

THE DREAM SCENE

NEWSLETTER

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

Bienvenido a todos and welcome to the February 2022 edition. Issue No.172

Welcome to the first edition of 2022. Even a slightly better year would be an improvement all round.

There are **many changes** coming to Spain during 2022 and you can read many of them in this issue. The tax year in Spain starts on January 1. And any new laws affecting business can only come into effect on two dates each year, either early January or early July.

Antigen test kit prices in Spain will be fixed to a maximum of **€2.94**. Until now, Spain was one of the most expensive countries for antigen tests, with Belgium, Ireland and Italy, where tests cost between €5 and €10.

Wind power became Spain's leading energy source in 2021, overtaking nuclear and gas-powered electricity for the first time. Wind power has generated 23.1% of Spain's electricity during most of last year, above Nuclear's 21% contribution and 16.8% from combined-cycle generators which run on natural gas. Spain currently has 1,267 wind parks with 21,431 turbines providing 27GW of wind energy capacity - the second most capacity in the EU after Germany.

During late December, the Spanish

fragmented (or Frankenstein, as some call it) government finally received approval for its 2022 budget - a **€450 billion budget** for the year which allocates more than half of its funds to education, health, pensions, subsidies and other forms of social spending, as the government seeks to boost activity in an economy badly hit by the coronavirus pandemic. Side deals with a plethora of smaller parties should ensure that the current socialist government should stay in power until the next general election in 2023. More on this and the assistance from the EU in the next issue.

CaixaBank, one of Spain's biggest banks, forecasts that house prices **will rise 4%** next year in part due to the soaring cost of building materials.

Spain has begun vaccinating children between the ages of **five and 11**.

Spain's 16,000 public **phone booths** have been inoperative since January 1, 2022 after the government declared it was no longer necessary to provide them as a mandatory public service.

Many thanks to Terry & Judy and Mike & Diane for their generous donations. Keep well and safe, Mick, Tid & DS Team.

INTERPRETER

LEGAL SERVICE, POLICE,

ALL MEDICAL

APPOINTMENTS

WILLS, NIE, SIP,

TIE CARDS!

ENGLISH - SPANISH

- GERMAN

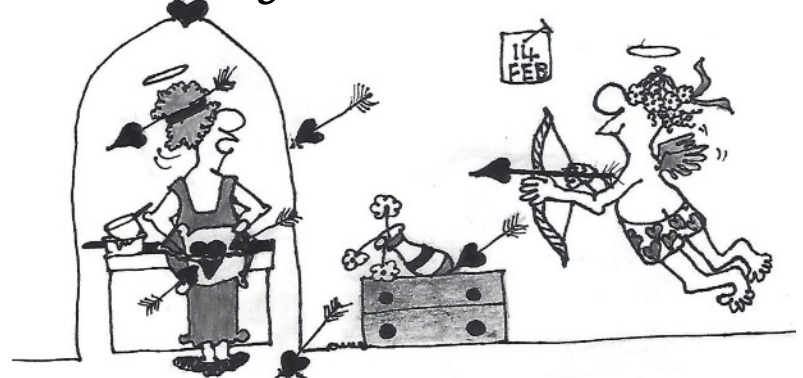
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LOCAL

Angela's Cartoon



Valentine! If you must practice your social distancing, do it in the bloody garden!

Old is when...your friends compliment you on your new alligator shoes and you're barefoot.

The local Orihuela government are drafting a tender for the construction of a **new civic centre on the Orihuela Costa**. The building, which will be a multifunctional centre, will be located across the road from Zenia Boulevard, running down the side of Via Park II. There will be a large car park, an open-air auditorium with a covered stage, with a capacity for more than 2,000 people. As well as offices for local government, together with multi-purpose rooms for classes and various club use. The building will have a ground floor size of 980m² with a basement of 400m². There are no fixed dates yet for the tender or the building project which has a budget of around two and a half million euros. With the tender drafting for the project costing more than €76,000! (But then again, nearly £900,000 of taxpayers' money was spent on a study commissioned by Boris Johnson that found it would be too expensive - £335 billion - to build a bridge or tunnel between Scotland and Northern Ireland.) This new facility would be welcome news particularly as the proposed extra health clinic for the Punta Prima area has not materialised. It is also regrettable that Orihuela had to **return 1.3 million euros**, half the funds received from Plan Resistir, to help minimize the impact of Covid on the self employed and small and medium sized companies. Basically, the council could not get their act together to meet the requirements in time.

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The popular annual **Medieval Market** in Orihuela, due in February, has been **postponed** again due to the increase in Covid throughout the Alicante province.

Five new 10-story buildings have been completed in Punta Prima coastal area. Just what we need - more concrete! See photo.



A new BP fuel garage with shop is now completed and open near to the Max Store, just before the motorway roundabout. It is a franchise of Consum. The **store is incredibly well stocked** with many of the British products you would find in the main supermarket **and at the same prices**. These include frozen sliced British bread, Irish sausages, some frozen food and much more. The selection is much more than one sees in other garage shops. It is well worth a look.



PILATES/YOGA IN BENIDORM AFTER NY's EVE!

I went to the doctors recently. He said: "Don't eat anything fatty"
I said: "What, like bacon and burgers?" He said, "No. Fatty, don't eat anything."

The Valencian government wants to introduce a **tourist tax levied on nightly stays** in accommodation with a proposed 2023 start date. That's despite the battering suffered by the tourist sector in areas like the Costa Blanca during the coronavirus pandemic. The new tax proposal backs away from region-wide mandatory imposition. It plans to give individual municipalities the flexibility to charge a levy on overnight stays in hotel rooms and other accommodation. The idea of the tax has been a source of disagreement between the socialists in Valencia led by president Ximo Puig and his left-wing coalition partners who have been very keen on the idea for some time. A suggested rate is somewhere **between €0.5 and €2 per night but councils will have flexibility to charge even more.** Alicante's Tourism councillor, Mari Carmen Sanchez, says that the city will 'not have a tourist tax'. (Let's not forget that local, regional and national elections are due in Spain during 2023!)

Three Kings (**Tres Reyes**) Day is always a special holiday for the kids in Spain - more toys! Their arrival in the various towns can be on camels (or horses made to look like camels!), but some arrive in coastal areas by boat. The kids line the beaches or harbours and cheer the kings. However this year in the Valencian town of Opoesa, Castellon, a large wave (and some dreadful seamanship) caught the rubber dingy containing the royalty just before it got to the shore and tossed the whole royal ensemble into the sea. All were safe, but if you fancy a chuckle, you can watch it here - <https://twitter.com/i/status/1478807292837568514>

Emilio Bascunaña, the PP mayor of Orihuela opened the first Citrus Day in the city. The Vega Baja area, mainly Orihuela, is responsible for **40% of Spain's lemon** cultivation and **70% of Valencias.**



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No matter what goes wrong,
there is always someone who knew it would.

Spain has extended **UK driving licence validity until end of February 2022**. This is the third extension, the first extension being announced in June 2021 and the second one in October 2021. The two-month grace period gives UK licence holders who reside in Spain and registered their intent to exchange more time to do so at Spain's often-overburdened DGT traffic authority. UK Ambassador Hugh Elliott admitted that "many of you have also rightly pointed out that Spaniards resident in the UK are able to exchange their Spanish licence for a UK one without taking a practical test". After a long wait for answers, UK licence holders in Spain are now hoping that a reciprocal agreement can finally be reached to solve this Brexit-induced obstacle, **but it may be wishful thinking**.

Another Brexit-related driving change **is on the way in 2022**, with an extra licence required to bring a van or large car trailer from the UK into an EU country. From next year, an international goods vehicle operator licence will be required for people based in the UK who want to bring a van over to the EU or Schengen zone. It costs £257 (€301) to apply for a goods vehicle operator licence plus an extra £401 (€470) for the licence. It needs to be renewed every five years at a further cost of £401. The change comes into force on **May 21st, 2022**.

Bankruptcies in Spain were up more than 30% during 2021 compared to 2020. The highest rates were in the regions of Madrid, Catalonia and Valencia. Insolvencies within the hospitality sector rose by 85% over 12 months due to Covid restrictions.

Over 34% of new companies formed last year were connected to real estate.

Marijuana plant seizures have gone up fourfold in five years in Spain along with a big rise in 'associated crime'. Spain has now surpassed the Netherlands for the first time in terms of plants seized by the police. Just over 3 million plants have been removed so far during 2021.

Husband: I want you to have this bracelet. It belonged to my grandmother.

Wife: Why does it say "Do Not Resuscitate"?

The Spanish National Police arrested 37 people in Madrid during early January for allegedly **sexually exploiting minors** and drug trafficking. 10 victims – all minors aged between 14-16 – were released from a criminal network of prostitution-related activities. Those arrested were nationals from Spain, the Dominican Republic, Nigeria, Romania, Cuba and Morocco. One of the individuals allegedly involved in the ring's activities is Saymol Fyly, a rapper with 154,000 subscribers to his YouTube channel. The raid involved 150 police officers.

People who threaten bar and restaurant owners over COVID passports could face prosecution in the Valencian Community. Regional president, Ximo Puig, said he's contacted the Prosecutor's Office following reports of intimidation and coercion against businesses in Castellon Province. **Indoor access to hospitality is only permitted by producing an EU COVID certificate** until at least January 31. If the current high rates continue, this date is likely to be extended.

Over **4,400 migrants died** or disappeared during 2021, whilst travelling by sea to try and enter Spain, according to a report published by the NGO Caminando Fronteras (Walking Borders) – which is double the number of 2020.

Madrid will allow women **in the region** to access **free IVF treatment** through the public health system up to the age of 45, as part of a €4.5-billion plan to encourage women in the capital to have more babies. Women in Spain become mothers at a later age than all their European counterparts. A study released in March 2021 found that the pandemic had made Spain's birth rate drop further still **to its lowest level in 80 years**, and Spain's National Statistics Institute estimates the country could lose five million inhabitants in the next 50 years, with immigration currently proving to be the best remedy to boost the population numbers.

So, what the hell happened to our hospital?

The average waiting time for an intervention at the University Hospital of Vinalopó, of the Ribera health group (who used to run the Torrevieja Hospital until mid-October 2021), is 53 days. A figure much lower than the average of the other public hospitals in the Valencian Community, located in 103 days, according to official data that the Ministry of Health has published for the month of October.

You will recall that the Ministry of Health took over the running of Torrevieja Hospital in mid-October 2021 for what it called 'greater efficiency.' The real decision for not renewing the Ribera Salud contract was political. The Left want all non-private operating hospitals to be controlled by the regions. However the quality of service being offered by Torrevieja Hospital since then has been appalling in a number of areas.

On November 30 approx, there was only one doctor in the A&E Department. At one stage, there were 34 people waiting to be seen, 20 patients in cubicles and 12 people lying on stretchers in corridors. The sole doctor present called the Guardia Civil as he could not cope.

The non-serious cases had to wait up to 17 hours to be attended.

In mid-December, after going to Quiron Hospital for a CPR test (which took just minutes from arriving to leaving) I wandered into the A&E waiting area in Torrevieja Hospital to check it out. I counted almost 90 people waiting, many in wheelchairs, and when the plastic curtain to the inside opened, the corridor was full with patients in beds. I spoke to a British second home owner recently and she told me she had to wait seven hours to be seen. She had a broken arm! I have heard other stories of rudeness, discrimination etc. If you have had a bad experience with the hospital or getting appointments, please let me know. See the letter on page 12 of another's dreadful experience.

We all deserve better!

My husband woke up with a big grin this morning. I love those magic markers.

NEED HELP?

On page 35, you will see a report from Michele Masson, President, **Help Vega Baja**, who gives a great account of this registered charity, which has been in existence for 42 years.

Although I had been generally aware of their existence for many years, it was not until the Gota Fria damage in September, 2019, that the immediate and effective response of Help Vega Baja became apparent to me. For this local disaster they channelled tens of thousands of euros of immediate aid to those whose dwellings and belongings were destroyed. All this was done, long before there was any positive response from the local council, region or central government!

Despite a dramatic reduction in funding during this Covid crisis, thanks to sponsors and hard work, they are very slowly building up their cash resources. You can help.

Last year Help gave out €2,350 of food vouchers. For the same period, their Welfare assistance was up 33% on the previous year - over 2,000 enquiries! Also in 2021, Help have completed 74 TIE applications and numerous Attendance Allowance applications and have not charged a cent for any of them, but thank you to those who made donations. Help have also negotiated a reduced rate for PCR tests at Quiron hospital, which Tid and I availed of, saving around €20 each!

You can become a member of Help for just €10 a year and there are many benefits.





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I've been hiding from doing any exercise. I'm in the fitness protection program.



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Issued Jan 2022



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Skin Repair Oil 50ml	39.00 euros
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TRU Refresh/Restore	62.50 euros
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Natural Organic Products

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Essential Oils 10ml	4.95 euros
Hand Soap 500ml	2.99 euros
Organic Bath Bomb	1.20 euros
Room Diffuser 50ml	4.95 euros

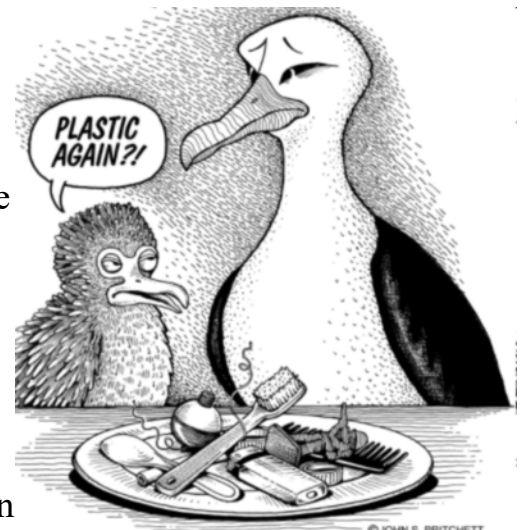
RyanAir has won the least popular airline award again. If they win again next year, they will beat the previous record set by the Luftwaffe in 1945.

POLLUTION!

After Marbella and A Coruna, Murcia is the third most polluted city in Spain, as measured in PM10 suspended particles – a common air pollutant found in smoke and dust. Measuring just 10 micrometres in diameter, they are small enough to get into a person's throat and eyes and cause irritation, including coughing and sneezing.

The eighty largest cities in Spain where some 19 million people and 40% of the country's total population live, have high levels of air pollution according to a report from the Sustainability Observatory.

In 2023, the Spanish Government intends to enforce low-emissions zones in the town centres of all cities in Spain with a population of more than 50,000 in an effort to reduce air pollution. This should include Torrevieja which has a population of 80,000 plus.



Joe's wife bought a new line of expensive cosmetics guaranteed to make her look years younger. After a lengthy sitting before the mirror applying the "miracle" products, she asked, "Darling, honestly, what age would you say I am?"

Looking over her carefully, Joe replied, "Judging from your skin, twenty; your hair, eighteen; and your figure, twenty five." "Oh, you flatterer!" she gushed.

"Hey, wait a minute!" Joe interrupted. "I haven't added them up yet."



JJ's

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TWEET!

TWEET!



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CAKES & MUCH, MUCH MORE!

OPENING TIMES

MONDAY - SATURDAY

11am - 5pm



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Letters to the Editor

Received 22 Nov 2021, from Donna.

I arrived in Spain with husband and dog for my 66th birthday and retirement which is 26th November. However last Saturday morning I got my shopping trolley and Max my dog, walked to the Mercadona, Los Balcones, did the shopping - the receipt times this at 11.20am - then I was walking back to my apartment and by the library at Lago Jardin, I was approached by a Spanish lady, slim, long brown hair, brown eyes, talking in Spanish and mentioned "perro". I said "I do not speak Spanish and do not touch my small friendly dog." I was then attacked by this lady, in my left hand I had my small brown purse which contains a debit card (now contactless) the rings on my left hand are my wedding ring, my grandma's 1924 diamond engagement ring from Birmingham Jewellery quarter, a ring I had when I was 40yrs old, 50 yrs old and 60 yrs old, and my watch. She attacked me in trying to steal my things.

I Screamed very loudly and thank goodness the neighbours came to my aid. The lady got away with nothing but I have a very bruised left arm and my right 3rd finger very bruised and swollen.

A male driver was waiting for her in the car and they sped off.

The police told me to go to Torrevieja Hospital. My friend drove me there arriving at 12.10 booked in at 12.35pm according to the slip I have. Now seen as low priority, and at 7.20pm with no idea when I could be seen just told to sit and wait - low priority, I left after photographing the clock. Next day Sunday back at hospital at 8.30am after 3 hours waiting and getting nowhere when a visitor told us about Hospital Quiron, so we left and went there. We were seen within minutes, x ray and bandaged up.. Please make people aware of this.

Thank you Donna, John and Perro Max.

People who say money can't buy you happiness just don't know where to shop.

Tara Palmer-Tomkinson



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DOG
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South Facing Terrace, Opposite Mercadona in Los Balcones

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Older Central Heating & Cooling Systems to be Scrapped.

It seems the days of central heating in Spanish homes are numbered as by May 2023, the vast majority of these systems will have been removed in compliance with the Royal Decree published on August 6 by the Ministry for the Ecological Transition and Democratic Challenge.

Affecting approximately 1.4 million homes, all buildings constructed prior to 1998 will have to replace their central heating or cooling systems. Houses built after this date should be largely unaffected, as the subsequent Regulation of Thermal Installations in Buildings (RITE) already prohibited them from being fitted.

By 2022, homeowners must obtain a quote (which is free) from an installation company regulated by the RITE to carry out the required adaptations. According to the Spanish Association of Heating Cost Distributors (ACERCA), citizens will then have 15 months from the date of the quote to carry out the removal of the central heating systems. Buildings located in the archipelagos or in the warmest areas of the coast: the islands, the Levante area, Guadalquivir and the north African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla are exempt from making the changes.

"I ended up with an older woman at a club last night. She looked okay for a 58-year-old. We drank a bit, and had a bit of a snog and she asked if I'd ever had a Sportsman's Double.

"What's that?" I asked.

"It a mother and daughter threesome," she said.

I said, "No."

We drank a bit more, then she says that tonight was my lucky night. I went back to her place. She put on the hall light and shouted upstairs:

"Mum, you still awake?"

UK & THE 90 DAYS!

Valencian authorities have been actively calling for UK nationals to not have their time on Spain's Costa Blanca limited or determined by the Schengen rules that now apply to them.

Valencian regional president Ximo Puig has said he wants "Brexit to be as Brexit-less as possible" and has asked Spain's Tourism Minister to "facilitate the visa situation" and "correct the restrictions" that Brits now face.

As the EU is currently overhauling and **modernising its system**, this may offer Spain and the United Kingdom the opportunity to reach a special entry and exit agreement which could be incorporated into a more advanced EU system due to come into force late next year. Madrid may have more important issues to deal with.

But the legality of Spain signing its own deal with the UK whilst forming part of the EU and Schengen Zone remains a grey area as there's **no recent precedent to this**. On the one hand the EC states that "Member States may make specific arrangements in bilateral agreements. General exceptions provided for by national law and bilateral agreements shall be notified to the Commission". But on the other hand, "common measures on the crossing of internal borders by persons and border control at external borders should reflect the Schengen precepts incorporated in the Union framework".

All things considered, rather than a readiness on behalf of Spanish and British authorities to strike a deal on extended and flexible entry and exit conditions, it seems more likely that **the EU's stance** will be the deciding factor. Don't expect anything soon!

Everything from the fallout of Brexit on Spain's tourism industry, to the UK's treatment of EU migrants and visitors and of course the outcome of the Brexit agreement on Northern Ireland, could play a part in Brussels's willingness to bend.

PERFORMING ARTISTS

UK artists looking to perform in Spain **will no longer need** to complete the costly and complex work visa process required post-Brexit after Spain's Cabinet agreed to waive the previous rules. Most EU nations have signed bilateral agreements with the British government to alleviate the fallout of the UK leaving the bloc but unfortunately Spain, together with Croatia and Bulgaria, were until now the only three countries with no alternative arrangement in place.

As of November 14th that changes, as the Spanish Cabinet has followed the advice of Spain's Association of Music promoters (APM) as well as their British counterparts LIVE and the Association for British Orchestras (ABO) to find a solution to the visa obstacle.

As explained in the official state bulletin (BOE) dealing with the decree, British musicians, actors and other artists as well as other people **who form part of the audiovisual sector** will be able to carry out their work activities in Spain for 90 out of 180 days without requiring a work visa.

However, there were still challenges to the industry, particularly around the transportation of goods or passengers in Spain by a foreign operator – a process referred to as **cabotage** – which make many tours impossible. Cabotage is the transport of goods or passengers between two places in the same country by a transport operator from another country. It originally applied to shipping along coastal routes, port to port, but now applies to aviation, railways, and road transport as well.

BISHOP WHO BELIEVED IN GAY CONVERSION THERAPY.

Xavier Novell i Gomà, A 52-year-old Spanish bishop, has been formally stripped of his powers and prohibited from administering the sacraments after he abandoned his clerical career to marry a clinical psychologist who became a "dynamic and transgressive" erotic novelist in 2015. Xavier can keep his title of bishop!

Remember the old days when we used to eat cake after someone blew all over it?

Man, we were wild...



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ARE YOU WASTING MONEY IN YOUR PENSION SCHEME?

There are many pension schemes, especially QROPS, where the administration, advice costs etc are very overly charged. I have been able to reduce fees for pension plans by on average 55% and also able to provide a regular review of the pension value. This can amount to considerable savings over the years. In fact one new client that we reviewed recently now has a pension that will provide him with a further £150,000.

DON'T MISS OUT, contact me on 634305881 for details.

BREXIT AND YOUR PENSION

No one knows what will happen with BREXIT , but I do know that anyone who did not live in the EU and wanted to transfer their pension overseas was hit last year with a 25% TAX CHARGE. Ouch! This could also be the case for transferring within the EU if we leave.

Contact me on 634305881 to discuss your options.

NEED A FINANCIAL ADVISER?

Are you one of the many who have taken out an investment or pension and never see the adviser again? You need regular updates of what is happening within the industry that could save you a considerable amount.

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An old lady walked into a lift at Harrod's department store followed by two very rich ladies. The first rich woman says to the other 'Smell this, Christian Dior £80 per ounce.' The second rich woman says, 'No! Smell this.....Chanel No.5....£100 per ounce!' The old lady farts and says, 'Smell that! Brussels Sprouts, £1.10 per pound!'



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Naming Pubs

Many pub names have significant meanings. The Royal Oak signifies the tree future King Charles the 2nd hid in to escape Cromwell; the Red Lion signifies all public buildings under James 1 being decorated with his crest, and The Duke of York warning all those girls under 18 to give it a miss.

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672 326 979

I got up this morning, got dressed and fed the dogs. After that I took them for a walk and while I was out I met my neighbour. He was somewhat embarrassed to admit that he had heard all the grunting coming from our bedroom earlier but said it was great that a couple of our age were still having early morning sex. I didn't have the heart to tell him that was just me putting my socks on.....

INFLATION HITS FOOD PRICES!

The Spanish economy has suffered rocketing inflation rates in the last year. It has been felt until mostly in utilities bills, but now it is causing prices on food products to increase, some of them in particular. In the last year Spanish consumers have faced the sharpest price increases of any major European economy, and they are now being felt in everyday items: olive oil is 26.7 percent more expensive than in December 2020, pasta 15.2 percent, soft drinks 11.7, fresh fruit percent 9 percent and fresh fish 6.6 percent. Even poultry meat (6.5 percent), fruit juices (6.3 percent), eggs (6.2 percent), milk (5 percent), coffee (4.6 percent), and bread (3.8 percent) have seen slight price increases that will be felt in households across Spain.

Two more specific price increases that may concern some Spaniards more than others, however, are on beer and tobacco. Beer prices have risen due to an increase in the price of cereals, and it is believed that the government intends to increase tax incomes on tobacco by at least 5.5 percent.

In the last year food and beverage prices had been somewhat stable, and relatively unaffected by inflation, but since October they have increased from 1.7 percent to 5 percent to round out the year.

Throughout the last year economists had hoped that the recent price shock would be transitory, and tied to the fate of the volatile utilities market, particularly the international natural gas price, but speaking last week, former Spanish Minister and now vice president of the European Central Bank, Luis de Guindos, suggested that inflation, and by extension, price increases, 'may not be so transitory.'

According to a recent survey by the Bank of Spain, 60 percent of national companies plan to raise their prices in the coming year.

(Abridged from The Local.)

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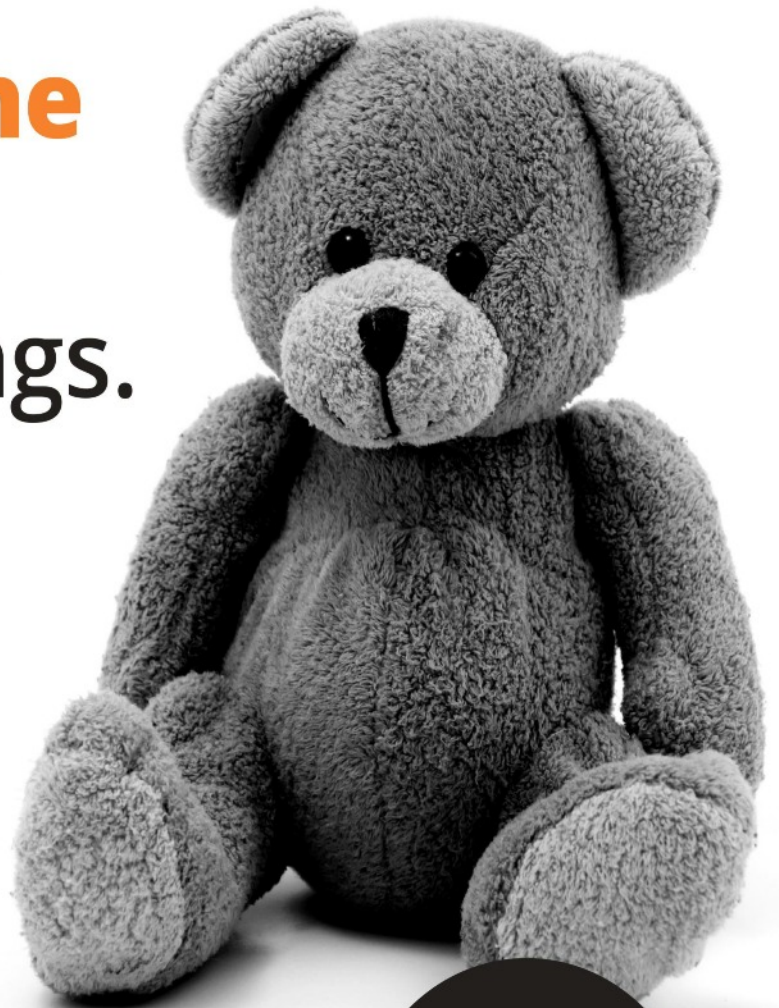
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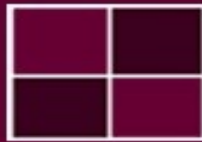
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Shock Arrest at Gatwick Airport

A public school teacher was arrested today at Gatwick Airport as he attempted to board a flight while in possession of a ruler, a protractor, a set square, a slide rule, and a calculator. At a morning press conference, Home Secretary Priti Patel said she believes the man is a member of the notorious Al-gebra movement. She did not identify the man, who has been charged by the Metropolitan Police with carrying weapons of maths instruction. "Al-gebra is a problem for us," Patel said. "They desire solutions by means and extremes, and sometimes go off on tangents in a search of absolute values. They use secret code names like 'x' and 'y' and refer to themselves as 'unknowns,' but we have determined they belong to a common denominator of the axis of medieval with co-ordinates in every country. As the Greek philanderer Isosceles used to say, "There are 3 sides to every triangle". When asked to comment on the arrest, Prime Minister Boris Johnson, speaking from his holiday resort before the planes stopped flying, said, "If God had wanted us to have better Weapons of Maths Instruction, He would have given us more fingers and toes."

From an actual court case:

ATTORNEY: Doctor, how many of your autopsies have you performed on dead people?

WITNESS: All of them. The live ones put up too much of a fight.

Adele's latest album has received critical acclaim.

One review in particular stood out:

"Fantastic stuff. Every suspect has confessed within minutes of me putting it on."

V Putin, Moscow

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KITCHEN OPEN DAILY 9:30am, Last Orders 8pm



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My wife got really mad when she found me kissing her twin
during a drunken dance at a New Year's Eve party.
He was not too thrilled about it either.



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KITCHEN OPEN DAILY 9:30am, Last Orders 8pm

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POTATO SCONE, TOMATO, BEANS, MUSHROOM & TOAST
WITH OJ & TEA OR COFFEE ALL THIS - ONLY €5.50!!**

Full English Breakfast €4.50 Mon-Sat 9.30am-1.30pm

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(Sundays 10am - 11.30am)

Coffee, Tostada 9:30 - midday €2.00

Homemade Cake, coffee €2.50

EVERY WEDNESDAY LAMB CHOPS, Chips & Salad, €9.95.

EVERY THURSDAY PORK CHOPS, Chips & Salad €6.95

Booking advised! 1.30 - 8pm

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100 + PEOPLE EVERY WEEK CAN'T BE WRONG!

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He was a good man, but a lousy cabinet maker.

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- Toasties
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- Selection of beers
- Coffee

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I was in the Aldi's today when a young woman came over to me and whispered,
"I'm going to wear something see-through tonight, what do you think?"
I replied, "Well I think it should be your glasses love. Your boyfriend is in the next aisle."

BREXIT Update:

Withdrawal agreement has confirmed that applications for Attendance Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment can be submitted throughout 2021.

Attendance Allowance is a benefit for people in receipt of a UK state pension and who may need extra help to stay independent at home, due to an illness or disability.

You could get: £60 or £89.60 a week if you need help both in the day and at night.

Completing the lengthy form, you need to show that you need help at home or someone to keep an eye on you. This can include help such as getting out of bed, help to wash and dress.

David, at Advocacy Costa Blanca is always happy to meet up for a chat. No charge.



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Has your health changed?

**Thinking about care and support at home?
ACB provides expert social care, welfare
guidance and support.**

*Free home visits and advice from an award
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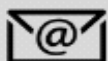
Attendance
Allowance



*Thank you David Minto for all your help and advise.
David came to my home in Dec. and filled in all the forms
etc. my claim was turned down so David persuaded me to
appeal Last week I heard from the court and I have been
awarded the higher offer plus back dated from January.
David you are an ultimate professional so once again thank
you
RW, El Galan*

*David Minto gives the most excellent service. I was
given a couple of groups to contact when I needed
some financial help for my disability. One group
just passed me on with tel. nos to contact . David
was immediately on the case , visited my home,
filled in forms with the info. No stress for me . Yes
David charges a fee , you would expect that, but he
certainly works hard and expertly for it and could
easily be paid from the award I received. Would
recommend Advocacy Costa Blanca to anyone
needing help. GR-San Luis*

Contact David on - 602465565.



- advocacycostablanca@gmail.com

Are you thinking about a return to the UK?

Are you aware of the Habitual Residence Test and Ordinary Residence?

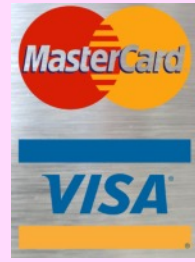
Should you decide to return to the UK, it may be that you could have housing, social services and benefits declined because of Habitual Residency Test and Ordinary Residence.

David, at ACB, has been a UK social worker for eighteen years, many of these at a very senior level and is very accustomed to helping people access welfare services on return to the UK.

For free advice and guidance regarding a return to the UK please don't hesitate to contact David at Advocacy Costa Blanca on 0034 602465565.

Scientists have discovered that most women will at some time contain certain intelligent DNA.

Unfortunately 95% will spit it out. (Incoming!!!)



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Mon - Sun 10am - 6pm



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€6.00!! AVAILABLE 1pm - 5.45pm



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STUFFING, ROAST AND MASHED POT'S,
AND SEASONAL VEGETABLES.**



JUST €5.50!

**PUDDINGS/AFTERS/DESSERTS/SWEETS
(WHICH ONE ARE YOU??) - HOT OR COLD
ADD ONE AND PAY €7.50 IN TOTAL!**



Wi-Fi

Most blokes own two to three pairs of shoes. So what makes women think we'd be any good at choosing which pair, out of thirty, looks good with your dress?

Antiviral Pills That Fight Covid Show Promising Results

Almost a year after scientists released tests showing the success of mRNA vaccines in fighting Covid, Merck released promising interim test results from a Phase III trial **of an antiviral pill**. On October 1, the pharmaceutical giant presented data that suggested molnupiravir could cut hospitalizations in half. Ten days later, the company submitted results to the FDA in hopes of gaining emergency use. In mid-November, the U.K. jumped ahead of the U.S. and granted approval for the treatment. By late November, advisers to the FDA recommended emergency authorization of the pill, though it was shown by this time to reduce death or disease by 30—not 50—percent. The drug should be taken—four pills a day for five days—starting within five days of the appearance of symptoms. It works by disrupting SARS-CoV-2's ability to replicate effectively inside a human cell.

Molnupiravir isn't the only viral drug with positive results. In November, Pfizer announced

its antiviral pill, Paxlovid, was effective against severe Covid. By December, the pharmaceutical giant shared final results that it reduced the risk of hospitalization and death by **88 percent in a key group**. News about both pills was welcome, as they are expected to work **against all versions of the virus**, including Omicron. Though the drugs aren't as big of a breakthrough as the vaccines, a doctor writing for the New Yorker called them "the most important pharmacologic advance of the pandemic." Many wealthy countries have already agreed to contracts for molnupiravir, and the Gates Foundation pledged \$120 million to help get the pill to poor countries. If approved and distributed fast enough, the oral antivirals can be prescribed in places, like Africa, where vaccines have been lacking. The pills represent another crucial tool, in addition to masks and vaccines, in the fight against Covid.

(The Smithsonian Magazine)



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I went to an Oriental restaurant last night and got chatting to the waiter. He told me he lived in Japan during the war and was a kamikaze pilot and his Code Name was 'Chow Mein.' I said, "Correct me if I'm wrong, but didn't kamikaze pilots sacrifice their own lives?" To which he replied, "Yes, but I was Chicken Chow Mein."

New Research into CBD.

A study conducted on mice shows that CBD (cannabidiol) inhibits viral replication without side effects.

A breakthrough study published during this January in the journal 'Science Advances' has examined the effects of cannabidiol (CBD) on human and mice cells and found that the primary active compound in hemp and marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*) may prevent SARS-CoV-2 replication early in the course of infection, shortly after the virus has entered the body.

In addition, an analysis of 1,212 patients from the National Covid Cohort Collaborative who had a history of taking CBD oil to treat seizures showed a substantially lower rate of Covid infection in comparison to control groups.

To test the theory, researchers from the University of Chicago treated human lung cancer cells with CBD two hours before exposing the cells to coronavirus. After 48 hours, the team observed potent inhibition of viral replication with no toxic effects.

Comparable results were achieved when the substance was tested on two other human cell types and three variants of the virus (Alpha, Beta and Gamma).

Taking it a step further, the researchers then tested their results on mice that express the human ACE2 receptor – the key entry point for

Covid. The rodents were injected with CBD twice a day for a week before being infected with coronavirus and for four days afterward. The results were conclusive: at both the highest and lowest doses, **CBD reduced viral load in the mice with no adverse side effects.**

“These results establish the preclinical efficacy of CBD as an antiviral drug for SARS-CoV-2 during the early stages of infection,” explained Long Chi Nguyen, lead author.

The team was quick to point out that the use of CBD in treating Covid must still go through rigorous testing and **cautioned people against self-medicating** as the optimal dosage, formulation, and mode of administration is still unclear. Nguyen and his colleagues clarified that **other similar compounds** such as cannabidiolic acid (BBDA) and cannabidivarin (CBDV) produced no observable results against the virus. Moreover, it was discovered that tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the main photoactive compound grown as marijuana, could actually **strongly counteract the antiviral effects of CBD.**

The authors have concluded that this finding “essentially rules out the feasibility of marijuana serving as an effective antiviral CBD source” since the purity, composition and concentration are so variable among cannabis products and commercially available CBD.



**If you find a magic lantern,
be careful what you wish for.**

The Tunnel of Lurve!

Paddy and Murphy were having a catch up in the village square -

"So Morph, how've yer been? Done anything interesting since last time?"

"No too bad Paddy. Took Mary to dat funfair in town last week, she was nagging me about dat Tunnel Of Love. To be honest, it was a bit of a disappointment, it was dark and uncomfortable and we came out soaked through. Mary was in tears so there wasn't much love on offer later I can tell ye!"

"Bijeesus Murph, dat's terrible, was the boat leaking?"

"What boat?"



JB's

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(Formerly known as Jilly's Bar)

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Updating your Digital Covid Certificate to include your booster.

Spain is now issuing the EU Digital Covid Certificate to all citizens in Spain who apply for it, becoming one of the first European countries capable of issuing and recognising the certificate. EU Covid Certificates can be issued and used in all EU Member States to facilitate free movement during the Covid-19 pandemic. All EU citizens and their family members, as well as non-EU nationals legally staying or residing in the Member States and who have the right to travel to other Member States, would be eligible to receive such certificates free of charge.

The certificates will verify three situations -
vaccination, recovery and negative results of a diagnostic test.

The key features of the certificate are:

- Digital and/or paper format
- with QR code
- free of charge
- in national language and English
- safe and secure
- valid in all EU countries

(You will need your SIP card details to hand.)

You can download your certificate from here-

<http://coronavirus.san.gva.es/es/certificado-digital-ue>

While going through the download process, a verification code will be sent to the mobile phone you have already registered with the *Salud*. Many have changed their phone number and have not advised the *Salud*. Unfortunately those will not be able to download their certificate.

I was banned from the Beverly Hills Swimming Club because I'm Jewish.

'My son's only half Jewish,' I said, 'so could he go in up to his waist?'

Groucho Marx



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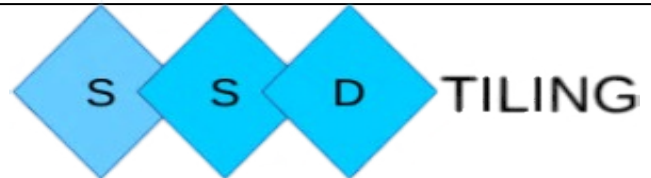
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Greatest selection of piercing jewellery from 5€



A guy walks into a bar and says to the barman,
"Give me six double vodkas."
The barman says, "Wow, you must have had one
hell of a day."
"Yeah, I just found out my oldest son is gay."
The next day, the same guy comes into the bar and
asks for six more double vodkas. When the
bartender asks what's wrong, the man says, "I just
found out that my youngest son is gay, too!"
On the third day, the guy comes into the bar and
orders another six double vodkas. The bartender
says, "Jesus! Doesn't anybody in your family like
women?" The man downs the first drink and
shakes his head, "Yeah, my wife!"



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**I promised I'd take Rotherham out of
the second division.
I did. Into the Third Division.
Tommy Docherty**

TIE Cards & the Green Certificate.

During 2021, some British residents of Spain had been incorrectly stopped from boarding planes for Spain as they only had the green residency certificate instead of the TIE card. It started with airline staff not recognising the old green residency documents of a number of British passengers, denying them boarding or entry to Spain. Airport officials had either not seen this sheet of paper before – which isn't a photo ID but still an official residency document – or they assumed it should have been replaced with the new TIE card. Similar problems were being encountered in some banks and the Spanish DGT department. Spanish authorities have since created an official document, PDF, for UK nationals to take with them to the airport stating that the green certificates are still valid. You can find and print out the relative form from the link below -

https://www.inclusion.gob.es/ficheros/brexit/nota_aclaratoria_green_certificate.pdf

This supporting notice is in both English and Spanish and should solve any problems you have with the green certificate, unless of course you come up against a real idiot and these are often impossible to deal with! Although the British Consulate are encouraging Brit residents to change to the TIE, the Spanish authorities have not given a 'closing date' or indication that they will be insisting on the change to TIE's soon. We will let you know when this happens.

Nasties!

What's the difference between Meatloaf and Prince Andrew?

Meatloaf is brown bread.

Prince Andrew is toast.

I'd like to thank the girl with no sports bra, who ran with me for the last few miles of the marathon.

Your lack of support got me through it.

Worlds surfing championship in Tonga won by some bloke on a wardrobe.



LOCKSMITH

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Antonio
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Camping Florantilles

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National holidays across all of Spain in 2022

Saturday, January 1st (New Year's Day)

Thursday, January 6th (Epiphany)

Friday, April 15th (Good Friday)

Monday, August 15th (Assumption of the Virgin)

Wednesday, October 12th (National Day of Spain)

Tuesday, November 1st (All Saints' Day)

Tuesday, December 6th (Spanish Constitution Day)

Thursday, December 8th (Immaculate Conception Day)

Valencian Region Holidays: March 19th, April 14th, April 18th and June 24th.

Gettin' Angry!

Two nuns, Sister Marilyn and Sister Helen, are travelling through Europe in their car. They get to Transylvania and are stopped at a traffic light. Suddenly, out of nowhere, a diminutive bat-like Dracula jumps onto the bonnet of the car and hisses through the windscreen.

"Quick, quick!" shouts Sister Marilyn. "What shall we do?"

"Turn the windscreen wipers on. That will get rid of the abomination," says Sister Helen.

Sister Marilyn switches them on, knocking Dracula about, but he clings on and continues hissing at the nuns. "What shall I do now?" she shouts.

"Switch on the windscreen washer. I filled it up with Holy Water in the Vatican," says Sister Helen.

Sister Marilyn turns on the windscreen washer.

Dracula screams as the water burns his skin, but he clings on and continues hissing at the nuns.

"Now what?" shouts Sister Marilyn.

"Show him your Cross," says Sister Helen.

"Right," says Sister Marilyn as she opens the window and shouts, "Arsehole! Get the f*ck off our car!"



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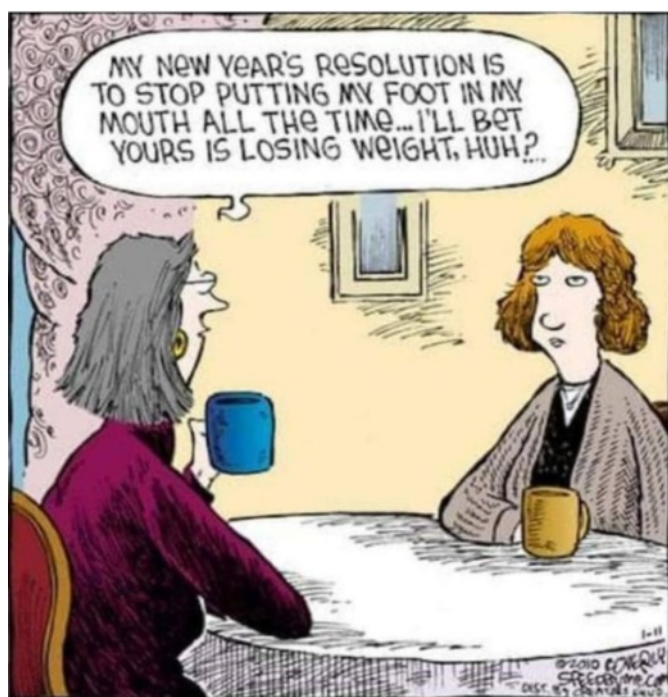
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At a recent job interview:

"What's your name?"

*"Dave ***** Smith"*

"Do you suffer from Tourette's Dave"

"No. But the Vicar at the Christening did."

A Bogota police academy in Columbia held a cultural exchange event for Germany. However



it caused outrage as the **hosts dressed-up as Nazi soldiers** with the

appropriate armbands, see photo. Guests gained entry to the event through a fake Colditz-style castle guarded by soldiers dressed in WW2 German uniforms and a German shepherd guard dog. Police later said that the head of the academy had been sacked.

More than **40 camels were disqualified** from a beauty contest in Saudi Arabia after breeders had “enhanced” them with Botox, fillers and facelifts. At the King Abdulaziz Camel Festival, breeders compete for around \$66m in prize money. Winners are judged on the shape of animals’ heads, necks, humps and postures. But in recent years the authorities have had to clamp down on breeders artificially enhancing their camels.

Norwegian soldiers will be issued used underwear. The military is asking conscripts to **return their underwear**, bras and socks when their service ends due to supply problems.

A South Korean presidential candidate has promised government payments for hair loss treatment. The platform is very popular with bald voters. South Korean presidential candidate Lee Jae-myung told reporters that he thinks hair re-growth treatments should be covered by the national health insurance program. Reports say **one in every five** South Koreans suffers from hair loss.

In the last Plenary Meeting of the Almuñécar Town Council it was unanimously agreed to make **Jesus Christ a perpetual councillor** on the council. This means that Christ will receive a mayor’s baton and the corresponding

medallion. As it was unanimous, it means the far-left party also voted in favour. The idea was put before the council was backed by 1,600 signatures in favour. Good luck with the postage on the medallion and baton!

A 47-year-old Venezuelan cyclist has been treated for receiving the impact of scores of pellets in the lumbar area, legs and buttocks by a hunter in a rural area of the municipality of Alicante. The cyclist observed two hunters in the vicinity but a few metres later he was shot by a third who fired **at least one cartridge** loaded with more than 100 pellets, which hit him. In his account to the police, the hunter alleged that he had **confused the movement of the cyclist with that of a rabbit** and admitted that he shot him with a cartridge, which contains a high number of pellets, which would agree with the testimony of the victim that he had suffered at least 100 pellets. One of the hunters helped him and called 112. He was evacuated to the Hospital de Sant Joan, where he underwent surgery and a surgeon told him that he had about a hundred pellets in his body "but it did not affect any vital organ". They could only "extract 16 and the rest are going to stay inside" because "they are in the muscle fibre and their extraction can lead to worse consequences," explained the cyclist.

The big question here must be, would you give back a lethal weapon to a chap who mistakes a man on a bicycle for a rabbit?

In a review of “**The Worst Michelin-starred Restaurant, Ever**”, the food blogger Geraldine DeRuiter described her 27-course, £170 meal at Bros’ in Lecce, Italy. She was served edible paper, glasses of vinegar, “rancid ricotta” and – the pièce de résistance – a ceramic **plaster cast of the chef’s mouth** filled with citrus foam, which she had to lick out. Chef Floriano Pellegrino responded by sending her a drawing of a man on a horse, captioned: “Being able to draw a man on a horse does not make you an artist.” Might I suggest that this particular chef goes on a cycling holiday to Alicante!

SOME CHANGES IN 2022

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Lots of new changes coming to laws, taxes, customer rights and other important matters that affect life in Spain this year. I covered Housing and Travel to the EU in the previous issue. I'll outline some of rest here. There will be more.

CUSTOMER WARRANTIES

From January 2022 consumer goods sold across Spain and the EU have a mandatory **3-year warranty** instead of 2. Digital goods such as applications, video or audio archives, digital games, electronic books or similar now have a two-year warranty. One of the markets that will be most affected is that of second-hand cars. If you buy a used vehicle in 2022 and it breaks down before a year has passed, it will be the seller who will have to deal with the repair.

This new law can be inflationary of course as the sellers will have to cover the extra costs of having more spare parts and repair capacity.

And good luck with your claim!

VEHICLE REGISTRATION TAX

On January 1st 2022, Spain's Registration Tax also increased, which will make 40% of **new vehicles** 5% more expensive, on average €800 more than in 2021. Spain's vehicle registration tax (impuesto de matriculación) is a once-off sum which is paid when you buy a new vehicle, a rate which varies depending on the vehicle's emissions. Once again, inflationary.

RETIREMENT AGE INCREASED

On January 1st 2022, the requirements to be able to access retirement with 100% of your Spanish pension has changed. To retire at 65 you will have to have made tax contributions for a minimum of 37 years and 6 months. That's three months more than in 2021, when it was 37 years and 3 months. If you do not meet this requirement, you will have to retire at 66 years and 2 months, if you want to collect a full monthly pension. The retirement age will continue to rise until 2027, by which time if you have not contributed a minimum of 38 years and 9 months you will have to retire at 67 years of age.

INCREASE IN IPREM

The IPREM is an index used in Spain as a reference for granting a variety of social subsidies for people who are struggling to make ends meet. It's also a crucial factor for those applying for **Spain's non-lucrative visa, as non-EU nationals (including Britons) who want to move to Spain without a job** have to show they have sufficient financial means to not be a burden for the state, with the bar set at 400% of the IPREM. On January 1st 2022 this figure rose to €579.02, €20 more than in 2021.

That means that the standard financial requirement for non-lucrative visa applicants is €2,316 per month in 2022. So a **non-EU national** wanting to apply for the non-lucrative residency permit for Spain for the first time (it lasts one year) would have to prove **they have €27,792**, more than €600 than for those who applied in 2021. An additional €6,948.24 is needed per additional family member!

SOCIAL SECURITY TAX RISE FOR SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS

Despite the economic devastation caused by Covid, Spain's self-employed workers will pay **€8 more a month in 2022**. The minimum contribution base will increase to €960.60 a year; the maximum is set at €4,139.40 instead of the current €4,070. The monthly fee for the self-employed with a minimum base will be €96 more per year – an 8% increase. Monthly, that will increase minimum contributions from €286 to €293.76, the highest in Europe.

PETS CONSIDERED SENTIENT BEINGS.

In April 2021, the Spanish Parliament pre-approved a measure which enshrined the rights of dogs, cats and other domestic animals as "living beings" which "have feelings" with regards to legal affairs such as divorces or inheritances. After final approval, this law came into effect on January 5th 2022. It will also give pet owners the right to compensation for "moral injury" if their animal is hurt by another person.

Whenever I left a door open, my mum would ask if I was born in a barn, which is odd because you'd think she'd remember something like that.

One can take it for granted that every country has strange laws. In the UK, the Salmon Act 1986 says you'll be punished for 'Handling salmon [or fish] in suspicious circumstances' and according to the Seamen's and Soldiers' False Characters Act 1906, and the Police Act 1996, it's illegal to pretend to be part of the armed forces or the police by wearing the various uniforms **even at a fancy-dress party!**

But here in Spain, there are also a lot of odd laws. Most of these can be attributed to various municipalities. Here are just a few.

The city of Sevilla introduced a number of bylaws during 2014 which **banned dominoes and dice games in the outdoor areas** of bars/cafes. Other banned actions included in this anti-noise legislation are unnecessary car engine revving, **loud TVs in restaurant terraces**, rolling beer barrels in the street, banging butane gas cylinders together and playing darts! Fines from €300 and way upwards.

Also in Seville, it's illegal to shake out clothes or carpets onto the street. Local bylaws also prohibit **hanging "indecent" (?) items** from your washing lines, with fines reaching up to €3,000 for serious offences. (So chaps, don't bring your leopard-skin thong to the city!)

What you place on **outdoor areas or frontal balconies** can sometimes raise issues with urbanisations and municipalities. The village of Villanueva de la Torre in Guadalajara in central Spain, which has a population of just 6,500, takes a very tough view.

Here **if you leave a mop on the terrace or balcony** you can be warned or even fined!

Called the "Ordinance of Citizen Coexistence with the Penal Code" it also bans dogs barking at night (you wish) and children playing in the street.

Fines are around €650.

The Spanish enclave of Ceuta in northern Africa also fines those who shake their clothes or rugs **from balconies** or in the street, of between €100 and €750. Daft!



In a bizarre legal case, Spain's Constitutional Court has rejected the appeal of a Spanish woman who filed a **sexual abuse and coercion complaint against her ex-brother-in-law** at the Provincial Court of Palma de Mallorca in late December. The woman, 38, told the regional judge she had felt forced to perform oral sex on her former relative after he requested that she pay him back €15,000 she owed with fellatio.

At a later date, the man reportedly told her that due to the favour she owed, she had to give him "two or three blow jobs a week and be his floozy whilst the debt was outstanding", something she felt "psychologically obliged to do" and went ahead with on five occasions.

The Balearic judge found **no evidence of sexual abuse or coercion**, concluding that "it was a freely agreed relationship" between the two. When the plaintiff then decided to appeal the matter at Spain's Constitutional Court, judges again washed their hands of it, arguing that the case did not justify "special constitutional significance" In other words, Spain's Constitutional Court, an independent body from the State which has the final say on all matters relating to fundamental rights and breaches of them, **doesn't consider that paying back financial debt in sexual favours is illegal** if agreed to by both parties.

Begging is allowed in Madrid **but not if you have a dog in your company**, or worse still, if you use dogs to do the begging for you. This 2018 animal protection bylaw aimed to crack down on organised crime groups which position dogs around the city, lie them down on a blanket next to a begging bowl and then leave them. Madrid authorities estimated these mafias could make anywhere around €400 a day from handouts from passers-by, so the fines can be stiff - up to €5,000.

Finally, According to Spain's Directorate General of Traffic, sleeping or **carrying out any other activity** which isn't illegal inside a vehicle (including sex!) isn't a finable offence as long as the car is properly parked and the act isn't bothersome. This does not apply in Bilbao, where you will be fined. So take note!



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AUTOMATIC ELECTRONIC DRIVE THRU TOLLS COMING.

As part of its program to modernise the motorways in line with Europe, the Spanish Government has announced that later this year it will be joining the European Electronic Toll Service (EETS), allowing drivers to drive through toll booths and just pay online.

Basically, it works on a contract basis.

Drivers sign up to the European electronic toll service (EETS), get sent an on-board unit which they can place in their car, and then are able to drive through any participating toll booth on any paid motorway in the whole of Europe without having to stop and fumble with change at the toll gate.

The idea behind the scheme is to make travel across Spain and Europe smoother and more homogenous. EU countries from Switzerland to the Netherlands have already adopted the EETS with great success.

It won't make toll roads more expensive, it won't mean paying extra taxes and it won't change which roads you have to pay to use and which ones you don't, but it will make it easier for EU countries to exchange information about unpaid tolls in different Member States so that it's harder for drivers to get away with not paying when they drive on a toll road.

It's not yet clear when Spain will be introducing this system – sometime in 2022 – but it's also thought that it will be compatible with other in-vehicle telematic services like emergency motoring assistance with eCall, which automatically makes a free emergency call if your vehicle is involved in a serious road accident, as well as real-time traffic and travel information.

If you're sitting in public and a stranger takes the seat next to you, just stare straight ahead and say, "Did you bring the money?"

A Happy New Year from all at HELP Vega Baja Registered Charity



With Covid still finding its way around, we did not hold a Christmas Fayre last year, but we did have a terrific Christmas raffle which with Erna's challenges raised 2,550 euros. This money is being used to set up the "HELP Respite Project". This project will provide limited respite to carers who need some "me" time but do not have resources to do so.

The Welfare Team has successfully helped many people with their Attendance Applications, offered emotional and other practical support and it is important that we emphasise that all services offered are totally free of charge.

Thanks to the generosity of individuals and local businesses, we have been able to provide a new welfare room enabling us to speak privately with visitors.. We thank everyone involved with this project, including Chris from BBKC, Blevins Franks Foundation, The Bridge Golf Society and The Celts Club de Golf. Also, a big call out to Villas Fox in San Miguel for once again sponsoring pull up notices for us which we can display both in and out of the centre.

Laura, our new Events Co-ordinator, is organising monthly lunches focusing on outlying areas of the community. The first lunch (assuming Covid restrictions remain unchanged) will be held on the 26th January at the Dog and Firkin, Catral. Please contact our San Miguel Centre for more information and to reserve your place.

The Helpdesk in La Marina is now open on a Tuesday each week at the Hope Christian Fellowship Church. The help desk volunteers can help you with your membership to the charity and make appointments if you need welfare, emotional or other support.

Unfortunately, several of our groups have yet to be reinstated. These include the Friendship Centres at La Marina and La Zenia and the befriending service, DAFs, CARE group and talks. We await an improvement in Covid data and an increase in the number of experienced volunteers before we can reinstate these services.

It just leaves me to offer a sincere thank you to our volunteers and each one of you for your support throughout what has been a very difficult year. It is always a great joy to see people not only helping our visitors but also forging "volunteer friendships". No-one can predict what the year ahead will bring although I guess it will always be a challenge but one that without doubt, we will meet and win through with the great teams and support we have.

On behalf of the full Elective Committee, I wish you all good health, and happiness for 2022. For more information on any of the services offered by HELP Vega Baja, call **966 723 733** or email office@helpvegabaja.com

Michele Masson, President, HELP Vega Baja

I was getting a hand job off my new girlfriend when I asked. "How are you so good at this?"

"Years of practice," she replied.

"Bit of a player in your day?" I laughed.

"No, I used to be a bloke."

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My wife didn't order anything from Amazon yesterday, so the delivery guy knocked on the door to see if we were ok.

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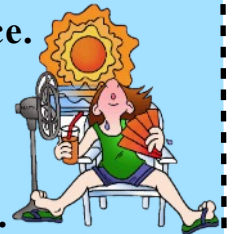


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Lime Bar Fishing SUNBATHING Club

I hope you survived a festive Christmas and wish you all a healthy Covid free New Year.

At the end of November after the last edition went to press, we held a handicapped match. The handicaps were worked out from the average scores of the last year's matches. This was fished at Bigastro on a cold but sunny day, where we had 4 teams of 3 taking part. What a fiasco that was!

Bigastro on a match day has rarely produced a lot of fish and this was the case again. Seadog (he hates Bigastro) knew what was coming and drove to El Bosquet. He was so late, he very nearly lost his peg to a reserve. Fagin regularly forgets to bring something or other (he did bring his keepnet this time), but this match he excelled himself. Everything was packed at home and ready to go, however when he arrived on the bank, he realised he had left his main bag on the dining table It contained his lunch, flask, bait, crossword book but worst of all his tranny radio!!!! 20 minutes before the match he was seen bimbbling up and down the bank scrounging bait, food and tackle from anybody who had spares. The 4 x teams were very even. We had 4 x blanks (1 per team) and the odd fish were scattered between the teams. The 3-man team weights were terrible ranging from 1.78 kilos to 3.79 kilos, mind you 3 Rods' team only won because he weighed in 1.33 kilos of bleak. He even tried to weigh in a dead bleak that he found in the margins.

It must have been dead for days as it was as dry and stiff as whitebait. His pet duck dined well that afternoon !! 3 Rods is now being called the "Bleaky Blinder"!

The December match was held at Bigastro again, on an dry, overcast & windy day. Unusual for here, but we only had the 1 blank out of 11 anglers. Don't get me wrong, it was still very hard fishing where you chucked out a feeder, huddled down into your jacket & waited, hoping that fish would take the bait. BFC is showing consistency with another good win to his name. This time 8 carp for 9.1 kilos from peg 3, 2nd was the Cat with 4 fish for 3.2 kilos (1 fish weighed 2 kilos) from peg 7, just pipping me into 3rd (again) with 4 carp & 3 barbel for 3.14 kilos from peg 9.

There were no reports of any shenanigans over the Christmas period. Although a few of the keener members ventured out, I didn't hear of anyone who went out on Christmas day.....

Covid, the Christmas break and booster jabs took their toll at the January meeting where we had lots of apologies and only 11 turning up. On the plus side, this reduced the usual arguments and the meeting was over in 15 minutes... bonus!

The January match was held at El Bosquet on pegs 1 to 16. Pegs 1 to 7 are on the narrow canal, so as we expected the fishing to be hard, we missed out every other peg on this stretch to give those anglers more room and a better chance to catch. We had been warned off by the professional clubs that had fished there earlier in the week, that they actually recorded blanks on their worst ever day fishing the complex. They fish it a couple of times each week, so if they couldn't catch, then we didn't stand a hope in hell!

We arrived to a bitter cold 2°C, but at least the wind had dropped off. As soon as the tackle was set up, most of us cracked our flasks for a hot coffee. At about 10.00 the sun was high enough and started to warm us up. For most of us, the fishing wasn't as bad as we expected. As I was setting up, I saw some bubbles coming up from the deeper water right in the middle of the canal. I started there and missed my 1st bite as I wasn't expecting it! Doh! 2nd drop in and I lost a fish!

That obviously scared anything that was down there as they didn't show again for another 30 minutes. The professionals had reported that mullet were taking bread earlier in the week, so as my usual paste kept being knocked off the hook, I changed to a tiny bit of bread on a very small size 18 hook. This worked for me and I started catching.

Spreading the pegs out on the narrow canal did not work for Seadog or Antique man. They had to suffer the freezing cold without a fish, while watching 3 Rods and the Cat catching on either side of them. As expected, the better fishing was on the wide canal (pegs 8 to 16), where everyone caught. BFC had drawn peg 10 which in the past has regularly produced 20 kilos - but not this time. After a cold day, in 3rd place was Fagash with 3 carp (1 about 2.5 kg) for 4.2 kilos, 2nd was BFC with several small carp for 4.5 kilos, but I pipped him (for a change) with 4 mullet and 1 good carp for 5.3 kilos. When the hooter went for the end of the match, everybody had a big sigh of relief so we could get out of there.

Over the last 3 months, several new pegs have been cut out at Eden 2, which look like the perfect spot for fishing. Although there had been no rain over Christmas, the water level still goes up and down like a yo-yo! I fished it 1 day in December and someone (somewhere upstream) must have opened a sluice gate. I carefully watched the water rising, ready to move if it got too high. It didn't so I carried on fishing. However, I had forgot that the track into the pegs is lower than the bank..... so on my way home, I found that the water had breached the bank further upstream and had worked round behind me! With no other way out, I had to roll my trousers up and paddle through 6 inches of water to get back to the car. Not a problem but the water was bloody cold, so be warned. The next meeting bun fight is at The Lime Bar on Tuesday 1st February.

Stay safe
Fishy fingers!
The Ghost

*Bought a penis enhancement device on Ebay.
Bastards sent me a magnifying glass!*

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The Cure?

A woman on the ward is in a coma. Nurses are in her room giving her a sponge bath. One of them is washing her "private area" and notices that there is a response on the monitor when he touches her. They go to her husband and explain what happened, telling him, "Crazy as this sounds, maybe a little oral sex will do the trick and bring her out of the coma." The husband is sceptical, but they assure him that they'll close the curtains for privacy. Besides it's worth a try. The hubby finally agrees and goes into his wife's room. After a few minutes the woman's monitor flat-lines... no pulse... no heart rate. The nurses run into the room. The husband is standing there, pulling up his trousers and says, "I think she choked."

WHERE DE FUZZ?

ROJALES Local Police have recently had only a single officer available patrolling the entire municipality at times, due a long-running pay dispute. Officers have refused to work overtime or perform extra duties, because the City Council still owes overtime from 18 months ago. The refusal, combined with absences due to Covid, have left the service at near breaking point. In many shifts, a single officer and a duty Head of Police back at Rojasles Police Station, have had to take calls and respond to the needs of a municipality in excess of 16,000 residents, including Spain's largest expat community – Ciudad Quesada. The Police and Firefighters Professional Union (SPPLB) explained that the debt outstanding to officers is almost €45,000. They say the situation is "unsustainable" and they may take legal action, because none of the compromises offered so far have been acceptable. Agents have given up voluntarily performing extra services, as they presume they are not going to be paid.

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

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Sunday The Old Station Montebello 11am -2pm

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