El Mono Colgante

Blythe Gruntmore, Alqueria's very own Englishman resident and Geordie made one of those decisions that arrive with a flash of inspirational brilliance. The flash however wasn't inspiration but the effect of downing a large glass of Remitroot Liquor. The idea, simply induced sentimentality born from melancholy brought about by the after effects of downing a large glass of Remitroot liqueur.

Blythe's grand plan, to build an English pub in Alqueria. It was to be built on waste ground to the east of the Río Verde. It was to be called El Mono Colgante, The Hanging Monkey. This was in honour of a brave and gallant act performed by his forebears in the north-east of England during the Napoleonic Wars. Every detail was to be faithfully followed, even the depressing red brick was imported.

One very important aspect of an English pub is the beer. Blythe, however failed to grasp the fact that beer at room temperature in England is quite different from beer at room temperature in southern Spain. Most who drank the tepid liquid thought it was a treatment for Pharyngitis.

The subtleties of another British tradition were also overlooked by Gruntmore. Puddles of beer on the bar. In the cool climate of Britain people wear long sleeves, when one leans on the bar these sleeves soak up beer. Wet elbows are an integral part of the 'Pub' experience. In southern Spain people mostly wear short sleeves, bare elbows are not absorbent and therefore do not diminish the amount of beer on the bar counter. At the end of the first evening there was so much liquid on the bar it had developed its own tidal system. People were being treated for alcohol poisoning of the elbow, it was costing the Alquerian Heath Service thousands.

Food consisted of pickled eggs, pickled onions and what Gruntmore described as 'Mushy peas and a grunter'. This delicacy consists of Marrowfat Peas, presumably with indigestion as they are treated with bicarbonate of soda, then generally

mistreated until they become a green amorphous mass. The 'peas' are then served with a barely warm pork pie. The sight of a Spaniard trying to decide what to do with this dish is an interesting one. Some simply opted for bouncing it off the ceiling.

British pubs do not offer a table service and Gruntmore followed this tradition. Poor old Alfonso Delgado sat expectantly for four hours before being rushed off to Alqueria General Hospital by paramedics suffering from severe dehydration.

Once the unpleasantness of an English pub outweighed its novelty value Gruntmore's clientele diminished to a critical level. El Mono Colgante soon became another statistic in the list of pubs closed and up for sale. And there's no sadder sight than a closed and bolted pub.

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