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SPORT

Local golf continues to thrive

Success for local stars as the Solheim Cup draws near - all in this month's Costa del Golf **INSIDE**



A MARATHON EFFORT

Records were broken left, right and centre during Malaga's annual sporting challenge **P55**

Runners set off from the Paseo del Parque on Sunday morning. :: NITO SALAS

Malaga's Unicaja Banco could be about to get bigger in a merger

The company is in talks with Liberbank to form Spain's sixth biggest banking group

Shares in Unicaja Banco and Liberbank rose this week as both companies announced they have been talking about a possible merger.

Unicaja is the biggest of the two firms and would be the senior partner in any deal, bringing some relief locally, as the bank is a big employer in Malaga province where it has its main offices.

There is also little geographic overlap, as Liberbank is strong in central and northern Spain. **P20**

Ciudadanos and PP talks to run Andalucía roll on into next week

Juanma Moreno emerges as most likely candidate to be regional president **P23**



Costa has the most problem road tunnels and bridges in Spain

There are 21 tunnels locally on an EU watch list and nine bridges under observation

Malaga province tops the national list for the number of main road tunnels not meeting safety standards and bridges or viaducts in a poor state of health.

The central government is urgently putting out to tender work to up-

grade longer tunnels to meet EU rules before an April deadline and avoid a possible fine. The AP-7 and A-7 are affected and work has been put off until the time period for improvements has almost run out.

For bridges and overpasses in

bad shape, the government has also said this week it will take extra action, carrying out additional inspections at those that do not pose an immediate safety risk but which need regular monitoring, possibly using drones. **P4**

An end to a long wait.

Two operating theatres at the Guadalhorce valley hospital have opened after a two-year bureaucratic battle **P10**

The Sierra de las Nieves, one step away from being a National Park.

Campaigners are hopeful for a formal declaration in the spring **P19**

Riverbeds remain clogged with vegetation

after the autumn's heavy rains and poor upkeep is increasing flood risks **P14**

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In the first ten months of this year 29,826 cars were registered in Malaga province, an increase of 9.9 per cent.
:: ÁLVARO CABRERA



EUGENIO CABEZAS

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The car industry is fuming. Successive announcements from the Spanish government about a rise in the price of diesel in 2019 and a ban on the sale of combustion engines from 2040 as part of the fight against climate change, have sounded the alarm in a sector of the economy which represents ten per cent of Spain's GDP and nine per cent of employment. In recent weeks dealers and manufacturers have been complaining about the "uncertainty and confusion" created by these situations, which they say is already having an effect on the market.

"People come to the dealers but they don't know what to buy. It's a complete mess," says Carlos Oliva, the president of the Malaga Automotive Association (AMA), which comprises 200 companies including official dealers, workshops and showrooms who employ 3,000 people in total. He says the scandals

The automotive sector is getting worried about the 2040 deadline

Local dealers are questioning the government's plans to ban the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles, saying it is causing uncertainty and confusion among buyers

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MARBELLA - FUENGIROLA - MANILVA

THE FIGURES

32,636

new vehicles were registered in Malaga province in 2017, an increase of 9.7 per cent.

53

electric vehicles have been sold in Malaga so far this year, the highest number since 2014.

5,000

charging points exist in the whole of Spain, whereas in Paris alone there are 12,000.

The sector represents 10% of Spain's GDP and 9% of employment, with more than 150,000 workers

about diesel engines some years ago tilted the balance in favour of petrol-fueled cars, "and now with the tax harmonisation they are proposing this could be the end for diesel vehicles".

In Malaga province, in the first ten months of this year, 29,826 vehicles were registered, of which 16,449 were petrol and 11,036 diesel. This is an increase of 9.9 per cent compared with the same period in 2017. Now, the sector is warning that in November the number of new registrations fell by 22 per cent, on top of a nationwide reduction in October (6.6 per cent, 88,410 vehicles). In fact, September brought to an end 29 months of consecutive increases all over the country, coinciding with the new European regulation regarding emissions coming into force, which caused an increase in operations in the previous months.

"There is a certain demonisation of diesel, because of the scandals about manipulation of contaminatory emission levels, although more people are now realising that a diesel car can have a more intensive use," says Oliva, who in any case believes that the Spanish automotive sector is not prepared for complete 'decarbonisation' within 30 years. "The government's announcements are all well and good, but they are forgetting that in other countries, like Germany, they have organised one billion euros of investment plans to encourage the change of model, and provide help for people buying electric or hybrid vehicles," he says.

Sources at Faconauto, the federation of dealers' associations, are concerned that the government's intention of banning registration and sales of traditional combustion and hybrid vehicles in 2040 will reduce the number of new registrations even further. "It's bad news for the sector and for the economy," they say, and they want the government to rejuvenate the ageing Spanish vehicle fleet in the short term, as part of its plan to decarbonise mobility. "They can't just give out this information without the sector knowing about it, and without specific and exact measures in mind," they complain.

The government has also come under strong criticism from manufacturers. The Association of Automobile and Truck Manufacturers (Anfac) flatly rejects the move, considering it "objectives excessive and its deadlines accelerated". Sources there also consider that "in practice, this means going against the principle of technological neutrality which is defended to the utmost by the European Union," they say.

Transport sector

Those in the transport sector are also critical of the government's plans. Borja de Torres, president of the Acotral firm and vice-president of the federation, says it is "difficult

to evaluate the proposal because it would have effects ten years before coming into force and it is difficult to know whether at that time there will be alternatives to diesel which are efficient in economic, social and environmental terms".

In his opinion, "someone who wants to invest in a diesel vehicle in 2030 will know that in 2040 it will have no value" and that, he says, will affect consumption and the industry.

"I believe that a progressive implantation with assistance would be much more suitable. Also, there are a lot of matters to sort out, like charging systems and batteries (in Spain there are only about 5,000 charging posts, compared with 12,000 in Paris alone), the model and energy costs, the autonomy of the vehicles... all this needs to be resolved before setting a date," he says.

The lack of public assistance for the sector to buy vehicles is another common complaint. "There has been none for more than three years now, although those are more profitable for the State because it recovers the money through the taxes paid on registration and IVA," says Carlos Oliva.

With regard to assistance for electric vehicles, compared with the plans in other countries, Spain has only invested 74.5 million euros in the past five years, and last year there was none.

Despite this avalanche of criticism, the Minister of Energy Transition, Teresa Ribera, defends the draft plans. She says they are reasonable and would mean full implantation of electric vehicles in 22 years.

"Spain cannot be at the back of the queue in the process towards which the whole EU is heading. The worst that we can find is that a tsunami passes over us," she said in a recent TV interview.

Only eight per cent of new vehicles registered in Malaga are electric or hybrid

The low sales figures reflect a sector which is accusing the government of causing "uncertainty" through its climate change plans

by E. CABEZAS

MALAGA. Of the nearly 30,000 vehicles registered in the province in the first ten months of this year (29,826), only 53 were electric. If the statistics provided by the dealers' federation Faconauto, from data from the Traffic Department, were to include other alternatives to petrol and diesel, such as the diesel/electric hybrids, those that use compressed natural gas, petrol/electric, plug-in petrol/electric and petrol/gas, the figure would still not reach eight per cent.

"There is not much choice of electric vehicles available and the price is a major problem, but another factor is that most models also have very limited autonomy," says Carlos Oliva, the president of the Malaga Automotive Association (AMA), who says the announcements made by the Ministry of Energy Transition are just "playing to the gallery".

"In countries like Norway half of all cars sold nowadays are electric. We are light years away here, because we don't even have enough charging points," he says.

In sectors like cargo transport, the implantation of 100 per cent electric vehicles "is a completely ridiculous idea," says the head of Malaga firm Acotral, Borja de Torres. "We have an alternative like natural gas which many companies are starting to use on a trial basis, and I have no doubt that it will be the bridge between diesel and other alternatives of the future," he says.

With regard to motor manufacturers in Spain the Minister of Industry, Commerce and Tourism, Reyes Maroto, says these are "lagging a long way behind" in terms of the production of electric cars, with only four models available. She has announced measures to

boost the manufacture of electric vehicles, and promised to give "certainty" and "legal security" to the sector through a working group "which will focus on competitiveness and sustainability".



Antonio Ariza. :: SUR

Meanwhile, the Spanish Retail Fuel Vendors Group (Aevecar) does not agree with the government making it obligatory to incorporate charging points for electric vehicles at filling stations, because "it is an investment which is not going to pay off", says the general secretary, Víctor García Nebreda.

However, Antonio Ariza, the president of the Professional Association of Electrical Installers of Malaga (Apiema), says the lack

of apparent interest in electric vehicles is due to the fact that there are not enough charging points in the streets.

"We have asked the mayor of Malaga, Francisco de la Torre, to provide us with land for two charging points, one near our offices in the Calle Babel area, and the other near the Materno hospital, in Arroyo de los Ángeles. They will be free to use, thanks to the national federation Fenie, with whom we are associated, and its own electricity sales company, and there will be no cost to the town hall. The president of the provincial government, Elías Bendodo, has also asked Apiema for an expansion plan for the province, a type of route map for charging points. Other big cities like Valencia, Mallorca and Madrid are doing the same. And in the province we are very advanced with three charging points in Rincón de la Victoria. At one time Malaga was a pioneer with its 'Zem2All' programme, but it has been left behind now," he says.

Ariza says the future of mobility is undoubtedly going to be 100 per cent electric, and that means we need public charging points. They are nothing more than a socket, and can be installed by any electrician.

"We are working with the Junta de Andalucía on this, because it is vital. Generally at a national level it is working well. Fenie already has more than 2,500 charging points in Spain, but the lack of them in the streets is a serious problem," he says.



Two Tesla vehicles, at a charging point in China. :: EFE

Costa road tunnels and bridges have more safety problems than anywhere else in Spain

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While there is no immediate danger, the government promised to step up inspections this week, including using drones

MALAGA. The province of Malaga tops the list of Spanish provinces with safety problems on its bridges and tunnels on the trunk road network, and all of those affected locally are on the Costa del Sol.

According to data from the central ministry for Infrastructure (Ministerio de Fomento) and the EU, 21 of the 113 tunnels in Spain that don't meet EU safety rules are found along the Costa.

Meanwhile the same ministry has admitted in separate data, which was previously kept secret but now published in El País newspaper, that there are 66 sub-standard main-road bridges, viaducts or overpasses across the country, nine of which are on the Costa del Sol.

Mountainous terrain

The amount in Malaga province, which tops the list of both tunnels and bridges, is being blamed on the area's mountainous terrain, meaning it has an above average share of tunnels and bridges on its motorways and main roads. The age of the roads is also being blamed.

However, the government could now be facing more fines from Brussels, similar to those recently given out for not treating effluent correctly in some areas, for failing to comply with its own promise to meet the EU deadline to upgrade tunnels by spring next year.

Tunnel vision

In terms of the 21 local tunnels which have safety deficiencies, 11 are on the A-7 coastal dual carriageway and are in municipalities including Marbella, Mijas, Estepona, Casares, Benahavis, Vélez-Málaga, Nerja, Torrox and Frigiliana.

The remaining 10 are on the AP-7 toll motorway. In the case of the A-7, it is down to the government to solve the problems, which include a lack of escape routes, systems for smoke extraction in a fire and inadequate safety lighting. Whereas for the road carrying the AP-7 classification, it is the private toll road operator that needs to pay the bill.

The problems arise from a 2007 law, which was enacted in response to a 2004 EU directive, that gave Spain until 30 April next year to up-



File photo of an accident inside a motorway tunnel in Malaga province. :: SUR

Tunnel deficiencies flagged by the EU include evacuation routes, smoke extraction and lighting systems

grade the safety features in longer tunnels.

Longer tunnels prioritised

Even newer tunnels, such as the one at Churriana on the A-7 Malaga outer ring road, widely praised for its safety and only opened in 2011 after the law change, are included on the list.

In all, the government says it needs to spend an estimated 27 million euros carrying out the upgrades along the Costa del Sol. It is now

seeking to have the timeframe for its own law extended for the shorter tunnels, under 500 metres, where improvements are less urgent.

Officials are also probing extra, remedial measures in the meantime for safety. However work on the longer tunnels, over 500 metres, is being put out to tender early next year as they are the most urgent under the EU guidelines.

Improvements were delayed during the financial crisis when infrastructure budgets were cut.

Bridge problems

In the case of the problematic bridges, another government analysis says that nine of the 66 bridges or viaducts with the most critical problems on the state road network are in Malaga province. These are on the A-7, MA-20 (old A-7 between Torremolinos and Malaga city) and the N-340 between Nerja and Maro.

The government's analysis of almost 23,000 bridges, viaducts and overpasses across Spain gave points to the condition of each bridge and each one with 81 points or more has been listed as a problem. Sixty-six were found to have the most serious problems. Only six per cent of the 23,000 were given the total all clear.

No real danger for now

The government has stressed that none of these bridges is in any danger and the problems, including corrosion, can be fixed in time. After the data was published this week, it promised to step up inspection on the bridges, including using drones, and blamed the previous government for doing nothing until now about the tunnels.

In terms of problematic bridges, Malaga is out in front with Cadiz province, compared to other provinces. For tunnels, the northern region of Asturias is a close second to Malaga, with 20 needing a safety upgrade. Here too there are a lot of tunnels as motorways have to wend their way through mountains.

THE AFFECTED TUNNELS ALONG THE COSTA

Name	Location	State-run or toll
Calahonda	AP-7 Mijas	Toll
Capistrano	A-7 Nerja	State-run
Casares	AP-7 Casares	Toll
Cerrado de Calderón	A-7 Malaga	State-run
Cerrosol	A-7 Nerja	State-run
Churriana (Malaga outer ring road)	A-7 Malaga	State-run
Corominas	AP-7 Estepona	Toll
Estepona	AP-7 Estepona	Toll
Frigiliana	A-7 Frigiliana	State-run
Lagos	A-7 Vélez-Málaga	State-run
Montemayor	AP-7 Benahavis	Toll
Nagüeles	AP-7 Marbella	Toll
Ortega Prados	A-7 Malaga	State-run
Pino	A-7 Nerja	State-run
Quinta	AP-7 Marbella	Toll
Río Verde	AP-7 Marbella	Toll
San José	A-7 Malaga	State-run
Santa María 1	AP-7 Estepona	Toll
Santa María 2	AP-7 Estepona	Toll
Tablazo	A-7 Torrox	State-run
Torrox	A-7 Torrox	State-run

BRIDGES IN TROUBLE

► Nerja-Maró. N-340, km. 301.

► Nerja-Maró. N-340, km. 300.

► Rincón de la Victoria-Vélez-Málaga. N-340, km. 263.

► Malaga city. MA-20, km. 4.

► Malaga city. MA-20, km.4 (opposite direction).

► Fuengirola. A-7, km. 206.

► Fuengirola. A-7, km. 205.

► Marbella-San Pedro. A-7, km. 164.

► Estepona (west). A-7, km. 140.

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The Udyco has seized twice as many drugs and arrested 500 people this year



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So far this year, the National Police have confiscated 40 tonnes of drugs and seized 100 million euros' worth of cash and property

MALAGA. They can't talk about their work, and it is thankless. They spend most of their time in the streets, listening to telephone conversations ad nauseam or working their way through mountains of documents. It takes time and doesn't always achieve the hoped-for result. In an especially violent year, during which organised crime was responsible for 25 bloody episodes in Malaga province, the police unit to combat it, Udyco-Costa del Sol, has made a record number of arrests and seized record quantities of drugs: more than 500 people have been detained, all related in



Officers from Malaga recently arrested a group of Swedish hitmen. :: SUR

one way or another with drug trafficking, and twice the amount of drugs have been confiscated compared with last year.

Chief Inspector Antonio Rodríguez Puertas, the head of the Unit against Drugs and Organised Crime in Malaga province, says it has been a difficult year. "There have been numerous revenge attacks, but it has been a spec-

tacular year in terms of results and police efficiency, the best in a long time. There has been a great deal of work behind it," he says. The Chief Inspector has headed major National Police operations, some of them jointly with the Guardia Civil, such as the one which resulted in the discovery of 6,300 kilos of cocaine hidden in a cargo of bananas in a ware-

house on an industrial estate in Malaga city.

The Udyco-Costa del Sol, which ended 2017 with 24,000 kilos of drugs confiscated, have already seized more than 40,000 kilos this year, of which 30,000 were hashish, 10,000 cocaine and the rest marijuana (more than 11,000 plants), heroin and designer drugs. The other aspect of their work focuses on the line that keeps the drug traffickers afloat: their finances. Since January the police in Malaga have "seized, embargoed or uncovered" goods and money worth 100 million euros.

Gangs broken up

Police operations against drug trafficking and organised crime, like the one which discovered a group of Swedish hitmen who are accused of having carried out two murders on the Costa del Sol, have resulted this year in more than 500 arrests, another record figure. These arrests have enabled over 600 criminal gangs to be broken up, predominantly "Spanish, Moroccan, Dutch, British and French", although - and this is something new - also some from Scandinavian countries.

"We are finding more and more transnational organisations, with mem-

bers from three or four different countries," says the Chief Inspector. Malaga province plays a strategic role on the map of organised crime: "About 33 per cent of all those investigated in Spain are in this province," he says.

He admits that although there have always been peaks of violent crime, this has been a "peculiar" year; for the first time, the security forces have had to deal with episodes of narco-terrorism after the explosion of two bombs in San Pedro Alcántara and Benahavís, and a third artefact which was detonated by the Tedax bomb disposal squad, also in Marbella.

"A lot of factors come into play," says Rodríguez Puertas. "Revenge attacks may be related to arrests, because the drug traffickers may think they were due to leaks or tip-offs. And if they have lost their haul, someone has to pay for that. It could be power struggles over territory, often occurring in their countries of origin, but the revenge attacks take place here, where they reside. Maybe also the pressure which is being put on, especially in the Campo de Gibraltar." But when asked what the key factor is, he doesn't hesitate: attempts by other dealers to steal the drugs.

"About 70 per cent of the revenge attacks this year were related in one way or another to thefts or non-payment," he says. He also has a message for those involved in drug trafficking: "We are working intensively and, sooner or later, every case will be resolved and those involved will go to prison. The Costa is not, and will not be, a nice place for these organisations to operate".

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Seven years for the taxi driver who raped a British tourist

The woman, who gave evidence via videolink and translator, said he had stopped his cab on the way to her hotel after a night out in Benalmádena

:: A. FRÍAS / J. CANO

MALAGA. Judges in Malaga have handed down a seven-year prison sentence to a 35-year-old taxi driver who raped a British tourist after a night out in Benalmádena.

According to the court verdict, the guilty man picked up the tourist on 21 June 2014 at 3.25am from Plaza Solymar, in the centre of the nightlife district of Benalmádena Costa.

He realised soon into the journey that his passenger was drunk, equivalent to four times over the illegal driving limit, said the court. Changing his route to Parque Olivar in Torremolinos, he stopped the car and moved onto the back seat, attacking the victim. He then carried on taking the woman to her hotel, where a receptionist was told by her what had happened.

The judges said that the victim had been highly credible and coherent in her version of events. Pre-



The courtroom scene during the trial in Malaga. :: sur

senting evidence by videolink and with the help of a translator, she had explained that she had had a few drinks with some girlfriends and decided to return to her hotel by taxi, as she had been told that it was dangerous to walk back alone.

"He stopped the car, locked the doors, coming round to the back seats," she had explained.

In contrast, judges said that the taxi driver's version of events had

little credibility. In his defence during the trial, he had said that the woman had insinuated that she wanted sex. He went on, according to his testimony, that it was only after he refused to go up to her bedroom with him afterwards that she called the police.

However, taking into account the receptionist's and police statements and the woman's injuries, the court dismissed the man's story.

IN BRIEF

Marbella assassin faces 28-year jail sentence

MALAGA

:: **A.F. / J.C.** Prosecutors are asking for 28 years for a man accused of shooting another in the back of the neck in a quiet residential area of Marbella at night in March 2017.

They allege that the 30-year-old was killed after a meeting discussing a drug deal. The accused is said to have tampered with the victim's motorcycle, which they were both riding, forcing it to stop in the Lomas de Río Verde area, near Puerto Banús at night, before carrying out the crime. The victim's body was found by a pizza delivery driver.

Man held for stealing game machine winnings

MALAGA

:: **A.F. / J.C.** A Moroccan man has been held over the theft of the 1,500-euro winnings of a fellow customer in a gaming arcade in Estepona. According to police, the man approached the other customer in his car after he had hit the jackpot on the machines.

Police were soon led to the 21-year-old man and in his house reportedly found 1,000 euros hidden in a box and the same clothes he was wearing in the alleged attack. The detainee also has a two-year suspended sentence for violent robbery handed down last July.

False cosmetic surgery doctor "practised from home for ten years"

MALAGA

:: **A.F. / J.C.** A court has been hearing how a woman carried out minor plastic surgery operations for almost 10 years without being a qualified doctor or having a proper consulting surgery.

The accusation of a customer who claims her face was disfigured has now been brought to trial and prosecutors are asking for a seven-year prison sentence.

From 1999 to 2008 the woman supposedly promoted her services and invited customers to her home where she operated on them in poor hygienic conditions.

According to court documents, the customer who brought the case had approached the allegedly false doctor over a problem on the right side of the face. After a series of different injections, finishing supposedly with collagen, the victim's face was initially left paralysed before the substance turned into nodules in subsequent years. The trial was due to begin this week.

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Philippe Starck's Ronda mill survives political upheavals and faces one last piece of red tape

Final plans have been submitted for the much-debated ecological mill the French designer wants to build outside the town

:: MARÍA GARCÍA

RONDA. "In Ronda, I'm going to do the most incredible thing I have ever done. It will be a project that synthesises the whole strength of Andalucía," said French designer and architect Philippe Starck in May last year. He was referring to a building which will house an ecological mill, something he planned several years ago, and it looks as if

it is now closer to reality.

The company, La Almazara La Organica SL, has recently provided Ronda council with the last of the plans, which should be the final step in the administrative process.

Francisco Márquez, the councillor for Public Works and Town Planning, says once these have been approved by the regional government's Environmental Department and this has been published in the official "bulletin" of Malaga province, the works licence can be issued. This will take approximately six months, and after that the developer will have a period of one year to start work on the project

It means that as long as there



An image of the design by Philippe Starck. **:: SUR**

are no administrative delays, and Ronda council does not put up objections to any aspects of the project or the works licence, construction of the mill should start before the summer of 2020.

This was the deadline set by the town hall last year for the construction of the building, which will be over 20 metres high and situated on the road between Ronda and Cuevas del Becerro. It means

the PGOU urban plan will have to be changed, however, because the maximum permitted height under the present one is seven metres. The proposal to modify the regulations was approved by the council, although Izquierda Unida voted against it because of the height of the building, saying "it is not suitable for a rural area".

The design of the ecological mill has been the subject of debate on Ronda council at times over several years, including when the PP was governing in minority in 2015, and afterwards during the pact between PSOE, Partido Andalucista and Izquierda Unida. It was first introduced when María de la Paz Fernández, who is now an opposition councillor, was the mayor, and is now being handled by the present mayor, Teresa Valdenebro. In July this year, the project was formally approved by the council, on condition that the Junta de Andalucía issued favourable reports.

The building will cost 18 million euros, and it is estimated that the project will have an economic impact of 50 million euros in ten years. It is also expected to attract about 100,000 visitors a year.



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An end to the waiting: two operating theatres open at the Guadalhorce hospital

The other facilities will gradually be opened over the next few months after a two-year bureaucratic battle and numerous complaints from patients

:: FERNANDO TORRES

CÁRTAMA. For years the Guadalhorce valley regional hospital has been a chimera for the health system in Malaga province. For many people, the fact that this brand new facility had no surgical facilities when it opened reduced this 30-million-euro investment to nothing more than a large health centre.

Now, after a lengthy and complex legal process in which a special plan had to be completely modified, and serious differences of opinion between different administrations, the first two operating theatres and some of the beds in the surgical ward are finally open, putting an end to a long period of waiting and a time which was marked by difficulties and delays.

On Monday the Junta de Andalucía issued a statement to announce that the new facilities were now op-



The surgical team in one of the new operating theatres. **:: SUR**

erative, and its acting delegate for Equality, Health and Social Policies, Ana Isabel González, took a tour of the new facilities in the company of the managing director of the hospital, José Antonio Medina, nursing director Mari Paz Piña, the director of the Anaesthesiology and Recovery unit, José Cruz, and nursing coordinator of the Surgical Block, Cristina Narbona.

Ana Isabel González explained

to the press that the aim is to open the facilities bit by bit, and that there will eventually be four operating theatres. The two which opened this week are for scheduled operations of different types where patients only need to stay in hospital for a short time afterwards. She also explained that these two operating theatres will be used for general and dermatology surgery, and the others will

open within the next few months.

José Cruz, the director of the Anaesthesiology and Recovery Unit at the Virgen de la Victoria hospital, said that “the opening of this new department is a major advance in terms of accessibility for patients and it will improve the response to medical needs in the surgical field, for common procedures which are not difficult to carry out”.

Open for two years

The managing director of the hospital, José Antonio Medina, said that the new operating theatres “will mean that a series of surgical procedures can be carried out on a day-to-day basis, and this will improve the standards of quality and accessibility for all the users in the area”.

The Guadalhorce valley hospital has been open for two years, attending to a population of over 100,000 from the 13 towns and villages in the area. It cost 30.6 million euros to open the new centre, including the construction and equipment and the Malaga provincial government then provided extra funds for the access and the electricity connection.

HERE AND THERE

No date yet for no-confidence vote

ALHAURÍN EL GRANDE

:: F. TORRES. Despite a recent court ruling meaning the mayor of Alhaurín el Grande, Antonia Ledesma, could face a no confidence vote, no such vote is planned. The court declared a voting irregularity at a failed attempted no-confidence vote against her in January 2017. The mayor has now appealed the court decision, and although councillors met this week to decide the date for a new vote, they cannot go ahead for the moment.

Towns may still protest at flood aid delays

TEBA / CAMPILLOS

:: F. TORRES. Inland towns severely affected by flooding in record-breaking rain in October say they may take to the streets again if promised emergency aid doesn't arrive soon. The mayor of Teba has said that if there is no news by 21 December, two months after the severe damage to the town, protests will start. Neighbouring Campillos has not put a deadline as yet. Multi-million-euro compensation payments have been promised for individual residents and the towns overall.

MOVIE LISTING
From Friday 14th
to Thursday 20th December

ORIGINAL VERSION SUBTITLED SPANISH

THE GRINCH
Director Yarrow Cheney and Scott Mosier
Voices Benedict Cumberbatch, Cameron Seely, Rashida Jones
ANIMATION · 86 min.
Language: English

Friday 14: 18:15
Saturday 15: 15:50, 18:15
Sunday 16: 12:00, 15:50, 18:15
From Monday 17 to Thursday 20: 17:45

FANTASTIC BEASTS: THE CRIMES OF GRINDELWALD
Director David Yates
Starring Eddie Redmayne, Jude Law, Katherine Waterston
FANTASY · 134 min.
Language: English, French

Monday 17: 22:15

MORTAL ENGINES
Director Christian Rivers
Starring Hera Hilmar, Hugo Weaving, Iqbal
ADVENTURE · 128 min.
Language: English

Friday 14: 17:50, 20:15, 22:30
Saturday 15 and Sunday 16: 15:45, 17:50, 20:15, 22:30
Monday 17: 17:45
Tuesday 18: 17:50, 19:45, 22:30
Wednesday 19: 17:45, 19:45, 22:30
Thursday 20: 17:45, 19:50

RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET
Director Phil Johnston and Rich Moore
Voices John C. Reilly, Sarah Silverman, Gal Gadot
ANIMATION · 112 min.
Language: English

Friday 14: 18:10
Saturday 15: 15:50, 18:10
Sunday 16: 12:00, 15:50, 18:10
From Monday 17 to Thursday 20: 17:45

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY
Director Bryan Singer, Dexter Fletcher
Starring Rami Malek, Lucy Boynton, Gwilym Lee
BIOGRAPHY · 134 min.
Language: English

From Friday 14 to Sunday 16: 22:40
Monday 17: 20:00, 22:15
Tuesday 18 and Wednesday 19: 22:15



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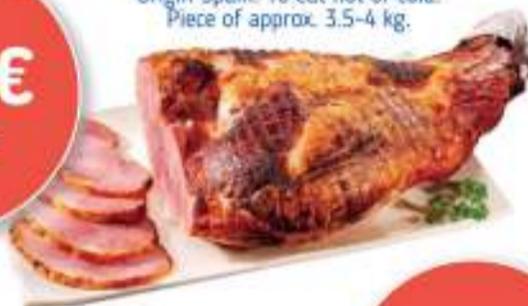
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HERE AND THERE

Information panels in English along coast

MALAGA

Malaga's provincial government, Diputación, has installed a series of informative panels at 14 points along the province's Senda Litoral, the coastal path that links the towns along the Costa del Sol. Of these five are in the Axarquía: the Cantal cliffs in Rincón de la Victoria, Valle Niza/Almayate,

Punta de las Ballenas in Algarrobo Costa, Calaceite in Torrox and Playa de la Torrecilla in Nerja.

Each panel explains the flora and fauna, important species and where they live or grow at each point, as well as showing photographs of marine life in the 14 areas and a photographic map.

All of the panels give the information both in Spanish and English and offer advice on safety as well as details of the province's biodiversity.



An information panel. :: E. C.

Cleaners confirm they will not strike on Migas day

TORROX

The strike planned by cleaning operatives to coincide with the Día de las Migas in Torrox on Sunday has been officially called off. A deal was confirmed in writing between the cleaning company's union and the town hall. This will lead to a six per cent pay raise and two days off per week, instead of the current one. However, some cleaning staff have expressed concern over the deal.

Criticism over delay to Nerja Christmas lights

NERJA

Nerja town hall has said that the reason the Christmas lights had not been switched on until today is that no company had come forward for the two-year contract to decorate the town.

Last Friday, a Cordoba-based company, Pogesa S. A, finally signed the deal. The town hall has been facing criticism on social networks, from residents and the opposition PP party.

Voting opens for Salacia or Poseidon to reign over Torre de Benagalbón promenade

After four years of discussion and protests, residents are being asked to choose from two proposals for the town's new Paseo Marítimo

EUROPA PRESS

RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA. Mayor of Rincón de la Victoria, Francisco Salado, was one of the first residents to vote for a new promenade for Torre de Benagalbón this week.

After four years of discussion and protests, residents are being asked to vote to decide which of two designs will be used to create a promenade along this stretch of beach.

One, known as Paseo Salacia, named after the Roman goddess of the sea, is more respectful to the environment. The other, Paseo Poseidon, is named after the Greek god of the sea and would be similar to the more traditional concrete promenades in neighbouring Rincón de la Victoria and La Cala del Moral.

Since the proposal was first put



Mayor, Francisco Salado, explains the two promenade options. :: E. C.

forward in 2014, citizens' group, Lirios de Mar, have campaigned against building on what they say is one of the last natural sand dunes in Malaga province. Last year they collected 6,000 signatures from people against the proposal, which they took to the town hall.

Salado has himself campaigned to make sure the end result respects the natural biodiversity of the area

and announced on Tuesday that he had voted for Paseo Salacia.

Both designs feature green areas, playgrounds, benches and bike lanes and construction is expected to start in 2020. A budget of just under 35,000 euros has been set aside for the project.

Residents can either vote online or in any of the town hall offices until 25 December.

Nerja caves foundation announces budget increase and entrance fee reductions

EUGENIO CABEZAS

The Nerja Cave Foundation last Tuesday confirmed its 2019 budget, which includes a 10.7 per cent increase in spending.

The foundation has announced a series of reductions in admission prices for the over-65s, under-12s, large families and people with disabilities. The new entrance fees, as well as providing a two-euro discount to people in the above categories, are also designed to promote higher visitor numbers outside the summer season and to en-

courage more online ticket sales.

During the low season, from January to April (excluding Easter week) and November and December, tickets bought on the internet will cost 11 euros and include entrance to the town's museum. The full ticket price in May, June and October will be 12 euros and 13 euros in July, August and September.

The introduction of the discount coincides with the 60th anniversary of the discovery of the caves by five boys who were playing in the area.



Visitors outside the entrance to the Nerja caves. :: SUR

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"Even opposition parties can't deny the value of the Calle Larios Christmas lights"

Teresa Porras Malaga's city councillor for Festivals and Operative Services

The councillor is convinced that she will still be in her post next year because Francisco de la Torre will win again in May's council elections

:: **PILAR R. QUIRÓS**

MALAGA. Once again, the lights in Calle Larios are a major attraction of Christmas in Malaga city. The city councillor for Festivals, Teresa Porras, says they are so successful that, for the first time in 15 years, opposition councillors haven't complained about them. She is proud that Malaga is a highly-recommended winter destination and is already making plans for Christmas next year, predicting that she will still be in her post because "Paco de la Torre will win the election and be the mayor again".

-It is undeniable that you have been one of the pioneers in Spain in terms of Christmas lights being a type of show in cities.

-In Europe, not Spain.

-Don't you think that on this occasion the mayor of the Galician city of Vigo, Abel Caballero, could claim that?

-Absolutely not. The mayor of Vigo, what has he got? A Christmas tree and decorations? Calle Larios is unique, look at the arch above us now. We have spent years making different arches, this is unique in the whole of Europe. That's why we have just been designated the best city in which to spend a sunny Christmas. Vigo doesn't have that; it has the same as all the other cities, a Christmas tree and some movable balls, some pretty, some ugly... the streets of Vigo have decorations which we in Malaga had six or eight years ago. We don't have anything of Vigo's. Vigo, on the other hand, does have things from Malaga.

-Well, the mayor of Vigo has challenged the mayor of New York, saying that his lights will be seen over there. Posturing, or augmented reality?

-Posturing.

-You can't please everybody all the time. Why has Calle Larios had the same lights for the past few years?

-Only two years, last year and this one. Two years ago we did the starry sky; that was sold on outside Spain afterwards. And last year we introduced the dome of Malaga cathedral, which is here again this year. Bear in mind that a dome like this doesn't cost 60,000 euros like a Christmas tree does; that can be paid off in two years. We paid 300,000 euros for Calle Larios, within our overall budget.



Teresa Porras, under the arch of lights in Calle Larios which resembles the cathedral. :: NITO SALAS

-How much is the overall budget?
-733,000 euros.

-Would you like to increase the budget so you could expand the lights to other parts of the city?

-All the city's districts have their Christmas lights, and a budget for them. Where I live for example, Cruz de Humilladero, there is a Christmas feature in every area.

-But that's just one place, not in general.

-Well, in the Bailén district there are Christmas lights, in Carretera de Cadiz, in the Eastern district...

-But not like Cruz de Humilladero, Mrs Porras.

-That depends on how much each district wants to allocate to it. I'm only responsible for the entrances to the city, through Ciudad Jardín, Barriguilla, Carretera de Cadiz and the centre.

-Do the Christmas lights attract business? What do shop and restaurant owners say?

-You only have to go to Calle Larios to see that. If we are capable of putting more than 30,000 people in the street every day, there is bound to be more business, in shops, bars and restaurants.

-Did you count the number of visitors last year?

-Last year, for the early-December holiday weekend, I have the figure of more than 250,000 people staying in Malaga city.

-So this is definitely a success?

-Remember. This is the first time in 15 years that the opposition has

not made a single complaint about the lights. I believe that is a success. I believe the opposition is now aware that the Christmas lights are an investment, not just a way of spending money.

-You don't think they'll bring it up at the next council meeting?

-I understand that they won't, because the members of the opposition, both PSOE and Malaga Ahora, have congratulated me. That's the truth. In fact Oviedo has copied us, Seville, which didn't used to have Christmas lights, has copied us; every city in Spain has copied Malaga's Christmas lights. Seeing how successful our 45 days of lights are, Madrid has invested 500,000 euros more this year. All the Spanish cities are increasing their budg-

"Every city in Spain has copied Malaga's Christmas lights; they all imitate Malaga"

ets and imitating Malaga. And next year we will have to increase ours as well because we will have to change the dome, and we have to make an important innovation in Calle Larios.

-In view of the recent regional electoral results, don't you think this could be the last year of you putting up Christmas lights?

-I think that's a bit of a mischievous question! Regional elections cannot be extrapolated to council ones because when we talk about local elections we are talking about very personal ones; so far the mayor of Malaga has had nobody to overshadow him, and people value what he is doing and the way he has been transforming the city.

-So, presuming you will still be Councillor for Festivals, what innovations would you like to see next year?

-We're working on that. We plan to put LED screens along the whole of Calle Larios, and we want to do something important and spectacular in the city of Malaga, maybe the full Christmas story, for instance.

IN BRIEF

Sephardic centre takes major step forward

MALAGA

:: **J. HINOJOSA.** The Malaga Jewish community has moved a step closer to its dream of having a Sephardic Jewish interpretation centre in the old town of Malaga. The plan has been on hold for over a year since the design was first unveiled, however the group behind the project has now applied for a building licence.

The plan has been delayed while a new architect, Leon Benacerraf, took over and changes to the plan made, including an interior courtyard. It is hoped that work can start sometime in 2019.

The new centre is on a plot of land between Calle Granada and Calle Alcazabilla, in the heart of the historic site of the city's old Jewish quarter. It will have two floors of 400 square metres telling the story of Spain's Sephardic Jews and a top floor terrace restaurant.



Pet cemetery project to start early next year

MALAGA

:: **F. JIMÉNEZ.** Construction of the new one-million-euro pet cemetery on the outskirts of Malaga will start in the new year. Parcemasa, the municipal company that runs the city's main San Gabriel cemetery complex, now has planning permission for the facility which is expected to be ready within six months once building work starts.

The project aims to provide people with an alternative to having their pets cremated, and will offer burial niches. It is estimated that a burial will cost 150 euros and a cremation a little less.

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Malaga faces the wettest season with streams and rivers blocked by plants and earth

FRANCISCO JIMÉNEZ

NIEVES CASTRO

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The accumulation of vegetation, rubbish and sediment makes it difficult for water to flow and increases the risk of flooding

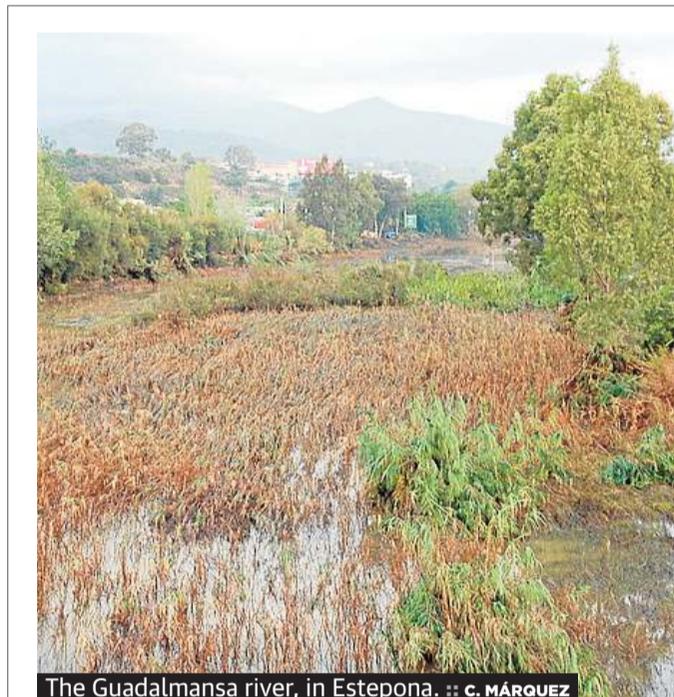
MÁLAGA/ MARBELLA. On 9 October the Arroyo Benajárfé stream broke its banks, flooded the village (which is in Vélez-Málaga municipality) and left several families cut off, all because of the mud and plants that were blocking the riverbed. Two weeks later, the same thing occurred in several places in Estepona, especially around the Padrón and Guadalmanza rivers which, due to the heavy rainfall, were turned into a quagmire covered in reeds and undergrowth. Just a few weeks ago it was Marbella's turn, when the rain caused the Arroyo Realejo to overflow and turned the rugby field into marshland.

It is not always possible to fight the force of water, as those who have been affected know, but what is clear is that the accumulation of vegetation, sediment and waste in the rivers and streams does not exactly help to minimise the effects of a storm.

Far from being an exception, the scene during one of the rainiest autumns in recent years in Malaga province is similar in many of the water courses along the coast. In most of them vegetation or accumulated earth are evidence of a lack of foresight by town halls, who are responsible for maintaining them in urban areas, as decreed in December last year by the Supreme Court. The court decision put an end to the eternal arguments between the regional government and local councils about who has to keep rivers and streams clear when they pass through towns.

Costa del Sol

Marbella is facing the rainiest time of year with only four of its many rivers and streams having been cleared. As a result of the Supreme Court decision, the council allocated 30,000 euros this summer for work to be carried out on the most problematical areas. These included the Benabolá and Segundo streams; the final stretch of the Arroyo Las Cañas Verdes; the middle of the Arroyo La Víbora, as well as a general clearing of several others which run



The Guadalmanza river, in Estepona. :: C. MÁRQUEZ



The Guadalmedina, before work started last weekend. :: S. S.



Accumulation of earth at the Arroyo Benagalbón. :: E. CABEZAS



Earth in Arroyo Jaboneros (Málaga). :: F. J.

close to properties: Primero, La Represa, Nagüeles and Guadalpín, in the town centre; Realejo, Siete Revueltas, Alicate, Real de Zaragoza, on the east side of Marbella; Pozuelo and Panorama.

According to information from the Environmental Department, the works were only completed on the Benabolá, Primero, Segundo and Guadalpín streams, and they involved removing rubbish and invasive species of vegetation. The remainder is due to be carried out once the rains have stopped. The council also says that it is working on putting a contract out to tender for cleaning and maintenance of nearly all the rivers and streams for one year, for an estimated 80,000 euros.

In Estepona residents have also been calling for more to be done after the heavy rain on 21 October which caused several rivers and streams to overflow. Hundreds of houses in the countryside were cut off when the water tried to recover its natural path, and the owners blame the authorities for not having done enough to prevent the situation.

A year ago the Supreme Court decreed that councils are responsible for river and stream beds in urban areas

On the eastern Costa, the biggest problems have been due to an accumulation of sediment and stones in the river and stream beds, especially in Rincón de la Victoria and Vélez.

This situation, combined with the amount of vegetation and other waste such as plastic in the highest areas pose a serious danger in the case of heavy rain.

People in Torrox are also complaining about the vegetation in the Manzano stream and Güi river, and the situation is similar in the bed of the Seco river in Nerja.

Action in Malaga

In Malaga city, as a result of the Supreme Court sentence the council

tripled its budget this year for clearing the three most problematical water courses (Guadalhorce, Guadalmedina y Este) but, looking at the results, those 160,000 euros were not enough.

On Saturday, after the neglected condition of the Guadalmedina river bed was highlighted in this newspaper's Spanish sister publication SUR, municipal operatives were brought in to clear some of the dense vegetation. The stretch upstream from the city centre between Las Virreinas, Palmilla and Martiricos, also suffered an accumulation of rubbish and pools of stagnant water from the Limonero reservoir (water is released from it for safety reasons on the first Wednesday of every month).

The risk of flooding is low because of the containing role played by the dam, but the unpleasant smell and the insects are a nuisance for people living nearby.

On the eastern side of the city, people look worriedly at the streams every time the heavens open. This is understandable, not only because of previous experiences but also due to the tonnes of

earth which have accumulated in the final stretch of the Gálica and Jaboneros streams, effectively blocking about half the capacity of evacuation of the bridges which cross them. At the moment, an excavating machine is dredging the mouth of the river to make it easier for it to flow into the sea.

At Jaboneros the problem lies in the build-up of earth, but in stretches of Las Cañas, such as at Soliva and before the industrial estates on the way to the Guadalhorce river, the vegetation is so thick that the water can barely be seen. That is also the case with La Rebanadilla stream, which runs parallel to the access road to the PTA (technology park) and is almost completely blocked by undergrowth.

These are not the only points in the city that need better maintenance, despite the Civil Protection plan to check rivers and streams every year to identify the critical points so that something can be done before the rainy season.

Contributors: Eugenio Cabezas and Charo Márquez.

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Torremolinos expat community informed of 'padrón' benefits

The meeting, organised by the town's Foreign Residents Department, focused on the legal aspects and advantages of registering on the census

BY TONY BRYANT

TORREMOLINOS. The Foreign Residents Department of Torremolinos town hall held an English language informative meeting aimed at the town's expat community on Wednesday. The meeting, chaired by Aida Blanes, councillor for Foreign Residents, focused on the legal aspects and advantages of joining the local population register (padrón). The councillor explained that registration gives the possibility of access to council grants and discounts in taxes (IBI), tuition, scholarships and school transportation, as well as reductions on water and refuse collection bills.

She also stressed the importance of registering on the census for those who wish to exert their right to vote in next year's municipal and European parliament elections.

"Registering on the padrón, which is compulsory for those that have lived in Spain for more than



Residents from the UK, USA and China attended. BY T. BRYANT

six months, is the first basic step that you should complete before carrying out any other administrative procedures. Registration is necessary for NIE application, vehicle registration and civil unions," the councillor explained.

María José Carmona (foreigners office), and Silvia Beramendi (padrón office), answered a variety of questions put forward by the audience, which was made up of British, American and Chinese residents.

Torremolinos has a foreign population of 13,113 and the British are the second largest foreign community in Torremolinos. However, only 796 Brits are registered and the town hall, which believes that the British resident population is far greater, expressed how this affects the financing available to the council.

"Our annual budget is based on the padrón, so the more people registered, the more money we will have to improve our town," María José Carmona said.

Town orders pet owners to clean up their dogs' urine with soap or vinegar

Benalmádena council is changing its bylaws and will fine those who do not comply

BY IVÁN GELIBTER

BENALMÁDENA. Letting your dog urinate in the street without cleaning it up in Benalmádena is likely to come at a price from now on. The local council announced on Tuesday that it will change local bylaws relating to pets and will force

owners or walkers to clean up after dogs with soap or vinegar.

"Nobody likes a lamppost or corner near their home continually covered in urine," said mayor of Benalmádena, Víctor Navas. "This change aims to make locals aware that having a dog carries certain responsibilities."

Owners will be encouraged to use dog parks or other designated areas and Local Police will be allowed to issue fines, although the exact amount hasn't been set yet.



The council says it will make sure the new rule is enforced. BY I.G.

HERE AND THERE



The complex is on the seafront at Playamar. BY NITO SALAS

Largest hotel complex on the coast gets rebrand and makeover

TORREMOLINOS

BY P. MARTÍNEZ. Finishing touches are being made to the transformation of three neighbouring hotels in Torremolinos owned by the same group into one unified com-

plex. The well-known Don Pablo, Don Pedro and Don Marco hotels, in the Playamar area, will now be marketed and known as Sol Torremolinos Resort and between them have 900 beds. The Meliá hotel group has spent 30 million euros over three years modernising the complex that makes up five per cent of all the hotel beds in the resort and is the biggest on the coast.

Airport passengers up 8% in November

MALAGA

BY P. M. Malaga airport saw its biggest monthly increase in passenger numbers this year in November. Data published on Wednesday said that, compared to 2017, 8 per cent more people passed through last month, reaching 1.1 million monthly passengers. Passengers to and from Spain grew 10.2 per cent and international users by 7.7 per cent.

Automatic passport reading fully operational

MALAGA

BY SUR. National Police have announced that the automatic passport reading machines at Malaga airport for passengers coming from outside the Schengen area are now fully installed. From this week, officers will be stepping up efforts to inform travellers as to how they work and encouraging their use to speed up passenger flow.



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Delayed Torremolinos plaza to include a time capsule

Residents have been invited to submit items to be sealed in the capsule as evidence that might be of interest to future generations

BY TONY BRYANT

TORREMOLINOS. Although a delay in the progress of the pedestrianisation of the centre of Torremolinos has postponed the official inauguration until January, most of the new boulevard and central plaza was opened in time for the switching on of the Christmas lights last Friday. The decision to open access to the new boulevard last week was taken in order to prevent more harm to the businesses in the area, many of which have been affected by twelve months of disruption caused by the work.

The whole of the Avenida Palma de Mallorca and almost all of the Plaza Costa del Sol has been finished and



The Christmas lights were switched on last Friday. :: SUR

fitted with a central water feature, benches, a stage for cultural performances and a large pergola, which has been named Pergola Torremolinos. However, the finishing touches will

not take place until after the festive season. One of the last steps in the project will be the burying of a time capsule, which will be placed under the Plaza Costa del Sol. A plaque re-

cording the date of the event will be installed to mark the spot.

The town hall has invited residents to submit items to be sealed in the capsule as evidence that might be of interest to future generations. These can include photographs and artwork, historical data and maps, newspaper articles, or written statements that reflect personal experiences that have occurred in Torremolinos.

The council will also include a book about the history of Torremolinos, the day's newspapers, currency, several historical documents and a current photograph of the new-look town centre.

All entries must be in PDF format and no bigger than one A4 page. The name of the applicant and any personal information for future descendants must accompany the document. Personal, social or political criticism will not be accepted. Submissions must be made by e-mail before Tuesday 15 January 2019 to captiempo@torremolinos.es

The renovation of the Plaza Costa del Sol and Avenida de Palma Mallorca is one of the largest urban transformations that the town has experienced in recent decades. The town hall hopes it will reactivate the local economy, which has been in decline for more than a decade.

IN BRIEF

Extended parking hours in Torremolinos town centre

TORREMOLINOS

BY T. BRYANT. Torremolinos town hall has announced that the car park of the Centro Cultural Pablo Ruiz Picasso will be extended throughout December. The car park, which is free, will open to the public from Monday to Friday between 7.30am and 2am.

During the weekends and public holidays, it will open from 9am until 2am. The new time schedule has been introduced so that visitors can enjoy the extensive programme of Christmas events taking place in the new pedestrianised town centre.

The festive schedule will continue until Tuesday 8 January 2019.

Year's final beach clean-up to focus on Fuengirola coastline

FUENGIROLA

BY T. B. As part of the campaign orchestrated by the Plastic Free Seas Worldwide foundation, the Beaches Department of the Fuengirola town hall has announced that the final beach clean-up of the year will take place on Saturday 15 December.

It is hoped that the project will remove at least 400kg of plastics from the beaches of Fuengirola, and those wishing to participate are asked to meet outside the Alarcón Restaurant at 2.30pm.

Organisers are encouraging as many people as possible to participate in the event, which is sponsored by Specsavers Opatcas Fuengirola. Rubbish bags will be supplied, but volunteers are asked to bring their own gloves.

Craig Webb and Natasha We-gloop, co-founders of Plastic Free Seas Worldwide commented: "Let's make this final beach clean-up of the year our best yet."



PROMOTING TOLERANCE AMONG CHILDREN

Torremolinos town hall presented awards to a group of children who participated in the 'Words Against Violence' literary contest that promotes diversity, equality and tolerance. All primary schools in Torremolinos participated and the seven winners each received a 75-euro voucher that can be used for educational materials and clothing. The presentation was attended by Aida Blanes, councillor for Social Empowerment, who said, "The best way to end gender violence is prevention."

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Sierra de las Nieves, one step away from being a National Park

MPs in Madrid still have to formally vote on the proposal, but campaigners say that "all is going according to plan" for a declaration in the spring

:: FERNANDO TORRES

MALAGA. After years of campaigning by locals and environmentalists, the Sierra de las Nieves mountain range, stretching out behind the western Costa del Sol, is now just one step from being declared a National Park. It will be the first area of Malaga province with the status and only the third area in Andalucía.

Last Friday, the national government's Cabinet approved the proposal document after the regional government did the same last month and this will now go to parliament for ratification. National Parks are the only protected natural areas requiring parliamentary approval. Although nothing can be certain, the formal declaration is expected to be made in the spring.

The future National Park will be only the sixteenth in the country and cover 23,000 hectares. The 64,000 locals, living in both the new reserve and an outer protected area, were praised by the government for their contribution to seeking to protect the area.

A unique environment

The government also highlighted the authenticity of the landscape and its uniqueness. The park will

cover some 65 per cent of the growing area of the protected indigenous Pinsapo pine and also samples of a rarely visible rock type from the Earth's crust called Peridotite.

President of the Mancomunidad, the inter-municipal group of local town halls that lobbied for the park, Antonio Pérez, said, "It looks like the declaration has reached cruising speed and everything is going to plan."

Most of the Sierra de las Nieves is already a Unesco-protected biosphere. The two current National Parks in Andalucía are Doñana and the Sierra Nevada.



Walkers on a trail in the western Costa mountain range. :: F. TORRES / FILE



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Airbnb prices in Marbella are fourth dearest in the world, survey says

The University of Malaga analysis, carried out for the council, puts the resort just behind New York, London and Barcelona

:: HÉCTOR BARBOTA

MARBELLA. A survey, carried out for Marbella council by the University of Malaga, has shown that only New York, London and Barcelona have more expensive properties available to rent on Airbnb than Marbella, based on property averages. The Costa resort comes just ahead of Los Angeles, Sydney and Moscow.

The 130-page study was commissioned by the local town hall in an attempt to understand the growing phenomenon of private homes



Foreign tourists in Marbella. :: JOSELE-LANZA

being rented to tourists via online platforms.

Marbella had 4,077 homes available this way, says the data, more than any other town on the Costa del Sol. Most of these are in the Nueva Andalucía and Elviria areas. Over half the properties being rented out are owned by foreigners. Almost all of those on offer are entire properties and only 7 per cent are individual rooms.

Seasons

The study by the university shows that availability is highly seasonal with almost half only being available on Airbnb for rent for between one and three months of the year. As these months are generally in summer, this has the effect of making the average price high.

The average nightly price in 2017 was 150 euros per home rented, just below New York at 159, London at 157.30 and Barcelona at 155.60.

The report concludes that the rise of Airbnb is not seen as a serious problem by Marbella residents, as it increasingly is in some areas of Spain.

IN BRIEF

Junta expected to open new hospital in summer

ESTEPONA

:: C. MÁRQUEZ. The mayor of Estepona, José María García Urbano, has announced that the construction of the town's new hospital is finished. The local council has paid for the building on behalf of the regional health service, and the mayor said that it was now up to the regional government to deliver its side of the deal and open the facility some time around next summer. The construction company still has some small areas to tidy up but the mayor highlighted how it had been put up "in record time".



The mayor on the square :: SUR

Marbella seafront square gets overhaul

MARBELLA

:: N. CASTRO. The Plaza del Mar, the open space above the car park and shopping centre alongside the seafront at the western end of central Marbella, has had a revamp. Local residents had been complaining about the poor state of repair and overall neglect. Now the council has completed a 200,000-euro makeover, with repaired water features, new lighting and some 3,000 flowers and plants. Visiting the new-look square last week, the mayor, Ángeles Muñoz, said a children's play park would also be installed shortly.

Manilva approves plan after 2017 overspend

MANILVA

:: C. MÁRQUEZ. Ruling councillors in Manilva approved a special financial plan on Monday after an audit showed 700,000 euros had been wrongly accounted for in 2017, resulting in an overspend being declared. They stressed that despite the technical error, the town's accounts "are healthy, stable and showing a surplus". The mayor, Mario Jiménez, also defended his administration's financial record, saying that the council is currently generating more income and lowering taxes.

Malaga-based Unicaja Banco mulls merger with Liberbank

No firm deal is on the table as yet, but Unicaja would be the bigger partner between the two brands, where there is little geographical overlap

:: JOSÉ VICENTE ASTORGA

MALAGA. Shares in Unicaja Banco and Liberbank were star performers on Spain's stock exchange this week after both companies announced that they were in talks

about a possible merger. Their share prices rose between 14 and almost 16 per cent.

Unicaja Banco, which is based in Malaga, is currently Spain's seventh biggest banking group and a merger with Liberbank would put the new company in seventh place, above Bankinter and below Bankia.

Unicaja has assets of 56.8 billion euros and Liberbank 39.1 billion euros, meaning that the Malaga company would be the controlling entity in any deal. Liberbank was formed by the merger of various

former savings banks in central and northern Spain during the financial crisis. Between them they would have 10,849 employees and 1,866 branches with hardly any geographical overlap and market-leading positions in many areas.

Both companies have stressed in statements that the talks are not at an advanced stage and no formal offer is on the table.

Unicaja Banco had profits of 142 million euros in the first nine months of this year, up 18.4 per cent on a year earlier.



A branch office of Malaga-based Unicaja. :: SUR



Liberbank has a small presence on the Costa. :: M.F.

Shares in Zara-owner Inditex fall as company announces slowdown

:: SUR

MADRID. Sales in Spanish clothing giant, Inditex, fell on Tuesday by almost 5 per cent on the day it announced a slowdown in growth in the nine months from February to October. Inditex, which owns Zara, Bershka and Massimo Dutti, among other brands, made 2.4 billion euros profit to October, up 4

per cent on a year earlier. Sustained by a sales increase of 3 per cent, nevertheless, it upset some analysts. Last year it grew 6 per cent in the same period.

"The current situation at the company is clearly disappointing," said Sergio Ávila Luengo of IG Markets.

The results were hit by an "ex-

traordinarily warm September", said the group, which added that its strategy not to enter a discounting war with the competition at that time had paid off. Total sales in the nine-month period were 18.4 billion euros coming from its 7,442 shops and internet.

The Galicia-based company added that the winter season had started well and that in November it had launched a new web platform for Zara in 106 new markets, especially Africa, in keeping with its strategy to have an internet presence in every country by 2020.

THE EURO ZONE
MARK NAYLER

IN TWO MINDS



This week, Pedro Sánchez confirmed a bumper increase of 22 per cent in Spain's minimum wage from January, from 736 euros per month to 900 euros. It's a proposal made, in part, to please leftist Catalan separatist parties, who say that they won't support the Socialists' 2019 budget - tabled for a parliamentary vote in January - unless Sánchez softens his anti-secession stance.

It's also a move that highlights the PSOE leader's schizophrenic tactics with regard to the Catalonia problem. Concession-driven in some respects, they're Rajoyesque in others: this week also saw Sánchez threatening to send national police into Catalonia if the region's own police force, known as the Mossos d'Esquadra, fail to restrain separatist protesters. Which approach will be more effective?

Leftist Catalan parties will approve, in theory at least, of the minimum wage increase, which would be the heaviest annual hike since 1977. It's set to be approved at a meeting of Sánchez's cabinet next Friday in Barcelona - a choice of destination that's also designed to appease the region's secessionists. Yet the tone of rhetoric this week, from both Madrid and the Catalan capital, suggests that it will take more than a piece of economic legislation to ease the tension.

In an address to congress on Wednesday, Sánchez was in a less conciliatory mood towards Catalan separatists. He compared their attempts to break from the rest of Spain with Brexit, saying that both campaigns told "lies" to gain support, inventing "grievances

[that] force people to choose between two identities". Hardly the words of a man prepared to cut the secessionists some slack.

Sánchez's remarks followed similarly inflammatory statements made by Catalan president Quim Torra on Saturday, after the latter's visit to Slovenia. Praising the country's split from Yugoslavia in 1991, following violent clashes during the "10-Day War", Torra said that "the Slovenians decided to push ahead [with secession] despite all the consequences. Let's do the same as them and be willing to do anything to live freely". It was an irresponsible and flawed comparison, one that Spain's foreign minister Josep Borrell said was effectively "calling for an insurrection".

Both Sánchez's and Torra's remarks set the tone of rhetoric that makes one despair at the prospect of compromise between Barcelona and Madrid. As indeed does the Spanish prime minister's warning to the Catalan parliament this week: unless the Mossos take a harder line on separatist protesters - who blocked a Catalan motorway last weekend - Sánchez says he'll send in Spanish national police to deal with them. This is precisely what Rajoy did in October last year, in an attempt to physically dismantle the independence referendum.

Unlike Rajoy, though, Sánchez also maintains that he wants to start a "dialogue" with separatists - something that the proposed wage increase is designed to facilitate. Yet Torra is inspired by Slovenia's bloody independence movement and Sánchez thinks that separatists are "liars".

Some dialogue.

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Gibraltar plans a ban on sale of energy drinks to under-16s

The CHAMP scheme to encourage children to lead healthy lives has now entered its third phase of fun events to keep youngsters active

DEBBIE BARTLETT

GIBRALTAR. CHAMP (Children, Healthy and Active! Multi-agency Programme) launched its third phase of planned events recently, as a way of encouraging children in Gibraltar to lead a healthy lifestyle.

The winter phase of the programme, called 'A Winter of Festive Cheer and Good News' kicked off with a treasure hunt, starting at Casemates, along Main Street and back via Irish Town, with multiple edu-

cational quiz stops stationed along the route. Lucky draw prizes were handed out to participants on successful completion of the treasure hunt.

As part of the healthy living aspect of this programme, the Gibraltar government has drawn up a command paper on the banning of the sale of energy drinks to children under the age of 16. These often contain high and unregulated amounts of caffeine, and have been associated with serious adverse health effects, such as diabetes, mood and behavioural issues, as well as tooth decay.

John Cortes, the Minister of Public Health, says the legislation to control access to high energy drinks once again shows "the government's commitment to real progress", and promises: "There will be more to come."

2019 DATES ANNOUNCED FOR ALAMEDA GARDEN TOURS

One Saturday a month, guided tours will be available of the Alameda Botanical Gardens next year. The dates have just been announced and those, with plenty of other information, can be found online (gibraltargardens.gi). All of the tours will be led by Andrew Abrines. The Alameda Gardens are an important part of Gibraltar's history, and have now become a very popular wedding venue as well.



VISIT GIBRALTAR



Ministers Neil Costa and John Cortes start the treasure hunt. **SUR**

IN BRIEF

Permission granted for futuristic development

GIBRALTAR

D.B. Outline planning permission has now been granted for a 19-storey mixed use development at Devil's Tongue Queensway, on a site which once formed part of the port.

The design of the building has had to be changed from the initial plans to reduce its size, because of its proximity to the City Wall, and the main entrance and approach have been moved to the north side. The height of the building was planned in line with others which already exist in Marina Bay and Ocean Village.

The new development will contain a variety of apartments on the upper floors, ranging from one to four bedrooms, and a five-bedroom duplex. There will also be shops, offices and parking facilities.

Upskirting to be made a criminal offence

GIBRALTAR

D.B. Upskirting - taking a photo under a person's clothing without their knowledge or permission - is not currently a criminal offence in Gibraltar, but that is about to change. The government wants to introduce legislation to make it a specific sexual offence which could result in a jail sentence of up to two years, and those convicted will be placed on a sex offenders register.

The law will cover all situations in which a photo is taken for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification, causing humiliation, distress or alarm.

Gibraltar's Minister of Justice, Neil Costa, who describes upskirting as "despicable behaviour", says the new law will ensure that those who violate somebody else in this way can be prosecuted.

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A pro-independence protester blocking the AP-7 motorway in Catalonia last weekend. :: SUR

Radical group calls for sabotage during upcoming Cabinet session

Catalonia was making headlines again this week ahead of a meeting of the Spanish government planned in Barcelona for 21 December

:: SUR

BARCELONA. Left-wing separatist groups have promised to “sow chaos” in Catalonia later this month when the Spanish government swaps Madrid for Barcelona for one of its weekly Cabinet meetings.

The Grups Autònoms d'Accions Ràpides -GAAR, (autonomous rapid action groups), the most extreme version of the radical Comitès de Defensa de la República- CDR (Republican defence committees), which were only set up last week, have begun briefing their followers with an instruction manual. In it they explain

how to carry out their planned sabotage and attacks against “transport, the energy sector, IT and communications and the security services”. The groups have insisted that the protests will be “non violent”.

The news that protests are being prepared for the Spanish Cabinet meeting near Barcelona’s port on 21 December came in a week of renewed militant action in the region and an escalation in political tension between the central and regional governments.

Last weekend members of the CDR blocked the main AP-7 motorway through Catalonia for much of Saturday and the following day they raised toll barriers without any intervention by the Mossos d’Esquadra, the Catalan regional police force.

Ministers in Madrid were quick to criticise the lack of police intervention, threatening to send officers from the National Police to Cata-

lonia if regional ministers didn’t carry out their constitutional duties. Madrid has already announced that is sending an extra 400 National Police for the planned Cabinet meeting next week.

The tension has been added to by Catalan president, Quim Torra, last weekend calling for the region to break away in the same way that Slovenia broke away from Yugoslavia, which involved violence and loss of life.

“That’s the kind of talk that sounds like it’s calling for an insurrection,” said Spanish foreign minister Josep Borrell on Monday from Brussels. Later in the week, Torra had toned down his rhetoric as opposition parties in Madrid called for the ruling PSOE to suspend regional autonomous powers again.

Mark Naylor, The Euro Zone :
Page 20

Madrid successfully hosts Copa Libertadores final after original game was suspended

:: SUR

MADRID. The people of Madrid were able to breathe a sigh of relief last week after hosting a major South American cup final at short notice, amid security concerns.

The second leg of the final of the Copa Libertadores, the equivalent of the Champions League, passed off without incident between Argentinian giants River Plate and Boca Juniors. Madrid had agreed to step in at the last minute when the

original match, planned for 24 November in Buenos Aires, had to be suspended due to violence between the notoriously conflict-ridden rival fans.

Real Madrid’s Santiago Bernabéu stadium was offered up as a new, safer alternative and last weekend the Spanish capital took on a Latin feel as thousands of fans flooded in from Buenos Aires, watched over by 4,000 police. The game was won 3-1 by River Plate (5-3 on aggregate).



River Plate celebrate their Copa Libertadores victory in Spain. :: AFP

Guardia Civil deals a blow to arms sales to criminals in Spain as 322 guns are seized

:: MELCHOR SÁIZ-PARDO

MADRID. Guardia Civil officers, as part of Operation Gonalde, have seized 322 guns, including four machine guns and seven submachine guns, as well as 50,000 cartridges. Four people were arrested

for allegedly forming part of a network selling the weapons to a wide variety of criminals, say officers.

The operation centred on Madrid, Asturias and Cantabria, where eleven homes and premises linked to the group were searched.

The group traded weapons from Spain and other countries, including decommissioned guns that they adapted to make work again. As the serial numbers hadn’t been removed and they weren’t registered with the authorities, it was easier to channel the weapons into the black market.

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A further week of Brexit turmoil sees pound fall sharply against the euro

Theresa May survived a vote of no confidence in the same week that she won a case brought to the Royal Courts of Justice by remain campaigners

:: JENNIE RHODES

MALAGA. Another week of Brexit turmoil began on Monday with disappointing news for anti-Brexit campaigners in Spain and across Europe. The UK's High Court announced its decision to reject the 'UK in EU' challenge against the illegal funding limits of pro-Brexit groups, following a full day hearing last Friday. Deferring his decision until Monday, Mr Justice Ouseley ruled against the case of Susan Wilson and others versus the prime minister, saying that the claim was "out of time".

Speaking after the decision, Wilson said, "While I'm obviously disappointed with this ruling, this challenge is far from over. We're working through the judgment and considering an appeal."

Article 50

The decision came on the same day that the European Court of Justice



PM Theresa May speaks outside 10 Downing Street after winning the confidence vote. :: EFE

ruled that Article 50 could be unilaterally revoked to stop Brexit, should the UK decide to do so. Wilson added to her statement, "We are still in good spirits over the ECJ ruling this morning that Article 50 is revocable. We believe this makes a further referendum more likely. At the very least, our case has ensured that any future

referendum will be under stricter scrutiny against illegal activity."

Vote delayed

Also on Monday, the prime minister, Theresa May, announced that the UK parliament vote on the Withdrawal Agreement would be delayed until "before 21 January",

causing the pound to drop sharply against the euro. The effects were felt strongly among pensioners on the Costa del Sol and those transferring money, who saw less money going into their euro bank accounts.

The delay led to SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon tweeting that she would be prepared to merge with

the Labour Party in order to topple Theresa May in a vote of no confidence. However, the call was unanswered by Jeremy Corbyn, allowing Conservative MPs to get in first with their own confidence vote on Wednesday.

Vote of no confidence

May survived the ballot by 200 to 117 votes, which led to mixed reactions from politicians and campaigners in the UK and abroad. Many were appalled by the decision to allow two MPs currently suspended from their roles over sex allegations to vote. Andrew Griffiths, the PM's former chief of staff, and Charlie Elphicke were registered in Wednesday's ballot despite serving suspensions. Labour called the decision, "a betrayal of women".

Prior to the vote the PM gave a press conference, announcing that whatever happened she would be stepping down before the next general election, expected to be called in 2022.

Liberal Democrat leader, Vince Cable said that the prime minister "must change course" over her Withdrawal Agreement. Meanwhile DUP leader, Arlene Foster, had already made it clear that her party, which reached a deal with the Conservatives to keep May in power after the last election, would not support the current agreement and the so-called 'backstop' arrangement which attempts to protect the Irish border.

May travelled back to Brussels on Thursday morning for the latest round of talks with the EU.

Talks continue between the PP and Ciudadanos over new Junta government

The Cs party appears to have ended its demand that its leader should be regional president and technical discussions on a pact began on Thursday

:: SUR

SEVILLE. Talks got under way this week between the conservative Partido Popular (PP) and centre-right Ciudadanos (Cs) over a possible coalition to take control of the Junta de Andalucía regional government.

On Tuesday, senior national and regional members of both parties met in Seville to agree broad cooperation and on Thursday different teams sat together to look at the fine print of policies and ministerial positions. By next Monday they are expected to announce a draft agreement.

The meetings follow the recent regional election which saw the vote of the ruling PSOE Socialist party decline, leaving parties right of centre with enough regional MPs to possibly oust regional president, Susana Díaz. The PSOE party has governed in Andalucía for 36 years and both the PP and Ciudadanos have



Who will be king? Cs's Marín and PP's Moreno in a file photo. :: EFE

said they want to reach a deal to "deliver the change" that they believe voters have asked for.

However, at the start of the week, there were two main sticking points in the outcome of any agreement between the two parties. Firstly, which one of the two parties the new regional president would come

from, and secondly, what to do about the 12 new regional MPs of far-right Vox. The surprise rise in that party, to 11 per cent of the vote, means their MPs' votes, or abstentions, are now needed to add to those of the PP and Ciudadanos in order to achieve the majority to oust the PSOE.

Ahead of Tuesday's first meeting between the two parties, Ciudadanos appeared to back down on its earlier insistence that its regional leader, Juan Marín, should be the president. They had argued that as Cs' number of MPs had jumped the most, from 9 to 21, it should be the leader of "the change".

However it now seems likely that the PP, which came second to the PSOE, will be allowed to take the lead in any coalition. "For us the [negotiating] red line is the promise to the people of Andalucía that the PSOE will not form part of a government," said Ciudadanos on Monday.

Meanwhile Susana Díaz has been rebuffed by the left-wing Adelante Andalucía group. Díaz, who has the right to try to form a government first in the investiture debate beginning on 27 December in the Andalusian parliament, was told that she would first need to get Cs' support, which is unlikely, before talking to Adelante Andalucía about any left-of-centre coalition.

In the election on 2 December for the 109-seat regional parliament, PSOE won 33 seats, the PP 26, Cs 21, Adelante Andalucía (Podemos and IU) 21 and Vox 12.

Vox works out what role it wants to play as PSOE reacts to their rise

:: SUR

SEVILLE. The shock rise of the vote for far-right Vox in the Andalusian elections continued to be a main topic of conversation in Spain this week. The support of Vox is needed to help the PP and Ciudadanos (Cs) into power.

While Ciudadanos has not yet mentioned Vox publicly, and the PP is assuming that party will support its new coalition automatically, Vox's Andalusian leader criticised them both on Wednesday.

Francisco Serrano said, "We won't get in the way of a PSOE exit, but we aren't going to let them [PP and Cs] blank us out." He added that he didn't want to form part of a new regional government but that he would demand a seat at the negotiating table and an enhanced role in framing future parliamentary debates.

Meanwhile the PSOE party has started an initiative nationally to undermine the PP and Ciudadanos negotiation by emphasising their reliance on the Vox vote, "warning" that the same could happen elsewhere in Spain.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We accept letters by email (surinenglish.su@diariosur.es), post or fax, but they must include identification and a telephone number, and be exclusive to SUR in English. We do not publish anonymous letters. Opinions expressed by contributors to this and other pages of SUR in English do not necessarily reflect those of the publishers. No part of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from the publishers.



FANTastic - reward yourself

Have you ever noticed the preparation for sporting events like marathons, 10km runs or triathlons when red/white ribbons show where they will come along? Do yourself a favour and go there when the happening takes place, especially when runners are concerned who exhaust themselves for whatever personal reason. They all deserve encouragement, from us.

Suppose one of your relatives is involved. Your kid, dad or mum, sweating a lot, doing the utmost to keep up with other runners. Clearly totally tired, feeling alone with the drive to get to the finish, running alongside people who don't seem to notice what's happening at all. Some pedestrians ignore the tape and step over it with the risk of blocking some runners. I mean, I can understand that people don't care about such sporting events. But when you're there, alone or with others, I can recommend the following and having the time of your life!

Take a stand behind the tape where you can see the runners coming. Every time one passes you cheer and shout and clap your hands. Shout Bravo or cheer

in your own language, that doesn't matter. If you find a name on a shirt, shout it out. You show your support for everybody's effort. Come on! ¡Vamos! The louder you are the better feeling the runner gets and (that's what this is about) you will be surprised of the reaction the encouragement gives you back. Their smile to you, their wink, even a sigh of thanks, one hand slightly up or two thumbs up Feels so good. You'll be amazed!

It doesn't matter whether you're on the terrace, on the promenade with friends or family or you're walking the dog. Stop what you're doing and support runners for a while. It inspires others to do what you do and they'll get the same good feeling. Experience it!

The coffee and drinks afterwards you'll enjoy a lot more with a different feeling and a wonderful experience. You may not meet the runners afterwards of course but be assured the gratitude from them to you is tremendous. You made the difference. Your loud support pushed them further. Supporting feels FANTastic.

Just try it, you'll see.

JANNIE BUNK
TORRE DEL MAR

THIS WEEK'S WINNING LETTER

Poor sprung door technique

PETER EDGERTON
MUSIC MAKER WWW.E-PETER.COM

Having devoted his life to astonishing levels of skulduggery, King Sisyphus came to believe he was more clever than even Zeus, the greatest of all Greek gods. Sadly for him, he most certainly wasn't and his punishment for indulging in such hubris, was to spend the whole of eternity pushing a massive boulder up a hill, only to see it roll back down to the bottom again each time he thought he'd accomplished the task.

I had a brief taste of Sisyphus's fate last week. The main door at The Shakespeare had had, for the last three and a half years, one of those automatic closing hinge mechanisms attached to its top right hand corner. Needless to say, what with all the comings and goings over such a long period, said mechanism simply gave up the ghost after a particularly busy night. Not to worry, the

following morning I popped into the only ironmongers in town which hasn't been turned into a boutique design-your-own salad bar. Yet.

'Hi - have you got one of those springy hingey thingies, please?'

'Yes, sir. We have this really rubbish cheapo version which only a fool completely off his cake on illegal substances would buy or, alternatively, the marginally more expensive model which is guaranteed to work in any circumstance whatsoever.'

'Lovely - I'll take the cheapo one then, please and spend what little I've saved on beer and crisps.'

'Er, well, ok. There you go then, buddy, you total idiot cheapskate.'

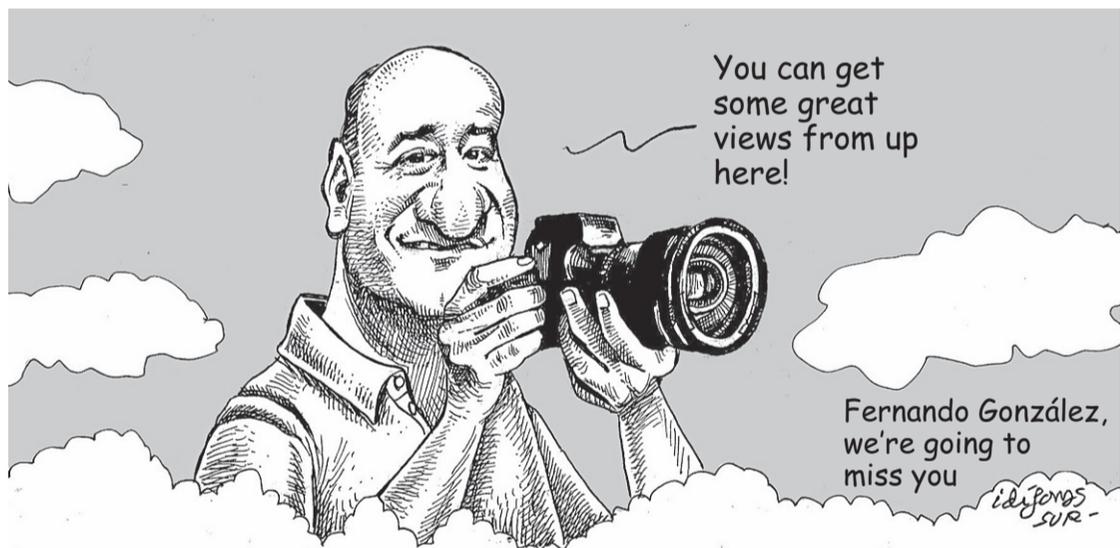
Off I tootled, whistling a merry tune, in order to fit my most frugal of purchases to the unsuspecting door.

The first evening it was in use was a resounding success as the

springy hingey thingy fulfilled all of its duties with considerable aplomb and not a little style. The next night however, it became clear that the old Spanish adage 'Lo barato sale caro' (what's cheap works out expensive) is right on the money as the springy hingey thingy slackened to the point of disaster. Consequently, for the next two evenings, in the style of King Sisyphus, I was involved in a closing-the-door-only-for-it-to-be-immediately-left-open-again routine which, admittedly, wasn't for the whole of eternity but did rather feel like it by two in the morning, let me tell you.

Today, I bought and fitted the more expensive springy hingey thingy. My word, never has the gentle thud of a door closing of its own volition sounded so sweet. I rather fear Zeus himself couldn't have done a better job. Aaagh! No wait, Zeus, I didn't mean it like that..

IDÍGORAS



SUR in English

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Nearly two and a half years after the partial opening of the Guadalhorce Valley hospital, two of its four operating theatres and some of its beds were finally opened this week.

This hospital is greatly needed to take the pressure of the Clínico in Malaga. It opened eight years later than scheduled, sloppily and incomplete. Somebody (many people, actually) didn't do their job properly and the hospital didn't have enough electrical power for the operating theatres and some other departments. Now it does, but it is still not performing 100 per cent, because nobody knows when the wards for non-surgical patients will open. What's more, nobody even dares to hazard a date, especially in the situation at the Andalusian Health Service now,

Operating theatres

ÁNGEL ESCALERA

after the recent regional elections. But, you know, there was more than enough time to have sorted out all these obstacles. The Guadalhorce Hospital opened late, and not properly. And when a tree is born twisted, it is hard to straighten it out. What starts badly, ends badly. This hospital, which is

a branch of the Clínico in Malaga, needs more staff, but what cannot happen is that people are taken away from one place to work in another. In other words, there would be no point whatsoever in moving professionals from the Clínico Universitario to the Guadalhorce. That is not a solution. It will create prob-

lems, not resolve them. If they don't employ more staff for the Guadalhorce hospital, they won't be able to open the wards. Those who take over the reins at the regional government's Ministry of Health and the Andalusian Health Service, if there is a change in government as it looks as if there

will be, have a great deal of work ahead of them.

Among the things which cannot be put off are the need to give the Guadalhorce Valley hospital with enough staff to provide a quality service. Without professionals, the health service cannot function. Asking people to give more and receive less is not viable.

The people of the Guadalhorce Valley deserve a hospital which, once and for all, works efficiently and isn't remedied by patches. It is good news that half of the operating theatres are now open (16 patients underwent surgery there yesterday), but that is just one part of the huge amount which remains to be done.

Let's see if once and for all the Guadalhorce Hospital can start to fly, without having its wings clipped.

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Milestones on a path of art appreciation

The CEO of The Arts Society travelled to Malaga from the UK this week to raise money for charitable projects and join in celebrations



JENNIE RHODES

✉ rhodes_jennie@hotmail.com

MALAGA. A year of celebrations for The Arts Society reached a climax this week with its CEO joining branches in the province for the final events to celebrate a series of milestones. While The Arts Society, formally known as NADFAS, reached its 50th year in the UK, the Costa del Sol branch has been celebrating 30 years and Nerja marked its silver jubilee on Tuesday.

The day started with CEO of the arts organisation, Florian Schweizer, completing a 10-kilometre run around Nerja to raise money for charity. The run was one of 50 that Schweizer, 41, is doing this year, to mark the international society's 50th anniversary. On Monday he ran for the Costa del Sol branch in Fuengirola and on Wednesday he travelled to Gibraltar where also ran 10 kilometres.

Before setting off for the Nerja leg of the sponsored run, the CEO explained that the idea came to him one day when he was running home from the office in London. "I often run home from work so I came up with the idea as way of getting to visit as many of the society's branches as possible in this, our 50th year, as well as trying to raise money."

He was cheered on by several members of the Nerja Arts Society, including chair, Helen Sijsling, as he



Nerja Chair, Helen Sijsling with CEO, Florian Schweizer in Nerja this week. :: J. R.



Lieuwke Loth, Helen Sijsling and Rosa Arrabal. :: R. D.



The Costa del Sol Arts Society celebrated 30 years in November. :: SUR

left the Balcón de Europa at 12pm.

At 5pm, the members were joined by mayor of Nerja Rosa Arrabal, and founder of the branch Roberta Kettel, to inaugurate a sculpture created by Cómpeeta-based artist, Lieuwke Loth. The sculpture is a gift from the society to the town and is on permanent display at the Casa de la Cultura, which is where the group hosts its monthly lectures. A members' dinner at the Parador restaurant in Nerja followed the inauguration.

The Costa del Sol branch celebrated its 30th anniversary with a dinner at the IPV Palace and Spa Hotel in Fuengirola on 24 November. Around 100 guests attended the event at which vocalist Ricky Lavazza sang and a magic show was given by lecturer and magician, Bertie Pearce.

Among the guests were Hilary Alcock, vice-chair of The Arts Society

Trustees and the European area chair, Jo Ward.

Current chair of the Costa del Sol society, Yvonne Sjokvist, gave a speech during which she reflected on the last 30 years, since the branch, the first in Spain, was established by Sue Brodie.

The money raised by Mr Schweizer's 50 runs will go to the various charities supported by The Arts Society, from a central fund in the name of founder, Patricia Faye. The Nerja branch will donate the money to the Aldeas Infantiles (Children's Villages) charity which has a base in El Palo and helps children without a family home.

Mr Schweizer also revealed that the society's AGM is to be held in Malaga in 2020, which representatives from the 380 branches worldwide are expected to attend.

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Menu a la Carte

25th of December

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Menu a la Carte

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*Children from 6 to 12 years of age, 120€ at children's party

Feline fundraisers claw in over 200 euros



ASH BOLTON

✉ ashbolton@hotmail.com

A Manilva cat charity is celebrating after receiving funds from two charitable events organised by foreign residents

CASARES. The Asociacion Gatos de Manilva (AGDM) received over 200 euros as well as tins of cat food thanks to cat lovers at the Costa Women group.

Now following the cash injection the charity is looking for volunteers to help them look after abandoned cats in the Costa del Sol town.

The first fundraiser saw a local branch of the Costa Women group hold a demonstration of floral art design on 28 November in Casares Costa, where organisers donated all admission fees and proceeds to the charity – totalling 95 euros.

The popular women's club then raised a further 107 euros during their annual Christmas lunch on 4



Melissa White and AGDM president Amanda Kiff at one of the fundraisers. :: A. BOLTON

December in Estepona.

Melissa White, event coordinator for the AGDM, told SUR in English: "We are so happy with the positive response from the Costa Women group for helping local

street animals in need. In particular the donation of canned and dry food was a big help to the charity at this time of year. The funds will help the charity continue their essential work with street cats and improve

the community in Manilva."

Melissa explained that one of the main actions of the charity is to trap, neuter and release cats to control their numbers in Manilva.

In addition, the charity works

AGDM helps to reduce numbers of feral cats in Manilva by trapping and neutering them

with Manilva's Environmental Department, provides education about street cats to the general public and focuses on the adoption of suitable cats and kittens.

Charity bosses at the AGDM are now seeking volunteers to temporarily foster kittens before they are homed, drive cats to and from the vets, help out with admin, fundraising and shelter-building.

Melissa added that donations of food, cat litter and pre-used cat carriers are always welcomed.

What's more, on Thursday 20 December the charity is organising a three-course lunch at La Pappardella restaurant in Laguna Village, Estepona. The lunch costs 40 euros and includes a welcome drink with wine, in aid of AGDM. For more information contact the restaurant on 952807354.

📍 www.facebook.com/gatosdemanilva

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WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

14 DECEMBER 1927

Iberia's first foray into commercial aviation

King Alfonso XIII was among the ten passengers on the three-hour flight from Madrid to Barcelona

The launch of the airline Iberia's first commercial flight from Madrid to Barcelona on 14 December 1927 was Spain's first foray into commercial aviation. Iberia Líneas Aéreas de España, S.A. was founded in June 1927 by Horacio Echevarrieta, a Basque businessman and politician; and Deutsche Luft Hansa (DLH), a German airline serving as flag carrier during the final years of the Weimar Republic. The majority share of the company was held by Echevarrieta, who became chairman of the board, but German sup-

port was crucial, because in addition to investing 24 per cent of the capital, DLH contributed materials and technical support.

Iberia's objective was to provide peninsular and transatlantic air services and it immediately applied for concession to establish regular flights between Madrid and Barcelona.

Founded during the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, with a capital of 1.1 million pesetas, its first commercial flight took off from the airport in Carabanchel (current Cuatro Vientos Airport) and landed in Barcelona three hours later.

The official flight on the ten-seater Rohrbach Roland monoplane included among its passengers the Spanish king, Alfonso XIII.

Prior to the official flight, a plane first flew from Barcelona to Madrid so that the king could witness the



Alfonso XIII disembarks after Iberia's first commercial flight. :: SUR

first landing. However, extreme weather issues forced the aircraft to arrive much later than expected.

The three-hour trip became a daily service that operated in both directions, and within a year of its first flight, the company was sponsored by the Spanish government to provide postal transport between Madrid and Barcelona.

By 1928, Iberia had three Rohrbach Ro VIII Roland aircraft, all with a capacity for ten passengers.

During the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, the aviation companies in Spain were state-controlled and as a consequence, in 1929, Iberia, along with Unión Aérea Española, was merged into Compañía de Líneas Aéreas Subvencionadas S.A. (CLASSA) and the new enterprise

was granted a monopoly. CLASSA, which initially ran flights between Madrid and Seville, began regular operations in May of that year. Though Iberia as an independent entity disappeared from the air transport scene until 1937, the airline maintained its registration in the Companies Register of Madrid.

At the end of the Civil War, with Barajas Airport in Madrid as its base, Iberia began operating flights between Madrid and Barcelona, Burgos, Seville, and Valencia, as well as Lisbon, in Portugal.

Nationalised in 1940 when its debt to DLH was paid off, Iberia was granted a monopoly over regular domestic flights and to colonies and protected territories.

Today, Iberia operates an inter-

LANGUAGE FOOTNOTE

Aeropuerto	Airport
Pasajero	Passenger
Avión	Aeroplane
Aeronave	Aircraft
Viaje	Journey
Vuelo	Flight
Aerolínea	Airline
Destino	Destination
Despegar	To take off
Aterrizar	To land
Facturar	To check in
Equipaje	Luggage
Conexión	Connection
Empresario	Businessman
Salidas	Departures
Llegadas	Arrivals
Fusionarse	To merge

national network of services. The Iberia Group flies to over 109 destinations in 39 countries, and a further 90 destinations through code-sharing agreements with other airlines.

In 2010, British Airways and Iberia merged, making the combined operation the third largest commercial airline in the world. The newly merged company, known as International Airlines Group (IAG), was established in January 2011, although both airlines continue to operate under their own brand.

Bilingual crossword inside back page

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Fernando González, at work in the football ground. :: SUR

SUR photographer and photo editor, Fernando González Aranda, dies aged 51

He was a loyal Malaga CF fan and a lover of local traditions, especially Semana Santa

BY PEDRO LUIS GÓMEZ

MALAGA. Malaga journalist Fernando González Aranda, photographer and photo editor for the SUR newspapers and lecturer at Malaga University, passed away on Monday, aged 51.

He was the son of former SUR photographer Fernando González Pérez, one of the founders of publishers Prensa Malagueña, and started taking photos at an early age, becoming

part of the SUR team in 1988.

He obtained a degree and later a doctorate in Communication Sciences at Malaga University and in 2000 became an associate lecturer in Journalism.

The father-of-two was a lover of local traditions, especially Semana Santa, and was a loyal supporter of Malaga CF. His career is peppered with success, including the Premio Andalucía de Periodismo for his work covering the flooding in the province in 1989.

His death has come as a hard blow to his colleagues who, although they knew he was unwell, had not expected such a tragic ending.



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DENISE BUSH



GARDENING

Senna didymobotrya

Aromatic fern-like foliage and bright yellow flowers make this plant an attractive addition to borders or patios

Commonly called African senna, popcorn senna, candelabra tree and peanut butter cassia, *Senna didymobotrya* is native to Africa and a member of the legume (pea and bean family).

In warm climates it can develop into a large bush up to five metres tall with bright yellow or gold flower

spikes 25-30cm long that are held erect giving it the name candelabra tree. It is usually shorter in cooler climates, reaching between two and three metres tall. The leaves give the plant a tropical look and are fern-like and attractive in their own right.

The crushed foliage is said to smell like freshly buttered popcorn.

The flowers, which open from fat, dark green or black buds and have a faint peanut butter-like scent, are followed by flattened pods 8-12cm long and contain oval brown seeds 8-9mm long. These seeds can be sprouted easily on damp kitchen paper once ripe. Popcorn senna can self seed and in Africa it is classed as invasive in certain regions. It has been grown around the world as a green manure and as a garden plant but will only become a problem in hot countries or where it is not maintained. After flowering it can be cut back hard to keep it bushy and to prevent seed formation if required. It can also be propagated from woody stem cuttings in the autumn.

Like all members of the pea and bean family (Fabaceae), *Senna didymobotrya* fixes nitrogen in the soil and can be grown as a green manure. In its native Africa it is used medicinally to treat a wide range of illnesses including malaria, diarrhoea, skin rashes and ringworm, jaundice and intestinal worms. However used incorrectly it is toxic, especially decoctions made from the roots. Extracts of the plant are usually known to kill mosquito larvae and grown near a patio it is said to deter mosquitos.

Senna didymobotrya grows well in a container provided it has plenty of hot sun and a rich, well-drained soil. Although drought-resistant for short periods, it will benefit from regular watering and will flourish better with extra feeding during the flowering period. Unfortunately it will not withstand frosts.



The tropical foliage and bright blooms of *Senna didymobotrya*. :: FLICKR

READER'S PHOTO



:: LESLIE CARROLL

ANGEL'S TRUMPETS

Leslie Carroll from Zarate near Alcaucín sent in this photo of a rather beautiful *Brugmansia* and its apricot-coloured blooms.

GARDENING HINTS FOR DECEMBER

Thanks, Joel Poinsett

The all-time favourite Christmas plant must be the *Poinsettia*. The green leaves contrasting with the bright red bracts are certainly festive however nowadays it is available in increasingly garish colours from salmon pink to yellow. Unfortunately some growers sprinkle the bracts with glitter before shipping off to stores. *Poinsettias* lost their appeal for me after approximately the third Christmas that I bought one. They are grown in special greenhouses and wrapped very carefully so that they can withstand the

rigours of shipment and sitting on a shelf in a store for a maximum of four weeks. They are very susceptible to changes in temperature, light and moisture. Just carrying it from the store to the car puts it at peril. Fussy is too tame a word; too hot, too cold, too dry, too wet, too draughty, too humid... all spell certain death. Back in the 1820s, when the young American diplomat and keen botanist Joel Poinsett was sent to Mexico, little did he know what future anguish his namesake would cause.

PHOTOS

Calling all gardeners

We know that many of our readers have lovely gardens, or enjoy growing plants on their terraces or balconies, so why not share them with others?

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Lifeline for expats facing social isolation

Founded in 2001, Age Care Association is a registered organisation staffed entirely by volunteers



TONY BRYANT

✉ tonysureng@gmail.com

The charity has experienced increasing numbers of older English-speaking people requiring assistance over the past five years.

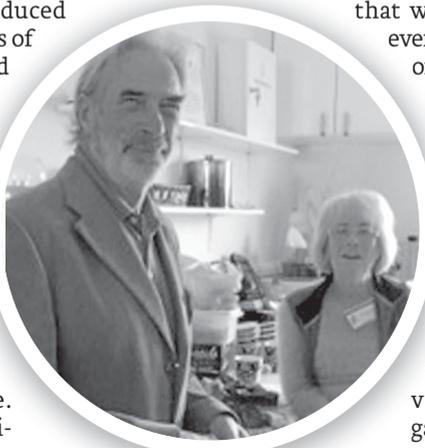
MIJAS. The festive season is upon us once again and many people will be busy preparing to enjoy the holidays with family and friends, whether here on the Costa del Sol, on back in the UK. There is, however, a sector of people that will be dedicating their time to ensuring that those who are left on their own at Christmas are not forgotten, especially the elderly expat community.

One organisation that will be working around the clock to make sure the elderly will not be overlooked is Age Care, the Mijas-based charity association that supports English-speaking senior citizens living in the Malaga province.

Founded in 2001, the Age Care Association is a fully registered, non-profit making organisation staffed entirely by volunteers. The charity began when a group of friends got together to hold a fundraising event to assist older people who needed help and support. Since then, the charity has expanded and now hosts weekly social meetings, as well as offering welfare support, practical information, appointment assistance and translation services.

The organisation also has a second hand shop in Calahonda, which is instrumental in raising the majority of the funds needed to run the charity.

Here on the Costa del Sol, just as in the UK, the issue of acute loneliness and social isolation is one of the biggest challenges facing senior citizens, especially during the festive season. Loneliness due to reduced mobility, the loss of family and friends, or the bereavement of a loved one, are some of the issues that can have a serious impact on the well-being and quality of life of older people. Many older residents also have social care needs, due to hearing or visual impairment



Age Care president, Sydney Weldon, with a volunteer. :: SUR



British expats attend an Age Care meeting in Benalmádena. :: T. BRYANT

ments and are sometimes confined to their homes.

Increasing numbers

Age Care claim that it has experienced increasing numbers of older English-speaking people requiring assistance during the past five years. However, it is not always health or mobility problems that need addressing, as Nigel Foster, the organisations Welfare Group Leader, pointed out to SUR in English.

“Age Care can help with many issues by providing care services in the home. Sometimes the simplest of problems can cause the elderly much stress and inconvenience. Even something simple like a power cut or problems with a mobile phone, which is sometimes merely the case of it being switched off, can be a big thing.”

Nigel got involved soon after he arrived on the coast in 2016, and he now organises the weekly Benalmádena meeting, as well as providing any type of help or assistance the elderly might need.

“Many of our members have been here for more than 30 years and some have lost their partners, so they don’t get many chances to get out and see people, but at least they know

that we will be here every week. We can organise transport for medical appointments and arrange interpretation services, but if we come across a situation we are not sure about, we will seek the advice of other organisations,” Nigel explains.

Age Care’s ultimate objective is to give support in

a wide variety of ways to the older English speaking community from Benalmádena to Calahonda. Some of the Age Care volunteers have had careers in nursing, education, psychology, and other caring professions, while others are simply people who wish to help the elderly. The

organisation has liaisons with the British Consulate, the Foreigners Department of Mijas, The Royal British Legion Spain South, La Cala Lions Club and several Masonic lodges in the area. The organisation also works in conjunction with the Cudeca Foundation.

Sydney Weldon, who has been president of Age Care for nearly five years, initially began helping in the shop. Today he runs the whole organisation, with the help of his dedicated team of volunteers, and he also employs three private care companies.

“If we receive a call from someone who requires home help, we first send in the care company to give us a written assessment of the situation; we then decide which way we can help,” Sydney explains.

Age care holds weekly meetings in Benalmádena, Fuengirola, Coin and Calahonda. The meetings offer the elderly a chance to catch up with friends, enjoy bingo, painting or free Spanish lessons. The organisation also arranges a free Christmas dinner and a summer tea party at the Tamisa Golf Hotel.

“We are always looking for volunteers to help in the shop and at our meetings. We are in particular need of drivers, especially those who can speak a little Spanish. If anyone is interested, then please visit our web site, call in to our shop in Calahonda, or come to one of our coffee mornings,” Sydney concludes.

📍 www.agecarecosta.org

ADVERTORIAL Rent a Car Osa Cars

Car rental that adapts to you

In 2016 Osa Cars was simply a thought in David and Patricia’s heads. But by 2017 the company had become a reality with offices across Benalmádena.

Why a car rental business? Nowadays not everyone needs a car of their own, and being able to rent one makes life easier.

Car rental is now not just for tourists but also for people who only need a car occasionally.

Today you might need a big car for a weekend away, and tomorrow you might need a small one to go out for dinner in the city centre.

We have not invented car rental, obviously, but we wanted to give the business our own personal touch.

Our business objective has always been to provide, or at least to try to provide the customer with what they need. We do not limit ourselves to strict standards, we try to adapt to the demands of our clients.

In any business the goal is to make money, but for us, the sat-



The team is dedicated to customer service. SUR.

isfaction of our clients is just as important as the benefits we get.

Our philosophy is, if we keep our customers happy they will continue to use our company, and we will continue to be successful.

At this point, we have only our customers to thank. We are very grateful for the trust they have placed in us from day one. It is a real pleasure to deal with people, who over time, stop being customers and become friends.

We will continue to work hard and strive to reach the company’s potential everyday.

We aim to offer our customers the best quality service and total transparency in everything we do. Our main goal is to have satisfied clients. Thank you for your trust.

📍 **Osa Cars Benalmádena Costa.** www.osacars.es / info@osacars.es / +34 952 560 795



Prison life. The building's large courtyard, as well as the chapel, became the axis of prison life for the women. :: SUR

What life was like in Franco's women's prison in Malaga

Thousands of women were sent to Caserón de la Goleta, which is now the Local Police headquarters, where the living conditions were "inhuman". In many cases there was no record of the crime they were supposed to have committed



ALBERTO GÓMEZ

✉ agalmendres@diariosur.es

MALAGA. They were accused of being delinquents, alcoholics and psychopaths, "degenerate" women with a tendency to infidelity, divorce or lesbian relationships. Many of them couldn't read or write and ended up being obliged to sign their criminal records with a fingerprint. Nor did they have a chance to defend themselves in the military courts and summary proceedings against charges as ambiguous as 'rebellion' or 'attacks on public morality', although in reality it didn't much matter because in most cases the Franco regime had

already found them guilty and sentenced them.

Thousands of women were jailed for simply being related to a suspected subversionist, or sometimes simply for having been in the wrong place at the wrong time. They didn't go down in history, but they lived through the Civil War and post-war period with the same amount of pain, contempt and bloodshed as the men. In Malaga, only a small plaque in what is now the Local Police headquarters, the former women's prison, recalls that muted horror.

For decades the Caserón de la Goleta was a men's jail, with just one or two cells reserved for women, until the building fell into such disrepair that it had to be closed and a new one built in 1933. The new provincial prison which, as the press of the time were keen to point out, had running water, was inaugurated on 2 Febru-

ary 1934. At that time, there were 291 men and four women prisoners.

Malaga MP Victoria Kent, who was director of the prison system, had introduced improvements because she was convinced of the need to reform Spanish jails with a more humanitarian focus. When the Civil War began, however, that situation changed radically.

In 1937, after the Francoists took control of the province, there were massive arrests and the old Caserón de la Goleta had to be brought into use as a women's jail despite its run-down state. Around 4,000 prisoners passed through the jail, according to research by professors Encarnación Barranquero, Matilde Eiroa and Paloma Navarro. In the 1990s they were able to access the prisoners' case files, which are now closed under the data protection laws. Historian Víctor Heredia recalls that over-

crowding in the women's prison "resulted in inhuman conditions because of the lack of space and hygiene, and as a result illnesses spread".

The repression against women was especially cruel in Malaga, home to writers and openly republican intellectuals such as Isabel Oyarzábal, María Zambrano and Victoria Kent herself, all of whom were well-known for calling for equality and high levels of independence until well into the 1930s.

Those advances regressed under the narrow Francoist morality, which demanded submission to masculine wishes, as reported in publications from the Women's Section of the Falange: "When your husband returns from work, offer to take his shoes off for him. Minimise any noise. If you have a hobby of some type, try not to bore him by talking about it. If you need to apply face

cream or hair rollers, wait until he is asleep before doing so. If he feels the need to sleep, so be it. If he suggests intercourse, then consent humbly, bearing in mind that his satisfaction is more important than yours".

In the women's jails, the authorities obliged the prisoners to go to Mass and to christen their children, who were often imprisoned with them. The poor hygienic conditions and lack of food created a desperate situation: exhausted prisoners without sufficient resources to look after their children. Some of those children died behind bars.

The prison in Malaga was no exception. The women were served hard 'almortas' (seeds from a member of the pea family which was banned for human consumption in 1967 because of their high toxicity) and vegetables which had been neither washed nor peeled. Suffering from ulcers and stomach pains, the women protested: they organised a hunger strike and succeeded in getting the potatoes and some other vegetables washed. Another protest obtained them a second shower, although there was never hot water.

"Life there was horrible. There were only eight women when I arrived, but it quickly filled up. The food, the guards, the deaths of other prisoners, the interrogations, the punishment cells...there are so many things to be told," said Luisa, one of the witnesses quoted in the book written by Barranquero, Eiroa and Navarro after talking to several of

They were fed hard beans and unwashed, unpeeled vegetables which resulted in ulcers, illnesses and a hunger strike.

“Life there was horrible; people died, there were interrogations, punishment cells...”

these women.

“We were amazed by these interviews, so surprised at the women’s strength. They had the conviction that they had done nothing wrong, only fight for freedom and social equality,” says Eiroa.

Political affiliation

About 38 per cent of the prisoners had told the authorities they were married, 18 per cent widowed and more than 17 per cent single. The marital status of the remainder is unknown. This lack of information, say the researchers, could be because many women wanted to keep quiet about their relationships, maybe because they weren’t married to their partners or because of their political affiliation. Most of the women in the jail in Malaga were aged between 21 and 40, although the repression extended to all age groups ranging from between 13 and 85.

More than 60 per cent of the prisoners were from elsewhere in the province. The rest lived in Malaga city or had been sent to the prison from other provinces. The few women who could read and write used to teach the others, although those classes were not part of the official work schedule at the prison. That included tasks “suitable for their sex”, such as sewing.

From 1940 the number of women sent to the jail for supposed crimes of rebellion dropped, and the number for “transgression of the socio-economic order” increased. In a city ravaged by hunger and typhus, the ruses used to obtain food became one of the most common reasons for arrest, although in many cases there was no record of the reason the women were imprisoned. Once inside, they would try to overcome their hunger by eating pieces of dry orange peel as if they were sweets. Today, the building still has the large courtyard which, together with the chapel, became the focus of prison life.

To obtain a reduced sentence the women had to show repentance and convert to catholicism. In 1944, the



▲ **Children.** Concepción Gallardo, one of the prisoners, with her daughter. Children were often imprisoned with their mothers :: SUR

► **Friendship.** The prisoners who could read and write used to teach the others, although it wasn’t part of their prison duties. :: SUR

▼ **Tribute.** In 2014, the old provincial prison in Malaga was classified as a “Civil War Commemoration Site”. :: SUR



Jesús El Rico procession in the Malaga Easter processions freed 19 women as well as the usual male prisoner, although in fact most of them had already been granted their release. “They chose the women who looked in the best condition”, says Barranquero. “It was a way of white-washing over what was happening. When the prisoners needed certificates of conduct, it was the priests who decided whether their behav-

our in the jails had been good enough or not”. At the ceremony before the El Rico procession, the then director of Ecclesiastical Affairs, Mariano Puigdoller, gave a short speech: “You must be eternally grateful to the Caudillo,” he told the women. “Pray to God that he is with us for many years to come”. The narrow cells, the uncomfortable beds and the incidence of ill-

nesses and epidemics complicated the situation even more. “The mortality rate was high. Women died from TB or typhus. Their time in prison was also characterised by little chance of visits, despair and psychological and physical collapse” says Barranquero. The children stayed with their mothers, if there were no other relatives to look after them, until they were three or six years old, in accor-

dance with the law at the time. After that they were sent to state and religious institutions. The presence of the children in the jails is not recorded in the files, something which complicated subsequent research, although witnesses say that most of them were adopted or sent to become seminarians, with the aim of wiping out any relationship with the past.

Concepción Gallardo was one of the women freed by El Rico, although in fact she had already been given her release letter and had to wait until the procession was held before she could leave the jail. Her son, José Sánchez, president of the Association against Silence and Oblivion, says that on the rare occasions that his mother received a visit from a relative, she would give them some of their clothes and ask them to disinfect them.

Before being transferred to Malaga, Concepción had been arrested in Loja, imprisoned in Granada and then moved to Gerona. A nun had told her that a couple wanted to take her daughter, who was only a few months old, so she had given her to her mother-in-law. In her file, she is described as a “person of extremely bad conduct and an active communist”.

Even when freed, life wasn’t much easier. The stigma of having been imprisoned stayed with most of these women all their lives, and they usually had to try to feed their families while earning miserable salaries. Only after Franco died, once the regressive storm had passed, did some of these women receive any recognition. In ‘Desde la noche y la niebla’, communist leader Juana Doña, who was given a death sentence in 1947, criticised the fact that “barely a few lines have been dedicated to women in the river of books written about the Civil War”.

In ‘En el infierno’, politician and author Lidia Falcón also paid tribute to women and criticised the fact that so many authors gave a purely masculine slant to their writings.

The women’s prison La Goleta closed its doors in 1954, when the prisoners were moved to the provincial jail on the Cártama road. The building became the Penitentiary Geriatric Institution and, years later, the headquarters of the Malaga Local Police. That particular hell had come to an end.

SOCIETY SCENE

A variety of ways to help the community

A fundraising cycle ride and a food parcel collection are among the initiatives with which the Costa's young and old help less fortunate families

:: SUR IN ENGLISH

La Cala de Mijas Lions

Treetops Christmas party

The La Cala de Mijas Lions raised over 1,800 euros at their annual Christmas party held recently at the Treetops restaurant in El Chaparral Golf. Last year the club donated over 74,000 euros to different charities. The Lions charity shop is open Monday to Saturday from 10am to 2pm and sells clothes, toys, bric-a-brac, books and other items. The branch is always looking for volunteers, so anyone with some spare time will be welcomed. Also any donations for the shop would be gratefully received. Call in at Calle Torremolinos, 12, in La Cala de Mijas, or telephone 637185533.

Royal British Legion Coin

Poppy appeal cycle ride

A sponsored cycle ride by Coin RBL member Ray Bower and his friend John Staton raised 2,150 euros for the Royal British Legion 2018 Poppy Appeal recently. This brought the year-end total for 2018 to 13,747 euros. Poppy Appeal Organiser George Chaney and his wife Marion thanked Ray and John as well as all the members and friends of the Coin branch for their help and support throughout the year.

Iceland supermarket

Chocolates for food parcels

The Iceland supermarket in Parque Miramar, Mijas, collected a large number of boxes of chocolate and biscuits, which will be included in the food parcels put together by the NGO Soroptimist International Costa del Sol. The food boxes will then be distributed by the Red Cross to around 200 families in need in the town. The Mijas Foreigners Department at Mijas Town Hall thanked the customers, the manager and staff at the supermarket for their generosity.



Children at BSM took part in a festival to help eradicate world poverty. :: SUR



Ray and John raised money for the Poppy Appeal with a sponsored cycle ride. :: SUR



Iceland staff with Anette Skou of Mijas Foreign Residents Department with the boxes of biscuits. :: SUR

LEGAL ADVICE



International Lawyers answers readers' queries

We speak English, German, French, Spanish and Russian

Please send your questions or contact us directly to arrange a personal appointment on:

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REF. S. S. E.

Before I got married, I bought a flat which I have rented out the last two years. However, I am getting divorced and since my wife will probably be given the use of the family home to live with our two children, I will need a flat to live in. Obviously, I have thought about the flat I already have, but since it is

rented, I do not know how to proceed. We renewed the contract four months ago, for another year, which would end in July of next year. Am I obliged to fulfil the contract until July, even though I need the flat for personal use?

The urban leasing law allows repossession of the apartment when it is needed for personal use, without having to comply with the agreed terms of the contract. All you have to do is give the tenant two months' notice, indicating that the contract has to be cancelled and that he must leave the flat because you need it for your own use. A different matter would be if, once the tenant has gone, you decide to sell the property. In that case, the tenant could demand compensation from you, or even return to live in the rented property. However, this is not the case, so you do not need to wait until July to occupy your home.

REF. R. P. Y.

Our son has recently divorced and although we are not too far away, our ex daughter-in-law does not allow us to see our rom our grandchildren. When our son has them he brings them to our home without her knowing. Is there a visiting schedule for grandparents in Spain? And how often is it? At the moment we rely on our son to see our grandchildren.

The law states that personal relations between the children and other relatives cannot be prevented without a fair cause as minors have the right to develop in a complete family environment. Judges favour the visits to grandchildren requested by the grandparents, although, as there is no pre-determined regime of visits, it will be each judge who determines the regime of visits taking into account each case and the circumstances.

First Assessment Consultation FREE of Charge

British International School Marbella Sing-a-Thon

A special learning festival at the British International School of Marbella has raised 209 euros for the charity Hogar Betania.

Families, staff and pupils took part in the Eradication of World Poverty Festival that raised funds through a variety of events including a 'Sing-a-Thon'.

The money is being donated to the charity Hogar Betania, a hostel run by volunteers that cares for homeless people in La Línea.

Mrs Rutherford, PSHE Coordinator, who helped organise the event, said: "Thank you all for your help and support at this event, we really appreciate it." For more information visit bsm.org.es

Knights of the Holy Sepulchre

Knights and Dames

Chevalier Joe Tiernan KCHS and Kathy, natives of Ireland and residents of Marbella for many years, represented the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre of Ireland at an investiture in Madrid recently where 14 Spanish men became Knights and four Spanish ladies became Dames of the Holy Sepulchre. Cardinal Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master of the order, presided over the two-day ceremony.

What are you up to?

If you are involved in a club or association and planning events, trips or activities that would be of interest to other readers of SUR in English, we would love to hear from you:

Email: surinenglish.su@diariosur.es



Kathy, Cardinal Edwin O'Brien and Chevalier Joe Tiernan. :: SUR

Most of Antequera's extra virgin olive oil is sent to China and the rest to Northern Europe

Over 95 per cent of the EVOO produced in Antequera is exported to Asia to satisfy the demand by Chinese consumers

AGUSTÍN PELÁEZ

ANTEQUERA. The Denominación de Origen Protegido (DOP) Antequera protects the extra virgin olive oil produced in the north of the province. It is the only EVOO (Extra Virgin Olive Oil) with a DOP seal in the province, but it is practically unknown by the locals. Antequera's oil is well appreciated, however, by consumers in China where over 95 per cent of the annual production is sent, according to Victoria Olmedo, secretary general for the Regulatory Board of the DOP Antequera.

Under the protection of this board are EVOOs from Cañete La Real, Almargin, Teba, Campillos, Sierra Yeguas, Fuente Piedra, Antequera, Humilladero, Mollina, Alameda, Palenciana (Cordoba), Cuevas Bajas, Cuevas de San Marcos, Villanueva de Algaidas, Villanueva del



Harvesting the olives in Antequera. :: SUR

Trabuco, Archidona, Villanueva del Rosario and Villanueva de Tapia.

Last year (the 2017-2018 campaign), 634,700 kilogrammes with the DOP label were produced for commercial markets. This year the total is expected to reach 700,000 kilogrammes.

Extra virgin olive oil DOP Antequera is produced mainly from Hojiblanca olives with other varieties including Picual or Marteño, Arbequina, Picudo, Lechín de Sevilla or Zozaleño, Gordal de Archidona, Verdial de Vélez-Málaga and Verdial de Huévar.

To be classified as DOP Antequera the olives have to be healthy and recently picked and the resulting oil should have a range of fruity aromas (besides that of green olives) such as almond, banana and green herbs. The intensity of the aromas varies between medium and high.

It should feel light in the mouth with bitter and spicy notes of low to medium intensity and which co-exist, in perfect harmony, with slightly sweet flavours. The colour can vary, depending on when and where the olives were picked, from golden to greenish-yellow.



DOP Antequera Extra Virgen Olive Oil before bottling. :: SUR

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C/ Torrealmadena, 3. BENALMÁDENA

Winemaking in Spain is generally rather conservative, so when someone breaks out of the conventional mould and heads in a different direction, they are usually referred to as loco.

Even something that could be considered a natural evolutionary process, such as adopting an unconventional label, is often frowned on.

At the end of the day it all comes down to resentment – envy by those who are nervous about appearing to not accept the pattern for such matters.

God's grape

The choice of grape variety can give rise to perceptions of being

ANDREW J. LINN

LOS LOCOS



different for the sake of it. This is not the case as far as the Ortega brothers are concerned.

It is said the Tempranillo grape (Spain's most widespread) was made by God and Pinot Noir by the devil, encapsulating how the variety is delicate and requires more pampering than, say, Tempranillo or Palomino. So the idea of cultivating it at a thousand me-

tres in the extreme weather conditions that characterise the Duero region, was risky.

But it worked, and from a project that commenced in 1985, the Alta Pavina bodega has justifiably carved out a niche for itself. It takes a lot of guts, or foolishness, to plant a grape variety in a region where it has never prospered before.

In the 14th century, the Dukes of Burgundy prohibited the cultivation of any grape variety in their region other than the Pinot Noir and, without of course any scientific evidence, the decision was more luck than good judgement. Something that is not so rare.

When Ronda bodega Los Aguilares took the same risk a decade

ago, the result was equally unexpected: the top international award three years running in blind tastings against 2,000 other wines made with the Pinot Noir grape from all over the world.

Frankly the most commendable element of these excellent wines is their value-for-money rating. Although there are several non-Pinot Noir blends in the selection, such as the superb Pavina White (Verdejo: seven euros), Pavina Red (25% Pinot Noir: ten euros), Pago La Pavina 2012 (30% Pinot Noir: nine euros) it is the outstanding Alta Pavina Citius 2009 (100% Pinot Noir) that really demonstrates the wine-maker's skills. (Birdie Wines).

WINE OF THE WEEK

Pavina Verdejo

There is not much that can be said about most white wines made from the ubiquitous Verdejo grape variety. Cheap and cheerful would be a little harsh, but it really is necessary from time to time to make the effort to find one that stands out from the crowd. This one, from the Alta Pavina winery, is very definitely out of the top drawer in this respect. Around seven euros.



dösz
RESTAURANT CHAMPAGNE BAR EVENTS
by DA BRUNO

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ALL YOUR ACCOUNTS JUST A CLICK AWAY WITH THE BBVA APP

With the new Bconomy Financial Aggregator clients can keep track of their finances by comfortably accessing information on all their accounts via their mobile banking app

For the first time in Spain, BBVA enables its clients to add financial products they have with other banks to their mobile banking app.

This innovative function means that, as it can take all the clients' products into account, the app can create an accurate financial health 'x-ray' and allow them to make better decisions on their spending or investments.

BBVA has, with this function, extended the service it has been offering its clients since February, when it opened the app up to the possibility of including accounts and cards held with other banks. Now, investment funds, pension plans, deposits, stock, mortgage and consumer products can also be added.

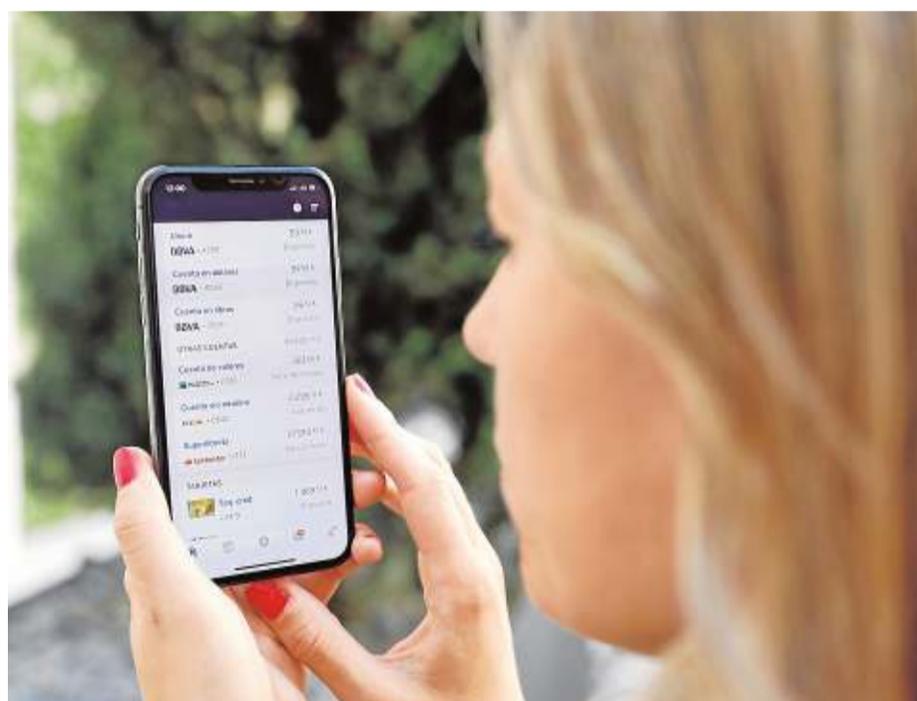
This innovative function allows clients to take an 'x-ray' of their current situation and financial health through the app

For the time being the system allows for balance and operation consultations on all the products within the app. In 2019, however, changes to regulations will create a suitable framework to allow for the possibility of using the BBVA app for operations between the different products.

Next year BBVA clients will also be able to select and configure the app to allow them to only view the products they want to and to allow them to check on expected movements for the products they have with other banks.

This will mean they will have a monthly forecast of set expenses and will be able to compare with the spending profiles of other people in similar situations (same age, sex, salary bracket and post code) to enable them to improve how they manage their finances.

All that clients need to do to add this new function is enter the app and, from the global position, click on the 'your other banks' option. Once they have done this, and following access verification for their



The BBVA app can be downloaded for both Android and iPhone... BBVA

other banks, the products will be automatically loaded onto the app and integrated in Bconomy.

BCONOMY, THE TOOL THAT LOOKS AFTER YOUR FINANCIAL HEALTH

Bconomy is BBVA's financial management app that enables users to analyse their income and spending and discover the state of their financial health.



To make use of this new function, all clients have to do is enter the app and click on the 'your other banks' option

The expenditure control function will carry out a study evaluating net assets, income, spending and any outstanding debts the user has. With all these parameters, it is capable of providing an economical photograph to help identify the current financial status, that is what the user's real capital is and how far they can go. It isn't a solvency analysis to allow banks to evaluate your financial situation, but it is an excellent self-awareness tool.

With the addition of the Aggregator, this tool takes into account all the client's products, allowing it to take an 'x-ray' of their financial health that accurately reflects their current situation and allows them to make better decisions regarding their spending or investments.



Manuel Moure, director of Digital Products at BBVA Spain... BBVA

"BCONOMY COMPARES THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF THE CLIENTS AND OTHERS WITH SIMILAR PROFILES"

How does BBVA's Aggregator contribute to improving its clients' financial health?

This tool measures the evolution of a client's income and spending, amount of savings, the money they spend on their home or their level of debt to help them understand their financial health, presenting personalised improvement plans to allow them better it. The clients greatly appreciate the ability to access all their financial information via a single tool which provides them with better control over their spending.

Is it safe to have all our financial information in just one App?

It's a completely safe process as all information from other banks is treated with the same levels of security as that of BBVA.

What other functions does Bconomy have?

It allows, among other things, for a sociodemographic comparison. This means clients can find out whether they're spending more than other people in similar situations or with similar profiles.

Which new functions are you working on at the moment?

As well as allowing users to operate with products from other banks via the BBVA app, within the PSD2 framework, there will also be 'Expected Movements' which will allow clients to prepare for possible unforeseen



A view of Estepa, a town which is famous for its 'mantecados'. :: J.A.

DISCOVER ANDALUCÍA

A tempting route of traditional sweets in all eight provinces

JAVIER
ALMELLONES



Bakeries and even convents in the region are busy making traditional Christmas treats

including mantecados, polvorones, and turrón at this time of year.



ORIGIN. Antequera and Estepa both claim to have invented the mantecado

ELSEWHERE. Alcaudete (Jaén) and Rute (Córdoba) are also well-known for their Christmas sweets

CONVENTS. Nuns in many convents in Andalusia make this type of confectionery.

WHEN. The month of December.

Andalusian Christmas treats

Estepa, Antequera and Rute are some of the towns which are historically linked with artisan production of these popular festive products

Where to buy them

La Colchona. Considered the oldest mantecado factory in Estepa.
Calle Sta. Ana, 28, 41560 Estepa (Sevilla).

La Perla. Traditional bakery in the historic centre of Antequera.
Calle Mesones, 26, 29200 Antequera (Málaga).

Galleros. Family firm which makes traditional sweets. *Calle Lucena, km. 19, 14960 Rute (Córdoba).*

Christmas in Andalusia has a very traditional flavour, not only in the sense that there are living nativities and other deep-rooted customs, but also for the traditional cakes and sweets which are made at this time of year in every one of the provinces in the region. From small bakeries to large firms, they are all busy producing large quantities of typically Christmassy treats at the moment.

It would be no exaggeration to say that many villages and towns in Andalusia literally smell of Christmas at this time of year, especially Estepa, a town in Seville province, which is considered by many to be the 'home of the mantecado'.

History and legend say that the type of small cake known as 'mantecado' originated in the 16th century. It appears that there was a glut of both cereal crops and pork fat one year, and the result was this recipe which has become very famous. However, there is still some debate about whether it originated in Estepa or in the town of Antequera, in Malaga province.

There is a huge variety of festive treats available: look out for alfajores, roscos de vino, mantecados, polvorones, pastorcitas and hojaldres, some covered in chocolate, some with pine nuts or coconut; they can be found in shops and factories all over the region, but especially in Estepa.

Apart from its cakes and sweets, Estepa is well worth a visit because it has many interesting buildings including the Torre de la Victoria tower, the marble façade of the Iglesia del Carmen church, the Marqués de Cerverales palace and the area around

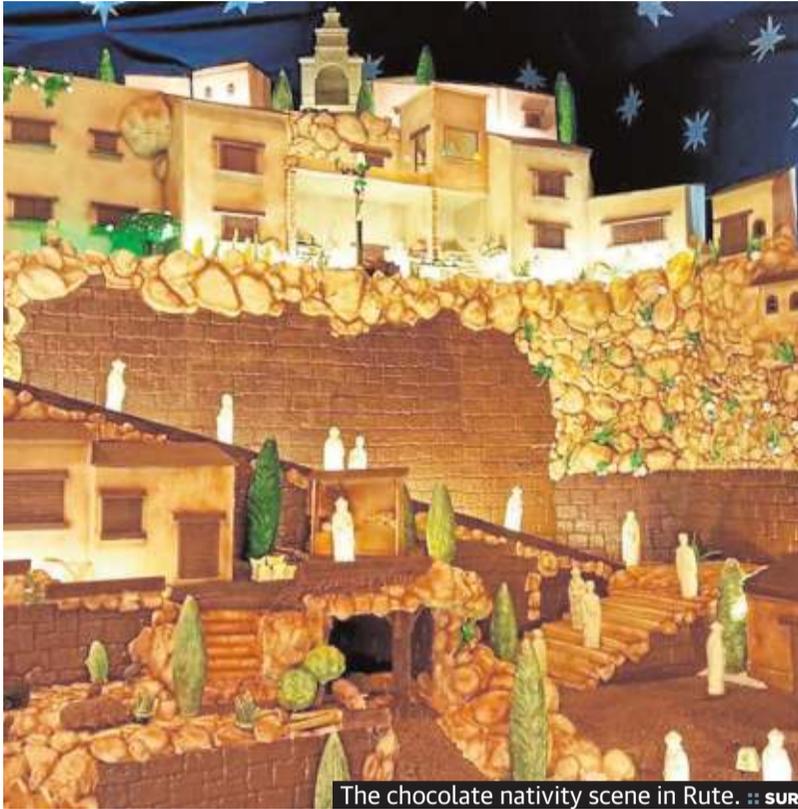
the castle, where you can go up to the top of the tower and see some of the best views of inland Andalucía.

The town of Antequera also claims to be the home of the 'mantecado', which is the Christmas treat par excellence, and although it is in Malaga province, it is relatively close to Estepa if you take the A-92 motorway (about 45 minutes). At this time of year several businesses in Antequera produce mantecados and other types of Christmas confectionery.

In Cordoba province, the village of Rute also has a tradition of making mantecados and polvorones, and it is also known for producing the famous aniseed drink 'anís', which is a favourite to accompany these Christmas sweets.

This village in the Subbética region is also home to two very unusual museums, the Turrón and Chocolate Nativity museums, both of them an initiative by the Galleros Artesanos company, which is very well-known for the many artisan treats it produces at this time of year.

The Christmas confectionery made in the village of Alcaudete, in Jaén province, is also renowned. Some companies have



The chocolate nativity scene in Rute. :: SUR



Christmas sweets from the Belén convent in Antequera. :: SUR

been making mantecados and 'hojaldrinas' pastries for many years, among a wide range of other festive sweets.

Nor should it be forgotten that in Andalucía there are also numerous closed orders of nuns, who make delicious cakes and sweets in their convents all year round, but with some special versions at

Christmas.

These can be found in Antequera, Archidona and Ronda, in Malaga; Alcalá de Guadaíra, Constantina, Carmona and Bormujos, in Seville; Jerez de la Fronteira, Puerto de Santa María and Sanlúcar de Barrameda, in Cadiz; Martos, Linares, Úbeda and Baeza, in Jaén; Baza and Guadix, in Granada; Montilla, Belálca-

zar and Villaviciosa, in Cordoba; and Aracena, in Huelva province, among others.

The Christmas treats made by the nuns in the convents are truly delicious, and this is also an excellent opportunity to sample and buy marzipans, 'piñonates', 'almendras garrafiñadas' and 'marquesas', among others. It is

also a good way ensuring that an unusual tradition lives on.

As well as from the convents mentioned here, and others all around Andalucía, these cakes can also be purchased from stalls at some Christmas fairs, nearby shops etc.

At this time of year in Andalucía you can also find bakeries which make

a variety of festive treats, in addition to the traditional mantecados and polvorones. Keep an eye open for 'pestiños', made with flour, wine, spices and honey, which are especially delicious when accompanied by a small glass of anís; or the 'pan de Cadiz', toasted marzipan with fruits and coconut, among others.



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AROUND MALAGA

Through a sea of olive trees and rugged mountains

The Gran Senda of Malaga runs through a large part of the region known as the Sierra Norte in the northeast of the province, known for its scenery, agriculture and woodland



QUICK GUIDE

The places

Villanueva del Rosario. The end of stage 11 and starting point of stage 12. At the foot of the Sierra de Camarolos.

Villanueva del Trabuco. Stage 12 passes through its terrain. At the foot of the Sierra Gorda and the Sierra San Jorge.

Archidona. End of stage 12 and start of stage 13. Principal town of the Sierra Norte de Málaga.

Villanueva de Tapia. End of stage 13 and start of stage 14. At the foot of the Sierra del Pedroso.

Villanueva de Algaidas. End of stage 14 and start of stage 15. At the foot of Sierra de Arcas and Sierra del Pedroso.

Cuevas de San Marcos. The optional diversion at stage 14 passes through here. At the foot of the Sierra del Camorro and beside the Genil river.

Cuevas Bajas. End of stage 15 (and the diversion) and start of stage 16. On the banks of the Genil.

The region

Section of the Great Trail. More than 100 kilometres long, divided into seven different stages (including the diversions).



The stretch of the Gran Senda (Great Trail) of Malaga which passes through the Sierra Norte region, in the north-east of the province, is more than 100 kilometres in length.

It is divided into six stages, and they take you through rugged terrain and a sea of olive trees. There is also an optional diversion, which introduces walkers or cyclists to some lovely local beauty spots. This is part of the attraction of the Great Trail of Malaga: it is an opportunity to see some of the most unique enclaves in Andalucía.

From the foothills of the Sierra de Camarolos on the edge of the region known as Alta Axarquía, to the banks of the Genil river, which marks the frontier with Granada province, the Sierra Norte de Malaga is home to vast expanses of olive trees, although in fact these only form part of the varied scenery. In this north-eastern region of the province there are rocky limestone outcrops, streams, and woods of pine and oak trees which are ideal for activities in the great outdoors, such as the rope

South. Villanueva del Rosario and del Trabuco are in the most southerly part of the region.

CAPITAL. Archidona is the main town in the north-eastern region of Malaga province.

TRANSITION. Villanueva de Algaidas and de Tapia are between Archidona and the Genil river.

GENIL. Cuevas de San Marcos and Cuevas Bajas are beside the main tributary of the Guadalquivir.

LOCATION. This region is in the north-east of Malaga province.

Where to eat

Arxiduna. In this charming restaurant in the Plaza Ochavada, chef Rubén Antón has been breaking with convention and offering creative cuisine with an excellent quality-price ratio for years. As well as the 'porra archidonesa', there are dishes combining the most Mediterranean gastronomy and the most exotic cuisine.

An added attraction is the chance to eat on the terrace or dining rooms, which were once a cave church.

Plaza Ochavada, 7, 29300 Archidona. Tel. 951 835 207.

Where to stay

Molino Jabonero. Relaxation is guaranteed in a farmhouse with more than 100 years of history, especially when it stands in an area of abundant olive trees with the sound of a murmuring stream. This is the Molino Jabonero estate, situated near the natural monument of the Fuente de los Cien Caños fountain. Carretera Málaga-Granada, Km 4, 29313 Villanueva del Trabuco. Tel. 652 232 269. www.molinojabonero.com





Panoramic view of the historical town of Archidona, the capital of this region. :: J.A.

bridge adventure park in Villanueva del Trabuco, the via ferrata (climbing path) in Villanueva del Rosario and Archidona, rafting in Cuevas Bajas and Cuevas de San Marcos, hiking and mountain biking along country paths, such as those which make up the different stages of the Great Trail.

This trail enters the Sierra Norte de Malaga via the Alta Axarquía during stage 11, which runs from Alfarnate to Villanueva del Rosario across the Arco Calizo Central.

After crossing the Sierra de Camarolos, the track descends through Hondonero to Villanueva del Rosario, a charming village which used to be called La Saucedá. Before reaching it, you can see the spectacular source of the Arroyo Cerezo stream, very close to the village.

The next stage begins at Villanueva del Rosario, heading towards Archidona and passing through part of the municipality of neighbouring Villanueva del Trabuco en route.

This twelfth stage of the Great Trail of Malaga also passes one of the most remarkable beauty spots in

this region, the Hoz del Arroyo Marín, where as well as a spectacular gorge there is a wide variety of flora and fauna and Mediterranean woodland.

The trail then takes you into the historic town of Archidona, which is famous for its octagonal main square, Moorish castle and the nearby Virgen de Gracia hill.

This is the largest town in the area, and it marks the start of the 13th stage, which leads to Villanueva de Tapia, once known as 'El Entredicho' because of the many disputes which arose over its fertile land.

From there, the Great Trail of Malaga offers a couple of options, both ending at Cuevas Bajas. One goes directly to Villanueva de Algaidas and then on to Cuevas Bajas, while the other, which is longer, passes through Cuevas de San Marcos.

In fact, the Sierra Norte de Malaga is the only region in which the Great Trail covers all the towns and villages in some way, although it only passes through one part of the territory which belongs to Villanueva del Trabuco.

The first of these options, the more direct way

of doing stage 14, takes you to the homeland of sculptor Miguel Ortiz Berrocal and some of his works can be seen in different parts of Villanueva de Algaidas.

Before that, though, the walkers pass through one of the most valuable historic complexes in the region, with the remains of an ancient cave church and a Franciscan convent, just outside the village. Close by, there is also a well-preserved medieval bridge.

Those who decide to go via Cuevas de San Marcos will not only walk along the bank of the Genil river but also through the Sierra del Camorro. Part of this enclave is protected as a natural monument because of its vertiginous fault. There are also two valuable historic remains, the walls of an ancient medina and the Belda Cave.

Everyone who walks the Great Trail of Malaga through the Sierra Norte will eventually come to Cuevas Bajas where, as well as the Genil river, it is worth exploring the historic centre of the village, because there are some interesting examples of architectural styles.

MORE PLACES FOR AN ESCAPE

The Alto Hondonero viewing point

Villanueva del Rosario At the foot of the Arco Calizo Central.

The first of the stages in the Sierra Norte of Malaga, after La Axarquía, passes beside one of the most interesting natural balconies on this long circular trail around Malaga province: the Mirador del Alto Hondonero viewing point.

It is on the road which runs between the Arco Calizo Central and the village of Villanueva del Rosario, and has beautiful panoramic views over this mountainous area of Malaga.



One of the classic routes up to the peak of El Chamizo, which is the highest peak in the Sierra Norte at 1600 metres above sea level, also passes through here.

As well as the viewing point, you can see the place known today as the 'Derribadero', which is so-called because of a significant rockfall.
Halfway along stage 12.



Historical buildings

Villanueva de Algaidas Very close to the village.

Beside the small road which links this village with La Atalaya district and Cuevas Bajas, stands one of the most important hermitage churches in Andalucía.

It is an old cave church of Mozarabic origin, and it was built between the 9th and 10th centuries. The remains are formed by two separate caves.

Beside the church are the remains of an old Franciscan convent, which was founded by the first Duke of Osuna



in 1566.

More than one important walking route passes through here, including the Great Trail of Malaga and the Mozarabic Way.

Not far from this site, you can also see the medieval bridge over the Arroyo Bebedero stream.

Beside the MA-203.

La Hoz del Arroyo Marín

Archidona Situated in the south of the municipality.

Before reaching the historical town of Archidona, stage 12 passes through one of the most stunning areas of this region, the Hoz del Arroyo Marín.

This is a small valley situated to the south of the town of Archidona. Here, by following a peaceful walking route, you can see the wide variety of native flora of this area.

The path runs parallel to the small stream called the Arroyo Marín, one of the tributaries which runs into the Guadalhorce river. The



first part is like an open meadow, but later it gradually narrows and becomes a gorge, or 'hoz'.

Beside the stream there are different types of popular, elms and a few bramble bushes, but around this area it is the olives which predominate, together with oak trees and fields in which vegetables are grown, belonging to nearby farms.

On the bank of the Arroyo Marín stream.

Sierra del Camorro

Cuevas de San Marcos Beside the Genil river.

The diversion from stage 14 of the Great Trail of Malaga passes beside the village of Cuevas de San Marcos, which is where the Sierra del Camorro Fault is situated. This is a limestone rock formation which has been classified as a natural monument of Andalucía because of its geological value.

This karst rock rises more than 900 metres above sea level, amid a sea of olive trees. Its spectacular vertical walls date back to the Jurassic period.

In the same area you will also find the Belda Cave, one of the most interesting in Spain; however it is closed to the public at present because of the presence of a large protected colony of bats.

This area, the valuable site of Medina Belda, is also home to the information centre called 'Senda de los Milenios', which is situated at the foot of the aforementioned Sierra del Camorro Fault and very close to the Iznájar reservoir.

This information centre only opens by prior request, and reservations can be made by sending an email in advance to: culturayturismo@cuevasdesanmarcos.es

Between Cuevas de San Marcos and the Iznájar reservoir.

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EXHIBITIONS

One Day Art Gallery

Marbella. 14 December, 7pm. *Besaya Beach, Urb. Coral Beach.* A 'One Day Art Gallery' with Austrian artist and filmmaker Dana Nowak.

Marbella Design Academy Winter Expo

Monda. 14 December, *Marbella Design Academy.* The event is a collective exposition of work by the Graphic Design, Interior and Fashion students, which will include a fashion show, and the graduation party. <https://www.facebook.com/event/s/306880500155836/>

Eduardo Balanza

Marbella. Until 30 December. *Galería Yusto/Giner, C/Madera.* An exhibition by artist Eduardo Balanza entitled *Remix*.



Diego Santos, Malaga.

Diego Santos

Malaga. Until 27 December. *Ignacio del Río studio. C/San Lorenzo.* Malaga artist Diego Santos is holding an exhibition of his works all with the theme of the female form. Opening times are from Monday to Friday 5-8pm. Other

times by appointment (tel: 667057356).

Nativity scene

Malaga. Until 5 January, *Sala Mingorance, Archivo Municipal, Alameda Principal 23.* A hand-crafted 'Belén' has been set up in the Sala Mingorance of the Archivo Municipal building. It has been made by José María Mesa, a teacher from the Canary Islands.

Inflatable art

Malaga. Until 10 February, 9.30am - 8pm. *Centre Pompidou.* An exhibition 'Constuir el aire. Arquitectura y diseño hinchable, 1960-1975' is based on inflatable furniture and other objects that were designed in the period between 1960 and 1975.

Fermy Lozano

La Cala de Mijas. Until 17 December. *Centro Cultural La Cala.* An exhibition of paintings by Fermy Lozano. Inauguration takes place this evening at 8pm.

Crib scene

Torremolinos. Until 6 January. *Lower floor of the town hall.* The town hall Nativity scene is open for visitors 9am-1.30pm and 5.30-7.30pm weekdays and 10am-2pm, 5.30-7.30pm Saturdays and Sundays.

CHARITY

Masquerade Ball for Cudeca

Mijas. 21 December, 7.30pm. *Restaurante Valparaíso. 30€.* Entertainment by Simone and Mr Maph. Masks on sale or bring your own. A full menu with welcome drinks and canapes on arrival. Reservations: restaurant Valparaíso 952485996 or call Suzy:

619444184.

Light a Light for Cudeca

Benalmádena. 16 December, from 6pm. *Cudeca Cancer Hospice* Cudeca's founder, Joan Hunt OBE, will be turning on the lights at this annual event. Father Christmas will also put in an appearance and there will be face-painting, Christmas cake and sweets, singing from the Sunny View school choir and a raffle. There will also be stalls selling gifts and Christmas cards. www.lightupcudeca.org

FAMA Christmas Party

Mijas Costa. 15 December, 7pm. *Tamisa Golf Hotel, Camino Viejo de Coin. 40€.* Welcome drink and hot mulled wine, three-course dinner (vegetarian option), wine and beer until 11pm. Raising funds for the Foundation for Abandoned and Mistreated animals. Bookings: call 620354885 or email: patriciamary-coleman@gmail.com

Charity fun walk

Estepona. 16 December, from 10am. *Los Reales. 10€.* An 8km circular walk to include Christmas trees in their natural habitat, mince pies, mulled wine and panoramic views. The funds will go to Heart animal rescue in Estepona who want to build a 1,500-metre enclosure for podencos. fundandfund@outlook.com

Quiz Night for ADANA

Manilva. 18 December, 8pm. *Rose and Thistle, Puerto de Duquesa. 3€.* Arrive early to get a seat. To book: 952155850.

Charity market

Benjarafa. 20 December, from 10am until 6pm. *Puerto Niza Res-*



Inflatable art, Pompidou, Malaga.

restaurant.

A market to raise money for the construction of a new classroom for the GAIA ECO-learning community of Torre del Mar. There will be a healing area, live music, workshops, baby chill-out area and activities for everyone. www.semillamontealegre.org

MUSIC & DANCE

The Wall Bar

Malaga. *Hotel Vincci Posada del Patio, 11pm, entry free.* 15 December. Dana and Gianni. International songs, jazz fusion and blues.

Louie Louie Live

Estepona. *Louie Louie Bar.* 14 December, 11pm. Rockinger Z and Fiesta Jack Daniels. 5€. 15 December, *midnight.* Deltó tribute to Extremoduro. 8€ in advance, 12€ on door. 20 December, 9pm. Christmas flamenco concert with Ana Fargas and Paco Javier Jimeno. 15€

Carol service

Alhaurín el Grande. 14 December, 6pm. *Cemetery Chapel.* Traditional Christmas carols

organised by the St Andrew's Chaplaincy Costa del Sol East.

Ecumenical festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sotogrande. 14 December, 7.30pm. *Ntra Sra de la Merced church.* An ecumenical service of nine lessons and carols with the Anglican, Catholic and Methodist churches and with the Camerata de Música Sotogrande choir.

Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

Malaga. 19 December, 7pm. *St George's Anglican Church, Avda de Pries, English Cemetery.* After the service, minced pies and mulled wine will be served and there will be a Christmas raffle.

Christmas Carol service

Torre del Mar. 15 December, 6pm. *San Andrés church.* Lux Mundi are holding an ecumenical Christmas carol service with the Spanish Amigos de Lux Mundi choir, the German Con Los Cantores choir and the TIMS British choir.

Concierto Noel

Malaga 14 December, 8pm. *Malaga Cathedral chapel.* The second Concierto Noel will include compositions by Gounod, Ocón and Saint-Saëns. The Malaga Chamber Orchestra will be conducted by J. Otero.

Christmas concert

Malaga. 14 December, 8pm. *Sala María Cristina.* Cantatas and Arias for Advent with music composed by Bach, Handel and Telemann. The Christmas repertoire will be played by the Malaga Baroque Orchestra with soprano Rosa María Caballero Blanco as soloist.

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Concerts at the Jorge Rando Museum

Pablo Alcázar. 14 December, 6.30pm.
Guitarist and composer Pablo Alcázar will be in concert.

Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra

Malaga. Auditorio Edgar Neville
14 December 8pm.

Conducted by Manuel Hernández Silva, the orchestra will play a variety of overtures and arias by Mozart, Gounod, Weber, Bellini and Donizetti during the first half and Schumann in the second half (Symphony n°2 in C major with soloist soprano Alba Chantar.

Malaga. Museo de la Aduana
16 December, noon.

The Sacrum Ministriles and Capilla musical groups formed by members of the Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra will be in concert.

Magnum Mysterium

Estepona. 15 December, 8pm.
Auditorio Felipe VI. Free.

The Municipal Band with the Coral Magnum Mysterium choir will be playing a varied repertoire including overture to The Thieving Magpie by Rossini.

Advent Concert

Mijas. 16 December, 6pm. *Mijas Pueblo.* Free.

With soprano Sonia García Quintero, Mariza Ruppman mezzosoprano and David Geary on keyboards.

The best of Keith James

Cómpeta. 16 December, 5pm. *Gal*

ería Luz de la Vida. 10€. Singer/songwriter Keith James will be in concert. Bookings: info@lieuwkeloth.nl

Casa de la Cultura concerts

Almuñécar.

15 December, 7pm. Orquesta de Cámara Mediterránea (Mediterranean Chamber Orchestra) play traditional Christmas music by Handel, Vivaldi, Corelli and Manfredini.

16 December, 6pm. The Great Kiev Ballet perform 'The Nutcracker suite'.

Handel's Messiah

Malaga. 17 December, 7.30pm.
Teatro Cervantes.

The Capella Amsterdam choir and the Eighteenth Century Orchestra as well as six other choirs from around the province, will be performing The Messiah by Handel.

The Nutcracker Suite

Nerja. 17 December, 8pm. *Centro Cultural Villa de Nerja.* 25€.

Le Manager Ballet will be performing the ballet from one of Tchaikovsky's most famous works, the Nutcracker Suite, and based on the story by E T A Hoffman.

Javier Perianes

Malaga. 18 December, 8pm. *Auditorio Museo Picasso.*

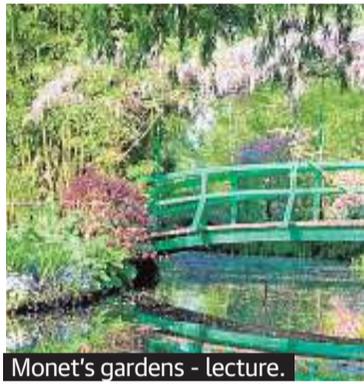
Pianist Javier Perianes will be playing works by Chopin, Debussy and Falla.

Collegium Musicum

Fuengirola. 16 December, 7pm. *Hotel IPV Palace and Spa.* 10€.

Marbella. 18 December, 8.30pm.
Iglesia de la Encarnación.

A special Christmas concert by the Collegium Musicum Costa del Sol choir and orchestra. At the end, the audience are invited to sing along to well-known international carols. Tickets: Nicholson's Jewellers, from Collegium Musicum and from 6pm on the door. Call: 952 775492 / 686 277 272 or e-mail: info@colmus.org.



Monet's gardens - lecture.

Malaga centre concerts

Malaga. From 17-28 December.
Plaza de la Constitución.

There will be 20 free concerts in the Plaza de la Constitución over the Christmas period with two concerts every day. Besides traditional flamenco and zambombas, there will be jazz, gospel, orchestras and choirs.

Carlos Álvarez sings Christmas

Malaga. 19 December, 8pm. *Auditorio Edgar Neville.* By invitation only.

Baritone Carlos Álvarez will be in concert with mezzosoprano Carmen Ariza, tenors Diego Morales and Francisco Arbós, baritone José Antonio Ariza and sopranos Lourdes Benítez, Lourdes Martín, Lucía Millán and Mónica Campaña. They will be performing Christmas music with pieces by Bizet, Reger, Donizetti, Mascagni, Bach and Gounod. Last invitations from Café Puerta Oscura, C/ Molina Lario, 5.

LECTURES

The Arts Society de la Frontera

San Roque. 21 December, 11am.
San Roque Golf and Country Club.
Visitors 12€

'Monet and his Gardens'

An illustrated talk by Brian Healey
delafrontera@theartsociety.org

Lux Mundi Art Appreciation

Torre del Mar. 17 December,
10.30am. *Lux Mundi Ecumenical*
Centre. 2€

Andrew Graham-Dixon from the TV series History of Art, shows how Spain's turbulent history has shaped its artists, from Francisco Goya and Pablo Picasso through to Joan Miró and Salvador Dalí.

Alma Deutscher

Torre del Mar. 18 December, 5pm.
Lux Mundi Ecumenical Centre.
12€

James Taylor will be giving a talk about the astonishing musical gifts of young Alma Deutscher who wrote a full length opera "Cinderella" when she was only 12 years old. Following the talk there will be supper.



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Revival will present a Beatles tribute in Fuengirola Port. :: SUR

Sea Breeze Bar hosts Beatles tribute night

TONY BRYANT

FUENGIROLA. Fans of The Beatles will enjoy a tribute concert in the Sea Breeze Bar in Fuengirola Port tomorrow night (Saturday). The show will be performed by Revival, one of the Costa del Sol's top tribute bands. Formed in 2007, the group will be remembered as the resident band of the former Elefante show bar in Benalmádena Costa, but they now take their Beatles Tribute and an interactive 70s show to venues all along the coast.

Revival present a tribute to

the world's most influential band with a hour-long set of their most iconic songs, complete with costumes and a little Liverpudlian wit. The band recreates The Beatles' early era, a time when the group were considered to be at their best; the professionalism of the musicians and their striking resemblance to the Fab Four will generate some of the nostalgia of the swinging 60s. Tickets for the show, which starts at 8pm, cost 10 euros and are available from the Sea Breeze Bar, or on the night of the concert.

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FLAMENCO

Flamenco in the Museum

Malaga. Museo de Arte Flamenco Peña Juan Brea, C/Ramón Franquelo. 8.30pm.

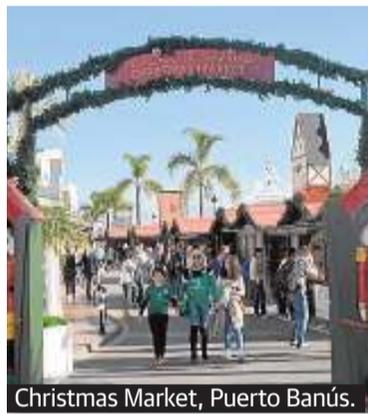
16 December. 2pm. Zambomba del Sur a Belén.

20 November. 8.30pm. Pascua Gitana. For information and bookings call 687 607 526 or email: info@flamenka.com

Zambombá Flamenca

La Herradura. 14 December, 7.30pm.

A typical Christmas instrument, the zambomba, is a type of drum with a stick through the middle. It will be accompanying the La Salinera and Son Mediterráneo choirs singing Spanish carols.



Christmas Market, Puerto Banús.

Antonio Guerra

Nerja. 15 December, 9pm. Centro Cultural Villa de Nerja. 12€. The flamenco dancer and choreographer Antonio Guerra presents his show En Buena Compañía.

Juan Brea Festival

Vélez-Málaga. 15 December, 9pm. Teatro del Carmen. 12€. El Pele, Rocío López La Boterita

will be singing, Niño Seve and Rubén Portillo on the guitar and Moisés and Fátima Navarro will be dancing.

Paseo Flamenco

Malaga. 15 December, 11.30am. El Perchel y La Trinidad.

For information and bookings call 687 607 526 or email: info@flamenka.com

El Niño de la Fragua

Malaga. 15 December, 7pm. Sala Gades, Teatro Canovas, Plaza de el Ejido. 15€ in advance, 20€ on door. Zambomba flamenca de Jerez with singer Pedro Garrido 'El Niño de la Fragua', Juan Manuel Moneo guitarist and Carmen Gri lo, Manuel de la Fragua and Eva del Rubichi.

EVENTS

Father Christmas village

Torremolinos. 14-16 and 21-24 December. Avda Palma de Mallorca. Father Christmas will be in his village for weekends from 11.30am until 2pm and from 5.30 until 9pm. On Christmas Eve he'll only be there in the morning.

Thespa

Los Boliches. 19 December, 7.30pm. Masonic Hall, Edf Bougainvillea. Members 16€, guest 18€.

The first one-act play will be Two Purple Gloves by Michael Park. This will be followed by dinner. The second play will be One Across by Ian Hornby. Festive dress preferred. Reservations: thespabooking@gmail.com or call: 622454422

Trip to Gibraltar

Torre del Mar. 20 December. Various departure points. 12€. Coach trip to Gibraltar. Passports

required. Lux Mundi Torre del Mar. Tel:952 543 334 or e-mail: luxmundi@lux-mundi.org

Christmas lights and nativity

Malaga. 21 December. Various departure points. 10€.

See the Christmas lights in Malaga and visit the nativity scene in La Mosca. Lux Mundi Torre del Mar. Tel:952 543 334 or e-mail: luxmundi@lux-mundi.org

CHRISTMAS FAIRS

Anglican Church Christmas Fair

Estepona. 15 December, 11am-5pm. Palacio de Congresos. Free. Carol singing, face painting, Santa's grotto, bouncy castle as well as stalls and Age Concern stand. Marbella Montessori School Choir and other entertainment. Raising funds for multiple charities.

Periana Christmas Market

Periana. 16 December. María Zambrano hall near town hall. Crafts, fresh flowers, tombola, jewellery, gifts, cakes and mulled wine etc. Donations to Red Cross.

Christmas market

Puerto Banús. Until 6 January. Muelle de Ribera. Father Christmas will be at the market between 15 and 23 December. There will be stalls selling toys, crafts etc.

Craft and gourmet market

La Cala de Mijas. Until 16 December, 11am-8.30pm. Plaza Supersol. The first Feria de la Artesanía y Gourmet is being held in La Cala until 16 December. It will offer gift items, crafts and gourmet food.

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Father Christmas, Torremolinos

cinemas to check for any last minute time changes. Lunchtime and late night screenings weekends only.

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C/Alcazabilla 4, Malaga. Tel: 902 36 02 95 www.cinealbeniz.com
Suspiria: 18.00 (every day).

Cinesur El Ingenio

Avda. Juan Carlos 1, Vélez-Málaga. Tel. 667 77 31 87.

Mortal Engines: 20.00 (Mon. Tues. Thurs.)

Bohemian Rhapsody: 22.30.

Ralph Breaks The Internet: 12.10 (Fri. Sat. Sun.)

Cinesur Miramar

Avda. de la Encarnación, Fuengirola. Tel. 952 19 86 00.

Bohemian Rhapsody: 12.00, 16.00 (every day)

Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald: 12.00, 16.30 (Mon-Thurs.)

Ralph Breaks The Internet: 12.10, 16.30 (Fri-Sun); 19.20 (Mon, Tues, Thurs.)

The Grinch: 12.25, 16.20 (every day).

Robin Hood: 18.20 (Tues).

Ben is Back: 18.05, 19.15, 21.20, 22.20 (Tues).

Mortal Engines: 12.15, 16.10 (every day).

Opera: Italian in Algiers: 18 December, 20.00

Cines Teatro Goya

For tickets and information call 951196665. www.cinesteatrogoya.com

The Grinch: 18.15 (Fri-Sun); 15.50 (Sat, Sun); 12.00 (Sun); 17.45 (Mon-Thurs).

Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald: 22.15 (Mon).

Mortal Engines: 17.45 (every day); 20.15 (Fri-Sun); 22.30 (Fri-Sun, Tues, Wed); 15.45 (Sat, Sun); 19.45 (Tues, Wed).

Ralph Breaks The Internet: 18.10 (Fri-Sun); 15.50 (Sat, Sun); 12.00 (Sun); 17.45 (Mon-Thurs).

Bohemian Rhapsody: 22.40 (Fri-Sun); 20.00 (Mon); 22.15 (Mon-Wed).

Yelmo Cines, Plaza Mayor

Centro de Ocio Plaza Mayor, Avda. Alfonso Ponce de León.

Tel: 902 902 103 or visit www.yelmocines.es

The Nutcracker and the Four Realms: 18.30 (Tues).

The Grinch: 18.20 (Tues).

Ben is Back: 17.45 (Tues).

Mortal Engines: 16.45 (every day).

Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald: 13.45 (Sat, Sun).

Bohemian Rhapsody: 12.50 (Sat, Sun); 20.00 (every day).

The Possession Of Hannah Grace: 22.35 (Tues).

Ralph Breaks The Internet: 12.00 (Sat, Sun); 19.25 (Tues).

Robin Hood: 19.10 (Tues).

Widows: 18.40 (Tues).

La Traviata live from MET: 18.55 (Sat).

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A festival of art on display in the streets of Torremolinos

:: TONY BRYANT

TORREMOLINOS. Torremolinos is preparing for the first edition of the Ruta del Arte, an open air art festival that will take place in the centre of the town on Saturday (tomorrow). The 'art route', which is organised by the town hall, will promote the works of local artists, which will be displayed in different parts of the town.

There will also be exhibitions in the Pablo Ruiz Picasso Cultural Centre and several restaurants, including Bodegas Guerola, Loft del Mar and El Gran Vino, and these can be viewed until 5 January. Participating restaurants will offer a special discount for those taking part in the route.

The event will incorporate an Instagram project that will invite



Plaza de Andalucía, Torremolinos. :: SUR

people to upload photographs of artwork they have admired.

Along with the exhibitions, the Calle San Miguel and Plaza de La Nogalera will become workshops for numerous art students from the Universidad Popular de Torremolinos. Visitors will be able to watch the artists at work and they will have the opportunity to purchase a painting or drawing di-

rectly from its creator.

The Plaza de Andalucía will become a large gallery where art lovers can simply admire the exhibition, or purchase a keepsake from the artisan street market.

The event begins at 10am and continues until 7pm.

For more information about participating venues, see www.torremolinos.es

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Taking exercise in a park in London. :: STEFAN WERMUTH

Holding back the years

Sarcopenia reduces muscle volume and capacity and, as people live longer nowadays, it is becoming an increasingly common problem. "Half of the population will end up suffering from it," say doctors

There is an expression still used in rural areas in Spain, that somebody who is ageing is "drying up". It refers to the fact that some inner force appears to be robbing an elderly person of their strength and physical volume and, actually, it isn't wrong.

"In humans, about 300 grammes of muscle mass changes naturally every day," says Daniel de Luis, who is a professor of Endocrinology and Nutrition and the head of the same department at the Clínico Universitario hospital in Valladolid. This internal enemy which seems to



lurk, waiting for us to get older, was given a name about 30 years ago; it is called sarcopenia.

The term was coined by Irwin Rosenberg in 1989. Younger people had begun to be diagnosed with something which until then had been associated simply with old age and its ailments, because the lifestyle habits of west- ➤

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Western societies such as lack of exercise and an unhealthy diet are multiplying a problem of enormous proportions and costs. The progressive increase in life expectancy is doing the rest.

Sarcopenia is the degenerative loss of mass, strength and muscular performance. It is an inevitable process in every human being, and shares common diagnoses with many associated illnesses such as muscular atrophies and rheumatic problems.

“The pathologies of age, like those of bedridden people or those with chronic weakening conditions, are those which produce the greatest loss of muscle mass. This is the illness of immobile people,” says Dr De Luis.

From the age of 50, muscle mass declines between one and two per cent a year, and muscular strength by 1.5 per cent (double after the age of 60), according to estimations from the Spanish Nutrition Foundation. It is an unstoppable process, and part of the ‘bodywork’ of being human.

Dr Marcos Paulino Huertas of the Spanish Rheumatology Society (SER) also quotes figures about the loss of ability of this human ‘engine’ which gradually deteriorates over time. “We reach our peak strength between the ages of 25 and 30, and from then on we lose it. The process speeds up at 50, and by the age of 80 between 15 and 40 per cent of people suffer sarcopenia to a greater or lesser extent,” he explains.

These high percentages vary, depending on the measuring system used. The profusion of studies and experts who are becoming involved in this research find it hard to agree where the limits lie between normal ageing and the pathologies derived from an abnormal acceleration in motor loss. “We still need to homogenise criteria,” admits Dr



A group of elderly people doing muscle-strengthening exercises in Stockholm. :: AFP

Paulino Huertas, who works at the General Hospital in Ciudad Real.

However, given that this is obviously a pandemic in the western world, the European Working Group on Sarcopenia in Older People (EWGSOP) has now been set up and it has established three parameters for more efficient diagnosis: a lack of muscle mass, a reduction in tractive force and low psychomotor speed.

Using these data, its first estimations are that around 11 million Europeans suffer from it. The figure rises to more than 20 million if the parameters are slightly expanded. The EWGSOP estimates that the number of people diagnosed will double in the next 20 years and Spain, one of the countries with the longest life expect-

tancy, is fertile ground for its advance. The most conservative figures say there are already at least 1.5 million sarcopenics in this country.

“There are no miracles. The key is not to be sedentary, and eat a protein-rich diet”

The ‘perfect storm’

A detailed study by the University of Liège (Belgium) shows that the number of people diagnosed could reach 63 per cent of over-65s in the next 30 years. Is that an exaggeration? It appears not.

Another spokesman from SER, Jordi Monfort, who is a rheumatologist at the Hospital del Mar in Barcelona, doesn’t believe the figures are an over-estimation. “A Korean study published in 2014 talked about 50 per cent of prevalence in people over the age of 80,” he says.

Associated with and multiplied by all illnesses which restrict mobility, from rheumatism to atrophies and including traumas, the loss of quality of life caused by sarcopenia adds enormous costs to medical and geriatric attention. In the ar-

ticle which Daniel de Luis and another 20 Spanish specialists published in the medical journal ‘Progress in Nutrition’, it states that “it costs the European Union 120,000 million euros a year”.

It is the ‘perfect storm’ in terms of the loss of abilities in the adult population. This invisible illness causes an immobility which in turn feeds back into a clinical loop of paralysing consequences.

Despite what is now known, there is still a great deal which isn’t. Recent studies are starting to suggest that not all races are affected equally. “In different groups of white caucasians differences in levels of ageing have been identified, although the circumstances aren’t clear,” says Paulino Huertas.

Is there anything we can do to

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Be physically active

The most important cause of sarcopenia is a lack of physical exercise. The best way to combat this is through exercises which combine strength and muscular force. Two or three exercise sessions a week can help to recover muscle in about eight weeks.

The role of nutrition

Muscles only regenerate with food. Elderly people should eat fewer calories, to prevent excess weight, but make sure they eat quality proteins.

What and when to eat?

This is proportional to weight. It is calculated that for correct muscular protein synthesis 30 grams of protein are required, so include energy foods in meals (bread, rice, pasta, potatoes, pulses) and complement them with animal protein (meat, eggs and fish). Lean cuts simply prepared are best (grilled or baked), in order to avoid fats.

minimise this? The experts all agree that there are no miracles to stop something which is part of being human. The only advice they can give applies to the whole population: don't lead a sedentary lifestyle, take moderate physical exercise and eat a diet which is high in proteins to prevent malnutrition.

Obese but lacking muscle

This is not all. Sarcopenia can reach such levels that it is being found in older people who are overweight. "Some people have excess fat but they also suffer a major loss of muscle mass. That is what is called sarcopenic obesity," says Daniel de Luis.

It is hoped that diets will be the key to slowing down the advance of this condition, but even here we come across lifestyle changes in elderly people.

"With age," explains Dr Paulino Huertas, "people tend to lose the ability to synthesise proteins." This ability reduces by about one third in very elderly people, although it has not been established whether this is due to the ageing process itself or nutritional disorders, according to a collective study by the Spanish Rheumatology Foundation.

The combination of a protein-rich diet, with a recommended 0.8 grammes of protein a day for each kilo of weight, and oestrogen-based hormonal therapies in post-menopausal women or steroids in the case of men, are providing the first steps. They mitigate the effects now, but shed no light on what the future may hold.

Foods which are high in protein and vitamin D, and essential aminoacids such as leucine are the best allies, together with sport.

"We are living increasingly longer, but we don't know how we are going to age. And magic pills to keep us healthy are just a fantasy," says Dr Paulino Huertas.

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With approximately 330,000 new breaks in Spain in 2017, fragility fractures are a huge obstacle to healthy ageing. It's already impacting the quality of life of more than 2.8 million women and men in Spain, costing the economy approximately 4.2 billion euros in 2017.

In the last few years a real breakthrough in this disease has taken place as a result of a Bio Medical engineer in the USA whose mother suffered from osteoporosis. He was motivated to look for a solu-



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tion and a real cure for this disease. The result of his efforts was the invention of a range of simple exercise machines called OsteoStrong - a revolution in the understanding of how to create stronger bones by increasing bone density.

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Malaga has the lowest birth rate in the last two decades, statistics show

FRANCISCO GUTIÉRREZ



✉ fgutierrez@diariosur.es

Figures from the National Institute of Statistics (INE) show that in the first part of the year there was a negative population growth with 6,403 births and 7,190 deaths in Malaga

MALAGA. The birth rate in Malaga province fell to the lowest point in the last two decades in the first half of this year.

The National Institute of Statistics (INE) published figures on Tuesday, showing the births, deaths and marriages that took place from January to June 2018. According to this data, 6,403 births were recorded in this period in Malaga province, compared to 7,190 deaths. This means that the province experienced a negative population growth (that is, more deaths than births) of 787 people.

According to data from INE, 2017 ended with a positive growth rate of 1,714 people. Throughout 2017, 14,422 children were born and 12,708 deaths were recorded.

This year therefore sees the lowest recorded birth rate in 20 years for the province. In 1998, 12,627 births were recorded, with the first half of the year seeing just 6,096 babies born in Malaga. In 1999, 6,260 births were recorded in the same period which is also fewer than in 2018.

The statistics also show that this year, from January to June, more



The number of births is the lowest it has been for two decades. :: SUR

boys were born than girls. It was recorded that 3,272 boys were born and 3,131 girls.

On the other hand, more men were also recorded to have died (3,723 men compared to 3,467 women). Of the total number of deaths (7,190), 2,694 were registered in the city of Malaga.

The statistics published also show the number of marriages which took place in this period. From January to June this year, 2,285 marriages took place.

Throughout 2017 there were 5,903 marriages. The month with

In Malaga more unmarried women had children than those who were married

the fewest was January with 174 and the most was June with 779.

There was also a striking fall in traditionally religious marriages, with only 390 Catholic unions recorded. Another 16 marriages of other religions took place.

The vast majority of the marriages recorded in the winter months were civil ceremonies, with 164 of 174 marriages in January taking place without any religious aspect. In June, 205 of the marriages that took place were Catholic.

In Spain as a whole, the first half

IN FIGURES

6,403

births in the first half of the year: 3,272 boys and 3,131 girls. There were also 19 late fetal deaths. You have to go back to 1999 to find a lower birth rate (6,096).

7,190

deaths. 3,723 men and 3,467 women. The growth is therefore negative (-787). One of the deaths was a baby who lived less than 24 hours.

2,285

marriages. The majority were civil ceremonies (1,871), while 390 Catholic wedding were recorded.

of this year saw 179,794 births, which is 5.8 per cent less than the same period the previous year. This low number of births in the first half of the year continues the downward trend of recent years, with the one exception of 2014.

At a regional level

Statistics released on Tuesday also accounted for the region of Andalucía as a whole, but this time, only for the first quarter of the year.

Throughout the region, for this period of 2018, there were 17,235 births and 22,497 deaths, which is a 5.2 per cent and an 8.2 per cent increase, respectively, than the same period last year. Births in which one parent was foreign accounted for 20.5 per cent of the total births in Malaga.

Another statistic released explored the marital status of the women having children. In Malaga there were more births to unmarried mothers (1,652) than married (1,543). Of the unmarried women, 653 do not live with the father of their children, compared to 534 who do.



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Golf and paediatrics join forces

Doctors have found that playing golf has many health benefits for everyone, especially children

With obesity a serious problem in today's world, doctors are taking steps to encourage children to play sports such as golf, in order for them to reap the benefits

:: ALBERTO GÓMEZ

MALAGA. At a recent event organised by the Royal Spanish Golf Federation (RFEG), the effects that sport has on health, focusing mainly on children, were brought forward by a number of specialists.

The federation called for doctors and physiotherapists to encourage children to play golf, as it is "healthy as well as fun", explains the marketing director of RFEG, Xavi Guibelade.

The medical director of the Golf es Salud programme, nephrologist José Antonio García Donaire, explained that "sport equals longevity" and there are many issues that can arise if you do not keep active and play sport regularly.

He believes that it is highly beneficial to "start as a child because practicing a sport early on can even change things we have been unlucky to get from a genetic point of view".

Aiding recovery

Dr Luis Madero, a member of the Royal National Academy of Medicine and head of the Oncohaematology department of the Niño Jesús Hospital in Madrid, also emphasised that the practice of golf and indeed sports in general, is an excellent way to aid recovery after medical procedures.

Dr Miguel Ángel Monroy, a paediatrician at the Reina Victoria



Some of the participants at the event organised by the RFEG. :: FERNANDO HERRANZ

"There are many problems that can arise from an inactive childhood," explains doctor Begoña Arias

health centre in Madrid and lecturer in Medicine and Health Sciences, explained that children need to play sports to live a healthy and balanced life. It is not only diet that is important, but it is also fundamental that they are doing enough physical activity.

The federation asks that doctors and physiotherapists begin to encourage children to play sport in order to fight issues such as obesity

Avoiding future problems
"It is not necessary for a child to be at the top level of a sport to participate and reap the benefits. It must be encouraged to avoid health problems in the future," he adds.

Dr Begoña Arias Novas, head of the paediatrics department of Zarzuela University Hospital and a member of the Paediatrics Society of Madrid and Castilla La Mancha, says that "many problems come from a lack of physical activity. Obesity is a huge problem in the world today and taking up a sport such as golf can be very good for children."

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Cifu celebrates after his last-gasp strike puts Malaga ahead in Mallorca on Saturday night. :: AGENCIA LOF

LA LIGA 123

Results	Next match day
Tenerife - Extremadura 0-0	MALAGA - Cádiz
Deportivo - Numancia 2-2	Granada - Oviedo
Gimnàstic - Granada 0-1	Numancia - Albacete
Mallorca - MALAGA 1-2	Reus - Córdoba
Albacete - Osasuna 2-2	Sporting - Mallorca
Oviedo - Almería 1-2	R. Majadahonda - Elche
Alcorcón - Reus 0-1	Osasuna - Alcorcón
Cádiz - R. Majadahonda 1-0	Las Palmas - Tenerife
Elche - Sporting 0-0	Extremadura - Gimnàstic
Lugo - Las Palmas 4-2	Almería - Lugo
Zaragoza - Córdoba 0-0	Deportivo - Zaragoza

Table	TEAM	PT	P	W	D	L	GF	GA
★	1. Granada	34	17	10	4	3	25	12
★	2. Alcorcón	33	17	10	3	4	20	9
■	3. Deportivo	32	17	8	8	1	28	12
■	4. MALAGA	32	17	10	2	5	21	13
■	5. Albacete	31	17	8	7	2	25	15
■	6. Cádiz	29	17	8	5	4	24	14
	7. Mallorca	27	17	7	6	4	23	16
	8. Osasuna	26	17	7	5	5	21	18
	9. Las Palmas	23	17	5	8	4	22	20
	10. Almería	23	17	6	5	6	20	18
	11. Oviedo	23	17	6	5	6	20	23
	12. Sporting	22	17	5	7	5	17	15
	13. Numancia	21	17	5	6	6	18	20
	14. R. Majadahonda	20	17	6	2	9	14	21
	15. Lugo	19	17	5	4	8	17	19
	16. Extremadura	17	17	4	5	8	23	26
	17. Tenerife	17	17	3	8	6	14	21
	18. Elche	17	17	3	8	6	13	21
▼	19. Zaragoza	16	17	3	7	7	17	21
▼	20. Reus	16	17	4	4	9	11	24
▼	21. Córdoba	13	17	2	7	8	18	33
▼	22. Gimnàstic	10	17	2	4	11	11	31

Malaga strike back in the nick of time to break away hoodoo

Victory in Mallorca was the Blue and Whites' first on the road in three and a half months



✉ dfinch@diariosur.es

with victory on the holiday island of Mallorca. It was far from plain sailing, though, as the Blue and Whites were pegged back in the second half and needed a late winner from full-back Cifu to seal the side's first win away from home in more than three months.

Facing the prospect of seeing their title challenge evaporate, Malaga knew that they needed to reverse a run of poor form as they started their run-in to the Christmas break. Recent troubles on the road for the Costa del Sol side made in-form Mallorca the favourites to claim the three points and overtake their visitors.

In fact, they started strongest and had the ball in the net when Antonio Rallo's header crept in at Munir's left post. However, the

linesman ruled out the effort for offside when replays showed that shouldn't have been the case.

Malaga, however, didn't heed the warning and almost conceded in identical circumstances moments later, only for Munir to bail out his colleagues on this occasion with a two-handed save

As half time approached, the

The Blue and Whites had not won on the road since 3 September in Almeria

visitors found the all-important breakthrough as Scotsman Jack Harper tapped into an unguarded net. The ball fell to the youth-team striker after Adrián's header from a corner came back out off the crossbar and the keeper Miquel Parera flapped at the ball under pressure from Gustavo Blanco Leschuk. The Mallorca players appealed for a foul by the Argentinian striker but the referee was unmoved.

In the second half, Vicente Moreno's side showed why they were unbeaten in seven league games and had not lost at home since 23 September. The pressure on the Malaga backline increased and it eventually told in the 73rd minute when Fran Gámez's volley across the face of goal was con-

1-2

MALLORCA-MALAGA

Mallorca: Parera; Fran Gámez, Valjent, Rallo, Joan Sastre; Pablo Valcarce (Aridai, 66'), Salva Sevilla, Pedraza (Baba, 80'), Dan Rodríguez (Abdon 87'), Lago Lunior; Álex López. Unused substitutes: Manolo Reina, Franco Russo, Stoichkov, Estupiñán.

Malaga: Munir; Cifu, Diego González, Pau Torres, Ricca; Juanpi (Ontiveros, 63'), N'Diaye, Adrián (Lacen, 75'), Dani Pacheco (Lombán, 90+2'); Harper, Blanco Leschuk. Unused substitutes: Kieszek, Renato, Hakabalanovic, Iván.

Goals: 0-1 Harper (42'); 1-1 Álex López (73'); 1-2 Cifu (85').

Referee: Gorostegui Fernández. Yellow cards for Adrián, Dani Pacheco, Ricca, Lombán, Munir and Rallo. Warnings given to Malaga doctor Daniel Rosado and masseur Marcelino Torrontegui. Mallorca coach Vicente Moreno sent to the stands.

verted at the back post by Álex López though neither Diego González nor Munir covered themselves in glory.

With only a win enough to keep the pressure on Granada and Alcorcón at the top, Juan Ramón

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Up next

CADIZ (H)

BY JAMES CHAPMAN

Andalusian rivals Cadiz are today's visitors to La Rosaleda for a fixture that will be much more challenging than expected. Having been in the relegation zone and with coach Álvaro Cervera's position under threat just weeks ago, few would have anticipated that Cadiz would come to La Rosaleda on the back of seven wins in a row. The division's inform team are now in the play-off places as a result.

In the late 80s and early 90s Cadiz got the nickname The Yellow Submarines. This was due to their remarkable ability to 'come afloat' at the end of the season despite having been 'sunk' for most of the campaign.

However, their luck finally ran out and they have not been in the top flight since 2006, with spells in the third tier for a total of seven years. This year could be their best chance to finally make their La Liga return.

Muñiz's team stepped up a gear and pushed for the win. The goal eventually came with just five minutes to go and from a very unlikely source. When full-back Cifu found himself on the end of Javi Ontiveros' cushioned header in the penalty area, without unerring confidence he brought the ball into his stride before letting off a fierce strike across the keeper into the side netting.

The players celebrated like a side who hadn't won away since 3 September (in Almería) - a welcome confidence ahead of the visit of Cadiz this evening.

"We have seen a great game in which both teams were fighting for the three points," said coach Juan Ramón Muñiz following the game. "We've not had good results recently but we are still heading along the right lines."

A midfielder and a striker, top priorities for January window

Sporting director José Luis Caminero is looking at the loan and free transfer market and has already opened negotiations

BY ANTONIO GÓNGORA

MALAGA. Though Malaga currently find themselves in the play-off places for promotion back to La Liga, they are not resting on their laurels. January will be a key month for their promotion ambitions and the club is looking to strengthen the squad for the second half of the season.

The two areas which are the focus for sporting director José Luis Caminero are in central midfield and up front.

Ever since José Recio left for Leganés and Manuel Iturra was released (and later joined Villarreal) in the final days of the summer window, Malaga have been short in the middle of the park with only Adrián and Alfred N'Diaye staking a claim for a regular starting place.

Up front, too, Malaga have been short with Gustavo Blanco Leschuk, an undisputed starter, struggling



The Malaga eleven who took on Granada at La Rosaleda. BY N. SALAS

to find a regular partner. Jack Harper has stepped up and started the majority of games, but during his injury absence, which coincided with that of Mamadou Koné, coach Juan Ramón Muñiz has been left with few options.

Héctor, signed on loan from Atlético Madrid, has failed to earn Muñiz's trust and is expected to return to his parent club in January, thus leaving two spaces in the squad that need filling.

Caminero has been prowling the loan and free transfer markets

and it is understood that negotiations have started with a number of players.

However, Malaga are also closely monitoring the situation of league rivals Reus who are facing sanctions for their unpaid debts and may be forced to sell players in January.

While midfield and attack are priorities, don't be surprised to see a defender come in too. After long-term injuries to Luis Hernández and Juankar, Malaga also could look to bring in a versatile defender.

IN BRIEF

Hicham shines on return to the reserves

MALAGA

E. MORALES. Having not been called up to the first-team squad for the last two games, Moroccan winger Hicham made an instant impact on his return to action for Malaga's reserve side, Atlético Malagueño.

The 20-year-old showed himself to be above playing in Segunda B



Hicham, in pre-season. BY SUR

by being constantly one step ahead of his opponents. This showed in the 20th minute when he gave his side the lead in Sunday's game against Badajoz after some positive wing play by Alberto.

However, after Juande put through his own goal and then Morgado gave the visitors the lead in the 65th minute, Malagueño needed a last-gasp equaliser to save a point.

It was Joel who pounced after a block left the ball in no-man's land, needing just a tap-in.

Femenino move closer to the drop zone after third consecutive defeat

BY MARINA RIVAS

MALAGA. It was supposed to be the easiest game of their Christmas run-in but defeat for Malaga Femenino against Sporting Huelva further demonstrated that the Liga Iberdrola is full of surprises.

With this third consecutive defeat (2-0 away), the Blue and Whites have fallen a further place, down to 13th, with only their fellow Andalusians, Madrid CF and Sevilla below them (the latter two suffered heavy defeats).

Malaga's next match is on Sunday, away to Albacete whose striker Alba Redondo just topped the goalscoring charts having racked up her tenth goal of the season in their home loss to Granadilla de Tenerife.

At the top remain Atlético but Barcelona are just a point behind.

LIGA IBERDROLA

Results	Match day 14
Rayo Vallecano - Logroño 1-1	Rayo - Valencia
Betis - Real Sociedad 2-1	Betis - Atlético
Sporting Huelva - MALAGA 2-0	R.Sociedad-Espanyol
Albacete - Granadilla 1-3	Madrid CFF - Sevilla
Athletic - Sevilla 6-0	Barcelona - Logroño
Barcelona - Madrid CFF 7-0	Levante - Athletic
Atlético - Espanyol 3-1	Sporting-Granadilla
Levante - Valencia 0-0	Albacete - MALAGA

Table	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PT
1. Atlético	13	12	0	1	47	9	36
2. Barcelona	13	11	2	0	44	6	35
3. Levante	13	9	3	1	30	8	30
4. Athletic	13	7	4	2	25	11	25
5. Betis	13	7	1	5	21	14	22
6. Rayo Vallecano	13	6	2	5	18	22	20
7. Granadilla	13	6	1	6	19	24	19
8. Valencia	13	3	7	3	14	17	16
9. Albacete	13	4	3	6	25	33	15
10. Real Sociedad	13	4	2	7	19	24	14
11. EDF Logroño	13	3	4	6	14	25	13
12. Espanyol	13	4	1	8	10	23	13
13. Málaga	13	4	1	8	10	29	13
14. Sporting	13	3	2	8	10	18	11
15. Madrid CF	13	2	1	10	14	36	7
16. Sevilla	13	2	0	11	12	33	6

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A LOOK AT LA LIGA

ROB PALMER

Commentator, Sky Sports
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Match-winner Añón. :: OPTA

Back to the drawing board

Plans for a La Liga game in the States this season have unsurprisingly been shelved

Cancel the plans to fly to Miami in January; the bold idea of playing a La Liga game in the United States has been shelved. (I say bold... in truth it was ill-conceived. It was like one of those ideas you have after a strong bottle of sangría with your pals.)

Let's all get on a plane, bring Lionel Messi and his pals from Barcelona with us, get the Americans to pay us loads of money; it will be a hoot.

The marketing men told us it was all about growing the brand globally, taking the game to football fans across the planet and spreading the word.

The theory was fine but in practice it was a disaster. The Spanish FA were not in on the act and ultimately became like Tory MPs in a Brexit negotiation.

The two clubs they'd persuaded to export a fixture were Barcelona and Girona. Taking Barça was ob-

vious. It would sell out any stadium in the world. There were healthy crowds when the diluted Liga teams played pre-season friendlies in the States so a meaningful match was always going to capture the imagination.

Girona were content to sacrifice their biggest game of the season and their supporters were being offered incentives to sweeten them. Who wouldn't fancy a subsidised trip to Florida?

The example of the NFL was always cited. The American football roadshow rolls into many major cities around the world and everyone loves the circus.

Sadly the Liga version was just that... a circus! One of the selling points was the fact that it was a proud Catalan derby yet obviously the authorities didn't want it becoming a political rally. ("Hey man, I love that colourful flag. What's it all about?")

Everything was ill-considered. It was an ad-hoc plan. I have sympathy for the proper football fans in America because it was a chance to see the superstars with their own eyes on their own turf. The

game has grown in the past four decades and MLS is now extremely well organised. The fans have a thirst for information and love the European leagues. When I was over in the summer I was astounded by the depth of knowledge from supporters who trawl for information.



The impressive Hard Rock Stadium would have been the venue. :: SUR

The American fans deserve better than the mainly reserve teams who tour in the summer. I liken it to basketball: in Europe we want to see the Lakers, Bulls or Boston Celtic these days rather than the Harlem Globetrotters against a team of stooges.

For now the initiative has been filed in Room 101. Maybe they should revisit it with the Spanish Super Cup or a Copa game.

But remember what a disaster the Super Cup was in the summer? They moved it to Morocco at the last minute. That is the problem, there is little strategy and the organisation is rudimentary. They are streets behind the best organised leagues. Here's an example.

When you commentate on a Champions League or Premier League game there's an app for the broadcasters to get the team line-ups the minute they've been disclosed. This helps with graphics, programme planning and commentating.

When I'm trying to find a line-up for a Liga game I have to trawl Twitter to see if anyone has posted it from the bowels of the stadium.

And so, the idea of exporting Liga to America worked out as well as most ideas we have at a Christmas party or summer barbeque after a couple of cervezas. It's ended up in the sock drawer!

Fine Añón goal seals valuable away win for Marbella against Don Benito

DON BENITO 0 MARBELLA 1

:: OPTA

BADAJOS. Marbella moved away from the relegation zone on Sunday after a precious 1-0 victory away in Don Benito.

After the hosts passed up numerous opportunities to take the lead, Marbella captain Añón bagged the winner with a sublime freekick from the edge of the box which left the goalkeeper stranded.

Club appoints new general director

:: J. RODRÍGUEZ

The first major move under the new ownership at Marbella FC has been a change of general director with Héctor Morales replacing Teo Bravo who was appointed by previous president Alexander Grinberg.

His brief is to "exploit the massive potential" of the club, a press release said.



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Runners cross the Malaga port, with the cathedral and lighthouse in the background. :: NITO SALAS



Martin Fiz, ambassador for the event. :: NITO SALAS

East African athletes dominate in the fastest ever Malaga Marathon



ENRIQUE MIRANDA

Twitter: @emirandasur

Ethiopian Lemi Dumecha beat the four-year-old record by two minutes while his compatriot Alemu Meseret came out on top among the women

MALAGA. With the sun not yet up at 7am on a Sunday morning, normally there are only two types of people on the streets of Malaga: taxi drivers, bus drivers and refuse collectors; or people on their way home from a night out.

The panorama was slightly different this time as some 5,000 athletes congregated in the central Paseo del Parque, some in fancy dress, ahead of the Malaga Marathon.

This year saw a record number of participants, with 1,500 of those signed up taking part in the new half marathon.

A large number of federated runners lined up this time, as well as



Kibet crossed the line on his knees. :: NITO SALAS



Brits offer their support to their compatriots. :: NITO SALAS

IN NUMBERS

2.11:07

Is the new men's record for the Malaga Marathon, beating the record set in 2014 by John Kipkorir (2.13:10).

2,407

runners finished the marathon inside the six permitted hours.

1,189

completed the half marathon.

runners from all over the world - a sign that the event is growing in prestige every year.

Not only was this the fastest Malaga Marathon on record, a total of five male runners finished with times quicker than the previous record.

Two-time world champion Abel Antón, ambassador of the event said: "It was a great day for many athletes who broke their record times." He also highlighted the very favourable conditions, with not too much heat and very little wind.

The final rankings were dominated by athletes from east Africa with 23-year-old debutant Lemi Dumecha (Ethiopia) winning in the men's category with a time of two hours, 11 minutes and seven seconds.

It was a dramatic ending to the men's race as Eliud Kibet (Kenya) fell within metres of the finishing line and had to crawl across on his hands and knees. As he struggled he was passed by his compatriots Moses Mbugua and Emmanuel Kibet who claimed second and third, respectively.

The first five runners across the line all broke the time set by John Kipkorir, another Kenyan, in 2014 (2h.13:10).

There was less drama in the women's event as Alemu Meseret, also from Ethiopia, came first with a time of 2h.32:20, 25 seconds off the record. Beshadu Bekele (Ethiopia) and Runa Skrove (Norway) made up the podium.

Kamil Jastrzbski came out on top in the half marathon (1h.08:15) while Mónica Ballesteros was the fastest among the women (1h.25:36).

According to Martín Fiz, another of the event's ambassadors, "the city is heading in the right direction". "Malaga Marathon beats Madrid and Barcelona and is closing the gap on Valencia and Seville," he said

Walking footballers to join fundraising effort for Sarah's new prostheses

A charity match will take place this Saturday in Elviria to help the 16-year-old sepsis victim get her life back

GEORGIE KENNY

MALAGA. Walking Football Spain has organised a match at the Estadio Santa María in Elviria this Saturday to raise funds for Sarah Almagro Vallejo, the 16-year-old Marbella girl who, after contracting sepsis in the summer, had to have her hands and feet amputated. Money raised from the Sarah Almagro Vallejo trophy will help towards the cost of new prostheses.

Teams of nine, including one created by Sarah's uncle, will play 20-minute matches in the tournament which will run from 2pm until 4pm, with the winners receiving the Sarah Almagro Vallejo Challenge trophy for their efforts.

SARAH ALMAGRO TROPHY

► **What.** Walking football tournament to help fund prostheses for local girl Sarah Almagro.

► **Where.** Estadio Santa María in Elviria.

► **When.** Saturday 14 December, 2pm to 4pm.

Players from across Malaga province will be represented, with teams from Benalmádena, Marbella and San Pedro.

Spectators, expected to include Sarah herself, are invited to attend. The bar will be open.

Top dogs on the Costa

This is not the only charitable event that Walking Football Spain have been involved in. Last Wednesday, WFS played against their rivals Walking Dead in a



Walking Football Spain, "top dogs" on the Costa del Sol. :: SUR

match-up to determine the "top dogs" on the Costa del Sol. It took place at Finca Naundrup in Calahonda, with all funds raised going to the Ciudad de los Niños centre in Malaga.

A total of four matches were played with the Walking Football Spain 'A team' defeating Walking Dead 2 - 1 in the final.

The other matches were all close in score with the first match and second ending in a draw. The third match saw Walking Dead take the

victory, but only by one goal.

After the tournament a reception for the players was held at the Costa del Sol tennis complex after which it was announced that a total of 665.66 euros has been raised.

Guest speakers

Next year on 20 January, Walking Football Spain is organising a Sportsman's Lunch at Batuta in La Cala de Mijas. The lunch will begin at midday, and a traditional Sunday roast will be available.

Former Arsenal, Hull City and Northern Ireland defender Terry Neill, alongside Larry Lloyd, who represented Liverpool, Nottingham Forest and England, will be attending the event.

Additionally, comedian and speaker Russ Williams will join the celebrations. Tickets are priced at 30 euros and a large amount of the proceeds will go to prostate cancer research. The rest of the money raised will go towards club funds to keep it running.

SPORT IN PICTURES



► **Endurance riding.** Forty-seven-year-old British rider Caroline Graham and her horse Bambina claimed victory in the recent endurance riding championship in Jerez, the last of the season. The Estepona resident and her horse both won medals for being top of their class in the 60-kilometre event. :: SUR



► **World School Games.** A group of English International College primary sports students will join 23 teams from around the world in Dubai, competing at the prestigious World School Games held at the end of January 2019. The squad (pictured) will compete in one of the largest competitions for athletics, swimming and football in global school sport. :: SUR

► **Polo.** Aero came out on top in the Copa So-toestates tournament contested at the Santa María Polo Club in San Roque on Sunday. The tournament, in which four teams competed, kicked off the Iberian Polo Tour. ::

SANTA MARÍA POLO CLUB



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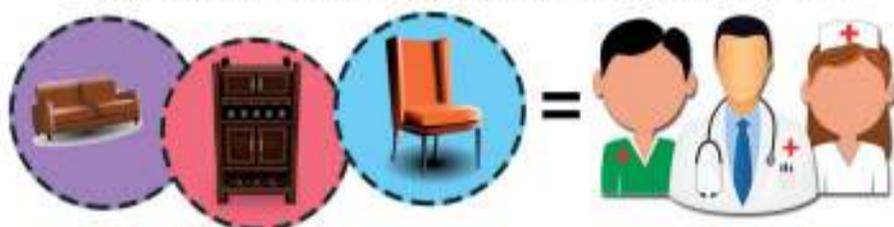
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THE STARS

Aquarius
January 21 - February 19
In a week full of enthusiasm and optimism you really feel at home in your own skin. All around you people are looking forward, not back.

Pisces
February 20th - March 20th
Showing your emotions needs to be tempered this week. Keep it genuine and heartfelt. Although you may tolerate irritating people, remember that your reactions could upset others

Aries
March 21st - April 20th
A sudden urge to splash the cash comes over you at the weekend. This could be due to bad planning. Maybe too late to look for bargains?

Taurus
April 21st - May 21st
A joint venture with your friend or partner in the New Year needs some organising now. As does a holiday treat for an older relative.

Gemini
May 22nd - June 21st
What starts out as a duty can easily turn into a joy if you throw yourself behind it. Meeting someone with much in common with you at the weekend is fun.

Cancer
June 22nd - July 23rd
Investing in the future is to be welcomed. Maybe you could combine a holiday next year with a business opportunity?

Leo
July 24th - August 23rd
Be prepared for some attention of the romantic kind even if you are not seeking it. This time of year always sees you at your charming best and sought out by friends and family.

Virgo
August 24th - September 23rd
Living in the moment and giving all of your attention to loved ones is essential. Forget work and worries and get into the spirit of the holiday period.

Libra
September 24th - October 23rd
You expect perfection and nothing less than the best is good enough. Deep in your own heart, however, you know that the greatest gift is being with those you love. Someone could turn up at last.

Scorpio
October 24th - November 22nd
Although you like a bit of adrenaline, disagreements should be put aside. Memories are made of both a good and bad kind. Make yours good by being generous in spirit.

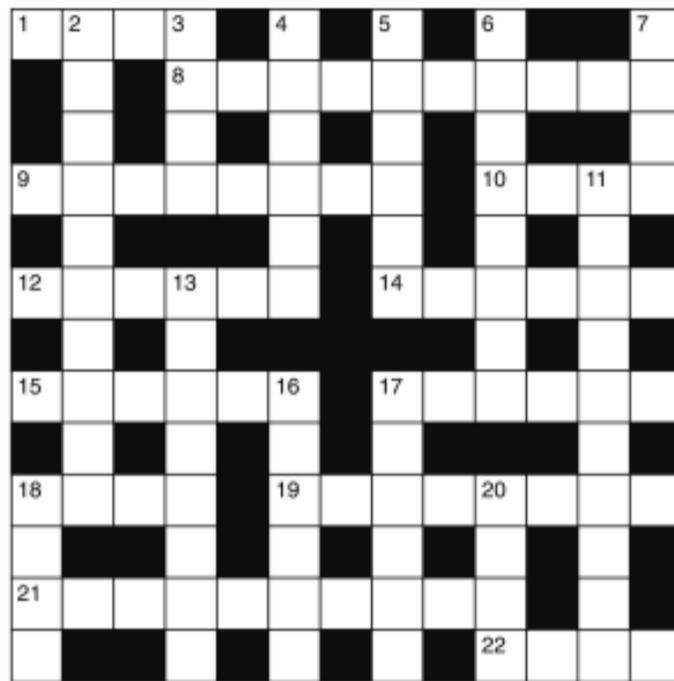
Sagittarius
November 23rd - December 21st
With a new beginning already in your mind, others start seeing a change of tactics. Although you like to keep your little secrets, being open to suggestion this week raises a smile.

Capricorn
December 22nd - January 20th
When you accept that no-one is perfect you really start to relax. Keeping your own high standards is essential, of course. Even so, don't expect everyone to fit into your mould.

THE SEVEN DIFFERENCES



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD N° 11325



Across

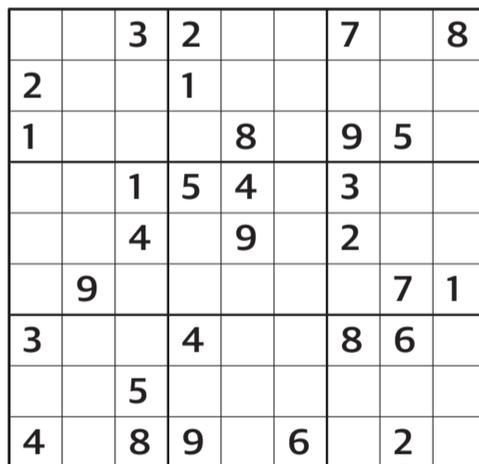
- 1 Give someone a pointed reminder? (4)
- 8 Unlucky enough to be badly cast as a leading actor (3-7)
- 9 Have no faith in Diana's confidence (8)
- 10 Father is not out to cause distress (4)
- 12 Worked hard to convert voters (6)
- 14 Put emphasis on nervous tension (6)
- 15 Joined a football club (6)
- 17 Question a learned cleric put in to annoy (6)
- 18 The lady's ring is one much admired (4)
- 19 Boastful bandmen will blow their own (8)
- 21 Just inclined to like blondes? (4-6)
- 22 Cheap price, though requiring a lot of notes (4)

Down

- 2 There's opposition since rates were changed (10)
- 3 Conventional fare? (4)
- 4 Reason to include a number in a proviso (6)
- 5 Conditions found in America (8)
- 6 Shaved in advance to be ready (8)
- 7 It was heaven on earth while it lasted (4)
- 11 A breakdown of this could have shocking results (10)
- 13 Not at home in the open air (8)
- 16 As a military detachment it's of no importance (6)
- 17 Golfing or boxing circles? (6)
- 18 Fit of petulance encountered playing draughts? (4)
- 20 They're evacuated during the shelling (4)

SUDOKU BY HANZO

Instructions
Complete the square making sure that every row of nine numbers includes all digits from 1 to 9, every column includes all digits from 1 to 9 and every 3 by 3 subsection includes all digits from 1 to 9



THE WORDPUZZLER

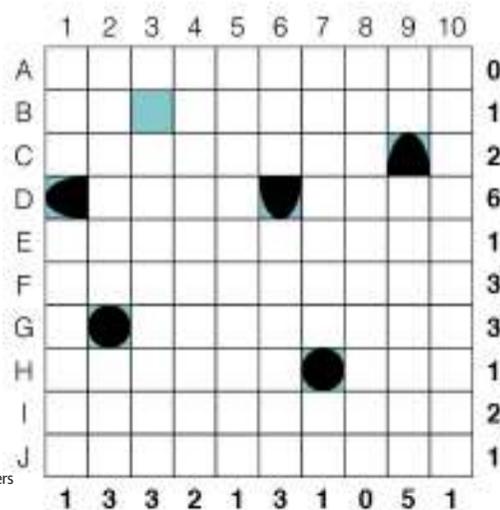
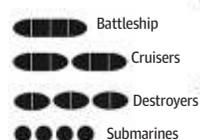


Can you identify the words that may be made up from the letters of POLTERGEIST from the clues listed below?

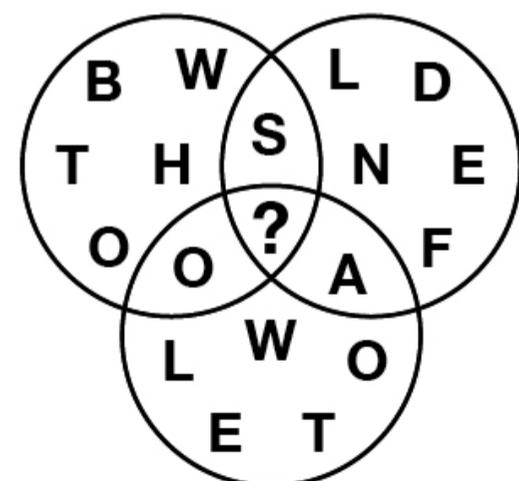
- 1. Location
- 2. Gravel
- 3. Material
- 4. Dog
- 5. Shawl
- 6. Public disturbance
- 7. Precipitous
- 8. Feat
- 9. Routine
- 10. Salute

BATTLESHIPS

Instructions Find where the fleet of ships (1 battleship, 2 cruisers, 3 destroyers, 4 submarines) are hidden in the grid. The numbers to the right of and below the grid indicate how many of the squares in that row are filled in with ships or parts of ships. The ships do not touch each other, even diagonally. Some have been filled in to start you off.



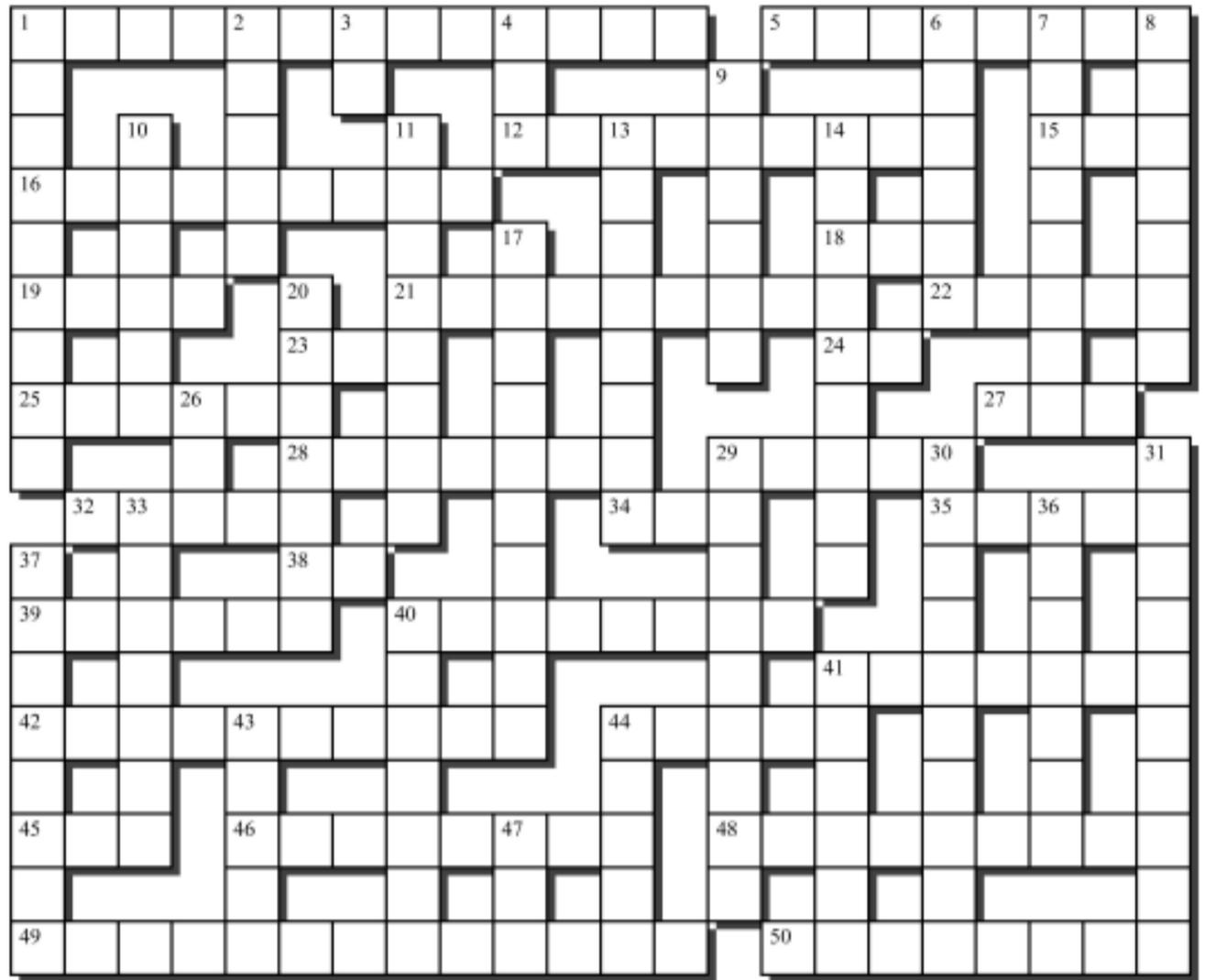
CIRCLEGRAM



Instructions
Replace the question mark with a letter so that the letters in each circle can be arranged to form words, names or terms on a common theme. What are the three words, and the letter represented by the question mark?

LANGUAGE CROSSWORD FILL IN THE SPANISH WORD

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Across | Down |
| 1) Privatisation (13) | 1) Passengers (9) |
| 5) Arrivals (8) | 2) Anchor (5) |
| 12) Informed (9) | 3) To go (2) |
| 15) Sun (3) | 4) I fell (3) |
| 16) Airline (9) | 6) Balloons (6) |
| 18) Gone (3) | 7) Destinations (8) |
| 19) Age (4) | 8) Departures (7) |
| 21) Staff (9) | 9) Shine (6) |
| 22) Path (5) | 10) Created (6) |
| 23) Axis (3) | 11) To take off (8) |
| 24) Of (2) | 13) To check in (8) |
| 25) To oppose (6) | 14) Aviators (9) |
| 27) Bear (3) | 17) Parliament (10) |
| 28) Air hostess (7) | 20) Summers (7) |
| 29) Meat (5) | 26) Us (3) |
| 32) They pass (5) | 29) Comfort (9) |
| 34) River (3) | 30) Businessman (10) |
| 35) To look (5) | 31) Transport (10) |
| 38) I heard (2) | 33) Happiness (7) |
| 39) Flights (6) | 36) Speed (7) |
| 40) Connection (8) | 37) Aviation (8) |
| 41) Prices (7) | 40) Snail (7) |
| 42) Airport (10) | 41) It seems (6) |
| 44) Haste (5) | 43) Chest (5) |
| 45) One way (3) | 44) Wall (5) |
| 46) To cancel (8) | 47) Light (3) |
| 48) To land (9) | |
| 49) Nationalised (13) | |
| 50) Aircraft (8) | |

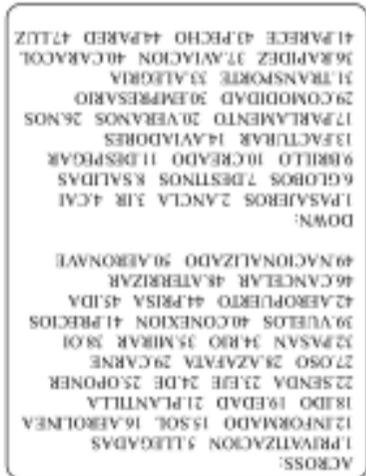


ANSWERS

Quiz answers

Of interest: The creature on the Flemish flag is a lion rampant sable. Although the lion has been in use for almost nine hundred years as the arms of the Count of Flanders, it only became the official symbol of the Flemish Community in 1973.
Answer: Dardanelles.
Of interest: The Dardanelles, also known in antiquity as the Hellespont, is a narrow, natural strait in northwestern Turkey that forms part of the continental boundary between Europe and Asia, and separates Asian Turkey from European Turkey.

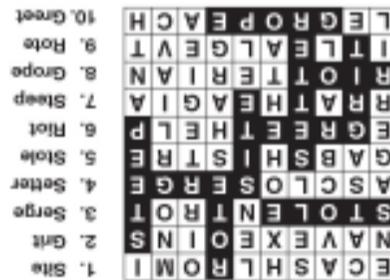
Language Crossword



Cryptic Crossword

Solutions: Across: 1 Prod; 8 Ill-starred; 9 Distrust; 10 Pain; 12 Stove; 14 Stress; 15 United; 17 Riddle; 18 Hero; 19 Trumpets; 21 Fair-minded; 22 Song; Down: 2 Resistance; 3 Diet; 4 Clause; 5 States; 6 Prepared; 7 Eden; 11 Insulation; 13 Outdoors; 16 Detail; 17 Founds; 18 Hilt; 20 Pods.

Wordpuzzler solution



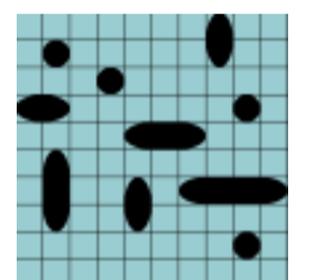
Sudoku solution



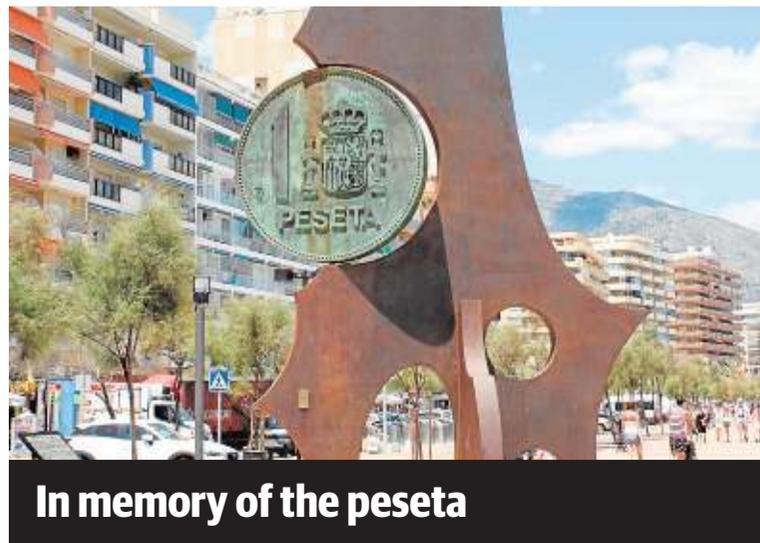
Circlegram

The letter represented by the question mark is R, Flanders, Waterloo, Bosworth. All names of battles.

Battleships



WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?



Last week: Marbella

The statue called La Bella del Mar is situated in a fountain in the Avenida de Ramón y Cajal and is a tribute to the hard work by many people to turn Marbella into the 'jewel of the Mediterranean'. It was created in bronze by sculptor Amador Braojos.



MALAGA PORT INFORMATION

CRUISE SHIP MOVEMENTS (SOURCE: MALAGA PORT AUTHORITY)

Ship	Date	From	Next port	Docks	Sails
Norwegian Spirit	21/12	Funchal	Alicante	07.00	17.00
Aidamar	25/12	Arrecife	Cartagena	10.00	19.30
Mein Schiff 2	29/12	Gibraltar	Valencia	07.00	21.30



In memory of the peseta



An air of the Alhambra on the patio floor

A group of artists has just finished an impressive project, giving life to a courtyard at La Térmica

By **ANTONIO JAVIER LÓPEZ**

MÁLAGA. When they paint on the ground, there is nothing slapdash about it. They do it carefully in two phases, using different materials to guarantee the final result. However, between one step and the next it is essential to leave it for 24 hours to dry, and that week it rained in Malaga.

"It was pretty tense at times... luckily the weather cleared up for long enough for everything to turn out alright," says Pablo Purón, one of the founders of Boa Mistura.

This group of artists has just finished its impressive work in one of the courtyards at La Térmica, the cultural centre on the outskirts of Malaga. The project is called 'El patio del tiempo' and it is an invitation to introspection, a life with a slower biorhythm. "What we always try to do with these works is reinforce the identity of the places and bring them new meaning, give them more value than some of them have at present," says Purón about the work, which covers 400 square metres and was carried out with the support of the Cervezas Alhambra beer company.



Boa Mistura's first project at La Térmica covers more than 400 square metres. :: SUR

The lattice work of Granada's Alhambra, twinned with the La Térmica mosaics, inspired Boa Mistura to carry

out the project in the arts centre owned by the provincial government. It won't be their last visit, either.

"We're going to work on the social aspect of the centre, something that all the members of Boa Mistura

are very involved with. There are two other courtyards and our aim is for the artists to do something in the main building and finish this series of patios," says the director of La Térmica, Salomón Castiel.

For Castiel, this first project by Boa Mistura "is going to mark a before and after at La Térmica, because it highlights areas which were used a great deal, but were seen as add-ons because of the importance of the main building, but now they will have a life of their own. It's impressive to see this horizontal art on the ground and something like this in such a large space. Really, it's not just enriching, it is remarkable," he says about 'El patio del tiempo'.

Boa Mistura are delighted by the idea, says Pablo Purón. "It would be a real honour, because the building is fantastic and what goes on inside, with all the cultural activities, is spectacular. Anything we can do to support this epicentre of culture in the city is wonderful, as far as we are concerned. Whenever they call us from La Térmica, we'll be ready to come, with our cases already packed," he says.

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