

# THE DREAM SCENE

## NEWSLETTER



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

Bienvenido a todos and welcome to the July, 2017 edition. Issue No.122.



Apologies for the late delivery of the Dream Scene this month. An illness and bereavement in the family necessitated a lengthy stay in Ireland and when I returned I had to cram two weeks work into five days. Printed copies of the July newsletter should be available on July 5.

If you think it is too hot here in Spain, spare a thought for the poor folks in Phoenix Arizona. There, it has been so hot that airlines have been banned from operating for much of the day. The temperature there has been around 49 degrees, higher than the normal operating capacity of most airplanes. It seems that when it is very hot, it is difficult for the aircraft to gain lift. The heat also creates problems with landings. But here on the Costa Blanca, we had a welcome respite from the daily high of 34° +, when on July 1, black clouds, thunder and lightening heralded cooler temperatures and a moderate rainfall locally. A short but welcome period of cool - 25° - followed. But please be very careful with exposure to the sun. The 'rush to suntan' by many tourists inevitably leads to sunburn, and skin cancer is on the rise again in this province.

Although the British tourist is the life-blood of the coastal tourism in Spain, the massive increase in fraudulent holiday insurance claims is shameful. Complaints about food poisoning following 'all-inclusive holidays' started years ago, and as the British can lodge their complaints from home via a tour operator, and despite in some case two years having passed since the holiday and a total lack of medical records or evidence, the claim still stands. Tour operators payout to the clients and then deduct the amount from their payments to the hotels involved. The hotels have no chance to protest or defend. Many British lawyers are implicated in the fraud as they have been fishing for client promising monetary gain for 'inventing' a complaint. The lawyers then receive a 60% fee from the compensation received, which is generally between €7,000 and €8,000. See article on page 35 for more details.

It is worth noting that one British family decided to claim from a Spanish hotel, but the hotel 'stuck by its guns' and challenged the allegations in the courts. The family then wished to to withdraw the complaint but the hotel refused, sending the case through an expensive and lengthy court procedure, so expensive that the family will lose their home due to the massive legal fees involved.

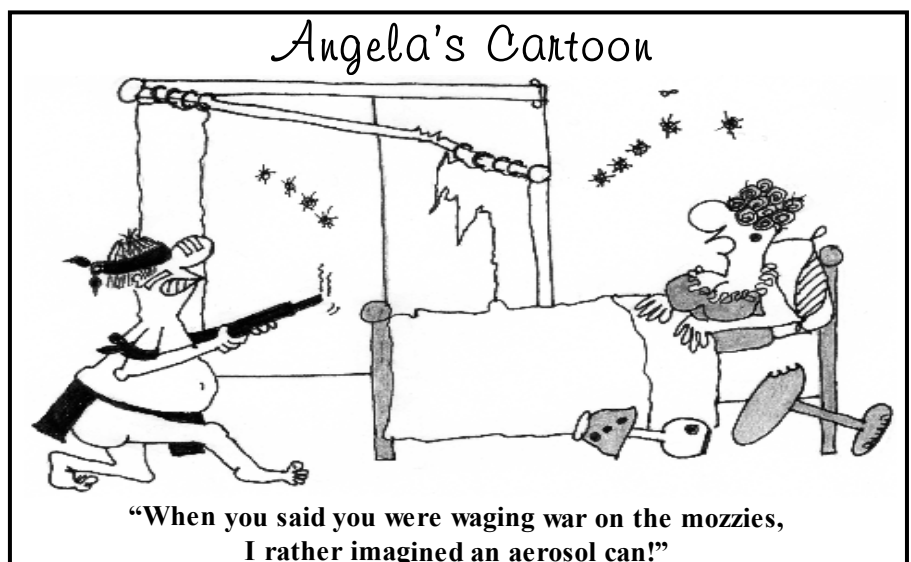
I have left out any coverage of Brexit in this issue as little of substance has emerged so far, other than the apparent confusion, lack of preparedness of the British negotiators and general pig-headedness.

Thanks to Lee B for his gift of a 'drinking voucher' and donation to printing costs and also to Ulf & Stina for their kind donation towards printing costs.

Have a great month,  
Mick & Tid

### FEELING THE HEAT?

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They're known as the *Belgrano Sisters* on account of the number of sailors they've been down on.

Peter Kay

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Email : [helenvankekem@hotmail.com](mailto:helenvankekem@hotmail.com)**



**Did you know that .....**

...it was necessary to keep a good supply of cannon balls near the cannon on old warships? But how to prevent them from rolling about the deck was the problem. The storage method devised was to stack them as a square based pyramid, with one ball on top, resting on four, resting on nine, which rested on sixteen. Thus, a supply of 30 cannon balls could be stacked in a small area right next to the cannon. There was only one problem... how to prevent the bottom layer from sliding/rolling from under the others. The solution was a metal plate with 16 round indentations, called, for reasons unknown, a Monkey. But if this plate were made of iron, the iron balls would quickly rust to it. The solution to the rusting problem was to make them of brass... hence, Brass Monkeys. Few landlubbers realize that brass contracts much more and much faster than iron when chilled. Consequently, when the temperature dropped too far, the brass indentations would shrink so much that the iron cannon balls would come right off the monkey. Thus, it was quite literally, *cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass monkey*. And all this time, folks thought that was just a vulgar expression? (Derrick G)

...a heroin explosion is occurring in the USA. 59,700 deaths were caused by overdosing with the narcotic last year. This figure is higher than all the US soldiers who died during the 19 years of the Vietnam war.

...Casu marzu is a Sardinian cheese that contains live maggots? The maggots can jump up to five inches out of cheese while you're eating it, so it's a good idea to shield it with your hand to stop them jumping into your eyes. Yum, yum!

...Sigurd the Mighty, a ninth-century Norse earl of Orkney, was killed by an enemy he had beheaded several hours earlier? He'd tied the man's head to his horse's saddle, but while riding home one of its protruding teeth grazed his leg. He died from the infection later.

...the Romans used to clean and whiten their teeth with urine. Let me know how you get on with it!

**LOCKSMITH**

**CERRAJEROS - SCHLOSSER  
SEGURIDAD UNION**

**24 HR  
LOCKSMITH**

**607 493 118**

**LOCAL**



**(Cut out & keep.)**

Now in summer, there is little happening in Spain on the political front.

Another referendum on Catalan independence was announced by the Government of Catalonia for 1 October 2017. This is being launched by members of the Junts pel



Sí coalition, with confidence and supply support from the Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP).

Once again this referendum has no authority nor approval from the central government in Madrid. Puigdemont, president of the regional government and the guy on the left with the bad Beatles' haircut, announced the single referendum question for October: 'Do you want Cataluña to become an independent State in republican form?'

Nationally, the PP remain in government thanks to the support of the Ciudadanos Party and a handful of others.

The new head of the socialist PSOE, Pedro Sanchez, is trying to oust the PP president Rajoy, but cannot gain the necessary votes. He now wants a sub-commission in congress to explore the possibility of a federal Spain during this coming September.

The British remain the largest foreign group of property purchasers in Spain, however they have decreased in percentage terms with fall from 16.4% at the end of 2016 to 14.47% at the end of the first quarter of this year. An improvement in the £/€ rate could see the percentage increase again, particularly if there are some positive noises coming from the Brexit negotiations.

We are all aware of the damage the storms of December and March wreaked on the beaches. Mallorca has imported 30,000 tons of sand from the Sahara in a single cargo ship. The French Association of Friends of the Saharan people lamented the removal. Like they don't have enough sand in the Sahara! Then in late May, another freighter brought 35,000 tons of sand from the Western Sahara. Some criticised this saying that it violated international law as occupied territory was being pillaged.

A major problem now for the remainder of the summer will be devastating fires we have here each summer. Some of these are started deliberately, some by lightening and others carelessly. Barbecues on rural or wild land are now forbidden and carry hefty fines.

La Verdad reported that Murcia is to get €14 million of FEDER Funds from the EU. The money is for modernisation and Murcia is the only region to get this particular type of funding. FEDER stands for *Fonds Européen de Développement Économique et Régional* (European Fund for Economic and Regional Development).

The Guardia Civil will allow a hundred Malagueños to be armed' - for security reasons with short weapons (pistols) - for the protection of judges and prosecutors.

Mercadona is to contract 7,000 people for the summer - the net minimum salary for summer workers is around €1,122 a month from June until the end of September, 2,000 more staff than last summer.

La Verdad leads 'the regional PSOE has opened to door for creating Cartagena having it's own province' - Ana Belén Castejón will announce the initiative of her party in the Assembly. All a waste of time and money.

Información in Alicante reports 'The Government is to oblige the unemployed who have lost all benefits to pay 40% of the cost of their medicines'. More than 100,000 people in the province cannot afford to pay for prescription drugs. 'Doctors get angry if we ignore treatment but I said my family has to eat' said one of those affected.

Manuel Moix, was Spain's Chief Anti-corruption Prosecutor. He resigned on 1 June 2017, after it was discovered that he owned 25% of a Panamanian offshore company. On the day he resigned, he sold a magnificent property in Madrid which he bought for a reported €530,000 in 1990 with five bathrooms, a wine cellar and a flamenco stage. He is also alleged to have interfered in corruption investigations involving the PP, the opposition parties being delighted with his removal.



## SUN

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SKY SPORTS

Wi-Fi

The good thing about iPod is that you can store 10,000 songs on there  
- or two Pink Floyd tracks.

Stuart Maconie

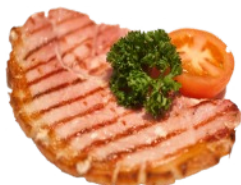
**LARGE BAVARIA  
DRAFT €2.20!  
BOTTLES  
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Pints: Bavaria €1.50**

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FROM GREAT STEAKS & GAMMONS  
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WHICH INCLUDE O.J. OR TEA OR COFFEE!  
STEAK MEAL DEAL FOR TWO JUST €23  
INCL. BOTTLE OF WINE OR CAVA !**

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MENU!**

**IF YOU ARE REALLY, REALLY HUNGRY THEN TRY OUR OMG MENU.**

**COME AND TRY OUR FAMOUS SUNDAY LUNCH**



**GREAT FISH & CHIPS,  
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**LIKE IT SPICEY?**

**NEW CHILLI OMG MENU!**

**CHILLI BURGER, CHILLI CHIPS,  
CHILLI DOGS, CHILLI NACHOS etc.**



**ENTERTAINMENT!**

**BINGO! EVERY WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY  
AT 2 PM. COME EARLY!**



**SATURDAY NIGHT KARAOKE!  
SUNDAY AFTERNOON 1 - 3PM  
CROONING SESSION!**



**WEDNESDAYS 5pm - 8pm**

**NICK GOLD**



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CK1 BAR FROM GOOGLE PLAY FOR ANDROID!**

**Wi-Fi!**

**BOTTLES OF MAHOU, JUST €1.50  
HOUSE SPIRITS €2.50; BRANDED SPIRITS €3.20!  
For bookings telephone 968 972 906 or 637 046 438.**

Yesterday morning my wife asked me to make love to her in the kitchen.  
When I asked why, she said the egg timer had broken and she wanted a soft boiled egg.

David Brinham

## What's Up? continued



The gossip columns or 'pink press' in Spain has been speculating about the love-life of F1 driver, Asturian Fernando Alonso. His recent poor form on the track has been matched by his seemingly unsuccessful efforts in the affairs of the heart. Since his divorce with singer Raquel del Rosario in 2011, he has had four girlfriends, his latest rumoured to be the 21-year-old Russian model, Viki Odintcova, photo. Still, you can see what drew him to her - the cute little tattoo on her left shoulder.

Cigarette sales in Spain are down by 4.5%. The only region to see an increase are the Balearic Islands, where sales are up by 1%.

There are more than 2,000 applicants for 250 places for train driving courses from Renfe - candidates have to pass an entrance exam and pay 21,000 € for the training course. Renfe Operadora is the state-owned company which operates freight and passenger trains.

After years of delays, the regional government in Murcia will, in July, raise the lowest wage payable in the region to €426 a month. At present it 'hosts' the lowest basic wage limit in Spain at €300 per month.

José Ángel Fernández Villa (photo), the former Secretary-General of SOMA-FITAG-UGT trade union, one of the two largest in Spain, is being investigated concerning the diversion of €31 million. During the last tax amnesty, Villa declared a personal account of €1.4 million and this has led to the current investigation and other 'lines of enquiry'.

One anti-corruption investigator believes that a number of mining UGT big wigs shared €2.7 million in Asturias, all while cursing the capitalists and flying the *Red Flag*.



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**Dog Walking/House Sitting and overnight stay.**

**Going away and can't take your dog or need your dog walked or house looked after.**



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Resident of Dream Hills**

The Spanish National Police and the British NCA have detained 24 members of a British gang, aged between 22 and 25 who were growing marihuana in the provinces of Alicante, Málaga, and Barcelona to sell in the UK. The narcotic was sent by frequent lorries to the United Kingdom inside crates of marble. The investigation began in June 2016 after the British authorities were informed about a family based in Barcelona which was transporting drugs from Spain to Liverpool. Following an explosion in Liverpool, police found 150 kilos of speed and five kilos of marihuana there. The gang members in Spain were all driving top-of-the-range cars without having any visible signs of employment.

Large drug seizures are now so common in Spain that I rarely report on them now, although two particularly massive ones during May were remarkable. 5.5 tons of cocaine was seized from a ship in the Canaries and more than 20 arrested. A Venezuelan fishing boat, also in the Canaries, was found loaded with 2,400 kilos of cocaine. The National Police has intervened in 2015 and 2016 four boats, confiscated 7,925 kilos of cocaine and taken 80 into custody in four boarding's, with the participation of the Spanish Navy and Tax Office.

Drug running gangs in Spain regularly try to steal the product from other gangs, sometimes dressing up as policemen and raiding suspected indoor drug plantations.

During April this year, police were called to a coastal town in Andalucia, where it was believed drugs were being unloaded from inflatable's at a beach. When the police arrived, more than 100 of the town residents barred the police from interfering with the 'import' operation!

You probably know by this stage that Banco Popular has collapsed, being rescued and absorbed by Santander, who have bought the failed bank for €1 after injecting capital of €7 billion. If you had an account with the bank it will be unaffected. However 300,000 shareholders now find their shares worthless. If you have an investment account with any bank, it is worth checking whether you have any of those shares included in your portfolio.

Lawyers are already queuing-up to represent those who were talked-into buying the shares.

Police have detained a 58-year-old Serbian man at Alicante Airport. He preyed on Russian tourists, who when they arrived, went straight to the bar, where he picked their pockets and handbags. Police found €20,000 cash in his possession!

If you think the postal service in Spain is a bit erratic now, just wait! The government intends cutting its funding by €60 million! This will probably mean that your monthly copy of 'Health & Efficiency' and 'Big Boobs' will arrive even later!

*You've never been truly drunk until you've had to use a bar stool as a walker to get home.*




SOUTH  
FACING  
TERRACE

# THE BAR NEXT DOOR.

FIRST FLOOR  
VIA PARK III  
(Sister bar to The Lime Bar)

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**POOL KNOCKOUT  
COMPETITION**

EVERY THURSDAY AT 3PM.  
MAXIMUM 16 PLAYERS.

**FUN DARTS EVERY WEDNESDAY  
AT 3PM.**

**GREAT PRIZES!!**

**Pies, Pasties & Sausage Rolls on Match Days.**

**HAPPY HOUR**

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OPEN 3pm - 12am  
Saturday & Sunday -  
12 noon - 12 midnight.

3 SCREENS!



Win  
Big  
Prizes

FREE  
WI-FI




## THE LIME BAR GOLF SOCIETY

On a very hot but enjoyable day on the 17th June 2017, 34 players teed off at Elle Valle. The course was in great condition with the pins placed in very difficult positions which was reflected in the scores ..... apart from those with dubious handicaps! The results were:-

### GOLD SECTION

Mike Heighway - 34 pts

Ian Grant - 31 pts

Lynne Newbury - 29 pts

### SILVER SECTION

Alan Thorpe - 32 pts

Eddie Allen - 30 pts (cb)

John Walls - 30 pts

### NEAREST THE PIN

Hole No. 1. - Gary Lavender

Hole No. 6. - Richard Mackey

Hole No. 9. - Arthur Jones

Hole No. 12. - Arthur Jones

Hole No. 15. - Norman Dobson

Hole No. 16. - Ian Grant

### BEST GUEST

Terry Bates - 29 pts



After the golf players returned to the Lime Bar (19th Hole) for refreshments, prize giving and excellent eats provided by the Lime Bar.

Ian Johnstone.



# LIME BAR



VIA PARK III

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**PLAY YOUR CARDS RIGHT!**

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Big  
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WITH GREAT VIEWS OF THE COSTA BLANCA.**

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*Hangovers installed.....and serviced.*

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CHECK OUT  
OUR  
SPECIALITY  
COFFEES!

*Ah, isn't that nice, the wife of the Cambridge president is kissing the cox of the Oxford crew.  
Harry Carpenter, TV commentator.*

## When the Shit Hits the Fan!

I'm sure we all have days like this.....you wake up and, after chewing through the restraining straps, you face the world with a mixture of hope, anticipation and maybe a little joy (that is if some of the drugs are still in your system); only to be faced almost immediately by a succession of disasters, a tsunami of problems, or what *chancers* in job interviews or politicians call "opportunities." (PM Teresa May and her cabinet have loads of opportunities at the moment!)

Late one evening, about two weeks ago, I was finishing off the day's work on the Dream Scene when I decided that I would ask my laptop to do three things at once -who says men can't multitask? But all this before I backed up a weeks data .... Dumb! Immediately the computer went on strike showing me a black screen and would not budge from that. The following 'cold boots', double clicks and threats brought no response, so next morning I decided to call for help and phoned **Gary on 634 334 565** who advertises Computer Repairs in the DS. Gary said he'd be around in half an hour. He arrived and after a suitable period of tut-tutting, took the comatose machine away for either repair or burial. If unsuccessful, I would have to recreate the newsletter from last month's PDF copy.....Ouch! So, thoroughly pissed off, I went down to Jillie's for a coffee, suitably paired with a generous ethanol flavoured drink. Unbeknownst to me, while I was on my second glass of the restorative libation, Gary had phoned the house to say he had fixed the problem, all the data was safe and when did I want the "bitch" back. Hallelujah! A superb service and two house calls for a very reasonable amount! Highly recommended, check out his advert on page 10.

But the horrors didn't end there!

*She - who must be obeyed*, then told me that the washing machine door was broken with the bath towels stuck inside.

### Overheard, on a Ryanair flight Dublin to Stansted....

Girl: 'Excuse me, flight attendant, can I have a Diet Coke with no ice?'

Flight attendant: 'Want a little umbrella in there too, princess?'

My family and I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their good wishes kind thoughts and prayers throughout Jeff's short illness and his passing. We are very appreciative of everyone's kindness and offers of help and support. We miss him dreadfully, but he is one of the angels now.

God Bless you all and thank you.

Jan and all the family.

**RIP JEFF.**

Cue throbbing vein in forehead. It seems the washing machine door was stuck in the closed position and the release handle broken. After several attempts to open the door with wire - following instructions from YouTube - still no success. Now, although we are surrounded by a variety of electrical goods retailers, if you go into Media Mart looking for a repair man or indeed anywhere else, they will look at you as though you've got two heads! Reliable electrical goods repair individuals are as rare as rocking-horse do-da. Fortunately Tid had the phone number of a reportedly reliable individual. This was **Stewart on 966 785 451 or 654 939 202**. Stewart arrived when he said he would, got the door open and went off to locate new parts. Back the very next day, he fitted a new door to the Zanussi and everything was hunky dory, all for a very reasonable cost! Stewart does not have an ad in the DS.....yet, but this is a chap you will need at some stage, so write his number down now. He also has an electrical shop in the square at Los Montesinos which is well worth a visit.

Then, just after Stewart left, we noticed that the water filtration system next to the washing machine was leaking! Would it never end! Fortunately, **Peter on 655 310 752** who has an ad on page 13 in the DS, came around asap and fitted a reliable British-made filter. A good water filtration system is a boon, saving you lots of money and effort. And veg', tea, coffee etc., do taste better being cooked in or made with filtered water - less minerals, including some dodgy ones that are in tap water. New systems can be installed quite cheaply and you will never need to buy bottled water again. Ask Peter for a quote.

So finally the three emergencies were resolved quickly and all at very reasonable cost. Peace and tranquility returned to 586, well sort of! Then the dog threw up on the rug in the lounge.....

But it once again it proved the old adage, 'It's not what you know but who you know.' Very true this time.

## **ELECTRIC BOILERS**

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Appointments Not  
Always Necessary.  
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Lower Ground Floor  
VIA PARK V  
Open 4:00pm - 0:00am

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**JULY 17 & 31**  
**Starts 7:30pm**

**HAPPY HOUR 4 - 6pm!**  
Always a tapa with your drink  
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(+31)645 149 223  
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### Booze!

Two drunks are standing at a warehouse door.  
The first drunk says, 'I heard half these girls have the clap  
and that none of them would think twice about stealing  
every penny we've got.'

The second one says, 'Not so loud, or they won't let us in.'

As I pulled back the ringpull on my can of Stella, I heard  
'Hello'. I thought to myself, 'It must be the drink talking.'

Although the municipality of Torrevieja enjoys a positive balance of more than €41 million in its accounts, the quadripartite left-wing council are unable to access the funds. This is because the ruling council are in a minority and have not had their annual budgets approved by the majority since they came to power. This means that they have to rely on the year's budget figure before they came to power, over two years ago. The PP and Ciudadanos parties want most of the money to go to reduce the town's massive debt. The cash surplus is growing by €400,000 every month! The lack of access to these funds has forced the council to drop their planned municipilization of the rubbish contract.

Torrevieja registers at least four burglaries every day in homes and businesses. There were 404 such incidents in Torry during the first quarter of this year. This unacceptable figure is up by 28% on the same period last year. This compares unfavourably to the city of Alicante which has four times the population but recorded only 269 robberies. The Guardia Civil are demanding more troops. Total reported criminal offences in the quarter came to 1,776 compared to 1,678 for the same period last year.

The stat's are a bit better for Orihuela, with total criminal offences for the first quarter reported as 772, compared to 858 for the same period last year.

These are of course reported offences. The true figure is somewhat higher as many do not want to face a trip to the police with a translator etc.

Matters are not improving much to the quality of the water at Mar Menor. A new parasite is exterminating the populations of the giant mollusc there. Scientists trying to deal with the various environmental problems there have been give a new budget of nine million euros. Also, in an attempt to trap the jellyfish invasions this summer, 60 large nets are to be placed in the Mar Menor area.

The San Juan Hospital in Alicante is using the highest-tech equipment in its fight against cancer.

They have now installed a new PET-TAC scanner which can detect the smallest tumours and will be able to scan some 3,000 patients a year. Lets hope the administration of this resource matches the efficiency of the machine and that those in need get scanned quickly.

In the Vega Baja area lemon production is expected to reach 917,000 tons, a 30% increase.

Artichoke yields in the area are also high, with around 25,000 tons collected. Farmers are getting €0.67 a kilo as against €0.38 which they received in 2012. Who, in God's name, eats those things?



# Café Bar



MAHOU  
&  
CARLING  
ON  
DRAUGHT!



VIA PARK V.  
**FULL MENU  
NOW AVAILABLE!**  
**OPEN MON - SAT FROM 1 - 8pm**  
**BARBECUE SUNDAY**  
**1 - 6pm !!**



**THE BEST FISH & CHIPS - DAILY!**  
Please book on Fridays to avoid disappointment!

All food freshly prepared.

*The 'Walk for Life' on June 4<sup>th</sup> raised €125.  
Many thanks to all who contributed.*

693 985 122

**GREAT  
WINES!**



## COMPUTER REPAIRS & SUPPORT

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*The Importance of Punctuation*

*Woman, without her man, is nothing.  
Woman: without her, man is nothing.*



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### CATS! CATS! CATS!

Three female cats were bragging about their kittens.

The first cat said, 'My kittens are part Persian. Their father was a pure Persian cat.'

The third cat said nothing.

The second cat said, 'Well, that is nothing. My kittens are part Siamese. Their father was a pure-bred Siamese.'

The third cat still said nothing.

Then the first two cats asked her, 'What are your kittens?'

She replied, Oh, I don't know. I had my head stuck in the tuna can at the time.'

An old lady went to the bus stop to get to the vet with her very ill cat. As she boarded the bus, she whispered to the driver, 'Can I get on, I think I have a dead pussy?'

The driver pointed to the woman behind him and said, 'Sit with my wife. You two have a lot in common.'

### CAM Bosses on Trial



After a five-year investigation, the management team of the failed CAM Bank are now being brought to trial. They face a number of charges including falsification of the financial reports, but also rewarding themselves handsomely when they knew that the bank was going 'tits up.'

The charges are mainly in three sections.

First, "the possible alteration of the annual accounts of CAM in fiscal years 2010 and 2011, which include conduct aimed not to reflect the true image of the company, such as those relating to the qualification of sub-standard, doubtful or failed loans '.

Secondly: 'The possible specific damage caused to investors as a direct consequence of the publication of those allegedly distorted annual accounts'.

And third, "The alleged damages derived from the alleged irregularities in matters of early retirement."

Concerning the falsification of accounts, one of the highly paid 'suits', former president of CAM, Modesto Crespo, stated 'I am not an accountant, I don't like accounting - My signature was merely instrumental and I hardly ever attended meetings. I don't know what happened, I don't understand things financial and nor do I like them.' Obviously the ideal person to be president of a bank!

Regarding the insolvency of the CAM; it was rescued by the Bank of Spain in July 2011 with losses of 1.136 billion € compared to the 65 million € profit showing in the official accounts. 'We always were unanimous in approving the accounts' said Crespo.



## Messi Found Guilty of Tax Fraud.

The Supreme Court has ruled that Argentinean soccer star



Lionel Messi, photo, was responsible for three tax offences. The tribunal confirmed the 21-month prison sentence that was handed down to him last July by the Barcelona Provincial Court for cheating the Spanish Tax Agency of €4.1 million during the 2007-2009 financial years, after he failed to pay tax on €10.1 million of income for his image rights.

The player's father, Jorge Horacio Messi, was also given a 21-month jail sentence, but this was reduced to 15 months by the Supreme Court after his son returned the amount defrauded to the Tax Agency.

The Barcelona court gave Messi and his father seven months in prison for each year he was understood to have defrauded the Tax Agency. He was also slapped with a fine of nearly €2 million. His father, meanwhile, was given a fine of €1.5 million. Given that the jail terms are under two years, the Barcelona Provincial Court is likely to suspend the sentences, as is the norm in Spain where there are no prior offences and they wouldn't dare put a football star in prison.

Messie will pay an additional €300,000 to escape jail. (If Oscar Pistorius was a footballer in Spain, he would have got away with it!)

But now Cristiano Ronaldo is in the spotlight also. The public prosecutor confirmed that six months before signing for Real Madrid, when he knew the signing would happen, he invested his image rights in a network abroad and 'aware of what he was doing' defrauded €14.7 million. He will probably be on the bench accused of four crimes against the treasury.

In another story Spanish prosecutors have filed a claim against Manchester United manager José Mourinho relating to two counts of alleged tax fraud in 2011 and 2012 during his time as manager of Real Madrid. A total of €3.3 million is involved.

## OTHER NEWS.

Over 25 per cent of all visitors to Spain in May were from the UK: almost a year after the Brexit referendum it appears to be clear that little if anything has changed regarding the traditional preference of the British public for holidays on the Spanish Costas. In fact, the number of people coming from the UK to Spain during May was 14% higher than in 2016, meaning that the Brit's accounted for just over a quarter of all visitors.

British TV chefs the *Hairy Bikers*, aka Dave Myers and Si King, have been at Lorca Castle recently shooting footage for a forthcoming series which will be aired in February 2018.

Diario de Ibiza reports that for a British family it is cheaper to fly to Florida or Indonesia than Ibiza. Summering on the island is much more expensive with the difference between the alternative destinations being some €1,400. Two weeks in Puket (Thailand) costs a third less than for Ibiza or Mallorca – as Orlando and Bali have seen prices fall by 16%, according to Travel Supermarket.

The crazed overspending continues. This time it is in Cartagena where the council allocated a budget of €20 million to the building of a new auditorium and convention centre, El Batel. The final cost of the project reached €64 million, an overspend of €44 million! The architects are being blamed. One of the anomalies I have noticed in Spain is that architects are often given overall control over large building projects. Independent project managers, quantity surveyors etc., seem not to exist, so basically the architects - the designers - have total control and an increased spend gives them more revenue. Giving them total control can be compared to giving a teenager a bottle of vodka and the keys to the jag'. This is compounded by the apparent lack of control and supervision by council officials. Bet the architects are chuffed, though!

# EL CAPITAN

Lago Jardin II.




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A short time after my release from being held hostage in the Lebanon, I travelled to Ireland. On arrival at Dublin airport, I got into a taxi.

The taxi-driver looked at me and said, 'You're that John McCarthy, aren't you?'

I said I was.

He nodded, thought for a moment, then said: 'Wouldn't you be more comfortable in the boot?'

John McCarthy

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(\* ) - From 1st April to 31st October

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, NIE or DNI. A bit of a palaver really. Prior booking is not required. Sometimes the bus fills up quickly with people and you have to wait more than 2 hours for the next bus.

## Lime Bar Fishing Sunbathing Club

The summer knockout competition is down to the last 4. Shropshire Lad v Just John, and Little Big Mick v Ball Boy.

Last month, an angler (not one of the club) passed away. His wife asked if any of our lads could use his tackle, so at our June meeting we had a sale of his bits and pieces. Well done and thank you to everybody for dipping into your pockets and raising €120. Jan was very grateful and said that the money will be going to a "Battens disease" charity as their grandson is a sufferer.

The June match was fished at Pedrera where the other clubs have been catching some big weights. Reports from those other clubs say it can be frustrating, not getting a bite for hours then catching a load in the last 30 minutes! As per normal, the Nomad and I turned up late - to a chorus of abuse as we had supposedly drawn the best pegs. When 3 rods says this, I normally struggle! Every body caught except Nomad and I only had 5 tiny bleak. So much for the best pegs! Shropshire Lad has won again. That's 3 out of 3 for the maximum 60 points. He is back in UK now for the rest of summer which will give us amateurs a look in.

The following week a couple of the lads fished the "favoured" pegs and had a cracking day catching 25 fish between them. Mind you, 3 rods was living up to his nickname. 2 rods out and a pole in between fishing the "monkey" (see below). He landed a fish on one rod, had a bite on the 2<sup>nd</sup> rod before he could recast out the 1<sup>st</sup>. As

he was playing the 2<sup>nd</sup> fish, his central "monkey" pole shot out of it's rests heading for the far side of the lake. Now poles are expensive, and no fish was taking his tackle into the deep. He dived in and managed to grip the end of his pole. After

swimming back to shore not only did he save his pole but he landed the 3<sup>rd</sup> fish too. Well-done sir! But will you learn a lesson? I think not.

Anti Social and Belinda are organising a night out at the New Tavern in July. These normally turn out to be good fun, so if you want to go, make sure they have your names asap.

"Monkey" – for those not in the know, it is a method of fishing without a float or shot, just a hook and line. As a kid I called it "free lining".

Next meeting bun fight is at The Lime Bar @ 17.00 Mon 3<sup>rd</sup> July.

Fishy fingers!

The Ghost

*Los Angeles is awful - like Liverpool with palm trees.*  
John Lydon



"I know you're in bed with the flu, but I need the keys to the filing cabinet."



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- I met my husband during an air raid. The bombs were raining down and I saw his face lit by an incendiary. He threw me on my face and said, 'Look out! Here comes a big one!'

- I suppose there wasn't much time for chatting in those days.

Mrs Slocombe and Mr Lucas, *Are You Being Served*.

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### Dubious Tactics by Banks on Floor Clauses.

When the government announced a clear process for banks to refund borrowers who had overpaid on mortgages that had so-called floor clauses in them, it seemed an ideal solution to avoid hundreds of thousands of homeowners taking their banks to court.

However, over five months on, consumer-protection groups say that the process is far from going smoothly and they are blaming the lenders for a lack of transparency.

Minimum interest rates payable on a variable mortgage were declared illegal by EU judges last year, in cases where the low rate 'floor' wasn't explained properly to a borrower on taking out the loan and where real loan rates had fallen below the floor clause (cláusula suelo).

Under the government's fast-track refund plan, since February, banks must make a refund offer to a customer within three months of them making a complaint that the clause wasn't properly explained.

If you didn't complain, the banks will not help you! Commenting on some of the tactics reportedly used by banks to delay or deny compensation, Borja Martín, Malaga president of Adicae, which defends consumer rights against financial institutions, said, "Some lenders say you have to fill in a special form, others don't; some ask for extra documents, others don't, some refuse to refund if there is an ongoing court claim. Within the same bank, people give different answers."

One complaint against almost every lender is the failure to give a written printout of how much has been overpaid by the borrower with an illegal 'cláusula suelo'. Many have been accused of pressurising customers into accepting a lower offer, including one going as far as to deposit an amount into a client's bank account without any explanation of how much was really owed.

Another watchdog, Facua, has said that some banks tell older people that reclaims can only be made online, which contravenes the detail of the government order.

An extra 54 specialist courtrooms are being set up across Spain to hear cases referred to them when a mortgage holder cannot agree an amicable compensation amount with their lender.

Meanwhile, Spain's finance ministry has ordered banks to publicly say how much progress they are making in refunding eligible customers. Up to now, only one bank, Bankia, has published detailed information. It says it has refunded almost 170 million euros to some 34,000 customers.

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### THE PHOENIX GOLF REPORT – SAURINS GOLF CLUB – Sunday 18th June

We had a lovely days play although rather warm for some players! There were two young players who proved to be very good, well done to them.

The overall winner was LIAM DAWKINS

Nearest the Pin No.6. - GRANT McROBERTS

Nearest the Pin No.10 - LIAM DAWKINS

Nearest the Pin No.18 - BRIAN ARCHER

After play we returned to the PHOENIX BAR for lovely grub as usual – many thanks to Donna and Paul.

Dave Wightman



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### The Oriental Massage.

A guy was on a business trip and he's staying in this fancy hotel. When he goes up to his room, there's a sign near the bed that says: 'Try our Oriental massage'. So he rings down to the reception and tells the clerk that he'd like to try one of the massages. About ten minutes later this lovely Japanese lady comes up and starts giving him a massage.

He's lying on his stomach and getting pretty horny, he gets a huge boner. She tells him to turn over and when he does, she sees his dick, standing at attention. So she giggles and says, 'Ahh, you want wanky!' He says, 'Oooh yes!'

So she runs off into the bathroom and he lies on the bed waiting.

A few minutes later she sticks her head out from behind the door and says, 'You finished yet?'

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Come and join the  
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## The Tab.

It was 40 below zero one winter's night in Alaska. In the town saloon, the bartender told Ed, 'You owe quite a bit on your tab.' 'Sorry,' said Ed, 'I'm flat broke this week.' 'OK,' said the bartender, 'I'll just write your name and the amount you owe me right here on the wall.' Ed looked concerned. 'I don't want any of my friends to see that.' 'They won't,' said the bartender. 'I'll just hang your parka over it until it's paid.....'

## Aftermath

The General Election is over  
and May got such a fright  
but we're not yet in clover  
with Corbyn and Co. in sight

Whatever your persuasion  
to the left or to the right  
we must stop mass immigration  
or drown in the blight

Yet we still have Brexit  
be it hard or be it soft  
from Europe we will exit  
with our heads aloft

But will our finances fall  
if Brussels gets its cash  
with our backs against the wall  
let us not be rash

If common sense prevails  
and Politicians listen  
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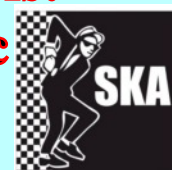
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Financial control of capital projects in Spain remains dire. Locally, the overspend by several millions on the two main concert halls in Torrevieja is indicative of this. But these are minor compared to the hundreds of millions wasted by the former PP ruling regime in the Valencian Community. The lack of effective project and financial management meant that not only were massive amount of public money wasted on useless 'look-at-me' projects including airports, but the lack of financial management and control made it all too easy to divert funds to corrupt individuals and organisations.

But throughout the country, the single project surely costing the most money has to be the introduction of the high-speed rail network, called the AVE.

The Alta Velocidad Española in Spain is operated by RENFE the Spanish national railway company. Adif, controls the infrastructure and charges RENFE a user fee. Billions have been ploughed into this 'showpiece' and although these costs will never be recovered, money continues to be ploughed into the project as the lines are expanded. But once again budgets here seem at best to be illusory.

Back in 2014, Xavier Fageda, a professor of economic policy at the University of Barcelona, estimated that the high-speed network then cost 40 billion euros to build and receives 300 to 400 million euros in annual subsidies. Obviously it is much more today.

"It's extremely expensive infrastructure with high maintenance costs that at the end has achieved its success at a high cost, because the demand in no way justified an investment that large," he says.

### The Ride.

Bill and his wife Blanche go to the Yorkshire show every year, And every year Bill would say, " Blanche, I'd like to ride in that there 'elicopter "

Blanche always replied, " I know Bill, but that 'elicopter ride is twenty quid, And twenty quid is twenty quid ! "

One year Bill and Blanche went to the fair, and Bill said, " Blanche, I'm 75 years old. If I don't ride that there 'elicopter, I might never get another chance " To this, Blanche replied, " Bill that 'elicopter ride is twenty quid, and twenty quid is twenty quid "

The pilot overheard the couple and said, " I'll make you a deal. I'll take the both of you for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and don't say a word I won't charge you a penny ! But if you say one word it's twenty quid. "

Bill and Blanche agreed and up they went.

The pilot did all kinds of fancy manoeuvres, but not a word was heard.

He did his daredevil tricks over and over again, But still not a word...

When they landed, the pilot turned to Bill and said, " By golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn't...I'm impressed ! "

Bill replied, " Well, to tell you t'truth I almost said summat when Blanche fell out, But tha' knows, twenty quid is twenty quid."

Critics argue that the money could have helped more riders if it had been devoted to the country's dilapidated regional and urban rail systems, which people use to get to work, or into achieving a more humble 200 kilometres per hour (about 125 mph) on long-distance trains instead of the more expensive 300 kilometres per hour AVE lines it now has.

"I think it would have been cheaper if they'd been flying people around in helicopters. It's a very expensive toy, and Spain has other priorities," says Fede Sabrià, a professor of operations management at the IESE Business School in Barcelona. "What do we do for the people who have to take the train 30 kilometres to work every day? That's the big problem."

"The high-speed trains have achieved competitive prices via infrastructure subsidies, which are exclusively paid by the public sector," says Fageda. "If you take into account infrastructure costs, all the AVE lines in Spain are absolutely ruinous."

In late May 2017, La Verdad in Murcia headlined 'the overspend of the AVE track to replace the water channels in the region has reached 3,109% - some sections budgeted at 17 million have invoiced 52.7 million which has now been paid.

The judge in the 'César case' has uncovered enormous lack of financial control with a budgetary overspend of 60 million €. Guardia Civil and Customs warned of the grave irregularities inside Adif.

(Sources: Fortune Magazine, Wiki & Others)



### Tragic.

Mr O'Malley had worked at the local brewery for years, but one day he wasn't paying attention, tripped on the walkway and fell into the beer vat and drowned. The foreman thought it should be his job to inform Mrs O'Malley of her husband's death. He showed up at the front door and rang the bell. When she came to the door, he said, 'I'm sorry to tell you, but your poor husband, Brian, passed away at work today when he fell into the vat and drowned.'

She wept and covered her face with her apron, and after a time, between sobs, she asked, 'Tell me, did he suffer?' 'Knowing Brian O'Malley as I did, I don't think so,' said the foreman. 'He got out three times to go to the toilet.'

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## Spain Spent the Last 76 Years in the Wrong Time Zone—and It's Not Healthy for Workers

Nazism may not make for ideal mealtime discussion, but in Spain it's the reason why people eat dinner in the dark.

Visitors to the country are drawn to the laid back Mediterranean vibe, a seemingly wayward rhythm of life that has people at work by 9am, lunching for two hours by 2pm, and eating dinner after the sun has set. Indeed while many other chefs in the Western world are closing shop, Spanish chefs are still working through the heat of summer. To an outsider, this routine seems exotic—but how it came about and how it has since affected the workforce is nothing to envy.

For the better part of the last 80 years Spaniards have been living in the wrong time zone, BBC Travel reports. The country may sit along the same Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) line as the United Kingdom and Morocco, but in 1941 it switched to Central European Time (CMT). That's



because general Francisco Franco decided to adopt the same timezone as then-Nazi Germany as a sign of solidarity with Adolf Hitler.

After the war had ended, Spain didn't switch back to GMT.

The change didn't cause the Spanish to change their routines, they just found themselves suddenly eating dinner an hour later than usual. The long lunches push the Spanish

workday until about 8pm, which sets dinnertime around 9pm or 10pm (prime-time television begins around 10:30pm).

The especially long days have caused a noticeable imbalance for swaths of the Spanish population, one of the reasons prime minister Mariano Rajoy in April 2016 proposed switching back to GMT, thus ending the workday around 6pm, as a means of facilitating better working conditions. It has since become part of the national conversation, as people weighs the pros and cons of ending the workday at 6pm. Some have expressed concern that it would hurt business; after all, tourists are one of the reasons shopkeepers keep their doors open well into the evening.

Margarita Mayo, a professor of organizational behaviour at IE Business School in Madrid, led a team of researchers in a project that analysed 3,262 employees across 70 companies to explore the business outcomes that came along with more flexible working hours.

"The preliminary results, presented at the Academy of Management Conference in 2015, showed that work-life support policies give employees a sense of control over their work time, which in turn improves their reported work-life balance as well as financial indicators of firm performance," she reported.

Mayo has used those findings to back up the effort of the Spanish prime minister and the entire concept of changing Spain's labour hours to "give employees more control over when they go home." (Quartz)



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But if you have a **Smart TV** (and a good broadband signal), then your options are simpler and cheaper. After purchasing the Smart IPTV app' for only €5 using my TV, Dreambox TV (see advert on the left), immediately connected me to their service. This was done over the phone and online. They never had to visit our property! After a month's introduction I found the service to be reliable, comprehensive and easily navigable - the best so far. Also, when the system needs updating, it can be done remotely - no house visits. All for just €10 a month! If you do not have a Smart TV, one can still connect an Android or IPTV box to your flatscreen and get the same service. Give them a call to find out more, or you can call at **Macklin's Welcome Inn** in VP3 and view the system. Overall, an easy to use comprehensive service. Highly recommended.

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## Sky Coming to Spain.

British broadcaster Sky is preparing its artillery to enter the Spanish pay TV market. The company, owned by Fox, expects to disembark in Spain next September, with a combined offer of lineal channels and video on demand for around €20 a month.

They face direct competition from Rakuten Wuaki, Netflix, HBO, Movistar, Vodafone and Orange. Spain has a comparably low acceptance of 'pay to view', when compared to European standards; Movistar (Telefonica) has 33% penetration in Spanish pay TV.

On the other hand, Spain has eight million broadband internet clients who have not contracted additional services, such as television, etc.

Premier League licensing means Sky cannot broadcast sport in Spain and will have to compete with the contents from HBO and Netflix.

As a Prime customer of Amazon.es, I get full access to Amazon TV (in English) for a Prime sub' of around €20 a year. It costs £100 in the UK!

I can also access a Spanish HBO TV service which includes top rated US TV and movies in English. You can easily access this on a Smart TV or tablet. HBO charge €7 a month.

However, if you want a cheap, single, quality TV service, take a look at what is on offer on page 27 of this issue.

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"Yesterday, FBI Director James Comey got a letter from President Trump informing him that his services were no longer needed. After hearing this, Melania Trump said, 'I would kill for one of those letters.'" –Conan O'Brien



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Jeremy Clarkson



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Marriage is like the witness protection programme: you get all new clothes,  
you live in the suburbs and you're not allowed to see your friends anymore.

Jeremy Hardy

## IDIOTS OF THE MONTH.

Maybe not Idiot but certainly Jerk of the Month, 47-year-old José Ignacio U. S. José, photo, attacked his



38-year-old partner and mother of his three children, with a kitchen knife in Valencia. The woman had 85 knife wounds in the head, neck, face, mouth, thorax, abdomen and finally in the heart. After murdering the woman, he called the police and later, under interrogation, said that

he acted in self defence! His lawyer has asked for his acquittal, while the chief prosecutor wants a jail sentence of 19 years and a private prosecutor wants 29 years.

Previously, José was sentenced to a two-year sentence when he stabbed a former partner in 1998.

But now we go 'International' as the idiots seem to be in full bloom worldwide.

First we visit India, where police in the 'dry' state of Bihar have accused rats of drinking some 900,000 litres of moonshine and other liquor which has gone missing from police stores. Officials in Bihar, where alcohol was banned last year, suspect that corrupt police either drank or sold the confiscated booze. No shit, Sherlock! However, the local police still insist that thirsty rodents are to blame. An inquiry is to be launched.....when they are sober!

Next we go to Bury in the UK where workers at a call centre are reportedly being made to lie on the ground, if they don't meet their sales targets. But the humiliation does not end there. They also have a dead squid dropped on their face while lying down. The Central Claims Group describe it as a 'team building exercise', and said that although the 'punishment' was chosen by the team with the best sales figures, all staff had consented to the 'punishment' beforehand. Reminds me of the old story of the notice in a WW2 Japanese sub' which read, "The beatings will continue until morale improves."

Next, one of my very few pet-hates: Justin Bieber.

Now I know that this chap is incredibly popular; his rubbishy music occupies most of the pop-chart toppers, either performing on his own or together with some other tuneless wassocks, who are glad to sit on his coat tails and be carried to greater riches. Although I have never liked his noises, my dislike was etched in granite when he wrote on the visitor's book at the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, "Anne would probably have been a 'bieberer' too." What a tosser! But then, this is the price one pays for giving wealth and fame to the young. Take a look at just some of the demands made by Bieber ahead of his concert in Mumbai: ten luxury sedans and two



buses to transport his 120 strong entourage; ten large containers of items, including a sofa and a ping-pong table, all flown in for him. He also

demanding a private jet to be on standby, and for three floors of a five-star hotel to be converted into a "private villa setting" filled with antiques, Mughal paintings and purple carnations. But at least his excesses keep us entertained.

Q. What has 1,000 legs and no pubic hair?

A. The front row at a Justin Bieber concert.

Staying on Bieber, I particularly enjoyed Conan O'Brian's comment on him: 'Justin Bieber reportedly caused \$20,000 in damage to his neighbour's home by egging it. It's been called the most pointless use of an egg since the fertilisation of Justin Bieber.'

Finally, spare a thought for the Chinese lady, who at Shanghai Airport, threw some coins for luck into the jet engine of the flight she was boarding. After the crew changed their trousers, the flight was rapidly evacuated and it took several hours of inspections before the plane was released and sent on its way.

*Making a speech on economics is a lot like pissing down your leg.*

*It seems hot to you, but it never does to anyone else.*

*Lyndon B. Johnson*

### The Latest Gadget!

A rather confident man walks into a bar and takes a seat next to a very attractive woman. He gives her a quick glance, then casually looks at his watch for a moment. The woman notices this and asks, 'Is your date running late?'

'No,' he replies, 'I just bought this state-of-the-art watch and was testing it.'

Intrigued, the woman says, 'A state-of-the-art watch? What's so special about it?'

'It uses alpha waves to telepathically talk to me,' he explains. 'What's it telling you now?' she asks.

'Well, it says you're not wearing any panties,' he says.

The woman giggles and replies, 'Well, it must be broken then because I am wearing panties!'

The man explains, 'Damn thing must be an hour fast.'



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### **Yee-Haw!**

A beautiful woman is sitting on a train with an empty seat next to her. A cowboy dressed in a Stetson hat and fancy boots saunters over and says, 'Pardon me, ma'am, do you mind if I sit here?'

The woman looks up at him and says, 'I most certainly do! Cowboys are disgusting! I hate cowboys! Cowboys are mean, crude, vile and uncouth! I'll tell you something! Cowboys will fuck sheep, they'll fuck cattle, they'll fuck dogs, their horses and they'll fuck chickens.'

Suddenly the incredulous cowboy asks, 'Chickens?'



### Drinking Coffee May Help Prevent Liver Cancer.

Increasing coffee consumption may help to stave off liver cancer, a new study has suggested.

Researchers have found that people who drink more coffee are less likely to develop hepatocellular cancer (HCC), the most common form of primary liver cancer – and the effect was even found in decaffeinated coffee.

Experts from the University of Southampton and the University of Edinburgh examined data from 26 studies involving more than 2.25 million participants.

Compared with people who drank no coffee, those who drank one cup a day had a 20% lower risk of developing HCC, according to the study, published in the journal *BMJ Open*.

Those who consumed two cups a day had a 35% reduced risk and for those who drank five cups, the risk was halved. They found the protective effect for decaf was “smaller and less certain than for caffeinated coffee”.

The authors wrote: “It may be important for developing coffee as a lifestyle intervention in chronic liver disease, as decaffeinated coffee might be more acceptable to those who do not drink coffee or who limit their coffee consumption because of caffeine-related symptoms.”

Lead author Dr Oliver Kennedy, of the University of Southampton, said: “Coffee is widely believed to possess a range of health benefits, and these latest findings suggest it could have a significant effect on liver cancer risk.

“We’re not suggesting that everyone should start drinking five cups of coffee a day though. There needs to be more investigation into the potential harms of high coffee-caffeine intake, and there is evidence it should be avoided in certain groups such as pregnant women.

“Nevertheless, our findings are an important development given the increasing evidence of HCC globally and its poor prognosis.”

Professor Peter Hayes, of the University of Edinburgh, added: “We have shown that coffee reduces cirrhosis and also liver cancer in a dose-dependent manner.

“Coffee has also been reported to reduce the risk of death from many other causes. Our research adds to the evidence that, in moderation, coffee can be a wonderful natural medicine.”

Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that in 2015, 4,673 new cases of liver cancer were diagnosed in England.

(Source: Press Association & Guardian)



*The British are not good at having fun. I get overexcited if there's a pattern on my kitchen roll.*  
Victoria Wood

### President's Day, Lime Bar Golf Society.

The Lime Bar Golf Society's President's Day competition took place on Wednesday the 28th June 2017 at Vista Bella Golf Club.

24 players took part in the competition with our club President, Pete Rushton giving advice on the 1st tee box to each player as they teed off (his advice often wasn't anything to do with golf!).

Teams of 4 played the Texas Scramble format. With lovely warm weather and a slight breeze an enjoyable battle commenced.

Prize Giving was held at the Lime Bar followed by great food and drinks provided by Pete and his staff. Special thanks to Pete from all the players.

Results were as follows:-

#### Presidents Cup

Winners

I. Grant, Bud Butler, B.Foley, I. Thwarted

2nd Place

M. Heighway, Bazzar, Digger, J. McGregor

3rd Place

K. Farrow, J. Walls, B. Archer, G. Lavender

Nearest the Pin No. 4 - M. Heighway

Nearest the Pin No. 8 - B. Butler

Nearest the Pin No. 15 - I. Grant

Nearest the Pin no. 18 (in 3) - L. Thwaites

Nearest Presidents Marker - N. Dobson



Want to know what the world will be like after the Apocalypse?

Four pounds on National Express gets you to Glasgow.

Jimmy Carr, 8 out of 10 Cats

It's the ultimate traveller fantasy: a seaside vacation with an all-inclusive hotel deal, and everything free of charge. As it turns out, many British visitors have made this a reality in recent years, thanks to phony claims of food poisoning.

This practice has shot up by 700% in the last year alone, and has cost the hospitality industry nearly €60 million by its own calculations. As a result, businesses in tourist areas such as the Balearics, the Canary Islands, Costa Blanca and Costa del Sol have come together to try to fight this growing trend.

The scam is simple enough. The tourist buys a travel package with any travel agent and stays at a Spanish hotel that includes all meals in the price. Back in Britain after the vacation, the tourist uses a claims-management company to file a complaint against the company that organized the trip, alleging that the hotel meals made him/her ill.

Current British consumer laws barely require the claimant to produce any evidence. No doctor's report is necessary, and claims may be filed up to three years after the event.

Since it is hard to prove that the client did not get sick, and faced with high legal fees if the case goes to court, the tour operator accepts the claim, then passes on the cost to the Spanish hotel as per their contract, in which the latter accepts responsibility for all damages. The holidaymaker gets a full refund for the cost of the trip, and the intermediaries take a fee.

"If [all the claims] were true, there would already have been a global health alert," notes the Spanish

But after being hit with claim after claim, hotels are starting to review each case in detail and to compile evidence that their establishments meet all hygiene and food safety requirements.

On some occasions, the fraud is discovered simply by checking out the claimant's social media posts.

The CEHAT wants legal reform to clauses in the contracts between hotels and travel agents, which currently let the latter pass on the costs of client claims to the hotel. This industry association wants the law to demand evidence that the illness really existed, and that it was related to the food that the claimant consumed at the hotel.

In the meantime, traditional areas for British tourism such as Calviá and Ibiza in the Balearic Islands have been flooded with claims.

The cases began in the Canary Islands, and quickly spread through word of mouth and campaigns by claims-management firms that make "no win, no fee" promises to their clients.

"The situation is cause for concern due to the volume of claims expected this summer," said Ramón Estalella, secretary general of CEHAT, who has already met with the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) to discuss the problem.

In a statement released on its website, CEHAT said that ABTA admitted that the situation involves complex, well-organized and highly professional groups, and that it is very hard to combat these bad practices.

CEHAT also warns that "the Spanish hotel industry is working on a raft of measures to defend its own interests: all fraudsters will face criminal prosecution in the Spanish courts, including all links in the fraud chain."

In the meantime, the Hotel Business Federation of Mallorca has asked for UK visitors to be banned outright from all-inclusive vacation packages. The *Diario de Mallorca* reported that the association president, Inma Benito, considers the scam such a problem that hoteliers are actually considering no longer selling all-inclusive packages to British tourists, even though the latter represent the second-biggest market for Mallorca, and the top market for the Balearic Islands and for Spain as a whole.

(LUCÍA BOHÓRQUEZ - EL PAÍS)

After reading the above, I came across a report from one hotel who received 200 complaints in just one season - all from British tourists, none from the Germans or Dutch. An additional problem has been the length of time when a claim can be lodged, this can be several years. All some claimants needed as proof was say, a receipt for the purchase of some *Imodium* in Spain!



Confederation of Hotels and Tourist Accommodation (CEHAT),

which is working to fight the fraud.

This practice has grown by 700%

over the last year, says Marc Ripoll, a lawyer who specializes in international law at Monlex Hispajuris, and who has advised the hotel sector on this type of fraud.

"Nearly 70% of claims are fraudulent or *gray*, meaning that the client was ill, but the pathology was unrelated to the food and drink at the hotel," says Ripoll, who notes that Britain recently had a similar problem with false claims over whiplash injuries in car accidents.

Two years ago, British legislation was reformed to address this problem, and "claim farms" then turned to claims over fake cases of gastroenteritis abroad. The *Diario de Mallorca* reported that hotel workers have photographed sales representatives for claim farms talking to their hotel clients on site.

*Scientists have invented something for getting chewing gum off the pavement. It's called a shoe.*  
Nick Percival

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<http://www.oriuela-costa.eu/index.php>

The above is a newish website devoted to Oriuela Costa. It has some good photos, some excellent virtual tours and lots of information in Spanish, German and English on this marvellous area.

The site is regularly updated and is well worth a visit.



Mr Speaker, I withdraw my statement that half the cabinet are asses  
..... half the cabinet are not asses.

Benjamin Disraeli

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