**La Feria del Corsé. Its history**

Soon it would be the village's annual *feria.* The Celebration remembers the exploits of *El Raro*, The Weird One. He was a hero of the Spanish War of Independence and the most famous son of the pueblo.

*It was to be La Feria del Corsé*.

In the summer of 1810 Guerrilla bands proliferated in Andalucía. This was in direct response to the French invasion of Southern Spain earlier in the year. Rogelio Jiminez or El Raro, had according to legend attacked a French column. Although heavily outnumbered they had driven off the soldiers killing and capturing many. Among the captives was none other than Joseph Napoleon Bonaparte himself, brother of Napoleon emperor of France. His favourite mistress, Fifi was also taken. Showing great humanity the guerillas allowed the French prisoners their freedom, first stripping them and making them walk naked back to the French lines. Fifi's corset was taken back as a trophy. A fine silk whalebone garment inscribed in golden thread, 'For my big French Boney'.

There is little historical evidence to back up this claim only a footnote in the histories of the partisan Vincente Moreno Romero. An attack on a French baggage convoy, although described in some detail only hints at El Raro's presence. A disorganised rabble seen in the distance plundering the French regimental baggage ties in well with a description of our hero. Having played no part in the attack they looted bags and trunks especially those containing female clothing of the officer's wives. The narrative suggests that several members of the rabble dressed in this clothing while dancing around a camp fire. A great deal of giggling accompanied these antics which lasted three days and nights.

Whatever the truth the small village museum had in one of its glass cabinets a corset, gold laced and inscribed. It was this artefact that was to be the focal point of the day.

The day’s events followed the same pattern every year. The teenagers amongst Los Gente del Cerro would man the castle tower with the corset in their possession. They would be the French, speaking in exaggerated accents and basically behaving like 'bad guys'. The youngsters of los Recién Llegados would elect a leader to act the part of El Raro and attack the tower. A brief water fight then ensues in which both sides try to soak the whole population of the village. The precious corset then returns in procession to the museum where it will reside until its next annual outing. A firework display follows, with liberal quantities of drink and food available from trestle tables erected in the plaza.