

THE DREAM SCENE

NEWSLETTER

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

Issue no. 100, 1st of July 2015.

Bienvenido a todos and welcome to the July edition.

Welcome to our 100th edition! Can you believe it? So let me just take this page to tell you about it.

When Tid & I started The Dream Scene in March 2007 and it had just six pages. Since then it developed into a beast! Every month we spent hours printing and stapling hundreds of copies. It became an ordeal. A Scandinavian friend (ironically the editor now of a popular Scandinavian monthly) put me in touch with one of his friends who could produce printed copies of the DS at reasonable rates. This was a massive boost to the publication. It grew and grew and today, each issue is now 34 pages with improved printing quality and more than 18,000 words per copy. The objective of the Dream Scene is exactly what it says under the heading, but an important part also is to promote local businesses. This is why I keep the newsletter non-profit and charge so little for the advertising.

Email copies are sent mainly to the UK but also a range of countries ranging from the US of A and Canada, but also to the northern European countries, to Australia and some to the south of Spain. Printed copies are given blanket distribution in the local area including DH 1 & 2, Los Altos, to four Via Park commercial centres, Lago Jardin 1 & 2 and to selected expat hot-spots in Villamartin, San Miguel de Salinas and Los Montesinos.

The Content: All people ever talk to me are about the jokes! Fair enough! Whereas I like clever, rude and sarcastic jokes and I will print them, I draw the line at overt racism and schoolboy smut, although I will have a teasing 'go' at every race including my own! I have never tried to 'dumb-down' the DS. I treat our readers as intelligent and mature individuals. Politics, health and legal articles will continue to appear in the newsletter (and probably too many statistics!). If you don't like it then read The Sun, Viz or the advertisers.

I try to be grammatically correct but I pay no heed to correct paragraphing. It takes up too much space, the space I prefer to fill with more news. There is no padding! Advertising is kept at a level just to support the costs. I turn away between three and five potential advertisers every month.

But the DS is not a one-man show. I might write it, but Tid edits, corrects and very rarely (tries) to censor it; Angela produces an original cartoon every month and has done so for every issue since March 2007 - she has even produced creative cartoons for us from her sickbed, what a soldier! (Did you know that her husband Pete poses for the nudie drawings?) Then there's the all important distribution - no point in producing something if nobody can get to read it. Here we must thank Steve, Stefan, Sue, Alan and Paul, who have always stepped up to the plate if one of the other was sick/in hospital/in jail/on black op's or just pissed. Delivering the Dream Scene in the winter/spring is fun - in the summer it can be hell! From this month, Sue will also be chasing up any changes to some of the existing adverts every mid-month. A massive thank you to our generous advertisers. Without you the Dream Scene would be just an urbanisation newsheet.

Readers and subscribers who receive the DS by email have a number of advantages. Firstly, the PDF email copies appear in glorious colour. This makes the adverts more appealing and the photos clearer. Secondly, I will now begin to include more internet links and this will increase. This enables the reader to get more clarification or information on a particular article just by clicking directly on the link in the email copy.

Our security guards in Dream Hills have informed me that there are still too many houses in the urb' with their front doors and / or grills, left open during the late nights or early hours of the mornings. This they say, is inviting trouble and unwanted visitors!

Angela's Cartoon

Dream Hills, Latest.

I was sorry to hear that David is no longer the handyman in our urbanisation. Time marches on and as David is now 67, I was told that there would be serious employment law issues in relation to the renewal of his contract. But David is still keen to do some work around the urbanisation. Those of us who have had him help out in the past have always been very satisfied with his work.

Many, many people, have asked me to pass on their grateful thanks to him and we happily join in on that. David is still available for odd jobs and can be contracted on 966 799 188. Thank you David. Wishing you all an enjoyable month, and hope we see you all soon. Mick & Tid.



Due to the recent heat wave, doctors are warning obese people to stay indoors.
Not for their health, but because no one wants to see them in short pants. (Conan O'Brien)

TRANSLATOR & COMPUTER TRAINER

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

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

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

TRANSLATIONS

- HOSPITALS / DOCTORS
- POLICE REPORTS
- OFFICIAL TRANSLATIONS (STAMPED)
- UNOFFICIAL WRITTEN TRANSLATIONS
- NIE / RESIDENCIA
- DRIVING LICENCES
- COURT
- TOWN HALLS
- SCHOOL MEETINGS

COMPUTER TRAINING

- WINDOWS XP, VISTA, 7
- MICROSOFT OFFICE (WORD, EXCEL, POWER POINT, ACCESS, ETC.)
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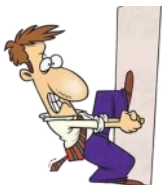
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Did you know that

...during just one week in May this year, more than 2,200 people were killed in India by the oppressive heat. August in Spain can also be fairly brutal. Make sure you have plenty of ventilation in your home and stay out of the direct sunlight if possible. Pay particular attention to your 'ankle-biters' and keep them out of the harsh direct sunlight.

...Spaniards are the second best in the world at balancing work and play, a new study has found, ranking them just behind Denmark. According to a report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation (OECD), Spain fell only behind Denmark in a ranking of work-life balance in a study of a group of the world's advanced economies. Spaniards working full-time devoted a greater portion of their day to leisure and personal care than any other country in the world, including Denmark, spending more than 16 hours a day on things like eating, meeting friends and pursuing hobbies (and you would think sleeping!). Denmark also led the way in overall life satisfaction, followed by Iceland, Switzerland, Norway and Israel.

...after months of speculation, the US online streaming service Netflix has officially confirmed it will be launching in Spain this October. Although the exact details are not yet known, the Spanish service will offer both national and international film and TV content at an expected monthly subscription price of around €8, the same as in France and Germany. The website www.netflix.com/es has been up and running for several weeks, allowing anyone who is interested in the service to sign up to receive more information. The catalogue of series and movies available at launch time is likely to be more limited than that offered in the US and the UK. Netflix's arrival in Spain has been a long time coming as a result of several issues, including the country's high digital piracy rates and the large royalty payments demanded by the Spanish film and TV industry. Netflix will be available for smart TVs, tablet devices, smartphones, computers, and video game consoles, and content will be available both dubbed into Spanish or in its original version with Spanish subtitles.

...it has been calculated that putting domestic solar panels on your roof will take 31 years before returning a profit. The Photovoltaic Association has asked the Interior Ministry to close the doors on domestic production in their next decree.

What's Up?

The May local and regional elections have forced the various parties to scabble around and look for alliances with other parties to ensure that they gain and hold power. The results of a Metroscopia poll has revealed that two blocks of political power have arisen during the pacts along ideological lines, PP with Ciudadanos and PSOE with Podemos. The paper comments the division between left and right could decide future alliances (at the general election).

La Verdad in Murcia reports the first proposals from the new regional coalition have faced a shortage of funds. The cost of some of the proposals is over €200 million and they have no idea how to fund them. Here the PP retain power but are forced to accommodate many of the (expensive) wishes of the Ciudadanos Party if they wish to rule.

La Opinión de Málaga headlines 'The new pacts will need an investment of €850 million'. The Málaga City Hall is preparing a report which will be presented to the opposition on what the most important projects are. Where the money will come from nobody knows.

House prices rose in Spain in the first five months of the year, but only on the Mediterranean coast which saw growth of 1.4%, while the national index was 1,322 p.s.m. in May (3.6% lower than last year). The large cities fared the worst with a 4.9% annual fall. The average price of a home today is 42.1% lower than the high in 2007.

Despite the alleged end of the crisis, the number of evictions in the first quarter this year was 18,869. According to the General Council for Judicial Power, up 2.1% with respect to the first quarter last year; 52.6% was because of rental debt. The regions of Andalucía, Cataluña and Valencia had the most evictions, with 8,946, 5,168 and 4,852 respectively. The best payers in the country were Cantabria with only 151 evictions, Basque Country with 156 and La Rioja 158. Socialist Andalucía tried to introduce legislation which would greatly reduce the evictions but, after the banks brought the proposed change to the Supreme Court, it was declared unconstitutional.

Nearly 98,000 Spanish families have lost their homes since 2012. Since the start of the crisis 598,747 mortgage based evictions have taken place.

Natural Gas is expected to drop in price by between 2.5% and 3% during the month of July. This will mean an accumulated fall of over 8% over seven months.

The money which working immigrants in Spain send back to the families now appears in the official statistics. The Bank of Spain has now reported that the total money sent out of the country in such circumstances in 2014 was 6.617 billion € 7.5% higher than 2013. Most was sent to Colombia (815 million) and Ecuador (723.5 million), and next we have Romania (520.3 million), Bolivia (466.8 million), Dominican Republic (406 million) and Morocco (394 million). The only other group who send money out of the country in similarly vast proportions is of course the politicians! I wonder if sometime one of government research bodies will calculate the amount of money that the northern and western European residents in Spain send into the country every month. I am sure it is an equally staggering figure.

It's the Truth!

When I was young, I decided I wanted to be a doctor, so I took the entrance exam to go to Medical School.

One of the questions asked us to rearrange the letters PNEIS into the name of an important human body part, which is most useful when erect.

Those who answered 'spine' are doctors today. The rest of us are sending jokes via email.

Moira.

The Treasury has threatened to cut the funding to three autonomous regions - Extremadura, Aragón and our own region the Valencia Community. This is because of the excessive time it takes these regional administrations to pay their suppliers. The Public Sector Debt Law, which was approved at the end of 2013, it allows the State to retain part of their financing to pay the invoices of the indebted Town Halls. Valencia takes 92.7 days to pay their bills and Aragon 109.7 days on average.

International Airlines Group, made up by British Airways, Iberia and Vueling, has launched a take over bid for Aer Lingus, to make the Irish airliner the fourth member of the IAG. The Irish Government, which holds 25% of the shares, has given their blessing.

A new record in total pension payments reached 8.217 billion € in May. Retirement pension took the largest slice of the cake and reached 5.733 billion €, then widows pensions at 1.481 billion €, permanent incapacity 858.2 million and orphan 125.2 million. The average retirement pension has risen to 1,019.7 € up 2.1% over the year.

The government is to change the method of funding for the cinema industry in Spain. In the past it could have taken up to three years for the public funding to be approved and paid. It was also formerly based on ticket sales which was often falsified. A maximum of €1.5 million, or 50% of the production costs will now be paid in instalments to qualifying films before the film's premier. To qualify for the subsidies, a system of automatic points will be allocated and will be as objective as possible. It will take into account the costs of distribution, the type of production, the filming location, with a forecast of the employment it will create. The Cinematographic Protection Fund for this year, will increase from 36.5 million € to 52.5 million.

A six-year-old-child, resident in Olot, near the Catalan city of Girona, has been admitted into hospital after contracting diphtheria. The childhood illness was eradicated in Spain almost 30 years ago thanks to routine vaccination programmes. But it was widely reported in Spanish media that the child currently being treated at the Vall d'Hebron hospital in Barcelona had not been vaccinated.

A 45-year-old woman died in Malaga but her organs were used to give hope to seven people who benefited from transplants.

A Belgian has been elected mayor of the village of Alcaucín in the province of Malaga. Formerly a member of the Green Party, Mario Blancke, has now joined Ciudadanos, and together with the Socialists will govern for the next four years. Alcaucín has been beset with real estate corruption for many years. Blancke, also a spokesman for Save Our Houses in Axarquía, can now work with the Junta de Andalucía to legalise several hundred properties which were illegally built on rural land. These properties were purchased in good faith and the owners (mostly foreigners) now may be able to get some form of legal security and not have their properties bulldozed. What a great shame that expats in our area appear apathetic when it comes to wielding, what could be, considerable political clout.

Shuffling Off the Mortal Coil.

•Two men are at a friend's funeral. 'Do you know if he left his wife much?' asks one.

'Yes,' said the other. 'Almost every night.'

•Harry believed so strongly in reincarnation he wrote a will leaving everything to himself.

•He's not dead. He's just electroencephalographically challenged.

⁴What's Up? continued

Spain comes top of the league tables compiled by the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) which show that there is one lawyer for every 189 citizens. At the other end of the list of 28 European states comes Finland which has one lawyer for every 2,718 residents. This means that, proportionally, there are 14 times as many lawyers in Spain as in Finland.

Banks will have to confirm the physical residence of their clients. The Treasury is preparing the regulation which will adapt Spain to the international system proposed by the Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation. It will no doubt mean, if adopted, more queues, more forms and more photocopies!

El País reports Italy has rescued 4,500 refugees from the Mediterranean in just one day! Italy asked for their partners in Europe and the international community to 'do what so far nobody has done: pacify Libya' and detain the incessant flow of migrants to their coasts.

More than 4,500 people rescued in just 24 hours and more than 38,000 so far this year. Seventeen bodies found at the bottom of a barge. The coordinator of Doctors Without Borders in Sicily, Chiara Montaldo, reported that among immigrants disembarked in the port of Augusta was Ahmad, a Syrian of 98 years who had 13 days adrift with 234 other refugees. The fear of war and hunger or hope for a better life will motivate people to seek even a dangerous escape. The photos you see included in this section are illustrative of the type of crafts they



use for the crossing from North Africa. One is little more than a toy, while the other is grossly overcrowded.



FOLLOW UP STORY.

Last month I reported on a story concerning the attempted burglary of a watch from a 73-year-old outside the Randy Leprechaun Bar in La Zenia.

Well it seems that the gang, believed to be Romanian, were collared in early June in the city of Segovia. The gang, five in their mid 20's, comprised mainly of young ladies. Their *modus operandi* was to first find an elderly potential victim who was sporting an expensive watch or jewellery. One of the ladies would then approach the person, stroke their arm, hug or kiss to distract them and then steal the object. Sometimes they feigned knowledge of a family member or friend to gain the confidence of the victim. The remainder of the gang would look out for the police and keep the getaway car running.

Police believe they have committed at least 99 offences, 11 of them in Segovia. But it is disturbing to note that this is part of a gang which was supposedly broken up by police in Alicante during 2014. So it begs the question, what the hell are they still doing walking around?

It seems that Madrid rather than Alicante is now their base. Five Spanish courts have issued warrants against this bunch, two of them ordering them to jail. Hopefully something definitive will be done now to stop them.

El Mundo headlines 'Anti-corruption is already investigating the UGT (union) in several regions'. The prosecutor considers the illegal diversion of public money to the union is not limited to Andalucía, and the alleged fraud amounts to 'dozens of millions of euro'.

The mother of the Real Madrid star player, Cristiano Ronaldo, got herself into a little bit of hot-water at Madrid airport in Madrid recently. Prior to her flight to Portugal a routine search of her hand luggage revealed that she was carrying €5,000 in cash. This is classed as an 'administrative offence' as the maximum amount of cash a person is permitted to carry on an airplane when leaving Spain is €10,000, leading to the mother of the three-time Ballon d'Or winner being detained when it was revealed she had over five times the legal limit in cash. The police confiscated (temporarily) €45,000 and allowed her to travel on to Portugal with the remaining money. She must now pay a fine to the tax authorities in order to free up the remainder of her money.

On May 30th, a 95-year-old resident of a nursing home in Navarra attacked an 88-year-old fellow resident and beat him about the head with his walker. The victim died some hours later. Somehow I never associated a nursing/retirement home with violence. Not of course unless it was directed against the cooks!

Lionel Messi has been called to court on charges of defrauding the Treasury. It follows the decision from a court in Barcelona which refused the player's appeal, believing Messi 'benefitted' from income made from selling his image. He is to be judged for tax evasion for a non-payment of IRPF Income Tax of €1.1 million. The Barcelona court remarked in any case now is not the moment to say the player was aware of the fraud, and that must be decided in the oral hearing.

A draft law on the alteration of the marriageable age, increasing the permitted age from 14 to 16 years was approved by the Spanish Senate on June 10. There were 134 votes in favour of the increase in age and 57 against with 18 abstentions. One must surely ask, why would one want to keep the marriageable age at 14? It will not become law until July 1.

This summer, you can now fly from Alicante-Elche Airport to a number of Spanish locations. These are Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Oviedo, Leon, Palma, Tenerife, Las Palmas, Menorca, Burgos, Santander and Santiago de Compostela. For the first five months of this year, passenger traffic was up 4% on the same period last year, with 3.6 million passengers.

As usual, corruption cases remain as prolific as fleas on a hedgehog. First a quick look at the Alhambra - Spain's most visited tourist site. Here, the head of the board of trustees, María del Mar Villafranca, along with three other employees and a businessman, have been arrested in connection with an alleged money-laundering and embezzlement case. Police are looking into the 2007 awarding of the audio guides contract to the company Stendal. The firm's payments to the Alhambra corresponding to the rental of the guides have been inconsistent and tainted by constant delays over the last eight years.

But the PP are at it again in Valencia. Serafín Castellano, a political big-wig and government delegate, has been arrested by the police and his passport withdrawn. Investigations relate to the granting of government contracts and the subsequent alleged bribing. El Mundo alleges that the 'commissions' paid to Castellano could exceed €750,000.

Brave!

Dick to wife: 'Darling, I'm not feeling well. Can you call me a vet.' Wife: 'A vet?' 'Don't you mean a doctor?'
Dick: 'I think a vet's more appropriate. After all, I work like a horse, I live like a dog and I sleep with a cow.'

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A Sergeant and two men from his platoon go to the pub. The Sergeant asks an attractive barmaid to join him in a game of pool, but she tells him she'd rather play with his privates.

Many of you will already be aware of the Municipal Theatre in Torrevieja, photo. What you may not know is that this concrete edifice came in €3.4 million over budget. From what I can gather over the last 12 years, a budget is something that Spanish politicians, particularly in the Valencian region, can drive a coach and horses through. But that is still not the whole story. It seems that the theatre has been operating without a licence for the past nine years!



Now this is something the ruling PP council in the town kept quiet about despite the fact that there have been scores of public performances in the theatre during those years. Okay, you may say that it is down to the usual leaden bureaucracy which is part of Spanish life. But, if there was an accident or say a disaster in the theatre, what would be the position of the insurers? Do you think they would pay up? Of course not. Never noted for their magnanimity, the insurance companies would duck and dive and point to the fact that the structure is still an illegal one and should not be open to the public yet!

Might I also mention that the new conference centre/music theatre off the N-332 near Quiron Hospital does not have a licence either, despite hosting a number of events to date.

Tourists at Alicante-Elche Airport got a hell of a shock in early June. A snake, two metres long, was discovered in one of the lifts in the car park. Fortunately the snake - photo - was non-poisonous and was quickly removed by the Guardia Civil and set free in the airport green areas. Keep an eye out; you may meet it again some time!



Having a bad day! Well, it could be worse. The photo below shows a house in Callosa de Segura in the Vega Baja del Segura, where a van drove straight through the wall. Two floors were damaged and the outside wall obliterated but fortunately, no one was injured.



The socialist council in Rojales have come in for some criticism from the opposition. It seems that after they were recently elected with a working majority, they awarded themselves a whopping 16% rise in salaries. Councillors' salaries in the area come to a total of €19,000. It reminds me of a line from the British sarcastic version of 'The Red Flag' - 'The working class can kiss my ass, I've got the foreman's job at last!'

Having enjoyed First Division football for two years, Elche F.C. have now been relegated to the Second Division due to non payment of tax debts. If the club doesn't pay the players €300,000 owed in wages by June 30th, they could be dropped to an even lower division. Elche locals were very upset and angry at the demotion. You would think the Black Death had arrived!

The Campo de Guardamar market on Sundays has been ordered to close by the Supreme Court as it has been operating without a licence for 20 years. The market has around 800 stalls and 40 bars all operating illegally. A bit like the public halls in Torrevieja I suppose (see opposite column). The manager of another market in the area is creating 'merry-hell' as businesses are operating there without a licence, harming other markets where they all have operating licences.

The warm weather this year has increased the incidence of problems with ticks. A plague of ticks in Pilar de la Horadada invaded a Guardia Civil vehicle which had to be abandoned and later fumigated. Something similar happened to a Guardia Civil vehicle near Foncalent Prison. Our own dog picked up two ticks locally during the past few weeks, so your dog is equally at risk. Proper 'Frontline' type applications and regular careful grooming will protect your pooch. Don't forget to check out inside your pet's ears, a favourite hiding place for parasites. You can see two short and helpful clips about removing ticks here -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJpgYn-kWFM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wotB38WrRY>

Progress on Corvera Airport continues to drift among the doldrums. Now that Aeromur is no longer the operator of the facility (sacked!), the certificate granted by the State Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) late last year is therefore invalid! A further application must be made by the new operator - and this can only be done once one has actually been appointed. So, possibly May 2016 but probably later!

June 22nd was the Feast of San Juan. The beaches were packed in the evening with people celebrating (any excuse...which is marvellous!) and jumping over small fires.

An eight-year-old has drowned in a pool at the Terra Natura waterpark in Murcia. There were 100 other people in the pool and the child was discovered by one of the three lifeguards, floating face down in the pool. This is the second fatal accident of this type to occur in 72 hours. Two days ago a 15-year-old drowned in a water park in Villafranca de Córdoba. Surely these terrible tragedies are avoidable with greater supervision.



Above is a photo taken in Alicante during the Festival of San Juan on June 22. 'Bonfire jumping' is a throw-back from pagan times to rid oneself of evil spirits. Thousands flocked to the beaches on the night. In Valencia alone a total of 200 people were attended to by the Red Cross - 30 were intoxicated, 29 injured, 24 suffered burns and 15 bruises, nine had something trapped in their eyes, one with heart problems and 13 other incidents. And then to top it all, a 24-year-old Romanian was stabbed to death following an argument.

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Lime Bar Golf Society Los Altos, Orihuela Costa.

The golf society's venue for the 10th June 2015 was held at Fond De Lop Golf Course.

Twenty-seven members teed off on a very warm and sunny morning. For the majority of the players this was their first visit to the course and hopefully will not be the last. The course was magnificent and in good conditions played well, the only draw back was the greens had recently been 'hallow tinned' making putting difficult.

The competition was in the Stableford format and the scores recorded are as follows.

Nearest the pin on the 3rd hole was Steve Cottle.

Nearest the pin on the 8th hole was John MacGregor.

Nearest the pin on the 10th hole was Digger.

Nearest the pin on the 12th hole (par 3) was Bryan Archer.

Nearest the pin on the 16th hole (par 3) was Arthur Jones.

Bronze Class in 2nd place was Ken Sutton with 30 points.

Bronze Class in 1st place was Barry Shawyer with 31 points.

Silver Class 2nd place was Les Thwaites with a score of 33 points.

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

Gold Class 2nd place was Arthur Jones with a score of 32 points

Gold Class 1st place was Ken Farrow with a score of 39 points.

Best guest with 20 points was Bob Sammond.

A very good day of golf in pleasant company, with thanks to the committee for organising the event and the bar staff for providing the meal, also to the ladies selling the football draw.



*I was such an ugly kid - when I played in the sandbox the cat kept covering me up.
Rodney Dangerfield*

OTHER NEWS.

Birth Rates, Fertile Women, Longevity and other life stat's for Spain.

Spain's National Statistics Institute (INE) has, as is its business, issued a raft of interesting statistics in its Natural Population Movement report.

The first bit of good news is the first rise in the birth rate after five years of falls. A total of 426,303 babies were born in Spain in 2014, 588 more than in 2013. The figure marks a rise of 0.1% year-on-year. Not a significant increase but it is at least heading in the right direction. Previous years showed a serious downward trend with the number of babies born in Spain having fallen 18% since 2008, a year that saw a 30-year high of 519,779 newborns.

Meanwhile, the number of fertile women (those aged between 15 and 49, according to the statistical series) fell from 11.6 million in 2009 to 10.98 million last year, as a result of a decrease in the number of immigrants living in Spain, and the high emigration rate among Spaniards – both factors attributable to the lingering effects of the economic crisis. Of the 426,303 babies born last year, 17.8% had a non-Spanish mother.

The average age of women who gave birth also rose once again, to 31.8 years in 2014, compared to 31.7 in 2013 and 30.8 in 2007. Broken down, that average is 29.3 years among immigrants in Spain and 32.3 among Spanish women. In 1981 the average age was 28.2 years. The trend is obvious.

In terms of deaths, the report reveals that 395,045 people died in Spain last year, a 1.2% rise compared to the previous year. There was a negative rate (more deaths than births) in nine regions: Galicia, Castilla y León, Asturias, Aragón, Extremadura, the Basque Country, Cantabria, La Rioja and Castilla-La Mancha.

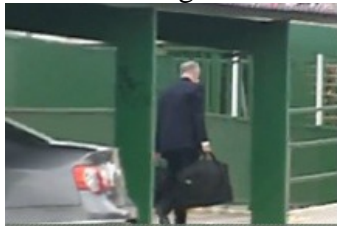
But it is good news on the longevity front. Life expectancy also rose in 2014 compared to the previous year, going up 0.2 years to 83, the highest on record. Average life expectancy for men in Spain is 80.2 (0.2 years higher than in 2013), and 85.7 (0.1 higher) for women. In terms of regions, Madrid has the highest life expectancy in Spain, at 84.4 years, followed by La Rioja (83.9) and Castilla y León (83.7). The lowest figures are to be found in Andalusia (81.9), Ceuta (80.7) and Melilla (80.3).

Marriages are also on the rise. In 2014, 158,425 couples got married, a 1.3% rise on 2013. The number of marriages per 1,000 inhabitants stood at 3.4 last year, a 0.1% rise on the previous year.

The average age of couples getting married in 2014 was 36.9 years for men and 34 years for women. These ages seem quite high to many other Europeans. Among married couples of different sexes, in 16% of cases at least one partner was not from Spain – a fall from 18.1% in 2013. Meanwhile, 2.1% of the total of registered marriages corresponded to same sex partnerships (3,300 couples).

One Down! Many More To Go.

It is refreshing to see a corrupt politician get his just desserts.

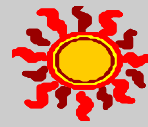


This photo on the left shows PP politician Rafael Blasco entering Picassent Prison in Valencia to serve a six and a half year jail sentence. Blasco, photo right, has appeared in these columns before when it was found out that he



misappropriated six million euros of public funds which were destined to go to assist relief work in underdeveloped countries but were diverted to his own interests. What is also astounding is that Valencia should think itself capable of funding underdeveloped countries when it cannot even pay its own bills. Valencia, one of the most indebted provinces in Spain, has a hard core debt of almost €40 billion.

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You've gotta love the Irish !

A coloured guy and Murphy go into a pastry shop. The black guy whisks three cookies into his pocket with lightning speed. The baker doesn't even notice. The black guy says to Murphy, "You see how clever we are? ...You Paddies can never beat that!" Murphy says to the black guy, "Watch dis, any Paddy is smarter din you, and I'll prove it to ya." He says to the baker, "Gimme a cookie, I'll show ya a magic trick!" The baker gives him the cookie, which he promptly eats. Then he says to the baker, "Gimme anudder cookie for me magic trick." The baker is getting suspicious, but he gives it to him. He eats this one too. Then he says again, "Gimme one more cookie..." The baker is getting angry now, but gives him one anyway. He eats this one too. Now the baker is really mad, and he yells, "OK... And now where is your famous magic trick?" Murphy says...." Now look in the black guy's pocket!"

Brian Horsman

Céad Mile Fáilte
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Grandpa In The Firing Line.

Billy was 4 years old and was staying with his grandfather for a few days. He'd been playing outside with the other kids when he came into the house and asked, "Grandpa, what's that called when two people sleep in the same bedroom and one is on top of the other?" His Grandpa was a little taken aback, but he decided to tell him the truth.

"Well, Billy, it's called sexual intercourse." "Oh, Okay," said little Billy and went back outside to play with the other kids.

A few minutes later he came back in and said angrily, "Grandpa, it's not called sexual intercourse. It's called bunk beds..... and Jimmy's mom wants to talk to you."

Lee Bell

The Spaniards and Spirits.

No, Gladys, not the supernatural ones but the hard liquor types. So how much do the Spaniards spend on their tipples when they go out for a 'short'? Well, much less than you would think - €14 a year on average!

Spaniards spent an average €14 on spirits – which is to say distilled drinks such as rum, gin and whisky – in bars and restaurants last year, €6 less than in 2013, according to a study by consultant Kantar Worldpanel.

But beneath this average consumption figure lie many differences. For example, “men spend 60% more than women (€138 compared to €86) and consume more frequently (15 drinks a year compared to nine for women),” explains the company.

Geography also influences the type of alcohol bought outside the home. “The heaviest consumers of these types of drinks are men, aged over 50, and resident in the north of Spain. They make up three million of the Spanish population, and annually spend €358. At the other end, the group that consumes the smallest amount of alcohol (to which nine million people belong) consists of women aged between 18 and 34 years old, resident in the metropolitan areas of Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia, who consume an average three drinks a year,” the consultancy concludes.

The differences between men and women are many: men consume more gin, rum and whisky, and although rum remains the most popular drink among female drinkers, women also order more vermouth and cocktails.

The survey – which only examines hard liquor consumption, leaving out drinks such as beer, wine and cider – highlights that the time and the significantly amount spent drunk. Edurne director of Worldpanel's sector, says that marked differences between masculine and feminine consumption, as well as age, what really determines which drink we end up consuming is the occasion: when, and who we are with.”

Weekend evenings and when in the company of friends remain the main occasions for consuming drinks with a high alcohol content. Rum and Coke, gin and tonic, and whisky and Coke are the most popular tipples, but again, there are geographical variations. “There are different preferences according to the area: along the Mediterranean Arc the preferred drink on Saturday nights is gin and tonic, in Andalusia it is rum and Coke, and in Madrid it is whisky and Coke,” the survey explains. When people go out with their partners, rather than in a group, mojitos and caipirinhas also stand out.

At Sunday lunchtimes, vermouth leads the way when it comes to strong drinks, competing with beer and wine. And for after-work drinks during the week, Kantar says it has detected widespread consumption of neat whisky – though it reiterates that the survey only examines drinks with a high alcohol content. “These types of strong spirits are not that common in this kind of consumption, which is dominated by beer (which makes up 86% of all after-work consumption),” it says.

The Munchies.

Two teenagers are found smoking a joint in the middle of a park. They're both arrested and taken to the town jail. The sergeant advises them they're entitled to one phone call.

A while later, a man enters the police station. The sergeant says, 'I assume you're the kids' lawyer.'

'Heck, no,' replies the man. 'I'm here to deliver a pizza.'

How Herpes Is Being Used to Fight Cancer.

Patients whose cells were treated with this STD were 8 times more likely to survive than a control group. A genetically modified strain of herpes can kill cancer cells and stop tumors from growing, according to new research. The strain, called T-Vec, was used to treat patients with melanoma as part of one of the final phases of testing of a new drug.

The research, published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology, is the latest to show how viruses may be used clinically to kill cancer cells. Unlike chemotherapy, which casts a wide net and kills any proliferating cells, viruses often narrowly target cancer cells, which could make them more effective in fighting the disease. The method also appeals to researchers because it activates the immune system to fight cancer.

Researchers looked at more than 400 patients with aggressive malignant melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer. More than 16% of patients given the T-Vec treatment showed a lasting response for six months, compared with 2% of members of the control group given normal treatment.

“We may normally think of viruses as the enemies of mankind, but it's their very ability to specifically infect and kill human cells that can make them such promising cancer treatments,” said professor Paul Workman, chief executive of the Institute of Cancer Research, in a statement.

The drug, produced by Amgen, now awaits approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration before it will be offered to patients.

<http://time.com/3897542/herpes-skin-cancer-melanoma/>

The Prayer.

In church an elderly lady was heard to say a prayer. It was so sweet and sincere that I just had to share it with you:-

Dear Lord,

The last few years have been tough for me. You have taken my favourite actor, Patrick Swayze; my favourite pop singer, Michael Jackson; my favourite Blues Singer, Joe Cocker; my favourite actress Elizabeth Taylor; my favourite football manager, Bobby Robson; my favourite golfer, Seve Ballesteros; my favourite comedienne, Joan Rivers; and my favourite comedian, Robin Williams.

I just wanted you to know that my favourite politicians are:

Alex Salmond, Tony Blair, John Prescott, Ed Balls, Gordon Brown, Nick Clegg, Ed Milliband and Nicola Sturgeon (in no particular order).

Amen.

Pete Dudman

(Bit of a Tory then Pete? Mick.)

The Service.

The daughter asks her Dad, "Dad, there is something that my boyfriend said to me, that I didn't understand."

"He said that I have a beautiful chassis, lovely airbags and a fantastic bumper."

Her Dad said, "You tell your boyfriend that if he opens your bonnet and tries to check your oil with his dipstick, I will tighten his nuts so hard that his headlights will pop out and he will start leaking out of his exhaust pipe."

Ann Wightman.



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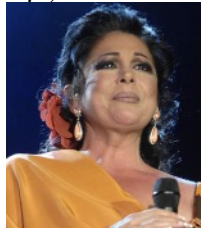
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Preferential Treatment?

You may recall that the Spanish diva, Isabel Pantoja, received a two-year sentence for money laundering in the long running Malaya case. But even while in prison, Isabel - photo - is rarely out of the media. This time the prison unions and prison staff are complaining about the preferential treatment she is receiving at the Alcalá de Guadaíra prison in Sevilla.

56 of the 87 public workers in the prison state that the diva is being treated like a guest in her own hotel; being invited to have coffee with the Prison Director; having her meals brought to her own private cell; smoking in prohibited areas at any time of the day; and not taking part in activities designed to reintegrate the prisoner back in society. The Prison Director has denied any laxness, however, the Interior Ministry has ordered an investigation.



'Spending a Penny.'

In order to bring about further integration with the single European currency, the Euro, all citizens of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, must be made aware that the phrase, "Spending a Penny," is not to be used after 30 June 2015. From this date onwards, the correct term will be: "Euronating". It is hoped that this will be a great relief to everyone. If you have any questions, just give me a tinkle, but please, not in the wee small hours!!! (Pete Dudman)

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How many people wind down their car windows, thinking the air conditioner drains too much petrol?

The answer comes from the website belonging Government of the United States (www.fueleconomy.gov) which describes itself as 'The official U.S. government source for fuel economy information'. It says turning your windows down when driving outside town will ease the heat, but will have a more negative effect on your pocket than if you turn on the air conditioning with the windows closed. It also notes when driving slowly in the city, opening the windows is both more efficient and cheaper. The website has five suggestions:

1. Use the air conditioning when you are on the open road.
2. Don't have the A/C setting too cold; learn to use the warmest temperature you feel comfortable with.
3. Try to park in the shade so you don't have to abuse the air conditioner.
4. Before you turn on the conditioner, drive for a while with windows down. This way the hot air in the car can escape and will be cooler when the air conditioner is turned on.
5. Never turn on the air conditioner before you drive. Most of the A/C models will only work when the car is in motion.

Every year babies and dogs die after being left in cars during the Spanish summer.

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Fred and the Four Pints!

Fred, a lifelong white racist living in the East End of London is in a major car crash. When he comes round 3 days later in hospital the surgeon says: "I've got good news and bad news.....the bad news is you have had 2 pints of African blood and 2 pints of Pakistani blood"

Fred screams "What the hell is the good news then?"

"Your penis is 6" longer and you are top of the housing list"

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the bumps at the time.*

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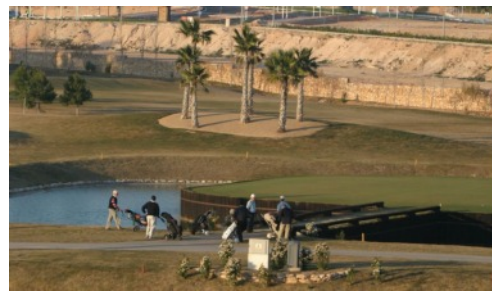
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THE PHOENIX GOLFING SOCIETY.

We played at La Romiro on June 21st. The weather was perfect for golf and we had a good turnout with everyone enjoying themselves. Overhaul Winner was John Walls.



Joint second was -
D.Wightman & Mike
Highway.

Nearest the pin was -
Mike Highway again &
D.Wightman again.

We had a Two's
Competition which

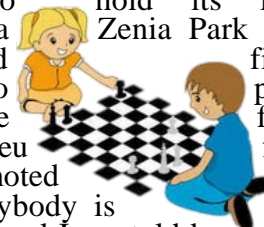
rolled over from our last game. This was won by Gary - 54 euros. He bought all the golfers and wives who came back to the bar for food, a drink. Generous chap!

Food was once again supplied by Donna and Paul, which was well appreciated; thanks Donna.

Our next meeting is at Roda on July 19th.

ORIHUELA COSTA OUTDOOR CHESS TOURNAMENT.

Orihuela Costa is to hold its first outdoor chess tournament at La Zenia Park on Saturday July 18, starting at 10am and finishing at 8pm. It costs €10 to participate in the tournament, deadline for entries is July 13, 2015. Contact dtoc.eu for applications. This event is being promoted by the German Association. Everybody is welcome to attend the event - no charge - and I am told by the organisers that FREE BEER(250 Litres +) will be available to all visitors!





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The Organisation.

An organisation is like a tree full of monkeys, all on different limbs at different levels. Some monkeys are climbing up, some down. The monkeys on top look down and see a tree full of smiling faces. The monkeys at the bottom look up and see nothing but asses.

TOURISM UP AGAIN.

Spain welcomed nearly 23 million foreign tourists in the first five months of this year, 5.1% up on 2014, according to the Survey of Tourist Movements at the Frontier (Frontur in Spanish), released by the Ministry for Industry, Energy and Tourism. In the month of May 6.5 million foreign tourists arrived, up 6.8% on last May. Between January and May, most foreign arrivals came from the United Kingdom with 22% of all foreign arrivals at 4.9 million up 3.3%, France with a 16.4% share, up 8.2% to 3.7 million, and Germany with a 16.1% share up 3.1% to 3.6 million.

Scandinavian countries continued their falls, down 28.7% in the first five months to 241,941 passengers. Russian visitors were 28.7% fewer in number to 241,940. (Incredibly similar figures!)

For the regional communities, Cataluña leads with 25.5% of the arrivals, up 5.2% to give 5.7 million. Canarias saw 21.6% of the arrivals with 4.8 million foreign visitors up by just 0.1%. Andalucía with 13.8% of the arrivals, 3.1 million people and up by 7.7%.

THE RICH GET RICH AND THE POOR....

Estimates of the number of people with large fortunes in Spain has grown by 40% since the crisis began in 2008. In 2014 alone, the amount of wealthy individuals rose 10% to reach 178,000 people, a new report finds.

A study by consulting firm Capgemini and RBC Wealth Management found that there had been a seven% global increase in the number of high net worth individuals (HNWI) in 2014. People who fall into this category have a million dollars or more in investable assets without counting the value of their primary residence or consumer goods.

The findings on Spain confirm earlier reports suggesting an increase in inequality. In Spain, household income dropped an average annual 3.5% between 2007 and 2011, similar to the figures for Ireland and Iceland, according to a recent study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Meanwhile, nearly 13 million people are at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Spain – 27.3% of the population, or almost one in three individuals – according to research by the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN), a coalition of NGOs, grassroots groups and European organizations.

Father Murphy & The Boozers.

Father Murphy walks into a pub in Donegal, and asks the first pisshead he meets, 'Do you want to go to heaven?'

The man said, 'I do, Father.'

The priest said, 'Then stand over there against the wall.' Then the priest asked the second man, 'Do you want to go to heaven?'

'Certainly, Father,' the man replied. 'Then stand over there against the wall,' said the priest.

Then Father Murphy walked up to O'Toole and asked, 'Do you want to go to heaven?'

O'Toole said, 'No, I don't Father.'

The priest said, 'I don't believe this.. You mean to tell me that when you die you don't want to go to heaven?'

O'Toole said, 'Oh, when I die, yes. I thought you were getting a group together to go right now.'

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IDIOT OF THE MONTH.

Plenty of choice this month, with the idiots mainly coming from that large section of the population - the gullible! If you are a regular watcher of Spanish TV, you will no doubt have been bombarded at some stage with adverts featuring a bunch of chancers hawking predictions using tarot cards, crystal balls and probably chicken bones!

The first is a story I touched on once before features the ex-president of the Castellón football club, José Laparra. Jose fell in love with a particular lady (obviously too particular to go for José) and solicited the help of a so called witch to cast a love spell.

On the basis that a fool and his money is soon parted, José paid the 'witch' €165,000. The 'witch' instructed José to put some water in a vase of flowers. Then after 40 days he should take the water and wash his body with it. To reinforce the love spell, he was also told to take some earth from a cemetery and rub it all over his body. Eventually José realised he had been suckered and together with some friends broke into the 'witch's' house to retrieve the money. The police were called - who confiscated over €145,000 in cash and charged José and his friends with burglary. José was fined €1,440 and also faces a jail sentence of over two years.

The next story concerns a Spanish woman in Barcelona who lost her husband in 2014. Heartbroken and depressed, she went to a 33-year-old Guinean man, who was posing as a witch doctor, for help. The charlatan put some sand on the woman's forearms and then poured a chemical liquid over her arms which made the sand smoke. This persuaded the unfortunate woman that the man had superpowers and between May of last year and February of this year she parted with €4,500!

When she finally came to her senses some weeks ago and confronted the man, he promised to repay her €8,200 but that in order to avoid bad luck he would have to kill three crocodiles, which the woman would have to pay €2,400. As the woman had already given all her savings to the man, she now took out a bank loan for the additional money. Shortly afterwards she realised she had been thoroughly scammed and called the police. The fake witch doctor was detained and is now in an immigration centre as he is in Spain illegally.

I believe in the next case the idiocy may be with the police and not the individual. In early June a man was driving his car in Salamanca in northwestern Spain. He was stopped by police and fined €80. His crime? Biting his fingernails while driving! The police cites the reason for the fine that the driver 'was not maintaining the required freedom of movement.' But it seems that this is not a rare occurrence in this region - Castilla y Leon. In May, a driver was fined for unwrapping a piece of chewing gum at the wheel.

'I'll tell you what I like about Chinese people, they're hanging in there with those chopsticks. They've seen the fork. And the spoon. I don't know how they missed it - Chinese farmer, getting up, working in a field with a shovel all day. Hello.....Shovel! There it is! You're not ploughing 40 acres with a couple of pool cues.' (Jerry Seinfeld)

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DANCING!

If you are someone who likes to 'trip the light fantastic,' 'cut a rug,' 'boogie' or 'bust a groove,' there are now two golden opportunities for you locally, where you can happily 'strut your stuff.'

The first is at **The Fire Station**, Top Floor, Via Park 1, La Zenia, on the right as you approach Zenia Boulevard. Here, every Tuesday night at 7:30pm, there are modern Jive/Fusion and salsa classes held by Maxine and Adam. It costs just €5, is held outside and it is great fun. Suitable for beginners or the experienced. No partner - never danced - no problem!

See www.modern-jive-spain.com & www.facebook.com/pages/The-Fire-Station/1640599752837102?fref=photo

Next is the **Casino Mediterraneo** in Zenia Boulevard. Every Thursday and Sunday evening from 8pm until August 31st, there will be live music, dancing and dinner. Tickets are just €15. For reservations phone 636 445 244 or 647 347 327. I have been to a number of events at the Casino. It has always been great fun and the food has always been exceptional. Go on! Tear yourself away from the 'soaps' and try something new!

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Twisted!

We had an entertainer at the kids' party who did balloon animals. He blew them up and twisted them into different shapes. I've never seen anyone do that with real animals before.

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Dumping Dogs!

In just one month, 17 puppies were dumped beside rubbish bins in the Xabia area of Marina Alta. This four were among them. All the puppies have now been taken over by the Xabia kennel as the animal shelter of Javea (Apasa) cannot cope. The charity shop of Apasa near the Arenal beach has recently been robbed. The Xabia kennel also report that many cats are also now being abandoned in boxes by the bins.



But especially callous was the dumping of three puppies into an illegal tar pit in Cartagena in recent weeks. Alarmed by their barking, a neighbour discovered their dreadful plight.

One of the puppies had to be 'put to sleep' but the other two recovered after several hours cleaning to remove the tar. See photo below. The puppies are cross-breed between a *podenco* and *galgo* breeds and are ideal for hunting, and so the Guardia Civil are concentrating their investigation on hunters and hope with the publics help the person who dumped the three puppies in the tar can be apprehended. They are also using Twitter to help catch the villain. The Society for the Protection of Animals has announced they will prosecute the owner of the land 'for uncontrolled dumping of tar, creating a dangerous area and environmental damage'.

But if the police catch the offender, the maximum custodial sentence he would get would be 18 months. And, as we all know, jail sentences of two years or less in Spain are rarely served unless it is a repeat offence.



But don't think that the dumping of pets is something confined to 'other areas.' Recently a neighbour in Lago Jardin 2 heard barking coming from a rubbish bin there and discovered a puppy in a cardboard box inside it.

I was going to also report on the hanging of greyhounds in northern Spain, but you are probably depressed enough already.

So here are some happy dogs!



I planted some birdseed. A bird came up.
Now I don't know what to feed it.
Steven Wright

MODELO 720 FOREIGN ASSET DECLARATION.

Just to refresh your mind: the Modelo 720 is a form which residents in Spain are obliged to complete in respect of assets held abroad. There are three reporting categories, based on bank accounts, investments and immovable property, and you have to report all assets in a particular category if the value of your total assets in that category amounts to over €50,000 but this only applies to assets located outside Spain.

Lawyers are appealing to Brussels over the new obligation to declare assets valued at over €50,000 stored abroad. Several offices consider as excessive the obligation on tax payers to face fines of 150% for being late in presenting their information. At the centre of their complaint is the infamous modelo 720, which obliges you to inform the treasury on your properties, current accounts and shares abroad. Lawyers think more than 30,000 people are affected.

A retired man from Granada was one of the first to be fined by the Tax Office over his assets abroad. The contributor, a returned emigrant, had saved over his working life €340,255 which he placed in two investment funds and shares in the Swiss bank UBS, according the El País who reports the comment about the affect was given by his lawyer, Javier Salinas Ullastres, speaking from his office in Marbella.

In late May, the Tax Office imposed a fine of €253,950.98 for being late with the 720, and in addition another 169,300 to regularise the items he had failed to declare and another 16,016 € in interest payments.

In total the inspection has cost him €439,267 for failing to inform assets abroad of €340,000. The Special Delegation in the Tax Office considered 'his infraction was very serious' and applying article 39.2 in the IRPF Income Tax Law, the fine equates 150% of the amount defrauded.

Several other lawyers have joined Salinas in his claim to Brussels, and if more fines are issued they will take the matter to the European Tribunal in Luxembourg.

Alejandro del Campo was the first lawyer to appeal to Brussels and when he heard about the Granada case he wrote a letter to the Judicial Office of the Tributary Matters in the European Commission. Del Campo is based in Mallorca. The Association of Fiscal Assessors has also written to Brussels, as have a British association representing their residents in Spain.

Since 2013 when the modulo 720 was introduced, it has uncovered assets worth more than 124 billion € according to the Tax Office.

According to judicial sources, some 30,000 contributors are worried because they haven't declared their assets abroad using modelo 720. Since 2013, the Tax Office has obliged residents to inform them of properties, current accounts, shares, investment funds and other assets over a total of €50,000. There are also heavy fines for late declarations.

The European Commission believes that the obligation to declare assets abroad, the Model 720, "contrary to Community law" in its disciplinary system, which considers "disproportionate", which has "the intention to propose the opening of a procedure infringement in this regard." Brussels has sent a communication which has denounced the illegality of the tax liability. Among those who have also denounced the Model 720, is the Spanish Association of Tax Consultants (AEDAF).

More in Spanish here -

<http://www.expansion.com/2015/03/03/economia/1425415031.html>

Mexican weather report: Chilli today and hot tamale.
Paul Rodriguez



JULY AT THE PHOENIX



Via Park V

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Wednesdays - Fun Darts with Big Brian, Oy! Oy!

Thursdays - Eyes down for The Phoenix Bingo -

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BINGO!



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A Great Night - Fancy Dress Optional.



Name That Tune!

Two little old ladies were walking through the park one Sunday afternoon. The band was playing a catchy sounding tune, and one of the old ladies said, "I wonder what the name of that tune is". The other one noticed a sign posted near the bandstand and said, "It looks like they post the names of their selections. I'll go down and see". A while later she came back and told her companion, "It's the 'Refrain from Spitting'".

Alex, Lilly & Robert

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Free Zone

The Best Restaurant in the World.

In late May 2015, El Celler de Can Roca in Girona, Spain, was voted best restaurant in the world out of 100, by their peers and food writers. I came across this report by Nick Ryan of the South Australia Sunday Mail, which is both informative and humorous. I hope you like it -

Last week a bunch of snout-in-the-trough chefs and food writers delivered their verdict on the world's 100 top restaurants.

Ranking something as subjective as experiences in restaurants are fundamentally flawed but this year these professional gluttons managed to get it right because the restaurant they anointed as the best in the world is a place that give me one of the most pleasurable nights of my life.

I write this not to brag or boast – enough people already think I'm a wanker – but to ponder the question of what might make something the "best" in the world.

The current titleholder is a place called El Celler de Can Roca in Spain, a perennial high-ranker that this year grabbed top spot for the second time, bringing the crown back to Spain after several years of everyone eating weeds and weird mushrooms at Noma in Copenhagen.

So what makes this place the best restaurant in the world?

In one sense nothing more than the – admittedly highly qualified – opinion of the competition judges. That's because our perception of what makes a restaurant great is pretty subjective and dependent on mood.

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Sometimes the best restaurant in the world has a lazy susan (rotating tray) in the middle of the table, sometimes a pint sitting next to a parmie (Veal or Chicken Parmigiana) that hangs over the plate and a publican called Herbie playing the Buzzcocks on the stereo.

And sometimes it's in a serene and refined space in Spain's Catalan heartland (headed by three brothers - photo) where food can be elevated to art without ever forgetting its single most important purpose is to taste bloody good. Walking into the world's best restaurant means your steps are weighted with pretty hefty expectations. This is not the kind of place you just pop down to when there's nothing in the fridge.

Every person parking their bum on one of the restaurant's 60 seats booked more than 12 months in advance to be able to do so. That kind of anticipation crackles and hums. It also probably helps explain, if not excuse, the number of cameras perched on tables and snapping away with the arrival of each dish.

Initial fears that this was going to be an evening of worshipping at some gastronomic altar are however quickly put to rest. Nobody wants to eat in a temple or bow down to their dinner and very quickly you understand that this is a place that understands that hospitality is at the heart of any great restaurant.

The first thing you notice as you sit down is a sense of space. Each table feels as though it's the only one in the place. The surprises and pleasures begin straight away.

Even before a menu is produced or the three volume wine list wheeled to the table, a contraption like a paper lantern is placed before each diner and a ribbon pulled to reveal five tiny morsels representing five countries – Korea, Mexico, Chile, China and Morocco. Each one is a perfect invocation of place.

A bonsai olive tree is placed in the middle of the table and you're invited to pluck the caramelised olives that hang from its branches.

White asparagus comes as an icecream slab with fine seams of black truffle prompting the waiter to joke "it looks like a Vienetta".

A ceramic sea urchin spills forth razor clams and seaweed, a single perfect langoustine is cooked in the steam produced by sherry being poured over hot rocks and pigeon hearts rest on clouds of puffed rice.

Every mouthful is perfect, the balance impeccable and 19 courses can be consumed and you walk out of the place with your belt buckled in the same hole it was when you walked in.

I'm in no position to say this place is the best restaurant in the world – not until I rob a couple of banks and get medical clearance to check out the other contenders – but if there's a better one it must be bloody good.

(I have added some punctuation and explanations to the above as the Aussie's obviously believe in neither. A meal at *El Celler de Can Roca* will set you back between €150 & €185 per head. Matching wines will add another €60 to €90 p.p. You can find some excellent photos of the food and restaurant here, together with some honest comments and samples of the menus at the link below. Mick)

www.cumbriafoodie.com/2013/09/07/the-best-restaurant-in-the-world/



Lime Bar Fishing Sunbathing Club

Not a lot going on this month or reports of anyone doing anything stupid. We should have had a games and quiz night but that didn't work out. It was too early for some & too late for others! It is a bugger getting old you know. We are having a summer soiree at the New Tavern in July so the booze may produce an idiot or two.....

At this month's bun fight we agreed to fish our monthly matches on a Friday. This is only for a trial period to see how well it goes. We also finally cancelled last year's "old farts" match due to a lack of interest. Well done to the 4 anglers through to the semi final of the knockout competition. They are the quill v just John and 3 rods v the Shropshire lad. Barry Williams is back from UK after staying with Cyril. Cyril is doing all right but they couldn't get out fishing as it pissed down the whole time. Shame! Feathers complained that he had not received a "personal" trophy for winning the "Rod & Reel" cup last year. I am sure something appropriate will be supplied!

Our June match was again held at the Eden as it was the only venue available to cater for 18 anglers. On the day only 15 could make it, mostly down to short notice medical appointments. We had a fantastic day fishing in glorious sunshine with everybody catching. This is our first match without a blank since October 2013. Incredible! Not only did we all catch, but most of us had "fishy tales" of the "BIG" one that got away. I watched a large carp on the surface sucking at the reed stems, but by the time I had got my floating bread sorted out, he had bugged off. The fish I did manage to land weren't big, but I lost 6 fish all in the same bit of reed bed. I must buy stronger tackle to whip them out! I was not happy as I only weighed in 2.7 kilos after having had over 10 kilos from the same stretch the week before.

The usual faces came top. 1st was 3 rods with 6.2 kilos, followed by the Shropshire lad with 5.2 kilos then Fagin with 4.2 kilos.

A few of our stalwart anglers ventured off to the Argos for a couple of days last week.....

We had a great couple of days with the lads and that's what the club was all about. The fishing was excellent for some! Don't mention sat navs to Just John though, his sat nav had people in farms and builders yards. This all added to the craic though and a very good trip out. We hope to do it again in September.

(3 Rods)

Next meeting bun fight is at The Lime Bar @ 17.30 Mon 6th July.

Fishy fingers!

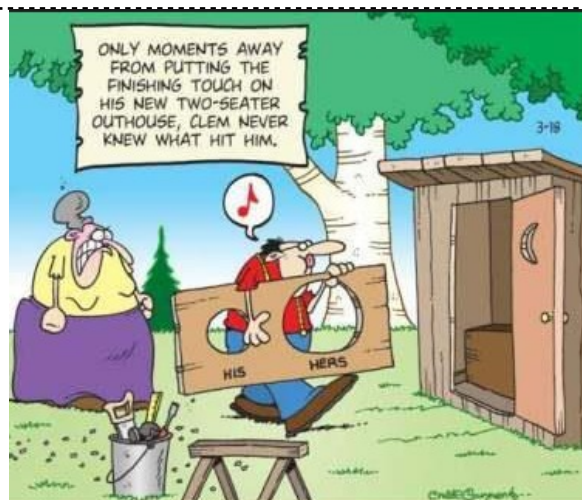
The Ghost.

When a man steals your wife, there is no better revenge than to let him keep her.

David Copperfield

The great question, which I have not been able to answer... is, "What does a woman want?"

Dumas



Bar Next Door Darts Team 2015.

Mark & Peter Rushton of the Lime Bar / Bar Next Door, started their 1st darts team in October last year, to play in the FairPlay Darts League. We had 12 players sign up, the league is organized by a young chap called Chris Logan from Domino's bar and I must say he did a fantastic job with some help of Allan Thorpe. I was some how wrangled in to be Captain. The league started in October and each week we played I was impressed by the enthusiasm of our players. We are not the best players but win or lose we all enjoyed the game,

We had great support of Peter & Mark and their wives, Sue & Carly, who went to great efforts to make sure we were well fed. All the other bars in the league were great fun to play against and the standard of darts in all the teams was brilliant - much respect to all of them.

The last game of the season was in April with just a few cup matches to play off. We had our presentation night on Friday 29th May at the Sunrise Bar Restaurant. A three course meal and I must say it was very good; the staff were very professional & the food was excellent. Chris & Allan awarded the trophies.

The Captains & Vice Captain Cup doubles was won by Chris Logan & Colin Kernahan from Domino's bar, runners up were Mark Rushton & Kevin Wood. Winner of the singles Captains Cup was Kevin Wood, runner up was Allen Thorpe. Kevin also received a medal for hitting a 180; there was about 9 other players awarded as well. It was great to take a couple of trophies back to the bar in the first season.

On the 11th June we had our end of season darts team night out, organized by our money grabber secretary Sandra Crabbe. Many thanks to Sandra; it meant we all had a great night out. We went to La Herradura Restaurant Los Montesinos and a good night was had by all; Peter Rushton, landlord of our bar, surprised us all by awarding every team member with a trophy for being part of the team - a very nice gesture. I would just like to say many thanks to the Bar Next Door / Lime Bar & their staff and everyone who took part in the FairPlay Darts League.

Kevin Wood aka 'One Dart Woody'



"The lads in the darts team say take your time in getting better — they're winning all their matches!"

Get on Yer Bike!

I think it is just terrible and disgusting how everyone has treated Lance Armstrong, especially after what he achieved, winning seven Tour de France races while on drugs.

When I was on drugs, I couldn't even find my bike.....

Willie Nelson



AQUAQUEST PLUMBING

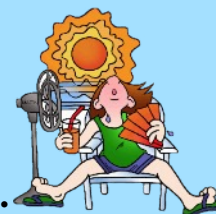


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EXPAT STUFF.

Putting out the Rubbish!

No, we are not talking about you ejecting your daughter's boyfriend, but the *basura*/garbage/rubbish!

If you are reading this you will probably have originally hailed from another European clime where your household rubbish was collected, at best, just once a week.

Thankfully in Spain, at least in this part, we enjoy a daily rubbish collection. This usually happens after midnight accompanied by the usual clanking and engine revving, but it is still an excellent service.

BUT, take care! The local police in the Valencia region have launched a new campaign to combat what they call "abusive bin use." Newcomers to Spain, tourists and indeed many long-term residents are unaware that there are strict rules in Spain governing the use of bins and hefty fines for those who are caught ignoring them.

The high temperatures reached during the summer months means that any food left in the bins for some hours will soon fester and stink and attract rodents, stray cats, insects and is a real danger to public health.

Each municipality has its own rules but generally, citizens are advised to deposit their rubbish in the bins between 9pm and 11pm. Although most ignore this during the winter months it is most important that this 'permitted period' is adhered to during the summer. I have heard from some people locally, who have been discovered by the police putting rubbish in the bins earlier than the 9pm allotted time. I have heard from some people locally, who have been discovered by the police putting rubbish in the bins earlier than the 9pm allotted time. So far they have just received a warning but the police can place a minimum fine of €60 on offenders but the fine can be significantly higher!

And please, garden rubbish in the *podos* bins only and household rubbish in the others. Tonight, I noticed an absolute mess in the three bins behind the *petanca* courts in Lago Jardin 11, - the garden rubbish container was covered in old mattresses and household rubbish and there was loads of 'green' rubbish in the household bins!

Dying for a Fag!

Smoking kills more people in Spain than AIDS, alcohol, illegal drugs and traffic accidents combined. In what amounts to (what El Pais calls) a slow collective suicide, smoking-related conditions sent nearly 60,500 Spaniards to their graves in 2012 – an average of 166 men and 40 women a day – according to a new study.

Please don't join them.....it is up to you!

I've reached an age where I wake up in the morning, look in the obituary column,
and if I don't see my name, I call a hooker.

George Jessel

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Sorted!

After a tiring day, a commuter settled down in his seat and closed his eyes. As the train rolled out of the station, the young woman sitting next to him pulled out her cell phone and started talking in a loud voice: "Hi sweetheart. It's Sue. I'm on the train". "Yes, I know it's the six thirty and not the four thirty, but I had a long meeting".

"No, honey, not with that Kevin from the accounting office. It was with the boss". "No sweetheart, you're the only one in my life". Yes, I'm sure, cross my heart!" Fifteen minutes later, she was still talking loudly.

When the man sitting next to her had enough, he leaned over and said into the phone, "Sue, hang up the phone and come back to bed." Sue doesn't use her cell phone in public any longer.

Pete Dudman

Viva España!

One of the things I love about Spain is that the Spanish media doesn't cosset or 'protect' its readers or viewers from what 'Disgusted of Surbiton' would call offensive. Whereas in the nanny-state UK the viewers are warned if there are 'flashing lights,' etc., coming up in a program (I am waiting for them to start showing warnings about showing images of peanuts!), the Spanish see flashing lights merely as the first step to a party or fiesta.

Mind you, sometimes their openness can catch you unawares. A couple of months ago I escorted a friend to the A&E at Torrevieja Hospital. While sitting in the waiting room and with my back to the TV (placed to placate and divert the irate and the impatient), I became aware that the program on TV was showing - with the appropriate grunting, moaning and squelching - what Private Eye magazine would refer to as 'robust horizontal-jogging' with an occasional bit of S&M thrown in. Naturally, being a healthy, inquisitive and horny male, I turned around, and yes, they were at it 'hammer and tongs' on the TV program. BUT, as I was smiling and taking in all the action, I glanced at the others in the waiting room behind me, to see just three women now watching me watching the porn on TV! It was very disconcerting, so I turned around and returned to my boring book.

But again, when the action in the movie 'revved-up' again, I was forced to turn around and see not only the hyperactive nudies, but each of the ladies raise their heads from their phones and look at me with expressions which said, 'Yes, we can see you, you dirty bast*rd!' I only managed to turn around another four or five times (Well, it was a very long night!) before I returned to my book for good. (For those literary buffs among you, the title of the book was *Sexual Abstinence and How It Can Improve Your Dart's Game.*)

Anyway, I am wandering. I wanted to direct you to the following link from *Diarioinformacion*, an online version of the popular Alicante newspaper. But be warned, it shows photos and film clips from *The Walking Dead*, highlighting what is called 'The Top Five Deaths of Zombies' and it is very, very, strong stuff! You would never see anything similar in the public media in the UK - they are far too cosseted for that. Enjoy and show it to the grandkids!

<http://ocio.diarioinformacion.com/tv/series/the-walking-dead-5-mejores-muertes-zombies-nws418888.html>

Pissed?

A nursery school pupil told his teacher he'd found a cat, but it was dead.

'How do you know that the cat was dead?' she asked her pupil.

'Because I pissed in its ear and it didn't move,' answered the child innocently.

'You did WHAT?' the teacher exclaimed in surprise.

'You know,' explained the boy, 'I leaned over and went 'Pssst' and it didn't move.'

Pete Dudman

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Do you know why it's so hard to solve a Redneck murder?
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Jeff Foxworthy



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CUT OUT & KEEP

When your children are teenagers, it's important to have a dog so that someone in the house is happy to see you.

Nora Ephron

Who'd be a Court Appointed Attorney?

Juan Antonio Gragera, an attorney, was sitting in his office on September 25, 2014, preparing divorce proceedings for a client. At around 8pm, the fax machine spat out a document informing him that he would be the official court-appointed counsel for a new client.

Juan thought he recognised the name of the new client, Francisco Correa, realising immediately that this was the main defendant in the *Gürtel* case, one of the largest corruption cases in Spanish legal history. But defending Correa, the alleged leader of a business network that bribed elected officials to secure government contracts across Spain, will not bring Gragera much more money than what he makes with simple court-appointed cases.

(Correa's earlier defence lawyer, José Antonio Choclán – one of the country's most prestigious criminal law experts – dropped the case when it became clear that he would not be getting paid.)

To date, the Madrid regional government has only paid his new attorney, Juan, net €19.07 (gross €147). His check came through on March 23 of this year, six months after he started working on the case, and it represents 70% of the entire amount he is set to make (€210). But the remainder will not be paid until the legal proceedings are over, even if that is several years from now.

At that point, he will be eligible for a €15 supplement because of the special nature of the case, plus €19 for every 1,000 pages of court papers, and €7 for every day the hearing continues after the third day. By comparison, private attorneys who specialize in corruption cases charge more than €100,000 a year.

The *Gürtel* case comprises a seven-year investigation encompassing 700,000 pages of reports divided into 2,000 volumes, with 187 people under investigation and 147 official requests for information issued to 21 different countries.

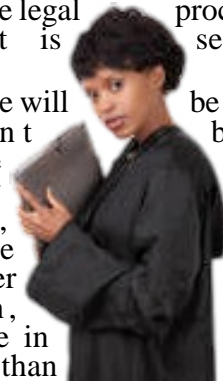
There are around 43,000 lawyers in Spain who have signed up to work as public defenders, according to figures released by the General Council of Spanish Lawyers. The state's investment in 'free justice' is just €4.72 a year per citizen, - a total of €23 million in 2013.

The Council complains that this investment has been cut back by over €43 million over the last four years, mostly by reducing counsels' pay. The average payment per case is €125, according to the same source.

Of course all this begs the question - How confident would you be in your defence attorney and his ability to fight your case, knowing that all he would receive for his/her efforts is a pittance?

Spain comes top of the league tables compiled by the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) which show that there is one lawyer for every 189 citizens.

At the other end of the list of 28 European states comes Finland which has one lawyer for every 2,718 residents. This means that, proportionally, there are 14 times as many lawyers in Spain as in Finland.



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Nancy Gray

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Silence followed! Some moments later the captain came back on the intercom. 'Ladies and gentlemen, I'm sorry if I scared you. While I was talking to you, a flight attendant accidentally spilled a cup of hot coffee in my lap. You should see the front of my pants!'

One Irish passenger yelled, 'Holy Mother! You should see the back of mine!'

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*Enjoying a drink on
the Costa Blanca.
This is probably how
we see ourselves.....*



But, is this how it really is?



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