

Passions

Many people are passionate about their cars, motorbikes and caravans. I have experienced this myself when I have had a new toy on wheels and spent hours polishing, cleaning and bringing it to the standard required. However, I do not consider myself to be a “petrol head” and probably have no more knowledge than the average chap about performance, horsepower, torque, injection and naturally aspirated engines. I just enjoy being on the road

For those of you who are passionate about vehicles and their workings, there are many enthusiasts’ clubs on the Costas to satisfy even the most hardened mechanical nut, from classic car clubs to the Harley owners groups. Ah biking, now there’s a pleasure in Spain, with the excellent roads and low density of traffic

Work

Fortunately for me my passion is my work, fortunate because I have met many people who are trapped in jobs that they hate and need an outside passion to take their minds off the drudgery. Why I am passionate about what I do? Consider this; I am a middle-aged foreigner in the land that I live and where amongst the population unemployment is about 25%, so I’m lucky to be working. The service provided is valuable to many people who have repeatedly said that they could not have done the work themselves. Daily I am in contact with ex-pats from many parts of the world with a variety of backgrounds and interests so provide daily stimulus. Many times there are totally unforeseen problems regarding vehicles, but more often than not paperwork. Having faced many many challenges, I am blessed in that having built up a great team of contacts; with their help problems can be overcome providing tremendous job satisfaction

Because I live in a Spanish village and work amongst the Spanish, I have been lucky enough to be learn to converse in their language and boy does this make a difference. I visit many towns and villages that I otherwise would not have ventured to, driving is a pleasure and more often than not the sun is shining!

Cricket

So, I am passionate about what I do because in turn I get so much back. There is though small difference between passion and obsession and when leaning towards the obsessive, I had to eventually listen to the repeated pleas of my other half to get a life and look beyond what I do. Of course she was right but what to do and how would I find the time? My rugby playing years were behind me, squash was an option, but perhaps I’m too old now to thrash around the courts. Golf? Too expensive

I was saved by cricket, a game that I hadn’t played for years. Didn’t know that it was played in Spain? No neither did I until I stumbled across San Fulgencio CC after chatting to a customer. Much later, on the way to a game in La Manga, I had arranged to hand over the papers and plates to a customer whose car I had re-registered and who lived nearby. “Blimey Graham, I thought that you were on the way to play cricket; is this your well toned athletic team mates?” He had a point; there were three

of us in the car, I was the youngest at 58; where hair existed it was grey and all were suffering from slipped chests as our previously expansive upper torsos had dropped down to our waistlines. What the hell, we were enjoying ourselves

So now, there are two meanings to a straight drive. A bouncer is not just the idiot who has pulled onto a roundabout in front of me, though the reaction time needed is similar; being caught out is more than a police radar trap, maidens are not always found on roundabouts, the boundary may not be the speed limit and the one thing to avoid is the wagging finger of the umpire or policeman.

Cricket has reduced my obsession with work, though certainly not the passion, but so that I can pay more attention to the love of my life (why Kathy of course!) Leigh, another much younger cricketer has joined the team to share some of the workload, which over the past few months has become more and more. The workload is increasing because more expats are bringing their cars with them from “home” due to the cost of vehicles in Spain, the cost of hiring and because the dear old Guardia Civil are becoming less tolerant of foreign plated vehicles

Horses for Courses

Regular readers will know that constant reference is made to the “bar room lawyers” who know everything and nothing. Whether well meaning or malicious, their advice should be treated with a healthy degree of scepticism, but the other day a customer told me that he had been given advice by the mechanic that I routinely work with in order to exchange headlights etc. The advice being that you cannot re-register a car until you have been in Spain for at least 6 months. This is complete rubbish and in the case of this customer may put him in the position where he has to pay import tax. I’ll save the details for another day (though they are on my website), but I could have brained the mechanic who has heard me talking countless times to customers on the phone explaining the nuances and intricacies of re-registration and got the different bits mixed up.

As mentioned at the beginning, I am not a “petrol head” but whilst having a basic understanding of the workings of cars, I would not presume to try and diagnose a fault or undertake any form of repair, but instead point a customer in the right direction. Likewise, it would be wrong to expect a mechanic or someone who had been in the motor trade all his life to understand the many complexities of registering vehicle in Spain. I do understand, after all it is my passion

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