

## Who to turn to?

So that this column is contemporary, I always try to cover those issues that have recently arisen. This answers a question that is frequently asked as to how the inspiration is found to write.

Last week had me fuming once again over the poor advice and unnecessary costs that expats had incurred by speaking to people with a smattering of knowledge but with no sight of the big picture.

A guy with a Swiss car has been ripped off by the manufacturer whilst buying a certificate that was not needed. Both he and a lady with a motorhome from Turkey had spoken to different gestorias who seemed unaware of the additional costs and processes when importing vehicles from outside of the EU. A Brit was using his pool cleaner who spoke some Spanish to help him re-register his vehicle and came unstuck with mistakes on his UK registration document. A German needlessly had the tow bar removed from his car; a lady with a car registered in the Channel Islands was told that her car was too old to register; it is not but she was unaware that as the CI are outside of the EU, Customs Duty has to be paid

### High horses and facetwit

I have been accused of riding a high horse, an unpleasant site, but now it is charging! For sure I can make mistakes, what person doesn't? I am not unique in my profession so not the only one with good knowledge of this subject. Nor is poor advice given just regarding vehicles; the tales are legion of people being conned and misled when purchasing property or getting financial advice so where do you turn to?

The social media, forums, blogs etc can be a marvellous tool for finding information, but some of the stuff is pure tosh. It may be that a particular circumstance meant that no problem was encountered, but each situation is unique so one size does not fit all

The most notorious of vehicles to deal with are motor homes or campervans. These highly popular vehicles are not cheap when new, so many folks buy older ones which have retained their charm and are less stressful to the wallet; the same logic applied when I bought my old Mercedes E class. Unlike the Merc' older motor homes do not have European Type Approval so can be impossible to re-register. Do not assume that because a vehicle is registered in one European country it can automatically be registered in another.

### Anoraks, geeks and other oddballs

OK I fully admit to being an anorak over this subject; it has become my obsession as this is my nature having been obsessed in turn by spotty faced girls, the Royal Navy and badly played golf. But we anoraks have our uses; computer boffins may be called geeks, but where would we be without them? We are students as well as specialists in our subjects, so whatever advice you need, go find an expert.

Finally, a prospective client wrote to me last week, though he could have been writing to anyone in any field of endeavour. His words were “You have come to me highly recommended, but I have a cheaper quote, can you do anything?”

The best response is supplied by John Ruskin (1819-1900)

*“It's unwise to pay too much, but it's worse to pay too little. When you pay too much, you lose a little money - that's all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything, because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing it was bought to do. The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot - it can't be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it is well to add something for the risk you run, and if you do that you will have enough to pay for something better.”*

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