Gruntmore, El Alcalde
Part three

Sobbing uncontrollably or laughing hysterically seemed to be Blythe Gruntmore's two options as he stood in front of a long double sided mirror. He had been in the Town Hall since the Guardia Civil had arrested the other council members and made mayor by default. He had written an obligatory speech which he had to present to the population of Alqueria in the Plaza at noon.

He now stood bleary eyed dressed in ill-fitting Mayoral robes with a base metal chain hanging like a limp bath-plug from this neck. Blythe had searched for a clue, a hint to his duties or what was expected of him. He had found instead inspiration in the form of six bottles of vintage Remitroot sherry. He had finished three and it was starting to show. Studying his appearance in the distorted mirror he wondered what his friends on Tyneside would have thought of him. Blythe breathed deep. It was high noon. He thought perhaps than one of the eighteen glasses of Remitroot sherry he had drunk was off as he felt dizzy and disorientated. He headed manfully for the square.

The village-folk had been gathering all morning. Horacio Stranglardeganso had opened the Bar La Casa Devante early, intuitively knowing a profit was to be made. The crowd in the plaza was in High Glee. Expectation, alcohol and Gruntmore's passed record promised an afternoon to be remembered. Women and girls giggled in corners while the men tried valiantly to remain straight faced as Gruntmore approached.

The ill-fitting robes gave him the appearance of an extra from a school nativity play. His chain of office bounced against his chest as he walked hesitantly towards the hastily prepared rostrum. Silence fell. A fundamental silence, just the sound of the gentle breeze and the birds, unaware of the solemnity of the occasion singing in the warm afternoon. Such a silence was an act of great self control for any Spanish gathering, for Alqueria it was a phenomenon worthy of note.

Blythe's opening sentence as written was 'Loyal citizens of Alqueria, I stand before you as Mayor'. However due to a mixture of Remitroot sherry, Blythe's extremely bad Spanish and his Geordie accent what was said was “Boiled denizens who are on the beer, look behind you a rutting pair”.

The assembled crowd dissolved into uncontrollable laughter. Tears ran down faces and legs crossed. Blythe had come up to expectation, unusual for someone in public office. The new Mayor bolted from the square, locked himself in the Town Hall not emerging for three days and nights. In the early hours of the third morning he made the safety of his little house on the Calle Horno, becoming a recluse.

An Election date for the local council has yet to be finalised. Blythe Gruntmore hopes it will be soon so he can once again walk the streets of Alqueria during the daylight hours.