

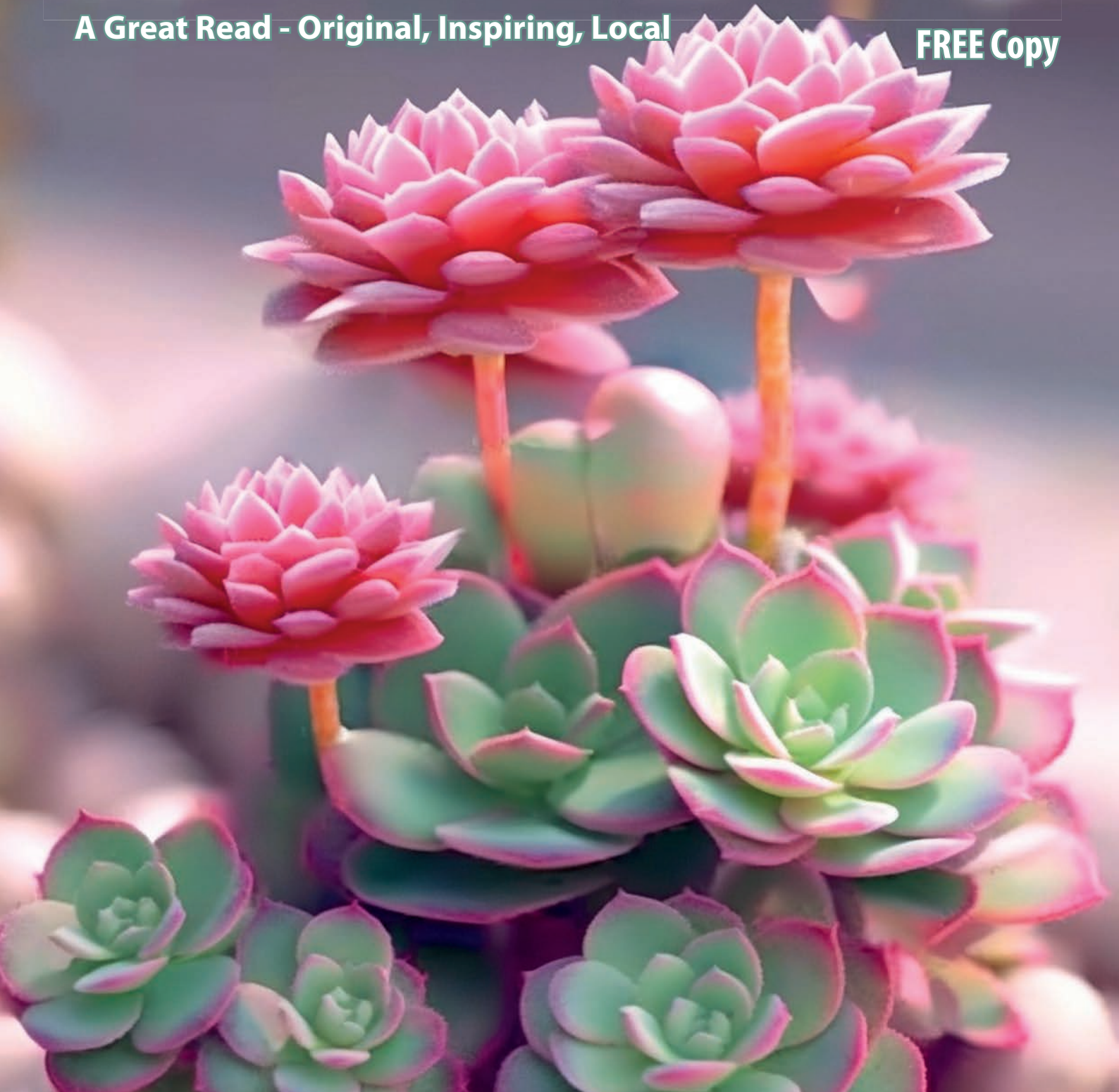
May 2024

Issue 133

# Almería Living

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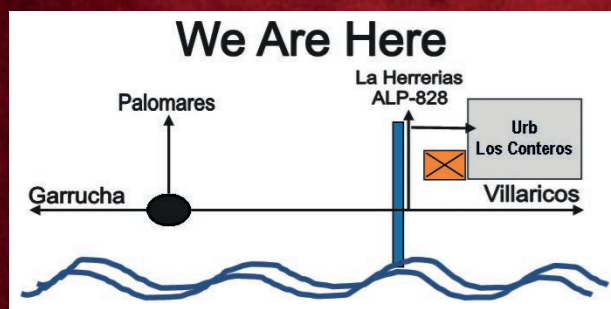
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# Almeria Living

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Puerta Rey, Vera Playa, Vera Town, Antas El Real,  
Los Gallardos, Velez Rubio and many surrounding towns

Welcome to the May 2024 issue of Almeria Living.

The bird activity around my terrace has increased tremendously as breeding season really gets underway. How some of the little things manage to stay in a tree nest is amazing after all the strong gusts of wind we have endured over the last month or two.

The sad story is that for the first year in over 18 living in my house, our family of swallows have not returned! No happy chattering to wake up to each morning. We have decided it is to do with climate change and those dreadful storms because looking around there are no where near as many by the office or in other local villages!!

It is great to bring you a bigger and brighter issue this month and it is a pleasure to welcome Spencer to our Sales Team, who is already finding his feet.

As always, I am very grateful to all my scribes, who once again have brought you a great mix of articles and stories to read.

We continue our new feature 'Welcome to....' with a visit to the town of Olula del Rio, one of the most renowned for marble production. (p.30-31)

My continued thanks goes to all our advertisers, who continue to support our magazine and reap the benefits of doing so. Local businesses rely on our trade so please try to use them whenever you can.

We hope you enjoy your read this month. Please don't forget to tell our advertisers that you saw them in the Almeria Living.

Take care and stay safe. Talk again in June.

Karen (Ed)

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# HARMONY COMMUNITY SUPPORT

## Keeping cool and keeping happy!

April was a busy month for Harmony Community Support, who have been actively supporting local individuals, families and the community as a whole for the last 9 years. This month was particularly in support of the younger generation.

Once again, the local school of La Alfoquia has benefited from a donation from Harmony.

On April 14th Lin Bennett representing the charity visited the local school where Harmony was thanked by the Mayor, Domingo Tralabon Garcia, the deputy mayor Anna Maria Campos and in particular by Vanesa Coca Rodriguez the Director of the CEIP La Alfoquia for Harmony's generosity in having air conditioning installed in two classrooms in the school. This is of enormous benefit to pupils and staff alike and everyone expressed their gratitude.

Previously, Harmony paid for rewiring and an upgrade in electricity supply for the Zurgena school so they could improve the heating and air conditioning as well as paying for the first air conditioning units in some classrooms in La Alfoquia.

Harmony have also made a substantial donation to the Go Get Funding page started by Andy and Donna Walker from the Community Choir 'All Aloud', who are raising funds for the Children's ward at La Immaculada Hospital in Huerca Overa. The money raised will be for education and play resources for the children, something that is desperately needed as funds available from the hospital for this are minimal. If you would also like to make a personal donation then



their fund-raising page can be found at <https://gogetfunding.com/childrens-ward-huerca-overa-hospital-inmaculada>.



None of this would be possible without all the amazing work of our Helpers, who keep the shop in La Alfoquia looking like a boutique and are always ready to assist the best they can. If you would like to offer some time to help this worthy cause then it would be great to see you at the shop.

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# National Parks in Spain

Spain boasts 16 national parks distributed on the peninsula and the two archipelagos. In March 2023, Nina started our journey to visit them all and so our travels continue .....



## Tablas de Daimiel

The park is a complex ecosystem which combines the characteristics of a flood plain, created by the overflowing of the rivers of Guadiana and Gigüela where they meet, with those of subterranean water discharged from an aquifer of great dimensions.

The flooding, helped by the almost flat terrain, facilitates the development of a very special and vigorous vegetation which provides an extraordinary habitat for a vast range of aquatic fauna.

One of the first known references to Tablas de Daimiel can be found in 'Libro de la Caza' (Book of Hunting) written by Prince Juan Manuel in 1325. He described it as a good place for hunting belonging to the Order of Calatrava.

It is also described in 'Relaciones Topográficas', a statistic survey ordered by Felipe II in 1575; he was so impressed with the area that he decreed that it must be well looked after.

In the middle of the 19th century, the wetlands gained great fame as a magnificent hunting ground, visited by royalty and the military



and aristocratic elites. However, the hunting was so relentless that it became completely prohibited in 1959 by ministerial order as the fauna was in danger of becoming extinct, and in 1966 the park was converted into a National Hunting Reserve. The excessive hunting that had taken place over the centuries had necessitated a fauna protection and conservation programme.

The Tablas was also under threat from another danger: Drainage! This started already in the fifties, and it was exacerbated in the sixties with the canalisation of rivers in the area leading water away from the wetlands, and in the seventies when the subterranean water was extracted for irrigation. After a few years the Guadiana river dried out completely leading to an ecological and geological disaster.

This led to the area becoming declared National Park in 1973, with an integral aquatic bird reserve.

It was included in the MaB (Man and Biosphere) Programme in 1981 and won the qualification Special Bird Protection Zone in 1988.

What makes Tablas de Daimiel so special is the confluence of the rivers Gigüela and Guadiana. The former carries salt water whose

chemical composition stems from the water's passage through marlstone and gypsum; the latter carries freshwater from the aquifer under the park. The change between the two types of water over time and space give the park its principal ecological characteristics and produces a great variety of vegetation.

The dominant vegetation of the park are grasses such as reeds and Typha, as well as sedges. The only species of tree in the park is tamarisk, or saltcedar. Saltcedars are small trees that are no more than 8 metres tall, which tend to grow in clusters and create thickets.

Tablas de Daimiel owes most of its fame to its birdlife. Many families of web-footed and wading birds live there, spend part of the year there, or stop over during their migration. The most common waterfowl to be found there is the mallard, which leads a sedentary life in the park. The red-chested pochard lives in the permanent, deep lakes where it is sure to find food. The

wigeon, which normally prefers coastal waters, can be seen in the park in winter, and flying overhead in March and October during its migration. Many other bird species make the park their permanent home or stay there for part of the year.

The park is also home to snakes and lizards, many species of fish and frogs, and a few mammal species that survive there thanks to the abundant bird life. Otters, water rats, wild boars, foxes, polecats and weasels are all represented.

*Continued on page 8*

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..... Continued from page 7

There are more than 30 islands in Tablas de Daimiel. They differ in sizes from the largest, Isla de Algeciras, to small islets that can only be distinguished from their surroundings seen from the air. The islands of La Entradilla, El Descanso, El Pan, los Tarayes and El Maturro are all connected by wooden walkways which are part of one of the routes offered to the visitor to the park.

The island of El Pan boasts the largest saltcedar wood in the park. There are specimens there that are more than a hundred years old. On other islands, saltcedar grows along the shoreline.

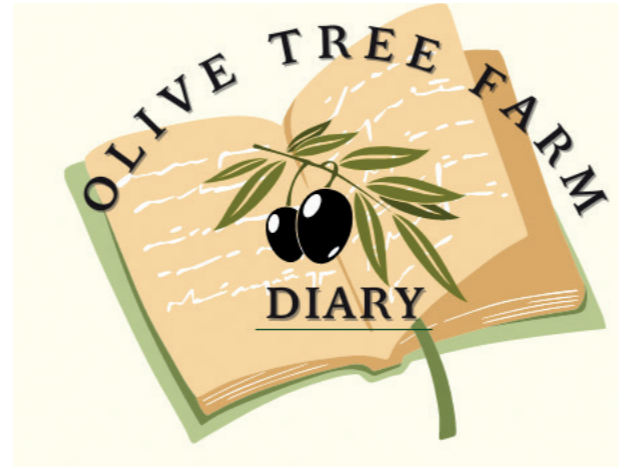
Up until the 20th century, the most important human constructions in Tablas de Daimiel were the water mills. They were situated along the river Guadiana and for centuries they were the driving force of the rural economy. They also constituted meeting points where people exchanged goods, sold products proceeding from hunting and fishing, at the same time as they served as inns and provided overnight stays.

There were as many as 14 water mills in Tablas de Daimiel and its surroundings, some of them dating back to the Middle Ages. An example of these is the Molino de Molemocho which is situated on the river Guadiana. It is one of the oldest and most emblematic water mills of Castilla La Mancha, and it was built at a time when the increase of the population,

due to repopulation, impelled the construction of more flour mills.

Covering a surface of only 3,000 hectares, Tablas del Daimiel is Spain's smallest national park. Sadly, with the persistent drought of late, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the water table at the level necessary to sustain this lovely example of wetlands, unless extensive measures are taken at government level.

# Trades & Services



April has been a fun month for us here at Olive Tree Farm! We have babies galore! The female goose is still sitting on her eggs, and any day we are at make or break point. We still aren't convinced any are fertile, but that little spark of hope still remains.

Out of the 24 chicken eggs we placed into the incubator, 11 chicks are growing up nicely, and are certainly leggy little things.

Let's not forget our little collection of duck eggs! We placed 8 into the incubator once the chicks had hatched, and five of them showed fertile within a few days. One of them hatched just yesterday, and as of writing this we have two more 'pipping' in the incubator. The first break is showing clearly in the shells, and Ben and I are taking it in turns throughout the day to keep misting them with warm water to keep that beloved humidity high.

These quacking little fellas have had us clearing and cleaning out the tank we had the chicks growing on in, so we had somewhere safe to put the ducklings where they won't be bothered by rowdy chicken behaviour.

The accumulated 20 chicks are, at the moment, housed in the budgie aviary at the bottom of the garden. They were getting a little large, and perhaps a little too smelly, to stay in the house, and we thought the aviary was a perfect intermediate spot for them to get used to the outdoors peacefully before we introduce them to the horde on the farm.

The Sunday I write this, we were going to make the Big Move for the fast-growing young ones, but unfortunately (or maybe finally) we have had rain misting on us for most of the day. Perhaps we'll manage it over the next few days!



While I'm on the topic of baby animals, our egg-count in the kitchen dropped all of a sudden. A hen decided to sit on a batch of eggs, so Ben let her. Unfortunately, that didn't stop other hens from squashing in (despite the other, available nest boxes), and she ended up on about twenty-four eggs! The problem is... we couldn't decide which ones she'd already been sitting on, and which were fresh. Oops! So, we let her keep those too...

We didn't really count on what she'd do come hatching day. One hatched, and she decided she was done and wandered off with her sole chick. Ben checked her abandoned nest to find another had hatched in her absence, and the rest lay cooling quickly.

Continued on page 10 .....

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..... Continued from page 9

He grabbed the chick and the rest of the eggs and brought them down to the tank and incubator, but only one other egg hatched. The pair are thriving, but too small to be with the other chicks, so they're going to share for now with the duckling while it waits for its siblings. I'm not sure he's even noticed they aren't ducks!

The other ducks on the farm have also filled their nest with 8 eggs, which one of the females is now sitting on.

Phew! I think I've covered all the egg stuff!

In other farm news, our job getting the areas set up the way we want them is ongoing, attempted around all the other things we have to do with the house and kids. We sure know how to keep busy.

Our olive blossom is bursting as well, and the trees are flowering really nicely – now we hope for no high winds, heavy rain or radiant sun to see them off. All is looking well to get us stocked back up, so fingers crossed!

Thank you for reading!

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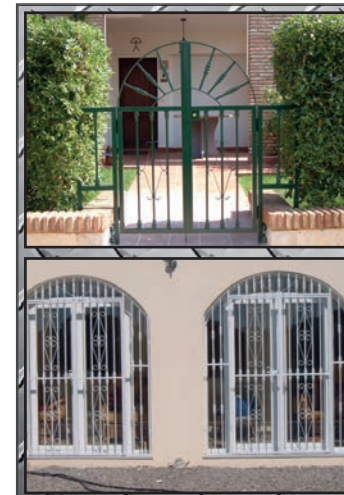


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# TECH, TV, GADGETS & GIZMOS

Greetings fellow travellers!

This month marks the fifth anniversary of my spot on the pages of this hallowed publication. Little did I think that I'd still be doing this some 5 years later as I delved, hesitantly into "The Internet" but here I am, nonetheless.

I would like to thank you all for taking the time to read what comes out of my head. Your indulgence is much appreciated.

This month I will be looking at something that caught my eye recently – tidal energy.

I caught a short report on a new type of turbine which has been trialled by Minesto in the Fjords of the Faroe Islands. As with most of the better inventions, someone has spotted a genuine need (not a made up or niche one) and applied logic to it.

Tidal power is nothing new, but its implementation has been somewhat unimaginative and poorly implemented. For example – the Thames Barrier in East London could have included turbines which would have generated a substantial amount of electricity, but the bureaucrats put too many obstacles in the way. No irony there... Hydro-electric power is nothing new but has generally up to now involved the construction of massive dams and the flooding of millions of acres of land. Big is not always better.

Water has been used for centuries to generate power. Water wheels have been around since at least the 5th century BC, the first of which was developed in China, possibly earlier. I don't think I really need to explain how a water wheel works so I think we can skip that history lesson. I do however think that water generated power is something that is highly under-used. It also becomes unnecessarily complicated.

The money people get involved and try to convince everyone that it won't work unless it's on a massive scale, costing billions (and making them a packet in the process). Small scale local projects



have a minimal ecological impact, occasionally improving the local ecosystem. I cannot see why recommissioning water wheels would be a bad idea, apart from a slight diversion of water there is no danger to the river, the electricity would be 100% renewable and who doesn't love a good water wheel?

OK. So maybe it might be a bit of a pipe dream (I will keep scattering the puns if you don't mind) and maybe a bit impractical and expensive but I'd rather have money spent on historic machinery that will last another 200 years than a high-speed rail project that was never going to be finished (HS2) and even if it was, would be run by idiots.

Other than water wheels, there are many other forms of turbine that can be raised and lowered into place on riverbanks across Europe. There are marine traffic considerations but nothing that a bit of thought couldn't fix. It is possibly a highly underexplored source of power.

There are sewers that have water (and yes, I know, other objects) continually flowing through them that could be used to generate electricity. It is this type of thinking that got the Minesto project in Faroe started. You may be sat reading this, looking quizzically out of the window at a Rambla that may not contain a drop of water for months, wondering why the hell I am babbling on about water wheels. There is a point. Somewhere. I promise.

The Minesto project consists of underwater "kites" (just take a moment to get your head around that) which look just like aircraft – for good reason.

They are designed to be manoeuvrable, making the best use of the flowing water for maximum efficiency. They are tethered to the sea floor and are kept low enough in the water to avoid being hit by boats. The power they make is sent along the tether line to a grid node onshore. They have a 12-metre wingspan and depending on the strength of the tide, can generate upwards of 1.2 megawatts of

electricity each.

They differ from previous efforts (notably the Scottish Atlantis project), which were adaptations of wind turbines, anchored directly to the seabed below them. An underwater wind farm. According to their blurb, there are also ongoing tests in Northern Ireland, Anglesey, Taiwan and Florida.

Basically, anywhere that there is a narrow channel (preferably longitudinal – across as opposed to North/South) with moderately deep water can be used to generate power. The cool thing is that whereas wind turbines rely on something that is wildly unpredictable, you can predict the tides for centuries to come!

You know when the tide starts and from which direction. It means that it is possible to manage different power generation technologies with maximum efficiency.

Where the Minesto kites beat the competition is their flexibility. They can be detached from their moorings for maintenance/upgrades and can be positioned in arrays so that they can capture more of the tides' energy from a greater area. The Faroe project was started because of the need to unburden themselves from the need to import their energy in a volatile and unstable market.

With enough kites and massive "battery stations" (used to store surplus energy for use after the tide has stopped flowing) they aim to achieve net-zero by 2030. This project shows what can be achieved.

I don't like to bandy about the term "green". It has been appropriated by groups who are "anti" pretty much everything. They rarely offer any new solutions and are generally more interested in slapping levies and taxes on anything they deem "unworthy" than finding a solution to the problem. What solutions they do have are often unimaginative and/or draconian.

Being mindful of who makes the stuff you buy is a good place to start and I don't hear them talking about that too much. We need more projects like Minesto's which look at energy delivery on a local level.



If green policy took a pragmatic view to the problem and stopped demonising everything they don't like then honestly, count me in.

Although occasionally unpopular, small-scale solar farms make sense in Spain. With 300+ days of unbroken sunshine per year it is a no-brainer (finally getting to the point).

And before we move on completely from tidal power, I have researched one part of Spain that would be ideal – the Straits of Gibraltar. I have found studies on the subject, but they all seem to come up with 1000 reasons why it can't be done. Minesto have proved that it can.

Once again, the committees have stifled a good idea and should be shown the door. The tides that run through the Straits of Gibraltar are some of the strongest in the world and could possibly generate a significant percentage of the power requirements for the entire south coast of Spain. Combine that with widespread solar and wind farms and southern Spain could be energy self-sufficient...

Power to the people!

*Ed - Thank you, Adrian, for your support over the last 5 years and bringing us so many interesting, enlightening and entertaining articles - long may it continue.*

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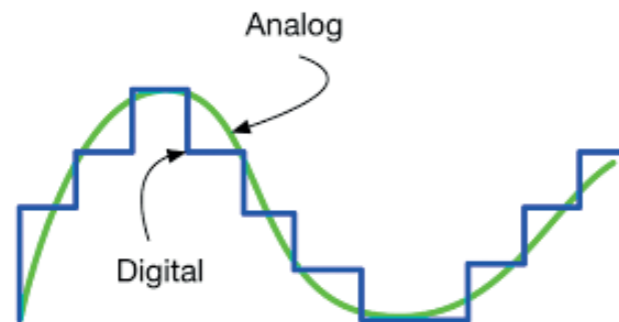


## Analogue vs Digital The Audio World

A donation of a nice 1960s Ferguson Radiogram got me thinking about the re-immersing of analogue recording techniques, vinyl records etc. Having got the set working to an "out the shop" condition, everyone who had walked in and heard it playing away in the background has commented "oh that sounds nice". Sure it does too. Not the best HiFi, but good on the ear, warm and comforting!

In the early '80s, CDs and digital recording started to take over from the old vinyl albums and studio tape mastering machines. All good stuff because you could now chop out and edit the rubbish '80s music with ease using a PC, not a razor blade and Sellotape. But there has always been a hard-core school of thought that says the resulting sound is not as nice to listen to. To record and process the raw analogue musical signal to make a CD, it first has to be chopped up and made into data, electrical 1s and 0s, similar data format used by emails, phone calls etc. The analogue signal is incredibly complex and has to be chopped into very fine pieces in order for the complexity to be reproduced by your CD player and to sound half decent. The human ear and brain are very sensitive to tone and dynamic range (loud and soft). You have the ability to hear a quiet pin drop, all the way up to 5 Spaniards playing dominoes. There is a varying degree of loss of detail in the conversion of the signal into a digital format (quantisation loss). The amount of detail lost depends on the format used. Purists say that it is noticeable and I totally agree. Try listening to an original recording of a piece of music, then the MP3 version. MP3 format has an even higher degree of loss of detail of all the audio formats. There is a massive difference.

In order to try and create this wide dynamic range when recording a band, group of singers for example, so it sounds like the real thing on playback, the audio needs to be processed, in order to cram the information into the media available. Recording systems and your own HiFi struggle to give the dynamic bandwidth the human ear wants. The signal needs to be compressed before recording (sort of squeezing it all onto the master tape) and expanded to its original status upon playback. This tricks the ear and brain into imagining a full spectrum of sound. Equipment to do this has been around since the '40s. Sun Studios, King Records, Abbey Road Studios, Beatles recordings, all were subject to this process. Recording engineers used



pieces of gear such as a Fairchild 670 variable Mu compressor and expander. A big lump, 14 transformers, 20+ valves etc. It gave the sound people wanted. Getting all this onto a vinyl record takes skill, the groove width, depth, spacing is determined by how loud and quiet you want to go and, how much bass is present. Basically, the louder you go, the fatter the groove and this reduces how long the record can play for. Clever recording cutting equipment designed by Ortofon in the 50s, looked ahead at the loudness

of what was about to be recorded and adjusted the groove spacing accordingly for that moment!

As computers developed, the signal processing could be managed and synthesised using digital techniques. Easier to use, cheaper and more flexible. However, the same problem exists, where errors being introduced during the analogue to digital conversion. Many recording artists are now demanding that recordings are made using the older analogue systems. Companies are building transistor and valve compressors and expanders, based on 60 year old designs. I mentioned the Fairchild box. If you can find one, you'll pay over £20,000 for it! There are companies buying up mothballed vinyl record presses, producing LPs again. Now big business. There is something fascinating about placing a record on a turntable and dropping a stylus into the groove.

I see a lot of the new "retro" equipment coming in for repair. Valve equipment that has been subject to modern day manufacturing techniques. Some of the companies have no idea about the practical issues. Valves get hot for one thing. Circuit boards are inadequate along with under rated components. Still, more work for me! More and more reel to reel tape recorders are coming in to be refurbished. These can be a challenge sometimes. Tape heads, motors and drive circuits that have tried to stand the test of time. However, with a bit of TLC and some old-skool engineering, we normally can get things going. It is interesting to see that the price of a reel of 1/4" recording tape is fetching a good price. I am sure we will see companies starting to manufacture this recording media again. Just like businesses are making vinyl records after 40 years.

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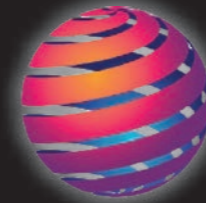
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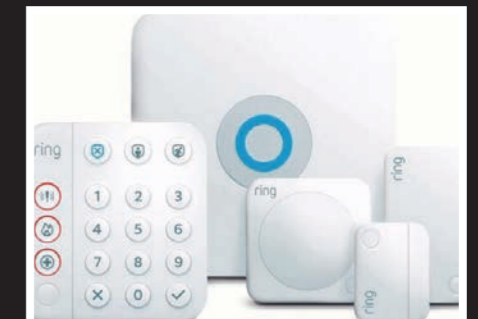
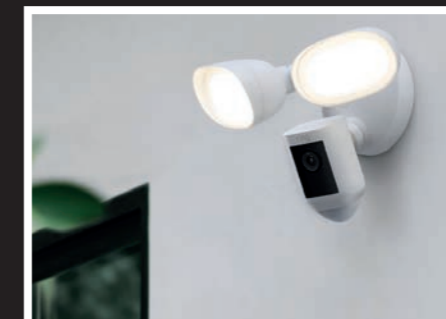
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- ISA and Investment Companies are following the banks in closing accounts to Non-UK Residents.
- Non-UK Residents can no longer receive advice from their UK Advisers, Banks or Investment and Pension Companies.
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- UK Pension Rules are changing again and may leave Non-UK Residents disadvantaged.
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**Stay Young**  
**Eat Apricots!**



Right now, is the high season for apricots and they are absolutely irresistibly sweet and juicy at the moment. In the case of apricots, it is not a question of 'persuading' yourself to have a piece of fruit; if there's any persuasion involved it will be to stop eating before you make yourself sick!

In other words: they are extremely moreish!

And like almost all other fruits and vegetables in season, they are full of health benefits. Here to mention but a few:

- They are stuffed with antioxidants (beta carotene). These help to slow down the ageing process and fight degenerative diseases.
- Their anti inflammatory properties calm down discomfort and pain.
- Their high iron content helps keep anaemia at bay.
- They help prevent several eye complaints, including reduced vision, retinal degeneration and loss of night vision.
- Apricots reduce liquid retention and thus help reduce high blood pressure.
- Their high fibre content improves your digestion and help against constipation.
- Their high content in natural sugar makes them a healthy soother when you have a sweet tooth.

However, in order to enjoy all these benefits you must make sure that the apricot is ripe when you eat it. Eating unripe apricots can have the opposite effect and cause indigestion.

The stone of the apricot is widely used in natural cosmetics, and also



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for producing the well known Italian liqueur, Amaretto.

Beware, though, the kernel inside the stone of the apricot contains amygdalin, a poisonous compound.

When you buy apricots, go for the ones with smooth skin and a good colouring, free of marks and bruises. If they are not quite ripe, leave them on the kitchen worktop for a couple of days. Once they are ripe they will survive in room temperature for about 4 days and in the fridge for up to two weeks.

Once you get to know your apricots, you will be able to catch them at just the right time to eat them; too soon and they are hard and lacking in flavour. Too late and they become floury and weak tasting. And just on time, you couldn't ask for a more delicious, delicate, sweet and juicy fruit.

If you can't eat them just when they are perfect, use them for compote or purée and freeze them until you need them for puddings, cakes or smoothies.

The best way of making sure your apricots are ripe and ready when you buy them, is to go to a fruit stall at the market and ask the owner for a sample before filling your bag with these beautiful little orange and pink gems.

Buen Provecho!



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# Cooking with Nina



## ¡Un Poco de Pasta Basta!

This phrase actually comes from an advert for a detergent that I remember from Spanish TV in the early nineties. It means 'A little dough is enough', pasta being Spanish slang for money.

And I've dedicated all my recipes to pasta this month – I just adore the stuff and have it often.

I'm trying to get used to having more wholemeal pasta; I don't find it as tasty as its plain cousin, but I do have it about every third time I have pasta in the hope that one day I'll like it as much. After all, it's much better for you.

So, what have I concocted for you this month?

There's a recipe with unbeatable Alfredo sauce, so easy and so delicious; I've obviously done spaghetti with meat sauce; there's pasta with tarragon chicken; and then a very lovely dish that appeared, as happens so often, out of whatever leftovers I had that needed using.

Yummeee! And your job is:

Read, cook, and enjoy!

### Alfredo Sauce

This is probably one of the simplest of all pasta sauces, and quite honestly also one of the most delicious!

It can be used as an accompaniment to any meat or fish of your choice; however, its subtle flavour and creamy texture makes it enjoyable just on its own with pasta.

That's how I had it, just with the addition of a fried tomato and some rocket.

Sometimes less is more.

Ingredients for two:

- 200g pasta
- 75ml cooking water from the pasta
- 75ml cream
- 75g Parmesan or grano Padano, freshly grated
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 1 tbsp butter
- Salt and pepper

Cook the pasta in according to the instructions on the packet. Reserve 75ml of the cooking water.

Melt the butter in a frying pan and sauté the garlic for a few seconds. Add the water and cream together with the cheese. Stir until the cheese melts.

Drain the pasta and turn it into the sauce. Stir. Season to taste and serve with a sprinkle of something green and herby on top.

Mmmmmmmmm!

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Ingredients for two:

- 1 chicken breast, cut into chunks
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 1 clove garlic, sliced
- 125g mushrooms, cut into chunks
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 100ml white wine
- 300ml chicken stock
- Sauce thickener (optional)
- Slug of cream
- 3-4 tbsp dried tarragon

Season the meat with salt and pepper and half of the tarragon and brown it off quickly in the butter and olive oil in a deep frying pan. Take it out and reserve.

Throw the shallots into the same pan and let them get transparent before adding the mushrooms and frying a bit more fiercely until they start turning brown. Add the garlic and tomato purée and let it all bubble for a minute.

Add the wine and bubble for three minutes. Pour in the stock and cream, add some tarragon to the mix and bring to the boil. Let it all simmer, covered, for 10-12 minutes, then return the meat to the pan and let it bubble for another five minutes until the meat is cooked.

Adjust the seasoning and tarragon and thicken the sauce to your liking.

Serve with pasta of your choice and something green for eyes and palate.

What a treat!

**Tarragon Chicken**

I have one standard tarragon chicken recipe that is absolutely lovely and that I always use to make it. However, I saw another version with less cream and more ingredients, so I adapted it to my own taste, and it was a treat!

I can guarantee you that you will make this dish more than once!!



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# Spaghetti and Meat Sauce



I know this doesn't exactly sound like a revolutionary, or even new idea, but as far as I'm concerned, whoever invented spaghetti with minced meat deserves the Nobel Prize for Cooking!

There is no better combination of two wonderful ingredients, and although there is little room for variation as far as the spaghetti is concerned, when it comes to variations to the meat sauce, only your imagination is the limit.

This one was wonderful!

Ingredients for two:

- 300g minced meat
- Olive oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- ½ red pepper, cut into strips
- 1 stalk celery, sliced
- 200ml beef stock
- 75g sundried tomatoes, cut into strips
- 2 tsp paprika
- 2 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- Thyme
- Salt and pepper

Heat some olive oil in a deep frying pan, throw in the meat and brown it all over. Add the onion and let it fry along for a couple of minutes, then add the rest of the ingredients apart from the salt and pepper.

Bring to the boil, cover, and let it bubble gently for about 45 minutes until the flavours are well integrated.

Towards the end of the bubbling time, cook the spaghetti (fresh or dried) according to the instructions on the packet.

Season the meat sauce to taste and serve with the spaghetti and freshly grated Grano Padano or Parmesan cheese.

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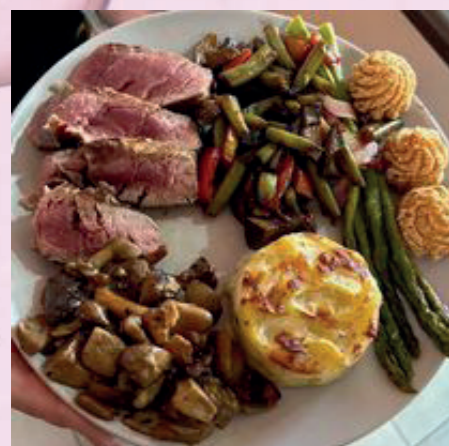
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Sometimes I get a bit annoyed that I always have so many things that need using up – something that seems to be par for the course when you cook for just one.

But in these days of awareness around food waste, there's no persuading myself that I can throw out the leftovers and cook what I want. Last night I really had to use up half a tin of tomatoes, some sausages and tomate frito and a bit of gorgonzola – and it turned into an absolute feast!

So I decided to share it with you! The measures are approximate, as is normal when you empty out your fridge.

Ingredients for two:

- 100g sausage cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 red onion, chopped
- ½ tin chopped tomatoes
- 3 tbsp tomate frito
- 300ml vegetable stock
- 60g gorgonzola
- 140g pasta
- 100g green beans

Fry off the sausages in the oil and set aside. In the same pan, fry the onion until it takes a little colour then add the tomate frito and stir well. Next, the chopped tomatoes and vegetable stock, bring to the boil and let it bubble for 15-20 minutes until the sauce thickens a little.

Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet and add the beans when there are about five minutes left.

Throw the sausages into the sauce followed by most of the gorgonzola cut into smaller bits. Let it bubble while stirring until the gorgonzola has melted.

Drain the pasta and beans and turn them in the sauce before serving in bowls with the rest of the gorgonzola sprinkled over the top.

Sometimes leftovers can add up to pure luxury!!

## A Few Leftovers and Some Pasta



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## Jason's Meat Free Recipe: Gigantes plaki with baked polenta courgettes

Butter beans are so versatile and are a great canvas for all manner of flavours, and also make a fantastic mash, which I'll get round to writing about in another issue. They are low in fat and calories, but high in protein and fibre and pack in plenty of minerals, including calcium. I'm a massive fan. This recipe is a version of the Greek classic - basically translated as baked beans - although very different to the bright orange ones we grew up with (the UK buys 1.5-2 million tins of Heinz Beans per DAY!). The beans match well with the courgettes. I grow them, mainly for the flowers, which are difficult to buy, but great to stuff, batter and fry. This recipe uses the 'actual' courgette, which is a bonus as anyone who has ever grown them, knows they are very productive! This recipe is healthy, as it is baked rather than fried, and not stuffed with cheese. The polenta coating gives them a crunch.

Serves 2

### Gigantes plaki

- 300g dried butter beans (alubias garrafón) (or a large jar or 2 tins)
- 1 tbsp salt (if you soak the beans)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 30ml extra-virgin olive oil, plus more to serve
- 1 large onion, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 celery stick, finely chopped
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tbsp red-wine vinegar
- 1 tsp honey (or sugar to make it vegan)
- 1 x tin chopped tomatoes, or the equivalent of fresh ripe tomatoes, chopped
- (optional) handful of baby spinach or chard



(optional) 50g feta to crumble over the beans when serving

### Baked courgettes:

- 2 courgettes quartered lengthways.
- 3 tbsps chickpea flour
- 4 tbsp quick cook polenta
- 2 tsp dried thyme (if you can get fresh then a tbsp of the leaves)
- (optional) zest from 1 lemon

There are two ways with this – the long way, involving soaking the beans overnight, or the shorter way with tinned/jarred beans. The giant alubias garrafón work particularly well in the dish. I'll give the shorter version of the recipe using precooked beans, but if you are into soaking them, then an overnight soaking in salted water (1 tbsp salt) is the first step, followed by a change of water, add the cinnamon, bay leaves and 1 (whole) clove of garlic and heat to boiling, keeping it there for 10 mins, and then simmer for another 45-60 mins, before draining the beans ready to use in the recipe. Otherwise, the steps are as follows (although all of it can be prepped while the beans are simmering).

Preheat the oven to 200°C/Gas 6. Then, in an ovenproof pan with a lid, sauté the onion, carrot and celery with the cinnamon and bay leaves until soft. Add the well-chopped (or crushed) garlic clove and the oregano. The add the vinegar, honey (or sugar) and tomatoes. Bring to the boil and then simmer for 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the beans and return to the boil, turn off the heat and allow them to stand until you are ready to put both the courgettes and the beans in the oven. Now is the time to fold in the spinach if you're using it.

To make the courgettes. First, line a tray with baking parchment. Put the chickpea flour in a shallow dish. Add just enough water (say 2-3 tablespoons or so) stirring continuously to make a sticky paste. Place the polenta, thyme and lemon zest in another dish, season with salt and pepper and mix together.

Piece by piece, cover the courgettes first in the chickpea flour mixture, then the polenta, to roughly coat. They don't have to be completely covered but try and get as much as you can stuck on, particularly on the cut parts. Place the courgette pieces cut side up on the lined tray.

Bake the beans and courgettes for approx. 30 minutes (beans with the lid on for 20 minutes, remove from the oven, give them a stir and finish off for the last 10 mins or so with the lid off), until the courgettes are just softened all the way through and the polenta golden. Keep a good eye as the timing will depend on the exact size of the courgettes and your own oven. Serve with some leaves, and a bit of crumbled feta if you wish, and enjoy!

## The History of Paella

To tell the history of paella, which is Spain's most famous and emblematic dish, we first have to look at how its main ingredient, rice, which was closely connected with the origin of this dish, became an integral part of Spanish everyday life.

Rice is thought to have arrived in Europe from Asia in the first millennium B.C., possibly with the advent of Alexander the Great, who opened a route to India and made the introduction of rice into the western world possible.

Originally, rice was used in gruel served with goat's milk, and sometimes it was used in medical concoctions. There was very little cultivation of rice in Spain until the Moors arrived.

The Romans had left irrigation systems along the Mediterranean coast, and these were vastly improved by the Moors; this, combined with the large Moorish demand for this cereal, made it possible to grow rice on a large scale.

It is known that rice was grown in quantity by 1238, when Jaime I the Conqueror ordered that the rice fields be removed from the near surroundings of city of Valencia to avoid the propagation of disease. Rice growing was concentrated in the La Albufera area, far from the city.

It was also the Muslim invaders that brought saffron to Spain, and two hundred years after they had conquered the country, they started growing crocus flowers for the production of this precious yellow spice, which is also essential for making paella.

When the Muslims were expelled from the Peninsula, the rice production suffered as a lot of the knowledge of how to cultivate this cereal disappeared with them.

However, rice persisted in the rural areas during the 15th and 16th



centuries on demand from peasants and shepherds who needed food that was easy to transport, and which could be made with whatever ingredients they might have to hand or be able to catch. These rice dishes had little in common with today's paella.

The Italian cook, Bartholomew Scappi, mentioned rice cooked with stock and called it Riso a la Italiana; this came from the merchants of Venice. This shows that rice dishes were popular in the Mediterranean area already at the end of the 15th century, which is also the era when the Italian risotto emerged.

*Continued on page 28 .....*

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When a book with the title 'The Newest Practical Instructions for Spanish Cuisine' was published in 1885, it showed a clear difference from the original paella recipe, and this led to an expansion of the paella and the ways of preparing it, which made it popular way beyond Spanish soil.

Soon, paella was served in Soho in London, in Parisian restaurants and in Delmonico's Restaurant in New York. It influenced the Latin American cuisine and even some of the famous Cajun dishes of the United States such as jambalaya.

With the 1960s' tourist boom in Spain, lots of foreign tourists to the Mediterranean coast tried and liked the dish, which created a demand for paella wherever foreigners visited, and thus the paella spread to the rest of Spain, also non-coastal areas.

Due to the popularity of paella, the Valencian agricultural council and the regulator of 'Denominación de Origen Arroz de Valencia' have together created a registry of the ingredients a paella must have in order to be sold under the name 'Paella Valenciana'.

The ten essential ingredients are. Chicken, rabbit, runner beans, butter beans, tomato, rice, olive oil, water, saffron, and salt.

Other ingredients that are allowed in certain regions are garlic, artichoke, duck, paprika, snails or rosemary to create varieties that are still accepted within the designation authentic 'Valencian Paella'.

But as we all know, there are many variations to the theme, and seafood paella and mixed paella are at least as popular as the original Valencian paella.

However, for the purist it is sacrilege to put for example seafood, peas, or chorizo in a paella – they do not consider that a Valencian paella.

..... Continued from page 27

Within Spain, and particularly Valencia, paella was a very popular dish by the end of the 18th century, but strangely enough, it was hardly mentioned at all by travellers to the country in the 18th and 19th centuries, although the 18th century English traveller and food scribe, Richard Ford, passed through Valencia and at least mentioned a rice dish called 'sol i separat'. About that time the locals started referring to the dish as paella.

The first documented paella (or 'arroz a la valenciana') was mentioned in a recipe book from the 18th century.

By the beginning of the 19th century paella was widely eaten in the Valencian society, and it was served on a round table with the whole family participating in the eating. It soon became a symbol of family reunions, and at the time that was almost the only way rice was consumed in Spain.



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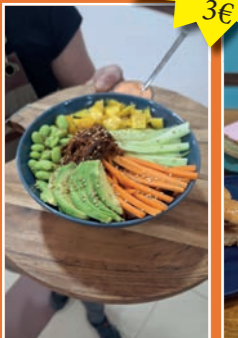


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Olula del Río is situated about midway up the Almanzora Valley, at a height of 490 MASL, sharing borders with the towns of Macael, Purchena, Urrácal, Oria and Fines. It is a growing town with a population of just over 6,000, and it has every amenity you could need. Set just off the A334, it is easily accessible and always easy to park.

If you decide to take a Thursday morning trip, you can enjoy a leisurely stroll through the market which is situated on the road behind the Chemist. As well as a full street of market stalls, hidden behind them is a multitude of locally owned shops, which you might just miss, so have a roam around and see what you can find! There is even an artisan bread shop tucked away up the little side street and a big tobacconist down at the bottom end of the market.

With regards to bars and restaurants, you won't be disappointed. Quite how many there are in Olula is hard to say, but there are dozens offering every type of food you can think of. Tapas bars are everywhere, all serving their own home-made versions of familiar dishes. One of the most popular of the local tapas, magra en salsa (pork in sauce), probably features on every menu, but the variations are very interesting! Usually passed down through the generations, this popular tapa dish is definitely worth trying out.

Olula del Río is a fascinating town full of history. Although in recent years many new buildings have been built on the outskirts, the actual centre of the village remains much the same as it did many years ago. Many of its streets are steep and winding, which makes walking on foot a must.

From many places in Olula, you will see the huge Piedra Ver de Olula which is lit at night and looks quite beautiful. Considered a symbol of Olula, the rock stands majestically overlooking the town. At the foot of the rock, caves have been found along with pieces of pottery dating back to the Neolithic period and the Copper Age.

Legend has it that there is tunnel leading from the top of the rock



down to the Macael stream which enabled the Moors to flee their enemies during the Catholic Reconquista of Almería.

The marble industry is the focus of the economy. The marble quarries of Macael are just minutes away from Olula, and they have generated a range of opportunities for local businesses. Originally, the marble was used by the Phoenicians to make sarcophagi. Later, when the Romans arrived, they got a little adventurous and used it for ornaments, tombstones and scriptures. Then there were the Arabs, who extracted massive amounts of marble and used it to build the Alcazaba in Granada.

Today, the marble industry is still a cornerstone of the economy in Olula del Río, which the many marble sculptures in and around the town bear witness to. Spain's largest marble

sculpture, Mujer del Almanzora, is situated on the edge of town, outside the Museo Casa Ibáñez.

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# Joan Miró i Ferrà

## Modern day Spanish Catalan painter, sculptor and ceramist

Joan Miró was born in Barcelona on 20th April 1893 to a family of watchmakers and goldsmiths. He was drawn to the arts throughout the early years and in 1920 he moved to Paris, France, to follow his dream. There he developed his own style that is generally regarded as Surrealism. However, he refused membership to any artistic movement in order to allow him to experiment with styles and ideas without compromising the group.

He pursued his own interests in the art world, ranging from automatic drawing and surrealism, to expressionism and Color Field painting.

Once asked how he got his inspiration - "How did I think up my drawings and my ideas for painting? Well I'd come home to my Paris studio in Rue Blomet at night, I'd go to bed, and sometimes I hadn't any supper. I saw things, and I jotted them down in a notebook. I saw shapes on the ceiling..."

Miró married Pilar Juncosa in Palma de Mallorca on October 12, 1929; their daughter Dolores was born July 17, 1931.

In 1948-49, although living in Barcelona, Miró made frequent visits to Paris to work on printing techniques at the Mourlot Studios (lithographs) and at the Atelier Lacourière (engravings). A close relationship lasting forty years developed with the printer Fernand Mourlot and resulted in the production of over one thousand different lithographic editions.

In 1959, at the request of André Breton, Miró represented Spain in The Homage to Surrealism exhibition together with works by Enrique Tábara, Salvador Dalí, and Eugenio Granell.



La Leçon de Ski - in a Contemporary Art Museum in Venezuela



The Tilled Field - can be found in Guggenheim Museum

In the final decades of his life Miró accelerated his work in different media, producing hundreds of ceramics, including the Wall of the Moon and Wall of the Sun that can be found at the UNESCO building in Paris. He also made temporary window paintings (on glass) for an exhibition.

In 1974, Miró created a tapestry for the World Trade Center in New York City where it was displayed for many years. It is reported to be one of the most expensive works of art lost during the attack of the twin towers.

One of Miró's most important works, his only glass mosaic mural, Personnage Oiseaux (Bird Characters), can be found in the Ulrich Museum of Art, Kansas, USA. The mural is one of Miró's largest two-dimensional projects, undertaken when he was 79 and completed when he was 85 years of age. The entire south wall of

the Ulrich Museum is the foundation for the 28 ft by 52 ft (8.53 m x 15.85 m) mural, composed of one million pieces of marble and Venetian glass mounted on specially treated wood in 40 panels, attached to the concrete wall on an aluminum grid.

He was to go to the dedication of the mural in 1978, but he fell at his studio in Palma de Mallorca, Spain, and was unable to travel.

His home and studio in Mallorca served him from 1956 until his death on 25th December 1983. He had become bedridden and suffered from heart disease and respiratory problems. His body is buried at the Montjuïc cemetery in Barcelona.

Joan Miró won several awards in his lifetime. In 1954 he was given the Venice Biennale print making prize, in 1958 the Guggenheim International Award and in 1980 he received the Gold Medal of Fine Arts from King Juan Carlos of Spain.



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This locality is the setting of an 850+ year old fiesta which has been awarded the status 'National Tourist Interest' and is celebrated every year at Pentecost in the town and at the Hermita de Nuestra Señora de la Estrella, 1.5 km away.

The fiesta commemorates the feat of a group of archers who managed to rescue King Alfonso VIII of Castilla when he was a child, and keep him out of the reach of his uncle King Fernando II of León, who wanted to have him in his power so that he could control the Crown of Castilla.

Continued on page 34 .....



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..... Continued from page 33

The archers achieved this by disguising the king as one of their own, and they all left the town on horseback and travelled for seven days to deliver him safely in the city of Ávila.

This happened on the day of Pentecost in 1162.

Out of gratitude, the monarch awarded the archers the title of knights and he granted them a Charter for their Brotherhood. The charter contained some ordinations which still rule the Brotherhood, and the original scroll they were written on has been preserved to the present day.

These are two of the 30 ordinances:

“Any man which the brothers consider should be a member of the Brotherhood, and who is not, show him contempt. No brother should lend him his horse, take goods to him or confide to him anything about the Brotherhood, and if he does he will pay four maravedies if it is proved. But he will not pay anything if he swears that he did not do it.”

“If the oldest brother in a household falls ill, he shall be watched over by four brothers who will be excused from any other tasks, and he who does not go to watch will pay a miscal. Only two brothers will watch over the son of a brother, they will be excused from any other tasks and if they do not go they will pay a half miscal.”

On the Saturday before Pentecost Sunday, certain members of the Brotherhood go to the Ermita and prepare everything for the next day. While they are there, they sample seven tortillas cooked with different ingredients, one for each of the seven days that the archers’ trip to Ávila took.



Next day, Pentecost Sunday, all the brothers meet in a location where they prepare and allocate their horses. They then all ride to the house of the leader, and the secretary checks that everybody is there and reads out the fines that have been issued during the year to members who have broken some ordinance. The fines are paid in wax. The most common infringements are being late for Mass, addressing a fellow brother in a familiar way or not listening to the leader.

After the fines, the honour of carrying the flag to the Ermita is raffled, and it is handed over with the words, ‘It will be carried by a good man’. All the brothers follow the flag, accompanied by bagpipes and drums, to the Ermita de Nuestra Señora de la Estrella, where the Virgen de la Estrella is taken out for the procession and then Mass is celebrated. During the procession the platform the virgin is carried on is auctioned. The successful bidder pays with bushels of grain. After that, round loaves of bread are also auctioned and paid for with bushels of wheat.

In the afternoon the Brothers dance in front of the Virgen de la Estrella and offer wine to the visitors to commemorate the festivities that the archers put on to mislead the soldiers that were pursuing King Alfonso VII.

Later in the day everybody goes back to the town. Next to the road there are two stone columns where the brothers pray for dead members of their Brotherhood.

When they reach town everybody heads for Camino de las Cuevas where there are horse races between the members of the Brotherhood. After the races the brothers go to the priest’s home where they are given lemonade before going to the leader’s home where the fiesta ends.

As a point of interest, some very illustrious personages have been and are members of the Brotherhood. Generalísimo Franco was a brother in his day as are our old king Juan Carlos I and our present king Felipe VI now.



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# THE PAST IS A FOREIGN COUNTRY

By Aileen Cleave

Just the other day, scrolling through the many notifications thrown up by the algorithms I apparently generate, my attention was caught by a headline from The Telegraph "Baby boomers are the luckiest generation in history". I couldn't read the article because I don't subscribe to the Telegraph and it was behind a paywall, but it struck a chord with me and after careful reflection, I agreed with the sentiment 100%.

A baby boomer myself from the late 1940s, I consider myself incredibly lucky to have retired to this very special part of Spain, the Almanzora Valley. As I sit on my terrace this warm, sunny April evening, drinking in the beauty of the Andalusian mountains in front of me, (and a little of the delicious local wine) my thoughts are drawn back to my childhood and the difference in lifestyle between those early years and these latter years.

When you stand back and look at it dispassionately the difference is incredible. Indeed, as someone once said, "the past is a foreign country". How alien to my grandchildren, for example, would be just one day in the life of a child of the fifties.

Woken by our mother calling from the foot of the stairs that the fire

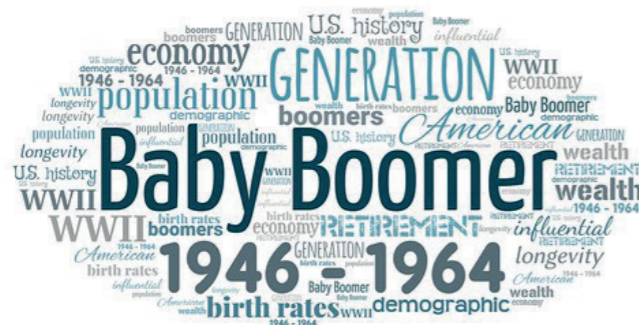


was lit and it was safe to emerge from the warmth of our beds, we would do so slowly, reluctantly and stare, shivering, out at an icy winter landscape.

The bedroom windows would be adorned with sparkling, magical images etched by Jack Frost. On the coldest days I recall the briefest visits to the bathroom to wash my hands and face and clean my teeth before bundling all my clothes together and running downstairs to the comfort and relative warmth of the sitting room and a blazing coal fire.

On those coldest days we were allowed to eat our porridge on our laps in front of the fire. The words "in front of the fire" still bring a warm glow to me.

And so, to school! No 4 x 4 chariot awaited me. With coat and muffler, hat and gloves I would set off to brave the icy winds and pavements of that North East town. If it was raining, the rain fell horizontally, and umbrellas were useless in such winds. I walked the half hour trip unescorted from about the age of 8, meeting school friends young and old en route.



The pace of change continues to accelerate throughout my teens and into my twenties when the most liberating thing ever to happen to women, including getting the vote, becomes readily available, albeit by prescription. I mean of course The Pill. For the first time in history (and here this is not just a newspaper headline) women have control over their own bodies.

In the late sixties and in the seventies, the consumer society really takes off. All the things our parents never knew they needed are now readily available, and with a new form of payment, hire purchase, and so begins the age of credit. In the eighties the banks take this to a new level, access to the "never never" being readily available to one and all, including mortgages which further fuels the property price inflation that started in the seventies.

It's now the nineties, and the internet has been around at a low level for some 7 or 8 years and Jeff Besos starts selling books online from his garage, heralding the birth of Amazon. In 1990, Tim Berber-Lee invents the World Wide Web and with the best of intentions, donates it to the world. Wow! How has that affected society? Where to start. Now it's not just our parents' generation being left behind, but us too, pedalling like mad to keep abreast of social and technological changes.

It's now not just a new decade of the noughties, but a new century, a new millennium, a Brave New World.

Or is it? Is something rather sinister creeping in under the guise of social media. We are now half-way through Los Años Veinte, the twenties, in this new century and disturbing norms are appearing,

possibly helped along by the unprecedented actions of our governments during the course of last decade's pandemic of COVID 19.

So how does all of this make our generation, born just after the most terrifying and all-encompassing war the world has ever seen, how, given what lay ahead of us, are we the luckiest generation? Well, and this is just my opinion, I feel that we inherited an overwhelming feeling of optimism amidst a time of privation, and rationing. A feeling that together with fellow nations we were able to overcome pure evil and emerge free and eventually strong again. We have witnessed, indeed experienced, all of the foregoing and are now able to retire, simply because time has been kind to us, with a reasonable pension and a world open to us, until Brexit, to live, work and enjoy.

My parents would have been open-mouthed to see the life style we enjoy here in Andalucia. For them two weeks enjoying the beaches of the Costas would have been the high life. They would have been amazed at the villas, and, my goodness, the private pools!

I say all of this for one reason only, that we (or rather I) fully appreciate our good fortune, especially as storm clouds appear to be amassing again on Europe's borders and in the Middle East. Let's make sure that our children and our grandchildren understand the great gift given to them by their great grandparents. It's difficult when times are hard, as they are for many at the moment, to remember how precious our gift of freedom is. In our democracies governments can be changed when the economy suffers, in a dictatorship that option isn't there.



I think it's a wonderful world, just not perfect, and I'm sure the two generations we have raised will rise to the challenge with all the optimism of hope in tomorrow.

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# Finders, Keepers....

Someone wise once wrote, "nothing is really lost until Mum can't find it." How true that is. I've lost count of the number of times just this week when I have put down my Specs only to spend the next half an hour searching for them and then face the humiliation of Mrs D picking them up from right under my nose.

However, according to a recent survey by an Insurance Company they are not the most frequently lost item in the home. That is, of course, reserved for the TV Remote. I say, of course because it is another item in our house producing much frustration when it goes missing.

In this particular survey, Glasses come out in second place, while on things lost outside the home, Glasses come in first, followed by Keys.

While I was reading this, I started to wonder what other stuff gets lost out in the wide world, so I turned to Transport for London and was amazed at some of the things which turn up in their Lost Property Depot in East London, the largest in Europe.

Apparently, some 6,000 items arrive each week and that takes some organizing and processing. Each article is logged and given a Reference number in the hope and expectation it will be claimed, within the 3-month time period,



By Vic Davey



when it then becomes the property of TFL.

Some of the unclaimed articles are donated to charity, sold at auction to help fund the Lost Property Warehouse or just disposed of, recycled where possible.

The Staff are often amazed at the expensive items which turn up, Wedding and Engagement rings and luxury Jewelry, Rolex watches as well as bags of money, some containing up to 15000 pounds.

But for me, it is the more unusual things which are handed in which I

find amusing. I mean, how can someone lose a Prosthetic Leg? Or a box of cooked frogs, not just the legs, the whole thing? A Bollard, or a brand new 50" Smart TV? And what about a Dalek Costume or a Wedding Dress?

How can they be lost, left behind and not reclaimed? One also wonders who owned the Stuffed Fox wearing a Royal Crown... someone must miss him!

The numbers in Madrid are quite similar to the train and metro services in London. Around 5,000 lost items per week are processed with the majority being Transport cards, Identity I.Ds and Driving licenses. They also have their share of unusual articles, ranging from Microwaves to bicycles, wheelchairs to dental appliances.

Next time I can't find my glasses, I'll think of the person who left behind a Parachute on the Underground and hope he realized it in time!

# Situations Vacant...!!

By Jos Biggs

*Sing a song of sixpence  
A pocketful of rye  
Four and twenty blackbirds  
Baked in a pie  
When the pie was opened  
The birds began to sing  
Wasn't that a dainty dish  
To set before the King*

*The King was in his counting house  
Counting out his money  
The Queen was in her parlour  
Eating bread and honey  
The maid was in the garden  
Hanging out the clothes  
When down came a blackbird  
And pecked off her nose.*

This is all about a 17th century Bristol lad named Edward Teach. But what has he got to do with blackbirds?

Edward Teach was born in Bristol in the late 1600s. He toddled along learning his trade until 1716, when he very successfully branched out on his own. So successful was he that he became the stuff of legends, and under the name of Blackbeard he was feared all over the Caribbean.

However, you can't be a pirate all on your own, no matter how black your beard is. You need help, but you can't just stick an ad. in the Sits. Vac. of the local rag saying 'Pirates wanted, cash paid, no questions asked.' If you did you'd be in big trouble.

So he dressed his recruitment campaign up as a ditty to be sung by children. But any pirate worth his salt knew, and this is what he knew:

Blackbeard paid his pirates wages of 6 pence a week and a hipflask of rye whiskey. That was considered a good wage.

He needed 24 sailors to crew his ship. Because they worked for Blackbeard they were known as blackbirds.

Before an attack the majority of the crew would hide in the hold out of sight - baked in the pie.

When an attack commenced the sailors would throw open the hold (pie) and begin to sing, or more accurately, attack!



An easy conquest would be known as a dainty dish, the spoils of which would be set before the King (Blackbeard)

Most pirates only paid their crew after a successful attack, or when they returned to port, but Blackbeard had a good reputation for paying his crew weekly, therefore he would count out the booty from his counting house, or stateroom.

Blackbeard's ship was named the Queen Anne's Revenge, and when she put into harbour it was said that the Queen was in her parlour.

Of course when in harbour the ship would be re-provisioned, so the Queen was in her parlour eating bread and honey, or taking on supplies.

Any particularly rich ship was referred to as a Maid.

The Caribbean was described as the garden.

Hanging out the clothes referred to setting sail.

When down came a blackbird, or more likely the whole lot of them, and pecked off her nose, or rather was raided her.

So there you have it - an 18th century Situations Vacant Ad!

*\*With a lot of help from Snopes.*

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# Victoria Kent, Spain's First Female MP

Victoria Kent Siano was a Spanish solicitor and politician, the first woman to become a member of the Solicitors' College in Madrid, and the first woman in the world who acted before a military tribunal.

She was born in Málaga on March 3rd 1892, and died in New York at the age of 95.

Her father, José Kent Román, was a travelling salesman in fabrics, and her mother, María Siano Gonzales, a housewife. Her parents were more liberal and open-minded than most of their contemporaries, and they let Victoria study to become a teacher in Málaga, and later to enrol in law studies at the Universidad Central in Madrid.

She arrived in Madrid in 1917 and graduated as a defending solicitor in 1924. She was one of the first women in Spain to achieve this.

In 1930 she defended Álvaro de Albornoz, a member of the Republican Revolutionary Committee, in the Supreme War and Maritime Tribunal, and thus became the first woman in the world to act as a solicitor in a court martial.

The outcome favoured the defendant.

In the election to the Constituent Assembly in 1931, she was elected representative for the Radical Socialist Republican Party.

The Minister of Justice appointed her to General Director of Prisons, which post she kept until 1934. In that role, she carried out comprehensive reforms with the aim to humanise the penitentiary system and improve the conditions of the prisoners. She also initiated the Feminine Prison Corps.

Interestingly, when women's suffrage was debated in parliament in the autumn of 1931, she declared herself against on the grounds that the women of the time lacked political and sociocultural education. This led to clashes with the radical republican MP, Clara Campoamor, and put her at loggerheads with the progressive and leftist sectors that she was a member of.

A fellow politician pronounced at the time, 'Only two women in parliament and they cannot even agree. Whatever will happen when there are 50?'

Victoria's argument was that Spanish women lacked enough social and political preparation thanks to The Church, and that their vote would therefore be prejudicial to the republican cause.

Her opponent, Clara Campoamor, was of a different opinion and said that every woman should have the right to vote and that she defended the equality of all human beings.

In February 1936, Victoria was re-elected to the Constituent Assembly, this time as a deputy for the republican left.



When the Civil War broke out in July of the same year, the Republican government sent her to Paris where she was in charge of the evacuation of children from the Republican areas, as well as helping Spanish refugees flee to the Americas.

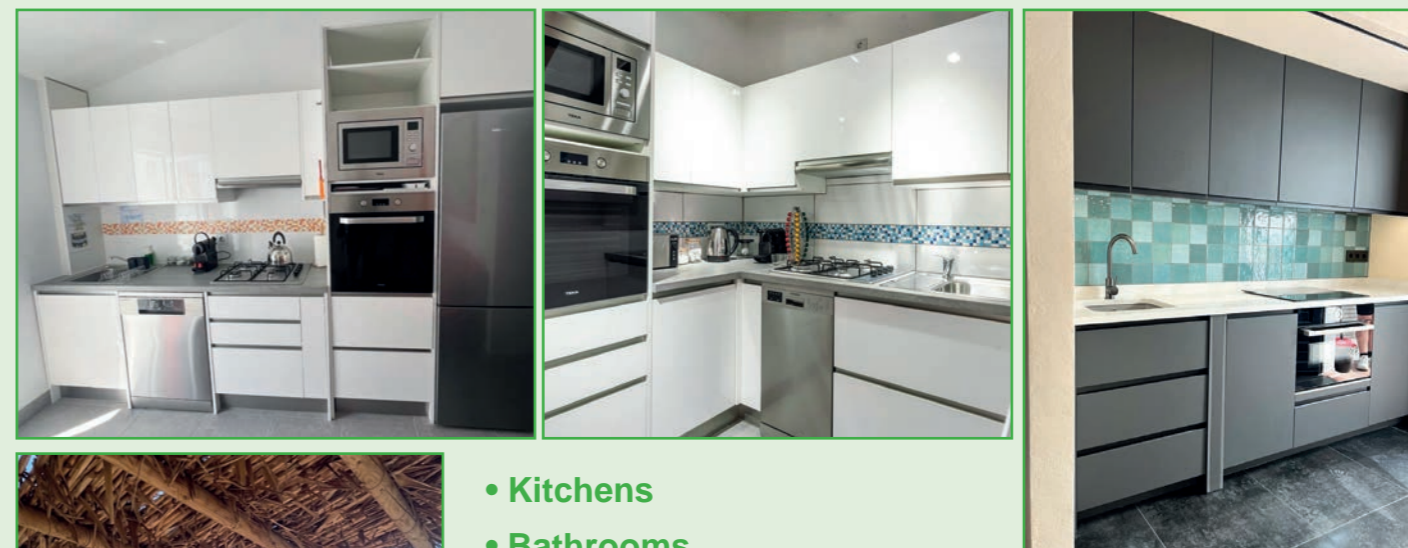
When the Second World War broke out, she stayed in Paris helping other Spanish citizens flee to the Americas. When France was invaded by Nazi Germany, she took refuge in the Mexican embassy, and her name was black-listed by the Spanish Franco police.

She sought exile in Mexico where she worked in the Social Defence Section and carried out a study of the terrible conditions in the Ibero American prisons. She then worked for two years in professional training of prison personnel.

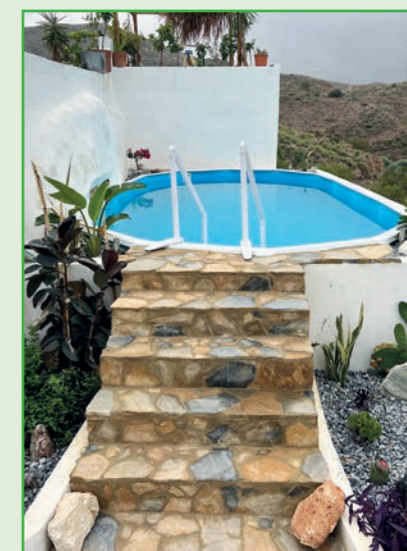
In 1950, she was offered a post by the UN in New York, to study the conditions in the Ibero American prisons.

She settled down in New York, but did return to Spain in 1977, forty years after her exile. Here, she was received with affection and admiration by her compatriots. However, she returned to New York and she stayed there until her death on 25th September 1987.

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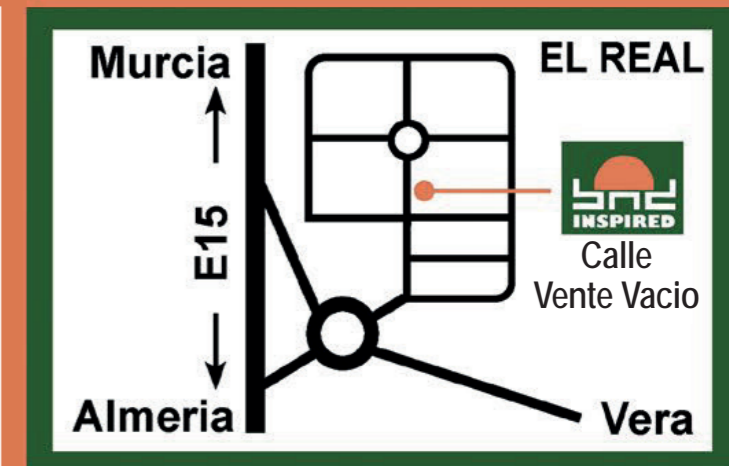
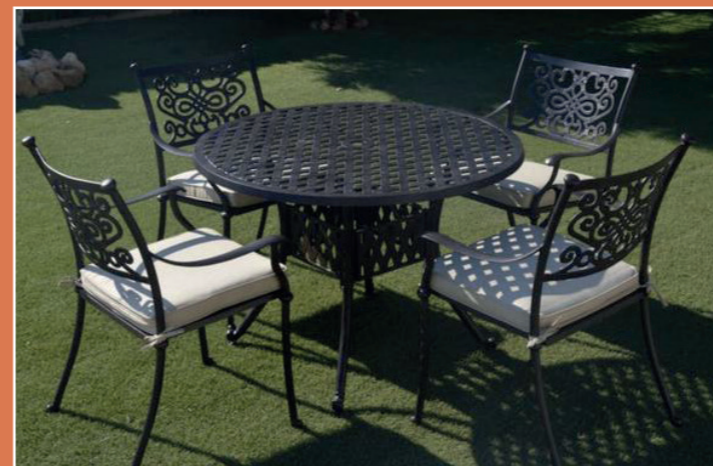
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## GOING GREEN

By Jason Lowther

### Environmental impacts of tourism

It's that time of year when my idle reverie is all about being 'somewhere else' – that is being present in the moment, but with a different view.

I guess for a large section of readers, it's the same for you. After all, what sparked the thoughts of living somewhere else? It might have been a case of anywhere but here in Spain, but most likely it's because something grabbed you on some random visit.

You might not even remember which one sparked the interest, or when, but the fact that you're here more than likely means that you've travelled. Gilbert K. Chesterton, an English author, philosopher and art critic is credited with coining the phrase that "they say travel broadens the mind, but you must have the mind". We live in an increasingly connected world, which permits those of us lucky enough to have been born relatively, in global terms, wealthy to explore and experience things very different to our usual setting.

Large scale tourism however brings with it a series of things to think about, in terms of the impacts of those periodic invasions. Back in the nineteenth century, when Thomas Cook was cutting his teeth in the business, he created the first full 'package tour', taking campaigners on a, arguably underwhelming, trip from Leicester to Loughborough return (meals included!). It was organised so people could attend a temperance rally, so not even any duty-free potential, were that to have been a thing back then. However, the modern package holiday industry began to take shape 'proper' in the mid-20th century. In the post-World War II era, package holidays became more widespread, especially in Europe. Companies like Horizon Holidays and Polytechnic Touring Association (PTA) in the UK began offering affordable package holidays to destinations like the Mediterranean, catering to the growing demand for leisure travel among the middle class.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed the greatest boom in package holidays' popularity. The emergence of charter airlines, such as Thomson Airways (now TUI Airways) and Monarch Airlines, allowed tour operators to offer all-inclusive holiday packages to destinations like Spain, Greece, and the Canary Islands at competitive prices. This era saw the rise of mass tourism and the development of purpose-built resorts catering specifically to package holidaymakers. The 1980s and 1990s saw the rise of the budget airline further opening travel opportunities. I'm of a vintage that took advantage of Freddie Laker's Skytrain, one of the pioneers



of the low-cost flight, to the USA when that brief 5-year window opened in 1977.

In a world of Facebook and Instagram, with pictures of perfect beaches, pristine landscapes, city skylines and jaw-dropping sunsets, there is a sense that there are 'must see' places. A personal bugbear of mine is the travel sections of newspapers offering insights into places that we should rush to get to before it gets popular/ruined. They are literally ensuring both of those outcomes.

Continued on page 46 .....



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Again, drawing on the wisdom of Chesterton, who seems seriously ahead of his time we get the conundrum: "The traveller sees what she/he sees, the tourist sees what she/he has come to see". Selfie at the Camp Nou anyone?

Actually, the Barcelona link is a good example of how things can go wrong. With visitor numbers consistently around the 10 million mark, either side of Covid, the city's residents have had enough. The sheer volume of people, often disgorged from cruise ships for a quick wander round La Rambla and the Boqueria Market and in some cases just to gawp at the life that is trying to go on there, has prompted a number of responses restricting access and photographs, etc.

The city authorities have banned large cruise ships from its city centre ports on grounds of air pollution and noise, and it is not the only 'destination' to do so on the basis of the social and environmental consequences on a city's cultural life. Venice has a complete ban – and in April this year introduced a €5.00 charge for day-trippers. Dubrovnik, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, in Croatia is similarly blighted and daily limits have been placed on the arrival of cruise ships. Also in April this year, thousands protested in Tenerife about the current model of tourism in the Canaries arguing that there should be a halt and a reassessment. Quoted by Euro News Rosario Correa, Secretary of the 'Salvar Chira-Soria' platform stated, "we are not against tourism, we are against a model that has led us to the deterioration of our land, of our people because the profits and growth of tourism are not reflected in society".



What to do? Sustainable tourism, also known as responsible tourism or eco-tourism is gaining some ground. It is an approach to travel and tourism that seeks to minimise negative impacts on the environment, culture, and local communities while promoting conservation and generating economic benefits. It doesn't need to be more expensive but should probably reflect something closer to the 'actual' costs imposed on the destination and by the means of getting there. There are several dimensions to the idea of sustainability in this guise, for example:

- **Environmental Conservation:** Sustainable tourism aims to protect natural resources, minimize pollution, and preserve biodiversity. This can involve measures such as using renewable energy sources, reducing waste, and promoting wildlife conservation.
- **Cultural Respect and Preservation:** Sustainable tourism respects and celebrates the cultural heritage of destinations. This includes supporting local traditions, protecting historic sites, and fostering cultural exchange between visitors and locals.
- **Community Engagement and Empowerment:** Sustainable tourism involves local communities in decision-making processes and ensures that they benefit from tourism activities. This can include providing economic opportunities through local employment, supporting small businesses, and investing in community infrastructure.
- **Education and Awareness:** Sustainable tourism promotes awareness and understanding of environmental and cultural issues among travellers. This can involve providing information about responsible travel practices, encouraging participation in conservation activities, and promoting cultural sensitivity.
- **Economic Benefits:** Sustainable tourism aims to distribute economic benefits fairly among local communities and businesses. This can help to reduce poverty, promote economic development, and support sustainable livelihoods.
- **Reduced Impact:** Sustainable tourism seeks to minimize the negative impacts of tourism on destinations, such as overcrowding, habitat destruction, and cultural commodification. This may involve implementing carrying capacity limits, promoting low-impact activities, and encouraging responsible behaviour among travellers.

Overall, sustainable tourism seeks to balance the economic benefits of tourism with the need to protect the environment, preserve cultural heritage, and support local communities, thereby ensuring that tourism can continue to thrive in the long term without compromising the well-being of future generations.

To complete the circle, we go back to Chesterton one final time, who also observed that, "a dead thing can go with the stream, but only a living thing can go against it". So, when thinking about where to get away, choose mindfully; don't always go with the flow. You might be harming or diluting the very experience that you went there for, or you might be contributing to its longevity and sustainability. Having the luxury of time, and so being able to go somewhere outside of the main season, or the school holidays is wonderful, but not always open to us. In which case, tread lightly, leave nothing but footprints and take only memories.

# La Feria del Caballo, Jerez



One of Spain's most famous fiestas is Jerez's horse fair, Feria del Caballo, which is celebrated every year in May a week after Seville's April Fair. This year it kicked off on May 4th and it goes on until May 11th.

The fair dates back to Medieval times and was originally, like the majority of the Spanish fiestas, a gathering of animal traders who, during a certain week of the year, were given amnesty by the king to buy and sell livestock without having to pay the corresponding taxes. What is different about Jerez's Feria del Caballo is that it has kept the livestock fair as an important and integral part of the proceedings – and especially, of course, the horses.

Jerez is world famous for its Pure Spanish Bred horses – Pura Raza Española (PRE) – and the annual fair has been declared to be of International Touristic Interest.

La Feria del Caballo is set up in Parque Gonzales Hontoria and comprises more than 250 so-called casetas, which are small areas, either tents or constructed, that sell food and drink. Each caseta has a special theme and its own gastronomic specialties. They all participate in the competition for Best Tapa and Best Decoration.

Among the typical foods found in the casetas are pescaítas fritas, little fried fish, cola de toro, oxtail, seafood and traditional sausages. The typical drinks are sweet and dry sheries.

Every day of the fair there is a constant flow of horses and horse drawn carts going through the central avenues. Jerez has a great tradition for horse breeding and the fair is interspersed with various equestrian events and the atmosphere is a unique mix of Spanish fiesta and equestrian event.

La Feria del Caballo is well worth a visit, and an experience never forgotten. During the daytime, take a walk around the fair, enjoy the casetas and their lovely food, sip a glass of sherry – sweet or dry, up to you - and admire the prancing horses and the horsemen and -women that handle them with apparent ease.

At night, walk about the fairground, enjoy the music and the lights, and the women in their spectacular flamenco dresses who at the drop of a hat jump up and start singing and dancing.

Do treat yourself to a trip there sometime. Horse lover or not, you can't but admire the horses of the Feria del Caballo, who are among the equestrian aristocracy – and they certainly seem to know it too!





## Ratoncita Pérez - the Tooth Mouse

A mouse named Ratón Pérez first appeared in "Cuentos, oraciones, adivinanzas y refranes populares" (1877), as the husband of "La Ratita Presumida" (The Vain Little Mouse). This character would later inspire Luis Coloma, who would make him part of the Spanish traditional folklore by turning him into a sort of Tooth Fairy.

In 1894, Coloma was contracted to write a story for Alfonso XIII, who had just lost his tooth at the age of 8. Coloma's story follows Ratoncito Pérez who lived with his family in a box of cookies in Madrid, but frequently ran away from home through the pipes of the city, and into the bedrooms of children who had lost their teeth.

The story details how Ratoncito Pérez cunningly misleads any cats in the vicinity, who may be lurking, and includes his interaction with King Buby (Queen Maria Cristina's nickname for Alfonso XIII).

The city council of Madrid paid tribute to Ratoncito Pérez with a commemorative plaque outside the warehouse where the mouse was said to have lived. The plaque reads: "Here lived, in a box of cookies, Ratoncito Pérez, according to the story that the father Coloma wrote for the young King Alfonso XIII."

Ratoncito Pérez thus became the first fictional character honoured with a plaque by the Madrid City Council. Coloma's original manuscript, with his signature and a dedication to King Alfonso XIII, is now located in the vault of the Royal Palace Library.

The Ratoncito Pérez has been used by Colgate marketing in Venezuela and stars in the 2006 Argentine movie El Ratón Pérez.

Ratoncito Pérez is a figure popular in Spanish and Hispanic American cultures, similar to the tooth fairy, originating in Madrid in 1894. He is known as "Ratoncito Pérez" in Spanish speaking countries, with the exception of some regions of Mexico, Peru and Chile, where he is called "el Ratón de los Dientes" (The Tooth Mouse), and in Argentina, Venezuela, Uruguay and Colombia, he is known simply as "El Ratón Pérez".

## Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 82

	6		7	1	9
		8			
				4	5
	8	3	2	7	
		4	6		
1		5		6	9
6	5		3	9	4
	9			1	
		9	7	2	

Easy

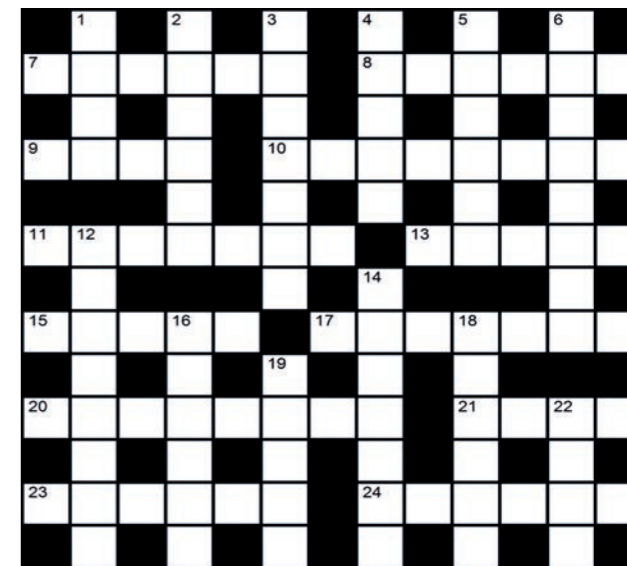
### Regular Sudoku

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.

	1	4		5				
				7				
				3	1			
	8		1		6			
			7	4		9		
	6	5				7		
5				8				3
3			9			5		
				9				

Medium



Across

- 7 Place
- 8 Marathon athlete
- 9 Fill to excess
- 10 Invigorated
- 11 Wine merchant
- 13 Sauce with basil
- 15 Exposed
- 17 Kind of sloped roof
- 20 Conflict
- 21 Gone
- 23 Break
- 24 Minister

Down

- 1 Hindu exercise
- 2 Ability
- 3 Withdrawn
- 4 Crop up
- 5 Store, as corn
- 6 No-show
- 12 Pictured
- 14 Dormancy
- 16 Flying high
- 18 Razor
- 19 Bread coating
- 22 Dry

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## Sorbas Caves

The Tabernas Desert, Europe's driest desert system, is situated on top of a subterranean labyrinth comprising thousands of caves lined with crystals.

Due to the scarce rain and vegetation, the erosion of the terrain has produced canyons, gorges, and a wilderness which have turned it into the 'West in the East', the setting for countless spaghetti westerns such as 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly' as well as other films including 'Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade'.

The Sorbas Caves constitute Spain's largest subterranean complex with more than a thousand caves and a thousand dolines on the surface, where the humidity condenses and create small oases of willow and palm trees. These dolines are large sinkholes created by rain breaking up the gypsum floor over a period of millennia. This phenomenon, known as karst, the dissolution of a mineral which has been exposed to the elements, is what has slowly created this landscape.

The water which has filtered into the Sorbas Caves over the millennia has created subterranean lakes, stalactites and stalagmites; gypsum crystals that glitter when the light catches them; mineral covered geodes and arbitrary shapes that look like sculptures.

Outside the caves, the humid conditions allow reeds, oleanders, and white poplars to thrive in small copses inhabited by the protected spur-thighed tortoise.

Inside the Sorbas Caves there is a network of several kilometres of interconnected cavities and kilometre long grottos; there are several subterranean ponds and lakes that reflect opaque light in their interior.

These complex systems have permitted the companies that provide guided tours of the caves to offer several different routes that vary in difficulty to suit the individuals or groups that wish to experience this marvel of nature.

Some three million years ago, the Mediterranean sea covered a good part of what is today the province of Almería, including the area where the Sorbas Caves are situated. It was in this last geological era known as the Cenozoic era that the world's present continents were defined, and the Mediterranean withdrew from southeastern Spain, leaving great accumulations and deposits of natural gypsum in the large hollow that today surrounds Sorbas.

This was the beginning of the history of the Sorbas Caves. As it is a desert zone, it rarely rains, but when it does, it is usually torrential. This is why there is little vegetation in the area, which promotes erosion. As the millennia passed, the water-soluble minerals were eroded, and the terrain subsided into what is known as 'karst'. The caves under the Tabernas Desert started forming in the subsoil hollow.

Of the many Sorbas Caves, the largest is Cueva del Agua, which is 8 km long; Cueva de la Corvadura is the deepest at 120m. Cueva del Tesoro and Cueva de Yeso both boast many features of geological interest. There are also exclusive and endemic plants there that grow in the gypsum, such as the Sorbas daffodil and the Sorbas spur.

The Sorbas Caves and the Natural Park, Karst en Yesos, are one of the few existing examples in the world of this kind of phenomenon, especially in such a perfect condition. The scarce rain in the desert above has allowed the caves and galleries to form quickly (in geological terms), and remain sufficiently dry and resistant to avoid collapsing.



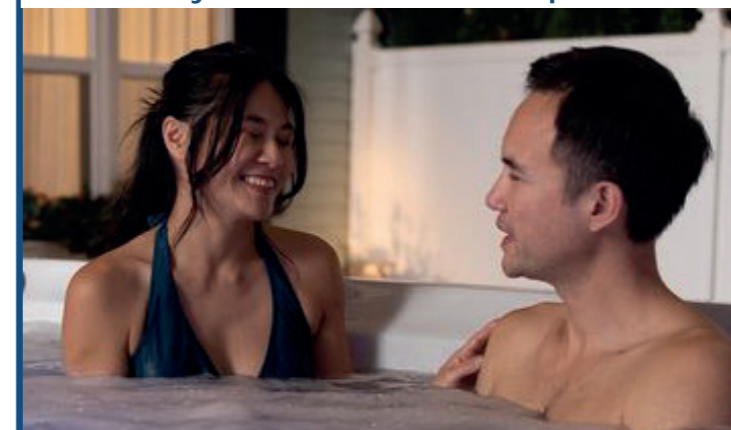
As mentioned earlier, there are routes for all kinds of visitors to the caves. Although there are plenty of guided tours on offer, it is recommended to reserve in advance. It is also recommended to go to the Centro de Visitantes Los Yesares in Sorbas town. They have three rooms of expositions and audiovisual projection where the formation and changes of the area are explained.

It is a good idea to contact one of the tour guides in advance to decide which route will be suitable for you and your group.

There is also an educational route, famous amongst international geology students, which takes half a day and allows the participants to study the terrain from both the inside and outside, and all the marvels of the karst.

The caves all have electric lighting, and there are Spanish, English, French, and German speaking guides available.

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# The Dinner Party

Dinner parties were all the rage in the 1970s. Starter, main course and two puddings, followed by coffee and mints - not to mention wine.

We had not long arrived in the fleshpots of Surrey from the wilds of Galloway. Had maybe been to a couple of posh lunches - even one with a real lady - but dinner!

My fun bit was dressing up, resplendent in a blouse with Margaret Thatcher bow-ties, while liberally applying my new Tweed perfume.

The non fun bit was preparing all the courses, tidying up the draughty ten roomed manse and getting two children to bed before the first ring of the doorbell.

Preparation had started days before. I had scoured my Delia Smith for recipes. Starter easy, main course more difficult, puddings impossible. I wrote the menu down on my kitchen wall chart "stuffed peppers, steak pie with glazed carrots, peas and roast potatoes, vegetable curry, puddings ???"

For the rest of that week, I pondered on puddings. Finally, I decided on one made by dipping ginger nuts (very gingerly) in sherry, building them up into a neat roll and covering the whole concoction in whipped cream, aptly named "Ginger Log". The second pudding would have to be fruit salad.

Two days before, I set off for Waitrose with my list. Luckily, I had plenty of nice steak in the freezer supplied by that young fellow who worked in Covent Garden. So, I concentrated on buying the vegetables and didn't forget the ginger nuts, sherry, and double cream.

Saturday evening arrived all too quickly. Table set, children in bed, pots boiling.

First to arrive was Fred. This wasn't any old Fred. This was Fred, the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, the most unassuming man you could ever meet, recently made Companion of the Order of the Bath. He was accompanied by his wife, Chrissie, born in Pittodrie and

By Evelyn McCrorie



with an accent to match.

Fred, a Londoner, was church treasurer and my husband Bill had been astonished to find his monthly stipend signed by the same Fred who also had signed his official tax rebate.

Close on their heels was Joan, a vivacious Scot from Barrhead, along with husband Michael, from Oxford, both strict vegetarians - hence the vegetable curry and fruit salad.

Following the adage "Never discuss religion and politics" was difficult as this was a group of church people, all with strong political views. However, Bill was good with the religious bit while I catered for their temporal needs.

The meal was going well when Margaret Thatcher's name came up. I foolishly let it slip that my mother thought a lot of her. Fred asked, "Has she met her?"

The look on his face said it all.

We quickly got round to the merits of vegetarianism. Joan jumped on to her hobby horse, and the rest of the evening went with a bang.

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# The Oso y Madroño



The bustling Puerta del Sol square is the location of one of the most famous symbols of Madrid: a 20 ton statue of a bear eating fruits from a tree. The official name of the statue is 'El Oso y El Madroño' but is often referred to as the Bear & the Strawberry Tree.

The 4 metre high statue, constructed of bronze and stone, standing on top of a cubic block of granite was built in 1967 by sculptor Antonio Navarro Santa Fe. However, the symbol dates back to 1212 and can be found as a main feature on the Madrid Coat of Arms

Originally, Madrid was named URSA, which means "bear" in Latin. There were various forests around Madrid where bears lived and there were trees that produced fruit that looked like strawberries. The berries of the Madroño tree are very sweet and are really not good eaten raw, but are great when made into a jam.

Why does the flag of Madrid carry the 7 stars, the bear and tree symbol?

The seven stars on the flag represent the consternation of Ursa Major (meaning "larger bear" in Latin). The first mention of the national symbol of Madrid was back in 1212, at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, between Alfonso VIII of Castile and the Almohads. Hence the Council of Madrid sent a detachment in support of the Christian King. Back then, the troops carried a flag that showed a bear on a silver field with seven stars on its body.

In 1222, the clergymen of the Madrilenian parishes confronted the Council for the use of the fodder in the fields and forests in the municipality. These were important resources for both institutions, and both wanted the use of these lands. King Alfonso VIII determined that the fodder would belong to the clergymen, whereas the forests would pertain to the Council. This decision did not convince the clergymen, but satisfied the Council. In fact, the council was so satisfied, that it immediately modified the shield of the municipality, adding a tree as proof of its new possessions. The bear, which formerly had been displayed walking, now stood on its hind legs to eat fruits from the tree.

Other adaptations have been made to the Coat of Arms but the bear remains!

# House Sparrow

The house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) is a bird of the sparrow family Passeridae, found in most parts of the world.

There is clear sexual dimorphism with the male's head being grey on top, black around the face and under the beak, and a vivid brown on temples and neck. The female, on the other hand, has a more uniform beige colouring around the head. Both sexes have a very light grey body with brown and black back and wings, more contrasted in the males.

The colouring of the young birds is very similar to that of the females, but with slightly duller tones.

The house sparrow has a rather simple song of one or a series of cheep or chirrup notes. It's mainly given by males, who repeat it incessantly during much of the year to announce that they possess a nest and to attract females. Females only rarely use this song, typically to attract a new mate after losing one.

They are boisterous birds, especially in the mating season and when they all get together to go to bed at night.

Sparrows can be found almost all over the world, including on the Iberian Peninsula and the Spanish archipelagos. They mainly live in areas inhabited by humans; they do not like forests, and they are not fond in high mountain areas.

House sparrows mate for life. The mating season goes from April to August, and a pair of sparrows can have two to three broods in a season. The female lays 4-6 eggs at a time. They often nest in colonies in hollows they find in human constructions such as cracks in buildings or hollow spaces beneath the roof tiles.

There nests are not very structurally complicated, but these little birds go to great lengths to line them with feathers, hair, and other materials that ensure that they are warm. Sparrows in southern Spain also build nests in trees.

The chicks remain in the nest for two weeks. During this time, they go from being completely naked to having real feathers without having down in between.



Sparrows live off grain and insects, although they also have adapted to eating human leftovers. In the breeding season they feed their young with insects.

They move around on the ground easily in small hops.

They are gregarious birds that nest and live their lives in not too big groups. However, sometimes they gather in great numbers to spend the night in the trees where they sleep.

The house sparrow has a life expectancy of three years. In this time it does not usually travel more than a few kilometres from its place of birth.

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# A Mutual Favour

During our Menu del Dia, taken outside in the sunshine at Saliente Monastery a fit looking young man appeared, strode purposefully across the terrace where we were seated, gazed for a while at the panoramic view before hitching his rucksack up into a more comfortable position and striding off into the same view, out of our sight and out of our mind.

Full of food and Christian charity, and at peace with the world in general, we left the Monastery for the scenic drive back to Albox, ready to appreciate to the full the beauty of the almond blossom in the afternoon sun.

Rounding a corner (there are many!) we came face-to-face with an unexpected dilemma in the form of a hitch hiker. I do not pick up hitch hikers for any reason unless by some accident of Fate they are known to me, and have an obvious and genuine reason for needing assistance.

We recognised him as the be-rucksacked young man we had seen earlier. As he heard us approach he turned to face us, joined his hands in an attitude of prayer, an expression of humble supplication on his face and in every line of his body.

His unspoken plea came right from his heart, and went straight to mine.

'Shall we?' Pete asked. I couldn't have said No and slept that night. Anyway, Christian charity and a very good Tinto Verano were still coursing through my veins.

He proved to be an ideal passenger. He inserted himself and his rucksack into the back seat of our rather small car without fuss, and passed the journey in patient conversation, making allowance for



By Jos Biggs

my inability to understand Spanish-speed Spanish.

He was undertaking a 3 day hike from Hijate, he told us, a total distance of 80 kilometres. He added that it would have taken him 3 hours to walk from Saliente to Albox.

Just before our journey's end we off-loaded him, and with fulsome thanks he transferred himself into his friend's car, conveniently waiting for him at the roadside to take him the remainder of the trip into Albox.

After he left our care I couldn't help pondering on his tactics. Had he, perhaps, been able to use his unique approach and general clean-cut charm to hitch a lift with other soft-hearted motorists along the way? Had he discovered by experience that adopting the stance of a penitent, especially in the environs of a Monastery, is more effective than the casual stuck-out thumb?

How much of his 80 kilometre trek had actually been on foot?

I don't think it matters – both hitcher and lifters were well satisfied with our afternoon's deal!

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# What is Happening in the Local Property Market. May 2024

By Voss Homes Estate Agents with offices in Huércal Overa & La Alfoquia

This year has got off to a great start and it looks like we are going to have another record year in property sales. The diary is already filling up with buyers coming over to buy their Place in the Sun. As usual there are lots of buyers coming from the UK, Spain, Ireland, Belgium, Netherlands, France, Germany etc

If this year you are going to sell your property in Spain then we would like to offer this advice.

1. Please do not think that buyer should be able to see all the hidden potential in your property through all the over grown garden, flakey paint walls or general clutter...Most buyers will not. The ones who will see the potential will use this as an excuse to make low insulting offers which is just a waste of your time. Just a bit of elbow grease and spending a little money could increase the value of your property by thousands and get it sold quicker.

2. Before you put your property on the market get some friends round to suggest improvements. However, 9 out of 10 friends will just say that your property is fantastic as it is. So do not get them round. Get the friends round who are not frightened to tell you the truth.

3. Pick the agent who is selling the most properties in your area.



Surely that makes sense?.

4. Do not go "multi agency" as you will be over advertising your property. Make your property look "Exclusive", "Unique" & "Special" to buyers by just going with one agent. Do not make it look like your property belongs in the "Bargain Bin" with all the other properties people are not buying. Make sure your agent does not share your property with lots of other agents. This will give buyers the wrong idea.

5. When your agent feeds back after a viewing do not take any negative feedback personally.

6. If your property still has the older style bathrooms, kitchens in or untidy gardens or a pool that needs re-grouting etc then please do not expect it to sell for the same price as you neighbours which had been modernised throughout.

7. If other agents knock on your door with fabulous stories saying they have mystical clients who want to your property then tell them that if they "really" have clients

interested then they should contact your existing agent and work with them to arrange a viewing. The commission is then split 50/50 which is better than nothing.

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# Malaga Christmas Lights

## Date option 1



**2 Nights**  
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**9<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> December**

**Price Includes:**  
Coach travel  
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4\* Hotel Soho Boutique Equitativa Central to the Lights

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# Malaga Christmas Lights

## Date option 2



**2 Nights**  
**\*245€** per person

**16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> December**

**Price Includes:**  
Coach travel  
Two nights in 4\* hotel  
Breakfast - days 2 + 3

**Staying at:**  
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\* Price based on 2 people sharing a room  
Single supplement upon request

Pick-Ups Possible From:  
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Pickup points and timings will vary depending on demand

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# Historical Cádiz

to Cádiz, which now commanded better access to the Atlantic. 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

Cádiz is the oldest continuously 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.

The part of Cádiz within the remnants of the city walls is commonly referred to as the Old Town. It is characterised by the antiquity of its various quarters (barrios), among them El Pópulo, La Viña, and Santa María, which present a marked contrast to the newer areas of town.

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



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.

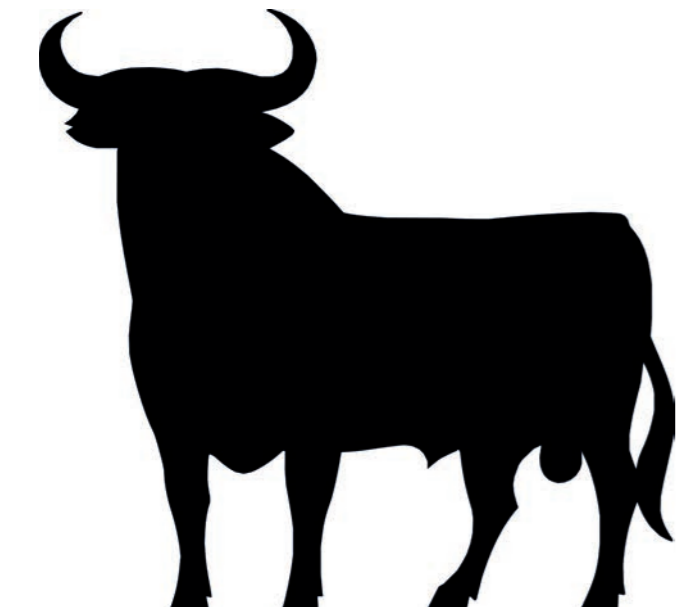
The Osborne bull is a 14-metre (46 ft) high black silhouetted image of a bull in semi-profile. Nowadays the conservation of the bulls is handled by the family of Félix Tejada.

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 images were black advertising boards (with the brand "Veterano" in red on it) located near major roads throughout Spain. 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 Cadiz, 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.



Christopher Columbus sailed from Cádiz on his second and fourth voyages and the city later became the home port of the Spanish treasure fleet. Consequently, it became a major target of Spain's enemies.

The greater part of the old town was consumed in a major fire in 1569; and in April, 1587, a raid by Francis Drake occupied the harbour for three days, captured six ships, and destroyed 31 others (an event known as "The Singeing of the King of Spain's Beard").

In the 18th century, the sandbanks of the Guadalquivir forced the Spanish government to transfer its American trade from Seville

# Pets Corner

Dakota – She Is - Teaching Me!

When I was a little girl, if I had hurt myself and my mum had to put on a bandage or tend to some minor injury, she often said she was sorry she had such hard hands and wished they were soft like Gran's. I didn't quite understand and thought she referred to the amount of padding she had in the palms of her hands.

Later in life, I have learned that I too have hard hands, and it has nothing to do with padding. It is how you handle things. For example, I cannot grow plants from seed, as I break the little plantlets when I come to plant them out...

Lately, Dakota has been teaching me that my hands are also too hard when it comes to grooming her. Cora and Brutus were never too keen on being groomed, and really only wanted me to do their backs and chests, so I had decided to teach Dakota right from early puppyhood to be groomed all over.

She's moulting like nobody's business at the moment, and it takes a lot of work every day to even try to keep up with it. However, a while back she started protesting and being mouthy, both with my hands and the brush.

The other day when this happened, I took a step back and thought for a moment. I realised that I do my dog brushing more or less the same as I used to when grooming horses. But of course, horses have much thicker skin and quite enjoy it when you put all your strength into the strokes. Not so Dakota. Or dogs in general, I suppose.

So I told her to stand again and started brushing her more gently. She stood quite still, and just let me get on with it. And to my surprise, I still got lots and lots of hair off her with gentle strokes. She stood quietly and let me brush away, even in the sensitive places such as her flanks and her tummy.

It took a bit longer than the hard way, but the result was more satisfactory, and Dakota definitely enjoyed it much more! No more sitting when told to stand, no more mouthiness, she just calmly enjoyed getting rid of all the excess hair.



I realise that my hard hands are partly a result of my lack of patience. Everything has to get done quickly so I can get on with other things, and when you work like that, you lose the finesse and the feel for what you are doing.

Continued on page 64 ....



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.... Continued from page 63

And whereas I understand that I'm not about to become a patient person just because I want to, I also thought I might bring this new self-insight into some of our training.

I already learned a long time ago that if I get angry with Dakota there's no way I'll make her do what I have asked her to. Training a very intelligent and strong-willed dog like Dakota takes lots of patience, self-criticism and thinking out of the box.

Sometimes, something that worked a treat last week, no longer does the trick. At other times, you have to go back to the beginning and start over. This is why Chris, the leader of my old training club, called it 'Back to Basics', and I learned from her that although you think your dog has grasped an exercise, it is sometimes necessary to go back and build it up again from scratch.

It happens at training that Dakota gets ornery and starts biting the lead and, when I try to stop her, my hands. This is obviously a completely unacceptable behaviour, which has to be stopped. But

as is always the case when I'm dealing with my strong-willed girl, there are two opinions in play – mine, and hers.

On Monday, towards the end of the class, she had a particularly bad bout of lead-biting, and eventually, the only way I could stop it was by taking her off the training court to cool down for five minutes. When we went back in, she was fine.

But again, she made me think hard about what I can do to stop the behaviour for good. I've noticed that it happens when she is either bored or over-tired. She can get bored at training if she has to sit about for too long while the others do their things. She sometimes gets tired on a Monday when we have had our scent work class just before normal training, or on Fridays after the group walk.

In either case it is a question of getting her mind away from misbehaviour, and I am now trying to quietly stimulate her, without disturbing the others, when I feel her starting to twitch. I stroke her, or move around her while she has to stay (this distracts her from her boredom), or I make her change position between 'sit', 'stand', and 'down'. Anything to keep her ever busy mind occupied until the next exercise.

I'm learning a lot from my amazing girl; she is making me rethink many of my pre-conceived ideas about how to train her, and she's forever keeping me on my toes.

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# Look Good - Feel Great

## The Benefits of Exercises for Older Adults

Exercise and nutrition are essential parts of a healthy lifestyle throughout our lives, and as we age, our requirements are ever changing. A growing body of research illustrates how regular exercise is especially important for seniors, and how more older adults are opting for an active lifestyle instead of a sedentary one. This article shows the benefits of exercise for older adults, the seven best forms of exercise for seniors, and a few exercises that may be hazardous to seniors' health.

### The Health Benefits of Exercise in Older Adults

Our biology changes as we get older, causing seniors to have different reasons for staying in shape than younger generations. Though physical fitness provides benefits at any age, the health perks physically fit seniors enjoy are more notable. Physicians and researchers say seniors should remain as active as possible, without overexerting themselves. In older adults, exercise helps you live a longer, healthier, and more joyous life.

Some of the benefits of exercising later in life include:

#### More exercise means more independence

Seniors that exercise regularly are less likely to depend on others. According to research, regular exercise promotes an older adults ability to walk, bathe, cook, eat, dress, and use the restroom. If self-reliance is a priority, exercise is one of the best ways to maintain independence for older adults.



#### Exercise improves balance for older adults

Falling down is a much bigger deal for older adults than younger ones. Every 11 seconds, an older adult is admitted to an emergency room for a fall-related injury, and every 19 minutes, a senior dies from a fall, according to studies.

Continued on page 66 ....

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..... Continued from page 65

Though no two falls are alike, and preventing falls is very complex, regular exercise can help reduce the likelihood of falling.

### Regular exercise means more energy

Though it seems counter-intuitive, being inactive makes you tired and being active gives you more energy. Any amount of exercise promotes the release of endorphins, which are essential neurotransmitters linked to pain mitigation and a sense of well-being. Endorphins combat stress hormones, promote healthy sleep, and make you feel more lively and energetic, overall.

### Exercise helps prevent and counteract disease

Heart disease, osteoporosis, depression and diabetes are common diseases among older adults. Adopting a more active lifestyle can contribute to the prevention of these diseases, or reduce the unpleasant symptoms of these diseases if you already have them. If you are at-risk of a disease, exercise may be the key to warding off an unpleasant condition.

### Regular exercise improves brain function

One of the most remarkable developments in health science is the revelation that the mind and the body are much more closely linked. A healthy body likely means a healthy mind, and seniors that exercise on a regular basis have improved cognitive health, according to research. More recently, a study from the Alzheimer's Research & Prevention Foundation, found that regular exercise could reduce the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease or dementia by nearly 50%.

## The Best Exercises for Older Adults

Exercise is crucial, but it can be hard to know where to begin. If you haven't worked out for a while, re-entry into the active world can be daunting.



There's also a good chance the exercises you were once accustomed to aren't ideal for older adults.

*Before you launch into an exercise regimen, it's important to check with a doctor or health practitioner to ensure you're healthy enough for exercise, and to see which exercises are ideal for your current fitness level.*

### 1. Water aerobics

In the past years, water aerobics have become an extremely popular form of exercise among all ages, but in particular to seniors. Exercising in the water is ideal for those living with arthritis and other forms of joint pain, as the buoyancy of the water puts less stress on the joints.

Additionally, water brings natural resistance, which eliminates the need for weights in strength training. Water aerobics exercises improve your strength, flexibility, and balance with minimal stress on your body.

### 2. Chair yoga

Like water aerobics, chair yoga is a low-impact form of exercise that improves muscle strength, mobility, balance and flexibility, all of which are crucial health aspects for seniors.

Chair yoga is an accessible form of yoga that provides less stress on muscles, joints, and bones than more conventional forms of yoga.

As an added bonus, chair yoga has been shown to improve mental health in older adults. Regular chair yoga participants have better quality sleep, lower instances of depression, and report a general sense of well-being.

### 3. Resistance band workouts

Resistance bands are stretchy strips of rubber that add resistance to workouts with reduced stress on your body. Resistance band



workouts are user-friendly, and accessible for beginners. This form of exercise is growing more popular among seniors because of the relatively cheap up-front costs of materials, which makes resistance band workouts ideal for at-home exercise. Additionally, these exercises are ideal for strengthening your core, which improves posture, mobility, and balance.

### 4. Pilates

Pilates is a popular low-impact form of exercise that was developed a century ago. In pilates exercises, breathing, alignment, concentration and core strength are emphasized, and typically involves mats, pilates balls, and other inflated accessories to help build strength without the stress of higher-impact exercises.

Pilates has been shown to improve balance, develop core strength and increase flexibility in older adults.

### 5. Walking

One of the least stressful and accessible forms of exercise is walking. For some seniors, walking is a bigger challenge than others, so distance and step goals differ from person to person. For

the general population, 10,000 steps per day is advised for a healthy lifestyle, but those with difficulty walking or joint pain may settle for a smaller number as a goal. Walking promotes a healthy lifestyle, while strengthening muscles, lowering your risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and colon cancer.

### 6. Body weight workouts

Muscle loss can be devastating and debilitating for older adults. Around a third of seniors live with severe muscle loss, which can lead to hormone problems, a decrease in the ability to metabolize protein, and other problems. Body weight workouts are one of the best ways to counteract the effects of muscle atrophy in older adults. One of the key benefits of body weight workouts is the affordability. The materials required for body weight workouts are minimal; most body weight workouts require workout clothes and a mat to soften impact with the floor.



Continued on page 68 .....

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..... Continued from page 67

### 7. Dumbbell strength training

Strength training has been shown to alleviate the symptoms of diabetes, osteoporosis, back pain, and depression, while helping you manage your weight.

Strength training also contributes to a higher metabolism and enhanced glucose control. Dumbbell exercises are some of the best ways for seniors to strength train, if they are performed with the proper precautions.

Dumbbells allow seniors to isolate muscle groups to strengthen, while improving balance and flexibility.

### Exercises Seniors Should Avoid

A good percentage of popular mainstream workouts are not ideal for older adults.

These popular workouts are well-suited for younger adults looking to bulk up or shed weight in a hurry, but they may put an unhealthy strain on older adults with joint pain, atrophied muscles, posture problems or issues with balance.

The following exercises should probably be avoided if you're over the age of 65:

- Squats with dumbbells or weights



- Bench press
- Leg press
- Long-distance running
- Abdominal crunches
- Upright row
- Deadlift weights
- High-intensity interval training
- Rock climbing
- Power clean weightlifting

### A patient recently asked me... Why am I Walking Funny?

After an initial chat about onset, symptoms such as pain, weakness, tingling etc., medical history, traumas, medications, hobbies, we then conducted a physical assessment, including observation of the walking pattern, posture, muscle reflexes and power testing.

We checked spinal movement and function through both legs, looking for any unusual movement patterns, and came up with a treatment plan to improve spinal motion and ankle flexibility, decrease tightness in overworked muscles, and activate muscles which weren't firing.

We also discussed appropriate footwear, and advice was given on how to avoid a recurrence of the same issue in the future.

If you've noticed that you've started 'walking funny', there are many reasons why this may have occurred. From poor quality footwear to joint pain, to muscle insufficiency.

The important thing is to identify the underlying reason that your gait has altered, before it starts to affect other structures of your body, resulting in pain and compensatory patterns, which can be challenging to resolve.

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# Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 82

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.

1	8	3	4	9				
2	5	4						
		8	1	4	2			
1	4	7			3		9	
	2	1	7	4	5	6		
			2	7				
4	6		7	8	9	1	3	
		1	2		5	3	7	6
5		2	1	3	6	8		9

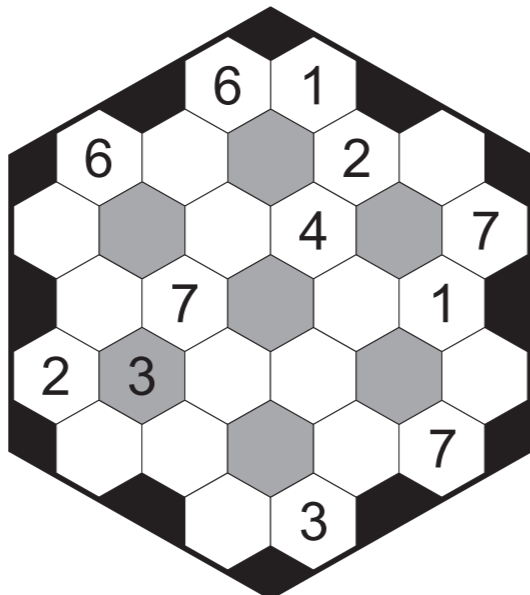
**Samurai Sudoku**

4	3		2		1	8	3	4		5	7			1	6	9			
8	5		3	4	9	7		2	5	8		9	4		5	7	2	8	
9	2		8		3		5		9	2	6		8	7	9				
1		3	6		8	5	9				8	7	3	2	1	9	4	5	6
5													3		2		7		
	4			5	3	1	2	7				4	2	5	8	7			1
7				3	4	5		1				9	3		4	8			5
		4	7		5								6		5				
2	1	5	8	9	6	4						5	8		3	7			2

## 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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Dreams can be entertaining, disturbing, or downright bizarre. We all dream, even if we don't remember it the next day. But why do we dream? And what do they mean, anyway?

### What Are Dreams?

Dreams are basically stories and images that our mind creates while we sleep. They can be vivid. They can make you feel happy, sad, or scared. And they may seem confusing or perfectly rational.

Dreams can happen at any time during sleep. But you have your most vivid dreams during a phase called REM (rapid eye movement) sleep, when your brain is most active. Some experts say we dream at least four to six times a night.

### Lucid dreams

A lucid dream is one in which you know you're dreaming. Research shows that lucid dreaming comes with a boost of activity in parts of the brain that are usually restful during sleep. Lucid dreaming is a

brain state between REM sleep and being awake.

Some lucid dreamers are able to influence their dream, changing the story, so to speak. This may be a good tactic to take sometimes, especially during a nightmare, but many dream experts say it's better to let your dreams flow naturally.

### Nightmares

A nightmare is a bad dream. It's common in both children and adults. Often, it happens because of:

- Stress, conflict, and fear
- Trauma
- Emotional problems
- Medication or drug use
- Illness

If you have a certain nightmare over and over again, your subconscious may be trying to tell you something. Listen to it.

If you can't figure out why you're having bad dreams, talk to a mental health care provider. They may be able to help you figure out what's causing your nightmares and give you tips to put you at ease.

Keep in mind that no matter how scary a nightmare is, it's not real and most likely won't happen to you in real life.

### Why Do We Dream?

There are many theories about why we dream, but no one knows for sure. Some researchers say dreams have no purpose or meaning. Others say we need dreams for our mental, emotional, and physical health.

Studies have looked into the importance of dreams to our health and



well-being. In one study, researchers woke people just as they were going into REM sleep. They found that those who weren't allowed to dream had:

- More tension, anxiety and depression
- A hard time concentrating
- Lack of coordination
- Weight gain
- A tendency to hallucinate

Many experts say dreams exist either to help solve problems in our lives, incorporate memories or process emotions. If you go to bed with a troubling thought, you may wake with a solution or at least feel better about the situation.

Some dreams may help our brains process our thoughts and the

events of the day. Others may just be the result of normal brain activity and mean very little, if anything. Researchers are still trying to figure out exactly why we dream.

### How Long Do Dreams Last?

REM sleep lasts only a few minutes early in the night but gets longer as we sleep. Later in the night, it might last more than 30 minutes. So, you might spend half an hour in a single dream.

### What Do Dreams Mean?

Famous psychologist Sigmund Freud believed that dreams are a window into our subconscious and that they reveal a person's unconscious desires, thoughts or motivations

Freud thought dreams were a way for people to satisfy urges and desires that weren't acceptable to society.

Just as there are different opinions about why we dream, there are different views about what dreams mean. Some experts say dreams have no connection to our real emotions or thoughts. They're just strange stories that don't relate to normal life.

Others say our dreams may reflect our own thoughts and feelings -- our deepest desires, fears, and concerns, especially dreams that happen over and over. By interpreting our dreams, we may gain insight into our lives and ourselves. Many people say they've come up with their best ideas while dreaming.

Often, people report having similar dreams: They're being chased, fall off a cliff, or show up in public naked. These types of dreams are probably caused by hidden stress or anxiety. The dreams may be similar, but experts say the meaning behind the dream is unique to each person.

*Continued on page 74 ....*

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..... Continued from page 73

Experts say not to rely on books or "dream dictionaries," which give a specific meaning for a specific dream image or symbol. The reason behind your dream is unique to you.

### Can Dreams Predict the Future?

Sometimes, dreams come true or tell of a future event. When you have a dream that plays out in real life, experts say it's most likely due to coincidence, a bad memory or an unconscious linking of known information.

But sometimes, dreams can motivate you to act a certain way, thus changing the future.

### Why Are Dreams Hard to Remember?

Researchers don't know for sure why dreams are easily forgotten. Maybe we're designed to forget our dreams because if we remembered them all, we might not be able to tell dreams from real memories.

Also, it could be harder to remember dreams because during REM sleep, our body may shut down systems in our brain that create memories.

We may remember only those dreams that happen just before we wake, when certain brain activities are turned back on.

Some say it's not that our minds forget dreams but that we don't know how to access them. Dreams may be stored in our memory, waiting to be recalled.

This may explain why you suddenly remember a dream later in the day: Something may have happened to trigger the memory.

### How to Make Sense of Your Dreams



If you're curious about your dreams or want to sort out any possible meaning behind them, consider keeping a dream diary or journal.

Write it down. Keep a notebook and pen next to your bed, and record your dream first thing every morning, while the memory is still fresh.

Write down anything you recall and how it made you feel, even if you can remember only random pieces of information.

Journal without judgment. Dreams are sometimes

odd and may go against societal norms. Try not to judge yourself based on your dreams.

Give each dream a title. This may help if you want to refer back to a dream. Sometimes, the title you create can provide insight on why you had the dream or the meaning behind it.

Dreams have fascinated humanity since the beginning of time and will probably continue to puzzle us.

Science has allowed us to learn much about the human brain, but we may never know for sure the meanings behind our dreams.

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# WHEELS

## MOTORING SECTION

## NOW WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT....?

By Vic Davey

44 year old Yorkshireman Percy Shaw hunched over his steering wheel and peered through his windscreen and out into the blackness. His headlamps barely lit the road ahead which was a notoriously difficult one to negotiate at night.

The last thing he needed on his journey to Boothtown, near Halifax, was to end up on his roof, down the steep slope on one side. He'd had a pleasant evening at the Dolphin Inn and wanted to get home in one piece. Suddenly, his lights picked out the shape of a cat, sitting on a fence at the side of the road.

It's head turned and the headlamps reflected back in it's eyes. Percy stopped, got out of his car and found he was on the wrong side of the road and very close to the disaster he'd feared. From this incident was borne the idea and invention which would make him famous and earn him an OBE; the reflective studs in the road known as 'Cat's Eyes'.

Well, that's one story. The romantic one. The more plausible one to my mind is that when driving in fog in his home-town of Halifax, he would follow the reflected light from the highly polished tramlines and this kind of led him to his invention. They say that necessity

is the mother of invention and this is true in his case as the demise of the tram as a means of transport meant the ripping up of the old tramlines, denying Percy and other drivers their guide in fog.

It was 1934 and at this time, he was already self employed as a path and road layer and had experience in light engineering. Percy was very resourceful and seemed to be able to turn his hand to most things mechanical. Retreating to his workshop in his spare time, he eventually came up with his 'cat's eye'. He started his own company in 1935, patented his invention and the rest, as they say, is history.

30 years later, he received an OBE for his services to export. But, by all accounts, he was something of an eccentric; never marrying, became largely a recluse and lived very frugally. It is said, he threw out all the carpets and much of the furniture from his house. Bizarrely, though, he kept three TV's continuously switched on and he owned a Rolls Royce Phantom. Percy Shaw died in 1976 aged 86.

Did he make a fortune? Well, his estate was valued at less than £200,000, much less than I imagined.

Continued on page 78 .....

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..... Continued from page 77

Incidentally, a couple of years ago, the UK Government announced it is considering the replacement of 'Cat's eyes' with "Solar Powered Road Studs". Why they feel this is necessary after 80 years, remains a mystery. Poor old Percy must be turning in his grave. I always thought there was something more than a little odd about inventors. I don't mean to sound disrespectful but they do seem to live in a parallel universe to most folk, but in a good way.

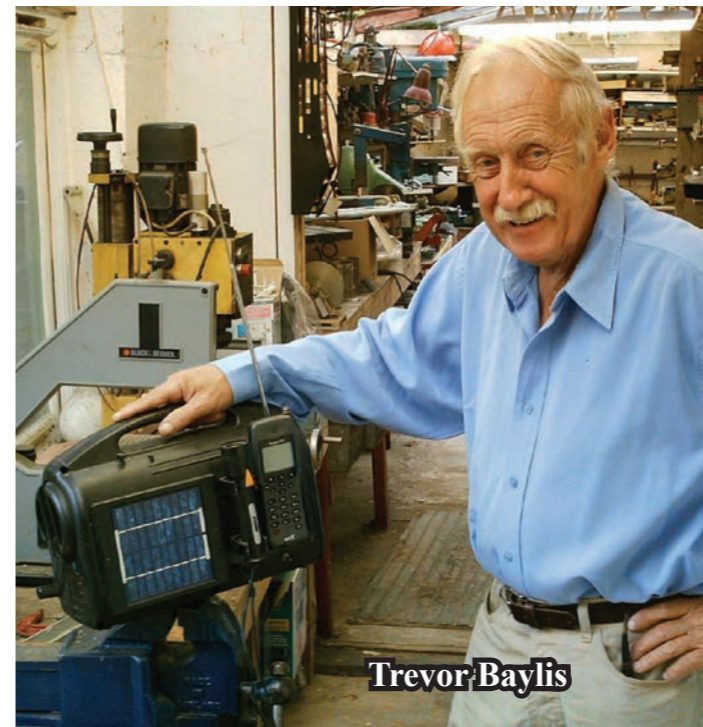
One of modern times most famous inventors once actually earned a living as a professional stunt man, performing high dives into tanks of water and as an underwater escapologist and formed an aquatic display team working in the Berlin Circus. You would, then, imagine his most famous invention would have something to do with swimming, swimming pools or some life saving equipment associated with swimming. Wrong. He is Trevor Baylis who gave us the wind-up radio! Remember him? During his stunt work, he came into contact with and formed an empathy for a lot of people who were disabled as a result of the stunt performances which ended their careers. Trevor designed many products to enable disabled people to live independently.

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 to 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 received a phone call. It was a representative from a company in South Africa who was interested in his idea and was prepared to



Trevor Baylis

back him. Shortly after, a company was formed, a cheque for half a million pounds was handed to him and his wind up radio was on its way. In 1996, Trevor had the honour of personally presenting Nelson Mandela with one. So, from swimming pools, a circus and watching a TV programme to receiving fame, awards and a knighthood for this and other inventions, many lives have been changed for the better, none more so than in Africa.

But what of inventors from our adopted country Spain? When I was researching this article I came across one Manuel Jalon Corominus

and found he invented the Mop. I, very smugly, thought this was perhaps the extent of Spanish ingenuity. Surely we would have heard of famous Spanish inventors had they achieved anything worthwhile. Well, I am ashamed to say I was wrong. Consider Julio Cervera Baviera 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).

Or how about 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 1620! Juan Pablo came from Zaragoza and was secretary to a wealthy family and 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.

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# 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 Adatable.**

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 at 4 years then every other year until it is 10 when it becomes an annual event.

A Mixta Adaptable has the first ITV when 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€

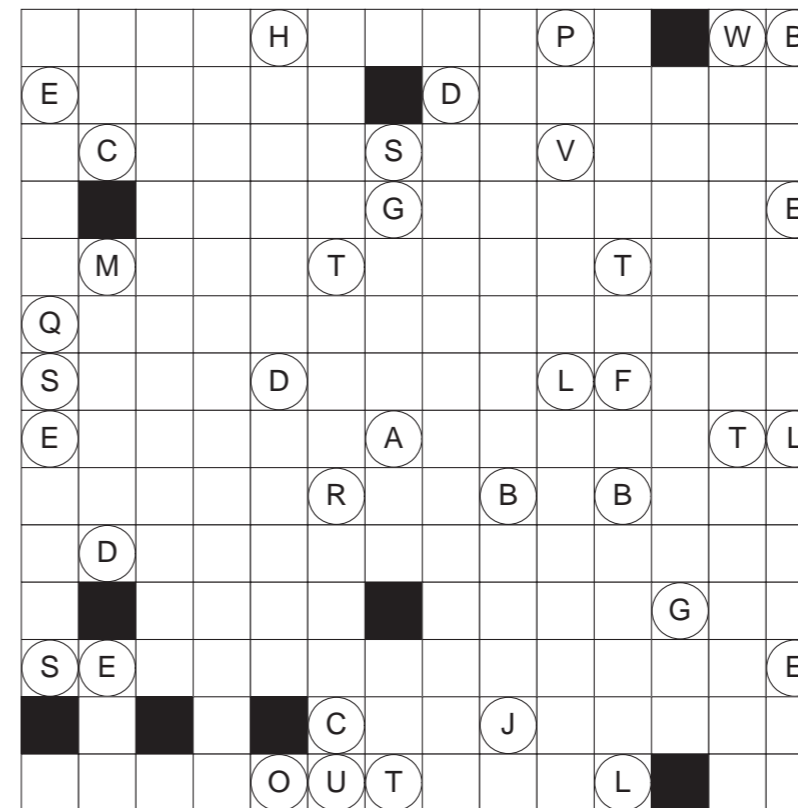
Finally, all relevant documents must be presented to Trafico, who, for a small charge, will change the details in their system and the car really is then a car!

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

# Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 82

## Reverse Word Search



Each of these circled letters is the first letter of one or more of the words on the given word list.

Your task is to fill in the grid completely using only the given words. No word will repeat itself. Words can be positioned the same as in a regular word search – horizontally, vertically or diagonally, reading frontwards or backwards.

Remember, any starting letter may be used by more than one word at the same time!

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| Encouragement | Other          | Trend    |
| Ended         | Outset         | Utter    |
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# Car Essentials for Women

Every woman should have two car kits: one for the everyday type situations, and another for those unexpected hope-it-never-happens circumstances.

This non-exhaustive list is customisable 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 in case 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!

So, there you have it!!

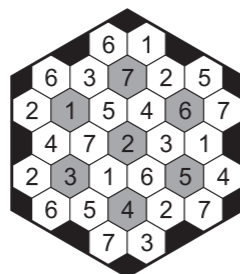
Is there anything we've left out? What would you add to this list? Or would you rather throw caution to the wind?

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## Puzzle Time Solutions



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**A K S T N E G S P A R T N E**  
**U M O N S T R O S N T Y S R**  
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