

THE DREAM SCENE

NEWSLETTER

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

Issue no. 119, 1st of April 2017



Bienvenido a todos and welcome to the March edition, and a special welcome to Brendan in Saudi Arabia. After the storms here Brendan, the beaches are looking a bit sad and in need of replenishment. Any chance of a few buckets of sand when you are over next?

According to the Met' Office this winter has been the wettest since records began. This hasn't been a period of constant rainfall, but on the few occasions it did rain it was a deluge with many floods. Blue skies with lots of sun now during the day but the evenings can still be very chilly.

PM Theresa May confirmed that she will send Brussels a letter invoking Article 50, the legal procedure for leaving the European Union, on March 29th. With all the thorny issues involved in navigating through Brexit, triggering Article 50 is likely to be only the beginning of the beginning, with negotiations to follow for two years or quite possibly longer. Actual discussions with the U.K. can't begin until ministers from the 27 nations officially approve more-detailed negotiation directives to be drawn up by the Brussels-based European Commission. This could take several weeks, meaning the two sides may not be able to start discussions until late May or June. Any assurances we expat's in Spain have had to date from either the British or Spanish authorities have been luke-warm at best. It is worth noting that the number of EU nationals registering as nurses in England has dropped by 92% since the Brexit referendum and a record number are quitting the NHS. Still, there's always that extra £350 million to spend each day! Ha! Ha!

Many have noticed that the *Policia Local* appearing to be checking various address around the urbanisation. I spoke to them and they are checking on dwellings and inhabitants for the *padron* at the request of the Town Hall. More on this in the next issue together with info' on early news on plans for a hospice in the area.

It is good to see that the spaces in the commercial development next to Aldi's, between Entre Golf and Dream Hills 2, have now all been taken up and are being fitted-out. This will include a large garage (OC Garage Services already open), a Cafe/Bar and a massive new Chinese Todo-supermarket. Two smaller businesses - clerical & building services are already established there.

Sincere thanks to Beryl & Denis, Peter & Brenda, Peter H, Carol & Brian C, Andy M, Les B, Ellen & Davey and Lil & Tony H, for their very kind donations to printing costs this month.

Somebody dropped a 'Thank-You' card with €10 in the Dream Scene postbox outside our house in a very kind gesture well over a month ago but forgot to sign the card! So please let me know who you are so I can reintroduce your sub'.....and don't all rush! Regards, Mick & Tid.

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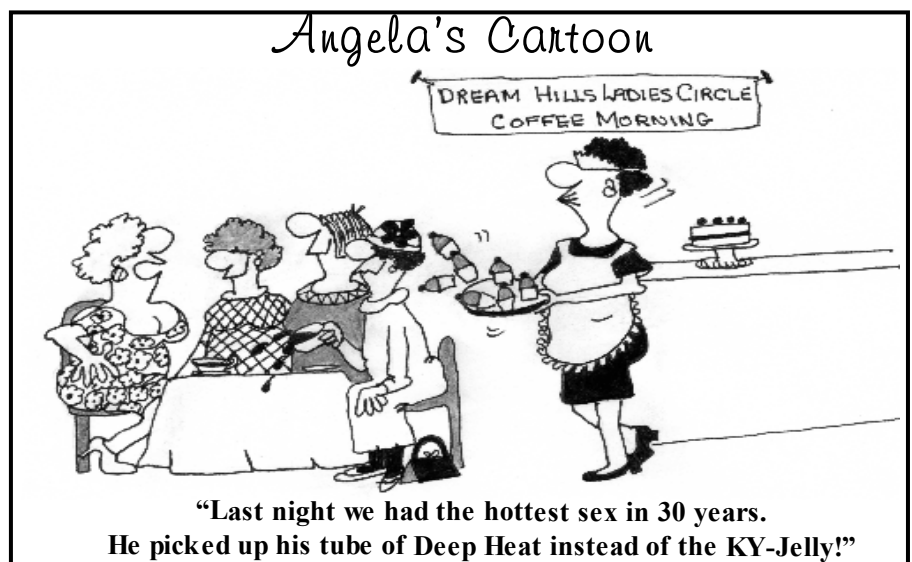
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Raymond Chandler

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Did you know that

...it's illegal to be a rhesus macaque in Japan. A zoo killed 57 of its snow monkeys with lethal injections after discovering they had been crossbred with the banned species of rhesus macaque. Japan prohibits the possession and transport of invasive species, including crossbreeds. Sources said the culling was unavoidable because there were fears they might escape and reproduce in the wild. The zoo's operator held a memorial service for the snow monkeys' souls at a nearby Buddhist temple.



...a fart can carry bacteria? Well, it seems it depends on what you are wearing, if anything. An Australian surgeon asked a colleague to fart onto a Petri dish, first fully clothed, then with his trousers down. Overnight the second Petri dish sprouted visible lumps of two types of bacteria that are usually found only in the gut and on the skin. But the fart which had passed through clothing caused no bacteria to sprout, which suggests that clothing acts as a filter. This report appeared in the BMJ way back in 2001, the report finishing with "Our final conclusion? Don't fart naked near food. All right, it's not rocket science. But then again, maybe it is?"



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An finally, did you know that Panasonic have launched a washing machine in India with a special program to tackle curry stains. Only 10% of homes in India have a washing machine, with most people still doing their laundry by hand. The new machines are selling very well and also have special programs to deal with sweat, sauces and hair oil.

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(Cut out & keep.)

ETA, the Basque terrorist organisation, has announced that it will be handing over all its arms - without conditions - and the civil intermediaries will be advised of the locations on April. 8. Close cooperation between the anti-terrorist elements of the Spanish and French police has been particularly effective in decimating ETA ranks in recent years. ETA murdered 829 people between June 28th 1960 and March 16th 2010. Imprisoned Basque terrorists are dispersed in prisons throughout Spain and a number of political parties in the region want the relevant prisoners to be relocated to the Basque Country.

Spain's State debt reached a record level in January at €955.275 billion. With continued borrowing and interest, it could easily reach a trillion €.

Five women in Spain were murdered in just four days during late February. This brought the total number of killings due to gender violence in the country to 16 in just seven weeks. Last year, 44 women died at the hands of their former or current partners, according to official records. In Murcia the media reported 'domestic violence is contagious with 6,302 cases in the Region last year' – more than 25% than in 2015 according to Judicial Sources. The Balearics is the community with the highest rate of women victims of domestic violence' – 5,268 cases last year up 13% on 2015 – judges have issued protection orders for 516 women. Since the conservative Popular Party (PP) came to power in late 2011, the budget allocation for the prevention of gender violence has been cut by 19%, going from slightly over €31 million in 2010 to €25.2 million in 2016.

The Convergence independence-seeking party in Catalonia was financed by a 3% tax on contracts according to the investigating judge. The media had a photo of a reconstructed document which has been put through a paper shredder – the evidence which a Catalan politician thought he destroyed and which the Guardia Civil has reconstructed, piece by piece, has been key to the investigation. (The Khomeini regime in Iran did the same with shredded documents seized from the US embassy.) El Mundo headlined 'Mas (Convergence Party) took control of the TV3 Catalan TV channel to hide corruption' – after the controversy of the 3% was reported by the channel. A new director, Vicent Sanchís, close to the Convergence party, will now lead the public company.

Government financial support for the Catholic Church has increased again' - 7,347,612 IRPF Income Tax declarations had the "X" on the tax form ticked last year, up 864,000 more than a decade ago. If the relevant part of the tax form was ticked, then a small part of your tax paid went to the Church instead of the state. Other religions do not benefit from such largesse. Surprisingly, the EU have not come up with any objections, yet.

Telefónica has sold 40% of their (network and antennas) affiliate to the KKR fund for 1.275 billion € - a price inline with the valuation realised to frustrate the stock market launch of Telxius.

Diario de Ibiza headlines 'the hotels on Ibiza are suffering a wave of fake complaints from British tourists' – vulture lawyers are promising their clients to obtain a free holiday if they make a complaint – this epidemic has resulted in a crisis between Spain and the UK.

The Barcelona City Hall is to spend €250,000 a year on feeding contraceptives to the pigeons on the Catalan capital in an effort to reduce the bird problem. Until now, the City Hall has applied periodic culls, capturing and then killing the birds, but it has decided to take a more humane and practical approach, which it hopes will cut numbers from around 85,000, by around 20% in the first year of the contraceptive scheme, with overall numbers falling by 80% in four to five years.

Barcelona also faces a threat from another avian species, the monk parakeet, numbers of which have grown sharply over recent years. So far, no measures have been discussed on how to deal with the noisy birds.

A bottle of butane rose by 5% during March to €13.52. The increase should have been 14% because of the increase in raw materials but regulations limit the increase to 5%. Despite the new increase, butane is still 22% below the €17.5 recorded in March 2015 but is still up by 20% since July 2016.

The government tried to end the storage monopoly in the Spanish ports but the stevedores (dockworkers) have organised several weeks of industrial action to counter it. The EU is pressurising Spain to incorporate new reforms in the area to bring it into line with the rest of Europe. Unloading a ship in Spanish ports costs four times as much as other European ports. The Ciudadanos and Socialist parties voted against the government on introducing the recommended efficiencies. Failure to introduce them will now cost the taxpayer around €140,000 a day. KPMG believe the labour overspend is around €286 million and that the sector, which is heavily unionised, is vastly overstaffed.

Resale property sales boosted by foreign buyers now make up 82% of the total sales, a third by foreigners, with the British still leading despite the latest Brexit effect.

A huge oil discovery was made in Alaska. Spain's Repsol announced the discovery of a field of 1.2 billion barrels of oil on the state's North Slope—the largest US onshore find in 30 years. First production could come as soon as 2021, helping to stem extraction declines in the state.

It is now illegal to dock dogs' tails in Spain.

The president of Mercadona recognises: 'Our website is shit' – Juan Roig has listened to what his shoppers are saying and he said his company has placed a working team of twenty to analyse how to become profitable online. Mercadona earned 636 million € in 2016 and will invest this year as much as 1.2 billion €. Over the year the supermarket chain, which now has 1,600 stores, generated 4,000 new jobs in 2016 and sales last year were up by 3.9% to reach 19.8 billion €.

El Mundo reports Cataluña as the autonomous community which taxes the low and middle income earners with the most income tax, far higher than other large cities such as Madrid and the two Castillas. Murcia is another region which penalises low and middle income earners.

Starting in June, Iberia will offer long-haul low-cost flights from Barcelona to Los Angeles and Oakland, Buenos Aires and Punta Cana in the Dominican Republic.

Telefonica will rent their fibre-optic network in Spain to Vodafone. The agreement will allow the Spanish multinational to recover part of the massive cost in placing the fibre cables, and will allow that expansion to continue. Telefónica fibre reaches 16 million homes already, while Vodafone have reached nine million using fibre and cable networks after their multimillion purchase of ONO. Orange has about nine million.

Local Police in Elda have supplied policemen with anti-



bullet-proof jackets but not for the policewomen! Because of their particular anatomy, women require a different shaped vest, as indeed do short police officers. It is not a 'one-size-fits-all! A badly fitted anti-bullet and stabbing vest can be as dangerous as no vest. It seems that it is only Orihuela, Denia, El

Campello and La Nucia who offer the correct protection in the whole province. Many police officers prefer to purchase their own bullet-proof vests because of hygiene and shape issues, with the more enlightened councils providing grants.

A judge has charged Ángel María Villar, president of the Spanish Football Federation with embezzlement of €1.2 million. What with dodgy transfer fees, footballer's hidden wealth & tax evasion - who is surprised!

Last month we reported on the gruesome murder of a 40-year-old Lithuanian in Cartagena. Two Lithuanian men have been arrested in connection with the crime; the first in a small town in France and the second later in Torrevieja. They are believed to be drug dealers.

Vicente Soriano, photo, has gone from being a leading researcher and expert on HIV to being expelled from his hospital. At one time a 'Rock-Star' of AID's researchers, his team in his small hospital in Madrid, was hitting the world headlines with his research. But in 2010, someone sent documents to the Spanish Agency for Medicaments and Sanitary Products (Aemps) stating that Soriano had conducted an illegal test. The inspection machinery went into action and some months later the Concierge of Health determined that Soriano had tested medications for HIV patients in his public hospital without asking for authorisation from Aemps, nor from the ethics committee in the same hospital, without taking out the obligatory insurance policies and without informing the patients they were being used as guinea pigs. He appealed the fine but ended up paying €210,000. But it didn't stop there. In 2013 he was taken to court for falsifying a signature on the authorisation to carry out tests. In the middle of 2016 the Health Concierge sentenced him to two years without work or pay, for manipulating clinical histories to make his hepatitis C patients appear in a poorer condition than the truth. By then he had given up research and only dedicated himself to assisting: attending to patients with infectious illnesses.



More than a quarter of EU citizens are having their applications for permanent residency in the UK rejected since the UK voted to leave the EU, according to a new analysis of the Government's migration data. If the Government was to require all EU citizens to apply for permanent residency, the refusal rate could mean 800,000 EU citizens are left without certainty as to whether they can stay in the UK post-Brexit, according to the research. In the last two quarters of 2016, more than 12,800 EU citizens had their permanent residency requests refused with a further 5,500 declared invalid, a rejection rate of around 28%, analysis by the Liberal Democrats found. To qualify, EU nationals need five years of continued residence in the UK.

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It's a myth that the British stand in orderly queues. Try getting the Number 159 outside Brixton station. It's like the last helicopter leaving Saigon. We queue until the bus arrives and then we stab and kill each other to get on. Jeremy Hardy.




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Lime Bar Golf Society, Los Altos, Orihuela Costa.

The Lime Bar Golf meeting was held on the 8th March 2017 at Saurines La Torre Golf Course.

On a fine morning 36 players teed-off on this nice course but with very tough pin positions.

The competition was played in the Stableford format and the scores recorded are as follows:-

Nearest the pin on the 6th hole was Bill Deme

Nearest the pin on the 7th hole was Ian Grant

Nearest the pin on the 10th hole was Nev. Greenwood

Nearest the pin on the 14th hole was Lyn Newbury

Nearest the pin on the 17th hole was Dave Railton

Nearest the pin on the 18th hole was Gary Lester

Silver Class 3rd place was Dave Railton with a score of 31 points

Silver Class 2nd place was Nev. Greenwood with a score of 31 points (on count-back)

Silver Class 1st place was George Rushton with a score of 32 points

Gold Class 3rd place was Ian Grant with a score of 29 points

Gold Class 2nd place was John McGregor with a score of 29 points (on count-back)

Gold Class 1st place was Mike John Williams with a score of 31 points

A very enjoyable days golf in pleasant company, thanks to the committee, the Lime Bar staff and the ladies selling the football draw tickets.



Colin Clarke

The Pipes!

A piper parked his car in an unfashionable part of Glasgow, forgetting he had left his bagpipes in the back seat and a window open. When he remembered his oversight he rushed back to the car, but unfortunately it was too late. There were another three sets on the backseat!



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It's called marriage.'* *Sam Kinison*

Local News

Orihuela Costa now has a new councillor/coordinator for the beaches and coastal infrastructure. It is Louisa Boné of the Ciudadanos (Citizens) Party. Louisa is to the right of the photo, taken at the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Cabo Roig. Next to Louisa is Dream Hill's own Stefan Pokroppa who now also works for the town council as an assessor to Councillor Boné. It is fair to say that they will have plenty to do and put right, as the previous administrations were useless when it came to putting the coastal infrastructure in order. Ciudadanos are now backing the ruling Partido Popular (PP), so hopefully this coalition arrangement will ensure that a sufficient budget is allocated to the infrastructure of the coast. Similarly, the beaches will have to be kept in tip-top condition with the highest incidence of Blue Flags per km in Spain. It is particularly good to see an expat, Stefan, as part of a council team. Let's hope that they can soon remedy many of the deficiencies in the coastal area.



The former councillor for Orihuela Costa, Sofia Alvarez, is now the PP Councillor for Foreign Residents. Sra Alvarez, photo, recently opened the library building in Calle Ciprésin Torre Zenia to local registered associations and clubs to hold meetings and activities.



Below is a scene from the recent very successful St. Patrick's Day Parade in Cabo Roig. It was a wonderful occasion with more than 8,000 spectators lining the streets. Those responsible for the Winning Float kindly donated the €500 first prize to the orphanage in Elche.



There was an earthquake during March 12 km beneath Los Montesinos measuring 2.7; the last quake there in 2015 measuring 3.3 magnitude. Spain had 12 major earthquakes in the last 600 years, the worst taking place in Torrevieja in 1829 with 400 people killed.

APPEAL.

Some of the bar staff and regulars plan to undertake a Sponsored Fundraising Cycle Ride from The Lime Bar in Los Altos to Benidorm on April 29.

The object is to raise funds for a specialised wheelchair for Pete Barton who is suffering from Huntington's Disease.

There are sponsorship forms and collection boxes in the bar. Please give generously.

Thousands of teacher's jobs are threatened as next September 1 the four-year moratorium approved by the Ministry of Education in 2013, on the linguistic requirement of Valencian in all teaching places takes effect. Among them more than 5,000 teachers lack the requirement, the largest number of them concentrated in the province of Alicante. This is yet another dumb decree made without proper consultation and even less sense.

Two-seater mobility scooters/wheelchairs have been banned from a number of commercial areas in Benidorm, particularly through the Mercaloi. Careless driving, several accidents and narrow passageways have prompted the shop owners to ban the two-seaters. Some areas are also considering banning the single-seaters.

The Guardia Civil have requested a judge to investigate the mass sterilisation of 160 cat in the nearby island of Tabarca. The police believe the process was 'less than sanitary'.

La Verdad in Murcia headlines 'Aena has postponed any decision over San Javier until the regional political crisis is closed' – the airport owner wants guarantees of institutional stability without returning to talks with the regional government.

The ex-mayor of Bigastro, Joaquin Moya, photo left, and his successor Raúl Valerio Medina, photo right, are both facing six years and six months in prison and 32 years of disqualification if found guilty of corrupt ion. It is alleged that for eight years Social Security payments were paid for 47 locals, who did not work. The contributions allowed them to collect all types of subsidies and access pensions that have now been blocked. Now this is a common fraud in Spain. What is unusual in this case is that the accused are both socialists, members of the PSOE. The alleged fraud, which was uncovered by *Informacion*, created false day-labourers and benefited relatives of the socialists, mostly elderly women. That the money will be repaid, around €25,000 p.p. is unlikely.



left, and his successor Raúl Valerio Medina, photo right, are both facing six years and six months in prison and 32 years of disqualification if found guilty of corrupt ion. It is alleged that for eight years Social Security payments were paid for 47 locals, who did not work. The contributions allowed them to collect all types of subsidies and access pensions that have now been blocked. Now this is a common fraud in Spain. What is unusual in this case is that the accused are both socialists, members of the PSOE. The alleged fraud, which was uncovered by *Informacion*, created false day-labourers and benefited relatives of the socialists, mostly elderly women. That the money will be repaid, around €25,000 p.p. is unlikely.



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Price: €6.92. Children under 4 years travel for free but ID may be requested.

Pensioners can get a 30% discount but only if they are registered as permanent residents in the Valencian Community. You may need to show proof of age ID plus Residencia. A bit of a palaver really. Prior booking is not required.



President Trump says he's planning to travel less to other countries than previous presidents. The idea was first suggested to him by other countries.

Jolly Nice of Him!

Per-Erik Muskos, a 42-year-old local council member for Övertorneå in northern Sweden, has proposed that Swedes should take a one-hour paid break from work to go home and have sex with their partners.

Muskos expressed concern about couples who do not have enough time together, and noted that "studies" show that sex is healthy. "It's about having better relationships," the AFP reported him saying. In the Swedish press, he emphasized the wellness benefits, which he said would be enjoyed by both single and coupled people.

That a small-town Swedish politician would encourage sex-breaks is not hugely surprising. In the work-life balance equation, Swedes clearly value life: two or three times a day, it's common to have *fika*, or coffee breaks, to help them disconnect, recharge and eat sweets. The country boasts 480 days of paid parental leave which can be shared between parents, and it has experimented with a six-hour work day (for which employees are paid for eight).

What is remarkable is that Muskos sees the logical time slot for the health-driven sex as being during the work day. Swedes already enjoy a relatively easy work schedule —an average of 1612 hours per year, according to the OECD, 9% percent less than the OECD average. And it does not appear that they are burning the midnight oil working late: only 1% of Swedes work overtime, according to the OECD Better Life Index.

However, this would be of little benefit to English and Spanish males, who would probably spend the hour watching football anyway!

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Ask the Rabbi!

A man wonders if having sex on the Sabbath is a sin because he is not sure if sex is work or play. He asks a priest for his opinion on the question. The priest says after consulting the Bible, 'My son, after an exhaustive search I am positive sex is work and is not permitted on Sundays.' The man thinks, 'What does a priest know of sex?'

He goes to a minister, a married man, experienced, for the answer. He queries the minister and receives the same reply, 'Sex is work and not for the Sabbath.'

Not pleased with the reply, he seeks out the ultimate authority, a man of thousands of years of tradition and knowledge - a Rabbi.

The Rabbi ponders the question and states, 'My son, sex is definitely play.'

The man replies, 'Rabbi, how can you be so sure when so many others tell me sex is work?'

The Rabbi softly replies, 'If sex were work, my wife would have the maid do it!'

Out of the Blue.

Several month ago we reported on the launch of a blue wine in Spain. Since starting production the company, Gik, has sold over 120,000 bottles, more than half in countries outside the European Union, like Japan, South Korea and Brazil. The company is also hoping to enter the American market soon. There is no disputing the wine's colour, a neon blue that comes from adding two natural ingredients, indigo dye and anthocyanin, a pigment found in grape skin.



But someone has complained anonymously to the Spanish Wine Federation, who have now fined Gik and told them that 'blue' wine is not acceptable. Under the European Union's oenological regulations, whatever is not specifically authorized is considered illegal — and blue is not an approved colour and cannot appear on the label. In 2008, a Spanish wine producer was also fined for marketing a "gold cava," made by adding gold particles to the sparkling wine known as cava that is mostly produced in Catalonia.



After suspending production for over two months, Gik is once again shipping its alcoholic drink, relabeled and now containing 99% wine and 1% grape must — so as not to fall under the category of pure wine.

But Gik is appealing the fine and has started an online petition to get people to join its crusade against color naming restrictions for wine. One of the company founders, Taig Mac Carthy, commented "Not being a lawyer, this whole dispute has left me with something that feels like a bad hangover."



"We met, fell madly in love, got engaged, had a lovely wedding and honeymoon. Then things turned sour, we grew bitter, separated and divorced. It was quite a busy weekend!"

EL CAPITAN

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Donations of 'pre-cooked' food, such as Meatballs (albondigas), jars of Lentils (Lentegas) & Chickpeas (Garbanzos), Tuna (Atun), Vegetables (Verduras) etc., are preferable. Many of the recipients would be unable to afford to pay costly electricity or gas charges for long cooking periods which many foods require, so pre-cooked foods are preferable.

But other than food, the charity also needs disposable razors, shaving foam, soaps, shampoo & shower gel, - even half bottles are welcome. The homeless are encouraged to keep clean and to shower in the Reach Out premises. www.reachouttorrevieja.com
<https://www.facebook.com/reachouttorrevieja/?fref=ts>

Marriage.

I had some words with my wife, and she had some paragraphs with me.

Sigmund Freud

Some people ask the secret of our long marriage. We take time to go to a restaurant twice times a week. A little candlelight, dinner, soft music and dancing. She goes Tuesdays, I go Fridays.

Red Skelton

The Rat.

Rodrigo Rato (photo), who headed the International Monetary Fund (IMF) from 2004 to 2007 and who was also a former finance minister with Spain's ruling Popular Party (PP) and a former Caja Madrid chairman, is one of 65 officials found guilty over their use of 'black'



complimentary credit cards, which were handed out to dozens of officials at two struggling banks.

Rato was sentenced to four and a half years in jail. Miguel Blesa, also an former chairman of Caja Madrid, got a six-year sentence. The 65 defendants (there were originally 66, but one of them has since passed away) received sentences ranging from three months to six years. The greedy bunch had used these cards liberally to pay for personal expenses, racking up bills worth €15.5 million on everything from gourmet restaurants to designer clothes and expensive trips.

Rato is also facing a host of other charges ranging from money laundering to tax evasion and will hopefully be joining Big Gay Juan in cell 69 soon.

It is worth noting that bank boards of these savings banks during this period did not comprise experienced business people but were populated by a range of politicians from the left and right, together with trade union officials and other spongers. Most of these banks had to be rescued but this did not stop the payment of large severance packages to the 'top dogs' where they 'rewarded' themselves. Thankfully, some of these wildly excessive payments are now being tested in the courts. This includes CAMbank.

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THE SEXUAL ACTIVITY OF SENIOR MALES.

The frequency of sexual activity of senior males depends on where they were born.

Statistics just released from the United Nations, revealed that: North American, Australian, New Zealanders and British men between 60 and 80 years of age, will on average, have sex two to three times per week, (and a small number a lot more), whereas Japanese men, in exactly the same age group, will have sex only once or twice per year if they are lucky. This has come as very upsetting news to a lot of us at the golf club, as none of us had any idea we were Japanese.

Moira

The British invasion started in the 60's and now they represent one in every four foreign residents, however the British find it difficult to integrate often of language difficulty and the elderly can in some cases miss family at home and are now more inclined to return given the uncertainties surrounding Brexit.

Taking Alicante Province

San Miguel de las Salinas – where the British outnumber the locals – over the past eight years 43% of them have left.

Benitaxell 124 km from the coast, over the same period almost half have left and between Benissa (-44%), Teulada (-49%) and San Fulgencio (-55%) while the Spanish population grew by an average 5%

More dramatically Calpe (-73%), Torrevieja (-65%), San Fulgencio (-55%) and Teulada (-49%) – regarding the number of British registered on the local censuses (empadronados) in the period 2008-2016.

However, Sonja Dietz president of the Marina Alta Businessmen Circle claims 'Nothing is happening. There is no exodus of the British from the Costa Blanca, only inflated censuses for political motives. Our businesses have not been affected, not even in real estate. However, as prices have been rising following the fall in the value of the pound, fewer new residents are arriving', she commented.

Estimated numbers on how many British spend more than six months a year here range from 70,000 to 130,000.

'At the moment when the mayors started to inform the foreign community the importance of registering as a higher registered population gets greater funding from the State – that date was January 1 2014.

'They arrived in the heat of the real estate boom, captured by promoters in their homeland, and the delights of sun and sea fade over time. Age and illness are the main reasons for the Britons to decide to return home and when their home has become less accessible or too big' explained Jordi Giner, doctor in Sociology in Valencia University. He has published many studies on the British in Marina Alta.

'Some become widowed, unprotected and isolated. The need to drive to get anything done when beforehand they had family support... and so many decide to return home.'

Regional social services are well aware of problems of the elderly. More frequently the over 80's find they are unable to help themselves and often pride makes them more immobile. In these cases neighbours and the Town Halls are the first to inform their family at home. 'However, in many cases they have no relatives left alive, or they have fallen out and don't want to return', noted the sociologist Jordi Giner.

According to the Alicante Province Economics Studies Institute (INECA in Spanish) the Brexit effect will reduce provincial GDP by 7%, something over 2.3 billion €. Tina Brown has been living in Alicante for sometime and has been helping her compatriots with the paperwork. 'Until Brexit, we were all happy here, the most common problem was validating the driving licence', she assured, 'Now they are fearful, repeatedly ask what is going to happen, but we don't know anything'.

The hot potato is health coverage as Spain is reclaiming from the UK 300 million € a year for health treatment of Britons.

'They get more fearful as they get old. They know our health service is better than theirs and many used to abuse the system as health tourists for hip and knee replacements... the panorama is an uncertain one' explained Jordi Giner.

A survey realised by Valencia University over Brexit showed 44% believed returning to the United Kingdom would be 'a bad option and only when absolutely necessary' – another 40% sustain they are going nowhere whatever happens and only 14% consider the change is just part of life's passage. (Feb 27, Typically Spanish)

Despite all the above, Mark Stücklin highlights a significant drop in demand from British buyers.

We finally have official data showing the real impact of Brexit on British demand for property in Spain. Sales registered to British buyers in the fourth quarter of last year were down 28%, and I think we will see an even steeper decline when figures come out for Q1 this year. That said, the British are still the biggest group of foreign buyers by a wide margin, at least for now.

Mark Stücklin, Spanish Property Insight.

Three Bullshitting Mice!

Three Scottish mice walk into a pub. The Edinburgh mouse ordered a single whisky and said, 'When ah see a mousetrap, ah lie on ma back and set it off wi' ma foot. When the trap closes over, ah catch it wi ma teeth, do 30 bench-presses, and then make off wi ma cheese.'

The Inverness mouse ordered a double whisky and said, 'When ah see rat poison, ah collect as much as ah can, take it home, and add it to ma cornflakes every morning instead o' milk.'

The Glasgow mouse said, 'Sorry, but ah cannae stay long. Ah've got a date wi' a cat!'



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*I got a teenage daughter and a menopausal wife.
One's getting breasts, one's getting whiskers. My life is over.
Bobby Slayton*



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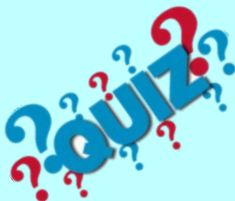
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Today I picked up Grandma at the airport. She's now at the age where she doesn't remember.
So I said: 'Thanks for coming.....goodbye!' Craig Kilborn

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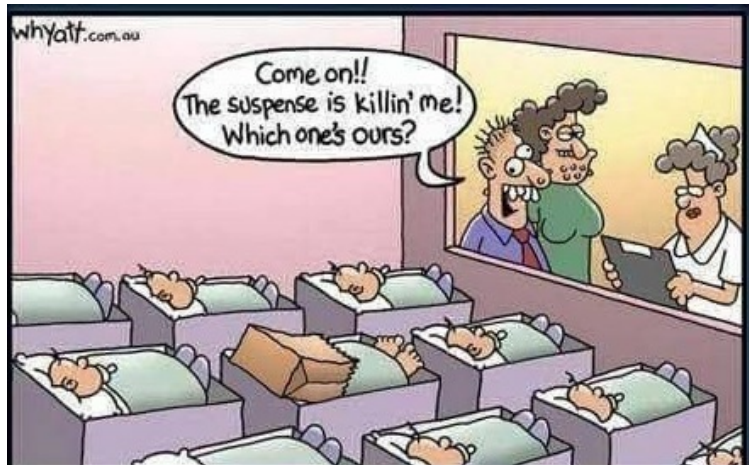
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ENCOUNTER

Last night coming home from a bar
I met this little strange being
pissing on the wheel of a car
I couldn't believe what I'm seeing

He turned as he heard me get near
and gave me this horrible stare
I stopped and shook in fear
at his horns, great teeth and green hair

Who are you and what do you want
I shouted at him in English
rak dannit en iddly eront
he replied in a strange language

I don't understand what your saying
as he turned a small dial on his chest
I'm just here for a while, I'm not staying
I think that will be for the best

Why did you come here I said
he replied ,I needed a toilet
I'm just getting into the deed
then you come along and spoil it

They told me this country was warm
he said as he shook his green penis
the next time I stop for the toilet
I'll go somewhere hot like Venus

Are you an alien I stammered
as he walked to a strange little ship
yes I am and your really hammered
you need to get home to your kip

The next morning when I awoke
the last night was a total blur
but visions kept coming of a bloke
small and green and covered in fur

I resolved there and then to stop drinking
as it's really worrying when
your mind sets you up to thinking
of aliens and little green men

The Phantom Poet

The Voice.

Men are attracted to a woman with a raspy voice. We think, 'Hey, maybe she's all done yelling.'

Moody McCarthy

Prince Charles's vocal chords are plainly trying to strangle him. He may well become the first monarch to lose his head from the inside out.

A. A. Gill

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The Phoenix Golf Society.

Sunday March 19, Hacienda Requelme.

Well, we had lovely weather for a change and the course was in good condition although there was a fair amount of water and Pampas grass about.

I believe that every body enjoyed playing the course and the day.

The overall winner was Vidar Fjeld with 29 points – well done.

The best guest player was Tom Brided with 31 points.

The Par 3 hole was won in two strokes by Pat Brennan who bought all the golfers a drink from his winnings – thanks a lot Pat.

After the game was finished everyone returned to the Phoenix Bar and to our usual lovely grub – once again many thanks to Donna & Kay.



Cheers, David Wightman.

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- Who cares what I think China should do? I'm a fucking actor.
I'm a grown man who puts on make-up.

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The Gallop!

The blonde decides to try horseback riding, for the first time. She mounts the horse unassisted, and it springs into motion. It gallops along at a steady pace, but the blonde begins to slip from the saddle. In terror, she grabs for the horse's mane, but cannot get a firm grip. She throws her arms around the horse's neck, but slides down the side, while it gallops on. The blonde tries to leap from the horse to safety. But her foot becomes entangled in the stirrup, and she is now in all sorts of trouble, with her head repeatedly banging against the ground as the horse continues its gallop. The blonde starts to lose consciousness.

But luckily, one of the checkout girls sees her predicament, rushes over, and unplugs the horse.....

IDIOTS OF THE MONTH.

Just when I thought the idiots went into hiding last month, out pops a magnificent one in Callosa de Segura in the Vega Baja.

The Policia Local and the Guardia Civil were called by neighbours in Callosa de Segura on Friday morning March 10, after they reported loud cries and noises coming from a local property. When they checked at the relevant property, one of the residents said that he was attacked by individuals who stole a number of plants from his house.

The police did not believe his story but assisted him anyway and decided to inspect the property. However, their inspection revealed that the 'valuable' plants were not



petunias or daffodils, but marijuana, in fact a marijuana plantation! Photo. But then it got even sillier. The man said he wanted to report the aggression and theft of his 'plants' so he went to the

police station and made his denuncia. After this, the police escorted him in handcuffs to a cell. He is now charged with several offences and will appear in court shortly.

When the police checked-out his property thoroughly, they also found that he was stealing power for his special lighting systems from adjoining properties.

It might be a good idea for you to check your bills as well. The stealing of electricity is not uncommon in Spain.

Scouse Emergency.

'Hello, hello, is that the Kirby police station?' came the anxious voice.

'Yes, sir, it is.'

'Do you have any reports of lunatics escaping near here, officer?'

'Not that I know of, sir. Why are you asking?'

'Someone's run off with my wife!'

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On Monday February 20, a 32-year-old Swedish man, J.R.B. checked into a pre-paid room in a hotel in one of Barcelona's busiest tourist areas. That night, in the company other Swedes he met in the city, he went on an almighty binge, spending €20,000 on alcohol, drugs and prostitutes, never returning to his hotel room. But then on the Tuesday morning at 10:30am his lunacy reached new levels when the man took advantage of a momentary lapse by a delivery driver, stealing his truck loaded with butane gas canisters and driving it erratically for three kilometres through the heart of the city. Police described it as the worst police chase they could remember. The Swede headed up the wrong way on an access ramp to the freeway hitting several vehicles with 45 gas canisters falling off the lorry and hitting people and vehicles. Then the driver went the wrong way up a one-way street with vehicles dodging the oncoming car and people running across a pedestrian crossing. Shots were fired on seven occasions in a bid to make the man stop. The bullets ended up in the vehicle's gas tank, tires and windscreen.

The vehicle, photo, was finally stopped and it took three policemen to subdue the driver, who was unhurt but was later taken to hospital for a physical and psychological examination.. Only three people were slightly injured, one policeman and three civilians, all by flying gas canisters.

J. R. B. is currently being held in the psychiatric ward at the Hospital del Mar.



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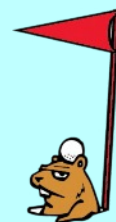
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Husband (a doctor) and his wife are having a fight at the breakfast table. Husband gets up in a rage and says, 'And you are no good in bed either,' and storms out of the house. After some time he realizes he was nasty and decides to make amends and rings her up. She comes to the phone after many rings, and the irritated husband says, 'What took you so long to answer the phone?'

She says, 'I was in bed.' 'In bed this early, doing what?' 'Getting a second opinion!'

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Mobile Madness.

The mobile or cell phone continues to invade modern civilisation. It has reached an epidemic level in Spain. Even the hospitals in Spain are not interested in your land-line, but want your mobile number to contact you. Maybe one should now appear on the Spanish flag as it is such a part of society today?

A survey in Murcia revealed that 50% of teenagers say they are addicted to their phone. Valencia has started a program to try and wean addicted children off the accursed device.

Obviously, I am not a fan!

On the last day of February, a 37-year-old exasperated mother in Almeria lost her patience with her 15-year-old son who would not put his phone down and do his homework. She grabbed the mobile and in the struggle which ensued the boy received a small cut.

The little shit then reported his mother to the Guardia Civil. The prosecutor demanded a nine-month suspended sentence for the mother but a judge in late March found her not guilty of domestic violence charges.

Domestic violence or not, I hope young 'Pedro' gets a size 12 up the rear from his dad.

Three Weddings.

Three virgin sisters were all getting married within a short time period. Mum was a bit worried about how their sex life would get started and made them all promise to send a postcard from the honeymoon with a few words on their first impressions

The first girl sent a card from Hawaii two days after the wedding. The card said nothing but: "Nescafé". Puzzled at first, Mum went to her kitchen and got out the Nescafé jar. It said: "Great from beginning to end".

Mum blushed, but was pleased for her daughter.

The second girl sent the card from the Maldives a week after the wedding, and the card read: "Rothmans".

Mum now knew to go straight to her husband's cigarettes to read from the pack: "Super strong, King Size".

She was again slightly embarrassed but still happy for her daughter.

The third girl departed for her honeymoon in New Zealand. Mum waited for a week, nothing. Another week went by and still nothing. A month passed; still nothing...

A card finally arrived from Auckland on which was written with shaky hand, "Air New Zealand".

Mum took out her latest travel magazine, flipped through the pages fearing the worst, and finally found the ad for Air NZ..... 'Ten times a day, seven days a week, in all directions.'

Mum fainted!!

(Carol Martin)

All Booze and Chicks?

Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the finance minister of the Netherlands and the head of the council of euro zone



finance ministers, Eurogroup, has come in for some flak for suggesting that the southern European countries who received EU aid spent "all the money on drinks and women".

The Spanish and Italian press were quick to pick up on

this, but the reaction of Albert Rivera (other photo dummy), the head of the Ciudadanos (Citizen's) Party was interesting. He lamented that Spain has wasted so much money on corruption leading to expensive infrastructures

which are not used, and was speaking in the Control Session under PM Mariano Rajoy over budgetary spending and the Cabinet's plans for the Mediterranean Corridor.



The president of Ciudadanos, reproached both governments of PP and PSOE, for having built toll motorway ring roads which are 'without cars' and airports 'without planes' and trains 'without passengers', and he warned Ciudadanos are not prepared to let this 'fiesta to be so costly for the Spanish public' And don't forget 'personal enrichment' Albert! Millions, if not billions have been siphoned to personal and political accounts over the years and there is no proof that this has stopped, even today.

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Alzheimer's and Dementia Cases Double in Ten Years Due to Aging Population.

A recent study shows how deaths from Alzheimer's and other types of dementia have doubled since 2005 in Alicante. In that year, those who passed-away from these diseases were 705, while in the last year there have been more than 1,300 people who have died as a result of these degenerative diseases.

Currently, it is estimated that 7% of the population over 64 years of age suffer from Alzheimer's or dementia, which in Alicante province is equivalent to 130,760 people affected. The future is not very optimistic, because in the absence of a cure for the disease, cases of Alzheimer's continue to increase.

At age 80 the risk of suffering from the disease is 30% and from the age of 60 this risk doubles every 5 years," explains María José Sáenz, head of the department of Neurology at the Hospital de San Vicente.

"Currently all efforts are focused on finding therapies in the phase of mild cognitive impairment to stop the progression of this disease," explains Sáenz. Although with a little luck these medications will arrive in the medium term, it is now possible to diagnose the disease in very early stages, when there is little deterioration and

only minor memory failures, so that the patient continues to lead a normal life. "We have at our disposal biological markers with which to detect the disease, for example through lumbar punctures."

Of all cases diagnosed as Alzheimer's, around 20% are of genetic origin, because of the mutation of three very specific genes. In this group of patients also lies the hope to be able to detect the disease before it gives any symptoms. Also to know what happens in a previously healthy body. In the Hospital of San Vicente they have diagnosed cases of hereditary Alzheimer's. "We propose to these families that they go to Barcelona, where a number of studies are being carried out in this area."

The following link relates to Alzheimer's in Spain and is in English and is informative -

<http://www.alz.org/es/dementia-alzheimers-spain.asp>

The Alzheimer's Association of Torrevieja have a purpose built day centre in the town with places for 50 patients a day. Their website is in Spanish and English - <http://afatorrevieja.es/en/>

*I won't say ours was a tough school, but we had our own coroner.
We used to write essays like 'What I'm Going to be if I Grow up'.*

Lenny Bruce



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Hello, Dolly!

In early March, Spain's first brothel opened in Barcelona where the prostitutes are not human beings but silicone dolls. The brothel's name is *Lumidoll*, which plays on the word "lumi," jargon for prostitute.

The dolls - Katy, Niky, Lily and Aki - each, are available to hire by the hour. 165 centimetres in height and are photo.

The 'unlimited services' will cost special introductory offer of €80 doll will set customers back €150 (or two hours are €170 (or €120 at the The owners say that the dolls are service "with special antibacterial prophylactics is recommended, and Customers are also required to call in the client's desires. You can also have



which can reportedly cost up to €6,000 There are four dolls in all, averaging made of silicone with realistic features,

€120 for one hour, although there is a currently in effect. Ninety minutes with a €100 while the special offer lasts) and reduced rate).

disinfected before and after every soap." Even so, the use of these are included in the price. advance so the doll can be dressed to an appointment with a *Lumidoll* at your

home, which would no doubt impress the neighbours. The website contains photos and brief bio's of the 'girls' here - <http://www.lumidolls.com/en/>

They also have an online store where you can buy your own doll for between €2,000 and €3,000.

But just as I finished writing the above, El Pais reported that the facility has closed down after a couple of weeks and is being relocated. So, Steve, Harry and Jethro, you'll have to cancel that trip! At least for now.

Let's Hear It for Kim!

A lecturer in North Korea explains the advantages of communism to the residents of a lunatic asylum.

Everybody applauds except for one guy standing at a distance.

'Why aren't you clapping?' asks the speaker. 'I'm a nurse,' he answers, 'not a madman.'

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Just Leave the Car, Granddad!

The Japanese authorities have been trying to encourage older people to give up driving after a recent spate of accidents, some of which involved drivers confusing the accelerator and the brake pedals. The latest incentive is in the central Aichi Prefecture, where a company that runs 89 funeral homes is offering a 15% discount for those who give up their licences.

Anyone wanting to take advantage of it has to provide evidence that they have handed in their licence at the local police station, which is supporting the initiative.

In 2015, there were almost 4.8 million licence holders over the age of 75, according to The Japan Times, twice as many as a decade earlier. The same period saw an increase in the number of fatal collisions involving elderly drivers.

Similar incentive-based schemes are operating elsewhere in Japan - some involve cheaper taxi rides or cut-price entry to public baths. The funeral home initiative is also quite a contrast to another offer announced in Aichi in November, whereby elderly locals could tuck into cut-price noodles if they surrendered their driving licences. Maybe Brit's might do it for cheap beer.....or ciggies?

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Poachers at a Zoo!

Poachers have broken into a French zoo, killing a four-year-old white rhinoceros and sawing off its horn.

Keepers found the dead animal, named Vince (photo),



in the African enclosure of the zoo at Thoiry, west of Paris, on the morning of March 1. It had been shot in the head and its large horn removed with a chainsaw. The poachers fled before they could remove the

animal's second horn, either because they were disturbed or because their equipment failed, police said. The poachers forced a grill at the rear entrance to the zoo, near the rhinoceros enclosure. They then broke through two further locked doors into the building containing three white rhino. "It's possible the thieves didn't have time to take the others," a police spokesman said.

A rhinoceros horn has an estimated value of between €30,000 and €40,000. Detectives say there is an established trade network in illegally poached horn between France and Asia. The white rhino is an endangered species, with an estimated 21,000 remaining in the wild across the world, mainly in South Africa and Uganda. Their horns are sought after in Asia, where they are valued for their supposed aphrodisiac qualities.

A Czech zoo now fears poachers so much it's cutting off rhino horns so the thieves can't!

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The young mechanic came to pick up his girlfriend with a pair of jump-leads holding up his pants in lieu of a belt.
'Don't you start anything,' she warned.

Applying for Spanish Nationality.

The number of Britons who have passed the test of Spanish nationality, one of several requirements to obtain nationality, has increased dramatically since the British referendum last June.

It was the morning after the Brexit referendum, and Helen Darbishire was having a difficult awakening. "I jumped out of bed and started ranting in all the languages I know," she recalls.

For her, as for all Brits living in other EU countries, the result was a bitter blow. Darbishire followed events from Madrid, the city of which she made her home more than a decade ago. Things she had taken for granted for a long time - such as the possibility of living, working and traveling freely anywhere in the EU - suddenly seemed in doubt.

To make matters worse, Darbishire soon realized that Spain does not allow British citizens to possess dual citizenship. She could apply for a Spanish passport, but only at the cost of relinquishing his British citizenship. As the months went by, and London's stance hardened, it began to give the impression that it was a price worth paying: so she passed the first part of the Spanish Nationality Exam in November, and plans to introduce herself to the Language test in the coming months.

"I want to have a Plan B in case the Brexit negotiations go awry. I need a guarantee that I will continue to enjoy freedom of movement in the EU," explains Darbishire, who heads an advocacy group that works in all Europe. "I do not think anyone will renounce their nationality without reluctance and remorse. The fact that the British Government forces me to contemplate this option is disappointing, at least."

Official Spanish data show that Darbishire is not a unique case. The number of Britons who have passed the test of Spanish nationality (one of several requirements to obtain nationality) has increased dramatically since the British referendum last June. The exam assesses applicants' knowledge of Spanish legislation, history, politics, culture, geography and social customs. Candidates have to know which is the capital of the Basque Country, and that you can not wash the car in a common parking lot of a block of flats.

The Ceilidh.

An English party at the Dundee hotel decided to join in that night's *Ceilidh*. One of the Englishmen asked a local girl up for a dance. Unfortunately the English chap proved to be somewhat clumsy and said to the girl, 'Sorry, but I'm a little stiff from rugby.' 'Ah dinnae care where you're from. Just stop standing on ma good shoes!'

In the six months leading up to the referendum on EU membership, only 70 Britons underwent the test. In the eight months since then, the figure has soared to 423.

This is only a fraction of the 300,000 British registered in Spain. But the emotional and practical dilemmas facing Britons willing to give up their citizenship extend beyond that group. They will be familiar to all who identify themselves equally as British and European, and who - until June 23 - were never in need of a choice between the two.

Other EU countries - notably Ireland, Sweden and Denmark - have also seen a pickup in Britons applying for citizenship after the United Kingdom voted in favour of leaving. But by excluding double nationality for the British, Spain has become a tough choice for many.....

According to Sue Wilson, who chairs an EU action group under the name of *Bremain in Spain*, only a minority of British expatriates are considering changing their nationality. "It's usually people who have been here for a long time, and who have a special connection with the country, and many will marry Spaniards."

.....

One of the frustrations for British residents is that Spain allows citizens of other countries, especially in Latin America, to retain dual nationality.

.....

Since last year a petition circulated requesting the same right for long-term British residents in Spain, and to date has collected 20,000 signatures. For the time being, however, the Government has not shown any signs of its willingness to amend the law.

This is a much shortened version of an article which appeared in Spanish in *El Mundo* by Tobias Buck of *The Financial Times*. You can read the full article in Spanish here -

<http://www.expansion.com/economia/politica/2017/03/21/58d01cfbe5fdea46668b4592.html?cid=SIN8901#comentarios>





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Koos Brandt

What a ‘no deal’ Brexit would mean for healthcare of British pensioners in Spain.

One thing that matters enormously to UK voters is the NHS. A “battle bus” emblazoned with a claim that the NHS would receive £350m a week if the UK left the European Union was crucial to the victory of the Leave vote in the June 2016 referendum – despite the fact that this central claim was widely debunked.

Among the challenges Brexit poses to the NHS, and there are many, is that it needs to get ready to receive a group of people whose healthcare is currently being paid for by the UK in other EU countries. Many are pensioners, and large numbers of them live in Spain. There are at least 100,000 retired UK citizens in Spain, according to official figures, though local estimates suggest it could be double that, or more.

In January, the prime minister, Theresa May, declared that “no deal is better than a bad deal” on Brexit. So it would be prudent to prepare for that “no deal Brexit” – the worst case scenario.

And when we analysed the legal position of British citizens in Spain we found that, although the situation is complex, it’s ultimately clear that if the UK leaves the EU with no deal, the NHS needs to gear up for many of them to return.

How Spain’s healthcare works for UK citizens

Healthcare within the EU works on a reciprocal basis. It relies on the legal principle that people can move around the EU and take their social security, pension, and healthcare entitlements with them.

If the UK leaves the EU with no deal, the position of UK citizens in other EU countries that rely on reciprocal healthcare arrangements will be determined by the law of the country in which they reside.

The Spanish health system guarantees emergency care to everyone, even if they are not EU citizens. This will not change after Brexit.

Yet the legal rights to non-emergency healthcare of people who are not EU nationals in Spain depends on their residency entitlements and their association with some kind of health insurance. A 2003 Spanish law (significantly amended in 2012) sets out who is covered by the Sistema Nacional de Salud, the Spanish NHS.

At the moment, UK citizens living in Spain are able to show permanent residency entitlement by reference to their EU citizenship, and to secure medical treatment as if they were Spanish by virtue of having paid UK tax and national insurance.

Like Spanish citizens, pensioners with annual incomes of over €100,000 pay 60% of prescription charges, capped at €60 a month, with lower co-payments (the amount that a patient contributes to the cost of their prescriptions) and lower caps for less wealthy pensioners.

Even if they have not paid tax and national insurance anywhere else, these UK pensioners are still covered by the Spanish NHS if their income is below a certain

threshold, as are Spanish nationals, and other foreigners who are authorised to reside in Spain.

It is currently very easy for British citizens in Spain to enforce their EU law rights, and administrative formalities are relatively light: that’s the whole point of the EU’s reciprocal healthcare system.

What happens if there’s no deal

If Britain leaves the EU without a deal, UK citizens living in Spain would be entitled to receive medical care as “foreigners authorised to reside in Spain” under the 2003 Spanish law. But in practice, to fall under the protection of the Spanish law, they will have to show their residency entitlements. As foreigners, they will only be able to secure a residence permit if they also have a work permit. Without that, pensioners will not be protected.

By contrast, at the moment all they need is the S1 form, which shows that they are entitled to healthcare in another country within the European Economic Area, provided under the reciprocal healthcare arrangements of EU law. S1 forms are currently given automatically by the UK, and are easy to secure.

Under the administrative formalities surrounding the 2003 act, foreigners must also prove that they enjoy coverage under some kind of health insurance. There are three ways they could do this. One would be to continue accessing the Spanish NHS by a special agreement – which costs €157 a month for over 65s and €60 a month for under 65s, and involves paying 100% of prescription charges. The second would be to use a private scheme, which will cost more, and will only really be practical for people who are healthy. The third would be to rely on their home state’s health system if it is recognised by Spain in an international agreement – but in a no-deal Brexit, this won’t apply.

The British pensioners living in Spain are – by and large – not wealthy people. They have made their homes in Spain trusting that the entitlements of EU law, and the administrative simplicity that follows, will remain in place. Kelly Hall at the University of Birmingham has been conducting interviews with some British pensioners who currently live in Spain. One man told her that he could not possibly contribute even a small amount towards his healthcare, and feels he will be forced to return to the UK. Spain is the host EU country with the largest number of such retired UK citizens. But there are significant numbers in other countries too: Ireland, France and Italy in particular. The British NHS should prepare to welcome them home.

(Source: THE CONVERSATION, 20/3/2017.

Authors: Tamara Hervey, Jean Monnet Professor of European Union Law, University of Sheffield & Joaquin Cayon-De Las Cuevas, Associate Professor of Health Law, University of Cantabria.)

“..... I passionately believe we’ll be better off in 10, 20, 50 years’ time for having taken control of our democracy.....Brexit will be a Titanic success.” Boris Johnson, Foreign Secretary UK.

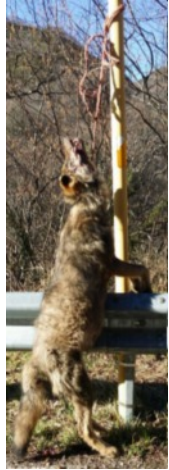
"To shore up the dikes of their necessary beliefs, men will use whatever mud they can find."
Ethnologist Clifford Geertz

A Wolf at the Door?

Well maybe not, but believe it or not there are still packs of Iberian wolves hunting in Northern Spain. In 2015 an estimate put the figure at 2,000, thankfully not all hunting together! They are spread from the northern border of Portugal, through Asturias and the Cantabrian Mountains to the Pyrenees.

Wolves featured in the Spanish news for two reasons in recent days. First, three wolf cadavers were found hung by the roadsides. Culling wolves is the sole responsibility of the authorities: hunters are forbidden from doing so, but to date nobody has been found responsible for the attacks on the animals. Farmers and local mayors complain that authorities only killed 29 animals from January 2016 to February 2017 while the upper cut-off is 45 wolves. The latest census shows there are 38 packs or family groups of Iberian wolves, a protected species, in Asturias alone.

The Seprona wing of the Guardia Civil have been investigating alleged falsifications of wolf attacks on livestock in order to fraudulently claim government compensation. The Guardia Civil says some €200,000 was falsely claimed in compensation and that these false attacks could have "played a role in generating an atmosphere of [social] rejection" of Iberian wolves. In



2000, Asturian sheep farmers put in compensation claims for more sheep killed by wolves than actually existed in the Principality!

But the second news item was word of an excellent new Spanish documentary, *Cantábrico*. Spanish naturalist Joaquín Gutiérrez Acha, the director of the documentary, was holed up for two years in some of the most remote corners of the Spain's Cantabrian Mountains filming much of the diverse but now endangered wildlife. They filmed everything from brown bears copulating to carnivorous plants devouring wasps and ants deploying chemical warfare against the largest woodpecker in Europe. But most striking was the hunting of a deer by one of the 70 wolf packs in the area. See photo. The movie is due for release on March 31.



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My Mate.

My mate Murphy was thrown out of the submarine service. He slept with the windows open. Mind you, he's not very bright. He once stayed up all night studying for a blood test.



Danger Spot!

Take a look at this horror! Note that that the force of the crash has knocked the number plate into the centre of the car. Yet another horrific crash on the N-332, this time near Grand Alacant on the way to the airport. The driver of this car, a 58-year-old German male was killed instantly. It is alleged that the driver of the other car, a BMW, fell asleep at the wheel and ploughed into this vehicle. He was unhurt!



Much of the N-332 is dangerous with little protection, being mainly single lane without any central barrier protection. This stretch where there are exit lanes from Gran Alicant to the 332 are particularly dangerous as cars try to join the fast moving traffic on the way to the airport, Alicante and Madrid. Impatience here can often be fatal. Many now believe that it is safer to travel to the airport by motorway than chance the unpredictable and highly dangerous N-332.

A Gambling Website Wants Help Coming Up With Quirky Donald Trump Bets.

The Irish gambling website Paddy Power is seeking an out-of-the-box thinker to be its "Head of Trump Betting." The company, which recently posted a listing for the 3-month long role on LinkedIn, is seeking a candidate that will be able to come up with bets about what President Donald Trump might do next. That includes typical bets such as "When will Trump resign," and more atypical ones such as "Will President Donald Trump ban Irish people in his first term in office?"

Both of those bets are already on Paddy Power's website. Other bets currently available include one questioning when White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer will leave or resign. Another wagers that Trump might marry for a fourth time while he is still president.

Paddy Power seems to be looking for a candidate critical of Trump — in one requirement, the listing calls for consistency in keeping up with Trump's tweets and "general idiocy." "Ideal candidate would have a good knowledge of which one's Melania and which one's Ivanka," the job listing states. "Better understanding of global politics than Donald Trump. Which won't exclude many."



The Wages of!

A boy and his date were parked on a back road some distance from town, doing what boys and girls do on back roads some distance from town. The girl stopped the boy.

'I really should have mentioned this earlier, but I'm actually a hooker and I charge €50 for sex,' she said. The boy reluctantly paid her, and they did their thing.

After a cigarette, the boy just sat in the driver's seat looking out the window.

'Why aren't we going anywhere?' asked the girl.

'Well, I should have mentioned this before, but I'm actually a taxi driver, and the fare back to town is €55.'

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Spain's Constitutional Court Rules 'Plusvalia' Tax Is Illegal If Property Is Sold at a Loss.

Spain's Constitutional court in a landmark ruling from last 16th of February declared that 'Plusvalia' property tax cannot be charged when a vendor sells property at a loss. In plain English; no profit, no taxation.

After a long property boom that lasted eight years, the 2008 bank meltdown delivered a lethal blow which caused property prices to tailspin overnight. This property implosion drove many vendors to sell properties below what they had actually paid for them during the heyday of the property bubble (Below Market Value or BMV properties).

As a recap, on selling property in Spain a vendor is liable for two taxes

Capital gains tax (paid to regional Authorities).

'Plusvalia' tax (levied by town halls).

This blog post will focus, however, on the second tax I list above; the so-called 'Plusvalia' tax. On selling, property vendors need to pay this tax as a result of the increase of value in the land to the town hall where the property conveyed is located. If there is no increase in value, it stands to logic no tax should be collected, right? Wrong! Town halls have fought tooth and nail to avoid this as they are overdependent on this local tax. This tax constitutes in most cases their main source of income. Only last year over 140 million euros were collected in Malaga province alone.

The significance of the Constitutional Court's ruling is that, for the first time ever, it gives the reason to vendors who had complained bitterly over the years that it made no sense to pay taxes on a property they were making a loss on selling. Town halls had turn a blind eye on this new phenomenon and adamantly refused to reimburse vendors the collected tax walking away scot free – until now.

In a nutshell, the reason of the discrepancy is because town halls calculate the 'Plusvalia' tax using the rateable value of property (cadastral value) they have on their books. Most town halls have not updated these values in line with today's market downturn and these, in most cases, still reflect the outdated values fetched at the peak of the property bubble. That is why vendors are still being charged this tax despite making a loss on selling.

It is estimated this ruling affects over 500,000 vendors.

The new ruling confirms similar rulings from regional Supreme Courts across Spain.

Timeframe to Claim

Unfortunately, vendors can only claim back tax dating the last four years as any tax collected before February 2013 is now time-barred. In other words, any vendor who's sold a property at a loss since February 2013, and has paid 'Plusvalia' tax, is now entitled to a full refund. For the vast majority of people the tax paid averages 1,000 euros or less.

Selling Property Now

It is a principle in Spanish law that you first have to pay the requested tax (or fine) and then file a complaint (appeal). So, if you are selling property now – at a loss – you cannot refuse to pay the 'Plusvalia' tax. Only once you pay it can you then raise a complaint seeking a full refund.

The New Ruling Spells Trouble for Town Halls

It is no secret town halls in the wake of the property bubble struggle to make ends meet as tax revenues have taken their toll due to the low volume in property transactions. The new ruling poses a serious setback to council finances which in most cases will translate into significantly denting their coffers and in others will throw local finances into disarray. Vendors can reasonably expect serious delays in paybacks if vendors start appealing en masse for a tax refund.

How to Claim

The process is not straightforward and is somewhat convoluted (always the red tape!). It requires the input of professionals. It does not suffice to show the difference between the buying and selling price in the Title deeds as it will be turned down by the Administration. You need to appoint a competent law firm to act on your behalf to claw back this tax. To appeal the tax successfully a technical report must be commanded to back the legal recourse.

As written, for most people this tax will be in the hundreds of euros yet in other cases the amounts can be quite substantial warranting the support of a law firm.

Only a case-by-case approach can discern on whether it is worthwhile or not for a client to file a complaint employing lawyers.

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A Sack of Skins!

A Jewish rabbi, Eli, had dedicated his life to circumcising young boys. Eli was getting on a bit and decided to retire, he took his huge sack full of foreskins to the leather shop and asked the shopkeeper to make him a retirement present with the foreskins.

The cobbler agreed and told him to come back the next day.

The next day Eli went back and asked the man what he had made.

The shopkeeper gave him a nice wallet. Eli agreed but said, 'It's nice but it's not much for a whole sack full is it?'

The shopkeeper replied, 'Yeah, but if you stroke it, it turns into a briefcase!'

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The editor, Mick, can be contacted at mick.dreamscene@gmail.com or at 586 Dream Hills. (Or in some Bar!)

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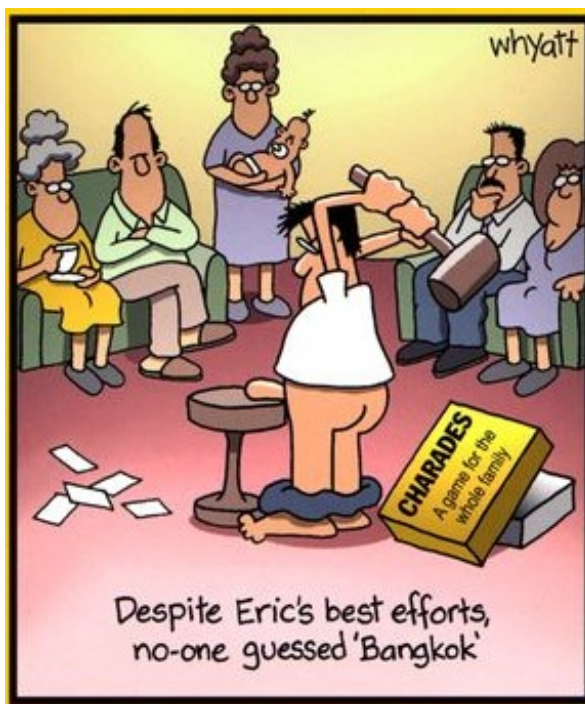
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