The Call Centre

Following the collapse of the Alquerian tourist industry and the subsequent legal action the Village Republic needed to replenish its coffers. There was no shortage of suggestions. Bank robbery, hostage taking were all discussed even the more ridiculous suggestion of actually working for a living was mooted. Always eager to take the easy option, it was decided to set up a call centre in Alqueria. A customer had already been found in the shape of a large British telecommunications company.

The success of the employment drive for the call centre was variable. Due to high power inertia that exists in Alqueria there were only two applicants. Loco Paco, who thought it was a competition to win a years supply of axolotl food and Blythe Gruntmore, eager to converse in his own language once more.

The fact that Blythe Gruntmore's Geordie accent was incomprehensible to anyone south of Newcastle was unknown to most Alquerians. However the British were used to call centres where operators couldn't string a coherent sentence together. As it was Britain that this service was aimed there shouldn't be a problem.

Loco Paco, apart from not speaking a word of English had a poor track record with people and even animals for that matter. People he kept at arms length in case they intruded into the make-believe world he had built up around himself. As far as animals were concerned the first Saharan Dung Beetle he trained soon discovered he was Paco's intellectual superior and moved out. The Beetle still lives in the Village. If they accidentally bump into one-another they try to avoid all eye contact.

As the switchboard lit up for the first time and the centre went live Blythe got into his stride. Such gems as “Rabooot yer rooutah, pet” and “Wheeel hev te sen a gadgie te check yer foone bonny lad” soon assailed the ears of callers . As no-one could understand this gibberish no-one could argue with his advice. Loco Paco who couldn't understand a word simply selected an answer at random from a type written sheet of

paper and read the English which he made unfathomable with Spanish pronunciations and accent. He would often break into Spanish telling the unfortunate individual on the other end of the phone all about his imaginary five foot tall rodent friend Bert.

Even though callers became irritated, swore and issued death threats the call centre was a great success. It was cheap, eroded the callers will to live so much so that their complaint seemed insignificant compared to the hell of calling the call centre. After all isn't this the real purpose of these places.