

ISLAND CONNECTIONS

1984 - 2010

26 Years of Excellence

The Canary Island's biggest fortnightly English newspaper read by thousands of tourists & residents

Edition # 607 / 1st - 15th January 2010 / 1.80€ at Newsagents / www.islandconnections.eu / www.newscanarias.net

The mothers of three young English holidaymakers who have spent the last five months in a Tenerife jail have gone public with their anger at the failure of the Spanish justice system to resolve what they are convinced is a case of mistaken identity which is having untold consequences both on the youths and their families.

John and David Heyfron, aged 20 and 18, and their friend Cakgan 'Chucky' Guvener (19), who are all from south London, came to Tenerife at the end of July for what they hoped would be a great holiday together, one of several they have taken without incident in Spain and Portugal in recent years. However, according to their families, just three days before they were due to fly back they found themselves caught up in a nightmare which shows no signs of ending.

Their mothers, Kerstin and Sevda, have been forced to give up their lives and jobs in England since early August to be near their sons, visiting them at least once a week in prison and liaising on a daily basis with a prominent Madrid lawyer hired to secure their sons' release. The nightmare began when the three young men were picked up by police in Playa de Las Américas as they headed from the Paraíso del Sol hotel to the beach nearby for a late-night swim. They were put in the back of a police van and taken to the local station where they were questioned about a stabbing incident a short time earlier in which a Belfast youth was injured. Despite cooperating fully with the police – they could not protest their innocence



Kerstin Heyfron (left) and Sevda Guvener have spent €50,000 so far to try and free their sons

English mothers' remand rage

WHY JOHN AND DAVID HEYFRON AND 'CHUCKY' GUVENER DIDN'T SPEND CHRISTMAS WITH THEIR FAMILIES

because they did not learn until a week later what they stood accused of – all three were remanded to Tenerife II prison on the orders of a local judge in Arona and since then the families have left no stone unturned in their bid to have them freed, at least on bail. "We want them back home and this matter brought to a close but, failing that, they should be bailed until a trial takes place, if it ever gets to trial. We have given all kinds of guarantees, including proof that relatives who live permanently in Parque La Reina would look after them, that they will remain on the island if released and have even of-

ferred to hand in our own and the boys' passports to make sure they cannot leave" said Kerstin, who has been on strong medication for the last few months due to the toll the ordeal is having on her health.

A string of appeals against the remand order have been filed by the families' lawyer, but to no avail, the latest rejection having been notified to the boys in prison shortly before Christmas. "We have been told that the Public Prosecutor is under instructions from her superiors to oppose bail applications as a matter of policy, irrespective of merit, and our sons are

suffering the consequences" explains Sevda.

The official reasons given for the prolonged remand are the seriousness of the alleged crime, classed by the prosecutor as attempted murder given that a broken bottle or a knife was used, and the risk that the youths will flee the island and not return to stand trial. However, a crucial prosecution element of 'evidence' of their involvement – a blood stain on a towel carried by John Heyfron when he was stopped by police – has turned out to be groundless as DNA tests now show the blood does not belong to the stab victim

but was from a nosebleed suffered by John earlier in the night. "This was the only objective evidence the prosecution had against the boys and after four months it has come back from the forensic lab in Madrid with confirmation of what we knew all along. We proposed a much quicker way of doing the tests but they would not listen" says Kerstin, whose anger grew when she learned that the judge had contacted the prosecutor to advise of the towel development but backed the latter's motion to keep the boys in jail despite the test outcome.

Contd on page 3

Index

THE YEAR THAT WAS
Review of
2009

• Pages 18-21

The pink Stradivarius
From the other side of the hills

By John Young

• Pages 4-5

Take note!

Full details of the Canary Islands Music Festival

• Page 8

Bollywood in Tenerife

Dining and dancing Indian style in Santa Cruz

• Page 10

CD Tenerife



Billy's boot

Interview with Billy Ions, A YOUNG EX-PAT PLAYING FOR CD TENERIFE CADETES

• Page 55

DECATHLON

The Sports Megastore, 8.000m²

Motorway Santa Cruz La Laguna, Exit "Las Chumberas".
38205 La Laguna, Tenerife. Tel: 922 62 79 00, Fax: 922 82 11 07

www.decathlon.com

...Always near to you
with our offer of
Spanish and
British products!

CC Fañabé Plaza
and Compostela Beach
Commercial Zone
Playa de las Vistas

SPAR

