

January 2025

Issue 141

# Almeria Living

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# Almeria Living

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Welcome to the January 2025 issue of Almeria Living. The first issue of the year!

Wishing you all a very Happy New Year and let's hope for a good one!!

Unfortunately, January isn't one of my favourite months of the year. I'm never sure exactly why but once we take down all those pretty twinkly lights that have adorned the houses and streets for the last month, everywhere looks somewhat stark and a little grey.

I'm not one for making resolutions because they always seem to be the hardest things to keep. However, of late, my terrace has been somewhat neglected so I have resolved to take better care of it and my many visiting feathered friends.

Speaking of which, I was so excited a few weeks ago to get a visit from a very colourful robin and he has been quite a regular since. Like the black redstarts, he waits for the gang of sparrows to have their fill and then comes down for a peaceful drink.

Just this week, there has been another stranger in town - about the size of a starling but all grey, including the long slender beak. It has a long slim tail with a hint of colour beneath - any ideas?

In this issue...

My scribes have been keeping busy, and I am most grateful for all their contributions, which I know the readers also enjoy.

I am delighted to welcome Tom Fynes as a new scribe this month. A fascinating short piece - read more on page 33.

Many thanks, as always, to 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 February.

Karen (Ed)

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# Getting your 'House' in order

A New Year is always a good time to consider what may have been neglected in previous times. This could be through a lack of knowledge or simply not having enough time!

Here are a few thought-provoking points to help...

## Making a Will

Wherever in the world you own assets, such as bank accounts, property or investments you should have a Will in that country. It will save your loved ones so much heartache, expense and red tape. Here in Spain, it is a straight-forward process, and the Will is signed in front of a Notary, where the original is held until the time of death. It is important to consider the beneficiaries of a foreign Will due to possible Inheritance tax issues so a consultation with an experienced business, such as us, is both worthwhile and helpful.

## Tidy Filing System

Bank records, property deeds, insurance documents, investment policies, alarm details etc. should all be filed together. If you haven't done so already, invest in a sturdy folder to store all these important documents. Make sure someone else knows where to find this folder and any passcodes or PIN numbers that may be relevant. Just bear in mind that if you are taken ill suddenly there is a pain free way of accessing anything that is required to help you.

## Change of Address

This is a task that many neglect to complete with all the necessary authorities.

It is essential that DGT know the Padron address of any vehicles and a notification address for licences and the issuance of fines. The



latter can get very costly if you do not receive post at the correct address.

The Hacienda (Tax Office) must have a current notification address for you. If the DGT and other such authorities fail to reach you they will hand over to the Tax Office, who after attempting to contact you will then proceed with an embargo on bank accounts or other assets known to be owned by you.

## Vehicle Ownership

Are you still receiving annual tax for a vehicle you sold over a year ago? It is possible that the change of ownership has not been completed properly and the vehicle remains in your name. This will include speeding fines and other traffic offences. Maybe the vehicle has left the country? DGT must be advised so they can take it off the system.

## Documentation Expiry Dates

Take a look at your passport and driving licence and make a note when they are due to expire so you take the necessary action in good time.

For UK citizens, even those resident in Spain, it is essential that your passport is in date, even if you don't intend to travel anywhere. Remember this document is now only valid for 10 years so you should check the start date and add 10 years. Ignore the written expiry date, unless you only intend to return directly to the UK and then they will generally accept the extra months. Do not let this document expire without ordering a new one.

Driving Licences can be renewed easily at any one of the private medical centres who offer the service. You will immediately be issued with a temporary document that is valid for use in Spain only.

These are just a few things to think about and are essential to get sorted. C.A.T. Services are here to help so just pop in, give us a call or send an email.

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# Spanish Provinces

Spain is divided into 17 regions and the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla on the African continent, all of which were granted autonomy under the Constitution of 1978. Thus they are now referred to as Comunidades Autónomas (Autonomous Regions) and Ciudades Autónomas (Autonomous Cities) respectively.

The majority of these regions are divided into provinces, each with its provincial government (Diputación Provincial), except those regions that consist of only one province, like Murcia for example, where the regional and provincial governments are rolled into one.

There are 50 provinces in Spain, each with its own capital city which usually, but not always, carries the same name as the province.

And so our journey continues .....



Fabada Asturiana literally means 'beans from Asturias', and beans are the protagonist in this tasty stew, which also contains chorizo, black pudding and salted pork belly, all traditional meat products from the annual 'killing of the pig' that usually takes place in December.

In fact, Fabada Asturiana is one of the most common ready-made foods on the supermarket shelves where you will see rows and rows of tins.

Most of Spain's cider will have been produced in Asturias. It is generally sweeter, and a bit bubblier, than English cider, and it is more often than not sold in pressurized bottles like cava.

The traditional way of pouring it is holding the bottle high in the air with your arm stretched and pouring it into the glass which is held in the other hand as low as your arm will allow without bending your back. There is an annual cider pouring championship in Asturias, the first prize of which is hotly contested every year.

There is even a statue of a cider pourer in the town of Mieres.

El Principado de Asturias (the Principality of Asturias) lies on the north coast of Spain bordering on the Cantabrian Sea and the provinces of Lugo, Cantabria and León. It covers an area of 10,603.57 km<sup>2</sup> and has a population of 1,010,058.

It is the most mountainous region of Spain with 35% of its surface being sloped at more than 50% and 65% at more than 30%.

It was given the title Principality in 1388 when Juan I of Castilla decreed that the heir to the throne be titled Prince (or now: Princess) of Asturias.

Two of Asturias's culinary traditions are famous all over Spain and beyond: Fabada Asturiana, a rich, warming bean stew, and Sidra de Asturias, the cider that is produced in countless brewery all over the region.

The autonomous region of Asturias consists of only one province, and its capital city is Oviedo which lies in the centre of the province. However, Oviedo with its 217,164 inhabitants is not the most populated city in Asturias; this honour befalls Gijón on the north coast, which counts 269,311 souls.

In the nature of the territory, the height of Oviedo varies between 55m and 714m above sea level.

The city is protected from the cold northern winds by the Monte Naranco, and to the south is the Sierra Del Aramo mountain range where the Angliru mountain pass lies. Angliru's claim to fame is that the gruellingly steep mountain road that leads up to it has been the venue of the final leg of the Vuelta a España bicycle race several times.



Oviedo boasts the titles 'Very Noble, Very Loyal, Deserving, Undefeated, Heroic and Good', which is included in its coat of arms, and which can also be found inscribed on a plaque on the façade of the town hall.

Historically it has always been thought that the foundation of Oviedo dates back to the 8th century when the monks Máximo and Fromestano built a monastery dedicated to Saint Vincent on the hill called Oveto or Ovetao. King Fruela I visited the place and decided to erect a basilica for Saint Salvador, where his son, the future king Alfonso II 'The Chaste,' would be born in 760.

Once Alfonso II 'The Chaste' became king, he moved the capital of the Kingdom of Asturias to Oviedo. It stayed there until it was moved to León as a result of the Reconquest.

During the Middle Ages the city's importance declined and due to the isolation of its situation the development of Oviedo stagnated, but after fire destroyed a great part of the city in 1521 efforts were made to recuperate some of its former glory and various initiatives within commerce and culture managed to turn the tide and the population grew to over 8,000.

The industrialisation in the middle of the 19th century and the subsequent development of the service sector at the beginning of the 20th set Oviedo on the path of becoming the modern service-minded city of today.

Oviedo's climate is classified as oceanic with warm summers, cold winters and the rainfall distributed throughout the year, though

heaviest in winter and spring. Because the city is quite far inland, the temperatures fluctuate considerably between day and night, and in January, the coldest month, the average temperature between 1972 and 2000 was 8.0°C, and in August, the hottest, it was 18.7.

Having been the capital of the Kingdom of Asturias, the city boasts numerous Pre-Romanesque monuments built between 711 and 910. They are well preserved and looking at them takes you back through the centuries to a different age when religion played a dominating part in all aspects of society.

Some of the most outstanding examples of Pre-Romanesque architecture in Oviedo include the chapel Cámara Santo de Oviedo, the palace Santa María del Naranco which was converted into a church in the 12th century and the San Miguel de Lilo church.

Oviedo is a very green city with 2.2 million square meters of green zones, i.e. 10m<sup>2</sup> per inhabitant and there are 10,000 trees planted in the city streets, many of which are pedestrian. The large park, Campo de San Francisco, covers 90,000m<sup>2</sup> and is popularly known as El Campo among the natives of Oviedo.

Like most other large Spanish cities, Oviedo's centre is a hubbub of life and boasts a wide range of designer boutiques, department stores, fast food outlets, bars and traditional restaurants as well as banks and hotels.



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## Carnival Time

### Origins of the Carnival

According to some historians the origins of the carnival go back to the Egyptians and the Sumerians some 5,000 years ago.

What is known for sure is that the greatest influence on today's carnivals was the celebrations of the Roman empire to celebrate Baco, God of the wine.

The celebrations went on for days, and slaves and free people participated on an equal basis – something which only happened that one time a year.

### The 'Christian' Carnival

The Latin origin of the word 'carnival' is 'carnelevarium' which refers to going without meat – obviously related to the fact that no meat should be consumed during Lent.

In the Middle Ages, which were dominated by a strong and tyrannical church that insisted on Christian customs and persecuted those that did not conform, the carnival actually reached a peak because it was seen as away of preparing for the approaching days of fast.

### Carnival Today

Nowadays carnival is celebrated three to four days before Ash Wednesday, which leads up to Lent. The fiestas precede what was supposed to be a period of reflection and fast. Apart from that it has no religious aspect at all.

During the days of carnival, the streets of Spain's towns and villages are bursting with high spirits, humour, parodies and exuberance. The most spectacular celebrations –in Cadiz, in Andalusia, and Santa Cruz de Tenerife, in the Canary Islands– have both been declared of International Tourist Interest and are famous all over the world.

The hallmarks of the Cadiz carnival are the typical songs and ditties sung by a variety of music bands; these songs are full of irony and social criticism and are composed by the various popular clubs and associations that take part in the festivities.

On a more local basis we have the carnival in Águilas (pronounced AHgilas) which is the biggest and most colourful in the area.

Revelry and partying flood the streets, and the processions and fancy dress are impressive. The Processions usually start around six in the evening, and the partying carries on throughout the night.

A special feature of the Águilas carnival are the so-called cascarones, which are empty eggshells that have been filled with confetti, and which the participants break over each others' heads.

The Águilas carnival was declared of National Tourist Interest in 1997.



# Look Good - Feel Great 5 Secrets of Longevity

Many people think that life expectancy is largely determined by genetics. However, genes play a much smaller role than originally believed. It turns out that environmental factors like diet and lifestyle are key.

### 1. Avoid overeating

The link between calorie intake and longevity currently generates a lot of interest. Animal studies suggest that a 10–50% reduction in normal calorie intake may increase maximum lifespan.

Studies of human populations renowned for longevity also observe links between low calorie intake, an extended lifespan, and a lower likelihood of disease. What's more, calorie restriction may help reduce excess body weight and belly fat, both of which are associated with shorter lifespans.

That said, long-term calorie restriction is often unsustainable and can include negative side effects, such as increased hunger, low body temperature, and a diminished sex drive. Whether calorie restriction slows aging or extends your lifespan is not yet fully understood.

**SUMMARY: Limiting your calories may help you live longer and protect against disease. However, more human research is needed.**

### 2. Eat more nuts

Nuts are nutritional powerhouses. They're rich in protein, fibre, antioxidants, and beneficial plant compounds. What's more, they're a great source of several vitamins and minerals, such as copper, magnesium, potassium, folate, niacin, and vitamins B6 and E.

Several studies show that nuts have beneficial effects on heart



disease, high blood pressure, inflammation, belly fat levels, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, and even some forms of cancer. One study found that people who consumed at least 3 servings of nuts per week had a 39% lower risk of premature death.

Similarly, two recent reviews including over 350,000 people noted that those who ate nuts had a 4–27% lower risk of dying during the study period, with the greatest reductions seen in those who ate 1 serving of nuts per day.

**SUMMARY: Adding some nuts**

**to your daily routine may keep you healthy and help you live longer.**

### 3. Try out turmeric

When it comes to anti-aging strategies, turmeric is a great option. That's because this spice contains a potent bioactive compound called curcumin.

*Continued on page 10 .....*

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..... Continued from page 9

Due to its antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, curcumin is thought to help maintain brain, heart, and lung function, as well as protect against cancers and age-related diseases.

Curcumin is linked to an increased lifespan in both insects and mice. However, these findings have not always been replicated, and no human studies are currently available. Nevertheless, turmeric has been consumed for thousands of years in India and is generally considered safe.

**SUMMARY: Curcumin, the main bioactive compound in turmeric, has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Some animal studies suggest that it can increase lifespan.**

#### 4. Eat plenty of healthy plant foods

Consuming a wide variety of plant foods, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and beans, may decrease disease risk and promote longevity. For example, many studies link a plant-rich diet to a lower risk of premature death, as well as a reduced risk of cancer, metabolic syndrome, heart disease, depression, and brain deterioration.

These effects are attributed to plant food's nutrients and antioxidants, which include polyphenols, carotenoids, folate, and vitamin C. Accordingly, several studies link vegetarian and vegan diets, which are naturally higher in plant foods, to a 12–15% lower risk of premature death.

The same studies also report a 29–52% lower risk of dying from cancer or heart, kidney, or hormone-related diseases. What's more, some research suggests that the risk of premature death and certain diseases increases with greater meat consumption. However, other studies report either non-existent or much weaker links — with the negative effects seeming specifically linked to processed meat.



Vegetarians and vegans also generally tend to be more health-conscious than meat eaters, which could at least partly explain these findings.

Overall, eating plenty of plant foods is likely to benefit health and longevity.

**SUMMARY: Eating plenty of plant foods is likely to help you live longer and lower your risk of various common diseases.**

#### 5. Stay physically active

It should come as no surprise that staying physically active can keep you healthy and add years to your life. As few as 15 minutes of exercise per day may help you achieve benefits, which could include an additional 3 years of life. Furthermore, your risk of premature death may decrease by 4% for each additional 15 minutes of daily physical activity.

A recent review observed a 22% lower risk of early death in individuals who exercised — even though they worked out less than the recommended 150 minutes per week. People who hit the 150-minute recommendation were 28% less likely to die early. What's more, that number was 35% for those who exercised beyond this guidance.

Finally, some research links vigorous activity to a 5% greater reduction in risk compared to low or moderate intensity activities.

**SUMMARY: Regular physical activity can extend your lifespan. Exercising more than 150 minutes per week is best, but even small amounts can help.**

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## Benefits of Sunglasses for Eye Health

Sunglasses are more than a stylish accessory – they're a crucial tool in ensuring your eyes remain healthy year-round.

Whether you're enjoying the outdoors during the summer or driving to work in the winter, you should never leave your sunglasses at home.

Here's why:

#### Sunglasses Are Designed to Protect

The most important job your sunglasses have is to protect your eyes from the harmful UV rays of the sun. Our eyes are extremely sensitive to sunlight, and even short-term direct contact can create painful or irritable symptoms.

#### Sunglasses Protect Your Eyes from the Elements

We don't see a lot of snow but if you're planning to leave town for a ski trip in the Sierra Nevada, don't leave your sunglasses at home.

A fresh blanket of snow can reflect 80% of the sun's UV rays directly into your eyes and burn your corneas.

When you're walking down the beach without sunglasses, grains of sand can get in your eyes and cause permanent damage.

Everyday dust blown by the wind can also irritate and potentially damage eyes and increase dry-eye problems.

#### Sun Exposure Can Bring on Migraines

Bright sunlight can really get to your head. Aside from the possibility of developing a bad headache, sunlight exposure can strain your eyesight, making your day much less comfortable.



#### You'll See Better

If you're at the ballgame or the beach you'll want to be able to take in everything around you. If you're driving, you'll be more in tune with your surroundings and be safer on the roads.

#### What Kind of Sunglasses Should I Buy?

You should love your sunglasses! Find a pair that matches your style and looks good on you. But most importantly, always opt for sunglasses that provide UVA and UVB protection. Polarized lenses reduce the amount of reflecting light that enters the eye, reducing glare and making images appear sharper and clearer. Polarized lenses also reduce the amount of strain on your eyes so you'll find yourself squinting less than you would with standard sunglasses.

Consult with an eye care professional to help determine the best pair for you if you require prescription lenses.

EVERY LIFE IS AN AMAZING STORY - BE REMEMBERED FOR THE GOOD TIMES



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# Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 74

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

Easy

## Regular Sudoku

Every Sudoku has a unique solution that can be reached logically.

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

Enter numbers into the blank spaces so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9.

Medium

1		2	3	4	5	6	7
8						9	
10	11			12			
13					14		
15		16			17		18
19		20				21	
22				23			

### Across

- 1 Leafy vegetable
- 5 Movie star
- 8 Pulled with a magnetic force
- 9 Chafe
- 10 Disreputable
- 12 Lights out
- 13 Shortened forms of words
- 15 Egotistical
- 17 Regal
- 19 Gallop
- 20 Height above sea level
- 22 Clothe
- 23 Relating to pants

### Down

- 1 Category
- 2 Smidgen
- 3 Examine in great detail
- 4 Large institution
- 5 Extra
- 6 Tract of land
- 7 Thieves
- 11 Hospital vehicle
- 13 Guaranteed
- 14 Twister
- 16 Don't get any funny \_\_\_!
- 18 Like some eclipses
- 21 \_\_\_ show time!

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# How To Eat Healthy Winter Food For Weight Loss

## Understand Your Body During Winter

Winter is time spent curled up on the couch, being warm in bed, seasonal parties, and lots more. It is also a time for enjoying delicious food and invariably packing on a few extra pounds.

It is hard to resist the temptation of comfort food in the colder months. However, it is not just you. There is a science behind these cravings. The fat in your body keeps you warm in cold weather, and so you have an increased need to eat fatty foods. Additionally, you tend to stay in and exercise less during these months, so you burn fewer calories and munch a lot more than you should.

The cold weather is a time to pay attention to your diet. Eating the right foods keeps your body warm and all those pesky winter ailments away. Stay fit and toned by sticking to healthy food options and making smart substitutions to your usual comfort food.

### “Eat your vegetables” – your parents have been right all along.

Leafy green veggies like broccoli, spinach, cabbage, etc. are rich in fibre and antioxidants. Eating them in the winter keeps your digestive system healthy. They also provide you with energy, keeping you active, and your weight in check. Add veggies to your plate instead of the empty carbs and starches in your cold-weather diet.

Try spices or experiment with cooking to make green veggies taste yummy. Winter greens combined with root vegetables give you plenty of variety in your diet and different vitamins, nutrients, and minerals.

### Consume protein

A diet rich in protein helps maintain your toned shape in the winter. According to a study done by the University of Washington, increasing your daily protein intake to 30 percent of total calories



reduces your calorie consumption by 440.

### Mix in some potatoes

Potatoes have a bad rep. It is a myth that consuming these vegetables adds a lot of fat to the body. Potatoes keep lousy cholesterol away by filling you up and are full of essential nutrients. Instead of going for greasy, fried potatoes, choose healthier cooking methods, such as boiling, grilling, or baking. Eat them with the skin on for even better results.

### Munch on carrots

Rich in nutrients and low in calories, carrots are a delicious and healthy food for those trying to watch their weight. Carrots contain high levels of water and fibre, which keeps hunger at bay and aids in proper digestion.

When you feel like munching on something as you get cosy under the blanket, choose a few slices of carrot with a low-fat dip instead of a bag of chips.

### Eat whole grains

Whole grains are good for your health at any time. But they are especially beneficial in the winter because they keep your body warm and increase your metabolism. Plan to have a bowl of oatmeal for breakfast for both the health benefits and to keep laziness at bay. Add flavouring like cinnamon or citrus fruits to it. Add barley, brown rice, and quinoa to your diet to increase your overall intake of healthy whole grains.

### Get nuts

Are you feeling between-meal hunger pangs? Grab a handful of your favourite nuts to snack the healthy way. For more warmth and better taste, roast them a bit first.

Nuts make you feel fuller, helping you avoid tucking into unhealthy options. They are also cold-weather favourites, particularly the still-warm roasted varieties. Walnuts, almonds, peanuts, cashews – all kinds are healthy, giving you plenty of variety. However, don't overdo because a handful of nuts is chock full of calories but better than a bag of crisps.

Winter is the time when you are likely to indulge in unhealthy snacking. Be smart and keep the right kind of snacks within reach. Load your kitchen shelves and the car with protein-rich snacks like unsalted almonds, fresh seasonal fruits, and vegetables. Also, eat plenty of oranges and apples to keep your immune system healthy. Kale is an excellent option as the antioxidants in it help detox your body naturally.

In cold weather, the human body goes back to its natural state, needing more sleep and slows down its metabolism. Aim to go to bed early instead of staying under the covers late when the sun is




shining bright and warm outside. Sleeping first means you will be well-rested and fresh to get some sun in the morning.

Getting enough sleep and soaking in the sunlight has a positive effect on your mood and keeps winter blues away. All of this suppresses unhealthy midnight food cravings and the tendency to overeat.

So head out and take a long walk in the sun to get some exercise and healthy exposure outdoors.

Work on a goal - An excellent way to stay healthy and keep your mood sweet is to work on a target. Try working towards a smaller butt or a naturally slim waist. Whatever inspires you to keep your day to day eating in check because there are many ways to achieve healthy weight loss in the winter.

Remember winter foods can be fun and healthy. With the right choices, you will feel enthused about being slim and full of energy.



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### Do you have temporomandibular dysfunction (TMD)?

The temporomandibular (tem-puh-roe-man-DIB-u-lur) joint (TMJ) acts like a sliding hinge, connecting your jawbone to your skull. You have one joint on each side of your jaw. TMD (Temporomandibular Dysfunction) causes pain and tenderness in your jaw around the TMJ (temporomandibular joint), and in the surrounding muscles and soft tissue structures.

Causes of TMD include teeth grinding, genetic factors, jaw injuries, arthritis, wear and tear, altered head posture, neck/shoulder problems that affect normal function.

Treatment varies from person to person and may include medication, physical therapy, custom mouth guards and in extreme cases, jaw surgery.

Symptoms may include:

- Pain or tenderness of your jaw in one or both TMJ's
- Aching pain in and around your ear
- Tinnitus
- Headaches
- Difficulty chewing or pain while chewing
- Facial pain
- Locking of the joint

TMD can also cause a clicking/popping sound, or grating sensation when you open your mouth or chew.

TMD affects everyone differently. For some, it's a temporary issue that goes away in a week or two. For others, it's a chronic condition that negatively impacts quality of life.

Your Osteopath is qualified to diagnose and treat TMJ associated issues, and TMD.

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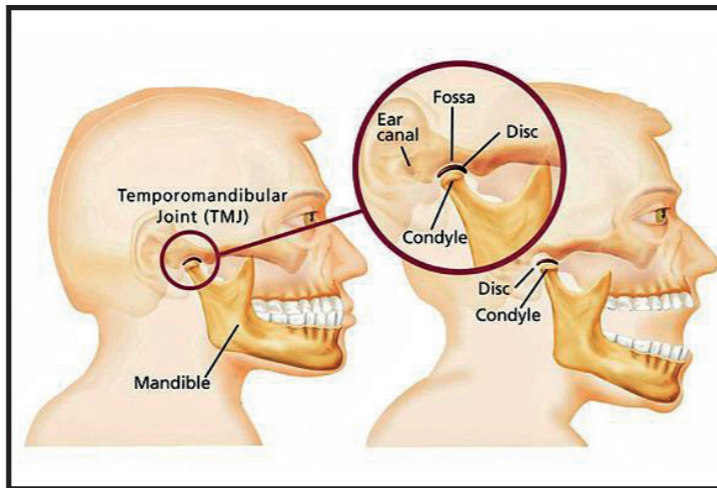


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# CLÍNICAS ABC



# Pets Corner

## Dakota – She Is - A Pussycat!!



I never thought I should say that – and it'll probably come back to haunt me or bite my tail. But there it is. She has learnt to behave in a very civilised way around the training centre's cats, and I'm sooo proud of her!

I must admit that she was far from the only dog in class who had the idea of getting rid of the cats once and for all, but what really bothered me was that as soon as there was a cat within sight (and there virtually always is down there), she would lose any semblance of concentration and would focus on the cat and nothing else.

One day, Paqui – owner and chief trainer – took all of us with cat issues to one side one by one and helped us make the dogs work in front of a cat. Manchita was the volunteer cat.

The wonderful thing about the training centre cats is that they are so unafraid that we actually get an opportunity to teach our dogs in front of them without the cats running away. They trust 100% that no harm will come to them and only run if they see a dog come running towards them unleashed.

After Dakota and I had had our turn, she worked a bit better, although always with an eye on Manchita.

I then asked if I could leave her with them one day a week (they have

doggy day care) and they could take her out for 5-10 minutes a time and explain to her about cats.

I'm not quite sure how they did it except with lots of bonding and titbits, but already after the first day she was quite a bit more relaxed about the cats.

When that day's lesson started, I praised her every time she could sit in front of a cat, a couple of metres away, on a loose lead without getting angry, and kept confirming that she was doing the right thing and was a good girl.

For the first couple of classes after the new regime, she was still a bit too interested in the cats, although less aggressive, but little by little she got used to looking at me and listening to me in spite of there being a cat in the near vicinity.

We have now reached a point where she works perfectly well when there are cats around. I always have to be on my toes, and probably always will, around cats and other dogs, but as long as I can catch her eyes and she pays me attention when I ask her to, I'm more than happy.

Now, when we're out and about, and she starts having a go at some four-legged foe, I say 'NO!', sit her down and give her a loose lead.



She very rarely breaks her sit, and even when I ask her to lie down, she obeys. She happily takes the treats and acknowledges the praise, both of which have left her cold in those kinds of situations in the past.

One more step in the right direction.

We have started agility, and we both love it!! Dakota is fearless on the court and enjoys the more informal training and the fact that mum is as upbeat and as excited as she is.

I have a dreadful fear of heights, and a couple of the obstacles in agility take her a bit too far off the ground for my liking. But I've had to swallow my reticence and not let her know for a minute that I'm reluctant, because if she suspects that I think it's scary, she likely won't do it.

But I'm proud to say that I've managed to keep my reservations to myself, and she doesn't suspect a thing. She just gets on with it and enjoys it immensely!

Thankfully, we're still on the walking stage, i.e. until she knows it really well, we walk rather than run around the course. This suits me fine, as I've realised how stiff I've become, and when I (attempt to) run, it becomes a jerky, short-stepped effort. So, I'll have to get myself more supple and get used to running a bit better.

The things we do for our dogs!!! Whatever happened to spending Sunday afternoons with a glass of red wine in front of the telly?

I must say that Dakota really has got me off my backside and made me much more active. My lovely Brutus and my gorgeous Cora were not as demanding as Dakota, and although I knew I was in for



a demanding dog when I chose a working line German shepherd, I didn't quite realise just how much it entailed.

But I love and welcome the challenge and the opportunity to shape this sharply intelligent girl into my mate and sidekick, and she seems to be completely content with her lot, too.

Do I ever wish I had chosen a chihuahua or a bichon frisé? Not even for a second!!!

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# The importance of oral health for our pets:



1) Raw foods, such as meat and fleshy bones, can help clean teeth naturally.

2) Brushing your pet's teeth regularly is one of the best ways to prevent dental problems. Establish a routine that makes brushing a positive experience.

3) Regular Veterinary Check-ups: Schedule regular dental checkups at the veterinary clinic. Professionals can perform deep cleanings and detect dental problems before they become serious complications.

Dental cleaning is a non-invasive procedure performed under general inhalation anesthesia. The goal of cleaning is to remove calcified dental plaque between the tooth and gum, which is causing swelling of the gums and pain. It is considered a necessary procedure for the prevention of periodontal disease and is very often performed in the daily clinic.

Oral health is critical to your pet's overall well-being, make sure you take it to the vet for regular checkups. Your pet will thank you!

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The oral health of pets is a key aspect of their care, and also one of the great forgotten. Lack of attention to the hygiene of the animal's mouth can lead to serious pathologies, not only at dental level but also general, which affect the vital organs of the body.

Plaque is the accumulation of microorganisms that adhere or settle on the walls of the teeth. It forms on both the surface of the teeth and gums and is yellowish white. When the dog or cat eats, the food stays on the teeth and attracts bacteria, which are what form the so-called dental plaque that we talked about before. If this plaque is not removed with proper oral hygiene, it will eventually become tartar, which is nothing more than dental plaque hardened and solidified.

The build-up of tartar in the mouth causes halitosis, leading to cavities and other gum diseases such as gingivitis, which leads to inflammation and bleeding, and periodontitis, which occurs when gingivitis is not treated and produces irreversible gum receding. Periodontitis causes the attachment of the dental piece to weaken and, in the most severe cases, ends with the fall of the teeth.

However, although the oral problems listed above are related to poor oral hygiene of pets, it also triggers other more serious diseases. This happens when bacteria accumulated in the mouths of dogs and cats spread to vital organs, such as the kidney, lungs or heart, using the bloodstream to expand.

Prevention is the best strategy to help maintain the oral health of our pets, and here are some of our recommendations:



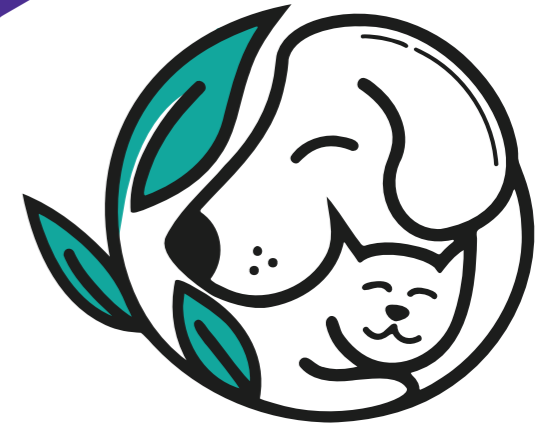
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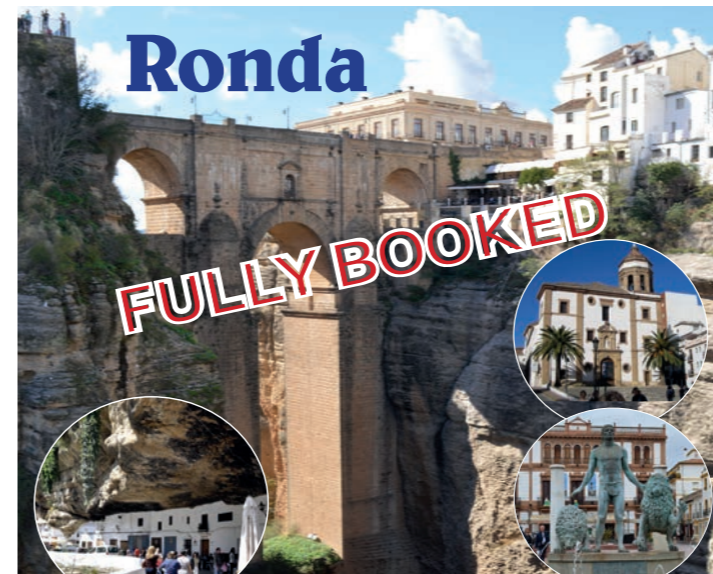
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# HOMES & GARDENS

## GEORGE SQUARE AT 6AM

By Evelyn McCrorie

As the first light of dawn broke over George Square, Angus watched his breath curl in the cold morning air and thought about Betty. He imagined her scolding him, her warm hands on her hips, but then pulling him into one of her comforting hugs.

He dragged his feet along the wet pavement, one hand in his pocket grasping the now nearly empty bottle of whisky, the other tightly wrapped around his makeshift walking stick.

The biting wind had blown him from Buchanan Street into West George Street and he stumbled as he negotiated the sloping pavement outside the Glasgow Treatment Rooms.

He remembered in better times going in there for a relaxing massage before meeting up with Betty for a night out at the pictures. With misting eyes, he leaned against a wall and took a final swig from the bottle before tossing it into a nearby waste bin.

His fingers, numb from the cold, fiddled with the hole in his pocket. He pulled out a crumpled photograph: him and Betty, both laughing. His tears blurred the edges of the photo.

With a jerking backwards movement and an upward glance, he could just make out the time on the Tron Church clock. Five to six, it registered. He padded on.

At 6am he was sitting on a bench, soaking wet and utterly miserable.

What would Betty have said if she had found him there at this unearthly hour? He huddled deeper into his threadbare coat, keeping a watch on Wetherspoon's which he knew would open at seven sharp. He would be their first customer for a warming coffee and maybe a bit of banter from the red-haired waitress.

The faint chime of bells from the Tron Church broke his reverie. A voice was calling out from behind him.

"Are you okay, pal?"

Angus turned, startled. A young woman in a bright yellow raincoat stood there, holding a steaming takeaway cup. Her smile was as warm as the coffee in her hands.

"Looks like you could use this," she said, extending the cup.

Angus hesitated. "Ah, you don't need to waste it on an old codger



like me."

She laughed softly. "It's no waste. It's Hogmanay. Everyone deserves a bit of warmth, don't they?"

He accepted the cup, wrapping his fingers around it. The heat seeped into his hands, chasing away the chill. "Thank you," he murmured, feeling both grateful and embarrassed.

The woman nodded toward the empty square. "Funny place to start the year, isn't it?"

Angus gave a wry chuckle. "Been wandering all night. Didn't have much else to do."

She tilted her head. "Well, a whole new year's ahead of you. Maybe it's a good time to make some changes?"

Her words hit him harder than he had expected.

She continued, "If you want, there's a community breakfast over at the church hall right now. Hot food, good company, and even better coffee."

As Angus approached the church building, each step felt a little lighter. It was a start - a new beginning.

Betty would be pleased.

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## Water World – The Otter in Spain

Like so many other animals in the wild, the otter is far from as prolific in Spain as it used to be, but it can still be found in many rivers and streams – as long as the water is clean, and the river bank offers cover in the shape of forest, thick vegetation or steep rock.

Otters are territorial creatures and the males usually commandeer 15 km of river, the females about 7. Once an otter has established its territory it will allow no other animal to feed in its stretch of the river, not even fellow otters. It marks its territory with its excrement.

An otter's territory is his kingdom, and outside the breeding season he has no fixed abode within his territory; he roams about up and down the river and sleeps over in his various temporary shelters.

The Iberian otter is not a sub-species, it is the same as the rest of Europe's otters, *lutra lutra*. It has a large, svelte body which measures between 59 and 85 cm, not including the tail which measures from 25 to 60 cm, more than half the length of the head and body together.

Its fur is thick, shiny and waterproof, brown on the back and grey on the stomach turning to a dirty white under the chin.

The otter has webbed feet; it is an excellent swimmer and spends approximately a third of its life in and under water. It can dive down to 20 metres and stay underwater for up to eight minutes.

Otters have no special breeding season although the majority of litters are born in spring.

When the otter comes into season it changes its habits; it goes out more during the daytime and forgets several basic everyday precautions. During the night, the male makes very distinctive



whistle-like calls to attract the female. Once they start the initial mating games playing in the water they stay together during the whole mating period.

The gestation period is 9 weeks. A litter typically consists of 2-3 pups, although litters of up to 6 pups have been observed.

The pups do not open their eyes until they are four to five weeks old, and at the tender age of 7 weeks they start venturing out of the lair. Once they are ten weeks old they play confidently close to the den until mum decides it's time for them to learn to swim.

To teach them to swim, she puts them on her back, swims to the middle of the waterway and sets them down. They then have to swim to make their way back to the shore.

She suckles them until they are 14 weeks old, and when they are six to eight months old they go off to start their independent adult life.

The life span of an otter is 8-15 years.

The otter's daily, or rather nightly, routine consists of an inspection of his territory.

He comes out at nightfall and starts working his way upstream, partly swimming against the current, partly on foot along the bank.

He then lets himself get carried back with the current, only travelling on the river bank if he has to negotiate rapids or waterfalls. Night time is also playtime, and the otters often play together in groups. They have slides that they slip down until they splash into the water.

The otter's diet consists of fish, frogs, snails, eels, insects etc. – and even the odd piece of fruit. They mainly go for sick or flawed specimens thus helping the surviving stock stay healthy.

They are much maligned by fishermen for taking trout, which indeed they do. However, they catch just as many or more of many other predators that prefer trout and devour many more than the otters do, so they help prevent overpopulation of those predators that feed exclusively on trout and their roe.

It is said that otters living in a river serves as a guarantee that its water is clean and unpolluted.

The Spanish otter population has not been present in south eastern Spain for many years, apart from some of Murcia's rivers where this adorable water baby can still be found.



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## 'Murder's in the Heir' - Whodunnit? You decide .....

Following on from the success of their last production, 'Don't Dress for Dinner', the Luvvies Amateur Dramatics Society, Arboleas, have turned to murder for their first production of their 21st Anniversary year 2025.

'There's been a Murder' ... Turn the game Cluedo into a play and you have the masterfully entertaining 'Murder's in the Heir!'

Almost every character in this hilarious mystery has the opportunity, motive and weapon to commit the unseen murder.

It's up to you, the audience to decide who actually did it! Each of the heirs to the tyrannical billionaire Simon Starkweather has the means and the motive to do away with him.

Starkweather gathers his family and employees to announce the contents of his will.

His lawyer, Lois van Zandt, reveals that he has bequeathed vast fortunes to his befuddled niece Fiona, her playboy son Jordan, his great-niece Paula (a Southern belle) and his grandson Simon III, as well as to his many servants.

Then Lois delivers the bombshell! Within hours this will becomes invalid, but WHY!

Of course, the rejected heirs are not pleased, so it's not surprising when they roam the old mansion carrying such items as an axe, a gun, and poison.

Predictably, the lights go out, and Simon is discovered murdered. Simon III is determined to find his grandfather's killer, with the help of detective Mike Davis.

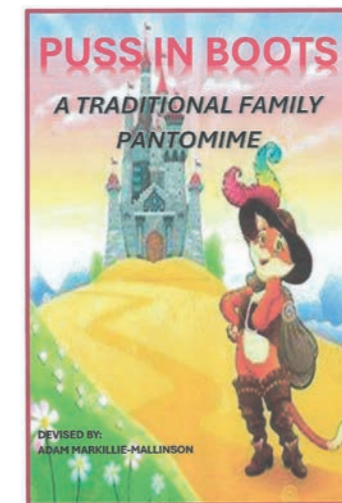
The play's unique ending, utilizing secret ballots gathered at the interval from the audience, determines the killer in this Spanish

Premier - 'Murder's in the Heir', by Billy St. John, following special arrangement with Premier Drama Services, Denver, Colorado.

The Luvvies Amateur Dramatics Society Arboleas are proud to be presenting this Murder Mystery Comedy at Teatro Pedro Gilabert Arboleas from Friday January 24th to Sunday January 26th 2025.

Tickets are on sale now, at €15.00 each, which includes a glossy A4 souvenir programme so you the audience have all the information to choose and select, at the end of Act 1, who you believe to be the Murderer.

Get your tickets now, to avoid being "murdered" in the rush. Tickets are available from C.A.T. Services, Total Entertainment - Albox & Arboleas, New Bar International and The New Trinidad Bar. See poster for details.



The Luvvies would like to thank Almeria Radio 107.5 FM for being their sponsor for this production.

Coming in December 2025 The Luvvies will present a very Traditional Puss in Boots Panto. Look out for more details later in 2025.

The Luvvies are always welcoming new members. Membership forms will be available at the theatre on performance days or contact Claire at Total Entertainment in Albox for more details. A warm welcome awaits.

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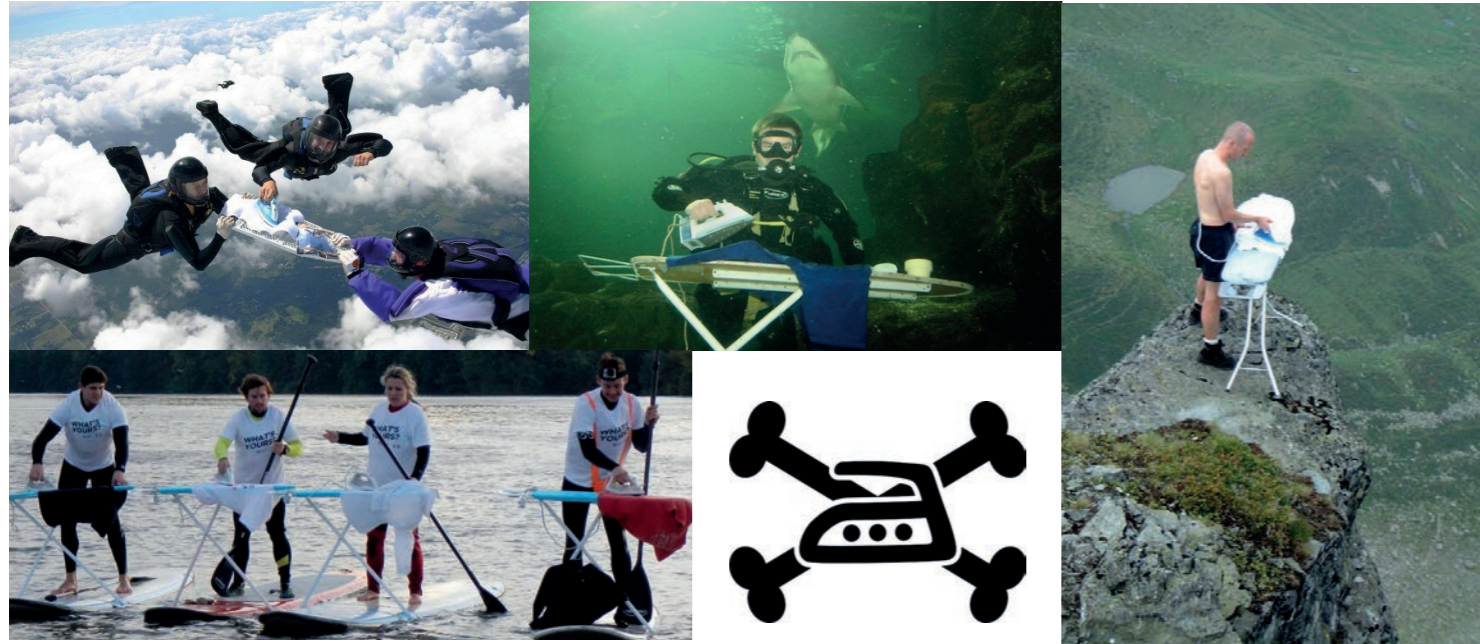
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# “A Steamy Start to the Year!!”

By Vic Davey



It's that time of year again when folk start making New Year's Resolutions, you know the kind of thing, stop smoking, lose weight, join a gym, many of which will be broken by the end of March. I made one a few years ago and, touch wood, have maintained it. It was to not make any New Year's Resolutions.

However, I thought I might start a new hobby, something a bit different. Stamp collecting? Nah! Coin collecting? Nah! I did collect matchbox labels when I was a kid, but Nah! How about Snake Charming? Now there's a thought.

I remember seeing a film once many years ago which featured this very skinny Indian chap, wearing just a turban and a loin cloth, sitting cross-legged on the floor in front of a wicker linen basket. He was playing some outlandish tune on what looked like a Recorder so beloved of schoolgirls everywhere. Suddenly the head of this cobra appeared over the top of the basket and started weaving around in time to the music. Fascinating. I mean, how hard can it be?

The more I thought about this the more interested I became. Then reality crept in. I could lay my hands on a Recorder ok, and perhaps bash out a tune, but the procuring of a snake might be more problematic. So I turned to my copy of 'Belly-Dancing Illustrated' (which I buy for the Travel Supplement) and turned to the ads in the back. Sure enough, there was a teacher. Unfortunately he was located in Tangiers which would preclude a once a week hourly lesson. So that was that!

However, I did some research and found that Snake Charming goes back thousands of years, probably to ancient Egypt, and is all bound up in magic and mysticism. The truth is that the snake follows the movement of the end of the recorder and not the music, since most are deaf anyway. Plus, they have their mouth stitched up or their fangs removed to protect their Charmer or handler. So, I was glad in the end I decided that this wasn't for me. But I wanted to find something.....so back to the research.

Charles Lamb is known as 'the dead body guy'. His unusual hobby is playing dead. As an actor who found he has trouble with speaking parts, he manages very well when a dead person is required in a play or movie. He posts photos of himself 'in character' and has a small career as a result. Now there's a thought! I think I could be a success at that. Of course, the career would cease upon my real demise!

I remember a notice going up in the office where I worked.

“Employees who are dying at their desks are failing to fall over. This practice must cease immediately as Management are unable to identify the deceased from the living”. No, I don't think so.....

Or, perhaps, another strange hobby I found, Navel Fluff collecting. Finding the raw material certainly would not be a problem! Graham Barker is in the Guinness Book of Records for the amount of his own stuff he has accumulated over some 20 years. It is kept in glass jars all carefully labelled. I could go for a new record.

Hang on a minute, if his collection took him 20 years that means I would be a nonagenarian by the time I reach his level. The only way I can do it more quickly, is if I also collected it from other people. Mmm.....not sure I want to go poking around in other people's navels to be honest. Call me fussy, but even accepting donations is not a pleasant thought. Oh, well, try something else.

After much searching, I have found one! I am already something of an expert at this and could take it to the next level, so to speak. **EXTREME IRONING.**

I do the ironing in our house and with all due modesty, am good at it, duvet covers being a speciality. If there was a Nobel Prize for Duvet Cover Ironing, it would be mine! Apparently it is a sport as well as a hobby. People take their ironing boards to remote locations, set them up and away they go. According to the Extreme Ironing Bureau it “combines the thrills of an extreme outdoor activity with the satisfaction of a well pressed shirt”. I mean, what more could I want?

Some of the places include a mountainside, in a canoe, underwater and in the middle of the M1 Motorway. (If it was me, I would have chosen the M25, since the lack of movement of traffic would provide minimal disruption). In April 2011 tenor Jason Blair was filmed ironing on the M1 after it was closed due to a fire

There is, apparently, an Extreme Ironing World Championships in which a British team were awarded Gold and Bronze medals in the first one held in Germany. Unfortunately, a breakaway group called Urban Housework tried to form their own hobby based around vacuum cleaning. It is not clear how successful they were or whether the ironers made a clean sweep!

So this is my new hobby. Shortly I will be going for the Rowenta trophy...if I have no pressing engagements....more details to follow... wish me luck.



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## CIA, Spanish & Zebra Stripes

By Tom Fynes

The CIA train hundreds of their agents to speak various foreign languages. But they stress that the agent must not get too proficient in their chosen language. The aim for the agent is to reach a conversational, just about get by, level.

What they don't want is a perfect speaking agent, with a peculiar dialect from a certain section of whatever town/city they are stationed in. It would raise too many awkward questions, so it is frowned upon.

What they do want is an agent speaking in a bland, everywhere, everyman, supermarket, restaurant, chit-chat in a bar, level of linguistic ability. Enough to recruit local agents and start a network. In short, they want agents who do not stand out in a crowd.

It reminded me of a TV show where a business guru was saying, "most businesses do not want specifically to succeed. What they want desperately, is not to fail." And he gave the example of the zebra's stripes, as a fantastic camouflage, to prove this theory.

The experts had studied the zebra and could not work out how, having black & white stripes as a camouflage, helped on the dusty green/brown African plains. It made no sense, so they set out to find out why. The lions hunting them, for example, have some excellent camouflage colouring which passes right in on the rolling plains of Africa.

The experts started tracking the zebra herd but could not pin down any one particular beast to set their electronic tracker on, as the zebras moved around, and they all looked the same. Eventually they selected one and marked it with a big red spot on its rump. So now they could tag it and follow it through the herd.

The lions tracking the herd had the exact same problem. They needed to target just one zebra. But which one, as they all looked the same. Then they spot one with a big red mark on its rump. Job



done. Meat is back on the menu Boyzz.

It turns out, the zebra stripes are a herd camouflage. The zebras will try to move in smaller circles, to be safe in the centre of the herd. The aim of the game is to blend in, not to be noticed, just like the budding CIA agent.

So too in learning Spanish, the aim should be to become linguistically invisible. Be like a zebra, stay safe in the middle of the herd. And do remember to get rid of that red spot from your rump.

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# GOING GREEN

By Jason Lowther

## Space junk: the final frontier?

Well, another year down and a belated Happy New Year!

A quarter of a century ago (yes, scary, isn't it?) we'd just got over anticipating whether the 'Millennium Bug' would cause planes to drop out of the sky, our bank accounts to empty spontaneously, our toasters to suddenly become sentient...or that cash machines would start randomly spitting out banknotes.

Fortunately, or not, in the case of the cashpoints, it didn't happen. It did though make us all think for a millisecond about our reliance on technology, and how that creates some unexpected environmental impacts.

A hopefully not too tenuous link then made me think about space junk. As humanity gears up to another 'space race,' this time with a full field of runners and riders from India, China, Europe, the usual suspects the US and Russia...and even Spaceport Sutherland in Scotland, it seems timely to consider what impacts might there be upon us all with 68 years-worth of 'stuff' already out there orbiting the earth.

Very quick recap – Sputnik in 1957 marked the start of humanity's original 'reach for the stars,' with the former Soviet Union and America each seeking to exert their influence and gain a strategic advantage over the other. To say it 'culminated' in the Apollo missions that saw humans leave their footprints on the Moon "one small step...one giant leap" etc, doesn't tell half the story though. This activity has resulted in international legal agreements to

regulate the use and exploitation of what lies 'beyond.'

As with other areas of so-called global commons, 'space (including the moon and other planets) is supposedly placed beyond the ability of any state to lay claim to it and is the common heritage of humankind – meaning we should all share in any benefit from it.

It is also to be used solely for peaceful purposes and no weapons of mass destruction are permitted to be located there. The basic rules these days overseen by the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), which in 2010 issued a series of guidelines to mitigate the amount of space debris, having appreciated the issue as one of concern about a decade earlier.

The legacy of all that awe-inspiring science that has given us satellite TV, GPS navigation, (sort of) accurate weather forecasting...and the beautiful shot of the Earth itself, called the Blue Marble and taken by the crew of Apollo 17 in 1972, has resulted in what NASA itself now describes as a 'junkyard' in near earth orbit.

There have been more than 6,000 launches - at an ever-increasing rate, which have resulted in there being over 56,000 tracked objects (and well over a million smaller items) in orbit, of which only about 4,000 are intact and working satellites.

The majority of the random (tracked) objects have been the result of failed launches and explosions in near-earth orbit. These unplanned events can have major consequences because the planned orbit of the items becomes unpredictable and any time they collide, they



change trajectories. On that principle, NASA recently deliberately crashed a rocket into an asteroid to see if it could be a means of avoiding a collision with Earth into the future, by shifting its path ever so slightly. Apparently, it worked.

It took a while for the first collision between satellites. That took place in February 2009 when a privately owned US communications satellite collided with a Russian Military one. Both were destroyed and created 2,300-plus trackable fragments, some of which have dropped from orbit and entered the atmosphere.

Since then, there have been six more, but as the pace of launches and collisions occurs even at its current rate then collisions will be responsible for more and more debris. It is hard to steer a course through randomly moving items.

Something as small as a rivet or fleck of paint, but travelling in excess of 17,000mph, is likely to cause significant damage and add cost and danger to operating in space. However, the rate of launches is increasing.

Take Space X, which has pioneered the use of reusable rockets, with more than a few explosive mishaps along the way, for example. One of its payloads did involve depositing a Tesla car into space on an orbit taking in Mars and the Sun. Related, Elon Musk's Starlink satellites, providing internet connection, currently holds permissions to send 12,000 of them into low earth orbit with an ultimate aim of there being 42,000 circling the earth.

Nations are beginning to act. So, for example the US Government issued the first-ever space debris penalty on a company called Dish Network for a failure to properly dispose of one of its satellites. The company was fined \$150,000.

Contrary to popular belief, not everything burns up in the Earth's atmosphere upon re-entry. Some of it makes it through and has potential to create havoc should it land unexpectedly on land. So, there is a need for a place where debris can be directed safely at the end of its working life.

There is a very remote area in the Pacific Ocean, known as the South Pacific Ocean Uninhabited Area, or more colloquially as the Spacecraft Cemetery, or Point Nemo. It is used as a final resting place for decommissioned spacecraft and satellites. It is no accident it is there.

Continued on page 36 .....

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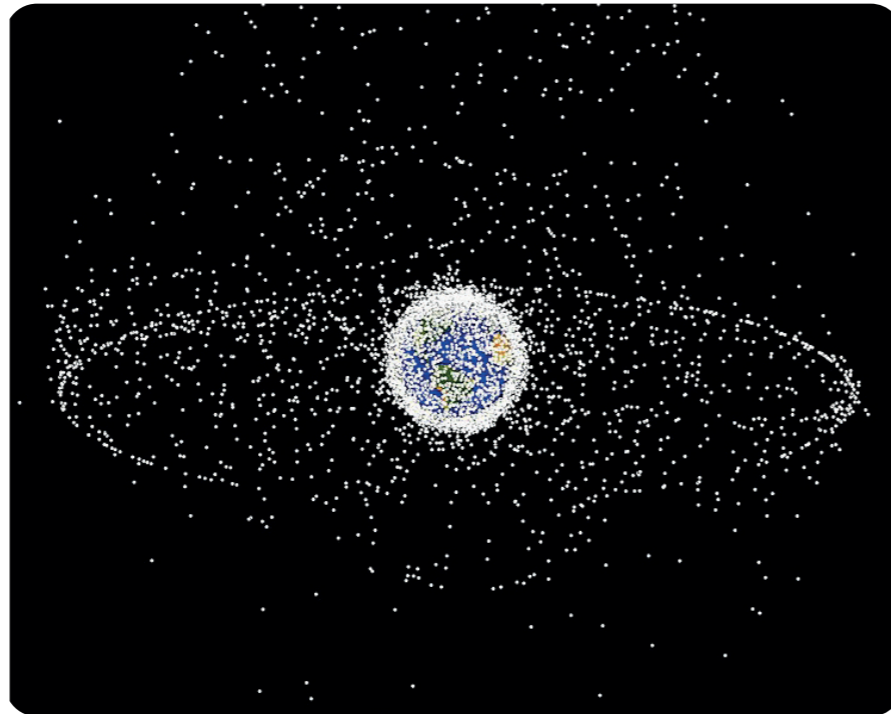
..... Continued from page 35

It is one of the most isolated spots on Earth, as far away from human populations (and shipping lanes) as possible, so as to avoid any potential problems created by the descent of spacecraft debris. It's about 1,450 nautical miles (2,700km) from the nearest landmass, making it the most remote point in the ocean.

All of the major players since the 1970s have been ditching their debris there since the 1970s: NASA, the European Space Agency, and Roscosmos (the Russian equivalent of NASA and the ESA). There are bits of Skylab (USA), the Mir space station (USSR and then Russian Federation), and all manner of other satellites and bits of spacecraft.

Until recently wisdom has it that this seabed space-junk has little environmental impact, as it is so remote. That sounds sort of familiar. The 'out of sight out of mind' mentality, prevailed for decades regarding ocean dumping, with munitions, radioactive wastes and much more mundane municipal wastes being routinely dumped at sea until a series of international Treaties from the 1970s reigned the practice in.

Nonetheless it is still where 'controlled' deorbiting of defunct spacecraft landings takes place. The practice of using Point Nemo became more standardised in the 1980s and 1990s, especially as the volume of space traffic increased with more satellites and modular space station components being launched. More recently, countries and corporations have been working on means to avoid such dumping, while also gathering or dispersing further afield the waste that is up there. Some have involved deliberate 'harpooning'



of defunct satellites and bringing them to earth. Another, far more sci-fi, involves the use of targeted lasers to track space junk so as to find a clear orbital path for newly launched satellites, developed by the ESA.

As ever, we tend to contaminate a place before then thinking about how that mess ultimately comes back to bite us. Luckily, I won't be around to write about how we're wrecking Mars!

I'll share some thoughts on the controls placed upon the environment 'out there' in a later edition this year, there are some, and as you'd expect they've had a lot to do with the balance of global power at the time.

There is, as well, the issue of 'light pollution' and the effects it has down here on terra firma. Also, as I sign off on this column, I was wondering whether readers had any specific environmental issues, concerns, bête noirs etc. you are interested in or would like me to write about in 2025?

I would hope that anyone who reads this appreciates where I stand on things being objective and evidence-based, so I'm not about to jump down any rabbit holes with conspiracists or flat-earthers. I can't guarantee that I'll pick up on all suggestions, but if there is something that interests you, let us know, via the Almeria Living contact email, and I'll see what I can do.

To sign off for the year on a positive note, Paul Watson's extradition to Japan was finally rejected by the Danish authorities on December 17th, citing outdated charges and concerns over fairness, just ahead of me submitting this column. So, 150 days after he was first incarcerated in Greenland, he'll be able to enjoy Christmas with his significant others...as I hope we were all able to.

Images courtesy of NASA

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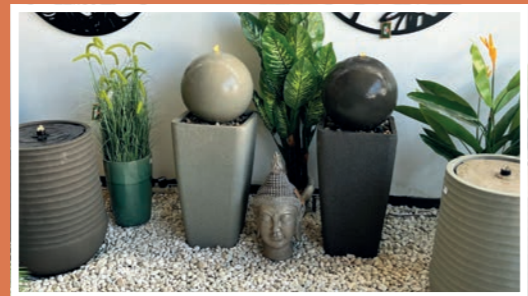
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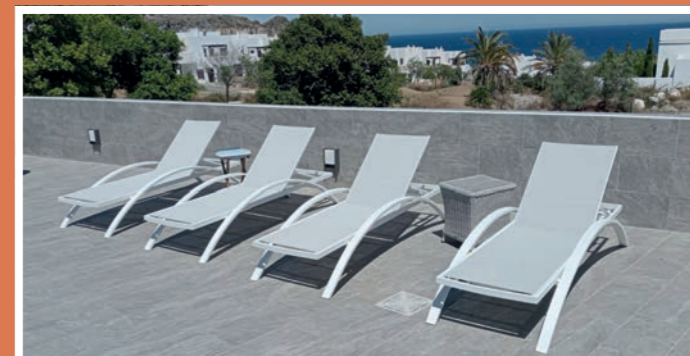


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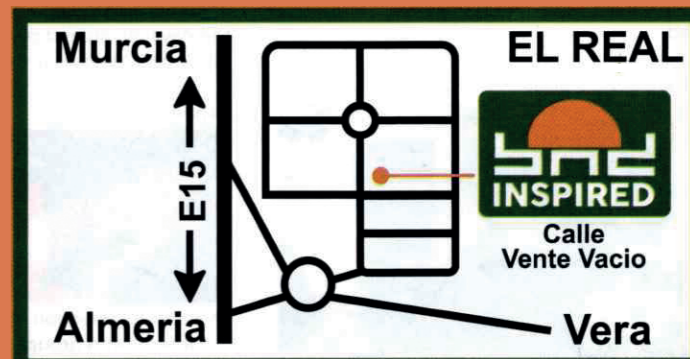




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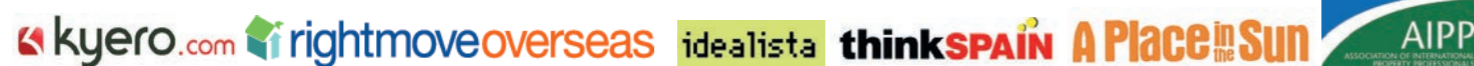
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## A Starling Murmuration



how?

The most compelling evidence suggests that each starling in the flock communicates with just a handful of other starlings, probably just 6 or 7, and follows their cues and copies their movements in a process known as 'scale-free correlation'. When one bird moves, its nearest neighbours do, and so on and so forth, which propagates a wave-like movement which pulses through the entire flock.

This is similar to how particles move in, say, an avalanche. The movement of each individual particle is intrinsically linked to the movement of another nearby particle.

Quite how or why starlings evolved to do this is unclear and there are almost certainly more layers of meaning waiting to be discovered.

Why is it called a murmuration of starlings?

Murmuration is the act of murmuring. A murmur is a generally low sound - like a rumble. If you're ever lucky enough to get within earshot of a starling murmuration, then you can hear the subtle beating of wings which sounds like murmuring.

Starlings tend to murmur at dusk whilst it's just about still light. Dusk is the transition from sunset to night time, which gets earlier as winter progresses until the December solstice, at which point dusk starts getting later again.

Starling murmurations can last up to 45 minutes, but some may only last just a few minutes. The end of a murmuration is usually sudden - something will seemingly prompt the birds to stream into their roosts, which is a wonderful sight in itself. Larger murmurations might form different groups that enter the roost at staggered intervals.

Although many other birds form large airborne flocks, starlings are the only birds that form this trademark pulsating formation that is known as a murmuration.

Starling murmurations are one of nature's most intriguing and dazzling displays. They've even been described as ethereal, as hundreds of birds swirl together in amazing formations.

Like many other birds, starlings flock together at certain times of the year. The unique aspect of a starling murmuration is the movement of the flock itself. Even when murmurations number many thousands of birds, they manage to fly in a collective mathematical synchrony that still baffles researchers today.

Murmurations typically occur in November until as late as March, whilst the birds are roosting together through the cold months.

Wintering starlings tend to roost communally, packing themselves tightly into their roosts to share body heat and make the most of their chosen safe roosting sites. Prior to roosting, they gather in vast numbers to head into their safe winter habitats together as one large flock - that is when they might form a murmuration.

Whilst the flock gathers momentum, the swirling murmuration helps the starlings avoid and ward off predators, which is one reason why starlings likely murmur. Murmurations dazzle predators in a similar way to how they dazzle us.

Starlings are gregarious birds and they don't just flock together to roost and form murmurations, but to feed as well. In the morning, usually as day breaks, starlings tend to leave their roosts all at once, which is a magical and dazzling display in itself.

Individual birds within the murmuration are sometimes moving at speeds exceeding 90mph, but somehow, they don't collide. Rather, they fly in harmony with almost perfect mathematical precision, but

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# New Year's Resolutions



It was the evening of the first of January, 2014. The three elderly men were sitting at the bar of Las Palmeras in the little village of Campillo.

They had all been born in the village, and although as youngsters they had been good friends, as they became adults their lives had taken separate directions, and they had lost touch with each other.

Retirement had brought them back to the village of their birth, and they sat together, sipping their beer and comfortably reminiscing about times past.

Manuel, the youngest at sixty-six, and who had always had an interest in the Arts, had left the village to go to University, from where he had made a career as an organiser of exhibitions, concerts and stage productions of all sorts. His career had taken him all over the world, but now he was ready to quit his hectic lifestyle, and had bought a large townhouse in the village, where he planned to quietly spend the rest of his days, enjoying the considerable amount of money he had made.

Francisco, a smart figure in his expensive casual clothes, had put his sharp mind and natural eloquence to good use, rising from humble clerk in the solicitor's office in the local town to eventually become a nationally respected barrister. He had defended or prosecuted many high-profile cases, but now he was looking forward to a life of peace and quiet in the countryside in his luxury farmhouse and his small but productive vineyard.

José, the oldest, his face browned by seventy summer suns, sat between his two friends. He had never left the village, making his living by taking whatever work was offered to him. He was well liked by everybody – even the children called him Grandpa, and as long as he had a roof over his head, and food on the table, he was content.

Soon the conversation turned to New Year resolutions. Manuel laughingly suggested that they each make a resolution to achieve the thing that they most desired, and that they should meet in the same bar on the first of January 2015.

'Whoever has not kept their resolution will pay for the drinks for the others for a whole year.' He proposed.

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By Jos Biggs

'Done!' Francisco agreed. 'What about you, José? Do you want to join in the bet?'

'What are your resolutions going to be?' Questioned José quietly.

'Oh!' Manuel laughed, and stroked his bald head. 'My life has been so stressful that I lost all my hair by the age of forty five. I am going to grow a new head of hair! What about you, Francisco?'

Francisco laughed, showing his perfect white teeth. 'My hair may be grey, but at least I have it! No, good living and good eating have rotted my teeth – these teeth look perfect, but they are all false; I will grow a new set of teeth.'

The two looked at José. 'What about you, José?' Enquired Francisco. 'What is your resolution? A trip to Madrid, perhaps? Or a cruise?'

José finished his beer, and stood up. 'I'm going to marry a Beauty Queen.' He put his glass on the counter, and left the bar.

'Maybe we shouldn't have done this?' Manuel said seriously. 'He has never even left the village, he's never going to meet a Beauty Queen, far less marry one! I was joking, and I know you were too, but I think our friend took us seriously. I do hope we have not hurt him with our silly talk.'

Francisco stroked his elegantly cut grey hair. 'No. By our standards José has not travelled far out of the village, we may consider him to be poor and his life very simple, but he is not stupid. I think he understands us very well.'

On the evening of the first of January 2015, Manuel and Francisco were sitting at the bar Las Palmeras, chatting and sipping their beer, waiting for their friend José to arrive.

Suddenly a familiar voice behind them said 'Ah! Manuel, I see you have not grown any hair in the last year. And you, Francisco, I see you still smile with false teeth.'

'José!' The friends greeted each other warmly. 'And who is this lady by your side?' Francisco turned to the smart elderly lady with a smile.

'May I introduce my wife, Maria.' José took her arm affectionately. 'I was lonely since my wife passed away five years ago, and Maria has been a widow for over two years, so we decided to marry last December. You might remember her.' He added. 'When we were youngsters, she was Maria Gonzalez, crowned Miss Campillo in 1957.'

So, you see, I kept my New Year resolution, I won the bet, so I believe that you both owe us drinks for the rest of the year.'



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

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

Well...! 2024 was once again our most successful year ever. Thank you so much to our many past and present clients and to all the local people and businesses for their support.

We are writing this at the end of December and like every year end we sit here wondering what the forthcoming year will hold for us. Unanimously we know that 2025 is going to be an absolutely fantastic year and we already have a long list of sellers asking us to list their properties in the new year. Also, our diary is already filling up with property buyers for January, February & March.

Our tips for sellers this month are as follows. The last one is particularly important.

1. At the same time as you are putting your property on the market meet with your solicitor or accountant for a full list of your sales taxes and costs whether you are buying again in Spain or taking the money out of the country.
2. Sole Agency vs Multiple Agency – Quite simply, if you put your property with numerous agents, you are literally dumping your property into the “Bargain Bin”. This will give the wrong impression of your property to buyers and delay it being sold.
3. If your property is already on the market and you get other unprofessional agents knocking on your door pestering you to list



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with them then just tell them to contact your existing agent. If they keep refusing to do this then they obviously do not want to sell your property do they?

4. Our last piece of advice for property sellers saddens and sickens us as it happens too often and the sellers would be “turning in their graves” if they knew. We have had older or ill vendors who have wanted to plan ahead for when they pass away. They want us to make sure that everything is as simple as possible for their children to inherit the property and then instruct us to sell it for them.

These sellers worked hard all their lives to buy their properties and want their loved ones to benefit from this.

However, too often the people who the sellers trusted to sort out their legal affairs get involved and all of a sudden the estate agent and children have been “locked out” and against the wishes of the deceased sellers requests the properties are sold off mysteriously to “persons unknown” and for a fraction of the true market price. The children are kept in the dark for months, bamboozled with legal waffle and one day finally receive a pittance of the true property value.

If you think you may have this situation in the future, please make your wishes clear to your loved ones in writing that you want your estate agent to be responsible for finding them a buyer. Do not allow your children etc. to get ripped off.



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## Asturian Sausage Rolls Bollu Preñáu



I've called this a sausage roll for want of a better name, and it is just that, only with different dough and a chorizo sausage instead of British sausage meat.

Bollu preñáu translates into ‘pregnant roll’.

It is a smallish roll, some 20 cm long, and it is typically sold at open air fairs in spring and summer. It is also a great favourite for picnics, and it is usually enjoyed with wine or cider.

The bollu preñáu is especially popular at the annual fiesta, Martes de Campo, which is celebrated in Oviedo the Tuesday after Pentecost. However, nowadays it can be bought in almost all Asturian bakeries all year round, not only for special occasions.

The chorizo used for bollus preñaus is traditionally the Asturian variety (logical, I suppose). You can also get ‘ordinary’ chorizo rolls that aren’t made following the traditional bollu preñáu recipe, and usually made with a chorizo with a less characteristic, strong flavour, and in some bakeries, in order to be able to tell the difference, the bollu preñáu is provided with a pea size bit of dough on the ‘tummy’ which looks like a belly button. Thus is the bollu preñáu identifiable!

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## ¡Buen Provecho!



To make bollu preñáu, you boil the required number of chorizos in cider until they start going soft. The chorizo should preferably be of the Asturian variety, and if you cannot get that, another chorizo with strong paprika flavour.

You then prepare your pastry, which is not puff pastry, but a denser pastry, sometimes similar to ordinary baguette. It is traditionally prepared with spelt flour, but ordinary wheat flour will do. The dough is divided into the same amount of portions as the number of chorizos and the sausages rolled into the dough.

Bake them in the oven at about 200°C for 15 – 20 minutes, or until they have changed colour. Don't worry if some of the rich, red juices from the chorizo escapes to the outside, it does not change the flavour, but gives the rolls a nice authentically homemade look!

If you are not a chorizo fan, the sausage can be replaced with a slice of pork belly, which is also traditional in the Asturian fairs and picnics.

In all the research I have done about the bollu preñáu it says that it should be accompanied by cider – preferably Asturian cider – so, what can we do. I would hate to be the one to break an age-old tradition, so let's pop a bottle of cider and eat our pregnant rolls! Cheers and ....

Buen Provecho!

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## Happy New Year!

I wish you all a happy and healthy 2025!

If you're anything like me, you have overindulged (just a little) over the Christmas period, so I've tried to be good and keep the food fairly sensible, simple and low fat.

There is, of course, an exception! I imagine that by the time we approach the end of the month, we will have had enough of simple, low fat food, so I've thrown in the traditional Spanish winter warmer, Fabada Asturiana, just for those that suddenly feel the need to replenish their 'proper food' deposits.

Apart from that, there are two very nice pasta dishes, and some lovely roast chicken legs. Irresistible!

Read, cook and enjoy!

### Roast Chicken Legs and Vegetables

A wonderfully tasty dish that will accommodate any vegetable leftovers you have clogging up the fridge.

If your fridge has different suggestions from mine, combine the veggies just as you like!

The hot, spicy hint makes the dish stand out from other chicken and vegetable oven roasts, and the lemon adds a fresh splash.

It's a lovely dish for a winter's day!

- Ingredients for two:
- 2 whole chicken legs
  - 400g small potatoes, halved
  - 1 red onion
  - 12 Brussel sprouts, blanched and halved
  - 2 carrots, cut into big bits
  - 8 cloves garlic with skin on
  - 1 red pepper, cut into chunks
  - ½ lemon, sliced
  - Olive oil
  - Oregano, salt and pepper

- Marinade:
- 1 tsp sambal oelek
  - ½ lemon, juice and grated rind
  - 1 tbsp olive oil
  - 1 tsp oregano
  - 1 tbsp maple syrup

Mix together the ingredients for the marinade and brush the chicken legs generously with it.

Place the vegetables in a large ovenproof dish, sprinkle with olive oil, salt and pepper and turn to cover everything.

Place the chicken legs on top, sprinkle with oregano and put the dish in the oven at 225°C for 50 minutes.

Believe it or not, that's all there is to it!

Serve with aioli if you fancy a dip, and otherwise, just enjoy!

## WHAT'S NOT TO LOVE?



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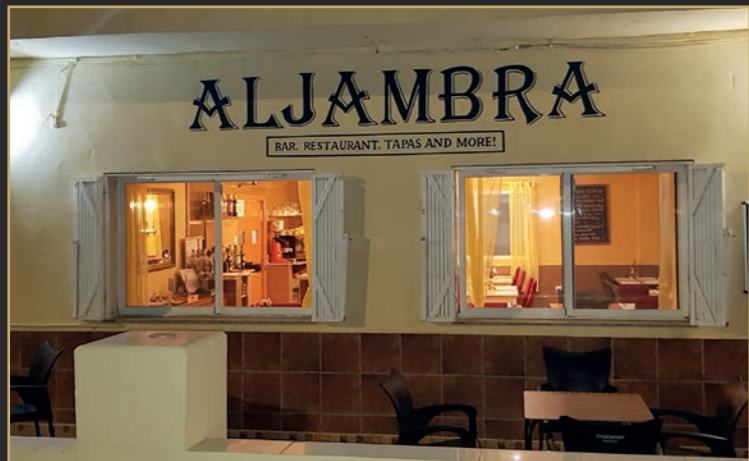
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Carl, chef and owner at the Aljambra in Albox, owned several restaurants in the UK before moving to Benalmadena in 2002. Returning back to the UK after great success at his restaurant Millys in Arroyo De La Miel.

He took the opportunity of opening the Aljambra in January after the closure of Bar Limaria where he was head chef.

The Aljambra offers a superb menu including Tapas and full menu choices. Gluten free options are easy because Carl makes everything from starters to desserts, therefore most items can be adapted to suit.

There is always a delightful choice of delicious specials sourced from local ingredients.

Aljambra is open for food and drinks Friday - Tuesday from 11.30 until late.  
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## Spaghetti with Mushrooms and Lemon

What an absolute treat! This dish is amazingly tasty and so filling and complete.

I used good old-fashioned white mushrooms, but If you want to be adventurous, you can use other kinds. There is such a wonderful selection in our local supermarkets nowadays!

The dish is put together in a minute and ideal for a dog training evening (or whatever you do when you go out of an evening).

Ingredients for two:

- 250g mushrooms, coarsely chopped
- 2+1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 lemon, juice and finely grated rind
- 150ml cream
- Pinch of chicken stock powder
- Freshly ground pepper

Cook the pasta as per the instruction on the packet. Drain and reserve, holding back 150 ml water.

Heat 2 tbsp oil in a frying pan and throw in the mushrooms. Fry, shaking the pan regularly, until they turn golden. Reserve.

In the same frying pan, heat 1 tbsp olive oil and cook the onion and garlic until soft. Pour over the lemon juice followed by cream and 100ml pasta water. Let it bubble for a couple of minutes and add more pasta water if needed.

Add the mushrooms together with the pasta and lemon juice. Heat everything through thoroughly and add pepper and maybe stock powder to taste.

Serve with a splash of green, a really tasty treat!



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## My Fabada Asturiana

Fabada Asturiana is one of the really traditional Spanish dishes. It uses good Spanish produce such as beans, chorizo and morcilla (black pudding), and is a wonderfully filling winter warmer.

I've added a few vegetables to freshen it up a bit.

This time I used a Fabada Asturiana mix from Mercadona (I'm not advertising, that's just who happened to have what I needed), because it contained the real McCoy, i.e. sausages from Asturias. And they gave it the most heavenly flavour, the best I've ever made!

Ingredients for four:

- 400g dried white haricot beans
- 4 small onions, peeled and left whole
- 4 carrots, peeled and cut into large pieces
- Packet of Fabada mix from Mercadona
- 6 whole cloves garlic
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 tsp paprika – Pimentón Dulce de la Vera
- 5 grinds black pepper
- 1 tin tomatoes

Put the beans in a bowl, pour boiling water over them and leave them to soak for an hour.

Drain and place them in the pressure cooker with all the other ingredients and pour water over to about two centimetres above the top.


Put on the lid and close firmly. Place over fierce heat and wait until you reach the top pressure.

Transfer the pot onto a low flame and let it bubble under pressure for about an hour.

Let it cool down slowly without releasing the pressure and serve once you are able to open the lid without forcing it.

So lovely, filling and warming!

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## Penne Arrabiata

To my sister, this dish was one of those that somehow really appeal, but you never get round to trying it.

When we were in Alicante together, we had lunch at a seafront restaurant that had it on the menu, and she took the plunge and tried it. And loved it!

It was made with courgette, which is not traditional, but made it into a bit more of a meal.

When she got home, she recreated it and was just as impressed, so I asked her to share it with me, so I could share it with you!

Ingredients for two:

- 150g penne pasta or any pasta of your choice
- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1-2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp sambal oelek
- 1 can chopped tomatoes
- 1 small courgette, quartered lengthwise and seeds removed.
- Salt and pepper
- 1-2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil or parsley
- Grated Parmesan cheese

Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet. Drain, but reserve 150 ml of the water.

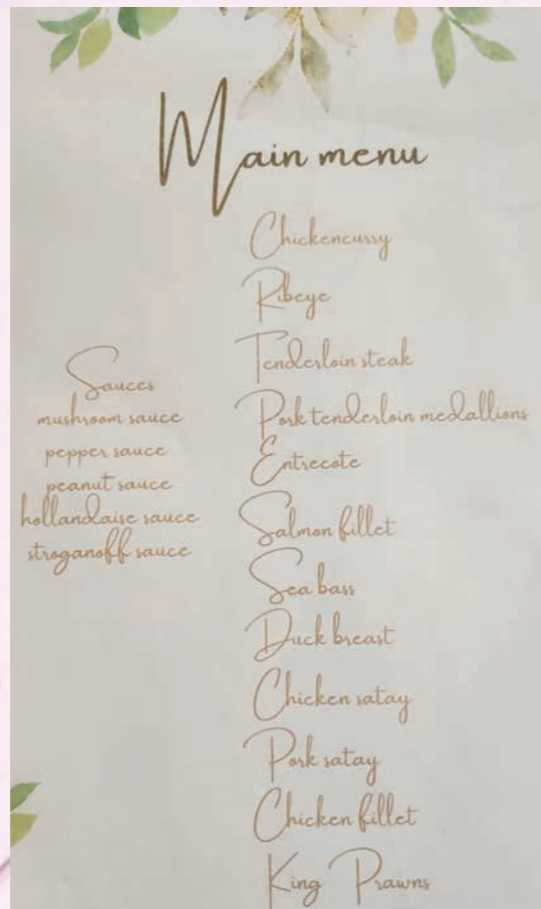
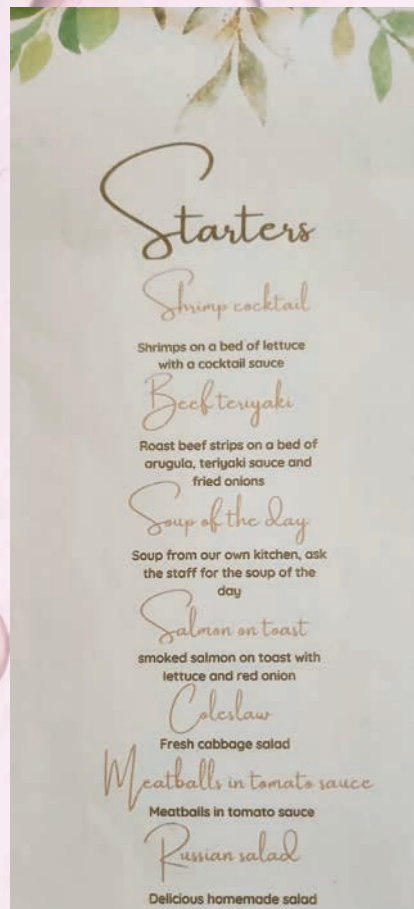
Heat the oil, add the garlic and sambal oelek, and fry, stirring, for a minute before adding the tomatoes. Bring to the boil and let it bubble for ten minutes. Slice the courgette quarters and add them after a few minutes.

Throw in the herbs, stir, and adjust the seasoning.

Turn in the pasta and heat it through. If needed, add some of the reserved pasta water.

Serve with shaved parmesan.

I have it from a reliable source that it is DELICIOUS!!



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## Jason's Meat Free Recipe: 'Buddha' Bowl

I'm having my usual crack at Veganuary - rather than 'dry' January, for goodness' sake! So, no apologies for the fact that this month's offering is 100% plant-based.

Fun fact, Spain officially joined in the Veganuary movement, which started in the UK in January 2014, for the first-time last year and the official website is available at <https://veganuary.com/es-es/>, should anyone be seeking inspiration.

So, after the glorious excess of the festive season, I'm offering something clean, healthy, wholesome and perhaps in line with your own resolutions.

The tradition of the dish has its roots around the 4th Century BC. Siddhartha Gautama (later to become Buddha 'the enlightened one') rejected his privileged noble status and set off in search of enlightenment. The story goes that he carried a bowl with him and received whatever morsels of food people would offer him.

In its contemporary guise, the key is balance, in flavour, nutrition and texture. Some whole grains, some protein, and some fresh veg and leaves all together in one bowl and with a dressing.

So, while the ingredients may differ - I've used brown rice here for example, but couscous, quinoa, bulghur wheat or even pasta (preferably wholewheat) would work equally well - they should give you an interesting variety. Rice and quinoa are particularly good if you are following a gluten free diet.

Black garlic 'ketchup' is my preferred dressing - a friend has worked out how to make black garlic in a rice cooker and so I have a steady supply but hummus would do the job, or a mix of soy sauce and sesame oil.

I've gone for smoked tofu, but any cooked legumes work fine, and whatever veg you've got...chuck it in! It's usually a cold dish, but I like to add the tofu still warm.

### 'Buddha' Bowls for 2

200g cooked brown rice (or cooked quinoa, bulghur wheat, couscous, pasta)

1 block of firm smoked tofu

¼ red cabbage, finely sliced

1 pepper, sliced

2 carrots, cut into matchsticks (could add some chopped cauli/broccoli florets)

A couple of handfuls of either or a mix of baby spinach/rocket/lambs' lettuce

1 avocado (optional) sliced

8 cherry tomatoes, halved (or 1 large tomato, chopped)

(optional) 1 small chilli, finely chopped.

(optional) chopped fresh herbs (coriander and parsley work well)



(optional) sprinkle of sesame seeds

Salt and pepper to taste.

If you're going to use the ketchup for the tofu make that first.

Chop the Tofu into, roughly, 2cm square pieces. Either put in a preheated (220°C, Gas 6) oven on a baking tray with a little oil, turning after 10 mins, or shallow fry in a little oil until golden.

While that's cooking, divide the leaves between two bowls and add ½ the rice (or whatever) and then add the raw veg.

Once the tofu is cooked toss it around in a bowl with 2 tbsp of the ketchup (or other dressing) add to the bowls and serve topped with the herbs, chilli and seeds, if using.

### Black Garlic 'Ketchup'

100g black garlic - out of its skin

150ml water

2 tsp dark soy sauce

2 tsp wine vinegar (white/red/rice will do)

2 tsp castor sugar

50 ml olive oil

Put the garlic and the water in a small pan and cook for about 10 mins on a low heat until the cloves are very soft.

Blend them with the soy sauce, vinegar and sugar and loosen, if necessary, with a bit more water.

Add the oil slowly until it forms a thick ketchup.

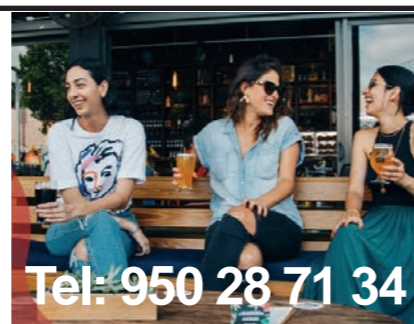
Scrape into a container with a lid. Whatever you don't use now, it will keep for a couple of weeks in the fridge.



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# SALT - the White Gold

## History

Salt has been a much-demanded commodity throughout history, so much so that it was once known as The White Gold.

It is commonly believed that Roman soldiers were at certain times paid with salt. This, however, is a misconception: 'salary' derives from the Latin word salarium, meaning money given to soldiers so they could buy salt.

The Roman Republic and Empire controlled the price of salt, increasing it to raise money for wars, or lowering it to be sure that the poorest citizens could easily afford this important part of the diet.

Already in the early years of the Roman Republic, with the growth of the city of Rome, roads were built to make transportation of salt to the capital city easier. An example was the Via Salaria (originally a Sabine trail), leading from Rome to the Adriatic Sea. The Adriatic Sea, having a high salinity due to its shallow depth, had more productive solar ponds compared with those of the Tyrrhenian Sea, much closer to Rome.

During the late Roman Empire and throughout the Middle Ages salt was a precious commodity carried along the salt roads into the heartland of the Germanic tribes.

Caravans consisting of as many as forty thousand camels traversed four hundred miles of the Sahara bearing salt to inland markets in the Sahel, sometimes trading salt for slaves: Timbuktu was a huge salt and slave market.

Salt created and destroyed empires. The salt mines of Poland led to a vast kingdom in the 1500's, only to be destroyed when Germans brought in sea salt (to most of the world, considered superior to rock




salt).

Venice fought and won a war with Genoa over salt. However, Genovites Christopher Columbus and Giovanni Caboto would later destroy the Mediterranean trade by introducing the New World to the market.

Today salt is considered a very modest commodity, and it is hard to believe that it was once such valued merchandise. We see it on supermarket shelves, in delicatessen, health food shops and anywhere that food is sold, and it is readily available everywhere at reasonable prices. Who would ever think it had such an illustrious history!

More about salt on page 58.



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## Flavoured Salts

We obviously add salt to our food in order to enhance its flavour.

If you would like to use less salt and yet not cut it out completely then mix it with other ingredients which also add flavour, that way you can obtain more flavour with less salt!

Here are a few ideas for flavoured salts; once you get the drift, the only limit to the salts you can produce is your own imagination!

### Chilli Salt

If you make this with fresh chilli it will obtain a beautiful salmon pink colour; with dried chilli you get the white salt mixed with red chilli flakes.

1. Cut the stalk off three red chillies.
2. Put them in a food processor together with 250g coarse salt and process until well mixed.
3. Spread out the salt on a piece of baking paper and leave it to dry at room temperature for 24 hours.
4. Put it into a tightly lidded storage jar.

### Lemon Salt

You can use this mixed with other spiced salts or on its own. It goes very well with chicken.

1. Cut the yellow rind off an ecological or untreated lemon.
2. Place it in a food processor with 250g coarse salt and chop until the rind has been reduced to small pieces.
3. Spread out the salt on a piece of baking paper and leave it to dry at room temperature for 24 hours.
4. Put it into a tightly lidded storage jar.

### Smoked Salt

Smoked salt adds a feel of barbecue or bonfire to your food, and furthermore it has an attractive colour. The easiest way of making it is by using a kettle grill.

1. Make smoke in a kettle grill by using either special wood smoking powder, or wood shavings which have soaked in water for about an hour.
2. Put 500g coarse salt in an aluminium tray with a large surface and place it above the wood, then cover the grill with the lid.
3. Leave it to absorb the smoke for about half an hour, maybe turning it a couple of times as you deem necessary.

### A Salty Did You Know...

That in medieval England you could tell a person's social status by where they were placed in relation to the salt on the dinner table. If you were placed close to the salt, you were a person of consequence, whereas if you were placed at a distance you were of no importance.



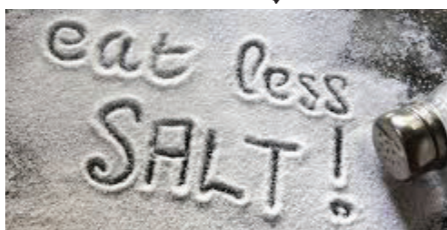
4. Cool and put directly into a tight lidded storage jar.

### Spiced Salt

Use any spices you fancy, this is just one of an endless amount of combinations.

1. Grind 1 tbsp coriander seeds with 1 tbsp cumin seeds.
2. Add ½ tbsp chilli flakes.
3. Mix the spices with 250g coarse salt and place it in a tight storage jar

### Healthy Salt Intake



Believe it or not, we do need it in spite of always being told to avoid it for health reasons.

Yes, it does cause us to retain liquids in our bodies – but we need to. Of course, an exaggerated intake of salt can cause high blood pressure, cardiovascular problems and strokes, so like all other good things, it should be enjoyed in moderation.

The recommended daily intake of salt is 2.3 grams. Researchers have found that reducing the salt intake for groups of patients with a high risk of the mentioned illnesses to 1.5 grams a day actually caused them other health problems without reducing the risk factor.

Unfortunately, we are not in control of how much salt we have, and researchers reckon that the average intake is three to four times the recommended amount. This is because some 80% of the salt we have comes from factory-made or processed foods.

This means that even health food products can have high salt contents, so make sure you always check the product description to try to control how much salt you eat.



# Trades & Services

## New Year's Resolutions for Gardeners

The new year gives us an opportunity to reflect on the past and dream for the future and maybe set some new year's resolutions. These ideas can help you be the best gardener you can be.

Resolve to meet one goal each month, or simply use them as inspiration for your own list.

### Clean out the shed and go through old materials

We've all got it: that one place in the garage or shed where forgotten garden materials have piled up and now sit, unused.

Resolve to clean out your garden shed, discard expired materials and tidy up tools.

### Take a risk, plant something new

Or, don't plant something old, however you want to phrase it. As gardeners, we all have our favourites, but there's little to be gained from doing the same thing in the garden year after year.

Challenge yourself to replace an old standby with something new.

### Add a new native species to your garden

Beautifully your garden and attract more pollinators by adding another native species this year! Here in Spain, we are spoilt for choice so why not be a little adventurous.

### Plant something with a child

Whether it's your own children or grandchildren, nieces, nephews or students, resolve to share the love of gardening with a younger person this year.

Or, simply plant some beans in a plastic cup on the windowsill and rediscover the childlike joy of seeing the first sprouts.

### Plant a food you haven't tried before

Whether it's a veggie, fruit or herb, resolve to grow a new type of food in your garden this year, remember to not plant more than you can realistically use.

### Treat yourself to a good gardening book

Gardening books are a great way to practice your hobby during the colder months or when the sun isn't shining. Resolve to read at least



one gardening book this year.

### Start something from seed

This is an annual resolution for gardeners. There is something intensely rewarding about growing from seed!

If this is already a regular part of your gardening routine, we suggest trying something new, or simply brushing up on your knowledge on starting from seed.

### Invite people over to spend time in your garden

We love the community aspect of gardening. Beautiful gardens are something to be shared, so resolve to have a gardening get-together at least once this year.

If you're an apartment-dweller or landless gardener, plan a garden-related outing with friends or perhaps resolve to share a meal outdoors.

### Document your garden

Finally, make a resolution to document your garden, either to track the progress of new projects or simply to enjoy.

Take photos of your garden, or perhaps start a gardening journal.

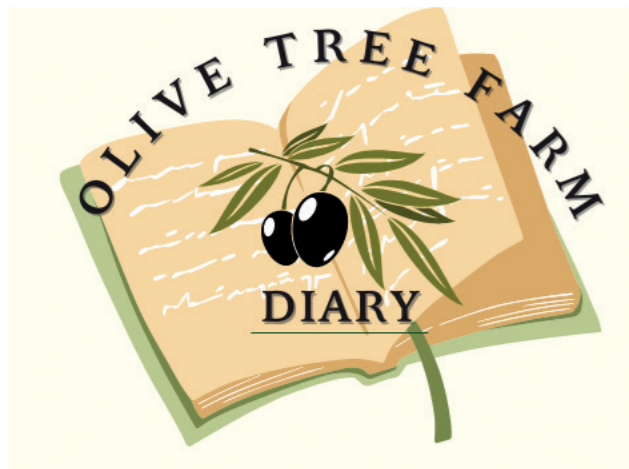


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We start 2025 off with some beginnings and endings here on Olive Tree Farm. As the year came to a conclusion, farmhouse life and Christmas tradition swallowed us whole!

Unfortunately, that left little time to do the most important task of the season – pick the olives! The winds came and went and knocked several branches' worth down, but time itself had our hands tied and we just haven't had the opportunity to throw ourselves at it. Hopefully, with a pinch of luck, we may be able to salvage enough to be able to get a little oil, at least.

Bad news aside, let's move onto the good!

The Christmas duck and New Year chicken roasts were absolutely sublime! Ben treated me to a culinary break over the holidays and did not disappoint — and neither did the birds.

We are looking forward to getting another good few hatching sessions as the year progresses, the first of which will be happening very soon as the Muscovys have finally began laying, and we're building up the eggs until we have a real good amount to fill the incubator.

I feel like it hasn't really been long since we put the incubator away, but here I am giddy as anything ready to see some ducklings hatch.

The kid in me is too thrilled!

Logan (9), Lucas (5) and Melody (1.5) have been getting the animals acquainted with their new toys since Christmas, too. When they're done running around hunting for eggs, they have been enjoying playing with their figurines and dolls in the flowing water channel.

It's had a very interesting affect on the ducks. The Muscovy ducks are always friendly and lurking around for a quick stroke, but the Khakis generally like to keep their distance. That last is probably a bit difficult when small people keep playing in your favourite drinking area.

It's taken perhaps a couple of weeks, but the ducks are well integrated with the kids play-life now, and they all crowd around the watering hole together, peacefully cracking on with their own things.

I do adore watching them all at it.

It looks like we won't have to wait for long to see something from the geese in terms of eggs now. The male has been "sneaking" up on us, doing a goose version of tiptoeing, except he is an exceptionally clumsy gentleman and often gives himself away. A good job really, no one likes a cheeky bite from behind!

His temperament, however silly, is a good thing though. I feel like maybe mating season is creeping upon us, ungainly as the gander, and we will use this opportunity as a final attempt to see if we can get some fertile eggs for incubation.



Without the second male to distract him, our lone boy seems to be more in sync with the female, and a little more attentive to her needs. Time shall tell.

We have also decided that this is the year that we reintroduce rabbits onto the farm. Having a Spanish friend who hunts and occasionally gifts us a rabbit or two has been amazing, and they were always our quickest and easiest supply of meat, so it seems a little daft to keep putting it off and get it back into the farm game.

Thank you for reading. I hope you had a wonderful Christmas, and Happy New Year from all of us here on the farm! I hope you join us again next month to see what farm-life antics we get up to!

You can follow the progress of the family and farm on our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/OliveTreeFarmSpain/](http://www.facebook.com/OliveTreeFarmSpain/)

You can also find our YouTube channel, just search for Olive Tree Farm! We will be adding new videos soon as we dig into some projects, so subscribe now so you don't miss any.

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# TECH, TV, GADGETS & GIZMOS

## EYE EYE

### Happy New year one and all!

Television at Christmas for me is not just about celebrity Tipping Point or all-stars Christmas Bake-off. There are a whole raft of treats at my disposal throughout the festive period.

One of my favourites since I was a child has been the Royal Institution Christmas lectures. They present science in an entertaining and relevant way with cameo appearances by people you would not necessarily expect (Douglas Adams was one). The presenters are always experts in their field and whereas normally their lectures would be to their peers, The Christmas lectures (which run all week) are specifically designed for children (which means that all of us stand a chance to understand what is being said).

This year's lectures were presented by Dr Chris van Tulleken as he followed a miniature camera on its journey through his digestive system. You will be glad to find that I decided against covering the subject this month as it would probably need to be unpalatably graphic in nature and I didn't want it as a running theme...

However, whilst on this trip down memory lane I ended up watching a short documentary on animal eyesight. It was focusing mostly on insects but was generally covering the adaptation of eyesight within differing species. It is widely known that dogs, for example have eyesight attuned for hunting.

Just as an FYI: dogs only see the world in blue & yellow and not red. Their eyes also are not as sharp as ours, down by about 50 per cent but where they do excel is in low-light and motion. Human eyes can detect flickering (such as displayed on a TV screen) up to about 50 times per second before the images become seamless.

Your dog will still see separate images up to around 75 times per second. Most TV refresh at about 60 frames per second so your dog is watching a stuttering succession of still images, especially if



you're watching on an old telly.

Visual acuity varies immensely between species; birds of prey have "telescopic" eyesight and Chameleons have 360 degree vision (just like your mum used to have when you were a kid).

You will be surprised, however, to learn that cats' eyesight is not as superhuman as widely believed. They have a similar colour palate to dogs and their night-vision is far superior to ours (by a factor of 6) due to their ability to capture and reflect more light (why their eyes shine at night in headlights).

Cats, like dogs, use their other heightened sense to help them hunt. They are described as "crepuscular", with all senses working at optimum unity at dawn & dusk. Cats do hunt at night because it is easier to hide, as many of you will know, having found a feathery offering on the kitchen floor waiting for you in the morning.

What really interested me was the section on compound insect eyes. I am sure you will agree that there is something fundamentally wrong about insect eyes – mostly due to the fact that they have the wrong number of them.

Spiders have evolved to have 8 eyes, two forward facing for detail and the others generally for movement. But why? Why is it necessary to have so many eyes when the acceptable amount is 2 (unless you're a pirate)? Well, the answer is surprisingly simple – spiders don't have a neck and cannot turn their head to see behind them so they literally evolved to have eyes in the back of their head (like your mum).

The more biologically-aware amongst you will have been palpitating about mentioning spiders in the same breath as insects – yes doctor Cooper, there are fundamental differences between spiders and insects; one of which is that spiders have simple (if too many) eyes and insects have evolved to have compound eyes. To add further confusion, some insects (Praying Mantis' for example) have 5 eyes! I mean, have a day off will you, God! Allied to the fact is that insects



also typically have antennae and wings. The two are probably related developments. A compound eye by design has a much broader field of vision, allowing the insect to move forward without having to turn round all the time to see if it is being followed.

So what the heck is a compound eye and how does it work? Glad you asked...

Most of us (I hope) are aware of how human eyes work; one opening and the light that gets through it is focused (or not) on to the retina at the back (upside-down) and the image relayed as a whole via the optic nerve to the brain – two at a time (again, unless you're a pirate). One big image with a lot of detail to decode.

Insects – flies for example are not overly bothered with the nuances of fine detail, using their other senses to find food. Their eyes, although low in resolution are very good at detecting movement, which makes sense as I have often wondered how a fly can find its way into a hermetically-sealed room but is unable (or as I am beginning to believe, unwilling) to find its way out of an open window!

Just as an FYI – if you are trying to swat a fly (what do you mean, "if"? It's Spain) I have it on very good authority (you know who you are Sensei) that if you attack from directly above then you're more likely to succeed. Flies, for all their ninja-like reflexes will take off upwards every time. Remember that the next time you're on a stress-releasing killing spree.

Anyhow, back to the subject in hand. If you imagine a honeycomb on a much smaller scale with a lens of sorts at the top and photoreceptors (like we have) at the bottom of each one then you're pretty much there. It works because some insects have up to 15,000 in each eye. You are quite welcome to research what this would look like but it's like a pixelated image when t'internet's on a go slow.

They cannot see an individual blade of grass moving, but that movement will result in a colour change that will be detected in one

or more "block".

The most wondrous part I thought is that bees see a different part of the visible spectrum to us, and can also see polarised light (light that has part of its spectrum changed during reflection). There are also differences between the worker bees and the pollinators.

Workers have poorer eyesight but the pollinators have eyes that can detect movement at up to 300 frames per second! They see ultraviolet light which is particularly helpful when searching for pollen – flowers have evolved to guide bees to where they need to go, with colour. I had a brief rummage around for pictures of flowers under ultraviolet light and some of them were breathtaking. Go look for yourselves!

During this random wandering (to which I am often prone) I started to wonder. We take sight for granted but don't always question it. What is light? Would it surprise you to learn that visible light and the radio waves that you listen to are basically the same thing? If so, why do you need a radio or TV in the first place? Your eyes are nothing more than a pair of miniature satellite dishes.

More on that next month but for now, happy New Year!





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### Mr. Almon Strowger. And his Telephone Exchange.

I have written about people that have given us technologies we take for granted. Seeing my electronic post bag burst at the seams, I thought I would write about another. Trembling with anticipation? It is sort of related to my recent article on the Speaking Clock.



We all take ringing someone up for granted. It wasn't long ago, the 1920's, that you would pick up the phone, to be answered in person by a polite lady, asking with whom you would like to be connected. Picking up your receiver at home would operate an electro-mechanical flap, "doll's eye" at the telephone exchange to attract the attention of the "operator." She would ask you who you wanted to speak with, manually connecting you to that subscriber. She would then listen in to the call and clear the line down when you stopped talking. Every telephone had its own two wire cable back to a central building. The streets and skies were cluttered with 1000's of overhead wires. Something had to change.

Now, history has it, that Mr. Strowger, an Undertaker by trade, had the right hump with the girl at his local telephone exchange. He knew she would listen to his calls and pass pending business to her husband, a competing Undertaker. Not cricket, eh? He set about designing the principles of an automatic system which could connect telephone users together, without the human element. He enlisted the help of his brother-in-law who was an electrical engineer. A system of pegs set in a circle, were connected to a central relay system. A specific sequence of peg operations connected you to the required other user. This system, that now had a patent, was installed in Strowger's then hometown in India, in 1891. "The Automatic Electric Exchange Company" was established. Strowger sold his shares and patents in 1898 for about \$2000. They sold for \$2.4 million in 1916! Bugger!

The system developed quickly and, in the UK, the British Post Office trialled several systems around the country from different manufacturers, from Sweden, Germany and the US. Mr. Strowger won.

The system developed into what was known as the "Two Motion" switch. You will be familiar with the dial telephone. Lift the handset and this enables a relay system in the exchange ready for your call.

As you wound up the spring-loaded dial and released it, it would wind back at a regulated speed, sending a chain of pulses (10 per second) to the exchange. One pulse for digit 1, through to 10 pulses for digit 0. This would step a "selector relay" at the exchange to a routing path awaiting your next digit of the number to be dialled. With each digit dialled, a different selector would take you to the next part of the route. Eventually, when all digits were dialled, a "ringing current" would be sent to the distant phone, to ring its bell. The subscriber would pick up the handset, which would finalise the

electrical connection between caller and receiver at the exchange. The answering party would politely announce themselves as the name of the local exchange and the number. e.g. "Temple Bar 3658," as opposed to a rather abrupt "digame" we have here! The exchange would detect if the distant handset was ready to receive a call and not busy. If it was in use, a busy tone would be sent to the caller. Local town exchanges were established so subscribers could chat locally. Towns were connected with cable capacity to cater for the average number of conversations required at any one time.

The electro-mechanical Strowger system stayed in service in the UK well into the 1980's. This included the talking clock, which was recorded onto a large rotating multi segment drum, containing all the separate words to be linked together to make up the Time is sentence. "Dial Tone and "Engage Tones" were recorded on a similar drum.

In "Times of Crisis", telephone access would be restricted to police, Doctors and Military, allowing enough lines to be readied for important calls.

Interesting fact... An electro-mechanical system is far less prone to damage by an "EMP," Electro Magnetic Pulse, generated by a nuclear bomb. The EMP would trash any modern-day electronic system. I know, certainly up 'til the mid 80's, an old Strowger system, under Downing Street, was maintained, just for that reason. Top Secret! If I told you any more, I would have to shoot you.

If you have something to fix, call me on the telephone.

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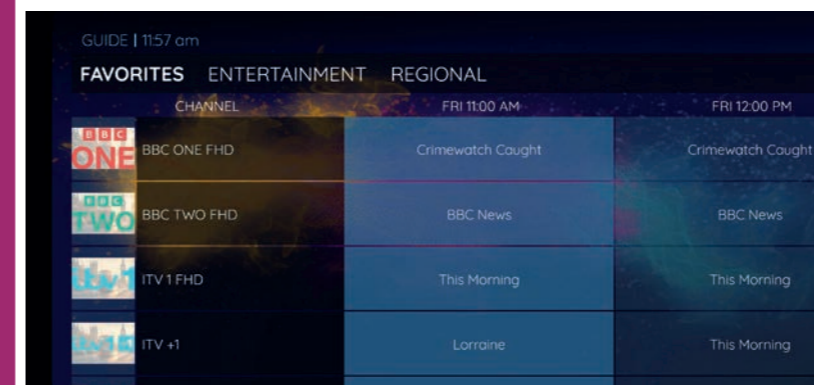
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# Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 74

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.

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

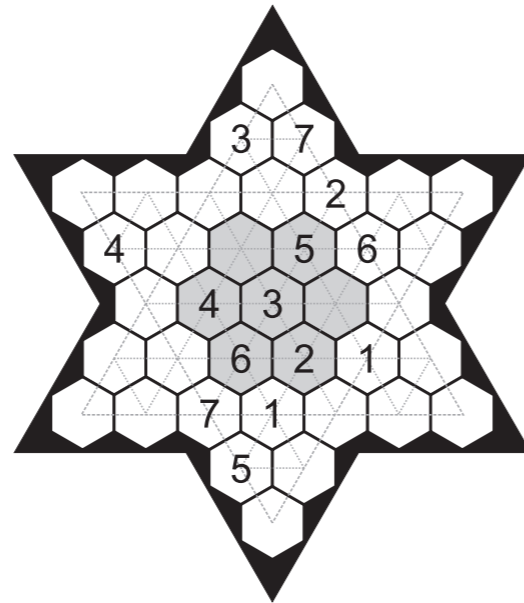
**Samurai Sudoku**


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

## Star Puzzle

To complete the puzzle fill in each of the empty hexagon cells with numbers between 1 & 7 following the 3 rules below;

1. No numbers in a horizontal line can be repeated.
2. No numbers in a diagonal line can be repeated.
3. No numbers in the 7 gray hexagons can be repeated.



\* Note that each white hexagon belongs to a line of 7 that must contain each of the numbers between 1 and 7

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<b>Wednesday</b> Bédar, Mojácar, Lubrín Cantoria	<b>Saturday</b> Águilas, Arboleas, Vera
	<b>Sunday</b> Fines, Villaricos

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**A look at the Red Bull Junior Team**

Almost half of the Formula 1 grid in 2025 will have come from the Red Bull Junior Team, making it one of the most successful academy programmes in motorsport.

Jack Doohan, Pierre Gasly, Alex Albon, Carlos Sainz, Isack Hadjar, Yuki Tsunoda, Liam Lawson and reigning world champion Max Verstappen have all come through the Red Bull ranks.

Each team in F1 has its own driver academy; for example, George Russell graduated from the Mercedes junior programme, but what makes the Red Bull system so unique?

The Red Bull Junior Team is a driver development programme operated by Austrian conglomerate Red Bull GmbH, best known for its energy drinks brand, and headed by motorsport advisor Helmut Marko.

It was officially founded in 2001 with the aim of signing and developing young racing drivers, so that they are capable of establishing successful careers within the industry.

This entails Red Bull identifying drivers from Formula 2 right down to karting to fund and support their progression through the open-

wheel ranks with aspirations of eventually getting to F1.

Sebastian Vettel, for example, first received Red Bull backing in karting, while Liam Lawson joined the programme at the age of 17 ahead of his rookie Formula 3 campaign.

Red Bull therefore owns two teams in motorsport's top single-seater championship: Red Bull Racing and Racing Bulls, which is what it will be known as in 2025.

Red Bull made its F1 debut in 2005 after the company purchased Jaguar Racing and thus took over its Milton Keynes base.

This saw Christian Klien and Vitantonio Liuzzi become the first two Red Bull juniors to compete in F1, as they both contested selected rounds of the 2005 season alongside 13-time grand prix winner David Coulthard, who was signed from McLaren.

It was not a stellar debut year for Red Bull as it finished seventh in the championship, but the following season saw the company expand its presence on the grid.

*Continued on page 70 .....*

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..... Continued from page 69

That's because Red Bull bought the uncompetitive Minardi, an Italian squad that had been in F1 from 1985 to 2005.

The company rebranded the team as Toro Rosso - which is 'Red Bull' in Italian - to serve as Red Bull's junior squad in F1.

Since its debut in 2006, the Italian outfit has raced under many guises as 'Toro Rosso' was ditched for 'AlphaTauri', Red Bull's fashion brand, in 2020 before rebranding as 'RB' in 2024. From 2025, Red Bull's sister team will be known as Racing Bulls.

Throughout the many rebrands, however, its sister outfit has become one of F1's most successful teams in history.

Red Bull has won eight drivers' world championships (Vettel, 2010-13, and Verstappen, 2021-24) and six constructors' titles (2010-13, 2022-23) while breaking many records like most victories in a season (21), most consecutive wins (15) and most points in a campaign (860).

But not every Red Bull junior will reach F1, as many graduates of the programme are contesting other forms of motorsport whether it is the World Endurance Championship, IndyCar or even DTM.

Which F1 drivers have graduated from the Red Bull Junior Team?

Hadjar will become the 17th F1 driver to have graduated from the Red Bull junior system when he makes his series debut in 2025.

The 20-year-old will partner Tsunoda at Racing Bulls after Lawson was promoted from the Italian outfit to become Verstappen's teammate next season.

Red Bull has a long history of signing drivers from its sister squad, with Vettel the first to make that jump in 2009 shortly after winning the 2008 Italian Grand Prix.

The eventual four-time world champion was a catalyst for drivers making the same transition, as Daniel Ricciardo and Verstappen both joined Red Bull directly from Toro Rosso.

Given Vettel and Verstappen have each claimed four F1 world championships with Red Bull, while Ricciardo won seven Grands Prix with the Austrian squad, the programme has many success stories.

But it is also a very cut-throat programme. Should a driver not



immediately perform well, their future within the system becomes under question.

Gasly, for example, moved to Red Bull in 2019 after a season and a quarter with Toro Rosso. But, the Frenchman was demoted back to the 'B' team after just 12 Grands Prix having struggled against Verstappen.

His successor did not fare much better either. Albon was promoted midway through his rookie year, but he was dropped from the 'A' team after just a season and a half.

That followed a very disappointing 2020 campaign where Albon finished seventh in the championship and 109 points behind Verstappen, who was third.

So the Thai-Briton was off the grid in 2021 before returning with Williams in 2022.

During his year away from F1, Albon contested DTM in a Ferrari 488 GT3 which was just one of many examples of a Red Bull junior graduate competing in a different racing series than F1.

Sebastian Buemi, for example, has become a four-time winner of the WEC after his three-year stint with Toro Rosso.

Ayumu Iwasa, meanwhile, is a Red Bull junior in the Super Formula championship and IndyCar's Callum Ilott spent 2015 in the programme - yet neither have started a Grand Prix.

# A Nerd Looks at Spanish Number Plates!

By Mike Woolnough

Having spent the last 18 months trying to be vaguely academic I thought I would return to being a nerd! The world needs more nerds, they are generally quiet, peaceful people who just want to enjoy their hobby without bothering anyone else.

Usually, they are objects of mild ridicule, so I was very pleased by the public outpouring of support for the model railway club that had its exhibition totally trashed by teenage yobs.

I am sure there must be a name for people who are interested in and/or collect vehicle registration plates but, try as I did I could not find one! It is not my particular nerdish activity but I recognise fellow nerds when I see them!

I contemplated writing this piece as a result of a number of our visitors expressing an interest in how Spanish car registration works when there is more than one format to be seen!

It always seemed a bit strange as there are several different formats to be seen in the UK...anyway, here goes!

In 1893 the Department of the Seine in France issued the world's first vehicle licence number plate. The rest of France did not follow until 1901 by which time Spain had been issuing them for a year.

At the end of the first year, four vehicles had been issued with plates, two in the Balearics, one in Cáceres and one in San Sebastian. A further 47 were issued in the following year.

The system was regionally based with one, two or three letters followed by a number sequence starting at 1 and continuing up to 999,999 (except that they never got that far!).

The letters used were the initial letter of the region concerned except where confusion could happen. For example, AL was for Almeria and A was for Alicante; similarly, M was for Madrid and MA for Malaga. In some cases the letters were those of the regional capital.

There were a few three-letter prefixes where the first two letters were the same. By 1971 Madrid had issued over 960,000 plates with Barcelona not far behind, so a new system was required.

There are quite a few cars around bearing the original series of plates. If you visit Barol Oil service station on the Santa María de Nieva road out of Huércal Overa you will find a number of vintage cars with early issue plates.

In 1971 a new system was introduced, still regionally based. The region identification letters were standardised at one or two letters followed by four figures followed by the letter A, this letter increased incrementally up to Z at which point the letter sequence became AA with the intention it would sequence through to ZZ. The letters Ñ and Q were never used.



www.worldlicenseplates.com  
October 2018

On square plates, all four letters came together with the numbers underneath with the potential to form words. Two letter combinations ending in A, E, I and O were not used in the suffixes because of the risk they could form offensive words!

Certain other combinations were never issued for the same reason, but one or two dubious combinations did slip through – but this is a family magazine!

All of these plates had black characters on a white background, in 1987 there was a change to the font which resulted in heavier characters being used.

By the end of the twentieth century Madrid and Barcelona had reached ZX and XC respectively so there was an urgent need for some changes to be made.

A further complication arose from the use of regional languages which resulted in changes in the spelling of some regional names. Girona became Girona with the number plate identifier changing from GE to GI.

To avoid a flood of changes the Government decided to abandon the regional system and replace it with a standard national system from 18th September 2000.

Continued on page 72 .....

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..... Continued from page 71

The national system consists of four figures followed by three letters. The first such plate was 0000 BBB and will continue through to 9999 ZZZ. As before Ñ and Q will not be used, neither will any of the vowels. It is estimated that this system will last until about 2040. At the beginning of June they are about to issue 0000 LBB. If you are a true nerd you will work out if the 2040 prediction is on target!

All of the new series carry the EU identifier as a small blue panel on the left of the plate. With the older plates it was optional. Owners of older cars may now add the identifier. If the plate has to be replaced due to loss or damage the new plate must include the identifier.

Of course, number plate spotters will have noticed there are quite a few vehicles around which have completely different number plates. Vehicles with an engine capacity less than 50cc (e.g. mopeds and microcars) do not have to have a national plate, these are still issued locally and are black on yellow. They all start with C for ciclomotor. Agricultural or other special vehicles are red on white and all start with E.

There are a number of other fairly standard plates with letters allocated to specific organisations, the two most common being DGP followed by four figures. (DGP= Dirección General de la Policía), often there is a suffix - RC; this indicates the vehicle is leased and other letter combinations like AB that it is purchased! The letters PGC are for the Guardia Civil.

Others you might see are EA, ET and FN for the Air Force, Army and Navy respectively. In all of these cases the letters precede the figures. In Seville and Cordoba they issue plates for horse-drawn vehicles. Special plates were also issued to Olympic officials for the Barcelona Olympics and similarly to officials at Expo 92 in Seville.

Coloured plates not already mentioned all have a prefix letter. H ~ black on white, historical vehicles; R~ black on red, trailers



over 750kg (the R is for remolque = trailer); P ~ white on green, provisional; T ~ black on white, tourist plates; S ~ white on red, is for new vehicle deliverers, V ~ also white on red is for car dealers, as in UK trade plates. Many of these have a small rectangular panel on the right with a combination of Roman and ordinary numbers indicating when it expires. One more coloured plate which does not have any extra letters - from about October of last year taxis have been sporting a rear plate that is white on blue.

Some vehicles carry a small supplementary plate; SP = Servicio Publico (Public Service) and MP for a vehicle carrying the owners own merchandise.

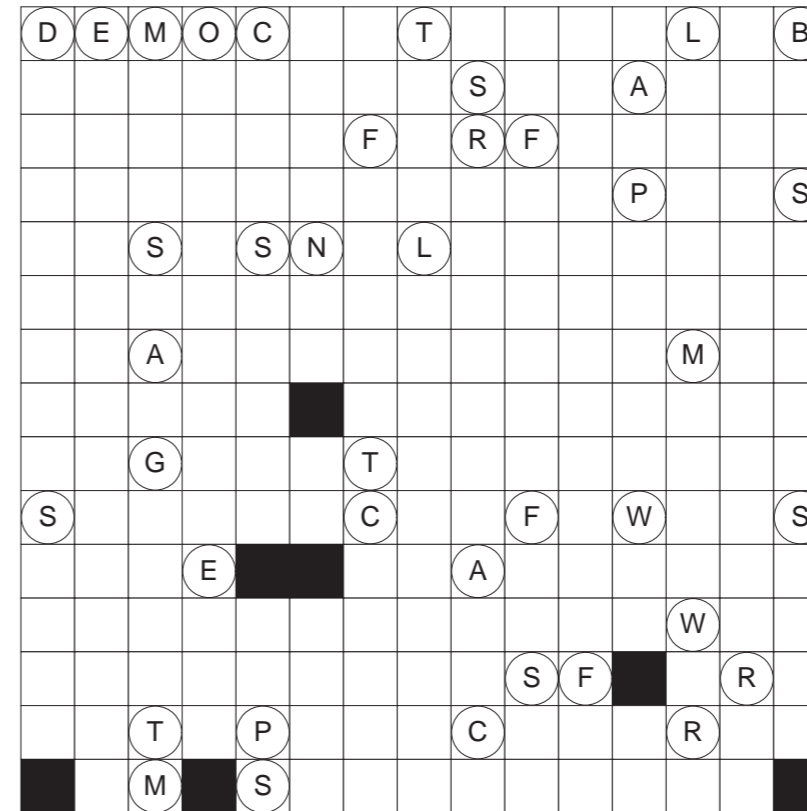
Diplomatic plates have two letters followed by two sets of figures. For the Diplomatic Corps, the letters are CD and are white on red, Consular cars are white on green, TA – white on yellow, for Auxiliary workers and OI – white on blue for international organisations. The first set of numbers identifies the country/organisation – the UK is 32, USA 27, France 30, Brazil 10 and Portugal 63 to mention a few. The second set is simply the order in which the embassy allocates them so, presumably, the British Ambassador has CD 32 1,

If you are still with me after all this then you are a true nerd, congratulations! One more thing, if you should spot a registration plate that simply has a gold crown on a purple background start tugging your forelock, for that is a plate used by the King on official duties!

# Puzzle Time

Puzzle solutions on page 74

## 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!

- |                 |             |                 |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Alone           | Frontal     | Sings           |
| Angriest        | Great       | Slang           |
| Awesome         | Limbs       | Smirk           |
| Boisterous      | Lizard      | Sneak           |
| Bumps           | Maims       | Spellbound      |
| Cents           | Mildew      | Strung          |
| Cowards         | Movie       | Stuns           |
| Crazy           | Nicer       | Submarines      |
| Democratically  | Overlain    | Sustain         |
| Enacting        | Pleas       | Taxis           |
| Experimentation | Putty       | Topic           |
| Family          | Raining     | Totalitarianism |
| Feline          | Reconfigure | Warranties      |
| Fizzing         | Rowed       | Worms           |
| Flame           | Shout       |                 |

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# 20/20 Vision?

The majority of people living in Spain, almost 80%, have some visual defect or other and wears glasses or contact lenses. As a consequence, many people wear glasses or lenses when they drive, as indeed they should.

If you have some problem with your vision, you should inform the centre which carries out the medical examination when you renew your Spanish driving licence. But have you ever been stopped by the police and wondered how they knew that you should wear glasses or lenses?

On the back of your driving licence there are 14 points of information about the driver. Point 12 deals with our visual health, and there are different codes for the different visual correction means.

Code 01.01: The driver wears glasses. If you are stopped and they look at your licence and you are not wearing glasses, do not say that you are wearing contact lenses at that moment. The code refers solely to people who wear any kind of glasses – be they prescription clear, sun, or photochromic glasses.

Code 01.02: The driver wears contact lenses. The police are not going to ask you to take them out to prove that you are wearing them, but it is obligatory to wear them, and only the lenses. You cannot substitute them for prescription glasses. And if you wear sunglasses with your lenses, these must be neutral, i.e., not graded.

Code 01.03: The driver wears protection glasses, prescription or not. This kind of glasses is worn to protect the eyes from adverse climatic conditions, dust, or harmful illumination. They are also used for pathologies such as dry eyes, ulcers, or herpes.

Code 01.04: The driver wears opaque glasses which partially filtrate the light, used by people who are sensitive to the light, or are recovering after eye surgery.



Code 01.05: The driver wears an eye patch.

Code 01.06: The driver wears either glasses or contact lenses as he chooses.

Code 02 refers to cases in which the driver uses hearing aids or needs help to communicate.

If you are stopped and not wearing the glasses or lenses indicated on your driving licence, the fine can be between 90 and 300 euro.

90% of the information we receive when driving comes through our eyes. It is vital for your safety, as well as that of your passengers and fellow road users, that your vision is always in order.

Never drive if you have used medication which can alter your vision. Driving fast limits your field of vision, so drive at a moderate speed. Use sunglasses with UV400 protection which protect your eyes from sun damage, visual fatigue, and glare.

It is always a good idea to carry a pair of extra glasses or contact lenses. It is not obligatory, but will come in handy should you have a problem with your usual visual aids.

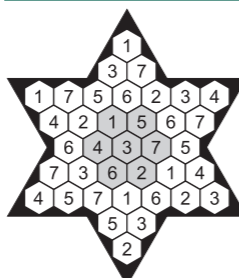
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9	1	2	7	8	4	6	5	3
7	5	6	1	9	3	4	2	8
4	6	7	5	3	9	1	8	2
5	2	1	8	6	7	3	4	9
3	8	9	2	4	1	5	7	6
2	9	8	4	1	6	7	3	5
1	7	3	9	5	2	8	6	4
6	4	5	3	7	8	2	9	1
1	4	2	3	5	9	7	6	8
3	7	9	6	8	1	4	5	2
6	5	8	4	2	7	1	3	9
1	6	4	7	8	5	9	2	3
3	7	8	2	4	9	5	1	6
5	2	9	1	6	3	4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

## Puzzle Time Solutions



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 P N G R E A T R O I R L N U S  
 S T R U N G C I N E N W O S  
 H A I E Z R E A A L O N E C I  
 O I E S E I T N A R R A W E N  
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