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May 2020

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ESTABLISHED 1986
Welcome to our very special exclusively online May 2020 issue of Almeria Living.

When I wrote to you at the beginning of March I never dreamt for one moment that life would change so much for everyone of us. I hope and pray that you and your families are safe and well.

As I write the Spanish government are issuing plans for the easing of the lockdown and the steps we need to follow to go back to ‘normality’. Who would have thought that being able to step outside your front gate and go for a walk would be such a big deal!

More than ever, local small businesses will need our support - there weren’t that many who will have qualified for any government financial help so your custom will be very important to help rebuild and pay back debts. For this reason, as a thank you for your support of Almeria Living magazine throughout the past 7 years, all our advertisers are appearing free of charge! Please note that some adverts were created during lockdown so opening times etc should be checked on Facebook or by giving them a call.

I have been fascinated by the images of animals and birds taking to the empty streets in towns around the world. I hope they have enjoyed their freedom too. Pollution levels have dropped too so the air is clearer and three cheers to all the frontline workers, who have continued without a break and I hope we will not lose this lesson.

Recently I wrote about medical cover for UK citizens living in Spain, especially in relation to dependants of those who qualify for S1 cover provided by the NHS.

This month I would like to repeat the advice to people who have qualified for medical cover as a dependant of their partner but have since reached maturity themselves!

There are two other situations that have come to light over the last couple of weeks and these are regarding continued medical cover after a partner dies and also those people who are receiving state medical cover without current Spanish Residencia.

It is important that anyone who becomes a pensioner in their own right MUST get an S1 and register it here in Spain with the Social Security and Medical Centre. This detaches them from their partner as far as medical cover is concerned.

When you visit the doctor or hospital for treatment the cost is sent to the administration department, who in turn send a bill to the NHS in the UK. If you no longer qualify as a dependant, i.e. you should be claiming in your own right, then the NHS may refuse to pay the bill via your partner and so Spain deactivate you in the system.

The situation is a little different in the very sad case when a partner dies. If the survivor was in the Spanish health system as a dependant they will continue to receive medical cover for a period of time but should contact Newcastle to establish exactly how long this cover will continue.

Finally this message is for those of you who are currently registered in the Spanish health system and have medical cards but do not have Spanish Residencia, i.e. the green paper either A4 or mini equivalent.

In years gone by, before the computer age really caught on in Spain, it is important that anyone who becomes a pensioner in their own right MUST get an S1 and register it here in Spain with the Social Security and Medical Centre.

We hope you enjoy your read this month and please don’t forget to continue telling our advertisers that you saw them in the Almeria Living.

Take care and stay safe. Talk again in June when we expect to see doctors, nurses and other medical staff battling to save lives in the NHS.

Stay safe and well and I look forward to seeing you when we reopen.

Karen (Ed)

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Pensioners & Dependants Health Cover Update

However, Spanish Residencia is one of the main criteria and it is clearly stated on the accompanying letter sent with the S1 forms from Newcastle.

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So, please take heed, it may never catch up with you but if one day you find yourself out of the medical system this could well be the reason why.

You may need to contact the Pension Service in Newcastle. Their telephone number is 0044 191 21 87777 and email address is tvp.internationalqueries@thepensionservice.gsi.gov.uk

If you would like further advice or assistance in the task then call C.A.T. Services on 950 63 43 88.

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What’s Inside.......
Alcalá de Henares

The historical city of Alcalá de Henares, located just 35km from Madrid, was awarded UNESCO’s World Heritage status back in 1998 in recognition of the fact that it was the first city to be designed and built solely as the seat of a university, and was to serve as the model for other centres of learning in Europe and America.

The word Alcalá originally from Arabic, al-qal’a, means ‘citadel’ or ‘fortification’. There are many cities in Spain that take the word at the start of its name.

The old city has been well preserved but the suburbs are home to numerous irregularly constructed buildings and high-rise apartment blocks. Although there is evidence of tribes inhabiting the area since the Calcolithic times it was the arrival of the Romans in 1BC who truly put the city on the map, reaching a status of municipium with its own governing establishments.

When the Moors arrived they built a settlement on a nearby hill, today known as Alcalá la Vieja, but after the place was reconquered in 1188 the Christians decided to abandon the old Alcalá in preference of the original Roman city.

The cathedral, built between 1497 and 1514 stands on the site of the original chapel constructed back in 414. A tower was added between 1528 and 1582. The processional cloister and the Chapel of Saint Peter were added to the building in the seventeenth century.

Despite being declared a national monument in 1904, much of the cathedral was burned during the Spanish civil war and only a few minor relics and choir seats remained. It was not until 1991 that the building was finally restored.

Another important landmark is the University, which was founded by Cardinal Cisneros in 1499, which became famous as a centre of learning during the Renaissance period. It was an initiative by the American Tortoise Rescue organization and was started in 2000.

The purpose of World Turtle Day is to bring attention to, and increase knowledge of and respect for, turtles and tortoises, and encourage human action to help them survive and thrive.

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Here in Spain, turtles and tortoises are protected species and it is prohibited to keep any of the native Spanish tortoise or turtle species in captivity. There are several of both, and sadly many of them are in danger of extinction. You may be lucky enough to stumble upon a tortoise or turtle in the Spanish countryside, or happen upon a turtle while snorkeling, and if so, enjoy the encounter and then both of you go your separate ways – they are really better off left alone.

Unless, of course, you see one crossing a busy road! Then do help him along, and in the direction he was going. If you put him back where he came from, he will only embark on another attempt at crossing the street.

Celebrate World Turtle Day by dressing up in green and doing your best Kermit impression – or simply by being aware and help raising awareness of the plight of these unique animals and hopefully help them face another few millennia.
So this guy walks into a pet shop. The owner is standing behind the counter and he asks the customer if he can help him.

Cust: “I need a parrot. It has to be green and it has to talk”.
Owner: “Mmm... I do have a green one but it doesn't say anything”.
Cust: “No, it has to talk”.
Owner: “I have a blue one and I can't shut it up!”
Cust: “No, it has to be green and it must talk”.
Owner: “Why? Why does it have to be green and able to talk?”
Cust: “Well, I am appearing in the Panto at the local theatre. We are doing Treasure Island and I'm playing Long John Silver. The Director is a real stickler for accuracy. Everything has to be spot on, so the parrot has to be green and it has to talk. Our dress rehearsal is on Saturday.
Owner: “I tell you what, I can get you one for Thursday”.

Cust: “No, that's no good, that's the day I go in to have my leg off!”
I guess I was about 10 or 11 the first time I read Robert Louis Stevenson's book 'Treasure Island'.
It is a real 'Boy's Own' adventure and I was captivated by the sweep of the narrative starting from a small Inn in Devon, and transporting me across the Atlantic to the exotic Caribbean; the tales of Pirates, tropical islands and buried treasure.
I suppose I imagined myself as Jim Hawkins, the cabin boy who narrates the story and who was pitted against Long John Silver, the one-legged pirate with the parrot on his shoulder who struck fear into everyone (Silver, that is, not the parrot).
The book was published in 1883 and, like Dicken's first works, was serialised, but in a children's magazine.

For the times, it had violent overtones, unusual then for a children's serialised, but in a children's magazine.

Stevenson's book 'Treasure Island'.
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then making up for lost time, as it were. I am happy to report, though, that they would ever get it together, if you know what I mean!

wondering when and if he and his wife before actually giving up on it and then arrived. caught in the hurricane and never on the afore-mentioned, ill-fated fleet probably guessed it, it was despatched so, the King sent for the said jewelry what!?

jewels of her choosing. Mercenary or but, unfortunately for Phillip, would but it is King Phillip V of Spain I feel ..... Continued from page 7

ible and mischievous, perhaps you could be the more likely to encounter one of them on the...
What is a Lawyer? A Lawyer is a professional person authorized to practice law. Spanish qualified lawyers are known as Abogados. They must hold a law degree and be registered with the legal association, or “college”, of the province where they practice. Only Abogados are allowed to act for parties in proceedings in Court. Of course a large part of their work involves the preparation of documents and providing advice to the public, “asesoramiento jurídico”.

There are many reputable Spanish “asesores jurídicos” who provide advice and prepare documents. They are legally qualified but are not members of the provincial college as they have chosen not to represent clients in court proceedings. Many specialize in Spanish employment or tax law.

If you become involved in Spanish court proceedings your Abogado must engage the services of a Procurador, who is the professional representative of your Abogado and deals with the formal aspects of the proceedings: filing of papers, arranging hearing dates, etc. Procuradores also have their own ‘college’ in each province.

Notaries seat important part in many transactions but they do not represent you. Rather, a Notary is a law graduate who has gone on to practice law as a “Gestor Administrativo” who practices in a “Gestoria”. A Gestoria is a service provider who can only be operated by a “Graduado Social” who is highly qualified in dealing with many different types of administrative matters. He is also qualified to represent clients at the many types of tribunal that regulate the citizen’s dealings with central and local government, such as social security, employment, etc. Most often expats find themselves instructing a “Gestor” to re-register their cars, obtain business licences, and other permits of all kinds.

A pomegranate tree. I love the bright red coloured flowers which later produced the juice laden fruit. I suppose a pomegranate is a bit like Marmite – you either love it or hate it. The smell and taste instantly take me back to my childhood when I would sit there and pick all the pith off of the fruit and sink my teeth into the juicy flesh.

Pomegranates have, in fact, been cherished for their exquisite beauty, flavor, colour, and health benefits for centuries. From their distinctive crown to their ruby red arils (seeds), pomegranates are royalty amongst fruit.

During their 4000 year history they have been symbols of prosperity, hope and abundance in virtually every civilization. It is known now as being one of the super fruits - rich in antioxidants and vitamins.

The fruit bearing tree is found all over the Mediterranean through to the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Africa and the Americas, it can grow up to 8 metres tall. Available all year round, in the northern hemisphere it is in season between September and January and in the southern hemisphere between March to May. The plant prefers to grow in dry areas because in wet areas they are prone to root decay from fungal diseases, but they can tolerate a moderate frost!

This fruit can be traced back to its origins in Persia and was cultivated in Georgia, Armenia and the Mediterranean areas for several millennia. In Armenia decayed remains dating back to 1000BC have been found. The name pomegranate comes from the Latin pumum (apple) and granatus (seeded). This is the influence for many languages, in German it is Granatapfel – seeded apple. In Spanish the name is Granada, which has great bearing in Andalucia.

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During the period 1238–1358 the Moors built the immense palace and fortress of Alhambra in Granada. Throughout the massive and beautifully crafted structure, pomegranates are depicted in the intricate archway designs and mosaics. In 1492 Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand ended the Reconquista of Spain when they conquered Granada, andalusia seed by seed.” The pomegranate is local lore, Queen Isabella stood with a pomegranate in her hand, and declared, “Just like the pomegranate, I will take over Andalucia by seed.” The pomegranate fruit incorporated into their beliefs and some scholars think that it was the forbidden fruit and not the apple in the Garden of Eden. The motif of the pomegranate in the Christian religion is found in many paintings, often in the hand of the Virgin Mary or the Infant Jesus as a symbol of the fullness of the suffering and resurrection of Christ. In the Qua’ran pomegranates grow in the gardens of Paradise.

Many cultures use the pomegranate in cooking, especially in the Middle East and India. Open the fruit by scoring it with a knife and breaking open, discard the pith exposing the arils (seed casing). The aril is the part you eat and the juice from the fruit can be either sweet or sour depending on the species. Many are doubtful about eating the pomegranate seeds whole, since most just extract the juice. However, most of the fibre and antioxidants actually come from the pomegranate seeds.

Pomegranate seeds are easily separated from the white membrane that surrounds them by putting it all in a bowl of cold water, then carefully separating the pomegranate seeds. Freezing the entire fruit makes it easier to separate.

In Europe, the pomegranate initially appeared more prominently as a symbol rather than a food. However, in later years Western culture revered the pomegranate for its medicinal properties, with the fruit featured on the heraldic crests of several medical institutions. Many religions have the pomegranate fruit incorporated into their beliefs and some scholars think that it was the forbidden fruit and not the apple in the Garden of Eden. The motif of the pomegranate in the Christian religion is found in many paintings, often in the hand of the Virgin Mary or the Infant Jesus as a symbol of the fullness of the suffering and resurrection of Christ. In the Qua’ran pomegranates grow in the gardens of Paradise.

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Grenadine also comes from the fruit in the form of a syrup used in cocktails.

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Grenadine also comes from the fruit in the form of a syrup used in cocktails.
Returning from a trip to Toledo, we journeyed back through La Mancha countryside and I quickly identified a cluster of windmills on a hillside as those made famous by Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes and his hero of the tale, Don Quixote.

A novel in 2 parts, Don Quixote is the most influential work of literature to emerge from the Spanish Golden Age and perhaps the entire Spanish literary canon. As a founding work of modern Western literature, it regularly appears at or near the top of lists of the greatest works of fiction ever published.

It has been regarded chiefly as a novel of purpose. It is stated again and again that Cervantes wrote it in order to satirize the romances of chivalry, and to challenge the form of literature currently popular with the public.

This novel has had a tremendous influence on the development of prose fiction. It has been translated into all major languages and has appeared in 700 editions. The first translation was in English, made by Thomas Shelton in 1608, but not published until 1612.

Don Quixote certainly reveals much narrative power, considerable humor, a mastery of dialogue, and a forceful style. Of the two parts written by Cervantes (other authors wrote copies!), the first is the more popular with the general public. The second part has less humorous effect, but shows more constructive insight, better delineation of character, improved style, and more realism and probability in its action.

The character of Don Quixote is noble-minded, an enthusiastic admirer of everything good and great, yet having all these fine qualities accidentally blended with a relative kind of madness. He is paired with a character of opposite qualities, Sancho Panza, a man of low self-esteem, who is a compound of grossness and simplicity.

Storyline

Central characters are the idealistic knight, who sets out on his old horse Rosinante to seek adventure, and the materialistic squire Sancho Panza, who accompanies his master from one failure to another. Their relationship, although they argue most fiercely, is ultimately founded upon mutual respect. In the debates they gradually take on some of each other’s attributes.

Before the good Knight of La Mancha dubs himself Don Quixote, his name is Quijada or Quesada.

He is a country gentleman, around fifty. During his travels, dressed in an old, black suit of armour, Don Quixote’s overexcited imagination blinds him to reality: he thinks windmills to be giants, flocks of sheep to be armies, and galley-slaves to be oppressed gentlemen.

Sancho is named governor of the isle of Barataria, a mock title, and Don Quixote is bested in a duel with the Knight of the White Moon, in reality a student of his acquaintance in disguise.

Don Quixote is passionately devoted to his own imaginative creation, the beautiful Dulcinea. She is a simple peasant in his home town, but Quixote imagines her to be the most beautiful of all women. At times, Quixote goes into detail about her appearance, though he freely admits that he has seen her only fleetingly and has never spoken with her. “Oh Dulcinea de Tobosa, day of my night, glory of my suffering, true North and compass of every path I take, guiding star of my fate…”

The hero returns to La Mancha, and only at his deathbed Don Quixote confesses the folly of his past adventures.
The truth about Grave no. 1886
Operation that changed the face of WWII

By Mike Woolnough

Whether or not you are one of those people who find cemeteries fascinating should you ever find yourself in Huelva a visit to the Nuestra Senora de Soledad cemetery might prove interesting. For there, on 4th May 1943, Captain (Acting Major) William Martin of the Royal Marines was buried with full military honours in grave No. 1886 in the San Marco section of the cemetery. There the grave remained lovingly cared for by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission until 1997 when the British Government broke its silence and added another plaque: “Glyndwr Michael served as Major William Martin, RN”

This subtle admission revealed the truth behind an operation which changed the face of WWII. Concocted by three members of Naval Intelligence, one of whom was Ian Fleming, the plan, code named Operation Mincemeat, was to “dump” a body carrying top secret documents off the Spanish coast. Some Spanish, though neutral, were known to be sympathetic towards the Nazis therefore it was hoped that the papers would find their way to Berlin.

The first problem was to find a body that could conceivably have died from drowning; eventually the St Pancras Coroner, informed MI5 that he had the body of Glyndwr Michael a vagrant who had died from drowning; some Spanish, though neutral, were known to be sympathetic towards the Nazis therefore it was hoped that the papers would find their way to Berlin. He became Captain, Acting Major, William Martin because his rank was high enough to be entrusted with the task of carrying the documents but not so high that German Intelligence might have heard of him. As a Marine officer he would come under the Navy and it was easier to not so high that German Intelligence might have heard of him. As a Captain, Acting Major, William Martin because his rank was high enough to be entrusted with the task of carrying the documents but not so high that German Intelligence might have heard of him. As a Marine officer he would come under the Navy and it was easier to not so high that German Intelligence might have heard of him. As a Marine officer he would come under the Navy and it was easier to not so high that German Intelligence might have heard of him. As a Marine officer he would come under the Navy and it was easier to not so high that German Intelligence might have heard of him.

The body was picked up by José Antonio Rey Mariá a Spanish fisherman and taken to Punta Umbria. What was not in the plan was that an honest and efficient Spanish official would promptly hand the briefcase back to the British authorities! It had to be gently suggested to him that he should clear it with his superiors first!

As we now know the plan was a success, Hitler diverted forces to Greece and Sardinia and not Sicily as was indeed the plan. All the letters were actually written by the senior officers concerned and then addressed by one secretary to avoid too many sets of fingerprints. There were also personal letters from one senior officer to another, one deplored the Americans. Hitler assumed these were further “Mincemeat” type hoaxes and ignored them!

The story of Operation Mincemeat was the subject of the book and film “The Man Who Never Was” although much of the story was altered because of restrictions imposed by the Official Secrets’ Act. The grave is no longer maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission but by a strange twist of fate it is cared for by the German Consulate in Huelva! Every year in April a British woman from Huelva lays flowers on the grave.
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REF: ME 2181     PRICE: € 150,000

La Pilica, Turre

A recently refurbished and tastefully decorated villa set in a tranquil valley a couple of minutes from the Turre – Los Gallardos road. The house consists of 2 bed / 2 bath with terraces, private pool and gardens. There is a double garage and separate store room. AC / heating and wood burning stove. Built area 210 m². Plot 9,118 m².

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An attractive modern ground floor apartment in a beautiful small complex called Pueblo Terrazas less than 50 metres from the beach and bars. 2 bed / 2 bath, one en suite. Independent access. Patio with 27 m² and terrace of 15 m². Parking space. Ideally located for holidays or for short term rentals. Built area 65 m².

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A corner ground floor apartment with 2 bed / 2 bath with a large private terrace and garden of 105 m². There are 2 communal outdoor pools, 1 heated indoor pool, sauna and tennis facilities with a gym plus paddle and tennis court. Concierge at the door. The complex is a 2 minute drive from the beach and also to the nearest supermarket. Built area 71 m².

REF: ME 2174     PRICE: € 102,000

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An attractive and modern ground floor apartment in La Alzaba de Mojacar with a large terrace of 305 m² and fabulous communal pool and gardens as well as an indoor heated swimming pool for the winter. 2 bed / 2 bath with fitted wardrobes. Includes garage space and store room. Sold fully furnished. Built area 121 m².

REF: ME 2181     PRICE: € 150,000

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A newly refurbished and tastefully decorated villa set in a tranquil valley a couple of minutes from the Turre – Los Gallardos road. The house consists of 2 bed / 2 bath with terraces, private pool and gardens. There is a double garage and separate store room. AC / heating and wood burning stove. Built area 210 m². Plot 9,118 m².

REF: ME 2154     PRICE: € 299,950

Los Gallardos

A new attractive modern ground floor apartment on a lovely complex with communal indoor and outdoor swimming pools and gardens. Ground floor with kitchen, sitting room, conservatory, bedroom and bathroom. Roof with 2 bed and bath plus terrace. AC. Furnished. Parking space. Secure, gated community. Built area 95 m².

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REF: ME 2179     PRICE: € 129,950

Vera Playa

A new attractive modern ground floor apartment with 2 bed / 2 bath with a large private terrace and garden of 105 m². There are 2 communal outdoor pools, 1 heated indoor pool, sauna and tennis facilities with a gym plus paddle and tennis court. Concierge at the door. The complex is a 2 minute drive from the beach and also to the nearest supermarket. Built area 71 m².

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“Infamy, infamy…..

…….they’ve all got it in for me!” Who can forget those immortal words from the wonderful Kenneth Williams, as a very unlikely Julius Caesar in ‘Carry on Cleo’? I was reminded of them when I popped into the office the other week to see our terrific Ed. Karen. Not that she has ever appeared in a ‘Carry On’ film...at least as far as I know. Having said that, I could see her in ‘Carry On CATS’ and I’m sure she has enough stories to fill a Carry On script. …Wonder what character she would play....? Answers on a postcard please.....

Anyway Karen was enthusing about a recent trip to Merida from which she had just returned. Her photos of the Roman ruins there were incredible, one of which featured on the cover of a past edition of the magazine. We agreed we had to go there sometime and see for ourselves. Then this got me thinking -(yes I know, here we go again) - how much I really miss ‘Time Team’. This was the Channel 4 series which ran for 20 years with Tony Robinson (now Sir Tony) as presenter. He is probably best known as an actor for the unorth character ‘Baldrick’ in ‘Blackadder’. Each week they (Time Team, that is) would dig holes and trenches in various parts of the UK countryside and find all kinds of stuff from the past. Not just from ancient Britain, but modern times too. But there was always a special thrill when they came across Roman remains, be they temples, villas, and/or burial sites etc. Unfortunately, the programmes finished in 2014 but they can still be seen on Youtube or the ‘Gold’ channels.

They did visit Spain in one episode about three years ago, to Denia in fact, where they were looking for the Muslim Port. They had already broadcast from Mallorca. However, many of the programmes from the UK concentrated on Roman Britain.

Karen’s photos got me wondering just how much of Roman Spain still exists above and below ground. So I decided to do some ‘digging’ of my own and I was pleasantly surprised at just how much there is to see.

Continued on page 22 .....
apparently, around 206 BC Andalucia saw the invading Roman legions, including the hauling of 300 catapults and 12 elephants of Commander Scipio Africanus. (What a fantastic moniker). Rome was battling with the Carthaginians at the time, who were well established in Iberia. Eventually, they were defeated and within a few short years, Andalucia became one of the Empire’s richest and best organised provinces. I wonder if that still applies today? The Romans Came, Saw, but took another 200 years to Conquer the peninsula from the east to the west. They were to remain for the next 600 years or so. I always thought it a pity they didn’t hang on a bit longer, then they could have wowed to the invading Moors on their way out!

Scipio founded the city of Italica, near present day Seville. Famous Roman Emperors Trajan and Hadrian were born there. The ‘old Scipio founded the city of Italica, near present day Seville. Famous Roman Emperors Trajan and Hadrian were born there. The ‘old Scipio founded the city of Italica, near present day Seville. Famous Roman Emperors Trajan and Hadrian were born there. The ‘old Scipio founded the city of Italica, near present day Seville. Famous Roman Emperors Trajan and Hadrian were born there. The ‘old Scipio founded the city of Italica, near present day Seville. Famous Roman Emperors Trajan and Hadrian were born there. The ‘old Scipio founded the city of Italica, near present day Seville. Famous Roman Emperors Trajan and Hadrian were born there. The ‘old

in fact, Hadrian who expanded the city and added a 25,000 seater amphitheatre. When you consider that the Colosseum in Rome held 50,000, this was quite something. The population of Italica at the time was only around 9,000 which shows how the importance of the city extended beyond its walls. There was also a pws housing estate developed containing very expensive homes with lovely mosaics which can still be seen today and would, no doubt, have Mr Robinson, sorry, Sir Tony, drooling at the thought of uncovering them along with the cobbled Roman streets.

Unfortunately for Italica, nearby Seville began to expand and over the years, from around the 3rd century, the city declined, suffering from looting and the robbing of building materials for other projects. It has been the subject of various excavations since the 1840s until it was granted Royal Protection as a National Monument in 1912. It is still a popular destination for visitors and tourists.

Perhaps one of the most stunning ancient Roman cities in terms of location, is Baelo Claudia. It is located in the very south of Spain, just a few kilometres from Tarifa, slap-bang on the coast overlooking the trade routes and shipping lanes between Gibraltar, Iberia and North Africa. The town was named after the Emperor Claudius (41 to 45 AD) and derived its wealth from the fishing industry. It produced a fish paste called ‘garum’ which was very popular with the Romans and was exported all over the Empire. There was also a fish salting factory which has undergone recent renovation.

There is a visitor’s centre and extensive ruins to see including a Basilica, Temple, Theatre, Baths and of course the factory. An important city in that time but one which began to decline in the 2nd Century and was almost obliterated by an earthquake.

However, the city with which I started this article, Merida, has probably the best, most impressive and extensive ruins in Spain including a Circus for chariot racing, which would accommodate 30,000 people. Ben Hur, eat your heart out! It is located in Extramadura, the region’s capital and was founded in 25 BC by veterans of the army of Emperor Augustus. It became one of the most important cities in the whole Roman Empire and, not surprisingly, Merida has been a World Heritage site for over 20 years. The city boasts remains of the Puente Romano bridge over the river Guadiana which pedestrians still use; The Forum, the Temple of Diana, The aforementioned Circus and the Amphitheatre and theatre which is also still in use today for various performances.

Unfortunately, there are many Roman ruins in the country which are, indeed, ruined; mostly piles of building materials which were reused by the Moors in the building of their palaces and Mosques and which were often built on top of Roman places of worship and then subsequently rebuilt into Christian churches. Seems that in the ancient world, little went to waste.

\[\text{Continued from page 21}\]
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We are so looking forward to welcoming you all back onto our showroom and hope you have come through the lockdown with your health and heart intact. This has been a very difficult and anxious time for everyone and we have come to value what we have in life so much more. We have genuinely missed working together to bring you the best choice and value in garden and terrace furniture. However, we have not been idle but working away from home to bring you some new ranges. These photographs are the best we can get just now but really wanted to give you a taste of what is awaiting you. Please check our FB page for regular updates on stock and information on our opening arrangements. Can't wait to see you all again!!!!

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Plants that Repel Mosquitoes

While the warmer weather has us all spending that much more time outside, we can’t forget the unwelcome intruders that tag along as well as after leaving many of us bitten and sore. The main culprit is the mosquito!

However, using chemical products to keep them away is not on the top of everyone’s wish list.

Read on for some ideas of plants that repel mosquitoes – naturally!

Citronella

Probably the most well known and one of the most common ingredients in most mosquito repellents yet many people don’t even know that citronella is actually a plant! It is actually a beautiful perennial clumping grass that emits a strong aroma that masks other scents, and keeps mosquitoes from being attracted to things located around it. The plant has a much stronger aroma than mosquito repellents that contain citronella, so it is a great choice. Grow citronella in pots and place around a porch or patio, or plant it directly in the garden.

Catnip

Your feline friends will be happy to know that catnip is a great mosquito deterrent! In fact, in a 2010 study, researchers found that catnip is 10 times more effective than DEET, the ingredient commonly found in bug repellents. It is a very easy plant to grow, and if you have cats in the house, they will surely be happy to have it around. However, be careful not to plant catnip in with other flowers, veggies, or herbs if you have cats around your garden. They will surely roll around in the catnip and smash everything nearby!

Marigolds

A bright, hardy annual plant, marigolds are a great choice for repelling mosquitoes. Marigolds contain Pyrethrum, an ingredient found in many insect repellents, and they have a unique aroma which bugs find repulsive. The flowers themselves are beautiful and can make a great border or addition to any flower box!

Basil

Calling all cooks! Want a double whammy when it comes to mosquito protection? Plant some basil! Not only will you have a quick and easy mosquito repellent, you will also have a delicious fresh herb on hand to add to all of your favourite recipes! There are many different varieties of basil around, so feel free to experiment and find the ones that you like best. Many expert gardeners recommend trying lemon basil or cinnamon basil to deter insects.

Lavender

You probably know that lavender is a gorgeous purple flowering plant with a soothing, calming scent. But, did you know that it is also a natural mosquito repellent? Grow it indoors near a sunny window, or outside in your garden or flower box to keep the bugs away.

Rosemary

Rosemary is a beautiful flowering plant that is often used to flavour lamb or fish dishes, but did you know that it is also a natural mosquito repellent? It’s perfect to add to your herb garden to keep bugs away, and it even attracts butterflies!

Geranium

This beautiful flowering plant is a great choice for mosquito repellent. When planted in a hanging container, the colourful blooms will cascade over the side of the pot, providing a beautiful visual piece as well as a very useful bug repellent!
The Life and Works of Salvador Dalí

23rd January marked the anniversary of the death in 1989 of the surrealist artist Salvador Dali. He was a colorful and imposing character in his ever-present long cape, walking stick, haughty expression, and upturned waxed mustache.

Spanish surrealist painter, Salvador Felipe Jacinto Dalí i Domènech, 1st Marquis of Púbol, was born in Figueres, Catalonia on 11th May 1904. His elder brother, also named Salvador, had died nine months earlier in 1903. He had a younger sister, Ana Maria, who went on to write a book about her brother.

Dali attended drawing school and in 1916 discovered modern painting on a summer vacation to Cadaqués with the family of Ramon Pichot, a local artist who made regular trips to Paris. He had his first public exhibition at the Municipal Theater in Figueres in 1919. In 1922 Dalí moved into the Residencia de Estudiantes (Students' Residence) in Madrid and continued his studies at the Academia de San Fernando (School of Fine Arts). He was unfortunately expelled in 1926 before his final exams because he stated that there was no-one competent enough to examine him!

Widely considered to be greatly imaginative, Dalí had an affinity for doing unusual things to draw attention to himself and his eccentric manner sometimes drew more public attention than his artwork. Yet his artistic repertoire also included film, sculpture, and photography. He collaborated with Walt Disney on the posthumously released short cartoon Destino and with Alfred Hitchcock on the film Spellbound.

Dali insisted on his “Arab lineage”, claiming that his ancestors were descended from the Moors who occupied Southern Spain for nearly 800 years and attributed to these origins, “my love of everything that is gilded and excessive, my passion for luxury and my love of oriental clothes.”

In 1928 Dali went to Paris where he met the Spanish painters Pablo Picasso and Joan Miro. He established himself as the principal figure of a group of surrealist artists grouped around Andre Breton, who was something like the theoretical “schoolmaster” of surrealism. Years later Breton turned away from Dali accusing him of support of fascism, excessive self-presentation and financial greediness. Dalí helped the surrealist film director Luis Bunuel with the script of the short film Un chien andalou (An Andalusian Dog) in 1929. Also that year he met his muse, inspiration, and future wife Gala, born Elena Ivanovna Diakonova, a Russian immigrant eleven years his senior. They lived together until 1934 when they were married in a civil ceremony.

In 1931, Dalí painted one of his most famous works, The Persistence of Memory, also called Soft Watches or Melting Clocks. The general interpretation of the work suggests Einstein’s theory that time is relative and not fixed. The idea for clocks functioning symbolically in this way came to Dalí when he was staring at a runny piece of Camembert cheese during a hot day in August.

In 1936, Dalí took part in the London International Surrealist Exhibition where he gave a lecture entitled Fantomes paranoiaques authentiques, wearing a deep-sea diving suit. He had arrived carrying a billiard cue and leading a pair of Russian wolfhounds, and had to have the helmet unscrewed as he gasped for breath.

Continued on page 30

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Salvador Dali - ..... continued from page 29

During the war Dali went on to develop an obsessive interest in what he called “the Hitler phenomenon” which eventually resulted in his expulsion from the surrealist group. The surrealist movement and its various members would continue to issue extremely harsh polemics against Dali until the time of his death and beyond.

In 1940, as World War II started in Europe, Dalí and Gala moved to the United States where they lived for eight years. In 1942, he returned in 1949, Dalí spent his remaining years back in his beloved Catalonia.

Late in his career, Dalí experimented with many unusual or located things to symbolize hope and love. Various animals appear throughout his work - ants point to death, decay, and immense sexual desire; the locusts are a symbol of waste and fear.

In 1968, Dalí filmed a television advertisement for Lanvin chocolates and in 1969 designed the Chupa Chups logo. Also in 1969, he was responsible for creating the advertising aspect of the 1969 Eurovision Song Contest, and created a large metal sculpture, which stood on the stage at the Teatro Real in Madrid.

In 1980, Dalí’s health took a steep decline after his near-senile wife Gala was dosing him with a dangerous cocktail of non-prescribed medicine that damaged his nervous system, thus causing an untimely end to his artistic ability. At 76 years old, the ‘ever-healthy’ Dalí was a complete wreck, his right hand trembling terribly.

In 1982, King Juan Carlos of Spain bestowed on Dalí the title Marquis of Pubol, for which Dalí later repaid him by giving him a drawing after the king visited him on his deathbed. Gala died on June 10, 1982 causing Dalí to lose much of his will to live. He deliberately dehydrated himself, possibly as a suicide attempt. He moved from Figueres to the castle in Púbol where in 1984 a mysterious fire broke out in his bedroom, possibly another suicide attempt. He was rescued and returned to Figueres where a group of his friends, patrons, and fellow artists saw to it that he was comfortable living in his Theater-Museum for his final years.

He died of heart failure at Figueres on January 23, 1989 at the age of 84, and he is buried there in the crypt of his Teatro Museo.

The elephant is also a recurring image in Dalí’s works. It first appeared in his 1944 work Dream Caused by the Flight of a Bee around a Pomegranate a Second Before Awakening. The egg is another common Dalíesque image. He connects the egg to the prenatal, such as in The Metamorphosis of Narcissus, thus using it to symbolize hope and love. Various animals appear throughout his work - ants point to death, decay, and immense sexual desire; the snail is connected to the human head (he saw a snail on a bicycle outside Freud’s house when he first met Sigmund Freud), and locusts are a symbol of waste and fear.

Dalí was a versatile artist, not limiting himself only to painting in his artistic endeavors. Some of his more popular artistic works are sculptures and other objects, and he is also noted for his contributions to theatre, fashion, and photography, among other areas.

Two of the most popular objects of the surrealist movement were the Lobster Telephone and the Mae West Lips Sofa, completed by Dalí in 1936 and 1937, respectively. The Scottish patron Edward James commissioned both of these pieces from Dalí. The Mae West Lips Sofa currently resides at the Brighton and Hove Museum in England.

Continued on page 32 .......

30 Almeria Living
During the years between 1941 and 1970 Dalí was also responsible for creating a striking ensemble of jewels, 39 in total. The jewels created are intricate and some contain actual moving parts. The most famous jewel created by Dali, “The Royal Heart”, is crafted using gold and is encrusted with forty-six rubies, forty-two diamonds and four emeralds, and is created in such a way that the center “beats” much like a real heart. The Dalí — Joies (The Jewels of Dali) collection can be seen at the Dali Theater Museum in Figueres, Catalonia, Spain, where it is on permanent exhibition.

Dalí produced over 1,500 paintings in his career in addition to producing illustrations for books, lithographs, designs for theater sets and costumes, a great number of drawings, dozens of sculptures, and various other projects, including the animated cartoon for Disney. The largest collections of Dalí's work are at the Dali Theatre and Museum in Figueres, Catalonia, Spain, followed by the Salvador Dalí Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida. It holds over 1,500 works from Dali. Other significant collections of his drawings and sculptures include the Reina Sofia Museum in Madrid, the Salvador Dalí Gallery in Pacific Palisades, California, Espace Dalí in Montmartre, Paris and the Dalí Universe in London.

The unlikeliest venue for Dalí’s work was the Rikers Island jail in New York City; a sketch of the Crucifixion he donated to the jail hung in the inmate dining room for 16 years before it was moved to the prison lobby for safekeeping. The drawing was stolen in March 2003 and as far as records show it has not been recovered.

Salvador Dalí - ..... continued from page 31
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Puzzle Time

Enter digits from 1 to 9 into the blank spaces. Every row of each 9x9 cube must contain one of each digit. So must every column, as must every 3x3 square.

Samurai Sudoku

Rosetta

A Rosetta is made up of a centre coloured hexagon encircled by 6 white hexagons. To complete the puzzle, fill in all 7 Rosettas with each number between 1 and 7 in no particular order while ensuring that:
1. No number is repeated in a horizontal row
2. Each number for 1 to 7 are represented in the 7 grey hexagon cells

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Why move?
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Samurai Sudoku

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As a pet owner you want to do everything you can to care for your pet; this involves regular, everyday activities to ensure they stay happy and healthy. Practice these responsible pet care tips year after year for a lifetime of happy and healthy cats and dogs.

**Veterinarian Visits**

Responsible pet ownership starts with regular visits to the veterinarian. Given their shorter-than-human lifespan, your dog or cat should be getting a checkup at least once or twice a year. Depending on your pet's vaccination schedule, they may go more frequently when they're young, but establishing and maintaining these visits is key to your pet's health. Many pets don't mind a trip to the veterinarian's office, especially if you choose a vet that's a good fit for your little friend.

**Vaccinations**

Vaccinating your pets is a vital component of responsible pet care. Soon after welcoming your new pet into your home, schedule an immunization appointment. During your first visit, the vet will set up an immunization schedule for your little pup or kitten to protect them from illness and disease. Vaccinations for puppies should happen early in your puppy's first few weeks after you bring him home. Talk to your vet at your first appointment, on when a good time to schedule that visit. They help prevent diseases such as rabies, Lyme disease, and distemper. Cats benefit from vaccines that prevent feline herpes virus, feline leukemia, and rabies. If you've adopted an adult or senior animal, make sure they are immunized, too. Vaccinations do need renewal and aren't just for young pets.

**Proper Identification**

If the unthinkable happens and your little guy or gal gets lost — youngsters in particular are prone to dashing out the door — having proper identification is the key to a happy ending. Start with the basics: a safe collar, and a tag that contains all of your contact information. In addition to an ID tag, microchipping your pet is advisable, because there’s always the chance a collar will fall off. The microchip, an electronic device about the size and shape of a grain of rice, is implanted under your pet’s skin and can be read by a scanner that pulls up your identification information. A combination of these forms of identification will go a long way to reuniting you and your beloved pet, but only if you keep your contact information up-to-date. Be sure to change your information on file with the microchip if you have a change in address or phone number.

**Spaying/Neutering**

Sterilizing your pet prevents a host of health problems, including complicated pregnancies, and reduces the number of homeless animals. Spaying your kitty (removing the uterus and ovaries) greatly reduces her risk for cervical cancer, eliminates the risk of ovarian cancer, and prevents her from going into “heat.” That minimizes the chance that she’ll stray from home in search of a partner, and any nearby male cats will be less aggressive (and they won’t spray to mark their territory, something that benefits you and your furniture). Neutering your puppy helps alleviate aggression and roaming the neighborhood, and will prevent him from getting testicular cancer. Because spaying or neutering is surgery that requires general anesthesia, your pet will likely stay overnight at the vet's office for at least one night for observation and recuperation.

**Healthy Food**

Two connected elements of responsible pet ownership include providing animals with fresh, cool water and healthy food at all times. The right pet food will enrich your best buddy's life, providing them with the energy and nutrients they need. With so many meal options to choose from, it can be daunting, but you can become adept in no time by familiarizing yourself with important ingredients and how they help your pup or kitty. When choosing the best cat food, look for a good balance of protein, carbs and fats. These are important ingredients for dog food, too, as is plenty of fiber for the digestive system. In addition to healthy ingredients, select a pet food formula that is appropriate for your pet's age, health conditions and activity level, and speak to your vet before switching your pet to a specialized food.

**Training and Socializing**

One of the most important aspects of responsible pet care is ensuring your dog or cat is well-trained, and proper socializing is a part of that. Starting when they’re young is best and most effective, but it’s never too late to learn new tricks. Toilet training is the number one priority for any animal with whom you share your home, as is working on obedience training. Learning socialization skills will help your puppy or kitten bond with you and with other pets. Ask your vet or local animal shelter for recommendations for good trainers in your area or at-home training guides to read. A well-trained pet is a happy pet, and that translates to a happy pet parent.

**Safe Playtime**

It’s no secret that dogs and cats love to play, and it’s an effective relationship-building activity. Take stock of their toys. Are they safe? Be mindful of threadbare stuffed toys that pose choking hazards and hard, sharp edges that could cause injury. Throw away and replace playthings that are worn out. Making DIY cat toys and dog toys is a great, inexpensive way to bring even more fun to pet parenting!
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Spring Allergies

Spring allergies occur for most people because of pollen. There are different types of pollen to consider (like tree pollen, grass pollen, ragweed pollen). Tree pollen hits in late March and April, and grass pollen isn’t far behind it. Other types of pollen hit later in spring into summer. That’s when most of the flowers and trees are blooming.

Experts say that warmer-than-average winter temperatures and climate change mean allergy season starts earlier and ends later. These factors lead to early tree pollination and can lead to higher pollen counts than normal for this time of year. As a result, we’re experiencing an early start to allergy season. If you suffer from tree pollen allergies, you’re likely among the first to feel the effects.

Tips for Dealing with Spring Allergies

Use these simple tips to avoid symptom-triggering pollen and breathe easier this spring:

Know Your Pollen Count

Keep an eye on the daily pollen count for your area. You can use a pollen alert tracker to track daily reports. On days the count is high (120 or above), stay indoors as much as possible to keep pollen exposure to a minimum.

Close Your Windows

Although it’s tempting to open your windows and let fresh spring air indoors, it may not be the best thing for your symptoms. Keep windows and doors closed to avoid letting pollen spores circulate and settle inside your home. Using an air purifier can help reduce pollen levels.

Shower After Spending Time Outside

Take a shower after spending time outdoors to wash pollen out of your hair and keep it from falling onto your pillow.

Consider Using An Air Purifier

Air purifiers, especially those that have HEPA filters, filter even the tiniest pollen spores out of your air along with other symptom triggers like dust, mould, and pet dander. With regular use, you can reduce and even eliminate your symptoms.

Continued on page 40 ......
Spring allergies - continued from page 39

Signs and Symptoms
Below are the most common signs and symptoms of allergies:

- Watery discharge through the nose or throat.
- Pain and / or discomfort behind the eyes, in the lower forehead
- Feeling light-headed or dizzy, passing out
- Stomach pain, feeling nauseous, vomiting
- Flushing
- Swelling in the mouth, throat, hands, and feet
- Itchy and irritated skin and eyes

Treatments
The following remedies will relieve mild allergic symptoms, but if you are experiencing any of the more serious ones on the above list,

you may need urgent medical assistance.

Tea with peppermint and nettle
Nettle is very popular in Europe both as a home remedy ingredient and a cooking ingredient. It contains loads of iron, which helps lower blood pressure, relieve arthritis and help allergies. On the other hand, peppermint contains flavonoids that reduce the secretion of histamines, thereby minimizing discomfort a great deal.

Local pollen
Local pollen is a great way of preparing your immune system for the spring. It has to be local, as you have to develop tolerance to the pollen in your area. Pollen is available in powder, capsules and granules, but the last form is the best.

Citrus Fruit Juice
Most allergies flare up in the spring and summer, when it’s nice and warm outdoors and you want to be outside. This calls for a refreshing, tasty Vitamin C-rich drink! Citrus fruit juice can provide allergy relief because it strengthens and enhances the immune system.

This has some clear advantages as the immune system is fighting as well as the spring. It has to be local, as you have to develop tolerance to the pollen in your area. Pollen is available in powder, capsules and granules, but the last form is the best.

No. 1: Salmon - Loaded with omega-3 fatty acids, this high-quality protein source is also filled with vitamin B-12 and iron. A deficiency can result in a dry scalp and thus hair, giving it a dull look. Vegetarians should Include one or two tablespoons of ground flaxseed in your daily diet for some plant-based omega-3 fats.

No. 2: Dark Green Vegetables - Spinach, broccoli and Swiss chard, are an excellent source of vitamins A and C, which your body needs to produce sebum - the oily substance, secreted by your hair follicles, which is the body’s natural hair conditioner. Dark green vegetables also provide iron and calcium.

No. 3: Beans - Legumes like kidney beans and lentils should be an important part of your hair-care diet. Not only do they provide plentiful protein to promote hair growth, but ample iron, zinc, and biotin.

No. 4: Nuts - Brazil nuts are one of nature's best sources of selenium, an important mineral for the health of your scalp. Walnuts contain alpha-linolenic acid, an omega-3 fatty acid that may help condition your hair. They are also a terrific source of zinc, as are cashews, pecans, and almonds. A zinc deficiency can lead to hair shedding, so make sure nuts are a regular on your healthy hair menu.

No. 5: Poultry - Chickens and turkeys may have feathers, but the high-quality protein they provide will help give you the healthy hair you crave.

When it comes to foods for healthy hair and beauty, variety is the best way to go.

An overall balanced diet of lean proteins, fruits, and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, fatty fish and low-fat dairy will help keep hair healthy.

Fast weight loss diets could leave you with less-than-healthy hair, along with a growling stomach. Low-calorie diets are often low in some of the most important nutrients for healthy hair. In addition to stunting hair growth and leading to dullness, super-low calorie plans may even cause hair loss.

Read on for the 10 top foods that should be the foundation of your healthy hair diet.

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No. 6: Eggs - However they’re served up, eggs are one of the best protein sources you can find. They also contain biotin and vitamin B-12, which are important beauty nutrients.

No. 7: Whole Grains - Sink your teeth into hearty whole grains, including whole-wheat bread and fortified whole-grain breakfast cereals, for a hair-healthy dose of zinc, iron, and B vitamins.

No. 8: Oysters - Oysters may be better known for their reputation as an aphrodisiac, but they can also lead to healthy hair – the key to their hair-boosting abilities is zinc – a powerful antioxidant.

No. 9: Low-Fat Dairy Products - Low-fat dairy products like skim milk and yogurt are great sources of calcium, an important mineral for hair growth. They also contain whey and casein, two high-quality protein sources.

No. 10: Carrots - Carrots are an excellent source of vitamin A, which promotes a healthy scalp along with good vision.
Figures published for 2017 reveal that 2,183 people in Spain became organ donors last year after they died. That’s 46.9 per million people in the population (pmp) – a standard way of measuring the rate of donation in a country.

The tantalising prize awaiting any country that does manage to increase donation rates is clear: better lives for potentially thousands of people. The impact Spain’s 2,183 deceased donors had last year, for example, is staggering. They made 5,260 transplant surgeries possible, including more than 3,200 kidney transplants and 1,200 liver transplants. There were 360 lung and 300 heart transplants.

Spain has ploughed money into this effort, training more than 16,000 medical professionals in procedures regarding organ donation and transplantation since the ONT was founded. And since 1992, Spain’s position as world leader has remained uninterrupted.

As well as saving lives, transplants save money, she says. For kidney patients, for example, the cost of long-term dialysis exceeds that of transplant surgery. Five years of haemodialysis, which uses an artificial kidney outside the body to filter blood, costs over €160,000 more per patient than a transplant.

If you have thought of becoming an organ donor in Spain – which is possible even if you carry a British donor card as well – here are a few facts for you.

Any person can become an organ donor. The individual patients and their organs are not assessed until after their death, so there is no screening procedure involved. However, only people who actually die in hospital are eligible as donors as the extraction of the organs has to happen immediately.

Under the Spanish system every deceased person is considered a voluntary donor unless they expressed in life a definite aversion to donating their organs. However, the family has the final say, and if they do not wish for the donation to take place it is not carried out.

Even holders of donor cards are not accepted if the family opposes the procedure. If you want to make sure you will be used as a donor you have to make a ‘Declaración de Voluntad Vital Anticipada’. This is like a ‘life will’ which legally obliges your family to accept your decision.

You can carry a national or an Andalucian donor card. The former is obtained through an organisation under the Spanish national health service called Organización Nacional de Trasplantes, or ONT. For more information see www.ont.es. If you need to read it in English, right click and choose Translate to English. The translation is not perfect, but you get the meaning.

To obtain the latter you can contact Salud Responde on 902 505 060 or contact our local health authority. For more information go to www.juntadeandalucia.es/servicioandaluzdesalud
Puzzle Time
Puzzle solutions on page 80

Regular Sudoku
Every Sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically. Enter numbers into the blank spaces so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

Across
1 Furnish with requirement
2 Consuming
3 Run of the mill
4 People from the Middle East
5 Sample
6 Exact
7 Size
8 Circus performer
9 Portion
10 Uses wool and needles
11 Become conscious of
12 Adventurous
13 Size
14 Before the expected time
15 E-mail for e.g.
16 Supported
17 Protect a person
18 Circus performer
19 Place to wash up
20 Portion
21 Extra-terrestrial
22 Uses wool and needles
23 Become conscious of
24 Adventurous
25 Tilted

Down
1 Begins
2 Iron
3 Guides
4Consuming
5 Conscious
6 European citizen
7 Took a convulsive deep breath
8 Degree of heat
9 Before the expected time
10 E-mail for e.g.
11 Size
12 Exact
13 Sample
14 Before the expected time
15 E-mail for e.g.
16 Supported
17 Protect a person
18 Circus performer
19 Place to wash up
20 Portion
21 Extra-terrestrial
22 Uses wool and needles
23 Become conscious of
24 Adventurous
25 Tilted

Easy

Medium

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We say YES! And You?

Ready to fight?
The artichoke plant belongs to a group called Cynaras and its scientific name is Cynara Scolymus. It is a plant that can grow up to 2 metres’ height, its flowers are bluish in colour and its leaves are lobular without spikes.

Its main claim to fame is obviously as a provider of artichokes to our plates. Artichokes are extremely healthy from a nutritional point of view as it contains vitamins (mainly B such as niacin, riboflavin and thiamine), minerals (phosphorous, iron, magnesium and potassium), mucilage and inulin.

But apart from this, the artichoke has certain medical and therapeutic properties that assist our bodies in preventing and treating certain conditions.

Benefits for the Liver

The artichoke is very helpful in the care and protection of the liver. Apart from stimulating the biliar function it also helps curing liver. It is also helpful in cases of fatty liver, a very common condition certain liver diseases such as intoxication, hepatitis and cirrhosis.

Great for Diabetes

It is one of the most recommended foods for diabetics as it helps reduce the sugar levels in our blood. Moreover, it has a low glycemic index, which means that it does not cause sudden changes in the sugar levels.

Good for Eliminating Toxins and Liquids

Thanks to its diuretic and purifying qualities, the artichoke is a good food for helping our organisms eliminating, in a natural way, accumulated toxins and liquids.

So it helps lowering the uric acid levels and preventing liquid retention.

Beneficial for High Cholesterol and Triglycerides

Eating artichokes regularly helps preventing cardiovascular diseases. It is also helpful in lowering high levels of cholesterol and triglycerides. This in its turn lowers the arterial pressure and helps prevent arteriosclerosis.

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After weeks of rain and a cool snap it looks like the weather is changing and rapidly too! Spring is merging into summer.

Beat the Heat

Keep hydrated

Drink water or liquids often, even if you are not thirsty, regardless of your level of physical activity. However, do not have too many drinks with caffeine, alcohol or lots of sugar as they make you lose more liquids.

Pay special attention to children, the elderly and people with illnesses that get worse with dehydration.

Have regular light meals, and consume foods that are rich in water and mineral salts, such as fruit and vegetables, which help you to replace the salts lost through sweat.

Keep your medication in a cool fresh place; the heat can alter the composition and the effects.

Keep in mind that when entering or leaving cool air-conditioned areas that sudden change in temperature could affect you.

If you suffer from over-exposure to the sun make sure you drink plenty of water and apply after sun or intensive body lotion to rehydrate the body both inside and out.

Wear it well

Wear lose fitting light-weight and light-coloured clothing so your skin can breathe. Ladies should carry a fan - it is amazing the cooling affect they have (the Spanish should know)! Sun hats are recommended with a wide brim to protect heads, ears, neck and hair.

Take care not to burn the back of the neck if wearing a baseball cap.

Sleep well

Air your bedroom in the fresh, early morning, then pull down the blinds and close doors and windows for the rest of the day to keep it cool.

Eat only a light meal in the evening and take a bath or shower in tepid water before going to bed.

Use air conditioning or fans to make it bearable during the night and keep in mind you should avoid using them if you suffer from cold intolerance.

Keep in mind that when entering or leaving cool air-conditioned areas that sudden change in temperature could affect you.

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Kim Clark

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Almeria Living

What Are Artichokes Good For?

The artichoke plant belongs to a group called Cynaras and its scientific name is Cynara Scolymus. It is a plant that can grow up to 2 metres’ height, its flowers are bluish in colour and its leaves are lobular without spikes.

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With hundreds of tomato varieties to choose from, Spain is a forerunner in the European tomato market - producing around a fifth of all the tomatoes on the continent. But it’s in the realm of research and innovation that Spanish producers are truly making their mark on the world tomato market, creating products that guarantee quality without sacrificing excellent taste.

Although Spanish explorers brought tomatoes to Europe from the New World in the 16th century, it took nearly two hundred years for this fruit to become an integral part of Spanish cuisine. Today, it’s as hard to picture Spanish gastronomy without this beloved ingredient, as it is to imagine consumers without their fervent preferences for one kind of tomato or another. Sweet, crisp, soft, fleshy, smooth-skinned, pink, red, brown, yellow, orange, green, more acidic, less seeds, round, pear-shaped...

Tomatoes come in so many flavors, sizes and shapes that in recent decades, researchers have strived to create new and better tomato breeds, ensuring that there is something for everyone.

This time of year you often see tomato vendors along the main roads advertising TOMATES RAF. Have you ever tried them? They are absolutely delicious and sweet, they have the proper old-fashioned tomato flavour, just like when we were children.

So what exactly are they?

Raf stands for ‘resistentes al fusarium’ – resistant to the fusarium fungus.

The Raf tomato was developed in France and is also known as the Marmande tomato from the region where it was first cultivated. It never really caught on in France, though, but the Almerian farmers adopted it and started growing it here at the end of the sixties.

It is considered that the Raf tomato can only grow and thrive in Almeria, and the growing conditions here are ideal for it. Both the ground and the water have a fairly high level of salts, and whereas this can be detrimental to other kinds of tomato, the Raf tomato thrives in these conditions. As a result of the high concentration of salt it absorbs more sugars and develops its wonderfully sweet flavour.

It looks quite distinctive with deep grooves and it is usually sold green. One unique quality of this tomato is that it ripens from within, so as soon as you start seeing slightly red veins in the skin it’s ready to eat. The earlier after this point you eat it, the crispier, more succulent and sweeter it is.

It is not recommended to buy Raf tomatoes red, as by this stage they have become floury and bland, and are really not worth having.

The Raf tomato is almost considered a delicacy, and it is normally eaten simply with salt and extra virgin olive oil. If you want to do it completely right, you need ‘Flor de Sal de Cabo de Gata’, which is our own local manually harvested salt from the Cabo de Gata Natural Park.

The Raf tomato plant has very delicate roots and is always grown by expert growers. It only yields about 25% of what other tomato plants can produce in a season, and for these two reasons it is not very widely cultivated.

The greenhouses of Almería cover an area of 30,000 hectares, 12,000 of which are dedicated to tomatoes. Only about 4% of this, 500 hectares, is used for Raf tomatoes.

The combination of all these factors mean that the Raf tomato is rather more expensive than the average, this season a kilo typically sold for about 8€. Expensive for a tomato, you might say – but not for a delicacy, though, right?

We’re approaching the end of the season, so hurry on out there and get your purchase in. If not, you’ll have to wait until November before these delicious gems are available again.
The caper bush (Capparis spinosa), also called Flinders rose, is a perennial winter-deciduous plant that bears rounded, fleshy leaves and large white to pale pink flowers. The plant is best known for the edible flower buds and the fruit, both of which are usually consumed pickled. Other parts of the plants are used in the manufacture of medicines and cosmetics. The drought tolerant shrubby plant is many-branched, with alternate leaves, thick and shiny, round to oval in shape. The flowers are long violet-coloured stamens, and a single stigma usually rising well above the stamens.

The caper bush requires a semiarid or arid climate and can withstand temperatures over 40°C in summer, but it is sensitive to frost during its vegetative period. It will grow in poor soil or even cling to rocks and wall joints. The latter is causing a serious problem to the preservation of ancient structures like the bastions of Palma and Wailing Wall in Jerusalem.

The buds (called simply capers) when ready to pick, are a dark olive green and about the size of a fresh kernel of corn. They are picked, then pickled in salt, or a salt and vinegar solution, and drained. If the caper bud is not picked, it flowers and produces a fruit. The mature fruit of the caper shrub are prepared similarly and marketed as caper berries.

Capers are a distinctive ingredient in Mediterranean cuisine, especially in Sicilian and southern Italian cooking. They are commonly used in salads, meat dishes and pasta sauces. They are known for being one of the ingredients of tartar sauce and are often served with cold smoked salmon or cured salmon dishes. Capers and caper berries are sometimes substituted for olives to garnish a martini.

Caper leaves are used in salad and fish dishes in Greece and Cyprus. They are pickled or boiled and preserved in jars with brine—like caper buds. Dried caper leaves are also used as a substitute for rennet in the manufacturing of high-quality cheese.

In Greek popular medicine, a herbal tea made of caper root and young shoots is considered beneficial against rheumatism. Selenium, present in capers at high concentrations in comparison to other vegetable products, has been associated with the prevention of some forms of cancer.

Capers and caper berries are sometimes substituted for olives to garnish a martini.

All sparkling wines should be opened with care (unless, of course, you are a racing driver!). Do not lever the cork out with your thumbs. Remove the wire, grip the cork with one hand and with the other hand gently turn the bottle until you will feel the pressure easing the cork out. The cork should come out with a hiss rather than a bang.

During the last few years, sparkling wine sales in Europe, especially Britain, have been dominated by the Italian fizzle, Prosecco. I have sampled many brands of Prosecco but have rarely found one superior to Cava.

Both Prosecco and Cava are produced by “Methode Traditionelle”. Until 1994 this was known as “Champagne Methode” but in that year the Champagne houses, made representations to the European parliament and achieved protection for the name with the result that now only wine made in the Champagne area of France can use this title. It is generally recognised that the Champagne Methode was invented by Dom Perignon in 1697. However, thirty five years earlier, in 1662, a Gloucestershire Physician and Naturalist, Christopher Merret, submitted a paper to the Royal Society in London detailing how to make sparkling wine by what became known as the Champagne Methode. Unfortunately he never put his theory into practice and it would take a brave person to tell a Frenchman that Champagne had been invented by the English!
Cooking with Nina

Wrap That Around Your Fork!

I noticed to my great joy that it’s been ages since I’ve done anything with pasta, so a great excuse for cooking some of my favourite dishes! So I did...

Spinach Fettuccine with Meatballs and Tomato Sauce

Good old unbeatable meatballs and tomato sauce – with a twist: Mix the meat with parmesan cheese!

Ingredients for four:
- 400g spinach fettuccine
- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 4 sprigs of fresh thyme and/or oregano, leaves only
- 1 kg ripe tomatoes, chopped
- 1-2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 100ml cream (optional)

Meatballs:
- 75g parmesan cheese, grated
- 500g minced beef
- Salt and pepper
- 15g plain flour

Heat the oil in a sautéing pan and fry the onions until transparent.
Add the garlic and herbs.
When the garlic becomes aromatic add the tomatoes, season with salt and pepper. When it bubbles, turn down the heat, cover and leave to simmer.
Add the rest of the ingredients and let everything simmer gently until the pasta is done.
Drain the pasta and mix in the pan with the chorizo etc.
Decorate with a handful of whole olives and serve with a leafy salad.
You can’t do much better than that!

Tagliatelli with Chorizo, Red Pepper, Olives and Artichokes

Like so many pasta dishes, this one is easy-peasy and oh, so tasty!

Ingredients for four:
- 400g tagliatelli
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 red pepper, chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 150g cooking chorizo, cut into slices
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tin artichoke hearts, drained, hearts cut into quarters
- 2 ripe tomatoes, halved and grated
- 75g black olives, drained and halved
- Fresh basil, chopped

Cook the tagliatelli following the instructions on the packet.
Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan and fry the onions and pepper. Add the chorizo slices and let them sizzle along for a couple of minutes.
Add the rest of the ingredients and let everything simmer gently until the pasta is done.
Drain the pasta and mix in the pan with the chorizo etc.
Decorate with a handful of whole olives and serve with a leafy salad.
You can’t do much better than that!

Spaghetti with Alfredo Sauce

(And lots of other goodies!)

Alfredo sauce is a great all-rounder if you’re in a pinch for a sauce.
Here it comes with bacon, chicken breast and spinach.

Ingredients for four:
- 500g spaghetti
- 30g butter
- 400g chicken breast, filleted and cut into strips
- 250ml cream
- 150g parmesan cheese, grated
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- Olive oil
- A couple of handfuls of tender spinach leaves

Cook the spaghetti following the directions on the packet.
Heat the olive oil in a frying pan and quickly fry the chicken breast and bacon. Reserve.
To make the Alfredo sauce, melt the butter in the pan you used for the meat, add the garlic and let it sizzle for a sec. Add the cream, bring to the boil and let it bubble gently for five minutes.
Now add the parmesan cheese and stir while the sauce thickens.
Grate or shake the nutmeg into the sauce and add salt and pepper to taste.
Throw the spinach leaves in the sauce and, either arrange everything on plates, or mix the bacon and chicken breast with the sauce as well.
Serve with the spaghetti. It’s loooovely!

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Artichoke A Tasty Bud!

You may have read elsewhere in this magazine how to prepare artichokes, so I shall limit myself to recipes here. Only, I must add to the preparation advice that when handling artichokes you always need a large bowl of water with a lemon squeezed into it to keep your hands and the artichokes from going brown! And leave the prepared artichokes to soak in this water until you start cooking them.

Artichoke Risotto

I’m back on my risotto horse, and I love it!

Ingredients for four:
4 fresh artichoke hearts, finely sliced
100g Serrano ham and/or chorizo, cut in small cubes
1 clove garlic, finely chopped
½ onion, finely chopped
100ml white wine
75g parmesan cheese, grated
320g round rice
1 litre hot vegetable stock,
30g butter
150g frozen peas
Olive oil

Heat the olive oil up in a frying pan, add the onion and garlic and cook gently until they start going transparent. Add the artichoke slices and cook for another three minutes, then the Serrano ham/chorizo, and cook for a couple of minutes more. Throw in the rice and mix well. Pour over the wine and allow it to evaporate.

Now start adding the hot stock a bit at the time, stir constantly and allow it to get absorbed before adding the next lot. After about 17 minutes, add the pea and cook until the rice is done. Take the risotto off the heat, stir in the parmesan and butter and let it rest for five minutes before serving with a leafy salad. Buon Appetito!

Baked Artichoke Hearts

This does for a really tasty side dish for any main course – or as a little dish as part of a lunch!

Ingredients for four:
6 fresh artichoke hearts, quartered
½ onion, thinly sliced
1 tbsp chopped parsley
6 tbsp breadcrumbs
3-4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
2 tbsp grated pecorino or other hard cheese
Salt

Brind a pan of salted water to the boil and throw in the quartered hearts. Boil them for approx. 5 minutes until a fork slides in easily. Drain.

Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a frying pan and add first the onion and parsley, and then the drained artichoke hearts. Cook until everything is soft without being mushy.

Turn the mixture into an oiled oven proof dish. Mix together the breadcrumbs, the parsley and the rest of the olive oil and distribute the mixture over the artichokes. Cook in the preheated oven at 180ºC until the topping is golden. Easy and delicious!

Alcachofa al Ajillo

This is another wonderful side dish, or a delicious snack all on its own

Ingredients for four:
8-10 fresh artichoke hearts, halved
10 cloves garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
Virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground pepper

Heat up the olive oil in a shallow casserole dish and add the garlic. Cook until it starts turning golden, stirring from time to time. Add the halved artichoke hearts and pour in enough water to almost but not quite cover the hearts. Stop when they start floating. Season with salt and pepper.

Cover and cook for about 20 mins, turn and carry on until the artichoke hearts are tender and the liquid all but absorbed. And that’s all there is to it! Get artichoking!
Preparing Artichokes for Cooking

I have met so many people who miss out on artichokes simply because they don’t know how to prepare or use them, and it’s a crying shame, because it’s a delicious and healthy vegetable that should be included in everybody’s diet on a regular basis.

You don’t use all of an artichoke; there are lots of leaves and leaf tips that haven’t got any ‘meat’ on them and have to be discarded. Also, right in the centre, unless they are very young, artichokes have a ‘beard’ that you want to get rid of.

The most well-known, and also most delicious, part is the ‘heart’, the core of the artichoke. But most of the leaves have some flesh on them – the closer you get to the heart, the more good stuff on the leaves. You can also peel the stems and use them finely sliced as well, as long as they are nice and hard. If they are soft, discard them.

If you just want to try what an artichoke is like, I recommend you to boil a couple in salty water. Use a plate with a weight to keep them immersed. Simmer them for 40-50 minutes, until a thin fork pierces the base without any trouble.

Leaves to drain, serve whole and eat them by picking off the leaves one by one and scraping off the fleshy bit with your teeth. If you like, you can dip them in vinaigrette dressing to make them more interesting.

A Brief History of the Artichoke

Nowadays, artichokes are so well known in Europe that you would think it was native to our continent. Artichokes have indeed been cultivated in Europe for many centuries, however they originated in northern Africa – according to the most recent studies in Ancient Egypt. From there, the Phoenician merchants distributed them all over the Mediterranean.

The Romans and the Greeks were lovers of this plant and they attributed aphrodisiac qualities to its fruit. The artichoke was so important to these two civilizations that it was included in their mythology. It is said that Artichoke was the name of one of Zeus’s many human lovers, whom he converted into an artichoke plant.

During the Middle Ages the artichoke almost disappeared; there is no evidence that it was known during the first centuries of this era, however, little by little, it was reintroduced and went on to become a much appreciated food of kings and aristocrats.

The artichoke is once more in evidence in Italy in the 15th century. Later on the artichoke plant was introduced to France by Catalina de Medicis, an Italian noblewoman who married the French king Henry II in 1533. She was a great lover of the artichoke heart, as, according to the chronicles of the time, was Louis XIV, aka Louis the Great, the Sun King.

In Spain, the artichoke plant was reintroduced by the Moors during the eight centuries that they occupied the peninsula. Since then it has been part of the staple diet in Spain, and it was one of the plants that the Conquistadors took with them to the New World.

You can also take off all the outer leaves and eat only the heart – you will know that you have reached the heart when the leaves are almost all flesh. Again, you can eat it as it is, or use it in other dishes.

Another way of preparing them is from raw. The thumb rule is to get rid of all the hard parts of the leaves. Cut off the stem, pull off the outer layers of leaves and then cut the artichoke to a point leaving only the fleshy lower part of the leaves. Finally, cut off the top down to the fleshy bit. Quarter or slice them finely.

If you are interested only in the heart, proceed like this:

1. Cut off all the outer leaves. A guideline is until all the tops of the leaves are at the same height.
2. Cut off the top approx. two thirds of the remaining leaves, squeeze gently to feel where they start to go soft – that’s your cut-off point. Now you’re left with the heart.
3. Quarter the heart. If the artichoke has a beard you will see it as a furry area down at the bottom – cut it out by inserting a knife under it and cutting it out with a downward motion.

Cooking with Wine

Wine has three main uses in the kitchen - as a marinade ingredient, as a cooking liquid, and as a flavoring in a finished dish. The function of wine in cooking is to intensify, enhance and accent the flavor and aroma of food - not to mask the flavor of what you are cooking but rather to fortify it. As with any seasoning used in cooking, care should be taken in the amount of wine used - too little is inconsequential and too much will be overpowering. Neither extreme is desirable. A small quantity of wine will enhance the flavor of the dish.

The alcohol in the wine evaporates while the food is cooking, and only the flavor remains. Boiling down wine concentrates the flavor, including acidity and sweetness. Be careful not to use too much wine as the flavor could overpower your dish.

For best results, wine should not be added to a dish just before serving. The wine should simmer with the food, or sauce, to enhance the flavor of the dish. If added late in the preparation, it could impart a harsh quality. It should simmer with the food, or sauce, to enhance the flavor of the dish. Wait 10 minutes or more to taste the sauce while it is being cooked; as the wine cooks, it reduces and becomes an extract which flavors. Wine added too late in the preparation will give a harsh quality to the dish. A wine needs time to impart its flavor in your dish. Wait 10 minutes or more to taste before adding more wine.

Remember that wine does not belong in every dish. Much wine as the flavor could overpower your dish.

For best results, wine should not be added to a dish just before serving. The wine should simmer with the food, or sauce, to enhance the flavor of the dish. If added late in the preparation, it could impart a harsh quality. It should simmer with the food, or sauce, to enhance the flavor of the dish. Wait 10 minutes or more to taste before adding more wine.

Traditional formula for pairing wine with cooking:

Young, full bodied red wine
Red meat, red meat dishes
Young, full bodied, robust red wine
Red sauces
Earthly red, full bodied red wine
Soups with root veg and/or beef stock
Dry white wine or dry fortified wine
Light/cream sauces
Dry white wine or dry fortified wine
Fish/shellfish/seafood, poultry, pork, veal
Crisp, dry white wine
Seafood soups, bouillabaisse
Sweet white wine or sweet fortified wine
Sweet desserts
Dry, fortified wine (i.e.: sherry)
Consommé, poultry, vegetable soups
Regional cuisine
Regional wine
In the 18th century, the sandbanks of the Guadalquivir forced the (an event known as ‘The Singeing of the King of Spain’s Beard’). 1569; and in April, 1587, a raid by Francis Drake occupied the enemies.

Christopher Columbus sailed from Cádiz on his second and fourth from the New World.

The city is dotted with numerous parks where exotic plants flourish, including giant trees supposedly brought to Spain by Columbus.

The part of Cádiz within the remnants of the city walls is commonly inhabited city in Spain and one of the oldest in south western Europe. It has been a principal home port for the Spanish Navy since the 18th century. Despite its unique location, on a narrow slice of land surrounded by the sea, Cádiz is, in most respects, a typically Andalusian city with a wealth of attractive views and well-preserved historical landmarks.

Cádiz is the oldest continuously inhabited city in Spain and one of the oldest in south western Europe. It became one of Spain's greatest and most cosmopolitan cities and home to trading communities from many countries, the richest of which were the Irishmen. Many of today's historic buildings in the Old City date from this era.

Among the many landmarks of historical and scenic interest in Cádiz, a few stand out. The city can boast of an unusual cathedral with gold tiled dome, an 18th-century watchtower, a vestige of the ancient city wall, an ancient Roman theatre, and electrical pylons of an eye-catchingly modern design carrying cables across the Bay of Cádiz. The old town is characterized by narrow streets connecting squares (plazas), bordered by the sea and by the city walls. Most of the landmark buildings are situated in the plazas.

In recent years, the city has undergone much reconstruction. Many monuments, the cathedral, and significant landmarks have been cleaned and restored, adding to the charm of this ancient city.

There is an amazing new bridge that connects to the mainland and the town of El Puerto de Santa Maria, headquarters of Osbourne and its famous bull silhouette.

The Osborne bulb is a 14-metre (46 ft) high black silhouetted image of a bull in semi-profile. Nowadays the conservation of the bulls is handled by the family of Félix Tejada.

The Osborne sherry company (founded by Thomas Osborne Mann in 1772) erected large images of bulls starting in 1956 to advertise their Brandy de Jerez. The original image was smaller and slightly different in design. The current larger image was created to comply with a law that prohibited advertising within 150 metres of a road.

In 1994 the EU passed a law that prohibited all roadside advertising of alcoholic beverages, and the bulls were therefore to be removed. By this time the signs were nationally renowned, so although some campaigners wished them completely removed to fully comply with the intent of the law, public response resulted in the signs being retained, but completely blacked out to remove all reference to the original advertisers. The Court eventually allowed these signs to remain on the grounds that they have become a part of the landscape and have “aesthetic or cultural significance”, thus turning the bulls into public domain images.

There are now only two signs in Spain with the word “Osborne” still written on them. One is at the Jerez de la Frontera airport in the province of Cádiz, and the other is in the nearby town of El Puerto de Santa María, where the Osborne headquarters is found.

There are about 90 examples of the Osborne bull silhouette boards. A few of them are also present, in a slightly different design, in Mexico, where it retains its advertising function.

Choosing Containers

It is possible to use anything that holds any amount of soil, so long as it has drainage holes. You gain the best effect from suitimg a container to its site and the job it must do.

In a past life we ran a garden centre at a prison I worked in. As a feature, I built a flower pot man using old plastic flower pots of varying sizes, larger for the body and head, getting smaller for arms, legs and feet. I used threaded metal bar with nuts and washers to shape the features.

He was about 6 feet tall. I attached his hands to a wheelbarrow, shaping arms and legs to assume a pushing position. When he was in position, we filled the barrow with soil and planted it up with a bright selection of bedding plants.

Continued on page 60 ....
We attached hanging baskets to each hook, all at different levels. We threaded plastic tubing along the spines, letting us connect to a watering system. The bright array of bedding plants from the baskets gave a massive hit of colour and was quite a surprise of the effect you can make. The garden centres have a vast range of pots and they are not overly expensive, just look around for best buys.

If you are feeling creative, inexpensive plastic containers are easily transformed with a coat of matt-finish acrylic paint to give a splash of colour. If the plant you intend to grow in the container is flowery, decorate the pot more discreetly with sponging. If you want to go all out, you could use stencilling.

Sponging: - Put on the base coat of paint and allow it to dry completely. Dip a sponge into the second colour you want to use and dab the pot to give an even lite covering.

Stencilling: - Cut out a simple repeated motif from card. Tape it in place and paint over the holes. Remove the card carefully to avoid smears.

Plants most suited to different types of containers

Movable containers such as an old wheelbarrow could have Argyranthemum frutescens, pink pelargoniums, brilliant yellow cælcaioria and trails of ivy foliage to set off the display. Suitable for old sinks, or similar containers could be Alpines or other dwarf plants. These would be lost elsewhere in the garden. Set among fern fronds of Dryopteris, Aquilegia bertoloni and iris gracilens.

More elegant containers such as a stone urn can look amazing with the simplest of planting. Variegated ivy appears almost golden in the sunshine, maintaining its good looks throughout the year with almost no attention or effort on your part. (Sounds like me!!)

On a personal note, I have very little soil in the garden, mainly tiles and gravel. To give the planting different heights and interest, I have raised some pots on old railway sleepers, putting planting climbers towards the back to climb up the fence. Then more colourful plants such as geraniums and Iberis redacta interspersed with different coloured grasses. Grouping them like this helps to stop them drying out too much and gives a bit more interest around the back of the pool.

Movable containers such as an old wheelbarrow could have Argyranthemum frutescens, pink pelargoniums, brilliant yellow cælcaioria and trails of ivy foliage to set off the display.

With an open mind, with a lick of paint, its surprising of the effect you can make. The garden centres have a vast range of pots and they are not overly expensive, just look around for best buys.

On another occasion, as a feature for one of our gardens at the Chelsea flower show, we built a seating area with a central metal frame. The spines of the central frame had a hook. We built a seating area with a central metal frame. The spines of the central frame had a hook.

We built a seating area with a central metal frame. The spines of the central frame had a hook. We built a seating area with a central metal frame. The spines of the central frame had a hook.
Start by getting rid of any kind of lava rocks or ceramic coals and put all of them into a bucket of warm soapy water. If you’re able to now clean around the burners and bars with ease - great. However, you may have to remove some parts to clean them properly, so consult your guide, and remember to not begin removing any gas-ferrying components that you’re unclear about. Put them back again when you are done, and scrub the lava rocks/coals in the bucket if requirements be and wash them in fresh water. You may find these need replacing after a year or so if they are gathering grime.

Lastly, rinse the interior of the charcoal or gas barbecue with a hose or a bucket of water until it looks nice and sparkly, and roll it out it will be looking all gleaming and ready for use. Remember to cover your barbecue or place it in the garage if you don’t worry too much.

It is a good idea to take time to preserve any kind of wooden areas though with a dedicated barbecue wood oil treatment. Please, please watch out for chemical preservatives or treatments you utilize elsewhere in the home. Some may be flammable and also have no place on a barbecue!

If you want to minimize work later on, try spraying the actual barbecue grill with oil before you cook to really make it more non-stick. In addition, if the coal area is looking exhausted, add a slim coating of sand which will protect it.

Remember to cover your barbecue or place it in the garage if you have one. You will be grateful you did so whenever you decide to roll it out it will be looking all gleaming and ready for use.

stainless steel models with oil (even baby oil) to keep the weather at bay, but don’t worry too much.
Those of you who read the last 2 articles, will appreciate that I have a passion for vintage electronics, engineers who have stamped their mark on our lives and who have gone somewhat unsung. The last 2 articles were about a couple of heroes of the WW2 code breaking establishment Bletchley Park, Tommy Flowers and Gordon Welchman. Bill Tutte is another good example.

During the first few years of WW2, B.P. concentrated on breaking the encryption codes generated by the Enigma machine. This was used to encode the German Morse Code sent via H.F. radio. The Germans realised that using this system was a slow and a man-intensive way of communicating. At the sending end, you had the machine operator, someone to read out the message to be sent and a radio guy. A similar set up at the receiving end. 6 men all-in-all to send a message.

The German High Command, around ’41, started to use the recently invented Teleprinter machine to communicate with strategic outposts around occupied Europe. This signal was sent via a radio network around occupied Europe. Unlike Morse, to the various German Command centers this was like an Enigma machine but on Speed and fed Cocaine. B.P. nicknamed this Tunny. The encoded message was generated in the form of a paper strip where the holes representing the characters were punched.

William ‘Bill’ Tutte

A fast and very secure way of encrypting this signal. Or was it?

Bletchley Park started hearing this new radio signal and soon realized it was a sophisticated automatic system. A senior codebreaker at B.P. John Tiltman, a cipher genius, soon worked out that the transmission was encoded with characters and was based on the Vernam cipher system. B.P. had acquired a Lorenz machine, but without knowing the initial settings of the machine prior to sending a message, cracking the code was impossible.

Tiltman did work out that each new message was proceeded by a 12 character set of information, details as to how to set the code was sent a reply message to the sender saying “Nicht bloody gut”. German for no good. The sender committed a sin which is said to have shortened WW2 by 2 years, saving over 20 million souls. Were these guys ever recognized by the Great Britain? No, not really. Tutte went to work at a couple of Universities in Canada where he was recognized and received awards for advances in statistical maths. Flowers was given £1,000 to cover his costs in buying valves because funding was not available at the time. Didn’t cover the costs at all. He did get an O.B.E. and a road, in his London East End, named after him, but that was in 1990.

45 years after the war! It is awful that many of the B.P. workers struggled in later life. You were shackled by the Official Secrets Act. If you went for a job interview you couldn’t even mention the clever stuff you had done.

So I say thanks to all those at B.P. who worked behind closed doors, giving us the freedom we have today and saving countless lives. I will also thank my Granddad, George Parker. He was fireman in the war, he saved lives too! And, he enthused me in electronics.

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Influences...

By Donna Walker

I adored Mr Cook. I absolutely adored him. He was a touch: how shall we say?: portly, bald, and probably in his early 60s which, to an eleven-year old, made him Jurassian, but I still adored him.

Going to his room with its huge picture windows along one entire side, twice a week, was the highlight of my existence, and I lived for those sessions.

Had Mr Cook taught a subject other than music, my life could have taken quite a different turn. Probably not a mathematical one, though. I was not allowed to enter for the “O” level exam as, I believe my parents were told, “It would be a waste of time.”

And so to the present day… Preparing this week for the singing group “All Aboard”, I ventured into the early pages of “HMS Pinafore.” A music teacher in a girls’ school many years ago had found rich pickings amongst Gilbert and Sullivan’s female chorus repertoire, and as I sat practicing at my keyboard with the inscrutable Hebe and her cohort of sisters, cousins and aunts, the memories of those days, like a salty wave “over the bright blue sea”, came flooding back.

So thank you for the music, Mr Cook!

Hasta luego,
Donna

A music teacher in a girls’ school many years ago had found rich pickings amongst Gilbert and Sullivan’s female chorus repertoire, and as I sat practicing at my keyboard with the inscrutable Hebe and her cohort of sisters, cousins and aunts, the memories of those days, like a salty wave “over the bright blue sea”, came flooding back.

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Hasta luego,
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Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star!

By Mike Woolnough

In the late 1960’s, a German astronomer was travelling around Europe looking for somewhere to site an observatory. After considering, Greece and Turkey amongst others he settled for the top of a mountain in the Los Filabres in Andalucia. The mountain is called Calar Alto, and the observatory officially opened in 1975. It is now home to 5 telescopes including the largest in continental Europe. (A larger one is to be found in The Canaries.)

What makes this site so special? Well, do you remember that song in Mary Poppins which has the lyrics...“up through the atmosphere, up where the air is clear”...? That is precisely what makes this site so special, at 2168 metres (7113 feet) above sea level the air is clear, the rainfall is low, there are about 2000 nights a year when the sky is clear for 6 hours or more and there is relatively little light pollution, although this was starting to become a problem. The Andalucian sky protection law has been enacted to maintain this important aspect of the area. The altitude is also important, a lot of the pollution, like dust, is at ground level and although this can get moved up higher, the greater the altitude the less of a problem this is. Also, as light passes through the atmosphere it is refracted (bent). As it gets nearer to the surface this distortion of the light rays becomes more pronounced. Therefore, building an observatory at high altitude gives astronomers a better view of the universe.

Until March 2016, the public could only view the exterior of the observatory, a day tour was run by the operators through the middle of the complex. From 1st March 2016, it has become possible for members of the public to be given a guided tour of some of the facilities, including the 3.5-metre telescope. I was privileged to be part of this English speaking tour. We discovered that the traditional image of the astronomer spending the night peering through his telescope no longer applies. Most of the work is done the better the image quality.

When buying a car from a dealer or garage the transfer of ownership is usually carried out by them and you will be given a ‘Justificante’ that allows you to drive the vehicle without paperwork in your name. This is generally valid for a period of three months so if the new ‘Permissio de Circulacion’ (log book) has not been received in that time it will be necessary for the garage/dealer to issue you with another justificante so you can continue to drive the vehicle legally. If you do not receive the paperwork within six months you should ask the garage/dealer to find out the problem.

When the sale is done privately it is necessary to present all the relevant documents relating to seller, buyer and vehicle, by appointment, at the buyers local Trafico office. For those living in this area it is a trek down to Almería. For this reason many people prefer to get the assistance of a gestor or business that can take care of the transfer for them. If you would like any help or advice with any of the above you can call or visit the office of C.A.T. Services in La Alfoquia.

When paying for the vehicle it will be in your interest to include the cost of the transfer of ownership in the selling price and be actively involved in the transfer or get someone to deal with it for you. This way, you will know for certain that the vehicle will no longer be your responsibility.

Remember that all the time the vehicle is in your name you are responsible for taxes, fines etc. So, if the buyer wants to take matters into their own hands it may be worth considering reporting the sale to Trafico so that once again you are safeguarding yourself.

As a seller it is also a good idea to hold on to the ‘Compra-Venta’ (purchase contract) or garage receipt – written in Spanish. I have come across several situations recently where the seller has no formal proof that they sold the vehicle and because the transfer of ownership has not been completed correctly they have received fines or embargos, which they have had no choice but to pay.

If you are going to buy a second-hand vehicle, either privately or through a garage, you might want to consider getting an ‘Informe’ from Trafico. This confirms who the legal owner is and if there are any outstanding debts or embargos attached to the vehicle. If you register ownership of the vehicle in Trafico you also take on any debts.

The observatory is jointly owned and managed by the Andalucian Institute of Astrophysics based at the University of Granada and the Max Plank Institute in Heidelberg, Germany. The tours are managed by a company called “Azimuth” and further details can be found on their website www.azimuthspanish.com. At the time of writing the English section is a bit sparse, but if your Spanish is up to it, much more information is contained in the Spanish section.

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Back to the title, were told, as a child perhaps, that stars twinkle and planets glow! Well, yes it is true! As well as having to travel a very long way that refraction I mentioned causes the light rays to “wiggle” slightly giving that twinkling effect. It is more pronounced near the horizon as the rays (a) have more atmosphere to pass through and (b) strike the atmosphere at a more oblique angle increasing the amount of refraction. On the other hand, the light from those higher in the sky comes straight in and has a more direct path to earth. The light from the planets has a much shorter journey to earth and is light reflected from the sun. This is less prone to distortion and there is a lot less “twinkle”, more of a “glow”.

Let’s change the way the general public see the universe,” said Victor Manuel Muñoz, doctor in astrophysics and Azimuth team member….. Go and see for yourself!

OSCAR BERNARDO DE SIERRA

[Image 187x437 to 576x815]
It was in 1991 when he sat down to watch a documentary programme about the spread of AIDS in Africa. Not a very uplifting subject for an evening’s viewing you have to say. But one item in particular struck a chord with him. “They said the only way to stop this dreadful disease from cutting its way through Africa was with the power of information and education. But there was a problem, most of Africa doesn’t have electricity. All they have are things driven by batteries, which were horrendously expensive.” He started to think about alternative forms of energy and what came to mind was a vision of the old style gramophone, with the wind-up handle on one side and which was driven by a spring. “I thought to myself, blimey, if you can get all that noise, dragging a piece of rusty nail around an old bakelite, surely there’s enough power in the spring to drive a small dynamo which, in turn, will drive my radio”. He was stirred into action and retired to his shed, or ‘studio’ as he liked to call it and found enough parts lying around to start early experiments. Like Percy almost 60 years before him, he patented his idea, but it took 3 to 4 years of hawking it around British companies, trying to get backing. “It was humiliating,” he recalled, “and I said, I’ve had enough of this. Why do I need this?” But help was to come his way from a surprising source via the BBC “Tomorrow’s World” programme which featured his idea. What Percy didn’t know was that the programme was seen as far away as South Africa until one evening he was sat on the set of a game show, the ‘Autogyro’ he is ashamed to say I was wrong. Consider Corominus and found he invented the Mop. But what of inventors from our adopted country Spain? When I was researching this article I came across one Manuel Jalon Coronimous and found he invented the Mop. I, very smugly, thought this was perhaps the answer to our short-sightedness. Surely we would have heard of famous Spanish inventors had they achieved anything worthwhile. Well, I am ashamed to say I was wrong. Consider radio Cuerva Baviola a pioneer of the radio and who some consider the inventor of the radio (although I think our friend Seth might have something to say about that). How about de Juan de la Cierva who came up with the autogyro which became the modern helicopter. And then there was Monico Sanchez Moreno who invented the first portable X-Ray machine...take it from me, the list is long.

My favourite, though, if you can call it that, is Juan Pablo de Bonet. He was the ‘inventor’ of the first recognisable sign language alphabet for deaf and dumb people. He was certainly a pioneer for the education of the deaf and wrote a book on this subject. When was this? 1940’s/1950’s would you think? Actually it was in 1626! Juan Pablo came from Zaragora and was secretary to a wealthy family who observed that the son of the head of the household, a constable, was deaf, as were a number of other titled family members. He became interested in how they could be educated since inheriting the family title and properties etc. depended on literacy which would have been almost impossible for deaf people in those times. His work influenced many subsequent sign languages throughout Spain and the rest of Europe.

It’s really interesting how people, like those here, come up with discoveries and inventions, often for the betterment of society and without thought to personal fame and fortune. Likewise, those who have made a lot of money, Trevor Baylis included, don’t just sit back and enjoy the fruits of their ingenuity, but frequently plough it back into improving their original ideas and for that we should applaud them.
When is a car not a car?! 

When purchasing a car in Spain it is important to pay heed to the vehicle classification because it has possible unforeseen implications. I am talking generally about vehicles such as the Ford Tourneo or Citroen Berlingo, which are very popular as they are very roomy and adaptable on the interior.

The word adaptable is the key because it is possible that the vehicle has been registered as a semi-commercial vehicle rather than a Turismo, which is the car classification. The actual classification to watch out for is 3100 Mixta Adaptable. When a vehicle is newly registered, if certain criteria applies, it can take this category and the purchaser is exempt from paying the commercial tax registration fee.

So, what are the implications? Firstly, if registered in this way, there are speed limit restrictions to take note of. Whilst a car can travel at 120km on a motorway, the same vehicle, with mixta adaptable registration cannot exceed 100km. Restrictions can apply on other main roads.

Secondly, there is the ITV to consider. A Turismo has the first ITV 4 years then every other year until it is 10 when it becomes an annual event. A Mixta Adaptable has the first ITV 2 years old then every other year until it is 6 when it becomes annual until 10 years old. After that the ITV must be carried out every six months! There is hefty fine for vehicles on the road without a current ITV.

In many cases this classification can be changed but not before the vehicle is 4 years old otherwise the original exempted tax must be paid!

An authorised main dealer needs to produce a certificate stating it can be a Turismo vehicle. This will take about a month and cost between 80-120€.

With this certificate it is then possible for the ITV station to issue a new Technical Ficha with the amended classification. This will cost about 50€.

Finally, all relevant documents must be presented to Trafico, who, for a small charge, will change the details in their system and the car really is then a car!

If you would like help with this or require further information call or visit the offices of C.A.T. Services.

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Car Essentials for Women

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This non-exhaustive list is customizable depending on your location and individual needs. One of the best things about owning your own car is the freedom it gives you, and part of that freedom is being independent. Your essential car items will help prepare you in times of need.

We’ve listed them in order of priority:

Day-to-Day & Emergency Car Essentials
- USB phone charger – Buy one especially for your car and keep it in the car at all times.
- Cash – Slot 50€ in a car pocket somewhere and forget about it. There’s nothing like cold, hard cash in emergency situations.
- Drinking water – A basic necessity, both everyday, and during emergencies.

Emergency Kit
- Mini medical aid kit – No need to specially buy one. Gather some basics like a few mild painkillers, bandage, disinfectant, and plasters.
- Torch – Store a small but powerful flashlight with its batteries removed together in a bag or case.
- Physical map book – When technology fails, you can always revert back to old reliable methods.
- Multi-tool – You’ll never know when you need to cut, poke, scrape, or saw something.
- Energy bars – Choose a honey-based one, they’ll have a longer lifespan due to the natural anti-bacterial properties of honey.
- Blanket – Even useful for outside of emergency situations.
- Comfortable shoes – In case you have to walk and stilettos are just not made for that.
- Spare tyre – What? You don’t already have one?

Clothes
- In winter – A warm jacket and spare pair of socks.
- In rainy weather – A disposable fold up plastic raincoat.
- In summer – A cardigan incase it turns chilly
- A hat or cap for shielding the sun.

Nice-to-Haves
- Pen and small notebook – For jotting down vehicle registration numbers, phone numbers, website addresses, etc.
- Tissues – Maybe should be essential!

Is there anything we’ve left out? What would you add to this list? Or would you rather throw caution to the wind?

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Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes was born in Fuendetodos, Aragón, on 30th March 1746. His father earned his living as a gilder. During his childhood the family moved to the city of Zaragoza where he attended school. At the age of 14, he became an apprentice to the painter José Luzán. He later moved to Madrid to study under Anton Raphael Mengs, a painter who was popular with the Spanish royals. Unfortunately he clashed with his mentor, resulting in low exam scores and he was denied access to the Royal Academy of Fine Art.

He then journeyed to Rome, where in 1771 he won second prize in a painting competition organised by the city of Parma. He returned to Zaragoza later that same year and soon started studying under Francisco Bayeu y Subías where evidence of his use of delicate tonalities became apparent.

Goya married Bayeu’s sister, Josefa, on 25th July 1773 and with her brother’s help he soon secured work with the Royal Tapestry Factory. He later brought a house in Manzanares, which ironically he had been named by its previous owner as ‘Quinta del Sordo’ (House of the deaf man) and he became a recluse.

In 1824 Goya left Spain to live in Bordeaux, France, returning for a short time in 1826, but in ill-health he went back to Bordeaux where he remained until he died on 16th April 1828. His works and themes ranged from merry festivals for tapestry work and draft cartoons to scenes of war and corpses. As his mood deepened so did the temperment of his paintings and as he neared the end of his life he produced frightening and obscure paintings of insanity, madness and fantasy.

In 1783 he was commissioned to paint the Count of Floridablanca and this led to many commissions and royal portrait paintings and the appointment of Royal Court Painter with a salary of 50,000 reales. Goya was left deaf after contracting cholera in 1792 and during his five year convalescence he read a great deal about the French Revolution. The series of aquatinted etchings that were published in 1799 under the title of ‘Caprichos’ were dark visions and summed up with the caption ‘the sleep of reason produces monsters’. When his wife, Josefa, died in 1812, Goya was working on several paintings and prints. The most renowned of these was ‘The Third of May 1808 – The Execution of the Defenders of Madrid’. In the work, Goya sought to commemorate Spanish resistance to Napoleon’s armies during the occupation of 1808.

For a while, from 1814, he lived with his housekeeper, Doña Leocadia and her illegitimate daughter, who studied painting with Goya. He later brought a house in Manzanares, which ironically had been named by its previous owner as ‘Quinta del Sordo’ (House of the deaf man) and he became a recluse.

In 1824 Goya left Spain to live in Bordeaux, France, returning for a short time in 1826, but in ill-health he went back to Bordeaux where he remained until he died on 16th April 1828. His works

Goya’s compositions included portraits and scenes of many of the Spanish royal family and friends, including Charles IV and Ferdinand VII.

Over time his themes ranged from merry festivals for tapestry work and draft cartoons to scenes of war and corpses. As his mood deepened so did the temperment of his paintings and as he neared the end of his life he produced frightening and obscure paintings of insanity, madness and fantasy.
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