The Riverside Holiday Village, Alqueria

(Part one)

The decision had been taken to build the Holiday Village east of the Río Verde. The natural barrier afforded by the River would separate Alqueria from the holiday makers. Rodriguez sensing money to be made wanted the lion's share of the new venture. He put his full weight behind the project and raised the necessary capital. The sale of eighty hectares of land to a Middle-Eastern gentleman financed the project. The land measured two hundred and seventy kilometres long and three metres wide. It was the disused Alqueria to Valencia railway line. The line became uneconomical ten years ago. This was chiefly due to the trains arriving at Alqueria always being empty and those leaving suffering considerable delay while they were thoroughly searched for illicit Remitroot liquor. The ownership of the land, already in dispute became further confused when Rodriquez sold it without the slightest claim to title.

The land to the east of the River was wet, swampy and unfit for human habitation. This was a worry but as they were to target British tourists it was thought they would feel at home there. The Río Verde itself is a stagnant green soup, with strange genetically altered fish and villainous looking amphibians blundering around in its murky depths. The risk of infection is always prevalent if one enters the water and clothing has been known to disintegrate on contact with the it. A plan had been hatched to introduce antibiotics into the food to counter the worst of the River's effects, but the cost proved prohibitive.

Rodriquez bought twenty prefabricated buildings from the now defunct *Ispravitelno-trudovoi lager* in Siberia, which he sold to the project at an exorbitant price. The Building Committee did question the suitability of ex-Siberian prison buildings, however the assembly instructions caused more of a concern. Written in Russian, the hieroglyphics meant nothing to the insular Alquerians . When completed instead of resembling the supplied illustrations they took the shape of fanciful Disneyland type structures with no two alike. They would not have disgraced Goudí himself. Staffing

the resort was easy. Unemployed from Alqueria, of which there are many, would be trained and given a smattering of English. Unfortunately the only person in the village with grasp of English is Blythe Gruntmore and as a Geordie this grasp is somewhat tenuous, his Spanish is also abysmal. Many happy, hilarious and alcohol soaked nights passed as Blythe passed on his linguistic gems. The sound of an Alquerian Spaniard trying to say " Welcome te wor village the booza is tha wa bonny lad" is a wonder to behold.

In these troubled times it is indeed a bold venture. Alquerians have always been given to bold gestures, stupid ones but bold none the less.

We can only see how the first inmates, or rather guests react to the resort.