



THE STIGNATI

A Community Newsletter for

BRORURY - BYFORD - KINNERSLEY - LETTON - MANSSELL,
GAMAGE - MOORHAMPTON - NONNINGTON-ON-WYE -
NORTON CANON - SARNESFIELD - STAUNTON-ON-WYE

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Wintering in Spain

Joan, Jo and I are staying in a villa on Sierra Zuera, on a hill overlooking Puengirola on the Costa Del Sol. From the patio I can see in the distance the coastal ridges running down to the Mediterranean with patches of the sea shimmering in between. Nearer, on the lower slopes of the hill, there is the bustle and noise of a building project pressing ahead. Adosados and Apartamentos appearing with great speed, a familiar sight in these parts. I must admit that I used to think of Spanish building as shoddy and jerry built, but having watched these jads toiling on the hillside below me, I am having to revise my opinions. They can show us a thing or two, work like beavers, and the construction is quite impressive. I cannot agree with the way that they squeeze the Town Houses in when there is so much space, but people buy them, most developments are sold before they are completed, so who can really blame them. Swimming pools, Tennis Courts, Golf Courses, they're all here, people come from all over Europe for their place in the sun. At the moment it seems to be the Danes, Swedes and Finns who are in the ascendancy. That seems to be where the main money is at the moment.

Over to my right as I sit here on the terrace in the afternoon sunshine, I look beyond the blue roof cupolas of the Elyhos hotel and its beautiful golf course, to the green rolling hills behind Marbella. We went for a trip in the back tracks through those hills a couple of weeks ago, before the rains came. Transport was in my son's 4 w.d. Patrol. I wouldn't chance my car on those rough roads. Locals would say that I mollycoddle my car, but I hope it will get us back to England. Lets give it a chance anyway...gosh its hot here at the moment, thermometer shows 32°C, well into the 80s..move into the shade. The back tracks, the farmers who live in "Avocado Valley" as its called locally, drive in and out of their Fincas in their old SEATs and Renaults, up and over the ruts and ridges, down and through the many stream beds that cut across the track. At great speed, curtained in dust, perhaps thats the secret, the speed. But its a beautiful area in there. The vivid greens of the Avocados and Citrus trees, the grey green of the wild Rosemary, the darker colour of the pines. The track winds up and over the smaller hills, down through little valleys with their stream courses, always giving new views and sights. In some places, the track runs right thro' a Finca, almost into the farmhouse itself, and old people pause in their labours of husking their Almond crop.

There is one particular stream that always flows in its own little hidden wild valley, that is a favourite picnic spot with my grandchildren. "Lets go to the stream, Dad", a Sunday cry. There are some tall, spreading trees at this spot, they look like Planes to me, but I forget to ask. They make lovely shade over a little sandy beach and pool. No wonder the children love it so. Picnic of cold barbecued chicken, fresh rolls and fruit is lingered over. Then Dad and Grandad are cajoled to join a scramble in the stream up its rocky course while Mum, Grandma and Auntie watch and doze. Strange to realise that the Coastal road with its constant traffic, the heaving population of glamorous Marbella are only 2 or 3 k.m. away over the intervening hills.

The rain came last week. Ye Gods, didn't it rain !! Some 18 inches in 4 days so I'm told, 8 inches in one day. Floods, mud slides, rock falls, subsidences, the lot. Malaga was the epicentre of the storms, and suffered worst. The Guardalhorce river overflowed its banks on 5 separate occasions taking out vital bridges and flooding the whole plain, including the Airport. We were not so badly affected, although our road was running 3 ins. deep like a river at one stage. Swimming pools all overflowed with rain falling in. Down in Puengirola, some roads were impassable for a time, and the onshore gales caused wave damage along the Paseo Maritimo. Large areas of the roadway stripped away. Several of the 'Chiringuites', the beach restaurants, were damaged, and sun beds etc. washed away. Wherever a stream or river reached the sea, the muddy stain spread for hundreds of metres, and debris of plants and trees was everywhere. Most of it finishes up on the beach, and there seems to be no great rush to clear it up this time of year.

The orange crop is beginning, and fruit on offer is getting better and cheaper. I'm not a great fan, but my companions are. We, I, lug home huge bags of them, at 175 ptas. per 3 Kilos, thats 11 or 12 big, juicy oranges for about 90 pence. We stock up at the weekly fruit market, but the daily covered market is good too. And there's a nice bar there ! I don't mind going. Or to the Supermarket either, there's an excellent bar there. We go to Gibraltar every other week, just under two hours away, and there we can buy the "English" things we cannot get here. Being duty free means that lots of things are much cheaper there too. The Spanish Customs can be sticky on the way back, and if left till late afternoon, take a long time in the queue. If too many bags or boxes are spied in the car, it then has to be entered into the Custom's Computer with a Passport number, and if caught again within a month, tax can be levied. We try to use one of our visitor's passports.

The shops around here are beginning to look Christmassy now, window displays, decorations and overhead electric lights. Rudolph looks different somehow. We are looking forward to our Christmas out here. I'll find time to write about it later.

Roy Brock

Many women are not as young as they are painted.

Its a funny kind of month November. For the really keen cricket fan its only then when he discovers that his wife left him in May.

After an incident in Croydon involving a prison van and a concrete mixer, the police are now looking for eighteen hardened criminals.

A critic is a legless man who teaches running.

Contributions for the **MARCH** issue should be sent to
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by **18th February** please.