I am delighted to say that this year looks like it will go out with a bang. Property sales have taken off again, providing the price is right, and the upswing looks likely to continue in to 2016.

It is good to see the number of public works underway and closed down projects being reopened. Likewise, it is good to hear that people are getting back in to work, slow though that may be. All in all, Spain is a brighter and more optimistic place than it was a year ago and the fruit of that recovery is a property marketing which is now moving having lain stagnant for so many years.

Holiday rentals did not set the heather on fire in 2015 but there was a flurry at the end of the year for bookings through in to 2016 so hopefully that is a sign of recovery in the coming year. Long term rentals remain buoyant with a good demand and prices starting to creep up.

I think we have a truly excellent year end edition of our Newsletter for you with a really mixed bag of facts, figures, information and updates. We have our usual money market update from James Baxter at Foremost Currency, an article on the Romans favourite condiment, Garum and the low down on celebrating Christmas in Spain. We looked back at some of our previous features and asked those contributors what they have to offer for Christmas. Steve Litchfield the butcher tempts us with his festive goodies, Ya En Tu Casa showcase their lovely gift hampers, The Taj Mahal Indian Restaurant are providing an excellent festive season menú and El Faro in Cadiz have a lovely set menú on offer for a special night out.

All that is left for me to say is, have a lovely Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Lesley McEwan, MD, Cadizcasa

STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS

Electricity is now charged by the hour in Spain. In essence, this means 24 tariffs in each day or 1440 different prices making up the 2 monthly bill. The result will be, that customers only pay for what they use and at the rate set when they use it. This change only applies to the 14 million regulated market customers i.e. those who buy their energy from the national supplier not those who are supplied by independent utility companies.

There is a difference of some 31% in cost between the peak and cheap rate in each day. Technical information is sent to the supplier via a digital or smart meter and is updated every 20 seconds. For those with a smart meter already fitted hourly billing is possible. Smart meters are being rolled out across Spain and the government wants to see them fitted in all homes and businesses, with up to 15kw supply, by 2018. The payment due to the supplier for a smart meter is 81 cents per month, some 40% higher than the current charge for an analogue meter, but installation is free of charge.

Consumer groups are sceptical that the new charges will benefit consumers as around 60% of the average bill is made up of standing charges and consumption only accounts for around 40%, but a recent report gives some ideas on how to keep costs low. The most expensive consumption is between 9pm and 10pm while the cheapest is between 2am and 3am and also 3pm and 5pm.

Weekends are around 7% cheaper than weekdays and Sunday is the best day with a saving of 9%. Therefore, Sunday during siesta 3pm / 6pm is the best time to do the washing or any housework you have to catch up on. Try to avoid Mondays between 8pm and 10pm as this is one of the most expensive times of the week.
ROMAN HP SAUCE

What did the Romans do for us? Well, apart from the aqueduct, sanitation, roads, medicine, education and of course wine. Great sketch by those masters of comedy, Monty Python, but it does illustrate just how easily we do forget what the Romans have done for us. They were masters of industry, with highly developed organisational skills. They ran an empire which at its height, stretched from the border of Scotland and England to the border of Iraq and Iran, and to the south it extended in to North Africa. All this with only wooden ships and leather sandals!

They say that an army marches on its stomach and any NAAFI manager will tell you that if the HP sauce runs out there will be war. At its height the Roman army numbered around 30 legions each made up of 5,000 men plus engineers, doctors, civilian administrators, craftsmen as well as private entrepreneurs who followed and supplied the great army, this group of people included retailers and artisans, musicians and entertainers and of course, the obligatory ladies of the night. In essence, a lot of people to keep happy and there were two things which made the most important members of this group, the Roman soldiers, very happy indeed. One was the aforementioned ladies of the night and the second was a strange little product called garum.

Garum was a fish sauce, used by the Romans much like we use HP sauce. It was not invented by the Romans, the Greeks got there first, but it certainly made its mark on history during the Roman period. It was a pungent sauce, also sometimes called liguamen, made by macerating oily fish and fish guts with salt, which stopped the decaying process. Any kind of fish could be used such as anchovy, mackerel, tuna, sardines or sprats. Sometimes herbs were added such as fennel, coriander, mint, oregano or dill. The mix was then fermented in the dry warm air for one to three months, in stone vats. As the fermentation progressed, a close texture woven basked was placed on the mixture, as the fish disintegrated, the liquid which came out of the mash would flow in to the basket and could then be taken off. The sauce was high in protein and amino acids. A whole garum industry grew up making this concoction and shipping it to the four corners of the Roman Empire. The best garum was considered to come from Southern Spain and was called garum sociorum or “garum of the allies”. The smell this fermentation process created was pretty bad and garum factories were relegated to the outskirts of most Roman towns.

Like soya sauce, garum was used as a umami flavouring but its uses were not only limited to food. It was also recommended for all sorts of ailments from freckles to dysentery. The sauce came in several grades to fit all social classes and purses. For instance, once the garum had been removed, the pulp called allec was used by the poor to flavour their porridge or farinata. According to Diocletian, the best quality fish sauce was liquamen primum, then coming in second was liquamen secundum and of course, garum could always be substituted by salt in a recipe. That said, garum appears in several of the recipes featured in the Roman cookbook Apicius and not only in the savoury dishes but also in some of the sweet ones. The Romans recommended that when mixed with wine, oenogarum (a popular Byzantine sauce), vinegar, black pepper, and oil, garum enhances the flavour of a wide variety of dishes, including boiled veal and steamed mussels. You must try that next time you are stuck for a meal idea!!

One of the main garum production sites was at Claudia Baleo, lying along the beach at Bolonia, just north of Tarifa in the Costa de la Luz. This incredibly well preserved site lies just off the N340/E5. On leaving the main road, you wend your way uphill to begin with then come round a corner to be confronted by the most fabulous view of the valley falling away downhill to the
seashore, slightly to the right, you can just pick out the incredibly well preserved remains of Claudia Baleo and as you get closer, many are apt to ask what those funny dug out stone things are right on the shore line – of course, they were the fermentation vats at the garum factory. The site has a museum but to be honest, it does not do the place justice and you would probably be better to hot foot it through the museum and out to the site which will not disappoint.

Claudio Baleo was occupied from around the end of 200BC and was particularly prosperous during the time of the Emperor Claudius, 41 – 45AD, indeed it was doing so well that he gave it the title of municipium, but by the 6th century the city was abandoned.

Why would the Romans abandon such a beautiful site which housed a large number of people and supplied one of life’s staple foods? It would appear that the decline coincided with seismic activity in the area and while the area is not particularly known for such activity, it has now been established, following 6 field surveys, that two earthquakes did take place. The use of extensive ground penetrating radar, amongst the ruins to detect archeoseismologic damage, indicate that there were two earthquakes within the Roman period. The first in 40 – 60AD and the second in 260 – 280AD, although this latter date differs to previous studies which put the second earthquake around 350 – 395AD. The damage they caused is evident when you look at the Isis Temple for instance and the data indicates a SW/NE directed compression due to ground shaking. The survey also concentrated on landslide and liquefaction processes, both common to earthquakes and evident in the area of the city. It is thought that the earthquakes were the result of a local event rather than a knock on effect of remote seismic activity.

Not only was the city beset by natural disaster, it was attacked by pirates both Celtic and Barbary. Piracy is not something you generally consider during the Roman period but it was a very real risk and Julius Caesar was personally a victim, having been kidnapped by Cilician pirates in 75BC and held for 38 days. They demanded 20 talents of gold but this was raised to 50 talents when Caesar became insulted and complained at the mediocre sum being asked for his safe return. The fine was paid and he was released but his sense of humour obviously failed him, as he then hunted down the pirates and crucified them.

In general, barring the earthquakes and pirates, life in Claudia Baleo was good, the city had 3 aqueducts
supplying it with fresh water, a sewerage system, a circular protective wall with main gate, an industrial area, administrative buildings, stores, a market, Roman baths, a theatre, and various temples dedicated to Isis, Minerva, Juno and Jupiter.

STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS

Children are now required by law to travel in the back of cars if they are 4ft 6in or less and should be in a booster seat or similar, suitable for their age, height and weight. The Spanish Traffic Department in fact recommend that children up to 4ft 11in should sit in the back not the front of a car and they further recommend that children should not be carried on people’s laps, or using the same seatbelt to protect a child and adult combined.

The only three exceptions which apply, are where the vehicle does not have back seats, where all back seats are already occupied by children of a similar height or where there is no ability to correctly install child restraints or seating systems.

It has been proven that child restraint or booster seat systems reduce car crash deaths by 75% and reduce the risk of serious injury by 90%.

MAKE DUL’S CHRISTMAS FOR HIM

Christmas is a time for family and to share a bit of love around. Dul has not had much luck when it comes to love. He was thrown out on the street to fend for himself or starve. As with so many strays, when you add a bit of food and a whole lot of love to see what a wonderful dog is hiding in that pile of bones and fur. You can fatten them up, you can heal them but the only thing which makes a dog complete is the love of a human and the security of a home he knows he will come back to every day and where he will be protected, respected and above all loved. Dul is not a dog for Christmas, he is a dog who will be loyal and faithful for many years to come so if you have a corner where a nice little basket could sit and you would not mind a bit of four legged company when you walk to the library, shops, park or the even the pub, Dul might be just the boy. Give him a chance if you can, he will reward you 1000 times over – I promise.
Dul would like to say something…….

I might be Dul by name, but I’m not dull by nature.

I was picked up from the streets in May 2013, neglected and scared, and have been in the pound ever since.

Despite my bad past, I have come to love people and I adore cuddles ♥

I would say I’m now ready for my forever home.

Could it be with you?

STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS

Air Berlin have cancelled their flights to and from Palma de Mallorca, while flights from Sevilla will be cancelled by the end of January and those from Jerez de la Frontera will go by March 2016. The carrier has provided passengers with well priced flights between the mainland and Mallorca and also to and from Germany, Switzerland and Austria but poor financial results have caused the cessation of the service.

In the first 9 months of this year, Air Berlin lost 191 million euros, mostly due to strong competition from the Spanish domestic flight market. They will now concentrate on short haul and long distance routes out of Berlin and Dusseldorf airports.

However, in summer 2016, the airline will fly connections to Mallorca, as this makes financial sense for them, Mallorca being one of the top German beach holiday destinations.

The company will also enter in to talks with airlines which offer routes between mainland Spain and Palma, and also those offering routes between Ibiza and Mallorca to try to take up multi-carrier deals thereby still offering customers flights from the peninsula to Germany, Austria and Switzerland albeit, with a stop over in Mallorca.

EXCHANGE RATE OUTLOOK

In the last 3 months we’ve seen a continuation of the trend set in the first half of 2015; that of continued uncertainty and volatile markets. GBP/EUR rates have been particularly choppy, dropping to the low 1.30’s in October before climbing back up to 1.43 towards the end of November. Before the financial crisis, a 10 cent movement in 4 weeks would have been unheard of; it’s now par for the course.

Back in the summer, the pound had touched an 8 year high against the euro at the height of the Greek crisis. As the pressure on Greece eased, the euro regained much of the ground it had lost in the earlier part of the year. The rate subsequently dropped from 1.44 to as low as 1.33. The downward movement in GBP/EUR was amplified by the weakening of the pound. Recent rounds of UK inflation figures have indicated that the UK economy has slipped into a deflationary period, with prices falling rather than rising, with the Bank of England targeting a 2% rate of inflation. With prices falling, the UK central bank is unable to raise interest rates and the pound has struggled in recent months as a result. There had been much speculation over the summer that the Bank of England were on the verge of an interest rate hike but this now looks unlikely to be happening anytime soon.
As hopes of a rate hike faded the pound had been sliding against the euro and the US dollar until retail sales figures in October gave sterling a welcome boost. The positive figures coincided with a speech from Mario Draghi, the president of the European Central Bank, in which he hinted at another interest rate cut and an extension to the ECB’s aggressive quantitative easing programme. The announcement sent the euro tumbling, dropping from 1.33 to trade above 1.40 against the pound within a few weeks. At the time of writing the euro was trading at 1.43 against sterling and 1.06 against the dollar. The GBP/EUR rate has only been higher once in the last 8 years, for a brief period this summer. Likewise, EUR/USD has only been lower than this once in the last ten years, for a brief period in the summer, at the height of the Greek crisis.

This is great news if you’re living in Spain on an English pension, or if your savings or investments are sterling denominated. Likewise, if you’re looking to buy property in Spain, your pound has strengthened around 7% against the euro since the end of October. To put this into perspective, a €250,000 property is now around £13,000 cheaper than it would have been around 1 month ago. Of course, if you’re looking to sell up and move back to the UK, the opposite is true. Currency brokers can help limit your exposure and protect you from further adverse movements in the currency markets. On the other hand, if you’re looking to take advantage of the current GBP/EUR high, a specialist foreign exchange brokerage may be able to source you rates of exchange up to 5% better than the high street banks.

Contact James Baxter at the Foremost Currency Group for a free, no obligation consultation on +44 1442 892 062. Alternatively, drop him an email at jsb@fcgworld.co.uk.

STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS

The BBC have caused great offence resulting in a demand for an apology for showing a member of an Easter parade brotherhood in an article about the Ku Klux Klan.

The article was about an anonymous group of internet hackers who plan to identify members of the racist American organisation and took the line of what damage this could cause. It followed the story of a woman whose life had been ruined by being falsely accused of being a member of the organisation.

Unfortunately, KKK wear pointed hats with face masks, identical to those worn for the Semana Santa celebrations in Spain and full length uniforms closely resembling the outfits worn when the statues of Jesus and Mary are carried. On Easter Sunday, the statues of Jesus and Mary meet face to face to symbolise Christ’s resurrection and the brotherhoods remove their masks to show that they have been redeemed for their sins and no longer hide their faces in shame.

These pagent are enjoyed all over Spain and many famous people take part including Antonio Banderas who is always present at the Malaga events.

The San Gonzalo brotherhood are somewhat furious at the error which they claim mocks and attacks their faith and traditions. Their website says members are very disappointed by the unfortunate incident and supine ignorance and they have demanded an apology from the BBC to publically clarify the position.

The BBC was not the first to make this mistake. The Spanish channel La Sexta was forced to apologise two years ago after a presenter also jokingly likened the Seville Easter brotherhoods to the Ku Klux Klan.

The BBC have now changed the offending picture.

CHRISTMAS IN SPAIN

I have always loved Christmas in Spain. It might not be the commercial extravaganza seen in America or the UK but it does last longer and is more about family and friends than the value of the gifts or the lavishness of the decorations.
In Spain, the religious element of Christmas officially starts on December 8th – this is the “Puente” a holiday for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception or Immaculada. A festival celebrated throughout Spain, and each year in front of the beautiful gothic cathedral of Seville with the Los Sieses ceremony which means the “dance of six”. Just to confuse you, it is now performed by ten elaborately costumed boys. The dance is a precise piece and people gather at the Cathedral to watch, while families crowd round the televisions as it is screened across Spain. Those not glued to the TV are content with a wander round the streets to see the Christmas lights and a coffee here or there with friends.

Only in the past few years have the shops and department stores started to open on the Sundays during December to help the Christmas shopping get underway and life from the 8th through to the next marker in the Christmas calendar, the 22nd December, is filled with much the same routine as in any other Christian country. Gift shopping, food shopping planning and decorating the house. However, in Spain we are spared the laborious writing of Christmas cards as they are not that common and are generally handed to people rather than sent by post. It would be considered very odd to send your auntie a card, and the question would be, “why didn’t you go to see her rather than posting her a card?!”.

The outdoor Christmas markets open around the second week of December offering sweets, nuts, marzipan, candles and hand made decorations and of course, no winter in Spain is complete without the roasted chestnut stalls with their braziers glowing and the paper cones of chestnuts being consumed as people walk around the markets.

In some areas, namely Granada and Jaen, there are the Hogueras or bonfires to keep you entertained. These fires are an ancient tradition and relate to the winter solstice and the shortest day of the year. It is traditional for people to jump the fires as a symbolic protection against illness but no Christmas would be complete without the Belenes or nativities. These can be small shoebox sized, or full scale productions with people dressed up as each character and live animals. Most houses have a Belen and certainly all churches and cathedrals run such an event during Christmas. At home families gather around the Belen to sing while the children dance and especially honoured is the cow, who the Spanish believe breathed its warm breath on the baby Jesus to keep him warm in the stable. Christmas trees are also popular although they tend to go up later around the second half of December.

Christmas is a time of year for a bit of good luck and the buying and giving of lottery tickets is a major industry especially during the Festive season. My hairdresser always give me a ticket for La Lotteria de Navidad but to date, my luck has not held. The main draw is El Gordo or “The Fat One” the draw for which is held on 22 December. It is called a lottery but not in the sense that you can pick your numbers. All the tickets come pre-printed with a number like raffle tickets and many can have the same number in which case all the winners share the prize for that ticket. While that may sound a bit mean, the prize fund tops 3 billion euros and it is common for a whole factory or even a whole village to buy the same numbers and split the winnings. There are three top prizes and thousands of other smaller prizes.

To try to simplify the mechanics of El Gordo, there are 85,000 ticket numbers between 00001 and 85000. Each number is given to 180 series and within those series, each is divided in to 10 decimas. To purchase a decima, you pay 20 euros.

The first prize is 3,000,000 euros per series or 300,000 euros per decima.

Second prize is 1,000,000 euros

3rd prize is 500,000 euros

There are two 4th prizes of 200,000 euros

There are eight 5th prizes of 50,000 euros

And finally 1,774 6th prizes of 1,000 euros

Then there are another 11 lower categories of prize going down to 200 euros

Now, if you have got out the calculator to check I have done my maths correctly, you will be short some 30% of the prize fund. That is because, the government takes 30% of the total fund. Party poopers I say!
The lottery was first held in 1812 to raise funds for the San Idelfonso Orphanage in Madrid. Originally two orphans were chosen to choose and read out the numbers as it was thought that they would be less susceptible to bribes, not having any relatives to influence them. Nowadays, San Idelfonso is a school and the children still announce the lottery, one singing or chanting the winning number and the other answering with the amount won. As the lottery now takes some hours, several shifts of children are used and when a major amount is won, the children have to sing the winning number and amount several times and show the winning wooden balls to a verification committee for confirmation. It is still common for an El Gordo winner to give money to the school. If you ever doubt buying the lottery in Spain is worthwhile, in 2011 the town of Grañen in Huesca won 700,000,000 euros making it the richest town in Spain.

The draw is broadcast live all over Spain via radio and TV. It is impossible to have a coffee in a bar or visit a friend without the rhythmic chant of the children in the background. Many commercial premises set up a radio or TV purely for the draw and you see people huddled around somebody with an iphone waiting to see if their ticket has won. El Gordo is a major part of Spanish life but lotteries are also run by other organisations such as the Cruz Roja but by far the largest and most popular is El Gordo.

Closely following on is Christmas Eve or Nochebuena. The Spanish say “esta noche es Nochebuena, y no es noche de dormer” it basically means, this is Christmas Eve and not a night for sleeping! Chistmas Eve is the most important night of the Christmas calendar when families meet to eat and celebrate together. Bars and restaurants generally close and everyone is home from work by mid afternoon. They play games, sing carols, watch TV, sometimes exchange small gifts and generally enjoy themselves. The giving of gifts, or more to the point, the timing for the giving of gifts, has changed in recent years. At one time, gifts were given to the children on Three Kings which is 6 January in memory of the wisemen who brought gifts to Jesus but now some families give the gifts on Christmas Eve, some on Christmas Day and others on Three Kings. This is due to the more modern acceptance of Papa Noel or the Father Christmas version of events. My friends tend to split their gifts so the children get something on Christmas Eve and the balance on Three Kings.

The celebratory meal is eaten in the evening and I have often been asked what Spanish people eat for Christmas. The answer is “not much different to anyone else”. They like prawns, seafood and smoked salmon, some like turkey with stuffing, other like lamb and some choose a large fish shared between all the family. All washed down with some bubbly, a nice wine and of course, some after dinner liqueurs, plus turron and polverones, those little sweets in wrappers seen all over Spain at Christmas.

Probably only able to waddle by now, many families go to church or for a walk in the countryside or along the beach, some meet with friends for a drink or coffee, and some visit family. Some take advantage of the swings set up specially for the Spanish custom of “swinging” at Christmas. Before you hit delete thinking we are off down a totally unconnected and potentially offensive route, we do mean swinging on swings. It is an old tradition and many Townhalls put up swings specially for the use of the public. Then everyone heads home for a buffet style lunch and more fun.

Next on the Christmas calendar is 28 December, the Feast of the Holy Innocents when young boys from towns and villages light bonfires and one of them acts as the mayor, ordering the towns people to perform civic chores such as sweeping the streets, tidying up litter, removing graffiti etc. Refusal to comply with instructions results in a fine, the money being chanelled back in to the festivities. This day is not dissimilar to April Fools day and people play jokes on each other and the media carry made up nonsense stories to amuse.
Closely following on Is New Year’s Eve or Nochevieja. Again, the family gather for a meal, chat and laugh, just prior to midnight everyone receives 12 grapes, these must be eaten for luck, one on each strike of the clock heralding the new year. Generally they are washed down by Cava. The young then head off to their parties and festivities and the older family sit around chatting and watching TV.

New Year’s day is a quiet day again spent with family or friends, not surprising, they probably need to recover!

Next on the calendar is 5 January, this day has one reason to exist and that is to provide the public with a chance to go to their favourite bakery or cake shop and buy a Roscon de Reyes. A doughnut shaped cake decorated with crystallised fruits and often eaten for breakfast on the biggest day of the Spanish year - 6 January or Epiphany. This day is all about the children with parades in many of the cities and towns. The main characters in the parades are the Three Kings, or Los Tres Reyes. We have Melchior who has long white hair and a beard, he wears a gold cloak and is the King of Arabia, he brought gold, a gift for a king. Then there is Gaspar. He is easily recognised by his brown hair and beard, he wears a green cloak and gold crown inlaid with green jewels, he represents the King of Sheba who brought Frankincense, a gift for a priest, and finally, there is Balthazar who has black skin, a black beard and wears a purple cloak. He is the King of Trase and Egypt. Balthazar brought Myrrh, a gift for someone who was going to die. The connection being that it was commonly used during the embalming process.

You may well be doubtful about the existence of the Three Kings but Marco Polo claimed in the 1270’s, to have visited Saba in Persia and to have seen the tombs of The Three Kings. Whether they did ever exist, I would not like to venture, but they are an intrinsic part of the Spanish festivities.

Well, that is Christmas in Spain. In essence, a time to show your love for your fellow man, spend time with your family and friends and forget about the daily grind of life, which is just what Christmas should be. Merry Christmas!

STOP PRESS…STOP PRESS…STOP PRESS

A new law passed in Spain has outlawed operations on domestic animals for cosmetic gain. This will include tail docking, removing claws or cutting ears. The law also makes owners personally responsible for their pets health and wellbeing.

Owning, trading in or breeding dogs is now only permitted when the person has sufficient knowledge. This will prevent horses being sold to people who cannot ride or do not know how to care for them.

Domestic animals can no longer be used for spectacle such as circuses or films or for advertising where doing so could damage their welfare or health.

The big question now is whether this will extend to the banning of bull fights or bull runs as present figures show that 80 - 90% of Spainiards are against them. Seeing them as unsuitable in modern day Spain.

The law recognises the special relationship between a domestic animal and humans and emphasises the contribution a human must make to the animal’s quality of life.

Recommendations include not giving a pet to children under 16 years without direct permission of their parent or legal guardian, not giving pets as prizes and discouraging unplanned breeding.
CATCH UP

We have featured many companies and organisation in our Newsletters over the years and I managed to catch up with two of them to see what they had to offer for Christmas.

The lovely Claudio, Diego and their little girl Lola Maria are developing a really magical business in Vejer called Ya En Tu Casa offering some of the best produce, Spain can offer and this year to make the present giving a bit easier, they are doing some great hampers which you can buy on line at (www.yaentucasa.com) or at their shop. They have put together 9 wonderful hampers each dedicated to a particular food group. There is a hamper for gin lovers, sherry lovers, wine drinkers, cooks and those with a sweet tooth. All the produce is sourced with love and care by Claudia and Diego and prices range from 45€ to 256€. Why not make somebody’s Christmas with a lovely little bit of Spain, courtesy of Ya En Tu Casa or better still, treat yourself over the festive season.
Probably best to get your order in early. Contact Claudia and Diego at:-

**The Old Town: Calle Corredera, 17**

**The New Town: Calle Hijuela de Lucas, s/n**

**Website:** www.yaentucasa.com

**Phone & Whatsapp:** +34 681243933

**Email:** andalucia@yaentucasa.com

**FB:** yaentucasa
Steve Litchfield at Litchfield the English Butcher in Chiclana is offering a great range of traditional festive products. Everything from fresh locally sourced turkeys, turkey crowns and boned, rolled and stuffed turkey to hand cured gammons, dry cured for fuller flavour and no added water. He can also supply you with, sausage meat for stuffing, chipolatas and pigs in blankets. If you dont fancy turkey this year, there are 28 day hung beef roasts of sirloin, topside or rib, pork joints with crackling and lamb roasts. Steve also offers over 200 grocery lines and some very special cheeses. He has Clawsons Blue Stilton, Italian dolcelate, vintage cheddar and Wensleydale with cranberries. It seems like a one stop shop Christmas.

Get your order in early, Mr Litchfield is a busy boy this time of year:-

*Litchfield’s English Butcher, Chiclana
Call 661 971 462*

**STOP PRESS…STOP PRESS…STOP PRESS**

Spanish police are braced for a posible gang war in the Costa del Sol following the murder of an Irish gangster. Gary Hutch, 34, who was linked to a notorious international drug racket was killed in a professional hit while he was apparently in hiding. Police sources believe that Mr Hutch knew he was being sought by rival criminals and had returned to southern Spain after being warned in Dublin that he was on a hit list.

Mr Hutch is alleged to have been a Lieutenant in the Irish Kinahan drug gang, his uncle was the known criminal Gerry “The Monk” Hutch. He had been spending time between Amsterdam and the Costa del Sol in an attempt to escape the gangland killers.

A year previous to his death, an attempt had been made on his life, which resulted in boxing instructor Jamie Moore being shot by mistake when he turned up for a training session with his pupil Matthew Macklin. Mr Moore has no criminal connections and appears to have been a completely innocent bystander in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Gary Hutch on the other hand, appears to have had more lives than a cat. He was present in a car in Estepona when Paddy Doyle another gangland figure, was shot dead, but Mr Hutch managed to escape on foot with survivable injuries.

Unfortunately, his luck ran out when he was out for a run near to the swimming pool of the Miraflores urbanisation in Calahonda. He was approached by a masked gunman who shot him several times in the head. The killing being witnessed by several British tourists sunning themselves by the pool.

The murder is thought to be part of a continuing feud involving the Kinahan mafia, which some sourves feel is due to erupt, but police say the general public are not at risk.

Thank you for reading our Newsletter, the next edition will be out on 1 March 2016.

Please remember it is free to join our mailing list for the Newsletter and all you need do is register under Newsletter in the right hand column of our Home Page