municipality then the tax will be applied. The Generalitat state that there are around 40,000 empty properties in Cataluña. The proposed introduction of this new tax is interesting as when pro-Independence Artur Mas, the Regional Premier took control, one of the first things he did was to throw out a law introduced by the previous Socialist-led coalition that forced banks to rent empty homes.

When we moved to Spain over 10 years ago, one of the first things that struck me was the Spaniards' love and dependency on the mobile phone. Everybody had a 'mobile' and it was not long before the town hall excesses in using them became apparent. Most notable of these was Torrevieja, where a number of town hall officials were forced to resign, one an Olympic gold medalist who, it was alleged, spent copious hours watching trans-sexual naughties! But in early March, Alicante Town Hall jumped into the 'mobile' spotlight. It seems this town hall has about 2,000 civil servants who 'work' there. But the office also has 652 mobile phone lines and that is not counting the employees own private mobile phones or the fixed telephone lines. Telefonica were awarded a two year contract in the sum of €1.5 million for the service. Vodafone have now taken the town hall to court saying that there was no competition for the contract and that 'it is clearly prejudicial to cost savings.' They want the contract cancelled and a new tender process started.

The Supreme Court has placed a limit on the Government's plans to use the unemployed to carry out social works in the regions of Spain. Some regions are doing this already but the Supreme Court highlights a problem. The unemployed who do social work will be given some funding, but they are taking up posts which should be for workers on a fixed contract. The Supreme Court therefore considers that the unemployed may only do 'punctual work' in public administration. And if you can guess what that is, go to the top of the class. Maybe they could be used for counting the bribe money of public officials and banking it.

The Spanish Federation of Hospitality and Catering estimate that approx. 27 bars, cafes & restaurants close down every day. Between the years 2008 and 2013 bar and restaurant sales have decreased by an average of 22%, leaving all but the most popular bars in affluent areas in a precarious financial position. However, even before the downturn of the economy, Spain had an estimated 350,000 cafes and bars - or one per 132 head of population. By 2014 the ratio had increased to one bar for every 155 residents.

Italian luxury sports car maker Ferrari has announced that it will open a 100-million-euro amusement park in 2016 with rides and a five-star hotel in Spain, its first such venture in Europe. It will be located within the PortAventura resort near Barcelona, and will feature Europe's highest and fastest "vertical accelerator", a driving simulator, restaurants, and a 250-room five-star hotel. Ferrari have already opened a successful amusement park in Abu Dhabi in 2010, with some of the world's fastest rides. See image.



Lidl's is to increase its investment in Spain to €180 million this year. This will create a further 400 new jobs.

'It's been a rough day. I got up this morning, put on a shirt and a button fell off. I picked up my briefcase and the handle came off. I'm afraid to go to the bathroom.'

Rodney Dangerfield

Social Security Sex.

Benny was in conversation with his friend Victor. 'So Victor, how's your sex life?'

'Oh, nothing special,' replied Victor, 'I'm having Social Security Sex.'

'Social Security Sex?' said Benny, 'What's that?'

'You know, Benny, you get a little each month, but not enough to live on.'

4 What's Up? continued

The Government's limitation of Universal Law has been approved by the vote of the PP. It means that the Spanish National Court can only judge in Madrid serious crimes committed outside Spain when it affects the Spanish or its nationals. All the opposition groups in Congress opposed the decision but the PP prevailed in a vote earlier this month by 179 votes to 163. Many opposition lawmakers have described the measure as a "dark day for human rights."

The European Court of Justice has said the 'cent for health' (*céntimo sanitario*) - a surcharge the government is placing on medicines, is illegal. That means that those prejudiced by the law can reclaim at the National Court the return of the 13 billion € taken by this tax in total. They can do so as an individual or collectively. See also page 15 for decision as it relates to petrol.

Five men, all Colombians, have been arrested in Elche and accused of stealing 90,000 pairs of shoes from various warehouses. 70,000 pairs have now been recovered. Three of them were caught inside one of the warehouses and put up a hell of a fight before 'being subdued.'

More than 51,000 Spaniards had signed up to the British Social Security System up to September 2013. Data from the National Statistics Office shows only Poland has sent more immigrants to Britain than Spain. The Spanish number of 51,370 is up by 38,080 over the previous year as the unemployment level in Spain is 26% and in Britain around 7%. The National Statistics Office says the reason the Spaniards change residence is for work and the crisis and unemployment in the south of Europe. Similar increases have also been seen by the Portuguese (39,120) and Italy (44,110). The data does not count the number of Spaniards who returned home in 2013. Figures show many Spaniards return home after a few years working in the UK, most of them in the hostelry sector.

A 49-year-old man was found dead in a lift in a block of flats in the Alicante Town of Xàbia. The corpse was clad only in underpants and in a 'strange position.' It seems his legs were 'up in the air.' The man died from natural causes but probably did so in a nearby 'club' (knocking-shop). It is believed the 'workers' there moved the body to avoid problems with the police. It looks like he may have died 'on the job!' A forensic team are investigating.

La Opinión in Málaga has reported that the courts are overloaded, and that penal cases have to wait until 2016 to be heard. Lack of staff and the volume of the work are to blame.

Spain has granted asylum to 12 translators from the Afghanistan army. This is a great idea as their life expectancy after the foreign troops go would not be worth a cent. I wonder if the US and the UK military do the same? I doubt it.

Información in Alicante reports the ex-Mayor's of Novelda's chauffeur is being sent to prison for keeping €24,000 which was supposed to be given to the organisers of the Christmas procession of the Three Kings. He'll get no present this year! You would also wonder why a mayor of a town with just 27,000 people needs a chauffeur.

The Spanish Government has signed freedom of access documents with three fiscal havens. Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man, who will renounce banking secrecy when the United Kingdom says so.

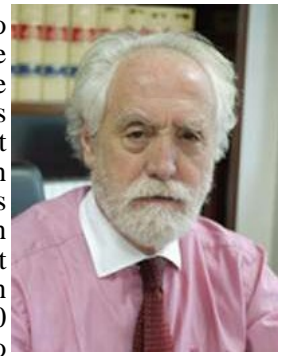
Spanish customs officials boarded a ship 30 miles south east of Malaga and seized 12 tons of hashish. In this particular area 75 tons has been seized during the last 10 months. A week of morning has been declared in Amsterdam and Manchester.

A deputy for the United Left has revealed that the Valencian government has paid an estimated €392 million to a number of football teams in the region between the years of 2003 and 2013. €40 million related to sponsorship of jerseys and billboards; €18 million related to loan guarantees and €233 million was paid on behalf of a television channel to transmit matches. Well, it's not like you taxes were being wasted, is it?

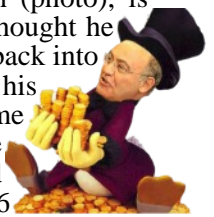
Jewish Mama.

On her birthday, Naomi's mother gave her two silk scarves - one pink, one blue. On the Sabbath she went round to her parents, wearing her smartest dress and the pink scarf. Her mother took one look at her and said: 'So you don't like the blue scarf?'

The Spanish Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Antonio Fernández de Mazarambroz (right), was removed from his post last month after the discovery of an alleged web of corruption in his own embassy. He has been in the post since May 2012, but it is now alleged that he has been selling visas for around \$4,000 each to Congolese nationals who wished to travel to Spain. This is not the first time that Fernandez de Mazarambroz has been embroiled in a scandal with passports in the background. In 1987, when he was consul in the Moroccan city of Nador, he was also dismissed. He also featured in an 'incident' with the female relative of a military officer which sparked a formal protest from the Ministry of Defence to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. There were also many allegations and official complaints concerning the constant presence of Moroccan subjects of dubious reputation at the offices in Nador.



The disgraced former president of the Spanish Employers Association, Díaz Ferrán (photo), is gradually finding that the assets he thought he had 'spirited away' are now coming back into the prosecutors net. Shortly before his arrest, he attempted to put his home in Mallorca in his brother's name. The courts cancelled the transaction and have now sold the property for €7.06 million. Around €4 million will go towards the mortgage and various fees and expenses, the remainder being divided among his creditors. Ferrán who has been in jail since December 2012, concealed his assets to prevent 10,000 creditors from collecting more than the estimated 400 million he owed them, stemming from the collapse of his defunct Viajes Marsans travel agency and other businesses he had owned. Prosecutors have traced some €88 million in assets and properties - including luxury apartments in New York - in his name.



A 78-year-old and a 67-year-old have been changed after serving up a marijuana-laced cake to several unsuspecting friends. Three of the group were later treated by doctors but there were no serious side-effects experienced after eating the cake. Other than eating everything in the fridge and making annoying phone calls to their children!

Five mountaineers lost their lives in two separate incidents in the Sierra de Gredos mountain range near Ávila in the region of Castile and León, during a single weekend in March. Three of the five plunged to their deaths due to a 450-metre fall. In another tragic accident, two fishermen were drowned and six are missing after their 35-metre fishing vessel ran aground on an island off the coast of Asturias. The crew were asleep and the vessel was on autopilot. There was only one survivor.

A sixteen-year-old was refereeing a football match between six- and seven-year-olds when he was attacked by a couple of fathers, aged 27 and 29. One held the referee down while the other punched him in the face and ribs. The young referee suffered damage to his cornea and possible broken bones in his face. The incident happened in León, which already has a bit of a reputation for referees. About two weeks earlier, three of its referees had to ask for police and Civil Guard protection during their matches. Association officials have said they will not send any of their referees to one of the weekend's local matches to protest against the escalating violence.



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WiFi

Six of the 12 PP councillors in Orihuela are now being investigated by the courts for alleged 'dodgy-dealings.' This does not mean that they are all guilty of course. The courts will decide. A previous PP mayor of Orihuela, Medina, was investigated at length and found to be innocent of the charges. What is also interesting however, is that the current minority local government of Greens and Socialists, have allegedly spent €50,000 of taxpayers money bringing these accusations to court. But as usual, it is the lawyers who are laughing all the way to the bank on this one. The devil looks after his own!

Work on the *Parque Reina de la Sal* in Los Balcones continues. Altogether it is turning into a quite impressive development. Part of the new works will include a specially planted area to highlight the native plants of Spain. If you are in the area, do take a look. Whereas the Salt Queen Park (*Parque Reina de la Sal*), has been an excellent achievement for Torrevieja, one wonders what happened with some of the other projects in the town. Firstly, a purpose built development to house 88 disabled individuals was completed in



2011 at a cost of €4.6 million of state funds. The complex (photo) has been vacant and unused since then as neither the town nor the region can afford to operate it and the private sector has no interest in it at the moment. So why the heck did they ask for it to be built in the first place? Secondly, if you go to Los Balcones and look at the massive development which faces the Alingui restaurant in the Filton Centre, you will wonder why it has been left vacant for so many years although it did get a facelift and a re-launch a few years ago. Originally planned as retirement flats, it was later supposed to be a convalescent centre for stroke victims. All in all, how shockingly wasteful for the most disadvantaged in our society.

The owner of a petrol station in the centre of Orihuela was robbed of €26,000 on March 18. The man had just taken the money out of his account at the bank in an envelope. But when he got to his car two villains who had been watching the bank for likely targets approached on a motorbike, smashed the window of the car and grabbed the envelope. The unfortunate man tried to chase the couple on the bike but crashed his own car into another within a few seconds. One of the thieves lost his helmet at the scene, so the police should be able to extract some clues from it.

Two men, a 29-year-old Spaniard and a 39-year-old native of Madagascar, were arrested in nearby Almoradí on suspicion of the theft of electricity cables for the copper. It seems the men were caught red-handed actually stripping the cables. The men had carelessly left the stripped insulation lying around on waste ground so the police just maintained surveillance on the area. The cables were stolen from the AP-7 motorway by San Javier airport, as well as from the street lighting in Almoradí and other local towns.

Three Bulgarians, aged between 23 and 46, were arrested by Guardia Civil in Torrevieja for crimes against workers' rights or what I would call 'slavery.' The Bulgarians encouraged their country people to come to Spain on a promise of €40 a day and help with renting apartments. When they arrived they were dumped into overcrowded flats in Torrevieja and forced to pay deposits. Their identity documents were taken, ostensibly to complete their contracts, which of course were never completed, but the documents were still retained. They were then forced to work nine hours a day in the fields and rarely paid more than €20 a day. Sometimes it took over two hours for them to arrive at their workplace, where they were then charged €6 for the bus fare!

The La Albetosa Park next to the Las Lagunas Nature Park between La Mata and Torrevieja was closed due to an infestation of the processional caterpillars. The strong winds we have experienced lately have blown their nests to the ground. At least one school trip to the park has been cancelled.

The Viking!

Thor comes to Britain and picks up a lovely young lady. After a night of all kinds of vigorous Norse sex, he turns to her, beats his hairy chest and says "I'm Thor!"

"Tho am I, thilly, but wathn't it great?" she replies.

The 10th Torrevieja Tapas Trail/Tour runs from April 3 to April 13 but only between Thursdays and Sundays. Participating outlets will be required to offer two different tapas. The set price for the standard tapa including a small beer, wine or refreshment will be €2, whilst the price of a gourmet tapa has been set at €2.50.



(Presumably the 'gourmet' tapas are the ones the waiter keeps his thumb out of or else they contain an anchovy!) No details yet of the participating outlets but they should appear on www.turismodetorrevieja.com in due course. I notice that the outlets who want to take part in the trail have to pay €50 to the municipality, which is a bit steep. Many of the tapas around this area are 'much of a muchness.' Generally unimaginative with the 'heated' ones usually delivered lukewarm. Lets hope these events raise the bar a bit. Once while eating some indiscernible grey tapa in a bar in La Murada, I asked the waiter what it was? "Brain... Piiig," he replied. Oh lovely!

Well you would think you would be fairly safe going out for a meal and drink in Torry watching the world pass by on the streets. But not for these two chaps - a 46 and 64-year-old, who were quietly sipping their *Soberano* outside their favourite bar on the evening of March 22. A car, being driven far too fast, crashed into the seating area scattering tables and chairs and injuring both men. I can imagine the older guy turning to the 46-year-old and saying 'Fu*k me! That last drink had a bit of a kick, didn't it?' They were later treated in Torrevieja Hospital for fractured ribs and other injuries but were allowed home the next day, no doubt to probably embellish the tale - "It was a truck driven by a mad Turk!!" The driver was taken to the police station where her blood alcohol level was more than five times the legal limit.



The former socialist mayor of nearby Bigastro, José Joaquín Moya, 'appropriated' €6,000 of public money between 2005 and 2008, relating to IOU's issued by the council without any supporting evidence. Two others are also accused. Moya has already been disqualified for 15 years from holding public office for convictions relating to irregular procedures in urban management. Dare I say that it is 'refreshing' to see that politicians other than the PP have been caught with their fingers in the till?

In Alicante, around 4,500 jobless in the city have asked for an advance of their unemployment money so that they can start up a new business. Local newspapers carried a story relating to a woman who is suing an Alicante hospital claiming that her husband lost all interest in sex after her husband had an operation there. A hospital spokesman responded, "The gentleman was admitted for cataract surgery. All we did was correct his eyesight!" This is not a joke!

Fatal Typo!

A man received an e-mail from his neighbour which said: "Sorry Jim, but I have been taking advantage of your wife... day and night whenever you've not been at home. In fact, probably more than you. I'm confessing now because I feel really guilty. I hope you will accept my sincerest apologies. I will ask your permission in the future."

Upon reading this, Jim gets his gun and without uttering a word he shoots his wife.

A few minutes later he receives another e-mail: "Sorry Jim: I meant 'wifi,' not 'wife.'" (Lee Bell)



LIME BAR



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LIME BAR GOLF SOCIETY, LOS ALTOS, ORIHUELA COSTA

The golf societies venue for the 12th March 2014 was held at Peraleja Golf Course.

On a rare windy cold morning morning 20 members assembled at the tee, the course proved to be challenging in the strong wind, but did not deter some interesting golf being played and enjoyed.

The competition was in the Stapleford format and the scores recorded are as follows:

Nearest the Pin in 2 on the 10th Hole (par 3) was Mike Slater.

Nearest the Pin in 2 on the 9th hole (par 3) was Nev. Greenwood.

Nearest the pin on the 12th hole (par 3) was Dave Everson.

Nearest the pin on the 17th hole (par 3) was Mylie Mc Vittie.

Silver Class 3rd place was Nev. Greenwood with a score of 30 points.

Silver Class 2nd place was Barry Sawyer with a score of 31 points.

Silver Class 1st place was Dave Everson with a score of 34 points.

Gold Class 3rd place was Mylie Mc Vittie with a score of 24 points. (on count-back)

Gold Class 2nd place was Arthur Jones with a score of 25 points.

Gold Class 1st place was Mike Slater with a score of 29 points.

A very good day in pleasant company; thank you to Captain Mick Slater for organising the event and mentioning Mick's wife Angie who helps considerably behind the scenes. Also thanks to the Staff at The Lime Bar and ladies for a most enjoyable meal. Anyone wishing to join our friendly society just needs to phone Mick on 659866468.



Stay!

My wife pulled into a crowded parking lot and partly rolled down the car windows to make sure the Labrador retriever had fresh air. The dog was stretched out on the back seat, and she wanted to impress upon her that she must remain there. My wife walked to the curb backwards, pointing her finger at the car and saying emphatically, "Now you stay. Do you hear me? Stay!" The driver of a nearby car gave her a startled look. "I don't know about you, lady," he said incredulously. "But I usually just put the hand brake on."

INHERITANCE TAX (IHT) PART 6, WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW. Can you mitigate or avoid paying the tax?

First of all, if you are a married resident couple with total assets of around €300,000 and one of you 'pops your clogs', then the surviving partner and inheritor should have little or no inheritance tax to pay. Gay married resident couples enjoy the same IHT privileges as heterosexuals. However, if you are an unmarried resident couple, the IHT payable can be substantial and this tax has of course to be paid within six months.

Avoidance & Mitigation.

Unless the IHT you may be liable for is substantial, it is probably best to just 'bite the bullet' and arrange for payment of the tax. I outline below some of the methods used to mitigate the tax payment, some legal and some not.

- In the previous issue we looked at the four and a half year statute of limitations on inheritance tax. This is where the inheritor 'accidentally discovers' the will after the limitation period. But if the tax authorities decide that you have deliberately withheld the declaration, they will fine you 25% of the actual tax payable.
- Some believe that giving a power of attorney to a person to sell the property after one dies is a way of escaping the IHT. However, as in the UK and many other countries, a power of attorney dies with its maker in Spain. Some people have failed to inform the authorities of the death and then proceed to sell the property under power of attorney. If it is done quickly, the authorities are unlikely to detect it but it is against the law. Further, if say cousin Harry has a reason to protest such a sale, it can be annulled as a fraudulent act later.
- Neither is it a solution to gift the property to your inheritors while you are still alive. The actual law is called the Law of Inheritance and Gifts and the Spanish gift tax is exactly the same as the IHT.
- If the tax is expected to be substantial then a family corporation or trust can be established with the family wealth passing into the company/trust. Then if one member of the family dies, there is a simple reorganisation of the board and a transfer of some of the shares attracting very little taxation.
- Equity release and obtaining a loan against your property is also an option. As the loan is a charge against the property when one dies, the IHT payable is greatly reduced. But there are many other elements which should be considered with this option, and it is not something one should jump-into until all the pro's and con's have been researched.
- Another method regularly advertised by a single company in the local free press is the strategy of investing your Spanish property in a new UK company. The property then becomes a UK company asset and any any transfers between a husband and wife in the UK are tax exempt. Okay, this is a simplified explanation but annual accounts would still have to be compiled and submitted to the authorities. It is not inconceivable that the various company expenses/charges over several years might exceed the IHT payable anyway! There is also the danger that the Spanish might introduce retrospective legislation. It is

also worth noting that an off-shore company (not a UK registered company) attracts a 3% tax on the asset annually in Spain. It can also be argued that the former arrangement with the UK registered company should be entered in the asset declaration Form 720 if you are a Spanish resident.

In these six articles, we have taken a deeper than usual look at some of the issues which surround the Spanish Inheritance Tax. It is true to say that it is discriminatory towards non resident property owners in Spain. Hopefully the European Court of Justice, which is investigating this, will stop dragging its heels and give a judgement. But then will the Spanish government abide by it?

Despite all this, it is very important you make a Spanish will. See ad on page 9. If you wish to discuss the ramifications of the tax on you, do so with a competent lawyer. Where you see 'Legal Services' offered, avoid it unless there is a qualified lawyer in attendance. Normally they are just clerks!

A penny for your thoughts.

A young Scottish lad and lass were sitting on a low stone wall, holding hands, gazing out over the loch. For several minutes they sat silently. Then finally the girl looked at the boy and said, "A penny for your thoughts, Angus."

"Well, uh, I was a-thinkin' Brenda... perhaps it's about time for a wee kiss."

The girl blushed, then leaned over and kissed him lightly on the cheek.

Then he blushed. The two turned once again to gaze out over the loch.

Minutes passed and the girl spoke again. "Another penny for your thoughts, Angus."

"Well, uh, I was a-thinkin' perhaps it's about time for a wee cuddle, Brenda."

The girl blushed, then leaned over and cuddled him for a few seconds. Then he blushed. And the two turned once again to gaze out over the loch.

After a while, she again said, "Another penny for your thoughts, Angus."

"Well, uh, I was thinkin' perhaps it's about time you let me put my hand on your leg."

The girl blushed, then took his hand and put it on her knee. Then he blushed. Then the two turned once again to gaze out over the loch before the girl spoke again.

"Another penny for your thoughts, Angus."

The young man glanced down with a furled brow. "Well, noo," he said, "noo, my thoughts are a wee bit more serious this time, Brenda."

"Really?" said the lass in a whisper, starting to fill with anticipation.

"Aye," said the lad, nodding.

The girl looked away in shyness, began to blush, and bit her lip in anticipation of this ultimate request.....

He then said, "Dae ye nae think it's about time ye paid me the first three pennies?"

Pete Dudman

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OTHER NEWS STORIES

Ruskies: The Russians spent €213 million on the Costa Blanca in 2013, 31% more than in 2012. This year another 150,000 'Ruskies' are expected. The reason the Costa Blanca is so popular is the regular flights which go from Alicante-Elche to Moscow, San Petersburg and Siberia, and the deals now being done by Russian Travel Agents with hotel chains in Spain. However, this is still 'small potatoes' compared to the Brit's. However trouble in the Ukraine is expected to slow down the traffic from Russia.

Becker in the Sh*t!: Former tennis star Boris Becker has had his holiday villa on the island of Majorca confiscated by Spanish authorities after not paying a builder's bill of €391,000. The court's decision stems from unpaid carpentry, plumbing and surfacing bills for a basketball court on Becker's now former property. His lawyer's claim that it was the real estate agent who sold the villa to Becker who was accountable for the bills, was rejected by the judge. The heavily indebted Becker, now 46 and coaching world number two Novak Djokovic, purchased the property on the Spanish island of Majorca 17 years ago. It nearly went under the hammer in 2012 in a similar case involving a €276,162 bill owed to a local gardener. On that occasion, the former number one tennis star coughed up the sum to keep a hold of his holiday home. Becker will now also have to pay an extra €24,000 in court fees and interest. (Source: 20 Minutos)

Stolen/Lost Passports: More UK passports are lost or stolen in Spain than in any other country across the world. Interpol's Stolen and Lost Travel Documents database reveals that 5,605 UK passports went missing in the country between 2012 and 2013 alone. In second place is the USA, where a significantly fewer, 1,539 were lost in the same period.

Tragedy: A fire in the early hours of March 26, tragically killed four Moroccan children between the ages of 12 and 3 in a small town in Tarragona. All the children were born in Spain. The father, mother and two other children survived. The family had previously been evicted from the flat, but had returned illegally.

Child Poverty: The charity *Caritas Europa* has released a study which shows that the politics of austerity has failed to solve any social problems and that the risk of a child under 18 living in poverty in Spain has now increased to 30%, nine points higher than the European average. The only country with a worse rating is Romania. The report also mentions a study in the British Medical Journal, which alerts that austerity produces more cases of HIV and tuberculosis, adding if the austerity measures continue Spain could see an effective dismantling of the Health Service, bringing significant damage to the population.

Citizen Safety Law: As was expected, Spain's legal watchdog has unanimously approved a report that finds parts of the government's controversial Citizen Safety Law "unconstitutional." In doing so, the General Council of the Judiciary (CGPJ) joins other state bodies, political parties and social groups that have condemned the draft legislation, which would introduce much tougher penalties for those partaking in street demonstrations or involved in activities considered to constitute public disorder. Presented in November, the bill includes fines of up to €30,000 for shouting slogans or carrying signs "that are harmful or abusive to Spain or any region" during a protest. It also focuses heavily on breaking up street demonstrations, and grants private security guards with the power to help the police in this task. Critics say that the legislation seems tailor-made for the Popular Party (PP) government to quell public displays of citizen discontent over its handling of the economic crisis and the corruption cases that have come to light over recent years. The Interior Ministry has now said that it is willing to make changes to the Fernández law – as it is popularly referred to, after Minister Jorge Fernández Díaz – to ensure all aspects of it are fully constitutional.

Bad Driving Habits: France's VINCI Autoroutes foundation commissioned the survey to compare the driving habits of the Swiss, British, Belgians, French, Germans and Spanish. 63% of horn-happy Spanish motorists were found to honk at other drivers who irritate them, compared with a more restrained average of 47%. I can confirm this one. Every trip to the airport is an adventure, allowing ample observation of Spanish impatience while driving and while waiting at traffic lights. If you dare to wait just one and a half seconds at a changing traffic light - you will be honked! They were also more likely to insult fellow road-users (59% compared with the average of 56%) and overtake on the right-hand-side on motorways (35% compared with 28% elsewhere in Europe). These three hot-blooded habits, however, were the only ones of the twelve surveyed in which Spaniards were worse than average, leading VINCI to note that they "adopted fewer risky behaviours behind the wheel" than other nationalities.

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Husband takes his wife to a disco. There's a guy on the dance floor living it large - break dancing, moon walking, back flips, the works.

The wife turns to her husband and says: "See that guy? 25 years ago he proposed to me and I turned him down."

Husband says: "Looks like he's still celebrating!!!"

Brian H.

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Two old ladies go to the zoo and see an angry male elephant with a huge erection. The elephant is rampaging round the enclosure, stamping its feet and trumpeting through its trunk. One of the old ladies turns to the other and says, 'Gracious; d'you think he'll charge?' The other old lady looks at the erection and says, 'Well, yes. I think he'd be entitled to!'

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What a Shower!

A recent survey of 500 Spaniards indicated that 42% of them take a ten minute shower every day. The survey also shows a difference in the sexes. 13% of Spanish women admit to being in the shower for twenty minutes, while for men the percentage is only 3%. (Presumably it would be higher if the women were in the shower with them as well!) It was also found that whereas adult Spanish preferred to shower in the morning for six to ten minutes, youngsters and teens preferred to shower in the afternoons or evenings.

The World Health Organisation says five minutes is the maximum for a sustainable use of water and energy, whereas only 9% of Spaniards keep within this limit. My problem is I have a big belly, so it takes the water which hits my head a further 20 minutes to reach my feet!



I went to see Pavarotti sing last week. Terrible, miserable man. He doesn't like you joining in, does he?

Bernard Manning.



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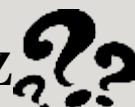
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The 'Bad' Gas People!

I always thought that the dodgy gas engineers were restricted to the coastal and expat' areas. I am very wrong it seems. A nationwide fraud scheme perpetuated by these villains has come to light. It ranges from Madrid, Catalonia, Castilla la-Mancha, Castilla y Leon to the Balearics, Andalucia and Valencia. An estimated 2,000 people have been tricked into paying between €50 and €390 for unnecessary repairs, safety checks etc in relation to their bottled gas installation. Some have been tricked out of as much as €2,500 for work supposedly carried out. These are organised gangs who work under the cover of a network of 60 companies, especially set up for the scam. The companies involved also owe almost €1 million in social security contributions!

To date, the police have arrested 12, confiscated ten top-end motor cars and blocked 227 bank accounts.

These scammers are quite clever. They will often research local telephone books and call to make an appointment 'to inspect your gas equipment.' When they arrive they will often cut a nick in the rubber supply pipes to ensure that they have to 'repair' the system. The only true gas inspectors who are ever likely to come to your property are the ones you yourself call and they are most likely to be from Repsol or Cepsa and are concerned with bottled gas - *butano y propano* only.

By law, all gas fittings for static installations on cookers, gas boilers and central heating systems should be inspected by authorised inspectors every five years. Stand alone bottled gas systems such as barbecues and gas heaters, do not need to be inspected, but it is advisable to have the rubber hosing changed every five years.

My pubic hair is going grey. In a certain light you'd swear it was Stewart Granger down there.

Billy Connolly.

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You will no doubt have noticed that the pipework is already being laid to many surrounding areas. But it will not be connected to the side roads and the houses who have requested it until after the next A.G.M. in Dream Hills gives approval for access.

Some people are adopting a wait-and-see attitude, but they may very well lose out on the heavily subsidised offer which is available now, but which will no doubt not be available once the engineers have left the area.

Basically there are two options to have the natural gas: Depending on your location you can have a gas connection inside your garden wall or patio with no connection charge and just a minimum monthly rental of around €3 approx.

Or you can have two gas connections to say a boiler and a cooker for just €221. The installation charge of €1,089 being waived in both options.

Should you wish to know more or to sign up, I strongly suggest you contact Virginia (who speaks perfect English) of Elecnor, a partner company of Gas Natural Fenosa, on 645 113 316, who will be pleased to meet you and to talk you through this very beneficial offer.



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IDIOTS, UNLUCKY AND JUST DUMB!

A 73-year-old caused mayhem in Majorca when he threw some rubbish into a roadside container. The rubbish exploded, sending the container lid 30 metres into the air; the blast breaking neighbouring windows and setting the air bags off in a nearby car. The old chap got a bloody nose and together with two others, total loss of hearing. The police arrived, evacuated a nearby bar and cordoned the area off. It seems that the old chap used to be a firework specialist and the chemicals he dumped reacted with the metal rubbish bin. Neighbours said that this was not the first time that he caused an explosion in this way. One neighbour said the suspect had caused an explosion in his store 10 years ago, nearly taking down the rest of the building. Local police, national police, firefighters, public works, a bomb squad, and more forces worked on the scene throughout the night to find out what substance caused the explosion.

What is it with these 73-year-olds? While cleaning her husbands tombstone somewhere in the Alicante region, this 73-year-old woman noticed that a vase with flowers had fallen on a nearby grave. She went to straighten the vase and while leaning on the gravestone, it gave way and she and the gravestone fell two metres into an open grave. The gravestone broke the coffin and the woman was stranded on her knees in the grave. She was eventually rescued by a policeman and a passer-by. It made me laugh, but then I am very odd!

The infatuation among the young for 'selfies' can be fatal, as a 21-year-old young man from the Andalusian town of Andújar found out. He and his friends climbed onto a parked wagon at Andújar train station to take some 'selfies.' However a 3,500 volt discharge from a high voltage wire above the wagon killed the 21-year-old and seriously injured one of his friends. Andújar's mayor declared three days of mourning for the town of 40,000 people in March.

A married couple from Barcelona accumulated a total of ten hefty driving fines over the course of two years. In a bid to escape payment, they told Catalonia's traffic agency it was the husband's mother who was responsible for the reckless driving in both their vehicles. But when authorities looked the woman up, they realized she had passed away prior to the fines being given. The couple have had to pay the full amount of the fines and have also lost points off their driving licenses.

Wrong Way!

A woman was in hospital and had been in a coma for a long time. One day, the nurse noticed a response when giving her a bed bath and washing the patient's privates. The nurse told the husband when he next visited and suggested that oral sex may help bring his wife round. Some time later the nurse returned and found that the patient had 'flat-lined' and that there was no heart beat or life signs. The nurse turned to the husband and asked 'What happened?' The husband replied that he did not know but that 'She may have choked!'



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(The Telegraph, July 12, 2013)

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The Big Knobs!

The kings of Spain, France and England are standing on stage ready to show the world who of the three had the largest penis. The king of Spain takes his out and, as its impressive proportions are seen, all the Spanish people shout: 'Viva España!' The king of France is next. He drops his pants and as his is even larger, the French scream: 'Vive la France!' Next comes the king of England. He drops his pants and, after a stunned silence, everyone exclaims: 'God save the Queen!'

Happy St. George's Day!

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Letters to the Editor.

Hi Mick,

Elaine Baker, just to inform you that after reading your article about the rep from Iberdrola calling at the door we decided to cancel the contract as we realised we had been led up the garden path! Please warn your readers that it cost 18 euros to do so although nothing was said when we went to the office in La Zenia. The bill came through the post!

Regards,
Elaine.

Thanks for that Elaine, I will pass it on in the next issue. I don't think you should pay that bill, by the way! Just tell them you were misled.

Regards,
Mick

Comment re Dream Hills.

I see that the Dream Hills AGM is now scheduled for May 16. I am pleased to see that Maribel Jimenez Morales will be standing again for president of the urbanisation. The last few years have been very difficult for businesses and of course for urbanisations as well. For a number of years now, increases to the annual urbanisation fees here have been negligible. This is not an accident. If you compare the fees we pay in DH compared to some nearby urbanisations, you will realise how lucky we are.

However, it would be good to see some new faces on the committee, and please, please, can you improve the communications to the property owners.

A hearty clap on the back to our security controllers, particularly 'A.' He recently stopped two thieves who had stolen a cigarette machine from The Phoenix in Via Park V, and were trying to dismantle it by the swimming pools. The thieves, both British, ran off across the open ground to Los Balcones, where a Spanish accomplice was waiting with a car to spirit them away.

An unsuccessful attempt was made to try and break in to Bar Domino, at the bottom of Los Altos, during the same early morning.

Now with summer and more visitors coming here, the thieves will be stepping-up their game, and if you are showing any vulnerability, they will pounce on it. Take great care.

Things That May Effect You!

Manually completed Tax Returns: Hacienda will no longer allow hand-written tax forms to be submitted. This will affect around 35,000 taxpayers. You can now make an appointment with the government tax office and they will assist you to complete the relevant tax declaration. Now what could go wrong with that?

Extra Petrol Tax to be Refunded: Spain was dealt a major blow as the European Union Court of Justice ruled that the poorly-named *céntimo sanitario* (cent for health)- a tax that most regional governments levied on hydrocarbons and used to fund healthcare and environmental programs - have now been forced to return 13 billion euros that it collected between 2002 and 2011. The tax was declared to be illegal. Still, getting this money back will not be easy, because part of the amount might be beyond the statute of limitations. In this case that is likely to be four years. Further, it is likely that most people who paid the tax did not keep their receipts or other proof that they paid the tax. Well run businesses however, will have kept their receipts and invoices and their refund could be substantial. This could be around €6,000 for a lorry driver and owner and €14,000 in relation to a coach. The government is expected to return just 15% of the relevant taxes it collected.

This is another example of how taxpayers are defenceless against tax hikes that are unfair and, what's worse, illegal! The original case was brought by a Catalan transport company who felt the tax was illegal.

A refund from Iberdrola?: Well, according to one of the consumers associations, 'Yes!' The electricity companies have to return €40 to every consumer because of the price on the wholesale market. The Organisation of Consumers and Users (OCU) said the refund will apply to the 17 million users on a regulated tariff, because the 'pool' price was lower in the first quarter than the price established by the Government. Don't hold your breath!

UK Govt. Travel/Health Insurance to be Curtailed: UK expat travel insurance is soon to be terminated for those who have sought or are looking to seek early retirement in Europe. Usually, expats moving abroad to Europe to retire early in the sun, are entitled to two and a half years of free medical care paid by the NHS. This has not changed for those over the state retirement age; 65 years and above for men and 60 years and above for women. However, expats who are retiring early to popular European destinations like France, Spain and Italy will most probably have to take out private medical insurance to cover any accidents. The process by which expat health insurance is gained for UK residents is by completing an **S1 form** which not only guarantees them free international health insurance for two and a half years but also for their spouses and children. In fact, in the 2012/2013 financial year alone, an estimated 2,355 S1 forms were issued. As of 1st April of this year, this is to end for British expats retiring below the state retirement requirement as part of the major cost saving scheme launched by the NHS.

Missed Call Scam: This is a scam which is common to some countries but will no doubt come to a phone near you soon! This is a scheme where the scammer tries to get you to call a premium line. Like many scams, this one relies on hitting many, many potential targets at once. The scammer sets up a computer to call thousands of numbers per hour — because for every 99 people who follow their gut and don't call weird numbers, there's one person who will. The trick? They only let the call ring once before it automatically hangs up. One ring is enough for the number to show up on your missed call messages, but just short enough that you're not likely to answer it in time (which keeps the call from fully connecting and thus keeps the scammer from having to pay any long distance fees.) A good scammer is clever. The calls will not be for a massive amount of money but maybe just a handful of euros, thereby allaying too much suspicion.

The solution? Don't call numbers you don't recognise. If it's important, they will call you back.

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MY HERO!

Okay, this is not a Spanish story, but the central character here should surely get a gold medal for ingenuity and nerve.

This chap, presumably Chinese, buys a first-class ticket on Eastern China Airlines in Xi'an International Airport, in the capital of China's Shaanxi Province. The purchase of a first-class ticket entitles the bearer to



enter the VIP lounge (photo), at the airport where a free buffet is always provided. The gentleman, who we will call Mr. Wong, then tucks into the buffet, has a free drink and after reading the free newspapers, leaves the VIP lounge, goes to the ticket desk and changes the date on his ticket to the next day.

But then Mr. Wong gained legendary status by his subsequent actions. He repeated the same process for a further 299 occasions - each day - free food, a drink, and possibly a snooze and a wink at the hostesses, followed by the change of his ticket to the next day and a repeat performance - 300 in all!

Eventually Eastern the cancellation trend when they started to simply cashed in his and went on his merry looking for another similar deal.



China Airlines spotted on their computer and investigate, Mr. Wong ticket for a full refund satiated way....probably dumb airline and a

A spokeswoman for Malaysian Chinese *Yit Poh*, that the company has no way to stop such a "rare act."

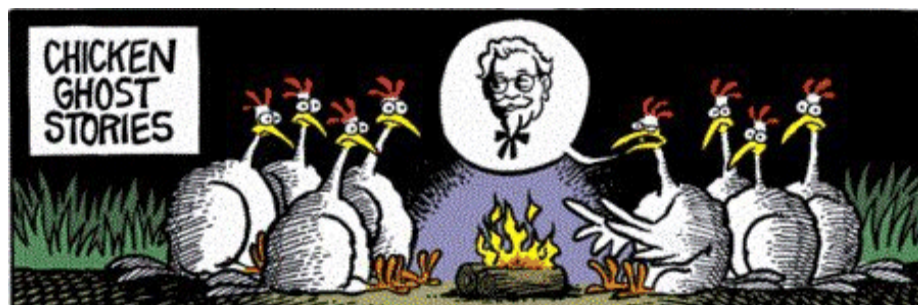
the airline told the newspaper *Kwong Wah*

MORE TRAINING COURSE SCAMS - NO HEROES HERE!

Regular readers will be familiar with previous reports in this newsletter concerning the UGT trade union in Andalucia and the money it diverted, which was originally destined for training courses for the unemployed. This time the 'fraud spotlight' falls on Madrid where a number of 'chancers' set-up four companies to defraud the regional and central governments of between € and

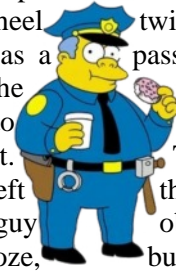


€4 million in subsidies for training courses. Early police investigations have revealed that 10,671 people were signed-up for courses which were funded by the Madrid government, but the courses were fictitious and the students non existant. More than 13 have been arrested so far, including Jose Luis Aneri on the left, and Alfonso Tezanos on the right. Alfonso was a former president of the Madrid Employers Association and the ex-Head of the Chamber of Commerce Training Association. So much for honest captains of industry!



COPS!

A National Police inspector in Palma, has been caught drunk behind the wheel twice in five days. But back in 2012, he was a passenger in an unmarked police car when the driver - who was drunk - crashed into and killed a 65-year-old German cyclist. The men were not on duty at the time and left the scene without reporting it. This guy obviously has a major problem with the booze, but how come he was allowed to remain in the police force after what can only be described as criminal negligence?



A Civil Guard policewoman in Northern Spain has been freed on charges after it was revealed she had given a local drug dealer her gun in return for 150 grams of 'speed.' Spain's National Police made the shocking discovery when arresting the dealer outside a bar in the north-eastern Spanish city of Huesca. The local pusher, who told police he felt "safer" with the weapon, was in the process of threatening someone with the handgun when he was arrested.



When checking the serial number on the weapon, it was revealed it belonged to a local Civil Guard officer, Spanish news agency EFE reported. Although the dealer told police the officer had given it to him in return for a copious amount of Class A drug 'speed,' she argued she "hadn't even noticed it had gone missing" as it wasn't her service revolver. A local judge freed both suspects despite charging the dealer with illegal possession of weapons and the officer as a collaborator in the offence.

As you can see from the above, it can sometimes be very difficult to get into jail in Spain!

Physiology 101.

Professor Higgins at the University of Sydney was giving a lecture on 'Involuntary Muscle Contraction' to the first year medical students. This was not an exciting subject and the professor decided to lighten up the mood.

He pointed to a young woman in the front row and asked, 'Do you know what your arsehole is doing while you're having an orgasm?'

She replied, 'Probably golfing with his mates.'

(Brian H & many others!)

Sign of the Times.

I went to the grocer's today and picked up an iceberg lettuce.

I said to the shop assistant, 'Why is it that these just seem to be getting smaller and smaller?'

'Global warming,' he replied.

My girlfriend always laughs during sex - no matter what she's reading.

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None But the Brave!

They say that when you encounter a lion, you shouldn't move a muscle. So when I encountered one, I stood still for 6 hours. Then a bloke approached me and said, "The zoo is about to close in ten minutes."

GALLERY

Some images from the Fallas, which takes place every March in Valencia.



One of the many 'fallas' constructed out of wood, wire and paper-mache. Some of the structures are massive. This 'head' on the left is only part of a full body.



Just a small part of this 'falla' shows Angela Merkel with a tight grip on possibly the French PM. On the left is Rajoy with a scissors for cuts.



This 'falla' is a 'caganer' of the president of Catalonia, Artur Mas, crapping on the Spanish constitution.



Some lovely ladies in their fiesta finery for the Fallas.



At the end of the 5-day fiesta, all the fallas are burnt except for the winning one.

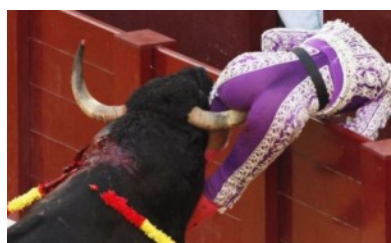


The guy with the worst job in China! Mind you, I don't think the people in the shops behind would be too happy either!



This giant paella is being prepared in San Pedro de Pinatar as part of a fund raiser for the charity Caritas. It was a balmy summer-like day with temperatures around 25°.

New make of toilet-door just arrived from South Africa and now available in Leroy Merlin.



OUCH!
Sometimes the bull wins!



The Silent Treatment.

A man and his wife were having some problems at home and were giving each other the silent treatment. Suddenly, the man realized that the next day, he would need his wife to wake him at 5:00 am, for an early morning business flight. Not wanting to be the first to break the silence (and lose!), he wrote on a piece of paper, 'Please wake me at 5:00 am.' He left it where he knew she would find it.

The next morning, the man woke up, only to discover it was 9:00 am, and he had missed his flight. Furious, he was about to go and see why his wife hadn't wakened him, when he noticed a piece of paper by the bed.

The paper said, 'It's 5:00 am, Wake up..' (Men are just not equipped for these kinds of contests.)

Derrick Green

Two TV aerials got married: the service was really bad but the reception was brilliant.

Keith



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HAPPY HOUR MON TO FRI.

If Everton were playing down at the bottom of my garden, I'd draw the curtains.

Bill Shankly

Lime Bar Fishing Sunbathing Club.

We had our first meeting under Mike the chair. His opening statement was, "I want to keep the meetings short." Well, this one lasted longer than the AGM!

The March match was relocated to Nancy's, due to the river being in flood. Lucky (grumpy) Bob wanted it relocated to Benjofar so that we could all blank; I mean "Have a sleep!"

This was the last match in our winter league with 6 anglers vying for the 2 remaining spots in the final. The weights were very close, but the successful 2 were "punchy" Bob Larby & me!

On the day, "3 rods" won again with 6.3kg, Fagin came 2nd with 5.5kg and 3rd was Lucky Bob with 4.4kg. These are good weights for our members! I don't know how Lucky Bob managed it, between his moaning and his sleeps! Maybe he turned his bite alarm's volume up.

During this winter league, Ron the "hustler" has beaten me by 1.5oz, 0.5oz and AGAIN this time by 0.01oz! B*****D!

The final was subsequently fished at the Eden, but although the river looked in good condition, the fish were few and far between. It was a glorious day and we got lots of sunbathing in.

Well done to Ron "the hustler" winning with 8.1 lbs (he hammered me this time). Fagin was a very close 2nd with 7.92 lbs, then Just John in 3rd with 1.88 lbs. 3 rods saved a blank on his record book by catching a single bleak. Lucky!

Last month, Bill Reade from Rods & Reels gave us a heads up of a new day fishery near Elche. It sounded good so 10 of us went on a fishing "recce". It is a cracking site with great potential. With reports of a 20 pounder in the lake & literally hundreds of 3-4 pounders stocked in the dykes, we were all really optimistic. However, on the day the fish were not feeding here either with 4 of us still managing to blank! On this recce, "I'm NOT tall" Paul caught a 6.7 pounder and "daffy" Mike L caught a duck! A real one that was released unharmed, as he didn't have any sauce à l'orange.

Anti social Baz arranged another darts night with our ladies. It was too late for this month's report. If anyone embarrasses himself or herself – I'll let you know.

More reasons why fishing is better than sex!

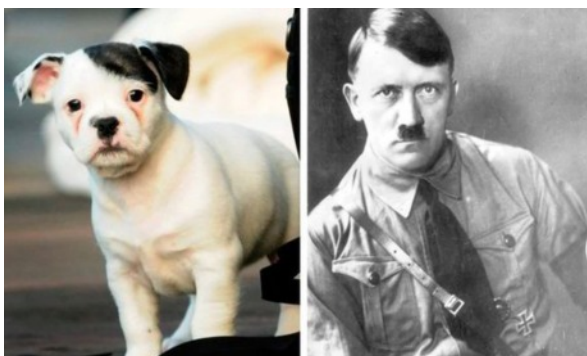
Your fishing partner doesn't get upset about people you fished with long ago.

It's perfectly respectable to fish with a total stranger.

If your regular fishing partner isn't available, he won't object if you fish with someone else.

Next meeting is at The Lime Bar @ 17.30 Mon 7th April.

Fishy fingers!
The Ghost



So you don't believe in reincarnation!



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CLEVER CLOGS!

The Washington Post's Mensa Invitational once again invited readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting, or changing one letter, and supply a new definition.

Here are the winners:

1. Cashtration (n.): The act of buying a house, which renders the subject financially impotent for an indefinite period of time.
2. Ignoranus: A person who's both stupid and an a*sehole.
3. Intaxicatton: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.
4. Reintarnation: Coming back to life as a hillbilly.
5. Bozone (n.): The substance surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating. The bozone layer, unfortunately, shows little sign of breaking down in the near future.
6. Foreploy: Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of getting laid
7. Giraffiti: Vandalism spray-painted very, very high.
8. Sarchasm: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the person who doesn't get it.
9. Inoculatte: To take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
10. Osteopornosis: A degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)
11. Karmageddon: It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like, a serious bummer.
12. Decafalon (n): The gruelling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.
13. Glibido: All talk and no action.
14. Dopeler Effect: The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.
15. Arachnoleptic Fit (n.): The frantic dance performed just after you've accidentally walked through a spider web.
16. Beelzebug (n.): Satan in the form of a mosquito, that gets into your bedroom at three in the morning and cannot be cast out.

Dogs.

I was walking my dog through the park today when a warden came over and said, "There's a £50 fine for dogs who foul the footpath."

"Well that's not going to bother him," I replied, pointing to my dog. "He's never got any money."

I wonder if other dogs think poodles are members of a weird religious cult?
Rita Rudner

A Bad Egg?

A priest in Alcoy, Alicante, has just been sentenced to three years in prison for the crime of misappropriation. It seems this case goes all the way back to 2007, when Fr. Francisco Sirvent was appointed *patrono-presidente* of the Lucania Foundation. The foundation had in its assets a commercial property located in the historical heart of Valencia, which was donated by a well known local builder. However, Sirvent decided to sell the property and keep the proceeds, €100,000, for himself. To this he added another €30,000 which he siphoned off the Foundation, which does not now have a single euro.

What a 'naughty boy' I hear you say; but wait a minute. It seems that Fr. Francisco has one heck of a history. While he was chaplain to an army unit in Ibiza in 1995, he attempted to coerce a number of soldiers into having sex with him. (No, not all at the same time, Gladys!) This was a particularly nasty business with one of his victims attempting suicide. After a number of soldiers reported him, he was sacked from the army.

He then went to Puerto Rico in the Caribbean where he was a pastor in the Diocese of Ponce (how appropriate). But here his bad habits returned and after being accused of sexual abuse in 2000, he was forbidden to hear confessions or celebrate Mass. He was also accused of taking \$50,000 from the parish funds.

Sirvent then turned up in Argentina where, in 2006, he was made a Prelate of Honour by Pope Benedict XVI for some consultancy work on Canon Law which he promised to complete. But the Archbishop of Mendoza in Argentina said this work never materialised. God only knows what else he got up to there, before returning to Spain. (Sources: El Mundo; Levante-emv.com)

Little Johnny watched, fascinated, as his mother smoothed cold cream on her face. 'Why do you do that, mommy?' he asked.

'To make myself beautiful,' said his mother, who then began removing the cream with a tissue.

'What's the matter?' asked Little Johnny. 'Giving up?'

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APRIL 19 BENNY VAN DE BERG Vocalist

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693 985 122 VIA PARK V

(€306 raised in mum's memory going to the AECC.

Well done and thanks to all who donated. JJ)

Jock's Final Wish.

An Englishman, Irishman, Welshman, Scotsman were captured while fighting in a far-off foreign land, and the leader of the captors said, 'We're going to line you up in front of a firing squad and shoot you all in turn. But first, you each can make a final wish.'

The Englishman responds, 'I'd like to hear "God Save The Queen" just one more time to remind me of the auld country, sung by the London All Boys Choir, with Morris Dancers dancing to the tune.'

The Irishman replies, 'I'd like to hear "Danny Boy" just one more time to remind me of the auld country, sung in the style of Daniel O'Donnell, with Riverdance dancers skipping gaily to the tune.'

The Welshman answers, 'I'd like to hear "Men Of Harlech" just one more time to remind me of the country, sung as if by the Treorchy Male Voice Choir.'

The Scotsman says quickly, 'I'd like to be shot first.'

The Queen's Visit.

The Queen was inspecting her armed forces, one from each of her fighting forces. She asks each one what they would do if they woke up and found a camel spider in their tent on operations?

The squaddie says, 'I'd reach over, grab my bayonet and stab it to death!'

The navy guy says, 'I'd reach over, grab my boot and batter it to death!'

The RAF guy says, 'I'd reach over, pick up my phone, call reception and ask... 'Who the f*** has put a tent up in my hotel room?''



APRIL AT THE PHOENIX



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- RACE NIGHTS; EASTER, etc.

Always something going on!

WiFi

The English football team - brilliant on paper, shit on grass. Arthur Smith

GOOD NEWS!

The gorgeous little baby with her mum in this photo (El Mundo) is Luna. This remarkable 10-month-old little angel had seven major organs replaced when she was only seven-months-old. Her stomach, liver, pancreas, colon, spleen and two types of intestine, were replaced. The parents had to move to Madrid, as the La Paz Hospital there was the only one in Spain capable of carrying out these multiple transplants. The parents received no state or social assistance in the matter. Help came from NUPA, a Spanish charity which specialises in assisting children with intestinal failure and who require organ transplants.

The La Paz Hospital is now the No. 3 hospital in Europe for children's transplants and the only one in Spain who does bowel transplants for children.

Go for it!

Okay, maybe a 'shaggy dog story' but it's also a story about a Fly, a Fish, a Bear A Hunter, a Mouse and a Cat.

In the dead of summer, a fly was resting among leaves beside a stream. The hot, dry fly said to no one in particular, 'Gosh...if I go down three inches, I will feel the mist from the water and I will be refreshed.'

There was a fish in the water thinking, 'Gosh...if that fly goes down three inches, I can eat him.' There was a bear on the shore thinking, 'Gosh... if that fly goes down three inches That fish will jump for the fly... And I will grab the fish!'

It also happened that a hunter was farther up the bank of the lake preparing to eat a cheese sandwich... 'Gosh,' he thought, 'if that fly goes down three inches...and that fish leaps for it... that bear will expose himself and grab for the fish. I'll shoot the bear and have a proper lunch.'

Now, you probably think this is enough activity on one river bank, but I can tell you there's more.

A wee mouse by the hunter's foot was thinking 'Gosh, if that fly goes down three inches... and that fish jumps for that fly.. and that bear grabs for that fish.. The dumb hunter will shoot the bear and drop his cheese sandwich.'

A cat lurking in the bushes took in this scene and thought, (as was fashionable to do on the banks of this particular river around lunch time) 'Gosh...if that fly goes down three inches..and that fish jumps for that fly and that bear grabs for that fish and that hunter shoots that bear.. and that mouse makes off with the cheese sandwich . Then I can have mouse for lunch.'

The poor fly is finally so hot and so dry that he heads down for the cooling mist of the water. The fish swallows the fly... The bear grabs the fish.. The hunter shoots the bear. The mouse grabs the cheese sandwich... The cat jumps for the mouse.. The mouse ducks...The cat falls into the water and drowns.

NOW, The Moral Of The Story....

Whenever a fly goes down three inches, some pussy's gonna be in serious danger.

(Dave Purdy)

Why is 'abbreviated' such a long word?

Michael Davis

MORE GOOD NEWS!

While trawling through the Spanish press, as I do, it is very easy to get the impression that everybody over here in Spain is 'on the make.' Scarcely a week goes by without some politician, businessman, bank or trade union being involved in some sort of underhand deal or expensive folly, designed to line their own pockets and shaft poor Joe Public. But of course not everybody is like that. Occasionally an angel or saint will poke their head above the surface of greed and renew our faith in human nature.

46-year-old Jordi Cabau was a self-employed worker in the Catalan building industry who went from one construction site to another. Nine months ago his work dried up but as he was self-employed, he got no assistance from the state. His partner, Raquel Pérez, also lost her job in a restaurant in a ski resort in Andorra at the same time. But Raquel, 31, also found herself pregnant at the same time and was refused state assistance. Social services were a waste of time, only offering useless suggestions such as 'use cloth nappies instead of disposable ones to save money.'

The couple then moved into her father's home. However, they were sharing with four others, all trying to live off her father's pension. They left within four months after finding temporary accommodation with the Catholic charity, the Rosa Oriol Foundation and its shelter homes, at least until the baby was born. (The Rosa Oriol Foundation was founded by the Tous family in Manresa, around which the whole of the town's civil charity network of food-distribution and shelters depends; maybe the subject of another article soon.)

Then their luck changed. A businessman from Manresa happened to read about their story in a local newspaper and got in touch with them. He wanted to donate an unused property, which included both a bakery business and a home. The entrepreneur, who wishes to remain anonymous, also helped them purchase the first consignment of items they needed to get the bakery going. "Some things we got for free or cheap thanks to his mediation," Jordi told a reporter from *El País*.

As Jordi was speaking to the reporter, a group of five people has walked in. They buy three chocolate buns and a packet of salt. The total is 2.94 euros. "That's it? You're sure you added it up right?" asks one of them, looking surprised. But it is. The new bakers have decided to put very popular prices on their products. "This neighbourhood is very run down," explains Jordi. "There are a lot of immigrants here and many are having a hard time. The other day an elderly woman came in asking me for a loaf of bread to eat and so I just gave it to her. Our margins are very low, but we are here to work, not to make money." The couple remain stunned by the generosity of the businessman: "It is one thing to give people food or momentary assistance," Jordi says, "but it's quite another to give them a future."

What wonderful people!



Photo from *El País* (Susanna Sáez) shows Jordi Cabau and Raquel Pérez with their son Asier in their baker's.

The History of Spain, Part 40. The October 1934 Revolution.

Following the victory of the Right and the Centre in the general election in November 1933, the Left referred to the next two years as the 'two black years' (*bienio negro*). The Left would only accept democracy as long as it kept them in power.

In December of the same year, the anarchists had their third unsuccessful insurrection, which was treated with the usual violence, which was now becoming a part of the Spanish political scene. The Socialist agricultural workers then held another general strike in June 1934.

During their first year in office, the centre-right government did not repeal any of the republican-socialist legislation; they just ignored it. However they did free General Sanjurjo and his accomplices, who were jailed after the attempted coup in 1932. But after a year of waiting in the political wings, CEDA, the Catholic party of the Right, now took three ministries in government: Justice, Agriculture and Labour on October 4, 1934. These were seen by the Left as crucial ministries. The Left now viewed the Right as 'fascist' while the Right saw the Left as 'reds.'

On the day after the ministry appointments, the militant Left, led by Largo Caballero, called for an insurrectionary general strike and revolution. Caballero was smarting from the defeat in the polls and the loss of his former position as Minister of Labour. There was no real planning to the revolt; just lots of chaos and wishful thinking. Caballero asked the soldiers and police in Madrid to join the revolution as if it were Petrograd in 1917! The wiser elements of the Left warned that terrorising the middle classes would only drive them into the hands of the Right. Caballero soon realised that their botched insurrection had failed to produce the spontaneous revolution of the masses he hoped for. Most of the revolutionary committee, including Caballero, were rounded up within three days.

The Catalans, under Lluís Companys, seized the opportunity to promote their independence declaring 'An independent Catalonia within a Spanish federal republic' from a balcony in Barcelona. Infuriated by this, the Madrid government under Lerroux, ordered the local military commander, General Batet, to proclaim a state of war and end the sedition. Batet, a very clever commander who wanted to avoid unnecessary bloodshed, placed two field guns in the main square and ordered his men to fire blanks. It wasn't long before Companys and his entourage surrendered. Interestingly, the anarchist CNT in Barcelona, a substantial and possibly game-changing force, abstained from the revolution as their leaders wanted nothing to do with the socialists and republicans!

The revolutionary general strike experienced some initial success in the mining areas of Leon, Santander and Vizcaya, as well as the town of Bilbao. But the arrival of troops and bombs from the Spanish air force put an end to the revolt.

But it was the revolt in the mining area of Asturias that caused the government the greatest concern. This rugged area had a long history of confrontation with Madrid, as indeed it still has today. The now legal communist unions were particularly strong here, as was the local tradition of direct labour confrontation. One of the heroines of Asturias was the communist-Stalinist, Dolores Ibarruri, dubbed *La Pasionaria*, the Passion Flower. (*La Pasionaria*, one of Spain's finest firebrand orators, would later become a leading figure among the Republicans during the Spanish Civil War.) Unlike their colleagues in Barcelona, the anarchist CNT in Asturias now joined up with the revolutionaries. It is estimated that the number of workers who took up arms in Asturias was between 30,000 and 40,000. Ironically the arms were supplied to the rebels by one of the more moderate socialists, Indalecio Prieto. Realising what lay ahead, he quickly fled to France to avoid arrest. The miners also had the dynamite from the mines, which they called, '*La artillería de la revolución*' - the revolutionary artillery.

The Asturian rebels were well organised and quickly took over several towns including Oviedo, which was defended by a garrison of 1,000. At this early stage at least 40 non-combatants were also murdered, mainly the rich and priests.

Whereas the revolution failed elsewhere, in Asturias it was now a full scale civil war. The rapidity of the advance of the rebels concerned the government in Madrid. They were also worried that the Spanish conscript army might not fire on their own countrymen. With the country now under martial law, the minister of war ordered a popular soldier and favourite of the Right, General Francisco Franco (photo), to suppress the Asturias rebellion. Franco ordered an expeditionary force from Lugo in Galicia to proceed to Oviedo. He also organised a cruiser and two gunboats to go to the Gijón coastline and bomb the miners. Aircraft was also directed to bomb the coalfields and Oviedo.



At that time, Spain's best fighting soldiers were in Morocco. This was the Spanish Foreign Legion and the Moroccan *regulares*. These soldiers gave and expected no mercy when dealing with the rebellious Rif tribes in Morocco. They dispensed savagery and expected little else if ever unfortunate enough to be captured alive. Franco now ordered two large contingents of these forces to move rapidly to Asturias. From October 10, these forces invaded the mining villages and towns, treating these areas as enemy territory, with looting, rape and the execution of prisoners on the spot. This was followed by savage repression of the whole Asturian mining area by Major Lisardo Doval, a Civil Guard commander, notorious for his cruelty.

Rebel resistance collapsed in Asturias, but here the revolution had cost around 1,000 lives. Several thousand were imprisoned and thousands more were sacked for taking part in the revolt. All in all, twenty rebels were condemned to death, but only two were executed. This was remarkable for the period. Can you imagine what the retribution from Hitler or Stalin would be for a similar revolt? Victory for the Centre-Right coalition of the Radicals and CEDA against what the Left called the October Revolution, gave new confidence to the government. They now began to unravel many of the changes introduced by the previous Socialist-Republican government, particularly in relation to the Catholic Church and land reform and the Catalan statute of autonomy was also immediately suspended. Gil Robles of CEDA now joined the cabinet in May 1935 as minister of war. He then promoted General Franco to Chief of General Staff.

For the Left the revolution was an irresponsible act. The historian Raymond Carr put it succinctly when he wrote, 'By revolting against an elected government in October 1934, the forces of the left denied themselves the legal if not the moral possibility of denouncing the rising of July 1936.' The leader of the militant Socialists, Caballero, was now in prison. *Pravda* called him the Spanish 'Lenin' and he became intoxicated with the image. In confinement he read the works of Lenin and received regular visits from the French Comintern (the international communist organisation) representative, Jacques Duclos. When he was released from prison in October 1935, just one year after the failed revolution, he was more radicalised than ever.

The alliance between CEDA and the Radicals collapsed at the end of 1935 as a result of scandals in the Radical Party. The government collapsed and President Alcalá Zamora called for new elections. He had hoped to create a new centre party and was blind to the fact that democracy in Spain had become so fragile, he was now pushing it towards its endgame. There would be civil war within six months.

More next month.

Obviously in the current economic climate, the growing amount of personal debt can be a problem to many. This in turn has led to a massive growth in debt collection agencies, because it is cheaper for businesses to resort to them than to the courts. Also, the debt claim may not be strong enough to stand up to scrutiny in the courts.

It is the big companies who will use these agencies, particularly the telephone companies - who are riddled with bad practice and misleading adverts - and lenders; well, we have all come to see the banks in Spain under a new light after their shenanigans during the last six to eight years.

The first thing the collection agencies will do is make a nuisance of themselves. I came across one instance where Vodafone used an agency, Konecta, to collect a €23 debt from a client. Konecta telephoned him every day at 9am for two whole months. He felt he was "intimidated in a constant manner" so with the help of a consumer association, he took Vodafone to court. He was then awarded €900 in damages, which he donated to the consumer group. Another consumer, a lawyer, was targeted by Movistar (Telefonica) over a bill he was in disagreement with. Here, the collection agency called him almost daily at 8am, even on holidays, between the months of April and September 2009. He kept a record of the harassing phone calls and won his case.

There have been many other instances where family members of the debtor are contacted, all in an effort to embarrass and intimidate.

But most of us would not know how to respond in these circumstances, even if we are in the right. If you are being harassed, it seems the most effective solution being offered is to file a complaint with the Spanish Data Protection Agency (AEPD) regarding the irregular use of information about the debtor. This is the advice of a lawyer, Pablo Camacho, who used to formerly work with one of the largest collection companies - *el Cobrador del Frac*. Angered by the methods used by this company, he resigned and formed an agency for the defence of debtors called *El Defensor del Moroso*. He has had his offices burnt down twice in mysterious circumstances. He and his colleagues now work from the street and their homes.

Debt collection has not yet been regulated in Spain, making this one of the few European countries without specific legislation on the issue. In 2009, the ruling coalition in Catalonia, CiU, proposed setting down some rules. Although the initiative was unanimously approved, it was never put into practice.



With age comes wisdom!

This old guy decided to treat himself, bought a brand new BMW Z4 convertible and drove it out of the salesroom. Taking off down the motorway, he floored it to 120 mph, enjoying the wind blowing through what little hair he had left. "Amazing!" he thought as he flew down the motorway, pushing the pedal to the metal. But looking in his rear view mirror, he saw a police car behind him, blue lights flashing and siren blaring. "I can get away from him - no problem!" thought the elderly nutcase as he floored it to 140 mph, then 150 then 160. Suddenly, he thought, "What on earth am I doing? I'm too old for this nonsense!" So he pulled over to the side of the road and waited for the police car to catch up with him.

Pulling in behind him, the police officer walked up to the driver's side of the BMW, looked at his watch and said, "Sir, my shift ends in 10 minutes. Today is Friday and I'm taking off for the weekend. If you can give me a reason why you were speeding that I've never heard before, I'll let you go." The old man, looked very seriously at the policeman and replied, "Years ago my wife ran off with a policeman. I thought you were bringing her back."

"Have a good day, Sir," said the policeman.

El Cobrador del Frac (the Debt Collector/Collection) is the largest and best know debt collection agency in Spain. They achieved notoriety by dressing their collection agents in top hat and tails. This draws attention and if one of these guys is knocking on your door, then your neighbours have no doubt what is up. The photo at the bottom of the left-hand column shows a collector from this firm pursuing a woman over a claim. The notice he is carrying says, 'She stole from her family.' If a debtor proves awkward, their strategy is to 'Name and Shame.'



These days, their collection agents don't dress up, but will do so at no extra charge if requested. I always thought we should give these guys a free hand at collecting overdue urbanisation fees. The firm now boasts a large fleet of similar vehicles which carry the company identification on the sides, front and back of the vehicle.

Which brings me to the main reason I compiled this article. In early March this year, an 37-year-old El Cobrador agent was chasing-up a debt for a client in the town or city of Albacete.

Dressed in top hat and tails and driving one of the firm's vehicles, he was pursuing a debtor in the air conditioning business for several days. The debtor 'did a runner' and the agent then decided to drive his car to the debtors house and park outside. Waiting in the car, he could not have expected the following course of events. The debtor did eventually turn up, but was driving a massive mechanical bull. Without warning the debtor rammed the Cobrador vehicle with the man inside. See photos. The debt collector was taken to hospital in a critical condition with multiple injuries and the Manitou driver was arrested.



The motto of El Cobrador is "Miguel de Cervantes is our most illustrious predecessor" ; Cervantes of course was once a debt collector. His creation, Don Quixote may have jousted with windmills, but I don't believe he would have got very far with a Manitou! The assailant has now been charged with attempted murder.



OUCH!!

A woman in Spain is planning to take legal action against doctors who performed an emergency caesarean section without anaesthetics. "Either we cut you or your son dies," doctors told Maria Mercedes Alcocer, an Ecuadorian woman living in Spain.

The soon-to-be mother had been admitted to a hospital in the northern Spanish region of Asturias 32 hours earlier after her water broke. But during her time in hospital, nurses were worried that she had not started to dilate. She had also developed a serious infection which in turn had given her a very high temperature.

The 37-year-old woman was rushed to the delivery room where doctors told her there was not enough time to call an anaesthesiologist and she reluctantly agreed for them to cut her stomach open and save her son's life. "The pain was horrible," Alcocer told Spanish daily ABC. "I gritted my teeth so hard that one broke." Despite losing consciousness, doctors were able to save the child's life. Since recovering from her ordeal, the disgruntled mother has decided to file a lawsuit against the hospital. She and her husband Cristian, who the newborn is named after, fear that their son may have been left physically or mentally effected during the difficult childbirth. "He didn't get enough oxygen (because the umbilical chord was tied around his neck)," Alcocer added.

The Ecuadorian woman says doctors informed her that she was likely to experience problems during her pregnancy and childbirth, and prepared accordingly. "For nine months, I did everything I was told. I ate yogurt, which I detest, rested, walked, and underwent all the tests recommended for pregnant women my age. I did not skip a single thing." Alcocer claims no one at the hospital has yet explained what actually happened during her childbirth. "So much suffering is inhumane, you cannot play with the life of people."

It certainly must have been a horrific ordeal for the woman and a damning indictment of the hospital that something like this was allowed to happen.

The 'Specific Conditions.'

Bankia has just placed a packet of 300 homes on the second-hand market with price reductions of up to 40% of their initial price. The bank warns the purchases that these properties have 'specific conditions' which must be expressly accepted by the purchaser in the 'buy & sell' contract. If you ask Bankia what the 'specific conditions' are, and they will tell you there are squatters in the properties!

Con-Men.

I am always amazed by the foolishness of people who will risk putting their savings into dubious investment companies who promise unrealistic interest levels. This time it is in Alicante where more than 200 people, mainly pensioners, were divested of their 'hardearned.' A number of individuals were 'suckered' into the scheme by being offered returns of 25%. This is surely 'dumb greed.' Once again it was a typical Ponzi scheme being operated - one investor being paid from the funds received from a later investor. The company made no actual investments. Three have been arrested to date and it is expected that the total amount swindled will exceed €3 million.

In another fraudulent scheme, 105 Britons and three Americans were arrested in Spain, the bulk of them in Barcelona - now recognised as the area in Spain where most expats are conned. In addition 20 Britons have been arrested in the U.K., eight in Serbia and two in the United States. Here the crooks acted as stock market agents accepting investments, moving the money abroad and then disappearing. In the last year alone, the police say there are 5,000 confirmed victims, most of them retired Britons aged between 60 and 70. Amounts in excess of €18 million are believed to be involved. There was strict discipline throughout the organisation, the members were not allowed to organise parties so as not to attract the attention of the police. Internal transgressions were heavily fined.

Late News:



The above body was found at the Cala Bosque, in La Zenia, on the morning of Saturday March 29. The carefully wrapped and taped body lay there for some time before the Guardia Civil took the body away for investigation. It was later reported that the body was that of a white male, around 1.80 metres tall.



The driver of this 458 Italia Ferrari supercar, valued at a minimum of €240,000, crashed into a skip in the centre of the Spanish capital on March 23. The driver then got out of the car in a confused state and ran from the scene. He was later interviewed by police, and it is believed that he may have been drunk at the time.

The Prayer.

A father put his 3 year old daughter to bed, told her a story and listened to her prayers which ended by saying: "God bless Mommy, God bless Daddy, God bless Grandma and goodbye Grandpa." The father asked, "Why did you say goodbye Grandpa?"

The little girl said, "I don't know, Daddy, it just seemed like the thing to do." The next day grandpa died.

The father thought it was a strange coincidence. A few months later the father put the girl to bed and listened to her prayers which went like this: "God bless Mommy, God Bless Daddy and goodbye Grandma." The next day the grandmother died.

"Holy Moley," thought the father, "this kid is in contact with the other side."

Several weeks later when the girl was going to bed the dad heard her say: "God bless Mommy and goodbye Daddy."

He practically went into shock. He couldn't sleep all night and got up at the crack of dawn to go to his office. He was nervous as a cat all day, had lunch and watched the clock. He figured if he could get by until midnight he would be okay.

He felt safe in the office, so instead of going home at the end of the day he stayed there, drinking coffee, looking at his watch and jumping at every sound. Finally, midnight arrived..... he breathed a sigh of relief and went home. When he got home his wife said, "I've never seen you work so late, what's the matter?"

He said, "I don't want to talk about it, I've just spent the worst day of my life."

She said, "You think you had a bad day, you'll never believe what happened to me this morning. My golf pro dropped dead in the middle of my lesson."

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with the most ridiculous ideas
are always the people who are
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—Bill Maher

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The AGM for the Dream Hills urbanisation will be held at the Orihuela
Costa Resort (as last year) at 16:00 hours on Friday, May 16th, 2014.

The Party.

Tom had been in the liquor business for 25 years. Finally sick of the stress he
quits his job and buys 50 acres of land in Norway as far from humanity as possible.
He sees the postman once a month and gets groceries once a month. Otherwise
it's total peace and quiet. After six months or so, of almost total isolation, someone
knocks on his door. He opens it and a huge, bearded man standing there.

"Name's Lars, your neighbour from forty miles up the road. Having a party Friday
night... Thought you might like to come. About 5.00?"

"Great", says Tom, "after six months out here I'm ready to meet some local folks."
As Lars is leaving, he stops. "Gotta warn you.....be some drinkin'."

"Not a problem" says Tom. "After 25 years in the business, I can drink with the
best of 'em." Again, the big man starts to leave and stops. "More 'n' likely gonna
be some fightin' too."

"Well, I get along with people, I'll be all right. I'll be there. Thanks again."

"More'n likely be some wild sex, too,"

"Now that's really not a problem" says Tom, warming to the idea. "I've been all
alone for six months! I'll definitely be there. By the way, what should I wear?"

"Don't much matter Just gonna be the two of us!" ®

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