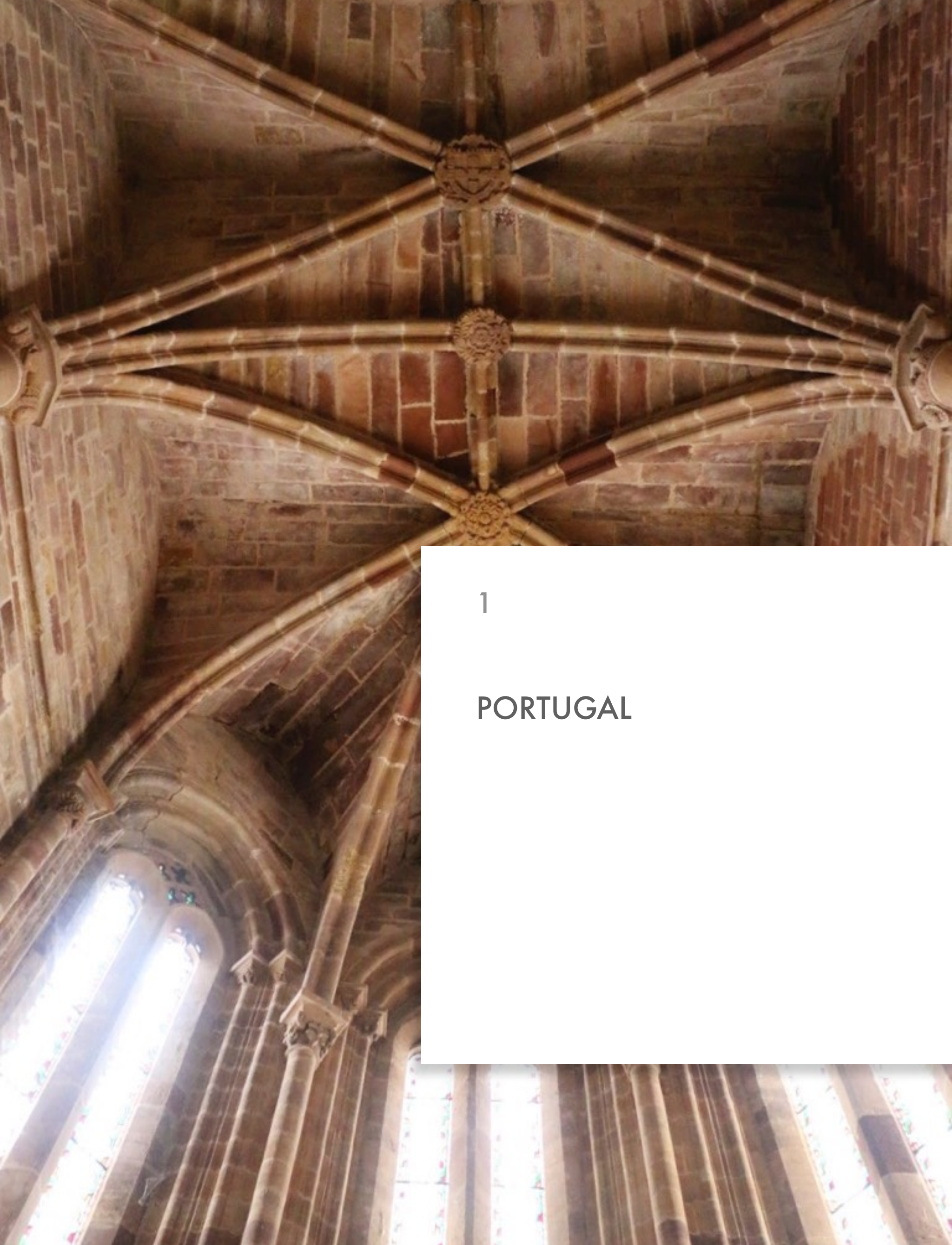


OUR BUMBLE

EXPLORING EUROPE IN OUR
MOTORHOME



1

PORTUGAL



Silves to Ilha de Faro

Sunday 22 March

Thud....thud....thud

What's that?

Thud...thud....thud

Craig what the hell are you doing?

Going for a pee but can't get out of bed

I burst out laughing. Poor Craig, all his bearings had gone and he was trying to get out of the bed via the back wall and the thud was him kneeing the back wall. That's the funny thing with Motorhomes, you change the position of where you sleep depending on the angle of the van and sometimes it doesn't half cock up your senses.

Last of the washing today and oh what a treat...clean cotton sheets all nicely ironed by my sister. I haven't had ironed sheets for a long time and how crisp and clean they feel. Cheers Mandy! The weather wasn't brilliant, so in between cleaning we checked out our email and surfed the net with the free wifi curtesy of Silves sports centre. Craig updated Marg the GPS with all new maps but she was non too pleased. Tom Tom installed a new voice "Happy Holly" and within minutes Marg was showing her who was boss.



Beep...beep...beep. Hey it's our Stephen (cousin), he is staying in Albufeira. He is here for a northern soul weekend, shall we bob over and say hello? With that we packed up Vin and set off in search of a Northern fella, pie in one hand and pint in tother. shuffling his feet along the street of Albufeira.

An hour later and we were on the car park of his hotel and as we looked up, there he was leaning over his balcony. It was so good to see Stephen and we had a bloody good chin wag about family, friends and anything else that popped in our head. We don't get to see each other half as much as we'd like to but when we do, you can't shut us up! Stephen hadn't half got a bargain to Portugal...£116

for long weekend (5 days) including flights, transfers, hotel and entrance fees to the Northern Soul venue.

Just before sunset we set off so we could get to Faro before dark. On route, we gave Vin a good old blast and by the time we got to Faro the amber light on the dash had disappeared. If you only tootle along then every 500 miles you need to drive over 2000 rpm for 30 minutes to clear any build up.

We parked up on Ilha de Faro and it was just like we'd never been away. This spot is wonderful and so good to drift to sleep to the sound of the sea crashing on to beach.



Ilha de Faro to Alvor

23 - 30 March

Up bright and early, so we could watch the airplanes arrive. Today, Craig Dad and his wife, Michele arrive in Portugal to celebrate his 70 birthday.

We sat on the beach and watched the Monarch plane touch down. Right Vin lets go and pick up the owd bugger. With that we set off, parked Vin on the airport car park and then headed over to arrivals to welcome them to Portugal. Not long before their little smiling faces popped through the arrival doors lugging 40 kg of luggage!

First stop, Ilha de Faro just 5 minutes around the corner. We parked up so they could have a stroll on the beach, feel the sun on their face and have a nice cuppa tea before the two hour drive to Alvor. The weather is due to change (for the worse) this afternoon, so best maximise on the sun whilst we can.

Once in Alvor, we found their apartment and telephoned their point of contact, who came straight over and gave them the guided tour. In the meantime we headed over to the campsite to check out our options but wasn't too impressed. We then went to the aire but it too was a swamp. The heavy rains over the last week have certainly took their toll on Alvor, everything is water logged. The aire looks like a n orange lake with just a handful of van around the edge. We hunted around for the best place to stop and found a palm fringed car park



at the side of the aire. Looks like we are not the only ones struggling for somewhere to stay...lots of motorhomes nestled in the palms.

We also unpacked all our goodies (thank you) and then spent an hour wetting ourselves with laughter. Craig's dad had vacuum packed four tins of beans and sausages. That's right folks, vacuum packed. We were howling at the thought of him emptying the tin in to the plastic bag and then sealing it up without losing any bean juice. Well, they made it all the way here with plenty bean juice and Craig will certainly enjoy, I am sure.

Later that day we popped over to see their apartment. Clearly it wasn't anything like what they expected - tiny, cold and very basic. We really felt for them. It's been years since they'd been abroad and when they do, it's not what they expect. Good job we have a spare duvet. In the evening, we celebrated their arrival with a lovely meal in a waterside restaurant. Shame about the weather...the wind was horrid and by the time we left the restaurant it looked like the storm might be in for the night. What a welcome to Portugal!

On Tuesday, the weather got worse, so rather than hang around at a beach resort we headed to Capo De Vincent. We stayed in the motorhome and prepared lunch whilst they blew around the lighthouse. The wind was wild and that is putting it mildly. It was wicked with a nasty cold bite.



Over the next few days the weather slowly started to get better, so most of the days were spent in and around the beach or on the aire. In the evenings, we dined out in some really nice restaurants..I got to eat out for a full 7 days, it was heaven!! Nearly killed Craig lol.

The kitchen tap packed up on Thursday and despite best efforts by Craig and his dad, the damn thing would not work. Nothing for it, we booked it in at CampServ for early next week.

The best day by far was Friday 27, Barrie's 70 birthday. The weather was beautiful (at last) and we celebrated the day with a BBQ feast fit for a king. We decorated Vin with balloons and banners and played some good old fashioned tunes for Barrie to sing along to. The celebrations continued right in to the night as we dined at Vagabonds and the whole restaurant sang happy birthday....first time I've see Barrie blush. It was a wonderful day and so chuffed they flew out to Portugal to spend it with us. Father and Son celebrating in style...brilliant.

For good measure we've thrown in a few pictures of Barrie (and Craig if you can spot him) in his younger years, which I am sure he will appreciate xxx

On Sunday, we completely forgot about the clocks moving forward. To be honest, we thought the change related to just British Summer Time...how wrong we were!

Before we knew it a week had passed and time to take them back to the airport. We'd all had a great time and shared some wonderful moments that we'll treasure forever.

PS Barrie, If you didn't already know, Michele fell in love with Peanut and she now wants a mini dachshund. I will help find one for you if you want?

Father & Son enjoying
time together





Sunday 29 March, 1 year since we lost our Russell to a rare form of liver cancer. A wonderful chap inside and out and he is sadly missed by many and no one more so than my sister Mandy.

Russell loved our motorhome and wanted to buy a little motorhome then him and Mandy could travel with us. We promised Russell we would take his ashes on our bumble and sprinkle him across the world and today is no exception. We sprinkled him on the most perfect fishing ledge with a fantastic view out to sea, he would love it and we could just picture him sat there enjoying the view and catching some rays.

Love you and miss you so much Russell xxx





Alvor to Loule

Tuesday 31 March

Yesterday, we dropped Barrie and Michele at the airport and then spent the rest of the day sniffing on our pillow. They'd left us the bloody flu...that's gratitude for ya! Craig's nose was running like the clappers and I was aching all over. We Brits are great at sharing colds & flu.

Vin went to CampServe in Loule to get his tap fixed. It was the microswitch but within half an hour he was fixed and flowing with water. The guys at CampServ have a very good reputation in Algarve and you can see why. Tidy workshop and very efficient. Not only that a fair price £38 for labour and parts.



Peanut says "Michele come back, I need some feet to massage and ta for my sign, its pawpect"

As we are in Loule and the sun is shining we decided to go to the stadium and do all the weekly chores. The stadium offers a free aire with fresh water just what we need for a washing day.

Whilst the washing dried we did a spot of planning. Where oh where shall we head to for Easter? Now I am excited. If what we have planned pays off, it will be brill...watch this space folks!

Once the clothes, bedding, towels and net curtains dried we took a walk around Loule. Nothing new but it felt different. The sun was shining, it was very hot (92 degrees) and it was brighter. That one hour change in time doesn't half make a difference. People were out in their summer clothes and taking shelter in the inviting bars and cafes. Lively but quiet music played in the street, which added to a more upbeat mood. It was truly a lovely afternoon to stroll around Loule.

The evening temperature didn't drop too much in fact it stayed so warm we slept with the windows open...a first for 2015. Feels like summer has arrived. Yippee



*No home is complete,
Without the pitter patter,
Of dachshund feet*



Loule to Retur

Wednesday 1 April

Woke up to the sun shining, the birds tweeting, the lambs baring and Peanut farting. Oh the joys of living in a confined space and when he farts boy he farts.

Just before our first morning coffee Craig decided to empty and reorganise the kitchen cupboards. Oh no, I better take shelter. Reorganisation by Mr OCD can only end two ways - smiles or smashes. I put head down and cracked on with updating our bumble. Three hours later Craig had reorganised the cupboards only to finish where he started. At least he was still calm...for now. By 12 noon we'd set off and we're heading to the fuel station for some GPL. Well, what a palaver. The pump wasn't working and the bloody kiosk woman was



about as useful as a chocolate fire guard. She didn't care and after half an hour of continuous trying we gave up. As we left the fuel station you could see the bewilderment on her face. Some people need a good shake!

From this point it sort of went down hill and the only good bit was the smooth road surface of the N270. Made a change from the horrendous broken road of the N125. First the Motorhome stereo/GPS overheated and then got its knickers in a twist. So no music and today of all days, as every squeak in the Motorhome reared its head. It was like the classical piece Carmina Burana, O Fortuna (tune from old spice)...a haunting but quiet squeak making you sit

in silence and anticipation of where it is coming from. Your eyes move left to right, glaring at every contender then boom. The squeaks all appear at once, scaring you half to death and causing your body to go in to epileptic fit as your eyes flicker quicker to suss out the culprit. All the bloody way to Retur. A total of 67 km of twitching like two bloody fools. I was so glad when we stopped until I saw Peanut had weed all over the bathroom floor. We then spent then next hour fixing the squeaks - dismantling the overhead bed, aligning the TV, fixing the bathroom mirror etc. Craig went in to the garage to find the torch had flew out the pocket and cracked the little kitchen bowl and to top it all...his bucket was cracked. By now it was mid afternoon,

we'd not had anything to eat and it was 36 degrees and getting hotter. Today, is just one of them days and I think we need to go and chill on the beach...and we did.

On the way to the beach we passed a Portuguese fella who lived in Southampton for a few years. He was fixing his Motorhome. He'd caught the rear bumper something and badly scratched it, so he was sanding it down and giving it a bit of a spray. Looks like it's not just us having bad luck today.

Our neighbour is a young at heart 85 year old Belgium lady. She travels alone in her Motorhome with her adopted Portuguese dog. She has all her wits about her and speaks 8 languages. She travels for 10 months of the year and loves everyone except the Dutch...they are too tight with money and ruining Portugal, so she has no time for them. She goes home in July and August when it is nice and warm in Belgium. Hats off to then old dear, I hope I am still traveling and full of life at her age.

Last day in Portugal

Today is our last day in Portugal, sniffle. We've been here for 101 days and travelled over 2,701 km along the Algarve, west coast up to Lisbon then diagonal across country. When we arrived in Portugal we didn't much care



for it but over the months it has grown on us and we've come to appreciate and love Portugal for all its good bits. It won't win any prizes for being the best but it does have a fabulous winter climate, good beaches, welcoming people, motorhome friendly and it's cheap. On average we've spent €20.09 per day (all in) which equates to about £5,500 per annum. We came here for the mild winter, to see a little of Portugal and to learn how to slow down and not explore everything in a day. We achieved our goal and now the warmer weather is here...we are getting ready to bumble. Excited !!!

OBRIGADO - Goodbye
in Portugal



ELLO!



2

ELLO

As you know, I am always calling the foreigners for their water filling techniques i.e. a watering can. Well this is how I do it. I would recommend going to a builders / plumbers merchants and purchasing a 2" pipe (just a couple of inches needed), a 2"-4" offset reducer pushed on the end and a 45° bend. Push together to create funnel. Insert in to van and pour in your water.

This contraption allows the water to swirl down the pipe allowing air in and out to stop it glugging and splashing. Must easier and faster than a watering can.

Total cost around £2.





3

ROUTE SO FAR

THE LAST 11 DAYS OF OUR JOURNEY

TAXI !!

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 Marinah
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