

Stab battle

A MAN is to appear in a Vera court after seven people were injured in a petrol station brawl.

Police said in a statement that the accused is a 29-year-old man from Mojácar with the initials RVT.

He is accused of stabbing a 38-year-old woman in the thigh during a fight involving at least eight people from two families.

The scuffle broke out at a petrol station on the N340 road in Los Gallardos, with six others hurt in addition to the stab victim, who was taken to hospital in Huerca-Overa.

Lifesavers

THE 112 emergency service handled more than 2,000 incidents over the Christmas holidays.

It comes as the regional authorities released the official figures for the festive period, which ran from midnight on Christmas Eve until January 8.

While the number of emergencies in Andalucía increased by 13.8 per cent on 2016 - to 28,708 - Almería was among the quietest provinces, with Sevilla (8,298) and Málaga (5,218) topping the ranking.

Surprise tornadoes strike

Several tornadoes tore through hundreds of hectares of greenhouses over the weekend. El Ejido mayor Francisco Gongora says the damage could be as much as €40 million.

The first priority is to estimate the damages and help affected farmers and companies file insurance claims, he said.

There were no injuries reported after Saturday's surprise

tornadoes, which were captured on film destroying warehouses, scrap yards and farmland. But the long term economic impact could be catastrophic, warned the Agricultural Association of Farmers (Asaja) in Almería.

Local president, Francisco Vargas said at least 200 hectares of greenhouses were affected.

Many farmers will spend



CHAOS: A tornado ripped through farmland, destroying crops and warehouses.

Photo credit: Consejería AgriPesca/Twitter



TWISTER: Surprise tornadoes caused mayhem in rural areas.

Photo credit: Severe Weather Europe/Facebook

months restoring their properties, losing valuable time while waiting even longer on insurance payouts, he said.

The damage was concentrated almost entirely in the rural areas of Balerma, Matagorda, El Ejido and Guardias Viejas.

Sub-delegate of the national government in Almería, An-

dres Garcia Lorca, toured some of the devastation on Saturday afternoon and pledged Madrid's support for the affected farmers.

SPAIN'S Supreme Court has upheld the convictions of six men jailed in one of Almería's most notorious drug smuggling cases. The gang include a former officer of the National Police and a security operative with links to the police.

They and four other men received lengthy jail sentences for smuggling 3,500 kilos of hashish from Morocco to a warehouse near Viator.

They were captured in Operation Hiena six years ago in what was one of the largest drugs busts in history. The Guardia Civil, National Police and tax office all worked together to crack the case.

One of the accused was a National Police officer who

Dirty half dozen

was active in the anti-drug trafficking unit and stationed at Almería airport. He used criminal connections acquired throughout his career to contact smuggling gangs in Morocco.

Another man with ties to the security forces used his inside

knowledge to secure a warehouse to stash the drugs. He coordinated transport as the gang used fishing boats to sail the hash from North Africa.

But police were already hot on their tail and raided the warehouse when the drugs arrived. During the ambush

shots were fired on both sides and the policeman-turned-criminal was hit in the leg.

The appeal centred on whether the authorities had used illegal means to trace the gang. The Supreme Court was satisfied that Operation Hiena was completely above board.

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NEWS EXTRA

Wheelie bags axed

RYANAIR'S new baggage rules come into effect next Monday, forcing travellers to book priority boarding to bring wheelie bags into the cabin and pay €5-6 if they want to take two items of hand luggage on board.

Lady Luck

A LUCKY lotto winner in Carboneras won €75,000 as part of the New Year 'El Niño' draw across Spain. More than €700 million in prize money was distributed.

Road smash

FOUR people were injured when two cars collided on the A-334 at Huerca-Overa on Saturday afternoon. All were taken to La Inmaculada hospital for treatment.

Firebug squashed

GUARDIA CIVIL arrested a man suspected of torching seven public bins, a cowshed and a bush. The arson spree took place across Roquetas de Mar, Vicar and La Mojonera at the start of the year.

The suspect, aged 43 and from Felix, is thought to be solely responsible for each of the fires.

In all cases firefighters were dispatched to extinguish the flames. Fires were typically set in the early



Photo credit: Guardia Civil.

FRENZY: Arsonist set seven bins alight.

hours of the morning.

Police found the man hiding in the bushes in wasteland near La Mojonera. They were patrolling the area in search of the arsonist when they spotted the camouflaged figure at 4am.

When questioned he could give no explanation for why

he was hiding. Police noticed several burns on his hands and took him to the station for further questioning.

The suspect has a long criminal record and was most recently arrested in November for damaging 10 cars in one night in different streets in Vicar and La Mojonera.

Plant pot disguise

TWO burglars were surprised by police inside a Huerca de Almeria home they had broken into. Guardia Civil and Local Police worked together to apprehend the two local men, aged 26 and 30.

They were caught thanks to a neighbour who spotted a hooded man sneaking into the property shortly after midnight on Friday. Two police patrols were dispatched to the scene and found the window smashed.

At that moment one burglar peeked out the window and saw the officers. He be-

gan running along the rooftop connecting neighbouring apartment buildings. A neighbour gave police access to the communal rooftop and they were able to surprise the thief at the other end.

Other officers then spotted a second burglar hiding behind a large plant pot on the communal terrace. He was quickly arrested.

The first burglar was carrying a rucksack filled with loot stolen from the property. The owner was not home at the time.

Never-ending story

A NEW trial of disgraced former Zurgena mayor Candido Tralabon and his four fellow accused will take place in December. As previously reported in the Euro Weekly News, the five had recently appealed against their convictions by Almeria's criminal court.

Tralabon was sentenced to six years in prison and disqualified from public office for 18 years. He and former councillor Manuel Tijeras were found guilty of helping develop and sell dozens of homes on land they knew it was illegal to build on.

Their appeal centred on whether they were guilty of bribery as well as corruption and that will be among the main questions tackled in 11 months time.

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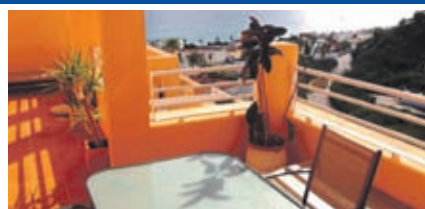
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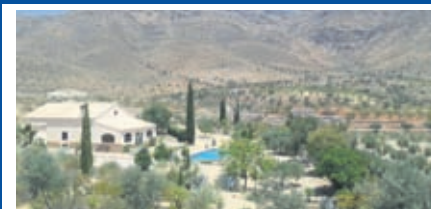
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P42

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P43

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Readers' views on eclectic topics in print and online. P44

HOMES & GARDENS

INSPIRATION AND INFORMATION FOR INSIDE AND OUT P64



P64

Vuelta returns

THIS year the Vuelta a España cycle tour will pass through Roquetas de Mar. The final stretch of the iconic international race will sweep down through Alpujarra, Granada, past the Enix Mountains and El Parador before reaching Roquetas. It begins in Malaga in August.

Winter warmth

BELGIAN football team SK Deinze are enjoying a winter training camp in Mojacar. Players are following the trail blazed by top Belgian cyclists by travelling to Mojacar in the chilly months. They are staying at the Hotel Marina Playa de Mojacar, making use of the gym and sauna.

Bloody attack

POLICE arrested a Nijar man, aged 47, accused of biting off part of his friend's ear lobe and stealing €350 from him in a Christmas Day assault. It took them two weeks to track down the suspect, who also threatened his victim with a knife.

History buffs

ALMOST half a million people visited Almeria's castles, museums and cultural spaces last year. The Museum of Almeria clocked up 82,761 visits, the highest since it opened in 1934. The Alcazaba recorded almost 300,000 visits, while 31,000 people toured the Velez-Blanco castle.

Shameless scam

THREE elderly people were conned in less than 48 hours by fraudsters pretending to be electric or gas inspectors. National Police are tracking the gang of three people who target senior citizens living alone in Almeria City, asking for a 'payment' of €200 while ransacking the property.

SPANISH FACTS OF LIFE... 45

With the festive season now a distant memory, Spain is gearing up to wash away the January blues with its famous carnivals, writes Harrison Jones.



COUNTRYWIDE: Revellers in Barcelona.

GRAN CANARIA: A feather in Spain's cap.

SONG AND DANCE: Cadiz is famous for satirical music.

Carnival season

SPAIN'S fiestas are famous the world over. But the action really heats up in the early months of the year, with carnival season sweeping in while most tourists are away.

During late January and early February, processions, costumes, songs, dancing and drink fill the streets as Spaniards party into the morning.

There are countless public celebrations across the country, though all the regional variations - particularly on theme and costume - are impossible to list.

The festivals take place across various dates but

all in the run up to lent - which some believe is the origin of carnival season: the excess before restraint.

The party season tends to take place in Christian countries and has Catholic origins. While Spanish carnivals may not have the swagger of Brazil or charm of Venice, they certainly have charm.

The public celebrations stretch across all the social divides - disregarding age, politics and class.

Social satire, mockery and plain ridiculousness tend to account for the majority of costumes.

■ SOUTHERN SOFTIES? NOT QUITE

THE most intensely celebrated events arguably take place in southern Spain. Cadiz, Andalucia, Tenerife and the Canary Islands are particular favourites with partygoers.

■ THE BIGGEST AND BEST?

FROM Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, the Santa Cruz carnival is broadcast on national television. Spain's largest event attracts around a million people every February. Frivolities reportedly date back to the 16th century and there is apparently even a drag queen gala. In 1987, 250,000 people attended a concert by Cuban singer Celia Cruz - setting a Guinness World Record.

■ SARKY CADIZ

IN Cadiz, cutting costumes take a sarcastic dig at current affairs. Likewise, satirical songs highlight society's problems. But even amid the criticism, there is a playful atmosphere and party feel.

■ CARNIVAL QUEEN

IN Tenerife, a carnival queen is crowned - as is the case elsewhere - amid much glamour. Spectacular costumes and vibrant parades attract revellers from around the world.

Gold rush

THE average price of agricultural land in Almeria Province has risen to €20,498 per hectare, almost dou-

ble the Spanish average of €10,582 due to Almeria's lucrative agribusiness. A hectare of land devoted to growing fruit and vegetables in greenhouses costs an average of €182,564.

183

The total number of news and features which appeared in Issue 1696 of the Euro Weekly News Costa de Almería edition, including 68 local stories.

PLUS THE REGULARS

News 1 - 28

Finance 29

Leapy 35

Time Out 45 - 48

Health & Beauty 53

Social 55 - 57

Albox 58 - 61

Property 62

Classifieds 66 - 67

Motoring 68 - 69

Sports 71 - 72

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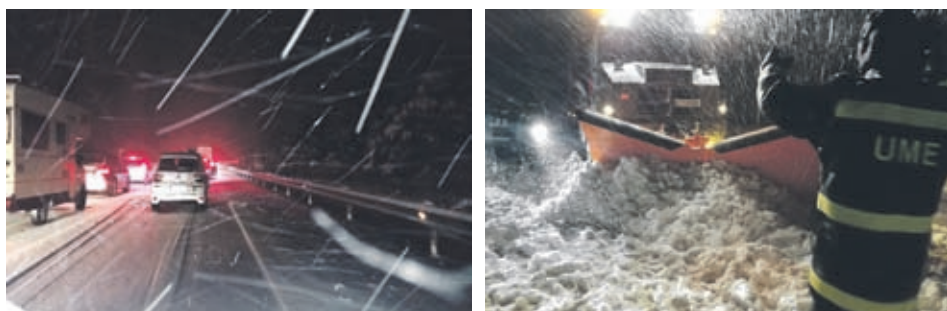
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Snow joke!



Photo credit UME/Twitter



COLD SNAP: Spain shivers in the freezing conditions as police and soldiers battle to free thousands of cars.

SPAIN was gripped by freezing weather as snowstorms swept the country.

The icy blast sparked chaos after more than 3,000 vehicles were stranded on the AP-6 motorway between Galicia and Madrid as they returned from the weekend's Epiphany celebrations.

Many motorists were trapped for more than 18 hours leading authorities to call in the army, deploying 240 soldiers from the military emergency unit to help Guardia Civil and police officers battle snow

drifts and reach them.

Some drivers took to social media to complain about the slow response by emergency services.

Sara Ramos told Spanish TV: "I'm with my family, there are two children: one two years old, the other six years old. The adults haven't eaten since mid-day yesterday. The children ate the small amount of food we brought with us, but since then they haven't eaten anything."

But while opposition politicians called for Public Works Minister Íñigo de la Serna to

appear in parliament and explain how the debacle came about, the Spanish government is probing Iberpistas, the operator of the toll road.

Mr de la Serna said that although the government owns the motorway, Iberpistas has "management responsibility," and is contractually obliged to have the means to deal with emergencies.

The icy weather was caused by a large and cold low-pressure system that formed before hanging over the Iberian Peninsula.

POLL OF THE WEEK
 Will you be shopping in the January sales?
LAST WEEK'S POLL:
 Should Spain follow Mexico's example and legalise marihuana-based products?
Yes 54% **No** 46%

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Top 5 stories

Sol couple 'apprehensive' to be on Channel 4 TV show
 AN EXPATRIATE couple who run a Marbella bar are set to be featured on the Channel 4 show 'A Life in the Sun'.

- 7,810** Engaged couple 'apprehensive' to be on Channel 4 show
- 6,924** Wintry weather to hit Costa Blanca after record dry spell
- 6,023** Spain slides to a halt as snow grips country
- 5,923** Bunny Lanes' life honoured in emotional Costa del Sol funeral service
- 5,336** Two dead in 'massive' pitched battle in southern Spain

**For week 1-8 January*

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OUR VIEW**Drought concern must be addressed**

SPAIN was ravaged by a freezing cold snap days after unseasonal wild fires broke out in several parts of the country. These are signs of the times, as climate change continues to hurtle the planet towards an uncertain future. And while snow has blanketed large swathes of the Iberian Peninsula in recent days, it is unlikely to be enough to lessen the effects of Spain's worst drought in decades, as national water reserves sit at just over 40 per cent of capacity.

A recent report by the national Higher Centre for Scientific Investigations showed that rising temperatures have 'increased the severity of droughts despite it raining more now than in previous dry periods.' Water for irrigation accounts for around 80 per cent of consumption, and demand has increased by 20 per cent over the last 30 years, during which construction has rocketed by 75 per cent and the Spanish population shot up by 20 per cent. But the Spanish government seems to have its fingers in its ears when it comes to water.

There are no water saving campaigns to be seen anywhere in the national or local media, the use of inefficient irrigation methods remains widespread, while desalination plants produce nowhere near the amount of clean water promised or remain unfinished following years of legal wrangling. Some towns even continue to dump raw human sewage into rivers or the sea as they have no means to process it. And with experts agreeing that 75 per cent of the country is susceptible to becoming a desert, Spain needs to wake up to its water woe before it is too late.

Pick up next week's Euro Weekly News for a special feature on the water crisis facing Spain.

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PROTECTED: Agua Amarga now free of harmful anchors.

Anchor action underway

A MAJOR clean-up operation of the Cabo de Gata's coastal waters is underway. Workers are draining the sea of chains, anchors, and abandoned boats that are endangering native posidonia fields.

At least 30 heavy pieces of metal have already been removed from the Agua Amarga beach in Nijar. The environmental department of Almería's provincial council has pledged to remove all illegal anchors and

chains from the waters of the protected Natural Park.

Posidonia is a range of sea grasses endemic to the Mediterranean. The underwater meadows play an essential role in marine ecosystems but are routinely damaged by boats tossing down heavy anchors and chains.

By law anchoring for more than 24 hours requires express permission from the

coastal authorities. But the law is regularly flouted by fishing boats and difficult to enforce.

Once the Cabo de Gata waters have been cleared of damaging anchors and chains, work will begin on developing a network of ecological buoys. These will not affect the posidonia meadows and will be positioned to show fishermen the most environmentally sound areas to anchor in.

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Whine and dine

SHE'S an ex-Royal Shakespeare Company thespian who has carved out a career in TV acting and writing.

But Tracy-Ann Oberman, 51, was unable to conceal her confusion after husband Rob Cowan tried to eat a napkin in a Spanish restaurant.

The couple were visiting an unnamed eatery owned by acclaimed chef Martin Berasategui, who has eight Michelin stars to his name.

And the pair were puzzled by the presentation of their gourmet meal-for-two, culminating in music producer Rob biting into a cylindrical white item served in a block of stone, which turned out to be a napkin.

Tracy-Ann, who has starred in Eastenders, took to Twitter to complain, as she wrote: "This is what happens when you apply a Michelin star or two or three. Honestly."

She added: "Delicious food served by acolytes of nonsense on receptacles of pure folly. #minireview."

TIME'S UP: Penelope Cruz hits the red carpet.

TracyAnnO/Twitter



BAFFLED: Tracy-Ann Oberman and (inset) the offending napkin.



TOGETHER AGAIN?: Gary and Julie-Ann.



The Fashion Court/Twitter

Hollywood backlash!

SHE was invited to present an award at this year's 75th Golden Globes awards in Los Angeles.

And Spanish star Penelope Cruz, 43, chose to don a glittering black dress in support of the Time's Up movement, which aims to tackle sexual harassment and gender inequality in the movie industry.

She was joined on the red carpet by many other celebrities wearing all black in a pre-arranged show of solidarity.

Hatchet buried on Bang Bang trip

THE Duchess of Cambridge's uncle is back with his estranged wife.

It comes after Gary Goldsmith, 52, recently hit the headlines after hitting spouse Julie-Ann, 48, to the floor with a 'left hook' in October, leading her to kick him out of their London penthouse.

He was banned from seeing to or talking to her while on bail, and was fined €5,650 in the wake of the attack, with a magistrate calling him a "mean, nasty drunk."

But now the couple's relationship appears to be back on after she spent Christmas and New Year with her husband of five years at his luxury Ibiza villa.

Dubbed Maison Bang Bang, the property has previously hosted Prince William.

And before leaving the party island the millionaire tweeted: "When two people really care about each other they will always look for a way to make it work, no matter how hard it is."

Sheer joy

SHE'S famed for her New Year's Eve fashion choices.

And actress and model Cristina Pedroche, 29, set tongues wagging once again after donning a see-through bridal jumpsuit to present this year's live TV coverage on national channel Antena 3.

Designed by luxury Spanish wedding designer Pronovias, the nude bodysuit is adorned with 200 Swarovski crystals.



Pedroche and her New Year outfit.

Plumb job

BRITAIN'S best-known - and wealthiest - plumber Charlie Mullins is searching for a third Costa del Sol property.

The Pimlico Plumbers entrepreneur and TV personality already owns a pair of million-euro villas in Marbella, and was joined by Katherine Ryan and a TV crew from Channel 4 show A Place In The Sun in his bid to increase his portfolio.



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Vera Playa - 94,950€ (ref: VPAA)
2 beds • 2 baths • Build: 61m²

This is a well maintained property, furnished to a high standard & suitable for sleeping 5 people. Located on a gated complex with outdoor & indoor pools making it a great all year round holiday location.



Los Gallardos - 115,000€ (ref: HNRB2)
3 beds • 2½ baths • Plot: 160m² • Build: 103m²

A fully furnished property suitable for full time living or as a low cost holiday home. Benefits swimming pool, mains gas, air conditioning, electric wall heaters, internet connection & off road parking.



Los Gallardos - 124,950€ (ref: HNCWS)
4 beds • 3 baths • Plot: 163m² • Build: 75m²

3 bedroom 2 bathroom bungalow with a self-contained 1 bedroom 1 bathroom unit on the upper level. Low community fees, superb views, swimming pool & being sold fully furnished.



Vera Playa (Naturist) - 159,950€ (ref: NBVBB)
2 beds • 1 bath • Build: 60m²

Breaking with the more traditional presentation of similar style properties, this re-modelled apartment is presented to a show home standard and will not disappoint the discerning viewer.



Los Gallardos - 190,000€ (ref: HNH)
4 beds • 3 baths • Plot: 486m² • Build: 208m²

Large detached 3 bedroom property with self-contained 1 bedroom annex, large garage & mature planted gardens. The property offers more than you may imagine from a first glance.



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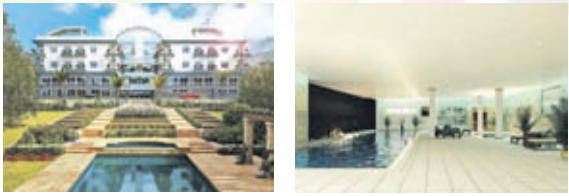
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A giant leap for mankind

PLANET Earth's largest library of galaxy histories has been developed by Almería's Calar Alto Observatory. After years of eye-straining research, astronomers have published data on the evolution of 300 different galaxies in renowned research journal Nature Astronomy.

By analysing heat, light and other physical characteristics of thousands of stars, they were able to piece together accurate pictures of the history of hundreds of galaxies over millions of years.

Researchers described the movement pattern of stars as providing a history book on the formation of galaxies. They hope their efforts will help science take a small step towards understanding the history of the universe.

Ling Zhu is one member of the international team of researchers who led the CALIFA project at Calar Alto. He is also a member of the Max Planck Institute which jointly manages the Observatory.

"CALIFA uses a newly developed spectroscopy technique which can observe galaxies in such a way that it shows the complete



Photo credit: Turismodeestrellas/Twitter

FAR FAR AWAY: Calar Alto a top galaxy hunter.

movement of stars," he said. "This helps us put together a kinetic map of the galaxy."

With the movement history of more than 300 galaxies charted, the team believe they have created the world's biggest galaxy library.

Calar Alto, located in the Sierra de los Filabres, is one of Europe's most important observatories. It possesses the largest telescope on the continent.

NEWS EXTRA

Train trap

TRAIN passengers on the route from Almería to Sevilla were delayed for hours due to heavy rain. Part of the A-92 in Sevilla Province was also cut off due to the unexpected snow.

Punch drunk

A KICKBOXER from Almería won a new professional title in the 64 kilo category for Andalucía. Kamal 'The Warrior' El Goual beat Alex Garcia from Córdoba by unanimous decision.

Dutch duo

TWO Dutchmen who smuggled 10 tons of hashish onto the Cabo de Gata coast using fishing boats were sentenced to four and a half years in prison each and fined €35 million.

Farm heist foiled

POLICE are hunting five masked men who attempted to steal €30,000 worth of agricultural equipment from a Campohermoso farm. They broke into the property late on Thursday night using a stolen truck and beat up the security guard before handcuffing him to a post.

Three of the men entered

the property carrying baseball bats and a gun while two others stayed in the truck. The guard was forced to

hand over the keys to a vehicle containing the material, due to be installed in the greenhouse the next day.

But all five were surprised by the farm owner who drove up to investigate when the security guard didn't answer the phone. They fled the scene when he arrived.

The truck was stolen in El Ejido. Police say the valuable farming equipment had only arrived on the property earlier that afternoon.

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NEWS EXTRA

Job boom

THE number of unemployed in Almería Province fell below 60,000 for the first time since 2008 after a Christmas miracle saw more than 1,500 secure new jobs.

Desert duty

SIXTY soldiers are leaving the military base in Viator to take part in the EU's Mali mission. They will help train troops and provide essential services in the embattled African nation.

Drug drivers

POLICE revealed that six out of 10 of the 1,300 drug tests performed on Almería drivers in 2017 came back positive, with cocaine and marijuana the most frequently consumed drugs.

New Year, same crisis

THE year 2018 has begun with alarming news for Almería's drought crisis. Two of the province's major reservoirs started the New Year with water reserves scratching the bottom of the barrel.

The Cuevas del Almanzora reservoir is currently operating at just 5.6 per cent of its capacity.

It can hold 157.7 hectometres of water but, as of Friday, contained just 8.8 hectometres.

To the west, the Beninar reservoir is just 8.2 per cent full, with a paltry 5.1 hectometres occupying a space designed for 63.

The figures come from the ministry of the environment which has described the situation in both reservoirs as critical.

The Junta de Andalucía has warned that it might have to declare an early state of drought in Almería unless there is significant rainfall in the coming months. Problems with the Tajo-Segura and Negratin-Al-



DRYING UP: Cuevas reservoir in dire need of water.

manzora transfers only compound the crisis for thousands of local farmers.

Andalucía minister for agriculture, Isabel Garcia Tejerina, has said that, unless restrictions are imposed on ir-

rigators, it will be difficult to guarantee water to residents in Almería, Murcia, and Alicante in 2018.



ALMERIA RAIL: One of the most dangerous tracks in the country?

Danger on the railway

THE Platform in Defence of the Almería Railway warned that there are 190km of track on the Almería-Madrid line posing serious danger of derailments. The troublesome track is between Santa Cruz de Mudela in Ciudad Real and Moreda, Granada.

Juan Tapia, a member of the Platform, which comprises more than 180 social groups and public bodies, said he didn't understand how passengers were able to endure the ride from Almería to the Spanish capital. He also voiced concerns about the track between Almería and Linares, Jaen. This ratty ride was one of

the most dangerous in Spain, Tapia claimed, and had not been fixed despite a promise 18 months ago to repair it.

The Platform in Defence of the Almería Railway was formed recently to pile pressure on the Spanish government to establish a high-speed rail connection between Almería and Murcia.

This is part of the heavily delayed Mediterranean Corridor project which seeks to establish a continuous high speed railway between Cadiz and Barcelona.

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NEWS EXTRA

Tower threat

LANDSLIDES pose a serious threat to the stability of the Pescaderia tower in Almeria City, warned PSOE spokeswoman Carmen Nuñez, who said the walls could collapse with heavy rains.

Paved over

AFTER years of neglect an informal parking space packed with potholes at Torrecardenas hospital has been paved over in a facelift sponsored by the University of Almeria.

Film fans

CINEMAS across Almeria Province entertained almost one million people last year, despite El Ejido losing its screens for nine months. Tickets cost an average of €5.52 compared to €6 nationally.

Veg prices slammed

Cheap as chips

A FARMERS' association has criticised the government for allowing big business to slash vegetable prices over Christmas.

COAG Almeria described the price cuts as incomprehensible at a time when producers are in the greatest need of healthy profits.

Provincial secretary of COAG, Andres Gongora, urged the ministry of agriculture to investigate and ensure prices remain stable in the future.

"Courgettes for 39 cents per kilo, cucumbers for 46 cents, and aubergines at 61 cents are just some of the su-



CHEAP AS CHIPS: Veg prices plummeted at Christmas.

permarket shelf prices we found, prices well below normal for the time of year."

Major companies can afford to sell vegetables at a loss to lure shoppers in to spend their money on other items, he said, but producers end up paying the price.

Gongora accused large chains of essentially black-mailing producers, forcing them to sell at bottom barrel prices or risk losing future business.

Meanwhile, he noted, other horticultural products routinely see prices go up over Christmas.

Delay danger

FEARS are mounting that delays in the arrival of firefighters to Carboneras could lead to tragedy. The local branch of the PSOE party has requested an urgent council meeting to reduce waiting times - described as excessive - by spokesman Jose Luis Amerigo.

He said that recent fires in homes, public bins and at the port had seen fire crews take more than 40 minutes to arrive.

The PSOE has proposed a joint action plan to be signed by Carboneras, the Endesa fire brigade, and the Fire Consortium of the Levante - based in Turre - that would guarantee a faster service for residents and businesses.

Endesa firefighters are currently unable to intervene in fires erupting in Carboneras due to red tape despite having a base nearby. Amerigo called for an agreement to end that anomaly.

Pirate English

ALMOST half of the English language academies in Almeria Province are operating outside the law, suggests a new report.

Snap inspections of English schools across Andalucia performed by Consumo found that four in 10 were not properly regulated. The proportion operating illegally is thought to be the same in Almeria.

The Association of Language Teaching Centres (Aceia) and certifying bodies, Trinity and Cambridge have called these

fake academies and pirate centres. They expressed fears that the unregulated language schools are increasing in number, harming students, giving staff shoddy contracts, and, overall, giving the industry a bad name.

More and more students and professional workers require formal certification to obtain course places and jobs.

Brexit. The clock is ticking.

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Beauty and the beast

AN ugly piece of modern art that has been annoying local residents in a historic Almeria neighbourhood will be removed. The bust of a deformed face will be replaced with a bust of the famous Almeria painter Jesus de Perceval.

The council controversially installed the strange looking original in a small square between Calles Trajan and Antonio Ledesma. It immediately sparked outrage among the residents association, with one local leader saying it was so ugly it was unsuitable for children.

The bust soon became known locally as the pigs head and neighbours have been demanding a substitute for months.

So far there are no complaints over the replacement. Jesus de Perceval is a favourite son of the city who spearheaded the Indalo art renaissance in the post-war period. He died in 1985 having seen his work exhibited in Europe and South America's most prestigious galleries.

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LOCAL LEGEND: Sir Frank Price with the Queen Mother and (inset) a more recent photo.

Sir Frank Price dies

A FORMER Lord Mayor of Birmingham who later founded a successful Mojacar Estate Agent has died in a Nijar nursing home.

Sir Frank Price, who was 95, spent his childhood in working class Birmingham and left school at 14 to work at a tool makers, before later leading Telford Development Corporation during the new town's construction in the 1960s and 1970s.

The ex-Labour politician and Chairman of Public Works was also a driving force behind the Midland Arts Centre, one of the first of its kind for young people in the UK, and forged ties with political leaders and royal family members around the globe.

"I wasn't very clever or handsome," Sir Frank once said. "I don't know what it was all about, but people liked me because I wasn't a money-grabber."

He moved to Los Gallardos in Almeria during the 1980s, where he successfully started the Price Brown Partnership - which in 2016 celebrated its 30th birthday - with his wife.

NEWS EXTRA

Number game

MORE than 80,000 new DNIs were issued in Almeria Province last year. Another 22,000 passports were granted to Almeria residents from offices in Huerca-Overa, Almeria City and Roquetas.

Gypsy extra

THE Meson Gitano building in Almeria will have a museum added to the premises. It will include artefacts spanning back centuries which show what life was like in medieval Almeria.

Purse pain

RENTS shot up by 8.8 per cent in Almeria Province last year, compared to 15.5 per cent in Andalucia. In Almeria City rents now stand at €6.2 per square metre.

Red handed

A 23-YEAR-OLD thief in Almeria City was caught in the act after several neighbours in the El Zapillo neighbourhood reported to police they had heard the sound of glass breaking and windows being forced open.

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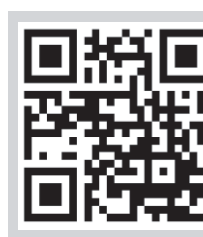
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A Place in the Sun



Nurses' nerves shattered

A SURVEY of nurses in Almería Province found that half felt burned out from working too much. Eight in 10 said they suffered stress and nine in 10 believe their work environment has gotten worse in recent years.

In concerning news for patients, seven in 10 said they believed that the service offered by hospitals has also deteriorated.

The study, 'Stress Perception in Nursing Professionals in Spain: 2012-2017' consulted nurses from across the nation. Almería was one of the provinces which provided the most input.

The aim of the study was to evaluate the impact of austerity cuts on Spain's public health service in the past five years.

"In primary care there have been dramatic cuts of up to half of all staff," said Jose Gonzalez, president of the SATSE nurses union in Almería.

"That has resulted in the remaining staff becoming extremely overworked and burned out."

Inventor's beach lockers

AN inventor based in Seron has developed a portable set of lockers that can be used to safeguard valuables at beaches or parks.

Antonio Gonzalez Marin enjoys sponsorship from the Business Development Support Centre (CADE) in Seron and has unveiled the project after months of work in a local warehouse.

The entrepreneur has created a set of lockers that cater to the modern world of laptops, phones and other gadgets. Beachgoers, for example, can lock their Smartphone away and enjoy the weather without worrying about it. The lockers even have charging devices.

Marin has already secured a patent for his invention and says the potential applications are endless. It could also be used in parks, shopping centres, and airports.

The set of several dozen lockers come in a prefabricated box made from sustainable and recycled materials. The box can charge itself using renewable energy to ensure a constant supply.

It is easy to assemble and comes with security cameras, protection against vandalism and even a Wifi antenna for internet access. Payment



Photo credit: Facebook/Miguel Angel Tortosa Lopez

SUPER SAFE: Antonio Gonzalez with his 21st century lockers.

is made electronically and the lockers are secure, with only the payer having an access code.

Marin's story is the first of what the CADE office in Seron hopes will be many success stories.

There are currently 11 companies and individual inventors using its space and facilities. They have secured public funding for their ideas, which are hoped to help develop the local economy.

NEWS EXTRA

Shaky ground

AN investment of €100,000 will help prevent dozens of homes collapsing in Alboloduy, near Tabernas. Underground leaks have left an entire street with serious structural damage.

City plans

MAYOR Ramon Fernandez-Pacheco has said Almería City's key priorities this year are a new library, the expansion of the promenade, and preparing for the arrival of high-speed rail.

Sales frenzy

THE average Almerian is expected to spend €111 on the January sales this year. Thousands of people flocked to shopping centres after Three Kings' Day to snag cheap deals.

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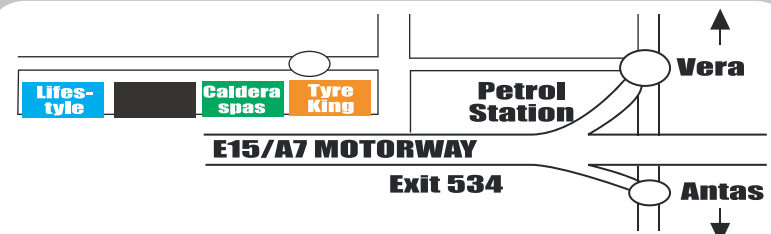
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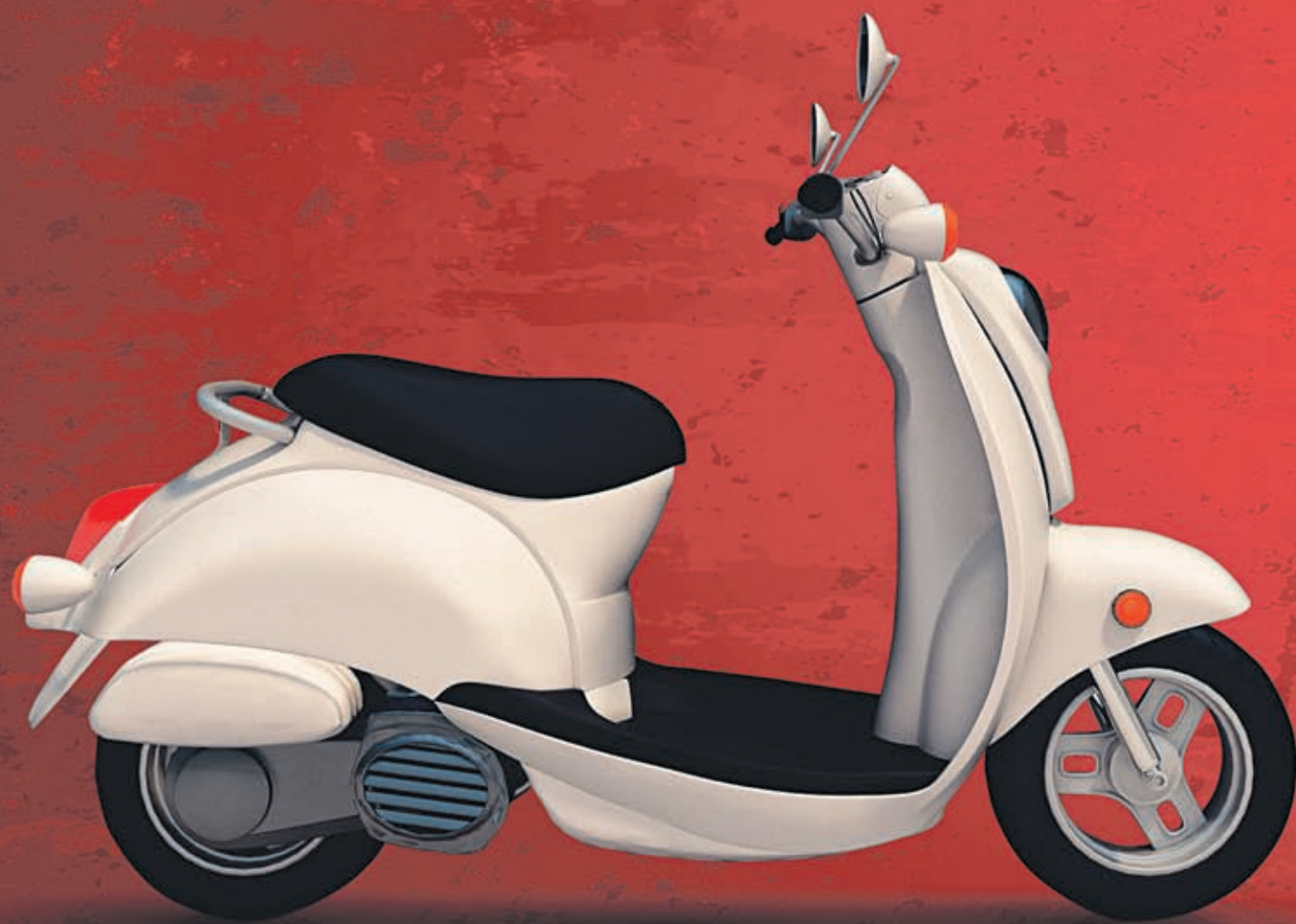
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NEWS EXTRA

Sea danger

A NEW report from the Spanish Lifeguard Federation reveals that 35 people drowned in Almeria Province from 2015-2017. Thirteen people lost their lives last year.

Pulpo power

AN octopus powder created by Almeria company Mare Siccus to flavour cuisine has been given an Excellence Award from Spanish food group Excelencias.

Boat rescue

TWO boats carrying 75 immigrants were intercepted by Maritime Rescue just off the Costa de Almeria. All were reported to be healthy and have been taken to the mainland for processing.



BON APPETIT: Fish like salmon include healthy omega 3 fatty acids.

Thanks for all the fish

SCIENTISTS at the University of Almeria have found further evidence that fish is healthy.

They discovered that two distinct omega 3 fatty acids found in fish worked together to prevent certain diseases emerging in rats.

The same fatty acids extracted from microalgae and given separately to the rats did not confer the same benefits.

Researchers concluded that only when they are combined, which happens naturally in fish, do the omega 3s boost health.

Working together, the

fatty acids offer the largest benefits to children, pregnant women and the elderly.

They promote proper development and prevent the deterioration of neurons in the brain. The two fatty acids concerned are EPA and DHA.

They are both considered essential fatty acids because the human body needs them to function properly and cannot produce adequate amounts itself.

“The most important thing we found was that the real benefit is not in the

dividual action of each fatty acid,” said Jose Luis Guil an Almeria University researcher. “Rather it is in their combination, which occurs naturally in fish.”

The discovery has important consequences for the lucrative omega 3 industry.

Fish have been over-exploited in the rush to produce millions of fish oil capsules for health and cosmetic reasons.

Microalgae was considered an alternative but the University of Almeria has shown that replacing fish isn’t as simple as it might seem.

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Hunters become the hunted

ONLY two poisoned baits were found by inspectors in Almeria Province in 2017. The result is being hailed as a success by the Poison Research Brigade (BIVE) of the Andalusian environmental ministry.

In 2010 there were 23 confirmed cases of poisoned baits being used by hunters and farmers in Almeria. Since then BIVE has upped the number of surprise inspections and expanded its local team to 10 environment officers who conduct field trips across Almeria.

Poison baits aren’t only illegal but pose a severe threat to vulnerable wildlife populations and regularly kill or inflict serious harm on wandering domesticated animals.

The two cases in Almeria took place in Turrillas, where two turtles were poisoned, and in Berja, where several dogs were killed.

Anyone who finds a dead animal in strange circumstances is advised to contact the Guardia Civil’s Seprona unit. Using poisoned baits is punishable by a fine of up to €300,000.

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Killer wave strikes

By Matt Ford

Storm Eleanor claims two lives

A DEADLY wave has killed two people in Mutriku, Basque Country.

Diego Verdejo Lopez, 67, and Loli Kintana Martinez, 65, had ventured onto a breakwater to look at the impressive five-metre breakers sweeping in off the Bay of Biscay when they were swallowed by what onlookers described as "a huge wave."

Visiting the coast from the inland town of Vitoria, they had been romantically involved for around a year after earlier losing their long-term partners.

According to eyewitness accounts, the pair were seen parking their car and walking onto the breakwater - which was not cordoned off and forms part of a wave energy converter - when a larger wave engulfed them and swept them into the raging sea.

Three people who were on the beach at the time rushed to their aid.

Mr Lopez was already dead, having drowned before they reached



Photo credit: Facebook

TRAGIC: This shocking sequence of images from social media captures the moment that the victims were swept off the breakwater.



him, but Ms Martinez managed to briefly grab a rope they threw towards her.

But the force of the water caused it to snap and she was killed after being repeatedly dashed against the

brick structure.

One of the would-be rescuers even dived into the water to try and help her and had to be rescued by firefighters after they arrived at the scene.

Mr Lopez' body had by this point already washed up on the beach, while that of his partner was eventually pulled from the sea.

A fire brigade official later said: "When we saw that the woman was already dead we decided not to enter the water as the conditions were so difficult."

A distraught family member told Spanish media he could not believe how they "failed to see the danger."

The town council has in the wake of the incident announced that the breakwater will in future be closed whenever a dangerous weather warning is in place.

The deaths came as Storm Eleanor battered northern Spain, bringing rain, snow, high winds and dangerous sea swells after orange warnings for dangerous conditions were put in place by national weather office AEMET.

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Migrants storm border

MORE than 200 African migrants have entered Spain after storming over a double fence between Morocco and Melilla.

In total, 209 people reportedly forced their way over the two six-metre (20 feet) high double fences between Morocco and the Spanish enclave.

Several people were reportedly injured during the violent barrage, including four of the migrants and a Guardia Civil officer.

Footage captured by journalist Helena Maleno Garzon shows a large group of migrants running through the streets of the city.

Migrants often use Melilla and Cueta, nearly 400 kilometres away, as



Photo by @platonchaca/Twitter

ACCESS POINT: Many migrants have attempted to jump the fences at Melilla in the past.

access points into Europe as they are the only two land borders between Africa and the European Union.

A record number of mi-

grants reached Spain in 2017, with almost 22,900 people accessing the country from Africa according to EU border agency Frontex.

US couple avoid prison

Pair 'lived with body of dead son for a month'

AN American couple living in Spain have avoided being sent to prison after they lived with the body of their dead son in their home for more than a month.

Bruce and Schrell Darlene Hopkins, 41 and 40, reportedly refused to release the body of their youngest son Caleb to

Spanish authorities several weeks after he died of an asthma attack in their rented apartment in Girona.

They were arrested after police discovered his body in January 2016 and were facing at least three years in prison, amid claims that they were guilty of homicide with seri-

ous imprudence.

However, a Girona court ruled that while it agreed that the child had needed hospital care that his parents did not provide, there were aggravated circumstances and fined the couple €990 for a crime of homicide for 'less serious imprudence' with aggravating kingship.

The Hopkins, along with their three children, reportedly moved to Girona seeking a safer and quieter life than they had in America.

Police found the body when visiting the couple's flat and reportedly described the apartment as having 'a nauseated stench.'

According to reports, rather than call the authorities following his death, the family kept a vigil next to his body, which was wrapped in a sheet.

Caleb is believed to have suffered the fatal asthma attack between the end of November and the beginning of December 2015, though the specific date of his death has not been confirmed.

The sentence is subject to an appeal within 10 days.



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CREDIT: twitter / @bomberosdeavila

ICICLES: Firefighters work to clear eaves and rooftops.

Fatal plunge

A MAN fell to his death while removing icicles from his fourth-floor home in northern Spain.

The 60-year-old man died on Calle Cruz Roja in Avila.

Emergency services were unable to re-

vive him.

Police are investigating the exact circumstances of the fall.

Firefighters have been working non-stop to clear icicles and dangerous accumulations of snow from eaves and roof tops in the area.

Catalan leader to remain in prison

FORMER Catalan deputy Prime Minister Oriol Junqueras will remain in pre-trial custody, after Spain's Supreme Court unanimously rejected his appeal.

Junqueras, the prominent separatist leader who has an outside chance of becoming president when the regional parliament is sworn in later this month, has been in prison since early November.

He is accused of rebellion, sedition and misuse of public funds following his role in the declaration of Catalan independence, following an illegal referendum.

Despite some of his colleagues being released on bail, Junqueras was kept in Estremera prison, outside Madrid.

The court has now upheld the decision despite Junqueras'

appeal, citing fears he would commit the same crimes for which he is being investigated.

He was number two in the regional parliament before Spain dissolved the government.

His Esquerra Republicana (ERC) party came third in last month's elections and will be crucial to forming a new, pro-independence government.

Junqueras is now likely to be prevented from being sworn in at the opening session of the new Parliament on January 17.

That complicates the process of forming a government, since his party make up the second largest grouping of pro-independence representatives.

The largest party was Ines Arimadas' Ciudadanos - a pro-unity group - with deposed president Carles Puigdemont's

Junts per Catalunya (JPC) party coming second.

Junqueras' ERC were a few seats behind.

Both men were fired from their previous positions when the Spanish government dissolved the Catalan administration.

With Puigdemont still in Brussels - where he fled to following a warrant for his arrest - Junqueras could, theoretically, become president if Puigdemont does not return to Catalunya.

But Junqueras may now be unable to return, if he is still in prison.

ERC and JPC have still not agreed on forming a coalition, according to Reuters. The separatist block would have a slim majority if they work with four anti-capitalist representatives.

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Photo credit: Wikimedia

BACK TO LIFE: A prisoner pronounced dead in Villabona Prison scared the life out of forensic scientists.

'Certified dead'

Prisoner wakes up in body bag

By Matt Ford

A PROBE has been launched after a prisoner declared dead by a trio of doctors woke up inside a mortuary in northern Spain.

It comes after an inmate named as Gonzalo Montoya Jimenez was found sitting unconscious in a chair at the Villabona prison, Asturias

Prison medics were unable to find a pulse leading two of them to pronounce him dead, before a third doctor sent by a court confirmed their diagnosis. The man's loved ones were even informed of his death. His

body was sent to a hospital mortuary in Oviedo and reportedly marked in preparation for a post-mortem examination before forensic scientists heard noises coming from his body bag. He was transferred to the Central University Hospital of Asturias where he remains in intensive care under watch by the Guardia Civil.

Hospital officials told Spanish media that they suspect the bizarre incident to be a case of catalepsy, a condition which causes a person's vital signs to slow down and their posture to become rigid.

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Crowning glory

FORMER King of Spain Juan Carlos made a rare public appearance with the current King and son, Felipe VI, at the annual Three Kings and Epiphany Day celebrations.

The former King, who turned 80 on Friday, has reportedly complained about feeling side-lined by the royal family in recent weeks, but appeared in full military uniform alongside his wife Sofia, son Felipe and Queen Letizia at Madrid's Royal Palace.

King Felipe VI praised his father during a ceremony held at the palace, thanking him for his "many years of loyal service to Spain."

Juan Carlos abdicated in favour of his son in 2014 and was given the title of 'King Emeritus' after nearly 40 years on the throne.

The former king is credited with leading Spain to democracy after Franco's dictatorship but reportedly abdicated after a series of scandals damaged his public image.

Golden boy

BASQUE city Bilbao bagged first prize in Spain's El Niño lottery.

Winning ticketholders with the number 05685 took home prize money of €2 million each for a full ticket, or €200,000 for a decimo (10th).

Second prize, worth €750,000 per series or €75,000 per 10th, went to the number 18442 and was shared between towns in

Asturias, Alicante, Burgos, Granada, Tenerife, Huelva, Malaga, Jaen, Las Palmas, Cordoba, Barcelona, Cadiz, Almeria and Guipuzcoa among others.

The third prize of €250,000 went entirely to the town of Yecla in Murcia as the number 23282 was drawn.

In total, €700 million in prize money was handed out.

Football fans clash

AT least 24 people have been arrested after fighting broke out between two sets of radical fans in Sevilla.

The small groups of fans, also known as 'ultras,' of La Liga teams Real Betis and Sevilla clashed ahead of their teams' match at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan stadium this evening.

According to reports, the fight, which occurred close to the Barqueta de Sevilla bridge, was allegedly organised between the two groups on WhatsApp beforehand. One person was left needing hospital treatment in the aftermath of the fight.

During the arrests, police reportedly seized a number of various objects including sticks, knives and axes.

All of those arrested are males between 20 and 30-years-old.

'They are not going to achieve independence'

THE winner of last month's Catalan elections has spoken about her plans for forming a government in a wide-ranging interview.

Ines Arrimadas, the leader of the pro-unity Ciudadanos party, has said she would "love" to become president after parliament is sworn in next Wednesday (January 17).

Speaking to the Spanish newspaper *El Pais*, the 36-year-old admits she is not yet trying to form a government - despite winning most seats - because the separatist parties have a combined majority in the Catalan parliament.

But, she adds: "If the secessionists can't form government, we will propose an alternative.

"It's not clear to me at all that separatists are going to



Photo credit: Ciudadanos

INES ARRIMADAS: "Love" to be Catalan president.

reach a deal, with some of them fleeing from justice, others in Brussels, and others in prison... we know what we're doing."

In last month's regional election - called following an

illegal referendum and a declaration of independence - Arrimadas' party won 37 seats. That put them ahead of former president Carles Puigdemont's party on 34 and his former number two - jailed

Oriol Junqueras - whose party won 32 seats.

However, pro-independence parties working together would have a majority in the parliament.

Arrimadas said: "I wish the number of seats we obtained was more in line with the number of votes that were cast in our favour... But we're going to handle this in the best possible way. We know what we're doing."

But Arrimadas also cautioned against any expectation that the situation could be resolved quickly, warning: "I understand people want to deal with 35 years of nationalism in five days, but unfortunately that's not going to happen."

She finished the interview by adding: "they are not going to achieve independence."



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January

Today (Thursday), 11.15am: Branch meeting at Artisan centre (Centro de Multi Usos). Speaker Alex Elder.

Tomorrow (Friday), 7.30pm: Fish 'n

Chips (alternative menu quiz, Beachcomber Restaurant Mojacar €6.50), quiz at 8.30pm (€2 per person).

Thursday 18, 11.30am: Branch coffee morning at MocaBar, Mojacar.

Further details from: rblmojacar.socialevents@gmail.com.

Can you help? Poppy appeal co-ordinator required. Contact Andrew Richardson as above.

Can YOU help?

THE Anglican Church of Mojacar is looking for an organist to help out on occasions at the Church, as their regular organists are unable to play at the moment. You do not need to be a professional organist, but if you think you might be able to help, please contact Pam Carter on 667 947 573.



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DO you have a forever or foster home to offer two or more of the 10 beautiful puppies recently brought to the PAWS-PATAS Shelter?

Ten beautiful puppies, approx eight weeks old, were brought to the gates of the PAWS-PATAS shelter by two very concerned and caring Spanish gentlemen, who had found them and didn't know what to do with them.

As the kennels are still reeling from the deadly Parvo outbreak - which claimed the lives of four of the resident puppies a few months ago - they could not take them in because to do so would have put their lives in danger too.

One of the volunteers from the PAWS-PATAS Cattery (aka Kats) offered to turn over her spare bedroom to the puppies and provide them very temporary shelter and other members of the Kats committed to rotate on day shifts to care for the pups until they could be checked over by a vet and longer term foster care and permanent homes could be found.

The vet has made two house calls and provided many tests, all of which were negative for serious and life-threatening illnesses. The puppies have been wormed and are awaiting vaccinations. While the puppies cannot be taken into the kennels, PAWS-PATAS are covering vets and food bills for the care of the puppies.

They need people to provide longer term foster care until at least the end of March or permanent adoption. The vet bills and coordination of veterinary care will be co-ordinated by the PAWS-PATAS kennels and will continue to be paid during that time by PAWS-PATAS.

If you can help in any way, and particularly by offering foster care, permanent adoption or have donations to offer, please contact: dogs@paws-patas.org.



BOLD SOULS: Paws-Patas supporters and volunteers brave the cold on New Year's Day.

New Year fundraising dip

THANKFULLY the sun was shining for the third New Year Paws-Patas fundraising dip.

Brave supporters and volunteers of Paws-Patas joined hands and plunged into the chilly Mediterranean in Mojacar in order to raise much-needed funds for the shelter.

Paws-Patas thanks all the generous sponsors who raised money which will help with vital repairs and the day to day care of the cats and dogs.

The dog folk raised €1,098 and the Kats €1,000.

Kerry Clarke, who instigated this fundraising event, finally got her husband Paul to take the plunge and said that everyone encouraged each other with jolly banter so that they could stay in the sea for at least 15 minutes.

The biggest crowd of folk to date arrived in various costumes and were cheered on by onlookers and watered, fed and wrapped up warmly when they had completed their brave deed.

If you have any fundraising ideas or want to volunteer in a variety of roles then please visit their website:

www.paws-patas.org.

Date for the diary

The AGM for Paws-Patas will be held on Saturday January 27 at Hostel Rural in Turre. Please arrive at 11.30am for a 12am start. There is plenty of parking and refreshments and food on sale.

They welcome members and non-members to come and hear the latest news and answer any questions. This is a very important AGM because they will be electing the executive team.

For more information email: info@paws-patas.org.

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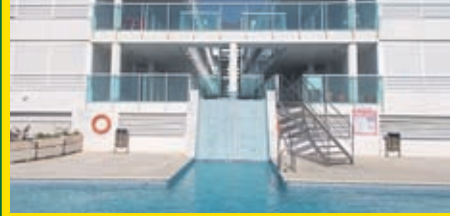
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SDV1423 390,000€

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DV1435 245,000€

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DENMARK

Pricey pinch

A VODKA bottle said to be worth over €1 million - which is made from 13 pounds of gold and silver, with a diamond-studded cap - was stolen during a night-time robbery on a bar in Copenhagen.

Staying away

DENMARK received less than 3,500 asylum applications in 2017, which marked an 84 per cent decrease over the last two years, which the government has attributed to the new anti-immigrant regulations that have been passed.

Record stretch

A RECORD seven million vehicles



Photo by Sean Knight Radio/Facebook

crossed the Oresund Bridge connecting Denmark and Sweden in 2017, the highest number ever recorded in the bridge's history, with cross-border Christmas shopping allegedly helping to boost the figures.

HOT SHOT: This €1 million vodka bottle was stolen from a bar in Copenhagen.

€1,850 after taking a taxi from Copenhagen to Oslo on New Year's Eve and trying to skip out on the fare, causing the Danish cab driver to alert the police.

Costly cab

A DRUNK man was forced to pay

GERMANY

All wrapped up

LOCALS in the German city of Stuttgart have taken to wrapping poorly-parked cars in cling film to deter them from blocking pedestrian areas and pavements.

Doner deal

THE former World Cup football star Lukas Podolski, who currently plays for Japanese club Vissel

Kobe, is set to open up a doner kebab shop in Cologne, the city where he grew up.

Flood fright

STORM 'BURGLIND' forced dozens of people to leave their homes in south Germany due to flooding and landslides, which caused hundreds of millions of

euros worth of damage to property.

Modern motors

GERMAN carmaker Volkswagen has announced it will work with Silicon Valley firm Aurora to create self-driving cars, with the hope of putting autonomous taxis on city streets by 2021.

FRANCE

Making peace

TURKEY'S president Recep Tayyip Erdogan travelled to Paris for talks with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron as the country aims to improve its ties with Europe following a stormy relationship during 2017.

Ligue of its own

FOREIGN students now view France as a more attractive place to study than the United States or the UK, according to a poll of 14,000 scholars who have either studied, are studying, or are planning to study there in the future.

Un-brie-lievable

ONE of the country's smelliest cheeses is under threat from marauding wild boar, farmers have warned, claiming that the rampaging swine are destroying pastures for cows that produce milk for the famously pungent Munster.

Big screen boom

THE country topped the European ranking of cinema-goers in 2017, with 209.2 million tickets sold, the third-highest number in the last 50 years according to the National Film Board.

BELGIUM

Purr-fect sendoff?

POLITICIANS are considering a law change that would allow animal owners to be laid to rest alongside their pets provided that they are cremated, with ashes to be placed in the same urn if the bill is passed.

Naked shun

AN online gambling firm has been told to remove 1,000 billboards from metro stations and bus stops in Brussels after the city's public transport operator received a string of complaints over an advert featuring a naked woman covered in bank notes.

Premier prizes

CHELSEA footballer Eden Hazard has bagged the national player of the year award, with Manchester City's Kevin de Bruyne and Manchester United's Romelo Lukaku completing a clean sweep of the top three for the UK Premier League.

Skating horror

A RUSSIAN tourist died in Bruges after she fell on an ice-skating rink, with the 43-year-old landing heavily on her head and passing away in hospital the following day.

NETHERLANDS

House rules

OFFICIALS in Amsterdam plan to crack down on the city's estimated 6,000 Airbnb rentals that allegedly violate local rules, such as renting to more than four tourists at a time or for more than 60 days per year.

Storm trauma

A RECENT storm that ravaged the Netherlands, with winds reaching up to 141 kilometres per hour, caused around €10 million in damage to homes and vehicles, according to the insurance association Verbond van Verzekeraars.

Border swap

THE Netherlands and Belgium have adjusted their borders by swapping a large amount of land, roughly the size of 27 football fields, after a headless body was found in the area and caused jurisdiction problems for police.

Under pressure

A DUTCH parliamentarian has called for an internal investigation into sexual harassment in politics in order to investigate how safe employees feel working in the Dutch Senate and lower house of parliament.

SWEDEN

Road kill

THE highest ever number of wildlife road accidents was reported last year in Sweden, with more than 61,000 incidents reported, an increase of more than 2,600 from 2016.

Game of clones

THE city of Västerås welcomed in the New Year with a stunning video clip which apes hit HBO series Game of Thrones, replacing key locations from the show with local landmarks including the cathedral and municipal swimming pool.

Fake news

SWEDEN'S security service chief, Anders Thornberg, has told UK media that his agency is not only handling an increased number of terrorism-related incidents, but is concerned about the threat of disinformation and fake news.

Meat free spree

FAST food giant McDonalds has introduced a McVegan burger in restaurants throughout the country in the wake of a clamour from diners, including a soy patty.

NORWAY

Oil toil

THE country has seen off a lawsuit by environmental groups to block oil drilling in the Arctic after Oslo's district court ruled that the exploration does not contravene the national constitution.

Switched on

THE Norwegian Road Federation has announced that 52 per cent of new cars sold in 2017 were electric or hybrid, up from 40 per cent the previous year, as the country races to become the first to end the sale of new gas and diesel vehicles.

Fare cop

A DRUNK New Year's Eve reveller took a taxi ride from Denmark to Norway via Sweden before fleeing without paying the €1,850 fare, but police were able to catch him as he lay passed out on his bed in a nearby house.

Seekers shrink

THE number of asylum applications received by the government in the latter half of 2017 was the lowest since 1995, with the overall total dropping from 30,000 in 2015 to 3,500 last year.

Junqueras has appeal case in court

A SPANISH court is considering an appeal by former Catalan Vice President Oriol Junqueras against his detention during the recent political crisis.

If he is granted bail, Junqueras may run to become the new Catalan leader. However, he faces being potentially charged for rebellion, sedition and embezzlement which could see him incarcerated for decades. Junqueras has already had two court appeals dismissed.

His legal team hopes that the separatists' victory in the elections to the Catalan parliament will help his cause.

Services industry grows

IN the wake of easing tensions in Cataluña, the service industry in Spain ended 2017 in an upbeat way, reporting an increase in the rate of activity. After two months of declines in the rate of growth, HIS Markit's index of purchasing managers rose to 54.6 in December, up by 0.2 from November.

"Although the final quarter of 2017 saw a weaker expansion in activity than the other three quarters of the year, the economy continued to grow at a healthy pace," Andrew

By John Smith

Harker, an associate director at HIS Markit said.

"Overall, 2017 has been a positive year for the Spanish economy, leaving it well placed heading into 2018." The marked increase in activity at the end of 2017 extends the current sequence of expansion to 50 months.

The strengthening of economic conditions was deemed to be behind rises in both activity and new business. According to a survey of more

than 350 companies, new business, orders and job creation all grew in December.

There had been fears that Spain's economy would be hit hard by the political fallout over Cataluña's vote for independence last year, when thousands of companies moved their headquarters out of the region.

However, these concerns have not been borne out and another reason for Spain's upturn can be attributed to the economic strength of the eurozone.

IT sector in need of reboot

THE IT and telecommunications sectors are most in demand by companies, and yet are the professions that receive the least applications, according to a study by the employment site Infojobs.

The survey revealed that job vacancies increase by up to 20 per cent in January, as a result of many people seeking a change at the start of the year. Openings within computing and telecommunications are the most numerous, making up 16.4 per cent of all the job offers published in Infojobs.

Despite the fact these industries offer above-average salaries, there are far fewer applications per vacancy than other sectors. Companies are desperate to address this, particularly in relation to cybersecurity.

Quote of the Week

God has taken her but she has not gone, she will be forever in my heart," says grandson Luis Alfonso de Borbon about the death of Maria del Carmen Franco y Polo, the only daughter of General Franco.



LOWEST EARNERS: To receive a welcome salary rise.

Minimum wage boost

SPAIN'S lowest earners will receive a welcome 4 per cent salary rise in 2018, in a new pledge made by the Spanish government.

In addition, if specific economic growth and employment targets are met, the figure could increase to as much as €850 a month by 2020.

In an agreement reached with trade unions and company executives, Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy will implement the in-

crease which will see the country's lowest earners receive €28.4 more a month this year.

"This is a boost to rebuild the salaries of people who lost most in the economic crisis," says Unai Sordo, leader of the Worker's Commissions, Spain's largest union. The unions will consider the measure a triumph for their work, having long demanded wages to mirror Spain's speedy recovery from the 2013 recession.

» BUSINESS EXTRA

Jobless down

UNEMPLOYMENT in Spain shrank by 7.8 per cent last year as the numbers continue to recede from the record highs of 2013. The Labour Ministry said 3.4 million people were registered as out of work in 2017, representing 290,000 fewer than in 2016.

Ortega stays

BUSINESS tycoon Amancio Ortega will retain control of his Pontegadea empire until 2029, when he will be 93 years old. The parent company of Zara and other fashion brands holds the most valuable block of shares in Spain.

Diesel injection

THE price of diesel has seen a second consecutive rise, to climb to €1.146 per litre. This is a level that has not been seen since July 2015. In turn, the average price of petrol has also increased this week by 0.56 per cent to reach €1.242.

Santander axes 1,100

BANCO SANTANDER, the biggest lender in the Eurozone, will be cutting 1,100 jobs following its takeover of Banco Popular, unions have said. Santander bought Popular last June for the

nominal fee of one euro, which helped avert its imminent collapse.

At the time, Santander calculated that the cost of restructuring following the purchase would be €1.3 billion.



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Investment in roads

Costs are lowest for three decades

SPENDING on Spain's road network under all of its administrations is down to 0.4 per cent of GDP, a level not seen since 1986. On top of this a new cut of €600 million in the funding of the Ministry of Development was announced last April.

The majority of that reduction in investment is due to be sustained by the road network, for several reasons. The railways are likely to be protected in order to keep the European funds that are attached. Indeed trains are wrapped up in political commitments that the government will be reluctant to break. It is also seen to be faster and generally easier to cut funding from roads. "It draws attention to the way the authorities try to protect the railways from the cuts," explains Matilde Mas, an Ivie Professor of Economic Analysis.

As a result, spending on roads will regress to the levels of the mid-90's, when €4,500 million a year was allocated for road maintenance. Compared to 2008, at the end of 2015 investment in this area by the Central Administration fell by 85 per cent in construction, and 59 per cent in repairs.

Of course once a road network is built, far less funds are required to maintain them, which the OECD has fixed at 2 per cent of the cost of the infrastructure. However, according to a study by the Spanish Road Association, the state of conservation of the State Highway Network on the autonomous regions is 'deficient.' The survey showed that as many as 325,000 road signs need replacing, and 50,000 km of road markings require repainting.

However, conserving roads has no political glamour and does not require set piece speeches and photo-friendly presentations for politicians. Governments therefore prefer to cut investment here than more public-



REDUCED OUTLAY: Spending on roads is at its lowest since 1986.

ly sensitive areas like health and pensions.

Jacob Diaz, General Director of the Spanish Association of Certera, warns, "When roads are not conserved, damage does not increase linearly but exponentially, until there comes a time when you do not have to maintain but rebuild." Although there is no study linking the maintenance for roads and accidents, it is clear that repairs are essential to ensure public safety.

ONLINE GIANT WILL LAUNCH LABOUR PROGRAMME

Amazon to 'Flex' its muscles

DELIVERY giant Amazon is leading the way in showing that digital business models can revolutionise labour regulations.

Moreover, it plans to launch its 'Flex' programme in Spain. This is a scheme where the company hires drivers in countries to deliver its packages. It is already up and running in the US, where people can earn \$18 to \$25 an hour and all they require is a car and a smartphone.

The 'flex' moniker is justified as drivers tell Amazon where they want to work and how many hours they want to do. During the shift, packages are picked up at the nearest Amazon location and delivered to people in the local area.

Rafael Chelala, a professor at Duesto Business School, comments, "The new model of Amazon is channelled into this so-called collaborative economy, which replaces the traditional model of assets with digital platforms."

There is even talk of a 'platformisation' of labour relations and Amazon is just one example of a growing trend in



'COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY': But are Flex staff self-employed?

which online commerce and collaborative economy platforms converge.

As the Uber court case has shown, questions arise in such systems as to whether each professional is simply self-employed, or a self-employed worker. This is clearly important when it comes to accountability and worker's rights.

As a result there are calls for the establishment of comprehensive reforms to labour regulations to make them fit

for this new digital world. In Spain there is only one legal precept that regulates teleworking and there is no reference to flexible days.

However, some companies have taken progressive steps and Axa has become the first company in Spain to include the rights of its workers not to respond to mobile phones outside of working hours.

Even the environment in normal working offices is evolving. "Before, it was going to the offices and a schedule was imposed because the means to work were there.

This has changed with increasing flexibility, and face to face meetings are only required when absolutely necessary," explains Chelala. Digital platforms and the 'gig' economy has become a popular route for students to earn money in hours that they can choose.

There may be a risk of exploitation and socioeconomic effects for the foreseeable future, but it is a brave new world.

Property firm to float shares

REAL ESTATE firm Metrovacesa has announced plans to sell off 25-40 per cent of the company via the stock market.

Scheduled to take place in February, the move is likely to set a new record as the largest listing by a European residential property developer.

The current record holder is Neinor Homes, which last year listed with a market capitalisation of €1.3bn, but Metrovacesa has a net asset value of €2.6bn.

It comes as the residential property sector in Spain continues to recover, with house prices rising steadily over the last two years.

Metrovacesa was responsible for the biggest property deal in British history when it acquired a tower in London's Canary Wharf for €1.6bn in 2007.

Rental prices rise again

RENTAL property prices in Spain continue to rise, with last year seeing an increase of 18.4 per cent. According to a survey produced by property portal *Idealista.com*, the average price now stands at nearly €900 a month for an average house of 90 square metres.

Barcelona and Caceres are the only cities in Spain where prices have reduced in 2017, although Barcelona unsurprisingly remains the most expensive place to rent in.

The provincial capitals of Santa Cruz de Tenerife and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria have seen the highest price rises, increasing by 22.7 per cent and 22.5 per cent respectively.

The biggest rise has happened in the Canary Islands, where owners asked for 27.8 per cent more for leasing their properties than in 2016.

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SPANISH BRANDS HOPING TO BOUNCE BACK

Bargain boom begins

SPAIN'S traditional sales campaign, the day after many Spanish children receive their presents from the Three Kings on January 6, has lost ground in the face of year-round discounts and a huge increase in online shopping. Nowhere is this growing trend more visible than during Black Friday, when nearly a third of all Christmas shopping gets done, according to a study by Deloitte.

All the main fashion brands, including Mango, H&M, Cortefiel, and Women's Secret, large department stores such as El Corte Ingles, and the online retail giant Amazon are already offering early sales with discounts of up to 70 per cent in some cases.

This change of emphasis towards year-round sales is having a negative impact on small and medium firms in the textile industry, as reduced prices eat into their profit margins. The Spanish Commerce Confederation (CEC) has again insisted on the need to establish a well-defined sales period.

"Early sales by many commercial brands have forced small and medium



JANUARY SALES: Already started for many brands.

stores to do the same, as a way to get rid of their excess stock," said the CEC in a statement. The surplus is the result of a slow autumn-winter sales season."

Despite the general tendency to get ahead of the pack on sales season, Inditex - the parent company of Zara and other major fashion brands, continues to wait until after January 6 before slashing its prices. Meanwhile, El Corte Ingles has taken a balanced approach: some items are already 40 per cent off their regular

price, but the bulk of the offers will come after the January 6 Three Kings.

At the other end of the spectrum, fashion brands are already offering large discounts for online and physical shopping. "Consumers take advantage of these offers to do their Christmas shopping, and businesses are offering more promotional prices in order to adapt and defend their sales," explains Emilio Gonzalez, who teaches economics at the Madrid-based business school Icade.

Despite the endless discounts, businesses remain hopeful that the Christmas and official sales season will yield positive numbers, even if profit margins suffer. "This is our key campaign, it is still out great sales bastion," says an El Corte Ingles spokesperson.

The textile business association Acotex said it is expecting to see sales growth of between 5 and 10 per cent but described it as a bad thing. "There are going to be very good sales with a lot of products available, which is bad because it's going to eat into companies' profit margins," said Acotex president Eduardo Zamacola.



Brent oil price at high level

OIL has been one of the great boons to the Spanish economy in recent years and during the past year led to a saving of €2.3 billion via crude imports.

The steep drop in oil prices between 2014 and 2016 left more disposable income in the pockets of households and companies.

As a result, the rise in the oil price in the second half of 2017 is a slight concern for the economic outlook. The Brent oil price, a notable benchmark in Europe, has begun 2018 at its highest level since early 2015, exceeding 65 dollars. This represents a rise of 50 per cent in the last six months.

The reasons for this spike are varied but involve policies restricting the supply in oil producing countries, as well as geopolitical conflicts.

Losing mental capacity whilst living abroad

by Stone King

Charlotte Macdonald

Contact me at international@stoneking.co.uk



MANY UK expatriates living in Spain own properties in the UK and have pensions and investments in the UK. They rely on their UK assets to maintain their lifestyles (and those of their families) in Spain. If they can no longer manage their affairs in the UK due to a loss of mental capacity, it can cause many difficulties.

“ You can choose a person or people, who you trust, to act for you when you are no longer able. ”

The best way to avoid the legal and practical difficulties that can occur with the loss of mental capacity is to plan for it in advance by drawing up a document called a 'Lasting Power of Attorney' ('LPA').



An LPA must be made while you have full mental capacity.

What is an LPA?

An LPA is a legal document that enables you to appoint one or more attor-

neys to act for you when you are no longer able to act for yourself.

Your attorney can be a professional,

such as a solicitor or a family member or friend.

There are two types of LPA: 'Health and Welfare' or 'Property and Financial Affairs'

An LPA must be made while you have full mental capacity. It is therefore important to make one while you are in good health.

Why should you get an LPA?

You can choose a person or people, who you trust, to act for you when you are no longer able.

If you lose your mental capacity and do not have an LPA, then your family (or the authorities) will have no choice but to make an application to the Court of Protection to appoint a 'deputy' to look after your affairs, which can be time consuming and costly.

Will my LPA be recognised in Spain?

Unfortunately there is no international type of LPA which is guaranteed to work in both the UK and Spain.

The advice we give to our clients at Stone King, is that if you have assets in both Spain and the UK, your only safe option is to appoint attorneys in both jurisdictions.



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Locals don't know what's hit them

LEAPY LEE SAYS IT

OTHERS THINK IT



ONE thing I did learn on my recent London trip was not to engage an Uber driver in any political discussion.

In the main, most Uber employees are immigrants. True to any London taxi drivers form, they are, (or consider themselves to be!) experts on just about any subject you care to mention - with current affairs undoubtedly a favourite. The problem is, once they start they are difficult to stop.

In around a dozen journeys I found out more about Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and their opinions of Saddam Hussein than any 'Arab Spring' discussions I've had since the criminal acts of Blair and Bush got us into it all. The open attitude of these cabbies rather sums up the feeling I got from most of London's ethnic immigrant population. The majority are extremely upbeat (well they would be wouldnt they?).

From shop assistants to museum guides, I found them generally polite, enthusiastic, confident and certainly not backward in coming forward. In fact, while shopping in a local chemist, I remarked to my companion that we needed candles. Her light-hearted suggestion of buying 'four candles,' ala the Two Ronnie's, bought a roar of laughter from



LONDON: British sense of humour sadly lacking.

the Pakistani assistant, who then proceeded to regale us with jokes from his favourite TV show, which happened to be Fawlty Towers - 'I come from Barcelona' he said 'I know nothing'!

Unfortunately, this light-hearted attitude doesn't extend to the Brits. Personally, I think the locals simply don't know what's hit them. To me, most of them appeared to be living under a cloud of doomy acceptance. And who can blame them? They have been battered by Brexit, paralysed by

the politically correct brigade, fleeced of free speech, overwhelmed by immigration, ill-advised, and deprived of political leadership to the point of utter submission. They also appear to have relinquished to my mind one of their most endearing and strongest weapons, the wonderful British sense of humour.

Any attempt at a merry quip, particularly at shop assistants, is met by an icy glare of suspicion while they apparently try and work out whether

you are being sexist or in some way abusive. The look I got when, purely by force of habit, I said thanks 'love' to a checkout girl (person!) had me looking back over my shoulder to see if she was dialling 999! Just how long can anyone go on living under these circumstances without something snapping?

Oddly enough, I actually do believe it could all still work, but not under this bunch of indecisive political pussies and certainly not under Corbyn's fascist bunch. What they need is a Winnie or Thatcher. Strong decisive leadership. Someone to give the British a degree of optimism. A leader who can instil a national ambition to somehow succeed in this unprecedented diversity of existence they have been conned into by the incompetent self-centered politicians and luvvie brigade.

All in all I actually left the old country with a certain degree of sadness. The only thing that hadn't changed was the weather! One thing I will miss however is the politeness. 'Excuse me,' 'oops I'm sorry,' 'my fault' and 'after you's' were expressions one doesn't hear quite as often as one should in the country of our choice!

Keep the faith

Love Leapy

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We have just completed the filming for our 25 episodes of Sun Sea and Selling Houses for Channel 4. Series 2 due to air in the next few weeks. Series 1 re run on Channel 4 now! 12pm Mon-Fri. The last episode finishes on a bang following the expansion of Spanish Property Choice into their new inland office in Albox. We now have a prime location opposite the Mercadona and just down from Puppy Rescue, Sol Supermercado and Bar Lepanto. So if you are looking for a property inland or have a property to sell, why not call in and meet the team. Avenida Lepanto 15, Albox, 04800.

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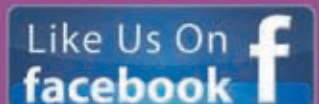
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TECH FOR THE TIMID

WOULD you buy a car programmed to kill someone? No, me neither. Except that soon, we will.

Consider the self-driving car which is steadily motoring its way towards acceptance. Behind the scenes, engineers are wrestling with the notorious 'Trolley Problem' and its variants.

In short, its ethical puzzle is whether you would divert a runaway trolley (or train) onto a track where it will kill four people, or to the only other track to kill just one.

So what happens when your driverless car has to decide between flattening a pedestrian, or killing you by swerving into a lamppost? Whether they admit it or not it's a no-brainer: the pedestrian is toast. Wiping out customers is certainly not a good business strategy for Tesla's Elon Musk and his fellow autonomous vehicle innovators.

Remakes of Stephen King's awful killer-car movie aside, we need to step back and realise that the driverless cars the majority of us will be driving by 2030 will not be safe. They will be safer...

It takes the average driver an estimated 160-million kilometres to

The rise of the robocar: give me a brake!

Could the ever-popular bumper sticker eventually read 'My other car doesn't drive itself,' asks Terence Kennedy?



RUNAWAY TROLLEY: Kill one person or four?

wipe someone out. But put that in the context of the globe's 1.5 billion vehicles, killing someone every 25 seconds. Taking out the fallible human factor by removing driver fatigue, intoxication and texting has to be an improvement.

Like those late 19th-century legislators who insisted horseless carriages had to be preceded by a man with a red flag, some of the knee-jerk measures now under considera-

tion make little sense. Logic says the car which drives itself fully is as inevitable as tomorrow's sunrise (Kim Jong-un permitting).

Yes, some states may insist we keep our eyes on the road while the car drives us. Or my favourite futile gesture of all not just for self-driving cars, but for electric cars in general: the demand that they make a loud noise, however artificially - thus negating the huge benefit of re-

ducing today's deafening traffic noise.

Media interest being what it is, it's inevitable that every time an autonomous car has an accident we'll read about it in huge headlines, with the resulting rage against the machine.

But don't let that put us off. See it instead in light of that old newspaper adage: when did you last read a headline that 'Thousands of aircraft landed safely yesterday'?

Oh and for the record, 90 per cent of ethics students would consistently let their trolley run down one person rather than four. Although quite a few would instead turn the four to strawberry jam - if the person on the other track happened to be their 'romantic partner.'

Self-driving us crazy

IT certainly doesn't help the cause of self-driving cars to read about the 'Darwin Award' for stupidity won by the owner of a brand-new mobile home in the States several years ago. He collected the vehicle from the factory, hit the interstate highway, engaged Cruise Control, then went into the back to make coffee. His Darwin Award was posthumous.

A self-driving bus recently made headlines in an accident on its first day out. But the culprit was a trucker who backed into it without looking. A semi-autonomous car hit the news, and a truck, when its driver was watching Angry Birds instead of the road.

We can at least look forward to a whole new slew of self-driving vehicle humour. How about a country song where the guy's truck leaves him too?

THURSDAY THOUGHTS

By Julius Sweeting, San Pedro

Rose tinted specs

IT seems that many British expatriates in Spain are particularly worried about the effects that Brexit will have on their medical treatment.

At the moment, little is set in stone and it is quite possible that nothing will change with UK citizens resident in Spain or visitors with EHIC cards being eligible for free medical treatment as they are now. Those who have been in Spain for some time may be looking back to the UK and the National Health Service (NHS) with rose tinted glasses as it surely isn't what it used to be.

In the past week, the Minister of Health Jeremy Hunt publicly apologised for having to cancel all non-urgent operations until the end of January and admitted that waiting times in A&E continued to get longer.

The following day, Prime Minister May effectively contradicted him, suggesting that things weren't so bad as the government had increased funding in the NHS.

In an almost unheard of turnaround however, the next day she had to backtrack and apologised herself for the thousands of operations that had been cancelled as new figures were released showing that 16,900 people had been stuck in ambulances for more than the proscribed 15 minutes before admission to A&E.

By contrast, I had to attend an emergency clinic in Marbella the other evening with a burst vein in my nose and although it was a bit third worldy, I was checked in immediately by a charming receptionist and seen within 20 minutes of arrival.

I wonder if that would have happened this winter in the UK where even GP appointments normally run late.

columnists@euroweeklynews.com

Readers interested in submitting articles for this guest column should send articles of around 250 words on topics felt to be of interest to the cosmopolitan EWN readership to editorial@euroweeklynews.com.

Looking back at some of 2017's daftest food trends

Nora Johnson
Breaking Views

Nora is the author of popular psychological suspense and crime thrillers and a freelance journalist. To comment on any of the issues raised in her column, go to www.euroweeklynews.com/3.0.15/nora-johnson

WHAT'S the 2017 food trend you'd most like to see the back of? For some, it's sharing plates that come out in the order that suits the kitchen, and waiters taking orders without notepads. Plus: communal seating, no bookings, no getting in. Except for making you stand in a line outside in the rain, driving hipsters into a frenzy to get in because of the long, long queue way down the street.

For others, it's plates filled with cloud eggs, Yorkshire pudding wraps or 'unicorn' food - ie anything dressed in rainbow pastels with a shedload of sprinkles. (A side of 'unicorn sprinkle,' anyone? Hmm, must be a Leave Voter's invention!). Plus: turmer-

ic lattes and edible 'glitter' (made from sugar and food colouring) on everything from coffee to crisps and even chickens. But hey, as long as it's on Instagram, looking way better than it tastes...

We generally eat what we're familiar with; but different cultures are used to different things. Intestines, insects and other nutritious foods are repellent to many in the West, but commonplace elsewhere.

Milky turmeric drinks, for instance, seen as a fad in Britain, are not unusual in India. Asian families in the UK drink turmeric milk but not as a fancy drink but when you have a cold. You'd simply be laughed at if it was served to guests as a delicacy.

It's weird how something can become hip and pricey if it's sold to a different demographic.

And what about food trends for 2018? As far as weddings are concerned, couples apparently still want 'Instagram moments' - and cakes with moving parts. Like a recently created four-tier cake with a spinning unicorn in the second tier. Really!

All this plus



Credit: lottielondonau/instagram

doughnut walls, DIY biscuit-decorating stations and displays of confectionery. Sounds more like food aimed at toddlers. Are these people old enough to get married if they need to be stuffed with all this childish nonsense?

Heck after all that, they'll all look as though they've been out on the razz with Keith Richards night after night...

Nora Johnson's psychological crime thrillers 'The Girl in the Red Dress,' 'No Way Back,' 'Landscape of Lies,' 'Retribution,' 'Soul Stealer,' 'The De Clerambault Code' (www.nora-johnson.net) available from Amazon in paperback/eBook (€0.99; £0.99) and iBookstore. All profits to Costa del Sol Cudeca cancer charity.

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GLITTER FEVER: Has the 'unicorn food' trend gone too far?

Advertising feature

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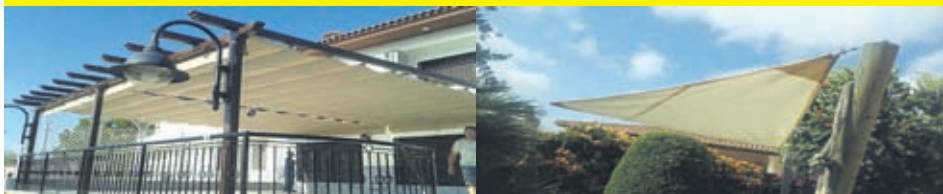
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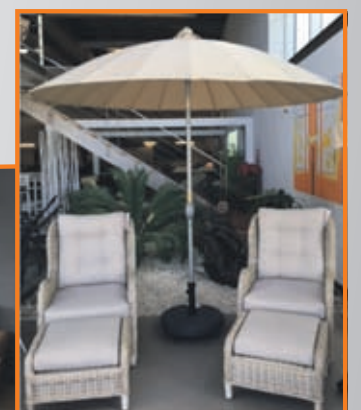
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- Great views, walk to restaurant
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VH1177 €149,950 CEE F255 8



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- Great views
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VH1227 €92,000 CEE TBC



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- Access to 2 communal pools
- Walk to amenities
- La Alfoquia

VH1218 €279,950 CEE TBC



- 4/5 bed, 3 bath Quality Villa
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- Walk to restaurant / bar
- Zurgena area

VH1231 €224,950 CEE E154 31



- Large 3 bed, 2 bath villa
- Plus 1 bed, 1 bath apartment
- 775m2 garden & pool
- Walk to restaurant, bar shop, doctors
- 10 mins drive to Huercal-Overa

VH708 €139,950 CEE G150 32



- 3 bed, 2 bath Village Villa
- Small garden with splash pool
- Walk to various amenities
- Taberno village

VH1086 €144,950 CEE TBC



- Spacious 3 bed, 2 bath Villa
- 415m2 plot, pool & sun roof
- Modern, spacious style
- Walk to amenities in La Alfoquia

VH1198 €239,950 CEE TBC



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THURSDAY	BBC one	BBC TWO	itv	CHANNEL 4	CHANNEL 5	sky sports main event
11 JANUARY	5:30pm Antiques Road Trip	5:15pm Great Barrier Reef with David	5:00pm Tipping Point	6:00pm Come Dine with Me	4:15pm Dear Diary, I Died	11:00am Premier League Daily
	6:15pm Pointless	6:15pm Flog It!	6:00pm The Chase	7:00pm The Simpsons	6:00pm 5 News at 5	12:00pm Info not available
	7:00pm BBC News at Six	7:00pm Eggheads	7:00pm ITV News London	7:30pm Hollyoaks	6:30pm Neighbours	12:30pm Sky Sports Daily
	7:30pm BBC London News	7:30pm Great British Railway Journeys	7:30pm ITV News	8:00pm Channel 4 News	7:00pm Home and Away	1:00pm Live European Tour Golf
	8:00pm The One Show	8:00pm Rick Stein's Road to Mexico	8:00pm Emmerdale	8:00pm George Clarke's Amazing Spaces	7:30pm 5 News Tonight	4:00pm Info not available
	8:30pm EastEnders	9:00pm Hairy Bikers' Mediterranean Adventure	8:30pm Tonight	9:00pm Hunted	8:00pm Baby Ballroom	4:30pm SKY Sports News
	9:00pm Big Cats	10:00pm A House Through Time	9:00pm Emmerdale	10:00pm Derry Girls	9:00pm Big Family Values: Celebrity Big Brother	7:00pm SKY Sports News
	10:00pm Death in Paradise	11:00pm Live at the Apollo	9:30pm The Cruise	11:00pm The Undateables	10:00pm Celebrity 100% Hotter!	8:00pm Info not available
11:00pm BBC News at Ten	11:30pm Newsnight	10:00pm Transformation Street	11:35pm Working Class White Men	11:00pm Celebrity Big Brother's Bit on the Side	8:30pm Live European Rugby	
11:30pm BBC London News	12:15am Michael Palin: A Life on Screen	11:00pm ITV News			11:00pm Info not available	
11:45pm Question Time		11:30pm ITV News London			12:00am SKY Sports News	
FRIDAY 12 JANUARY	6:15pm Pointless	6:15pm Flog It!	5:00pm Tipping Point	1:00pm Channel 4 News	3:15pm NCIS	9:00am Live European Tour Golf
	7:00pm BBC News at Six	7:00pm Eggheads	6:00pm The Chase	1:05pm Darts	4:15pm The Perfect Stalker	11:00am Premier League Daily
	7:30pm BBC London News	7:30pm Great British Railway Journeys	7:00pm ITV News London	6:00pm Come Dine with Me	5 News at 5	12:00pm Info not available
	8:00pm The One Show	8:00pm Rick Stein's Road to Mexico	7:30pm ITV News	7:00pm The Simpsons	6:30pm Neighbours	12:30pm Sky Sports Daily
	8:30pm A Question of Sport	9:00pm Mastermind	8:00pm Emmerdale	7:30pm Hollyoaks	7:00pm Home and Away	1:00pm Live European Tour Golf
	9:00pm EastEnders	9:30pm Rome Unpacked	8:30pm Coronation Street	8:00pm Channel 4 News	5 News Tonight	4:00pm Info not available
	9:30pm Room 101	10:00pm QI	9:00pm River Monsters	8:00pm Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast	8:00pm The Wine Show	4:30pm SKY Sports News
	10:00pm Would I Lie to You?	11:00pm Newsnight	9:30pm Coronation Street	9:00pm The Big Fat Quiz of Everything	9:00pm Costa Del Celebrity	7:00pm SKY Sports News
10:30pm Mrs. Brown's Boys		10:00pm Lethal Weapon	12:05am First Dates Hotel	10:00pm Celebrity Big Brother	8:00pm Football	
11:00pm BBC News at Ten		11:00pm ITV News		11:00pm Will and Grace	11:00pm The Debate - Live Cricket	
11:25pm BBC London News		11:30pm Newsnight		11:35pm Celebrity Big Brother	12:00am	
SATURDAY 13 JANUARY	6:40pm BBC News	6:00pm Trust Me, I'm a Doctor	3:30pm Free Willy 2: The Adventure Home	12:30pm The Simpsons	4:30pm FIA Formula E Race: Marrakech	9:00am Good Morning Sports Fans
	6:50pm Regional News	6:30pm Tom Kerridge's Lose Weight for Good	5:20pm The Chase: Celebrity Special	1:30pm The Simpsons	6:15pm Dogs Make You Laugh Out Loud	9:30am Cricket
	6:55pm Weather	7:00pm Hugh's Wild West	6:20pm Local News and Weather	2:00pm Come Dine with Me	7:15pm The Secret Life of Puppies	1:00pm Football
	7:00pm And They're Off...For Sport Relief	8:00pm A House Through Time	6:30pm ITV News and Weather	3:00pm Darts	8:05pm Greatest Ever Celebrity Wind Ups	3:30pm Info not available
	7:40pm Pointless	9:00pm Dad's Army	6:45pm The BRITs are Coming	7:00pm A Place in the Sun	9:00pm Blind Date	4:00pm Live European Rugby
	8:25pm Wedding Day Winners	9:30pm Grand Tours of Scotland's Lochs	7:45pm Take Me Out	7:30pm Channel 4 News	9:55pm 5 News	6:15pm Football
	9:25pm Casualty	10:00pm Live at the Apollo	9:00pm The Voice UK	8:00pm Spying on the Royals	11:00pm Football on 5	8:40pm My Icon
	10:15pm BBC News	10:45pm QI XL	10:30pm Through the Keyhole	9:00pm Queen Victoria's Last Love	11:30pm Celebrity Big Brother	9:00pm Sky Sports Tonight
10:30pm Weather	11:30pm Madonna Rebel Heart Tour	11:25pm ITV News and Weather	10:00pm Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation		10:00pm Live NFL: Divisional Round Game	
10:35pm Hard Sun			12:30am Transporter 2			
SUNDAY 14 JANUARY	5:30pm Songs of Praise	12:15pm Raymond Blanc: How to Cook Well	2:45pm Tipping Point	1:30pm Jamie's Quick and Easy Food	2:30pm Dennis Strikes Again	7:00am Eurasia Cup
	6:05pm Attenborough and the Sea Dragon	12:45pm Food and Drink	3:45pm Britain's Brightest Family	2:00pm The Simpsons	4:05pm Will and Grace	10:00am Cricket
	7:05pm BBC News	1:15pm MOTD2 Extra	4:10pm The Cruise	2:50pm Two by Two	4:35pm Blind Date	1:30pm Live Nissan Super Sunday
	7:20pm Regional News	2:00pm Masters Snooker	4:45pm Local News and Weather	4:50pm Channel 4 News	5:35pm Garfield	4:30pm Live Nissan Super Sunday
	7:25pm Weather	6:35pm Ski Sunday	4:55pm ITV News and Weather	5:15pm Darts	7:10pm Pixel	8:00pm Live NFL: Divisional Round Game
	7:30pm Countryfile	7:20pm Mr Holmes	5:10pm Death Becomes Her	9:00pm The Biggest Little Railway in the World	9:00pm Badass Brides	10:00pm Live NFL: Divisional Round Game
	8:30pm Still Open All Hours	9:00pm Yellowstone	7:00pm Dancing on Ice	10:00pm SAS: Who Dares Wins	9:55pm 5 News	2:00am SKY Sports News
	9:00pm Info not available	10:00pm Dragons' Den	9:00pm Vera	11:00pm The Big Fat Quiz of Everything	10:00pm Celebrity Big Brother	3:00am SKY Sports News
10:00pm Mcmafia	11:00pm The Water Diviner	11:15pm Peston on Sunday		11:00pm The Boy Next Door	4:00am SKY Sports News	
11:00pm BBC News	12:40am Masters Snooker Highlights	12:10am Next of Kin				
MONDAY 15 JANUARY	5:30pm Antiques Road Trip	5:45pm More Creatures	7:30pm ITV Evening News	2:05pm Posh Pawn	4:15pm Her Dark Past	9:00am Good Morning Sports Fans
	6:15pm Pointless	6:15pm Great and Small	8:00pm Emmerdale	3:10pm Countdown	6:00pm 5 News	9:30am Cricket
	7:00pm BBC News	7:00pm Flog It!	8:30pm Coronation Street	4:00pm Village of the Year	6:30pm Neighbours	4:45pm Best of Sky Cricket
	7:30pm Regional News	7:30pm Eggheads	9:00pm The Martin Lewis Money Show	5:00pm A Place in the Sun	7:00pm Home and Away	5:00pm SKY Sports News
	8:00pm The One Show	8:00pm Great British Railway Journeys	9:30pm Coronation Street	6:00pm Four in a Bed	7:30pm 5 News	5:00pm SKY Sports News
	8:30pm Inside Out London	8:00pm Rick Stein's Road to Mexico	10:00pm Next of Kin	6:30pm Extreme Cake Makers	8:00pm Car Crash TV	6:00pm SKY Sports News
	9:00pm EastEnders	9:00pm Inside the Factory	11:00pm ITV News at Ten and Weather	7:00pm The Simpsons	9:00pm Police Interceptors	7:00pm SKY Sports News
	9:30pm Panorama	10:00pm House of Saud: A Family at War	11:40pm Killer Women with Piers Morgan	7:30pm Hollyoaks	10:00pm Celebrity Big Brother	8:00pm Football
10:00pm Silent Witness	11:00pm Inside No 9		8:00pm Channel 4 News	11:00pm Not So Sweet Sixteen	8:00pm SKY Sports News	
11:00pm BBC News	11:30pm Newsnight		9:00pm How to Lose Weight Well	12:05am Celebrity Big Brother's Bit on the Side	1:00am SKY Sports News	
11:30pm Regional News			10:00pm The Undateables			
TUESDAY 16 JANUARY	6:15pm Pointless	6:15pm Flog It!	4:00pm Dickinson's Real Deal	4:00pm Village of the Year	4:15pm The Wrong Mother	5:15am Cricket
	7:00pm BBC News	7:00pm Eggheads	5:00pm Tipping Point	5:00pm A Place in the Sun	6:00pm 5 News	7:00am Cricket
	7:30pm Regional News	7:30pm Great British Railway Journeys	6:00pm The Chase	6:00pm Four in a Bed	6:30pm Neighbours	10:00am Cricket
	8:00pm The One Show	8:00pm Rick Stein's Road to Mexico	7:00pm Local News and Weather	6:30pm Extreme Cake Makers	7:00pm Home and Away	4:45pm Best of Sky Cricket
	8:30pm EastEnders	9:00pm Inside the Factory	7:30pm ITV Evening News	7:00pm The Simpsons	7:30pm 5 News	5:00pm SKY Sports News
	9:00pm Holby City	10:00pm House of Saud: A Family at War	8:00pm Emmerdale	7:30pm Hollyoaks	8:00pm Secrets of the National Trust	6:00pm SKY Sports News
	10:00pm Silent Witness	11:00pm Inside No 9	8:30pm Britain's Favourite Dogs: Top 100	8:00pm Channel 4 News	9:00pm Diet Secrets and How to Lose Weight	7:00pm SKY Sports News
	11:00pm BBC News	11:30pm Newsnight	11:00pm ITV News at Ten and Weather	9:00pm The Secret Life of the Zoo	10:00pm Celebrity Big Brother	8:00pm Info not available
11:30pm Regional News		11:40pm Regional Programmes	10:00pm 24 Hours in A and E	11:00pm One Night with My Ex	11:00pm The Debate - Live SKY Sports News	
WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY	3:15pm Father Brown	6:15pm Flog It!	5:00pm Tipping Point	4:00pm Village of the Year	3:15pm NCIS	7:00am Cricket
	4:00pm Escape to the Country	7:00pm Eggheads	6:00pm The Chase	5:00pm A Place in the Sun	4:15pm False Pretences	8:50am Lord's Pavillion Portraits
	4:45pm The Farmers' Country Showdown	7:30pm Great British Railway Journeys	7:00pm Local News and Weather	6:00pm Four in a Bed	6:00pm 5 News	
	5:30pm Antiques Road Trip	8:00pm Rick Stein's Road to Mexico	7:30pm ITV Evening News	6:30pm Extreme Cake Makers	6:30pm Neighbours	8:55am Cricket
	6:15pm Pointless	9:00pm Tom Kerridge's Lose Weight for Good	8:00pm Emmerdale	7:00pm The Simpsons	7:00pm Home and Away	4:45pm Best of Sky Cricket
	7:00pm BBC News	9:30pm Trust Me, I'm a Doctor	8:30pm Coronation Street	7:30pm Hollyoaks	5 News	5:00pm SKY Sports News
	7:30pm Regional News	10:00pm Millionaires' Ex-Wives Club	9:00pm Britain's Brightest Family	8:00pm Channel 4 News	8:00pm Starting Up Starting Over	6:00pm SKY Sports News
	8:00pm The One Show	11:00pm Mock the Week	9:30pm Coronation Street	9:00pm Kirstie and Phil's Love it or List it Kiri	9:00pm GPs: Behind Closed Doors	7:00pm SKY Sports News
8:30pm Match of the Day Live		10:00pm ITV News at Ten and Weather	10:00pm 999: What's Your Emergency?	10:00pm Celebrity Big Brother	8:00pm Info not available	
11:00pm BBC News		11:00pm Transformation Street		11:00pm Celebrities in Therapy	11:00pm Cricket	
11:30pm Regional News				12:05am Celebrity Big Brother's Bit on the Side		

|| The schedules for the television programme pages are provided by an external company: we regret that any changes or errors are not the responsibility of Euro Weekly News.



Soap yawns, festive laughs and cracking drama

MURDERS, thefts, assault, drug overdoses, lying, fraud and much more are all served up in the most popular soap operas nowadays.

Coronation Street, *EastEnders* and *Emmerdale* are very dangerous places to live at present. I realise the script writers are competing for ratings but come on guys, get real. These repeated hospital scenes being shown, really are beginning to grate with the British public. I also think the writers are missing a trick, let's have some groundbreaking rating busters.

How about a plague of locusts, or Noah's Ark anchored in Albert Square? Being a policeman on any of these soaps virtually guarantees employment.

A yearly compulsory watch over Christmas for us is *Nativity!*; a children's film on BBC about a primary school teacher Mr Madden (Martin Freeman) tasked with putting on the school Nativity with the headmistress's loony nephew, a classroom assistant called Mr Poppy wonderfully played by Marc Wooton. It's a hilarious and touching comedy come musical that plays with the heart strings, and watch out for cameos from Ricky Tomlinson and Alan Carr.

Pointless, the BBC's nightly quiz show

presented by Alexandra Armstrong but overseen and directed by the irrepressible Richard Osman seems to be still going strong after what feels like a million shows. The two presenters' professionalism keeps the programme fresh, unlike many that went before. I particularly like the celebrity editions, usually shown over the holidays, in which the standard of celeb brain power is put under scrutiny.

It's amazing where these celebs come from, one or two I must confess I thought were deceased. Some

stars should clearly change their agent.

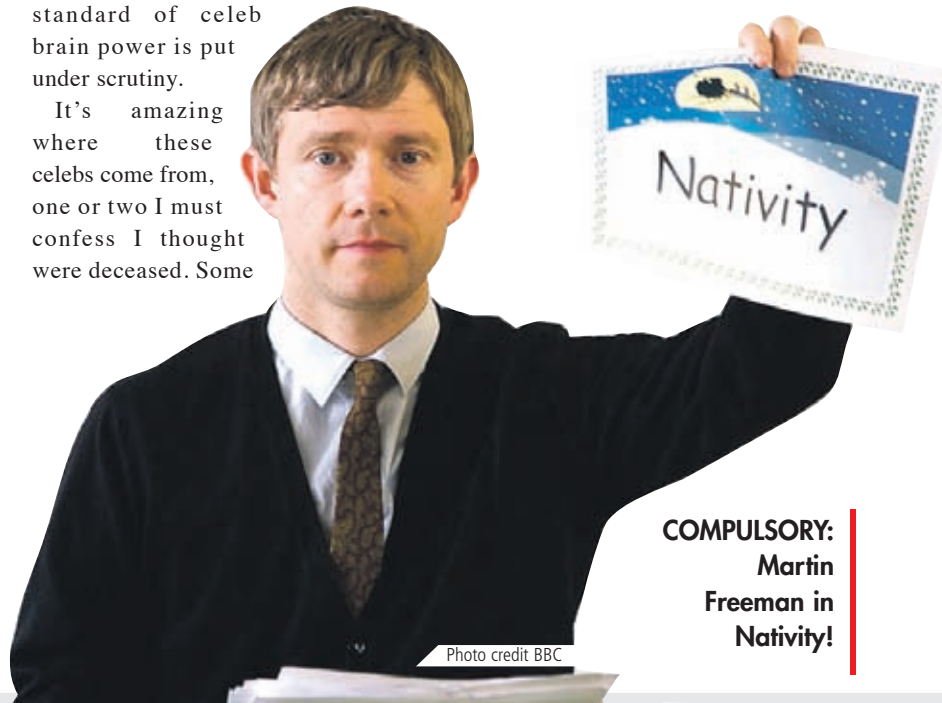
Storage Hunters on Dave TV is a rip off from the American series of the same name. It features a motley crew of punters bidding for the contents of storage containers presumably left by their owners. The original American version is slick, smart and full of brilliant one liners from

the punters. The English version is dim, dull and full of false people buying garbage.

Against my better judgement but in the line of duty I watched *Doctors Behind Closed Doors* on My 5 and found myself enjoying it to the degree of taking in a few more episodes which were running continuously. There's something quite bizarre about being in a doctor's treatment room 'spying' on seemingly unsuspecting patients. It's really interesting to see what the diagnosis is and what treatment is prescribed, but also very scary at times. Different doctors featured with different patients and my conclusion was what a great job they do.

McMafia is both stunning and confusing but highly watchable. Maybe my brain's incapable of absorbing this fast moving plot. It's an everyday tale of a Russian oligarch (!) and his family, conflicting with the shadowy criminal past activities of the ageing father. Violence and huge finance abound as Alex Goodman (James Norton), son of the tortured father tries to unravel the exact cause of his father's grief. The quality of the filming is stunning and it's a class watch.

Critique: PM, San Fulgencio



COMPULSORY:
Martin
Freeman in
Nativity!

Photo credit BBC

By Matthew Elliott

Travel

WITH the sunny days almost guaranteed, a popular day out for Costa del Sol readers at this time of year is the gorgeous town of Ronda.

A beautiful drive from the coast that takes roughly an hour, Ronda is easily one of the most popular locations in Malaga for seaside daytrippers.

The town itself is the very definition of picturesque. But there is one major attraction that stands heads and tails above all the rest. Ronda is surrounded by an incredibly deep gorge that has a monumental bridge crossing it, one of the finest architectural feats you'll see in southern Spain.

Standing on the large sandstone hill that holds Ronda, visitors can peer down over 100 metres through the El Tajo gorge and take in some magnificent sights of the surrounding countryside. The high altitude also makes Ronda the perfect location to get some refuge from the sweltering Spanish heat in the height of summer.

Ronda has some of the best preserved history of any town

Ronda: Mountain magic



MAGICAL: Ronda is the perfect place for a day out.

in Spain. The old bridge itself was built in the 18th century

and guests can also explore the medieval Arab baths,

which are over seven centuries old. The bullring, built

in 1785, is the oldest in Spain and decorated with memoirs

from hundreds of years of history.

Hiking and walking around the old town and surrounding areas are fantastic options for those with energy. But be warned. It is incredibly hilly and the shortest walk can quickly become exhausting. As a remedy there is an abundance of terrific local cafes and restaurants with delicious Malaga fare and at decent, non-touristy prices.

Shopping is also an excellent experience. Ronda has been spared much of the tacky souvenir shops that sell useless trinkets and instead has a thriving scene of local businesses offering handmade craftworks, clothing, oils and food.

To get to Ronda from Marbella take the A-397 all the way and directly inland. It's a windy, hilly road that requires caution but is a wonderful ride once you've got the hang of it. An alternative route from Malaga takes the A-357 deep inland and then the A-367 down to Ronda. It takes slightly longer at almost an hour and a half but is handy if coming from the eastern Costa del Sol.

YOUR PAPER - YOUR VOICE - YOUR OPINION

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Animal charities have no power

SIR,

On Christmas Day, ADANA - the Estepona dog rehoming centre - welcomed many volunteers to help clean the pens, walk the dogs and give them their Christmas Dinner, donated by an anonymous benefactor.

How sad, then, that amid this goodwill we received messages from disgruntled members of the public asking why we had not taken action over a case of serious dog abuse in the El Padron neighbourhood.

First of all, it has to be said that ADANA was only made aware of this abuse after people had seen the dogs at first hand. Nobody contacted ADANA to tell us about it.

Second, people need to be aware that ADANA is not a Spanish version of the RSPCA. We have no more influence with the authorities than any concerned member of the public.

So why did none of these people who had witnessed the abuse not make a formal complaint? Until this is done no police action can be taken.

But instead of doing the right thing, people criticised ADANA. We are a

A fitting tribute

WE arrived outside the former Bunny's Bar around 12.15pm and there were already at least 100 people there.

Phil was busy with guests so we stood to one side but he noticed us and came straight over which was a teary moment.

We decided to go to the church near Bonanza Square and watch the coffin arrive.

Everybody on the terrace gave a rapturous applaud for well over a minute on the cortège 50 feet below - this truly hit both Phil and his family as it was totally unexpected and out of the blue.

The church is vast - probably 500 seats - and was at least half full which is incredible for a guy



Photo credit Matt Ford/EWN Media Group.

HUGE TURNOUT: Hundreds attended Bunny Lane's funeral.

of 75. The service was delivered in a humanist manner which was very apt considering Barry's life and paid great respect and tribute to his career in theatre.

With no prayers and no hymns, the finale was awesome and can never be repeated by another English person still alive on this

coast with a rendition of 'I Am What I Am.' Everybody stood and clapped like old times in Bunny's.

Totally brilliant day the perfect tribute to a very funny and much-loved guy.

Trevor and Annette Whitehouse, Costa del Sol

small charity which cares for for over a hundred unwanted dogs at any given time. We are run by volunteers and totally reliant on public funding. We wish we could do more to intervene in cases of cruelty and neglect but we simply don't have the power.

My New Year's wish is that every one of us becomes more aware of our personal responsibility to act in the face of evil and not pass by on the other side and leave it to others.

Mary Page, President ADANA Estepona

Rental trap

I HAVE rented apartments and houses for some years in Spain and while many private owners are honest, some are not. The problem is that the owner, by law, holds the deposit. For example in my previous rental, they held €400. And when it came to handing the deposit back - after first deducting water and electric bills for two months - that they would keep the other €348 for cleaning expenses.

When I complained to the owners, who were both out of work, they refused to reply to my emails. After some advice from the Citizen's Advice Bureau in Malaga, it gave me the information I needed. Owners should leave the deposit with the AVRA (the Agencia de Vivienda y Rehabilitación Andalucía). If they have not done so, it is probably because they do not want to pay taxes on the rental income.

I sent a letter to the owners saying I would contact the AVRA and then the local tax offices to see if they had paid taxes on their rental income if I did not get my money back. Paying me was cheaper than paying the taxes, so my money was returned.

Surely the law should be changed so the money automatically goes to the AVRA to help stop any such problems?

Michael Hill, Torre del Mar, Malaga

Leapy woe

I FOLLOW your column most weeks and agree with a lot of what you say in your articles.

But to say that the whole careers and promotions of the UK police is based entirely on arrests and convictions is absolute rubbish! Am I a cop? No. But a retired one yes. Indeed I was promoted from Constable to Chief Superintendent, and at one time served as Head of the Career Development Department. I therefore believe that I have a very good understanding of the system. Clearly, you do not!!

Keep the faith.

Derek Lynch, Altea, Costa Blanca North

HAVE YOUR SAY

All letters by email or post should carry the writer's address, NIE and contact number though only the name and town will be published.

Readers who have missed correspondence can see all letters - which can be edited before publication - posted on: www.euroweeklynews.com.

IN PICTURES: Spain slides to a halt as snow grips country

Yesterday in the morning it was rain but soon started snowing heavily lasting throughout the day. Today the mountains (Fuensanta) are still covered and cold temperature, more snow threatened... On the day of the Kings I did not appreciate snow as my present from them... chocolate next year please...gracias. *Tim McMahon*

We need the water this is good. *Angela Mansfield*

Sunny and dry in Mojacar! *Anita Oakes*

Sun and clouds Coin campo, Malaga, with snow on the Sierra de las Nieves, bit chilly. *Ruud Faber*

What! No snow? I'm not going to La Manga then. Gonna stay in North Wales. *Davejune Higgins*

38 starving dogs rescued

Wouldn't it be great if we could now stick them in a cage and let them starve to death! *Jean Gray*

I wonder what punishment these scum will get? How can anybody do this to these poor dogs? Absolutely heartbreaking. I hope they will rot in hell. *Doris Teasdale*

Comments from EWN online

Could the Animal Shelter not put down the animal that lead to these poor dogs suffering the way they did? *Andrew*

Passenger leaves plane by emergency exit

Good on him! There is never enough information given.... No drinks, no food and continual lies!! Why stay on board!! *Rob Whaley*

He was probably thinking he was going to die whilst having an asthma attack and needed air but was being ignored, so he let himself out. *Stephen Richards*

You're all too quick to criticise Ryanair. That plane was on the ground and on its stand. It

then becomes the airport's designated ground handling service, not the airline. If they failed to service the flight with stairs, the agent service are to blame. *Will Murphy*

Catalan crisis 'cost Spain €1 billion'

The damage these people have done is incalculable. Which is why it would have been a good idea for Rajoy to put a stop to it a lot sooner. Even now, he's just pussyfooting around the problem. *Peter Harvey*

Two dead in 'massive' pitched battle in southern Spain

How is it that no arrests were made in the four hours that this lasted? *Jace T Adams*

What an awful situation leaving two dead, it must have been pretty frightening for people in the area. *Necie Russell*

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MADDOCKS' VIEW ON LIFE



' MY NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION - I INTEND TO GET OUT AND ABOUT MORE! '

Trivia from around the world

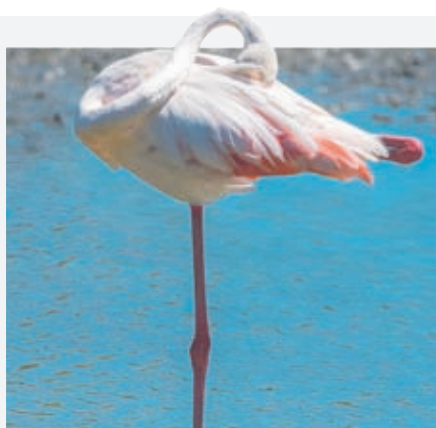
*** The words 'kosher' and 'hummus' were recently added to the official Spanish language dictionary.

*** Iceland has an official book-buying season – Jolabokaflö. It runs from September to December and over half of all books sold in Iceland are sold in the month before Christmas.

*** Hawaiian Airlines never had a fatal accident or a hull loss throughout its 88 year history, making it the longest-running carrier in the US.

*** Flamingos can sleep while on one leg. The balancing act requires less muscular effort, allowing the birds to stay perfectly still.

*** Finland is the only country in the developed world where fathers of primary school age children spend more time with their children than mothers.



FLAMINGO: Perfectly balanced.

*** In France it is illegal to publish photographs of handcuffed suspects, as they are not to appear guilty until proven so.

DID YOU KNOW?

The second officer of the Titanic, who survived by swimming from the sinking ship to a capsized raft, later in life sailed his civilian craft to Dunkirk during World War 2, helping to evacuate over 130 men.

Women's wit

' A woman is like a teabag, you can't tell how strong she is until you put her in hot water.'

Eleanor Roosevelt



Famous quote

' I hope that in this year to come you make mistakes. Because if you are making mistakes then you are making new things, trying new things, learning, living, pushing yourself, changing yourself, changing your world.'

Neil Gaiman, English author

World of English

' Calque: word or expression introduced into a language by literally translating it.'

YOUR STARS FOR NEXT 7 DAYS

AQUARIUS
(January 21 - February 19)

Spirituality seeps right through the week. As you are feeling particularly sensuous, invite someone special to dinner or on a trip. Visit garden centres and plan ahead. The colours and perfumes will be particularly pleasing.

PISCES
(February 20 - March 20)

Satisfaction with your love life is paramount this week, and the opinion of others seems important to you. Perhaps you are looking for an excuse to make a change. It is possible, however, that a change is not required so much as a different approach. It is not essential to put all your eggs in one basket.

ARIES
(March 21 - April 20)

A conversation with a colleague brings insights into how others live and it is quite an eye-opener. Friendships are particularly important this week. You have been dashing around and maybe not enough thought has gone into how you spend your leisure time.

TAURUS
(April 21 - May 21)

There is something in you that needs a creative outlet. Perhaps you would like to write a book: memoirs, for instance, take up a craft or paint. Learning a new language would also be satisfying. Certainly, food for the brain and soul are what you should be seeking now.

GEMINI
(May 22 - June 21)

Being very much in demand for your talents this week means less time to spend socially, so it's important to make time for loved ones at the weekend. Someone seeking your advice may simply be seeking your approval for an action they are going to take, anyway.

CANCER
(June 22 - July 23)

There may be some opposition to your ideas as Pluto turns this week. Perhaps your natural charm just doesn't seem to be working. As you have helped others in the past, make it clear that you expect a bit of co-operation. It is not through lack of will that some people do not offer help.

LEO
(July 24 - August 23)

This is a week when progress is fast and plans run ahead. Try new ideas and seek information to hone your knowledge. An organisation that is new to you offers insight and social involvement. An offer that thrusts you into the limelight might be avoided at first but would be to your advantage.

VIRGO
(August 24 - September 23)

Although you have perhaps been looking to money-making ideas to progress finances, think also of alternatives. Perhaps there are areas of your lifestyle where money could be saved. Items that are not used could be sold for a profit and rid you of clutter.

LIBRA
(September 24 - October 23)

Having suffered a bit of a setback last week, you may be feeling less confident. Revving up your social life will certainly help to bring spirits up again. Be with people who listen or inspire you in some way and avoid boring or moaning folk.

SCORPIO
(October 24 - November 22)

Thoughts come to you, perhaps in dreams, that are creative and energy boosting. Someone who recently moved out of your sphere is sadly missed but is in some ways still a part of you. A person at work who has been causing you concern needs investigation, but the facts may be less alarming than you suspect.

SAGITTARIUS
(November 23 - December 21)

A strong and exciting romantic feeling flows through the week, which is fitting as Valentine's Day comes round again next month. Someone returning from a trip makes you smile and boosts your spirit. People who have been a little bossy or late finally realise that you will not rise to the bait.

CAPRICORN
(December 22 - January 20)

It's a better week for travel with less likelihood of delays. Should you be feeling a little lethargic and sorry about recent events, just count your blessings. Consider raising some money and having fun at the same time by indulging in a garage or car boot sale. Doing something entirely different can boost your mind and activity levels, which can't be bad.

LOTTERY

UK NATIONAL LOTTERY	IRISH LOTTO	EURO MILLIONS		LA PRIMITIVA		EL GORDO DE LA PRIMITIVA
Saturday January 06	Saturday January 06	Tuesday January 02	Friday January 05	Thursday January 04	Saturday January 06	Sunday January 07
(18) (28)	(6) (8)	(10) (20)	(2) (5)	(6) (9)	(19) (28)	(5) (25)
(31) (32)	(19) (20)	(21) (28)	(20) (38)	(13) (24)	(33) (40)	(29) (37)
(44) (51)	(38) (46)	(48)	(41)	(35) (42)	(42) (48)	(52)
BONUS BALL	BONUS BALL	LUCKY STARS	LUCKY STARS	REINTEGRO	REINTEGRO	REINTEGRO
(50)	(23)	(01) (08)	(4) (8)	(16) (3)	(38) (0)	(2)
		EL MILLON: VSX56204		JOKER: 5 207 129	JOKER: 263 047	

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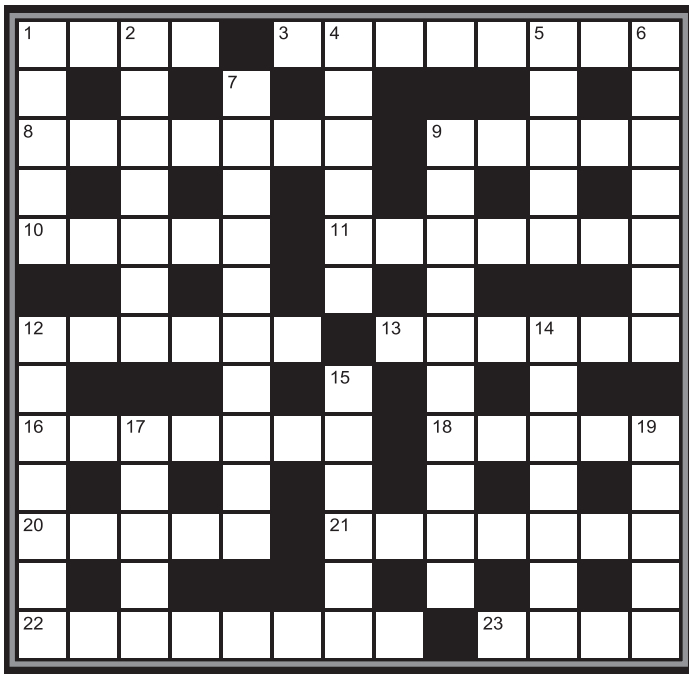
Cryptic

Across

- 1 Alternative in church's centre (4)
- 3 West Indian songs about plays in Greek island (8)
- 8 Communication from dining room takes a long time (7)
- 9 Bring tea round in porcelain (5)
- 10 The first ceremony is ordinary (5)
- 11 Socialist leader in fitting decline (7)
- 12 Reading, for example, about Tory leader's shame (6)
- 13 Troubled waters for this reprobate (6)
- 16 Trace singlet one returned for example (7)
- 18 A society role model is buried in Austria (5)
- 20 Goes round for some bread (5)
- 21 Nice tax break is incorrect (7)
- 22 Raised tax in East Leeds endlessly (8)
- 23 Small county in which flowers are grown (4)

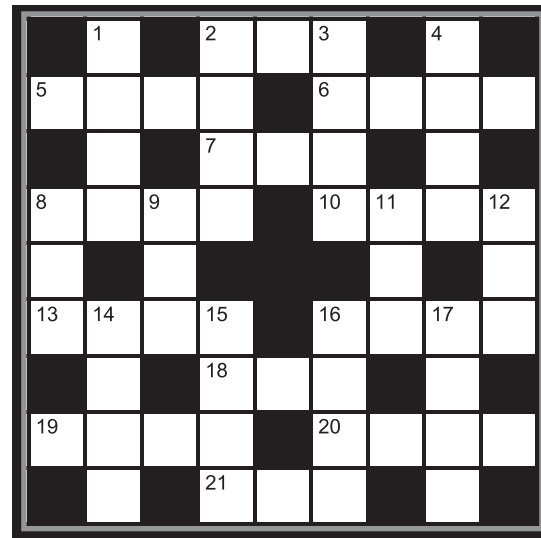
Down

- 1 Arrive Tuesday for the space traveller (5)
- 2 Daring knight returning with a monarch (7)
- 4 Schedule for a general prosecutor (6)
- 5 Southern tipple given to pigs (5)



- (5) 6 Rearrange car test and flee (7)
- 7 Stuntmen did several reconstructions (10)
- 9 Informal neckwear injured people (10)
- 12 Cancel religious education and poetry (7)
- 14 Outdoor area where a caterer served up (7)
- 15 Speak in ceremony outside city (6)
- 17 Crack only found outside civic centre (5)
- 19 Louts destroyed a plant (5)

Quick



Across

- 2/18 Exploit, cheat or overcharge (3,3)
- 5 Small river fish (4)
- 6 Show the way by going first (4)
- 7 Beer (3)
- 8 Small wooded hollow (4)
- 10 Largest continent (4)
- 13 Bucket (4)
- 16 Assists (4)

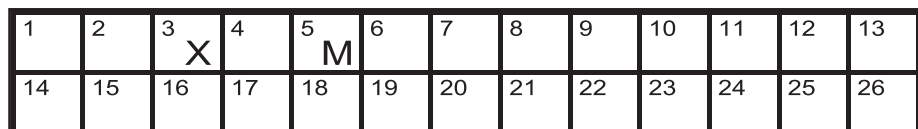
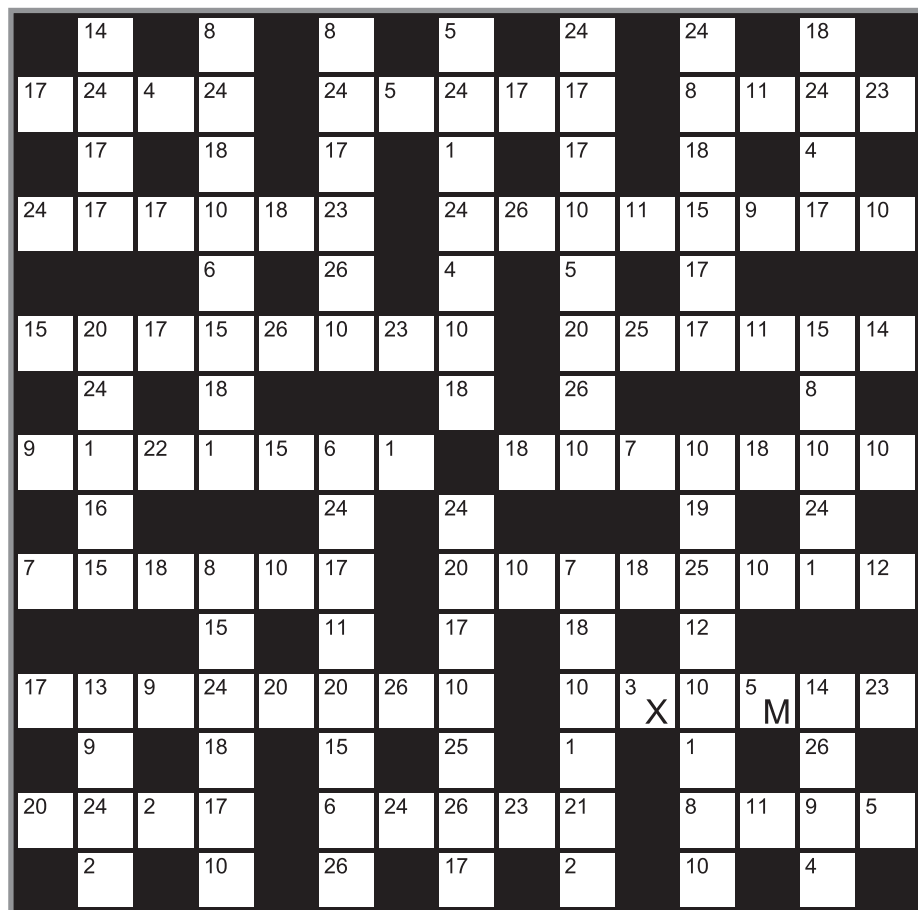
Down

- 18 See 2
- 19 Excludes (4)
- 20 Highest point (4)
- 21 Sense organ for hearing (3)
- 1 Completely unclothed (4)
- 2 Authentic (4)
- 3 Defendant's answer to a charge (4)
- 4 Asian garment (4)

- 8 Immerse for a time (3)
- 9 Hawaiian flower necklace (3)
- 11 Glide over snow (4)
- 12 Donkey (3)
- 14 Slightly open (4)
- 15 Fail to win (4)
- 16 A long way off (4)
- 17 Profound (4)

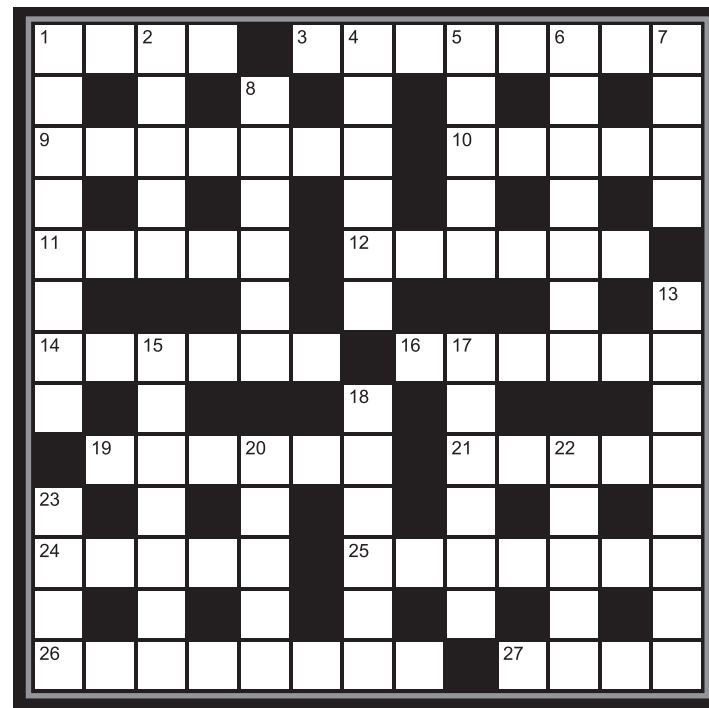
Code Breaker

Each number in the Code Breaker grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. In this week's puzzle, 3 represents X and 5 represents M, so fill in X every time the figure 3 appears and M every time the figure 5 appears. Now, using your knowledge of the English language, work out which letters should go in the missing squares. As you discover the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and the control grid.



English - Spanish

The clues are mixed, some clues are in Spanish and some are in English.



Across

- 1 Este (zona, área) (4)
- 3 Predicador (8)
- 9 Técnico (7)
- 10 Carro (wagon) (5)
- 11 Ahora (at this time, immediately) (5)
- 12 Más fácil (6)
- 14 Nailones (metal) (6)
- 16 Estatua (6)
- 19 Cartera (6)
- 21 Cervezas (5)
- 24 Flecha (5)
- 25 Enemy (7)
- 26 Guapo (8)
- 27 Mediodía (4)

Down

- 1 Entrada (lugar de acceso) (8)
- 2 Sacred (art, musical) (5)
- 4 Reabrir (6)
- 5 Arches (5)
- 6 Cosecha (7)
- 7 Tejado (4)
- 8 Liver (anatomical) (6)
- 13 Cucharilla (8)
- 15 Safrón (7)
- 17 Mesas (muebles) (6)
- 18 Arroyo (riachuelo) (6)
- 20 Céspedes (5)
- 22 Hedgehog (5)
- 23 Baño (4)

CROSSWORD PAGE

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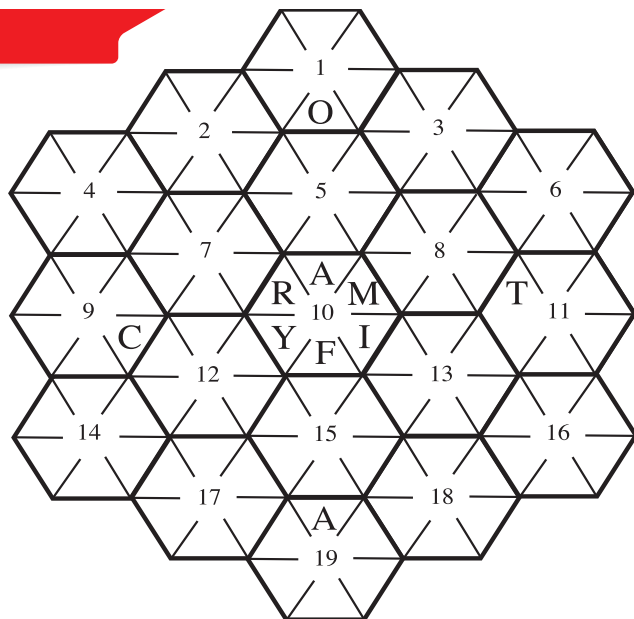
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Hexagram

- BLANCH
- BRONCO
- CANTON
- COSMOS
- COYOTE
- CRUSTY
- DHARMA
- FIASCO
- HEROES
- MODIFY
- PATHOS
- PATRON
- PAYOFF
- POISON
- POLICE
- RAMIFY (10)
- TAMPON
- TARPON
- VESTAL



The purpose of the Hexagram puzzle is to place the 19 six-letter words into the 19 cells. The letters at the edges of interlocking cells **MUST BE THE SAME**.

The letters in the words must be written **CLOCKWISE**. The word in cell 10 (**RAMIFY**) and one letter in four other cells are given as clues.

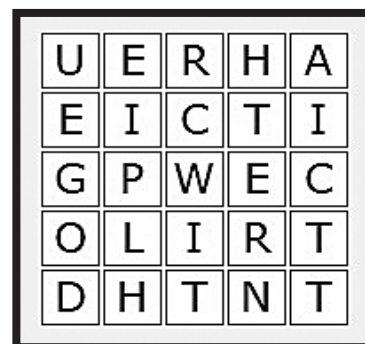
LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

- 1 Beaten 2 Dreamt 3 Teller 4 Sweaty
- 5 Lambda 6 Selves 7 Barber 8 Verbal
- 9 Bonnet 10 Embark 11 Eyelet
- 12 Workup 13 Votary 14 Worsen
- 15 Fourth 16 Shelve 17 Poncho
- 18 Behold 19 Infect.

Boggled

How many English words can you find in the Boggled grid, according to the following rules?

- The letters must be adjoining in a 'chain'. They can be adjacent horizontally, vertically or diagonally.
- Words must contain at least four letters and may include singular and plural or other derived forms.
- No letter may be used more than once within a single word, unless it appears twice.
- No vulgarities or proper nouns are permitted.



TARGET:

- Average: 20
- Good: 28
- Very good: 40
- Excellent: 51

SCORING:

- 4 letters: 1 point
- 5 letters: 2 points
- 6 letters: 3 points
- 7 letters: 5 points
- 8 or more letters: 11 points

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

arsine aril arils ails airs aims sari sail saint slim silo simoon simon sine sinew sinner sinh loom looms loon liar liars lira limo limn limner line liner lino lint linty rail rails rain rims inner mooli moon mils milo mine miner mint minty mont month ohms aioli ahoy wine wino winner were nils nims ninth nine nominee hols holism holm hoya yonis yahoo queer queen wholism whom whoa renin brew

Nonagram

How many English words of four letters or more can you make from the nine letters in our Nonagram puzzle? Each letter may be used only once (unless the letter appears twice). Each word **MUST CONTAIN THE CENTRE LETTER (in this case R)** and there must be **AT LEAST ONE NINE LETTER WORD**. Plurals, vulgarities or proper nouns are not allowed.



TARGET:

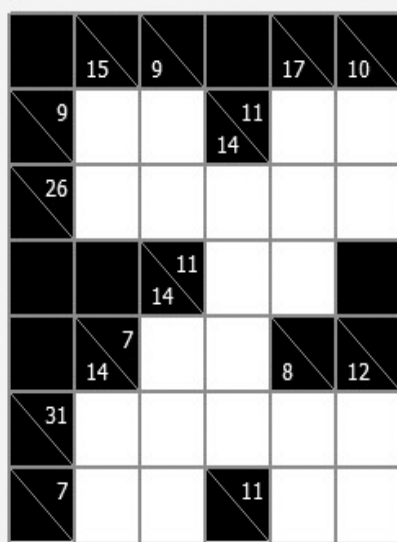
- Average: 5
- Good: 7
- Very good: 10
- Excellent: 12

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

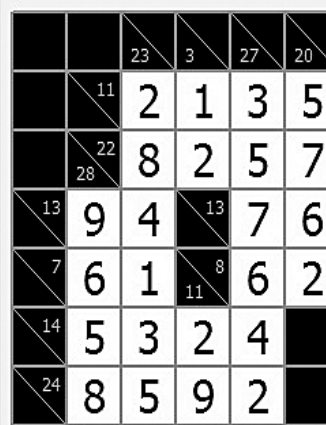
ache arch char chat chit each echo echt etch hack hair hake hare hark hart hate hear heat heck heir hero hick hike hire hoar hock hoer hoke itch kith oath rhea rich tach tech tich aitch chair chart cheat chert chirk choir choke chore earth ethic hacek hater heart hiker hoick ichor ketch ocher ochre orach other ratch reach retch roach teach their thick throe torch achier choker chorea coher hacker hector heriot heroic hokier orache thicko thrice troche chariot haricot hotcake thicker ARTICHOKE

Kakuro

Fill all the empty squares using the numbers 1 to 9, so that the sum of each horizontal block equals the 'clue' on its left, and the sum of each vertical block equals the clue on its top. No number may be used in the same block more than once.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

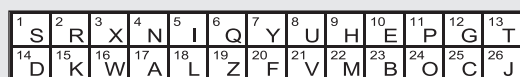


LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS

QUICK

- Across:** 1 Imports, 7 Confident, 8 Oral, 9 Able, 11 Aluminium, 12 Message.
- Down:** 2 Miniature, 3 Omit, 4 Trembling, 5 Acrobat, 6 Streams, 10 Wins.

CODE BREAKER



CRYPTIC

- Across:** 1 Cinch, 3 Disband, 7 Nastier, 9 Gnats, 10 Enact, 11 Soothe, 13 Seesaw, 15 Easter, 18 Candle, 20 Canoe, 22 Urban, 23 Salvage, 24 Theseus, 25 Audit.
- Down:** 1 Condense, 2 Hoist, 3 Duress, 4 Signora, 5 Awash, 6 Dash, 8 Shave, 12 Briefest, 14 Andante, 16 Tonga, 17 Versus, 19 Amble, 20 Gilla, 21 Just.

ENGLISH-SPANISH

- Across:** 1 Crudo, 4 Cuchara, 8 Galleta, 9 Nests, 10 Racha, 11 Chupete, 12 Day off, 14 Noises, 17 Sendero, 19 Poner, 21 Erizo, 22 Prayers, 23 Toenail, 24 Early.
- Down:** 1 Cigar, 2 Unlucky, 3 Oveja, 4 Charco, 5 Canguro, 6 Aisle, 7 Answers, 12 Dessert, 13 Fregona, 15 Sonreir, 16 Gospel, 18 Naipe, 19 Peace, 20 Rusty.

App of the week



Clarity money (free)

This is a free personal finance app that helps you manage your budget and save money through a variety of methods. Link your bank and card accounts to the app, and Clarity then analyses your spending behaviour and helps you build a budget to track your spending.

QUIZ: ENDS IN Z

1. Derived from the Hebrew for 'to gather', what name is given to a collective farm or settlement owned by its members in modern Israel?
2. Les Troyens, Symphonie fantastique and La Damnation de Faust were all works written by which 19th century French composer?
3. Let's Dance (1962) and The More I See You (1966) were both UK hit singles by which American singer?
4. The US musicians John Lewis, Milt Jackson, Percy Heath and Connie Kay were collectively known as the ----- Quartet?
5. What was the name of the politician and revolutionary who served as the president of Venezuela from 1999 until his death in 2013?

6. Which alcoholic cocktail is made of two parts Champagne to one part orange juice?
 7. Which American cartoonist is best remembered as the creator of the Peanuts comic strip that features a range of characters including the boy Charlie Brown and the dog Snoopy?
 8. Which city in northern Morocco gives its name to a flat-topped conical red hat with a black tassel on top, worn by men in some Muslim countries?
 9. Which city is the capital of Liechtenstein?
 10. Which printed multicoloured cotton fabric with a glazed finish is used for curtains and upholstery?
- Not a lot of people know that... according to the Oxford English Dictionary (Third Edition) the first attested use of the word 'quiz' is from 1781 and means 'an odd person'

Answers:

1. KIBBUTZ, 2. HECTOR BERLIOZ, 3. CHRIS MONTEZ, 4. MODERN JAZZ, 5. HUGO CHAVEZ (full name Hugo Rafael Chávez Frías), 6. BUCK'S FIZZ, 7. CHARLES SCHULZ, 8. FEZ, 9. VADUZ, 10. CHINTZ

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Wrong side of the law

NAIMH and Ruairidh are lovers and business partners.

They are owners of a small, but internationally recognised Hebridean tweed company.

As they prepare for an important fabric fair in Paris, Niamh accuses Ruairidh of having an affair with a Russian fashion designer they work with. He insists this is a lie and storms off.

Moments later, the car containing Ruairidh and the fashion designer explodes in a ball of flames.

With Niamh a prime suspect in the murder, the Parisian police hound her even after she returns home.

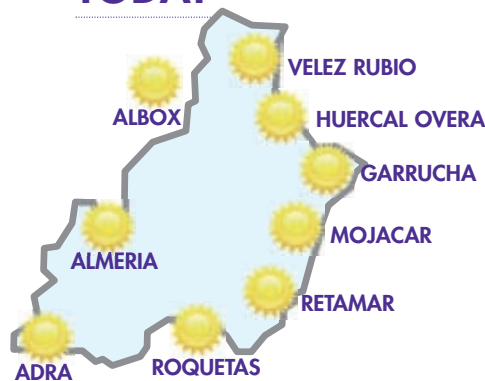
She begins to suspect that things are not what they seem and when there is an attempt on her life, she becomes convinced that what seemed like a terrorist attack on her lover might be something far more personal.

books@euroweeklynews.com

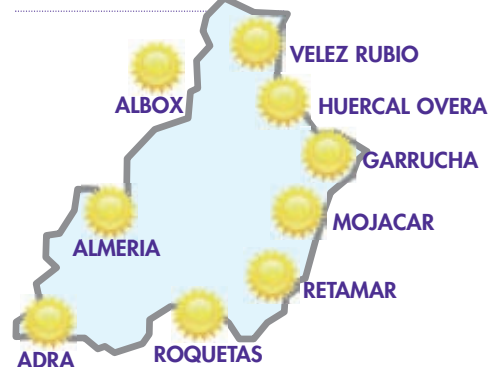
Costa de Almería

weather

TODAY



TOMORROW



Malaga TODAY: MAX 15, MIN 6 - S Fri - 16 8 - S Sat - 16 9 - C Sun - 15 8 - C Mon - 16 10 - Sh Tues - 16 9 - Sh Wed - 16 9 - S	Almeria TODAY: MAX 16, MIN 6 - S Fri - 15 8 - S Sat - 16 9 - C Sun - 16 9 - S Mon - 16 9 - Sh Tues - 16 9 - Sh Wed - 16 9 - S	Bilbao TODAY: MAX 9, MIN 6 - Sh Fri - 12 7 - C Sat - 10 6 - Sh Sun - 11 8 - C Mon - 11 7 - Sh Tues - 10 7 - Sh Wed - 12 8 - Sh	Madrid TODAY: MAX 8, MIN -2 - C Fri - 9 1 - S Sat - 7 1 - C Sun - 8 4 - Sh Mon - 9 4 - C Tues - 10 3 - C Wed - 11 3 - C
Alicante TODAY: MAX 16, MIN 7 - S Fri - 17 7 - S Sat - 17 9 - Cl Sun - 16 9 - S Mon - 17 10 - C Tues - 18 10 - C Wed - 19 10 - S	Benidorm TODAY: MAX 16, MIN 7 - S Fri - 17 8 - S Sat - 17 9 - C Sun - 17 8 - S Mon - 16 10 - Sh Tues - 17 10 - Sh Wed - 18 11 - S	Mallorca TODAY: MAX 13, MIN 8 - C Fri - 14 7 - C Sat - 16 9 - C Sun - 15 9 - C Mon - 15 8 - Sh Tues - 15 9 - C Wed - 15 10 - C	Barcelona TODAY: MAX 13, MIN 5 - Sh Fri - 14 4 - S Sat - 13 5 - C Sun - 13 6 - Sh Mon - 13 5 - C Tues - 14 6 - C Wed - 15 7 - S

S: Sun Cl: Clear C: Cloudy Sh: Showers Th: Thunder Sn: Snow

Euro Weekly News strives for accuracy, but cannot be held responsible for any errors in published forecasts

SATURDAY



BIRTHDAYS

- **Jamie Vardy, Footballer, January 11, 31**
In the 2015-16 Premier League season, Vardy scored in 11 consecutive Premier League matches and was voted the Premier League Player of the Season and as outsiders Leicester won the title.
- **Zayn Malik, Pop singer, January 12, 25**
Former member of multi-million selling boyband One Direction. He left the band in 2015 and released his debut album



Jamie Vardy.

- featuring the single *Pillowtalk*, in March 2016.
- **Liam Hemsworth, Actor, January 13, 28**
Australian actor who stars as Gale Hawthorne in the Hunger Games film series. He also played Josh Taylor on the Australian soap opera Neighbours.
- **Dave Grohl, Rock singer, January 14, 49**
Rock drummer, vocalist, and guitarist who first rose to prominence as the drummer of Nirvana, then went on to

- become founder and lead singer of the Foo Fighters in 1994.
- **Kate Moss, Model, January 16, 44**
Global fashion model who popularised the heroin chic fashion trend of the 1990s. *TIME* magazine named her one of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2012.
- **Michelle Obama, Former first Lady of the US, January 17, 54**
Married Barack Obama, the 44th President of the US, in 1992. Has been a strong advocate for the rights of veterans and the LGBT community.

Sierra Nevada SNOW REPORT



After heavy snowfall last week, 91 of Sierra Nevada's 125 slopes are now open. However there is no snow expected to fall this weekend or the following week. Temperatures will stay below freezing until next Wednesday, where temperatures will creep up to two degrees.

1128 - Pope recognises Knights Templar

Pope Honorius II grants a papal sanction to the military order known as the Knights Templar, declaring it to be an army of God.

1559 - Elizabeth crowned Queen of England

Two months after the death of her half-sister Queen Mary I of England, 25-year-old Elizabeth Tudor is crowned Queen Elizabeth I at Westminster Abbey in London.

1904 - Henry Ford sets speed record

Driving a four-wheel vehicle dubbed the '999,' Henry Ford sets a land speed record of 91.37 mph on the frozen surface of Michigan's Lake St Clair.

1908 - US President honours the Grand Canyon

Theodore Roosevelt declares the massive Grand Canyon in northwestern Arizona a national monument. The site now attracts more than four million visitors a year.

1919 - Prohibition enforced in the US

The 18th Amendment to the US Constitution, prohibiting the 'manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors for beverage purposes,' is ratified and becomes the law of the land.

1950 - Boston thieves pull off historic robbery

Eleven men steal more than \$2 million from the Brinks Armoured Car depot in Boston, Massachusetts. The culprits weren't caught until January 1956, just days before the statute of limitations for the theft expired.

1967 - Packers face Chiefs in first ever Super Bowl

In this historic first World Championship game of American football, the Green Bay Packers beat the Kansas City Chiefs 35-10.

This week in history

Sudoku

Fill the grid so that every row, every column and every 3X3 box contains the digits 1-9. There's no maths involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Word Ladder

Move from the start word (SURF) to the end word (DOWN) in the same number of steps as there are rungs on the Word Ladder. You must only change one letter at a time.

SURF

DOWN

SURF
TURN
TORN
TOWN
DOWN
Solution

DVD

The man with the iron heart



REINHARD HEYDRICH has risen to the top of the Nazi Party as head of the SS, and is the architect of the 'Final Solution.' His brutal rule of occupied Czechoslovakia leads to Hitler dubbing him 'the man with the iron heart.'

However, a small group of Czech Resistance fighters led by Jan Kubiš and Jozef Gabčík, plan to assassinate Heydrich.

This film tells the incredible true story of how the brave men and women of the Resistance sacrificed everything in the name of freedom.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

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

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

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Final Christmas TV ratings see Call the Midwife topple Mrs Brown's Boys

Richard Shanley
Dishing the Dirt

OF EUROPA DIGITAL



THE final tally for the Christmas Day ratings battle is in and it turns out plenty of us had a sweet tooth, as a very syrupy 'Call the Midwife' special takes the crown. Overnight ratings had 'Mrs Brown's Boys' as the most-watched show live on the big day, but now that the figures consolidating all the repeats, recordings and on-demand viewings have been released, we can get the full picture.

In a handy graphic uploaded by PA's Ian Jones, we can see what came where in the consolidated top 10, and how many millions of us tuned in: As you can see, the BBC (specifically BBC One) nabs seven spaces in the top 10 and the entirety of the top five, with 'Strictly Come Dancing,' 'EastEnders' and 'Doctor Who' all beating ITV's top performer of 'Coronation Street.'

Jones notes that both 'Corrie' and 'Em-



Photo by Jemma Crow/Twitter

XMAS MIRACLE: Call the Midwife' special takes the top spot.

merdale' are both down a million viewers (ish) when compared to Christmas Day in 2016. On the other hand, 'Call the Midwife,' 'EastEnders' and 'Doctor Who' (which was Peter Capaldi's swansong and the five-minute debut of Jodie Whittaker) all slightly improved in their ratings.

Elsewhere in the top 10 we've got 'Victoria,' 'The Highway Rat' and 'The Queen's Speech' - where Her Majesty referenced her original festive TV broadcast and also kind of a series two episode of 'The Crown.'

If you would like me to answer any questions you may have on satellite TV or to expand on anything I have written about please call me on 678 332 815 or email richard@europa-digital.com. I look forward to your comments and questions.

Don't forget to listen to my radio show every weekday from 10am on Spectrum 96.1 and 106.8FM, now covering almost 3,000sq kms of Costa Almería and Calida or listen online at costaalmeria.spectrumfm.net for the latest news and views from the world of satellite television.

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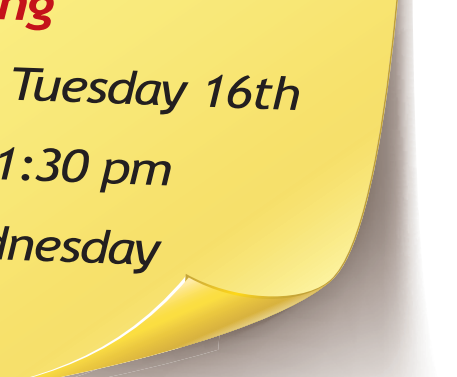
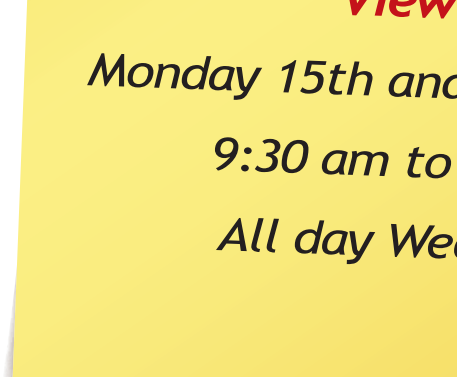
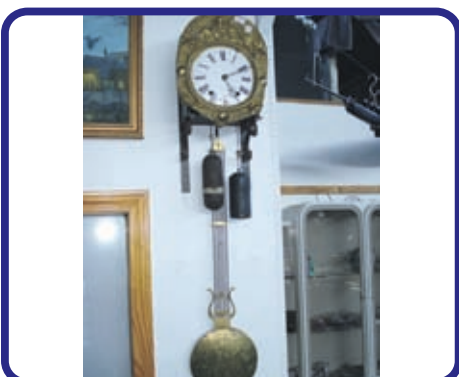
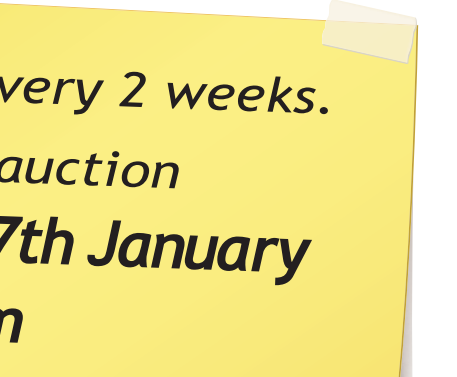
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Travel



ROOM WITH A VIEW: Torre Vieja on the Costa Blanca.

Alicante's underrated tourist base

TORREVIEJA is not the destination at the top of many travellers' lists in Spain.

However, the city makes for an ideal base from which to see a number of quaint, charming villages and popular beach spots.

The waterfront promenade, lined with palm trees and Spaniards out for a stroll, comes alive in the evenings. Buskers and merchandise sellers add spirit to a number of endearing bench-based monuments, while the lively restaurants culture adds to the homely feel.

The real draw, though, is the sea view - particularly at sunset - and the ice cream vendors who serve all manner of flavours, from the exotic to the traditional.

Another tourist favourite is the Go-karting just outside of town.

Though the city is not particularly authentic - or much different to other tourist-filled seaside towns - what is impressive is the number of nearby locations that you can day trip to.

With relatively cheap accommodation on offer, tourists can see the delights of countless local beaches. Try the quiet Lomas de Cabo-Roig or Punta Prima, wave-filled Guardamar, or popular sand and sun-filled La Zenia.

Nearby Spanish towns are also worth a visit for travellers after a more authentic experience.

LEGALLY SPEAKING

Are dash cams legal in Spain?

WE answer some common driving questions, kindly provided by members of the Guardia Civil based in Torre Vieja, Costa Blanca, who set up the N332 website and Facebook page to help break down barriers.



DASH CAMS: Legal and even useful in Spain.

A FREQUENTLY reoccurring question searched for is 'are dash cams legal in Spain?'

Although there are data protection issues, when referring to traffic law the simple answer is yes. One point that must be considered is that under data protection legislation you can run into problems if you share the footage on social media showing faces or number plates without permission, for example.

That said, not only are dash cams legal in Spain, they can also be extremely useful, especially in providing evidence in the event of an incident, or worse, and can be used by the authorities to help prosecute offenders, such as was the case when a lorry driver embarked on an extremely dangerous overtaking move, the footage was used to track down and prosecute the driver.

What we must take notice of is that the installation of the dash cam must not interfere

with our primary field of vision. The optimum position will depend on the style of camera and vehicle, but if the camera can be hidden behind the rear view mirror, then it will not impede your view of the road ahead, and will not create an additional distraction.

Like all devices, such as GPS and mobile phones, they must also be secured and you must not touch them whilst you are driving.

In terms of them being useful, dash cams have been in use in many countries for many years, serving not only as a means of providing evidence in the event of an incident, but also protecting vehicle owners against false claims.

Russia is one of the countries where dash cams have been in use for many years and in America, a move to make them mandatory gained support in recent years, on account of the value they provide.

For more news and articles visit www.n332.es or search N332 on Facebook.

Are they exempt from fees?

Q. I have been led to believe that, if your house is immediately facing the main road, then you are exempt from Community fees. Our housing estate is not fully enclosed. Can you explain?

D S (Costa Blanca)

A. Not true. If you are a member of a Community of Property Owners, you must pay the fees, whether you are an apartment, a terraced house or a free-standing villa on its own plot. Only properties which are on a street in a town or a farm in the country and which do not belong to a

David Searl
You and the Law
in Spain



Community are free of Community fees. Instead, they pay taxes to the town hall to maintain the street and the services. Confusion may arise because some housing

developments where city streets or roads are used wind up paying both municipal taxes and Community fees to maintain streets and lighting. These complex legal situations, which grew from rapid property development, are gradually being sorted out along the Spanish coastal areas.

Send your questions for David Searl through lawyers Ubeda-Retana & Associates in Fuengirola at Ask@lawtaxpain.com, or call 952 667 090.

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Every little helps

HAVE you ever splashed out on an expensive new face cream only to find the whole tube is gone in a couple of weeks?

The disappointment at investing in a 'miracle' cream which comes in microscopic proportions can be high. But the good news is we may be using far too much of our favourite products, according to one beautician, and can get away with using less.

Dr Natasha Cook, an Australian dermatologist, has told one publication one of the most expensive products - facial serum - can be used in tiny proportions because it is so concentrated.

She explained, "for serum, all you need is a pea-sized amount over the entire face," adding, "these

products are, in theory, concentrated with a high percentage of active ingredients. This means you shouldn't need too much."

Sticking to the same theme she says moisturiser should be used in an "almond-sized amount," adding, "two pumps if it is a pump applicator or an almond-sized amount over the entire face."

Foundation, which can be expensive if used several times throughout the day, can also be used in pea-sized quantities. Dr Cook explained, "if you've got a larger face, you may need slightly more," adding, "I recommend applying it to the back of your hand, before getting a 'kakubi' make up brush and evenly buffing it all over your face."

Lastly, for improving dark circles and puffiness use a "sunflower seed equivalent," of eye cream as, "these creams tend to be rich so you only need a small amount."

JUST A DROP:
Experts recommend using serum in small amounts because of its high potency.



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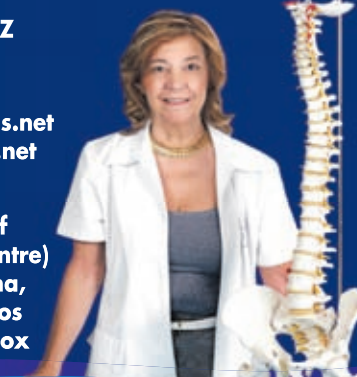
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Painkillers 'could reduce fertility'

MANY women experience various pains during pregnancy and may turn to painkillers for help.

But this could damage your unborn child's fertility, according to scientists.

The study, carried out at the University of Edinburgh, found taking paracetamol or ibuprofen during pregnancy reduced the number of eggs in a female foetus by up to 40 per cent. And while the research was carried out on rats, scientists say the same could be true for humans.

The news could affect the fertility of unborn males too as scientists found the number of sperm cells in foetuses reduced by up to 20 per cent.

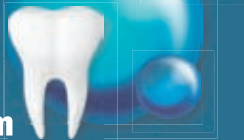
The group was less concerned by this, however, as men can produce sperm all their lives but women only have a limited egg supply.

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Cassandra Nash

A weekly look

- and not entirely impartial reaction -
to the Spanish political scene

SPAIN'S president Mariano Rajoy had the nerve to urge Ines Arrimadas to try to form a government in Cataluña.

TOUGH CHOICE:
Rajoy is putting
pressure
on Ines
Arrimadas.



Ines Arrimadas/ Facebook

As Ciudadanos was the most-voted constitutionalist party, this was her obligation, he maintained, although Arrimadas knows she cannot compete with the combined seats of the pro-independence parties.

Yet after the December 2015 general election when the Partido Popular lost its overall majority in the national parliament, Rajoy immediately refused to try to form a government despite heading the most-voted party.

Rajoy wants to see a constitutionalist party in Cataluña but he also hopes to undermine Arrimadas now that Cs is inching its way up the national polls, overtaking Podemos and nudging the PSOE.

Meanwhile, the Cs leader will wait to see who turns up for a pro-independence investiture attempt.

Remanded ERC leader Oriol Junqueras, PDeCat's former Interior chief Joaquim Forn and ANC leader Jordi Sanchez all

won seats, as did ex-regional president Carles Puigdemont and the four members of his former government self-exiled in Brussels.

They are sure to be remanded if they appear, but the separatist parties will be eight MPs short with no room to manoeuvre if they don't. And that's when Arrimadas will start manoeuvring.

Promises to keep

MARIANO RAJOY has committed Spain to increasing its NATO contribution by 80 per cent over the next seven years.

He could have taken the trouble to inform the public first but, wanting to avoid answering awkward questions, Rajoy buried the announcement while Spain was captive in the clutches of Christmas.

He admitted he promised to step up the country's contribution during the 2014 summit meeting in Wales but so did everybody else. And like everybody else, it was assumed - or at home, certainly - that Spain was

not going to cough up when the time came.

So who does Rajoy want to curry favour with? Trump, who frequently trumpets about those who shirk their NATO dues?

The pledge definitely won't go down well at home, where millions are still out of work and where spending has been cut on more important things than international defence.

Lingering aftertaste

THE last of the cruise ships chartered to house police and Guardia Civil officers drafted in to prevent the October 1 referendum have left Barcelona.

The Ministry of the Interior sent between 5,000-6,000 officers to the region and the outside world's view of Catalan independence is based on footage of Spain's forces of law and order using an inordinate amount of muscle to prevent Catalans from voting in an unauthorised ballot.

Neither did the images go down well in the rest of Spain, although censure from the constitutionalist parties who recognised that the Catalan government was acting illegally, was muted.

But what should have been kid-glove treatment was iron-fisted and later that day in Cataluña, media coverage pushed people into voting who would otherwise have stayed at home.

Daughterly devotion

FRANCISCO FRANCO's daughter Carmencita has died, aged 91.

Referring to her late father she said, "I don't deny it when they say he was a dictator, but neither do I like it because it's usually said as an insult. Nevertheless it doesn't sound too bad to me."

Exactly, Carmencita. Dictators are largely unloved except by their families.

columnists@euroweeklynews.com

Travel

Entertainment capital of the Orihuela Costa

THE southern Costa Blanca is home to a host of wonderful commercial centres that are always teeming with life, but if there is one place that stands out a mile, it has to be Cabo Roig.

Just a short walk away from the perennially popular La Zenia, the Cabo Roig strip really is the place to be.

Chinese, Mexican, Indian and Thai cuisine can all be enjoyed via the fantastic selection of restaurants available. Of course there is always good British pub grub on offer too, even including chip shops.

If you don't fancy a bite to eat then there is a host of bars that specialise in drinks and provide generous allocations of happy hours.

One of the best things about the Cabo Roig strip is that it stays open all year round. Some of the establishments close for the winter, but most stay open meaning you can still enjoy a lively night out even in the middle of winter.

There are entertainers gigging throughout the year so whether it be comedians, karaoke hosts, drag artists or tribute acts you enjoy most, there really is something for everyone.

A short walk from the strip are the jaw-

dropping views of the promenade where you can walk right around the coast to La Zenia or Campoamor whilst stopping to enjoy a drink or two at the numerous chiringuitos that are situated along the beaches on the way.

Houses are very affordable with some beachside properties going for under €100,000 and you can get even better value for your money if you choose a place on the opposite side of the N332.

If there is one event in Orihuela Costa to rival the Christmas Day celebrations on La Zenia beach, it is the St Patrick's Day parade in Cabo Roig.

Ranked as one of the top 10 places in the whole world to celebrate St Patrick's Day by National Geographic, the atmosphere in Cabo Roig is something that needs to be experienced to be believed.

Every year, thousands of people line the Cabo Roig Strip to cheer and join in with the annual celebrations for Ireland's patron saint. The Strip turns green for the day as it is filled with parade floats, cars adorned with Irish flags and regalia, dancers, musicians, march-



STUNNING STROLL: Cabo Roig is the perfect place for a walk on the beach.

ing bands, and even a few leprechauns. There is also face-painting, traditional Irish dancing, street magicians, bouncy castles and flamenco dancers, adding a touch of 'El Toro' to Paddy's big day.

Following the parade there is a classic car and motorbike exhibition and drive-by which provides a great opportunity to snap a few photographs of some well-preserved relics. The day is then rounded off with an eye-catching fireworks display.

Cabo Roig is a fantastically multicultural area with British, Irish, Spanish, Russians, Moroccans, Germans, French and Chinese all



living in harmony with one another.

Throughout the year there is a constant happy vibe running through the place and with so many great features, it is not hard to see why. So be sure not to miss out, get yourself over there and come and experience the excitement for yourself.

Discover some delicious wines with experts

THERE will be an unusual performance at the Teatro Cervantes in Almeria City on Sunday February 18 where the star of the show will be wine.

Rich wines, ice wines, sparkling wines, noble wines and even wines where the grapes are grown in volcanic soil.

Whatever the pedigree, every wine will have a unique feature in this the second celebration of unique wines.

It promises to be fun and enjoyable but with an element of learning about the different types of wines and the process by which they are made which may be quite different to

those found in the more everyday Riojas and Riberas.

Wine specialists Curro Lucas and Alfonso Montaña will be responsible for directing the tasting and will be able to share their wisdom thanks to the large Cervantes screen.

There will be six different wines to taste and to learn about and after the tasting there will be some small picoteo to enjoy followed by a full toast with one of the special wines.

Attendees will be encouraged to ask for advice about any aspects of wine or the industry from Alfonso Montaña who has been a wine professional for more than 15 years, and is co-



Photo by Randy OHC flickr

TASTING TIME: Discover some special wines.

owner of the wine cellar Solera Ibérica and a member of UEC (Unión Española de Cata-dores).

He is confident that more than 4,500 wines from around the world have gone past his nose and into his mouth.

Places for this tasting are limited and cost €35 if booking is made by Friday February 2 or €40 if you apply later, but be warned, ticket sales will be closed a few days before the event in order for the organisers to order sufficient wine.

May the force of the orchestra be with you

A NATIONWIDE tour by the Film Symphony Orchestra playing music from the great movies is coming to an end soon but will be at the Auditorium of Roquetas de Mar this Saturday.

This tour has proven to be very popular with some locations being completely sold out so those wishing to see the performance need to consider checking availability as soon as possible.

Saturday's performance starts at 9.30pm with tickets costing from €36 to €41 and reservations may be made online at www.teatroauditorio.roquetas.entradas.com although there are very few seats left.

This tour is entitled The Music of the Cinema and the full orchestra under the direction of Constantino Martínez-Orts in his famous black frock coat and in honour of its past tour and tribute to Star Wars it will play



Photo by FSO

ON STAGE: The Film Symphony Orchestra.

the theme of the new release Rogue One: A Story of Star Wars.

The FSO will perform for the first time in symphonic format a beautiful suite that will collect the most characteristic themes from the Oscar-winning soundtrack of La La Land as well as some of the great themes of the past 50 years or more.

There is even a special section for the young (and young at heart) with music

from Up and Peter Pan.

For those who love the cinema, this is an opportunity to indulge in an evening of nostalgia performed by an enthusiastic and professional team of musicians.

This tour has seen 30 concerts in 20 cities and the musical director and his team perform with the passion and feeling of fun of the truly committed as if each was the first concert of the tour.



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Facebook: Brothers in Band

IN TRIBUTE: The nine-piece Brothers in Band.

Brothers in Band

IT is becoming increasingly more difficult to attend the concerts of some of the great musicians of the 60's and 70's due to death, ill health or simple old age.

So, it is becoming more and more attractive for audiences to attend 'tribute' concerts performed by musicians who have studied their idols in minute detail and present musically perfect interpretations of the songs and music that fans know so well.

With Mark Knopfler concentrating on his solo career and as a composer for film soundtracks, Dire Straits, the first group to sell one million CDs, have not performed together since 1995 and it appears unlikely that they ever will do so again despite their enormous success.

Today, a band made up of nine Spanish musicians who call themselves Brothers in Band are in the middle of a tour of Spain and Europe where they are presenting all of the best known numbers recorded by the original band.

They are due to appear at the Padilla de Almería Auditorium on Friday February 9 with tickets costing from €20 to €32.

With no likelihood of ever seeing the original band again, this is an opportunity to see a highly professional outfit who are so confident of their ability that they even offer a CD and DVD of themselves playing on their website www.brothersinband.com.

A great guitarist returns to his roots

ONE of the still living greats of the Flamenco guitar, José Fernández Torres, better known as Tomatito will be performing in Roquetas de Mar.

Having worked with legends such as Paco de Lucia and now blending traditional Flamenco with Jazz and Cuban inspired music he has travelled the world performing in every continent except Antarctica.

Born to a musical family in Almería, his diminutive name Tomatito comes from his father who was known as Tomate and his grandfather Miguel Tomate and he is also the nephew of legendary Flamenco singer Niño Miguel.

At the age of 12 he moved to Malaga in order to play in a different area and it was there that he met the late Paco de Lucia as well as singer Camarón de la Isla who he worked with for 18 years.

He recorded a number of albums with Camarón and eventually shared the guitar duties with Paco de Lucía for the first time.

After going solo, he has released a

number of albums and has won five Grammy awards and a Latin Grammy, for his album Aguadulce.

Since then, he has collaborated with such names as Elton John and

Photo by Errol Putigna flickr



Tomatito in concert.

Frank Sinatra and has influenced an entire generation of young guitarists.

Tomatito returns home to present his latest album Soy flamenco (I am Flamenco) at the Teatro Auditorio in Roquetas de Mar coming on stage at 9.30pm on Saturday February 24 with seats costing from €21 to €23.

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Photo by Diego Delso Wikimedia

TRADITIONAL: A Flamenco performance.

Flamenco in Almeria - learn the true story

MANY visitors to Spain are lured into restaurants which offer Flamenco shows without often understanding the tradition or history behind this very special and not necessarily typical Spanish obsession.

This is very much an art form of Southern Spain which is attributed to the arrival of the Romany gypsy population which made its way to Spain from India in the 15th century and there is no doubt that many of the most famous Flamenco performers came and continue to come from the gypsy world.

It has to be remembered however that Spain in the Middle Ages in particular had a huge cross culture with Jewish settlers and Moors who also added their traditions to the Flamenco style which was not really recognised until the 18th century.

Originally it was dance only, an expression of the

feeling of the performers and their compatriots but it expanded to include voices and instruments with hand claps and shouts of encouragement from the audience.

Nowadays, the Flamenco style is more popular than ever, not just in Spain but on an international basis and it is said that there are more Flamenco academies in Japan than in Spain whilst in America there are even heavy metal bands who incorporate Flamenco into their musical style.

Almeria has a thriving Flamenco culture with at least 18 clubs (known as Peñas) affiliated to the Federation of Flamenco clubs of Almeria (Federacion de Peñas Flamencas de Almeria) and whilst the audience in these small but thriving clubs is predominantly Spanish, most welcome expatriate visitors who want to know more about the music and dance.

Although they serve simple food and drink, these are not drinking clubs but temples to the Canto Jondo (deep song) style which can be very moving yet to some ears is rather cacophonous. This singing is accompanied by guitar and cajon (the wooden box drum on which the drummer sits).

Dance is another intricate part of Flamenco with both men and women performing to a very high standard. On occasion you can witness duels between the musicians and the dancers to see who can be the fastest and yet most accurate performer.

If making your way to a Peña is a bit daunting, then prior to any Feria, local Peñas will host a Concurso de Cante which is a competition for local artists with the winners being invited to participate with more established artists (often full time professionals and recording artists) in the Festival.

Third in world rating

BACCHUS CELLAR

by Lorenzo Barbareschi



AIRÉN: In decline but well worth a try.

AIRÉN, an old Iberian white grape, represents about 30 per cent of all Spanish varieties and is the world's third most grown.

Unknown to many and predominantly grown in the south, central and western regions of Spain, its production is now declining and being replaced with red varieties including Tempranillo.

The grapes - late to bud and ripen and very resistant to drought and diseases - are perfectly adapted to the harsh arid climate of La Mancha with its calcareous soils and vineyards 700m above sea level.

Airén is also known under the many synonyms, including Aidén, Blancon, Forcallada, Forcallat blanca, Forcayot, Laeren del Rey, Layren, Manchega, Mantuo Laeren and Valdepenera blanca.

A relatively neutral taste and flavour and high acidity has made Airén the production choice for alcohol used as the base for Brandy, thus limiting its use to develop blended or varietal wines.

Additionally due to processes used including fermentation in terracotta vats, Airén wines do not always receive favourable publicity.

In general, Airén wines are characterised by a pallid colour with yellow iridescences and an alcoholic content of about 12 - 14 per cent making it quite pleasant and easy to drink, with mature fruit scents including banana, pineapple or grapefruit.

To get the best out of it, pair Airén wine with grilled sardines with green pepper, garlic prawns or something spicy.

Better label Airén wines including Castillo del Moro; Sendas del Rey by Felix Solis and Don Octavio by Bodegas Villarobledo are priced €4 - €6, though some can be found for just over €1.

Happy tasting.

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Photo by Cristóbal García Granados/Facebook

STOLEN: The water pipes between Limaria and Los Higuerales.

Pipes pinched

A PACK of 180 metre-long water pipes have been stolen in Arboleas.

Mayor of Arboleas, Cristóbal García Granados, announced on Tuesday that the tubes, used for water supply between Limaria and Los Higuerales as well as irriga-

tion, had disappeared.

He wrote on Facebook: 'Just comment, that a pack of tubes with 180m have been stolen last week on the road.'

'These tubes are 25 by 25 by 25 and 160 mm in diameter.'

'If anyone saw anything suspicious, just send the basic

data, vehicle registration etc. to the Ayto of Arboleas.'

'Thank you very much for the collaboration.'

The pipes are reportedly worth an estimated €3,000 and are suspected of being taken between Friday afternoon and Tuesday morning.

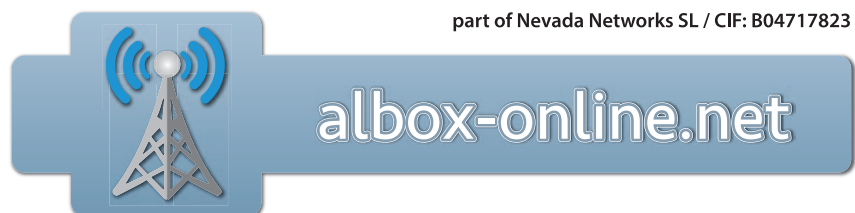
Family fun run

MORE than 300 people took part in a fun run organised by Olula del Rio Council over the weekend. Contestants came from as far afield as Granada and competed in different categories.

Joaquin Perez Martin, aged 40, won the men's race while Maria Segura Cosilla won the women's. Both raced along a 5.25km circuit that both began and finished at the San Pablo Park.

A shorter race for children preceded the main events. Attendance this year was higher than ever before as the race's popularity continues to increase.

It was the fourth edition of the San Silvestre race and also featured a raffle and plenty of food and drink for fans.



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All Areas Covered

Streets sorted

SEVERAL streets in Albox's historic centre have been completely renovated.

The renovation works, which have taken place over the past few weeks, consisted of paving and adding steel constructions to many streets in the area in the hope of improving safety for both pedestrians and drivers.

Asphalt pavements have been added to Calle Palmeras, Calle Ramón y Cajal, la Calle Brígida Pardo, Calle Huerto de la Virgen and Calle Duque de Ahumada, Calle Amigos de la Argentina (next to the Plaza de San Francisco) and Camino de San Roque.

The final works to be completed were repaving Rosario Street, one of the main access roads to the San Antonio neighbourhood.

Mayor, Francisco Torrecillas, told Spanish media: "The state of many streets



Photo by Google maps

LOOKING SMART: Albox's historic centre's streets.

of our municipality, including the asphalt, was very worrying.

"Not only because of the image and the aesthetic but also because, as in the case of Rosario Street, they sometimes represented a real danger for their neigh-

bours because of the holes and the damages they had, especially for the elderly."

He continued: "With these works, which will continue soon in other streets of our town, we have given more security to pedestrians and drivers."

"We also improved the image of our municipality in some important points such as access to the historic district of San Antonio and the cradle of Albox, which now has a renovated Rosario street and the new Alfareros Park."



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CLAIMING HER PRIZE: Competition winner Tonia.

APSA hamper winner announced

ANIMAL PROTECTION SOCIETY ALBOX (APSA) has announced the winner of their annual charity Christmas hamper competition.

The winner was Tonia from Chapmans bar and restaurant in Albox. She received the hamper from Maggie, manageress of the shop in Avenida Lepanto, who would also like to thank all those who bought tickets.

All of the proceeds from the competition have gone towards helping the many animals in the care of the charity.

Never-ending story

A NEW trial of disgraced former Zurgena mayor Candido Trabalon and his four fellow accused will take place in December.

As previously reported in the *Euro Weekly News*, the five had recently appealed against their convictions by Almería's criminal court.

Trabalon was sentenced to six years in prison and disqualified from public office for 18 years. He and former councillor Manuel Tijeras were found guilty of helping develop and sell dozens of homes on land they knew it was illegal to build on.

Their appeal centred on whether they were guilty of bribery as well as corruption and that will be among the main questions tackled in 11 months.



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The future's bright



BOOM: 2018 is expected to be an excellent year for Spain.

FORECASTS for Spain's 2018 property market are now in place. Barring an expected crisis, higher prices, more sales, more construction and higher rewards on investments are all on the cards.

The sale of new homes is expected to continue growing, after increasing for the first time since

2006 last year.

Servihabitat expects that total sales of new and second-hand homes will reach 560,000, up from 472,000 in 2017, but still shy of the high water mark of 775,000 in 2007.

New homes will account for almost 120,000 of those sales, more

than a quarter, as construction booms across the country.

Permits to construct new properties are expected to swell by 18 per cent to almost 140,000 this year. Developers are expected to be the dominant figures of the 2018 marketplace as buyers renew their faith in newly built properties.

The number of mortgages taken out is projected to increase from the 320,000 in 2017 and interest rates expected to stay low after falling below 3 per cent in October.

Investors who snapped up properties to let out long term, or to tourists, can expect a profitable year. The Bank of Spain is projecting long

term returns of more than 10 per cent. After rising 4.5 per cent in 2017, prices are expected to increase by a minimum of 4.7 per cent this year.

More optimistic figures project a rise of between 6 and 8 per cent. Moody's is confident of an 8.6 per cent rise over the next three years.

Wage worry

RISING property prices are good news for investors but problematic for Spaniards on average wages trying to get on the property ladder.

New research found that a Spanish resident earning an average wage would need to devote 13.7 years of their salary to buy an average-priced house, which costs €141,200.

New house smell

NEW home prices rose by 5 per cent in 2017, the highest annual increase since 2007.

The timely jump comes as Spain prepares to build tens of thousands of new homes this year after a decade of construction decline. During that period almost all buyers opted for second-hand homes.

But a study from the Appraisal Society of 400 municipalities suggests that might soon change. Prices of new homes rose by 1.7 per cent in the first half of 2017, and 3.3 per cent in the second.

The average price now stands at €2,227 per square metre.

New homes in Barcelona now cost €3,865 per square metre, compared to €4,500 in 2007. Prices are similar in Madrid and the luxury seaside destination of San Sebastian.

They are lowest in Ciu-



Photo by Unsplash

PRICEY PADS: Homes in Barcelona are some of the most expensive in the country.

dad Real where a new home fetches just €1,160 per square metre.

Cataluña is well ahead as the most expensive region

in Spain for new housing. But it is also the only region where the real estate confidence index fell, plummeting by two points at the tail

end of 2017. The political crisis is the obvious cause, with buyer confidence in every other Spanish region remaining high.



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Your garden in January

By Dick Handscombe

APOLOGIES that my column disappeared for a couple of months but software problems, delays in obtaining a compatible hard disk and becoming acquainted with significant changes in user friendliness caused my first major problem since Google appeared in 1998.

This was the same time when gardening problems multiplied with a drying climate, the use of an increasing number and variety of plants from outside Spain, wide variations in the sources and qualities of composts and the occurrence of unwanted plant pests, from the ever increasing number attacking fruit trees to feral cats.

Most expat January gardening needs are common along the Mediterranean coast from north to south, but what is feasible from

**PRUNING ROSES:** Recommended for January.

day to day are influenced by the tremendous gales, continued droughts on the Costa Blanca and widespread rain in Andalucía.

Fortunately mild temperatures so far have allowed continuing good harvests of a diverse mix of tasty salad

leaves and flowers. Chemical free salads with up to 20 ingredients continue from my raised beds and line of builders buckets surrounding the boule court.

One very useful job for a dry day is to clean up roses and prepare them for the

2018 flowering season. First prune to an appropriate shape leaving two strong budding points on each pruned stem. Spray with a strong garlic spray and plant two garlic seed segments under each plant before placing a deep manure

mulch, preferably horse, under each plants.

Climbing plants now need pruning to manageable heights and prevent them from becoming straggly when spring growth commences.

To achieve a healthy garden environment for humans, pets and beneficial insects and ensure that all possible vegetables and fruit can be eaten safely, only spray when essential and try to restrict your spraying to ecological sprays such as garlic and neem as insecticides and propolis for a general fungicide.

Inexpensive spring bulbs are now appearing so it is a good time to plant some extra ones. But do water and improve the soil first. It is also not too late to sow sweet peas for early spring displays.

When we had our large henegada allotment we always had a 20-metre row that supplied bunches of flowers and seeds to passing village ladies for whom sweet peas were a novelty.

If you have an area of bare vegetable growing soil top it up with a layer of animal and vegetative compost to renew and improve the fertility and moisture retaining properties.

Spring cleaning

WHILE it may be a little early for an official spring clean, the new year can certainly be a good time to look to the future and declutter anything you don't need from your past.

And while many of our objects hold sentimental value and we would not want to lose them, many of us accumulate plenty of other possessions we neither want nor need.

According to website *becomingminimalist.com* 'Many begin to feel overwhelmed, anxious, and defeated around the idea of decluttering their homes,' but 'the decluttering journey doesn't need to be as painful as some make it out to be.'

To make the idea less daunting, the site suggests giving away one item each day. It explained, 'Colleen Madsen at 365 Less Things gives away one item each day. Over the past several years, she has experienced quite a transformation simply reducing her stuff one day at a time.'

Next you could try picking up a large rubbish bag and seeing how quickly you can fill it with unwanted goods. The website suggests anything collected in the bag can be given to charity.

Next, if you are struggling to part with clothes you may not have worn for years, a technique adopted by Oprah Winfrey could help. The website says 'hang all your clothes with the hangers in the reverse direction. After you wear an item, return it to the closet with the hanger facing the correct direction. After six months, you'll have a clear picture of which clothes you can easily discard.'

Finally, you could try the 'four-box method.' Use four boxes in each room, labelling them, 'trash, give away, keep, or relocate.' Go through each item carefully until you only have things you either need or want and which are in their correct place.

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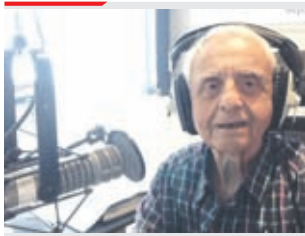
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IF you give your dog a command - even a simple one like 'sit' - then the reward of good dog is given as the dog's bottom hits the ground. Just a verbal praise given in a light happy voice can be enough for most dogs.

Sometimes people will use food or a motivator for this reward system. I believe if you have used treats for a couple of months, a dog will now be content with the bright happy voice which should be sufficient for such a simple command.

As your commands become more difficult for the dog to



Credit: Unsplash

GOOD BOY: Rewarding your dog is important, but only when he deserves it.

achieve you can always up the reward, especially if you are doing scent work. A motivator that the dog really loves can now be used such as that special ball or toy.

Most professional working dogs are rewarded in this manner as soon as they have found something. This reward for work well done is a must.

Whatever you use, you only have a split second to give it on completion of an exercise. Personally I like to use my voice and a quick touch under the chin as my

rewards. I always have my voice with me, so it is always on hand, where a different type of reward may not be with me at that crucial time.

Think about the dolphin which performs in a show. He is being taught to jump out of the water. If he jumps about two metres, he gets a small whistle to call him back, and when he returns to the edge of the pool he is in, he gets a small fish.

As his training increases, and he jumps about six metres or more out of the pool, he gets a huge instant whistle while he's at the top of the jump, which brings him swiftly back to the pool edge where he gets a bucket of fish as his reward.

The timing of any reward is important. (If your timing is out, you may be rewarding for the wrong action.) Watch the height he jumps from there on. The reward is always there for him immediately and will he give his best every time.

Progress made on 'pawternity leave'

AN increasing number of businesses have started to offer time off for employees who have just welcomed a new furry friend into the home.

As any pet owner knows, those first few days are important for establishing ground rules and forming a bond with the animal, which helps in their training later on.

According to the Kennel Club, the first 16 weeks of a puppy's life has major impact on how balanced and sociable a dog turns out to be, and suggests that taking time off would be "extremely beneficial" for both the owner and the puppy, as they can use this time for some intensive training and one-on-one time.

It's not just dogs that benefit from some personal attention during the early days; research has shown cats also need a lot of reassurance and bonding time.

However, Battersea Dogs and Cats Home has advised it's important owners limit their 'pawternity leave' to just a few days.

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**Clarkson
Quote of the Week**


Driving a Reliant Robin is about as dangerous as inviting your mum over for an evening on ChatRoulette."

Some might say...



MORE than half of all new cars sold in Norway in 2017 were electric or hybrid models.

Zero-emission cars made up a fifth, while hybrids accounted for a third of all sales, said the Norwegian Road Federation.

The stats put Norway firmly at the front of the electric revolution.

The Scandinavian nation is planning to ensure that all new cars sold are entirely electric by 2025.

Meanwhile the UK plans to ban petrol and diesel by 2040. Norwegians are buying green cars in record numbers for several reasons.

Drivers of electric vehicles enjoy lower road taxes, free use of ferries and tolls, and free parking.

They can recharge their cars freely and can use bus lanes alongside taxis.

One of the world's wealthiest countries, critics attacked Norway for giving tax cuts to some

Northern light Norway goes green



TOP UP: Teslas rule the roost in Norway.

of its richest citizens, who could drive an expensive Tesla Model X on the bus lane while paying almost no tax.

A controversial Tesla tax was introduced on electric vehicles weighing over 2,000 kilos, but quickly scrapped.

Norway is the biggest oil producer in Western Europe but also produces 98 per cent of its electricity from hydropower, making electric cars clean and reliable.

The only hurdle in the way of achieving the 2025 goal is manufacturing might.

It takes longer to produce electric cars and, while demand might be rising, sceptics wonder whether car makers can keep up.

There are now long waiting lists for electric cars and delivery schedules are notoriously lengthy.

But the Norwegian experiment will be watched keenly by other European nations.

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THE luxury division in the SUV market has been heating up with Bentley, Jaguar, Range Rover and Audi vying for supremacy. But more affordable options are now on the market with the release of Renault's latest five-seater Koleos and the new look seven-seater Sorento from Kia.

The Koleos is by no means cheap, with a starting price of £27,500 (€30,900). Renault offers drivers a lot of bang for their buck with ample space compensating for less seats than the average SUV. The boot can be expanded to 1,690 litres.

For those keen on their gadgets, Renault offers an upgrade on the Koleos, the Initiale Paris line, which begins at £36,700 (€41,200).

For the extra 10 grand drivers get heated Nappa leather seats, an infotainment system with Apple CarPlay, TomTom satellite navigation, LED headlights, a panoramic sunroof which opens and a 13-speaker Bose stereo. There's a spare wheel, automatic parking sensors and even cup holders which can be heated and chilled.

The Initiale Paris comes powered by a 2.0 litre dCi 175 turbodiesel engine with an all-wheel drive and automatic gearbox. Deliveries start in spring.

Kia's popular Sorento has been given a sporty GT-Line Series for 2018. This large SUV boasts all-black leather seats, LED headlamps, twin exhausts and an eight-speed automatic gearbox, with a six-speed



Photo by Cornwall Nissan/Twitter

SLEEK: New Renault Koleos a hot addition to SUV market.

Stylish SUVs hit market Sleek and affordable

manual alternative available.

There is a 2.2 litre CRDi turbodiesel engine. Apple CarPlay and Android Auto are available on all models and the SUV re-

tains Kia's trademark ice cube fog lights. Prices range from £28,995 (€32,600) to £41,995 (€47,200) for the GT-Line S automatic.



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Rock 'n' Roll for Jose

MANCHESTER UNITED'S Premier League's fixture against struggling Stoke City at Old Trafford will be just another 'rock 'n' roll' day for Red's gaffer Jose Mourinho.

"The king of the rock and roll said I was underperforming," said Mourinho.

Ex-Real Madrid boss Mourinho, who enters the final 12 months of his existing annual £12m deal this summer, has pointed the finger at Oasis star Noel Gallagher, fan of arch rivals Manchester City.

Gallagher aired his views after City's 2-1 win against United in December: "It's payback time. Respect to the United fans who clapped Pep Guardiola.

"They know they've seen something special. The hypocrisy of the man (Mourinho) is staggering," said Gallagher, referring to Mourinho's post-match comments, which took issue with the nature of City's win.

United, who host Stoke on Monday, have invoked options to extend the con-



UKSPORTSCENE

with Andrew Atkinson

tracts of Juan Mata, Ander Herrera, Ashley Young and Daley Blind until the end of next season.

Bestikas are linked with Marouane Fellaini, 30, out of contract at the end of the season. Fellaini, who joined United in 2013 in a £27.5m move from Everton, has rejected a

new contract.

United executive vice-chairman Ed Woodward and Mourinho's advisers are set for talks over extending his stay: "My commitment is total and I want to stay," said Mourinho.

Premier League fixtures: Saturday: Spurs v Everton; Newcastle v Swansea; Chelsea v Leicester; Crystal Palace v Burnley; Huddersfield v WHU; WBA v Brighton; Watford v Southampton. Sunday: Bournemouth v Arsenal; Liverpool v Manchester City. Monday: Manchester United v Stoke.



WILL HE STAY?:
Mourinho has said he wants to extend his stay at Manchester United.

'Rocket Ronnie' still potting balls, not plants

RONNIE O'SULLIVAN who won a record seventh Masters title in 2017 when defeating Joe Perry 10-7 in the final at London's Alexandra Palace, says: "It's just a job.

"I still like playing, but for me it's just a job," said O'Sullivan, in his 26th year on the green baize, who plays Marco Fu on January 16.

O'Sullivan, who has earned his nickname as 'The Rocket' with 31 ranking tournament wins, won the UK Snooker Championship in December, potting another £450,000 first prize.

"It's not always about the money," said Sullivan, edging towards a milestone £10m career winnings, following his bow on the green baize in 1992. World Champion in 2001, 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2013, Sullivan pocketed the £200,000

first prize, when successfully defending his 2016 Masters title, superseding Stephen Hendry's six Masters wins.

"It is great to get some records. To win seven, someone up there is looking after me," said O'Sullivan, who once told me he'd rather be potting plants, than balls.

All Masters matches, up to and including the Semi Finals, will be best of 11 frames. The Final is best of 19 frames. Draw: January 14: Mark Allen v Luca Brecel; Mark Selby v Mark Williams. January 15: Ding Junhui v Ryan Day; Judd Trump v Liang Wenbo. January 16: Ronnie O'Sullivan v Marco Fu; Barry Hawkins v Kyren Wilson. January 17: Shaun Murphy v Ali Carter; John Higgins v Anthony McGill.

Spain Europe Global World of SPORT

with Andrew Atkinson

ANDY MURRAY'S hopes that 2018 would be a better year than his injury plagued 2017 is in tatters with the former world number one's hip injury woes continuing.

"I want to be fit and healthy. It isn't about winning every match or winning more slams," said Murray, who missed almost five months with hip issues in 2017.

Murray, who underwent an intensive programme of rehabilitation in preparation for 2018, withdrew from the Brisbane International and the Australian Open this month, due to his long-term hip injury.

"I had every intention of making a strong start to the year," rued Murray, who rose to world number one in 2016, now ranked 16th.

Murray, who spent off-season in Miami, returning to the UK in December, could be suffering a torn labrum. A hip labral tear involves the ring of cartilage - labrum.

The Australian Open starts in Melbourne on January 15 and Murray said: "Sadly I won't be playing in Melbourne. I am not yet ready to compete."

If Murray is suffering a torn labrum surgery would be fraught with uncertainty. A hip labral tear may predispose osteoarthritis in the future.

Three-time Grand Slam champion Murray - who has not played a competitive match since Wimbledon - considering surgery, said: "I just want to enjoy playing again."

SPORTSCENE SPAIN

with Andrew Atkinson

EVERTON striker Las Palmas born Sandro Ramirez could be set to depart Goodison Park, just seven months after arriving from Malaga last summer in a £5.2m move.

Toffee's boss Sam Allardyce continues to trawl the January transfer window to bring in more firepower after signing striker Cenk Tosun, 26, from Besiktas for £27m.

"Securing the player is most important as the club's biggest area of concern is the number of goals we're capable of getting," said Big Sam.

Sandro, 22, whose future is unclear on Merseyside, eyed Champions League football this season, citing sacked manager Ronald Koeman as one of the reasons he joined Everton.

On Sandro, Allardyce, who replaced Koeman in November, said: "There's never a guarantee when a top player comes from abroad that he will settle in his first year.

"And certainly not settle when the team isn't doing very well. Every new player that came from abroad would find it difficult to

Ex-Malaga star, Barca prodigy Sandro set for Spain return?



STRUGGLES: Sandro (centre) has failed to make an impact at Everton.

perform to his best level when the team struggles."

Everton were in dire straits under Koeman - sacked after the 5-2 home defeat against Arsenal in October - that left them in the Premier League relegation zone.

Sandro has been linked with a loan move to Valencia in the January window, with a view to a permanent move.

Sandro started his career at Barcelona where he was a member of the youth academy, aged 14, and went on to make 17 first team appearances in La Liga, during 2014-16.

Released by Barca, Sandro joined Malaga on a three year deal in July 2016. A year later he moved to Everton on a four year deal after triggering a £5.2m release clause.

With just 15 appearances in all competitions Sandro has netted a sole goal, having featured in Europa League football, the Premier League and the EFL Cup.

Spurs host Everton in the Premier League on Saturday, with Newcastle hosting Swansea and Chelsea hosting Leicester. Sunday January 14: Bournemouth v Arsenal; Liverpool v Manchester City. January 15: Manchester United v Stoke.



PHILIPPE COUTINHO has officially signed for Barcelona for a fee that could reportedly total €160 million. The Brazilian was officially presented at a ceremony held at the Camp Nou on Monday after passing a medical.

Costa de Almería's best guide to local sport

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Late drama as UD Almeria start 2018 with win

A STUNNING 91st minute Ruben Alcaraz free-kick followed by a 92nd minute Rene penalty save saw UD Almeria secure their first victory of 2018 over La Liga 123 Segunda Division rivals Lugo.

In a game full of chances, the real action all came after the regulation 90 minutes as Alcaraz beautifully curled a free-kick around the wall after a

foul by Lugo's Bernardo Cruz, to put the hosts 1-0 up with hardly any time left to play.

But just a minute later, defender Marco Motta was caught napping on the ball in the box and gave away a penalty, and was also sent off in the process, to give Lugo a chance to salvage a dramatic draw.

In another spectacular twist, Almeria 'keeper Rene guessed the right way of Fede Vico's spot kick to save the penalty and he also kept out the following rebound to ensure that Almeria secured all three points.

The result leaves Almeria 14th in La Liga 123, just one point behind 12th placed Alcorcon.



EVENTFUL: Late drama unfolded at Estadio de los Juegos Mediterraneos after 90 minutes were up.

Rojiblancos striker Juan Muñoz spurned the most clear-cut chance of an action packed first half, having been put through one-on-one with the 'keeper but couldn't convert as he dragged his shot wide of the post.

In truth, the match was very stop-start with a total of 38 fouls committed between the two teams across the afternoon.

Further chances fell to Verza, Hicham Khaloua and Ruben Alcaraz in the second half before Alcaraz

finally put the ball in the back of the net in the 91st minute.

The Rojiblancos will look to carry their momentum into Saturday's fixture as they host 17th placed Gimnastic at the Estadio de los Juegos Mediterraneos.

New Year brings better weather to Aguilon

THE New Year brought much better weather with a beautiful sunny day and very little wind for the first medal of 2018.

Thirty five players enjoyed the high temperatures, with Norman Ridgeway taking the top prize.

1st: Norman Ridgeway 82 -11 = 71

2nd: Lynne Whibley 96 -25 = 71

3rd: David Greaves 94 -22 = 72

Two's: Paul Mailly, Derek Manning, Peter Death, George Holland, Julie White, Dave Wilson.

For further information log on to the Aguilon members club website [www. aguilonmemberclub.com](http://www.aguilonmembersclub.com)

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