AND I WOULD WALK...

... Not quite 500 Miles, but the length of the Island!

For many, a day well spent on Lanzarote requires little more than a walk from the beach to the pub and back. In stark contrast, one Playa Blanca resident is taking a path much less traveled.

Ever since he escaped the stress and weather of his native England, to work here as an independent web designer, Alan Gandy has had ambitions of walking the length of the island.

"You know how things are, we say these things and never get around to doing them. I've been procrastinating on this one for far too long," he writes on his blog. This Feburary, Alan Gandy will trek the length of the island—about 70 km—in only two days. Oddly enough, he has a hard time explaining why.

"Just to get out, clear the head," he tells us with a shrug. It's clear he is at a bit of a loss as to how this undertaking became so important to him. "Please don't write that it's a mid-life crisis," he laughs.
Even so, he won't let an opportunity to do some good pass him by.

Word has started to get around about Alan's plan, and he is capitalizing on the attention by dedicating the effort to charity. Also, he hopes doing this publically will keep him honest.
"Committing to that forces me to plan for it and name a date," he writes.

He now encourages supporters to donate on his behalf or to make a formal sponsorship—a donation that is conditional upon completion of the walk.

Donations are being collected via the web and also in some of the bars around Playa Blanca (Full List Next Issue). Money raised will be split evenly between the Lanzarote-based charity, Niños del Tercer Mundo, and The Rose Road Centre, which helps provide services to disabled children and their families.

He chose the Rose Road Center as a hat tip to his friend Geoff Holt, who was the first paraplegic to circumnavigate the globe and who also supports the center.

When he talks about his plan, Alan exudes a very earnest, boyish excitement. It's clear that he is looking forward to the work required to pull this off well.

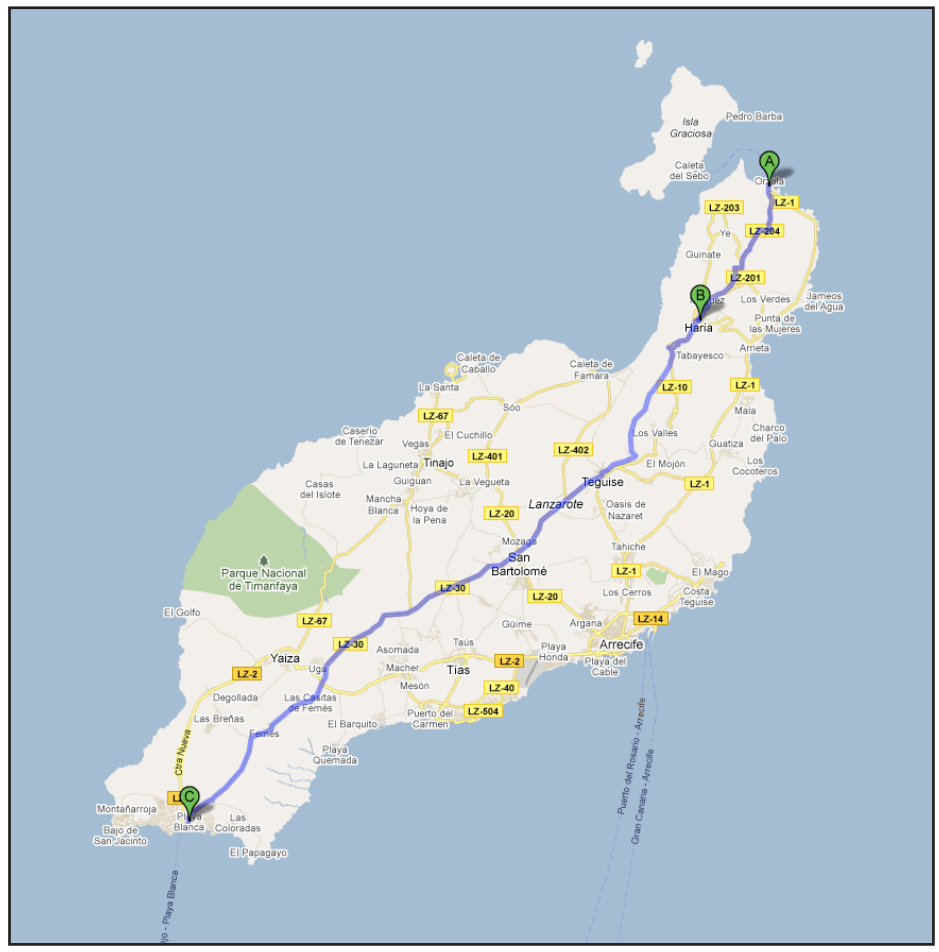
So far, Alan is off to a good start. He has been clocking up around fifteen kilometers a day, and has made it to the gym for the first time in four and a half years.

"I've never doubted my own ability to complete the walk (short of injury) – gym or no gym. But it sure as hell makes sense to use the two things to help drive each other!" He writes.

Overall, he feels better already, and his dogs love all the exercise. This is an improvement; the vacationer's lifestyle he had fallen into in Playa Blanca was not the healthiest.

"There's been plenty of cheap wine at bars down by the water, to say the least," Alan told us over coffee and—yes— cigarettes at a seaside bar.

On the day of the walk, 4th February, Alan plans to set out in the early-morning dark. He will start at the North of the Island and work his way South, so that he'll be able to walk back along the shores of Playa Blanca the next evening to finish at his own front stoop, at which point he intends to eat, shower and fall into bed



(in which order, nobody is sure).

After his first day's trek on Friday, he'll either have someone pick him up and take him to pre-arranged accomodation or camp out.

If an image of Forrest Gump leading a large crowd of supporters comes to mind, forget it. Alan is eager to take on this challenge as a personal and private endeavor, and asks to be left in contemplative solitude for this trek.

Even so, he will update his progress via GPS transmitter throughout the day, allowing supporters to follow along on Google Maps.

Also, if interest continues to swell, Alan will look into organizing a larger community event in the future for charity. So far, many who have caught word about the walk have expressed interest in joining up, so stay tuned.

El Sol News will check in with Alan again after he completes his walk. Until then, we encourage you to support this effort through a charitable donation, which can be made online at: http://www.justgiving.com/Alan-Gandy

Doing something for charity?
Let us know at:
info@elsolnewslanzarote.com
or call us on 626 726 424!

ARRECIFE THEME

Festival organizers recently announced the official dates and theme of Arrecife Carnival 2011. It will run from 25th February until 9th March and this year festivalgoers are being pointed towards the world of opera for inspiration for their costumes and floats.

Carnival is a prominent annual fixture featuring many entertainment offerings, including music, food, parades and live performances.

PLANE LUCKY

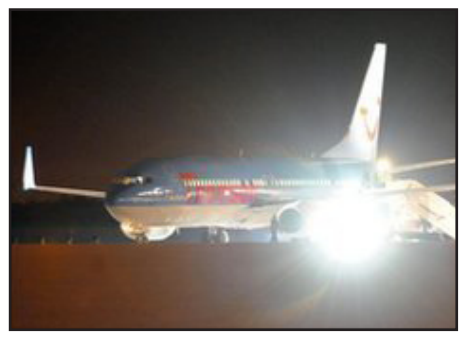
Heavy snow in the made for quite a wild ride when a plane bound from Lanzarote overshot the runway at Newcastle airport and crashed on the tarmac. Fortunately, none of the 200 passengers on the flight were injured

"Who wants to kiss the tarmac?" The pilot reportedly asked passengers after the plane skidded to a halt.

Allen Young, of South Hylton in Sunderland, was returning from a family holiday with his family when the aircraft came in for its dicey landing.

'The plane started to shudder after we hit the runway. The pilot was putting on the brakes... we quickly realised we were over the front of the runway and the front end of the plane was in the field.

'People didn't realise how serious it was until we got off the plane,' he said.

Sharon McBeth, 55, of Florence Street, Walker, Newcastle, said: 'It was amazing, I never doubted that the pilot would get us down.'

'The pilot was amazing, I can't thank him enough," said Kay Stephenson, a grandmother of five from Eastfield Avenue, Wallsend.