

By the end of of this year we will have spent just under six months in Spain, four months in Ramsgate, a month sailing around the Greek islands and another month travelling and visiting with friends across Europe. One of the nice things about having the villa in Spain is having several of our friends and family staying with us during the year.



In May we had a new swimming pool constructed in the garden in Spain. Unfortunately we were not able to use it much then, as we had already booked our ferry to travel from Venice to Greece. We have used this overnight (25 hour) ferry several times and treat it as our holiday. Everyone thinks that when we are in Spain we are on holiday, but apart from the weather, it is not a lot different from living at home anywhere. We still have the usual chores to do, so a night on a ferry with a nice restaurant and a bar, and a chance to sun bathe on deck during the day is a real pleasure.

Sailing in the Ionian is great, usually some breeze in the morning and quiet in the afternoon. We went to the Gulf of Amphraccia, north of where we keep Asterix, to check out the wildlife (dolphins, turtles, pelicans, snakes, etc.) and then to Petala in the south for some peace and quiet. We were hoping to move Asterix nearer to Spain, but the French Mediterranean marinas have a waiting list, and the Spanish ones are really expensive. So we will have to stay in Greece.

Late July / early August saw us travelling back to Spain for a month, via Belgium for some beer, and France, where it was great to visit cousin Betty, and second cousin Susan who I hadn't seen for some forty years. Back in Spain we at last got a lot of use of our new pool, as Pauline's brother and nephew came to visit and her daughter came to stay for a fortnight.



October and we travelled down to Spain via the Bay of Biscay. We have done this trip before, but this time it was a little bumpy . Sitting in the restaurant for dinner we had to keep our hands on the wine bottle and glasses as they would otherwise have slid onto the floor. We were happy, but several other passengers seem to think it was better to lock themselves away in their cabins until the trip was over.

It has been wet here in Spain, but not as much flooding as in the UK and at least it is warmer, and I hope it will stay this way until we leave after Christmas.

**Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year to you all.**

