

# ★ **EU**RA The **Eu**RApean

## **MY FIRST EuRA CONFERENCE PALMA 2010**

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I had been really looking forward to my first EuRA conference in Palma when much the world stopped flying due to unforeseen circumstances. Eyjafjallajökull started to erupt on the 14<sup>th</sup> April causing all flights in the UK spreading to many airports in Europe being cancelled and this was when the nightmare for Tad and Dominic really began.

After several frantic calls to the board and many emails to all members attending, followed up by several phone calls from the office, it was decided to cancel the conference for this year and rebook it for 2011. But I was not deterred; I decided that if the planes were flying on Wednesday then I was still going. After all I had booked and paid for my flight and I was not going to jeopardise losing my money for nothing.

On waking on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> my first stop was my computer to see what the plane scheduled for my flight was up to, surprisingly it was scheduled to take off at the correct time for Palma and so was I. The queue was not too long at Gatwick and in no time we were boarding on time for our flight out to Palma, all 25 of us, we were asked to disperse ourselves throughout the plane for weight balancing of such a small load.

Arriving in Palma 2 hours later, a short taxi ride to the hotel Melia Atenea and dropping bags off gave me plenty of time to have a stroll on the promenade and a well deserved drink in the beautiful evening sunshine. Then a date with Tad and Dominic who had spent the previous few nights camped out in the hotel along the road, wheeling and dealing with hotel managers, conference exhibitors, and everyone else concerned with organisation of a well run event. What a joy to meet them and spend a few precious moments in their company before they hot footed it back to their hotel to continue the mopping up process.

Thursday whilst Tad and Dominic worked through the day trying to reorganise things for next year, I took time for a little sightseeing. Rain did not put me off; I was determined to get round as much of the city as possible justifying this as my first session of the conference and taking in a little lunch in a typical Spanish bistro in the centre of the city. I remarked to Tad in the evening I really enjoyed the second session of the conference in the afternoon at the Salvador Dali exhibition at the Musee opposite the cathedral. Well chosen subjects Tad and Dominic but not quite what I was expecting for a EuRA conference.

Upon meeting up with other delegates in the evening who had also managed to get to Palma namely, Gerry Bertolosi from Cultural Awareness, Klara Foti from ARC Hungary and David Hugkulstone and James Walters from Smith Stone Walters over plates of tapas with Tad, (Dominic was once again hard at it on his computer back at the hotel,) I discovered new friends and business contacts. The next day was spent sightseeing and visiting the north of the island so really relaxing and enjoying the charm of Mallorca.

The flight was just as uneventful, an empty airport, a three quarter empty plane and a good landing on time at Gatwick and the trip was over.

One valuable piece of information, everybody was adamant that the EuRA conference was the best in the business and organised in a very relaxed manner resulting in very good networking and getting to know other like minded people in the business. I was very sad not to have experienced it this year but am very much looking forward to meeting up with everyone next year.