

Viewpoint

Speaking your language

By Jason Moore

OVER recent weeks we've had plenty of telephone calls about the Gas and Electricity Board, GESA's, billing fiasco. "What can we do," the worried caller asks, "go to their offices and complain," is our answer. "But do they speak English, asks the caller..." "I sincerely doubt it, is our re-

ply." Now there are two schools of thought on this issue. The first is that GESA, because they have a large number of foreign clients, should have staff who speak English but the second is that non-Spaniards should make an effort to speak the language so if they do have to make a complaint they have the necessary skills to do so. It is a difficult one and I do think

that is six of one and half a dozen of the other. No, I am not sitting on the fence! You can "get by" living in Majorca with-

out speaking a word of Spanish. In most cases you don't have to. The only time when language skills are needed is when you have to do something

rather unpleasant like complain about your bill. Now, I know I am not going to change the habit of a life-time with some expatriates who will never learn the language and there is a simple solution, let your gestor or legal representative deal with it. It saves a lot of trouble but unfortunately even complaining when you are in the right costs money!

The only time you need to speak Spanish is to complain!

PALMA PARKING PROBLEMS

by RAY FLEMING

SINCE I live outside Palma I am a frequent short-stay user of the city's car parking facilities.

My preference for various reasons is for street-parking and in this I am always indebted to the unofficial car-parkers who signal that there is a vacant space, or that another car is about to leave, and who are especially helpful when

one is reversing out of a space into fast-moving traffic. They do an important and good job and deserve a small tip for their trouble.

I was therefore disappointed to read in this newspaper that the Palma Council intends to replace these helpful people with salaried and uniformed "parking support and public assistance officers" who will not expect any tip. I was equally disappointed to see these

people described as "often of immigrant or drug or alcohol-dependent origin". Those I know are invariably polite, friendly and do not push for a tip.

The change is the brain-child of Eberhard Grosske, Social Welfare and Citizen Participation Councillor, who has said that "The former tip-seeking car

parkers were nearly always seen by residents as another problem rather than a solution." I cannot speak for residents but I can say that as a visitor to Palma I see them as a solution not a problem. Furthermore the suggestion that the new service is "free of charge" to the public is wrong - all residents will pay for it whereas under the previous arrangement only those parking their cars paid.

Palma's unofficial car-parkers do a good job and should not be displaced

MAJORCA
Daily
Bulletin

From Our Files

Saturday 7 March

1964: Frank Sinatra Jnr's show at Palma's Teatro Lirico was listed to start at 10.30pm. At 10pm Sinatra and his party arrived at Palma airport; at 11pm they were enjoying a dinner backstage.

According to the *Bulletin* columnist Benito, the show was worth the wait. Among the supporting acts were the Pied Pipers, vocalist Helen Forrest and trumpeter Charlie Shavers.

1974: One of the first decisions of Britain's new Labour government was to settle the miners' wage claim at a cost of 103 million pounds. This was almost exactly the sum the Pay Board had recommended to Edward Heath's Conservative government before he decided to call a general election on the issue of "Who rules Britain?".

BORN: William Boyd, author, 1952; the Earl of Snowden, photographer, 1930

DIED: Stevie Smith, poet, 1971; Herman J Mankiewicz, screen-writer, 1953;

ON THIS DAY: 1969, the London Underground Victoria Line was opened;

1876, Alexander Graham Bell patented the first telephone

THREE YEARS AGO: President Bush's three-day visit to India had "ushered in an historic transformation in US-Indian relations".

By contrast, his short stay in Pakistan had been "merely routine".

TWO YEARS AGO: Royal Marines were among NATO forces in Afghanistan preparing to mount the largest offensive against the Taliban since 2001.

ONE YEAR AGO: Sevreal newspapers were predicting that the government had decided to abandon its plan to introduce compulsory identity cards in Britain.

YOUR LETTERS

Dear Sir,

BELOW is the text of a letter from the Director General of the World Society of Protection for Animals (WSPA) to the Mayoress of Palma in response to Palma City Council's recent decision to close down Centro Canino Internacional Animal Refuge (www.centrocaninointernacional.org). The CCI shelter provides a vital service to both the people and animals of Majorca. WSPA respectfully request the Mayoress to review the Council's decision and allow CCI to continue their invaluable work.

Dear Madame Mayoress,

I am writing on behalf of the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA) further to my letter last year in relation to our Spanish member society Centro Canino Internacional (CCI) and the alleged threat of closure to their shelter once again.

CCI is a valued member of WSPA and we are strongly supportive of their work. WSPA representatives and supporters regularly visit CCI and we know that the shelter is well managed and operating at a high standard of care for the animals. CCI have followed Council advice at all times, including applying for a breeder's license as instructed (although they are not a breeding facility) and a residence license (which was applied for last September but has not yet been granted). With regards to the complaint at issue, CCI have done everything in their power to reduce any noise disturbance caused as a result of the dogs. In fact, they have already taken measures to reduce this problem, investing vast amounts of money into sound proofing their kennels and building a barrier wall. Furthermore, they have requested permission to build more outdoor sound barriers and are awaiting decision from the Council.

I am sure that you are aware that CCI has a high level of local and international support for their work, and their shelter provides a vital function to both the animals and people of Majorca.

WSPA sees no justifiable reason why CCI should be refused the right to continue its valuable work for animals, and in light of the above information and the likely repercussions of closing this shelter, I encourage you to review the Council's decision and hope you will reverse the decision in favour of CCI.

Yours sincerely,

Major General

Peter Davies CB

CCMI, FCIPD, FRSA

Director General, WSPA

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