



Be very careful

What an extraordinary weekend I have experienced! Indeed, I could say it was both very stressful and unpleasant. Thought I would write about it and inform you of another scam that is going on, this time in the Alicante area.

On my way to La Marina, just past Gran Alacant a red light appeared on my car dashboard, then another and another. Very concerned by now, I managed to persuade my car to get up the hill and turn off the N332 to La Marina Urbanisation. Two minutes later, I arrived in the local garage when my steering ceased to operate and the electrics failed. I parked; suddenly, whoosh! I was surrounded by smoke coming from the bonnet! I jumped out and started to unload my car of cases and boxes of paperwork etc.. Amongst this load was a bag with three beautiful sweaters from Marks and Spencer's purchased just two weeks ago on a shopping trip to the UK.

I then noticed a small car parked behind me and two people with a small white dog. I assumed they were taking the dog for a walk, they left and then another car drove up and asked the way to Cartagena. A very large map was placed in front of me, which I said I didn't need as Cartagena was further along the N332 which was only 2 minutes away from where we were.

They roared off and I noticed that my keys and the bag with my new clothes had been taken (I think they thought this was my main handbag). Having lost my keys meant I couldn't lock the car, which in turn worried me about what might happen to it? I then had to go to the Guardia to complete a denuncia and they advised me to change the locks on my car because when I next returned to the area my car would be stolen. It is now in the BMW garage, and will be for at least two weeks!!!!

On discussing my trauma that evening, with others in an excellent bar called J.R's in Los Montesinos, I heard more sad stories. One couple had an experience on a very busy Saturday night. A couple came into the bar; the man had a large scar down his face and they looked like they may be gypsies. The man purchased a water and the woman stayed by the door, he drank his water and they both left. It was soon discovered that one of the ladies handbags had been taken, sadly along with some sentimental jewellery, plus of course the normal documentation.

Then another tale of woe; this time from someone whose car had been broken into and left in a bit of a mess. On going to the Guardia to obtain a denuncia for insurance purposes, they produced their documents only to be informed that as the insurance companies address was not registered in Spain, the Guardia could not issue this. This is obviously a point to consider when taking out House and Car Insurance – the other alternative, should this happen to you, apparently is to say that it is personal, and not for the insurance company.

May I suggest you are very careful with your keys and handbags at a petrol station, but be especially careful at the La Marina garage. Having notarised copies could be the answer for all your legal documents; I believe some local police will even stamp these copies. Do not carry valuables or sentimental items in your handbag and take care of how many Visa/Credit cards you are carrying.

With the economy in a poor state, these types of crimes I am sure will increase. When people are desperate they will try and steal anything that is relatively easy, just be aware. Having said that, they caught me out, my excuse is I was a bit stressed out at the time by my car trouble, especially with smoke still pouring out of the bonnet!!!!



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/// EXPAT SERVICES

It only takes a couple of minutes for your life to take a nasty turn. Thankfully they didn't mug me, so I live to tell the story.

P.S. Can I please suggest that everyone checks their policies very carefully, to ensure that you have full cover in the case of theft – times are very hard for many and the risk of burglary in your home or car is higher than ever.

It may be an idea to consider an alarm, connected to a central station and the Guardia Civil – for more information on this, and the additional discount we can offer on your home policy, please call one of our offices.