

THE LANZAROTE EXPEDITION

- Down at the Island's hospital...

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Despite the admiration towards the island's natives for their remarkable philosophies and spirit, the Clarion international press team wondered if the local health service just went a *little* way towards long years and good health.

So, to get an insight into the Spanish way of caring for people they met Maria-del-Mar Ferrer and colleagues in charge of the Radiology Department at Arrecife General Hospital.

Maria, 33 married with two children, took a few moments away from a hectic shift to be asked about job satisfaction and levels of pay.

"Well" she confessed, "pretty good, we'd all like more money of course, especially as since we went into the Euro prices have rocketed. But we are happy and tremendously proud of our work and how the system works.

Meeting lots of foreign patients we are always told how different it is elsewhere. Arrivals at Accident and Emergency in Lanzarote are received and assessed by a doctor immediately. Then, delays for treatment are rarely more than an hour. Tests, x-rays and scans are completed really quickly."

Asked about waiting times for non-urgent operations it was clear that usually *weeks not months* were involved... but it was a question about hygiene standards at her work place that caused a visible shock.

"Why? What are you suggesting?" Maria responded. It was explained that in the UK there is a huge ongoing problem with thousands of deaths annually through MRSA - type bugs and that blame is often laid upon hospital cleanliness standards. Neither Maria nor her colleague, pictured here.....



.....had ever heard of MRSA or anything like it. The subject was left alone.

The UK visitors took up no more time of the hospital's busy key staff, and left with the impression that morale and patient satisfaction was at a level certainly to be envied elsewhere in Europe.

And then - to the Town Hall...

The final episode of the whistle-stop Canary Islands tour was at the good offices of Lanzarote Mayor - Jose Juan Savadrerra, who kindly provided statistics on the senior generations living in his province of Tias.



Jose Juan Savadrerra, Mayor of Tias, Lanzarote

TOTAL NUMBER OF TIAS RESIDENTS -16,000

Those aged over eighty... 215

(that's about one and a quarter percent)

Those aged over ninety... 45

(which is about a quarter of one percent)

Now, to conclude this tale, let's make a comparison with similar figures for **Newcastle-under-Lyme**, obtained after being referred to the 2003 Census by the Borough Council.

Firstly, breathe in readers - you are all expecting a foregone conclusion on where you might need to be to maximise your years... *but wait-*

TOTAL NUMBER OF NEWCASTLE RESIDENTS -122,000

Those aged over eighty... 5,150

(that's over four percent)

Those aged over ninety... 680

(that's over half of one percent)

In a nutshell, there are over three times as many octogenarians, proportionately, in Castle Comfort's home town compared to Tias - and double the amount of those over ninety!

Nationally - there are over 2.4 million of the UK's population over eighty (that's over 4%)

In Spain - the over eighties account for 1.5 million (which is also lower at 3.5%)

So folks... to end, if the mood takes you there - go and enjoy the sun, sand, sangria and olive oil - but surely the COSTA-DEL-CASTLE (or-not-so-sunny-Stoke) AIN'T SUCH BAD PLACES TO GO THE DISTANCE AFTER ALL.

Happy days!...(wherever you live)

THE TRUJILLO-PEREZ FAMILY OF 9 BROTHERS -

native to Gran Canaria, are blessed with remarkable longevity. All served together in the Spanish Civil War, returning safely to reach a ripe old age ranging from the late 80's to the eldest,



Francisco, (pictured here) who passed way in 2002 just short of his 100th birthday. Three brothers are still going strong!

CCC's Continental Care

The Clarion reporting squad, on the way back from their Canary Islands expedition, stopped at Madrid to check up on Castle Comfort Centre's first ever overseas client. Teresa Marron, 96, acquired a Pride Riser Recliner five years ago. "Last night I was sleeping badly in bed due to tummy acid," she explained. "So in the early hours, I



moved to my chair, set it in a certain position... the pain went off... and I slept like a log!" Teri summed up her CCC comfort

aid by saying, "This chair is my life"

Pictured; Teresa, 96 along with granddaughter Itzear who finds the Castle Comfort balloon more interesting than the chair!

Approaching 101



Ethel Sweetmore of Hanchurch a CCC Centurion