

# LA REVISTA

ISSUE 257

THE BRITISHSPANISH SOCIETY MAGAZINE

SUMMER ISSUE 2022



# Mahou



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together.



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cuando *nos*  
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# WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER ISSUE!

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In its more than one hundred years history, the charity the BritishSpanish Society whose flagship publication is this magazine, has paid tribute to many commemorations and special events. The celebration of the Platinum Jubilee in honour of Queen Elizabeth II's 70 years of service deserves a very special mention.

As a former member of the British Royal Household tells us in these pages, one of Her Majesty's more remarkable achievements is the way she has been such as exemplary Head of State over such a long period and throughout so much change and upheaval. If you think about what the UK has been through in the past few years alone - the divisiveness of Brexit, the pain of the pandemic, and now a terrible war in Europe - The Queen unifies.

In her nobility, in the true sense of civic responsibility and her sense of duty, and in her stoicism and steadfastness, she has proved an example among monarchs, beyond national boundaries. Her special warm relationship with the Spanish Royal family has helped reinforce bilateral ties, and she generously sent her best wishes to the BritishSpanish Society on the occasion of its centenary celebration in 2016.

These pages also celebrate a resurgence of cultural activity



*Jimmy Burns Marañón, OBE  
Chairman & Executive Editor*

with the return to London, after its suspension during the pandemic, of the hugely popular Flamenco Festival as previewed by Graham Watts, while another dance critic Fatima Nollen shares her experience of a show from the Spanish speaking world, breaking boundaries of diversity and fusion, *Wild Tango*.

BritishSpanish Society members and other supporters have been enjoying meeting up again in some very convivial events in both countries as we report in our News section, while our out-reach *Punto de Encuentro* shares stories of members old and new, and why they support our charitable mission of cultural and educational dialogue and engagement.

Sustainable travel and exploration forms part of discovering what we have been missing and what has changed, so I hope you enjoy following the footsteps of our writers-all BSS members- from Norfolk to North

Africa, via Ibiza and Almeria! We have Anna Swinfield's latest offering of her British and Spanish favourite 'hidden jewels', university student Mary McCullough expanding her knowledge of Spain as a writer and English teacher, Alec Morrow down memory lane in the Balearics, and a Spanish language contributor in our intrepid explorer and adventurer Pepe Ivars, testing his resilience in some of the most challenging terrain in the world, and showing his respect for our fragile planet.

And there is still more good writing and worthwhile content to enjoy in this issue, from British hispanist historians to Spanish anglophile authors, from a Financial Times prize columnist sharing his football passion, watching and writing about Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, to reviews of a new novel on the tragedy of the Spanish Civil War, and the rewards of eating today in a celebrity restaurant in the Spanish capital.

Keep supporting the BSS -get others to join a growing community- and have a safe and peaceful summer!

# Contributors Issue 257



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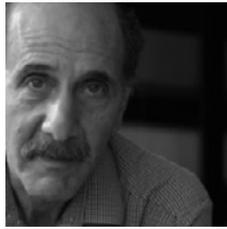
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# Save *the* Date

## June 2022



**BSS Summer Party**  
**Wednesday 8th June, 6.30pm**  
**The Spanish Embassy, Belgrave Square, London**

Join us for the biggest BritishSpanish Society event of the year!

BSS members (priority) £50  
non-members £55



**Discovering the Kew Gardens' hidden gems with Carlos Magdalena**  
**Friday 24th June, 3:30pm - 6:30pm**  
**Kew-London**

Asturian born Carlos Magdalena is the Collections Horticulturist in Kew Garden's iconic tropical nursery.

BSS members (priority) £20  
non-members £25

## September 2022



**BSS Autumn Reception**  
**Thursday 22nd September, Time TBC**  
**Madrid**

Join us at the British ambassadors residence in Madrid.

Details & Booking contact BSS secretary  
Lisa Chambers  
**info@britishspanishsociety.org**

Or check The BritishSpanish Society website **britishspanishsociety.org**

## November 2022



**Annual Spanish Music Concert**  
Date TBC, Time TBC  
St. James Church, Picadilly Circus, London



**BSS scholarship Awards Ceremony**  
Date TBC, Time TBC  
The Spanish Embassy, Belgrave Square, London

## Other events of interest in June 2022



**Anglo-Argentine Society Asado**  
Sunday 19th June,  
11.00am  
London Wasps FC, Acton, London

Join our friends at the Anglo-Argentine Society for an open air family friendly day and enjoy a traditional Argentine Asado with Argentine beef, folklore, entertainment



**Sadlers Wells Flamenco Festival 2022 – Manuel Liñan ¡VIVA!**  
21st & 22nd June, 7.30pm,  
Sadler's Wells, London

Innovative choreographer, director and multi-award winning flamenco dancer, Manuel Liñan, returns to Sadler's Wells. Discount for BSS members.



**Sadlers Wells Flamenco Festival 2022 – Compañía Jesús Carmona The Jump**  
28th & 29th June, 7.30pm  
Sadler's Wells, London

The aptly dubbed 'Catalan virtuoso', Jesús Carmona, returns to Sadler's Wells with his signature elegant, powerful choreography in tow. Discount for BSS members.

# News & Events

Cristina Alvarez Campana,  
Amy Bell, Brett Theobald,  
David Hurst



## Flamenco Beginners' Social Evening 18th March

A group of enthusiastic BritishSpanish Society members, ranging in age from their 20s to those who once were in their 20s, enjoyed their first flamenco class. The event was hosted by Battersea Spanish, a popular language and Latin cultural centre in Battersea, south-west London, offering Spanish language lessons as well as flamenco dance courses or, in the case of some of our British members, an introduction to how to dance this signature Spanish art form.

So, after a convivial glass of Cava on arrival, we all got 'in the swing' with a get-up-and-dance soundtrack from the heart and soul of Andalucía. Moving in a circle, and our Anglo Spanish chairman breaking out to dance an impromptu *Sevillanas* with the teacher, most of us learnt for the first time the basic flamenco hands, arms, hips and leg movements before putting it all together. We loved it and wished to repeat the experience so to fine-tune our expertise!

The class was followed by more Cava, tapas, *ambiente y buena compañía* and the night continued. We hope to return to Battersea Spanish in the autumn for a BSS film night. In the meantime, for more information on courses and public events offered by our good friends at Battersea Spanish, visit [batterseaspainish.com](http://batterseaspainish.com)



## Wallace Collection Tour 26th March

Members and friends of the BritishSpanish Society gathered for the sold out event visiting the Wallace Collection, a beautiful national museum which was first opened to the public in 1900. The collection displays an assortment of art and artefacts gathered by the first four marquesses of Hertford as well as Sir Richard Wallace.

The tour was one of the first in-person events following the easing of lockdown measures, and guests were invited to peruse the collection in small groups, accompanied by a tailored tour booklet, provided by a BritishSpanish member of the Events Committee, Brett Theobald. The booklet highlighted the Collection's outstanding treasures, which includes eighteenth-century French art, an array of important artwork from the seventeenth and nineteenth-centuries, as well as the Medieval and Renaissance era. Extra attention was given to the history of the Hertford House, in which the Wallace Collection resides, the history of the marquesses of Hertford and special notice was given to art and artefacts of British or Spanish origin. The collection encompasses some of the finest armour and weaponry in all of Britain, with wonderful intricate swords and decorative armour.

After the tour, visitors were invited to the Devonshire Arms Pub, where we were split into teams for a friendly pub quiz whilst socialising with a few drinks. The quiz focused on all aspects of the collection, family house and the family themselves, and congratulations to the winning team.

With thanks to the Wallace Collection who preserve and share their artwork for all to enjoy, as well as all members that joined the tour and made the event so enjoyable.



### Members Dinner, Madrid 31st March

The restaurant RAST, one of the Spanish capital's top-rated Mediterranean eateries was the setting for a convivial gathering of Spanish based members and guests, over a delicious fish and meat and vegetarian dinner with excellent wine.

What a fabulous evening. The long-awaited Christmas *cena*, postponed because of COVID restrictions, finally went ahead and was enjoyed by all who attended. Members had missed the *buena compañía* of other BritishSpanish Society friends during the pandemic and were delighted to finally be back together.

Organised by the BSS's Madrid based Trustee Brian Douglas and co-hosted by Executive Council member Igor de la Sota, the dinner had a good turn-out of British hispanophiles and Spanish anglophiles, sharing ideas and experiences in a relaxed atmosphere. Our head

of events Cristina Alvarez Campana welcomed guest speaker and BSS member, the author and journalist Tom Burns Marañón, older brother of our chairman.

'Culture is about people with shared emotions and aspirations, and the mutual appreciation of things of value,' Tom Burns told his audience: 'The wonderful thing about the BritishSpanish Society is that it represents two great cultures.'

Drawing from his recently published latest book *Historia Mínima del Reino Unido*, Burns, who is a leading columnist with the Spanish newspaper *Expansion*, provided an interesting account of the defining periods and characteristics that have shaped the history of the English people and how this has impacted on their relationship with Spain.

Burns, *inter alia*, talked about historic royal links such as that of Catherine of Aragon's marriage to Henry V111, and two

universal literary icons who were contemporaries, Shakespeare and Cervantes, and their contribution to shaping two languages of global reach.

'We enjoyed very much the evening and met fantastic people. We very much look forward to the next event,' said one attendee.

'What a lovely group of people. We had a great time,' said another. The comments summed up a worthwhile evening.



### The Spring Bring & Share picnic - 15th May

The haven of peace and encounter London's St Mary's Church in Cadogan Street and its garden provided a wonderful venue.

St Mary's, just a four minute walk from Sloane Square, is one of the oldest and most welcoming Roman Catholic parishes in Central London attracting a very international community, not least Spaniards and people from other parts of Europe. Its adjacent garden is a tranquil and lovingly cared for green space bordered by flowers and trees, a sheer arcadian delight for young and old.

Thanks to the hugely personable and inspirational parish priest Shaun Middleton ( a great admirer of Spanish culture from its historic art and music to the best of its food and wine!), gatherings at St Mary's are always a hugely welcoming occasion and we could not have asked for a more genial pastor and joint-host.

The event was preceded by a beautiful community mass with readings on the beauty of

creation and love and respect for one's fellow human beings. There were prayers for those suffering war in Ukraine, and music led by the young London based Anglo-Spanish student Myriam Lowe, who sung the prayer *Nada de Turbe* by Saint Teresa of Avila.

Then it was time to break bread .... with BSS friends, including parishioners, and supporters of all ages and backgrounds filling the large garden in a convivial *Punto de Encuentro* from mid-morning into the afternoon, with lively conversation and an assortment of delicious Spanish food and drink, brought and shared .

BSS Trustee and head of events Cristina Alvarez Campana and her husband Quique won the 'prize' for the most delicious Spanish home cooked *empanadas* and *ensaladilla 'rusa'* (a popular spanish potato based salad not a tribute to Putin ! -see below a note on its origins !)

Regular St Mary's parishioners and new BSS members Victor Marin and Mar Maraver, who came with their young baby Martina, were close runners up with their home -made *tortilla*,

and there was much else to be savoured and enjoyed from *gazpacho* to *chorizo* and *jamon*, vine tomatoes, cheese, mandarins and *tortas*.

The open space for a run around and trees to take cover behind, were much enjoyed by children, and our sponsors Mahou and Codorniu delivered some top quality Alhambra beer, Cava, white wine, and Solan de Cabras water.

All in all it was a hugely worthwhile live connection and coming together

Very many thanks to all supported the organisation in invaluable ways including Ben Welch and young family who made the extra mile to get here. We miss you, Ben-come back!

Welcome back David Hurst who cut short his world tour to join us! Brett was a star helping Kidge, her daughter Miriam, and Father Shaun putting up the Glazebo which of course was a protective Godsend when the rain came.

### A note on *Ensaladilla Rusa*

The 'Russian' salad popular with Spaniards, while having its origin in Russia well over a century ago, has its foundations in French cuisine. Its original name was *Olivier* salad in honour of its creator Lucien Olivier, (1838-1883) a Russian chef of Belgian and French descent, and owner of the *haute cuisine* Hermitage restaurant in the centre of Moscow, during the Russian Empire, in the early 1860s. Olivier's signature salad, which gained popularity among the higher classes in pre-revolutionary Russia, was a somewhat more elaborate and

expensive version (it included caviar, partridge, crab meat, as well as boiled potatoes!) .

With the formation of the Soviet Union, the original recipe was made with humbler ingredients such as chicken, cooked ham, carrots and peas, while

always keeping cooked potato and a mayonnaise-based sauce as its base. It was refugees fleeing from Russia who took this version of the recipe with them, to other countries, not least Spain, adapting it to the palates and products of the towns and cities they found new lives.



### **Wine tasting, London 20th March**

Tickets for the BSS's wine tasting with Master of Wine and Chairman of the Gran Orden de Caballeros del Vino Sarah Jane Evans sold out well ahead of the day- which was no surprise.

With one of the British pre-eminent experts on the wines of Spain (see Sarah Jane Evans's exclusive article 'Tasting Excellence' in the last issue of La Revista, viewable, if you didn't get your copy, on the BSS website:

[britishspanishsociety.org/la-revista-256](http://britishspanishsociety.org/la-revista-256))

sharing her insights at one of London's top Spanish gastronomic venues, this was one not to miss.

As well as savouring some quality wines, in the magnificently emblematic Hispania Restaurant in the heart of the City of London the evening full of friendship and good cheer included a delicious menu of canapes created by Marcos Morán, Hispania's gastronomic director and winner of the 2017 Royal Academy of Gastronomy, "Marqués de Busianos" award for showcasing Spanish gastronomy around the world.



### **Wine tasting, Madrid 26th March**

The *Edificio Palacete* the suitably palatial headquarters of our friends The British Council on the capital's Paseo del General Martínez Campos gathered wine experts and lovers among the BritishSpanish Society's growing membership and support.

Guided by wine write Howard Heckle and Master of Wine Norrel Robertson guests were taken on a fun tour of Spain's wine regions, learning about grape varieties and how to identify our favourites while learning to love those less known.

Bringing his expertise gained over many years as a broadcaster and writer, Heckle shared his own knowledge and love of Spanish wine. Master of Wine and wine producer Norrel Robertson shared his experience of learning about wine from 'the cellar up'.

Wines were not the only stars of the evening, much enjoyed by our Spain based British and Spanish members. Succulent bites straddling culinary cultures included British style sausages made in Spain and Madrid best-known *tortilla*. Many thanks thank you to our event sponsor Grupo Contasult, hosts British Council and our food and wine suppliers, C.V.N.E, Spanish Palate, El Escoces Volante, Martín Berdugo single vineyard estate, and The British Butcher.

# Punto De Encuentro

## The people and stories of the BritishSpanish Society

### Bilingual bridge-building

At the BritishSpanish Society (BSS) we use both English and Spanish, thus it is a wholly bilingual organisation. The question to ask is whether anyone who speaks two languages, whatever their level, can be deemed as bilingual. Well, there are many degrees of bilingualism. An ongoing discussion is about what bilingualism involves and especially if there is such a thing as a perfect bilingual, i.e. someone who speaks both languages at native-level and has two distinct mother tongues. If we take two languages like English (UK) and Spanish (Spain), in order to be the perfect bilingual you would need to feel entirely British when speaking or writing in English as well as totalmente Spanish when speaking or writing in Spanish. The idea of a perfect bilingual, however, is debatable of course, since bilingualism is ultimately a matter of range, study, mindset, and experiences. With languages, you can only ever strive for perfection.

One of our long-standing members at BSS is Isabel del Río –del Río in the Spanish-speaking world– who was born in Madrid but has lived in London most of her life, including part of her childhood and adolescence. Isabel is an established author of fiction and poetry in both English



and Spanish, as well as a linguist specialising in literary translation. When asked whether she considers herself bilingual, she says: “Yes, I’m bilingual, pero jamás seré bilingüe perfecta...”

Isabel’s latest poetry book is *Cuaderno de notas*, published at the end of last year by Ediciones Árdora, based in Madrid. Árdora is a prestigious niche publisher, and in 2020 it was awarded the ‘Premio Nacional a la Mejor Labor Editorial Cultural’ by the Spanish Ministry of Culture. Isabel’s new book includes poetry in English, in Spanish, and in both. As she explains: “What happened was that certain poems in the book literally demanded to be written in two languages and not solely in one, and so they ended up as bilingual poetry.” The book is about nostalgia and longing,

language and identity, sentience and transience. It explores the creative potential of bilingualism, and incorporates other literary devices such as aphorisms, epigrams, paradoxes and prose poems. It is available on the Book Depository website and online from Casa del Libro.

Isabel has also published short stories, novellas and novels, but she loves poetry best – mostly non-rhyming poems, although she writes and has published sonnets. She has worked full-time as a journalist and broadcaster for the BBC World Service and as a translator and terminologist for a UN agency in London (International Maritime Organisation – IMO). Last year she published her fragmented memoir *A Woman Alone*, and this year she will be publishing a selection of her short stories in Spanish and will be translating –into English– an anthology of Latin American poets living in the UK.

For more information about Isabel’s work, please check out her website [isabeldelrio.co.uk](http://isabeldelrio.co.uk)

Here are the final verses from Isabel’s bilingual poem ‘Ah, la memoria’ from *Cuaderno de notas*:

.../...

*Y en el momento del éxtasis, if it ever does take place, entran en juego tantas cosas: awe, el desánimo, anguish, hasta la propia insanity, como si todas ellas caminaran de la mano en condiciones de pretendida igualdad, and only then, will we realise the enormity of this whole messy business de la existencia en su conjunto and conclude that it will forcefully have an unresolved ending y que no hay necesidad de precipitar las cosas, y menos de vivir la vida as an anxiety-ridden individual, rattled with guilt, riddled con los errores cometidos by others, esas faltas que son endémicas as a condemnation of sorts*



### Growing partnerships

On Saturday May 14th BSS chairman Jimmy Burns Marañón made the opening speech at the symposium *COVID-19: the beginning, the journey, and the future* in Oxford organised by our friends at the Spanish Researchers in the UK (SRUK/ CERU) with a line-up of expert submissions from the UK and Spain- Prof Isabel Sola, Dr Nerea Irigoyen, Prof Jeremy Brown (UCL Hospital), Steve Rees (Astra Zeneca) Pro Luis Enjaunes, Prof Kyle Pattinson, and Dr Maxime Taquet - and attended by an impressive sample of hugely talented and motivated young Spanish scientists studying and working in leading British universities.

Burns Marañón paid tribute to the work of scientific researchers and members of the medical

profession, and emphasised the importance of student mobility and funding. He noted that as well as co-organising previous conferences including a webinar during the pandemic , SRUK/ CERU 's, good cooperation between it and the BSS has extended to advising on the evaluation of candidates for the BSS's post-graduate scholarship programme.

The developing cooperation with SRUK/ CERU is one of several organisational partnerships-they include the Cervantes Institute (see below) and the British Council - consistent with our mission of building cultural and educational ties between the peoples of the UK and Spain.



### **Congratulations/Felicidades**

to **Jose Sol**, founder of Spanish Ham Master - celebrating the 10th anniversary this year, of making quality Jamón Ibérico better known and appreciated in the UK. Jose, who is a member of the Executive Council of the BritishSpanish Society, recently joined Raymond Blanc the celebrity chef in his garden-themed dining rooms 'Jardin Blanc', at The RHS Chelsea Flower Show 2022 (May 24-28) in London.

Born in Madrid, but now based in Marlborough, UK, the father-of-two is an expert in 100% acorn-fed Iberian ham and prides himself on his renowned hospitality events around the world, where he educates guests on cuts of the cured meat before tasting it.

With a background in marketing, Sol originally moved to the UK to become the sales manager of a Spanish ham company. He became so interested in the product, he decided to branch out into the hospitality industry and set up his own company in 2011.

"The best way to sell jamón is by creating a "Jamón Culture", which means, talking about the product to people, promoting the excellent quality of the ingredients (oleic acids and omegas), how to consume it, how to keep it and what to pair it with," he says..

You can see Jose's video for the BritishSpanish Society's 'Voices' campaign on the BSS website and social media.



### **Membresia en alza/growing membership**

The BritishSpanish Society's membership continues to grow in the UK and Spain, diverse and drawing on all age groups and backgrounds with a shared interest in being part of a friendly community of support and engagement.

Among our new members...

#### **Mar Maraver y Víctor Marín Sánchez**

'Somos Mar y Víctor, una familia de farmacéuticos españoles que tomó la decisión de dejar Madrid hace 5 años para iniciar nuevas oportunidades profesionales en UK. Durante este tiempo hemos tenido la suerte de vivir en Cambridge y conocer mucha historia tanto de la universidad como de este país. Desde hace 3 años vivimos en Londres, donde hemos aumentado la familia con la llegada de nuestro primer bebé, Martina. Ha sido en Londres también donde hemos tenido la oportunidad de conocer al chairman Anglo-Español Jimmy Burns Maraño y su mujer Inglesa Kidge, logopeda y terapeuta con tres décadas de experiencia on la National Health Service, quienes nos han introducido en el maravilloso grupo de la BritishSpanish Society Society en el Reino Unido y España, donde disfrutamos de eventos de altísimo nivel cultural y nos permite conocer gente nueva, tanto españoles como ingleses, y establecer conexiones tanto personales como profesionales. Es un lujo para nosotros formar parte de esta gran comunidad!'



### Juan A. García Calderón

‘Como marino de la Armada Española he pasado la mayor parte de mi vida profesional a bordo de fragatas, navegando por la gran mayoría de mares, a veces durante ejercicios programados y muchas otras desempeñando misiones internacionales operativas bajo mandato de Union Europea Occidental, OTAN o Naciones Unidas. Misiones principalmente enmarcadas en Operaciones por Mantenimiento de la Paz en zonas de conflicto como Kosovo, Bosnia Herzegovina, Irak y operaciones contra la piratería en aguas de Somalia, entre otras.

Paralelamente dicha actividad profesional, me ha permitido también visitar países y descubrir diferentes culturas, unas más conocidas y otras no tanto, propias de lugares remotos y menos frecuentados, en los que he intentado explorar sus costumbres y tradiciones y acercarme a sus gentes, convencido de que el

aprendizaje de la diversidad humana nos enriquece y ayuda a apreciar nuestros propios valores.

De todo ello, de muchas experiencias y reflexiones, estoy elaborando un libro de relatos que se suma a otros proyectos literarios que estoy realizando actualmente o ya finalizados, como la extensa novela histórica *Las Fronteras del Mundo*, publicado en 2019 (y escrito casi íntegramente en alta mar, durante mis travesías). Otros proyectos pendientes de concluir próximamente incluyen historias tan dispares como la lucha contra la piratería somalí o los preparativos para la batalla de Trafalgar por parte de sus principales actores Nelson, Churruca y Villeneuve.

Mi interés en pertenecer a la BritishSpanish Society viene de mi profundo apego a la historia de ambos países, su rica cultura y sus imperecederas tradiciones. Tanto España como Reino Unido, volcados en su inigualable vocación marítima

y afán explorador, han sido grandes imperios, cada uno en su momento, gobernando gran parte del mundo, con sus luces y sombras (seamos autocríticos para poder resultar veraces), pero con trascendentales destellos expandiendo la cultura moderna a continentes a los que trajeron prosperidad y progreso.

Por ello, ser miembro de una asociación como la BritishSpanish Society, que busca afianzar y promover los lazos entre ambos países y culturas, con tan impresionante patrimonio histórico, es para mí no solo una satisfacción sino una ponderosa motivación para contribuir desde mi humilde aportación al mejor conocimiento de lo que nos une!

### Farewell or Hasta pronto to our friends...

Ignacio Peyró & Miguel Oliveros the director of the Cervantes Institute in London and Miguel Oliveros, cultural attaché at the Spanish embassy, who come to their end of their postings in the UK this summer and are moving to new locations, Rome and Madrid respectively.

It has been a challenging time for both, each in their separate jobs, dealing with the aftermath of Brexit and the lock-downs during the pandemic but they have each endeavoured to keep alive their mission of cultural engagement.

Both have been much valued friends of the BritishSpanish Society, each supporting the charity's mission of strengthening links between the peoples of the UK and Spain with shared interests.

While in London Ignacio, who is a declared anglophile as well as a journalist and author, published a follow up to his very well received cultural and social 'dictionary' of the UK: *Pompa y circunstancia*, with a collection of his past articles entitled '*Un aire inglés. Ensayos hispano-británicos*'.

Between other duties and literary hobbies and enjoying his great passion-eating good food- Ignacio helped mark the end of lock-down by delivering a cooperation agreement with the BSS. This was inaugurated last February with the first of what will be joint annual lectures of the two organisations -Professor Enrique Moradiellos on Churchill and Spain.

To Miguel, the BSS owes its gratitude for the support the Spanish Cultural Office has given in helping promote the charity's scholarship programme for postgraduate students, and helping with events, not least sponsoring young Spanish musical talent as was very much in evidence at the BSS's sell-out annual concert of Spanish music which resumed last November at St James's Piccadilly to the popular acclaim of our membership.

To both Ignacio and Miguel a heart-felt GRACIAS from all at the BSS ! We look forward to building on firm foundations and developing cooperation with your successors.





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# A Monarch Admired and Respected by All

## Patrick Harverson

A former member of the Royal Household reflects on the enduring example of duty, and sacrifice of Queen Elizabeth II, the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee after 70 years of service.



It was in the summer of 2004, in my first year working for the Royal Family, that I realised with some clarity how The Queen stands so apart from other leaders around the world.

It was the 60th anniversary of D-Day and heads of state and governments were gathered on the clifftop above the beaches of Normandy. They were there to pay tribute to those who led the invasion that played such a pivotal part in the victory over Nazism.

Centre stage were President Bush, Prime Minister Blair, President Chirac and Chancellor Schröder. At the time, the four leaders were at odds with each other over the ongoing Iraq war, with Chirac and Schröder refusing Bush and Blair's pleas to commit troops to the effort to remove Saddam Hussein. It was a fractious political moment that threatened to overshadow the important ceremonies that day.

Alongside the world leaders on the clifftop that day was Queen Elizabeth II, the only one present who for the public could truly embody the values of the occasion: of service, duty, and sacrifice. The only one who, to many watching, shared the qualities and character of the men who risked their lives six decades earlier to defeat tyranny. Untainted by the political divisions of 2004, and as a modern manifestation of wartime stoicism and steadfastness, The Queen stood apart, admired and respected by all.

As, indeed, she has done now for 70 years as Sovereign.

In that time, she has worked with 14 British prime ministers, met 14 US presidents, and known four popes. She has undertaken 21,000 public engagements, hosted one and a half million guests at her garden parties, and has kept 30 corgis (and counting) as her beloved pets.

In trying to describe The Queen it is hard to avoid clichés. She is dutiful, imperturbable, steadfast, the personification of regal dignity. Amid the statistics and superlatives, the question - "What is she really like?" - is often asked but rarely convincingly answered.

I worked for the Royal Family for almost a decade and cannot provide a credible answer. Her inscrutability is often identified as one of The Queen's greatest strengths. By keeping her private self to herself and her family and only the closest of friends, she allows everyone to see and appreciate in her the qualities they wish for in a Monarch - wise, calm, dependable, always there for us.

One of her more remarkable achievements is the way she has stayed the same over such a long period and throughout so much change and upheaval. If you think about what the UK has been through in the past few years alone - the divisiveness of Brexit, the pain of the pandemic, and now a terrible war in Europe - The Queen has kept us together. An "anchor" is how David Cameron described her in a speech to mark her 90th birthday. She holds the nation and its people fast during stormy times.

For 70 years The Queen hasn't just done one job. She has been head of state, head of nation, head of nations (the 15 Realms), head of the Commonwealth, head of the Church of England... and of course, head of a family.

In all of her roles, it is hard to think of a time when The Queen has put a foot wrong. Some argue that after The Princess of Wales's death in a car accident in 1997 she should have come down to London earlier to mourn with her people... but she was simply putting family before nation (for once, perhaps). It was an understandable prioritisation.

As well as her surefootedness, there is a steeliness to The Queen too, and a strategic mind at work. Just think about how deftly she has been preparing for her successor, Prince Charles, to accede to the throne. How she laid the groundwork for the 53 Commonwealth nations to agree in 2018 that The Prince of Wales succeeds her as its head. Last year she said it was her "sincere wish" that when her son becomes King his wife, The Duchess of Cornwall, will be known as Queen Consort. And this month, when The Queen couldn't be present at the state opening of

Parliament, it was her wish that her heir (and not the Lord Chancellor, who in the past has fulfilled the role in her absence) read the speech outlining the Government's legislative plans.

As The Queen put it in her most recent Christmas Day broadcast: "We see our own children and their families embrace the roles, traditions and values that mean so much to us, as these are passed from one generation to the next ..." She knows, and wants the nation to believe, that the monarchy is in safe hands for the future. In The Prince of Wales and The Duke of Cambridge, it is.

**Note on the author:**

Former Financial Times Journalist Patrick Harverson is a public relations executive. Between 2004-2013, he was communications secretary to the Prince of Wales, Prince William, and Prince Harry.



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# London welcomes back Flamenco's best

Graham Watts

*An Ode to Time - David Ruano*

After a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the London Flamenco Festival is back with a bang (21 June – 2 July), bringing several flamenco legends to headline the festival alongside some of the art form's rising stars in a programme that emphatically focuses on flamenco's familial legacies.

In previous years, any one of Manuel Liñan, Ana Morales, Estrella Morente, Jesús Carmona, Tomatito or María Pagés would have been a major draw for London-based lovers of the art but this summer, Sadler's Wells will host all of them – and more – in twelve days of what promises to be an amazing portfolio of the best of flamenco, representing both its classical traditions and pushing boundaries in several directions through the contemporary development of *nuevo flamenco*.

In the vanguard of the *avant garde* is the *bailaor* Manuel Liñan who has long been admired for challenging gender stereotypes, joyfully expressing gay identity by showing great proficiency with the colourful costumes traditionally worn by *bailaoras* – the *bata de cola* and *mantón* (respectively, the dresses with long

trains and large tasselled shawls). In previous shows, Liñan has exhibited his feminine virtuosity in isolated episodes punctuating his masterful command of the male repertoire, dominated by rigid upper bodies, bent legs and fast *zapateado* (the rhythmic drumming of the feet). But in *¡Viva!*, which premiered in Madrid in 2019 and will open the festival at Sadler's Wells on 21/22 June, his all-male ensemble challenges flamenco tradition by building upon Liñan's innovation and introducing another six male dancers to perform traditional *alegrías*, *tàrantos*, *bulerías* and *escuelas bolera* in the manner of, and dressed as, *bailaoras*.

At 42, Liñan is both a major force in *nuevo flamenco* and an openly gay artist now headlining a traditionally macho profession, and *¡Viva!* is his bold manifesto opening up flamenco to a new and inclusive age of enlightened diversity. Liñan



Manuel Liñan

will return to direct two former Ballet Nacional de España dancers, Daniel Ramos and Victor Martín, in *Boreal*, which will be shown in the Lilian Baylis Studio on 23 June and also promises the expectation of fans, shawls and castañets.

Gender equality will be balanced on 24/25 June with the Gala Fiesta de la Bulería de Jerez with an all-women cast performing *Mujeres de CAL y CANTE* led by Compañía María del Mar Moreno. The performance will feature Fuensanta “La Moneta” and María del Mar Moreno, alongside Pastora Galván (sister of Israel, and daughter of José). Her rich family heritage has made Galván a deeply expressive performer. These dancers will be supported by the deep expressive vocals of Juana la del Pipa, the legendary gypsy *cantaora*, now 74. Flamenco is also in her genes: she is the daughter of the legendary *bailaora* Tía Juana la del Pipa and took her mother’s flamenco name, which derived from her childhood activity of selling sunflower seeds (*pipas*).

Another great singing star, Estrella Morente, will return to the Flamenco Festival to give a concert on 26 June, in which her uniquely emotive voice will cover a curated collection of songs remembered from her childhood, exploring the depths of love and loss. Morente will be supported

on stage by the singing of her brother, Enrique ‘Kiki’ Morente Carbonell.

Ana Morales is another artist whose work blends traditional and new flamenco. Born in Barcelona, in 1982, Morales brings her autobiographical show, *Without Permission, Songs for Silence*, to Sadler’s Wells for one night only (23 June). Mixing styles and flamenco forms, Morales’ show is influenced by memories of her Andalusian-born father and his connection to the art of flamenco.

Another Catalan superstar, born in Barcelona (in 1985), is Jesús Carmona who will return to the Festival with *The Jump*, following his sell-out show in 2019. Carmona is another former principal with Ballet Nacional de España and is skilful across multiple dance genres from ballet, through tap to the courtly dances of the 17th and 18th centuries and in *The Jump* he will push the envelope of flamenco by crossing these genres to explore multi-faceted aspects of male dance virtuosity.

Another returning Flamenco Festival regular is the outstanding *nuevo flamenco* guitarist, Tomatito (José Fernández Torres), now 63, who will be *In Concert* for one-night-only on 30 June, supported by an ensemble of outstanding musicians and an as yet unnamed dancer. This five-time Grammy



Award-winner and former musical partner to the legendary *cantaor*, Camarón de la Isla, is famed for incorporating jazz in his flamenco *toque*, which is often improvised.

Sadler's Wells again enjoys support in hosting the Festival from the Cervantes Theatre in Southwark, which will show three performances on successive nights from 23-25 June, beginning with *Madrileño* guitarist Yera Cortés, followed by young *nuevo flamenco* *cantaora*, Ángeles Toledano (27), and then the musical ensemble, *Pasion del Sur* (*Southern Passion*), comprising cellist Irene Ortega and her brother, guitarist José Ortega, who will explore an interface between flamenco and classical music. These musical interludes will enjoy the intimate *tablaó* surroundings of the Cervantes where the audience will be just a few metres away from the performers.

The Lilian Baylis Studio will also be busy throughout the festival. In addition to the aforementioned *Boreal* show, directed by Manuel Liñan, El Yiyo y su Troupe will bring new sounds and expressions, including the influence of the late Michael Jackson, to a self-titled show on 1 July; and fast-rising *ballaora*, Paula Comitre, will provide a concluding performance, following a week-long artistic residency, also on 1 July; a fusion of flamenco tradition and urban and electronic music follows on the next evening in *Terca Cielo* (*Third Heaven*) through the combination of talents in Rocío Márquez' singing and Bronquio's music; and, finally, the Festival will conclude later on 2 July with a dance and music party entitled *Flamenco is not a crime*, hosted by DJs Pedro and Benito Jimenez.

Appropriately, a flamenco superstar will bring the Sadler's Wells main stage performances to a close on 1/2 July with *Una Oda al tiempo* (*An Ode to Time*) by Compañía María Pagés, which will bring an ensemble of sixteen onto the stage, led by Pagés herself. The preparations for this innovative show formed the backdrop for the BBC4 *Danceworks* documentary, shown during the pandemic, in May 2021. *Una Oda al tiempo* presents issues of transience, permanence and eternity. Pagés – amazingly, now 58 – has brought her own innovative aesthetic to bear on flamenco traditions and her shows are developed in association with her husband, El Arbi El Harti, who has both co-directed and provided dramaturgy and text for *Una Oda al tiempo*.

Pagés is the last of many great performers who will grace the 2022 Flamenco Festival, bringing the curtain down on a remarkable programme that will represent the widest spectrum of the art with diverse performances that both emphasise the deep hereditary roots of flamenco and push its boundaries into innovative and exciting territories. ♦

#### Note on the author:

Graham Watts OBE,  
a BBS member, is a dance  
writer and critic.

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# Wild Tango

Fátima Nollén

Germán Cornejo's recent show at London's Peacock Theatre is bold, imaginative and breaks new boundaries.

I confess I am biased, since I am from Argentina, and this tango show created by a world champion of Rio de La Plata's most famous dance genre, came packed with songs I grew up with. They weren't tango at all, but what we call "national rock", though played in a 2x4 tempo, hence it was easy for me to enter in a state of happy nostalgia taking me back 30 or more years ago. The band making a great job under the direction of Ovidio Velázquez went from Soda Stereo, to Charly García, to Fito Páez (I sung all the songs in my head) and to a few tangos. The talented lead singer Luciano Bassi showing a broad and clean register, sounded like an old fashion Roberto Goyeneche, or gave a tango a rap twist.

But let's go to the dance.

Cornejo's proposal was created mainly for men, because that is the way tango started, as a challenge between *gauchos* who gathered their arms with a poncho, blinding a knife in the other; an image that softened with time, when more civilised *'malevos'* (the *gauchos* who left rural areas to find better jobs in the port of Buenos Aires) showed their skills on the dance floor. So, all those years ago, in the 1900s, same-sex dance couples were the norm. Women arrived later to this dance.

There were only three women in Wild Tango, and they really made their presence felt in spectacular fashion; superb dancers, fast feet work, very flexible when moving their legs in gyroscopic manners, precise and yes, uber sexy when needed; always in heels. Of course, they had numbers in which they danced together too.



The show opened to a stage with two sets of scaffolding escorting the band at the centre-back. Though I didn't find them necessary at all, dancers and singer went up and down purposelessly since there was no plot prompting to climb them.

The feel was industrial, edgy, punk. Dancers mainly dressed in black in the first half, with various outfit changes. The gaucho *'bombachas'* re-interpreted as hooded onesies with harem pants, while the *'rastra'* or wide belt, was transformed into corsets for men to show their bare torsos in subsequent numbers. The costumes were signed by Gerardo Casas and Cornejo.

This work was wild for a reason, fast paced, over the top, sexy. Closer to what in Argentina we call *'Teatro de Revista'* which are very popular, inspired by the French *'Revues'* (think *Folies Bergère*) or music hall, than a tango show.

It brought together elements of Argentine folklore such as *'malambo'* and use of the amazing *'boleadoras'* to create rhythm together with the feet work.

Suddenly dancers followed the classic circle movement of a traditional *milonga*, but their steps being complex combinations delivered with ability and wowing the audience. Added to that there was a circus-like element, the use of aerial dances in duos and trios, with acrobatic ropes in their wrists or with harnesses.

Cornejo and his partner, Gisela Galeassi, delivered a couple of beautiful duos to everyone's delight, reminded why they were world champions. Some

lifts with double turns in the air at high speed were nothing short of spectacular.

The second part followed a similar pattern, more plotless dance to great music; though the outfits looked a lot less interesting because they tended to erase the body shapes in these strange tunics. Colours picked up making neon tones and pink prominent.

This troupe is young and talented. They do have good technique as background and they also prepared themselves well in modern dance, urban movements, circus and folklore to do this show, and despite one could noticed some lack of adjustment or the need for more rehearsal, the commitment and passion to deliver was all on show.

I always ask myself: was I entertained? Did I leave the theatre happier that I entered?

The answer to both is yes. I had a great wild time.

**Note on the author:**

Fátima Nollén is a Dance Writer, Member of the UK Critics' Circle Dance Section, Chairwoman of the Anglo-Argentine Society



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# A Call From the Sahara Pepe Ivars



Un aventuro y explorador Español radicado en el Reino Unido nos cuenta el desafío de entrenar en el desierto para la carrera más dura y exigente del mundo.

Escribo este artículo ya desde la comodidad de mi oficina en Londres con un tiempo horrible cortesía de *storm Corrie* que nos ha regalado unos días de frío y nieve por aquí y algo que, para alguien como yo que dedica a hacer expediciones polares es una bendición.

Y supongo que os preguntareis que hace un explorador polar escribiendo un artículo para la revista sobre el Sahara... y todo empezó a principios de Noviembre, cuando me llama al móvil mi amigo Jimmy Burns Marañón, chairman del BritishSpanish Society donde los dos ejercemos como voluntarios :

- *Hi Pepe, how are you mate. Are you coming to the Xmas concert?*

-*Erhhh.. Jimmy yes sure... I am travelling now and have access to the diary, but yes.*

- *Perfect then, book now before we run out of tickets, Ok? Where are you?*

- *In the Sahara Jimmy*

- *Whhaaat? You're kidding me*

- *Nope. Busy going up a massive dune now so let me call you back next week, ok?*

- *Crazy!*

Y así empezamos a plantearnos porque no hacer una colaboración con La Revista, para escribir sobre algunas de estas aventuras que son parte de mi día a día pero que puede interesar a muchos de nuestros socios, así que espero no defraudar compartiendo estas historias.

¿Y qué hacía yo en Marruecos? Pues estaba en el Sahara entrenando el Maratón des Sables del 2023. Este tipo de eventos requieren una gran preparación y logística, probar diferentes materiales y probar la alimentación e hidratación. Un montón de muchos detalles que hay que tener resueltos antes de emprender una de estas aventuras.

La *Marathon des Sables* (MdS) es considerada por muchos la carrera más dura y exigente del mundo. Son 6 días en autosuficiencia por el

desierto, cargando todo en una mochila de 8 a 8.5kg de peso, y con etapas para recorrer los más de 250km del recorrido con una etapa larga de 90km... Es una clásica que requiere una buena preparación mental para afrontarla.

Nuestro viaje se organizó a principios de noviembre, cuando todavía se puede correr por las dunas con un poco menos del calor achicharrante de abril, y con una temperatura muy similar que durante la carrera. Fuimos un equipo de 10 personas, con un coche de apoyo que nos daba soporte logístico y llevaba el agua. Al final corrimos los 140 kilómetros que separan Zagora del Lago Iriki, en 4 días a muy buen ritmo y probando diferentes opciones de material, peso y avituallamiento.

La llegada a Marrakech fue lo que se puede esperar llegando a un sitio de caos ordenado como es Marruecos, en medio de la pandemia y con las restricciones para los vuelos del Reino Unido... una aventura antes de empezar la aventura. Dentro de Marrakech nos quedamos en un Riad en la zona del zoco cerca del palacio real, un sitio excelente para descansar fuera de la aglomeración de turistas y del tremendo tráfico del centro de la capital.

A lo largo del día fueron llegando los diferentes compañeros de aventura desde diferentes destinos y al final del segundo día estábamos todos juntos compartiendo mesa y planeando esta *'running expedition'* del sur del Sahara. Durante estos viajes se comparten muchas horas con los compañeros de aventura y se acaba creando una relación especial con cada uno de ellos. Hay que tener en cuenta que los que hacemos este tipo de actividades y expediciones somos relativamente pocos, y en cierto modo, compartimos una forma de vivir la vida que nos hace más gregarios, y no es extraño que, durante los años, coincidiéramos muchos de nosotros en este tipo de cosas. Es el caso de un buen amigo, un gran crack como es el Albert Bosch, que fue uno de los que parió este concepto de aventura running en un medio como el desierto un grupo de medio 'locos' con esa energía focalizada. Un grupo muy interesante en el que había unos cuantos "monstruos" – algunos con 4 MdS a sus espaldas – pero también personas 'normales' que querían vivir esa experiencia diferente con sus



hijos o amigos. Y eso fue lo que enriqueció esta experiencia, el compartir con personas "normales" una actividad de la que cada uno quiera sacar algo diferente.

Así con ese buen rollo, el tercer día nos levantamos temprano y empaquetamos para que los jeeps nos llevaran rumbo hacia el sur. Exactamente unas diez horas de viaje hacia el suroeste, camino a nuestro punto de salida de M'Hamid El Ghizlane el pueblo que es la puerta del inmenso desierto del Sahara oriental. A mitad camino, hicimos una parada tras atravesar las montañas del Atlas, en el pueblo de Ouarzazate, un pequeño oasis estratégicamente posicionado, y postal idílica para tomarse una buena foto con su Kashba y palmerales de fondo.

Esa noche de antes todavía en contacto con civilización, es importante para ultimar los detalles del equipo y disfrutar del lujo de una ducha caliente que tardaríamos varios días de volver a poder disfrutar. Preparando las mochilas con el material, me di cuenta de que las polainas que gastamos para proteger las zapatillas de la arena, no las había llevado al zapatero para que las colocara, así que me tuve que ir a buscar un zapatero local bereber que, a base de cola



natural y clavos, me las instalo sin problema alguno en las zapatillas por 4 dirhams; ¡Aun veo la cara de sorpresa del tipo cuando intentaba explicarle más o menos lo que tenía que hacer!

Al día siguiente, desayuno al amanecer y salimos a la primera luz. Es una sensación especial el trotar por una callejuela medio asfaltada que se mete de lleno en el desierto. Una puerta mágica a otra dimensión del desierto de arena que sería nuestro hábitat por los siguientes cuatro días.

La primera etapa definió desde el principio a los dos grupos de corredores que se mantendrían durante el resto de las etapas, y además sentó bien las expectativas del ritmo en el que todos íbamos cómodos, rápidos, pero dosificando en cada etapa para llegar "enteros" al punto final de esta expedición. El grupo de cinco atletas terminamos la primera etapa de 36km en poco menos de 5 horas – rápido para el tipo de terreno y desnivel.

Ese día dormíamos en una *haima bereber* que estaba a los pies de la gran duna del

Leon (Zahar). Una montaña de área que sobresale en el horizonte del Sahara por su estética belleza. Y desde su cima vimos el sol ponerse, en un espectáculo de esos que solo unos privilegiados tienen la suerte de vivir alguna vez en la vida.

Esa primera noche en el desierto fue especial. Mientras preparábamos una bien ganada cena de comida liofilizada y barritas de muesli,... hicimos una hoguera y nos quedamos hasta tarde alrededor del fuego compartiendo batallitas y conociéndonos todos un poco mejor.

Las noches en el desierto son muy frías, en muchas ocasiones cerca de cero grados y la arena abrasante durante el día, se convierte en una masa orgánica fría como un bloque de puro hielo.

El día siguiente era el día el más "corto" en el papel, pero nos acabó costando 6 horas y media terminar los 34 kilómetros en el corazón de las dunas de Chegaga. Fue un día muy duro por el calor y el desnivel de las dunas, sobre un firme de arena

suelta y desniveles de dunas que se hacían interminables. Esta fue la etapa reina de esta expedición y una de las etapas del MdS, y esa noche dormimos como niños.

Día 3 de la expedición, salimos de Chegaga por terreno de dunas siguiendo por el valle del río Draa – el río más largo de Marruecos pero que por estas fechas va seco. Este tercer día de expedición nos llevó a través de más dunas y pistas de arena por donde pasan las caravanas de dromedarios bereberes que son los pocos que transitan por este remoto lugar.

En el desierto la navegación puede ser complicada, por ello para este tipo de expediciones llevamos una baliza (navegador GPS) que nos sirve para comunicarnos con el mundo al mismo tiempo que nos marca el camino a seguir. En esta zona del desierto marroquí, y por la proximidad a Algeria no hay nada de cobertura de móvil. Y yo personalmente llevo una manta solar que me ayuda a cargar las baterías. ¡Victimas de la tecnología!

Esta etapa fue de algo más de treinta kilómetros, pero rompe-piernas total. Caminos de arena donde no había ni un solo tramo duro donde poder correr decentemente. En total unas 5 horas y media de martirio que nos lo tomamos con resignación. Esa noche la pasamos a la orilla del lago Iriki, un lago seco en el desierto y en un sitio excepcional donde las estrellas nos deleitaron con un espectáculo sin igual. Esa noche sería corta porque decidimos salir de noche con las frontales



y antes del amanecer para ver la salida del sol corriendo.

La última etapa fue muy especial y ¡muy rápida! Otros 39km que recorrimos en 4 horas y once minutos cargados con mochilas y corriendo haciendo relevos, un trabajo de equipo sin igual en la que todos dimos el máximo que teníamos para acabar en un tiempo récord. Es impresionante como en apenas 4 días un equipo de personas que no se conocían lleguen a este punto de compenetración y ritmo que nos permitió disfrutar al máximo de esta experiencia

Al terminar la etapa y celebrar con un bocata que nos tenían preparado los del coche de apoyo, para recuperar energía para las dos horas de jeep hasta el hotel de Foum Zguid. Esa noche dormimos en una cama confortable y con ducha de agua caliente, y nos tomamos una cerveza local, que sabiendo un poco como funcionan las cosas en Marruecos, es relativamente fácil conseguirlas.

Al día siguiente nos subimos a los coches de buena mañana y salimos hacia Marrakesh, yo para volar de regreso a Londres

y el resto del equipo se quedo una noche mas para disfrutar de la capital. Yo ya tenía mi cupo de *tagines, pastilla* and *harira soup*, y prefería cenar un buen Fish & chips.

Una experiencia muy recomendable y de la que cada uno de los que participamos sacamos de ella lo que esperamos. Por mi parte iba buscando un entreno de calidad en un evento puramente deportivo, con el objetivo de probar equipo y tomar notas técnicas, ritmos, pulsaciones y todo eso... y termine viviendo una gran aventura con un excepcional grupo de personas que se convirtieron en amigos y que ya estamos planeando la próxima aventura. Los que nos dedicamos a hacer este tipo de cosas de forma habitual a veces perdemos la noción de que también hay que disfrutar de la experiencia, no solo centrarse en la consecución de un objetivo, y esta experiencia me ha enseñado eso.

Espero que hayáis disfrutado leyendo esta crónica tanto como yo la he disfrutado escribiendo y recordando estos momentos. Si alguien alguien de vosotros

quiere más información sobre esta o cualquier otra aventura que estéis planeando podéis contactarme directamente o a través de la BritishSpanish Society y estaré encantado de poder ayudar en lo que pueda.

#### Nota sobre el autor:

Pepe Ivars es Fellow de la Royal Geographical Society y Alpine Club y miembro del Comité Ejecutivo de la BritishSpanish Society.

# Six Months in Almería

Mary McCullough

A Young English university student, member of the BSS, writes about the challenges and rewards of spending her 'gap' time teaching English in Spain.



Having come across an advertisement to be in an English teaching assistant, I was curious to see how the experience would come to life. When I arrived, I felt I was at an advantage by firmly telling myself that if anything went wrong here, it wouldn't matter because at the time, 'Almería World' wasn't real for me. Admittedly, it squashed a habit of overthinking, but this unconscious decision to put a divide between my English self and a potential life in Almería, meant I was missing out on the beneficial blends of both.

When I sat down to write this piece, my overall impression of my time in Almería was that it had been a step back from reality. But three cups of tea in, I've realised that I never really moved away from reality – I had just added sweeteners. Spanish culture, Spanglish language and English writing created the perfect blend of both countries, helping me to settle into Spanish life whilst never feeling far from home.

Sandwiched between two stressful university years, the long weekends with no essays to fill them with, have been blissfully vacant for long beach walks, swimming and exploring. But it's the change of people that let you mentally switch off from England. Rather than 'not being in England' and 'being in Spain' I've really enjoyed being in a bilingual and bicultural limbo.

I wouldn't say I took more enjoyment from speaking either language, more the fact that I was working and living in a place where I could speak whichever came to mind first, and people would understand me. Even to the point where I could identify more with Spanish expressions in my writing; six months of trying to translate 'tengo ganas' for students proved that!

The blur of languages overlapped into my accommodation too. The flat has always felt like an airport. Simply because we have a mixture of nationalities all under one roof, all in a foreign country. I loved that there was no defining country in the flat. Spain was never authoritatively present, nor was it absent. It equalled itself out as another nationality, following the German, English and Greek influence just in the form of jamón, reguetón and Spanglish.

Working in an international school widened the bicultural angle to my time. It was also a balance between being a teacher to the students but being a student to the teacher. I learnt so much from the teachers I helped during my time there. Interestingly I still improved my Spanish despite teaching the children English. Picking up on their grammatical mistakes which derived from Spanish structures meant I could quietly absorb their language whilst I corrected them in mine. One

of the perks of not being fully qualified or being much older is that you can get in touch with your childish and carefree side whilst (trying) to be a helping hand.

For a lot of people, living on the Spanish coast paints the picture of drinking Tinto de Verano and eating tapas until the sun sets over the sea. Whilst this isn't the everyday reality, there have been moments thankfully where this has been true. As a writer, the cherry on the cake was discovering a writer's group with whom I could share this time. During our regular meetings on a sea view terrace, I had my piece of paradise. Sitting back and listening to all sorts of writing genres was an opportunity to learn and reflect on my own writing.

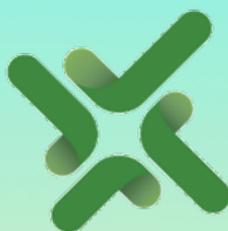
As I come to the end of my time here, I will really miss slipping freely between both cultures and

languages. I definitely felt a distinction between my everyday UK life and Almería life, and I didn't favour either. Instead, I appreciated the blurriness of the boundary between them.

Website of the school where Mary taught:  
**alboran.sek.es**

**Note on the author:**

Mary McCullough is currently reading English Literature and Spanish at the University of Reading. As part of her degree she has been spending an academic year in Spain, both writing in Madrid and then teaching in Almería



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# Spanish Football, up close and personal

Simon Kuper

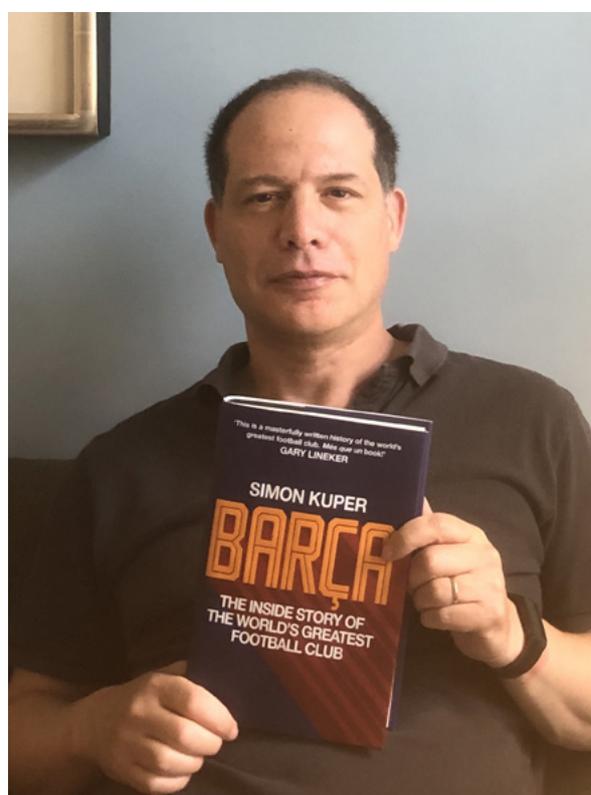
A British journalist, who moved from Paris to Madrid last year, and has written a book about Barça, loves the game and enjoys following one of the great club rivalries

Some days this winter, I'd be having lunch outside in the Madrid sunshine, happier than I can remember being anywhere that I've lived before, and I'd think: "How did I get so lucky as to land up in Spain?" And the answer is football.

I was born in 1969, and like most northern Europeans of my generation, I grew up mentally very far from Spain. In my childhood, it was still widely regarded in the north as a poor country with a culture that wasn't worth thinking about. My high school in the Netherlands offered English, French and German but not Spanish. I'd never even visited Spain till I was 22, when I arrived in Barcelona to research a football book I was writing. Nobody had told me it was such a beautiful city. Over the next 30 years, I kept returning, generally to write about *Barça*.

In 2019 I realised that my contacts at the club had come to regard me almost as a *soci*, a club member. I asked them if they'd cooperate if I wrote a book about *Barça*. "Of course," they said. They were true to their word, and never once attempted to censor me.

I took the family along on some of my research trips. My wife already spoke good Spanish, and the children quickly began learning it. They fell for Barcelona. Then, during the darkest winter months of the 2020-2021 lockdown in Paris, our home for most of the last 20 years, we all agreed spontaneously that we wanted a post-pandemic adventure in Spain. Our first thought was Barcelona. But it's not an easy place to learn Spanish, because so much of daily life happens in Catalan, and the bilingual citizenry grows up with a head start in mastering English. Instead, we moved to Madrid, a city we barely knew. Here,



over the last year, I have continued my project of discovering Spain through football.

Spain's many regional rivalries have done some terrible damage. But since the Civil War, the rivalries have been played out mostly through football, and they have enabled this midsized, not-very-rich country to produce an outside football culture. The world's biggest club game, the Clásico between Real Madrid and Barcelona, is only the most prominent expression of the broader Spanish sporting concept of *morbo*, which roughly means "needle" or "rivalry".

I've never been anywhere else in Europe where football means as much. In England, by and large, football is just football; Manchester United versus Liverpool or Arsenal versus Spurs doesn't have deep political or cultural significance. In Paris, there are 12.5 million people and just one top-division football team, Paris St-Germain, whose stadium seats only 48,000. Even very regionally divided Italy cannot match the *morbo* of Spain. When the Italian coach Fabio Capello coached Real Madrid, he marvelled at the Spanish radio talkshows on which people shout at each other about football long past midnight. In Italy, he said, we love football too, but we do sleep sometimes.

So essential is *morbo* to Spanish football that Madrid's president Florentino Pérez is now trying to prop up the archrival *Barça*: he knows that if *Barça's* financial crisis condemns the Catalans to long-term mediocrity, the rivalry will fizzle, and Madrid will suffer too. He is pushing a European Superleague for *Barça's* sake as well as Madrid's.

I often go to watch Real Madrid and am struck by how the Santiago Bernabéu stadium towers over

the modest business district in which it stands: a metaphor for the size of football in the Spanish psyche. The most successful club in football history, with more social-media followers than any other club in any sport, represents what is globally only a second-tier city. Part of the appeal of Real Madrid to Spaniards is that it exemplified a quality that was rare in twentieth-century Spain: world-class excellence.

I have sustained my journeys of Spanish discoveries with umpteen pre-match meals of seafood and Albariño. In fact, I think I've found football heaven.

**Note on the author:**

Simon Kuper is a columnist with the Financial Times and author of *Barça: The rise and fall of the club that built modern football*



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# Off the Beaten Track

Anna Swinfield



**The writer, a BSS member, bilingual anglophile and hispanist, reflects on the contrasting charms of two of her favourite hidden jewels, in Britain (Norfolk) and Spain (Agua Amarga)**

Blakeney is familiar territory for me. I spent happy days there as a child with my family. On the North Norfolk coast, it's an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and a favourite treat on Boxing Day; bracing the icy Norfolk wind and walking along the shingle beach with Sammy, our Airedale terrier.

Pretty Norfolk flint cottages once owned by local fishermen now sell at a premium. The National Trust and part of the Heritage Coastline own the estuary and salt marshes going out to Blakeney Point. The Point is created by a longshore drift and is constantly re-shaped by tides and currents. Children and adults can learn fascinating facts about rare coastal birds such as the avocet and marsh harrier. Mr. Bean's Boat Trips make frequent short voyages to visit the seals. You can pick up a boat throughout the year to Blakeney Point (as well as the nearby Morston Quay). The Point is an ideal breeding site for grey seals and their pups born during November to early January. With the largest seal colony in England - over 2,000 seal pups born annually - it's a memorable experience. Or chat to the locals. They'll always know somebody who has a reliable boat and with some gentle persuasion you might bag a private tour.

Negotiate the price (the locals are honest folk) and they'll be proud to show off the area they've lived in for generations. Always be sensible: the North Sea is dangerous and the rivers and creeks which criss-cross the marshes and reed beds are tidal. The sea surges into them at an alarming speed and walkers and bird watchers can be cut off. But if ordinary common sense is applied north Norfolk has a unique magic. Why not go 'off the beaten track' for a day or two?

The Blakeney Hotel is family owned. You can't miss it as you drive or walk to the quay. It's quintessentially English and retains its original charm. With panoramic views across the Estuary and marshes to The Point, it has 60 bedrooms and has been refurbished to a high standard. Fresh kippers for breakfast from Cley Smokehouse won't disappoint. Enjoy a drink on the hotel terrace facing the Estuary. The Flint Gallery on Westgate Street sells contemporary art by local artists.

Blakeney is only one of the delights. The coastline has a necklace of pretty villages such as Titchwell, Morston and Brancaster. For livelier and larger resorts there is Wells, Hunstanton (pronounced Hunston) Cromer and Sheringham.



The village of Cley next the Sea (pronounced cly) with its landmark 18th century windmill (a posh B&B with Michelin star restaurant) is Blakeney's neighbouring village.

You can walk from Blakeney Quay to Cley. It's a charming three miles, and the path is mainly flat. In Cley try the Picnic Fayre deli: homemade doughnuts ooze jam (how they should be but rarely are), and buns rich with cinnamon and Demerara sugar. You'll need energy for walking (my excuse).

If you have time, squeeze in Holt. With its fine 18th century Georgian buildings, it's a delightful little town. Kate Middleton is often spotted in the shops; Kate and Prince William's home and the Queen's estate at Sandringham are a few miles along the coast. Holt boasts

eclectic art galleries, antique and bookshops, with restaurants and cafes along the high street and tucked away down tiny courtyards. Dare I admit that I have found a pretty dress, or three, in Francois Bouttier. Well worth a visit!

\*\*\*\*\*

Agua Amarga is a costly (compared to other Spanish pueblos) but idyllic seaside resort. It's a one hour drive from Andalucia's bustling city of Almeria. Most tourists who visit this region are interested in discovering the national park of Cabo de Gata, famed for its outstanding beauty and fauna.

The name 'Cabo de Gata' is from the mineral agate once mined in the area. It's the only region in Europe with a scorching desert climate and is an ideal setting for spaghetti

westerns and films such as Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade.

Our small, charming hotel, discerningly tucked away, dripped style; the discreet patio was a peaceful haven with fuschia and bouganvillea at either end of its whitewashed walls. At the MiKasa Agua Amarga & SPA hotel breakfast can be had at the poolside or in the garden. It's situated only a couple of minutes from the beach. A handy tip: there's an airport shuttle service (at an additional cost).

We had dinner at a beachfront restaurant, popular with the locals. The owner embraced us. Although it was 9pm his granddaughter's chubby little fingers were curled tightly round his neck. Rightly or wrongly, most babies in England are in bed by 7pm.

I ate sea bass caught that morning which tasted, of course, wonderfully fresh. The candlelight flickered as night fell. We savoured the warm sea breeze. The starry sky twinkled as we watched little fishing boats bobbing up and down. But bliss suddenly vaporised. Mosquitos! They fell on me with a vengeance. Teasingly the restaurateur muttered: 'English blood must taste sweeter.'

I rapidly swelled up with stinging red bumps on arms and legs, hardly camouflaged by my red dress. They swarmed on to the balsamic vinegar in our salad. The waiters covered the drinks as best they could. After giving my favourite part of supper a miss (the dessert), we paddled in the sea which helped alleviate



the itching. It was almost midnight, and the water was warm and soothing.

The next day we explored the area, finding unspoiled bays and navigating precarious, sheer drops leading to pebbly coves. I forgot to pack trainers and wouldn't recommend flip flops (lucky not to break an ankle).

An elderly man who had spent his life in Agua Amarga suggested a secret bay (always ask the locals) some five-minutes drive from the hotel. Said to be haunted it was called somewhat ominously '*la playa de los Muertos*' (Beach of the Dead). Rumour has it that it was named after pirates washed up centuries ago. Today it's a naturalist's heaven. On our final morning we rose early again - before the searing heat of the day - and drove there. We looked down the cliff edge. The sea was wild, the sky still dark. Spooky but mesmerising, we were determined to see more of it. A red flag swung high, its white metal pole squeaking, a stark warning not to brave the current. But we had no intention of swimming. After a thirty-minute descent, we were walking on a stretch of golden paradise, just us and a handful

of fishermen. The waves and spray pounded. I recalled family trips to Waxham: one of my parents' favourite escapes, a remote corner on England's Norfolk coastline. I wondered if I would see any seals.

'*La playa de los Muertos*' felt a million miles from Almeria where tourists flocked from far and wide in search of cheap fun in the sun. We were in heaven.

#### Note on the author:

Anna Swinfield read Spanish and journalism at Leeds University. She resides in England with her Spanish husband and their children. She lived and worked in Spain for ten years and visits it regularly.

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# Ibiza Memories

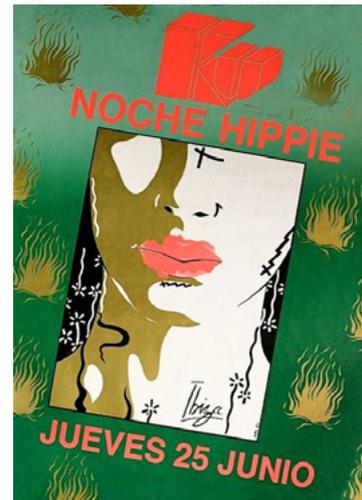
Alec Morrow

A BSS member looks back to his first encounter with Ibiza, living there in the mid 1980's, at the start of an enduring love for Spain.

A friend in London had lent me his keys to his apartment in Roca Liza, a late 1970s classy modernist development mid-way between Ibiza town and Santa Eulalia. It's lines clean, modern, straight almost characterless, the windows panoramic, the terraces overlooking a spectacular view of the Mediterranean. It looked modern then, and it looks modern now, a triumph of Spanish Ibizenca architecture picture perfect in every way, and still in many ways the same today.

On the clear and still evenings the view of the rocky headland over which hovers the sandy island of Formentera some distance away on the horizon must be as beautiful as anywhere in the Mediterranean if not the world. When there is a breeze, the sea shimmers and changes colour from turquoise to dark blue passing through emerald green, the shadows of the odd cloud casting even darker patches on the sea. The intensity of the sun and the levels of light make the view extraordinary and breathtaking all in one.

Ibiza was the Spanish melting pot that attracted people from all over the world, for here the world's young and beautiful would congregate, on the back of Ibiza's reputation as a safe haven from Franco's



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regime for artists, that accolade subsequently passed to Hippies, and on to *La Movida* and new Romantics of the world.

Here I would discover what it means to be truly a global citizen, where one's language was no barrier to anything as English was the Lingua Franca. Here the beautiful people of the world mixed in perfect harmony in a great celebration of a life.

I was seduced by many other things in Ibiza, not least the climate, the hedonistic atmosphere, the weird and wild clothes, the charms of *Ku*, *Amnesia* and *Pacha*, three extraordinary temples of the night, that transported me from a comfortable middle class Britain to a world I barely imagined could have existed.

*Ku* then was an open air club with a swimming pool adjacent

to the dance floor, two things you would be hard pressed to duplicate in London. Its capacity was enormous, accommodating some 10,000 revellers over 6500m<sup>2</sup>. Needless to say, it was a venue of choice for every serious performance artist. In the 1980s, Alaska, Luis Miguel, Freddie Mercury, Montserrat Caballe, James Brown, among others, all performed there. Themed parties were held, among them '*Somos como Niños*', '*Noche de Faun*', '*Noche de San Juan*', and '*La Luna Llena*'. And people rose to the occasion, making great and creative efforts to live the party theme. The free invitations handed out to the hordes of people in the streets of Ibiza, designed by Parisian Yves Uro (1954-1995), led to traffic jams at 2.00am outside the clubs.



Photo: Alex Kulikov on Unsplash

Where as *New Romantics* were gracing London night clubs, here in Ibiza a core of shoulder padded men and women were putting a Spanish twist on what seemed to me to be same theme with breathtaking results parading in the evening trawl along Carrer de la Virgen, and Carrer de la Mare de Déu, and the pedestrian streets of 16th century fishermen's quarter in the hills under the walls of Dalt villa.

Endless sun, blue skies, decent coffees, on terraces where people watching appeared to be an Island, if not national pastime. It's not that Ibiza was paradise, it certainly wasn't. A lot of the cafes and bars were a mix of, by modern standards, low maintenance and 1950s design, formica surfaces, plastic chairs, innumerable ashtrays, *cascaras de pipa* and tissues. Holes were drilled in teaspoons at cafes near the port so that heroin users didn't steal them. And the colourful brightly flashing screens of the *tragaperras* with their eclectic, irritating and inimitable electronic music attracted anyone so inclined to waste some money.

It was at the Montesol Hotel in the winter, the first Hotel

in Ibiza, built in 1933 which receives the morning sun that, I would frequently breakfast. The interior was a dated mix of dark panelling and smoke stained mirrors and green faux leather buffets. The terrace overlooking Vara Del Rey, furnished with brushed aluminium tables and chairs that wouldn't look out of place next to the *Talgo* trains of the 50s.

From here I would admire the stunning views of the Citadel of Ibiza, as back drop to the theatre of life, a prism through which to observe Spanish life . People seemingly in random places but with a real purpose as they get on with their daily life across the large plaza. To the untrained eye, street life in Spain is like a well-played game of chess, with elegant players, of mixed backgrounds, ages, professions moving gracefully around the streets and plazas, all knowing what they are doing and where they are going.

On the terrace in the mornings middle aged gestores and their clients contemplated their business of the day, over *carajillos* and *cortados*. I would learn here a lot about Spanish culture. Everyone was polite, and well dressed. Cafe etiquette

involved long waits for service and even longer waits for what was ordered. People were respectful, unashamed of eye contact, ready to smile and acknowledge, enter into polite meaningless chit chat just to pass the time of day, with no fixed agenda, no destiny needed in the interaction. The delights of instant friendship however short lived.

Things are different now, mostly. The Montesol is now a boutique hotel, and has resumed its original name Gran Hotel Montesol. The quaint almost derelict white fisherman's cottages house which were abandoned in Sa Penya now change hands for €500,000 plus, I'd be certain that the holes drilled in teaspoons don't exist, and the *tragaperras* don't spew out *La Cucaracha* at all, because gambling is now internet based.

But some things don't change. As the pandemic hopefully recedes into memory, the streets will fill in the early summer evenings during the high tourist season, the bar terraces will fill around midnight and *Ku (now Privilege)*, *Pacha* and *Amnesia* will be filled to capacity at 3-4.00am just like 35 years ago.

As Climate Warning continues and the debate about the benefits of sustainable tourism intensifies some people feel mass tourism is a problem. For sure, it's nefarious consequences need to be managed, and increasingly this is being effectively undertaken.

But could my and many other people's positive experiences be replicated without mass tourism...absolutely not! For what is creativity, beauty and culture without an audience?

# Feria de la Manzanilla, Savoured and Enjoyed

Sara and Justin Ellis

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BritishSpanish Society members share their experience of their beloved Sanlúcar de Barrameda, voted Spain's 'Capital de la Gastronomía 2022', as music, dance, *tapas*, and not least its legendary famous dry sherry return in festive mode.

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For some, it's the third *feria* in as many weeks within a short driving distance, or longer horseback ride, following the more famous versions in Sevilla and Jerez, but there's no sign of anybody flagging. For this is a much longed-for return of Sanlúcar's de Barrameda's avenue of *casetas* assembled along the central *Calzada de la Duquesa Isabel* after two years of Covid-dictated absence.

A further sign that the Feria de la Manzanilla has been missed was that the lights were switched on bang on time at 10pm on Tuesday (17 May this year), marking the official opening of festivities. We didn't arrive until midnight on Wednesday night, but having hopped through the *Portada*, as tradition dictates on everybody's first arrival at the *feria*, we quickly settled back into the swing of things:

-*Rebujitos* - a half bottle of *Manzanilla*, the dry sherry, unique to Sanlúcar, that gives the feria its name, mixed with lemonade and, occasionally for a bit of sophistication and freshness, a sprig of mint and

-*Sevillanas*, the folk dance that looks to the uninitiated like an easy version of flamenco, but which is devilishly hard to learn (it was for Sarah and me at least) if you haven't grown up with it.

On the remaining days, the feria starts to kick off around 3pm, with each *casetas* (an extravagant yet robust marquee, with a bar, kitchen, seating and most importantly a dance-floor) starting with lunch and some gentle *Sevillanas*. As night falls,

the tables are cleared away and the volume is turned up. The fifty or so *casetas* seem to compete with each other for their night-time custom according to how loud their sound-system can go, and by midnight the avenue is a cacophony of *rumbas* and *euro-pop*.

On Friday night, we dine with friends at *La Cigarrera*, a lovely old sherry bodega away from the bustle of the *feria* and only a minute from our flat. *Sanluqueños* are never ones for small parties, so typically there are fifteen of us for dinner, and naturally after dinner we head back to the feria for a gin and tonic, served up in a *maceta* (flowerpot) – a litre, hopefully recycable, plastic cup. When we need a break from the incessant noise, one of our friends, Rocío, knows the owners of a house behind the line of *casetas*, who open their garden up to their friends as sanctuary – she calls it the '*Caseta VIP*'. We make sure to acquaint ourselves with the owners, for Saturday and future years.

By 3 am in the morning, we light-weight English have had enough and turn homewards. The crowd has started to thin out but the music is still pumping, and the *churros* stalls, which have been waiting all day for their moment, are starting to receive their first customers. The *casetas* will close at 4 or 5am, and some will take their party on to the bars on the town's renowned beach-front restaurant strip, *Bajo de Guía*, until sunrise.

The *feria* closes on the Sunday, by which time we've had plenty of everything it has to offer. There's been great debate in Sanlúcar about whether to get rid of the '*Día de Resaca*' the



official public holiday for Hangover Monday, but for now it continues to provide a welcome rest to those who have worked and/or partied hard for the preceding 6 days and nights.

**Note on the town:** Sanlúcar de Barrameda is a baroque town of churches and wineries at the mouth of the Guadalquivir, a boat ride away from the ecosystem Parque Nacional de Doñana.

English merchants were granted special privileges by the Dukes Medina Sidonia during the 15th century, leading eventually to the establishment of a sizeable colony in the town.

With cultural roots predating the English to the Moorish occupation and earlier, it has a rich gastronomic culture, and apart from its famous *manzanilla* sherry, serves out wonderful food not least, its local *langostino* (the king of prawns) *cigalas* (crayfish), *chocos* (cuttlefish) and *zamburiñas* (scallops). Other tasty local delights include *papas aliñas con melva*, in which locally harvested boiled potatoes are marinated with olive oil, sherry vinegar, onion, parsley and salt, then topped with rich tinned tuna loin.

**Note on the author:**

Justin Ellis is a British lawyer and is a member of the BritishSpanish Society's Board of Trustees.



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# Spain & The British Historian

Tom Burns Marañón



**With the passing of Oxford's Professor Sir John Elliott, who died last March, the writer explores his legacy and the contribution of other notable British academics who have shed light on Spanish history.**

Members of the BritishSpanish Society, who for reasons of their own are interested in building cultural bridges between the two nations, know very well how brilliantly Spanish history has been written up by British historians.

Think Geoffrey Parker who 'humanised' a Philip II whom protestant Europe considered a monster and put him in the context of his XVI century age. Or Henry Kamen who has battled against the stereotypes of the "Black legend" that William of Orange set in motion in an early exercise of propaganda warfare when the Netherland revolted against Spanish rule. Kamen set the record straight. Or Raymond Carr who showed that 19th century Spain was not an exceptional Jurassic Park as romantic travellers had described it. In many ways it was mainstream Europe. Or Hugh Thomas who kept revising a History of the Spanish Civil War that he wrote before he was thirty and which made him instantly famous among a new generation of Spaniards because Franco banned its publication. Thomas also worked backwards and became enamoured with

Hernán Cortez, the ground-breaking conquistador who very intelligently grabbed the Aztec empire. There are many more as the torch was handed on to likeable, controversial and, above all, good writers such as Paul Preston.

British historians have been remarkable in their research and their story telling of 'abroad'. Going to lectures and tutorials in my far-off undergraduate days it amazed me how they trained their sights on France, Germany, Italy, and Russia/the Soviet Union. But I always thought, my Hispanic bias I daresay, that among the brightest and the best who explored the past of distant climes, those who trained their sights on Spain scored very highly. Philip II, the powerful catholic nemesis of Elizabethan England, was always going to be of interest. So was the creation of an overseas empire that included the establishment of universities, translations of biblical texts and civil codes into vernacular languages and heavy-duty debates about human rights.

Mid XVII century Spain, which was fighting envious enemies on every front, its golden literary and artistic age notwithstanding, jump started Spain's imperial decline just as two world wars would three hundred years later ensure the decay of the British Empire. The is where John Elliott who died aged 92 in March comes in. Elliott, whose preretirement job was Regius professor of History at Oxford University, was a true prince among British historians of Spain. He was the quintessential aesthetic, unassuming intellectual blessed with the gift of charm, infinite curiosity and boundless patience and generosity with his students. They worshipped him, of course.

Elliott was fascinated by how France in the early XVII century was, despite its religious wars, able to build a strong nation state and how Spain, rooted in Catholic orthodoxy and with gold and silver from the Indies pouring into the royal treasury, was not. To explain how the rot set in he coined the phrase 'imperial overstretch' which has since gained traction as the cause of United States reversals in southeast Asia, the Middle East and Afghanistan. The problem in Spain was inbuilt and Elliott's earliest work was on the Revolt of the Catalans that ditched the efforts of Philip IV, the grandson of Philip II, to centralise a Madrid-based administration.

Elliott's biography of the Count Duke of Olivares, Philip IV's ultimately useless strong man, is history at its best. As a stimulating read, *The Old World and The New 1492-1650* that deals with the impact on European minds of the discovery of the New World can hardly be bettered and *Scots and Catalans: Union and Disunion*, published in 2018, should be required reading in Edinburgh and Barcelona.

**Note on the author:**

Journalist and historian  
Tom Burns Marañón  
studied under the late Sir  
Raymond Carr at Oxford.

**John Elliott & Catalonia**

by Professor Paul Preston

I got to know John shortly after his return to Britain to take up the regius chair at Oxford. Previously, my knowledge of him came from his books, including *The Revolt of the Catalans*, which had given him hero status in Catalonia. There, over the years, as in Spain, he was showered with prestigious prizes.

To learn Catalan, he had lodged with a family in Barcelona. 'Before my stay was over I was even dreaming in Catalan,' he wrote later. He had also acquired a sense of the repression of Catalans under the Franco dictatorship. A striking experience came one day when, innocently speaking in Catalan, he asked a member of the Policia Nacional for directions. The furious policeman snapped: 'Speak the language of the empire!'

A more nuanced awareness of the history of Catalonia's relationship with Spain came with studying with the Catalan historian Jaume Vicens i Vives, whose influence meant that John avoided falling prey to the theme of 'chosen nation syndrome or innocent victim syndrome.' Thus, his most recent book, *Scots and Catalans: Union and Disunion (2018)*, which made sage criticisms of the most recent Catalan independence movement, did not, inevitably, please the more radical *Catalanistas*. (extract from Paul Preston's Obituary of John Elliott published in The Guardian on 24th March, 2022)

*John Huxtable Elliott, historian, born 23 June 1930; died 10 March 2022*

# El Instituto Cervantes Visita Stonyhurst Ignacio Peyró

Situado al norte de Inglaterra, entre las colinas de Lancashire -lugar de importante tradición recusante-, el colegio de Stonyhurst no es solo uno de los colegios más célebres de Gran Bretaña, sino un lugar de gran relevancia en la historia de las libertades en las islas, escribe el autor del este artículo, Director del Instituto Cervantes en Londres (2017-2022).

Stonyhurst fue fundado a finales del siglo XVI por los jesuitas, en tiempos de gran controversia religiosa en Inglaterra -tanto es así que se fundó en St. Omer, en los Países Bajos Españoles, con patrocinio real de Felipe II. Su historia, por tanto, nos retrotrae a la época de la biblia de Douay y Rheims y figuras notables del Catolicismo Británico como el sacerdote Jesuita Edmund Campion y su persecución por parte del Protestantismo reformista después de la cisma entre la Corona y Roma durante el reinado del Rey Tudor Enrique Octavo tras su separación de su primera mujer la Reina Catalina de Aragón.

Campion, fiel hasta la muerte a su fe Católica, fue condenado por alta traición, y ahorcado y descuartizado en Londres en 1581 durante el reinado de Isabel Primera, siete años antes de la fallada invasión de Inglaterra por parte de la Armada Española de Felipe Segundo.

Campion fue beatificado por el papa Leo X11 en 1886 y nombrado santo por el papa Pablo VI en 1970, entre cuarenta sacerdotes y laicos de Inglaterra y Gales martirizados entre 1535 y 1679.

Estatuas y reliquias de Campion destacan en Stonyhurst, cuya historia nos recuerda también a la gradual consecución de libertades de creencia. En 1794 el colegio se instala definitivamente en Inglaterra y en su ubicación actual. Entre alumnos y profesores, Stonyhurst ha tenido desde santos a revolucionarios como Joseph Plunkett que después de estudiar en el colegio firmó la declaración de independencia

Irlandesa en el levantamiento de Pascua en Dublín en 1916 y que terminó entre los ejecutados por un pelotón del ejército inglés.

También destacan condecorados por valentía con la máxima medalla militar Victoria Cross, siete en total durante la Primera Guerra Mundial mas que cualquier otro colegio.

Es importante señalar que el gran poeta Gerald Manley Hopkins enseñó en la escuela y entre alumnos de renombre en el ámbito de la cultura, política y el mundo de deporte destacan Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creador del legendario detective Sherlock Holmes, Charles Carroll firmante de la declaración americana de independencia, y gracias a una gran tradición de jugar al rugby, varios jugadores de la selección Inglesa y Irlandesa como Kyran Bracken, Will Greenwood, Nick Drake-Lee, Joe Ansbro, y Barry O'Driscoll.

Dada la gran tradición del colegio de sus lazos con España, y el gran número de alumnos de habla española, y la colaboración del Instituto Cervantes con colegios y universidades (a los que se ofrecen programas online de español, exámenes oficiales y programación cultural), era lógico que tanto Pedro Jesús Eusebio, director de los centros de Mánchester y Leeds, como yo mismo en calidad de director de Londres y coordinador de Reino Unido, aceptáramos con entusiasmo la invitación de la escuela a visitarla y conocer su departamento de español, que nos vino gracias al contacto que tiene con el colegio, el actual chairman del BritishSpanish Society,



Jimmy Burns Marañón, que estudió en Stonyhurst entre 1966-71 y llegó a ser presidente de su asociación de alumnos.

Durante una entrevista cordial y llena de contenido con John Browne, director del colegio, pudimos ahondar en la búsqueda de la excelencia y la visión global que, inspiradas en los valores de la Compañía de Jesús, alientan la labor educativa de Stonyhurst. Esa visión global subraya la importancia de la docencia de las lenguas extranjeras, entre las cuales el español es la más demandada en el colegio.

Tras la entrevista con el director, la encargada de las tesoros históricos de Stonyhurst, que forman parte de unos de los museos más antiguos del mundo anglo-sajón, la Doctora Jan Graffius nos hizo una visita guiada por las ricas colecciones, un extraordinario museo-gabinete de curiosidades con especial énfasis en la preservación de la memoria material del catolicismo inglés. La biblioteca, claro, merecía especial detenimiento, y pudimos ver desde la carta fundacional del centro

-con la efigie de Felipe II y María Tudor- a un *First Folio* de las obras de Shakespeare o materiales autógrafos del citado Gerald Manley Hopkins. Una colección que forma parte, por sí misma, de la historia del país.

La reunión con el departamento de español fue asimismo tan cordial como fructífera, y sirvió para compartir experiencias, celebrar la buena marcha de nuestra lengua entre el alumnado y sondear caminos de colaboración ante todo en materia cultural con el centro más cercano a Stonyhurst, el de Mánchester.

**Note on the author:**

Ignacio Peyró is a journalist and author . After five years in the UK, he is moving this autumn to take up a new post as Director of the Cervantes in Rome

# Restaurant Review: Tatel, Madrid

Steven Brown



The last time I wrote a restaurant review was for the school magazine and I used words such as 'gruel', 'slops' and 'frogspawn' to describe the less than edifying dining experience. The headmaster, Mr Roberts, was not impressed and summoned me to his office where he explained, much as if I was the reincarnation of Dickens's Oliver Twist, that I should be more grateful for what I received, though curiously he did not say that I was wrong in my assessment.

So, fast forward 40 years and I am covering a restaurant at the opposite end of the gastronomic spectrum: Tatal, which is situated on Madrid's main thoroughfare, the Paseo de la Castellana, at number 36. Tatal proposes innovative takes on Spanish dishes.

Through the door, one is greeted by a corridor of fairy lights and the dimly lit, though atmospheric, interior is suave and sophisticated reflecting a neo art deco architecture. With Rafa Nadal, Cristiano Ronaldo, Pau Gasol and Enrique Iglesias as part owners it might be a place for the 'beautiful people' to be seen and hang out, but somehow I managed to get in all the same. Lucky that my wife was with me.

The service all evening was flawless, efficient and professional, the waiters having found that sweet

spot which lies somewhere between overbearing (glass is refilled after each sip) and neglect (you have to jump up and down, shout and wave your arms around in order to get attention).

There was live music too, from a talented female singer with a silky voice accompanied by a smooth saxophonist with a silky hat. My one gripe of the evening was that they were a bit loud though they did take frequent breaks and the background music was well judged decibel-wise.

We tried the Tatal, 'Classic Experience' menu which is an amalgam of some of the restaurant's signature dishes. It did not disappoint.

The first starter was an Ensadilla Rusa (more on the origins of this dish elsewhere in this issue!) with prawns: the salad's vegetables diced finely without being obliterated, smothered in an ultrasoft mayonnaise sauce; the prawns sitting on top, king-of-the-castle style.

Next up were aubergine discs, fried in batter and accompanied by a honey flavoured foam. The combination worked splendidly as did the contrasting textures.

The final starter was Tatal's classic Spanish omelette with truffle. Firm on the outside but soft and almost creamy on the inside. Beautifully

judged and you can see that they have made more than a couple of these in the past.

The main dish was a breaded veal cutlet, fried and topped with spring onion, truffle and poached egg. So often this dish resembles the sole of a shoe doused in sawdust, both visually and in the mouth. However, in the hands of the chef at Tatel, it was a delicate delight, the meat tender, the exterior crispy, the topping accentuating the veal rather than subtracting from it.

The dessert was their award winning cheesecake which was so light I almost thought it would float up from the plate. Instead, it rose up on my fork and, in no time, was gone.

Pleasantly full, I finished off the last sip of my Rioja (a Señorío de Villarica 2017), arose from the table and was back outside in the moonlit Madrid night.

I was grateful for having had such a wonderful dining experience. Mr Roberts, eat your heart out!

With thanks to Tatel for supporting the Britishspanish Society fund-raising raffle.

**Note on the author:**

Steven Brown, a BSS member, works for an international Spanish bank in Madrid where he has long been resident.

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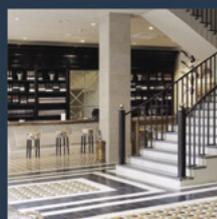
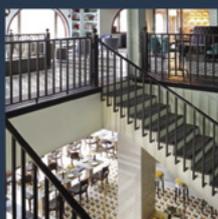
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# A Nation Torn Apart

Jules Stewart reviews Maggie Brookes' new novel on the Spanish Civil War.

Maggie Brookes' novel stands as a unique addition to the tens of thousands of works of fiction as well as historical accounts, that have been published on the Spanish Civil War.

First, the quibbles. The reference to General Franco as a fascist is misleading. Franco was first and foremost a Francoist. His only political doctrine was self-empowerment, manipulating the fascist Falange, the Catholic Church, the Carlists, the military and other right-wing factions as tools to catapult himself into power and secure his position as unchallenged leader of a totalitarian regime. Then, too, why do we so often find fascist with an upper-case "f" and communist in lower case? So much for grinning from under a green eyeshade.

The story is unique for several reasons. Firstly, this is a tale of war that brings home to the reader its full horror without the need to go into descriptions of battlefield fire and fury. Secondly, the author explores the all-too-often overlooked role of relief workers behind the combat zone, the Quakers, Save the Children volunteers and medical staff who risked their lives to care for refugees escaping the advance of Franco's armies. She does not turn a blind eye to the in-fighting among these international organisations, with disputes over seeming minutiae such as the relative merits of condensed and powdered milk.

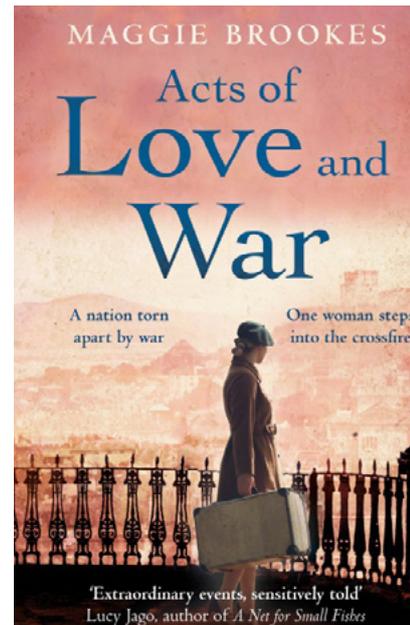
The plot is itself another intriguing feature of the book. In rural Hertfordshire, Lucy forges a close relationship with her childhood neighbours, the brothers Tom and Jamie. Eventually, her friendship develops in a romantic attraction to both men. At the outbreak of war in Spain, the brothers leave to take up rival causes. Tom, a devout Catholic, secures a reporting assignment with *The Herald*, while Jamie goes off to join the International Brigades fighting Franco's armies. Lucy is distraught at the thought of one or both of

them being killed in the conflict. She finds her way into the Republican zone, there to work with relief agencies, while intent on persuading the two men in her life to return to England.

The author says that when she came across this story of British-Spanish cooperation, friendship and sacrifice, she knew it was one that she had to tell. Before the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, she had visited Barcelona, Ronda, Córdoba, Sevilla and Benidorm, the places that feature in the book. She was therefore able to draw on detailed journals of her travels, even with small details like the nuns who made marmalade in Sevilla, along with her own impressions of the Mosque of Córdoba and the gorge at Ronda.

'That left me with printed and internet resources,' she says. 'The memoirs of Francesca Wilson and Kanty Cooper (who feature in the book) were alive with brilliantly observed detail of what they saw, and the accounts of the battles I used were heartbreakingly and sickeningly vivid. Visually, I found photographs, for example of Barcelona after bombardment, and postcards of Puigcerdà in the 1930s. I watched films and read transcripts of newsreels I was unable to access. I also had a huge map pinned to my wall. To my lasting regret, I was not able to travel through Spain as I'd intended, but hope that by combining memory, journal notes, first-hand accounts, photographs and film, I have managed to convey Lucy's experience.' Indeed she did, *con creces*.

*Acts of Love and War* by Maggie Brookes is published by Century this June



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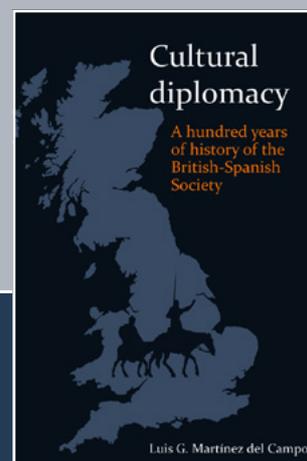
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