The Opening

Work on the Palacio de La Paz continued slowly. Worryingly slowly, however the funds available for the project seemed to be disappearing alarmingly fast. The architects Fleecem, Skinem and Leggit had brought in contractors from the UK and they needed to acclimatise to the Alquerian environment. There had already been casualties. After swimming in the reeking Río Verde two 'brickies' from Sunderland suffered physiological changes. They are now starring as pantomime fairies in Nigel Ruffbody's production of 'Giggling in the Greenwood' at the East Daftborough Apollo.

Once the building is completed it will be fitted out as a leisure and entertainment centre for the Alquerian people. No one barrio would dominate with all entertainment and pastimes non-controversial. The idea was to soothe nerves and foster tolerance. Reirmucho S.A. of Almería agreed to handle these activities. They duly set about researching local Alquerian customs to find something common to both barrios. After much work they came to the conclusion that the only common customs appeared to be womanising, gambling and drinking. The last two were easy to achieve in the form of a casino with an integral bar. As for the first, they sought the advice of the capable and ever willing Manuela. No foreign entertainers could be persuaded to visit Alqueria. The Pueblo has been on a black list ever since a group of Morris Dancers performed there some two years ago. After being in the Village for only two hours they needed counselling and all turned in their bells and ribbons. Most visitors from the outside tended to drive cars with flashing blue lights on.

Whether by luck or sheer hard work it is difficult to say but the day of opening eventually arrived. All Alquerians, apart from Loco Paco who was busy shoeing his Saharan Dung Beetle made the trek across the Río Verde. The opening ceremony was itself a triumph of absurdity. Rodriquez of the Newcomer's barrio and Poyato representing the Hill People pulled the lanyard simultaneously. What looked like an extremely large brown paper bag dropped away revealing the structure.

To say it was the most hideous building imaginable would be an understatement. The Newcomers blamed the Hill People and vice versa. The ensuing riot lasted for three days and nights, during which time, ironically, the new building came into its own. It was pressed into service as a first-aid station for these and subsequent inter-barrio hostilities.

It appears that the only common aspect between the two barrios are the casualties caused by the inter-barrio fighting sparked by their differences.