

One of Gran Canaria's best known museums



El Museo Canario Museum lays off staff

One of Gran Canaria's best-known museums is suffering the consequences of the cuts in public funding due to the recession.

The Canarian Museum in Las Palmas says it is forced to reduce staff drastically although it hopes the measure is only temporary. The museum, which receives thousands of visitors every year, including many researchers who study its valuable historical collections of documents (particularly old newspapers), filed recently for permission to lay off 14 of its 18 employees and its head is taking a 20 per cent pay cut to tide it over the current troubles. The downsizing means certain departments such as the library and archive will have to close for several months.

The private museum's plight, caused mainly by the drop in funding from public institutions, has led to calls for it to be made part of the public museum network.

Missing grandmother plea

CIRA GUILLÉN



Cira Guillén has been missing for over a year

The grown-up children of a woman who has been missing from her Las Palmas home for over a year have launched a fresh media bid to find her.

Cira Guillén has not been seen since January 2009, when she left her home in Jinámar but never returned.

Her two children José and Dunia have gone public with a new plea for information which might resolve the mystery. Posters of the grandmother have been put up again on local buses in an attempt to jog memories of anyone who might have seen her.

In an interview with the

Canarias 7 paper, the brother and sister admit that the uncertainty is having a devastating effect on their respective families, particularly their young children who have not seen their grandmother since she handed them their Three Kings gifts last year.

It is believed the woman was seeing a psychiatrist for

depression since the death of her husband some time before her disappearance.

Las Palmas

Swine flu scare

Authorities dismiss teacher deaths link

The deaths of two teachers from the same Las Palmas school within a few weeks of each other are 'a tragic coincidence', according to the Canarian Department of Education.

Both men, who were middle-aged, taught the same subject and their unexpected deaths triggered speculation that the Mesa y López Secondary School had been hit

by an epidemic of H1N1 flu. The mounting concern led the authorities to issue a statement denying any link between the two tragedies. "The deaths of the members of staff were unrelated and were not due to the flu. There is no cause for alarm and it is business as usual at the school" said a spokesperson. For its part, the school accused the media of stirring up concern unnecessarily among pupils, parents and staff.

Lanzarote

Human rights activist

Haidar returns

Saharan activist Aminatou Haidar returned to the Canaries last night, a month after she left Lanzarote following a five-week hunger strike at the island's airport.

Haidar is believed to have travelled to Gran Canaria for a medical check up at a private clinic. She was met by local politicians who supported her during her tense battle with Morocco to be allowed back into the country in December. The human rights campaigner said she had no problems leaving Morocco yesterday and hopes there will be none on her return.

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