



## **ASOCIACIÓN PROPIETARIOS MONTGÓ JÁVEA**

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### **APMJ NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2016**

Dear All,

First of all, a Happy New Year to everybody. I am a bit late in sending my best wishes to members, but then again, I seem to be a bit behind on everything at the moment. The garden still needs a bit more clearing despite me having filled two large containers already. I also seem to be spending a lot of time organising plumbers, electricians, builders, tree-fellers, etc, in between clearing up the never-ending supply of dog mess in the street outside my house. As a result, APMJ matters have not exactly been forgotten, but have definitely 'slipped to the right' a bit. However, I am back on track and looking forward to hearing about your concerns and trying to solve yet more issues in the coming year.

Looking back over the past few months, in early December, along with some 60+ members, I enjoyed a very pleasant APMJ Christmas Lunch at El Gaucho Restaurant. The company was excellent, the staff attentive, the wine red, the water fizzy and the food absolutely first class. Normally, I come away from El Gaucho reeling from a 'salt high', but this time the chefs got it just right. Thank you Barbara for organising the event!

On 12<sup>th</sup> January, we held our first Montgó Morning of the year. Our guest speaker was Carl Barclay, who owns Casa Segura Locksmiths in Jávea. Below, you can read a bit more about what he covered in his informative talk and demonstration. I have got some ideas about guest speakers at future events, but for the moment simply hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter and, just as importantly, find the information contained within of some use.

#### **Street Signs**

I will start with an easy one this time. If nothing else, it will make a change from talking about asphaltting the roads. A couple of years ago, we asked people to let us know if the street sign for their road needed updating, as some were in a very poor condition. The Ayuntamiento then replaced a number of them, which helped smarten the place up a bit. Never the less, there are still a few around the area that are almost unreadable and could easily be replaced. Please do let me know by the end of February if you think your street sign should be replaced and I will submit a consolidated list to the appropriate department. I also wonder if anything can be done about the numerous mailboxes at the ends of various roads. Now that Correos will only deliver normal mail in this area to the APMJ-supplied buzones (of which we still have plenty for sale if anybody is interested), I would have thought that they were now redundant and could be removed to help clear up the area a bit.

#### **Fire Prevention Update**

The fire prevention project is starting to see some results, albeit they are mixed results. I am assured that the Local Police are continuing to identify the owners of the overgrown plots listed in the Denuncia we lodged with the Ayuntamiento last year. As many of you will have seen, the large area below Carrer de la Penyaparda is being cleared gradually which is a 'win'. On the other hand, many of the smaller plots are still causing problems, not least because of owners pleading poverty or whatever. That said, I suspect pleading poverty is simply an excuse for inaction in many cases. I am therefore not particularly sympathetic and will keep on with the campaign.

The same applies to owners who refuse to either protect their palm trees against the Palm Weevil (Picudos Rojos) or to treat them once infected. We will keep pushing to see some action, although in the knowledge that little will probably get done.

Another example of 'little being done' is the request to the regional government to clear the trees at the edge of the Montgó Natural Park. My requests for updates just seem to disappear into a black hole. I am therefore going to have to stop relying on, what is for me, traditional methods of communication (i.e. electronic) and 'go local' (i.e. organise more face-to-face meetings). I will let you know how I get on.

Meanwhile, last year we set aside some money in the budget for fire prevention signs to be sited around the area. If anybody would like to step forward and help me out by designing, ordering and placing the signs across key points in the area then I would be delighted. I know that signs alone will not prevent fires, but if they increase awareness a bit and just help one less cigarette end being thrown out of a passing vehicle then that will be progress!

### **Strychnine Poisoning**

One of our members recently told me the sad news that her cat had died from strychnine poisoning. I know that a lot of people use it for the intended purposes (mainly killing rats) but it would be nice to think that such poisons were being used with consideration for other animals, especially pets. Another member also told me about the difficulties in obtaining pesticides, in particular those used as weed killers, from local garden centres. It seems that as from the start of the year you will need to have completed a specialist course in order to obtain a licence to purchase the stronger products.

In my opinion, the above two matters are linked. I am therefore minded to try and invite somebody along to one of our Montgó Mornings to tell us more about the correct handling of poisons as well as how we might obtain pesticides for our gardens. It may be, of course, that we will have to rely on the professional gardeners more and more for certain things in the future. First, however, we need to clarify the issues and understand what we can and cannot do. I will let you know how I get on in finding a speaker. As always, if you are unable to attend one of our Montgó Mornings, I will let you know the appropriate information either by Newsletter or e-mail after the event

### **Processionary Caterpillars**

The Processionary Caterpillars are on the move. Those of us who have lived here a while, especially those who have pets, will know what I am on about. Newcomers might be less aware. In brief, the caterpillars nest in pine trees. At this time of year they start moving in order to burrow into soft ground ready for the next stage in their life cycle. Human contact with the hairs may cause rashes and respiratory problems. Animals, especially dogs, are susceptible to picking up the hairs on their paws, which they then lick. This can result in itching, swelling, vomiting and death. This link will tell you all you need to know about them and show what they look like: [http://www.abaco advisers.com/spain\\_explained/life-spain/news/processionary-caterpillars-spain](http://www.abaco advisers.com/spain_explained/life-spain/news/processionary-caterpillars-spain). In the interim, you are advised to keep your dogs under control, especially when walking in the woods. If you are tempted to try and remove nests and destroy them, then please carefully read up about the procedure on-line and take all necessary precautions.

### **Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) Matters**

NHW Matters: that could either be a simple statement or a way of saying "here's some NHW news". As far as this Newsletter is concerned, it's a bit of both. NHW does matter and can be quite effective in controlling crime. As you will have seen, there have been a number of reports of suspicious activity as well as actual crimes taking place recently. Even where alarms are fitted, actually work and the police respond quickly, it is often too late. It therefore seems to me that our best defence is keeping our eyes open for suspicious activity. That, of course, is a pretty loose term, but in my view includes, but is not confined to:

- a stranger loitering in your neighbourhood or a vehicle cruising the streets repeatedly
- someone peering through gates, doors or windows
- someone knocking on doors asking if you have an alarm fitted (and yes, it has happened) or collecting for so-called charities
- someone tampering with electric or gas or water systems without an identifiable company vehicle or uniform
- sounds of breaking glass
- strangers loading valuables into vehicles from a residence, especially if into an unmarked vehicle

As I have urged many times before, do not get involved yourselves unless you have the physique and weaponry similar to Arnie Schwarzenegger in the film *The Terminator*. Instead, report suspicious activity through the NHW system. In the case of an actual threat or ongoing incident, report it immediately to the emergency services on 112. Whatever system, please try and give a description of the person or persons involved, for example sex, race, age, height, appearance, clothing, etc. The most important bit of information about any vehicle is the registration number, along with its make and colour. Let's face it, a report about a disreputable looking character in an old vehicle is interesting information but not actually much use to the police! Indeed, that could well describe me driving about the area looking to see what needs doing.

Talking of the police, the Chief of Local Police and the Head of the Guardia Civil in Jávea will be attending an NHW meeting in the Social Centre on 1<sup>st</sup> March starting at 1100 hours. The meeting is being arranged by the Chairman of NHW Jávea and is for all Coordinators and members of the 16 NHW areas in the town. Our local NHW Coordinator, Sandra Benson, has already e-mailed you about this event and has asked for an indication of numbers attending. I for one certainly intend going and recommend it to you as it is a chance to hear from the law enforcement agencies a bit more about what they are doing about crime in the area. More importantly, it is an opportunity to ask questions (I, for one, certainly have a few!).

### **Montgó Mornings**

The NHW meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> March of course clashes with our scheduled Montgó Morning. Rather than miss the opportunity to be at the NHW meeting, we will provisionally delay our Montgó Morning at Le Gourmand until Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> March. I have a guest speaker lined up for that meeting, but will confirm the date and let you have more details in a separate e-mail another day. First though, we have our Montgó Morning on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February. Although I don't have a speaker arranged, I look forward to seeing you there and discussing whatever issues arise that morning.

Our meeting in January was linked to two of our Montgó Mornings in 2015. We had previously heard from Candida Bourne, an insurance broker, about a number of insurance related matters including the need to ensure you have adequate household insurance. We also heard from José Antonio Monfort Pons, the Chief of Local Police, about the causes of crime and what is being done to tackle the problems. This time, we had Carl Barclay who gave a lively and highly informative talk in which he made a number of suggestions to help improve physical security around the home, including:

- Do not leave ladders, tools or any other implements that could be used to help break into the house lying around the garden
- Do try and secure patio doors with a chain or padlock, especially one with a built-in alarm
- Do not use fake security cameras as thieves can easily recognise them
- Do be careful where you install security lighting as it can just simply be a device to 'show the way'. A light with a movement sensor and an in-built camera is good though as people instinctively look at lights when they come on

Carl went on to demonstrate a number of simple devices that could be used to protect property and valuables, such as cable alarms which emit a piercing noise when tampered with or cut; small alarms which go off if the item (for example, a rucksack or bicycle) is moved; and cameras which can be installed discreetly in the garden. Even better, if you were to buy such

items from Carl's shop, then he would give APMJ members a 10% discount. He also mentioned his key-holding service as well as his standard locksmith services, all of which are detailed on the following website [www.locksmithspain.com](http://www.locksmithspain.com).

Carl's final point was to remind people to ensure they were able to open any safe in the house. There had been a number of local incidents recently where householders had been threatened with weapons to force them to open safes. Declaring that you had lost the keys or didn't know the number would simply be putting yourself at risk, even if true. A quick call to Carl to see if he could obtain replacement keys or open the safe by other means could save problems if you were ever burgled whilst in the house.

### **Annual General Meeting (AGM) 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

We will be holding our AGM on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March starting at 1030 hours. I had previously informed everybody that the meeting was on 17<sup>th</sup> March. This was not down to clerical error, a mis-booking or anything else. I simply got my dates confused. I will send out further information about the AGM in mid-February. Meanwhile, if you have any specific points you would like either me or the Mayor to cover at the meeting, then please let me know in advance.

### **APMJ Subscriptions**

The annual €15 membership fee covers the period January to December each year. This means the subscription payments for 2016 are due now, rather than on the anniversary of the last payment. This is a point I come back to time and time again. The reason is simple: I would prefer our Committee members to have the opportunity to enjoy our meetings a bit more rather than dealing with paperwork every occasion. Prompt payment also reduces the workload in chasing people up as we get into the latter part of the year. Lastly, it also helps us to better control our finances. If you have problems in getting to one of our meetings to pay in person then please do contact Ann Hambrook, our Membership Secretary, on [apmj.membership@hotmail.com](mailto:apmj.membership@hotmail.com) to find out about alternative methods of payment.

### **Cine Jayan**

On a lighter note, you might like to know that the cinema in Jávea Port, Cine Jayan, not only shows English language versions of the latest cinema releases, but is now also showing live events such as ballet and opera. Further details can be found on our website <http://www.montgoresidents.com>.

### **.....and Finally**

This has been a rather long Newsletter. To be fair, there is plenty going on. Indeed, to help with that workload, I could really do with somebody to act as Vice President. If you were interested in taking on that role, especially if you were interested in becoming President during 2017, then please do let me know via [presidentapmj@gmail.com](mailto:presidentapmj@gmail.com).

Hasta la próxima

Andrew Simmonds  
President APMJ