Oficina de Turismo and the Holiday Village

With summer once more on the horizon the good folk of Alqueria turn their thoughts to the tourist season. Not that they have many tourists. A coach full to the brim did arrive last August, unfortunately it was lost. The passengers were football supporters making for Madrid, however their sat-nav had a sense of humour. So keen were the villagers to keep their accidental visitors that they took the wheels off their coach. It was a week before the supporters finally left the village. When they did they took the receptionist from the olive mill, Carmen Golpeara with them. Apart from a very rude postcard from Manilla, she hasn't been seen or heard of since.

The tourist office is at the southern end of the Calle del Siniestro, with a rear window opening onto the village's goat and donkey pasture. The odour from which mingles with Alqueria's natural fragrances to produce a unique aroma said to cure blocked sinuses and to dissolve eye cataracts. An ancient building of Moorish construction, it dates from the village's reconstruction at the foot of the Sierra Alhamilla. The whitewashed walls and beamed ceiling add a charm to the place while the uncluttered desks and neatly arranged brochures gave the impression of disuse. One could even imagine Tumbleweed blowing gently across the floor. Very few people came here. A grant from the European Union had been received, paid pro-rata on the number of tourists to the village. Two Euros and fifty five cents doesn't buy a lot these days however.

The task of promoting Alqueria is a difficult one. The uniqueness of the village lies in it's rather unpleasant attributes. The green perma-haze and perma-pong are the most obvious and troublesome of these. A public relations consultant, one Alvaro Spineto was employed but he contracted a rather rare form of foot rot from swimming in the Río Verde and had to be hospitalised. Judging from his notes the only way to attract visitors to Alqueria would involve mass kidnap and unlawful imprisonment. It was therefore decided by an unusual display of unity to build a holiday resort in the village. This at least would satisfy the second of Spineto's methods.

Although the decision to build the resort was multilateral, where, when and how to build opened the proverbial can of worms. Rodriquez wanted the village to buy his land which lies between the Camino de Alqueria and his olive mill at an inflated price. Poyato suggested bulldozing Rodriquez's house and outbuildings with no compensation and preferably with Rodriquez still inside. So the arguments started and continue with progress painfully slow.

Will the project see the light of day?