**Gruntmore, El Alcalde**
**Part two**

The town council first looked at ways in which to raise revenue, even considering a tax on Poyato's Remitroot crop. However as a liquor it keeps half the village in a permanent state of ecstasy. While, mashed into mortar it holds half the village's buildings together. Besides it's Rodriquez's favourite beverage and he is *El Jefe.* Other schemes suggested were a patio tax and a Wellington Boot tax. The latter would involve an allowance for old Olonso who lost a leg during the over eighties limbo dance contest at the *merienda de campo*. All of these proposals affected both sides of the community equally making them politically unacceptable. The target of any tax or cut must be the Hill People or the non-partisan of the village.

After much debate, funding for the *lavandería* was to end. A similar fate awaited the *naranjos.* The oranges offered a free source of juice for the Remitroot Sunrises much enjoyed by the Young Mothers of Alqueria Club.

José Cabrasilbido the local police officer enjoyed driving his official *Seat Altea* but no more. The council replaced it with a 1982 MotoVespa. The Seat disappeared but coincidently the Deputy Mayor was seen driving a badly resprayed *Altea* some two weeks later. This was a cut too far. José, who had always remained impartial as a good police officer should know where the bodies were buried. He also knew who buried them.

Every member of the council except the seconded Blythe was involved in some skulduggery or other. Some insist it is obligatory. Which is why respectable law abiding citizens never run for public office. The more José chugged his way around the village on his antiquated machine, the more the resentment grew within him. Finally unable to contain his anger no longer he visited Guardia Civil headquarters in Almería. He took with him a bulky box-file containing a detailed chronology of all of the misdeeds of councillors past and present. Written on the box in a shaky hand was

*venganza de los oprimidos.*

The Civil Guard are an efficient force and acted with commendable speed. Blue lighted cars and vans poured into the Calle Horno. Officers stormed the council offices rounding up the local dignitaries, unceremoniously bundled into the back of a van and driven south. All except Blythe Gruntmore, who in his own little insular world was free of blame. All of the arrested councillors automatically lost their seats. Blythe was officially a councillor, the only councillor left. Accordingly Blythe Gruntmore the Geordie, who spoke extremely bad Spanish with a thick north eastern accent became Mayor.

Before our illustrious English could wear the robes and chains, he must prepare and deliver his inaugural speech.

The whole village waited with anticipatory amusement.