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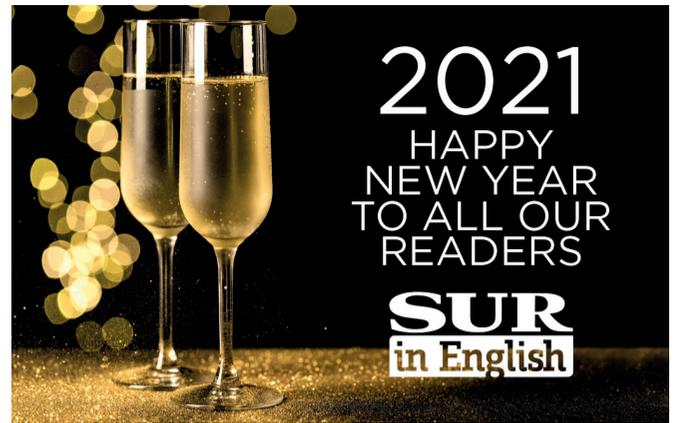
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News	2
Comment	12
Lifestyle	14
What to do	16
Health&Beauty	18
Food&Drink	20
Sport	21



Brexit expat groups give a cautious welcome to the UK's new deal with the EU



Eugenia, a care home resident, was the first person in Malaga province to get a jab against Covid-19. **SUR**

A shot in the arm for the new year

The initial phase will focus on care homes and health workers but the vaccination campaign won't start in earnest until more supplies of the Pfizer vaccine arrive **P2**

As the clock ticked towards the end of the transition period, there was hope that the separate Gibraltar deal would be done in time

The transition out of the EU for the United Kingdom came to an end this week and, with it, the free movement of British citizens to live and work in Spain, unless they are official residents.

Groups in Spain who had campaigned for more support for British residents affected by Brexit

expressed relief over the UK government's last-minute agreement on zero-tariff trade. The rights of expats in Spain had already been decided in the earlier Withdrawal Agreement, signed last January.

While British MPs backed the final trade deal on the future relationship with the EU with a large majority on Wednesday, there was still no word on a separate deal needed over the border between Spain and Gibraltar.

The EU gave that responsibility to London and Madrid directly and fears were growing ahead of New Year that there could be chaos getting in and out of the Rock. **P4&7**

Relief for hospitality businesses in Andalucía as tighter Covid restrictions are avoided **P3**

Malaga-made bubbly is growing in popularity as a good-quality tippie to celebrate with **P20**

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First batch of vaccines to arrive are given to care home residents and hospital staff

Some 130 people locally were vaccinated last Sunday on the first day of the EU-wide rollout, but mass vaccination will not ramp up until into January

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MALAGA. "I'm not scared, I'm calm; I don't feel nervous," said 88 year-old Eugenia as she sat waiting to become the first person in Malaga province to be vaccinated against Covid-19 last Sunday. "This has got to be done, that's that," she added.

Eugenia, a resident in a care home in the El Palo district of Malaga city, was one of 130 people locally to be injected with the first of their two doses of the Pfizer vaccine.

Last Sunday was the first day that people across the countries of the EU started getting the vaccine, and the Andalucía region had some 2,000 injections to give out. This was more of a token start to the massive campaign ahead, with more doses not expected to arrive until this week and the real volume of vaccinations due to start in January, when some 70,000 doses a week are expected to be delivered to the region.

Among those receiving the jab with Eugenia were 73 residents at the same home and six staff.

Across Malaga city a little later on Sunday, 50 staff from a variety of departments at the large Hospital Clínico had been selected as the first recipients. The first here was José Luis Velasco, a lung specialist at the hospital.

The vaccinations continued on



José Luis Velasco, a specialist lung doctor at Malaga's Hospital Clínico, gets his jab on Sunday afternoon. SUR

Junta hopes half of Andalucía will be vaccinated by start of the summer

The president of the Junta de Andalucía, Juanma Moreno, said last weekend that he hoped to have half of the Andalusian population of eight million people vaccinated by early next summer.

The first concentrated phase of the campaign in January will focus on the elderly in care homes and the staff that care for them. It will

then move on to people working in the healthcare sector, ahead of the general population.

However, Moreno said the vaccination of more than four million people across Andalucía by summer will depend on the supply of doses provided by the national Ministry of Health each week.

The president added that he was "excited and hopeful" with the start of the vaccination against Covid-19, which he considered a "first step" to soon regain the normality lost due to the pandemic.

Monday with 100 residents at the main care home in Estepona.

In Malaga province, including the Costa del Sol, there will be 38 vaccination hubs that people will be directed to, of which 15 will be mobile to go out to care homes and other centres.

Nationally, a resident and a carer at the Los Olmos care home in Guadalajara, to the north-east of Madrid, were the first two people in Spain to receive doses of the Covid-19 vaccine on Sunday morning.

At 96-years-old Araceli, the oldest resident of the care home, confessed, "I was a little nervous."

Almost 370,000 Pfizer vaccines were flown into Spain on Tuesday

ÁLVARO SOTO

MADRID. Following the choreographed first vaccinations across the EU on Sunday, there was a slowdown at the start of the week in Spain while more supplies arrived.

In the end, 369,525 doses of the Pfizer / BioNtech vaccine arrived early on Tuesday at airports in Madrid, Barcelona, Vitoria, Valencia and Seville, allowing for the vaccination to begin again in earnest on Wednesday morning.

The arrival of the vaccines had been delayed for a day after a "logistics problem" at Pfizer.

"Due to a minor logistical problem, we have rescheduled a limited number of our deliveries. The logistics issue has been resolved and those deliveries are now being shipped," Pfizer stressed.

The army was called in to take some of these vaccines on to the Canaries and the Balearics.

By April, Spain will have received 4.6 million doses of the Pfizer vaccine that will allow it to vaccinate 2.3 million people, almost all the 'at risk' group, made up mainly of care home residents and their carers.

'British' variant detected on Costa among recent arrivals from the UK

Malaga province still has a lower Covid-19 rate, at 123 positive tests per 100,000 people, compared to Andalucía on 147 and Spain on 255

SUR

MALAGA. The regional Health ministry confirmed on Wednesday morning this week that there were five known cases of the new, more contagious "British" variant of coronavirus in Andalucía, with a further seven possible cases be-

ing analysed, six of which are on the Costa del Sol. One of those first five cases is in hospital

The regional authorities have stepped up their extra analysis of samples from positive Covid patients in coastal areas, where there are most Britons, in their hunt for the new variant that was first reported in the UK.

Four of the five first identified patients with the different strain recently arrived from the UK with the virus, despite bringing negative test results, and the fifth is a person who has been in direct contact with one of those.

Of the five confirmed cases, three were found in Malaga province and two in Granada.

Case rates steady

Andalucía was still showing a slow decline in its case rates in the final few days of 2020, with any negative impact of the easing of restrictions over Christmas not showing as yet.

On Wednesday (30 December), the average case rate per 100,000 people in the previous 14 days in the region was 134, down from 147 a week earlier.

In Malaga province, including



Some Malaga Airport arrivals tested positive. S. SALAS (FILE PHOTO)

the Costa del Sol, the 14-day case rate was 123.4, almost the same as 122.8 from a week earlier.

The daily figure of new cases for Andalucía was 1,414 on Wednesday this week, the highest daily figure since November, although Wednesday data nor-

mally shows an increase.

Despite the increase, the region had one of the lowest rates of contagion in Spain. The average national rate announced on Tuesday evening this week was 255 per 100,000 people in the previous 14 days.

Covid crisis estimated to have cost the Costa 10 billion euros

Across Spain, 600,000 jobs are believed to have been lost due to the pandemic and it will take four years to get back to normal again, a study says

P. MARTÍNEZ / L. PALACIOS

MALAGA / MADRID. The tourism crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic has led to estimated losses of 10.3 billion euros across Malaga province, according to a Costa del Sol Tourism report.

Officials estimate that the number of tourist visits lost in 2020 in the province will amount to 9.4 million people, which represents a drop of 71.7 per cent over the total number of visitors in 2019.

In the Turismo Costa del Sol report, 'Effects on Employment, The Number of Tourists and The Economy', it is calculated that six billion euros have been lost directly by the tourism sector (hotels, bars and restaurants) and a further 4.3 billion euros indirectly, through damage inflicted on other business sectors, such as food suppliers or taxi drivers.



Most hotels on the Costa have been closed since September. NITO SALAS

The collapse in tourism has already forced the closure of 1,785 companies and destroyed the jobs of 17,605 workers locally.

At a national level

A further, year-end report gives an insight into the economic effect of Covid-19 across Spain. According to an annual work study by recruiters Adecco, it will take

four years for employment levels to reach their pre-coronavirus levels nationally.

The pandemic has destroyed some 600,000 jobs, it says, and in 2021 only 200,000 will be created again. There has been a 3.5 per cent fall in people working year-on-year but in the under-25s age group this drop is as high as 20 per cent, the study found.

Andalucía confirms no new Covid-19 restrictions for New Year and a review on 4 January

The regional president praised people's efforts to keep the virus under control over the Christmas holidays



Moreno speaking last Sunday. EFE

SUR

MALAGA. The president of Andalucía, Juanma Moreno, confirmed last Sunday that the special measures to control the pandemic will not be changed for the New Year.

Moreno said, "Thanks to everyone's effort it's been possible to get to the beginning of Christmas with reasonably low infection and hospitalisation rates."

The regional committee of experts decided not to impose any further modification or tightening of the current restrictions that will remain in place until 10 January. A review will be carried out on 4 January.

Moving between Andalucía's eight provinces is allowed and the hospitality industry will be able to continue serving from 8pm until 10.30pm.

From 6 to 8pm, bars and restaurants may serve nonalcoholic drinks only, providing they are licensed as a café.

Shops can stay open until 9pm and the curfew is still set between 11pm and 6am, except on New Year's Eve, when it starts at 1.30am on 1 January.

In homes, up to ten people can get together on New Year's Eve - with the advice that "they do not mix more than two groups sharing a home", while the maximum number of diners per table in a restaurant continues to be six.

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Brexit campaign groups welcome trade deal but lament loss of rights

Bremain and Brexpaths vowed to continue to work to protect Britons' rights by working closely with authorities in Spain

JENNIE RHODES

MALAGA. Reactions to the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement have come in from Spain-based Brexit campaign groups. Speaking as British MPs debated its contents in the House of Commons, Sue Wilson, Chair of Bremain in Spain, said, "After weeks of uncertainty, news of a trade deal between the UK and the EU came as a relief. Although a deal was welcome, it was not a cause for celebration – merely the lesser of two evils. A bad deal really was

a better option than no deal at all."

Although Britons' rights in Spain had already been guaranteed, so there was little change for those already legally resident, or in the process of getting residency here, a deal does reinforce that guarantee, said observers.

Anne Hernández, President of Brexpaths in Spain, explained, "The deal that the UK has struck with the EU isn't a good deal but it is obviously better than no deal."

She went on to say, "However, we Brits in the EU have no support whatsoever, no representation in any parliament and since the referendum we have been out on a limb, most definitely out of sight and out of

mind. Left to our own devices, we have had to rely on Spain to defend and support us and they have done their absolute best to meet the demand of our applications for TIEs and exchange of UK driving licences."

Travel and Erasmus+

A big relief for businesses that operate between the UK and Spain was the agreement on zero-tariff trade between the EU and the UK

A big relief for businesses that operate between the UK and Spain was the agreement on zero tariffs

and the inclusion of aviation and arrangements for airlines in the deal, allowing people to "travel to and from the EU easily".

The deal includes provisions for future social security coordination, such as on state pensions, and confirms 90-day visa-free travel within any 180-day period for tourists and business traveller and for cross-border workers.

One of the biggest disappointments for many was the ending of the Erasmus+ programme for British students to live and study abroad. Dublin has confirmed that it will continue to fund Northern Irish students' participation in the scheme.

Gibraltar was still undecided

At the time of press, negotiations were still ongoing over Gibraltar, as stated in part seven of the agreement, 'Territorial Scope': "The UK, Gibraltar and Spain will continue to negotiate arrangements to seek the best possible outcome for the people of Gibraltar and surrounding area."

Campaign and support organisations including Bremain and Brexpaths in Spain have vowed to carry on working closely with authorities in Spain and in particular the British Embassy.

"Plans are afoot for 2021, we shall continue to be needing help from Spain," Hernández told SUR.

Reassurance for those in residency limbo as clocks chime on end of transition period

NEIL HESKETH

MALAGA. With the clock ticking on the deadline for Britons to register residency in Spain to take advantage of the terms of the EU Withdrawal Agreement, the UK Embassy launched a final reassuring message of 2020. "If you are unable to complete the registration process before 1 January, you will still be protected...as long as you were legally living in Spain before the end of 2020," said the statement. "That means meeting the EU free movement conditions of working, being self-employed, or having sufficient income and comprehensive healthcare cover to support you during your retirement or studies."

From 1 January, Britons can only stay in Spain for up to 90 days in any 180 day period if they are not legally resident. Visitors' passports are expected to be date stamped at airports.

Within the latest EU-UK deal there is good news however, as a form of EHIC emergency health cover for all UK visitors is set to continue into the future.

The right to use a UK driving licence by holidaymakers was also agreed, but not for residents, who face fines once a six-month grace period ends.

Boss of UK Consulate's international call centre in Malaga is given MBE

Michelle Stewart has led a team of over 100 people answering up to 10,000 calls a day in 16 languages during the pandemic

SUR IN ENGLISH

MALAGA. The operations manager at the UK government's international consular contact centre, based in Malaga, has been awarded the MBE in Britain's New Year Honours List.

Michelle Stewart will collect her award for services to British nationals overseas, it was revealed on Thursday this week.

The Costa-based centre is the hub for calls from around the world and operates 24 hours a day.

Over 100 remote staff work in 16 foreign languages to provide support, taking day-to-day pressure off UK consulates globally. They have faced extra workload throughout the pandemic when the number of calls coming in surged from 2,000 to 10,000 a day at times.

Michelle first joined the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office as a team leader at the centre after an earlier career in tourism.

British Ambassador Hugh Elliott said: "Michelle's calm and focused leadership and resilience has allowed her to manage a global team successfully during this unprecedented and protracted global emergency this year."



Michelle Stewart



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Photo of the drugs in Nerja. **SUR**

Eight arrested and over 1.5 tonnes of hashish seized in Nerja during police operation

NERJA

E. C. Guardia Civil officers arrested eight people and seized 1,535 kilogrammes of hashish in Nerja last weekend.

The operation began in the early hours of Saturday morning after a semi-rigid boat typically used to transport hashish in the Strait of Gibraltar was detected near the coast.

The crew made for a beach in Nerja where one person was detained and seven more were later rounded up. Officers seized the boat as well as 24 bales of hashish.

Twenty plastic barrels, normally used for carrying fuel for boats, were found to have false bottoms and also contained the drug.

In total 1,535 kilogrammes of hashish were recovered.

Surprise joint retirement ceremony at El Capistrano

NERJA

Dolores Platero has worked as Estate Manager for 40 years while Keith Taylor has stepped down as President and 15 years on the committee

JENNIE RHODES

NERJA. A double retirement ceremony took place at the El Capistrano residential development in Nerja last Wednesday for both Dolores Platero, who has been the Estate Manager for 40 years and Keith Taylor who stepped down in September as President after four years in the role.

Prior to becoming president when Alfons Mettel retired four years ago, Keith had been vice president and committee member for a total of 15 years.

A small outdoor ceremony was held on 23 December when plaques were unveiled for both Dolores and Keith.

Both admitted that the event was a “complete surprise” and had thought they were going along to give a brief speech about the other. “I had prepared something to say about Keith,” Dolores laughed, adding, “so it was a complete surprise when I realised that Keith had prepared a speech about me.” Keith said exactly the

Dolores Platero (2nd left) and Keith Taylor (2nd right) last Wednesday. **SUR**

same thing about Dolores.

Keith, 75, explained to SUR in English that he and his wife Pat moved to Capistrano in 1996 when he retired from his dental practice in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. The couple were soon “drawn into everything” Keith explained.

By the mid 2000s Keith was on the executive committee before becoming vice president. In early 2017 when Alfons retired he took over as president.

Keith speaks very highly of Dolores, describing her as a “remarkable woman”. He explained that she “guided” him through a num-

ber of problems during his presidency with “total professionalism”.

Both Keith and Dolores spoke of the ups and downs of managing a large community like Capistrano, with 530 homes belonging to people of many different nationalities with an annual budget of over one million euros.

They mentioned disputes with the town hall, problems with water suppliers and developers as well as the problems the Covid-19 pandemic has brought, but both said there had been “a lot of good times too”. Dolores’s last day will be 8 January, a day after her 65th birthday.

Brit arrested after stolen van involved in police chase leaves officer in critical condition

NERJA

A. F. / E. C. / F. T. Three Guardia Civil officers were seriously injured after a 28-year-old British man rammed their police vehicle in a stolen van during a high-speed chase along the A7 motorway on Tuesday.

It is believed that the suspect stole the van belonging to the Vélez-Málaga based López-Pardo catering business in Motril when the driver left it open to deliver a package to a restaurant near the beach.

Police were alerted to the theft and the van was located on the Algarrobo area of the motorway.

When the van rammed the police vehicle it also tipped over into the central reservation. The driver tried to escape on foot but was caught after injuring two more officers while trying to resist arrest.

A 40-year-old officer remains in a critical condition in intensive care in Malaga’s regional hospital.

Rincón’s animal welfare campaign to promote responsible pet ownership

RINCÓN DE LA VICTORIA

SUR. Rincón de la Victoria town hall launched an animal welfare campaign on Monday aimed at educating residents about giving pets as Christmas presents.

The campaign, which will mainly be run via the council’s social media sites, shows a Teckel puppy with the slogan ‘I am forever’ with a soft toy version of the same breed of dog with the words ‘and I am a Christmas present’ next to it.

Councillor María Carmen Cañizares explained that the idea was to remind people that “including a pet in the family comes with changes to lifestyle and pace of life.”

The town hall also aims to promote the responsible adoption of animals rather than buying them from breeders, as well as laws against mistreatment and abandonment of animals, which Mayor Francisco Salado pointed out are “criminal offences.”

Town hall and Nerja Cave Foundation officials at the new entrance. **E. C.**

Nerja Cave reopens for second time this year with improved access as well as objectives for 2021

NERJA

E. C. As the Nerja Cave reopened to visitors last week for the second time this year, local authorities including the town hall and

Nerja Cave foundation unveiled a series of changes at the Neolithic site. Improved signposting and entrance as well as clearer parking and a children’s playground are all part of an investment programme which has been rolled out while the cave has been closed due to Coronavirus restrictions.

The authorities also set out objectives for 2021. It is hoped that around 270,000 visitors will access the site, compared with 410,000 in 2019. The annual music and dance festival will be suspended again next year.

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Shops close and a curfew is introduced as Covid-19 cases rise in Gibraltar



Covid cases are rising sharply. **SUR**

Although the government on the Rock has not imposed a full lockdown, it is asking people not to mix with other households

DEBBIE BARTLETT

GIBRALTAR. The chief minister of Gibraltar announced new restrictions at a press conference on Sunday afternoon, as Covid-19 cases continued to rise at a very concerning rate. On that day, the number of active cases had reached a record 482 and 1,703 people were in self-isolation, including a large number of front-line services personnel.

Fabian Picardo said the virus was behaving differently now and was twice as infectious as it was before, explaining that "if we continue meeting and congregating outside of our households as if nothing was going on, the virus will continue to spread like wildfire. I am therefore left with no choice but to announce stricter measures for at least 14 days".

These measures included a curfew, starting that same evening, from 10pm until 6am, with certain exceptions such as people work-

ing, delivering food, walking a dog or seeking medical attention. Picardo said at the time that the curfew would be relaxed on New Year's Eve, but on Tuesday night

this was changed after advice from medical and public health experts and the curfew will therefore apply.

All non-essential retail businesses had to close from Monday, as did hairdressers and beauty salons. The number of people allowed to gather was reduced to 12, but the chief minister urged everyone not to mix with others at all. He asked the over-70s in particular to act as if they were in full lockdown: "We love you dearly. Our nation is built on your effort. Lock-

ing you down would be the very safest route to take, but out of respect for your sense of responsibility, we are not doing so legally... so please do act responsibly. The vaccine is round the corner. We are almost there. Please do not put yourselves in danger now. Behave as if you were locked down by law, for your own good," he said.

Picardo also warned that further restrictions may become necessary and said he will make another announcement on or before 7 January.

As the Brexit cut off arrives, a decision on Gibraltar's future EU relationship goes down to the wire

D. BARTLETT

GIBRALTAR. The 31 December deadline is upon us and at the time of going to press there was still no news about the separate agreement needed over Gibraltar's future relationship with the EU once the transition period ends.

The Gibraltar government has been negotiating with its Spanish counterpart, via the UK, on ways to prevent border problems if no agreement is reached. Chief minister Fabian Picardo said recently that he was optimistic that a deal was very close, and Spain's foreign minister expressed her concern over citizens both sides of the border, but neither had revealed what the final sticking points were, despite speculation in the UK and Spanish media. Talks may continue beyond the deadline, but in that case the interim period from 1 January could cause confusion and disruption at the border.

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Miguel Benítez with the cheque and certificate of thanks. **SUR**

Nerja's 41 Club makes Christmas donation to local food bank

NERJA

J. RHODES. Members of Nerja's 41 Club donated 500 euros from their charity account to Nerja Solidaria de Alimentos, the local food bank, on Monday.

Nerja Solidaria President Miguel Benítez said, "Nerja relies on tourism so this year has been devastating and some families found themselves without a single breadwinner."

Miguel went on to hand a 'Certificate of Thanks' to Dr Brian Karet, who is a Nerja Solidaria volunteer and secretary of the 41 Club.

Dr Karet said, "In the short time

I have been working here the number of families needing help has more than tripled and the situation may not improve for a long time."

The food bank is staffed entirely by volunteers and is part of a network which buys basic foods and personal hygiene products wholesale and then distributes them to families.

41 Club Chairman Peter MacLeod said, "Donations, however small, are welcome. They may be made to the town hall, or via 41 Club."

For further information about the 41 Club contact Peter MacLeod on 678 059 288.

Landmark new square in Benalmádena to honour historic paper industry

BENALMÁDENA

T. B. Benalmádena town hall has announced plans to create a new public square in the heart of Arroyo de la Miel. Work on the new plaza, which will be located near the old aqueduct that was once part of the town's paper industry, will begin in the new year. The project will cost around 300,000 euros and will take approximately three months to complete. The initiative has been on the back burner since 2005, when plans were abandoned by the former council and the area fell into ruin.



Víctor Navas

Mayor Víctor Navas said, "Thanks to the stability of government that we enjoy today in Benalmádena, we have been able to save one of the most emblematic and historically valued corners of the town."

Mercadona donates more than 260 tonnes of food to meal centres and charities

MALAGA

JUAN SOTO. Spanish supermarket giant, Mercadona, has donated more than 260 tonnes of basic necessities to meal centres and charities across Malaga province. The chain has strengthened its collaboration with the Emaus meal kitchens in Estepona, Vélez-Málaga and Torremolinos; the Casa de Asís, in Antequera; the Santo Domingo kitchen and the Yo soy Tú and el Cottolengo associations in Malaga city. Mercadona's director of external relations in Malaga, Paco Rodríguez said this shows "the firm's commitment to be alongside the most disadvantaged groups".

"The exceptional situation...requires agility in our decisions with a single objective: to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable," he added.

Mercadona donates to more than 280 meal centres, 60 food banks and other charities in Spain and Portugal.

Expats group provides support for struggling hospitality sector

FUENGIROLA

T. BRYANT. A group of caring expats have formed a new support platform to help the local hospitality industry overcome the devastating effects of the coronavirus pandemic. The brainchild of Val Williams, the group aims to support local venues and artists by hosting charity events to raise funds to keep the industry afloat in 2021.

Val has recently stepped down as president of Friends of the Theatre (FOTA), although she is not ready to retire just yet. The 81-year-old British expat held the position for 18 years and in that time, she helped raise more than 120,000 euros for the theatre.

As the Covid pandemic devel-

oped, Val became more worried about businesses struggling in the Mijas and Fuengirola areas and so she decided to set up a Facebook page called Simply Surviving. Val has secured the support of local entrepreneur Alan Boardman, founder of Mijas Walking Tours. Alan, a long-time supporter of the amateur entertainment industry on the coast, said that the group's desire is to "help revive the local entertainment industry".

The group, which already has more than 200 members, has arranged a series of events to take place in the new year, and these include a fun quiz at the Salón Varietés Theatre, one of the establishments that is currently experiencing severe financial difficulties.



Members with Val Williams (3rd l) and Alan Boardman (3rd r). **SUR**

Marbella's Food Fairies bring Christmas cheer to Costa families

MARBELLA

SUR IN ENGLISH. A Marbella-based charity is celebrating after delivering Christmas hampers and presents to almost 800 underprivileged families this week.

A team of 25 volunteers helped deliver the gifts to those in need between Manilva and Malaga.

The operation saw hundreds of Costa del Sol locals donate food, money and toys to the charity over the past few weeks.

British expat Kara Caradas, who organised the project, said: "We all worked our asses off and we did it."

"No one expected the volume but we delivered to just under 800 families in time for Christmas."

The 36-year-old Brit started the registered charity during lockdown to help those who were



Kara with volunteers. **SUR**

struggling to feed their children during the pandemic.

However, with Christmas approaching the charity realised there were still a lot of people that needed their help.

Kara, from Kent, who has lived in Spain for 20 years and manages Marbella's Boardwalk Cafe, added: "I feel very humbled and proud by everyone's efforts and very emotional by it all. Thank you to everyone who helped support us and a Merry Christmas to the whole coast."

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King's Christmas message focuses on the Covid crisis

MADRID

King Felipe also referred to the need to uphold the Constitution and maintain ethical standards, in a veiled reference to his father

MARÍA EUGENIA ALONSO

As every year, King Felipe VI welcomed the arrival of the festive season with his Christmas Eve televised message.

The coronavirus pandemic, which he said had led to a social and economic crisis that has changed the lives of Spaniards and the rest of the world, was prominent in his 13-minute speech.

The King did not directly mention his father, Juan Carlos I, who was embroiled in financial controversies in 2020, but part of the message appeared to be aimed in his direction.



King Felipe

Speaking about Covid-19, King Felipe acknowledged that the current situation "is serious".

Even so, he said he had confidence in the ability of Spanish society to overcome this situation

and "face the future with determination and security".

In his speech, the monarch appealed to individual responsibility as an "effective instrument" in the fight against the virus and urged people to stay alert at all times.

He remembered all the people who had lost family and friends due to the disease: "In thousands of homes there is a void impossible to fill due to the death of your loved ones, who I want to remember with feeling and full respect." In addition, he referred to those key staff working on the front line against Covid-19.

Ethical principles for all

The Head of State also mentioned in the broadcast the need to defend the Constitution since it "reflects our way of understanding life, with our rights and freedoms".

In this traditional Christmas Eve speech, he stated: "The moral and ethical principles that citizens demand from our conduct are an obligation for us all without exception." He stressed that these principles "are above any consideration, of whatever nature, even personal or family ones."



Semana Santa will not go ahead for the second year in a row. EFE

Seville's Easter processions and Feria de Abril in 2021 fall victim to the pandemic

SEVILLE

SUR. The Archbishop of Seville has signed an order to suspend the huge Holy Week processions in the city in 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Taking into account the organisational complexity of managing the huge crowds we are forced to take extraordinary measures to help mitigate the spread of the Covid," explained a statement published on the Archbishop's website.

Earlier in December, the mayor of Seville had also announced the suspension of the iconic April Fair (Feria de Abril) in 2021 because he could not guarantee the safety of people as it is expected that at that time only 30 per cent of the population will have immunity to Covid-19.

Language gurus choose Spanish word for lockdown as their 'word of the year'

MADRID

MIGUEL LORENCI. A top foundation to promote the good use of the Spanish language has chosen 'confinamiento' as its word of the year. The word literally means confinement but is also used in Spanish as the equivalent of the English word lockdown.

It was chosen by the FundéuRAE, a foundation run by the EFE national press agency and advised by top language and dictionary experts.

They had to pick from a shortlist of 12 words mostly relating to the coronavirus pandemic and its effects, such as vaccine and resilience.

'Confinamiento' is defined by the RAE (Royal Spanish Academy) as "temporary and generally imposed isolation of a population, a person or a group for health or safety reasons".

THE EURO ZONE MARK NAYLER

The big issues



Pedro Sánchez slapped himself on the back this week, declaring that his government has fulfilled 23.4% of its promises during 2020 and that 90% of the remainder have been actioned. In doing so, he prompts us to evaluate the performance of his coalition administration over the last twelve months, a period of time characterised by eye-popping levels of political incompetence and very questionable suspensions of fundamental liberties.

Although its ability to generate interesting or informative headlines was quickly exhausted, Covid dominated Spanish news and commentary throughout 2020. And in Spain, as in many other countries around the globe, the central government's panicked response has resulted in a vast net of restrictions, which ensnares and entangles you the moment you leave your house.

Some of these rules can't be obeyed without breaking others, as is the case with the

"no-smoking-at terraces-but-only-on-the-street" thing. Thankfully, this piece of absurdity is now openly flouted, as it deserves to be (or at least it is in my locals).

Other regulations, especially those concerned with mask-wearing, command us to behave in an irrational manner and threaten us with fines if we're caught exercising a little situational logic; (where's all this money - taken from people who forget or choose not to follow laughable rules - going, by the way?).

While on a bus travelling through deserted Malaga countryside the other day, I passed a guy walking alongside the road with his mask dutifully strapped on, although the nearest person was probably a couple of kilometres away. Why? A few days before that, a power-drunk policeman shouted at my girlfriend to pull her facial hardware up as she was putting out the rubbish - on an empty street. Why? Both of these incidents perfectly captured the insanity and sinister surreal-

ism of last year.

Yet it's not all about Covid, certainly not in Spain. Another of 2020's big stories centred on the alleged fraudulent activities of the country's once-adored king, Juan Carlos. Juan Carlos fled to Abu Dhabi when the news broke in August, and made a hefty tax payment a few weeks ago, neither of which screams innocence of the charges brought against him. The wider context of Juan Carlos's troubles is a debate about the future of the Spanish monarchy, an issue on which Spaniards are split down the middle. What's really needed is a new poll on the subject, especially as the last one was conducted several years ago, before details of Juan Carlos's apparently limitless greed emerged.

Then there's the volcanic matter of Catalan independence, which will dominate the region's elections on Valentine's Day. It remains uncertain whether the nine leading separatists sentenced in October 2019 will receive pardons, which in turn begs the question of whether they should have been imprisoned in the first place. There are plenty of inherently Spanish subjects to follow and discuss throughout 2021, then - and they're all much more interesting than boring old Covid.



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HOSPITAL

ARTERIAL HYPERTENSION: HOW TO BEAT A GIANT

The Hospital Helicópteros Sanitarios in Marbella has added the Renal Denervation (RDN) technique to its portfolio of services in order to combat hypertension

MÁLAGA

SUR. The cardiovascular intervention unit at Hospital Helicópteros Sanitarios in Puerto Banús (Marbella), staffed by doctors Luis Íñigo, Pedro Brugada and Eduardo Molina, carries out all sorts of interventions related to arrhythmias, ischemic cardiopathy and other congenital or structural heart diseases. They have recently added the renal denervation (RDN) technique to this portfolio of services, relying on the experience of pioneering cardiologists to obtain excellent results.

Arterial hypertension (high blood pressure) has become a huge public health problem in developed countries and is one of the risk factors for cardiovascular ailments. It is defined by readings of ≥ 140 mm Hg systolic and/or ≥ 90 mm Hg diastolic pressure.

An increasingly common illness

The prevalence of hypertension is increasing at a global level. In 2000 an estimated 972 million adults had high blood pressure, and the figure is expected to have reached about 1,560 million by 2025. It is an illness which, in itself, tends to be asymptomatic and its importance revolves around the fact that the higher the blood pressure, the greater the risk of death.

High blood pressure is responsible for more deaths than any other vascular risk factor. It has been proven that slight reductions in arterial pressure (of just 5 or 10 mmHg) can significantly reduce the number of heart attacks, disabling strokes, kidney failure or heart failures.

The ideal values for people aged over 18 are 120/80mmHG, and readings of up to 140/90mmHg are considered to be normal. For diabetic patients or those with kidney failure, the optimal values are under 130/80 mmHg. The threshold for arterial hypertension, therefore, must be consid-

ered to be a flexible one based on patients' cardiovascular risk level and profile.

The objective of treatment to lower and correctly manage blood pressure is to reduce the cardiovascular morbidity. This, however, is achieved in less than 50% of patients, sometimes due to poor therapeutic adherence and sometimes due to inefficiency of medication in cases of severe and refractory hypertension. To these two causes we must add another, equally important one: the side effects of medication and possible tolerance to them.

To circumvent these drawbacks and improve the prognosis of hypertension sufferers, a new, non-pharmacological treatment method is now being employed which acts on the sympathetic nervous system, lowering arterial pressure and even removing the need for drugs in patients with mild cases. Studies on kidney physiopathology have revealed in a credible manner that an increase in sympathetic activity originating in the kidneys encourages a rise in blood pressure and produces organ damage not only in the kidneys but also in other target organs.

The new technique is called renal denervation (RDN). It is a minimally invasive procedure which is carried out under local anaesthetic and sedation, and consists of introducing a catheter via the femoral artery to gain access to both renal arteries and then carry

out a radio frequency ablation of the sympathetic nervous system to innervate the aforementioned arteries. That catheter, known as Spyral, is made by Medtronic and has a design that allows for simultaneous application of radio frequency at four different points. After various applications both the afferent and efferent sympathetic renal tracks are interrupted, reducing vascular tone and blocking the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system and achieving a drop in blood pressure with no adverse effects.

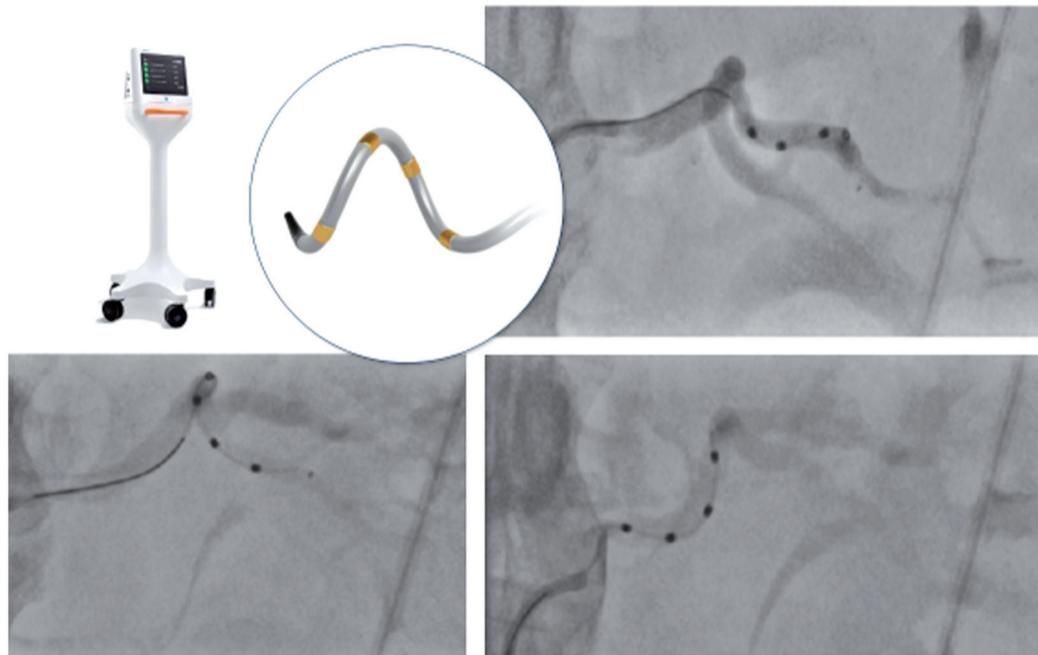
The procedure takes about 45 minutes and has a complication rate of very nearly 0%.

We know that a reduction of 20 mm Hg in systolic arterial pressure or 10mmHg in diastolic arterial pressure halves the risk of death of cardiovascular causes. This improvement is not

hard to achieve in many of these patients following RDN.

A number of recently published studies have proved, in patients with moderate arterial hypertension, that RDN is efficient to improve blood pressure readings in the doctor's surgery and, more importantly, 24-hour ambulatory monitoring of arterial pressure (MAPA) readings, both in patients who do not take medication and those with incomplete pharmacological treatment. It was also revealed that many patients with severe cases have been able to significantly reduce the amount of medication they take.

The safety and efficiency of the treatment has been tested in a variety of patients presenting common clinical conditions (diabetes, kidney failure, heart failure, atrial fibrillation, refractory hypertension). They are all



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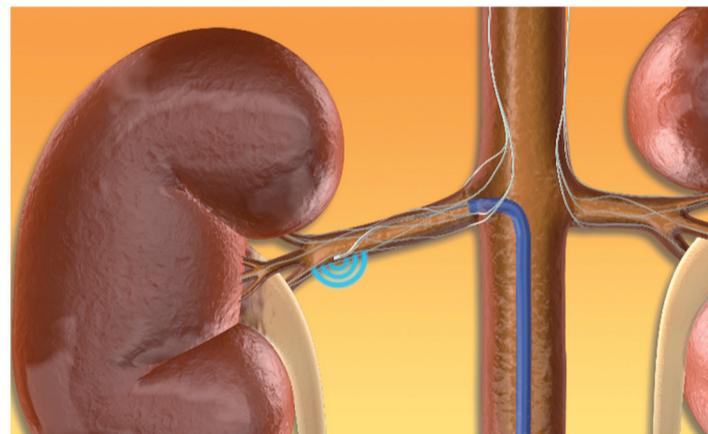
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included in the GSR (global Sym- plicity register), and constitute the greatest set of RDN data in the world with more than 2,700 patients included and monitored for more than 3 years. Very significant reductions in systolic and diastolic arterial tension have been seen in these patients.

In conclusion, treating arterial hypertension is an important challenge for everyday clinical practice. Renal denervation by catheter represents an innovative technique to efficiently lower these patients' blood pressure, and there is much evidence to confirm reductions in blood pressure and benefits to quality of life in a great majority of patients with hypertension, considerably improving the therapeutic arsenal for their treatment.

Extensive experience

Dr Molina carried out his first renal denervation intervention in 2014 at the haemodynamic unit at the Virgen de las Nieves University Hospital in Granada, where he is currently the clinical director. He belongs to the national renal denervation work group and is a member of the committee which draws up the national consensus paper to determine the correct use and indication of RDN at specialist centres. The experience this group has accumulated enables it to provide a success rate of more than 80%, with a lack of complications in all cases.



LETTERS
TO THE EDITOR

Covid for Christmas

It wasn't that long ago that people were moaning about Christmas - how it was too expensive, such hassle coordinating with the extended family, a nightmare putting up with the in-laws. New Year's Eve was always a massive anti-climax. Now that's suddenly changed. For so many people it's somehow become this inalienable right that they're are flagrantly willing to risk lives for.

Is it so much to ask to make a small sacrifice just this time around? Every year health services across the world are put under immense strain during the winter. This year we're heading for catastrophe and yet so many people don't seem to want to take any responsibility, willingly bending the rules.

I understand it's been a difficult year. But is Covid at Christmas and a family death in the new year really worth it?

AUDREY WELLS

Fence us in

With this new 'British' variant running rampant, there's only one way to keep us safe here. Spain has to close its borders, keep all foreigners out, even Spanish residents and nationals.

They've had enough time to get home now. We've got to pull up the drawbridge and fence ourselves in.

ANTHONY HILL

China virus

Back at the start of this crisis President Trump was told he couldn't call it 'the China virus'. So why now is it ok to call it 'the British variant' or 'the South African strain'? It feels like double standards.

SARA O'SHEA

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THE MUSIC MAKER
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Predictionary corner

It's that glorious time of year when we make wild and wholly unfounded predictions for the coming twelve months. It is, of course, a totally pointless exercise but good fun, anyway. Here's my best shot.

First, in the world of music, another young man with a very high voice will release yet another song that sounds like your nan's wallpaper. He'll be hailed as The Next Big Thing for an hour or two until it dawns on all concerned that he closely resembles every other male singer from the last fifteen years, at which point there'll be a collective yearning for a bloke who actually sings like a bloke. When it becomes apparent that there aren't any in the offing, Barry White and Johnny Cash will once again sell lots of records.

In politics, some people will say some very popular things and then will be called 'populist' by

people who don't like them. They will also be called 'a breath of fresh air' by people who do like them. Everyone on all sides will subsequently run around with their fingers in their ears yelling 'Can't hear you! Can't hear you!' until they collapse in a heap, furtively clutching a small screen hoping that one or two people they hardly know will validate their unsolicited opinions and, indeed, the absurd nature of their existence. Well, one or two people they hardly know, or their mum. It's all the same, really.

Social media, then, will relentlessly offer the modern day equivalent of the tragic Greek tale of Narcissus who fell headlong into a puddle of lager while taking a selfie. Or something.

In the world of sport, footballers will continue to spit copious amounts of phlegm hither and yon ad hoc, showing scant regard for Covid legislation or, indeed,

basic good manners. Snooker players will still be playing in empty, freezing theatres wearing layers of jumpers which make them all look like Big Bill Werbeniuk in his heyday. However, the modern chaps will have to content themselves with a Cup-A-Soup and some hot chocolate as opposed to Big Bill's 417 pints of beer. Per frame.

The economy will trundle on regardless with many countries trillions of euros/pounds/dollars/Monster Munch in debt to many other countries they may or may not have heard of, with no-one actually ever paying any of it back, while 'expert economists' proffer vacuous nonsense about GDPs and peaks and troughs to vaguely normal, dignified people who, generally speaking, can't even work out how the hell that fifty euro note they had in their pocket this morning has miraculously transformed itself into a fiver, a two euro coin and a bus ticket, when they only popped out for a thin white sliced and a tin of corned beef. Or maybe that's just me.

Anyway, however 2021 unfolds, I hope it brings joy and blessings to all.

Happy New Year.

IDÍGORAS



SUR in English

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JOANNA STYLES

Reasons why Malaga is the best place to have a business in 2021

With 2020 at an end, most of us are looking forward to starting afresh in 2021. With vaccination under way, optimism is definitely in the air. The sense that the new year will be a good one for locations that offer what people want.

I believe that Malaga is one of them. And one of the best because the city brings together exactly what tourists and would-be relocators will be looking for in 2021. Here's why.

Safety first. Top of visitors' priorities will be health and safety guarantees and Malaga

offers several:

-The Malaga Safe for You campaign provides weekly antigen tests to employees working in tourism, culture or retail.

-Malaga city has the World Travel and Tourism Council Safe Travels stamp recognising tourist destinations that have health and hygiene protocols in place.

-Guaranteed Covid-19 insurance from the Junta de Andalucía for non-resident foreigners staying in registered accommodation. It provides cover for hospital healthcare, accommodation in an apartment and repatriation.

All that sunshine and light. Malaga is one of the few places in Europe offering 320 guaranteed days of sunshine a year. Plus, the winters are mild and the city enjoys a daily 10 hours of daylight.

By mid-January, the thought of a weekend or short break in the sunshine will be irresistible for many Northern Europeans, virus or no virus. Expect big interest in Malaga this winter.

Plenty of new investment. Despite the effects of the pandemic, businesses have continued to invest in Malaga. More construction cranes have sprung up on the skyline and there's big investment in hotels and high-end residential property.

Malaga is already looking ahead to the next five years and betting on strong tourism and relocation markets.

A top place to live. Malaga regularly features on 'best place to live' rankings and the latest came from Forbes last November. Malaga is one of the 20 best places for Americans to live in Europe because it's "family friendly and also very suitable for single digital nomads or couples, as well as retirees who wish to live an active, culturally rich

and lively retirement."

Great communications. Malaga does communications very well. The Airport has direct flights from dozens of European cities and down on the ground, well-maintained roads connect the city to the rest of the Costa del Sol and beyond.

Online connectivity is just as important in today's work-from-home world - 5G arrived in the city in 2020 and fibre-optic internet is widely available.

Something for everyone. As Forbes pointed out, Malaga caters for any demographic and from all walks of life. Best of all? They all get a warm welcome.

Looking forward to 2021. My glass is always half-full, but natural optimism aside, I genuinely believe that 2021 will be Malaga's year. The year when the city emerges as one of Europe's preferred destinations for safe, sunny and quality short-breaks and relocation. And the year that the city's best businesses reap real rewards.

Joanna Styles is CEO of Guide to Malaga, a provider of information in English about the city for tourists and residents. www.guidetomalaga.com

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A New Year's custom difficult to digest

Lucky grapes. The strange practice of eating 12 grapes at midnight is thought to have been introduced in the 19th century by the Madrid bourgeoisie, who copied the idea from the French



◀ Caricature from 1911 showing various politicians eating the lucky grapes in the Puerta del Sol in Madrid.

roots in Madrid, but it has caught on among the expat communities, although few have mastered the procedure.

At the first dong of midnight, one must pop a grape into their mouth and swallow it before the second dong, approximately three seconds later. There is little time to chew and swallow, much less savour the twelve grapes, but if you eat them all by the end of the final bell's toll – and this does not mean finishing with a mouthful of pulp and pips – then one can expect good luck throughout the coming year: this is, of course, providing one does not choke to death in the process.

The custom can be traced back to the 19th century, although the exact origins remain debatable. One popular theory claims it was popularised in 1903 after a bumper grape harvest in Alicante (where around 80 per cent of the lucky grapes come from), al-

though the republication of old newspaper articles prove that it actually began in the 1890s. An article titled *The Benefactor of Grapes* published on 1 January 1894 reported that the custom “has acquired among us a letter of nature”. Another article said: “The enduring habit of eating the grapes when the first bell of twelve sounded, had countless families gathered together in fraternal colloquium.”

French origins

It is claimed that the bourgeoisie of Madrid copied the idea from the French tradition of having grapes and champagne on the last day of the year. The new custom soon took off among the well-heeled families, but it was quickly ironised by the poorer citizens, who began converging on the Puerta del Sol to mock the new upper-class practice.

Although scoffing twelve grapes at midnight is somewhat difficult, it is more appetising than the Russian custom of washing down the ashes of your wish list with champagne, and less dangerous than the Danish tradition of hurling plates and crockery in the air as the clock strikes.

TONY BRYANT



As the old year comes to an end and the stroke of the clock at midnight is eagerly awaited, the people of Spain get ready to participate in

the unusual custom of the twelve lucky grapes. This strange ordeal usually takes place in the main plazas of towns and cities around Spain, especially at the foot of the

clock in the Puerta del Sol in Madrid. But this year, most will perform this difficult ritual in front of their television sets.

This Spanish custom has its

WHAT HAPPENED TODAY?

1 JANUARY 1986

Spain joins the European Economic Community

After being ineligible for membership before Franco died, Spain's new democratic government lost no time in applying for accession

DEBBIE BARTLETT



On New Year's Day 1986, after many years of trying, Spain officially became a member of the European Economic Community, the predecessor to the European Union, and with Portugal joining on the same day this became what was known as ‘the Europe of 12’. Spain had signed the Accession Treaty to the European Com-

munities on 12 June 1985.

Spain began its application to join the EEC in 1977, shortly after the election of its first democratic government in over 40 years; as a dictatorship, it had not been eligible to do so before and had only been granted a preferential trade agreement.

The political parties, despite strong differences about other issues, showed a united front on membership of the EEC because of their conviction that this would not only assist its modernisation but would also enhance its international reputation. In February 1978 the Council of Ministers of the EC formally opened negotiations for Spain's accession.

It was not a simple matter. The country may have become democratic but other EEC members were concerned that its level of economic development was significantly behind



The EEC was the precursor of the European Union. EFE

that of other states, its industrial sector needed serious reform, and there were difficulties regarding its fishing fleets. Agriculture, however, was the main area of concern.

The issues were resolved successfully, although Spain

literally paid a price for its membership: it became a net contributor to the EC budget for several years. The general feeling in the country, though, was that the future benefits would outweigh the immediate costs.

LANGUAGE FOOTNOTE

Europa	Europe
Estado	State
Dictadura	Dictatorship
Democracia	Democracy
Comunidad	Community
Tratado	Treaty
Firmar	To sign
Gobierno	Government
Partidos	Parties
Comercio	Trade
Negociaciones	Negotiations
Consejo	Council
Miembros	Members
Desarrollo	Development
País	Country
Industria	Industry
Agricultura	Agriculture
Beneficios	Benefits
Gastos	Costs

Spain became a member country of the Schengen Area on 26 March 1995 and of the Eurozone on 1 January 1999.

Opinion polls in recent years have shown that although there is criticism of EU institutions among some in Spain, in general the overall view of EU membership is still positive.

Bilingual crossword inside back page



DENISE BUSH

GARDENING

Dyschoriste oblongifolia

Native to Florida, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia, *Dyschoriste oblongifolia* is a low-growing perennial herb which has stunning purple, trumpet-shaped flowers.

It is commonly called snake herb, twinflower (the flowers usually open in pairs, back-to-back) and oblongleaf twin flower. In some plant catalogues

it may also be listed under a synonym, *Ruellia oblongifolia*.

The twinflower has small, oblong leaves around 4cm long by about 1.5cm wide. They have a slightly hairy top surface.

The small purple flowers usually form in pairs and have five, lobed

petals. The lower petals are marked with darker streaks that extend into the throat. Although the blooms do not carry much nectar, they are extremely attractive to bees, butterflies and other pollinating insects. The twinflower will form dense clumps up to 30cm high and flowering may occur all year around in temperate areas.

In cooler areas the main flowering period is from June to August, after which the flowers set seed in brown, oblong pods as the plant becomes dormant.

The seeds are dispersed when the pod pops open or are carried away by ants. The seeds germinate easily and twinflowers can become invasive although they are easy to eradicate. They also spread by sending out rhizomes. Twinflowers can be propagated by dividing the clumps, or be left to naturalise.

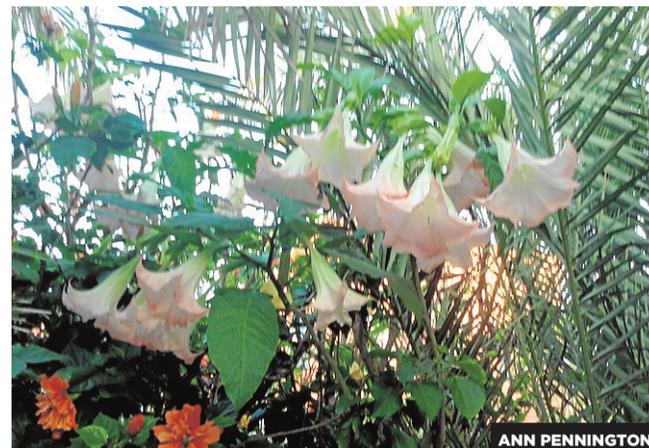
Although drought tolerant for short periods, twinflowers benefit from regular watering during the summer. They like the heat so a position in full sun or partial shade is preferable and will promote continued flowering.

Dyschoriste oblongifolia is found growing wild in dry, sandy pine forests and therefore needs soil with good drainage. Their ability to colonise and spread make them ideal for groundcover, but they can also be used for the front of a border or in containers and hanging baskets.



Dyschoriste oblongifolia and close up (inset). SUR

READERS' PHOTOS



ANN PENNINGTON

Angels Trumpets

In milder areas of Andalucía you may be lucky to have *Brugmansia* flowering in winter, like this one that belongs to Ann Pennington.



MARIA HILLEN

Flor de Pascua

Poinsettias (Flor de Pascua) have to be the most popular Christmas flower of all time and this one is in all its festive glory in the garden of Maria Hillen.

PHOTOS

Calling all gardeners

We know many of our readers have lovely gardens, or enjoy growing plants on their terraces or balconies and some like to take photos of plants they see when out and about. Why not share them with others? Email

your photos to english@diariosur.es or send them to SUR in English, Avda Dr Marañón 48, 29009 Málaga, with a caption and a few words of explanation. Alternatively, you can send them to us via Facebook ([@surenglish](https://www.facebook.com/surenglish)) or Twitter ([@SUR_English](https://twitter.com/SUR_English)).

COMMUNITY SCENE

MIJAS

Rotary Club gives festive help to the homeless

T. BRYANT. Members of the Rotary Club Mijas have been out in force over the Christmas period delivering food parcels to the Fuengirola food bank. Over the last few months, the association has donated more than 2,000 euros to help the food bank feed the homeless and support families in dan-

ger of social exclusion during the coronavirus pandemic.

On 6 January, Rotarians will deliver more than 50 bags containing food, toiletries and clothing to the homeless people in Mijas and Fuengirola as part of its annual Homeless Day project.

"We will never give up on our commitment to help the homeless and underprivileged people in the Mijas and Fuengirola area," explained president Suvi Kauranen.



Rotarians at the food bank. SUR

MALAGA

CLC Foundation serves up a Christmas treat

T.B. Fundación CLC World has once again collaborated with the Los Ángeles Malagueños de la Noche Christmas Menu Campaign. President of the foundation Juan Miguel Marcos presented the soup kitchen with a cheque to cover the cost of the 2,000 tortillas (Spanish omelettes). The meal, which included a roast chicken dinner, was served to the needy on Christmas Eve.

MIJAS

Soroptimist helps feed 400 needy families

T.B. The Soroptimist International Christmas project in Mijas has helped more than 400 families. The charity has been donating non-perishable food to the municipal food bank for several years thanks to the help of numerous charitable organisations. This year, Soroptimist members decided to add fresh vegetables and eggs so people have the possibility to create healthier meals.

EXHIBITIONS

Victor Porlen

LA CALA DE MIJAS. Until 7 January. Centro Cultural. Jaén artist Victor Porlen will be exhibiting a selection of his works.

Recycled Christmas trees

MIJAS PUEBLO. Until 5 January. The streets of Mijas are the location for an exhibition various Christmas trees made and decorated with recycled materials

José Manuel López Toirán

MIJAS PUEBLO. Until 7 January. Casa Museo, C/Libertad. Galician-born artist José Manuel López Toirán uses scrap pieces of wood to create his colourful sculptures.



Hilando, Museo Picasso Malaga.

Cristianos Coptos

LAS LAGUNAS. Until 18 January. Casa de la Cultura. An exhibition of photos by Antonio G. Redondo entitled Cristianos Coptos, Una Forma de Vida.

Mesopotamian art

MARBELLA. Museo Arqueológico Municipal. The exhibition at the archaeology museum consists of various pieces from different periods in the history of ancient Mesopotamia. The collection is owned by Estepona resident and French architect, Jacques Cavro.

Isabel Rosado

MARBELLA. Until 19 January. Galería Yusto/Giner. La Ermita industrial estate, C/Madera, 9. The exhibition Still Living by photographer Isabel Rosado consists of still lifes with a twist. Viewing is by previous appointment only. Email: galleria@yusto-giner.com Call: 951507053.

Christmas Nativity scene

FUENGIROLA. Until January. Museo de la Ciudad de Fuengirola. The traditional display of belenes (Nativity scenes) will take place this year, but visitor numbers are restricted.

Christmas art exhibition

GAUCÍN. Until 10 January. Town Hall, C/Convento. Fourteen artists from the Art Gaucín group are exhibiting their works in the new town hall. The display includes paintings, sculpture, pho-

Three Kings await the arrival of the children in Torremolinos this year

TONY BRYANT

TORREMOLINOS. Children and grown-ups will be able to enjoy the arrival of Los Reyes Magos, (Magi of the East) in Torremolinos on Tuesday 5 January, although, because of restrictions enforced to combat the coronavirus pandemic, the Wise Men will not embark on the traditional procession through the streets of the town. This year, the kings will be installed in the building that will soon house the Sabor a Málaga market in Plaza de la Independencia.

Torremolinos town hall had been looking at different ways that could make this year's event a reality. One of the options was to organise a parade with a single float, which children could view from their balconies and windows, but after careful consideration, it was decided



The Three Kings will be located in Plaza de la Independencia. SUR

that the best option would be for the children to visit the Magi in the centre of town.

The town hall has set up special mail boxes to enable the children to post letters to their favorite king; these letters inform the kings how well they have behaved during the year and ask for the gifts they would

like to receive on 6 January.

Councillor for Culture Aida Blanes said, "We have been working for weeks on different options that could make it a reality for the children of Torremolinos to enjoy such a special day, even if it is different from what we traditionally organise each year."

tography and ceramics. www.artgaurcin.com

Malaga Picasso Museum

MALAGA. Museo Picasso Málaga, Calle San Agustín.

Collection. Dialogues with Picasso. Collection 2020-2023 is formed by 120 works by the artist. These include the cubist sculpture Glass of Absinthe (1914) and the painting Susanna and the Elders (1955).

James Turrell. Until June. The exhibition entitled Cherry, is an experiment with light, space and time.

Hilando Diseño. An enormous tapestry mural of colourful squares created by over five hundred students in primary and secondary schools, art and college students as well as vulnerable adults in care homes in Malaga. www.museopicasso-malaga.org.

The Russian Museum

MALAGA. Edificio Tabacalera, Avda Sor Teresa Prat.

Temporary exhibitions. The two temporary exhibitions currently at the museum are Rompiendo el Silencio. El cine Mudo en Rusia (Breaking the Silence. Silent Film in Russia) and Andréi Tarkovsky. Maestro del Espacio (Master of Space). Andréi Tarkovsky was one of the most influential Russian artists of the 20th century and forerunner of innovative techniques in the cinema of the time. In conjunction with this exhibition is a series of silent movies, with some of the most iconic Russian, Italian and American films available until 4 April 2021.

Annual exhibition. The current annual exhibition at the Russian museum features true-to-life works



James Turrell, Malaga.

from the past three centuries. From still lifes of the 18th century to everyday scenes painted only a few months ago, the museum has created a tour consisting of 163 works in a succession of rooms. Until April 2021.

Centre Pompidou

MALAGA. Muelle Uno.

From Miró to Barceló. The semi-permanent exhibition is entitled De Miró a Barceló. Un siglo de Arte Español. (A century of Spanish art). Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Salvador Dalí and Luis Buñuel were precursors of new ways of seeing and creating, and their legacy still lives on. This chronological journey through a century of Spanish art shows that the generation of contemporary artists has kept alive the spirit of the avant-garde with extraordinary energy.

Charo Carrera. Until March 2021. The main staircase in the Centro Pompidou is the site for the painting Si yo, Si tú by veteran artist Charo Carrera.

Dar la Cara. Until 11 April 2021. The

latest exhibition, Dar la Cara, consists of photos and videos by twenty-six artists. Classic portraits are mixed with contemporary and innovative styles, sometimes surreal and disquieting.

JM Galería

MALAGA. Duquesa de Parcent, 12. De Gente En Gente is the title of the current exhibition at the gallery. It consists of contemporary works created by artist José Miguel Chico López.

Carmen Thyssen Museum

MALAGA. C/ Compañía, 10. 9.30 - 2.30pm. 7 - 9pm Tuesday to Friday. 9.30am - 9pm Saturday and Sunday.

Collection. A journey through mainly Spanish art from the Old Masters through Romantic Landscape and Costumbrismo, Précieux Style and Naturalist Painting and Fin-de-Siècle. **Masks. Metamorphosis of Modern Identity.** Until 10 January 2021. The exhibition consists of over 100 works by national and international artists.

Estrada - Mother and Son

MALAGA. Until 5 January. Salas Minogorance, Archivo Municipal. Mari Pepa Estrada and Rafael Pérez, mother and son, are exhibiting their works which are different in styles but linked by an invisible thread.

Nativity Scene

MALAGA. Until 5 January. Archivo Municipal. The Asociación Belenista de Málaga La Alcazaba have created a special display entitled "Nace Jesús en un Pesebre" which is a fragment of a nativity scene showing the birth of Christ in a stable. The figures are

made out of terracotta and hand painted by sculptor Joaquín Pérez and the buildings, lighting etc are all by ABEMA.

Piña y Más Allá

MALAGA. Until 10 January. Casa Amarilla, C/Santos.

An exhibition of art works by over 40 artists is on display in the gallery.

Museo Revello de Toro

MALAGA. Until 24 January. Closed Mondays. C/Afligidos.

Félix Revello de Toro is a distinguished Malaga artist. Around 117 of his works are on display in the museum which regularly holds workshops and art classes for children and adults. The temporary exhibition is entitled Revello y la Transición Española and consists of ten works completed between 1978 and 1997. More information call:952062069 or email: museorevellode-toro@gmail.com

Museum Jorge Rando

MALAGA. C/ Cruz del Molinillo.

www.museojorgerando.org

Expressionist museum of work by painter and sculptor Jorge Rando.

Enrique Brinkmann

CHURRIANA. Until 5 January, 2021. Casa Gerald Brenan, Calle Torremolinos.

Artist Enrique Brinkmann has an exhibition of 12 of his works entitled Estrellas para Brenan, Obra Gráfica, a personal tribute to the writer. Brinkmann has exhibited in the MOMA in New York as well as many other museums and art galleries around the world.

Marilyn Manson, 21 Years in Hell

MALAGA. Until 22 January. La Térmica. Free.

British photographer Ralph Perou took photos of the extravagant, dark and peculiar American rock star Marilyn Manson over a twenty-one-year period. Thirty of his photographs from the book '21 Years in Hell: Manson/Perou' are on display at the Térmica in Malaga city.

Creadores 2020

MALAGA. Until February. La Térmica. Free.

Six young artists, Abel Jaramillo, Virginia López-Anido, Delia Boyano, Antonio Ruiz Montesinos, Jorge Isla and García & Fernández are exhibiting works which include installations, photographs, posters, collages etc.



Creadores 2020, La Térmica.

Juxta Litus

MALAGA. Until 31 January. Alfájar Sala, C/ Císter, 1. Entitled Juxta Litus (Close to the shore), this exhibition includes the gallery's recent ceramic works.

The Beatles versus The Rolling Stones

MALAGA. Until 31 March 2021. Centro Cultural La Malagueta. The exhibition consists of a collection of photographs taken by Terry O'Neill and Gered Mankowitz of the two legendary bands from the start of their careers and through their 'boom' years. There are also some photos taken by Baron Wolman and two documentaries, Eight Days A Week by Ron Howard and Charlie is My Darling by Peter Whitehead.



Juxta Litus, Malaga.

Brujas sin Coloquios

VÉLEZ-MÁLAGA. Until 7 February. Granada artist Lucía Díaz has been working on a project that represents the history and legends about witches that has persisted since Arabic times by way of the tradition of Andalusian ceramics.

Coby Bloemsma

EL MORCHE. Until 6 January. Bio Beach Club. Artist Coby Bloemsma paints in oils and acrylics, her favourite subjects are people, especially women. www.cobybloemsma.com



The Centro de Música de Granada symphony orchestra. SUR

Almuñécar welcomes in the New Year with concert

JENNIE RHODES

ALMUÑÉCAR. The annual New Year concert will be taking place at the town's Casa de la Cultura on Saturday 2 January at 7pm.

The Centro Música de Granada symphony orchestra will be performing pieces by Mozart and Dostoyevsky as part of the programme, accompanied by dancers.

Thirty-five musicians and two dancers will be taking part in the concert which Culture councillor Alberto Garcia

Gilabert said would be "very special this year" and that it was something the town "couldn't forgo to welcome in the New Year" despite the pandemic.

Tickets cost 10 euros and are available from the Casa de la Cultura box office which is open daily from 11am to 1pm.

Capacity is restricted and a coronavirus health and safety protocol will be put in place.

For further information visit www.almunecar.es.

Luzy Amor

FRIGILIANA. Until 3 January. Sala 98. A collective exhibition of works by Ana Bilon and Elke Weitenkopf. Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only, 11am - 2pm.

LIVE CONCERTS AND MUSIC

OFM Chamber Music concerts

MALAGA. Auditorio del Museo Picasso de Málaga. 12 January. Quinteto de Jazz OFM.

Tickets: www.museopicasso-malaga.org

Malaga Philharmonic Orchestra MALAGA.

3 January, 7pm. Teatro Cervantes, Malaga. New Year's concert with works by Strauss II, Emile Waldteufel, Josef Strauss, Ruperto Chapí, Eduard Strauss, Piotr I. Tchaikovsky and Gerónimo Giménez.

4 January, 8pm. Auditorio Felipe VI, Estepona. New Year's concert to raise funds for Cáritas Estepona.

www.orchestrafilarmonicademalaga.com Tickets: www.unientradas.es

Municipal Band

ALMUÑÉCAR. 2 January. Streets and squares of Almuñécar.

The band will play traditional festive songs in their last Christmas 'Paseo Musical'.

Iris Nieto

MALAGA. 5 January, 4pm and 8pm. La Polivalente. C/Lagunillas.

Iris Nieto Acoustic Covers Duet. Visit www.tallerblues.es for more information. Reserve tickets at lapolivalente-lagunillas@gmail.com

Enchanté Cabaret

MALAGA. 10 January, 7pm. Teatro Cervantes. 24€

Divinas productions present a cabaret show based in a small cafe in Paris as the German troops approach during the second World War. Tickets: www.unientradas.es

THEATRE AND DANCE

Alice in Wonderland Musical

MALAGA. 5 January, midday. Teatro Cervantes. 12€.

Trencardis productions present a musical version of Alice in Wonderland for children over the age of four.

MORE IDEAS

Christmas train

LA HERRADURA. 2 January, 5 to 8pm. Leaving from the Centro Cívico.



Iris Nieto, Malaga.



Municipal Band, Almuñécar.

More information from the town hall.

Three Kings visit

LA HERRADURA. 5 January, 4pm. Castillo de la Herradura.

The Three Kings are coming to La Herradura Castle bearing gifts for the children of the village.

O. V. FILMS

SUR in English advises calling cinemas to check for any last minute time changes. Lunchtime and late night screenings weekends only.

Yelmo Cines, Plaza Mayor

MALAGA. Centro de Ocio, Plaza Mayor, Avda Alfonso Ponce León. Tel: 902902103. www.yelmocines.es. Until 5 January.

The Croods: 18.50 (every day); 16.45 (Tues).

Saint Maud: 16.15 (Tues)

The Comeback Trail: 20.20 (Tues).

Wonder Woman 84: 19.00 (Tues).

Yelmo Cines, Vialia

MALAGA. Centro Comercial Vialia. Tel: 902220922. Until 5 January.

The Father: 20.05 (Monr).

The Comeback Trail: 18.10 (Mon).

Saint Maud: 20.30 (Mon).

Wonder Woman 84: 18.35 (Mon).

Cine Albéniz

MALAGA. C/ Alcazaba, 4. Tel: 902360295. www.cinealbeniz.com until 7 January

The Father: 12.00, 17.10, 19.45.

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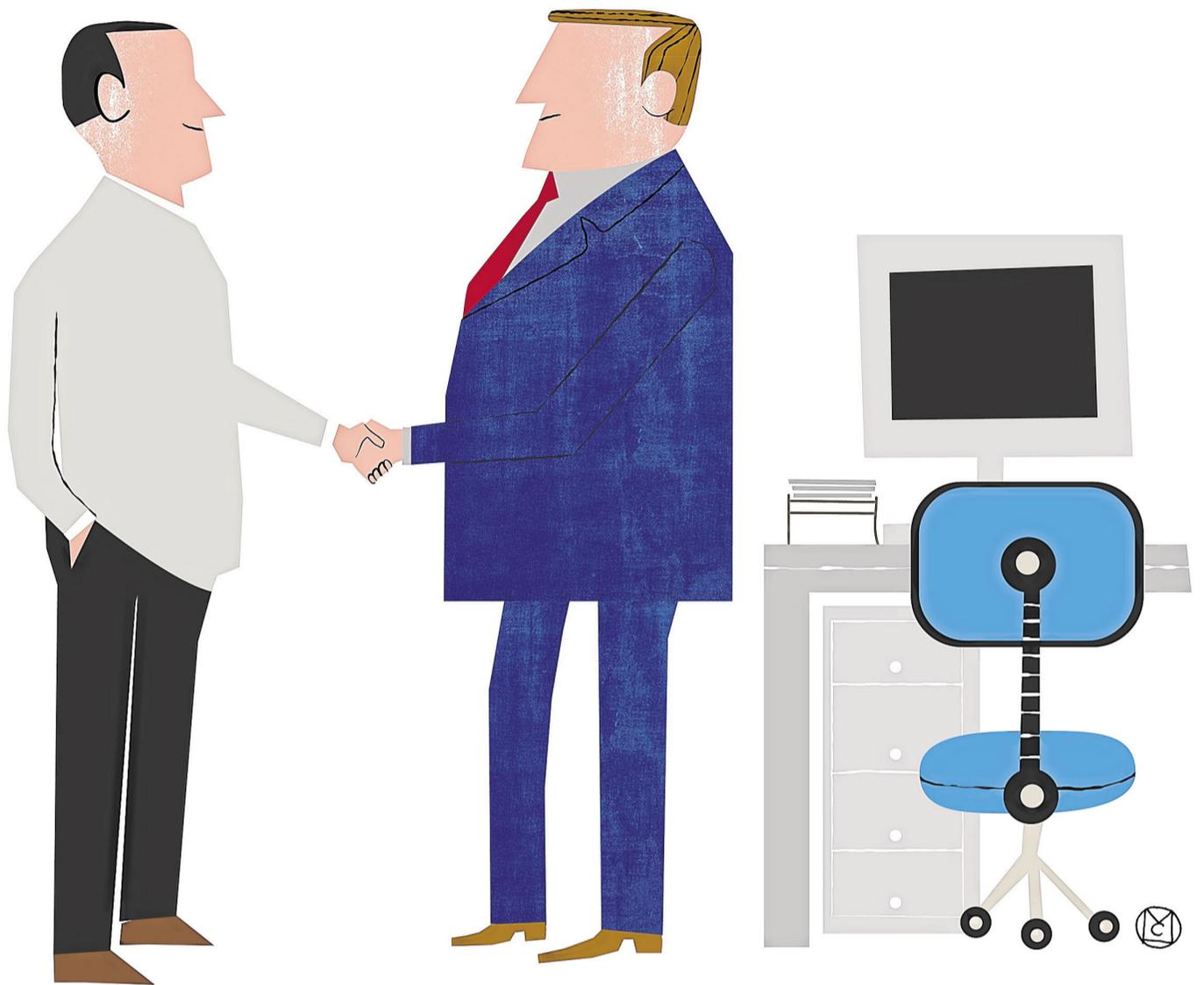
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Working with a mental disorder

Stigmatised. People with serious mental disorders have to live with the stigma, in fear of being rejected in the workplace or by their family and friends



ELENA MARTÍN LÓPEZ

MIKEL CASAL

At 22 I had the first psychotic break.” “I was 14 when I was diagnosed with anxiety attacks.” Lucía and Marta are two Spanish women who have one thing in common, they have one of what are now classified as the five serious men-

tal disorders, which include bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, personality disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and major depressive disorder. They prefer not to discuss which mental illness they were diagnosed with as they don't want anyone to iden-

tify them. Doing so could lose friendships or even their job.

It seems beyond belief, but it's true. “The stigma within Spain is such that many people with a diagnosed mental disorder don't tell anyone about it in fear of rejection,” says Fernando Pérez, occupational therapist from the Centre for Rehabilitation and Employability at the mental health organisation FEAFES-Salud Mental in Cáceres - a centre whose main objective is to provide support with regards to necessary skills in order to enter, manage and stay in the world of work.

In Spain, one per cent of the population has been diagnosed with a mental disorder, but few are told about it. “In my current job my colleagues don't know anything about it,” says Marta. “Sometimes I've considered telling people about it, but other times I've heard such horrible things said about mental disorders in the office, that I start to wonder; what would they do if they knew? I've had other jobs where I have confided in people and received a lot of support, but the reality is that even some of my friends have distanced themselves from me in fear of

IN NUMBERS

25

per cent of people in Europe are diagnosed with a mental disorder at some point in their life.

“The rate of unemployment among people with serious mental disorders is higher than any other group, with figures estimated at around 87 per cent”

what I might do to them. It is this erroneous mentality that has instilled the belief in society that we're crazy and capable of attacking you at any time,” she adds.

Lucía, who currently works in the hospitality industry, despite having studied Law, says she hasn't felt “particularly marginalised”, but she nonetheless

doesn't like to talk about the topic with anyone. That said, she believes mental disorders shouldn't carry any stigma, “After all, more and more people have these problems. Stress, for example, is widespread.”

And she's right. In fact, one in four Europeans are diagnosed with a mental disorder at some point in their life, according to Celso Arango, president of the Spanish Society of Psychiatry. After the economic disaster of 2008, the number of cases of people with anxiety disorders increased by 20 per cent, while the United Nations has already announced that the coronavirus pandemic has “sown the seeds of a major mental health crisis that will eventually blow up if measures are not taken”. However, resources for these conditions remain scarce globally.

The picture is also bleak within the workplace. The rate of unemployment among people with these conditions is higher than any other, with figures estimated at around 87 per cent. One of the reasons is the lack of opportunities. “There are companies that believe that hiring a person with serious mental illness will cause them more



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problems, but what they don't realise is that they surely have workers with depression, insomnia, family problems or stress, who aren't receiving help or treatment, which can be much more problematic," explains María del Pilar Cáceres, psychologist and technical director at FEFES-Salud Mental. "Ultimately, when a person is recommended by an association like ours, they have previously gone through a process of adjustment to their disorder which will enable them to function at the required standard for their job position," she adds.

Also, before joining the Centre for Rehabilitation and Employability, members must have been receiving treatment for at least two years in order to have some sort of clinical stability. For this reason, when a person gets diagnosed with a mental disorder, the best thing is to visit a psychosocial rehabilitation centre where they will teach them, on an individual basis, how to manage their symptoms and the importance of not stopping their medication.

Temporary contracts

Given that a mental illness can start at an early age, usually between the ages of 18 and 30, especially among men, it's common for members to join the Centre for Rehabilitation and Employability without having been through Higher Education (around 80 per cent) and they have to be accompanied during their academic training before moving on to look for a job. For example, Marta, who was a very studious teenager in high school, became incapacitated upon being diagnosed and had to retake her classes later.

At the centre you can also take classes on bureaucratic issues such as understanding a salary, or attend workshops to learn how to put together a CV or complete mock interviews. "This is

HOW TO GET RID OF THE STIGMA THROUGH...

The media

It's common to link social problems (crimes, kidnappings...) with psychologically damaged individuals, but "the reality is that for every person with schizophrenia who commits a homicide, there are a hundred without mental health problems who are a lot more violent," Arango points out.

Schools

Education is a fundamental part of ending any stigma. "Bullying is caused by a lack of education in diversity. It's more important to know about mental illnesses than the streams of rivers," Arango says.

very necessary, because those of us who have had difficult periods have gaps in our CVs and we need help to be able to talk about our illness in an interview without it being a hindrance," says Lucía. "The experience has shown us that these people are excluded from certain selection processes when they tell us that they have been diagnosed with a mental health illness and it's uncommon for them to find permanent contacts," the occupational therapist adds.

Through the association work with various companies "educated on the importance of mental health" and are part of the Incorpora programme, promoted by the La Caixa Foundation, whose aim is to promote social and workplace integration for people who are at risk of exclusion. "The placements we do are in normal companies, not in special employment centres. We want them to adapt to

the real world of work, because they are able to do. The only thing you have to do is to find an activity that motivates you and that you will be able to carry out without getting frustrated," says Cáceres. "Likewise we enforce supported employment, meaning that we'll always help our members when needed, whether that be in person or by telephone," Pérez adds.

Remote working has also been a challenge for those who weren't prepared for it: "Some have not been able to keep their job during lockdown because they didn't have any internet connection, a computer or basic IT skills," says Pérez.

As is the case for anyone else, working helps you stay mentally and physically active, increases your self-esteem and prevents isolation. "We live in a society in which it seems like if you are not working at 100 per cent capacity then you're useless. This demand leads to lots of people diagnosed with a mental illness taking permanent leave and claiming benefits. The marginalisation that this entails can worsen their health. Wouldn't it be better to pay people for doing something, despite it being supervised, than to pay them for doing nothing? One shouldn't be blamed for having schizophrenia or being bipolar," Arango says.

Both specialists and interviewees agree that nowadays there is a lack of awareness and social empathy towards mental disorders. "We shouldn't judge people for a part of who they are, because this overlooks all their qualities," says Cáceres. She also highlights the importance of speaking more openly about these illnesses as "many people don't know about them until they start experiencing them" and, above all, the importance of asking for help - something which is usually sought after only when the situation becomes unbearable.

Openly fighting the stigma

Why employees' mental health should be prioritised in the workplace

OPINION
KATIE HEYES

Workplaces are rife with varying forms of mental health stigma. In the office, it's all about profit and wellbeing is often side-lined or considered a hindrance. Marta, whose friends have deliberately distanced themselves from her in fear of what she could potentially do to them, puts this down to an "erroneous mindset that exists in society". However, with everyone doing their bit to listen and support each other, all workers can build a natural rapport and consistently achieve their goals.

Discriminatory presumptions surrounding mental disorders are not only completely false but can perpetuate gaslighting. As such, people with mental illnesses can be made to feel like their struggles are indicative of some sort of failure or personal flaw. When the employees' personal needs are being neglected, how can they still be expected to thrive? How can they work at the same productive level when carrying the burden of stigma surrounding mental health difficulties?

External stressors, such as the death of a loved one, being the victim of a crime or a dispute at home, can weigh down on employees. Carrying all

these emotions around at work and not being able to properly address them can increase levels of stress and mental exhaustion. Yet, the norm right now seems to be 'conceal, don't feel'. All due to an immense fear of ridicule from co-workers or the risk of losing work.

However, by considering that around one in four people in Europe experience a mental disorder during their lifetime, why should something so ubiquitous be stigmatised? Why is the black dog now a big elephant in the work room?

Employees can be made to feel scared, insecure and invalidated for something that can be out of their control. The simple fact is that everyone has mental as well as physical health issues of some description - and they are both equally important. Just like outside factors such as injuries or infection can affect our physical health, there are circumstances that can cause distress and affect someone's mental wellbeing.

Normalising seeking support, offering support and prioritising the mind as well as the body will establish a safe support network within each workplace, openly fighting the stigma and not brushing it under the carpet.

2021 sounds better 

Happy New Year

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Toast the New Year with sparkling wine from Malaga

Quality. Some excellent sparkling wines are made in different parts of the province

JAVIER ALMELLONES

Ten years ago it was unthinkable that a sparkling wine would be made in Malaga. Now there are several. Between 2014 and 2019 seven bubbly wines came onto the market. At the moment it is possible to buy these wines for between 8.50 and 25 euros, which, although not under the protection of a Denominación de Origen (DO), are nonetheless of excellent quality. The wineries that produce these wines are from different parts of the province: Malaga city, Serranía de Ronda, Vega de Antequera and the Axarquía.

Botani espumoso

This was the first sweet muscatel and started production in 2014. Botani espumoso is sparkling wine made with grapes from the Axarquía by Grupo Jorge Ordóñez. It costs between 11 and 13 euros. It is not difficult to find in specialty stores and can be bought in the La Malagueña wine store, a company recently awarded the Puerta Nueva prize for its commitment to the wines of Málaga and the Sierras de Málaga.

Apiane espumoso

Although the Tierras de Mollina winery no longer exists as such, its wines are still distributed from the Virgen de la Oliva cooperative, also based in the town of Mollina.

Among the most successful wines at this time of year is the sparkling Apiane, a bubbly sweet muscatel wine made from grapes from this town in the Vega de Antequera. At present, it is distributed by Narbona Solís, which delivers it to many restaurants and specialty stores. The average price is around 9 euros a bottle.

Florestel seco

The Quitapenas winery in Guadalmar has two sparkling wines, one sweet and one dry. This emblematic firm started its particular journey with these bubbly wines in 2014, a few months after the Botani appeared on the market. However, unlike the Botani, the first Florestel was dry, made from the Alexandria Muscat grape. It can be purchased for 8.50 euros for the 2018 vintage both at the winery itself and at its online shop, as well as at other specialist online sites.

Florestel dulce

Following the success of Florestel Seco, this centenary winery produced its own sweet, sparkling wine in 2016, also made with Alexandria Muscat grapes. It can be purchased direct from the winery in Guadalmar or through its online shop. The 2019 vintage costs around 8.50 euros.

Las Olas de Melillero

For the past three years, the Victoria Ordóñez winery has been producing its own sparkling wine. This wine is a rosé that is a blend made from red grapes (Petit Verdot, Syrah and Tempranillo) with Pedro Ximénez, all of them coming from the Montes de Málaga region. They come from two enclaves located in the natural park (the Badillo and Puerto del León vineyards) and from La Fresnada, in the Camarolos mountain range (Sierra Norte de Málaga). The 2017 vintage can be found in specialised wine stores and shops that carry gourmet products. It is priced at around 17 euros. It can also be purchased directly from the Bodegas Victoria Ordóñez online store.

Tartratos

This sparkling wine, a 'brut nature' made from Alexandria Muscat grapes, came onto the market in 2018. This sparkling wine is made using the 'champanoise' method, like the classic French champagne. In this way, it has a second fermentation in the bottle which allows the natural development of carbon dioxide gas and, therefore, the characteristic bubble of this type of sparkling wine. In addition to representing a milestone in the wine history of Malaga by the method used, it is also a great reserve. After a first vintage of 2015, which had 30 months aging in the bottle, the 2016 vintage has six months more of aging in the bottle. Despite this, its retail price is still around 25 euros. It can be purchased directly from the winery's shop in Rincón de la Victoria (Licorería Antonio Muñoz Cabrera).

Cloe Brut Nature

Another prestigious winery in Malaga that has its own sparkling wine is Doña Felisa, in Ronda. In August of last year they brought out another 'brut nature' made with the 'champanoise' method, which involves a double fermentation of the must in the bottle (in this case, fourteen months of aging). Unlike the Tartratos, this one is made with the Sauvignon Blanc grape. The average price of a bottle of the 2017 vintage is around 20 euros. You can buy it online on the website itself or in stores specialising in wines.



Malaga's sparkling wines can often be found in specialist wine shops. AFP

Anyone for a Chinese?

ANDREW J. LINN



A significant amount of the Chinese produce consumed in Spain, and the rest of the EU, is unhealthy and possibly dangerous. In my opinion, although Chinese authorities exercise sanitary controls, many of these are merely symbolic and designed to facilitate export of items that are problematic.

From my understanding, soil is polluted across the country and clean irrigation water is practically unknown. Corrupt health officials and deliberately misleading labelling mean that, for the Chinese anyway, it is never possible to avoid eating contaminated produce, and fake items, like honey, are universal.

Fish is always questionable unless from the sea. Fish farming uses water that is polluted with heavy metals like mercury and lead. Farmed cod, tilapia and prawns should be avoided. Chicken farming is not only cruel in its practice, but most live birds carry diseases. Apple juice, a major export, has been found to contain antifreeze, and frozen peas are often made from soy, dyed green. Most of the garlic we eat comes from China, where it is invariably contaminated with pesticides. Check those supermarket

mushrooms carefully. If they are from China, they will be doused with sulphur and formaldehyde to keep them looking fresh. Many are repackaged here on arrival, so the source is hard to detect.

Salt and rice are other red flag products, and never buy Chinese-produced organic food. The controls are lax, and officials accept bribes to certify non-organic food as organic.

Consumers have to be vigilant when buying frozen and tinned produce, and it is more important than ever to check the labelling very carefully.

WINE OF THE WEEK

Gargalo Godello

A dry white wine from Ribeira Sacra, it has received several awards. The Monterrei bodega is owned by fashion designer Roberto Verino, linked to the region by his grandparents who also made wine there. The Godello grape variety is one of Spain's best. Superbly priced at around €11.



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◀ Mari Pepa, in her favourite spot at the Martín Carpena arena.

Everyone's favourite granny at Malaga's sporting arenas

Huge fan. This has been an unusual season for 76-year-old Mari Pepa García, who misses cheering on Malaga CF and Unicaja and making fellow fans' lives that bit sweeter

CRISTINA PINTO



▶ This fan of Malaga CF likes to dress for the occasion when she supports them in the stands at La Rosaleda.



▶ Mari Pepa with the placard she was presented with as a surprise on her 74th birthday, which she celebrated by watching Unicaja.



It all began 25 years ago in the Ciudad Jardín district of Malaga city. She didn't realise it at the time, but Mari Pepa García was about to discover a new world, one which she would love forever. Her children, Dani and Mar, were fans of the Unicaja basketball team and had tickets to watch them play Olympiacos Piraeus in the Euroleague 1995-96 season. Dani couldn't go and Mari Pepe didn't want her daughter to be on her own. "Come on, I'll keep you company," she said.

She knew nothing about sport, including basketball, but was captivated by the atmosphere. "It was so much fun, I was like a little girl, I had such a good time. And it was addictive - I have never missed a single European match since!" she says.

After that first experience, Mari Pepa was continually looking to buy tickets and the following year she couldn't resist becoming a season ticket holder. "When I originally came to Ciudad Jardín, I had no idea what life was going to be like, but it was so exciting. I couldn't wait for match days," she says.

She became a football fan not long afterwards. Two seasons after watching her first basketball match, La Rosaleda became another of her favourite places in the city. "I loved it when we all waited together for the coach to arrive, and as soon as we saw the driver we all started singing," she says, laughing.

This is the thing about sport; people not only fall in love with the game, but also the atmosphere in the stadium. That is

definitely what happened to Mari Pepa, who at the age of 76 says she doesn't understand much about the rules, but wouldn't miss a match for anything.

In both the Martín Carpena arena and La Rosaleda stadium she has a favourite place beside the stairs, and she is very well-known. "People pat me on the shoulder and say hello. They know I have sweets and chocolates to give out to everyone," she says. This granny from Malaga never goes unprepared; she always has her 'kit' so she can hand out treats to children, and even the workers. "I always make sure the people on the door get some," she giggles.

Just not the same at home

Now, however, Mari Pepa sits on her sofa instead of in the stands,

and watches the matches on Movistar or DAZN. She watches some live, and others later, but she is clear about one thing: "When I'm going to watch the day after, I ask my children what the result was. If they lose I don't want to watch, I'm getting old now and I only want to see good things," she jokes. But she longs to be there live, in the stands at the Carpena or La Rosaleda, enjoying the music, the singing, and her family around her: her son, daughter, and grandchildren Noa and Leo. "I love La Rosaleda, but right now nobody can go there, to see anything," she says. She has, however, noticed that there have been some people in the stands at the Palacio de los Deportes sports complex. "They must be selling some tickets, then... maybe we'll be

"I had no idea life would be so exciting... I haven't missed a European game since; I couldn't wait for match days," she says.

"People pat me on the shoulder and say hello. They know I have sweets and chocolates to give out to everyone"

able to go before too long," she says, hopefully.

She can't choose between the two temples of sport in Malaga. If there is a match on at both at the same time, her daughter Mar decides which one they should go to. "Sometimes we have watched Malaga play and then rushed to see Unicaja as well, but if the matches coincide then she decides which is the most important," says Mari Pepa. She recently turned 76 but this time she couldn't celebrate in her favourite places. "The boy who sits in front of us is also from Ciudad Jardín, and one year when it was her birthday he made her a placard," says her daughter.

A thousand stories to tell

After so many years watching these sports, Mari Pepa has thousands of memories, including celebrations like the time fans rushed onto the pitch at La Rosaleda when Malaga gained promotion, although she says she wasn't one of them. "There was no way I could jump over the barriers, so I just cheered in the stands," she says. She also remembers when Unicaja won La Liga in 2006: "We were carrying so many green and purple balloons... I was having the time of my life. My daughter had to go, but I stayed in the city centre celebrating, and then caught a bus home," she says.

Mari Pepa also used to make cakes for "the old Unicaja players" and take them to the bench.

Being a fan is something very special and, like Mari Pepa, everyone has stories to tell. After all these years in Ciudad Jardín, following Unicaja and Malaga FC, she has now spent her first year without being able to support her teams. But she isn't downhearted. She'll be there at the Martín Carpena and La Rosaleda to cheer them on just as soon as she possibly can.

Malaga return from their Christmas break with a new face in the squad

The signing of Alexander González has been confirmed; the right-back will replace Iván Calero who has been ruled out for the season

ANTONIO GÓNGORA



MALAGA. After a week of rest over the festive period, the Malaga first team returned to the training field on Monday after undergoing coronavirus testing ahead of a busy run of matches which will ultimately decide their season.

When the football returns this weekend, the fixture list will be congested for the Blue and Whites, with three matches in six days, followed by a break coinciding with the Spanish Supercup, held in Andalucía (the semi-final between Real Madrid and Athletic will take place at La Rosaleda on Thursday 14 January).

On Sunday the Blue and Whites will visit Albacete, before receiving Real Oviedo in the



González's signing means Malaga have 18 professionals again. [INSTAGRAM](#)

second round of the Copa del Rey on Wednesday. Three days later, on Saturday 9, they will host the Asturians again, this time in the league.

If Malaga progress to the third round of the cup, three more

games will follow before the end of the month. That could elevate to a total of seven if they make it to the last 16.

In the meantime, the players must prepare themselves for the physical challenge ahead after

THE JANUARY RUN-IN

► **Sunday 3 January.** Albacete-Malaga (kick-off 6.15pm). The return of league action after the break.

► **Wednesday 6.** Malaga-Oviedo (9pm). Second round of the Copa del Rey.

► **Saturday 9.** Malaga-Oviedo (6.15pm). Same opposition but this time in the league.

► **Saturday 16 (TBC).** Round three of the Copa, if Malaga make it past Oviedo.

► **Sunday 24 (TBC).** Malaga-Ponferradina in the league.

► **Wednesday 27 (TBC).** Third round of the Copa.

► **Sunday 31 (TBC).** Alcorcón-Malaga, in the league.

their short break. On the plus side, players with injuries have had time to recover and a new face has joined the squad.

Calero's replacement

With right-back Iván Calero ruled out for the rest of the sea-

son through injury, the club have already moved to sign his replacement: Venezuela international Alexander González.

In cases such as these, La Liga allows an emergency signing to be made. This means Malaga have 18 professionals on the books but can't sign anyone else unless they sell someone. However, at this stage, as SUR understands, the club is not considering selling any first-team player, unless their release clause is paid.

The 28-year-old right-back was officially unveiled on Monday and joins after a bad experience with Dinamo București in Romania, where he, and a group of other players, went three months without pay.

González returns to Spain's second division, where he played for five years with Huesca, Elche and Mirandés before heading to Romania.

The full-back, who has 48 international caps, is excited about his new challenge: "It had to be a big club for me to return to Segunda, and Malaga is among the biggest. I am one hundred per cent ready to train and adapt as quickly as possible."

González also said that he spoke to the other Venezuelans who played for the team before taking a final decision. "As soon as they found out they contacted me and told me that the city is fantastic. In fact I was here last summer on holiday", said the footballer, who had been in Malaga since Saturday to sign his new contract.



A LOOK AT LA LIGA
ROB PALMER
Commentator, Sky Sports

So much for a quiet break

Lionel Messi, Neymar and Diego Costa have been making plenty of non-football headlines this week



What makes headline football acts so compelling is their ability to create headlines even when the game is having a festive break.

Lionel Messi, Neymar and Diego Costa have kept the media busy over the past week with the kind of buzz words journalists love to use: "private jet", "beach party", "rift" and let's throw in "covid" too just for good measure.

With the hours ticking away until Messi can negotiate his exit from FC Barcelona, he granted an in-depth interview where he gave an insight into what may lie ahead. It was predictable that he would see out the final six months of his contract but then



Diego Costa has been linked with a move to Wolves. [EUROPA PRESS](#)

he dropped the bombshell of a new life in America.

"I would like to play in the United States and experience life and the league there.... but ulti-

mately come back to Barcelona in some capacity," he is reported as saying.

Cue a frenzy of speculation about his preferred destination.

In the UK they associated Manchester City with their sister club New York FC and came up with the conclusion he could somehow follow Frank Lampard's example by playing for both.

Some suggested he could follow Zlatan Ibrahimovic to Los Angeles and the latest reports from South American outlets are suggesting he's building a mansion in Miami, home of David Beckham's MLS franchise. Messi managed to avoid the media by 'jetting' back to Argentina for a family holiday.

Also "jetting" is Neymar. Again, it is a non-playing story - it can't be a playing story as he's officially injured. However, his sore ankle may not prevent him dancing the night away at a party he's reported to be hosting at his beachside mansion close to Rio de Janeiro. The event - Neymarpalooza - is said to have started on Christmas Day and will run until New Year's Eve when 150 close friends of the superstar will congregate.

Representatives for Neymar claim he's not behind the party and cite an agency as the organiser. Does that mean he has nothing to do with it or is he

leaving the blowing of balloons and writing of invites to others? 'Pass the parcel' has to be dismissed surely?

Needless to say, it hasn't gone down well in a country with the second worst death toll in the world from the pandemic.

The final headline maker is Diego Costa. His second coming at Atlético Madrid has had an unexpected and premature end as he and the club agreed to a mutual parting.

It has been a nightmare return, initially he had to wait six months to become registered and then he struggled to get his body fit for top-class football, especially the high-intensity variety demanded by Diego Simeone.

Speculation is rife about his destination, with a link to Wolves making the most sense as a short-term replacement for the injured Raul Jiménez.

Costa, Messi and Neymar have created their 'brand' for their footballing exploits, but news of their off-field movements does keep us intrigued.

Have a happy New Year, I'm rushing to the airport for my private jet to Rio. I have a party to attend!

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What's in the stars for 2021?



Aries

21 March - 20 April

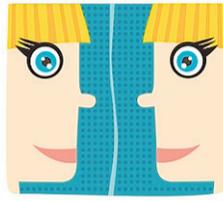
Ready for take-off Aries? As 2021 gets under way you'll be keen to put the past behind you and embrace new and exciting options. The spirit of discovery is strong, and if you are ready to take on board new challenges you can go far. As a pioneer and adventurer, you often pride yourself on going where no person has been before. But with a focus on team players Aquarius, you might go even further when you affiliate yourself with a group, organisation or kindred spirits. With sobering Saturn facing off with Uranus and in a tight angle from February until July, it may be hard to adjust to new values. What can bring relief and a fresh perspective is the movement of Jupiter into flowing Pisces for a brief spell from 13 May until 29 July. If you find yourself crystallising instead of transforming, then reach into this sublime energy and let go. You won't lose anything, and have much to gain instead. Where romance is concerned you have great potential, and others can be drawn to you for many reasons. Don't get carried away though. There are times when you may want to ignore an instinctive nudge, but it's better to listen and act on it. Ready to enjoy a leadership role? You may have the perfect credentials to be a manager and organiser, but this comes with the realisation that if you succeed, it will be because others have played their part too. It's important to express your unique qualities and talents, as by harmonising them with the efforts of others success could be yours.



Taurus

21 April - 21 May

During 2021 you are ready to soar, Taurus, yet also eager to take a deeper dive as you seek new experiences. You'll have many opportunities to unravel emotional entanglements that may be preventing you from having your full share of love, financial wellbeing and happiness. It's time to let go of whatever no longer serves, and doing so can be very freeing. There is so much you might want to accomplish, especially with Saturn and Jupiter in your career zone. You are ready to take on board new responsibilities and challenges, even if it means leaving your comfort zone. Others will be watching you though, so you will need to set the right example. You might not enjoy this at first as it can grate, but if you can adapt you'll fly even higher. You are not on your own though, as you will be attuned to the deeper current of life, so listen to your instincts and take note of your dreams as they may contain valuable guidance. A relationship could be heading for a more committed walk, but be certain this is right for you. This is a year in which your values might change, and as a result your relationships may go through some shifts too. You'll have great support from friends as Jupiter enters your social zone from 13 May until 29 July. They will be there when needed, and this can be very comforting. This year you can draw to yourself some fabulous career opportunities and promotions, and this will be a result of all your hard work. It's time to enjoy your reward.



Gemini

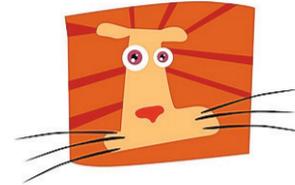
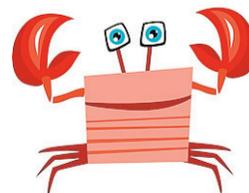
22 May - 21 June

2021 brings so many new possibilities your way, Gemini. But your fortunes could change for the better when you're willing to work alongside others as a team, collaborate and see the bigger picture. You may find yourself drawn to humanitarian causes and ideals. Being involved in schemes and plans that can make the world a better place might be so important to you. In fact, it will change you as a person as you resonate with new ideas and ideals. This is where you'll find your feet and relish the projects, conversations and friendships that spring from it. With a Saturn-Uranus angle peaking between January and July, you could sabotage your own success if you can't let go of beliefs that may be holding you back. Yet Uranus is perfectly placed to allow this process to take place, if you can go with it. Tie up those loose ends and you'll feel so much better. As Jupiter moves into your topmost sector from 13 May to 29 July, your job or career could become the arena where you truly shine. There are dynamic possibilities for love, but someone may feel they are being sacrificed for your career, or vice versa. It could be that this person needs a lot of attention, and with your freedom-loving nature you could find this a tad galling. There is potential for a relationship that is everything you could want, although you might not recognise it right away. If you've worked hard to get money matters sorted, then keep the momentum going. Don't throw away your hard work by making rash decisions. A sound approach can give you a foundation to build on.

Cancer

22 June - 23 July

Is this the year you take charge of your destiny, Cancer? 2021 may be the portal to a deeply fascinating time in which the process of transformation can see you coming into your own. You could have a yearning for something that takes you out of the ordinary and propels you on to a healing and spiritual path that might make you whole in the process. New Year, new you, and your friendships could change as you do. Certain people may no longer chime with the values you are ready to adopt. New friends will show up who are on a different wavelength, and who you can more easily relate to. With attitudes being very fixed, any bad feeling can be dissipated by adopting a more accepting and compassionate approach to those who cannot or will not change. When Jupiter moves into Pisces from 13 May until 29 July, you'll really feel this and be willing to let others make any adjustments in their own way. Technology might play a big part in finding love, and a virtual relationship could run for some time before you meet in the flesh. Lovely Sun-Jupiter aspects between 24 - 29 January, 22 - 24 June and 14- 16 October can be helpful for finances, with money-making opportunities showing up. You may be more experimental in your love life too, as Saturn your ruler moves into Aquarius. Regarding your career, things may be quieter in this respect with Mars moving out of this zone after a six-month stay. Even so, you will be hard at work looking for new opportunities, and some of these can be exactly what you've been hoping for. You might feel you have stepped onto the right path at last.



Leo

24 July - 23 August

You'll be ready for new creative adventures, and a chance to indulge those passions that leaves you upbeat and recharged. Good things are coming your way, Leo, as 2021 is unleashed. A powerful focus on your sector of relationships involves close partnerships, as well as other types of interaction, including networking, friendships and group activities. By working alongside others you can accomplish so much more. However, new ideas and ideals that are absorbed from others could be a clash with your more traditional ambitions and plans, giving much food for thought. The people you liaise with might change you and your dreams, and goals may shift. Perhaps you'll no longer want the things you once did. This is also a year when you need to pace yourself, as sobering Saturn faces off with electric Uranus, which may be a tad exhausting. Find a way to balance activities so you have plenty of chance to rest. This involves taking a break from too much screen time as well. Still, with a powerful focus continuing in your wellness zone, you'll be keen to stay on track and do whatever you can in this regard. While finances look to be fairly stable this year, you will get a boost when Jupiter moves into your sector of shared assets between 13 May and 29 July. A wise investment of your money could bring a positive return. Avoid taking too much of a risk though, as this might backfire. In terms of your career, this can be a time of dynamic change in the way you work and what you work at. You could jump tracks more than once as you experiment with what brings you greatest satisfaction. Your love life can be both exciting and challenging, Leo, but you'll be willing to overcome any complications to make the most of this propitious time that has so much going for it.

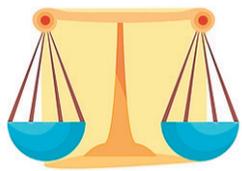
Virgo

24 August - 23 September

Welcome to 2021, Virgo, and to a year that has so much promise. With a major emphasis on your lifestyle zone and a fascination with techniques, strategies, lists and routines, this is an excellent opportunity to get your life in order so you can accomplish your brightest goals. It's also a chance to experiment with new ideas, techniques and technologies, and find ways to unleash your tremendous potential. The snag may be in getting stuck in routines that have passed their usefulness. If something has always worked you might be against doing anything differently. But taking that leap of faith could mean the difference between doing well or simply ticking over. You'll free up more time too, if you adopt new ways and means. Career-wise this can be a positive year, with opportunities for some exciting jobs showing up, and these could take you into new territory. It seems that your skills and abilities may be very much in demand, but will perhaps be used in a different setting to what you are used to. Finances seem fairly steady, and you can be content to let things tick over or to invest any extra money in your home or property. Be careful though, as not all deals may be as good as you think. Take care to read the small print. Beautifying your home might also be something you'll enjoy, particularly as expansive Jupiter moves into imaginative Pisces between 13 May and 29 July. Mind, with a Solar Eclipse in your career sector on 10 June, there is the possibility of an exciting advancement if you're up for it. Your love life looks set to sparkle, particularly between 13 May and 29 July, and next year can be even better in this regard.



New Year horoscope. See what astrologers say could be in store for the coming twelve months



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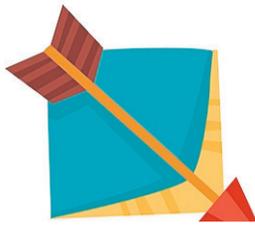
24 September - 23 October

As 2021 gets under way, your sector of leisure and creativity is busy. The cosmos is encouraging you to indulge your love of certain activities as a way to refuel and rediscover your passion. You need a chance to kick back and enjoy life, especially after an intense couple of years. To this end you'll be keen to experiment with new hobbies and pastimes, and with dating too. If you're looking for romance you may be drawn to those who are older, have had a lot of experience of life, or have refreshing perspectives to share. In a long-term partnership? This seems to be fairly stable, but you'll also crave excitement and new challenges, especially if your bond has been in a bit of a rut. This year, you look set to go far with a new business idea or other opportunity. But to do so, you need to clear the decks first. Is there a situation that is holding you back from being the success you deserve? When you can pinpoint it and do something about it, new springs of energy will be revealed. Your motivation and willingness to try new things could return. When it comes to finances, Pluto in your home and family sector suggests you may be making money from your home or property, or perhaps working from home on a more permanent basis. Ready to showcase your creative skills to the world? You may have abilities that have so far remained dormant. This year encourages you to be more forward about what you can do. Overcome your doubts and there could be sparkling developments on the cards for you.

Scorpio

24 October - 22 November

Get ready for an exciting 2021, Scorpio. With sobering Saturn and jovial Jupiter in your domestic zone making key angles, home and family life can be an opportunity for expansion, as well as a chance to plan and sort out any ongoing issues. You may have to deal with someone's awkward attitude though, and this could generate conflict if you're trying to move ahead. Tact and discretion might be needed, and some degree of flexibility. If neither of you are willing to budge, then you will get nowhere. A long-term partnership could suffer unless you find a way to compromise. You may want to upgrade aspects of your home and make it more technological and perhaps eco-friendly. There is a chance of a move if doing so helps you feel more secure or adds more stability to your life. To this end, you could be eager to locate somewhere that has opportunities, with a positive and safe environment. With Jupiter in your money planet and domestic sector for much of the year, you may be keen to invest in your home, and make it a warm and comfortable place to be. As this exuberant planet moves into Pisces for a brief flirtation between 13 May and 29 July, it's time to kick back and enjoy life. There are options for romance, creative developments and for taking a well-deserved break. Solo? This can be quite a delightful year for finding love, particularly between 13 May and 29 July. Spoken for? Relationships could be tested, but this might be helped by being willing to explore new ways to be together.



Sagittarius

23 November - 21 December

What a year 2021 looks to be Archer! You'll have a chance to bring your goals and plans into fruition, and this can be very fulfilling after a spell where other people's needs seemed to take priority. Whatever you want to enjoy or accomplish, this is your chance to go for it. The connections and friendships you make could be key to the success and happiness you are hoping for. You may link to groups with ecological or humanitarian interests, and this can influence you greatly. You might feel you should change your ways, and yet this could seem a step too far. Easy does it! Take such developments in stages, especially those that benefit energy levels and wellbeing. The key is not to stress over it. Your home and family life will benefit from the brief sojourn of Jupiter into Pisces between 13 May and 29 July, and you might have a desire to beautify your home, but also to generate income from there. The main benefits of this influence may be felt from next year, but this year you'll be ready to lay the groundwork. With Pluto continuing in your money zone this is a great time for planning, especially as regards taxes, inheritances and purging excess waste. It's an opportunity to get rid of, or sell, anything you don't use very much, and you'll feel a great sense of freedom from doing so. With Saturn, your financial planet, in Aquarius, anything associated with writing, blogging or making money online can do well. Regarding your love life, the Solar Eclipse on 10 June could be a stepping-stone to a new phase in a key relationship, or even a chance to turn over a new leaf.

Capricorn

22 December - 20 January

You may have big plans for 2021, but taking a step back and seeing the bigger picture can assist you in making the right decisions and choices. It might be worth taking some time out to reflect on what you really want, a question that may be uppermost in your mind during this deeply interesting year. Saturn your ruler, journeys through your sector of resources, finances and talents, along with Jupiter. Are you making the most of your skills and abilities? You may be keen to explore freelance, creative or entrepreneurial opportunities for work, which might seem a little precarious if you are used to a regular wage, but which you could now find very appealing. Don't make too sudden a jump though. Be prepared to make any changes slowly and carefully to avoid excess stress. You might also find renewed interest in teaching, writing or using your technological skills to earn extra cash. Sparkling opportunities may be had in this regard as Jupiter moves into Pisces temporarily from 13 May to 29 July. Children may be going through more of an experimental phase, and the way you talk to them about their behaviour can be the key to creating a more positive bond. An authoritarian approach might not work at all. This can be a strong financial year as long as you don't fritter away money on impulse. This is generally unlike you, Capricorn, but with hard angles between Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus, a sense of frustration may find you doing something that puts your hard work in jeopardy. If you avoid such actions and pace yourself, then Jupiter's presence in your money zone for much of the year could help you to build prosperity.



Aquarius

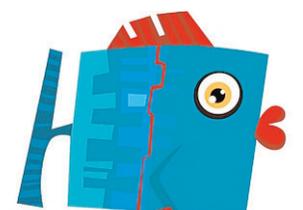
21 January - 19 February

With 2021 knocking on your door, you'll start the year as you mean to carry on, that is, with the determination to accomplish your goals. You may have a more serious take on matters than is warranted at times, due to having sobering Saturn in your sign. Yet with expansive Jupiter here for much of the year, good things and great opportunities can show up for you. You won't let yourself get carried away and will test each step as you go. However, you'll be keen to experiment with new ideas, technologies and perspectives, and this could have a profound effect on any choices and decisions you make. This can also be the year your home environment undergoes quite a change, either because of a move or because different dynamics are operating within the home. These may be what you want, but they could be quite jarring for a while until things start to gel and you begin to feel at home in your domestic setup once again. As Jupiter makes a brief foray into Pisces and your money sector from 13 May to 29 July, it's an opportunity to make the most of any financial opportunities. If you invest wisely you could do very well. When it comes to finances and career, this could be a prosperous year for you, as you have a great sense of purpose, fabulous management skills and your work ethic is also very strong. When it comes to money though, your intuition can be your guide to financial increase. Your social life is also very important to you, especially during the first five months, when your connections with others can be a catalyst for change in your own life.

Pisces

20 February - 20 March

As you step into 2021, Pisces, you could find that your search for spiritual nourishment has deepened. This might be due to the difficulties experienced during 2020, and a need for something deeper to sustain you through the coming months. Your natural spiritual urges would have been enhanced by the presence of Neptune in your sign for some years now. This year, you may want to commit further to understanding your true potential and discovering your heart's desire. Starting a practice that can ease any stresses and bring greater peace of mind could be of major importance. In fact, this may be the reason that you take this path in the first place, so you can respond more calmly to the ups and downs of life, and take them in your stride. This year might well have one or two challenges, as does every year. Taking up meditation, yoga or the practice of mindfulness, could help you navigate through such situations with ease. You'll sparkle in other ways too, as Jupiter your co-ruler moves into your sign for a brief stay between 13 May and 29 July. This gives you a taster of what is to come next year, when it moves in for a longer period. During these weeks, you could experience good fortune and perhaps an opportunity for a dream of yours to come true. Your career may be going through changes, and this can be down to the Lunar Eclipse on 26 May and the Solar Eclipse on 4 December. However, if you're prepared to go with the flow, these could be beneficial and lead to a more prosperous and fulfilling path.



THE STARS

Aquarius
January 21st - February 19th
You'll be busier from this week as Mars moves in and encourages you to get on with domestic tasks and projects. If you have been flagging in this respect, you may feel a renewed burst of energy.

Pisces
February 20th - March 20th
After a precarious few months the plans you make now will be down-to-earth, and this can inspire renewed confidence.

Aries
March 21st - April 20th
Socially, things may pick up, with a desire to liaise with those in positions of power as well as a willingness to make new friends.

Taurus
April 21st - May 21st
If you've felt all at sea for some while, this can change from this week as feisty Mars enters your sign and you begin to feel more in control of your life.

Gemini
May 22nd - June 21st
While you may be excited about what the future holds, you might feel drawn to upgrade your inner game with some self-improvement, or perhaps by linking with a coach.

Cancer
June 22nd - July 23rd
Ready to put energy into your social life? The presence of Mars encourages a proactive phase, so you may be busy. But you'll also get support and feedback on your latest plans.

Leo
July 24th - August 23rd
Your career can be energized as Mars moves into a prominent zone. As a result, you may be on the ball when it comes to making decisions and putting yourself in the spotlight.

Virgo
August 24th - September 23rd
After a more intense phase you may feel lighter and brighter as Mars moves into your sector of travel for around six weeks. Its presence encourages you to embrace new opportunities.

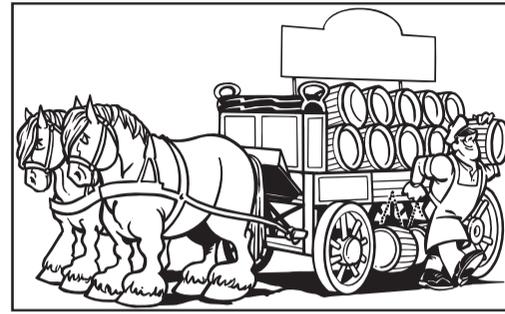
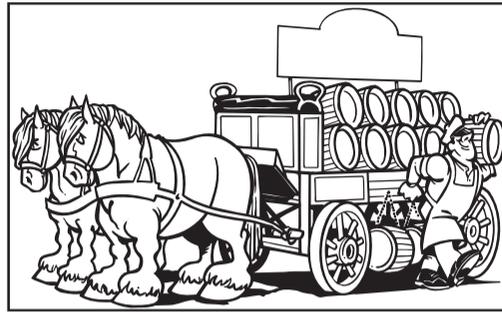
Libra
September 24th - October 23rd
With Venus entering your home zone a peaceful vibe may be felt that might help smooth over difficulties and perhaps encourage you to give your place a makeover.

Scorpio
October 24th - November 22nd
As Mars enlivens your relationship zone its presence can stir up any issues that have been swept under the carpet. Yet bringing them out into the open may be a relief.

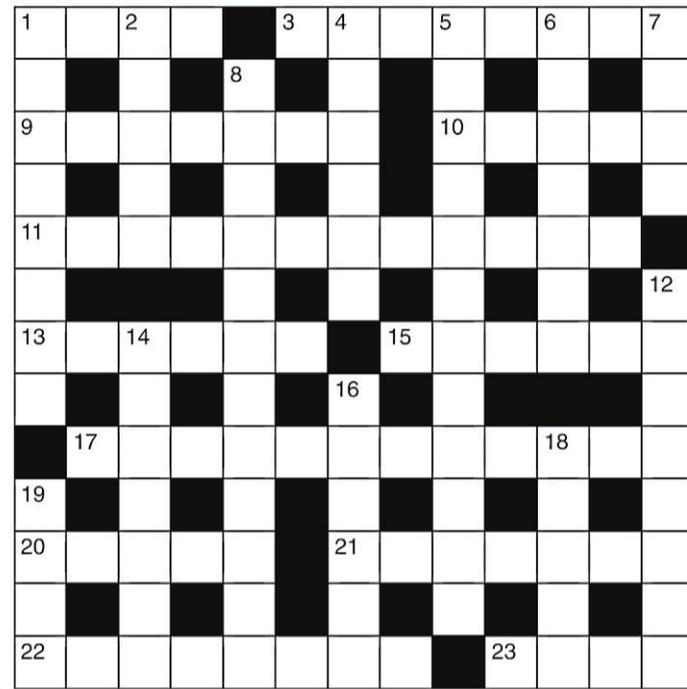
Sagittarius
November 23rd - December 21st
From this week you'll have more energy for your daily tasks and be ready to let go of activities that are serving no useful purpose.

Capricorn
December 22nd - January 20th
As dynamic Mars enters your sector of self-expression, it's time to let others see how brilliant you are. The cosmos encourages you not to hold back.

THE SEVEN DIFFERENCES



CRYPTIC CROSSWORD N° 11442



Across

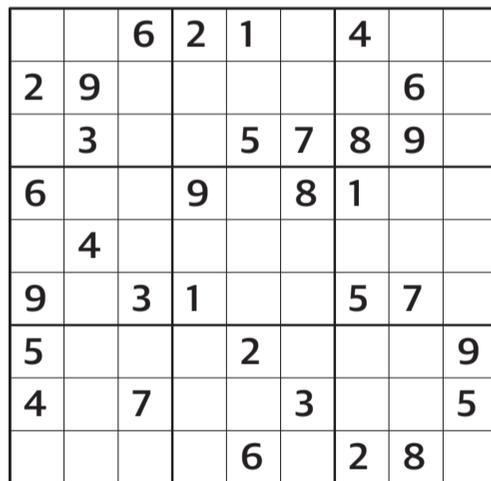
- 1 Link up in space where prisoner stands (4)
- 3 Unlucky lad if let out (3-5)
- 9 Boy is wicked pest to bird (7)
- 10 Rub out some mistake or other as early as possible (5)
- 11 It shows intention of making a comeback (6,6)
- 13 A creditable presentation is expected of it (6)
- 15 Sibling of same age gets half sharp pain (6)
- 17 Resisting by getting to one's feet? (12)
- 20 Stage presentation of work taking a long time (5)
- 21 Self-centred person is to get corrected (7)
- 22 Prepare to find egghead in awful tragedy (3,5)
- 23 Ring given to workers as sign (4)

Down

- 1 Area where more than 500 are over-rigorous (8)
- 2 100 having a breather on the topmost point (5)
- 4 It is measured in fall (6)
- 5 Nice views might be seen through it (6,6)
- 6 Strangely ardent to take one in part exchange (5-2)
- 7 Made attractive sketches, perhaps (4)
- 8 Meticulous passenger in the road? (12)
- 12 Increase the hinge (8)
- 14 Clear I should be in part of the games (7)
- 16 10 o'clock will see the dunderhead present himself (6)
- 18 Said I omitted to include language feature (5)
- 19 Yearn over a specified time (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

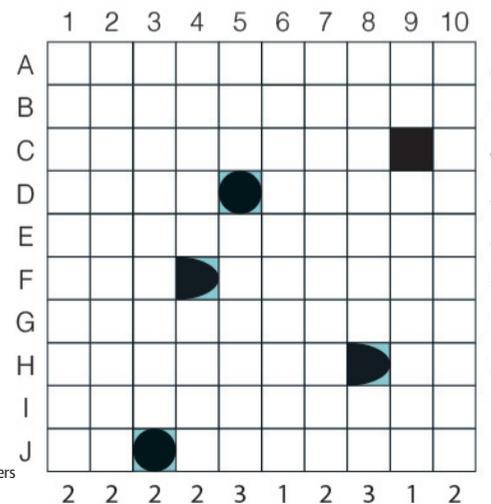
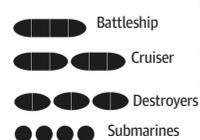


Can you identify the missing names from the groups listed below?

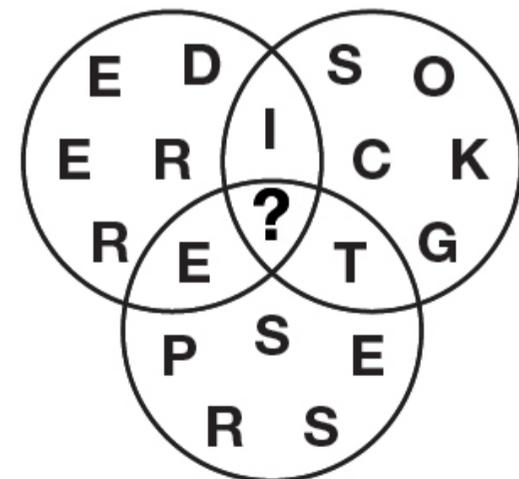
- 1. --- Knight and the Pips
- 2. --- Lewis and the News
- 3. --- and the Dreamers
- 4. --- Dury and the Blockheads
- 5. --- and the Bunnymen
- 6. --- Lennon and the Plastic Ono Band
- 7. --- Harley and Cockney Rebel
- 8. --- and the Gang
- 9. --- Marley and the Wailers
- 10. --- and the Pacemakers

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 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?

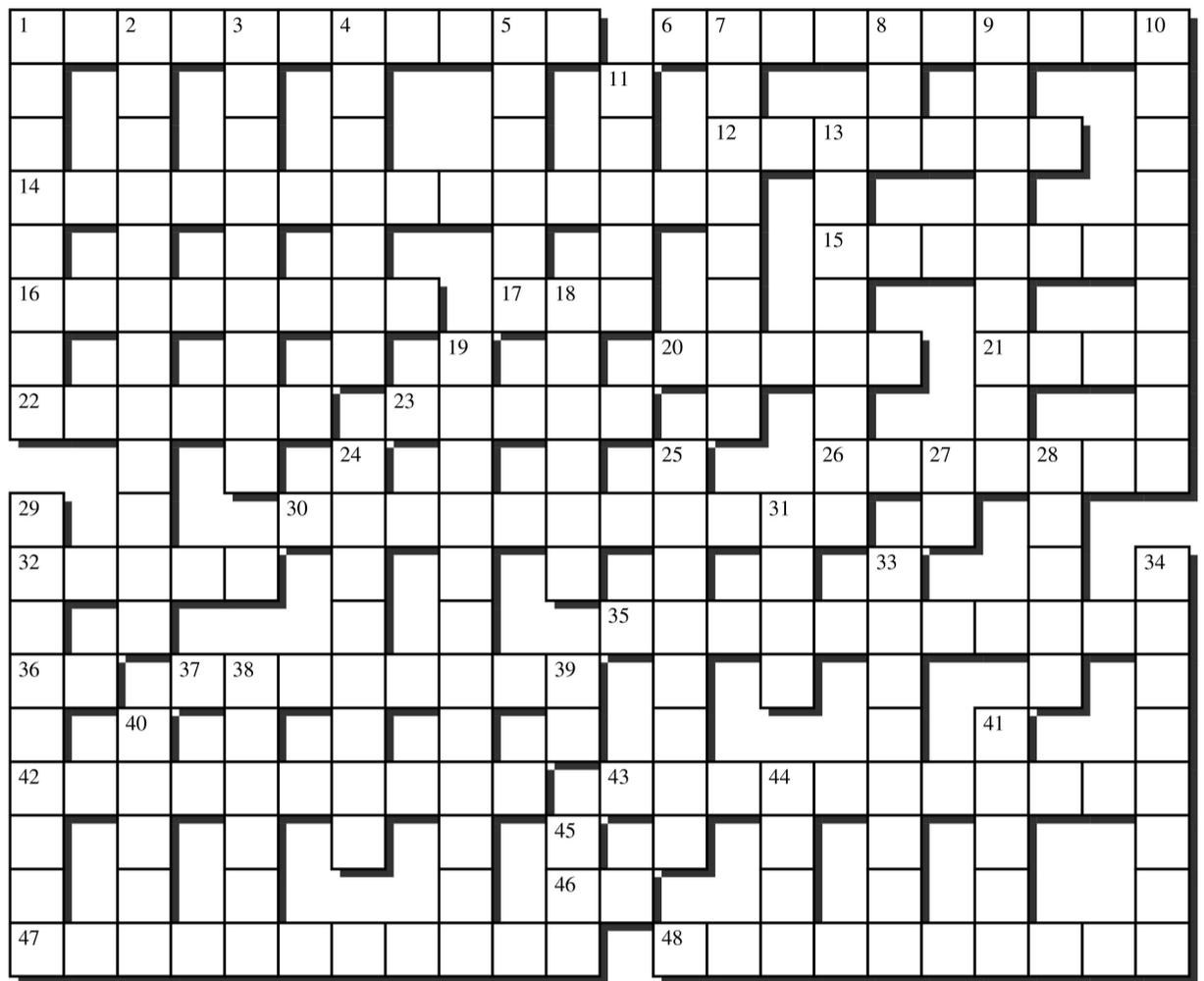
LANGUAGE CROSSWORD FILL IN THE SPANISH WORD

Across

- 1) Communities (11)
- 6) Democracy (10)
- 12) They opposed (7)
- 14) Stabilisation (14)
- 15) Official (7)
- 16) Hung (f.pl) (8)
- 17) It was (3)
- 20) Free (5)
- 21) I washed (4)
- 22) To flutter (6)
- 23) Fishing (5)
- 26) Our (m) (7)
- 30) Growth (11)
- 32) Snow (5)
- 35) Agriculture (11)
- 36) A (2)
- 37) Fabulous (f) (8)
- 42) Translation (10)
- 43) Prosperity (11)
- 46) My (2)
- 47) Isolation (11)
- 48) Development (10)

Down

- 1) Commerce (8)
- 2) Mentalities (12)
- 3) Named (f.pl) (9)
- 4) Disloyal (7)
- 5) Lace (6)
- 7) Economy (8)
- 8) With (3)
- 9) Tariffs (9)
- 10) Shipyard (9)
- 11) Friend (f) (5)
- 13) Ear, nose and throat specialist (m) (8)
- 18) Bunch (6)
- 19) Common market (7,5) (12)
- 24) Brawl (8)
- 25) Ginger (8)
- 27) It is (2)
- 28) Touch (5)
- 29) Industry (9)
- 31) Trio (4)
- 33) To infringe (8)
- 34) Fishing ground (8)
- 38) Customs (6)
- 39) Ace (2)
- 40) Hands (5)
- 41) Ice (5)
- 44) Six (4)
- 45) I love (3)



ANSWERS

Quiz answers

Of interest: Hillary Diane Rodham Clinton was born and raised in the city of Chicago in the US. She had met Bill Clinton at Yale Law School and moved to Arkansas.

Of interest: Mount Elbert is the highest summit of the Rocky Mountains of North America and the highest point in the US state of Colorado and the entire Mississippi River drainage basin. The mountain was named in honor of a Colorado statesman, Samuel Hitt Elbert.

Language Crossword

ACROSS:
1. COMUNIDADES 6. DEMOCRACIA
12. OPUSCULO 13. OPERA
14. ESTABILIZACION 15. OFICIAL
16. HUNTO 17. ERA 21. EGOTISTA
20. LIBRE 22. FLUTEA 23. PESCA
26. NUESTRO 27. ESTE 28. FABULOSA
30. CRECIMIENTO 32. NIEVE
35. AGRICULTORES 36. A
37. FABULOSA 38. ARKANSAS
42. TRADUCCION 43. PROSPERIDAD
47. ISOLACION 48. DESARROLLO

DOWN:
1. COMERCIO 2. MENTALIDADES
3. NOMBRES 4. DESLEAL
5. SENCILLEZ 6. MANOS
7. ECONOMIA 8. CON
9. BARANCOLES 10. ASTILLERO
11. ANGA 12. TORRINO
13. ENTENDIMIENTO 14. EVIDENTE
15. OFICIAL 16. CADA
17. COMUNIDAD 18. BARRIO
19. COMERCIO 20. OPERA
21. EGOTISTA 22. FLUTEA
23. PESCA 24. BARRIO
25. GINGIBRE 26. PESCA
27. ESTE 28. FABULOSA
29. INDUSTRIA 30. CRECIMIENTO
31. TRIO 32. NIEVE
33. INFRINGE 34. PESQUERIA
35. AGRICULTORES 36. A
37. FABULOSA 38. ARKANSAS
39. ACE 40. MANOS
41. HIELO 42. TRADUCCION
43. PROSPERIDAD 44. SEIS
45. AMO

Cryptic Crossword

Solutions: Across: 1 Dock; 3 Ill-fated; 9 Stephen; 10 Erase; 11 Return ticket; 13 Cheque; 15 Twinge; 17 Withstanding; 20 Opera; 21 Egotist; 22 Get ready; 23 Omen. Down: 1 District; 2 Crest; 4 Length; 5 French window; 6 Trade-in; 7 Drew; 8 Thoroughfare; 12 Heighten; 14 Evident; 16 Attend; 18 Idiom; 19 Long.

Wordpuzler solution

1. Gladys
2. Huey
3. Freddie
4. Ian
5. Echo
6. John
7. Steve
8. Kool
9. Bob
10. Gerry

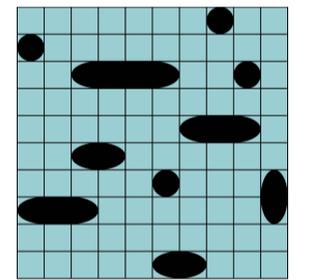
Sudoku solution

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

Circlegram

The letter represented by the question mark is N. Reindeer, stocking, presents, all associated with Christmas.

Battleships



WHERE IS THIS?



Monument to a bull

Last week: Torre de Benagabón

This unusual fountain in the shape of a dandelion seed head is on Calle Tempestad.



THE SUR IN ENGLISH CORNER

Hope for the New Year

Out with the old and in with the new may be an old expression but it couldn't be said with more sincerity this year. 2020 has been a year of trial and tribulation for just about everybody, with seemingly insurmountable problems posed by the pandemic. However the dark days were brightened by the community spirit of people everywhere, with impromptu concerts from balconies, messages of support and acts of kindness. Throughout the year, the SUR in

English team have reported on the Covid-19 crisis, which at times nearly obliterated the news about Brexit, but with a vaccine now available and a Brexit deal reached, we're hoping that 2021 will bring better news, good health and prosperity to all our readers and their loved ones. Don't forget you can contact us with your news and views by emailing surinenglish.su@diariosur.es or via Facebook @surenglish or Twitter @SUR_English.





The German Shepherd who helped stop countless lives being lost in Mallorca, is now commemorated in Antequera. **ANTONIO J. GUERRERO**

Ajax, the police dog that prevented a terrorist 'massacre'

A four-legged hero. The German Shepherd who prevented the terrorist group ETA from committing a second attack in Mallorca in July 2009 has been honoured with a statue in Antequera

FERNANDO TORRES

The first car bomb explosion killed Carlos Sáenz de Tejada García, 28, and Diego Salva Lezaun, 27. The two Guardia Civil officers were victims of the attack that the terrorist group ETA carried out in Palmanova, Mallorca, on 30 July 2009.

The terrorists had prepared a second car bomb that was ready to be detonated while the authorities were still responding to the first incident.

But they hadn't counted on Ajax, a Guardia Civil dog specialised in the detection of explosives, along with his handler, Sergeant Juan Carlos Alabarces.

The dog identified the vehicle and avoided a massacre.

"He saved many lives, includ-

ing mine," acknowledged the officer at a ceremony on Monday when his home town of Antequera honoured the German Shepherd with the unveiling of a statue in the dog's honour.

Ajax's career ended in 2012 and lived out his last days at the Lobo Park in Antequera, where he died in 2013.

After retiring Ajax received several honours including international recognition with a gold medal from the British charity, the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals. Just 30 animals have ever received this elite distinction.

Ajax also received a private audience with King Juan Carlos in recognition of his bravery. But now, on a rainy day in December, Antequera has installed a bust of the animal carved in solid stone by the artist Antonio García.

The general director of the Civil Guard, María Gámez, presided over the emotional ceremony which was led by the town's mayor Manuel Barón.

Ajax's partner Alabarces thanked the town and the Guardia Civil for making this commemoration possible and explained that the connection between the pair had been "immediate".

He also explained that Ajax had all of the values that the Guardia Civil stands for: "Loyalty, honour, discipline and the spirit of sacrifice."

Despite the time that has passed, Alabarces says: "What we saw that day will never be forgotten." He explained: "Ajax located another vehicle carefully prepared to implode and cause a massacre of women and children, as it was in an area full of hotels in full summer."

On that day, the black and "fire-coloured" dog became a symbol of the fight against ETA

"Ajax was much more than a dog. He represented the tenacity, service and dedication" of all those who had to face the bombs and gunshots.

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