



THE DREAM SCENE

NEWSLETTER



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

Bienvenido a todos and welcome to the December 2023 edition. Issue No.193

After an unusually warm couple of weeks in early November, temperatures are **now much cooler**, particularly in the evenings and early mornings.

British citizens living in Europe who had lost their electoral rights in the UK because they lived abroad for more than 15 years **should be able to vote** in the next general election, after the British government finally published new rules on registration and voting.

After two days of deliberation and debate, PSOE leader **Pedro Sánchez** has secured 179 votes to win **another 4-year term** as President of the Spanish Government. However, it was touch and go as the 'kingmakers' Catalan Junts held out until the last minute, but the Catalan separatists finally joined Sumar, ERC, EH Bildu, PNV, BNG and the Canary Coalition and voted in favour of the socialists. In reality, the debate was all but a formality and Sánchez's win was a foregone conclusion. The other 171 deputies, including PP, VOX and the UPN, unsurprisingly voted against his investiture. The promised amnesty to the Catalans has been deeply unpopular to the majority of Spaniards.

PM (& President) Sanchez now has to try and keep his **squabbling coalition** together, never easy with those holding extremist and unbending views. At the same time he has united his enemies against him as never before and shown himself to the Spanish people in general as untrustworthy. It is not possible to condone the actions of a man who repeatedly said that an amnesty would be unconstitutional before the election then does a total about face and does exactly what he said he would not do when the election didn't go his way.

The UK's leading holiday destination, **Spain**,

is also the safest country in the world for women travelling alone. Nearly 80% of women said they felt safe walking alone at night and the country also scored highly on the safety index. Top destinations include the sunny Costa del Sol, the Balearic Islands and the Canary Islands. **Seville** was recently named Europe's 'most walkable destination.' You may recall that last month we reported that the Daily Mail described the city as 'very touristy and a bit tacky.' But what would the Mail know!

Wishing all our readers have a wonderful Christmas and a peaceful, prosperous and Happy New Year from all our advertisers & Mick, Tid and The Dream Scene Team.
REMEMBER: No Dream Scenes during January, back again in February.



The thing about high-tech is that you always end-up using scissors.

David Hockney

The Torrevieja City Council received a memo from the central government indicating the initiation of an environmental impact study for a road improvement project on the **congested N-332 stretch**. The road, vital for traffic from Orihuela Costa to Alicante airport, currently handles over 40,000 vehicles daily with only one lane in each direction. Due to its passage through protected areas, the project cannot proceed to tender until the environmental study is completed. Torrevieja mayor Eduardo Dolón is determined to expedite the study's completion to commence work by year-end. Despite the positive development, concerns arise as the central government, without clarification, plans to widen only half of the eight-kilometre section between the hospital and the Ozone leisure centre at the CV-905 access. This area has been an accident-prone zone, exacerbated by the continuous white line since 2014, yet remains a critical route during high seasons.

Torrevieja is to allocate **459,000 euros** to provide video surveillance and signage to the Casa Grande industrial estate.

The Torrevieja City Council is going to **return 227,000 euros** of a subsidy granted in 2021 for the professional care project for families with daughters and sons under 14 years of age. It is the so-called Co-Responsible Plan. Of that subsidy of more than 220,000 euros, they only used about 11,000 euros and now the local administration must return what it has not used together with a surcharge of 11,348 euros for late reporting and lack of use of the funds. Irresponsible misuse of a Responsible Plan - so it is not just Orihuela who can screw things up!

Mayors in the Mire!

The fifth mayor in Orihuela to face legal issues has cast a further shadow on the municipality's transparency and credibility. Our PP mayors have some history!

Back in 1993, the then PP mayor **Luis Fernando Cartagena** received an envelope with **49,000 euros** sent by Sister Bernardina, of the Carmelite Sisters responsible for the municipal asylum. She had collected it from the elderly sheltered there so that it could be used for social works. (Continued in next column)

However, Fernando 'trousered' the money!

He started a four-year jail sentence in 2010 but served only two years.

Additionally, there is an ongoing resolution process regarding irregularities in the allocation of waste management services in Orihuela, where former PP mayors **José Manuel Medina and Mónica Lorente**, along with others, were acquitted. The Supreme Court will have the final say as the Prosecutor's Office has requested the annulment of that ruling and a retrial. (The then judge would not allow the prosecution to use telephone recordings as evidence. He felt it interfered with the accused's human rights.)

Furthermore, there is an impending verdict in the Vega Baja zonal plan case, which includes accusations against Mónica Lorente, who succeeded Medina as the Oriolana Mayor. She is facing a potential sentence of four years and nine months in prison, along with 24 and a half years of disqualification. The charges revolve around allegations of favouring the interests of garbage businessman Ángel Fenoll in the awarding of a large landfill contract.

Lastly, the current first PP mayor of Orihuela, **José Vegara**, is awaiting trial for a continued crime of falsification of a commercial document, as well as two prosecutors for VAT and tax fraud related to certain companies. The prosecution is seeking a seven-year prison sentence for Vegara. Despite these legal challenges, he was elected as the first authority of Orihuela, even surpassing the previous councillor's election results.

At present, former PP Mayor **Emilio Bascunana** is facing an oral trial as it is alleged he was paid as a physician for around ten years but never saw any patients.

On a more serious note, an 18-year-old on an electric scooter collided head on with a moving vehicle in Orihuela during early November. The **young man died** at the scene and the two ladies in the car were also injured, one with several cuts from windscreen glass and the other from smoke inhalation.

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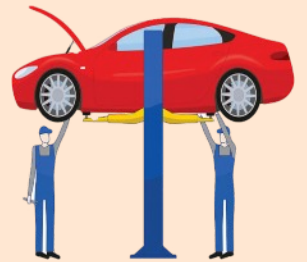
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PARTY! PARTY! PARTY!

According to new research, taking the erectile dysfunctional pill Viagra, can decrease the risk of Alzheimer disease. This is great news, because there's nothing worse than getting a hard-on and forgetting why...

Olive oil prices have gone from bad to worse. Extreme heat, wildfires, and drought are cutting harvest yields for producers, prompting shortages—and higher prices. In May, the global price of olive oil reached a 26-year high. It's since gained another 32%, setting an all-time record. Nearly €5,500 per metric ton in May, the global price now tops €8,200.

Spain, the world's largest exporter and importer of olive oil, has yielded **only half** what it normally would this year, thanks to extreme heat and drought. The country's annual production is usually more than a million tons. But lack of rain over the past year—when Spain received only about one fifth of its typical precipitation—led to the driest and hottest conditions in the nation's history for olive farmers, slashing output.

Throughout the Mediterranean, weather problems have made for less than ideal farming conditions lately. Italy, the No. 2 olive oil

producer, suffered its worst drought in 70 years in 2022 and is still recovering.

In August, the Spanish government reported dwindling supplies of olive oil, intensifying concerns and pushing prices higher this fall. The government projects that Spain will produce about 680,000 tons of olive oil through the end of 2023, a huge drop from roughly 1.5 million tons the previous year. In an interview with Spanish radio station Onda Cero, agriculture minister Luis Planas said olive oil would become a "luxury product." His government's forecast makes the supply outlook appear bleak, at least for the foreseeable future.

Italy lost the title of top world **wine producer** as its output fell 12%, allowing France to reclaim first place as its production held steady.

Spain held onto its position as the world's third largest wine producer although its production fell by 14% and was **down 19% from its five-year average.**

A gorilla walks into a bar.....

A gorilla goes into a bar and orders a G&T. This totally amazes the bartender, but he thinks, "What the heck, I guess I might as well make the drink." So he pours the G&T. He then walks back over to the give it to the gorilla, and the animal is holding out a twenty-euro note. Well, now the bartender is just at a loss for words. He can't believe that a gorilla walked into his bar, ordered a G&T, and then actually had a twenty-euro note to pay for it. So, in amazement, he takes the twenty and walks to the cash register to get the change. While he's standing in front of the cash register he stops for a second and thinks to himself, "Let me try something here and see if the gorilla notices anything."

So he walks back over to the gorilla and hands him a euro change. The gorilla doesn't say anything, he just sits there sipping the G&T. After a few minutes the bartender just can't take it anymore.

"You know," he says to the gorilla, "we don't get too many gorillas in here."

And the gorilla says, "At nineteen euros a drink I'm not surprised."

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Migrants Being Housed in Guardamar

As with many European countries, parts of Spain have been hit with a deluge of migrants. The Canaries had **9,000 migrants from Africa during the month of October alone.** (32,000 have reached the archipelago so far this year.) The islands already house several thousand migrants which has put a huge strain on the accommodation resources there.

Around 230 migrants- mainly from Senegal, West Africa,- who landed in the Canary Islands are being accommodated in a Guardamar del Segura hotel on the southern Costa Blanca.

They are now staying at the four-star Parquemar hotel in nearby Guardamar. The hotel receives €40 per person per day, funded by the Ministry of the Interior. This deal runs out on December 31, 2023. After that date here are no plans. The new hotel residents are being helped by the Cruz Roja and the CEPAIM foundation. The Guardamar contingent consists of young men, with no women or children. The only restriction they have is that they cannot enter or exit the Parquemar after 10.00pm.

The socialist mayor of Guardamar, Jose Luiz Saez, was not informed of this refugee influx until the Senegalese began arriving! Most of the Senegalese nationals appear to have families in France and Belgium, and they may be end up there, according to Jose Luiz Saez. Benidorm have refused to house any migrants in its hotels. They say that the requests to house have not come from official government authorities.

So far this year, **44,404 irregular migrants** have reached Spain, representing a 57.5% increase (16,208 more individuals) compared to the same period last year. The peak number of irregular migrant arrivals was recorded in 2018 when 57,498 people reached the Spanish coasts.

Brits Buying Spanish Trains.

London North Eastern Railway (LNER) has chosen a Spanish company Construcciones y Auxiliar de Ferrocarril (CAF) to supply the British rail service with 10 tri-mode trains that can operate in electric, diesel or battery mode.

The contract also includes maintenance of the trains for the next eight years. This massive investment will cost more than half a billion euros, but this price tag includes both the cost of purchasing the trains by Porterbrook, which will subsequently rent the units to LNER, and the ongoing maintenance of the vehicles.

The units will be made up of 10 cars each and are based on the CAF model called Civity UK, a train designed specifically for intercity services. These high tech carriages boast the latest advances in terms of safety and passenger comfort.

While the bulk of the building work will be carried out in Spain, the final assembly of the trains will take place at the CAF's plant in Newport, Wales, which has been in operation since 2018 and currently employs a staff of 220 people.

According to LNER, the benefits of tri-mode trains range from a reduction in emissions, particulates, noise and vibration pollution to lower maintenance and operating costs.

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Q. Why does it take one million sperm to fertilize one egg?
A. Because sperm are male and they refuse to ask directions.

ORIHUELA COSTA BEACHES - THE LATEST.

After more than a year, Orihuela City Council has managed to unblock the tender process for the management of Orihuela Costa's beach bars with the promise that all facilities will be reopened in time for Easter 2024.

Whereas up until now one company looked after all of the coast's chiringuitos, this time the bars themselves, the water sports services and the sun beds and umbrellas will be broken up into five different lots to encourage competitive prices.

The contracts will last for four years, up to and including 2027. The performance of all of the facilities was closely studied and the council came up with two different criteria.

First, the proximity. "If a successful bidder assumes responsibility for two or more beach bars, we make their life easier if they are close," indicated the head of the Costas, Manuel Mestre.

The other criterion is profitability. "We have put beach bars that we know are profitable with others that are less profitable, to benefit citizens and restaurateurs who have to make profits," he explained. (Wait, who doesn't need to make a profit?)

The tender will now be published and the contracts will be awarded a few days before Holy Week.

Each bidder can apply for a maximum of two lots. (I am sure an entrepreneur could set up another company and bid for another lot. That has happened with the *basura* contract in the past.)

The first contract will set its manager back 79,708 euros and will cover the beaches of Punta Prima, Cala Mosca and Cala Estaca, north of the coast.

The second, by far the most expensive and coming in at 239,663 euros, will be for Cala Cerrada, Cala Bosque (La Zenia) and Cala Capitán in Cabo Roig.

The third (105,324 euros) is for La Caleta and Aguamarina.

And the fourth (179,695 euros) covers La Glea, Barranco Rubio and Mil Palmeras.

Lot number five (37,466 euros) consists of the nautical facilities, which will be located, specifically, in Cala Bosque, La Caleta, La Glea and Barranco Rubio.

The new chiringuito lease holders will also be responsible for the toilets, sunbeds and umbrellas on their respective beaches.

As usual, the majority of the beach bars will only open between Easter and the end of the summer season but the busiest – Cala Bosque and La Caleta – will be allowed to serve customers all year round.

The Innocent.

Did you hear about the innocent young lady who met a man in a raincoat? Later, she recounted the event to her friend. 'Coming back from the supermarket, a man stopped me and showed me the lining of his raincoat.'

'That's odd,' mused her friend. 'Are you sure he only wanted you to see his raincoat?'

'Oh yes, he wasn't wearing anything else.'

Three good friends, Andy, Bob and Charlie were travelling in a car that was involved in a serious traffic accident and unfortunately, all 3 perished.

As they had all led good lives their souls were immediately transported to heaven where they were met by St Peter who asked them: "When your families and friends visit your body lying in its open casket what would you like them to say about you?"

Andy said: "I would like them to say that I was a good family man and an excellent doctor who treated all of his patients with respect and cared for them to the best of his abilities."

Bob said: "I would like them to say that I was a kind and considerate husband and a dedicated teacher who made a positive contribution to the education of our children."

Charlie said: "I would like them to say 'Look.....he's moving'"



Helen's Bar



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KATI'S BAKERY

VIA PARK 3 (Next to the Lime Bar)

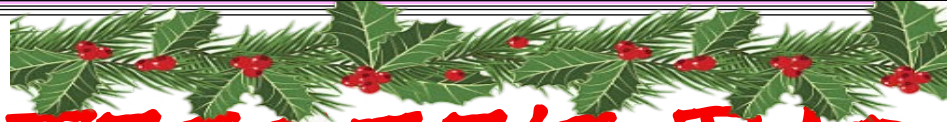


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My wife phoned me as I sat in the pub last night.

“I’ve cooked dinner,” she screamed, “and if you are not home within 20 minutes,
I’m going to feed it to the dog!”

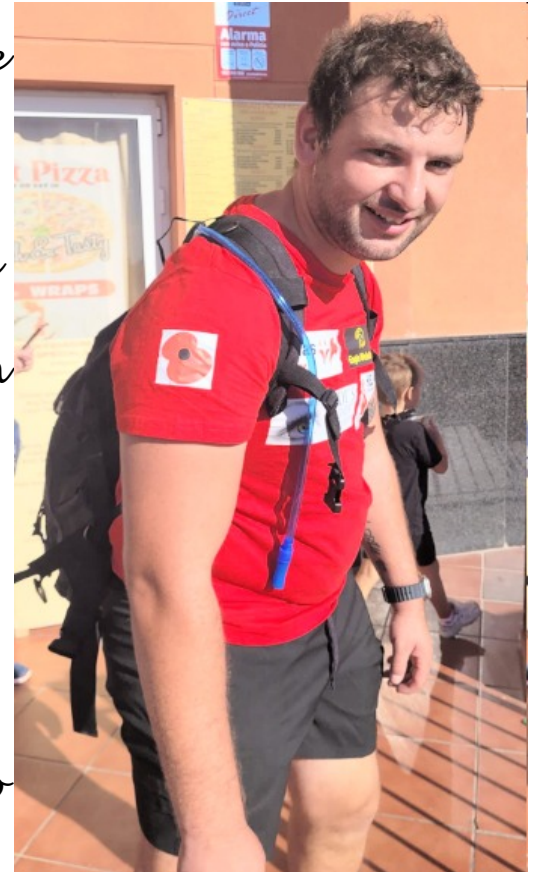
“Woah!” I said, “That’s bang out of order. It’s not his fault.”

As always, the Remembrance Sunday service was well attended at Via Park III this year. As is the case each year, ex military and families attended a special service held at the Lime Bar.

This year was extra special as former Grenadier Guard, Josh Fazzino, joined everyone having completed a 70 k hike carrying a 20 kilo pack! It had been a long and eventful night for Josh as he walked the streets whilst everyone was sleeping. Josh was sponsored and raised a significant amount for registered charity HELP Vega Baja. Michele Masson, President of the charity said "we would like to thank Josh for choosing to do this walk for us. We are amazed at his determination to complete the walk and the daily training he has been putting in.

We would also like to thank those people who sponsored Josh including Villas Fox (San Miguel), BBKC and others who sent donations through via our Facebook page and customers on the day at the Lime Bar.

It was good to meet all the ex military too and to witness the comradeship that



continues despite the number of years which have passed. In true military style, a good day was had by all!"

If you would like to donate there is still time. Simply visit HELP Vega Baja website at www.helpvegabaja.com

where you can complete a bank transfer or pay by Stripe.

A general and a colonel were walking across the base and each time they passed one of the private soldiers, he would salute and the general would reply with the words 'and the same to you'. After this happened half a dozen times, the colonel turned to the general in puzzlement. "Why do you always say 'and the same to you?'" he asked. "Simple," came the reply. "I was a private once so I know what he's thinking every time he salutes someone like me."

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How does the Spanish tax agency monitor rental properties?

All property leases in Spain, whether residential or commercial, must be declared by owners in their 2023 Income Statement, and any revenue generated has to be included in the Personal Income Tax (IRPF) How does the Spanish tax agency monitor rental properties? Treasury inspectors rely heavily on regional governments to keep track of deposits paid for rental homes, but the Tax Agency also requires landlords to submit a property's energy efficiency certificate when a lease is signed, so the authorities can quickly flag owners that haven't correctly paid their taxes. In addition, the Treasury also analyses the aid granted for works to improve the energy efficiency of homes, together with the list of cadastral reference numbers to which they refer. Also, inspectors can cross-check the electricity supply or water consumption in a supposedly empty house or apartment; if the utilities are being regularly used, this is clear evidence of an illegal lease. But it doesn't stop there. One of the ways inspectors work is through the surveillance of real estate websites, through which they can also monitor irregular tourist rentals. In fact, this is an area where rental fraud has grown the most in recent years. To keep track of holiday homes, the main source of information for the Treasury is through the 'Modelo 179' form, which should be submitted on a quarterly basis for all rental properties by the intermediators in operations (such as Airbnb, etc.) not by the owners of the touristic apartments rented. This document includes fundamental information, since it must state the owner of the property being rented, its cadastral reference, the number of days it has been rented to tourists, as well as the amount of rent received. The latest data from the Treasury Technicians (Gestha) indicate that in Spain there are close to 1.28 million irregular leases, which makes up an astonishing 40.8% of the total. That means that four out of every 10 rentals are not declared.

Hose Jockies & the Fuzz Fight!

Local conflicts and dislikes abound world-wide. Rangers and Celtic, Man U and Man City, Brexiters and Remainers, Royal Marines and the Paras. But firefighters and police, have in many countries, more than a little animosity towards each other.

In Ourense, a city in Galicia, a demonstration by around 200 striking firefighters took a chaotic turn, leading to violent clashes with riot police.

The protest escalated when the firefighters attempted to access the Provincial Council building, where they encountered a defensive line of National Police officers. During this confrontation, one firefighter suffered a broken nose in an altercation with the riot police.

Although there were other casualties, the labour unions, who organized the protest, did not disclose further details to the press.

The protesting firefighters employed smoke grenades, flares, fireworks, and even makeshift flamethrowers during their demonstration. In response, the police union SUP expressed their dismay on social media, highlighting the firefighters' use of flamethrowers against their fellow officers. These firefighters have been engaged in industrial action since June 15, seeking improved working conditions. These rural fire station crews, often at the forefront of combating forest fires, aim to bring their conditions in line with urban counterparts in Galicia. Their strikes mainly involve the refusal to participate in non-mandatory overtime, resulting in sporadic fire station closures throughout the region during the summer.



"Yes, but is there any news of the iceberg?"

Part Time Employees and Pensions

On October 1st 2023, the Spanish government implemented new conditions which affected the social security benefits and pensions of part-time employees in the country.

Royal Decree 2/2023, will now affect the social security contributions of two million people in Spain who have *trabajo a tiempo parcial* (part-time work), the vast majority of whom are women.

From October 1st, a part-time workday equates to the same amount as a full-time workday, in terms of the total number of days/months/years Spaniards have to work before being able to claim a pension or access certain welfare benefits such as temporary incapacity or care of a family member.

Currently, workers in Spain have to work 13,595 days to access a full pension when they retire at 65 years of age, 37 and a half years of *trabajo cotizado* (contributed work).

To get the minimum pension after 15 years of work, the minimum number of days worked is 5,745. Previously, part-time work would not count as a full day but rather a fraction based on the hours worked.

Under the new legislation, one day of part-time work counts the same as one day of full-time work.

According to the Spanish social security's website, it doesn't matter how many hours are worked on a part-time basis on any given day for it to count as one day of work.

The change doesn't necessarily mean that part-time workers will get the same pension as full-time employees (as this is also determined by gross salary), but it does influence how easily and quickly they can reach 100% of the regulatory contributory base to access a full pension. As women are far more likely to work part-time in Spain in order to be able to take care of their children, the measure is an attempt to help close the pay and work rights gap between men and women.

My father invented the burglar alarm,

but it was stolen from him.

Victor Borge



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EU Confirms Date for Post-brexit £6 Fee for European Travel And When Britons Will Have to Provide Biometrics

The date when British holidaymakers will have to pay a £6 visa fee to enter certain European countries after Brexit has been confirmed.

The EU Council has said that the much-delayed Electronic Travel Information and Authorisation System (Etias) will start from 2025. This requires UK citizens post Brexit to register and pay a £6 fee for entry into the Schengen Area - which is a majority of EU countries.

Britons will also have to enter details about their employment, address and previous trips, as well as biometric information such as fingerprints and a headshot.

Travellers under 18 and those over 80 - as well as EU citizens, will not need the document.

The Etias form will last for three years and allows holidaymakers to enter the EU for 90 days in every 180 days, as is the case currently.

The Electronic Travel Information and Authorisation System (Etias) will be required for non-EU citizens who do not need a visa - such as the UK and other countries like New Zealand - to enter the Schengen Area. This includes almost all EU countries such as France, Spain and Germany, however not Ireland, Cyprus or Romania.

(More on Etias in future issues.)

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CEPSA, Spain's second largest oil company, said that it had agreed to buy 220 automated **low-cost petrol stations** in Spain from Ballenoil for an undisclosed amount. It emerged in May that Cepsa was in advanced negotiations to acquire Ballenoil, with speculation that the deal could be worth between €200 and €300 million. They plan to keep the stations low cost. Ballenoil has a presence in 12 regions including Catalunya, the Valencian Community, Andalucia, Madrid, and Murcia. Cepsa, which is controlled by Abu Dhabi state investor Mubadala and U.S. firm Carlyle Group, intends to expand its overall network to more than 2,000 stations across Spain and Portugal.

SOME WELCOME CHANGES IN VALENCIA

The Tourist tax has now been dumped in the Region of Valencia by the new political regime. They have already almost eliminated the Inheritance/Gift Tax and have also promised to tackle the squatter problem. The latter will be difficult to solve. When does a sitting tenant become a squatter after he/she stops paying rent? A new study estimates that just under 79,000 properties in Spain are now occupied by squatters. I know of two locally, one solved with €3,000+!

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A man went into a Glasgow police station. He asked the officer at the desk, 'Are there any criminal lawyers in Glasgow?'

'Aye, sure,' replied the sergeant, 'but we cannae prove it.'



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Homer Simpson

U.K. Social Welfare Information - Advocacy Costa Blanca.

Benefit Rates 2023/2024

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David, you are a highly valued professional who people have come to respect and rely on. Your personal integrity and knowledge are highly valued by myself and others who endeavour to support those who have none.

SC. Royal British Legion, Orihuela Costa Branch

David visited us in Catral. We couldnt find anyone to visit us so far inland. You certainly get what you pay for.

No such thing as a free lunch as they say. B&P W. Catral

David helped me when moving my Husband to a care home in the UK. His knowledge of the UK care system is amazing.

The amount of time he gave to us was fantastic.

We couldn't have done it without him.

GD-Torre Vieja

I contacted a group for help with welfare and care They gave me some forms and advice. I didn't have the time or energy & a friend recommended David. He visited and helped me with the application & is also helping with the Spanish care. Yes he charges but his knowledge and help makes it so worth it.

MT. San Miguel.

David just helped me claim £47389 back from unpaid state pension. All for free!!! IL- Catral.



0034602465565



advocacycostablanca@gmail.com

Advocacy Costa Blanca is operated by David Minto, a UK registered Social Worker. Get in touch if you need advice or guidance related to UK and Spanish welfare support.

This includes UK benefit applications (Attendance Allowance/PIP) or support to return to the UK with care.

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Who Shot One of the Founders of Spain's Far-right Vox Party?

The former leader of the Catalonia wing of Spain's conservative Partido Popular (PP) political party and one of the founding members of the far-right VOX group, Alejo Vidal-Quadras, **has been shot** in the face in broad daylight the centre of Madrid on Thursday November 9.

The brutal attack comes on the same day as PP and VOX party members denounced an agreement between Catalan separatist parties and the ruling PSOE socialist party to provide legal amnesty over 2017's illegal independence referendum in return for political support.

78-year-old Vidal-Quadras was shot on Calle Núñez de Balboa in Madrid at around 1.30pm, and has since been transferred to the Gregorio Marañón hospital in the capital.

Despite his injury (a double jaw fracture), Vidal-Quadras remained conscious when he was rushed to hospital. Police investigations are still in the early stages, but according to witness accounts, the shooter was wearing a black motorcycle helmet when he walked

straight up to Vidal-Quadras, shot him in the face with a 9mm Parabellum pistol and made his getaway on the back of a large Yamaha motorbike that was idling nearby.

Just hours before the attack, the ex-politician Tweeted, "The infamous pact between Sánchez and Puigdemont has already been agreed upon, which shreds the rule of law in Spain and puts an end to the separation of powers. Our Nation will thus cease to be a liberal democracy to become a totalitarian tyranny. We Spaniards will not allow it." Nonetheless, Vidal-Quadras himself is reported to have told police in hospital that he believed **Iran was behind the planned assassination attempt** due to his links with the Iranian opposition movement. Vidal-Quadras was one of the first ever politicians that the Tehran regime put on its list of terrorists!

Vidal-Quadras runs a law firm in Barcelona and has numerous dissidents of the Iranian regime as his clients.





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MAKE A WISH AND THE DAMAGE IS GONE

A Valencia doctor has been convicted of neglecting her duty to respond to a patient's urgent call for help, despite the patient residing merely 50 meters away from her medical centre. The incident occurred on September 22, 2019, when the doctor was on night duty at the Health Care Point in Valencia. The patient, who had recently undergone heart surgery, began experiencing severe distress. His family called the emergency 112 number twice as his condition deteriorated. In a desperate attempt for assistance, one of the patient's children walked to the nearby medical centre to seek help. However, the doctor, who was sleeping at the time, refused to leave the centre, arguing that she could only respond to emergencies when activated by the CICU (emergency call centre).

Tragically, the patient passed away over an hour later due to cardiorespiratory failure, though experts suggested that the doctor's non-attendance did not directly cause the death due to the patient's heart condition. The doctor

defended her actions during the trial, claiming that she followed established protocols and could not leave the centre without CICU activation. She also mentioned that the security guard had informed her of the family member's concern but did not specify the severity of the situation. She believed that the ambulance was already en route, as the patient lived "nearby" rather than directly opposite the centre. As a consequence of her actions, the doctor has been removed from her medical duties for 18 months and fined €4,500 for her omission of duty to help. Despite the outcome, the doctor maintained that she would make the same decision again, citing adherence to established rules and avoiding potential legal repercussions as her reasons.

I went to my doctor's and he told me I had acute paranoia. I said, excuse me, but I'm here to be examined not admired.

Gracie Allen



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Human Relations

One day Mr. Smith, MD of a large company, called his HR director, Dave, into his office and said, "What with Brexit, we're having to make some cutbacks, so either Jack or Barbara will have to be laid off."

Dave looked at Mr. Smith and said, "Barbara is my best worker, but Jack has a wife and three kids. I don't know whom to fire."

The next morning Dave waited for his employees to arrive.

Barbara was the first to come in, so Dave said, "Barbara, I've got a problem. You see, I've got to lay you or Jack off and I don't know what to do?"

Barbara replied, "You'd better jack off. I've got a headache."

A Close Escape in La Florida

An 82-year-old man, reportedly from England, had a miraculous escape on Tuesday October 31 when an explosion in an upstairs room set his Orihuela Costa house alight.

Emergency services were called to the home at No. 9 Calle Osa Mayorin, La Florida, shortly before 8am.

When firefighters arrived, they were told that two women and a man were inside the house, which was billowing plumes of black smoke and flames from the upper storey. The older man made his way to the second floor balcony where he was rescued by neighbours, who managed to get him onto the terrace of an adjoining property, but not before sustaining multiple burns to his legs.

He was transferred to the University Hospital of Torrevieja hospital for treatment, along with two Orihuela Local Police officers who had suffered smoke inhalation.

The other two occupants escaped without injury and the fire was brought under control by 9am.

Upon arriving at the popular residential street, firefighters reported seeing "a lot of smoke and flames" and the house has been "severely affected," with extensive smoke and fire damage to the first and second floors.

According to early investigations, the fire may have been due to the explosion of a small appliance on the upper floor, where the victim's bedroom is located, where he was at the time of the event.

"Due to the thermal load inside the room, the window exploded and a fire broke out, generating a chimney effect with all the smoke escaping outside," one source concluded.



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DECEMBER 31st Opens 7pm - 1am Tickets Only €15pp

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MERCADONA FINED.

Spanish supermarket chain Mercadona has been fined €2.5 million by Spain's data protection agency for conducting a 'facial recognition' system trial. The objective of this trial was to identify customers with restraining orders issued against them for attacking Mercadona staff. The pilot program was implemented in 48 stores across the Valencian Community, Mallorca, and Zaragoza regions and operated for several months.

Despite Mercadona's initial claims that they would strictly adhere to all data protection laws, the Spanish Agency for Data Protection (AEPD) found that the company did not meet these standards. The system used cameras to instantly identify individuals who had received restraining orders or had been convicted for incidents involving Mercadona staff. If such a person entered a store, the police would be alerted.

Mercadona had previously stated in July 2020 that the facial recognition technology aimed to enhance the safety of both customers and staff. However, earlier this month, it was revealed that the AEPD had been investigating the legality of the recognition system due to concerns about data storage. In response to this investigation, Mercadona terminated the trials in May and removed the cameras.

In their defence, Mercadona claimed that they had collaborated with the relevant judicial authorities in the store areas from the project's outset. They also asserted that they had presented comprehensive information to the AEPD while maintaining transparency. Additionally, Mercadona assured that no images of non-offending customers were retained, and warning signs were placed at store entrances.

The missus asked me if I had seen the dog bowl. I said I didn't even know he played cricket.

The Spanish Economy

The European Commission anticipates Spain to be the fastest-growing major economy in the eurozone until 2025, surpassing Germany, France, and Italy.

Projections indicate a 2.4% growth in the Spanish economy this year, followed by a slowdown to 1.7% next year, with a rebound to 2% in 2025.

The Commission attributes this growth to household consumption, driven by easing inflation (expected to fall to 3.4% in 2024) and job creation, albeit at a slower pace. Unemployment is projected to decrease from 12.1% this year to 11.1% in two years.

European recovery funds are deemed crucial for sustaining investment amid high financing costs from the European Central Bank's interest rates.

Despite positive indicators, the Commission raises concerns about high interest rates potentially dampening demand, particularly given Spain's existing public and private debt levels. It notes a decrease in debt but warns of persistent challenges.

Furthermore, the Commission envisions Spain falling short of deficit limits, even with the expiration of anti-crisis measures, projecting a structural deficit of over 3% of GDP, regardless of economic cycles.

CHILD ABANDONMENT.

The National Police in Alicante has identified a concerning trend where, over the past few months, at least 15 Maghreb minors have been abandoned by their own parents. These parents, often tourists from Algeria and Morocco, have left their children near reception centres or police stations in Spain. They do so in the hope of leveraging an advantageous legal status and having the government take responsibility for their children as unaccompanied foreign minors (often referred to as "menas"). In some cases, these parents return to their home countries before being discovered. However, since September, at least five parents have been arrested in Alicante on charges of child abandonment.

The Rolling Stones have announced a new tour. Fans will be able to recognise their tour bus as the one doing forty in the fast lane with its indicator on.

Kevin Nealon



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A suspected thief **posed as a mannequin** in order to steal from a store in Poland. Police said that the 22-year-old, who hasn't been named, stood motionless in the shop window next to a number of real mannequins until the shop closed, and he "felt it was safe", photo. He then roamed around it stealing jewellery. He was spotted by security staff, however, and later arrested.



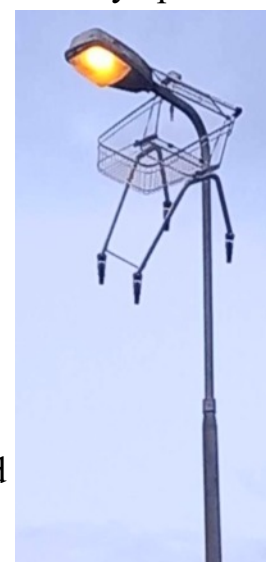
California has an **invasive fruit fly** problem. It's dumping millions of sterile male flies on Los Angeles to stop the population from growing. Though the invasive Medfly is just a fourth of an inch long, it's capable of destroying 300 fruits, nuts and vegetables, posing an existential threat to California's multibillion-dollar agriculture industry. It's not the adult flies that cause the most damage, though — it's their young. When a female fly lays eggs inside a fruit, they hatch into maggots and tunnel through it, turning the fruit into a rotten mass.

A "fake" lawyer, who had been practising under the name "Brian Mwenda", has been arrested in Kenya. His case has divided public opinion – because he had **won all 26 of his cases**, despite having no legal training. The Law Society of Kenya has condemned the "masquerader", but others have praised him, including Kenya's Central Organisation of Trade Unions, which said he was a "brilliant young mind" who had made it "without traditional qualifications".

Brighton's Morris dancers have dropped the word "**men**" from their name to become more inclusive. The troupe, formerly Brighton Morris Men, has become just Brighton Morris. It's still a male group, but according to a spokesman (Oops, spokesperson!), it now "welcomes those who feel they fit into a largely male-presenting space, whether cis male, trans men, non-binary or gender non-conforming".

Robbers took almost **€600,000 worth of jewellery** from the wife of Mongolia's Olympic Committee president when he visited France to discuss security for the Paris 2024 Games, prosecutors have said. Prosecutors said that two members of the gang had followed the couple's minicab on a motorcycle from Paris's Charles-de-Gaulle airport at Roissy outside the capital. The minicab was heading to the couple's hotel and had slowed in a tunnel near the stadium when the robbers smashed the rear window and grabbed a bag on the back seat containing the jewellery. The total value of the jewels came to €570,000, including gold and diamond earrings estimated at €165,000 a pair, according to Agence France-Presse. The robbery happened on October 11. Now Mongolia has a GDP per capita of only 4500 USD. But then again, maybe their Olympic Committee is as lucrative as FIFA.

The fire service in Malvern, Worcestershire, has been called out to deal with a shopping trolley (pictured) that had been left dangling from the top of a **32ft lamppost**. A special team from Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service freed the trolley. How it got there remains a mystery.



There was **chaos on a flight** to Taiwan last month, when a foot-long otter and a giant albino rat escaped from a passenger's hand luggage and roamed through the cabin. "I walked back from the toilet and my friend whispered softly to me, 'There's a rat on the plane,'" one passenger recounted on social media. "Pet rat, pet rat," he said, "it has a white body and it's not small." A flight attendant who tried to catch the rat was bitten, though both it and the otter were eventually bundled into bags. A subsequent search at Taipei airport revealed that 28 live turtles, a marmot, a snake, two otters and other rodents had also been smuggled onto the flight, reportedly by a Chinese passenger.



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*'We must do lunch sometime' is a polite euphemism for
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Marcus Hunt

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Armando Ianucci

IS THAT POOL PROPERLY MAINTAINED?

Medical professionals **across the UK and Ireland** have been issuing warnings about an unusual upsurge in the number of tourists suffering from intestinal parasites after returning from holidays in Spain. In total, more than **600 cases of 'Cryptosporidiosis'** have been registered, an infection commonly contracted in swimming pools and water parks.

What's more, a huge number of visitors to Spain, particularly the popular Costa Blanca, have reported breathing problems because of the poor air quality in the area. (I find this very strange as the air quality around here is quite good. Maybe packed airlines are to blame?) Professor Kelly, of Imperial College London, said: "Tourists can come up against airborne particles and noxious gases associated with ill health — even after short-term exposures.

"This is especially the case for vulnerable groups such as the young, the elderly and people with cardiorespiratory disease."

Avanti's Kelly Johnstone said: "It's worth knowing which destinations might not be

ideal." In relation to the stomach problems, "a continuous and unusual excess in the disease" has been detected between August 14 and October 1, according to scientific journal 'Eurosurveillance', and most cases "are related to international travel, especially to Spain and other Mediterranean countries." **So far this year, as many as 2,940 cases of Cryptosporidiosis have already been recorded** - 121 of those infected have been admitted to hospitals – in the British, Welsh and Irish (North and South), according to the National Epidemiology Centre of Spain. This is a considerably high and unprecedented number, taking into account that last year there were not even a thousand cases registered. In the opinion of experts, the surge in infections is largely due to the influx of Irish and British holidaymakers to Spain during September and October as a result of the unseasonably high temperatures. During August, Spain welcomed two million visitors from Britain, 20.1% of the total.



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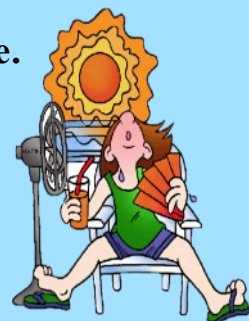


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Lime Bar Fishing SUNBATHING Club

At the end of October, we fished for the Fagin Cup. In respect to our passed mate (who didn't like El Bosquet) we fished at Bigastro. For those that couldn't make it you didn't miss anything.

Bigastro was living up to it's reputation, of when there are more than 4 x anglers on the bank, you will have a crap day. We had 7 x anglers. 2 had no bites at all. 1 lost one fish. 3 had 1 fish each and Geordie went bleak snatching for 6 bleak, 3 tiny barbel & a caraiso.

With minutes to go, Geordie was losing by 0.01 kilo until he had a baby barbel on his last cast to win the cup. You could imagine Fagin up there laughing at us! At least he would be glad that 3 Rods eventually won something this year.

What a month November's weather has been! In mid-November we still had glorious sunshine with the thermometer going up to 30°C with a light breeze. However, the nights have been really chilly and the water temp is dropping rapidly. This is my excuse for the poor match results, but it also normally spells the time when the big carp start stocking up for winter. So, here's hoping! At present, the fish are being really finicky and need coaxing with tiny baits like maggot or single bit of corn. An example of this was, I was twiddling my thumbs waiting for a bite watching an



Abbey professional next to me doing the same. At lunch time, he started catching loads of small mullet. Always ready to swallow my pride, I went and asked what he had changed. He replied that he was using exactly the same tactics (small feeder with 2 maggots), but he had switched to a different type of ground bait. How stupid is that!

The November match was fished again at El Bosquet on pegs 1 to 16. We knew to take a large flask and be patient and that was the case. As usual the end pegs were the "lucky" pegs. We had 11 on the bank and of those, 2 x blanked and 4 others only caught either 1 or 2 fish.

Winner on the day was Just John (he nearly stayed for the weigh-in), who fishing peg 16. He only had 2 carp for 7.4 kilos, but one of which was 4.12kg. At the other end of the canal (in peg 8) was Fagash, he came 2nd with 3 carp for 6.32 kilos. I was next to Fagash (in peg 9) and came 3rd with 6 small carp for 5.2 kilos.

After this report goes to print, we have the "Old Farts" match and our presentation night. Not saying that we have an aging club, but this year if you are 75 years old you are considered a 'whipper snapper'!

As I mentioned earlier, with the water temp dropping, this usually stimulates the bigger fish to start feeding. 3 Rods was the 1st to hook into one. 10.68 lbs from Bigastro. See photo.

The next meeting bun fight is at The Lime Bar on Tuesday 5th December.

Stay safe.
Fishy fingers!,
The Ghost



IS THE 90-DAY RULE FOR BRIT'S CHANGING? NO!

Recent rumours suggest that Spain may consider revising its 90-day rule for Britons, similar to France. The speculation has gained traction, fuelled in part by a miss attributed quote indicating that Spanish authorities are actively "lobbying" for a legal amendment. This has re-ignited interest, particularly among non-resident British second home owners in Spain and individuals seeking extended stays of over 90 days within a 180-day period in the country. As is their usual form, the Daily Express and GB News jumped on the story with headlines such as "Desperate Spain begs EU...", while on this occasion an unknown reporter has wrongly attributed a quote which has spread like wildfire and not been checked.

It all started after the French Senate recently voted in favour of the country's new Immigration Bill - including an amendment that would "ease the conditions of entry into France for British citizens who own second homes in France." However, it's a long way from being a done deal, as the Assemblée Nationale will have the final say on the bill in December. France's Immigration Bill is contentious and those who pushed for the 90-day amendment, right-wing Les Républicains, do not have a majority, making it unlikely it will pass.

Ultimately, the problem is that the 90-day rule is an EU rule, not a French or a Spanish one - so anything that France and Spain potentially do affects other countries in the EU by setting a precedent.

"I think the French are walking a bit of a tightrope because they are equally aware that in some areas what they do will set a precedent for other EU countries and they are being careful not to make concessions to the UK, effectively, in areas that could then involve other EU countries having to do the same thing," Member of the House of Lords, Lord Peter Ricketts, told The Local France.

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The chancellor has announced new plans for shortening the dole queues. He's asking the men to stand closer together.

Ronnie Barker



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