

Spain and beyond 2025

Day 1 Monday 24th February

Firstly when we are going on a long trip we have mixed emotions, the excitement of the places we will visit, the people we will meet, where our journey will take us which at this stage the plan is very rough and flexible as we haven't booked anywhere as yet well apart from our first stop tonight in Portsmouth. Then there is the other side of things, the thoughts of not seeing our family for nearly three months is hard to take as we love them all so much, we will also not see our friends lots of whom are more like family than friends but we are sure that we will celebrate and catch up on things when we return. Right let's get started our plans of having the house ready yesterday for our Air B&B guests fell a bit behind schedule yesterday and we still had things to this morning which we thought would delay our planned 12 o'clock (which is usually 10am) departure time but amazingly the house is ready and after a quick visit to see Barb's mum, we are off at 12.05. Barb is driving the first leg to Portsmouth which is supposed to take between 4 to 5 hours but we know that's not going to happen, as soon as we join our wonderful M6 it starts to rain in bucket loads that hard that through the spray you can just about see the road and the traffic slows to a snail's pace, this does not bode well and Sylvia (Sat Nav) starts to extend our expected eta, flipping heck we have only done about 30 miles. The rest of the trip does not get much better although the weather does improve but it is still stop and start all the way to Costco in Southampton to fill up with fuel, last week I filled Glo's tank at Costco Liverpool and the diesel was £1.28 lets not fall into the .9 trick, Costco Southampton £1.39 and that was still 10p cheaper than other stations. Next it's on to Portsmouth and Port Solent Marina for tonight's stop over, the Marina which obviously has boats and some pretty big and expensive rascals, also has some shops and an extensive selection of eateries including a Wetherspoons, it also has an extremely large car park which allows stop overs for free, there was probably 20 or 30 vans of all sizes already there when we arrived with more arriving later. As for our arrival time well we were correct to question Sylvia's eta of 4pm as our actual arrival time was 7.40pm, not the best journey and one thing is for sure we will not be having any travel days like that until possibly when we arrive back in the UK. As you can imagine we are both tired from the days drive and also hungry but neither of us felt like starting to cook so we headed in to the Marina and after a look around at the boats we went in search of an eatery which we chose in haste and could have chosen better but when you are tired and hungry you just want food and then time to rest and get some sleep and that's what happened so until tomorrow that's about it.

Stop Over
Port Solent

Day 2 Tuesday 25th February

After a good nights sleep we both feel much better however we have both woken up with a bloodshot and irritable right eye, can we not do things independently mind you after 44 years we probably share ailments as well as thoughts, there is no rush today as our ferry is not until 10.45pm, first stop is to have a look around the Marina in the daylight and those big expensive boats are still parked up and I would like to say glowing in the sunshine only the sun has decided to stay at home and give way to a very grey but dry day but hey they still look expensive. The plan for today is to head into Portsmouth and have a look at the city and the sites it has to offer, we do have an idea of a couple of things and places we fancy seeing but the first thing is to decide how we are going to get there, we did look at getting a bus but according to maps it required a couple of changes and took about an hour and a half, as also needed to go food shopping we decided drive it was and we would just have to find suitable car parks. Shopping done we head for our first visit of the day the D-Day museum which fortunately had its own car park and is situated very close to the seafront which is bonus as we were able to have a walk along the coastal path before returning to the museum which judging by the outside is not very large and not as large as the 59 meter tank carrying landing craft that is next to the museum. It's massive and makes you think of the brave men and boys that were on board on the D-Day landings, I shudder to think how long it would take to build now with all of amazing technology we have, what am I sure of is that it would take longer than the 3 months it took to build in war time. It had a crew of 12 which given the time scale had very little training and the commanding officer was only 20 years old. Now you may think that I am being tight but trust me that is one thing that I definitely not, we to the entrance

and find that the entrance fee is £28 which we thought was excessive and we did not go in, instead we stood outside by the landing craft and thanked the crew and the other brave men that fought during both world wars. Then we used the remaining time on the parking meter to go for a walk along the coastal path. After our walk we headed off to see the other three attractions which were HMS Victory, a trip to the top of the Spinnaker building and a trip on a hovercraft, we did go to all of the planned venues but again the prices were silly, let's have a run through them Spinnaker £26, HMS Victory £62 and the 10 minute cross ion the hovercraft £68 bringing a grand total of £184 for what would taken a few hours now that is an expensive day out which would have blown the daily budget completely.

Now it was a waiting game until we board the ferry, we thought we would get there about 9pm but by 7.30pm we were board of playing the waiting game in Tesco's car park and headed of to the port which was only 10 minutes away, we are obviously not clued up about this ferry to Spain lark as when we arrived it looked like half of the motorhome's in the UK were in front of us, if we had turned up at Dover that early we would have either been put on an earlier boat or told to hop off and come back later but that is certainly not the case here, this is the start of a couple of things that we were about to find out about this crossing. Again after going through security and parking in the queue we expected to get loaded in an hour or so but that was not the case, five minutes after turning the engine off the queue and us are on the move and are soon parked up on the top deck. As we take our 2 bags out of Glo it looks like we are going to learn another lesson as people are taking huge powered freezer boxes on wheels that they can just about lift out of their van and will definitely be using the lifts to get to the upper floors, they are carrying more than we take for a long weekend away not a 36 hour ferry crossing 18 of which they will be asleep for, whereas we have a change of clothes, make up bags, a couple of tea bags and some coffee in case there is not enough in the cabin. We eventually navigate our way to our cabin which although it has 4 beds is let's say compact, very compact and we are glad that there is only two of us, as for worrying that there might not be enough tea or coffee we didn't need to as there wasn't a kettle to make it with, there isn't even any bottled water. The cabin is totally different to last years crossing from Harwich to Holland which not only had plenty of tea and coffee it also had a free mini bar, its now becoming clear why other passengers have brought the contents of their kitchen with them. When I booked the crossing I had tried to upgrade the cabin but they were all booked, again now we know why but hey it's only for 36 hours of which 18 hours plus we will be asleep and we have stayed in worse even if they were cheaper places. After unpacking we head off to explore the ship, boat, ferry what you call it, now it sounds like I am on a bit of a downer but in comparison with the two ferries we have used from Hull and Harwich to Holland this one is a bit lacking, but it is a means to an end and has saved us the long drive from Dover. We head of to the bar for a couple of drinks to watch us leave the harbour and the crowds of people waving the boat off but they must have gone home fed up of waiting as we didn't set sail until after midnight, it was then definitely time for bed, let's see what happens tomorrow.

Stop over, oh yes boat

Day 3 Wednesday 26th February

The other day I was reading a post from a fellow traveller who was saying that the Bay of Biscay had been like a mill pond during their crossing, ours wasn't bad until the middle of the night when this big boat started to rock and roll side to side and front to back (that's the nautical terminology). In the morning the Captain issued a warning to be careful when walking around his craft and to be especially careful while showering, Barb was going nowhere and was staying firmly put in her bed but I needed to go for a walk around. Now I am not saying that tables and chairs were moving across the boat but if you looked out of the 6 foot high windows the horizon was at the top one minute and then the bottom the next, I am ok with this but there were not many other peeps wandering around. I know that this isn't a cruise ship but it's 9am what do you do for the next 15 or so hours, well I can catch up on the blog which I hadn't started yet, I can look out at the waves, read for bit have a wander and around the duty free. Oh I know I can see if there is a nurse on board to have a look at my eye which is bit worse than yesterday, after a quick chat at the information desk I am talking to the nurse who is very helpful and thinks that it is a viral infection and gives me some eye wash and drips for both of us to take for the next four days, cost no, nope, nothing. Ok what's next oh yes get a takeaway tea for Barb, ah well you will have to wait until 10.30 when it opens, next stop back to our cabin to let Barb know I have seen a nurse and

what she has given us, eye drop insertion time it is which is fun when the boat is rocking and rolling all over the place. I go back to the lounge and have a coffee in a cup, yes I could have got a tea from there for Barb but it would have been empty by the time I got it back to the cabin, 10.30 arrives and Barb's tea is delivered, she is still not ready to venture downstairs and head back to the lounge and bar area. Where I found what people do while they are waiting to get to Spain it's obvious that at 10.45am you get a carafe of red wine or a pint of Guinness, you have got to be kidding me I think that I will have a coffee. We will jump through the day as there is not much to tell you and we will jump forward to the evening, there are two restaurants yes I know only two but it is a ferry not a cruise ship even if I keep telling Barb we are on a cruise, the choice of restaurants are a buffet style and a proper one, as we have been good managing the budget today Barb decided that we went to the proper one, the food was very good but you did need to call at a chippy on the way home. The two couples sitting behind us had me worn out as I played picking up the names of places they kept dropping in an effort to impress each other, it does remind of a story I was told but I will need permission to share it with you. After the meal there was time for a nightcap before bed and the thoughts of tomorrow when we arrive in Spain.

Stop over, boat again

Day 4 Thursday 27th February

We are due to dock at 8am but as the boat is still on UK time that's a 7am there is not going to be any form of lie in and there wasn't at 5.40 the wake up alarm starts playing through the cabins speaker and just in case you had any thoughts of turning over for an extra 5 minutes it gradually got louder and louder and you were getting up whether you wanted to or not. After checking that we had all our stuff we headed down to the lounge for a coffee and waited for the call to head for your vehicles, when the call is there is the usual mad dash as people jostle for the stairs to get to their vehicles faster than anyone else which always makes me laugh as they won't be going any further than their vehicles until the front door is opened. It's funny watching people with the massive Esky's (fridge boxes) dragging what now should be lighter but don't appear to be as they are putting up a fight to go where the owners want them to. Then there are the people who had rushed down the stairs but had rushed down too many and then had to try and get back up the stairs to the floor their vehicle is on, the husband taking the lead and apologising to everyone while the wife follows telling him she had told him he was going to the wrong floor, that's going to be a fun "I told you so" conversation when they get to their vehicle, not a good start to the morning. As expected we are reunited with Glo long before the Gentleman Start your engines instruction is called, after a quick and a stamp in our passports which means that the Schengen clock has started, we are through customs without stopping and on the open road remembering to drive on the wrong side of it. Although as soon as we are on the road my favourite thing is upon us, a roundabout, I don't know why but no matter how many times I drive on the wrong side of the road I still take me some time to get used to them, turning left is the other thing. When we were in Norway last year I was talking to someone and they asked me how I got on with driving on the right and I said my two pet hates were roundabouts and turning left they laughed and said that when they drove in the UK and in other countries where you drive on the correct side of the road their pet hates were roundabouts and turning right. We are heading to Bilbao and it looks like we are going there on our own as out of the hundreds of vans that were with us on the boat there is not one in sight, I guess they have all headed south or southwest. We have a few options for stopovers the most tempting is the free one so we head there first but when we arrive it didn't feel like the best area and there are no other vans there from last night and if it feels like that you don't stay. There is a campsite but that is €50 a night so that's not happening, then there is an Aire which has good reviews and that is where we stayed, it had very friendly staff, full services in fact two of everything, fantastic views over the city and just felt right, it was €17 plus €4 for ehu if you needed it, which for a city sight was not bad, not as good as the free Marinas in Norway but safe and secure. After parking up it was time to head into the city which was easy as there is a bus stop a couple of hundred yards or meters away with a regular service direct into the city at a cost of €1.50. It's not long before we are in the city but we may have got off at the wrong stop as it's not the most salubrious area of the city but after a short walk we are in the heart of the city, as with most old cities you have to walk around looking upwards to appreciate the architecture otherwise all you see is shops and there are some beautiful buildings hiding above the bright lights of the usual shopping brands. We head off to see the Guggenheim museum which is a mile or so away, we follow the river which opens up space to views of the buildings on either side of it,

it's not that long before we arrive at the museum which is impressive to say the least, modern art is not really our bag but the building is and we take time to walk around to experience it from all sides.

Now it's time to eat and we head back into the city, the choice of eateries is boundless there are tapas bars everywhere, to make the most of the experience we opt for the one here one there approach usually going hunting for the ones down side streets where the locals hang out, we are right into this tapas lark. After more walking around the day becomes evening and it's time to explore a few more of the many bars available and they are starting to get lively with locals calling in after work and ladies that do lunch in the early evening talking loudly while the wine flows without stopping. At that point it's time to go bus stop hunting and to find our way back to Glo after a very enjoyable day and early evening, we are heading west to Gijon in the morning and we have a quick route check which wasn't too difficult as basically there is only one road to use so let's see how we get on with that tomorrow.

Stop over
Autocaravanes Kobeta Bilbao
What three words, amused.hugs.impaled

Day 5 Friday 28th February

We are on the road by 9.30 and soon out of the city and on the main road towards Gijon which is about two hours thirty minutes away, we will skip the journey other than a quick mention about wagons, it looks like they have taken a lesson from the road trains in OZ, although not a big as the road trains they are some big rascals, 40 foot artics with another 40 foot trailer attached to the back and they don't hang about. Anyway just after 12.30 we arrive in Gijon, we have found a park up a few minutes away from the city and the reviews do not disappoint, massive car park less than a 10 minute walk into the city, there are 30 to 40 vans already here (with not a UK one in sight apart from us which is the same as yesterday) and it's free, that will do for us. It may have got to 20° yesterday but it's nowhere near that here, it's blowing a proper hoolie the sea is rough and the waves are crashing down on the beach while some surfers have braved the conditions and head towards the beach riding the white horses. We ain't doing that, we aren't even going for a paddle we are just going to head into town, the town isn't as interesting as Bilbao there are lots of bars, restaurants and shops closed and by the look of them they have been closed for a while, I guess they suffered during Covid and never managed to recover or it is a seaside town that is not as busy as it once was. The tapas culture is nothing like Bilbao and most of the restaurants and bars only have a few customers but it is out of season. One thing I have found and something I need to fix pronto is my embarrassing lack of the Spanish language, Google or some other form of lessons required immediately, especially as up here there is very little English spoken probably about as much as my Spanish. We find somewhere to eat off the beaten path and have a guess at what there is to eat as the staff were in the same boat with English as we are with Spanish, I understand meatballs and chorizo with something, ok we will have that, the meatballs arrive as expected, the chorizo arrives as a sausage with fried potatoes and fried eggs, so sausage, egg and chips. We then head off for a walk along the beachfront which didn't last long as the hoolie is now blowing more than it was previously. Time to head back to Glo for a chat, route planning which took all of a minute and to catch up on the blog which has been lagging behind and I need to sort myself and keep it up to date daily. Tomorrow we are heading for Coruna which is a 3 hour drive so we will find some stops on the way, let's see how we get on with that more will be revealed tomorrow.

Stop over
Aparcamiento Parque. De los Hermanos Castr, Seafront Gijon
What three words fell.plunger.grudge

Day 6 Saturday 1st March

We had a late and lazy start this morning, the vans had grown in numbers to about 50 and still not a UK one in sight apart from Glo, our first job this morning is to visit a Quimica that's a chemist for those that don't understand Spanish, I can see Mr G Translate coming into play there or do I do

what a proper English do, you will know the ones that just talk louder in English, point at things and then mutter under their breath because people in their own Country don't understand what you are saying to them in a foreign language it would be funny if it wasn't so embarrassing listening to them. I might be using Mr G&T but I will be doing my best, usually when I do that the person I am talking to smiles and says How can I help you, but they are usually happy you have tried. It's another chilly and blowy morning as we walk along the seafront in search of the quimica that we walked past yesterday but today it was playing hide and seek, we eventually found it and enter with trepidation as the phrase required is one that I have never used in any language apart from English, I need to remember not to just point at my eye. Well my Spanish could not have been that bad even if the pronunciation was abysmal the pharmacist understood me and produced a bottle of eye drops and between us we worked out, to be used every 4 hours for the next 5 days and for the princely sum of €2.50 I guess £7 at home. Eye drops in, it is time for a coffee before we head off for our first stop of the day, it's 12.30 which means there absolutely no chance of us getting anywhere near our next planned destination which is about 3 hours away, instead we head out of the city into the countryside and find a stop high up next to a lighthouse obviously overlooking the sea, otherwise there would not be much point in having a lighthouse. After our jambon baguettes we head off for a walk which turned out to be a very short walk as the hoolie that blowing at sea level had turned into a proper gale up there, we did have the excuse not to stay out due to our eye infections. Next stop was for an overnight park up which is about 30 minutes away and is a designated Motorhome park up with both types of water drain services, there were about 10 vans there when we arrived just before 3pm and only a couple of spaces left, we got there just in time as the other slots soon filled. Great we have kept to our travel rules today which are to make sure we are parked up between 2 & 4pm there is no point in driving forever without stopping and relaxing mind you today was a bit silly as we have only travelled 40 kilometres, we will have to do a bit more than that tomorrow. The strikes 4pm which means it's beer o'clock well as they say it's 5 o'clock somewhere, later we went for a walk to the reservoir which again was a short walk as it was not exactly warm. Then it was back to Glo and just a snack as neither of us were particularly hungry, after bit of planning which included doing more than 40k, keeping up with the blog that was about it until tomorrow, let's see what we can find then.

Stop over

Area Overo, Overo, Asturias, Principado de Asturias

What three words lamps.proofs.puzzled

Day 7 Sunday 2nd March

Let me start with a couple of things I had omitted from a couple of previous days (it's an age thing) when we were exploring the streets in Gijon we past a ladies hair dressers it was like a step back in time to the hairdresser my mum used to go to, blue rinses going on everywhere and hairdryers that I always thought were spacewomen's space helmets when I was a kid, if your not old enough to know what I am talking about you better check the out on Google. Just along the same street we found a car's sales showroom in the middle of a row of terraced shops, it reminded me of when I worked in a Main Honda dealership that was the corner of a row of terraced shops and restaurants the street was close to China town in Liverpool which is the home of the oldest Chinese community Europe it also has the largest Chinese Arch outside of China and has restaurants over 100 years old that are still owned and run by the same families. Anyway back to our Spanish road trip, one of the other great things we have found in the two cities we have visited so far is that they do not have electric scooters to rent, don't get me wrong I do think that they are good but it's the idiots that ride them around towns and cities without any thought for others. As we only did 40 kilometres yesterday and the fact that it's darn chilly up north we have decided to get some kilometres covered and get to Coruña on the west coast and then we will be able to head South down the coast in a hunt for some warmer weather, obviously at this time of year we are not expecting the sun to be scorching hot but the forecasts further south are showing expected temperatures around 20° which is much better than the 10° it is here at the moment. It was about a 3 hour drive but it still meant that we were parked up by our travel rule time, as we needed to find a site with facilities Barb could not find anything for near the city but found one in the hills for €10 plus €3 if you need ehu, it's a bit off the beaten track and basic but has everything we need and even has washing machines if you need them, yes it's basic but fine for a stop, if you come here make sure that you have sufficient provisions as there is nothing around here and I do

mean nothing for about 10k oh and bring some €1 coins for the showers. When we arrived there were two other vans but left not longer after we arrived, must have been UK plates, we haven't seen another UK van since leaving the ferry. The sun came out later in the afternoon and stayed for the rest of the evening making it warm inside Glo but still not very warm outside. We had thought that we were going to be on our own but are joined by one other van, I am a little bit in the dog house as on the way here I had said that we would need fuel tomorrow, but just before we got here we drove past a fuel station and the diesel was reasonably priced and Barb said why don't we turn around and get some here but there was nowhere to turn around so smart Alic said don't worry we get some on route, well the next one we got to was 10 cents dearer again smarty pants says that he is not paying and drives on. Guess what yep you are correct 10k further on there is a ping accompanied by an orange light on the dashboard, what was that asked Barb ah well my dear that would be the low fuel warning, ooops but never mind the dashboard info bit says we have 50 miles of fuel left so we will be ok until we find somewhere tomorrow, well we better had be for my sake. I guess we find out tomorrow if I am properly in the dog house but I am positive we will be fine and I better find somewhere cheaper than the one we past or I will send the address to post the dog biscuits to. Fingers crossed for tomorrow we will all find out then if the blog is published early you will know if I am in the poo but until then that's it for today.

Stop over Eumenatura, Monfero, La Coruna, Galicia 15617
What three words rustles.electrode.zipped

Day 8 Monday 3rd March

The sun was shining when we woke this morning but let's not carried away it might having been shining but it wasn't giving off Spanish sunshine that gives you a sun tan, it was more like the heat from a 40 watt bulb from 10 feet away. Definitely time to head south like migrating Birds which didn't really happen. Another lazy start this morning which meant we didn't leave the stop over until 12 o'clock, our first stop is the small town that we came through to get to the site it's 10km away and the low fuel light is still reminding me that I could be going out to buy some wood to build a dog house I am also getting that look telling me that I could be on the naughty step. On the way to the town I let Glo coast down the hilly bits to preserve the precious go go juice. We arrive in Pontedeume with a view of parking up and having a look around and maybe finding a shop that sold wood, a saw, a hammer and some nails, blow the tape measure I will wing it. However I see a saviour that we hadn't seen on our way to the site, yes it's a fuel station, now all I have to hope for is that it's cheaper than the one I cockily drove past, well let me say the shop if there was one has lost on its best sale of the day as the diesel was 10 cents a litre cheaper wow I can breath easy, now not only as it cheaper it was like going back to the old days (that some might not remember) but they actually had a gentleman that came and filled the tank for you now there is service for you. After a walk around the town which didn't take long although we were tempted to join all of the locals and head into a bar, but we didn't and set off towards Coruna which is a large city and it's only about 30 minutes away.

When we get there the first thing we need to do is go shopping and we want to find a large supermarket as we drive into the town there is a Carrefour hypermarket yippee I love theses places they sell everything, the only problem with them is that I could spend all day in there. We follow the signs for the car park but there is a slight problem it is a multi story with a hight limit of 2.2mtrs now that would be fine if we wanted Glo to become a convertible but as we don't we had to take evasive action much to the annoyance of the car behind, well he shouldn't have been so close, we then find the open air car park and as soon as Glo is turned off we are off bags in hand. As soon as the doors open the first thing that you find is a bar with plenty of beer and red wine being served, listen up Tesco's, other supermarkets are available, you are missing a trick if nothing else it makes a great man crèche unfortunately we can not partake as we well I am driving, next I to the shop itself where the first thing you find is a 10Lt box of wine for €9.99 I was tempted if nothing else for a laugh and now I wish I had, well we will be paying another visit, next you have the stuff Barb would not let me buy like a 70" TV, a set of massive Bluetooth speakers and what I was really disappointed about was the of road electric scooter but as I said we will be going back for more provisions so you never know. Then the serious bit food, the selection is endless vegetables that the buyers from our supermarkets would not know what they are, neither would we and so wouldn't buy them, the aromas in the fruit and vegetable sections are fantastic everything is so shiny and fresh that it's difficult not to buy things then you move on to the fish

and meats sections well wow is all I can say every time I visit a supermarket in Europe, there is everything known to man, it takes me forever as some things you have not got a clue what they are and when Google translate tells you what it is you wish you hadn't asked, I did that in Hong Kong and definitely wish that I hadn't asked, don't ask us the story of the giant sea slug, no please don't ask. Our trolley has got all sorts of stuff in it and we leave it at the end of an aisle so we could browse without pushing it around, when we returned with some more items it had done a magic trick and disappeared. After a tougher search it was nowhere to be found, Paul Daniel's would have been very impressed mind you if he could have made anything disappear just like that so would I. Right let's start again another trolley and then we retraced our steps and tried to remember what we had put in it then low and behold our original trolley reappeared just like that although it did have other items in it. Our guess was (and yes it wasn't that difficult) the someone had taken it, put some stuff in it then realised it wasn't theirs and dumped it leaving us to put our doubled up stuff and their additional items back where they came from, well in some cases nearly where they came from but only wine and none perishable items. Then the fun bit going to the till and having the little chat you have with the person at the till ah well my know well used phrase of Lo Sieton no hablo espanol comes into play and then we get around to sort of understanding what each other is saying. Right back to Glo and to find somewhere to put the stuff, looks like Barb should have let me buy that fridge after all. With a bit of Jenga sorting the stuff is in the fridge and the prawns are moaning that it is cold in the freezer. Now after all that excitement we need lunch albeit a late lunch and where better to have it than Carrefour' car park how romantic is that. After a romantic lunch we have to decide whether we want to go into the city as the traffic was rammed an hey it's another city, but we did want to visit a couple of places in the old town so we brace ourselves and head off into the traffic to get to the other side of the city which to be fair was not that arduous and we soon find somewhere to park. Then we head off for a walk along the harbour wall big deal I hear you say and my answer to that is it is massive, a marathon runner failed to get to the end of it, it is a massive sea defence that does a great job of protecting the harbour from the rough sea, Wirral council take note that lessons could be learnt to help the mess made in West Kirby, again Mr or Mrs etc Google will tell you about it. Then we head off to see the Tower of Hercules which has served as a lighthouse since the late 1st century AD and is the only fully preserved Roman lighthouse which is still used for maritime signalling, well that's what UNESCO say about it, they actually say a lot more about it but you can read that for yourselves. What was a bit of a blow was that it only cost €3 to go to the top but we got there too late and it was closed this was made even worse as it free on a Monday. Portsmouth and it's Spinnaker should take a pricing lesson from this historic building that has more of that history stuff than that £18 a visit Spinnaker which I guess won't be around for as long as this beautiful building.

Time is getting on and we haven't found anywhere to park up for the night but there are a couple of local options, the first one is the Marina harbour but we find out that this is €27 a night so that's not happening, then we look at another option but that would have been parking up on the North face of the Eiger so that was a no no, the next one overlooked the bay and the city and had a great view but when Barb read more about it she found that someone's van had been stolen from there last month. This getting a bit like Goldilocks and the three bears, but then we find that there is a free official Aire with services just up the road, how's that for planning or lack of, to be fair we hadn't planned on staying in Coruna overnight but we spent too long in the supermarket. I do have a couple more things to let you know about but I will save them until tomorrow just in case it's a slow news day we will have to wait until then to find out as we haven't decided whether we are going to take the slower coastal roads south or head strait for Santiago de Compostela, we will know before you but I will update you tomorrow evening, unless we go out for the evening.

A Coruna, A Coruna Galicia 15011, ES

What three words fracture.face.petal

Day 9 Tuesday 4th March

The decision was made to travel to Santiago de Compostela which is a about an hour away, let's skip an hour, wow that was quick we have arrived and we have the usual dilemma of where to stay well that was fairly simple as there is free local council site with waste disposal, when I say a site it is actually a large car park with some bars, restaurants and a big M all within a 5 minute

walk and it is a 30 to 40 minute walk into the city which is good and bad as it is all downhill on the way there and yep you guessed it, it's the opposite on the way back, that's probably the difference in time. Glo is parked up with a number of other vans and again not a UK plate to be seen, let's jump 30 minutes, now we are in the city and the first stop is Cathedral and wow this is a beautiful building and dates back to the year 1211, now that is some time for a building to be still here, I doubt some of our modern buildings won't be around that long. The inside is just as beautiful and lavishly decorated we spend time exploring the ancient building appreciating the workmanship of the experts that have kept the buildings splendour you are still reminded of its age when you climb the marble staircase which are worn by the hundreds, thousands of people that have walked on them in the buildings history, I am not catholic but I do respect these places of worship and whenever we visit them I always light two candles, one for people I have lost and one for the people my dear friend has lost and she replicates this for me when she visits these historic places of worship. Right let's go and get some steps in and wander around the streets of the old town and as it warm walking around i suppose it would be rude not to assist the local business's and partake in a cooling cerveza, we head off the main streets and find a bar which is not too far from the Cathedral and is frequented by locals but I imagine it will be full of tourists in the summer, time to try out my broken Spanish it's a good job as there was very little English going on here, fortunately it worked and our drinks arrived. After a spot of people watching while they sat tables sipping their beer while watching it get warm and then leaving it behind, well rest assured that did not happen with ours. Right time for some wandering along the well worn cobbled streets and then on into the newer parts of the city where there is the usual array of well known high street shops, there are lots of people and children in fancy dress and we are not sure why and there are no indications of what is happening but there a guard rails being put up to separate the pavement from the roads but not much else happening, It's time for us to find somewhere to have snack, now guys you may know how this works, you wander around looking at all of the available options and then end up back at the first place you looked at. Anyway in we go and the idea of this is pretty cool, there is a counter with a large selection of tapas you choose the ones you fancy and there are three different prices €1.65, €1.95 and €2.15 of and the vino tinto is €2 for a large glass, when it's time to pay you take a plate with the cocktail sticks which are different shapes and this indicates the different prices, how clever is that and 17 quid for 6 tapas, dos vino tinto and dos cerveza is pretty good value for money. Then it's more walking and more people lining the streets in fancy dress, yes it looks like there is a parade going on but we still not sure what it's about however when the warm up act floats arrive it's obvious that we are missing a trick and head back up hill to Glo. Back at Glo we actually make a plan, don't laugh, the weather forecast says that it's going to rain for the next couple of days so there is no point in visiting places of interest as we won't be doing a lot of sightseeing in the rain we are going to head down the coast for about an hour and stay at a site for a couple of nights for a bit of r & r, it's probably a bit daft to head for the coast when it's raining but looking at the sites website the place looks great and view look fantastic with beautiful beaches and the seas crystal clear water, yes I know we probably won't be using either of them but if you are going to sit in the rain you may as well have something good to look at. Also the local restaurants are supposed the best sea food going and their websites show a fantastic array of stuff from the sea 98% of which we love. Darn amazing that we actually have a plan for the next two days, let's see what happens, you will know not long after us.

Stop over. Area Autocaravanas De Santiago de Compostela, A Coruna, Galicia 15703 ES
What three words added.clouds.balanced

Day 10 Wednesday 5th March

This is what happens when you stay at a city site there is to much to see and do that by the time you get back to the ranch it is too late to start writing up the days events so you are getting two days at once. Anyway before we leave the car park we pop into one of the local cafe's for a coffee and tea, we do believe that when towns understand that allowing motorhomes to stay for free in what other wise unoccupied spaces will bring business to their community and we always feel we should and do contribute in some way, we also believe that these places should be treated with respect and leave no trace that we have been there. We set off south towards the coast, the comments on search for sites says that there are restaurants and bars by the site there are not any shops so we pop into Lidl for a couple of bits and then we are off out of town and to the motorway and the rain starts well Glo could do with a wash, a section of the motorway is a toll

road and as we haven't used the tags as yet, this could be a learning experience but fear not as we approached the barrier there is a beep from the windscreen and the barrier opens, not a clue how much it was but it worked. It's not long before we arrive at the site, now this place does not look anything like it does on their website but hey we are here for a rest so in we go. I book us in and I am told that you just pay whenever you leave, I am told to head up to an area and choose our pitch. There are lots of small tired looking caravans which obviously don't go anywhere at any time and 99% of them are wrapped up in tarpaulin's waiting for the summer. After checking in and looking at these vans things don't look like they do on the website, oh well we are here now and head up to the allocated area we have our choice of pitches as there is no one else here oh well that will make it a quiet stay. After looking at the facilities we checked the website again and came to the opinion that they should be reported to trading standards or whatever they call in Spain as this is obviously not the same place well it might have been in the 1980's or possibly the 70's, also the people who left such glowing reviews on search for sites were either relatives, left the review for a different site by mistake or have considerably low standards or possibly our expectations are too high it does look like our stay may be shorter than planned, we are not really bothered and just treat it as a bit of laugh and we have the place to ourselves. We checked out the menus at the local restaurants and the food looks amazing and it looks like we could be blowing today's budget in seafood paradise rather than having the planned paella in Glo. There are four restaurants to choose from and all of the offerings on the menus look great and it looks like it might be difficult to make a choice between them but as they are fairly close to each other we can check them out and then choose the one we fancy. With high expectations and even though the weather is not great we have a spring step with thoughts of lobster, massive prawns, scallops and other delicious offerings. We get to the first restaurant and it's shut not just closed but fully shut, oh well there is another 3 to choose from well there would be if the next 2 were also closed but as we walk along the boardwalk we can see the lights are on at the one I fancied as it's on the beach overlooking the beautiful bay. However as we get close to it we can see the tables being put away and one by one the lights go off, well if nothing else it has saved the budget from a battering, we head off back to Glo and pop into the campsites bar for a glass of vino. Yep this is another step back in time and we are the only ones in there, well apart from one guy sitting in the far corner of the room, I am slightly concerned as I am not sure if he is dead or just asleep, fortunately he was just asleep, you could not make this up. One thing for sure is that our stay will not be as long as originally thought but the experience and the laugh we had will stay with us forever, I might be being unfair and it may be wonderful in the summer but we won't be returning to find out, I am not going to publish the details of the site but if anyone is heading this way let me know and I will give you the details, let's see where we get to tomorrow.

Day 11 Thursday 6th March

I may have sounded a bit or possibly a bit down on the site yesterday, don't get me wrong it's not going to win any Caravan and Motorhome Club awards but the facilities are clean and the showers are hot with skin removing pressure although I could only find two which is ok as we are on our own but would be a bit hectic in the summer. I suppose I was disappointed in not being able to appreciate the seafood paradise and things will feel much better with some sun but doesn't everywhere it was our choice to come out of season but we do have plenty of time for the weather to improve. We head off to Braga which is on route to Porto, the main road, motorway has vineyards on both side for as far as can see, it's amazing to think that in about 7 months brown nearly black sticks sticking out of the ground will produce the fruits that will make the local vino. The weather is atrocious on the drive to Braga but we arrive there in under 2 hours and head to a park up where a funicular railway takes you to the Bom Jesus do Monte a neoclassical church at the top of the hillside for a mere €3 return. However there is a bit of a pattern forming as the funicular railway is shut which means that the Bom Jesus do Monte will not be having the pleasure of our company as there is no way we are hiking up there in the pouring rain, maybe tomorrow we will see but the weather is still not looking good. This also means that there is not a great deal to tell you about today so I will have to dig into some of the reserved blog padding stories, well they are a bit more like things we have noticed on your travel so I suppose you could fit the informative bit. First driving standards which are pretty good on the roads we have used, most of the motorway type roads have not had a great deal of traffic on them and the driving is nothing like the awful driving we encounter on our wonderful motorways, they are mostly two lane dual carriageways and the drivers lane discipline is great, as soon as an overtaking manoeuvre is complete they are back into correct lane and it all happens without any tailgating, lights flashing,

horns sounding or gesticulations out of the drivers window. Then there are the motorway exits which like most other countries in mainland Europe that we have driven in, the deceleration lane and exit are about 10 yards long and then turn immediately right which makes for interesting braking when you get to the junction. Then we have parking which to be fair is pretty amazing as they can park their car in a space leaving about 2 inches at each end, I initially thought the parked like the French and just left the handbrake off and their way into a space, but no they are just good at it, I consider myself good at parking but I would struggle to get into the spaces, in fact I think that even self parking cars would shout don't be daft from the dashboard. One thing does make it funny is that even if you are in a massive empty car park they still want to park 2 inches from you, I don't really understand that one, when we were at a municipal Motorhome Aire there was a 7mt Motorhome parked parallel to a wall and two cars arrived and parked at 90° at each end with a couple of inches at each end, there was no way the Motorhome was going anywhere without waiting until one of them came back or he or she just drove into them. As I don't want you to get too excited about these informative sections and also I need to keep a few in reserve in case more padding is required. Oh one more thing I have just remembered is that between the car park we are staying in and the funicular railway that I think I mentioned is shut, there is supposed to be a Michelin star restaurant well that's shut as well and looking at it from the outside it's more like a Michelin remould not a star. Right that's it let's see what happens tomorrow, I guess the weather will play a big part in what happens but you never know.

Day 12 Friday 7th March

The rain stopped this morning and we decided to go and see the Bom Jesus do Monte Church, which the guide book says is located on the slopes of Mount Espinho, well let me tell you that hiking up there it is not located on the slopes it is actually at the top. As the funicular railway was not running yesterday it was going to be a hike up the 568 steps separated by up to the church off we go and after about 500 steps we stop to catch our breath for the 10th time and we hear a strange clattering noise, guess what it was, yes you got it, the funicular train going past us, well ain't that just great, anyway it's too late to turn back so it's onwards and upwards. When we get to the top we are above the massive red wood trees that tower straight up towards the sky, not only are above them we are also higher than the mountains in the distance. The neoclassical church is a beautiful building when looked from any angle and the inside is just as magnificent, it was built between 1784 and 1811 when I look at buildings of this age and earlier it is not just the architecture, the design and the lavishness that I admire, it is the ability to build them. I know the Egyptians built the pyramids in a couple of thousand years BC but they are not quite the same thing. After our 568 steps up and the same down which was just the 2.4 miles, did we collapse in Glo nope we set off for a stop over in a supermarket car with a Motorhome park up area in Porto. I have to say that driving in Portugal is not like driving in northern Spain when it was fairly relaxed, the driving standards in Portugal are not good, don't get me wrong it's not as shall we as driving in Italy but it does resembles the M25 and we make a bit of a mistake as we went into tight mode and opted for not using the toll road a mistake that we will not make again, I will just say it was tense interesting experience we did not relax until we got to the park up where joined a number of other vans and even one from the UK, the first job was to go to the supermarket to buy a baguette which you would think would take a matter of minutes, but hey for me shopping in a supermarket is not like shopping at one in the UK that I can not get out of quick enough, here it's more like you can't get me out, as I have said previously they are fantastic. Eventually Barb drags me out but only just past the tills as we do have to stop for a coffee, I did think of having a beer but I managed to resist, right time to order a coffee and a Coke (others are available) in Portuguese, I had only just around it in Spanish, obviously my pronunciation was abysmal but I get there in the end and no before ask the young lady did not speak English and hey it cost a whole €2.40. Back at Glo we have bit to eat and make a plan to get into the city, we could walk but it's 3km or we could the a bus well 2 buses or we could get an Uber for €6 obviously the Uber won, actually it didn't as the weather decided it was going to play a part in our plans and after it had been dry all day so far, someone turned the taps on full and also brought some thunder and lightening to the party, Porto is on hold until tomorrow. That also puts the brakes on the blog post so I will need to use some but not all of my reserved padding out, first bit is information for anyone travelling from Spain into Portugal, before you cross the border well a sign that says you are in a different country, find a fuel station and put as much fuel in your tank as you can and if possible get a couple of extra buckets of it, obviously not buckets but something suitable to carry the stuff, as in

Spain we paid €1.39 so far the cheapest we have found is €1.65, Glo's info panel tell us we have about 250 miles of the stuff left in the tank so we will wait for as long as possible before we make a purchase, our thoughts are we are going to look for an Auchan hypermarket that sells fuel but that's a job for the next couple of days. Next info bit is about vehicle technology and saving our planet that we are doing our best to destroy, it does not look like Spanish and possibly Portuguese motorists have grabbed the electric vehicle concept with both hands. It seems that they have made a contribution to Tesla's \$1.5 Billion loss last year, as during our trip so far we have 4 possibly 5 electric cars and 2 charging points both of which had none electric cars parked in them. I wonder what year the government has set for the end of fossil fuel cars till at least 2080 by the look of it or have realised that you have to use fossil fuels to create them in the first place oh and what do you do with an old lithium battery obviously that comment may cause some disagreement with some readers but we are all allowed an opinion, but mine is that when a car manufacturer says that they are carbon neutral they have popped to a Forrest spoken to the boss of the trees and done a deal to buy everything they give out, now may be the thoughts of a philistine but I am yet to be convinced, I have spoken with someone who has just bought some battery powered commercial vehicles and they just don't work, our current technology is not up to the job. Right that has put my head above the parapet and will wait for it to be shot at and hopefully I am wrong and we get things sorted out, I will end there although I should lighten things up a bit, well the lightening outside is doing a good job of it, fortunately it is not going to set any fires as it's too flipping wet, hopefully tomorrow will be better and we can get into Porto for a wander around, I want to go to the Bolhao market which after watching Portillo's programme, yes I did watch it, looks fantastic and vibrant even if a might not fancy some of the stuff that's for sale as in Portillo's programme, the food guy from Porto said that they eat every part of an animal, I might miss out on a couple of them there bits. Rights that's probably upset a couple more people so let's call it a day, I will let you know what is sold in the market if we can get there tomorrow.

Stop over Centro Commercial, Vila Nova de Gaia, Porto, 4404-504
What three words darkest.fast.contents

Day 13 Saturday 8th March

The rain stopped this morning but the forecast said it would start later, we made the decision that the weather was not going to put us off and then another decision which yes we should make this one yesterday, how we were going to get there, we had three options walk, bus, uber it was just under a 4 mile walk which was a bit of a no no, then the bus option which required 2 buses and would have taken over an hour and longer if we had missed a connection and cost about €4 or then there was Uber this was a door to door service took 15 minutes and cost €6.50 well which do you think. Obviously it was a no brainer and Uber it was and literally 1 minute after pressing the confirm ride button it arrived, he must have been hiding around the corner. After an interesting 15 minute journey we were dropped off outside the market and off into the lively intoxicating atmosphere, it immediately makes you want to be involved. One of the first things you notice is that lots of people are wandering around with glasses of white and red wine or port now that's something that you don't see in our local market at home, there are a number of different stalls offering a selection of wines, ports and some selling draft beers. Now when in Rome and all that lark we joined the queue at one of the wine stalls, it was a bit early for Red and I suppose it was also a bit early for white but we didn't want to be left out and chose two glasses of Chardonnay at €3 and you just take the glass back when you have finished, the glasses have the stall number engraved on the base so that you know where it came from. It was really busy in the market I shudder to think what it's like in the tourist season, we thought that it would be a good idea to have something to eat to help with the wine consumption and after a sandwich which not like a boxed ones from the shelf in Greggs these are freshly made ciabatta with your choice of filling like freshly carved jamon. Then it was time for a walk around exploring the old streets of the city, unfortunately this was not the day for doing a great deal of exploring as the rain started to fall and properly fall, we had to retreat into a coffee shop to keep dry along with lots of people, the coffee shops, bars and restaurants must love when it rains heavily. Fortunately just as I finish my coffee the rain stops and we are back exploring but the running for cover into various shops continues for the rest of the afternoon it's really not great fun our plan of staying out for the evening was diminishing very quickly but we did want to head down to the river and have a look at the bridges and restaurants that line the river. On our way down the narrow streets there were sounds of great joviality coming from a small bar, it was obviously a local's bar and not a tourist joint this is just

our type of place, there is a group of about 12 guys who have just finished their meal and were having a great deal of fun and obviously had a great friendship, it reminded me that guys should get together and talk, I am going to arrange to go for a meal with the guys when we get home. Anyway the place is great, none of that fancy stuff and talking with broken English and very broken Portuguese I find that it is a family business and all of the people working there were sisters, brothers uncles and aunties. Four of the family are sitting next to us eating a stew from a very large pan, it did look really good but we did wonder what it was as I had heard that there is a culture of eating every part of an animal. I can't help myself I have got to ask, it turned that it was squid and vegetables which we are both very pleased about as a bowl of the stew is put on our table for us to try, it was really good and fortunately just squid and not tripe or something similar. We have to leave or I think we would have been there all night. We say farewell and walk down to the river, now I know that it was raining heavily earlier but now it was not just raining it was raining as hard as it could, this wasn't going to be a pleasant night out and it was time to call an uber to return us to Glo. Now I had said previously that we hadn't seen many electric cars or charging points and today was no different that was until the Uber arrived and yep it was a new all electric Hyundai it was a nice car and even with the wipers on it got us back to Glo in no time at all, it was a really nice car. That's it for today and we are going to head inland tomorrow as the forecast says that the weather here is not getting any better and city sight seeing in persistent rain is not our idea of a good time.

Stop over Same car park as last night

Day 14 Sunday 9th March

If we had been on a normal 2 week holiday we would be on our way home today but we are only just getting started, that said my original route is looking like it won't happen as so far we have only done about 700 miles which makes it look like we will have to do the end part of the trip another time, I guess that's good as it means we will have to come back on another trip. Today's rambles are going to be short really short, we are leaving the car park our home for the last couple of nights and heading inland towards vineyards but on the way we are stopping off at a cheap site to replenish Glo's tanks. It is only a short hour and a bit drive to get us to the campground and today we chose the toll road which made things much easier but we do have one concern which is when we arrive at the first toll booth there is no gate no red light turning to green and no beep from the tag 40km later we arrive at the toll booth's and the end of toll road, again there is no gate no lights and no beep saying that we have paid. Which means we don't know if we have paid or are we going to get a fine, I contacted Emovis on a wonderful chat line which told me it was there to help 24/7 with any problem you may, great so I ask my question and it asks for some details and then comes back with the reply, sorry I can not help you with that question please phone tomorrow, well thanks a lot. Before we get to the site we drive through the village but as it's Sunday it's shut, then it's straight to the site and as it is €11 a night let's not get too excited but it's a site and has the stuff we require, there is a strange thing that we have never encountered before, when we have set up the guy running the show arrives and unlocks the ehu box, plugs our lead in and then locks it again, hope he is around tomorrow or we won't be going very far. The sun has come out and I suggest we get the chairs out while we have a cup of tea before we go for a walk along the side of the river, my idea of sitting outside is not responded to favourably as the sun might be out but it's still not warm. The sun that was out half an hour ago has cleared off and has been replaced by the rainman, that's put a stop to our tales of the riverbank walk which also puts an end today's rambles as you don't want to hear about us sitting in Glo looking out of the window or what we had to eat, let's hope tomorrow creates more words to fill a page.

Stop over Amarante Camping, Amarante 4600-099
What three words tribal.short.gushes

Day 15 Monday 10th March

As the rain falls on Glo's roof that put stop to our plans of exploring Amarante and after our ehu cable has been freed from its captivity in the power supply box we head off for our next location which is the wine a port region of Douro and the town of Peso da Regua it's only about a 90 minute drive and again we have chosen to take the toll road option. Oh guess what the rain is getting heavier and is not making for a pleasant drive which I guess would have even less

pleasurable if we had taken the up hill and down dale route as this route took us high into the hill and into the clouds which is just like driving in fog. The other interesting thing is when we get to the toll booths there are no barriers and no beep from the tag to let us know we have paid, I would have to make that phone call to Emovis later. Right that's enough telling you about a boring drive let's skip forward 90 minutes and we arrive at our destination and a community Aire that would be our home for the next two nights, it's a free Aire with water disposal and ehu if you want it for €3 as there is not much chance of any solar we splashed out on electricity. Next job is to phone Emovis a very pleasant member of staff, look it was a lady but I do to be sexist, I explained the situation and she said that the toll could be charged by either the tag or anpr and it should be ok, but I could look at my account in a couple of days and the charge should show on there if not it would be a good idea to call them back, there where a lot of should, could and would's in the conversation that did not fill me with a great deal of confidence but I will check online in a couple of days. Our plan was to park up and then have a look around the town however yes you guessed it mr Rainman had different ideas and we took sanctuary in Glo until it finally stopped and there was even a little bit of sunshine. A friend of ours who is a brilliant photographer nice told me while Jennie and I were on a course with him that the rain should not stop you going out and taking photographs, sorry Dave I disagree and I don't even find it enjoyable walking around in the stuff. Interesting he, Jess, Isla and their dog are currently on a mammoth road trip in their monster truck that they have been on for the last 12 months and it does not look like they intention of returning home anytime soon. I think that it is an amazing experience for them and what a wonderful way for Isla to experience the world at such a young age, keep enjoying yourselves. While the wet stuff had stopped falling we head off for a walk and start with a trip over one of the bridges that span the river which is in full flood and is high up the rivers banks. Then it's into town for a look around, its late afternoon but not late enough for people to be coming out to eat at the various restaurants but it would be rude not to try a glass of vinho, we find a small actually a very small bar and in my perfect Portuguese I ask for a glass of white and a glass of of red wine which isn't a really difficult translation well I didn't think it was however by the look of the lady behind the bar I might as well have been speaking in my fluent Egyptian, we get there in the end and two large glasses of the stuff arrives. We sit watching the world go by, well actually it isn't as it has started raining again and the only thing going past is traffic. With our libation consumed it is time to do battle with the rain and get back to Glo asap, we found that the ehu that plugged into Glo without an issue and was fine unless you used any form of anything that used 240v. After venturing out into the rain to reset the trip which was housed in a locked box fortunately it used to a triangular key like an external electric box, (make sure you have one as lots of things are locked with them in Europe) we always carry one of these with us actually we have got two because they came in a pack of two. Back into Glo, wet coat hung up to dry, turn on 240v and it trips again, with a few oh gosh that's a nuisance the reset performance is repeated and the power is back on but not for long and we a few more oh gosh that's a nuisance. Guess what yep it trips again well it can stay tripped I will look at it tomorrow, it was time for a bit of journey planning and we decided that we are staying here tomorrow and then as the weather has no sign of improvement anywhere in Portugal we are going to head straight down south and then south east to Spain in search of some sun. Right that's a big change of our plan but it needs to be done, I will let you know what our planned route is tomorrow when we have worked it out, until that's it for today.

Stop over Peso da Regua 5050 PT
What three words trickling.insist.background

Day 16 Tuesday 11th Mach

It's a better day today and we head off into town without getting wet for a coffee which is interesting as there two ways of having coffee the first one is to walk in order an espresso hit, drink it in about 30 seconds, or the other way is take a seat order coffees and water and then sit there for an hour more with an empty cup while chatting with your friends. Don't get me wrong I think that it is great for people (men & women) to sit and talk and there is also no one sitting there with a laptop or iPad and headphones, but it doesn't help the coffee shop turn tables some which are not that big, the shops not the tables. Anyway one our fellow CV owners had suggested a train ride to Pinhao and over a coffee and a Fanta a plan is made to go for the train ride, now shall we say that they are not very regular in fact the options were 11.18 or 15.18 firstly we hadn't well missed the the first one by a fair margin probably because we had not got up very early so this gave us the option of catching the 15.18 which did make us think about being able to catch a

return train. As we had a previous experience while travelling on a river boat in Brisbane we had purchased a day ticket and were just travelling around on different boats without paying much attention as to where they were going we just wanted to have a look around on the river. This was working really well, that was until we caught the last one well we didn't actually know it was the last one until we got to the boats destination as we are getting I say thanks for the ride Captain what time is the return, oh he says as the crew tie ropes tightly to the jetty, there isn't one until tomorrow this was the last one. Oh thanks that's great, we weren't on our own with this dilemma as another couple on the boat had done exactly the same as us, right let's find some public transport of some kind well that's what we thought but all other forms of public transport had cleared off to the pub until the next day. The other couple were getting really worried about the situation whereas we were just peed off, right where is that Uber app ok would you like to split the cost of an Uber by the look on their faces they were willing to pay for it if I could get one, anyway 15 minutes later the Uber arrived and transported us all back to Brisbane safe and sound with a tale to tell. The train wasn't that bad as the return was at 18.18 firstly what's with this 18 minutes lark as we all know that's never going to happen unless we were in Japan, app downloaded and ticket purchase made with an over 40 something discount and also a special Spring discount they came to the grand total of £11. We had some time to kill before the trains expected departure time and went for another walk around the town which didn't really take too long, we did go into what I think was a Chinese store massive and probably the biggest store in the town, if you have been in one you will know what they are like, shelves and shelves full of all sorts of tat ranging from espresso cups with hearts and initials on them to underwear of let's say various choices, no we did not buy anything.

Next it's off to the railway station, anyone who knows me will tell you I hate being late for anything and we arrive at the station 10 minutes before the planned departure time that we knew was not going to happen but to be fair it wasn't that far behind schedule. We get on board and I have the feeling that Barb had directed us to 1st class, let's not get carried away it wasn't exactly posh but I think was better than the other carriages and there were not very many people in it but hey we can only be asked to move. The journey is fantastic the track follows alongside the river which is still flowing at a good old rate with white horses on waves, on the river side there are vineyards as far as you can see, built in tiered terraces raising high to the top of the hillside, on the port side of the train the rock face goes straight upwards from the rail track and when you do get a view of the hillside it is also covered in tiered vineyards top the top of the hillside and it's a pretty high hillside. Back to the riverside we soon find out one reason the river is so wild and that because it has being held back and then released through a hydroelectric dam. On the other side of the dam the river is wider and there is a lot of water waiting impatiently to get through the dam, we find out later that the river flows from the top of Spain and when they open their dams the dams in Portugal have to be opened soon after obviously it's not guess work they do talk to each other before opening the gate. The journey only take about half an hour and soon we can see our destination on the left bank as river meanders right, from a distance it looks like it is a bay, getting off the train is interesting as it was getting on as there are no locks on the doors to stop you opening them before the train stops, you can actually open them when the train is moving, as we get close to the platform the guy in front of us opens the doors and goes down to the first stop, the UK HSE would have a heart attack, it's like stepping back in time. Now to find things to do as we have three hours before the return trip, we have a walk around the village, due to the time of year most things are closed, there are a number of signs offering wine and Port tasting but unfortunately these are also closed, we carry on the the end of the Main Street and then back along the river, there are river cruises lasting for different times 1hr, 2hrs up to all day cruises. The next cruise to depart is at 5pm which is a little bit close to comfort for train departure and we give that a miss just in case it is delayed. As we haven't eaten we head back to the Main Street and find a quirky wine and tapas bar, there are only one other couple in there but this looks like a place that would ram packed in the tourist season. We are shown to a table well offered which ever one we liked and were given a menu, here we go we have made our choices of a white wine a red wine and a mixed sharing platter of meats and cheeses, deep breath and time to use my fluent Portuguese, ok here go uma vinho Branco etc and the young guy repeats back to me, ok so one white wine, one etc, dam it I give in, I either say it and I am not understood or I am understood and the person I am talking to speaks fluent English. As it's quiet we have a conversation with the young guy and I first ask how should vinho Branco etc be pronounced and he said that my pronunciation was pretty good and that he understood what I was ordering, oh well I will keep at it then. All over the walls and under the glass top tables are notes from previous

customers saying how much they had enjoyed themselves, these are not on tatty bits of paper but are all new, all the same size and for effect they are different colours, it looks like this is the place to be when things get busy, he does tell us that in the summer there are queues of people waiting outside. What was funny that the other couple were German, that's not the funny bit but what did amuse me was that when they could not be understood they just talking louder while making various gesticulations and repeatedly pointing at things, and I thought that it was the daft English people that did that, obviously I was wrong. Time to go we say goodbye let's just stick to goodbye as we all understood it, next time to get back to the train platform again with no expectations of the train being on time and yep it didn't disappoint but it wasn't late by much. The journey back was just as beautiful as now the sun, which had been out today, was at that time that photographers call the golden hour the light is beautiful with the sun's golden glow shining on the hillsides and the pink and blues hues around the clouds in the sky, what wonderful time of day, of course if we can get up early enough on a clear day we get the same magic light as the sun raises above the horizon, both magic times of the day. It's not long before we are back in Regua. We just have time to visit a small bar for a drink and chat about the day looking over the river as the sun finally sets. You don't want to know the rest as was just back to Glo, dinner and bed oh and no blog creation which means that I will be a day behind again, we do have another excursion planned for tomorrow let's see what that brings, you should know not long after us.

Stop over Same as last night.

Day 17 Wednesday 12th March



We were up early this morning and looking at the pictures above you might be able why are where we went, we are all packed up, blue jobs done and ready for the off at 10am, our tour was not booked until 11am and it's about a 40 minute drive which should mean we were early. We had booked the tour on the internet and to say the tour details and the address were sketchy would be an understatement. The details we have got are put into Sylvia which is now a bit odd as the current satnav voice is a bloke possibly we should rename it Sid or something else if you have any suggestions please let me know. Sylvia (for the time being) gives the route instructions and off we go after about 10 minutes he keeps telling us to go down a track that a horse pulling a small kart would struggle to get down or up and Glo like us was having none of it, initially we think it's trying to take us on one of those short cuts yes they will have happened to you as well, it takes you down some back track and then brings you back onto the same main road that you were already on. This was more than that as even though we stayed on the main road he kept finding dirt tracks, we are high in the hills and eventually find somewhere to stop and check the internet for the address of the vineyard we were going to and after telling Sylvia the new address we are going in completely wrong direction. We head off back towards our original starting point and now instead of us going to be there early for the tour we could be late and that is not good, now unfortunately when I think we are going to be late and I ask Barb to check the directions again and to get the phone number in case we were going to be properly late, yep the address is correct and we don't actually need to panic as the tour is booked for 11.30 doh! When we get to the entrance gates of Sandeman's vineyard which are just off the main road we are then on a single lane cobbled track which meanders and climbs up the hillside as we got higher the track which has nothing to stop you going over the edge gets narrower and as the sheer drop is on Barb's side, her grip on the door handle and the seat get tighter as she got quieter, I don't say anything but I did wonder what would happen if anything came the other way. We continued upwards to the very top of the hillside and got the car park then Barb could release her grip and talk, I did think of asking if she enjoyed that drive but I thought better of it, I quite enjoyed it and it

was made all the better as we were early and we had also stopped on the way to have a look at the dam and the amazing force of the water which at one side was calmly waiting on one side and exiting the other as a wild foaming torrent of angry water.

The security guy shows us which way to go and we head off down the hill towards the glass fronted building which has an amazing view of the hillsides and the valley, it turned out that the guard had sent us the wrong way as this was the tasting room and actually the end of the tour. We are accompanied by the guide back to the top of the hill and to where the tour would begin, they are still waiting for some more people to arrive and explained that lots of people do arrive late due to the location. There's me getting wound up about the possibility of being a couple of minutes late, but after being at business meeting and seeing someone given a welcome glad you could make it followed by the guy on the stage asking for a round of applause for the late arrival, you ain't going to let that happen to you, it's also bad manners and puts you on your back foot. Anyway that's not happening any more and what's wrong with me we are only here for a Port tasting. It turned out the reason why the other couple were late was that they had been on a boat tour where we had been yesterday and it was late getting back, so it was a good job we hadn't gone on one yesterday as we may have been waving to the train as it went past us. Right let's get this party started, I mean tour started we. The tour was very informative but unlike other tours we have been on at other vineyards, breweries or distilleries it didn't have anything happening but that was due to nothing happening until the end of the August when the grapes are harvested and everything goes a bit nuts, due to Global warming the grape harvesting time has moved forward to the end August from October. At the end of the tour you walk down a dimly light corridor and when the doors are opened you are in the tasting room with its vast windows giving you fantastic views over the vineyards cover hillsides in the bright sunshine, yep sunshine. We sit overlooking the vista with our three different Port varieties on the table in front of us, we start with the White then Tawny and finish with a Ruby. Our guide takes us through the process of making the different varieties, there was me thinking they were just white, red or redder, I didn't really, before the tasting Barb pours us a glass of water to have between the different courses but when moving the bottle across the table it catches the top of the glass containing the white port and over it goes hitting the glass topped table dispensing the contents over the table and Barbs knee, fortunately it broke the stem of the glass leaving the bowl complete and even contained some port and that was we had three glasses of the stuff. Now have a choice do I just smell the stuff and let it just touch my tongue or drink it, as the car park does not close for another 7 hours the option is to drink it and then have our lunch in the car park and wait for a couple of hours chilling in Glo oh and we do go to the shop to make a purchase. Obviously I am not going to drive if above the limit which is virtually nought and to make sure it's ok I have a breath test analyser with us and that is showing completely Zero. Now the question is what do we do, it's getting on in the afternoon so there is not a great deal of point setting off southwards and we head back to last night's stop over to give us a fresh start tomorrow. After dinner we head off into town to see what night life is going on as we know that the Spanish and the Portuguese do not eat until late in the evening, well if they wanted to eat in this town they had one option and that was the Indian restaurant as that was the only place that was open but empty but the aroma's wafting out of the open door were fantastic. With not one bar open and absolutely no one around as there was nowhere for them to go, we head back to Glo to try and recover from the excitement of the evening, I suppose it was good as even though it's not within our usual driving rules we have a long drive day ahead of us tomorrow, I will let you know the plan tomorrow.

Stop over same as last night again

Day 18 Thursday 13th March

As there is no sign of the weather improving we are heading straight down south using the toll roads rather than following the coast, we don't see any point in that as the coast in the rain and cold is not a great deal of fun. The plan is to get somewhere near to or past Lisbon, we are not stopping at Lisbon as we have been there and saw lots if not of the sights with our wonderful friends. It's about a 4 hour drive plus stops on route but the first thing we have got to do is put some fuel in Glo or we won't be going anywhere, as we really need fuel and there are no options we have to go and be legally mugged and pay €1.72 a litre which is downright theft against the €1.38 we paid in Spain, there is no way we are filling Glo's bottomless pit of a tank at that price, as previously a guy puts the fuel in for you and I ask him to stop at €50 which hardly made the

fuel gauge move but we know had just under 300 miles before we needed more of the stuff. Right this is going to be a bit of a boring day as there were no real incidents on route apart from getting mugged again when we stopped for a coffee and a snack at one of the services, who's food and prices are on about a par as the UK but it did sell draft beer which is just insane. Let's skip 4 or 5 hours and we arrive at the first one of our two planned destinations, firstly we went to the Auchan supermarket for some provisions and also they have a laundry and we need to get some washing done. Ok let's skip that bit and from there we headed off for tonight's stop over which is a free Aire with electric and fresh water on each pitch, showers and stuff and emptying stuff for Glo, how much well is free totally free including the electric. I did say this was going to be a short story day but even I didn't think it was going to be this short but there you go, tomorrow we will head further south towards Faro which is another three or four hour drive which we will probably do in one go but we may have a change of mind and find a stop over on route, I am thinking let's get there and enjoy it, we will let you know tomorrow and the phones have just binged and let us know we have another house booking so that will help the budget and Lucas's bank balance a bit, let's see what happens tomorrow.

Stop over Area Erra, Coruche Satarem 2100 PT

What three words harp.cavern.similarities

Day 19 Friday 14th March

We were in a bit of quandary this morning wether to stay here as the sun was shining and we could sit out and enjoy the sunshine or head off further South towards Sagres which is about a 4 hour drive plus stops, we probably would not drive that far and would find another stop over but that would have us arrive on Saturday and we don't really like arriving in tourist spots at the weekend because of them there tourists, oh is that not us. Eventually we decided to leave, now I guess that so far we have only seen about 10 other UK vans on our trip and just as we are about to leave we get a bit of a surprise when a young lady arrives at the door and tells us that her and her husband are 4 vans away in their CV20 how nuts is that, pleasure to meet you Diana and Chris who are heading in the opposite direction to us, safe travels to you both and we hope we can meet at a CV gathering or somewhere. We set off and our first stop Was to Lidl as the Auchan we went to yesterday had a very small selection of food, it did have 2 lanes of animal related food and stuff which is not much use to us as we do not have any form of animal since the gold fish died.on the meat counter there were some objects of unknown origin or we could have had a whole rabbit for €7 but that wasn't really an option, they didn't even have any bananas. Lidl did have more stuff that was known to man in the meat and fish sections and they did have bananas, we purchased things that we recognised along with a bottle of red fizzy stuff with a cork for the obscene cost of €3, Barb is hoping that it will taste like the Sparkling Shiraz that she had and fell in love with in McLaren Vale Oz, personally I doubt it very much. While we are in Lidl we are still contemplating wether we should stay or go, the sun was shining and it seemed a waste of sunshine to be driving, we can always drive tomorrow and as we have not as yet in 18 day had a chair outside never mind one with sun or a bum on it, that's it we are staying. After paying for provisions we head back to the same site for the day and the night, this really puts paid to saying much about the rest of the as it was spent outside in the sun reading a book yes an actual book as the internet and phone connection was at best pre steam power, which was good in one respect. Glo was looking a bit mucky so out came the waterless wash and wax to bring her back to her sparkling self I never thought that this stuff would be any good but it is, well apart from the higher parts of Glo as I am a bit of a short arse, it wasn't until later that I remembered that there is a small folding step somewhere under one of the seats which I suspect is the left one, next time the cleaning stuff is out I will have a hunt for the stool. While we are sitting in the sunshine the young French guy that is parked in front of in what was once a 52 coach or possibly a bus and it's definitely a work in progress project, gets a set of ladders out, now why didn't he get them out earlier, and then two 5lt tins of something which it soon became apparent as to what it was, as out of one of the many lockers he produced a roll of fibreglass matting and then proceeded to lay the matting and resin, it didn't look like health and safety was high on his list as he was not wearing any glove and we know that this stuff does two things, it makes your skin itch and it's also as sticky as a sticky thing can be, as for a face mask don't even bother asking, fortunately there is a gentle breeze which is blowing in the right direction to carry the fumes away from us, as the other thing it does is stink. For todays blog it all goes down hill rapidly from there as sitting out

in the sun reading a book while tasting a glass of red fizzy which at 3 Euro surprisingly enough was absolutely nothing like the sparkling Shiraz we had in Mc Vale while watching the Tour Down Under go through the village four or five times on its circular route for the day. After all that excitement it was a bit more sitting, cooking, eating and bed so that's why it's another short one today and as we will be driving tomorrow I might have to dig into the reserved stories to keep you occupied and on the edge of your seats, we will have to wait until tomorrow to find out.

Stop over Same gaff as last night

Day 20 Saturday 15th March

There was still the lingering smell of fibreglass resin in the air this morning as I don't think that it cured too well overnight, now we might be getting good at this decision making lark as we have decided to be like migrating birds and head south to Sagres in a hunt for some sun as the weather forecast for here and a good way down is not good so let's get as far south as we can and hope that it improves. It was about a four hour drive and you don't want to hear about that especially as we have chosen to use the toll, yes it will cost a few quid and we know exactly how much for few days until it appears on our account. You might ask why we would we use a toll road we'll Sid or Sylvia what ever he would like to be known as, told us that using the toll road would take about 4 hours plus stops and the none toll road would take 12 hours (obviously longer in Glo) plus stops which would probably include at least 2 overnight stops so easy decision really. Let's skip the 4 / 5 hour drive but just pick up on the highlights, firstly just like our wonderful motorway system make sure that you fill up with gogo juice before you get on one, then unlike our motorways when you are leaving or going to the services on ours you get an easy additional 300yd lane in which to slow down and then usually a gradual turn to take you off. Well guys not in mainland Europe guys, yes you do get 300, 200, 100 meter markings but they are when you are in a live lane with traffic coming up behind you at 120kph, then you get a 50 foot braking zone which is closely followed by a 90° right hand turn or even a full circle to get you onto a connecting motorway with a speed limit of 40kph, ok that might be a slight exaggeration but it's not far off. The vast majority of drivers are extremely lane conscious, overtake pull in, sometimes the pull in can be a bit close and also what's the point of overtaking someone and then applying the brakes it seems a bit counter productive if you ask me. Also the majority keep to the speed limit which is usually 120kph then when you look in the mirror you can see a projectile in the distance approaching at a considerable rate of knots, it passes us like we are stopped and within a couple of seconds it was gone along with the flames being spat out of its exhausts, the quick look that we got as it went past confirmed it was a BMW M3 with big fat wheel arches and judging by the noise it made I guess that it may have received a little bit of engine tuning and the cats removed, flipping heck it was quick. Right that has used up the 4 and a bit hours drive and we arrive at Sagres, there a couple of stop over options all of which are free but basically just car parks, two of them are handy for the shops as one is in Lidl's car park an the other is the Auchan car park but we fancy going a bit more upmarket to a car park closer to the sea and head to the one by the old fort. Obviously we were not the only ones that had the same idea as it was full of all forms of homes on wheels ranging from small vw caddy vans to 12 ton monster trucks, don't get it wrong this is not some piddling little car park it's massive, we find a space looking out towards the sea it's a good way off and when we walk out to see the sea it was also 200 foot down a sheer rock face, if you fall off you won't be getting up. The forth park up is closer to the sea but is supposed to be daytime parking only but it does not look like anyone is paying any attention to that as it is also full of vans, I shudder to think what it is like in the summer. The sun is out and would be wrong not to find a beach bar and sit out in the sunshine and the first one we found won our custom, now the €2 for a large glass of wine and the €2 for a large beer that we have been enjoying up North are not happing here by any stretch of the imagination and times of €4 a round are gone and I don't suppose we will those prices anytime soon as we head along and then up the coast with all of the tourist stuff but I bet you will be able to get a full English and free shots to tempt you into a bar with music blasting out. It makes me think that we should have stayed up north for longer, but the weather was atrocious and at least the sun is shining here but 2 bears are €11 which is cheap for 2 bears but as for beer that's nearly 3 rounds up north, bit like the UK I suppose. We have a walk around the town which there really isn't that much of and then return to Glo just before, guess what happens yep it starts raining, sorry folks it looks like we have brought it with us, that's put paid to our romantic hand in hand walk along the beach which in one respect was good as getting to the beach is a bit like bouldering competition in flip flops and coming back

in the dark would just be darn right dangerous especially when gazing romantically into each others eyes, I can hear the ouch that hurt. As will have guessed that's your lot, more tomorrow.

Stop over Parking Fortaleza, Sagres, Vila do Bispo, Faro 8650 PT

What three words disservice.muses.goodies

Day 21 Sunday 16th March

Up early this morning, the sun is shining and it's warm, we looked out the back windows of the van and can see a guy standing at the very edge of the cliff and at first were concerned and we saw two other people with him, nosey as nosey people are I get the binoculars out to have an even better nose and then can see clearly that he is unpacking something, then all is revealed he is going paragliding, helmet on and all geared up ready to go it was time for him to get some air into the parafoil, the air got into the parachute and he was ready for take off or so he thought as just as he was about to fly off into the the wind and the chute had a different idea and turned him round facing inland. After a bit of a fight with the chute he showed it who was boss and then he was soaring above the sea as the white water waves ideal for surfers came crashing down on the beach below, shortly he is joined by another paraglider who had taken off from further around the bay. They past each other too and throw over the sea and the cliffs, now as interesting as it is I think it might be more fun and exhilarating doing it than watching it, it's not before I had enough of watching them it's time for me to go for a walk into town to try and find a bakery or shop selling fresh baguettes, it's a bit early on a Sunday morning so I stop for a coffee on route, again it is obvious that we have moved to a more expensive part of the country as we are now in Costa coffee prices and maybe a bit more expensive if that's possible, after being legally mugged for my coffee the baguette hunt continued. It after a while it became obvious that at this end of town you are only going to be able to buy surfing type of stuff and not actual food and I head off in the direction of Lidl and the Auchan I wasn't going to walk to them as it was a fair hike but I did think that there may have been something on route but there wasn't and I suppose with hindsight there wasn't going to be one as even if at sometime there had been one, the arrival of Lidl and Auchan will have seen them and many other small businesses off, this is always a shame but it is our own fault by not supporting local businesses and buying cheaper products while making our shopping easier. Get me off that soap box, defeated by the baguette hunt I had back with nothing to show from my hunter gatherer mission, I headed off to have a look at the other bay where the cliffs were just as high and on the beach the surfers are just about to head into the sea, time to use some time watching surfers surf, it took forever for them to get out to the surf starting point by which time I was getting bored which was only enhanced when they tried to ride the incoming waves, the standing up bit did not last very long and then they were carried by the waves back towards the beach then it was time to repeat the process of getting back out there, well that was enough of that. Just as I was about to head back Barb and Glo the paraglider's started to fly along the beach as if looking for a place to park and yes they were, when there was a clear part of the beach that was suitable the first lunatic started his descent and landing approach, now they call balloon landings a controlled accident, this guys landing was more like a controlled crash and more like an uncontrolled crash. Fortunately after bouncing along the beach he picked himself up pretty quickly, you know the way that you do as if to say it's fine I meant to do that and then quietly say to yourself, shit that hurt but there's still nothing to see here. Now the second lunatic must of been watching this and laughing to himself as this smart arse touched down slowly and delicately at walking speed, took a few steps along the golden sand and then turned around and gathered his chute before it had chance to touch the sand, the first guy was standing there saying gosh isn't he good at this followed by something beginning with t. That's enough excitement for one morning and I head back to Glo oh and Barb, the walk back was t shirt and shorts weather but the forecast was for rain in an hours time. The weather forecast was 100% correct as an hour later it started to rain and never stopped, well it did for a minute but that was only to gather some strength to rain heavier. That really put a stop to the rest of the day and instead of going for a walk we sat in Glo watching and listening to the rain, now the weather not only stopped our plans it's also brought this to an abrupt end as there is no point explaining how to sit down and look out of a window in the afternoon that's an accou job, stop it you can't say that, we are on the move again tomorrow but only a 15 minute drive along the coast so let's see what that brings, we will find out tomorrow and you will find out later than us.

Stop over same as last night

Day 22 Monday 17th March

Yesterday was one of those milestone days which when you were working was the last day of your three weeks holiday which in most cases was the best you were going to get, which means if that was the case I would be back in work today but thankfully I am not, didn't you just hate that first day back, a thousand emails that even though you set the darn thing to auto reply and say sod off and ask someone else I am on holiday, you still got more saying that you haven't got back to them. Then there is the list of stuff that hasn't been done because no one wanted to, not sure why as by the afternoon that had lists delegated to them and also asking them for a response as why they hadn't dealt with them in the first place, that question was probably a bit more harsh. Then there are the ones that you had to deal with and having to explain why you had the audacity to take a holiday rather than answering their questions that were pretty stupid in the first place, but you bite your lip and don't tell them so. After looking at the weather forecast yesterday we had fairly or very low expectations of it being a good day but it looked like they were wrong as it's a beautiful morning with the sun shining brightly in a clear blue sky. We have a couple of jobs to do on route before setting off on today's extremely long journey of about a whole 20 minutes up the road to the small village of Burgau, a friend of ours used to live here but has since moved back to Manchester not sure why but she has, that's not a dig at Manchester. Coincidentally she is coming back on Wednesday to stay with a friend and we have arranged to meet up on Wednesday or Thursday. First job is fuel as the Intermarche or the Auchan have the cheapest fuel going by more than a £1 a UK pound per gallon, we choose the Intermarche that is a couple of minutes out of the town and also has facilities for emptying all waste and water to top up the water tank, we hadn't noticed before but there are also a couple of bays for stop overs. We also need to do some shopping which again takes over an hour as I can't stop looking at stuff, I always laugh when we arrive at the tills and put our shopping on the conveyor belt, our food shopping consists of a sausage, a baguette, some ham, another tomato not sure why as I do not like them but we seem to be collecting the rascals, from there on it all goes down hill and absolutely everything is bad for you follows behind the tomato, there is wine, beer, a variety of cakes obviously including some Paste De Nata followed by some more wine and beer, hey there is nothing wrong with healthy eating and we are on our holidays. We really must start as if we were at home as the trip is a marathon not a sprint, come to think of it, it does resemble the conveyor belt at Tesco's but there is a difference, you pay in Pounds not in Euro's, talking about euro's we weren't really but we are now, I am not sure what type of bank card that you use in Europe, we use a Monzo card and have done for years it's great, anyway whatever you use if you are given the option to pay in Euros or the good old British pound, always choose Euros obviously it fluctuates a bit but we have been getting an exchange rate of €1.19 which the Monzo app tells you as soon as you tap the card, if you opt to pay in that UK pound you get smacked round the chops and are given €1.02. This doesn't only happen in Europe it happens in every other country we have ever visited, obviously the conversion is in the country's currency not Euro's I just wanted to point that out, laughing with tears in eyes smiley face, I may be extolling the benefits of a Monzo card but I don't work for them and other cards are available. Flipping heck we haven't even left Sagres yet, it's a good job that we are not going far, ok filled up with everything we need we are off and 20 minutes later we are in Burgau and as we arrived the weather man's threats arrived the sky went dark and it started bucketing down. Now let me set the scene the town is on a hill and we are at the top of it and the car park is by the sea which in case you hadn't noticed is a lot lower yes it's called sea level, the streets are made of the small 3 inch or 7.6 centimetre whichever you prefer and are made of the shiniest slippiest stone going they also raised in the middle lacking the surface area of whatever grip they offer is next to nowt and we have to descend sharply downwards on a road that is only single track with houses on either side and is just wide enough for Glo to fit down, now this isn't one way so if anything try's to get up as we go down they better be good at reversing. Fortunately we only meet another car at the very bottom although there were three cars close behind so they all had to select reverse and let us through, finally with a sigh of relief we are in the car park just time for the rain that was in buckets is now in Barrels the big ones. Needless to say we didn't go anywhere for a while, then there was a break in the weather, I think they must have run out of water and we head off to explore the town with umbrella's in hand. Yes the town is up that hill and we find out how slippery these polished cobblestones really are, we probably didn't realise on the way down as Glo's chunky BF Goodrich tyres had stuck to them much better than Barb's trainers did. We get to the top and as it

is only a small town nothing is happening as yet until the holiday season, tourists and better weather turn up, as such the walk around the town did not take long and we head off down the slippery cobbled hill back to Glo. You might know what's coming next and yes Barb's trainers loose any form of grip or traction with cobbled street and off she goes, for a moment I thought she had taken up snowboarding but then with balance gone there was a shout of ouch as her ar?? sorry bottom made direct contact with the same things that seconds ago her feet where on, that there guy Sir Issac didn't get it wrong. I get her check that she is ok and check that there is nothing serious, well I wouldn't want it to spoil the holiday, yep she is ok so I get her to her feet and tell her to get on with it, oh yeh like I am that brave. With a what will be bruised bum we go down the hill holding my arm a smiling at the two local guys that had been watching her downhill experience. She is still in a bit of shock and suggests that we stop at the next tavern which fortunately at the bottom of the hill, we take a seat and there is an ouch as someone's bun touched the seat. The waitress comes over, can you call a lady a waitress or both sex's now waiters, anyway Barb says that she could do with a glass of Vinho Tinto to calm her nerves while I make do with a coffee. As per our rules of engagement after three or four days wild camping, if you can call a car park wild, we are looking for a campsite and the other rule is that if it's only for a night or two it has to be cheap and have stuff like hot showers. There is nothing that that fits those parameters near Burgau but we find one very close to the centre of Lagos and that town is going to be much lively than here, now the reviews on Search for sites are to say at least mixed, look it's €12 a night and if you want to splash out it's an extra €2 for unmetered EHU it's not going to be the Hilton, but our thought process is that if you set your expectations low and sometimes as low as a snakes belly you will not be disappointed. We arrive at the site and go completely mad and pay the extra €2 for the EHU extravagant or what, the guys tell us to pick anywhere we like in a certain area and when it stops rainy come and tell him where we are and he will come and unlock the power supply box, I mention that it might be Wednesday before it stops raining, worryingly he nods and says yes that's possible. This idea of locking the power supply box isn't new to us as it has been the same on a couple of others, now the reviews were not wrong it is basic very basic and you would not want to stay here for a weeks holiday although there are some people obviously living here full time. Look it's ok for us as we had based our expectations on the snakes belly idea so are not disappointed, we have stayed in worse places, granted not in Europe, it's a 10 minute walk into Lagos centre and the other option was to pay a lot more and be further out of town. There is a break in the weather and I head off to get the guy to unlock the box he takes no chances and comes with umbrella in hand. It might only be a ten minute walk into Lagos but that did not happen today but we will be tomorrow and if it does rain we will just blow the budget and get a cab back, but that is for tomorrow and I will let you know then for now I will have to put up with a fair amount of ouch, ow and some more ouches, I bet there will some more tomorrow.

Stop over Camping Trinidad's, Lagos, Faro, 8600-513PT
What three words booster,ridge.browser

Day 23 Tuesday 18th March

I did forgot to mention yesterday about the ascent of what is now known as Barbara's hill, we left the car park and approached the North Face of the Eiger with some trepidation wondering if we would meet another vehicle coming down and would Glo succumb to the snowboarding road surface that Barb had found. We arrive at the bottom of the hill and I had been hoping that there would be another van or car in front of us ready to attempt the ascent that we could have followed alas that was not the case and we were on our own in the race to the summit. We check that there is nothing coming downwards, press the power button on Glo's autobox and we are off and Glo powers her way to the top of the hill with ease, her BF Goodrich tyres not showing any sign of loosing adhesion, being serious for a minute and only a minute these tyres are fantastic they improve the ride and have more grip than a sticky thing sticking to a thingy, that is a sort of anagram for a different sentence. During the night there were a few more ouch, ow accompanied by a couple more ouches separated by some light sounds of snoring. It turned out that after her undignified exit from her snowboard which Barb said would be more fitting if had been a surfboard, my answer was that as she can not do either it didn't really matter and also surfboards have fin, anyway she not only landed on bum, her left knee had also made contact with the cobbles which Mr Google informed me is Limestone Barb said that she wasn't actually bothered what it was called, I think that's what she said, whatever it is it was darn hard. Time to dig into the

first aid kit for a tube of Ibuprofen gel and apply a liberal quantity on her left knee with another ouch and a golly gosh that hurts. About a minute later I asked if we were going for a walk into town, which with hindsight wasn't a great idea, oh ok my luv shall we wait for a while this appeared to be a more sensible suggestion. While we wait for the ibuprofen to do its stuff I do a bit of van spotting and I tell you what even though this is not the most salubrious of sites there is some expensive kit parked up, there are a couple of Morello monsters which are a couple of 100 grand at least and also a couple of Mobilvetta monsters which are also around 100 grand. As I wait patiently for Barb's knee to improve I am gazing out of the window and another big Mobilvetta arrives and parks close to us, this site has no pitch parking and it's just park where you like, as it's out of season there is loads of space and it looks like they are going to try everywhere that is available. The wife is walking around checking out various places which are very similar, the couple are Italian and we do know that Italians can get a little excited and these two were no different, the wife is directing her husband to park in various places forward, backward, sideways and all directions available during the don't park there park here no not there over here and turn it round so it faces that way, the conversation gets louder and more excitable. By this time I am laughing so much tears are streaming, unfortunately for my amusement they finally decide on a spot, still having a lively volatile conversation. Then fortunately for my amusement isn't actually over as when he goes to connect to the EHU power box the cable is too short, this was the straw that broke the camel's back and the place is like a battlefield, finally he moves the thing closer to the power and by the pointing and gesticulations that is obviously where it is staying, then just to put the top hat on things they realise that they have got to get the power box unlocked, she storms off to the office to get the guy with the key, god help him, don't you just love people watching.

Next it's off into town for a look around it's about a 15 minute walk and as usual it's either up or down, we arrive at the old town and fortunately it is not raining as the streets pavements are made from Barbs favourite snowboarding white stones and the streets are nearly as steep as the ones in Burgau. We wander around the streets which are full of tourist type shops you know the stuff that they sell, stuff like fridge magnets with I heart Lisbon with made in China on the back then the rows of well known decorated Portuguese boomerangs, which I did not know that they used, surprisingly these also had made in China on the back. There are lots of American tourists which by the look of it are on form of group as they are shop hunting in packs, I was fairly surprised that they didn't armfuls of Boomerangs, I did smile a bit when some were looking at glass fish of various sizes and colours hanging from fishing line and saying that they liked them and that they would make good Christmas tree decorations, that would not have been my first thought of a use for them but to each their own. There are also numerous restaurants trying to get your business, and the tourists who again think that rather than trying to use a bit of Portuguese with some help from Google translate to place their orders we are back to let's speak louder in our native tongue while pointing excitedly. This is made even more stupid as everyone working in bars, restaurants, shops and other the business's all speak perfect English, I have been reliably informed that to get a job in any form of tourism job you have Got to speak English. We choose somewhere to eat and even though the sun is not cracking the flags, well it as t even out, we take a seat outside and very quickly have menus in our hands, when we go to restaurants I always love seeing what other diners are having. This lets me put meals into a couple of categories, yep I like the look of that, that's a possibility and the no chance variety which usually includes something green or has salad involved, my perusal of what was happening on other tables didn't actually take very long as each table it was either quiche with salad or a cheese and ham toasty, some even went totally off piste and had ham and cheese, it's a good job battered fish and chips weren't on the menu. Well the inspection of the various tables didn't get me into a wow I have got to try that, after I checked the menu and the daily specials board there were a couple of things that looked interesting but didn't really know what it was, I was with the it's fish, meat, poultry bit but didn't have a clue as to how it was cooked, so a conversation with the waitress as to figure things out. She seemed a bit shocked that I was asking and not going for the ham and cheese sandwich, we went through the options, I chose Codfish a Bras which she told me was a traditional Portuguese dish, I got the impression that they didn't get a great many orders for the dish. Our meals arrived and my codfish a bras wasn't really anything out there, it was salt cod, onions, shoestring fries and probably something else in scrambled eggs which were just set enough to maintain a square shape It also came with chips which were freshly fried crisps, it really wasn't as out there and was a bit like kedgeree without rice or curry powder, which I suppose is nothing like kedgeree but you get the idea, now we ordered a couple of beers to accompany our lunch, now this may have been the

reason that things went down hill rapidly this todays blog comes to an abrupt end. The first beer was accompanied by a second but then we paid our bill and left without having another drink but after we had walked what must have been all of 12 yards or even shorter in metres, there was another bar which was having a happy hour, well I say hour it started at 1pm and finished at 11pm. As it was 2.25pm which meant it was 5 o'clock somewhere which is a stupid saying as it always 5pm somewhere, well I think it is. Anyway first on the list of happy hour specials was Margaritas which at the time remember 2.25pm seemed like a good idea, now as with most spirit related measures served on the continent it's just guess work and always over estimated making all spirit based drinks stronger than the piddling little quantity that a jigger holds in the UK. This made these margaritas like something they use to get rockets off the ground and to the moon and back, it's a darn good job that there weren't any nude flames knocking about. Right if we had any sense we would have paid and gone for a walk around, but did we did we heck as our confidence has increased by the previous glass of jet fuel served in Mexican green cactus stemmed glasses. After our second round with these things we make the sensible decision not to have another in case it laid us flat on the canvas, like proper adults who obviously know better we paid our bill and departed. Now after another 12 yards there was another bar offering special happy hour discounts, you think we went in don't you, well your wrong we refrained from entering, hey aren't we good, well we were for a while, then after what must have been a 20 minutes we came to another bar which was extremely lively and looked like it was going to be loads of fun and was beckoning us in, now our brains were saying no but the little guy on our shoulders was saying go on get in there for just the one Mrs Wembley, younger readers will have to look for the Mrs Wembley phrase from aging tv programme, don't forget it was really getting late it must have been at least ten past four. It was really lively in there and then there was a real problem as the special priced cocktail of the day was Long Island Iced Tea probably my favourite cocktail next to Amaretto sours but out of the two the contents of the iced tea version is bound for mars never mind the moon. The first two arrive containing more white spirit than there is on the paint thinners shelf in B&Q, they obviously contained coke yea about a teaspoon of it, you will have noticed that I said the first two and after the second one things started fuzzy and foggy and then fuzzier still, it was definitely time to pay and go. God knows how or why but but a modicum of sense kicked in and said that it was time to go, that modicum of sense never usually happens but fortunately it did on this occasion, then it was time to remember where Glo was and how to get to her, shortly later we are reunited with Glo and that was about us done, I am convinced that it was too much fresh air on the return journey and that is about your lot for today, tomorrow we are meeting a friend in town, hopefully with not too much of a headache fingers crossed I will let you know tomorrow.

Stop over Same as last night

Day 23 Wednesday 19th March

At 5am there is a message from my head to get up and get the first aid bag and retrieve 2 paracetamol and not to put the packet away as more will probably be required later, I have to admit that I was feeling a bit worse for wear this morning, oh and I wasn't on my own, my better half was asking for a share of the paracetamol tablets. We were meeting a friend of ours for morning coffee a walk around and then lunch, she used to live here for 20 years but sold her apartment and moved to Manchester a few years and has just popped back for a week to stay with friends, great timing and not at all planned as she booked her flights back in December so pure coincidence we are all here at the same time. Her way of getting here was a bit quicker and cheaper than our route, wait for this 20 quid for flight here, 16 quid to get back, 61 Euro for a weeks car hire and she arranges 1 year insurance for 49 Euro so no additional hire car insurance, is that just nuts. We had arranged to meet her at 11 o'clock so we needed to get our act's together and try and stop moaning about headaches, we found that standing under fast flowing hot water and have it pouring onto our heads improved things fairly quickly, obviously this happened in separate cubicles, there was none of that showering with a friend lark going on. We have arranged to meet in a cafe which helped even more as I was able to consume a couple of coffees before she arrived, when she joined us we ordered her a coffee and it would have been rude not to join her, hey they are only small cups but I might not sleep for a while and my eyes are ceramide open. Then it was time for Cath to show us around the none tourist bits and the restaurants and bars (don't mention bars) that locals go to, which are obviously cheaper and more authentic than the ones in the main tourist areas, she suggests a few alternatives for our lunch but

we let her lead the way. After lunch Cath had to return to Burgau as she had something arranged we said our farewells and we will see here when we get home. We head of into town and have more of a walk around while avoiding every bar on route, it's then time to head back to Glo as the weather forecast did not looking good, in fact it looked flipping awful. Fortunately we arrived back at Glo just before it started raining properly, the sky had turned black and the rain was torrential flowing across the campground accompanied by thunder and lightning, and just to make things a bit more interesting the wind decided to join in as the forecast predicted. They had predicted 50 to 60 Miles per hour winds, Glo rocked around for most of night for all of the wrong reasons and fir cones flew from the surrounding trees landing on Glo's roof which certainly made us jump. Fortunately we were not parked directly under any trees but if they had fallen they may have got us but there was no option of moving as there were trees all over the site, we were luckier than others as a guy had arrived earlier with a two man tent and not a very expensive one, it did look like it had just come from the centre isle in Lidl. The storm continued throughout the night and there was not much sleeping done as Glo did not stop rocking and the fir cones did not stop falling from the trees, which when they land on the roof they sound far worse than it is. This really was a short one probably the shortest one so far and improvements will be made but I have admit to being a bit jaded but will get over it, time to get the pen and paper and write 100 times "I must try harder"

Stop over same as last night

Day 24 Thursday 20th March

Well we survived the night even if we didn't a great deal of sleep but I think we did better than the guy in the tent as at some point during the night he had retreated to the back of his van and was now trying to put the tent somewhere to dry out. All of the trees were still standing but had dispensed lots of leaves, cones and twigs all over the site, as the site is sand based lots of the stuff had been washed onto road parts and flowed down to the lower parts of the site and into people's awnings and they had started a clearing up operation. We were moving on today and were getting Glo ready for departure after being parked up for a couple of days it takes a bit longer than when you are doing nightly stops as you get more stuff out and don't immediately put it away. We are ready for the off but we just have to get unplugged from the locked ehu power supply box, now rather than go to the office and ask Mr Happy to come and unlock it I thought that there might be another way and I don't know if this was a bit of a stupid idea and kids don't try this at home, but as it was just a continental two pin plug I wondered if I could get my hand in through the bottom where the leads came out and pull the plug out. Fortunately Barb did not need to find a defibrillator as the plug came out without a problem, I did it that way as I am a bit daft and impatient so please don't try it if you don't feel confident. Cath gave us a details of a few places to visit and the first one was up in the hills and I really wanted to go in case there were some photograph opportunities, but as we approached we could not see the top of the hill and without using a great deal of brain power I figured out that if we couldn't see the top that when we got there we would not be able to see a great deal, that put a stop to that idea. We continued to the next stop which was a small but lively coastal town, we wander through the streets where a few shops sold those fridge magnets made in you know where and we eventually got down to the beach where there are various restaurants and cafes. In an effort to help the local economy we stopped of for a coffee at a place overlooking the sea, we chickened out a bit and went inside rather than one of the many tables outside, I guess that in the summer this would be totally different and there would be a queue to sit outside but that is not the case today. Then it was more of that walking lark down the promenade and at the end it was turn around and do some more of the same but in the opposite direction to get back from where we started the only difference was that the place on our left on the outward bound walk where now on our right but looked pretty much the same. Barb is perusing the various restaurants menus and suggests that we treat ourselves to a late lunch, there is a possibility of this being more like an early dinner as it's now let's look again at the menu of every restaurant available, now after all these years I should know just to wait at the first one we looked at as that's where we will be going and sure enough that's what happened. Once inside we then have the usual which table are we going to sit at which is made worse by being given the choice of sitting where we like, now they could either be shut or be serving breakfast by the time this could take. I tell you what why don't we sit here overlooking the sea oh yes why don't we do that, I don't sit down immediately just in case the sea decides to move. Drink time you have what you like my dear I will be having Coke as I am driving,

drinks and food ordered and as the meals are prepared on a BBQ it will take about 30 minutes would you like any bread or olives. Since we have been here in Portugal I mean not in this restaurant there has been a distinct lack of balsamic vinegar and here was no different here, we didn't fancy olive oil and white vinegar there was also another reason and that was this restaurant not only charge the price of ten whole baguettes and you get 4 slices they also charge individually for one of those little packs of butter now in my mind that is just taking the p**5, so that's a no thanks to the bread and as Barb does not like olives it is a no to them as well. Barb is having piri piri chicken and I am having spare ribs and the food arrives earlier than expected, probably because we hadn't fallen for the bread and butter lark, that said both meals were very good, it also a no to desserts but we will have another drink as guess what, yep our friend mr torrential rain has returned and no one was going anywhere. In Billy Joel's sound the Piano man there is a great line which I have used a few times previously which is "there's an old man sitting next to me making love to his tonic and gin" well that was me with my Coke, as I didn't want another and I was keeping this one until the rain stopped. Eventually it stopped and there was a mad exodus to get somewhere before it started raining again, we joined everyone else leaving my flat coke behind, before the waitress could say thanks for coming have a nice toady, we were gone, we are in Portugal so what's with this have a nice day crap, I am pretty sure that wherever you are in the world and this is said to you, what they actually mean is thanks for your money now sod off as why on earth would they give one if you had a nice day or not and has anyone ever gone back and said, actually I haven't it was a crap day, me cynical never. As some male twit has not brought either a waterproof jacket or an umbrella it's let's get back to Glo quick before the rain man returns and that means let's stop looking at fridge magnets that we are not going to buy, we could get them tomorrow if we really wanted any and I guess that if all else failed we could get one on a next day delivery from Jeff Bezos although I guess he wouldn't send it personally.

After a very quick stop for a baguette we are back at Glo just in time as the rain man popped back to say hello, we head off to our next and final stop for today and that's a Lidl car park in Portimao which is another short trip, there are a couple of other motorhomes already there but there is one special painted space reserved for Glo, it wasn't really it was just empty when we arrived. You not only have Lidl in which to shop there are other options available, your choices are Aldi, Centro supermarket, Staples if you require some office stuff, a furniture store and also a Chinese supermarket that is massive and sells every bit of tat you can think of over two floors, I am not kidding you could die in there and you would not be found for a month. Then on the way way back there is a port a cabin selling cars and if you want a snack there is a big M, that's enough of that let's get back to Glo we have risked enough time out in the dry. Yes it rained again but that was about it for the day as you don't really want to hear about us sitting Glo for the rest of the evening as it wasn't that interesting, not sure what's happening tomorrow we will have to wait and see.

Stop over Lidl car park Parchal, Faro 8400-330 PT
What three words talents.wept.worm

Day 25 Friday 21st March

Now I thought that this was going to be really short one as our thoughts of going for a walk into town were well a truly stopped, as from the moment we woke up until about 2pm it hadn't stopped raining and that proper stuff that will soak you to the skin, as there was no chance of going anywhere I hadn't even bothered getting changed and was set for a duvet day. What we hadn't noticed yesterday was the Stork and a big rascal sitting on its massive nest at the top of a chimney in Lidl's car park, then we spotted another on a plinth on the chimney, then when you started looking they were all over the place. Two on the top the Staples office stuff shop, one on top of each S, then a couple more on power pylons and also another at the top of another chimney on the way into town, in the short breaks in the rain I went outside to take some photographs of the big Storks and I ain't kidding these are proper big rascals that deliver a pair of twins at once, they looked like they went to the gym a couples of times a week. Now these rascals must have not liked having their photographs taken as when it was raining they were strutting their stuff walking around using every bit of space available, then when it stops raining for less than 2 minutes they jump into their nest and hide, apart from showing the top of their heads every know and then. Don't they know that rather than taking phone camera shots, I had gone to the effort of getting my camera out and proper long lens and then risked taking them

outside with those possibility make that certainty of rain at any time, I gave them ample time and opportunity to have their photographs taken but they obviously didn't want the Facebook publicity, the best I could manage was a very top of head shot, stuff them, me bothered not at all. It looked like there was a break in the weather and we quickly head of towards the town, we got very nearly to the other side of the river before it started doing you know what. Hoods and umbrellas up we head into the old towns narrow streets looking for some shelter, it looked likes the shopkeepers had the same thoughts about the weather and shut up early to head off for a longer than usual siesta and there was not that many people walking around. We took the appropriate action and found a bar and even that experience did not last long as 30 minutes after we arrived they announced that they were closing for the day, ok thanks we will take our business elsewhere and we darn well did. After a bit more of a wander around we found an establishment that was open, willing to take our euro's and had a great view over a square with water fountains, great place for people watching. The people watching experience what not limited to just the people passing by but also some of the clients that this establishment attracted, let's call it a mixed variety of slightly eccentric individuals and their equally eccentric partners, people that just came inside for a site down and then left and then some others that must have been part of the cast of one flew over the cuckoo's nest. Fortunately the rain had stopped and we beat a hasty retreat back to the Lidl car park and Glo's security, which then meant that the rest of the evening will get a bit boring for a blog as it included listening to music on Alexa, having dinner, washing up and some more music. I suppose the most interesting bit was what's happening tomorrow and that is firstly to visit the towns Saturday's food market and then make our way along the coast to Albufeira and we are not sure what type of experience that will be, but we all find out tomorrow, I bet you can't wait.

Stop over Same as last night

Day 26 Saturday 22nd March

We are awake early this morning and after a tea and coffee we are off and the first to stop is to a sort of campsite not far away from Lidl where you can for a small price we can empty and refill Glo's water tanks, we had considered staying here last night but after arriving to carry out the water process we were very happy that we hadn't stayed, let's just say that it was inhabited, yes I suppose that was a fairly apt description of the sites bohemian residents, the Lidl car park was a better place to stay. Next was to find a car park close to the market which after we have visited the market we can head straight off to the Hen, Stag and party time town, are we really sure we are going to do this, no we're not really but as long as we treat it as a laugh and don't get wound up about it, will be ok. The closest parking space to the market that Glo will fit in, is actually another stay over park up that is closer to the town centre, there are a number of vans parked up and a couple that look like they have been there for some time and had no intention of going anywhere soon, also there was the mammoth Morello which seems to be following us or maybe it's the other way around. It's only a twenty minute walk to the market and as we approach there is a buzz in the air with lots of people about, some that been into the market carrying bags overflowing with fresh vegetables and fruit and others like us carrying nothing but anticipation. There are a few stalls outside selling bags, trinkets and stuff but the main event is inside up the stairs to the first floor and as we climb the stairs the buzz gets more intense and we can hear the vendors calling out offering their goods in preference to their neighbours on the next stall. This is more of a proper market unlike the one in Porto which was great fun a did sell fresh produce it was more of a tourist attraction. This market was full of stalls selling vegetables, fruit, now sorry vegetarians but there was also meats of all types and in the next hall was the fish market selling a vast majority of things that live in the sea but I didn't sea sorry see a shark, there are massive chunks of tuna, not like the chunks you get in a tin, these are as if they had brought in a whole tuna then chopped off its head and tail and then we're selling the middle bit, you just told them how thick you wanted your tuna steak and there it was. Back in the meat section the same thing was happening none of that prepackaged or even pre cut stuff here, you just told the butcher what you wanted and he produced a big chunk of the stuff and cut off however much you wanted from a slice of sirloin to a massive tomahawk steaks, the same happened with pork and poultry and few alternatives, not going there.

Ok vegetarians let's back to the place where they are selling green things and obviously stuff of other colours, colours that are so vibrant they look like been painted with the brightest paint

known to man and then every single one had been polished and polished again, all of the fruits look as if they have been through the same process. It wasn't just the colours its the smells that accompany them, it's sensational even the tomatoes smell fantastic and I don't like the things, well that's not really true as I like them cooked, the ones that come in tins, the ones in a sauce Italian style as well as bottled and like the odd bod that I am I like beefsteak tomatoes, the ones I don't like are the ones with seeds surrounding by the slimy stuff that looks like that Psychomagnotheric Slime from ghost busters, they have beefsteak ones here that are the size of a watermelon and everything else is the same massive and oversized, the stuff on the shelves of Tesco's, obviously other supermarkets are available and their produce is nothing like the stuff for sale here. I am not sure if they are missing the trick of selling glasses of wine but I think that most of it would get spilt due to the hustle and bustle here in this serious market. With our senses all fired up we head outside where there is a cafe frequented mainly by locals we find a table which are all outside as inside there is just space for a quick espresso while standing up, they are serving breakfast sandwiches obviously cheese and ham, pork and flash fried steak on homemade bread, that sounds good we will have two and a coffee for me (driving) and as Barb can't drink coffee she follows the locals lead and joins them with a beer, well it's 9.30 am, in defence, the place is full and there is more beer than coffee on all of the tables, I am in the minority but it was good coffee so I had two and the price for it all ten euros. Time to get back to Glo and set off for Albufeira we ask each other if really want to do this and decide that if we are here we have got to give it the benefit of the doubt and it's only 40 minutes away. We are going for a class overnight park up of another Lidl car park, look it's free and you don't need to go far for shopping and if you don't like Lidl there is an Aldi over the road but no M&S. Enter time warp and we are now parked up on one Lidl's special Motorhome parking bays, now we need to prepare ourselves for things to come as at it is still early much too early to head into party town, we have time to get our party gear together which is made more difficult as we haven't brought any fancy dress outfits with us, if we had a bit of forward thinking before we left home we could have brought our Fred and Wilma outfits, oh yea like that was going to happen. It's time to head into town and hopefully we have got our timing right, get there in time to have a bit of a laugh people watching and then get out of there before it gets too stupid, we are going to walk in and then get an Uber for a fast escape back to Glo.

Moving forward 30 minutes we arrive in the old town and the bars are already getting a bit lively, there are definitely some if not most have been on an early starter and are onto the karaoke stages absolutely murdering some of our favourite songs, it's not really singing it's more like shouting down a microphone with the worst voice available while forgetting the words even though they are written on a screen in front of them and even at the correct speed for the song being murdered, but they are either behind, in front or just totally lost or just pissed, more than likely it's a case of all three. Usually at a karaoke you get one smart arse that gets up on stage and sounds and has the actions of a professional singer, you know like Jane McDonald at the end of one her TV cruises shows, unfortunately that was not the case here, there was not one of them could sing in any form other than a cat getting strangled, obviously rspca that doesn't happen here it's just to express a sound effect and as for moves they were a definite no no, I guess that some people did not have a mirror in their hotel bedroom or were told that size 10 clothes looked great on a size18 body and the girls were just as bad, says me who is not the best advert for Hugo Boss. We grab a bite to eat before the madness commences and take a seat for some people watching, you may remember that I said that in the market I hadn't seen a shark well we did here and it was walking rather staggering support by two of its mates, this did surprise me a bit as I didn't know that sharks could walk never mind drink enough alcohol to make them stagger by 5pm, me thinks the shark peaked to early, mind you at 5pm he had chance to go the aquarium have a kip and come back out again but I doubt that was going happen. Things well people a getting louder and our time people watching was coming to an end we had seen quite sufficient, we do wonder how much more of this we will witness as we travel further along on to the Spanish coastal resorts and will we just leave Glo's engine running for a fast escape but we will worry about that in the next couple of weeks. For now it's time to order our beam me up Scotty Uber, this proved to be a bit of a mission as when I put in our pick up location it turned out to be a no go area for Uber's as it was close to a taxi rank, if they had messaged me we could have moved location, but did they, did they heck and the first two after excepting the fare subsequently cancelled, the third guy must have had bigger thingies as he ventured close and gestured for us to go to him and then we beat a hasty retreat, on the way to the luxurious Lidl car park he explained the pick up rule, we will know for next time. The driver must of thought we were going

shopping as he dropped us off at the store's front door, he didn't know that they also so supplied 5 star accommodation, we didn't let him into the secret and let him drive off before we walked over to Glo. That's about it for today as the rest of the evening is boring stuff and we need get our escape plan together, as the sun is due to come out to play for the next couple of weeks we want to find a site to stop for a couple of nights and enjoy the sun well that would be during the day, we will see if we manage to achieve our quest tomorrow.

Stop over Lidl car park R. Baden-Powell 1, 8200-131 Albufeira,PT
What three words bicker.anthems.drainage

Day 27 Sunday 23rd March

We do have a plan for today, part of it we won't know until later as the campsite we have found is just turn up and take your chance and by what we have read about the site it gets very busy, as I mentioned we are looking to stay for a couple of days and enjoy the sun and actually get the chairs out and sit outside which amazing is something we haven't been able to do on the previous 26 days of this trip, the chairs have been shouting any chance of us getting out. The first planned stop is Faro for a look around, after a bit of shopping at our very local Lidl we check out and set off towards Faro. It's another 40 minute drive so let's skip that and we arrive in the town, there is a car park just outside the old town walls, this is also used as an overnight stop over but it's not the quietest of stop overs as it is directly under the flight path of Faro airport which isn't far away meaning that the aircraft are flying not too far above, yep it's noisy from 6am to 11pm but that's not going to bother us as we are only staying for a couple of hours. We wander around the narrow cobbled streets of the old town and as we walk past the shops most of which are closed as it's Sunday, it's not the shops that are the interesting parts of the buildings, you need to be looking upwards to see the old parts of the buildings that haven't had neon signs stuck on them. As we walk along the waterfront we are approached by various people offering us boat trips to go dolphin hunting, ok not hunting but finding them and watching them, we decline their generous offer to relieve us from some of our euros for a couple of reasons, we have seen them before although I never get tired of watching them or any kind of wild animal in its native habitat, and then even though the sun is shining brightly, it's blowing a proper hoolie and being on a small boat getting blown all over the place is not at the top of our list. We stop off on the waterfront for a coffee and we moved tables twice to take shelter from the wind this confirmed our thoughts about not going on a boat trip in the open sea. After a coffee we continue our wander before heading back to the flight path and collect Glo, by the way this little wander around the streets was actually four and half miles, I am not walking to our next destination a campsite in Tavira, Glo is taking us there which is about a 40 minute drive. Jump forward 40 minutes and we arrived at the campground which when we get there is looking busy, but fortunately they have a space and as advertised the cost is €12.50 including ehu, sounds good value but they must have been looking at ladder pricing that bigger business's such as Apple and possibly car dealerships use. You know the way it works you walk in wanting to spend a grand and end up spending two, obviously you end up spending much more at Apple and as for the car dealership you end up spending twice your original budget to get the car you really wanted, well they might not be on the same level but they have lured you in with €12.50 offer and then tell you it's €2 for a shower and €1 for a poo or even a wee for that matter, yes I know we have a loo and a shower in the van but nothing beats a 5 minute proper hot shower, they are immaculate and well worth the €2 and there is enough space to shower with a friend obviously a very good friend, even with the shower and the loo the site is still good value. They have spent a few quid on the place and even though it is stone chip base it has large defined pitches with ehu and water, there is also a lady walking around picking out any weeds of what looks like freshly laid stone, one thing that does amaze, confuse and really piss me off is why when they are laying the new stones or pitches of any surface why can't they do it so they are level, it can't be that much more difficult rather than us needing to use two sets of ramps on top of each other and still not being able to get the van level, yes I know that you wouldn't do that but you get the idea.

Plugged in ticked, water in ticked, level don't be daft that is not happening, they do have washing machines so in between sitting in the sun Barb is busy getting stuff clean and dry while the sun is out and there is a gentle breeze, it's a bit more than a gentle breeze but great for drying stuff. During our trip so far we haven't seen many UK vans especially up at the northern part of Portugal but we have made up for it here as there are at least 10 within a 100 foot radius and we are

parked back up to a fence, there is even a CV40 parked 10 foot away from us. A word of advice if you do stay here try to get a pitch close to the middle or to the left as you drive in as on the right there is a railway, a building site with not much happening while we were there and this is where you can not get level, guess where we are, didn't we choose our pitch well Doh! Everything is better in the sunshine and for the very first time on this trip we can put chairs outside and sit on them while enjoying the sun. The rest of the day is not much interest to you as it was a bit more sitting out, a chat with our French neighbours, food time and a bit more chill time, told you it wasn't very interesting but the chats are good as you can swap travel stories, find out where other people's travels have taken them and on this trip lots of people are travelling in the opposite direction and we can give each other ideas for the rest of our trips and also others that we will have in the future. It may be a short one tomorrow as we are staying here and we don't have a plan as to what we will be doing but we can all find out tomorrow.

Stop over Tavira Motorhome Park, Tavira, Faro, Algarve 8800-228
What three words wipe.surpass.sunbathe

Day 28 Monday 24th March

Let's not get carried away but the sun is shining again with expectations of 20° Celsius yes Celsius, it's amazing how the possibility of two days of sunshine in a row makes you feel when the weather has been so bad for the last couple of weeks and without getting too far ahead of ourselves the forecast is sun and warmth for the next 14 days. I don't care what time it is the chairs are out and so am I with coffee in hand it's even shorts and T shirt time, this so much better and it makes you think if we should retrace your route and enjoy the previous places we have visited and could not fully enjoy because of the weather, we will have to think about that. We went for a walk into town for a little wander around and a bit of people watching while sitting in the sunshine having a coffee, I have noticed that since we have arrived at the more tourist areas the coffee is not as good as I have had previously, they used to be wow now that's a coffee as your eyes open wide immediately at the first sip and the aroma was fantastic, now they are like hot milk with a smidgen of coffee I have even tried having an extra shot but it didn't really improve it, the kick and the aroma is now just not there, I will have to keep great coffee hunting, I feel my espresso pot coming out to play tomorrow. We continue our wander around and on our way back to the site we go through the none tourist area we find a cafe, restaurant, take away it's not looking like the most attractive or inviting place however the queue out of the door, round the corner and up the street tells a different story which is confirmed by the amount of locals coming out with bags of take away food, this place will be getting a visit tomorrow, I will give you an update after our visit. We need get some shopping well just a baguette really, not far out of town and close to the site there is a large shopping centre with all the usual shops and also a supermarket as usual when of these Goliath's arrive it see's off the local businesses and probably the reason while we could not find a local bakery and when we thought about it we hadn't seen a butchers, green grocers anywhere in the town, it's possible that we didn't go to the right places but our short stroll around the town was only five and half miles so we did cover a fair bit of it. This is when today's story gets a bit well actually a lot lacking in content as it includes getting back to the site, booking another nights stay, then sitting outside in the sun which is a bit difficult to make interesting for you and it doesn't get any better for you after that as it's a bit more sitting, cooking and eating and a short look at where we will be going next. There is the usual rough plan but that's changed since I started writing this as I have found somewhere I really fancy visiting, I can't tell you where as I haven't told Barb yet and I should really tell her first, I will let you know tomorrow not long after I have discussed it with her, as a clue it's a bit of nature and out in the wild for a couple of days fingers crossed, I did think that this was going to be a short one and I certainly not wrong.

Stop over same site as last night

Day 29 Tuesday 25th March

I wasn't sure how long today's story was going to be but let's wait and see, firstly my plan has met with a positive response from the boss although the direction of the route has been changed from my original plan, tomorrow we will set off to Seville which means that not far from our current location we will be crossing the border back in to Spain the country we started the trip, yes ok to be pedantic we actually started in the UK but you get the idea. After we have spent however long it will be in Seville we are then going to the destination that I want to go and see which is the Doñana National Park, you can't wild camp in any of Spain's national parks so staying there will make a dint in the campsite budget but I am sure it will be worth it, we will just have to have a few more free night outs. Yesterday I mentioned the restaurant that we had seen in a none touristy part of town, I did a bit of Goggle research and it sounds like a great place, we have decided to give it a go. We get there close to our planned 1pm arrival time and head into what we or I thought was the restaurant, it wasn't a restaurant it was just a bar and a very small bar at that, it was like being in the front room a very small house, four small tables each with four chairs in close proximity of each other petite and compact or just small. To say that the owners English was as good as my Portuguese wouldn't be far from the truth, we figured out that they didn't sell food and wasn't part of next door, but there were locals eating. Ok the restaurant must be next door so in we trot, well we don't actually as this turns out to be a take away only and had room for about 6 people at one time right what do we do now, well judging by the queue that there was yesterday the food must be good so let's go for it. The language barrier was just as bad if not worse than next door and my awful pronunciation of Portuguese was no help at all, I had seen local reviews of what food they sold but you can forget everything in any reviews, it was basically we are selling what we could get this morning and that's what your having, eventually I get to understanding that they had chicken which is for Barb, I was trying to be a bit braver and again got to a mixed grill from the BBQ not sure what variety of meat it was going to be but let's go for it. Two large round foil containers are filled one with chicken and one with not sure what types of meats but will find out shortly both served with chips, total cost €9 now what do we do next. We go back into the bar and there is one table and before I could order any drinks, the owner comes over, puts a table cloth, plates and cutlery on the table, looking around the regulars are tucking into food in the same foil containers, ok when in Rome and that lark. I go to the bar and order 2 large beers for the ridiculous sum of €2.40, even more ridiculous we could have had a litre carafe of house wine for €4.00. Time to open our surprise containers, Barbs is half a bbq chicken with chips and mine fortunately is bbq pork, rib, sausage and chips. This is just nuts and just wouldn't happen at home, the locals are on red wine, beer, brandy and aguardente a white Portuguese brandy served in a shot glass, even the 4 guys on the next table who were obviously on their lunch break were sharing a 1.5ltr carafe of Vinho Tinto. Then the owners wife brings out their lunch and they sit down and tuck in, anyone who wanted serving would have to wait, which again would never happen at home but it's just the norm in places out of the tourist bits where you can't even get a job if you can't speak English. We have a bit of a join in with the locals conversations as one guy in there was from Reading and had escaped the rat race in the UK and is in hiding in Tavira and has some understanding of Portuguese. It turns out that this place got more interesting food wise, as even though they didn't serve food, if you go in the day before and order a meal they will cook it for you, well as long as you ok with having whatever they are having they just cooked more of it. Today's option looked and smelled great, with the help of our new found friend from Reading, it was broad bean and pasta stew with sausage and chorizo served with home made bread, it's a real shame that we are leaving tomorrow, don't you just love it, what a way of life. It's then time to head into the tourist area as our Dutch next door neighbours have suggested a bar that must not be missed, yes there is a pattern forming, anyway it would be rude not to tell them that we took their advice. The bar overlooks the river with lots of outdoor seating so you do some people watching as the world goes by, when they were telling me about earlier this morning they told me that it was called the Black Anchor they said it was great and that they went every day, now who has got a problem. When they told me the pubs name I thought I wonder if by any chance it could be an Irish bar, as we usually try to avoid them in touristy places as wherever we have been in the world the Irish bar is always the most expensive in town, anyway let's give it a go. We follow their directions and are soon sitting at a table outside in the sunshine overlooking the river, now here we have the opportunity for another of my favourite sports, my chair is turned to get into the perfect position for a spot of people watching. If you just sit and watch people going by or just sitting doing stuff it is amazing what you notice and this is where clever comedians get their jokes, scripts and stories from, just by observing what is happening around them and then possibly exaggerating what they have seen, and turn them into a story or joke that have your sides splitting, they are very clever people and all done just by watching people and their actions. As for

the prices in this Irish bar I was pleasantly surprised and was proved totally wrong, this place was cheaper than a J D Wetherspoons, €2.50 for a large wine, it wasn't just large it was more like a bucket and could have had a goldfish in it, I am sure that Barb preferred it without the goldfish. Then it was time to walk back to Glo, skip the walk and we are back with Glo for the rest of the afternoon, now this has managed to be a lot longer than I expected this morning but now it's going to go down hill as you won't want to here about Sun sitting, dinner which we didn't want or have due to having our carry out, carry into the bar lunch and then a bit of planning while Alexa supplies the backing music. It's a travelling day tomorrow so there might be some let's do the time warp moments while travelling from a to b, so I might have to do some observations of stuff that happens and see if I can make them mildly amusing, we find out tomorrow.

Stop over Same as last night

Day 30 Wednesday 26th March

We are on the move today and heading off to Seville which Sid has told us is under a 2 hour drive, we were not in a mad rush to leave the site which I might have sounded as if I had a bit of a downer on, well after staying for three nights, I haven't as it's a great site, the site itself is immaculate, the facilities are immaculate, there are three grey and black waste disposal areas at various parts of the site, at bit like a cmc site you are not allowed to hang a washing line to a tree but here they only charge you £10.50 a night Inc eh, take that cmc, would we come again darn right we would. By 12 o'clock we are ready for departure, all the cabinets are locked, everything is stored away and yes even the bathroom door is shut for a change. We did need to get shopping but decided that stopping as soon as we started was not a good idea and we would stop further along the route, Sid shouts out his first instruction and I notice even though he had said it was a 2 hour drive which should give us an arrival time of about 2pm but his info screen is saying 3pm, what's all that about, well it's about travelling through a time zone and loosing an hour of our lives that we won't get back for a while. We arrived at the park up just after 3pm, let's just say that for the first part of the journey there was no traffic on the road and that was because they were all waiting on the outskirts of Seville to descend on us, mayhem that's all I am saying. On first impressions the car park was a bit rough but not as rough as surface of the car park I think that the army had been using it to practice dropping bombs on, it's was a slow process to get to where the other vans where parked, initially we had thought of finding somewhere else but as there were about 20 other vans we decided to stay, safety in numbers and all that lark. Then we went for a walk into town, I don't think that I have mentioned that it is a darn sight warmer than it has been for the last month, the illuminated signs are saying that it's 27°C and that's warm enough for me when we are walking around. The cities buildings are absolutely fantastic and there are so many of them, this visit could take more than the two days we had initially planned, it's going to be more like three or four, there is an extremely large cruise ship (my idea of hell) parked just up the river which I guess had increased the tourist population considerably. The streets are full with people and now the local's have finished work and are now in the bars and restaurants doing what you do in them, eat and drink when I say drink, they buy a beer take a sip and then chat until it has got warm and gone flat, then order another. Yes I know that the European drinking culture is different to the UK where it's get as much in as quick as possible, with the Norwegians it's different as the price has a big part to play and probably explains that when they come to Liverpool to watch a football match and you chat to them in a bar they have a pint in each hand and two more on order, they laugh when you tell them it's ok they won't run out of the stuff and also they basically don't close. It's also not that the guys are standing at tables outside wearing black suits and some even wearing coats over them, we were standing there in shorts and T-shirts and we're still hot, it goes to show that we in the UK just don't have the same temperature's, some of us moan after it's been over 27° for a couple of days while here it's still jumper, scarfs and coats weather. After exploring the local streets and admiring the buildings it would be rude not to support the local economy while doing some more people watching we stop of a bar overlooking one of the towns square's, we haven't picked a trash one as yet only because we haven't found one but we will, this one is a more upmarket locals stop off place to be seen, but wasn't as expensive as we were expecting. We have been trying to book tickets for the Palace and the Cathedral but there are none available unless you book a trip, we have been told that when tickets are released the tour companies buy them all so you have to go on arranged tour and even they aren't available until next week, apparently this is also the case with tickets for entrance to the Alhambra palace, isn't hindsight a wonderful thing as if we known, thought about it or even done

a bit of planning we would have known the ticket situation we are just going to turn up tomorrow and see if can queue and pay at the door. Then it was time for more walking around and you need to bring some ibuprofen with you when you visit these ancient cities as to appreciate the architecture you have to walk around looking upwards, while doing this you also need to be very aware that even if you are standing still, as some idiots walking towards are so engrossed at looking at there phone while chatting away are likely to walk straight into you, I must admit that sometimes I just stand there and the suddenly they look up realise that I am not moving and they have to take avoiding action. It was getting dark and time for the hike back to Glo, let's skip 30 minutes and we are back at the car park which is still packed with cars some of which are just abandoned. We have been joined by some more motorvans which is the abbreviation of motorhomes and camper vans. Not much more for the day as the rest of it is the usual stuff apart from that the car car did get a bit lively with the youth of today we're having some fun listening to music, as we're we, and possibly sharing a beer or two, they weren't driving around like lunatics there were just having a laugh. It's a shame that like in other countries, ours included, there is nothing for them to do or go that they would be interested in, instead all they have is a dusty car park, it's probably not changed over the years but now this leads to a massive drug culture. Anyway let's not get started on that route other than what seems acceptable is that when they leave, they leave their mess with them which at times we van peeps get accused of, but this also not a conversation to start before it's time for sleep time and that time it is let's see what happens tomorrow.

Stop over bit of a dodgy car park Blas Infante Metro parking, Seville 41011
What three words Wardrobe.learn.waxing

Day 31 Thursday 27th March

We had great plans of making an early start this morning but hey that never happened, actually it turned out to be a really late start, I would like to say that we used the time productively, planning, making routes, organising stuff, but I can't as we completely wasted the the morning doing well not much. Then to make our trip into town an even later start than we had planned, we needed to go shopping and we also had another mission which unlike Tom we had accept, as yesterday as we approached Seville there was that dreaded bing from the dashboard and the yellow icon of fear flashes up on the dashboard, fortunately it was the puff of wind icon telling us that Glo wanted some of that Adblu stuff. The first mission was to navigate our way through the craters in the car park, after taken some evasive action and ignoring some directions from a guy in a hi vis who was trying to get us to follow a mini which went into one of the craters and hasn't been seen since, we successfully arrive at the main road. I know the Abdul is not required immediately but that bing and the yellow wind need to be gone asap, we can see a large BP station up the road in the wrong direction but that's our first destination, we get there and did they have it nope they didn't, we headed off towards the supermarket knowing that we would pass more fuel stations on the way as we are going out of town so that I can get my Carrefour hypermarket fix. This seemed like a good idea however that swarm of vehicles that pounced on us yesterday when we arrived, we're lying in waiting for us and pounced on us like a swarm of hungry locusts, this is made even more fun as when you join or try to join the 5 lane motorway you get about 100yds to get from the let me out acceleration lane to the far two left hand lanes and then after negotiating that, Sid shouts get in the far left lane as the road just splits in two and then shouts turn right, Glo is just about to disappear up her own exhaust. That little test negotiated we see a large fuel station and off we go, after the getting here experience I wonder if they sell Brandy as well as Adblu, well the first disappointment was that they didn't sell Brandy but even worse the didn't sell Adblu, what is it with this stuff as all modern diesel's use it and diesel is cheaper and more popular here than in the UK and you can't get it. I did look and there was an App for find the stuff which I expected to work like the find LPG one, but it didn't work full stop. This is starting to get like the Hunt for Red October, onwards towards Carrefour and they have a fuel station but first let's go for a shopping experience, as others we have visited this place was massive selling most things known to man, ok that's an exaggeration but it did sell loads of stuff. We only went to get a few days of shopping as we never really know what's going to happen, but shopping here takes well over an hour, you just can't stop looking at stuff and then getting Mr goggle translates camera pointing at stuff to find out what it is. Finally we get to the till with our 8 items 1 of which is the obligatory cheapest bottle of wine I can find, it's got to be tried. Next stop fuel station, guess what they don't sell it, oh stuff this let's continue this mission when we head to our next destination, for now let's get back

to crater city, and then into town. We carry out the traffic battle again and then the crater avoiding game once again ignoring the frantic waving from Mr Hi Vis, not sure he was very pleased but judging by the parking no one else was taking any notice of him. Parked up, fridge and cupboard stacked with the 8 items, we are ready to head into town. First stop the Cathedral but the queue was massive and after standing there for a while, the queue was hardly moving and was going to take hours, let's forget that one and head round to the Royal Alcazar and unbelievable there was no queue, let's get in quick but not as quick as the conversation, excuse me which way do we go to pay the entrance fee the ones with the age reduction, all sold out try again tomorrow and off he walked. That looks like a massive fail on both accounts let's head off for another look around. The narrow streets are busier than yesterday, the cruise ship passengers must have formulated an escape from the floating block of flats. We do find a separate part of the Cathedral that is a small church but is still a beautiful ornate place, after a fair bit a big bit more more strolling around admiring the architecture which you are surrounded by wherever you go, soon the afternoon turns into evening and it's about time we had a bit of Posh and Trash although we haven't seen any trash places but they must exist. First let's choose a bit of Posh and there is no shortage of these places which are inhabited by some elegantly dressed beautiful people and that's just the bloke's. The tables all face around an open square which is surrounded by yet more fantastic buildings, there are no neon shop signs here just some classy bars and restaurants, at lunchtime you can not have an outside table unless you are eating, they do allow you to go inside and just have a drink but now in the evening they very gracefully allow people just have drink outside. I can fully understand this, as I have previously mentioned when the guys find a seat they get a glass of wine and they are there for the day, there is no such thing as turning tables or pre theatre early doors and sod of by 7pm. We chose a perfect table for a spot of people watching and order a couple of drinks, if you order a spirit based drink, there is none of the stick it in a jigger and pass it over routine here they bring the empty glass well apart from the ice and lemon if that goes with what you are having and on the tray is the bottle of your chosen spirit which after checking it is what you ordered the bottle is inverted over your glass and have of the bottles contents is emptied into your glass accompanied by a small mixer, do you think I could have another three or possibly four mixers please, it's no wonder they sip their drinks over an hour or so. One drink and an hour later it's time for spot of trash hunting out of the tourist area and down some of Seville's back streets, it takes a while but we find one with more down to earth clients, I guess the guy behind the bar does not get much trouble, he is about 6 foot 6 inches, probably works out for 12 hours a day his name was Ivan Egore and had muscles in his spit. Now there is no English going on here and my Spanish which I did think was bad but have now decided is just shit wasn't working too well either but Ivan and I sorted out the drinks requirements, granted he didn't bring the bottle to the table but he put the wide glass on the bar and filled the thing half full with gin now this wasn't any small glass going on here, I got my cerveza pinta (as in pint) in the same size glass. Usually our posh and trash game lasts more than two bars but it won't be getting past two tonight. Some time and few more mixers later it was time to leave Ivan to have a drink with his mates, needless to say Ivan's bill was less than half the price of the posh one. Our trash hunt had taken us to the far side of town which meant an ever longer walk back to Glo, time warp again and we are back with Glo and the car park is slightly livelier than last night, I did put Glo's CCTV on yesterday but nothing has set them off other than our neighbour getting into his van, the kids must not be allowed out late as the music is soon over and so is our day, we will have a long day tomorrow, as we want to get to the Cathedral and the palace and we have booked an evening river cruise, let's see what happens tomorrow.

Stop over Same as last night

Day 32 Friday 28th March

We have had two nights at this park up without any issue but we aren't 100% convinced that we shouldn't move, but we were out yesterday we did have a look at one of the other suggested park up's and it was pretty similar, so based on there hasn't been an issue over two days and nights and there are lots of other vans here we were staying put. Today is going to be a proper walking day as we will have to come back to Glo to get changed before the cruise. I don't mean that dinner suit and evening dress as we weren't meeting the captain but it was definitely shorts and T-Shirt and shorts day and the cruise did not dock until 11pm which by then it's a bit chilly and will require grown up pants and possibly a coat. Firstly it's the visit to the Cathedral and with Glo's cameras armed, we are off into town. When we get there the queue was surprisingly short and we

join the end of it or as Americans and the Traveling Wilburys would say "End of the Line" yes I know silly but it amuses me, if your of the younger age you may need to goggle the Traveling Wilburys they were a very special band. What we don't as yet know is if this end of the queue line is for pre booked tickets or pay at the gate, I am nominated to go and find out and return with the positive news that this is the pay at the gate queue line and it's moving extremely quickly, fortunately we are queuing for about 30 minutes which is just as well as it's sticking hot, I wouldn't like to think what it would be like in the full summer sun. We get to the till and one benefit of being a certain age is that you get 50% discount fortunately I have our passports with us as they guy taking the cash said I am sorry I don't believe the age you are telling me you look far to youthful, is he looking for a tip. Then we are in and for a mere €14, it's difficult to explain how magnificent this building is but everywhere you look is another wow moment, I am not really religious but the building is awesome and has some very interesting facts, building work started in 1402 and wasn't finished until 1506 it is the largest cathedral in the world, no wonder it took so long to look around it, and it is the 4th largest church, and the largest Gothic church in the world now that's some proper boasts. I didn't know any of this until our visit and I am pretty impressed, obviously there is plenty more information about it on the interweb, next it was to try the same trick at the palace, we get there and again there are two queues and a different guy wandering around with his I work at the palace badge, hi can we queue and pay on entry, this guy must have the same script as his mate or they on a backhander from the tour companies as his reply was the same nope mate all sold for today, but they are all sold out on line, yes I know you need to book through a tour company adios I am off for a walk around with my badge and with that he was gone. I guess our palace visit won't be happening but that gives us a reason to come back sometime for a weekend break, obviously not in Glo I think we would use a plane to get here, but we haven't got one of them but there are a couple of companies that will bring you on one of theirs. We did manage to get into a few buildings that were just open to the public at any time, these were also magnificent with huge sweeping marble staircases leading to ornate marble floor hundreds of years old and you wonder how many people's feet have walked on this marble all of which have worn into the marble, I wonder if in a 100 years time people will think hey Paul & Barb walked this staircase and floors ok I guess they won't but we haven't contributed to the wear in the marble as will the people that follow us in the future. Time to continue our none guided walking tour during which we find the bull ring, now you can pay to go inside but ethically I don't agree with what happens inside, although it does have a couple of boasts of its own, it has been there since 1762 and is the largest bull ring in Spain, we make do with walking around the outside talking about the building and not what still happens inside, if you are sick enough to want to go and watch, tickets can be purchased from as little as €20 and the season is from April to September but remember you will be contributing to the cruel death of over 180,000 bulls a year worldwide and that's why I would not go inside never mind paying to go in. Enough of that, we have time for a quick cooling libation before we head back to Glo for a bit of a rest and to get changed before walking back into town for our river cruise which will end up with us walking back to Glo. Now I am not sure about contributing to the wear on the marble stairs and floors but we have tried our best to wear out the pavements between the city and Glo. A bit more time warp, walk back Glo, rest, change and walk back to the city and the river, phew I am knackered just thinking about it. As usual I have made us get there early and on this occasion I will admit to being a bit too early but not early enough other than to sit and wait for our cruise ship to arrive, after a while we can see our ship which may be exaggerating slightly as it's a boat sailing towards us, not only can we see it we can hear it and it's loud, not the engine the guests on board, there is music loud music, singing, dancing and a good time being had by all, this was obviously a hen dooo I guess that with all that joviality on board, it was not going to be the romantic, gazing longingly into each others eyes over dinner which was accompanied by a well chilled Chardonnay. It turned out that when the guy at the wheel parked the boat, the happy revellers walked the gang plank and got off still singing at the top of their voices heading into the city to continue their merriment. It was a shame that they hadn't stayed on board as the passengers on this cruise numbered 11 including us and 7 of them had a face on them like a bulldog chewing a wasp. We take our seats and set sail our fellow passengers included an English couple sitting opposite us and I guess that they may have had a glass of Vinho before they left their hotel, then there was a German guy who looked older than us accompanied by an obviously newer model draped over him, then a party of three who must have been sworn to secrecy as they never spoke and the other couple just played on their phones. We set sail and the food is served firstly a sharing platter of cheese and meats, here we go typical English eeee what type of meat is that, well it's cured Serrano ham, cured why what was wrong with it, nothing it's left hanging around to cure not cooked. Not cooked eee I can't eat that and

how about the cheese, is it cheddar if not I am not eating that either, Barb and I nearly need paddy pants this is going to be a fun evening, next course guzacho soup I look at Barb and say that's not bad at all but wait for it, and from across the boat there is the soup cold question, well yes but it's supposed to be, oh eeee I can't eat that, and the new model draped over the older guy says eeee I can't eat that much to the displeasure of the older guy, let's just say that there were only three bowls that went back empty, this is going to be a fun evening. It was just about to get funnier as the waitress brought us the next course first and presented with a platter with two different items telling us that one was a traditional prawn and potato mix and that the other contained octopus, well I really hoped the paddy pants would do the job as when the platters were presented on the opposite table and the contents of each was revealed, there was a shout of whhhhhat, I really hoped that they had a defibrillator on board as I thought she was going to have a heart attack, both of their platters beat a hasty retreat, there wasn't much gazing into each other's eyes going on at our table as when we did we both put the paddy pants to test. The only thing that hadn't been refused on the starboard side of the boat was the Vino Blanco and the Vino Tinto that was going down really well and I suppose that was the cause of the, you always do this to me, I told you I didn't want to come, with my lips firmly pushed together I was thinking Barb don't look at me please, the next course came out and they both said we will leave everything else and skip straight to the deserts, oh by the way what is it, oh it's fried milk and custard, well that was it I was off to the bathroom like a shot. Only to find that when I eventually managed to keep my face straight and leave the bathroom they were standing at the stern of the boat having that I told you so conversation with a glass in one hand and a fag in the other. Well it wasn't quite the evening we were expecting but it was certainly entertaining and the fried milk was great, not sure how you fry milk but obviously you can unless it gets lost in translation. When the captain parks the boat we are not sure whether to get off first or last but we just end up going with the flow and say thank you to the captain and crew and beat a hasty retreat into the darkness. Then it was time to give the pavement some more wear and tear on the walk back to Glo parked in the interesting car park, it was gone midnight when we got to her and now I am another day behind with the blog, can I catch up tomorrow I suppose it depends on what happens.

Stop over same as last night

Day 33 Saturday 29th March

Definitely on catch up mode as I am still a day behind, it was a tiring day yesterday not only for our feet but especially for my sides as they are still aching and also the car park was a bit lively again last night, we are on the move today and departure was later than expected due to a lie in to try and catch up on some sleep. When we have been parked up for a couple of days it takes a bit longer to get Glo ready for departure as stuff is not put away immediately and tends to accumulate which then takes longer to pack up. The next job was to negotiate the minefield of what is supposed to be a car park which this morning is nearly empty, we can only assume that during the week the car park is full of cars belonging to commuters using the trains and as today is Saturday they are not working. This means we could drive onto the tarmac section of the actual car park and weave our way through cars that are still there but still managing to get to the exit without destroying Glo's suspension. We were heading towards the Donana national park but we had a couple of jobs to do on route first we need to empty Glo's tanks and then there was the small matter of the hunt for Red October to get rid of the Bing and the orange icon on the dashboard and we needed to baguette hunting the first point of call was the disposal point which is slightly in the wrong direction but not far away, we arrived, done and sorted let's move. We have booked a campsite as you are not allowed to wild camp in any of the national park areas but we are not due there until tomorrow as if we are staying on a site we want to get there as early as possible to get value for money and you can sit outside on your own pitch and chill. Barb had found a stop over in a small town and like others we have previously stayed at they let you use it for free as they understand that it brings money into their economy, there is no ehu but it does have water and waste facilities, it was just outside the national park and about 30 minutes from the campground. First stop Lidl, we are not having an hour shopping stop so Barb went in and returns with the baguette in hand, that was two out of three missions completed, it was now after lunch time and we realised that the last thing we had to eat was last night's fried ice cream and custard. We went into true English mode as there was a big M over the road and to be honest we needed a change from ham and cheese or cheese and ham baguettes, food buttons pressed on

the ordering screen then on to the drinks section and would you believe it English tea is available, Barb's finger flew at the touch screen and tea is added to the order but the next press of the screen may have confused things as it then asks do you want milk, yes of course and that is added to the order, once everything was in the basket the payment button was pressed and the order was being processed. I went to the counter to collect the order this is when things went a little off piste and confusing not helped by no English and completely crap Spanish to try and explain the problem. The tray of food is placed on the counter which I collected and with a smile and a smile and obrigardo oops wrong country I meant gracias, I then notice that the tea bag is in a packet on the tray accompanied by a cup of hot milk, now I know excuse me and water but a cup of boiling water in a cup is beyond me without G translate and even with him things are difficult, fortunately there is one person that speaks a bit more English and we get to the cup of boiling water but then, there is a why do you want that, we got there in the end but when I got to the table I told Barb that if we are out she is drinking either Coke or beer. Next Adblu which is proving to be a contender for the world hide and seek championship, a few miles further on there was a fuel station we pulled in and yes they had it, they even had it on the same pumps as diesel, petrol and the more expensive versions, when we have found Adblu on draft previously it has been at the back hidden away as if it had a contagious plague, things got even better as when you pull up to the pump it's back to the old days and a gentleman puts the fuel in for you, that's a service that you don't get in the UK, all you have to do is go in and pay, thank you very much. It was only a a short distance to the stop over which is good as I am not sure where the rest of the day has gone, when we arrive there are already about 10 vans already there and some people were sitting out in the sun which you are not really supposed to do as they are just stop overs and camping activities are prohibited, that said nobody takes much notice especially when there is plenty of space. Barb had checked out the town on the interweb to see if anything was happening in the town that we could go and have a look at but goggle didn't find anything, later in the evening we found that mr goggle isn't the smart arse everyone thinks he is, as in the distance we can hear a band tuning up, we thought that it was just some locals having a bit of a sing song, boy how wrong we were. At about 8.30 the music started to play but this time at full blast, it may as well of been coming from the next van, there were lots of English songs being sung to a different beat well they were being murdered rather than sung then there were a couple of Spanish songs before the English ones started again. The lead female singer could have been sort of singing at the karaoke in Albufeira last week when we were there, it sounds like lots of people are having a good time and later on I went for a walk to see what was going on. I did think that given the amount of noise being created it would be easy to find the source but after walking around for a while I couldn't find it as the sound was bouncing off the walls of the small streets and when the wind changed direction so did the sounds, also there was not a sole walking around to ask where the venue was, I guess they were either there or sitting in their house with ear plugs in. After a while I gave up as I thought that by the time I found the venue they would be wrapping up, when I get back Barb said you have been a long time was it good, not a clue my dear I could not find and never mind laughing. Well the wrapping up of the gig didn't happen at 10pm or for that matter 11pm or even midnight, by this time the laughter was reducing and by 2am it had got off and turned into a sulk, this went on until 4am and there was a lot of we are not amused comments being made. At that point here ends today's lesson or this morning's lesson which ever is more appropriate.

Stop over La Palma del Condado, 98 Avenida de la Zarcilla, 21700 SP
What three words Tempting.donor.breath

Day 34 Sunday 30th March

As you can imagine it was a very late start this morning as we needed to catch up on the sleep we didn't get last night, when we were outside getting Glo ready to leave there were plenty of other motorvaner's looking very jaded and moaning in various languages. It's a great park up with absolutely no issues and we recommend it if you are heading this way just check out what's happening if you are going to get here this time next year, well I suppose at any time as they may have more than one music festival. I did want to get to the campground early but we are not going to get there as early as our original plan, I think I have mentioned before, that if we are staying at a campground I want to get there as early as possible to make the most of our time there as it cheeses me off in the UK when they say that you can't arrive before 3 o'clock and you have to leave by 11 o'clock and then have the neck to charge you over 35 quid for less than 24 hours. We

have found that here you can turn up at 9am and leave at 3pm now that is getting your monies worth, I guess that this is not the case in the peak season. The next bit is driving so we will enter another time warp, but before we get into it, you need to know something, if you are planning to travel along the A483 be warned as what they have done is to import every pothole in the UK and dispersed them along the whole length of this road it's absolutely abysmal it's just none stop potholes all the way and there are some proper big ones, even when you try to avoid one by swerving all over the road you hit another, the smoothest part is the narrow hard shoulder, I seriously thought we were going to puncture a tyre, I run our BF Goodrich tyres at 60psi I shudder, hey that ended up as an unplanned play on words, any I shudder to think what it would be like on standard tyres at 79psi, you would probably loose a couple of teeth. Ok time warp and we are at the site, we have booked for two nights and paid 50% deposit and went to reception to pay and took our ACSI card with me and yep we got a discount and this is probably the best sites we have stayed on, it has individual hedged pitches with water and obviously ehu if you want it, a swimming pool, washing machines €4, free showers, small supermarket, bar and restaurant and at £19 a night with the ACSI card we thought it was good value. They even have a published quiet time between 4pm and 6pm for a little siesta, we are set up in minutes the Glo only needing to climb one step up the levelling ramps then it's time for a look around the site, pool looks good and when we head into the restaurant & bar area it is absolutely heaving there are a couple of hundred people in the three areas sitting down to lunch. Surely all of these people can not be staying on the campground, then we looked out of the window and there are three coaches parked up, they are on a charabanc trip which obviously included lunch and One glass of wine and they are making it last with no intention of buying another. A coach trip is another idea of hell and it ranks not far behind a cruise on a ship with 3,000 passengers, I would rather stick hot pins in my eyes We have done a couple a couple of long weekend coach trips to France when Barb worked at Barclays as they were as cheap as chips but a disaster all the same, I did another years before when I was at night school, that was a bigger disaster as it crashed on the M62 no one hurt, it just ran up the back of a van while we were in queuing traffic, it was a reasonably funny story, let me know if you want to hear it. Then there was the piece de resistance, Barb found a trip to Italy and even though I was fairly reticent about it on paper it did look like a good trip which started by flying to Italy and then travel by coach to 7 cities in 7 days, it did turn into a bit of a nightmare but was also hilarious made even more funny was our fellow passengers, it would have made a good John Cleese script, it was years ago but I remember everything about it so I might put pen to paper of fingers to keyboard, it really was a funny week. Back to today, rather than joining the coach trips passengers, we got a couple of drinks and went to sit in the courtyard, then it was back to Glo and it's time warp two time, chairs out we sat in the sun, had a nap, sat out in the sun, had something to eat and went to bed, that was the end of the day, we had planned on visiting a nearby village which is supposed to be interesting and also go flamingo hunting but those plans were adjourned until tomorrow.

Camp site Camping La Aldea, Almonte, Huelva, Andalusia 21750
What three words, complaining.leggy.dismissing

Day 35 Sunday 31st March

Wow this site is certainly quiet, we felt refreshed and ready for the day ahead, it amazing how good it makes you feel being able to sit outside in the morning sun with a cup of coffee, today we were on the mission that we didn't get chance to fail yesterday as as we didn't even start it. Late morning we set off to walk to the village of Del Rocío and to go Flamingo hunting which shouldn't take much as they are supposed to be prolific in the area, yes it does include more flipping walking but at least I thought that it wasn't going to be like a walk around Seville. We followed the directions out of the campground and then turned onto the road into the village, now when I say road it wasn't actually a road it was a wide sandy dirt track, we carried on along the track towards the start of the buildings which were not derelict or in need of repair, they were just empty and there was not a person to be seen, it was like stepping back in time to an old American western town but without the cowboys, or was it possibly a film set or even a ghost town This town was looking like a ghost town come sing along, it was completely nuts. We continued on along the track, a guy passed us with a pony and trap and disappeared into the distance, we continued on along the dusty track, there were a few dusty cars dotted around but we still hadn't seen anyone other than they guy with the pony. There are rows of terraced houses all in good condition but unoccupied, we pass one of the houses and the door is open and there is a table outside covered

in a vinyl red and white polka dotted table cloth and lady outside wiping wiping it with a damp cloth, considering that there dust blowing everywhere she might be there all day. As we walked further into the town there were a few more of the houses that are occupied with their owners sitting outside, it makes me wonder if the other properties or holiday homes or something like that, we get to the church and there is more going on with a few shops and a couple of bars at one of them every outside table was occupied. Unfortunately we could not go into the church but looking at pictures on line it looks beautiful, when you read about the town it has lots of history and dates back to 1789 but it also has history going back to the 13th century. During our visit we probably saw about 100 people and a guess that they knew we were tourists as we are wearing shorts an T-Shirts, while they were wearing long pants, shirt, thick zip up hoody and a gilet, At the end of May, El Rocio takes on a whole new dimension when it hosts Europe's largest pilgrimage, the village grows from 2,000 inhabitants (they must have been in hiding when we were there) to almost a million people to welcome the Romeria del Rocio the that must give it a goal different dimension. There is a lot more information about the village on the interweb but don't be going and looking at that until you have finished this. Close to the church is the waters edge where the guide book told us that the flamingos were prolific and were accompanied by numerous other species of birds, things look very promising as there were twitchers carrying spotting scopes and expensive cameras with even more expensive lens with camouflaged covering so that the flamingos and the hundreds of supporting acts would not be able to see them. Now there was a good reason why the birds would not see them as there wasn't any in sight apart from one duck that was waving at from 500yards away and one sparrow eating some breadcrumbs on the path. It is known wonder why the twitchers were walking off looking dejected, I checked the guide again and yep it says that the pink things along with the other species were prolific 24/7 365, I think that had used the word prolific as and anagram of, they have all bugged off, even the duck that looked like a water loving sparrow from that distance, flapped its wings and scarpered we can add flamingos to the not seen list, but we have seen a Whale no not on this trip don't be silly. Then it was the dusty walk in the blistering sun, well it was hot, back to the campsite to sit outside Glo and recover, kidding apart it was time to put the awning out as the sun was proper hot. I mentioned that the camp site has a published quiet time of 4pm to 6pm it's not that noisy during the rest of the day and from 8pm its just silent, anyway while having more of a relax during quiet time ours was rudely interrupted just after 4.30 as a caravan towed by a Fiat Ducato from Slovakia arrived at the next site to us, talk about noisy, first whoever was driving was trying his best to burn the clutch out while reversing on to the pitch, then they obviously haven't heard of WD40, others are available, as with every turn of the screw to lower the corner jacks there was a ear piercing screech, I didn't think that it was possible to make that much noise unloading the contents of a van into a caravan, but it was all this was accompanied by them both shouting at each rather than talking while trying to every word in the Slovakian dictionary, they eventually finished about an hour later, moan moan moan. We are now back into time warp as not a great deal happened worth telling you about for the rest of the evening other than we booked to stay for another night, I wonder what we can find to do tomorrow, until then that's it.

Day 36 Tuesday 1st April

Well folks this really is going to be a short one, and I do mean very sort one as let me think what we have done today and the answer to that is absolutely nada, zilch, nowt, nothing apart from sit outside enjoying the sun, I didn't start doing a bit of admin stuff like filling in the spreadsheet with what we had spent and what we had spent it on, but I soon gave up one that one, why spoil a beautiful day filling spreadsheets that you really don't want to see the results off. Oh we had lunch sitting in the sun, we did actually do a bit of route planning in fact a lot of route planning that will take to Cadiz then down to Gibraltar then to Granada and then further up the Spanish coast to Almeria. That's a journey of around 800km and for us that is lot of planning, it will probably change on the way but at least it's a bit of a plan. We did eventually get off our backsides and have a walk around the site and went for a sundowner in the bar, over the last week have had days when we have done over 23,000 steps and today we just managed to get to 1200 how lazy is that. There is not much point telling what else we did because that was nothing, we are on the move again tomorrow with a couple of stops planned so there shine more to tell you. As for todays it is definitely not getting published on its own it's going have another day with it, we must try harder tomorrow but until then that's it.

Stop over Same as last night

Day 37 Wednesday 2nd April

It's on the move day and as usual when we have been stopped for a few days it takes a bit longer to get Glo's interior ready for travel, she is also looking a bit mucky and covered in sand dust but fortunately you can wash your van while you are on site, our pitch was directly in front of the was bay so when we were ready to go. While we are still getting Glo prepared, a German couple pull their large Motorhome onto the bay but that doesn't matter as we are a good way off being ready to go. It appears that the German gentleman has decided not just to wash his van but to give it a 5 star valet with knobs on both outside and inside, Barb is starting to have a bit of a moan and giving them dirty looks, I am usually fairly patient but this guy is taking the sounds like siss but starts with a P, as he keeps going into the garage at the back of the van for yet another cleaning product and its looking like he has got more products than Halfords. My patience is wearing a bit thin and I reverse Glo towards the wash area, he had by then started going round locking all the cabinet doors and then gets in the van, oh that done then thinking they will just drive off but no he has to brush his pony tail while she applies her make up and then they start looking at which route they are going to take, this is starting to look like there may be a diplomatic breakdown between an EU country and a none EU country, as I was walking towards them he looked up and as if he just noticed we were waiting, put up his hand and mouthed an apology well I think it was an apology and they drove off. After Glo is a darn sight cleaner than before, we set off for our first stop was less than a mile away, we went back to El Rocio to visit the church as for some reason that neither of us can think of when we're there on Monday we had not gone inside the church. We didn't drive down the sand track as you can go down the main road to the other side of the town to where the church is and then it's a ten minute walk. The church is beautiful inside and very ornate, I do find it strange that in the UK we have campanologists that practice for hours to make our church bells sing while here and also at the magnificent Seville Cathedral there is just one dong of a bell and that's it, funny what goes through my mind. Next stop was to Niebla which took us down the A483 you may remember the other day that it had more potholes than the UK, well this stretch is no different and all they do is erect a sign that tells you it's going to be bumpy for the next 40k trust me you do not need a sign to tell you that as a few of your teeth are on the floor. We arrived at Niebla which is a seaside resort and like others we have visited, as it is still out of season there is not much going on well nothing actually. We have a walk along the beach and there was a massive rock which wasn't actually a rock it was the remains of a watch tower called Torre de Hiuera which dates back to 1577 I bet there will be no remains of our house knocking around in 448 years. I also wanted to see the river which is called Vino Tinto because of its red colour we did find the river but to us it looked like a muddy brown which may have been caused by the amount of rain fall. The day was moving on a bit quicker than we had expected and our next stop was Huelva another old city and also the home of the replica's of Christopher Columbus's ships the Santa Maria, Nina & Pinta, let's not forget that the original three ships date back to 1492 oh and they all sank at some point in history, keep that mind. We headed to a stop over in the car park outside the Muelle de las Carabelas, the museum of Columbas's ships these may only be replicas of the originals but in 1992 the did sail Columbus's route to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the original crossing. When we arrive there is another UK van parked up and on our way to the museum we stop and have a chat, they are doing a similar route to us but in the opposite direction, they tell us that at the moment you can not go on the ships as it has been raining and the decks were too slippery, I guess they had different risk assessments and health and safety rules back in 1492 as I would think that while crossing the Atlantic Ocean the decks of these three small ships might have got a bit wet. As we are doing the route in different directions we exchange places we have each visited and park up suggestions, then we head off to sea the ships or even see them, now I know that HMS Victory in Portsmouth is a much much more impressive ship than these three small ships but let's also not forget that these are the first ships to sail to the Americas and I was amazed at how small they actually are. The other difference is that the admission prices, HMS Victory 51 of our UK pounds, again I know that the three of Columbus's ships are replicas but the Entrance fee was €3 that's £2.51 now that is some difference. As we are walking around, there is an announcement that as the decks have dried out we can go on board great and I bet the sailors in 1492 would have been made up, I was standing on the deck at the stern of the Santa Maria and there was an American couple standing behind me, Wilma says to her husband isn't it just amazing that these boats are still sailing after over 500

years, I will leave it there. With a bit of a snigger it was time to get back to Glo and as we are staying here for the night, yep it's a freebie, and all that happened was food and a small amount of planning that was it for the evening and that's about it for today but there will be more tomorrow.

Stop over Muelle de las Carabelas La Rábida, Huelva, Andalucía, 21819, ES (free)
What three words firmer.cling.projects

Day 38 Thursday 3rd April

The longer we are here I think we are falling into the more relaxed way of things, the it will happen when it happens, the I will serve you when I get round to it there is no rush, then when you finally get your coffee just sit with it for an hour, keep cool there is no rush mañana will be fine. We know we have over a three hour drive plus stops to get to Cadiz so do we get up early and set off as soon as we can, do we heck at 10am we are still contemplating what to have for breakfast while still laying bed. We eventually get our lazy butts out of bed and manage to get on the road for about lunch time, which meant that as soon as we got on the road it was time to stop for lunch but we thought that was a bit soon and we needed to get some kilometres done. Travel days do lead to a bit of lack of content if nothing interesting happens along the way, to get to Cadiz we have to drive back to Seville to get to Cadiz as there isn't a direct route through the national park, which is a bit of a pain in the bum as we are going to get there in the late afternoon when the traffic will be nuts, yes I know we should have got up earlier, but hey if we don't get there then mañana will be fine. I mentioned the other day about the Spanish importing potholes from the UK and planting them three foot apart in various places all along the A438 and the A429 well I didn't think it was possible but it obviously was as they had some left over and have planted them liberally all the way down the main E1 and A4, driving down them is like playing bash the rat but having to hit an empty hole, it really does make it slow progress so with the pelvic thrust that really drives you insane let's do the time warp again. Hey presto after a bit of even slower process around Seville we have finally arrived in Cadiz, we have checked out a couple of the suggested park ups but they are miles out of town, we have driven around trying to find other alternatives and did find one near the harbour but that was still 5k away from the city, the only other option was to pay for a car park that you could stay overnight, that will have to do but there is a cost involved and it's €14 a night which does sound expensive and compared to last nights free stop over it is expensive but then if you compare it with Liverpool 1 where you would need a mortgage to stay for 24hrs this is good value. By then it was after 6pm and with only a couple of hours of daylight left we hurried into town, well it was more like a leisurely stroll, we wander around the narrow streets and then into a square there is the cathedral in front of us and the doors are open we get inside only to be told that it is closing like right now, I guess we will leave that until mañana, told you we are getting into the swing of things. We wander around until about 9.30 it's dark and time to return to Glo then it's another one of those Richard O'Briens time warp moments and until tomorrow that's it.

Stop over Parking Santa Catalina, Cádiz, Andalucia, 11002, ES
What three words crew.winners.means

Day 39 Friday 4th April

Our plan today was to walk to the market that is supposed to be similar to the market in Porto then after meandering our way through the narrow streets to visit the Cathedral, some might ask are you very religious as you keep visiting churches and cathedrals. Those of you that know me will know that I am not an atheist but not really religious unless I need to be, but I do appreciate the magnificent architecture, grandeur and opulence of these magnificent buildings, but then that raises the question, is there a need for this opulence to worship, when there are members of that religion that are starving or need help with their lives but that is not for me to answer, I do know that when I enter these places of worship whatever religion they may be, I treat them with respect and I do light a candle well actually two as I always light another for a dear friends loved ones. Anyway the big boss above had a different idea as to how our day would plan out as not long after we had set off on our quest the heavens opened is how some explain lots of rain, myself I am a bit more basic and would say it pissed down and pissed down profusely, now I am not sure if profusely is a strong enough word, but I would say that it absolutely absolutely pissed it down. So we are absolutely soaked and as the rain is just getting heavier and is now accompanied by

thunder and lightning we take sanctuary in a local cafe with lots of local people who have finished their drinks long ago and are just waiting for the rain to stop so that they can scarp, the owner is quite happy for them just sitting there without spending any extra, Now I always feel guilty sitting in cafe's while not paying for the space I am occupying that other paying customers could be using, as there is no chance of this drenching rain stopping any time soon, I order a second coffee. Eventually there is a break in the weather and as the cafe empties very quickly, we pay our bill and scarp off to the market, well what we thought was the market stopping every now and then to take shelter from yet another downpour. When we get to the market well what we thought was the market it actually isn't is the train station, it just shows that sometimes you should find the address and navigate to that rather than using Google earth and heading for a building that from above looks like a market, not sure why trains going in and out were not a bit of a give away, anyway it got our steps up. Now that we have got the address for our original destination we set off on the three kilometre walk to the place that we walked past hours before, me moan never, we arrive at the market but possibly a bit late to fully appreciate it, as some of the stalls were packing stuff away. There were still plenty selling fantastic vibrant vegetables of all descriptions, then the butchers stalls with amazing joints of meats that we do not see in our butchers never mind the stuff that supermarkets think are impressive. There are even chilled cabinets full of aged beef joints including massive rib joints which I wonder if could be cooked in Glo's small kitchen our bbq, our bbq is a bit limited in size and it would be a waste not to treat these fantastic cuts of meat with the affection they deserve, so they stay with the butcher that may have also had something to do with the cost. There was another similarly with the Porto market and that there were a number of bars and eateries dotted around selling beers, wines, spirits there were even some selling coffee, not sure why as they weren't very busy. A couple of beers were accompanied by some tapa's and small plates of Paella, the rain that had been replaced by sunshine made a comeback and this time it thought that would rain slightly heavier otherwise known as it danced it down splashing upwards from the floor nearly to the height it had come from in the first place. Well no one was going anywhere anytime soon and the queues at the bars and food outlets started to grow, it would be rude not to join them as we weren't going anywhere either. Eventually the rain stopped and the sun came out supplying a fair bit of warmth, time to make tracks to the Cathedral, there is only a small queue and we find out why when get to payment desk, that will be €19 please which is considerably more than the €3 to enter the Cathedral in Seville and I am not sure which I think is the most impressive. You do get a hand held thingy that talks to you as you walk around, it doesn't just talk to you, it gives you information as you take the journey around the building which could be described as opulent or an obscene use of money, whichever your view is the architecture is beautiful and breathtaking. It takes some time to walk around and appreciate the building and when we leave it is time to head back to Glo and decide what we are doing, we had the option of staying another night in the car park or moving on, we had no intention of starting the journey to Tarifa which was our next destination and as we had just about done Cadiz we decided to move on down the coast about 30 minutes away to another car park but this one overlooked the sea and sand dunes. Skip 30 minutes and we arrive at the dunes car park there are a few vans already there and the search for sites app description was pretty good and where we parked we had a great sea view. The weather forecast wasn't wrong as the wind had now grown in strength to the expected 40mph, this was giving the sea lots of life and the massive waves attacked the beach with the incoming tide. When it is within our control both love the sounds or noise of the sea and the force of the waves, it's going to be a noisy but relaxing night, we are on the west coast and as the clouds dissipate, we are treated to a beautiful sunset, I decided that it would be a good idea to get my camera and take a walk to the beach and get some sunset photographs with the sun meeting the horizon in the distance and the violent white capped waves in the foreground, doesn't that sound great in theory. So picture this the tide is coming in and the waves are crashing down forcefully on to the beach, I have taken some photographs and decided to take some low level shots that would take in close ups of the white capped waves with the sunset in the distance. Usually after watching the tide and wave timings I have been pretty good judging the distance between staying dry or getting wet when the sea comes up the beach with the incoming tide, after watching the incoming wave pattern I choose what I think is a don't get your feet wet position, crouching down to get the desired shot I wait for the best combination of white topped waves and the setting sun, eye against the camera waiting to push the take the photo button I realise that there is a massive wave heading towards me, now the next bit happens in seconds well apart from the standing up bit, aging knees and all that, sort of upstanding and running backwards which obviously wasn't going to be quick enough to escape from mr raging wave, ok let's run backwards turn around and run forwards in ever

increasing wet sand seemed like a good idea. Actually it wasn't as the wave hit me just at the exact moment as the twist, turn and run was in motion, there was only going to be one winner here and I had already accepted defeat it was now in damage limitation mode, what's going to get wet me or an expensive, very expensive camera, there was only one answer and fortunately I had a change of clothes the van, arm and camera in the air and arse in the sand in wet and cold sea, then laughingly mr wave buggers off back down the beach in readiness for his next never ending attack. Now it doesn't matter how old you are, when you fall on your arse and especially when you get soaked at the same time, it's amazing how quickly you get to your feet and go for the Obi-Wan Kenobi, There's nothing to see here, hoping that no one did see what happened but hey even if they did, it would give them a laugh and I probably won't ever see them again, now I don't know if anyone did see the heroic camera save, but I walk back to Glo and Barb laughing stupidly, Barb is proper miffed that she hadn't seen the epic save manoeuvre, it was either that or you stupid soggy sod don't be coming in here covered in sand and water. That is about as much laughing at my expense you are getting for one day, hopefully I will be more sensible tomorrow but I doubt it, we will have to wait and see

Stop over Sand Dunes, Cadiz, Andalusia 11011 Spain
What three words shires.denim.superbly

Day 39 Friday 4th April

Our plan today was to walk to the market that is supposed to be similar to the market in Porto then after meandering our way through the narrow streets to visit the Cathedral, some might ask are you very religious as you keep visiting churches and cathedrals. Those of you that know me will know that I am not an atheist but not really religious unless I need to be, but I do appreciate the magnificent architecture, grandeur and opulence of these magnificent buildings, but then that raises the question, is there a need for this opulence to worship, when there are members of that religion that are starving or need help with their lives but that is not for me to answer, I do know that when I enter these places of worship whatever religion they may be, I treat them with respect and I do light a candle well actually two as I always light another for a dear friends loved ones. Anyway the big boss above had a different idea as to how our day would plan out as not long after we had set off on our quest the heavens opened is how some explain lots of rain, myself I am a bit more basic and would say it pissed down and pissed down profusely, now I am not sure if profusely is a strong enough word, but I would say that it absolutely absolutely pissed it down. So we are absolutely soaked and as the rain is just getting heavier and is now accompanied by thunder and lightning we take sanctuary in a local cafe with lots of local people who have finished their drinks long ago and are just waiting for the rain to stop so that they can scarper, the owner is quite happy for them just sitting there without spending any extra, Now I always feel guilty sitting in cafe's while not paying for the space I am occupying that other paying customers could be using, as there is no chance of this drenching rain stopping any time soon, I order a second coffee. Eventually there is a break in the weather and as the cafe empties very quickly, we pay are bill and scamper off to the market, well what we thought was the market stopping every now and then to take shelter from yet another downpour. When we get to the market well what we thought was the market it actually isn't is the train station, it just shows that sometimes you should find the address and navigate to that rather than using Goggle earth and heading for a building that from above looks like a market, not sure why trains going in and out were not a bit of a give away, anyway it got our steps up. Now that we have got the address for our original destination we set off on the three kilometre walk to the place that we walked past hours before, me moan never, we arrive at the market but possibly a bit late to fully appreciate it, as some of the stalls were packing stuff away. There were still plenty selling fantastic vibrant vegetables of all descriptions, then the butchers stalls with amazing joints of meats that we do not see in our butchers never mind the stuff that supermarkets think are impressive. There are even chilled cabinets full of aged beef joints including massive rib joints which I wonder if could be cooked in Glo's small kitchen our bbq, our bbq is a bit limited in size and it would be a waste not to treat these fantastic cuts of meat with the affection they deserve, so they stay with the butcher that may have also had something to do with the cost. There was another similarly with the Porto market and that there were a number of bars and eateries dotted around selling beers, wines, spirits there wee even some selling coffee, not sure why as they weren't very busy. A couple of beers were accompanied by some tapa's and small plates of Paella, the rain that had been replaced by sunshine made a

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Stop over Sand Dunes, Cadiz, Andalusia 11011 Spain
What three words shires.denim.superbly

Day 40 Saturday 5th April

Even though we were awake early enough to watch the sunrise, we soon reverted back in to manana mode until we finally got ready for the drive to Tarifa which I may have mentioned is the most Northerly point in mainland Europe and is on my bucket list to add to the other two extreme

points of the compass we have already conquered. Let's go time warp mode as the two hour drive is fairly boring apart from mentioning again the absolutely abysmal road surface that is now becoming the norm, we arrive in Tarifa in the middle of the afternoon and there are motorvans parked and abandoned everywhere, this is another one of those thoughts of what must this be like in the summer. We headed to a park up on some land next to a Lidl and when we arrived there were probably 40 vans parked up, Barb thought that it would be a good idea to drive into the town to have a look in case there were any better park ups. This sounded like a good idea but I keep forgetting that these villages or small towns were built for horse and carts not 3.5ton vans, anyway we were there by then and just to make it more interesting two of the roads we needed to use were closed for road works, this left no option but for us to drive through the town centre with the outside seating and umbrella's of roadside bars, restaurants and cafes making the road narrower and progress even slower. Then the route took us down what I can only describe as a dirt track and a very rough and narrow dirt track, wow that was fun, eventually after over a mile which felt like several we get to some tarmac and head back to our starting point next to Lidl. As the parking was more like abandonment we went for the when in Rome and just drove until we could get level without using ramps. We needed some calamine tea for some calmer but we didn't have any, I wonder why that was, so we had to settle for a cup of good old Tetley and yet another little rest. Later in the afternoon we set off into town for look around that we didn't really get when we drove through as we were too busy trying to avoid things while waving apologies to the people tutting from the roadside tables. It's a lively little town and as we walked towards the centre there is another road closure that was closed for a street market which unlike Gt Homer street market this one had high street prices for items that you wouldn't buy on the high street, it also did have any pop up bars unlike the other markets we have been to. We then walked into the town itself which was bustling with life and music, there was something else that caught my eye and that was advertisements for day trips across the Straights of Gibraltar to Tangier which I am thinking is on the should do while you are here list, just need to convince Barb that it's a good idea, we couldn't get any prices as the offices had closed up for the day, we will have to have look if they are open tomorrow. One of the bars has a front row table available and we take a seat wondering if we will be able to have a bit of tutting at some other idiot with a 3.5t van but surprisingly that didn't happen. There was a guy sitting over the road playing a guitar and singing, he was pretty good and the sounds wafted down the street in the cool evening air making it a very chilled and pleasant place to be, as the evening moved on it was time for us to also move on back to Glo which is about a 30 minute walk which is 95% uphill. Back at Glo it was time for something to eat and have a look on the interweb to see if we can get an idea of prices for the trip to Tangiers so that when go to a couple of the offices in the town we have an idea of what the cost should be. We will all have to wait and see if we book a trip or as it will be Sunday if any of the offices are open, but that will be tomorrow and until then that's us done.

Stop over Next to Lidl, Tarifa, Cadiz, Andalucia, 11380
What three words fresh.lush.systems

Day 41 Sunday 6th April

It has been suggested that for my avid readers who are up to date it's a bit of a pain to scroll through every previous blog post to get to the current day. So I will post the most current 10 posts at the top and for those that haven't read previous posts, firstly why not and you will need to start at day one work your way through the the rest and then catch up with the rest of us. I hope that makes sense,

Where we have previously used the time warp to quickly pass time while moving from a to b this morning we are using it to get from 8.30am to 2pm as during those four and a half hours we did absolutely nowt, nothing, buggger all apart from chill out with the sunshine. Then it was time for us to get ready to go on the hunt for 36° North, the getting ready time was like we were dressing up for a very posh evening doo, that would include showers, hair done, then make up, choosing and then changing one's mind on which dress to wear, there are a couple of parts of that process that never applied to me. After an hour and a bit we are ready to head into town and our quest to get to 36° South just to put another tick in the been there, seen it, done it box. Barb does think that I am a bit of a crank, the difference is that know it, for me there is a bit of a feeling of been there,

seen and ticked the box, I am never going to climb Everest, K2, North face or any face of the Eiger or any other mountain but I am fortunate and able to visit places that when I was a child were like the possibility of a journey to a different planet, now I can always say that I have been there, seen it, done it, it's not that others haven't but for me it's an achievement that I/We have been there. Some of the places that I/we have or want to visit aren't really sensible ideas, like let's drive to Montenegro because that's where the casino in James Bond Casino Royale was supposed to be set, even though it was actually filmed in the Czech Republic but let's go there anyway, I can see why Barb thinks I am a crank but she goes with it and we always enjoy the trip, Barb does have her moments like let's drive three hours in the wrong direction to visit the Ikea museum, I go with it based on the same thinking that if you are there you should go as you ain't going to go there again, by the way we both agree that it was shit. On our way to 36° we stop off at a travel agent to discuss the day trip to Tangier, with the information in hand we will make a decision on the trip later but for now it's let's hike to 36° the sun is shining and the beaches are full of sun worshipers and others brave enough to enter the beautiful clear but cold waters. For its the trip to Isle de Tarifa which was once an island but is now joined to the mainland by a man made causeway, which in reality makes that there two points of the most Southerly point of mainland Europe, one being before the start of the causeway and the other at the most southernly tip of the island, I guess both points are correct but are open to discussion. We are going for both, one is by default as we have to pass it to get to the second, as we cross onto the causeway that is the first box ticked and then there is only a couple of a hundred yards to the next point. I am a bit unhappy well actually pissed off that we can not get to the tip of the island as some knob has built a wall along with a locked gate meaning that we can not continue on for the last 100 yards. As we have crossed the original end of Europe before the island was joined to the mainland and we also reached 36°0'19"N but couldn't get any further because of the locked gate, I am calling it job done and mission accomplished, you can argue the fact for a 100 yards but please do not expect a very pleasant answer, in my opinion We have been there and Done It. As we had completed the mission we thought that we should treat ourselves to a bite to eat and possibly a glass of Vino Blanco, we returned to one of the venues we visited last night and ordered a selection of Tapas and nearly but didn't forget two glasses of the fruity Vino Blanco, while we are there we have read of the info sheet for the Tangier trip and it doesn't really look very good value for money, we have been to Morocco before and also visited a Souk which I think that when you have seen one that was sufficient for me and we cross that one off our list. There is just time for Just the One Mrs Wembley (goggle it) then we head off back up the hill to the park up and Glo, to formulate a plan for tomorrow which isn't really difficult as we know where we are going it's just a case of finding a suitable parking spot, but for now that's it until tomorrow.

Stop over Same as last night

Day 42 Monday 7th April

Now this is going to sound a bit mad but it happens because so many motorvans come here, over the road to the park up is a fuel station which has showers and washing machines next to the forecourt and yesterday we had gone over for a shower only to be told that they are not open on a Sunday, don't ask me it didn't make much sense. This morning we thought that we would get up and see if we could beat a possible rush, we walk to the fuel station and it's shut, we hadn't got up at stupid o'clock it was just after 8am oh well I suppose we can go back later. We were going to go to Lidl after visiting the showers but thought that we would go then and that's one job, but we also failed on that mission as well as it was shut until 9am, what is happening here. At 9am we head off to the fuel station for the third time and it's open, Barb goes to get a key, probably a school boys error but when we went yesterday we failed to ask the cost, be warned if you are coming to Tarifa and fancy a shower as it came as a bit of a shock that it cost €5 per person for 15 minutes total which started when you were still in the shop, hey on the plus side they were very clean with powerful hot water, good job really. Next stop Lidl for some supplies, when we got back to Glo we could have made her ready for the off as soon as we got back, did we did we heck we went into the, there is no rush mode, in fact the no rush mode lasted until 11.30 before we were ready to leave but it was only 30 minutes to get to Gibraltar. 30 minutes later we are there and in search of a car park, we went to the one that also has a separate stop over, but we are not staying overnight and we just find a space in the car park which is about a 20 minute walk to the border crossing this was a good job as it was hot very hot. We get to passport control and there are only 6 people in front of us, then passports stamped we are the next border check and with a

quick glance at our passports we are through checks and then just needed to walk into Gibraltar. Now I don't know if you have been and walked into Gibraltar but if not it is a bit strange as you have to walk across the airports runway, if there is a plane landing or taking off it's a bit like a railway level crossing, a barrier drops down and the gate is closed then you wait for the landing or take off to happen then the barrier goes up, the gates are opened and you trot off across the runway, it's certainly a different way of getting into a country. When we got to the gate it and barriers were shut and as we waited the queue behind us grew, which is good as it gives you more opportunity for a spot of people watching and listening, there is a guy standing behind us having a bit of a moan about being kept waiting. Now I need to set the scene, there are signs and notices everywhere depicting planes taking off or landing, there is a large control tower to our left which has a massive RAF carrier of big stuff plane and also two private jets parked next to it, now I suppose it's a bit strange that you are standing there waiting to cross a runway but you don't need much of an IQ to figure out that's where you are, face it you don't see many planes parked outside Tesco's on a Monday afternoon. Anyway as we are standing there this guy is moaning to someone about the length of time he had been waiting, which was probably less than 10 minutes, next he says anyone would think it was a runway at the very moment another private jet came past the control tower and its wheels touched the ground with that squeal of rubber right in front of us, his only comment then was Oh. Then the barrier raises and the gate is opened and we all have a bit of a surreal experience trotting across the runway, I guess was expecting a zebra crossing or an aging guy with a lollipop stick but no there was just tarmac with some black tyre marks on it.

Barb does not really want to go up the rock as she said that she didn't want to get jumped by a Ape, I am saying nothing. Well it's street meandering time and laughing at some of the shops, like the supermarket we went into and there were Pukka pies in a warming oven, then there was Roy who owns a fish and chip shop and advertised it as World Famous, I am not sure who came up with that very bold statement, well I guess it was Roy, I am also not sure in which world it is famous as I haven't heard of it, let me know if you have. Down the Main Street there are a lot an awful lot of jewellery shops and we all know how much Barb can be attracted to bright and shiny things, I was getting pretty good at the Obi wan Kenobi, There's nothing to see here wave, I did fail at one point and visit inside did occur but a purchase didn't, wow that was close. Then it was time to go back to passport control and another stamp in our passports, our return trip might not have been at the right time as we approached the barrier and closed gates, there were at least a hundred people in front of us. We all waited some peeps less patient than others then in the distance we could hear the roar of engines and by the sound of it they were big engines, as the revs increased so did the noise it got louder still the closer they got to us. There was no wonder that there was lots of noise as it was accompanied by lot of plane it was the massive RAF aircraft which I have been reliably informed was a Boeing C-17 Globemaster III, I just new that it was big and noisy, the barriers and gates remained closed and a short while later and small private jet came into land, after it had turned around at the end of the runway and parked by the control tower the gates were opened and the barriers raised allowing the bikes and electric scooters to head off across the runway followed by the slower pedestrians but some faster than others say as to get to the boarder crossing first to avoid what I thought would be a massive queue. I was surprised how quickly our passports were stamped and we were on our way back to the car park, when we got back to Glo it was absolutely roasting inside and we were both a little warm and tiered after our visit to Gibraltar that was only supposed to be four an hour or so and ended up being substantially longer and was supposed to be short walk which ended up being a 7 mile hike. Barb had already found a free park up about 30 minutes away but it did take longer due to the amount of traffic and some road works, when we got to the park up, we couldn't park on the spot shown on Park 4 Night as there were some road works leading to it but the car park next to it was open and there were a number of other vans already there. The beach was a couple of hundred yards away and there was a great view of the beach, sea and the Rock, it was still warm and we sat outside watching cruise ships come and go. We could see a large shoal of fish splashing on the surface of the sea and through binoculars we could see a number of seals that had come out get their dinner. After that excitement it was the usual stuff of food and planning for tomorrow which is a tad boring for me to write about let alone you reading it, so we will call it a day and see what happens tomorrow.

Stop over Torre Vigia Nueva, La Linea, La Linea de La Concepcion, Cadiz, Andalusia 11315

What three words turntable. Plotters. oiling

Day 43 Tuesday 8th April

I was up at sunrise and walked down to the beach to get some sunrise photographs and this time I made sure that I left enough distance between myself and the sea even though it was a lot calmer than the other night. Even though we are both up early, we were in no rush to leave and that no rush thinking turned into mañana mode making it nearly lunchtime before we set off. During our planning session which must have been nearly 15 minutes last night the decision was made that we needed to find a site for a couple of nights but as we are approaching the Brits on tour part of Spain the sites were getting expensive. We didn't need a site with all of a CMC site that you would want if you staying for a week or two, while looking on Search for Sites we found one just over an hour away which didn't have very flattering reviews but they all also said that it was clean and had all the facilities you need including a swimming pool, crazy golf and a bar that served food, we decided to give it a try but first we set off to visit Marbella which wasn't planned to be a very long visit. When we get to Marbella it was extremely busy and our planned not very long visit turned into a very short visit, which we think maybe the case with some of the holiday destinations that will be on our route very soon. The campsite is situated just off the main coast road and we arrived early afternoon, we booked in and are given a pitch number, as we drive towards pitch, some of the descriptions left in the reviews on Search for Sites were absolutely spot on and we had to agree that it was like a "Shantytown" with homes of all descriptions ranging from aging caravans with massive awnings, caravans with wooden sheds attached and what looks like a large summer house, it is certainly an eclectic mix of properties and people it's like a commune of people that want to escape the rat race and they have certainly done that it's a bit like the land that time forgot. There very few tourers here but one English guy I spoke to who had a very flash Motorhome said that he came here every year, well there is no accounting for taste as this place is never going to get in the CMC but it also doesn't charge CMC daft prices. We have been to a few sites similar to this in different European countries and on a serious note we are fortunate to drive up in a reasonably expensive camper van and then when you look around places like this it makes you wonder what happened in peoples lives to bring them here, I guess some are here through choice and others through necessity, these are homes not holiday homes and there are a number of Brits shackled up here in Shantytown. Glo is parked up and the sun is shining brightly, chairs are out and so is the awning so that it can offer some shade, it's not open fully as we would be on next doors pitch shading their trailer. On one side we have a French couple who are touring in a Motorhome and on the other side is a long stay German guy in a caravan with an awning that looks like Baden Powell used on the first scouts night out, actually when you look around there must have been a job lot of them going cheap. You get to know your neighbours fairly well as there is none of the CMC 6 meter rules going on here it's not even 6 foot, any closer and you would be sitting together. It sounds like I am not giving the site a very good review but it does what it says on the tin and there are not many CMC sites that have a swimming pool, crazy golf, bar, restaurant, free ehu and a tennis court for £16 a night, with sites like this if you keep your expectations low then you won't be disappointed, we're not. This has been reasonable short one today but tomorrow's will be even shorter as we are staying put and won't be playing crazy golf, paying tennis or going for a swim, let's see if I can get more than a sentence out of doing nowt.

Stop over Los Jarales, Midas, Malaga, Andalusia 29649
What three words avatars. proofread. shekel

Day 44 Wednesday 9th April

This is definitely After finishing last night's blog we ended up going for a walk and under the guise of gathering information to pass onto others, we visited a couple of the bars along the road just outside the campsite, all I can say is that I wasn't out of bed to capture a sunrise photo this morning and don't bother asking about reviews for any of the bars. Let's move onto 12 o'clock and we set off for a walk over to the beach which is not too far but first you have to get across the main road choices were to go over on the footbridge or you can follow the road that goes underneath, we opt for the second method which sounded like a good idea as why go up to come

back down to sea level now in theory that made perfect sense, but in reality it didn't as there was no access to the beach from there so we had to continue on up to the main road, carry on alongside it and then go down a different road to get to the beach, that was hard work for what should have been an easy task and if we were to do it again we would know better, but we're not going to be doing it again so it doesn't matter. We have a walk along the coastal path and stop for a coffee and amazingly a cup of tea which wasn't made with hot milk, its a difficult task getting tea with boiling water and cold milk, even in McDonald's you get the questioning enquiring look that Manuel used to give to Basil Fawlty, mind you it's not as bad as trying to get a proper cup of tea in the USA, there they look at you as if you have just escaped from Area 51. Barb was so happy I think I will get her one for a wedding present, I won't be writing any blogs or doing much at all if I did that, but today she is as happens a pig in poo, with her pot of boiling water with breakfast tea and separate milk. In full mañana mode it took us about an hour to drink of tea and coffee, well most of that time was spent with two empty cups and a chat. On our return to Shantytown we stopped to get some shopping which included yet another baguette, when we get home a baguette of any size, shape or form will not be crossing our doorstep for the foreseeable future, mind you ham and cheese will also have difficulty getting through the front door. Flipping baguette in hand we walk through Shantytown noticing more bizarre establishments that we had missed before probably through shock, there is a log cabin well we used to have the same thing in our garden and we called it a shed, then there is a caravan with an even bigger shed acting as an extension and even more dib,dib,dib tents, more seriously we have to remember that these are peoples homes. Now we are really going to struggle for content as for the rest of the afternoon and evening we did absolutely nothing, tomorrow we are on the move and we have some exciting and interesting places to visit that I can't wait to see, they are only an hour or so up the road and I guess they will be yet another experience to add to the trip list. We will all have to wait until tomorrow to see what tempting delights the Costa del Sol has to offer, let's see what and where we get to.

Stop over Same as last night

Day 45 Thursday 10th April

Today is another travelling day but not a travelling far day as on route we have a couple of places to visit, with planned stops at each of the for an unknown time which will depend on what we find, one thing on the to find list will be breakfast not just because we can't be bothered to have anything before we leave, it is a quest to taste the gastronomic delights of the Costa del Sol. First job is to get Glo ready for travel and then the next task is to get her off the pitch, as the guy in the home opposite has decided to park his car in front of the pitch, there are a few options that need to be taken into consideration before this manoeuvre is carried out. Firstly we don't want to hit the guys car, which would be more for Glo's benefit not his car, then we don't want to drive over the Baden Powell antique awning next to us, then we have the French guys trailer to try and not hit and last but not least take down either or both of the two newly planet trees at the front of the pitch. This operation is not going to be a pull forward put on a right lock and drive away, if this manoeuvre was part of todays driving test the roads would be empty of cars without L plates, fortunately it's not a test and I am able to have Barbs assistant, after a few backwards and forwards in different directions we are out and off to pay the man on the gate as it's a don't pay until you leave agreement, not sure what would happen if you said you were just going out for the day but didn't go back, but who is going to do that for 16 quid. Sid gives us some directions to get to the main road, I thought that he was actually trying to navigate his way out of the crystal maze. We eventually get to the main road and set off on our quest for the Spanish gastronomic delight, with tastebuds tingling we head for our first destination which is only 30 minutes up the coast to Fuengirola, before we can quench our gastronomic appetite we needed to find somewhere to park a task that every other car in the place was trying to complete, some were successful as they were only 6 feet long, however Glo is considerably longer and after a couple of tours along the the promenade, side streets and car parks we gave in and headed on to Torremolinos where I was sure we would be able to satisfy our tastebuds. First let's have a drive around and see if we find a restaurant that will be able to complete or task, first drove a long the central Main Street could not find one and we also could not find anywhere to park, the place was rammed. We were sure that what we were looking for would be on the promenade facing the sea and we were right in our thinking, there was loads of them next to each other and then we found the absolute hands down winning establishment called Scoffers and they did a Full English which

included 2 of everything and a mug of Tea for €5.95, obviously using the best quality meat sourced from a local award winning farm with red tractors everywhere. In reality I think the meat content of the sausages could be at least 5% but while you are here you have got to try the local cuisine, next job find a parking space. This proved much more difficult than finding Scoffers, what a fantastic name for a UK cafe, we drove around all the car parks we could get into and as many streets that we could find but after half an hour of car park hunting we gave in, I was sure that Scoffers was going to a franchised business and we would find another further up the coast possibly in Benidorm, don't get me wrong it is not actually having a full English including sausages with 5% meat content. It's just a bit of a laugh and one of those things that you have to do just so you put a tick in the box, which will be made even better if I can find a kiss me quick hat to wear while photographic evidence is taken, yes I know very childish but hey if it keeps me happy for €5.95 that will do although I might not eat the sausages unless they can provide farm to fork evidence. With another parking failure we headed for Malaga but I was setting my heights of finding a parking space a lot lower as it looked like most of the car parks had height barriers to keep us out, we had found a park up on the other side of town which was a 20 minute bus ride into the town and after a drive through the busy streets we headed off to the park up which overlooked the sea. It was a busy place with a mix of touring motorvans and long term stayers that had no intention of moving and I doubt if some of them couldn't if they wanted to. We found a great spot and although there was some road noise this was hidden by the waves crashing on to the beach. It was mid afternoon so we did not see the point of going into the city but there was a small village about a mile and a half in the opposite direction which we could get to by walking along boardwalk while watching the waves crashing onto the rocks, remember that comment. When we get there we can only find one establishment open and it's definitely a locals watering hole overlooking the sea, we stay for a chill for about an hour while watching the different meals being served, there were some that I would not have tried. On the walk back to Glo we stopped a number of times to watch the waves crashing onto the rocks throwing white foaming spray into the air, I always find the power of the sea amazing and also how frightening it must be when it takes control of what ever craft you are sailing because it doesn't matter how good a sailor you are, if it wants to win it will. Obviously not as serious as that situation you will remember that it caught me out the other evening and gave me a good soaking, well I was sure that it couldn't get me as I walked along the costal path, so stopping to watch as the waves hit the rocks and you will have seen that as the waves come in there are a number that make a good old splash and then there is one that makes a proper splash. I have only got my phone with me but still wanted to get the white water flying into the sky, so I stand there on the perfectly dry boardwalk trying to predict the next biggy, the next one looked that it was going to be it and boy was I correct but it wasn't just a biggy it was a monster that not only shot white water skywards it also shot it in the direction of the boardwalk at exactly the point I was standing and for the second time in the last couple of weeks I am soaked from the waist down, this time Barb witnessed the event and could not stop laughing which to be honest I wasn't and I am usually the first one to laugh at myself when something like that happens. Mr Sulk says let's get back to Glo so that I can get changed, bah humbug, soon back at Glo, changed and smiling, then for you the rest of the evening food, do some sort of planning, try and catch up with this and then bed and there you go that's it for another day.

Stop over Parking Penon Del Cuervo, Malaga, Andalusia, 29017
What three words. Flushed.slowly.pint

Day 46 Friday 11th April

We actually did a bit of planning last night, when I say a bit it got as far as walking down the road and getting the bus into Malaga, 10am we set off down the road to cross the main road by using the pedestrian bridge however it was taped off for some reason so unusable and the not other option was to take your life in your hands and cross the four lane highway, Barb you go first and I will follow, no we held hands and went for it, safety across we get to the bus stop. Mr Goggle maps had told us we had a couple of options of which bus we could get so we just got the first that arrived as it was going in the right direction fortunately it went to where we wanted to go which was the far end of the town, then the plan was to walk back through the town to the opposite end, bit of a hike but that was the plan. There was still the remaining quest of finding another of the now worldwide franchised Scoffers, the town is in preparation for the Easter celebrations and there was lots of seating areas, viewing areas, platforms and stages busily

being erected. It was extremely busy and this area was far too upmarket to allow a Scoffers planning permission for one of their outlets. It was also a shopping area which usually I would have avoided at all cost however would you believe it Barb had made an alteration to the plan and we had only got off the bus ten minutes ago and wants to pay a visit to Primark that's a posh Primark wtf, if I was the suspicious type I might think that was part of the plan that she hadn't told me about and what made it worse was that it was a 20 minute walk in the wrong direction. Being the obedient and understanding husband we head off to find Primark which is situated in a large shopping precinct oh deep joy, get ready to pass me a hot pin, thankfully it had a number of coffee shops and I took up residency in one of them while Barb went to join the madness of shopping in Primark. I was just about to order my third Cappuccino when Barb returned. Time to find the exit and quick escape from shops, I know that we get out of shopping mall and into the streets there will still be shops but they will be selling the made in China fridge magnets and other tat that you take as presents for relatives and friends who say thanks with a smile while thinking why to I want a fridge magnets from a trip I haven't been on or you could take them a flamenco fan with "I heart Spain" on, now that's a must have present. Next we have got to find something to have for a snack as we haven't eaten today as Barb is like a Gremlin in reverse when she hasn't eaten in the morning she can be a bit of a Gremlin and has to eat so that she can turn back into a lovely Mogwai. The other parts of Malaga we visited were proving a bit too posh for a Scoffers and in desperation we shot into a big M for a sugar hit and a tapa of fries just to take the edge of the Gremlins hunger until we can find a proper tapas bar later. For now it was time for yet more of that walking lark to take in the sights and as usual you end up with a stiff neck as the wonderful old architecture is above the bright lights of more shops, we then headed for the waterfront for yet more walking while enjoying the sunshine and the sights. We consider ourselves fortunate to be able buy a new campervan and do the things we do, then we look out to the marina, well actually outside the marina as this very big yacht would not fit in the marina, it's actually not a yacht it is a super yacht and when it was built in 1990 it was the 9th largest super yacht in the world but now the rich have got richer and she has fallen to 48th position although she does have an Airbus H130 helicopter parked at the back on the helipad, she also has amongst other things an indoor swimming pool. Lady Moura was last sold in 2021 for 125 million quid which is peanuts compared to the cost of today's super yacht's today, but that's still a darn sight more than Gloria cost and Lady Moura costs 12 million quid a year to run which is considerably for than Gloria's fuel and 2nd service costs. However she only sleeps 27 guests including one Billy no mates, however she does have a crew of 60 so you never know Billy might get lucky, as for a accommodating guests that equals 12 CV20's and 1 CV40. There are a couple of differences though as Lady Moura can float and CV's can't, there is less chance for Billy to get lucky, CV's get used more often and the price of a CV may be expensive but it's not obscene. It was now late afternoon and as there was little chance of either of us starting to cook when we returned to Glo, it was time to go on an eatery hunt and there are plenty to choose from, we stop at a couple sit down and have a look at the menu but Barb doesn't fancy either of so it's a thanks but no thanks to both of them. While we are having a regroup on the choice of eatery, we stop off at the the Irish bar, there's one in every city wherever you go in the world and this one like every other we have visited serves the most expensive pints in the place so they also got the no thanks we are off. We wander down the streets and see what might be a contender in the receiving our customer, it's about the busiest in the street and also has a number of local customers which is always a good sign, decision made we are staying here, a couple of drinks ordered while we peruse the tapas menu and there are lots of them to choose from, choices made and it's not long before the first arrives and is soon followed by the other three which in case you are interested were Chorizo, Whitebait, Calamari and Potato Bravas, which were all very good. It was then time for more walking around and also stopping to listen to a band playing great music on the waterfront, time was getting on and it was time to remember which bus we need and where the bus stop was. We found both of them and then while on the journey it was just a case of remembering where to get off, I usually try and remember an interesting point about the stop before the one you need and then you have time to do a double check and then press the let me off button, fortunately it worked and we didn't get off in the middle of nowhere, fortunately we didn't have to risk life and limb crossing the road. Just to get some more steps in, as if we hadn't already done enough, we went for a walk along the boardwalk, making sure to stay clear of any waves that might have tried to get me, before returning to Glo, then was the usual stuff, well apart from eating, as the tapas had fulfilled that task earlier, we did have to look at where we are going tomorrow and you will find that out tomorrow.

Stop over Same as last night

Day 47 Saturday 12th April

Before we head further along the coast we are going to head inland to Cordoba before we head further up the coast, it is starting to be the norm that we don't start off very early to head for our next destination and today was no different. It was about a two hour drive to Cordoba and on route we needed to do a couple more jobs, we needed fuel and Glo needed a couple of emptying jobs. The drive was pretty uneventful so let's have another time warp bit. Including the required stops the journey took about three hours and we arrive at the stop over that Barb had found which was a rough and ready car park but it was close to the town, we had read in previous reviews of the stop over that there was 2 guys who "looked" after the car park possibly unofficially but hey they are only making a living, as others have said, his opening bid for a parking space was €20 but we finally agreed on €5, it was a bit rough and nowhere near level but we had a plan as there were cars parked on a completely flat concrete slab, as soon as one moves we are going to grab that spot and that happened sooner than we expected, we swoop on it as soon as they move off and we are now level and much happier, I was expecting the car park guy to come back and want more for parking on a flat bit but he didn't. We are soon on the short walk into town which then involves more meandering around the streets looking at wonderful buildings this also leads to the usual stiff neck as you are looking upwards most of the time. The town was very busy as it was the start of the Easter celebrations with the first parade starting later in the evening, as well as wandering around the town we went to have a look at some of the massive carriages that are used in the processions, they are huge with larger than life sized figures of Christ carrying a cross escorted by Roman soldiers, they are carried by a few teams that do sections of the route and then swap over in rotation which is not surprising as it must weigh a ton, they are huge and are carried from underneath and are hidden by a curtain that surrounds the carriage that reaches the floor which must impair the little vision they have through the top of the curtain. After a bit more wandering around it's nearing the time of the start of the parade as normal it's a bit of mañana starting time, the crowds gather along the route. If this was in the UK there would be barriers on each side leaving the road clear for the parade, there would have been three or more risk assessments carried out accompanied by a 300 page method statement, every police person available would be lining the streets and all the police horses we have would be clip clopping along the street, along police motorbikes with lights flashing clearing the way and waving people back which is a bit daft due to the barriers in place. Thinking about it, it would be a none starter due to the suggested 25kg lifting at work policy, if that was adhered to the carriage what not have got of it's garage. Does any of that apply here nope absolutely none of it, there are two police officers wandering around saying hello and stopping for a chat and then one guy at each corner of the carriage telling the guys carrying it which way to go, I know which job I would sooner have. We have taken up a position behind the people who have been waiting for the last two hours and in the distance we can hear the 500 piece band fire up their various instruments including drums that are setting car alarms off while shaking the ground and they haven't got anywhere near us yet. At the front of the parade there are a hundred or so people wearing gowns and three foot high conical hats that also cover their faces with slots cut out for their eyes, don't ask me but, four foot high candles are being carried that keep getting blown out but that's ok as there is a guy running around carrying a long stick with a fire lighter on the top to relight them, it looks like he is never going to be out of work. As the procession proceeds slowly past us, we can see the carriage in the distance, just before it gets to us it stops and with a round of applause it is lowered for a team change, guys appear from under the curtain holding their backs as the replacement team take their position under the curtain then when the guy with the good job says lift or something like that, there are a lot of groans as it is raised to shoulder height this is also accompanied by a well deserved round of applause. It passes us followed by the band blowing into every wind instrument known to man including some that aren't, I have never heard a wind instrument reach such high notes and there are dozens of them. They are followed by the drum section again there are about a hundred of them of every size available, well apart from those massive kettledrums which they would have had if anyone could have carried one, they shake the ground and you feel them vibrate against your chest. It's a very impressive sight and this was the first of many that would take place until very late, unfortunately it looks like it is going to rain and as I like a lunatic am wearing shorts and T shirt it is time for us to leave, we get back to Glo just before the rain starts to bucket down but fortunately it doesn't last long and shouldn't effect the other

processions taking place. That's about it for the day as it's just the usual stuff from here, let's see what our plans are for tomorrow we will find out then and you will know a bit later than us.

Stop over Cordoba, Andalusia, 14009 SP (on search for sites)
What three words slows.nitrate.gagging

Day 48 Sunday 13th April

We were on the move again and on our way to Granada, amazingly we were on the road early and on our way to Granada it was another 3 hour drive with not much to talk about other than virtually all the way on the 130km route both sides of the road as far as you could see was fields with thousands of olive trees they just went on and on it was amazing to see so many and I suspect there were more that we could not see. Time warp time again and 3 hours later we arrived in Granada and we headed for the park up that Barb had found that was about a 3km walk into town, it had said on search for sites that there weren't many spaces, all the spaces were very tight and they were not suitable for anything over 6mt and they were 100% correct with all their remarks then only other thing they could have said was that the bays were very tight not just tight. There was one space and with a some forwards and backwards manoeuvres we fitted Glo in with hardly any overhang at the back, it was going to be fun getting her out but we would deal with that tomorrow. All of the spaces are covered in wisteria so we didn't get much solar but that wasn't going to be a problem, we are a bit miffed that we could not get tickets for the Alhambra palace but there was a chance we might get into the Cathedral we find out later. We headed off into town and as yesterday in Cordoba it was very busy with people coming for the Easter parades, this is another beautiful city which again induces neck pain but it was worth it. After our usual wandering around the streets admiring the architecture and it's even better than usual as it's Sunday and all of the shows are shut apart from a few selling the I heart Granada fridge magnets and some other tat. The afternoon is moving swiftly towards early evening but it's still hot, the illuminated signs are saying that it's 28°, we are going to wait and watch the first of the evenings processions and rather than waiting for more people to arrive at the roadside where we wouldn't get a very good view, we took up a vantage point at the cathedral monument which gave us a view straight down the avenue and the route the procession travelled. As yesterday the timing was very loose and it didn't start anywhere near to the planned start time and also made slower process than the printed route guide gave us, but hey we were there and we had seats on the monument, well they weren't really seats it was more like a wall we could sit on, actually that's exactly what it was and 100% better than standing for a couple of hours. When the procession finally started and we could hear strike up the band in the distance the rest of it went much the same as last night other than it was obviously a different carriage while still depicting Christ carrying a cross and the people with the 3 foot conical hats and mask were dressed in blue and white not just white. As this finished about an hour later than advertised and we figured if we had seen two processions we didn't really need to stay until midnight to watch the others that would follow later in the evening so we set off to return to Glo. We had been really good all day but as we were hot, tired and thirsty, it would have been rude not to stop and help the local economy by having just the one Mrs Wembley drink, Barb forgetting what she got last time decided on a gin and tonic, the bit she had forgotten was that it came in a pint glass half full of gin served with a small bottle of tonic, this allowed me to have second drink while Barb just had a second bottle of tonic. While we were there it started to rain which attracted more customers so that they could take shelter under the provided awnings and umbrellas, we did stay longer than originally planned but didn't purchase anymore drinks we just did a Billy Joel Piano Man tonic and gin line, if you don't know what I am on about, check the songs lyrics. There was a break in the rain and we made a smartish return through the park to Glo, when we got there I had to have a walk around Glo to look at the various possibilities to get her out of this very tight spot but then it started to rain again and the get me out of here I am a Gloria would have to wait until tomorrow. After that you can figure out what the rest of the evening involved which wasn't much and you will have wait until tomorrow to see if Glo manages to free herself from the Tight Fit now there was a band, if your younger you won't have a clue who they were but they had a Lion that Slept at night, on a completely off piste conversation which isn't unusual, I used to work with a young lady who was part of a come back band with the original male singer, if you can find a video of the song you will see what she used to wear when she left work to go direct to a gig, hi Claire how are you doing. Anyway moving on Glo will need some help from us to escape in the morning.

Day 49 Monday 14th April

Well I had probably bigged up this escape from tight fit parking space as with two forward movements and two reverse movements she was out, now we can put that down to excellent directions and ace driving or we can say that I was overtaking the escape from car park, but Barb did say that it came out easier than she had expected, eer. Today rather than heading back to the coast there had been a change of plan and a fairly big change rather than the sea we were heading off to where there was a possibility of there still being snow, we were heading for the Sierra Nevada mountains our destination is over 2,000 metres above sea level so just a bit of a change to a plan. Off we go on the three ish hour drive most of which will be spent on the ascent to the campsite but will save that part of the drive for a minute, there were a couple of points of interest on the first part of the drive firstly as with yesterday's road this was surrounded by thousands of olive trees along the whole route and secondly we stopped at a services for a coffee and the place was full and went a bit quiet when some idiot walked in wearing shorts and T shirt while they are wearing duffel coats and scarves. This wasn't like one of our service stops it was a bar that sold food but more alcohol than food and when you ask for a coffee and a Fanta people start looking for your spaceship, the dust is blown off the coffee machine and while the beer fridge is being restocked of the next round, a tin of Fanta is found a the drink by date was checked before it was put on the bar. I kid you not everyone in the place was either drinking beer or vino tinto and if you hadn't had enough when you left there was an off licence next door to keep you topped up for the drive home, at home we have to put up with a cold Big Mc and a coke. I head to the bar to pay but have to wait awhile as more drinks are poured, let's get out of here quickly before any of these customers head to their cars. From there let's skip things until we get to the mountain road, now I thought that Bealach na Ba in Scotland and the Trollstigen mountain road in Norway that we drove three times consecutively (don't ask) last year, are interesting roads but this rascal is a beast I lost count of how many blind single lane hairpin bends there were it didn't matter whether it was a left or a right turn it was still blind and Barb was checking that the road was clear, it was a bit unnerving when a large lorry decided to come hurtling down the hill with not a great deal of space between us even though Glo's tyres are hanging on to the very edge of the road. As we climbed the drop got steeper and obviously higher with not much stopping a quick downhill exit. Barb is far from happy especially as this continues for over 30 minutes we reach 2,000 meters and there is a straight bit giving time for a deep breath before the bends say hello again but the campsite isn't that far away so we will be able to take a rest, now 2,000 metres is pretty high but not the highest road in the Sierra Nevada mountain range, the highest is at 3,400 meters leading to Pico de Veleta and is the highest paved road in Europe. I did suggest to Barb that we went to have a look as it could add another been there tick in a box however her response was not the most favourable, it had something to do with if you think I am going up a road like we have just driven up but higher and colder you are sadly mistaken, ok perhaps not. The campsite has fantastic views over the mountains and although it's a bit dated everything is clean and the showers are red hot, there are not many others here but I guess in a couple of weeks you will not be able to move. Parked up and plugged in it's time for chairs outside and be able to breathe normally, we watch the sun setting but unfortunately there is not a great sunset, really that is it for the day as there is nowhere to go so let's park it here for today making sure the handbrake is on, we are really not sure what is happening tomorrow but I guess we will figure it out as there is no rush.

Stop over Camping Alpujarras, Laroles, Granada, Andalusia 18494 Spain
What three words, inflatable.deploying.bookkeeping

Day 50 Tuesday 15th April

We did have a think about what we were going today and it didn't take us long to figure out what that was as it was raining and there is no way we were going out there to get wet, so this is going be a really short one. It was an admin day and Barb was seeing who else and how far back she could get with my family tree. I needed to do a couple of things with or house on Airbnb and I also needed to check our Portuguese toll charges as I am not sure they are correct, oh and I also need to catch up with the blog as I am now lagging four days behind due to being in towns and watching things happen until late in the evening. We also made plans for tomorrow and that was let's get back down to sea level and to some warmer weather as the best we are going to get up here is 13° but we could not come up to the mountains as the views are fantastic, it's so

beautiful. It really is going to be a short one today as nothing much else happened other than the rain stopped and was replaced by gale force winds ok they weren't gale force but they were certainly strong. There was a slight break in the weather late in the afternoon I we took the opportunity to walk to the village that was built hanging onto the side of the mountain so the best way to get to it was probably to abseil but we had to walk down a very steep road which is great as we have to drive down it tomorrow, anyway we get to the town and yep it's shut apart from the petrol station well it's probably the only one for god knows how many miles, it's certainly the first one we have seen since leaving ground level. As there is nothing happening we look for the cable car but there is a distinct lack of them so it crampons and axe to get back up the hill to the site. When we got back the sun had come out and we thought we would sit outside and enjoy the sun but mr sun had forgotten to bring his hot pants and was only sending a couple of degrees of warmth down to us, so sitting outside did not last long and the chairs are stowed away ready for departure tomorrow. I am now struggling to tell you anything else about today as the rest of the evening is usual stuff so let's leave it here until tomorrow and let's see how we get back down to sea level.

Stop over same as last night

Day 51 Wednesday 16th April

To say that it was a bit fresh up there last night would be a large understatement, it was flipping freezing, not actually freezing but it was still cold and even I needed to have an extra layer on the bed last night and the forecast up there was not getting any warmer and we decided that even though the mountains and the views are fantastic we would head down to warmer weather. Fortunately there was another route down the mountain as we did not fancy coming down the road we used to get up there. The road going down was also an interesting one with lots of narrow blind hairpin bends, it was also a fairly steep descent which adds the other problem of stopping gravity assisting a 3.5 ton van downwards as it approaches these lovely bends, now if you keep your foot on the brakes it won't be long before they overheat boil the brake fluid and then you don't have any left and that does make life interesting. It's not my job to tell you how to avoid that happening and I do not want the responsibility of telling you but one thing for sure is sitting with your foot on the brake pedal for a long time there will be trouble ahead. Anyway we get down the steep inclines without any issue with brakes, we were heading towards Alicante which was about a three hour drive and we needed a couple of stops for food and fuel on the route. First stop was for a coffee to recover from the drive down the mountain and we found a food stop and hotel next to a fuel station, why you would want to stay in a hotel at a fuel station I am not sure but they did sell coffee. We are asked if we wanted anything to eat but Barb wasn't too keen on the idea after looking at the contents of the warming trays, we declined the offer and settled for the coffee. It seems that the Spanish way of fixing godly road surfaces is not to fix them but to put a permanent road work sign reducing the speed limit and warning you it's going to be a bumpy ride for the next 10 kilometres. Then amazingly the road surface changed and had been resurfaced and not just for 10 meters and then it became obvious why all of this road was fresh tarmac and that was because there were a a set of barriers yep it was a toll road although there had been no previous notification that we were approaching a toll road, oh well are here now and as we approached them there was a beep from the toll tag and the barrier lifted and let us through. Barb tried to check the cost and length of the road but it was proving very difficult and also very difficult to get off it to a none paying and probably more interesting road, in the end we decided just to stick with it and add the £120 toll costs we had already clocked up. Not sure how long the toll road was but it was long, it made the M6 toll road look like a side street, we got to get me out of here barrier and went in the I have got a tag lane and slowly approached the barrier there was no beep from the tag an no movement from the barrier, with Glo's bumper under the barrier there was still no movement, now we could have just driven through it but we didn't think that was a very good idea and we chose the back me up option. Fortunately there was nothing behind us and we are reversing out I can see a lady in the pay here I haven't got a tag booth shaking her head and tutting, we drive to her booth and she was not happy and kicked off in a proper strop, obviously we hadn't got a clue what she was going on about and my response of lo siento no hablo espanol didn't seem to have any effect on her strop. Eventually we managed to communicate that we had a tag and that it had opened the barrier at the start of the toll, at which point she calmed down a bit before she had a heart attack, she gesticulated that she wanted to see the tags, tags passed over she started typing which I guessed was the numbers on the back

of the tags then shrugged her shoulders and handed them back. Then the absolutely pointless conversation continued but we figured out that she wanted the ticket you would receive at the entrance gate if you didn't have a tag, but we have got a tag and didn't get a ticket, this went on for a bit longer, then she forcefully prodded the computer keyboard, I was wondering how many keyboards she went through in a week but didn't and couldn't ask her. Then she shrugged her shoulders again and passed Barb a ticket while thrusting the card machine towards Barb, the card machine was asking for €9.45, quick pay her and let's get out of here, I am not sure that my response of gracias have nice day went down to well, or that she didn't get the scouse humour but the gate opened and we promptly scarpered, I guess that I might be having an interesting conversation with the tag company in a couple of days.

Before this interesting interaction had taken place, Barb had found us a stop over which was more like a campsite but was €10 a night including all facilities which were free, now you can't beat that, we would class that excellent value considering we paid €5 for that crap car park in Granada, there is a slight difference as there was a lot to see and do in Granada and this site is in the absolutely in the middle of nowhere with not even the smallest town anywhere close to it, if you want to go anywhere you would be going in the van, sounds good to us. Barb has phoned to make sure they had a pitch and got a positive response and about 30 minutes later we were there, Barb goes through the booking in process and we are sone at our pitch with chairs out and sitting in the sunshine. The lady at reception had told Barb that the site is open between September to May, don't ask me it didn't make much sense to me either, but she did tell Barb that through the winter they are fully booked every year and people stay for weeks if not months. Now I can get that after a lot of travelling a few days of doing nothing may be appreciated but for weeks on end I might go nuts. The site is great but there are not many people here, there are a fair few cast away Brits, when it is full I imagine that there might be a queue for the facilities may be fairly long as even though they are immaculate there are only two showers and two loo's in each of the sexes. If you are looking for a cheap stopover or want to stay longer and do nothing, we would highly recommend the place, details will be at the end as usual. Speaking of the end we are only a couple of words away from it as the rest of the evening was uneventful and you would find uninteresting we will call it a day and let's see what happens tomorrow.

Stopover Los Olivos Camper Park Cartagena, Murcia, Región de Murcia, 30396, ES
What three words. fells.tiffs.rebounds

Day 52 Thursday 17th April

The sun is shining and as we haven't seen much of it's going to be a waste of a great day driving and although there is nothing to do, we have decided to stay and chill out in the sunshine and as there is nowhere to go and nothing to do, that's what we did absolutely nothing. Now I may unintentionally upset a couple of people and this is in no way applies to responsible dog owners, I know that lots of people with motorvans have dogs and I have also owned dogs myself, what does upset and annoy me is irresponsible dog owners who possibly should not own one. I also know that dogs bark and that is usually because they want something or they have seen or sensed something or another dog is barking, I might be wrong but that's my thoughts of why they bark. We are sitting outside relaxing in the sunshine when a caravan arrives and parks up at the corner of the site and as soon as the car doors are opened the dog starts barking and it's obviously a large dog Ann it's bark is also very loud, that loud he or she may as well be sitting on our pitch, but if he or she was on our pitch I would find out what the dog wanted a pacify it. This owner appears to be an idiot as the barking continues and only stops when the unhappy or attention seeking dog stops to take a breathe. We think that when they sort the caravan out that they would pay some attention to their animal, but as the insistent barking continues it would appear that the dog is not getting any attention, I leave it for a while but this becoming like a stuck record and as I do need to get some steps in, I stroll off in the direction of the din. Half way there the barking stops, oh that's a result, the dog must have got what it wanted or the owner had taken control of it, I returned to take up the laid back relaxed position in the sunshine and yep the racket starts again and does not stop. It was time to have a discussion with its owner, as I approached the pitch there was a black Labrador tied to a tree in bright hot sunshine with no sign of any water. The number plates on the car indicated that it was from Germany I asked the gentleman if he spoke English and yes he did, I then asked him if could attend to his dog and stop it barking and also pointed out the it possibly like some water. His response was that it's a dog and it will bark,

yes I am with that but not continuously for about an hour, by then this guy was already getting me wound up, he then continued by telling me that the dog was German what that had to do with things I don't know. My response was does it understand German, oh yes he does, that's good find out what he wants and then tell him to shut up in German and make sure he does, I headed back to our pitch incase things got heated and I said something I possibly shouldn't, thankfully the dog got what he wanted, probably a bit of affection and that was the last we heard from him. I did say that there was nothing to do and that's exactly what we did for the rest of the day apart from chatting to a few fellow Brits as they walked past, we swapped routes we had all travelled and swapped suggestions of places to stay and things to see, we picked up some good tips for the next stage of the journey. Talking about sitting on our bums, eating and a bit more sitting in the sun does not really make for very interesting reading, so let's see what tomorrow brings, as without even sitting looking at a map we do have a definite plan for tomorrow.

Stopover same as last night

Day 53, Friday 18th April, Day 54 Saturday 19th April, Day 55 Sunday 20th April

You are all getting a bit of a breather for the last few days as after a short drive we arrived at our friends in San Miguel De Salinas and we stayed with them from Friday to Monday so we are going to treat the weekend as private days. We send them our thanks not only for their company and for 2 nights in real beds, it was a great weekend.

Stopover Real beds in San Miguel De Salinas

Day 56 Monday 21st April

This is going to be a relatively short post as we didn't leave our friends until lunchtime and we were heading towards Benidorm with a couple of stops to have a look at places on the route, first stop was Laguna Rosa de Torrevieja on the hunt for the so far elusive Flamingo's as I walked down to the laguna which is pretty much like a lake, there is a large sign showing the extensive variety of species of flying things that you will see including the elusive flamingos, wow I thought this is going to be it and apart from the flamingos, I would have to contact John on his holidays in Japan and ask him what the name is of the various birds I was about to see, when I say names I don't mean like Fred, George or Frank I mean the real names like duck and seagull. The excitement was raising as I got closer to the laguna, I reach the waters edge binoculars and camera with its long lens ready to capture the moment, it turned out that I didn't to lug all that gear to the waters edge as the elusive flamingo remained elusive not a single one, not only that there wasn't a single flying thing anywhere to be seen not even a duck bobbing around in the water, I thinking of giving up this quest and go hunting for alien space ships as I am sure I have more luck. On the return journey through the undergrowth I pass the sign that I had seen previously and had another read and then I saw the small print at the bottom which in very small print said, if you are expecting to see any of the birds shown above, you are sadly mistaken, just goes to show that you should always read the small print. I am determined to find one of these pink flying things while we are on this trip, even if I have to go to a zoo they are not going to be as elusive as moose in Norway. Next stop was Torrevieja itself, this didn't actually take very long as we drove in, drove through and drove out, then we continued to the town of Elche as it has palm gardens which were supposed to be worth a visit and Barb loves gardens, garden centres, flower shows and anything else with to do with flowers and Latin botanical names, well she is RHS qualified don't you know. Although the palm trees are very impressive they are not really Barb's favourite colourful array of plants, flowers and shrubs and as for me I am not really going to get very excited unless the palm trees are on an exotic island, we were ready to move on to our next appointment. As we had just had two nights in proper beds with all the home comforts, it was back to a car park for the night which was about 20 minutes outside Alicante, when we arrive the car park is full but only one other motorvans, we are soon parked up and levelled looking out over the sea. After some food we head down to the beach to have a look at the beach and a short stroll hand in hand watching the sun set over the mountains, then it was back to Glo where I should have written this but we were both worn out by the full out fun weekend, I have got a

feeling that I might be a couple of days playing catch up, let's see what happens tomorrow I suppose we will all find out then.

Stop over

Day 57 Tuesday 22nd April

It looks like we are getting into the full manana mode as the starts of our days keep getting later and later, eventually we get ourselves into gear and head into Alicante, first job was to find a parking spot, the stopover Apps had given us a couple of locations that Glo can get into, the first one was a definite no no there was rubbish everywhere, Glo was not being left here unattended, if you get that unsure feeling about a stopover or a parking lot, move on and find somewhere that you feel comfortable with. The second was not far away and actually closer into town and looked more suitable, not Liverpool One quality but free which L1 certainly isn't, when I say it was free but I think that it was only free as there was a police car parked just by the entrance. We have found that in car parks like these there are some self appointed attendants that direct you into a space and charge you €5 for the privilege of parking on waste land, we have previously paid just for peace of mind, on this occasion it looked like we had arrived at the right time as the "attendants" were conspicuous by their absence but would reappear as soon as the police moved on, attendants or not, Glo's security cameras are going on. It's a bit of a hike along the palm tree lined promenade and unlike the beginning of this trip the weather is beautiful with the sun glistening off the still waters of the marina and making the very posh, very expensive, highly polished and very unused boaty mcboatface's that are parked up in rows sparkle as the sun's rays reflect off the floating pieces of art bright and shiny bits. Even though the sun is shining and throwing out a fair amount of heat, the locals are still wearing coats and grown ups pants, the blokes that is, whereas we are in shorts and T-shirts, we have a stroll around the marina and then into the town. It's then off to Barbara's castle, or by its real name Castillo De Santa Barbara, we passed the entrance on our way into town but decided to go into town first, this might not have been a good idea as the queue is zig zagging around the taped maze. When we arrive at the get your money out or your not coming in desk, we didn't need to dig into our pockets as if your are of a certain age entrance is free, result. Now Barb is not too fond of enclosed spaces and now we are in a long tunnel in a queue waiting for our turn to get in the lift to the top, when we exit the lift it was time for some deep breaths before a look around, it's impressive to think that it's been here since the 9th century and is built on top of Mount Benacantil which is 166 meters above sea level. Looking at the building and the height of it I thought that it would have been impenetrable but I was surprised to read that it had been successfully invaded a few times, all I can say is that the guys that were supposed to be defending it were pants and needed to take some lessons in defence. The view from the top is obviously very different nowadays with it being surrounded by high rise hotels, apartments and other buildings for a significant distance, beyond the properties you can see the mountains in the distance and you can also see why T-shirts, shorts and no coat might not have been a good idea as you can watch them disappear as the rain heads towards us and you can feel the find as the rain pushes forward in our direction. Defence from getting wet seems futile and we retreat towards the lift which only had three positions top middle and bottom, when it arrives at the top the lift operator told all waiting that we could not get in and even though it was empty we would have to walk down to first floor and get in the same lift as it went down, now that seemed a completely stupid idea and a few people in the queue made their feelings quite obvious. It didn't really work as no one got in and we all trundled off down to the first floor discussing how sensible that experience was. We all arrive at the first floor and then tried to find the lift which was playing a good game of hide and seek and it had also hidden every sign that may have given you a clue to its location, eventually we find it and wait in another queue, when our turn arrives we get in and it is the same lift operator that was driving when we saw here at the top floor. I am not sure that she understood what I meant when I said Hi how are you doing didn't we see you before on the top floor with an empty lift, I guess this the same one but now it's as full as a full thing could be, they need to add logic with the defence lessons. We had been expecting there to be some wet stuff persistently falling from the sky as we exited the tunnel but fortunately it was only spitting. When we got to the car park our suspicions of self appointed attendants were confirmed they were even standing in the street directing cars in, one of them did try to get €5 from us based on we had parked without asking them, unfortunately for him he got a response that he fully understood even though he did not speak English. As we drove out, the guy directing

the cars in and out also tried the you owe 5 euro conversation he also got a response that he understood.

Time to say farewell to Alicante and head off to an Aire that Barb had found which is about an hour away and had full services including ehu for €13 it was a bit out of the way to the next destination but there was no rush, we hadn't called ahead as we find that sometimes with spare of the moment bookings we just turn up and hope that there is a space rather than phoning but that's just our thought process. It turned out that at this Aire that thought process would not have worked here as rather than just fitting vans in, this Aire had large individual numbered pitches and was extremely well organised, fortunately there were pitches available and after driving around a few times so that Barb could find one she liked which happened to be the first one we past, it was a bit like choosing a restaurant, walk past all of them and end up back at the beginning and then once inside picking a table and then moving to another for some reason, she better had not read this otherwise I will be on the naughty step. Then it was chairs out and sit in the sunshine, the most difficult thing is to figure out which language to say hello in as people walk past and have a good old nose, I settled for hi or hi hi depending on how I felt, it's a bit Scandinavian but seems to work with most people, unless they just look forward and walk faster as they realise that they have been spotted being nosey. Not much more to the rest of the day as it was chill, eat and bed and the chill bit put the blog into manana mode which meant I will need to play catch up tomorrow but until then then that's your lot.

Stop over Area Natur Playa Muchavista
El Campello, Alicante, Comunidad Valenciana, 03560, ES

What three words wavelike.itchy.overpower

Day 58 Wednesday 23rd April

This site actually encouraged our now normal manana mode way of thinking as we did not need to vacate our pitch until 12.30, we did manage to get away just after 11 o'clock and we set off to wait for it Benidorm which was only about 30 minutes away, we have found a car park which looks like is a walkable distance from the town, when we arrived getting to this car park was how shall I put it, I guess interesting would be a good one to use. Once we got into it we found that it must be related to a few others we have used as even though it wasn't far from the town, the army had previously used it for a bombing or minefield practice area, there is not a flat bit to be seen. Even though you really needed a safari rally truck to navigate your way across it, there were lots of vehicles parked on it and there were also no self appointed attendants in sight, probably because they could not find anywhere to stand without falling over. We drove slowly across and found Glo a suitable space out of the way of other vehicles, we then readied ourselves for the Benidorm experience but not before Glo's watch out for things security cameras were fitted and tested. The supposed walk into town was more like a extended hike and our first stop was the old town market, you can't beat a good old market for looking at the selection of vegetables and food stuff available, yes I know that if you have been to one then you are unlikely to get a surprise at the next, but you never know unless you try. Due to its location apart from food stuff I was expecting a selection of kiss me quick hats and a varied selection of fridge magnets, stickers, key rings and other genuine Spanish items saying I heart Benidorm which have come directly from China, as we walk down from the top of the hill we can see the tops of the market stalls in the distance and it was a big old market, I thought this may take some time to get through. As we got closer we found that it was actually going to take us no time at all to inspect the the various stalls as they were all just in the process of finishing packing up all their stuff, that put an abrupt end to our market visit. Dejected and wondering what fantastic items we had been unable not to purchase we continued down hill to sea level and the waterfront where we expected everything to be happening, when we got there the usual decision had to be made do we turn left or right thinking that this could take all day I make a management decision to turn left walk done one side of the road and walk back down the other and do the same to the right of our point of entrance. Left leg of the journey complete we continued along the promenade by the beach until it was time to cross over and walk back past the various shops and restaurants one of which we needed to stop at to get a snack so that Barb did not turn into Gremlin mode, I will let you have a think about

what happened next. Yes correct and have won a goldfish which they didn't actually have, I guess due to the heat as if you walked around here in the summer with a goldfish in a plastic bag of water it would end up as one of the boil in a bag things that you used to get. Anyway yes we did walk half way down the promenade checking out the various cafe's, snack bars and restaurants then we turned around and went back for a second visit, Barb had seen one displaying a menu offering chicken kebabs that sounded ok. We sat outside in the sunshine with seats that gave us a great view for people watching an event I always find fascinating, food was ordered and was to be accompanied by a large cerveza and a Coke for me, it's not long before the chicken kebabs arrived and it wasn't quite what Barb or myself for that matter was expecting, the expectation was pieces of chicken on a stick along with a couple of vegetables, what actually arrived was something that roughly resembled a doner kebab but made from some form of what once may have been chicken, with some salad in a wrap. Although it tasted ok it was definitely not on Barbs favourite meal list and probably won't get ordered again, thankfully the people watching was more enjoyable than the food and when asked if there was anything else we would like, Barb made a quick response of no just the bill. The escape was made even faster as the Monzo card was hovering ready and waiting to get to know the card machine as soon as it arrived, without even a chat up line like I haven't seen you here before it was tap bing accepted and we were gone, off into the distance with Barb leaving most of her chicken surprise on the plate. Benidorm wasn't quite what we had been told to expect possibly as it is early in the season and also during the day, we have been told that it gets livelier at nighttime, don't get me wrong there were a few topless extremely white male bodies strutting their stuff along the prom which I guessed by tomorrow they would be bright red and not the expected immediate overnight tan and also suffering from a banging headache. After a walk inland for a look around we headed back up the hill to the bomb site, while we were out Glo's cameras had notified us of any occurrences and had fortunately been waiting patiently under the shade of a tree. The next job was to get out of there when we exited the car park we wanted to turn left but as it was one way we had to turn right and then at a strange junction which I suppose if you live here is normal turn left and then left again. It's the same type of slip road as the one on the way in, narrow with a window high wall on the left side. There was also another problem which was exactly the the same as when we were going in but in the opposite direction, there is a coach parked and there is no chance that Glo will fit through the gap so it was sit and wait until it cleared off, while we waited a couple of cars squeezed through the gap but only by pulling their mirrors in and taking a deep breath, others chickened out and waited behind us. We were not sure why it was parked there as no one got on or off, eventually it cleared off and we could make our way to our stop over for the night which was a car park at the town of L'Agas de Pi which was a smaller posher seafront town, after picking a spot with some expensive motorvans we have a walk into town and down to the beach and back again, as we are again staying for free we like to contribute to the local economy and as the shops were shut, it was going to have to be a local bar we choose one of the many available and a female bar person comes to take our order and tells us that we can only have one as they were closing soon and no before you ask it wasn't midnight it was only 8 o'clock, oh well their economy is not going to prosper much this evening. After our one drink we return to Glo and the few more vans that have joined the clan, it was time to play blog catch up but that didn't happen and we are not having a do nothing day tomorrow which would have given me catch up time, in fact it's going to be the total opposite and having a full tourist visit here and there day, all will be revealed tomorrow if I manage to catch up after I have written I must try harder 100 times.

Stop over Parking municipal, L'Alfas de Pi, Alicante 03581
What three words

Day 59 Thursday 24th April

We had a busy sight seeing day today and as usual we didn't a particularly early start but we got act together and arrived our first stop of the day the village of El Castell de Guadalest to give it its full name or just Guadalest as it is more commonly known, I guessed that its abbreviated name was used as there wasn't much left of the Castell. First job was parking went into the first car park to be told no go over the road ok will do but I will have drive around the car park to get out as there are now cars behind me, with a grunt and a shrug of his shoulders he moved the bollard

blocking the entrance, don't you just love people that are so happy with their job, I wondered if he had ever thought about finding one he might like. Anyway around the car park we go and at the far end of it there is plenty of space for Glo but as not to spoil Mr Happy's day even more we left and drove over the road to the second car park and pull up to the traffic cone that was blocking the entrance, as we were patiently, a woman and a bloke in the I am superior to you hi-vis waistcoats come running over shouting and waving their arms excitedly in the air. They run over to the passenger door and were surprised that there was no steering wheel and that someone had moved it to the wrong side of the van, the shouting which was obviously in Spanish continued, I went for the No hablo Español but that didn't stop them, I guessed that these two must be Mr Happy's even happier brother and sister. Eventually we figured out that there was another car park hidden down a hill where they wanted us to park, ok we will go there but you best tell the queue behind me that they will all need to back up, it was complete bedlam with cars trying to reverse coaches stuck in the middle of a very narrow road, why on earth they didn't let us park in there precious car park or even I suggested let us go in to turn around to come out like their happy brother did, eventually we get to the entrance of the third and well hidden car park where Mr Happy's happier brother told Barb that we owed him €6, oh and he only took cash gosh that was a surprise. The road to the car park was a steep descent and felt like it was half way down the mountain we had just driven up, it certainly felt like it when we climbed the stairs back up to the village. Finally we are in the village and it's a very quaint with narrow twisting streets which just for a change go either up or down and then go down and up, it's very busy with tourists and has lots of the tourist type shops selling the usual stuff, if we had bought a fridge magnet from everywhere we have been we would need a bigger fridge or possibly a magnetic wall. The views from the top are beautiful with mountains surrounding it, down below in the valley there is a vivid green lake, it is so colourful you would think that it had some form of dye added. The village and the Castell have history dating back to ???????? it would have been nice to contribute to the village's economy but a fridge magnet, towel or T-shirt with a picture of a derelict Castell did not really float our boat after a bit more of a stroll we headed back to Glo to set off to our next destination. We set off along the same twisting road which has a fair few hairpin bends, not as many as the other day but certainly more than we have got in Liverpool, our next tourist stop was ????? which was a series of waterfalls linking pools that you could swim in, this is another tourist spot and when arrive the first job as usual was to park and when we arrive at the car park we are met by another of Mr Happy's relatives and told that we can't park in there carry on up the road to another one which we do and pull in and find a suitable space well out of the way, now Mr Happy must have some relatives as another one of them comes along with the can't park there park it elsewhere comment. Eventually we agree on a stop to park and this time it was only €5 which would be refunded if you ate in the restaurant over the road. We followed the other tourists and locals up a hill towards the waterfalls entrance where you would have to put your hand in your pocket but not too deep as if you were of a certain age you got a special price of one euro discount which doesn't sound much but when the usual cost was €4 it was a pretty good discount. As you know waterfalls flow downwards which means you have to walk upwards, we certainly got our steps and levels in today

Day 60 Friday 25th April

What we hadn't realised yesterday was that our park up was in the perfect position for both sunrise and sunset, the sunrise was fantastic with no massive buildings, cranes or anything obstructing the view, the golden hour at each end of a day is a beautiful thing that should always be enjoyed. Now watching a sunrise means that we were awake early which is something that hasn't happened recently but that doesn't mean that we were out exploring what it did mean was that we could put the chairs out on the beach enjoying the sun while we had our tea and coffee and then enjoying more of the sun before its rays got too hot. The quest for the Brits on holiday English breakfast had not yet been successful and to be honest I wasn't expecting to be able to complete it in Denia as it's a bit more upmarket, but Mr Goggle has said that there is a place in the town that goes by the traditional Spanish name of The Railway Tavern and surprisingly sells English food, sounds like the full Brits establishment. We set maps to take us there and after getting a fair few more steps in we get there only to find it closed, looks like another fail, when we walk around the corner the road is blocked off to cars and there is a food market along with some other stuff after a walk around checking out the amazing variety and aromas of very fresh fruit and vegetables we head off to find a more traditional Spanish restaurant which we guessed was more of a locals hang out as we were the only tourists there, again we were the ones in T-shirts and shorts while everyone else was in grown up pants, jumpers, scarves and puffer jackets, I would

have passed out, it was roasting. The other give away was that even in a tourist resort there was absolutely no English spoken not one word, because most places we have been lately have spoken English I have slipped back into Brits on tour mode and have to give my head a knock to find the very little Spanish my brain has available, eventually it wakes up manages to order what we wanted well I think I had as the waitress repeated it back so quickly my little grey cells could not catch up and just ended up saying Si accompanied with a smile. We had also forgotten about mañana mode and this place was right into it, it was nearly teatime before the food arrived but when it did amazingly it was what we wanted, I made a bit of a mistake by ordering another coffee which arrived from Brazil and a similar amount of time passed by the time we got the bill and paid. When we are away on an extended period Barb cuts my hair but as it needed cutting I thought that I would have it done professionally, Barb heads, pun not intended, back to our four wheeled apartment while I go barber hunting, there was one directly opposite the posh marina which also meant an expensive haircut so I “head” inland to find a more sensibly priced establishment. I managed to find one that didn’t close for an afternoon kip and it’s empty so he can fit me in, now this was going to be interesting as we were back to no English as this guy was from Columbia but I think ah what the hell my hair goes fast so at worst it was only going to take a fortnight to improve. Together we worked out that from the ears up we were going for, dos, tres, cortos, ok let’s go for it, electric trimmers in hand we set off on the hair cutting journey which I kid you not took an hour and fifteen minutes, people have had quicker facelifts, I was thinking that this guy was a perfectionist or was unsure of what he was doing and didn’t want to cock it up too much, eventually the various size and types of scissors along with the three different electric trimmers are stowed away. Then he opened a draw and pulled out a pair of latex gloves, wow hang on there I only wanted a haircut and before I could say anything the wax is being applied, this is something that I never have as your hair ends up feeling like Hercule Poirot’s moustache not that I have felt his moustache but you know what I mean. Then it’s talcum powder and massive shaving brush time and with a quick flick of his wrist the protective gown is removed, at this point I am thinking that the posh barber by the posh marina may have been cheaper, how much do I owe you, €12 came the reply, 12 yes 12 ok muchas gracias, needless to say he got a tip, charge more, it’s short and a bit sticky but very professional and it will grow and the sticky stuff can be washed out, then with an muchas gracias adios, I was out of there. When I got back to our two bed, one bathroom sea front apartment Barb was just about to report me missing and send out search parties, the day was getting on and we listening to Simon Mayo’s all requests Friday on Greatest hits radio and I give them a ring, I have phoned before but have never been successful but today my call is answered and I guess that because we are in a bit of quirky situation, they decided to have me on, they explained that I would be on in a couple of minutes and when gave the word Simon would say the word I had to reply hello Simon, Matt and the team, we went through where we were how long we had been away and just before they played The Mavericks Dance the night away, Simon said enjoy your holiday, I replied and you enjoy work. I got a few messages off people who had heard me so at last I have a claim to fame. There been a fair bit of activity in this one today and as the rest of the evening was just the usual uninteresting stuff I will leave it here and let’s see what happens tomorrow.

Stop over same as last nights

Day 61 Saturday 26th April

I have been talking to another English couple and got into the hunt for a full English conversation, he told me that the railway tavern did them but they didn’t open until 12 o’clock which would explain why it was shut when we got there yesterday, I did think that 12 o’clock was a bit of a daft time to open for breakfast but possibly they have moved into an even later mañana mode than the locals, oh well it’s got to be worth a try. We get there just after 12 and yes it’s open and it also has the much hunted full English for €5, not surprisingly the owner is English and it’s not long before a number of expats arrive for their breakfast, brunch, lunch whatever you want to call it. Lets not beat around the bush but it wasn’t the best breakfast going and the sausages may have contained some pork but I couldn’t find it, I am sure that Iberian pigs do not have much to worry about in this kitchen but hey it completed the quest and the mission was complete. I asked if the Liverpool Mach would be one tomorrow and got a positive response and if we fancied it they were doing roast dinners until 4pm, ok thanks we will see you after 4pm, the quest for a breakfast was just for a bit of a laugh but a roast dinner was taking things a bit too far. After another walk around

we head back to our beach fronted apartment and from then on things get a bit boring as we did completely nothing apart from sit out in the sunshine until the sun was about to go to the other side of the world, and then we went for a walk along the beach to watch its golden glow while we checked out what the water was like, well it was wet and cold and I wasn't going in above the knee, I think Barb stopped at her ankles. Then it was back to Glo and the stuff that it's not worth telling you about, when I looked at how sort this was I did think that I must have missed something but then thought, you can't have a full on day everyday and that I hadn't missed anything and that means this is all you are getting until tomorrow.

Stopover same as last night

Day 62 Sunday 27th April

This morning was a bit like yesterday afternoon as in we didn't do anything in fact we didn't do much apart from sit in the sun until just before 4pm when we got ready to go to the expats bar, we are an hour in front of the UK so kick off here was 5.30pm, we got there about 5pm and they were having the Liverpool match on one tv and the United match on the other, this could be interesting as it not a very big establishment, also the place was full of expats. There is no point in telling you about the match other than Liverpool WON, what we did have was a new found expat friend who may have had a drink before arriving there and was determined to tell us his life story and how good he was at his job before he retired for about 60 minutes during the match. This is starting to look like it might be even shorter than yesterday's blog, as after the match we escaped from our new friend and headed off to celebrate the Liverpool result, we returned to the market place and what seemed the most popular bar we took a vacant table outside which by the look on the maitre d's face we should have escorted to, I hadn't seen her when we arrived and it hadn't happened before in the last 61 days, oh well too late now we are sitting down, Barb orders a G&T and as usual they bring the bottle to the table and just pour a large amount of gin into the glass that usually needs two bottles of tonic, we chat while doing some people watching, just to set the scene, the chairs are director type chairs you know the fold up wooden ones with canvass base and back, the base is lower than you are expecting when you sit down. No Barb did not fall off it, a family arrive with I suspect the grandfather as he is getting on in years, there are six in the party and the maitre d organised her staff to join a couple of tables together and arrange the required amount of chairs. As everyone is getting seated the grandfather sits down and misjudged the height or lack of in the chair and backwards he goes, crash onto the cobbled floor, oops this might not be good, and obviously there is a bit of panic, the maitre d, staff and the adults in the party and rush to his aide and get him up and into his seat, fortunately he was just a bit shocked, grazed his arm but hadn't hit his head. Possibly low trendy arty farty slightly unstable and pretty uncomfortable directors chairs might need a rethink. With all that excitement Barb orders a couple of drinks this time the waitress brings over the bottle of gin and the tonic along with a glass with large chunks of ice that were big enough to sink one of those posh boats if it hit one, now I am not sure if this waitress wasn't capable of judging measurements or if she should have been wearing L plates but rather than just pouring the gin into the glass she produced a jigger to measure the gin, I didn't know that they had them as we haven't seen one in any form since we left the UK. Before we leave I go to the bathroom while Barb settles the bill, when I return she is not happy as her G&T's cost €11 each, now I know that in the UK is not extortionate unless you are in Wetherspoons but the most we have paid since we have been here has been €5 or €6 plus an extra bottle of tonic to dilute them and as for using a measure well that was just ridiculous, I guess we won't be going back there even if they did have 40 day aged steaks that I fancied for our special meal. That's really your lot for today as to be honest we may have possibly celebrated too much and stayed out too late, even though we really like it here and I think Barb is looking for a permanent space in the car park we will be moving to our next destination tomorrow, you will find out where we are going tomorrow.

Stopover same as last night

Day 63 Monday 28th April

For celebration reasons we did not leave our favourite car park until late in the morning but it wasn't a problem as we were only travelling for just over an hour, as we have been parked up in car parks for 5 nights Glo's tanks need a bit of attention and our first stop was to a service point

about 20 minutes away, we will skip through that bit and rejoin as we head towards Valencia and as we are both a bit like Glo we need some home comforts we are staying at a campsite that Barb has found, which has everything we need and we can also get a bus outside that will take us into Valencia. Nothing special about the journey but as we drive through a small town just before the campsite none of the pedestrian traffic lights were working, when we pulled into the site which is like a mixture of a Haven Holiday camp, Maplin's and Fawlt towers but for £19 a night including all services and private pitches you can't complain. While Barb goes to book in I notice that there is no phone signal, unusual but they will have WiFi so it won't be a problem, Barb comes to get me as I need to sign a form, they can't book us in properly as the internet is down ok no great problem and the power is down which again is not great problem as they have back up generators very posh and it makes you think that a power cut is a regular occurrence. After a bit of sun sitting we head off for a walk around, it's definitely old school holiday camp but is very well maintained, as we had no contact with the outside world we were still blissfully unaware of what was happening other than they couldn't take card payments. We had planned to get the bus into Valencia but decided that it would be better having a whole day there tomorrow rather than a couple of hours this afternoon which as we were to find out later was a good job that we hadn't. It wasn't until about 11pm our time when we started to get some sketchy intermittent phone and internet signal that we got some messages asking if we were ok, but we still didn't have enough signal or WiFi to see what was happening and were still blissfully unaware of what was going on but when people message you to see if your ok it does make you wonder what's happening. It wasn't until about 11.30pm that we could have an intermittent conversation with Jennie and then Phil that we found out what was going on and how serious it was, thank goodness we hadn't gone into the city that's if there were any buses still running from here. We are pleased that we hadn't gone into come to a proper site that had back up power, I am not sure how we would have been in our favourite car park in Dénia with no lights n in the town and not knowing what was happening, good timing I guess. They came round and told us that they were going to turn the generators off between 11.30pm and 6am but that wasn't going to be a problem as we were going to be asleep and had our own power anyway, it has been an interesting day and we won't find out anything until tomorrow that is if the internet has been restored. Until then that's your lot for a sort of exciting day when we eventually found out what was happening, it could have been more interesting if we hadn't arrived here when we did, best be buying a lottery ticket.

Day 64 Tuesday 29th April

Ok our initial plan before we arrived at this site was to get the bus early, well earlier than we have been getting up recently and the bus into Valencia from outside the entrance of the campsite but due to yesterday's issues we have been wondering if that's a good idea, we are awake early and have been looking online for local information to see if Valencia is back and open for business but nothing we have found is confirming that it is. I go to reception to ask if they have any more information and they told that yes the city was up and running but it was still not fully operational and a bit chaotic. In our opinion that doesn't sound good, as if everything was fully up and running they would be shouting from the rooftops saying that it would be lovely to see as many visitors as possible. Now do we risk it or do we chicken out, we chose to chicken out and do our visit tomorrow the plan is to drive closer to the city and catch some form of public transport into the city and see what happens, if we need to spend more time in the city we will find a park up and hope that there isn't another power outage. As for today it looks like we are going to be doing nothing whatsoever well apart from me getting my finger out and catching up with the blog which thankfully I did. We also need to find somewhere to park from where we can catch a bus into the city, we will pick that idea up later. In my haste to play blog catch up, I forgot to tell you about the Fawlt Towers connection, last night when we were unable to communicate, well we could communicate with each other but at that time neither of us had a clue what was happening outside the campsite and we weren't too sure what was happening there, so we went to the restaurant / bar for a drink and possibly something to eat. This is were Basil's member of staff came into play, we sit outside in the evening sun and a waiter came over to ask what we would like and I kid you not he could have played Andrew Sachs's double, he was the image of him but wasn't wearing a white waiters jacket, when I tried to order our drinks and ask for a menu in my fluent Spanish, he looked at me tilted his head to one side and with that unknowing Manuel look said ¿Que, well I couldn't speak, I had to hold my breath to stop myself from laughing, then to make it even funnier one of his younger colleagues came over to help, fortunately he did not give Manuel a clip round the back of the head as Basil would have done. After a large intake of breath I

managed to place our order and Manuel walked off and when I looked, he even had the same pants on that were a couple of sizes too big, Barb and I could not look at each other without laughing and the more we tried not to the worse we got, I really wish I could have filmed it, it was amazingly funny. As there was no internet they could only take cash or they did give you the option to write down all of your card details including the magic three numbers and they would charge your card when the internet came back online, oh yes like that's going to happen which was a bit of a shame as the restaurant had really good reviews and we could have had our trips special meal there, but the card bit was not happening and we didn't have enough cash, who uses cash anymore, well you would if you were here and there was no internet. Getting back to today we still hadn't done much and certainly not as much planning during the day as we should have done, but as it was the evening before we started to look for somewhere to park closer to the city and it wasn't looking good as every park up we could find had various dodgy reviews that didn't make us feel at ease leaving Glo with all of our stuff and some expensive stuff, unless the reception team have an idea where could park, we might be staying here another night, but that conversation will have to wait until tomorrow morning as they have closed up and gone home. I guess that we are going to close here until tomorrow as we aren't getting very far with planning for tomorrow, let's see what we can find out in the morning.

Day 65 Wednesday 30th April

First job was to go to reception and find out if they could suggest anywhere we could park Glo just outside the city and then get public transport in to the city, I head off and ask the question, there was a lot of head shaking but in a negative way, they said that they wouldn't advise parking at any of the park and rides or at any for the open land car parks as even though they should be free there are groups possibly immigrants acting as self appointed car park attendants, and that they wouldn't leave their car there never mind a motor an full of stuff. Well we can rule that one out and not a good thing to say about the city. Ok how much is another night, oh that will be 51 euro, sorry I thought you said €51 and it was €21 last night, yes that's correct €51, no wonder the place is empty ok forget that. I understand that they have rules but sometimes businesses would be better applying some logic as the place is empty and 50% of something is better than 100% of nothing and we would have probably eaten in the restaurant and had a few drinks but as it was they missed out on it all. There is no way we are paying €51, can we leave our van in the car park and collect it later, after a trip into what I suspect was the bosses office, the answer was yes you can do that, that's great thanks. We move Glo to the car park and head over the road to the bus stop, the bus trip takes about 30 minutes and cost €2 each but so far it has come through on the Monzo card as €0.01 we will see if it reconcile's itself in the next few days. After yet another stroll around another ancient city which has been there for over 2100 years, my neck is hurting again as all of the interesting architecture is above the illuminated signs of the usual shops and as for that Ale Hop lark they are like bottoms they are everywhere, we had walked past three of them before we got to our first destination which was the Central Market which is not only a fantastic building it is also the largest fresh produce market in Europe and they are not kidding it's massive covering 8,000 square metres. As soon as you walk inside, the aroma's are amazing and tantalise your senses, we have entered the meat and vegetable side of the market but head through to the separate fish part, again as we have seen before, the variety from the various vendors is fantastic and like nothing we see in the UK, lots of them also sell cooked items like prawns, octopus, sea urchins and other small slimy things in shells. We then head into the meat, vegetable, fruit and associated items like cheese, freshly ground coffee, olive oil, balsamic vinegar along with beer, wine and other stuff. It's not like Porto market where everyone was walking around with a glass of wine, don't get me wrong, tapas and wine are available and as the wine is One Euro a glass I am not sure why there isn't more of it in people's hands, it would have been in mine but unfortunately I would be driving later. Back to the produce the colours and smells of the fruit and vegetables was fantastic and there were also some of those, what the heck is that items, again the meat selection is fantastic with massive ribs of beef sitting there waiting for customers to ask the butcher to cut a couple of steaks off or to portion part of a whole rib, there are also massive tomahawk steaks again waiting to be separated from its attached mates. It's a shame but I don't think Gloria's cooking thing would be able to give the meats the care and attention they deserve. Obviously every other cut of meat including ears, feet and internal bits from lots of animals are available (sorry vegetarians out there) there were a few things that I wouldn't try especially pigs willy's that were proudly on display at the very front of chiller window. That's enough of that let's

move on and see some more of the sight's the city has to offer there are a number of churches in the city and although I am not really religious we do go into a few of them to respectfully admire the architecture. Then it was time for us to join a Python cast and Indiana Jones in a quest but it wasn't much of a quest as we knew where the item in question was and unlike the silly price that they wanted for you to visit Granada's cathedral the entrance fee for the magnificent Valencia cathedral was €9 and if you are of a certain age like under 17 or if you are at the other end of the scale the fee is reduced to €6. I may make a joke of things a bit but I am also extremely restful these magnificent places of worship, I always sit and have a few minutes of reflection, say a short prayer and I always light a candle, how come I do that if I am not really religious well it's respectful for others beliefs and there may be someone listening that knows that I am not a complete atheist. The cathedral is a magnificent building with a history dating back to 1262, for some people that's not a time on an odd clock, it is the year 1262, you get a headset and a little box that when you press a number it gives you a voice over recording giving you the details of the part of the cathedral you are located, the tour takes over an hour and reserves the last part of the narration to take you to a special place. I leave Python and Indiana behind and enter the chapel of the holy chalice where the Holy Grail is kept, obviously it is absolutely priceless and is kept behind what I imagine is safety glass, now believer or not, there is what I can only call a feeling of calmness and silence in the chapel with everyone being extremely quiet and respectful. There are a few museums but we are running out of time before they close, we had thought about the under water fishy place but at €50 each for entrance to the Oceanogràfic that was not happening. Also we had the 30/40 minute bus ride back to Glo and then find a park up somewhere. Time warp time, we have collected Glo and arrived at our park up which was in an Alcampo hypermarket overlooking the sea about 30 minutes the other side of Valencia. Now you can't park in a hypermarket car park without going in to have a look at stuff, as you entered they had a display of special offers all for One Euro including bottles of red, white or rosé wine, a bottle of vino blanco had to be purchased just for a bit of a laugh and while walking around a few more items from various locations in the shop ended up in the basket but the electric scooters wouldn't fit. After looking at the meats in the market and in the hypermarket the quantity of Iberian pigs rear legs in both, made me wonder if there was either lots of two legged pigs knocking around or these rascals aren't as rare as they would have you believe, the things are everywhere in the shop, the legs I mean not the pigs. The place was also rammed with people which we thought was a bit strange for a Wednesday night, little did we know. After a walk along the promenade it was time to head back to Glo and then the usual uninteresting stuff that you don't want to know about, we also need to do a bit of planning as we are heading inland tomorrow, we will let you know where tomorrow until then that's it for today.

Stopover Area de Autocaravanas, Alboria, Valencia, 46120
What three words pencils.bowls.yours

Day 66 Thursday 1st May

Pinch punch first of the month, we found out this morning why the hypermarket was so busy last night as in Spain the 1st of May is a bank holiday and is Día del Trabajador (Labour Day) now we in the UK are used to having bank holidays tagged onto a weekend but this bank holiday is always on the 1st May and everything is shut, but there is a resemblance to the UK as when things are shut we and the Spanish go shopping as if the shops are going to be shut for a month. It didn't bother our first stop as it was to Little Venice and was only a short walk away, the description on the internet and from tour operators was that it was full of beautiful individual colourful houses along a canal and resembled Portofino Venice. We have been to Portofino and to suggest that Little Venice is anything like Portofino would stretch the amazing imagination of J K Rowling or J R R Tolkien to the nth degree, it was built in the 1970's and is a marina with about 15 houses freshly painted in different colours. We possibly need to stretch our imagination and stretch it lot but the only hint of resemblance we can see is that there is water and there is a roof on the houses, look it might be us, but that's our opinion and we won't be rushing back unlike Portofino which is beautiful. Our next planned stop was going to be the Lladrò museum, we were fairly certain that it as going to be shut but couldn't confirm it on the internet, it was only 15 minutes away so it was worth the short trip, we could have saved the 15 minutes as the firmly closed gates confirmed that it was shut, that was a bit of a blow but stuff happens so let's move on. We are heading inland for a while to get into real Spain rather than the coastal towns and we set off towards Zaragoza which was about a three hour drive plus stops, fairly uninteresting drive

apart from the usual Spanish way of fixing knackered road surfaces, they just put a sign up in road work colours that says uneven surfaces for 50km and the other thing I don't understand as well nuclear physics and Chinese writing is why on earth do people drive past you and then put their foot on the brakes, I guess that there is some logic but it's well hidden from me. After about 90 minutes we pulled into the services for a rest stop, I don't think that I will ever get used to European motorway services as they don't just serve coffee, this one sells three varieties of draught beers, bottled beers, red and white wines. It is very busy and every table has a varied selection of the alcoholic drinks along with some already empty glasses. I have a *café con leche* while Barb goes for the if you can't beat them join them and has a *cerveza de barril*, we are only about 100km from Valencia and the south east coast where lots of English is spoken but when I was ordering our drinks I found very quickly that there is absolutely none whatsoever, my brain realised that it needed to move back into its limited knowledge of the Spanish language, it managed to communicate the words to my mouth to order our drinks even if the pronunciation was poor. Then Barb says why don't we have a couple of tapas my immediate response was ok you go and place the order after you have figured out what was available, Barb's response was get lost you are doing that. Goggle translate helps us figure out what was available and I thought that with a bit of work I could get through placing our order, well let's say I was wrong it was a long and difficult discussion with lots of tutting going on behind me, but I got there in the end and they were really good. Next was to find a stopover which was about an hour away and about 500 metres from the motorway which was great we could get back without travelling miles oops kilometres before we could get back on, it was a designated stopover but really it's a lay-by outside a small town,. There is a bit of a change to our travel plans but I will let you know about that in the next issue.

Stopover Longares, Zaragoza, Aragón, 50460
What three words wavelike.tribally.confronts

Day 67 Friday 2nd May

I must admit that I had been a bit sceptical about last night's stopover but we didn't have any problems at all and had a great night's sleep. Today was another travelling day as we have had a rethink on our travel plans, we do not think we have enough time to give our original plan the justice we want to give it and that it deserves which is good in one way as it gives us another trip to do possibly later this year when we get our Schengen days back (what a stupid idea). We have decided to head north from Zaragoza and over the Pyrenees into France and do some touring around France. When we arrived at Zaragoza the weather had changed and it was absolutely pouring down, our original plan was to park up and have a look at the old town and then head off, but there was no way that I was walking around anywhere in the pouring down rain and by the look of it there was more modern sprawling city than old town. I think that everyone had added today to yesterday's bank holiday as everywhere was packed and parking was non-existent and we needed to find somewhere to have something to eat. I know that we have eaten in some random non-Spanish eateries but I think we went a bit daft today as we ended up in one of my non-favourite shopping experiences, the clue is it's blue and yellow and from Sweden, but the one thing they did have was parking, ok I will go but there is no chance of us going shopping, it's straight to the restaurant, eat and leave. Strangely enough the food was very Spanish and not the usual Swedish meatballs, gravy, chips with loganberry jammy stuff, what was also different about this store was that we could find our way out, if you feel like a listening to the I fear IKEA song check out the Lancashire Hotpots song it's funny and also very true. Enough of this city lark let's escape to the mountains, when we get out of the city and onto the main road we can see the mountains in the distance, that's not really true as we can only see the bottom of them as the top is covered with dark storm clouds and they were heading in our direction. It wasn't long the clouds along with torrential rain that was that hard the wipers couldn't cope, you could not hear yourself think as it battered Glo from every direction, it also severely slowed progress as you couldn't see anything. It looks like the weather is fighting our plans at every opportunity as we wanted to drive over the mountains and try and find a park up at the top and wake up to a beautiful sunrise, the rain was showing no chance of abating and even I would not be daft enough to attempt driving over the top of the mountains in this weather and even if we had we would not have seen anything so we took the sensible route through the tunnels. The rain was that bad it wasn't worth stopping so we broke one of our travelling rules and kept on driving, we exited one of the tunnels and there was a small sign saying France, by Spain hello France and just to make

sure that you know you are in France our phones beep with a message from BT saying welcome to France. We were in full rebellious mode today and our 3pm stop rule also went out of the window and we continued on until about 6pm to a small village that had a designated le campingcar stop over, as we drove into the village stupid satnav Sid told us to turn right which we did and that was a big mistake as Glo just about fitted down it and being even more stupid I kept following his instructions as he was sure that the stopover was further down the road, mind you we didn't have any option as there was nowhere to turn around and not much hope of reversing out. When we get to the bottom of the hill the road stopped, well it didn't really it turned 90° left and then over a bridge that was made for a horse and small kart. Sid was nearly right with his directions as we could see the stop over but it was on the other side of a three foot high wall, ok we had no option but to turn around and head back up the road, turning round was going to be easy but we have done it before, Barb gets out to watch the corners and then a monsieur came out of his house to tell us how to complete the manoeuvre, this is how you do it, you turn here, then turn there, then turn here, then turn there once more and that's it's done, follow my instructions but listen carefully I will say it only once. Ok here we go, needless to say this didn't go to his original plan as although he may have done it lots of times in his own car, when he stands looking at you telling you which way turn the wheel he has forgotten that his instructions are in reverse, eventually the task is complete and with a merci monsieur we are out of there, well nearly, as when we were going back up the hill, a van decided to come down, oh flipping heck that's a bit of a nuisance I thought, this could go on for ages but eventually we got past each and found our way into the stopover and got there just in time as we got the last parking space. When we are having a free night at an Aire that the town has supplied we always try to contribute to the local economy and after a walk around the town the only thing we could find open was obviously a bar and it would have been rude not to pay it a visit, time to order drinks, now my brain was tired and still in Spanish mode and although I know how to order our drinks in French my brain sent dos cervezas to my mouth at which the guy behind the bar gave me a strange look, oops sorry what I meant to say was deux bières s'il vous plait, ahh that's better but the pronunciation is still pants, after our local economy assistance we head back to Glo and then the stuff that is of no interest, which means that's your lot until tomorrow.

Stopover Oloron Sainte Marie, Pyrenees- Atlantique 64, Nouvelle-Aquitaine 64400 France
What three words adults.subject.stress

Day 68 Saturday 3rd May

As is becoming our usual no rush to leave, it's mid morning before we are about to set off and before we left we wanted to empty the waste water tank, just as we were about to move to disposal drain we are beaten to it by a French guy, not only did he get there first he also blocked our exit, to be fair he did ask if we wanted to leave but I said no as we wanted to use the supplied facilities after him, thinking that he wouldn't be long was a big mistake. When we do this job, we open the waste water valve then at the same time fill the fresh water tank and empty the other thing all at the same time, simples. This guy could obviously not multitask, as first he drained the water and waited for the last drip to fall to the floor, then opened the back door to get the hose pipe to fill the fresh water tank, then the hose connection would not fit the tap and he had to go searching the back of the van for the correct one, then when there was sufficient water in the tank the hose pipe was put away, then he got the other tank that we don't want to talk about and did what was needed. Great even though the process took three times as long he will be going now, wrong again as the hose pipe came back out and they started to fill 5lt water bottles, now by this time even I was start to loose it and Glo was driven towards the service point but that didn't stop the bottles being filled, eventually the bottles were loaded and the side door was closed but then opened again while he went for a wee behind a wall, he returned closed the side door and got into the drivers seat only to get out again for some reason, then got back in and started to adjust the interior mirror, now this guy must have had too much time on his hands, was taking the hit and mis or was just stupid, I am going for the last one. Eventually we on the service point and in less than five minutes we are finished and driving away, let's just say that by the time we left, Barb was considerably less than impressed, especially as we had a bit of a drive to do, to get us close to Bordeaux, now that we are in France there are lots of places such as vineyards, farms, chateau's and similar places that are listed in French Passion that you can stay at for free, well when I say free they are not really free as there is an expectation that you will purchase some of their produce

which is ok with us as it is sort of free as you have the product to take away. Surprisingly Barb has found a vineyard just outside of Bordeaux and has phoned to book a space, yep they could fit us in so of we go, it's time for a bit of time warp as it was about a three hour drive. Jump forward three hours and we arrive at Vignobles Pestoury vineyard at about 3pm, Barb let them know that we had arrived and they invited us to a wine tasting at 6pm, there's the you buy wine bit, but until then we had time to sit out next to the grape growing bit enjoying the sun. Six more motorvans arrived and by 5.45pm a number of cars had joined us, just before 6pm the owners come and round us all up and depending on language we split into three groups with Father, Mother and daughter who own the vineyard, our group is lead by mum Louise who gives us lots of information about the vineyard and the grape growing bit, joking aside she is very knowledgeable or we were very gullible, no it was knowledgeable and passionate. When we arrived the vineyard did not look very big but when I asked how many bottles they produced a year, I was not alone in being surprised when she said between 150,000 to 160,000 bottles a year, wow and how many people do you employ and we were even more surprised to find out they only had one full time employee but employed more at harvest time. During the tasting of 10 different wines ranging from some pink fizzy stuff to a robust red and then an alcohol free grape juice, we also found out that they did not use a wine merchant to sell their wines, as they sold everything themselves, now that sounds like a good business 150,000 bottles a year, which were considerably more than €1 a bottle, three family members and one full time employee, sounded like a good business plan to me. Louise did say that if there was a wine we didn't like you could spit it out into the vessel provided, oh yea like that's going to happen, after the tasting you are invited to the Disney experience, you know the one, it's the shop that you have to go through to get out, of course we did make a purchase to take home with us, Louise also told us that it could be kept for 4 years and that we could keep robust red rascal could be kept for up to 15 years, like that's going to happen in our house. After thank you's and good nights we returned to Glo for a glass or two of the vintage Auchan special reserve and that was about it for today, tomorrow we are going to Bordeaux and then continuing north, until then that's your lot.

Stop Over Vignobles Pestoury, 14 Chem. de Tellas 33370 Yvrac
What three words spurned.guides.sudden

Day 69 Sunday 4th May

Our late starts are getting a bit silly, everyone else has left the vineyard and we were still sitting there having coffee and tea, we finally got ourselves into gear and headed off for Bordeaux, I had found a car park right by the Monument aux Girondins which is right where we want to be and I am sure that is where we parked when we were here last time. The only snag is that reviews on Search for sites mixed with some saying that motorvans are not allowed to park there anymore, we headed off to find out, it was only a 30 minute drive and when we arrived the first part of the car park had a barrier and we couldn't get in, however at the other end there was plenty of free space, there were a couple of cars park but we weren't too convinced that it was ok to park there, but as it was Sunday and the barriers were up, we would risk it. Next to the monument and the what we hoped was a that we wouldn't get locked in, was a massive antique fair, guess where we were going, it was massive there must have been a hundred stalls stocked full of stuff of all descriptions, anything from a tie pin to a massive walnut veneered armoire, some of the stall holders must have spent more time polishing the silver and silver plate than they did selling it. As with lots of these fairs there was a fair amount of what I call a right load of shire but there was more great stuff than there was tat. For me there were a couple of stand out items, a two foot long model of a Mercedes 420, an absolutely massive 60's chandelier, a 1950's American petrol pump and two fantastic 1960's brown leather and aluminium loungers complete with footstools they were beautiful if they would have fitted in Glo, fitted in our house and I could have afforded them they would have been going home with us. As you can imagine this took a lot of time to walk around and also clocked up a couple of miles without making a purchase, mind you we could go back for the loungers, next it was a walk around the older parts of the city and another stiff neck time looking at the fantastic buildings. After that we walked along the river and back to Glo through the park, when we got to the car park the entrance we had used, now had a barrier across it, ooops this could be interesting, to say that Barb was slightly concerned would have been a slight understatement especially when I told her there was another barrier closing another exit, fortunately there was one exit still open and Barb wanted us through it as quickly as we could, don't worry we got out. Next we were on a mission to get further north which is where we

would have been if we hadn't taken so long leaving the vineyard this morning, it's a four hour drive to our next destination which wasn't going to happen even though we decided to use the toll road. We did have a couple of stops on route first for a late lunch, we had considered buying something to eat from the services but they were taking the miss unmercifully and made the UK services look cheap, now I am not tight by any means but €9 for a sandwich or €15 for a hamburger was ridiculous especially when you think that at the services in Spain we got 4 large tapas, a beer, and a coffee for €13 granted the venue was more rustic but much more fun. Needless to say we returned to Glo for our lunch, we were breaking our travel rules by travelling too long and too late which to be fair we have only done a couple of times, but as we have found before doing this usually leads to a problem finding a stop over and today was one of those days. Barb had found an Aire with services, one of which we needed, when we got there it was full and one of the vans was a UK van that had past us not long ago on the motorway, we are in fuel conservation mode as the price of fuel in France is ridiculous as the cheapest we have found was €1.59 compared to the €1.13 we paid in Spain, thankfully we filled up just before leaving Spain and will only need to fill up once in France. After using the service thingy we needed we headed off to a second Aire which wasn't far away and when we arrived it was empty and that was because a height barrier had been fitted, on to the next on which wasn't far away and it was empty, completely empty with loads of room for lots of vans, it seemed a bit strange that there was no other vans there so we checked a couple of recent reviews which were all positive and decided to stay. It had been a long day and we were both tired which means that this is your lot, tomorrow our first stop is long and fast, I will leave that with you to see if can figure out where it is, another clue is that we are heading towards Normandy.

Day 70 Monday 5th May

Time warp will come into play a couple of times today as we had a couple of options which were drive all the way to our final destination which was Omaha beach which was about a five hour drive or find a stop over on route but before we could make our mind up we had a couple of jobs to do, get some shopping, get some fuel and get some LPG. The first job was just down the road but there was a problem it was an Auchan and going to one of them usually takes lots of time which is usually my fault as I can not help looking at the stuff available. When we got there it looked like we do all there jobs in one go as it had a fuel station that had go go juice at a reasonable well reasonable price for France and it also sold LPG, this looked like it was going to be a proper result. I think that the station was designed for Citroën deux chevaux, we managed to get to the diesel pump and filled Glo to the brim, then we finally got to the LPG pump and then found which adapter to use and connected the pump to Glo slight problem it didn't work, I did wonder if it was pilot error but it wasn't the thing just didn't work and when disconnected it didn't give the swish of escaping gas which when I first used one years ago gave me a proper fright. Next shopping time we didn't get a trolley and just got a wheelie basket which we thought may speed up the shopping process which it didn't really as all that happened was the basket overflowing with stuff falling out on the way to the tills. We finally got on the road and head off to our first stop which is, did you work it out from yesterday's clue, if you did congratulate yourself if you didn't we'll try harder next time, you only had to look at a map, yes we were on route to Le Mans, it's another one of my daft things that have to be done, wherever we are if there is a motor racing circuit nearby we are going to it. Unfortunately the track was closed as they were getting ready for the British MotoGP meeting this coming weekend and there was also lots of updating work going on which I guess they want to finish before the 24hr race in June. After leaving the circuit we heard the very sad news of the tragic accident at Oulton Park where two of the riders died competing in a sport they enjoyed, my thoughts are with their loved ones and also other riders injured in the accident. It must have also been a traumatic experience for the other riders, the marshals who I expect would have been first at the scene and the medics and doctors. After hearing that news it's difficult to think about minor stuff that happened on our trip today so I will keep it short today and bring you up to date with the rest of today's journey in tomorrow's ramblings until then let's call it a day.

Stop over Camping Le Robinson, Colleville-sur-Mer, Calvados, Normandie, 14710, FR

What three words handler.conflicted.greases

Day 71 Tuesday 6th May

Let's start with the rest of yesterday's journey after leaving Le Mans our next stop was to a campsite at Omaha beach which was another 2 to 3 hour drive, normally we wouldn't do these long drives but we decided to go for it and see oh far we got as we really wanted to get to a proper campsite and chill for a couple of days. We also broke another rule we intentionally used toll roads, we have tags stuck to Glo's windscreen but try not to use them when possible but on this part of the trip we had a need for speed and using them saved over 2 hours on the journey. Some parts of this section of the drive was very busy and this slowed us up as for the tags they nearly got ripped off the screen, some of the tolls use the tags and others use anpr and you either get a beep from the tag or you don't, we arrived at the first toll gate and there was a beep from the tag and the gate opened and off we went, simples well that's what you would think, it was time for a coffee stop and now I go into motorway services moan mode, there was a diy coffee machine which supplied while you wait freshly ground coffee beans into your cup of requested coffee, I went for an americano with milk, yep while the your coffee is being prepared message is displayed you can hear your beans being ground, ouch that sounds painful, any way a large take away cup was hanging there waiting in anticipation of the hot coffee to pour into it. The message was still saying your coffee is being prepared, let's say that this machine is never going to replace a human barista any time soon, eventually the machine sends an on screen message telling you that your coffee is ready please retrieve your cup and enjoy, the first problem was retrieving the cup as the machine must have got attached to it and didn't want to let it go. Not wanting to spill the precious contents I carefully managed to get the machine to release the cup, now my worry about spilling the contents was totally unfounded as hiding at the bottom of this large cup was about two mouthfuls of the stuff, muttering away to myself I sit down where Barb had been waiting for me to return with a cup full of freshly brewed coffee. The coffee lasted about a minute and to stop me moaning she told me to get another cup from Paul's patisserie, doing as I am told I join the queue and order a large Americano with milk, another paper cup is produced as I am told, that will be €5.60 monsieur, sorry how much, yes you heard me right now cough up and take your cup with you and guess what yep this cup was also half full, so for less than a full cup of coffee I had just been legally mugged for €8.40 and moaned about it for the rest of the day, in fact I still am and it's the next day. Back on the toll road and after a bit of time warp we arrived at the exit toll gate, we drove towards the gate but there is no beep from the tag and no sign of the barrier raising, the booth is unpersoned and we didn't have ticket to put in the machine, this happened to us in Portugal and as then our only option was to reverse out of the lane much to the delight of the cars waiting behind us, once out we look for a booth containing human being but there wasn't one, oh gosh this is going to be fun and left us with only one option drive through the barrier, no it was to try another lane which as we drove towards the tag beeped and up went the barrier, now what is all that about. By this time we were an hour away from our destination and that was just too close for us to stop and about an hour later we arrived at the campsite and fortunately they had space because we hadn't booked and were just winging it, Glo is soon parked up, level and plugged in, it was definitely time for a full cup of tea before we did anything else. As you might or should know it is VE Day on the 8th May and this year it is the 80th anniversary and as we were heading north we have come this way to pay our respects to the men, boys and women who lost their lives so we could be free. You can get to Omaha beach directly from the campsite and we walk to to it in the afternoon, if you didn't know what had happened here you would just think what a beautiful beach it is, if you read the history of the landings one of the many problems encountered was the weather and today it is blowing a gale and the sea is extremely rough with high waves crashing onto the beach and I wonder if this was what it was like when the landings took place. History says that Omaha beach was the most difficult and heavily defended of the 5 beaches, as we walk towards the beach we are high on the hillside where the German gun emplacements still stand, even the bolts that would have fastened down the guns still stand upright out of the concrete and there are still signs of the trenches used for protection presumably to move between emplacements. It's a long way down to the beach and when you stand on the beach with the sea behind you, you can see why this was the most difficult, from the rough seas looking inland there is a long flat shoreline that had to be crossed before there was any type of cover and then there were the steep cliffs, obviously I have no idea what the men and just kids went through on that beach but reading the history of the landings, things didn't go well before they even got to the beach. Standing there in the strong wind that makes it difficult to stand and the waves crashing down behind me made it a moving experience and say thank you to those brave men, something that I expect to say a number of times over the

next few days as we visit the other beaches and memorials. It had been a long, thought provoking and moving day and after dinner that was us done and dusted for the day. I think that tomorrow will be another moving and possibly more so as we visit the other beaches and the American and British memorials, I will let you know.

Stop over same as last night

Day 72 Wednesday 7th May

Before we began today visits we had a usual job to do, we needed to go shopping again and we still had a few ongoing tasks to complete, I won't go through the hypermarket shopping experience again as you have heard it all before and this visit was no different. However when we came out there was a difference, they had fuel station that sold LPG and it was only 91 cents, there was one slight problem as the fuel station was a one way system and the LPG pump was on the wrong side, we managed to turn around on the forecourt without upsetting most of the other drivers, although a few were waving their arms in the air, well they could wave all they liked as we were not going to miss this opportunity. I know that the gauge is not that accurate but it is at the far left and is now showing orange which I have got seen before, with correct connector fitted, gun connected the button is pressed and held in until it won't put anymore in. I know the tank wasn't full before we left and we have been away for 70 days ish and been off grid for most of them and the grand total of just over 10 litres went in, which I think is darn good result. The achieving task results didn't end there as they also had a van wash that even had stairs to a platform to wash the top of the van, Glo has only been washed once while we have been away and was extremely dirty, we had just enough coins to finish the job apart from the roof which was a bit of a blow but it will have to wait until we get home, well that was a result both of the outstanding tasks completed in one place.

The next visit was far more serious and 15 minutes later we arrived at the American memorial cemetery, as with all things the Americans do there are no half measures from the moment you drive in everything is immaculate, the lawns, trees, driveway and massive free car park are as neat and clean as could be. The cemetery covers 172 acres and as you approach the visitors centre which is an impressive building mind you it should be as it cost 30 million dollars, there are security guards, bag searches and scanners before you can get inside of the free to enter the museum, which has lots of displays spread over two floors and there is an infinity pool / lake looking out over the beaches, in the background there is a recording of a lady solemnly reading out the names of the brave men who lost their lives. Then you go outside to the cemetery which is perched above the sea overlooking Omaha beach, in front of you as far as you can see stand 9,389 pristine three foot high, white Italian marble crosses marking the graves of the soldiers who bravely gave their lives for the cause of freedom, it was a very moving and poignant experience. It makes me think how futile wars are, but will mankind every realise that, I don't think so. Quietly and thoughtfully I return to Glo to meet Barb who had been equally moved by the experience. We gathered ourselves together and checked our route to our next point of call which we expected to be as equally moving, we were heading further along the coast to the British Normandy Memorial. When we arrive this Memorial is also immaculate but is on a much smaller scale than the American memorial, there are a couple of other differences, one there is a charge for the car park and when you go inside it is more shop and cafe, the memorial museum is only small and you also had to pay to enter. However when you go outside into the cemetery it is beautiful, there are lines of pillars with the names and ages of more brave souls who gave their lives for freedom. When you look out towards the sea, there stand 1,475 giant silhouettes of British soldiers, sailors and airmen, in the wildflower meadow above Gold Beach, were a compelling reminder of the price that was paid for our freedom, this is more moving than any amount of money can buy. To be honest I was at a loss how to fully describe the feelings I had seeing these giants standing in the meadow and I have used some words from the Standing with Giants website. We had planned to go to Storm beach but it had been an emotional day and we had enough for one day, storm beach will still be there tomorrow and we will go there tomorrow. We returned to the campsite and I really found it difficult to add to today's experience's. I will leave you tonight with a thought, if you are travelling through Normandy, stop at the war graves and thank the brave men for what they did for us, there is a slight change of plan tomorrow and there is a good reason that I have delayed posting it.

Day 73/74 Thursday / Friday 8 & 9th May

We were moving on from the site this morning and before telling you about our change of plans we had two more places to visit, the first stop was about an hours drive and was to Sword beach the second of the two British Invasion beaches, although there is not the same display as there is at Gold and Omaha, when you stand at the waters edge looking inland you still get the feeling of the bravery and fear of the men that were part of the invasion. Our next stop was Juno beach which was attacked by Canadian forces this is also a more subdued affair with a small display with gift shop which I do find difficult to understand, yes people may want a memento of their visit but a key ring with Juno on the front and made in China on the back doesn't really do it for me, what is much more meaningful and memorable is the understated memorials which like the others have the names and ages of the fallen hero's. The town of Courseulles-sur-Mer is right on Juno beach and has a tourist feel about it and although it is still not the tourist season, it is a bank holiday and the restaurants and cafes are full of families enjoying themselves and after a walk around the town we return to Glo and plan our route to our next destination which is where our plans have changed. Barb's mum hadn't been to well last week and we have decided to make our way home slightly earlier than we had planned which also means that we will be home for our little guys 3rd birthday, we wanted our early return be a surprise for mum which is why I hadn't published the blog as she is one of the people that does read my ramblings, we booked a ferry crossing from Dieppe to Newhaven, it is a longer crossing than from Calais and we haven't tried this crossing before but we thought that we would give it a try, hoping that the drive from Newhaven to home will be better than from Dover. We headed off to Dieppe which was about two to three hours away, which took us longer as we really really had to stop at a hypermarket to collect some necessities, you know the stuff, it comes in red, white and rosé, along with some other stuff that comes in tins containing water hops and barley. As usual our trip to the Hypermarket took much longer than a shopping trip to Tesco's (yes there are others available) and along with the drinkable items there are a number of other items we would love to purchase, there were a number of cheeses Barb would have liked to bring home and I had been looking at the meat counter and there were tomahawk steaks and some other cuts of beef that were waving and shouting Buy me, Buy me but unfortunately due to rules since Brexit and current rules we are not supposed to bring meat or cheese products into the UK. Some may say that it could be irresponsible to bring these products into the country but I don't really see the difference in pre and post Brexit, well I do really (I am not going into that debate) but regarding meat and stuff what is the difference, It is for our own consumption and would be cooked soon after we arrived home. Now I didn't mind a couple of €1 bottles of wine being taken off us but a couple of tomahawk steaks, T bones, ribeye's etc may have been a costly experience and might have got my bum smacked, don't go there. We arrived at Dieppe and although we were not booked onto the 12 o'clock crossing on Friday we thought that we would check out where the ferry departed from, after checking the instructions sent by DFDS ferries which said, to make your arrival easier here is the address of the Dieppe port for your crossing, like a good boy the address is given to Sid for him to give us directions. We followed his instructions and arrived at the address given, however when we arrived it is obvious that there was no chance of a ferry leaving from there as it was a small dock for small boats with water a couple of foot deep, it turned out that the address given was for the DFDS office not the port, which turned out to be a 15 minute drive away, yes if you have sailed from here you will be aware of its location but we hadn't, we certainly know where it is now. Our original plan was to find a place to stay for the night but as we were there we wondered if we could get an earlier crossing, after a trip to the office and a quick conversation we are booked onto the midnight ferry. Boarding started at 9.30pm and after having our dinner in the car park we in the boarding queue which is extremely short and doesn't get much longer, considering the number of motorvans that where on the ferry on the way to Spain it looks like they have stayed there or have using a different port to sail from. After passing through the two passport controls which were about 4 foot apart, there are two guys in Hi-Vis jackets that ask if they can have a look in the van and after a 30 second glance they are happy with the inside and then check me with a magic wand, they did not check Barb and I did think that as we were in a 3.5 ton van it would be extremely unlikely that I would be carrying anything in my pockets, oh well I suppose that that's security. Let's have a bit of a time warp as you don't want to hear about an uneventful 4 hour ferry crossing, we arrive back in good old Blighty and are soon through passport control and then we head for customs which transpired to be absolutely no existent, there was just one guy who was not a customs officer sitting at the end of the inspection tunnel twiddling his thumbs. Now I was worrying about bringing a tomahawk steak back with us, we

could have brought half a cow, it was ridiculous and a bit worrying that it was so easy to get into the country, it's time for a bit more Let's do the time warp again, as you don't want to hear about a 5 hour drive along our wonderful motorway system. Apart from how awful it is driving here rather on the other side of the channel and also while we where in mainland Europe we did not witness any road rage, however as soon as we get back and are on the A23 here we go there is a guy in a Mercedes driving like a lunatic up the the back of a van hand on horn swerving all over the place while gesticulating and shouting out of the window, I guessed he wasn't saying hi mate how are you doing, welcome home. Five and bit hours later we arrive at Barbs mums and yep she is surprised to see us and it's lovely to see her, time for big hugs then real English tea with wonderful Liverpool water and a catch up of what's been happening and trip stuff, I really must get some photographs sorted out and put on the website. Then it's time to head home and start the task of emptying Glo, cleaning her inside and out and the rest of the mundane jobs, while I have the opposite emotions and feelings that I had 70+ days ago when we left on our trip, I would like to see family and friends and then start planning where to go next which for the next couple of months will have to be in the UK, Scotland here we come. This was the last day of this adventure and I suppose it will be good to sleep in our own bed, but to be honest I sleep better in Glo, there will be an epilogue of the trip which I will sort out in the next few days when we get ourselves sorted out and back to normal, if being home is normal, we will also have to get stuff sorted out quickly as the house is booked out and the guests are due to arrive on Friday, so thats this trip done, and until the epilogue is done that's your lot for now but there will be more hopefully many more to come.

Stop over Home

The Epilogue, Closing, Wrap-Up, Conclusion, Finale, Endgame, Finished, The End of this trip but god willing there will be plenty more.

The Sun Sets On This Adventure

I didn't mention in the last days blog that when we got home it wasn't really the end of our trip as although we were home we had a slight problem, some of you will know that while we are away we rent out our house on Airbnb, the house has three floors or a ground, 1st and 2nd floors which ever way you look at it, and when we are away we put all our personal stuff in our top floor bedroom and lock the door. This is a great idea and works well, until you get home and strip the other bedrooms and then realise that you haven't got a key to our top floor bedroom, then as long as you have a sense of humour you find that the keys are in the armrest of Phil's car which wouldn't have been a problem if it hadn't been parked at Manchester airport while they were in Disneyland Paris. Fortunately they were due home the next day and we only had to have one more night in Glo on our driveway, I didn't bother taking a back door shot as there is not a great deal interesting about our garden fence. I still haven't really got back to home life or driving on the right side of the road, well it's really the left hand side but you know what I mean. On the plus side it has been great to see family and friends and to be home for the little guy's 3rd birthday I really have missed him and obviously the rest of the family. Let's get back to the trip and let's start with some facts and figures, we covered 5,500 miles yes miles not kilometres and according to Glo's odometer she averaged 34mpg, while we are starting with the mileage it became obvious during the trip that my idea of heading home through southern France, Italy and Switzerland to get to Calais was not going to happen even if we had stayed for the full 90 days. I guess there is a lesson for me to learn and that is not to try and do everything at once and instead go for quality over substance. I have to admit that I do have that trait and I am not sure that it's a good one but better a glass half full, in one way it's good not to have completed the trip that it gives us a good reason to return that way and finish the planned trip, especially as I have seen some other peoples trips travelling through Italy and Switzerland and they reminded me of how beautiful both countries are, even if driving in Italy can lead to heart palpitations, last time we were there Barb found it best just to keep her eyes shut. Going back to some figures let's start with fuel which cost £740, ferries and tolls cost £833, now for the next largest cost items there is a bit of a pattern and as they all may include some form of liquid beverage, obviously mostly tea, coffee and Coke Zero, as such I am just going to put them in order rather than cost, starting at the top was Shopping, next was Eating out, closely followed by Drinks while we were out. We did have a few more costs and I will put a monetary value for these, starting at the top we had campsites at £402 at which we stayed at after 3,4 or 5 days of free camping, we would stay at at site for 1 night or a few

nights depending on how we felt or where we were. Yes we could have reduced that cost by not using sites as often but the cost averaged out at just over £5 a day over the trip and we are happy with that, next was activities coming in at £248 which included things like a river cruise, Sandeman's Port tasting day, Cathedral visits, washing machines etc oh and that €12 haircut. Bringing up the rear was parking at £42 of which £22 was parking outside Gibraltar while we went for a visit Across the airport runway. Could we have reduced some of those costs, yes of course we could have, we could have eaten out less, drank less tea and coffee while we were out, bought less tea and coffee while shopping and stayed at less campsites but we would have had some of those costs while we were at home and also we were on our holibobs, you might have gathered that tea & coffee is a euphemism or a misspelled anagram. Also you have to remember that if we had been at home we would have had some of those costs and unlike others, our house generates income for us which would not happen if we were at home, that's it for the costs unless you would really like to know the undisclosed costs if so let me know and I will share them with you as long as you don't tell anyone else. Next it's holiday bits with some shoulda, woulda, coulda bits, let's start with them and get rid of the negatives, I suppose first things is we should have started the trip a bit later and we may have got better weather but then there would have been more tourists, hey weren't we tourists, yes we were but that does not mean that we have to visits places when they are rammed packed with other tourists. The weather also played a bit of a negative at the beginning of the trip as it stopped us doing some of the things we wanted to do, it's not our idea of fun walking around anywhere in the pouring rain, it was also cold and played havoc with getting a proper suntan, it also made us head south quicker than planned as we went sun hunting which didn't quite work as the rain joined us. When we got on the ferry to Bilbao for the 72 hour crossing it was obvious that we were novices on this trip as the seasoned Portsmouth to Bilbao travellers had brought the biggest Esky's (cooler boxes) that they could carry and in some cases they were on wheels as they were toooooo big to carry. We quickly found out why they had brought their own food and booze for the 72 hour cruise as the food prices on board were criminal but if you haven't got an Esky you don't really have an opinion as it's difficult to find a local Wetherspoons, I am sure that some passengers had brought enough for a 10 day cruise and I wouldn't be surprised if they didn't have a Calor gas stove or an induction hob with them, next time we use this crossing we will be joining the Esky crew but probably not one with wheels. We loved Northern Spain and Portugal as it is far more rustic and we found lots of places that hadn't been spoiled by tourism with the associated shops selling We heart Spain fridge magnets. Although there was not much or no English spoken in some of the places we visited it makes it more exciting and interesting and we met some lovely local people. During this part of the journey we didn't see another UK van for 10 days or possibly longer and one other thing was that it was cheap as an example at one place we paid €1.13 per litre of diesel and a gentleman came out and filled the tank for you, I am old enough to remember that at the garage by my mothers shop the owner used to come out of his office wearing a blue foreman's coat and put the fuel in for you, I would add that I was only a kid and he was very stern a bit scary and was always addressed as Mr, I bet he never stood any messing about from his mechanics in his workshop. If you are thinking of doing this trip here is a quick recap on the campsite and Aire costs, the most we spent was €22 per and the least was €2.50, we used our ACSI discount card on a few sites obviously not the €2.50 one, but we were mostly out of season, the site we stayed at on the night of the power cut was the one that cost €22 but it was a full blown holiday camp, due to the power outages we had considered staying for another night but that was going to cost €49 as it had changed season, guess what, correct we didn't stay. We don't normally use toll roads but in case we need to we have always got a tag for the countries we are visiting, on the return part of this trip we wanted to shorten the travelling time as we wanted to get home quicker, we have used these tags a couple of times on previous trips without any problems but on this one they didn't behave themselves. On a couple of occasions we would arrive at the entrance gate the tag would beep and the gate would open but when we got to the exit gate there was no beep and the gate stayed put, this made life a bit interesting as we would have to reverse out and try another gate, I have spoken to the tag supplier and they have no idea why.

This is now getting a bit long and some of it is in previous days of the blog and if you haven't read them, that's not my fault, to bring this journey to an end there are two last things to mention, firstly did we enjoy it, yes we had a ball, being together for 72 days 24/7 did we fall out, yes we did but only for a couple of hours and that was only because we were both tired and a couple of things weren't going right with a particular part of the journey. Will we be doing another, yes most definitely we will but it won't be a trip across the channel for at least another 90 days, don't you

just love Schengen rules. This does give us time for some UK trips but I guess that these will be shorter but more frequent, Scotland here we come and who knows we may even venture South, one thing that might be good for you is that the blogs will be shorter. The second thing is the blog, if you have read it I hope you enjoyed it, as you will have guessed it is not supposed to be too serious and has hopefully brought you a smile and even a little chuckle at times, hopefully not the brothers. I would really like some feedback, some of which I might ignore but we don't know unless I get some, ideas for what you would like to know more about next time, stuff you don't want to know about will hopefully help to improve the next one. I would like to apologise for some of the incorrect spelling and incorrect pronunciations but I am not going to take all the blame, instead I am going to put some of the blame onto my teachers as all they said was, could try harder, but did not try harder to help, shit that was a bit serious, the other thing to blame is the tea & coffee. The blog is just going to trip over 75,700 words and I really would like to know if your feelings both good and bad, well that's it for this trip until next time thank you for reading my ramblings and if you didn't read them tuff you don't know what you missed, keep safe and enjoy your travels and smile as often as you can it will brighten up your day and can be infectious.

Until next time, Thanks again

Paul, Barb and Glo oh and Jules & Verne who haven't had much input on this trip but will next time.