

Newsletter

Autumn 2023

Issue 2

BBA



That went well!

Feedback from our
first event

BBA



HOT TOPICS

COFFEE MORNINGS

Also in this issue:

More Hot Topics!

Spotlight - Costa
Brava Hospice

Expo Event

News Roundup

Partners and local providers we work with

To find out more about these organisations click the images to go to their websites.

Want to join our Partnership Programme? Connect your business and services to our membership. Sponsorship starts from as little as 20euro for inclusion in our quarterly newsletter, promotion across our social media and annual entry in the partnership section on our [website](#)



Providing information and support to English speakers in Spain since 1992, check out their website for the wide range of locations you can meet with other members as well as online support



Offering help and support to those with life limiting illnesses and their families



Anglican Church in the Costa Brava, holds Zoom services on a Sunday and other meetings online, some physical Church services are held check the website for details



Spanish Red Cross site in English [some explanation needed as to what services are being offered]



The British Benevolent Fund is a Spain wide Charity for when times are tough – providing financial support to help Britons in Spain get back on their feet



The Royal British Legion provides lifelong support for the Armed Forces community – serving men and women, veterans and their families. District North Spain covers an area from the French Border to Almeria



The British Society of Catalunya – Bay of Roses since 1995 members group welcoming people of all nationalities organising social and group events including sports across the region check the website for details



Formerly Girona Grapevine changed to online Meetup during Covid and has kept the online presence but now organising physical events and meetings again check the web for details



An informative and useful website. The site will assist you with all aspects relating to living, visiting, owning a holiday home or investing in Spain.



U3A Girona region, members groups and events across the region, check the website for details



A Diocese of Girona organisation the website is in Catalan but should translate automatically if using Google translate option in your search engine



A central hub for volunteers in the region, from training to projects and opportunities

Welcome!



Back to school, back to reality - as they say. Is that it? Is summer really over? We may have started to see rain on the horizon but don't be fooled though drought rules still remain until the reservoirs show an increase!

It has been a long hot summer and a relatively quiet one for BBA volunteers, this autumn we are keen to get our community of members and volunteers introduced to those who can most benefit from our services.

According to the National Institute of Statistics there are over 4,500 UK people resident in the Girona province. Added to that the seasonal increase of visitors, in 2022 there were over 422,000 overnight hotel stays by UK visitors and that is not counting those that bring a motorhome or caravan!

Here at BBA HQ we continue to offer practical support and advice, provide contacts to services and help with translation if you are not familiar with the language when you first arrive.

Brexit and the pandemic

certainly put the brakes on British migration but with the introduction of different visas allowing people to live and work here year round more and more people are choosing the Girona region as their home.

With our contacts with various groups and service providers we are able to point those who are looking to make this area their home in the right direction.

If you are looking for information about residency, visa's, health care, work, study and all the legalities then make us your first port of call as we can guide you to the best places to gather that information. Making your journey to living here a smoother one.

Equally, we are also looking at recruiting volunteers from the new influx of residents to our area. We are a dedicated team but people come and go and new blood is always very welcome.

Voluntary roles are varied and flexible, from practical hands on support to the provision of information..

Just an example of volunteers we are looking to recruit to broaden our service offer are parents who want to be actively involved in their new communities to engage with other parents and help build a support network and information hub.

If you would like to find out more without commitment please contact us via our website www.bba-girona.com

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Hot Topics Café

One of our new initiatives is to provide a regular series of coffee mornings where you can firstly meet other people in your local area and secondly access and share information that may be relevant or useful to you.



Our first took place in **Montjuic, Girona at Praline Café** and was really well attended. The subject for this particular coffee morning "What to do when a loved one dies in Spain" recognised that at some point in our lives death will affect us or our friends and knowing what to do and how to help is immensely useful.

Feedback was really positive and our presenters, Ruth Milner, a Doula and BBA Member, and Melissa Levey, representing the Costa Brava Hospice, were able to provide valuable information on the process, answer everyone's questions and offer an opportunity for an open and frank discussion.

For those who are not familiar with the services of a Doula they are trained professionals who provide expert guidance for the service of others and support another person through a significant health-related experience such as dying. You can find details on the process that Ruth provided at the event on our website [here](#)

What next?

The format of our Hot Topics Café;s are first and foremost to provide information, whether you are a long term resident or a new comer. The planned events aim to be relaxed and informal and encourage discussion. We call them Hot Topics because they are often subjects that some might feel uncomfortable enquiring about or discussing openly. Language might be a barrier. Some may be issues that we often put off, others that you may feel no one else is concerned about. We don't anticipate all will be so challenging, some, like the next planned event, Online Safety and Security, offer practical advice or guidance. Before each event we will ask people to submit specific questions on the planned subject so we can endeavour to provide the info you need.

Suggestions we have received for future Hot Topics are

- Routine male and female testing for cancer - when, how often, where, CAP or Private
- New Parents - help, support groups, post natal depression
- Older Parents - teenhood to adulthood, how to survive! Self support groups and Youth services to tackle subjects such as online safety, drugs, drink, sexual activity
- Health & Wellbeing - new versus traditional therapies, pros, cons, risks
- Health & Wellbeing - yoga, meditation and mindfulness a new way to health and fitness

Something else you would be interested in? Discussions you would like to have with others?

Email your suggestions to britbengirona@gmail.com or via the website [here](#)

MAKING LIFE SIMPLER:
BE DIGITALLY AWARE & SURF SAFELY

A HANDY GUIDE AND YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



BBA

**HOT
TOPICS**

COFFEE MORNINGS

25 OCTOBER 10-12 LLORET DE MAR, VENUE TBA

If you would like to join the discussion and have questions send them to us in advance to britbengirona@gmail.com

Spotlight - Costa Brava Hospice

WHAT IS HOSPICE CARE?

Hospice care is given to people who are dying. This means giving comfort and spiritual support to those in the last stages of their illness.

THE DIFFERENCE...

Hospice care begins when it is clear that a person has a limited time of life remaining. This may be offered alongside Palliative care that begins at the diagnosis stage when there is no possibility of curing the disease. Both Hospice and Palliative care require specialised teams with a focus on not just managing physical needs such as pain, but also mental and emotional anguish.



OUR LOGO, A GINKGO LEAF

Strength, hope and peace

In the East, it is considered a symbol of longevity, hope, resilience and peace. The tree's delicate fan-shaped leaves have been prized for their beauty, copied by artists, and advertised in literature.



COSTA BRAVA HOSPICE

The Costa Brava Hospice is an organisation that provides hospice care in the province of Girona.

The hospice philosophy promotes the care of a person in all areas (physical, emotional, social and spiritual) when suffering from advanced disease and near the moment of death. At the same time family members and those close to them are equally vulnerable and may need help and attention. For this reason, our care is aimed at the entire family unit.

For this to happen it is vitally important that the missions of the hospice and its services are widely known by both medical and hospital centres and health professionals as well as the wider community.

When we first started talking about a hospice no one around here knew what we were talking about.....

Now we have many Volunteers trained to accompany people at the end of their life. So the obvious next step is to have a centre where we can carry out the appropriate care for each person.



We have already found an ideal building in La Bisbal. With an adjoining plot to build a block of apartments as sheltered accommodation. There will be a restaurant to serve the Hospice, the apartments and the local trade. As soon as we get the approval of the new Mayor of la Bisbal we will be knocking on every door in order to raise the funds needed to complete the project.

Watch this space.....



If you need to make an appointment to speak in person about your needs or those of your loved ones we are here to listen and support you. Our registered office is in Girona and our work area covers the Girona Province and Costa Brava. If you are interested in getting involved in any capacity please also contact us:

COSTA BRAVA HOSPICE Plaça Pompeu Fabra, 11 17002 GIRONA

+ 34 634 898 481

info@costabrahahospice.com or via our website [here](#)

Bring your own car to Spain or buy here?

When it comes to establishing your motoring roots in Spain, a pertinent question arises: Should you bring your own vehicle from abroad or take a leap of faith with a local Spanish car? Let's dive into the pro's and con's ..



Familiarity with the Vehicle

One of the top advantages of bringing your own car is the familiarity you have with its history and performance. You've experienced its quirks, understand its maintenance schedule, have likely taken it for regular servicing and know the mileage is genuine. This kind of knowledge with a vehicle ensures trust and eliminates any surprises down the line

Maintenance History

A transparent maintenance record can be a car owner's best friend. When you've been with a car from the start, or at least for a significant time, you've either kept those records yourself or know where to find them. With a local Spanish vehicle, previous owners may not have maintained comprehensive records, making it challenging to assess the car's actual condition.

Cost-Effective

Importing a car might seem like an expensive endeavour, but when you factor in the potential costs associated with unknowingly purchasing a local vehicle that has underlying issues, the scales might tip. Remember, unexpected repairs can be expensive, especially if the car you've chosen has been poorly maintained or involved in accidents.

Emotional Connection

Many people form an emotional bond with their cars, making them more than just machines. Bringing your own car can preserve those memories and sentiments. Starting fresh in a new country doesn't mean you have to start fresh with your vehicle.

Resale Value

Cars with known histories, especially those from countries with stringent vehicle standards and maintenance cultures, can have better resale values. Buyers often prefer vehicles with clear histories and are willing to pay a premium for that peace of mind

Adapted to Your Needs

Your vehicle is probably already tailored to your preferences – whether it's the seat covers, audio system, or any changes you've made. Buying a new car means starting from scratch and reinvesting in personalising it to your taste.



Disadvantages

Whilst the cost of importing your vehicle on to Spanish plates needs to be taken into account, there is often still a huge saving to be had against purchasing the same vehicle that's already registered on Spanish plates, as cars are very expensive here in Spain.

However, reselling, part exchanging or scrapping a right hand drive vehicle can be more problematic than a Spanish vehicle.

Also for UK vehicle owners there is the strong possibility that headlights and rear lights may not immediately comply with Spanish regulations, these can usually be adapted for significantly less than the cost of purchasing replacements and those driving here as tourists will already be aware.

However, for right hand drive vehicles there is also the fact that you are on the wrong side at tolls and car parks which is ok if you have a passenger but more problematic when you are driving alone. There are much fewer toll roads now in Spain but if you are in an area that has them you can purchase a Telepeaje tag or similar that automatically opens most barriers for you. You also need to be aware of any debts associated with a second hand car purchased in Spain, either finance or motoring fines, if these are not cleared before you purchase you inherit them and become liable.

Safety

Sitting on the right puts you at a disadvantage when driving generally. Maneuvers come more naturally when your driving position is in the centre of the highway. Things like overtaking, approaching roundabouts when you feel like you are on the wrong side of the road can feel alien and pose an element of risk if your view is not clear or you become confused.

Conclusion

It really is down to gaining confidence and familiarity driving on the “wrong” side of the road, something which develops more quickly in a left hand drive vehicle. Cost of buying in Spain is probably higher than making the necessary conversions to a right hand drive vehicle, completing test, registering in Spain and paying taxes. However, reselling a right hand drive car may be more difficult either privately or as a part exchange. Whichever you decide, Safe motoring!

This article has been reproduced with slight amendments from the N332 website Facebook page. This is run by the police with the help of journalists to translate into English and share information. Find and follow their page [here](#)

Expo Services Girona

We want to thank the organisers of this really informative and useful event that we recently took part in. Hosted at Espai Fundació "la Caixa" Girona, conveniently central and close to the bus and train station. The event was aimed at local residents looking for English speaking businesses and services. The organiser, Marylynn Parnell, did a fantastic job attracting a wide range of both from many different sectors and there were a steady stream of visitors throughout the day.



We were keen to engage with new people across a wide range of ages and interests to promote our voluntary service and recruit volunteers who want to support their local community using their unique skill set and to make new friends and connections. This event presented an ideal opportunity and we were able to connect with many who were interested in getting involved or finding out more.

We also signed up some new people to our volunteers and partners programme with a range of experience including yoga and reflexology, health and wellness, financial advisors, chiropractors, home care, companionship and fundraising which is a brilliant result!

We hope to introduce you to our Volunteer team over on the Blog and Facebook during the coming weeks.



News Round Up

Right click links and select 'Open In New Tab' to keep this Newsletter open so you can return to it easily

Attention Quizzings!

Back by popular demand hosted by our very own quizmaster, Jason. The bar will be serving a range of food and drink.- to reserve a table email missannecollier@yahoo.co.uk

Directions for Can Carbonell - Post Code 17455

From the North take the C31 Barcelona road which becomes the C65 and then the C35 to exit 92 which goes direct onto Urb Can Carbonell. Take the slip road passing the petrol station on the right and up to the roundabout, turn left to cross over the main road to the next roundabout taking the first exit passing the yellow mailboxes and the Club House is directly in front of you. There is plenty of free parking.

From the South - Vidreres - take the C35 exit 92 and the right at the first roundabout, pass the yellow mailboxes and the Club House is in front of you



Mountain Safety

September 23rd is the Autumn Equinox. Yes, although we still have the warmth of the sun, the shadows are getting longer, the mornings are more misty, we (hopefully) will get more rain and although we can still enjoy the beach and all the region has to offer we need to be mindful of this change in the season.



The Interior Generalitat de Catalunya are running a campaign to remind walkers, climbers and hikers of how quickly even experienced people can get into difficulty in the mountains. Particularly as we head into autumn and winter

In the mountains you have to be prepared because the conditions can change in a very short time. It is important to know the weather forecast, the route you want to take, go there with the right equipment and accompanied. It is better to cancel your trip if the conditions are bad.

In case of an emergency, call 112.

A handy slide show in Catalan but pictorial with some timely reminders on their FB page [here](#)

Coast to coast charity walk

Our very own Helen Weir, a long standing member and supporter of the BBA, alongside her good friends Gill and Annariet are walking 200 miles of the UK Coast to Coast route to help this volunteer led charity to support older people manage difficult changes and stay independent.

Follow their journey on our Facebook page in support, enjoy their stories and pictures as they walk from the West coast of Cumbria to the east coast of East Yorkshire traversing mountains, lakes, hills and dales. If you can, make a donation to help us on our way. It's a great way to give something back! Every little counts!

Donate to their GoFundMe [here](#)



Can you cross the solid white line to overtake a cyclist?



Cyclists are amongst the most vulnerable road users and must be afforded a safe distance when overtaking. Specifically, you must give a minimum of 1.5 metres lateral distance when overtaking. In the event that the road has two or more lanes in the same direction, you must move entirely into the second lane to pass. However, on a road with a single lane, the question frequently arises as to whether you are permitted to cross a solid white line to overtake cyclists. Solid white lines in the centre of the road must not be crossed. That means you cannot turn left into a side street, and you are not allowed to overtake. If it is a double white line and it is broken on your side, you are permitted to cross, including turning onto junctions.

However, although you are not permitted to cross a solid white line to overtake, there is an exception in the case of overtaking cyclists, and so the answer to the question is yes, you can cross a solid white line to overtake cyclists, but under a very specific condition. Very simply, only if no vehicles are approaching from the opposite direction. A vehicle can also be an approaching cyclist coming the other way. If the road is clear, then you may proceed, allowing the cyclists the mandatory distance to pass. If vehicles are approaching, you must not proceed. Similarly, if you cannot give the cyclist the mandatory distance, you must not proceed. Slow down, stay well back, and wait until it is safe to continue before overtaking.

Cyclists should always keep to the right to facilitate the safe passage of other road users. Although cyclists are permitted to ride two abreast, you are obliged to ride in single file to allow for the flow of traffic. Information courtesy of N332

Electric Scooters - DGT Rules and Regulations



We have seen a huge increase in electric scooters in our urban areas over the last few years. Whilst using more sustainable personal transport is welcomed the lack of consideration and regulation has become concerning and as such new regulations and policing of current usage has developed.

Where can you ride? It is prohibited for VMPs to travel on sidewalks, pedestrian areas, crosswalks, highways, highways, interurban roads or tunnels in urban areas. The routes authorized for circulation will be indicated by a municipal ordinance. If there is not one, circulation is allowed on any urban road.

Technical requirements The DGT will be circulating a manual with technical specifications and all VMP's will be required to be certificated from January 2024 to guarantee minimum safety requirements.

Other standards applicable now The speed of these vehicles must be between 6 and 25 km/h. It is mandatory to have a braking system, an acoustic warning device (bell), rear and front lights and reflective devices.

Sanctions Driving an electric scooter under the influence of alcohol and other drugs can result in a fine between €500 and €1,000 depending on the level of alcohol or €1,000 if drugs are involved. If the test is positive, the vehicle will also be immobilized, as is the case with the rest of the vehicles. For using a mobile phone while driving a scooter or any other communication device, the fine will be €200. Those who wear headphones must pay the same amount; If you ride at night without lighting or reflective clothing and if you do not wear a helmet

Report by Anabel Guitierrez and reproduced from the DGT
For further details and to keep up to date visit [CAB Spain's information page](#)

FREE Physical Activity Programme

Walks and physical activity sessions for the natural and urban environment of Santa Cristina d'Aro. Every Monday at 4:45 pm this is a Nordic walking programme, completely free no need to book all you need to do is turn up! It would be a great way to meet people in the local community and practice your language skills in an enjoyable relaxed way. The aim of the program is to promote the physical activity of community, improving the physical condition of people and the state of general health, including the psychological, social, spiritual and planetary dimension.

Programa d'Activitat Física

Sessions dirigides d'exercici físic i caminades (marxa nòrdica), dirigides a millorar la condició física de la persona i l'estat de salut general, incloent-hi la dimensió psicològica, social, espiritual i planetària.



Dilluns a les 16:45h

Activitat gratuïta

Informa't al 677 02 84 14

egomez@activitatfisica.dipsalut.cat

Santa Cristina d'Aro

Altres informacions: Caminades i/o sessions d'activitat física per l'entorn natural i urbà del municipi dirigides per professionals experts.

Activitat gratuïta.

Per a més informació i inscripcions podeu contactar amb:

Estela Gómez – egomez@activitatfisica.dipsalut.cat - Tel. 677 02 84 14

Un servei de:



Col·labora:



Proveït per:



Partnership Programme



Would you like to introduce your products or services to the English speaking community in the Girona Region?

We are inviting Companies and Service Providers who have something to offer our readers and members to take part in our Partnership Programme.

We have a comprehensive programme which includes promotional space in this quarterly Newsletter, listing on our website as a partner and blog posts which are distributed via social media.

We mail out the Newsletter quarterly to our members and we also share on social media with Facebook pages used by British and English speakers across the region, followers of these pages exceed 10,000.

We have also started hosting Hot Topic Cafes across the region and Partners will be invited to take part in relevant Topics providing another opportunity to connect with the wider community.

Partnership is an annual commitment and starts from as little as 20euros. To find out more contact britbengirona@gmail.com

We reserve the right to decline applications if we feel they are not aligned to our members and readers needs.

Image courtesy of Freepik



British Benevolent Association



GIRONA PROVINCE

The British Benevolent Association for the Province of Girona (BBA) was set up as a registered charity in 2007 with the aim of providing practical help and support to any British or Commonwealth subject living in, staying in or passing through the province of Girona and the Costa Brava. Practical help is provided through a network of volunteers across the region and supported by donations and fundraising events.

Do you need help now?

Call the BBA between 8am – 8pm Tel: 695 210 108 To speak to one of our volunteers

Email: britbengirona@gmail.com

or call the 24 hour emergency number at the British Consulate Barcelona

Emergency 24 hour telephone: (+34)902 109 356 or (+34)917 146 300

Spain Emergency Number: 112

