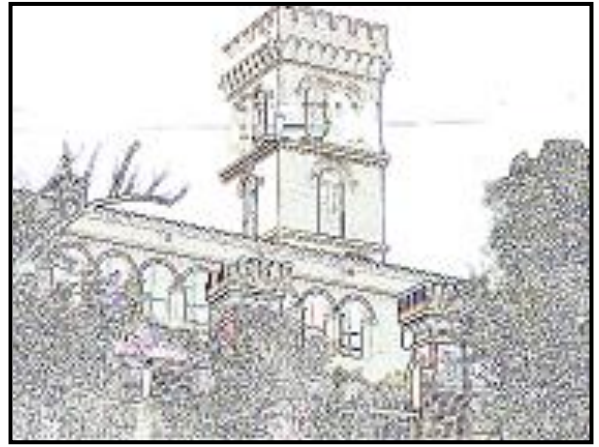




The View from

# The Perch



**An occasional (mainly) light-hearted look at life in and around Cabanyes**

*Number three: November 2009 Email: viewfromtheperch@googlemail.com Mail: Caseta 275*

## The Boar War

Wild boars are causing increasing problems for residents as they make nightly raids on local gardens, primarily in search of food but sometimes, it appears, just for the hell of it. They are very secretive, shy and nocturnal animals, spending the day hidden in thick undergrowth. But when night falls...

Lawns are turned into badly ploughed fields, trees are uprooted, shrubs destroyed and irrigation systems wrecked as *los jabilies* work their way across the urbanization. Carrers Roma, Paris, Siena and Zurich have all been visited in the recent past and owners are at a loss when faced with keeping the unwelcome visitors at bay.

As much as some people think that they will eat humans, they won't! They are just very aggressive mammals. They are omnivorous, opportunistic feeders, with a varied diet of meat & two veg that includes fungi, tubers, bulbs, nuts, fruit, eggs, insects and larvae. Acorns from our local cork oaks they see as an autumnal delicacy. They root out or dig with their snouts and hooves to get to their subterranean food sources. Hence the problems.

And things could get worse because boars have more young each year than any other large mammal. The sows can have as many as three litters a year with up to 14 piglets each time. So much for contraception.



*A once Carefully manicured lawn in Carrer Roma*

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So what's to be done about defending local gardens? Across the world, it is a question repeatedly posed but rarely satisfactorily answered. But certainly, nothing should be done that is not legal or humane.

However, a Japanese farmer has created a "family of scarecrows," including a baby in a stroller and a child on a tricycle. Damage to his crops has been greatly reduced. Locally, hunting parties are frequently active across the valley and in many places, particularly in North America, various traps have proved effective. Fencing can also work, but it has to be sturdy, high enough not to be jumped over and dug into the ground by about 12 inches to prevent the boar from rooting underneath.

(Continued on page 2)

# Hola!

## Welcome to Edition Three of "The Perch".

It has been an interesting and encouraging three months since our last little effort appeared. Being modest folk by nature and upbringing we are, of course, extremely reluctant to indulge massively in any trumpet blowing. But it is motivating when readers email us to say;

'We would like to say how much we have enjoyed the first two issues of The View from the Perch. Very interesting and entertaining; thank you for making the effort to produce it. We hope you will continue!'

And there's more; 'Thank you for another readable and enjoyable edition which I picked up last week from my caseta. Would love to continue to enjoy your good stuff...'

OK, if you insist, just one more; 'Really good job on the first 2 issues. Very entertaining, informative and I like the breezy, light-hearted style. I've not heard one negative comment from anyone about your "rag" - and only lots of compliments and smiles.' (not sure about the "rag". Ed.)



A view from close to the Perch

In fact, only one negative response. This from the person who put an anonymous note in our caseta suggesting, in effect, that we should sneak on our neighbours. You know who you are and you now know that we don't do that. So back to your butterfly collection.

But onward to the sunny uplands! Along with the positive feedback has come more new contributors which is terrific as we hope that The Perch can become a truly community communication. What we find so interesting is that, what started as a bit of a giggle seems to have become increasingly relevant and informative. We have to have a giggle, of course, but hopefully readers will continue to benefit from some of the more serious and responsible areas of The Perch.

By the way, if as you read this edition, you get the impression that quite a lot of the copy is a load of Balls then we apologise unreservedly! But it is all good stuff; particularly part one of the ABC of the EUC.

And finally, remember that we can email The Perch to you and that your comments and contributions are always welcome; so please keep them rolling in.

JD

## The Boar War

*Continued from page 1*

Two strands of electric wire have been as effective as almost anything but do not necessarily make for a pleasantly designed garden.

Finally, sprinkling mountain lion urine around the perimeter of the garden is claimed by many to be infallible. But as we don't get too many mountain lions in these parts (and I'm not sure how to go about collecting their urine!) the research continues for something a bit more practical.

But if you are allowed to shoot or trap one of these invaders, do remember that wild boar is a succulent, lean, and exceptionally flavourful meat that makes sausages, particularly with added honey and thyme, that are absolutely delicious!

JD

We asked the spokesman for SNOUT (*Sensitive Nostrils Often Uproot Trees*), the wild boars' union, to comment on the widespread damage being caused by his members. "Get real, man," he grunted, "We was here first."



## The ABC of the EUC: Part One

The EUC (Entidad Urbanística De Conservación Vizcondado De Cabanyes) is responsible for the care and maintenance of Cabanyes and for ensuring that services are delivered correctly. It collects dues from all owners of properties and land in Cabanyes and then uses the money to maintain and repair our urbanization.

Just over three years ago Sr. Agusti Ambros became president of the EUC and since then it has been working steadfastly to get Cabanyes in a “fit state” to hand over to the Ajuntament of Calonge. The targeted date for adoption is the end of 2010 and, at that time, Calonge will become responsible for all aspects of services and Cabanyes will be a “normal” part of Calonge. The EUC will then cease to exist and will not collect any more money from owners.

In the meantime, it is important that all owners pay their EUC fees. Without this money it takes longer to get Cabanyes ready for adoption, thereby costing us all additional money in the long run. The cases of owners in arrears will eventually be passed to the court system and once this costly (for the owners) process has been started it cannot be stopped by them just “paying the arrears.” Legal notices will soon be sent to 50 outstanding arrears owners. If these owners don’t pay dues then mandatory levies will be made at the time of sale or, in exceptional circumstances, the courts will order the sale of properties.

The topic of sewage is something much debated by us all! Not least, following an EUC project resulting in the creation of a necessary sewage pumping station. It is now mandatory for all properties to be connected to the mains sewage – no exceptions. All connections must be made following the correct procedures and before starting any connection works you must contact Carlos Saez on 670 26 2303. Anyone not connected at the time of adoption by Calonge should expect that the Ajuntament would take legal proceedings against them, as not being connected is considered an environmental hazard and an offence.

Finally, if anyone has any serious questions about problems with life on Cabanyes then send me an e-mail in English (please keep it simple) to [andy.ball@ya.com](mailto:andy.ball@ya.com) explaining the situation and I’ll try to get an answer. Alternatively you are always welcome to phone directly to Agusti Ambros on 972 65 08 26 who speaks Spanish, French and Catalan.

And in next February’s edition of The Perch, I will detail some of the EUC’s achievements since 2006 under Sr. Ambros’ Presidency, particularly in terms of cost savings.

Andy Ball

## SAY “NO” TO BLOW!

Following the EUC AGM in July and our lead story ‘Knock out Blow?’ a month later, we are told that Calonge Council is considering the issue, including limiting the hours of use of the dreaded leaf blowers. But we understand that it could be months before a Calonge-wide decision is reached.

And that there would still be many hours of this unwelcome racket every week.



In the meantime, the noise and air pollution continues, even though several owners are already banning the use of the machines on their premises. However, more than 75% of the villas are not occupied for much of the year. And if you are not here then you don’t hear!

We understand that Calonge has decibel measuring equipment and that individual owners are encouraged to complain to the police if they believe the noise is in excess of that allowed, which we are told is around 70-75 decibels.

And, as we suggested in our last edition, all owners should seriously consider their friends and neighbours and tell the gardeners “no blowers or no contract.”

*The big question is, Cabanyesian, will YOU  
Say “NO” to Blow!?*

JD



**Agusti Ambros and Andy Ball**

## Mark my Word

### Off Your Trolley - a guide to local shopping. Part Uno.

In this short series, I will pass on to you lucky readers some closely guarded techniques of buying day-to-day provisions here, so that you emerge from the experience contentedly and, just as important, with all your teeth (assuming you had them in the first place).

Firstly, dismiss the idea of a "one-stop shop." Typically count on a full day or more trawling Carrefour, Suma (formerly Pijoan), Lidl, Mercadona and, for those of you still standing and presumably on hyperbolic steroids, Intermarche, Caprabo and Aldi too, not to mention Dia. Indeed, we won't mention Dia.

Carrefour and Mercadona vie for first place in terms of number of stores, size, selection and a user-friendly environment though, in terms of customer service, they usually leave much to be desired; opening a new checkout before customers faint from exhaustion is a rarity.

Enough of moaning! With the festive season upon us, the good news is that you'll never need to cry "veal meat again" (apologies to Vera Lynn), since our local Suma, or alternatively Lidl's in Palafrugell or St. Feliu de Guixols are excellent for their variety and quality of fresh meat, poultry and cheeses. They are much weaker when it comes to fruit and vegetables, where street markets win in all respects, including the fun of elbowing your fellow shoppers out of the way. And don't forget to buy your 12 lucky grapes to be eaten on each stroke of midnight at the New Year. At most times of the year, Mercadona's Ignacio Prieto boxed ones, "sin semillas" (seedless) if you can get them, are excellent.

A final word before next time: I might not always be right, but I assure you I'm no basket case when it comes to shopping. If there's one thing I have learned, it's that however stressful it gets, never fly off your trolley!



Mark Woolf



## Sayonara Wry on Aira

Ryanair seems to have become the BBC's favourite airline, recently featuring on Panorama and repeatedly on Watchdog. And the airline continues to get hefty exposure in the press. So The Perch is simply not prepared to publicise O'Really anymore. Well, not for the time being, at least.

Our last word (possibly) on the subject is that Ryanair gets you there, usually on time, in no-frills fashion and, if you are a qualified accountant, it is possible to calculate what it is going to cost you.

But the last words, here and elsewhere, inevitably come from the great man, Michael O'Really, himself.



**And who said he's got a big mouth?**

**On competition:** "We don't want war. We want peace. We want a piece of Italy. A piece of Germany. And we want a big piece of easyJet."

**On freedom of choice:** "If you like higher fares don't book Ryanair. If you want the guaranteed lowest fares in Europe fly Ryanair. If you don't like us don't fly with us. 67 million people will take your seat."

**And on customer relations:** "I think my warm wit charm and engaging personality will win them all over."

## Feathered Friends

The Red Legged Partridge lives here all year round but seems to come into its own in the autumn, its loud hoarse call, starting with a few clucks and building to chuk-chuk-chukar, a haunting sound in these slow to get light mornings.

Easy to identify with its red leg and beak; it is a rotund and stocky bird standing about 35cm high with a strong black eye-stripe extending across ear and neck to join a broad speckled breast band. With beautiful blue flanks barred with black and chestnut, I always think this pretty bird has a somewhat Egyptian look.



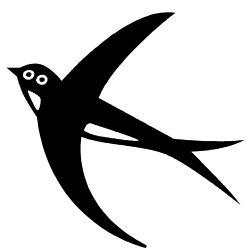
©Jim Weare

Shy and wary, the Red Legged Partridge likes to be on the ground, nesting in hollows and feeding on seeds and leaves, flying only when pressed. It will quickly run away when disturbed, disappearing from sight like magic despite its showy markings.

Like all game birds, the Red Legged Partridge is also very good to eat, Keith Floyd's last meal was a lunch of partridge in red wine – way to go? I think not. In this household at least, this plump little beauty will remain a feast for the eyes only.

Helen Saker

## How to Attract Birds



Warm pool, inviting sun beds and icy cold Chardonnay on tap? No, you need lots of nuts and fat balls for the tits. I am, of course, talking about our feathered friends!

The best way to ensure plenty of birds to watch in the winter is to feed and water them. Ensure your feeders are placed somewhere where the birds will feel fairly safe.

**Bird tables** (for cat-free gardens) only need to be very simple - a good autumn DIY job. Use a variety of nuts & seeds, cheese rinds and grated stale cheese, dried fruit, apples, fresh coconut. Don't use bread, it fills them up but has little nutritional value. Scatter some of the above under the table to attract the ground feeders – robins, blackbirds (they love apples and currants), pigeons, etc...

**Feeders** - Wild birdseed and 'fat balls' can be bought from most good pet shops (or make your own by packing melted suet mixed with seeds into empty coconut shell halves.) However, we have yet to find a local source of peanuts. Hang up your feeders and sit back and enjoy an array of regular visitors.

**Water** – essential for not only drinking but also bathing. Even a small birdbath (with a shallow edge) will act like a magnet for most garden species. Watch the hierarchy in the 'line up' for the bath.

So, binoculars at the ready – oh, and perhaps just a small glass of Chardonnay!

Helen Saker

## Here we go.....

*A debut contribution from Trevor & Joan Holt, complete with a great picture, takes us further than The Perch has ever travelled before!*

We had a nine-day mini-adventure by taking our car on the ferry from Barcelona to Civitavecchia, the modern port of Rome. We set sail from the terminal at 2215 arriving the next day at 1830. We then drove 120 kilometres to the famous Amalfi coast where we met our daughter who had hired a villa right on the Amalfi drive. She had also rented a 33ft boat, with skipper, for an amazing 175€ per day including fuel and drinks, for us to visit the stunningly beautiful towns of Amalfi, Positano, Ravello, Minori and Sorrento.



**Villa Rufolo in Ravello**

We then headed north to Florence for three days, staying in the centre at Hotel Rosso23. We had plenty of time to take in all the famous sights and museums and had a romantic Tuscan dinner in a restaurant close to the Pont Vecchio Bridge, under arches and vaults dating back to 1200 AD. Close to the restaurant, in a local Anglican church, we were entertained by professional operatic tenors and sopranos performing from the works of Puccini, Verdi, Rossini and others.

Then on our homebound day we went via Pisa to take the usual photos of the Leaning Tower and have a relaxed lunch, before driving the few kilometres to Livorno where we departed on the ferry at 2330 for the 24 hours cruise back to Barcelona.

The return tickets on the Grimaldi Line Cruise ferries were only 320 Euros for two adults' fares, the car and decent en suite overnight cabins. The ferry has good restaurants, bars, casino and entertainment lounge.

We reckon it would've cost more to drive, taken much longer to get there and been a lot more stressful. But most importantly, it was a refreshing, exciting & relaxing experience for us both.



## Blues in La Bodega



Talent in Cabanyes seems to abound on the evidence of the public debut of the impressive Nathans Blues Band at the end of October. Apart from bass player, David Coll, they all live amongst us, led by guitarist Nathan, and vocalist Libbie, Drohm.

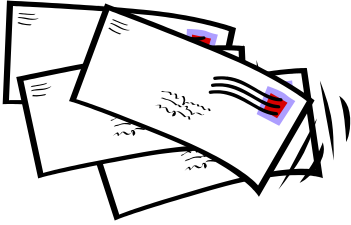
From the once banned 'Digging my potatoes' to the BB King classic, 'The Thrill is Gone,' Libbie's fine performance ranged from the saucy to the downright melancholy. From Andy Ball on keyboards, we heard that his 'Bucket's Got a Hole in it,' the Hank Williams 60 year old hit, while Mike Duxbury on drums completed the line up.

Next gig is 30<sup>th</sup> January. One for the diary.

## Thanks

The Perch just seems to grow and grow; from four to six to eight pages in the course of three editions with much of the growth coming from beyond Duncanland. Apart from our writers, whose bylines appear, we benefit from people like Bob & Margot Carefull, who offer ideas & photographs that help to enhance our pages.

But eight pages mean more paper, ink and time and once again we are indebted to Quality Estates for providing all three. Apart from providing this invaluable support, the company is particularly active on the Estate Agency front, not least on Cabanyes where you may have spotted its boards. And the whisper from inside is that the market is picking up and that there are buyers on the lookout for the right properties at the right price. You read it here first! And you can see more at [www.quality-estates.com](http://www.quality-estates.com)



# Letters to the Editor

*Editor,*

Will you not keep calling me O'Really in your pathetic little publication? You know as well as I am doing that that is not my name. It's O'Leary.

I find it offensive, unreal, unacceptable, unnecessary and in the worst possible taste when all I am trying to do is to make a few honest punts by running a bums on seats, give us your money, airline.

So will you not just stop it?

Yours curtly,  
Michael O'Really.

\*\*\*

*Dear Editor,*

I live near the top of Cabanyes and when I got up this morning, my terrace had disappeared leaving a large hole outside our back door. Where on earth can it be?

Yours deprivedly,  
Manuel

*Dear Manuel,*

*This is not an unusual occurrence but is part of what makes living here so exciting. You are unlikely to find it as it may have travelled many miles by now. I suggest that you fill the hole with water and keep dolphins.*

\*\*\*

*Dear Editor,*

The gardener has just left my villa, with his assistants and all of their equipment. I now notice that there is a leaf on my terrace.

Can I sue the gardener for breach of contract?

Yours hopefully,  
P.D.Q.

(Name & address not supplied.)

\*\*\*

## Community Corner



**Community Corner is where we want YOU to tell us about a place or a product, a service or an event, that you feel you would like to recommend or let the community know about. Without responsibility.** Because we all know that it is so easy to try someone on their rare off day! But this corner is all about offerings from third parties; it is not a place for 'free' advertising.

**Having a party?** Don't want to cook? Whether your event is small or large, let Helen and Maureen take the strain. From montaditos (substantial, sophisticated canapés) to a tasty buffet menu, they can ensure your party is painless, giving you the time to enjoy yourself. Contact Helen on 972 66 22 25 or Maureen on 972 66 06 74.

**Royal British Legion** - Regrettably, the Calonge branch of the the Royal British Legion will close next month through lack of volunteers to

keep it going. However, the annual Nov 11th Remembrance Service and Survival Lunch will continue and Poppies will still be sold. RBL beneficiaries will continue to be supported in the area and caseworkers will be on hand.

Sincere thanks from the President, Trevor Holt, for all the support in recent years and the help in raising thousands of Euros for the RBL charity. If your want to know more, contact him by email: [trevor.holt@telefonica.net](mailto:trevor.holt@telefonica.net) or on 972 65 30 04.

**Carnival Float** - A Cabanyes group has been a part of the local traditional 'Carnaval' for eight years. It has a 'carrossa' – a float - and invites more people to join them on board. It just involves a few rehearsals and being part of the fun on the day.

2010's Carnivals are on Feb 13, 14 and 21 - but you don't have to do them all. The cost is a one off €25 per person and €35-€40 for the costume. Contact [joan.ball@ya.com](mailto:joan.ball@ya.com) for more details.



## Wine of the Month

Sunny days with blue skies and clear crisp nights – what a wonderful season this is. And when the thermometer drops at night, nothing hits the spot like a warming Rioja.

So with this thought in mind, off I went in search of a goodie to complement a hearty chicken casserole. Oh, but what a choice! Of course, it was necessary to try a few but I finally settled on a Faustino Crianza 2006, one of this long-established bodega's modern wines, modestly priced at 4.95 Euros at Suma.

This medium bodied tempranillo wine took me from a small glass while preparing dinner (a key criterion for me!), accompanied the main course very well and finally had enough oomph to deal with a medium strength cheese course. It is not overpowering and would complement many dishes and would also be pleasant slightly chilled in warmer months.

So, in summary, a good dependable economical wine to tickle the palette.

But of course, the research must go on.....



HD

## Whine of the Month

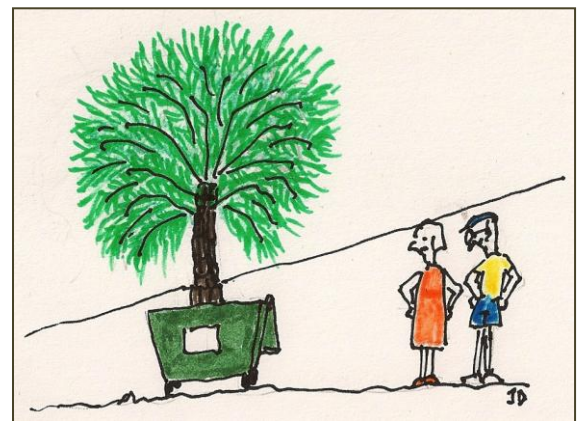
Why are residents confronted with the unpleasant and unwelcome sight of large household items – chairs, bedposts, electrical goods and much more - which, instead of being taken to the deixalleria, are being dumped by the rubbish and recycling containers?

And that's not all! Garden waste is often stuffed inside the rubbish containers; this too should also be taken to the deixalleria for recycling. NB. Large reusable bags are available there free of charge for just this purpose. When the containers are abused and misused in this way, they are soon full to overflowing, particularly during the busy summer months, so that rubbish has to be left on the ground, to be spread around by animals.

And there's more! Some people are so lazy and uncaring and inconsiderate, that they dump everything – legitimate rubbish - plus all those items that can and should be recycled – bottles, cans, paper and plastic - into the rubbish containers.

So why are some people so environmentally unfriendly and selfish?

**We should be told.**



**"I say, that's a bit much"**

Marianne and David Triber



## The Last Word

To all of our contributors, supporters, providers, enablers, readers and anyone else that we may have inadvertently and discourteously omitted or overlooked, we wish the coolest of Yules and a splendid 2010 during which we sincerely hope that everyone will perch happily, prosperously and healthily.

Have good ones.

*Helen & JD*

