

## The Young Family's Trip to Spain, 2003.

We started our Spanish adventure by driving the two cars, our Vectra and Mum's Clio, from our home in Cambridgeshire to Portsmouth.



We got on the boat and found our cabins, then reconvened for a sit down with a couple of large gin and tonics. We sat and watched the movements of the ships in the harbour while we waited for our own departure.

We all enjoyed a nice meal with some wine in the Langham's Brasserie on board the boat.

The next day we attended a talk on the whales, dolphins and other sea life of the Bay of Biscay and went out onto the top deck to see what we could see. We managed quite a few sightings of different types of whales and dolphins and went back inside that evening, happy with our efforts, for a meal in the carvery.



The next morning we landed in Bilbao and began our 560 mile drive through the centre of Spain, in temperatures that topped 40 degrees, down to Mum's home town of Malaga. We stopped regularly and the cars were air conditioned so it wasn't too bad and we got to Mum's apartment just before 7pm.

We were in Malaga during the time of their fiesta and went to one of Mum's neighbour's house on top of the hill to watch the fireworks. The holiday period meant we couldn't progress with the bits of Spanish red tape we were there to do as quickly as we would have liked. After a week though, we felt we had done all that we could do and packed the car to set off up the coast.

Our first night's stop was in a very hot and humid site that had no drinking water on tap, you had to buy it from the supermarket in bottles and we were glad we were just passing through. The heat and humidity robbed us of our I.Q. and we had trouble trying to remember how to pack the car in the morning.



We moved along the coast to Peñiscola where we found a much nicer camp site that provided us with a much larger plot, drinking water, cool shady trees and a swimming pool which the girls enjoyed. It was generally clean and well run and so we decided

to stop an extra night. The girls used the pool and play area, with its see-saw, swings and slide, to the full.

During the night there was a storm of such electrical ferocity the like of which we had never seen before, the lightning was a



near constant flickering instead of an occasional flash!

From there we moved off up the coast towards the Costa Brava and wound our way around the cliffs above Saint Feliu de Guixols which gave us the opportunity to savour the view.

Our stop at La Fosca was for three days. The camp site was about a hundred yards from the beach and we spent some time, covered with sun block, lying on the sand and splashing in the sea.



We also took the opportunity to visit Ampurius, a town originally built by the Greeks that the Romans took a shine to before being left to the Greeks for it to be abandoned and hidden from view until the archaeologists dug it back up again in the '60s.



The Roman villas still retain some extremely well preserved mosaic floors

We had a paella on our last night there and then moved on towards France and our rendezvous with the boat at Cherbourg.

We crossed the boarder in the Pyrenees in a huge traffic jam caused by people shopping in the town there, le Perthus. Our first stop wasn't far from the medieval fortress city of Carcassonne, so we dropped in to admire the history and marvel at the tourism.



That evening we found a camp site in a river valley, a truly magical setting beside the water and the ducks. Unfortunately the weather broke and during the night we experienced another storm with thunder and lightning. It was much more like one would think a storm should be this time with normal lighting and normal rain.

We put the tent away wet in the morning and decided that we would look for a hotel for that evenings stop. We didn't want to be bothered with unpacking and repacking the car or putting the tent up or down in the rain on our last overnight stop of the holiday.



That evening our wish came true when we found a hotel near Bayeux after coming off the motorway to search for a proper French country hotel. We were asked to follow the lady from the hotel to a family apartment the hotel ran about 4 kilometres away. It was a house by the sea.



When we got there and took up residence in the top floor, with the best views, the sea was nearly two hundred yards away. People were walking their dogs, riding their horses and sailing sand yachts along the sand.

We were woken during the night by a racket outside and got up to see that the tide had come in, right up to the house!

We went back to bed and took some pictures in the morning.

We enjoyed the luxury of a dry, warm, indoor kitchen to have our breakfast and got ready for our last day in France.

We visited the big supermarkets and stocked up with wine, coffee, cheese and saucisson.



We arrived for the ferry with time to spare and found some comfortable seats in the café area where Jacqui ran into a man she used to be in the venture scouts with when she was a teenager. We landed back in the UK after a calm 4 hour crossing and drove home to be back in our beds by about one thirty in the morning.