

## Spaniards regain village access

**Graham Keeley** in Barcelona  
The Guardian, Tuesday 29 April 2008  
[Article history](#)

They are the ghost villages of Spain, whose inhabitants left long ago, leaving only crumbling ruins.

But Villaescusa de Palositos, one of Spain's growing band of 2,600 abandoned villages, reversed the trend when hundreds of former residents smashed down a fence to get into the village in La Alcarria, east of Madrid, ending a battle against a private property owner and the local council who fenced it off.

The businessman bought the village after it was abandoned in the seventies and built a country house which he visited occasionally. He put up fences and claimed all roads leading to the village were private. Former residents and relatives of the original villagers fought for years to get access so that they could visit the grave sites.

The Association of Friends of Villaescusa de Palositos cited reports from the state-run Service for the Protection of Nature (Seprona) and Catastro (Land Registry) to prove that roads to the village were public property. Miguel Martin, of the Roman Circle group, said the village's 11th century ruined church was part of the Road to Santiago across northern Spain.

"Every pilgrim should have the right to visit this church," he said.

The businessman and the council declined to comment.

---

[Printable version](#) [Send to a friend](#) [Share](#) [Clip](#) [Contact us](#)

---