¿Utopía?

The green mist hung heavy in the morning air. Its ability to offend the nostrils and severely erode the epidermis keeps the local inhabitants behind closed doors. The return of the Alquerian Mist was unheralded due to the complex nature of its origin. The bad drainage coupled with a temperature inversion which occurs from time to time in the Alquerian Valley are considered the main causes. This time it was thick, foul smelling and particularly irritating to the exposed parts.

The timing of this meteorological phenomenon was unfortunate. A television unit from the BBC, led by that celebrated director Gordon Gigglemoor was in the process of producing a documentary. 'Utopia' was to be a programme investigating why so many Britons choose to settle on the southern Iberian Continent. Alqueria had been chosen as the venue. Why? Perhaps bribery by the Pueblo's leaders. Perhaps research had selected Alqueria from its many rivals or perhaps it was just sheer bad luck on the part of the BBC. Whatever the reason Gordon and his worthy crew coughed and scratched their way through the disgusting green mist. The cultured presenter's voice of Preston Melove permeated through the chocking haze. He waxed lyrical about the wonderful climate before collapsing in a paroxysm of coughing.

Preston is a man with two great loves, himself and food. His opinion of Alquerian food was to regard it as a weapon of war rather than something one would voluntarily digest. His forced smile as he sampled the Alquerian Newt Pie said it all but in the true tradition of the BBC Preston put on his professional face. Describing the delicacy as unique and delicious before moving out of shot and vomiting for five full minutes. The smell of the pie lingered causing Preston to be followed by a herd of meowing cats.

It was with some trepidation that the film crew setup their equipment with the intent of capturing a typical evening's entertainment at the Bar La Casa Devante. Ernesto Muyinestable, the one-legged flamenco dancer was first up or rather down, his

performance alternating between the two. The applause which greeted Ernesto at the end of his act was one of pity and embarrassment. Ernesto viewed it differently and vowed to increase his repertoire with more complicated routines. A recipe for disaster. Manuela followed with her 'gran espectáculo'. This involved Manuela, a root vegetable, a side-arm truncheon and a volunteer from the audience. Even the hardened locals felt nauseas as Manuela performed feats of amazing dexterity and ingenuity.

At this point Preston was seen to weep openly. Sobbing into his microphone which expired with a puff of blue smoke and a muted crackle.