

HIS, HERS, THEN
OUR BUMBLE
EXPLORING EUROPE IN
OUR MOTORHOME

SILVES

SILVES





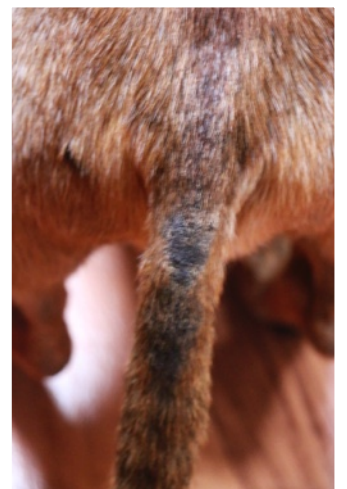
Overview

10 - 21 March

Back with my Billy no Mates, farting pooch and of course my crocs. It felt fantastic to be back with my lovely, if somewhat, mad as a box of frogs family.

Its like I'd never been away until I looked in the cupboard! He'd rearranged everything into a man OCD order! Oh jeez, where is everything? As I peered in to each cupboard I could hear Craig shouting "nothing changed in there except...." He'd changed every bloody cupboard in some shape or form and being a typical man, he was pleased as punch to find that his reorganization skills had resulted in space...we have two free cupboards. My thoughts..oh shit, that means he's chucked loads of stuff. No doubt I will find out what he chucked out over the coming weeks.

On a serious note, it was good to be back with my hubby and so enjoyed giving him a huge big hug and smothering him with kisses. Craig was all clean and smelling of aftershave, whilst Peanut on the other hand stunk of an owd dawg. Clearly a sign the boys had 'hung' out in style, festering in their pit. Craig had done a good job of tidying everything up and making the place smell fresh except for the dog. Poor



Peanut, he looked like something the cat wouldn't drag in. Not only did he smell like rotten cheese but he'd no fur on his tail and his chest was bald. My poor little sausage dog...wonder if they do wig tails for dogs?

With everything that's gone on in the last two weeks we haven't managed to keep a daily diary but we do have a bit of summary and some pictures on the beautiful town of Silves.

As Craig mentioned, I'd been back in the UK to follow up on this itchy skin condition. The itch drives me nuts and when it's bad, it is like a constant electric shock that just doesn't back off. Sometimes it can last days and quite often I don't get any sleep, which just compounds the problem. I've also developed a few other annoying ailment like an eye condition and low B12, all of which they believe to be linked to the same thing...copper. Apparently, my liver is copper toxic and it looks like I may have something called Wilson's disease. Anyway, I've had loads of tests and now await the outcome along with another consultant appointment. The tests will be a few weeks, so rather than shiver in Manchester, I thought I might as well sun it up in Portugal with my

hubby. I must say, a big thank you to everyone for the kind wishes, really appreciated.

I stayed with my sister and it was lovely to spend time with her. We laughed, cried and of course, put the world to right. Thanks for having me Mandy, xxx.

It was also great to see family and friends. Mum was as loving and as gawgus as always. Dad was poorly sick with a cold and a bad back and has since moved in to

Bolton Road B&B aka my sisters. Lucas (left) & Oliver (below) my two great nephew's continue to blossom every day and remain a bundle of fun.

However, staying with Mandy did have it's set backs...we seemed to jinx each other. Every day something went wrong and here are just a few of the highlights

- Instead of 1 endoscopy, I ended up having 3 endoscopies in less than 24 hours. I croaked for a week!
- Mandy's shower pipe burst turning her downstairs loo in to a fabulous waterfall.
- My mobile phone broke and I lost everyone's contact details. I used mum's mobile for a couple of days but didn't realise it had an SOS alert until in the middle of the night my sister came charging in to my bedroom like a woman possessed.
- Our central heating system went on the blink but only after I'd fixed the alarm.
- The bedroom lightbulb just shattered and scarred us half to death but not half as much as changing the bulb. The lampshade is that big, I had to climb in it.

On my birthday, mum treated me to a tasty fish, chips & mushy pea lunch. Then in the evening, I tucked in to an Indian take away with our kid! And I wonder why I am a size 8!

I also received my first clearing from my sister in Ireland, Thanks Shikha



As a goodbye present our Lucy gave me a hum dinger of the flu. The extra strength bug certainly knocked me for 6 and no sooner had I said hello to Craig and I was in bed and knocked out cold for



several days. I felt awful. Craig had made such an effort and found us a great beach location on the Ilha de Faro and what did I do...go to sleep. When I arrived it was 30 degrees + and glorious sunshine and when I woke several days later it was 18 degrees and pissing down!

Over the last week Craig's taken me to all the places I missed like Alte and Ilha de Faro so we haven't taken many pictures, so as not to cover old ground. I must admit I was shocked but pleasantly surprised when Craig sent out the bumble. I never thought he would do it but so glad he did. It certainly made my day when he sent it - he's now promoted himself to Ello Magazine, Editor & Chief!

We have got some pictures of Silves (1st and 2nd visit) for you. We also stayed at a place called Messines but it was a bit of a hickville with not much to see except muddy puddles and a hardware store selling men stuff. Craig seemed rather impressed with their bucket collection and spent a good half an hour giving the glad eye to a rubber 10L with a fancy red handle. Despite her slender ribbed body, Craig just couldn't part with €1.90 and so returned home to his one and only black builders bucket. The



thing is, the one and only bucket has just got a hole in it. Craig is in a real dilemma - do I replace or do I fix? He loves his bucket, it goes everywhere with him and to be parted from it would break his heart. After much pondering he decided to give The Bucket open heart surgery. Every tool in his box was out and eventually, a bit of mastic and a lot of

TLC the bucket was back in action.

We received a email update from our friends Hanneke & Derek who are on their way back to the UK. Sounds like they are having fun but it looks bitterly cold up in Porto. They sent some wonderful pictures and one in particular of the last supper (or

not!), which I really wanted to show you but for some strange reason we have lost the email. Then today, we got a text message! Would you believe it, they were sat in their motorhome (northern Spain) overlooking a valley full of elephants. How amazing is that! I have got the coordinates and its in the bucket list! It sounds amazing.

We watched Fifty Shades of Grey, which came highly recommended by Janette. Definitely worth watching if you haven't already seen it...its as good as the book!

Vin the motorhome hasn't been too well this week. First he got a cruise control error message. We took him to the Mercedes Dealer in Faro who plugged him in and gave him the full diagnostics. Fortunately nothing could be found, so they gave him the all the clear and sent us on our way. Then a couple of days later he got another error code. This one we are not



sure of, so we're going to call in on Monday and see if they can check him over again. I recon he's feeling a little light headed after Craig ditched all that gear out the cupboard. Don't worry Vin, I will

find some more crap to fill it and make you feel better.

We received an email from Barbara at Southport Pleasureland. She has a list of 2015 events and it taking bookings for anyone wishing to camp over. Its a brilliant site and only a few quid, so if you want to know more just drop her an email on barbaragregory01204@hotmail.co.uk. We've stayed there before and have to say the Annual Firework Championship is brilliant.

We didn't see the partial solar eclipse - it was wet and cloudy!

Happy Birthday (22 March) to the wonderful and beautiful Amy...hope Lucas gives you loads of cuddles xxx



Silves

Second page - Tiled scene showing the Christian and Moors, both wishing to rule.

Above - The town sat below the old Sé and ancient Fortress.

Below - Wild poppies growing around the Fortresses walls.



Once the capital of the Algarve and the medieval residence of the Moorish kings of the al-Gharb. Once Christian, then Moor and finally back in to Christian hands again in 1189.

Silves is definitely worth a visit. Quite a lot to see in terms of a Moorish Castle, Cathedral and quaint streets but more than anything it has a lovely feel about the place. Whilst some of the shops may stock a few modern items, it still feels raw and unchanged. If though time has stood still with cobbled streets, stone walls and rustic paintwork.

The town has a reasonable aire, which is free to use and located near the municipal swimming pool (and free wifi). However, the GNR police keep turfing people off the aire and the town mayor is going mad. The mayor wants people to stay because it is good money for the town especially in winter when the tourist trade in non existent. However, the GNR keep putting their foot down and laying down the law of the land. It is to be hoped that one day a balance will be struck and the GNR will realise that motorhomers provide a good income for the country and help keep small communities open all year round and not just in the peak holiday season. If every town were allowed to have a small aire and charge a small fee for the services offered then everyone would benefit. Feels like a win win situation but until the law changes, the GNR has a job to do.

The cathedral is OK but nothing special. The €1 entrance fee isn't expensive but considering most churches are free, it feels a bit steep especially then its nothing to write home about. It has a few good tombs



Above - The lower entrance to Fortress.

Top right - An old woman walking up one of the many steep roads.

Below - A local wine store built in a Moorish style at the Fortress entrance.

Right - Stonework detail showing Le Fleur emble.



one of which makes reference to the Knights Templar. Wonder if Dan Brown knows about it?

After a wander around we headed back to Vin for a big cleaning day. Next week we have a few guests and a rather big birthday celebration.....watch this space folks!

Before we go just wanna say...get well soon dad and don't forget to make Mandy some of your special soup!

Oh nearly forgot...check out the back cover with Craig's weekly ello.





Top right - The Interior.

Centre left - Floating candle.

Bottom right - Religious statue.

Below - Floor stone.

Bottom Right - Interior roof detail.



ELLO!



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ELLO

Ta for all comments and here's this week's top tips.

The image above is me smoothing some silicone mastic onto my bucket, 2 hours later it's all set and no more hole. :-)

Toilet seat - when traveling the toilet lid rubs against the toilet seat and scratches the plastic. Not only do the scratches look naff but they hurt your arse when you need to meditate..if you know what I mean! So, find a little bit of foam, I used some draught excluder which I had and stick it to the inside of the lid. One on either side should do nicely! It also stops the toilet seat from slamming shut if it's left up when you drive away.





THE LAST 11 DAYS OF OUR JOURNEY



Our Top 10 Places

1. Seville
2. Salamanca
3. Alvor
4. Lagos
5. Belem
6. Mertola
7. Mafra
8. Evora
9. Beja
10. Silves

Our Hidden Gems

1. Praia do Marinhah
2. Praia do Arrifes
3. Praia do Carvelho
4. Praia do Almargem
5. Vila do Bispo (forest)
6. Mèrtola river bank
7. Praia do Amado
8. Porto Covo (dunes)
9. Cacela Velha