

## Bill and Cathy McArthur in Spain: 19

And now for something completely different.\* We have read a number of books about Spain while here, numbering among our favorites, *Driving Over Lemons* by Chris Stewart and *South of Granada* by Gerald Brenan. Both of these books are about the land and people of the same region, the Alpujarras, a mountainous region to the south of the majestic Sierra Nevada range. The village of Lanjarón is at the western end of the valley and is famous for its water, both for drinking and bathing. *The Rough Guide to Spain*, to which we are very devoted, talks about Lanjarón being filled with the aged and infirm who visit for a cure in the baths. Since we seem to number among the A & I, we thought we'd fit right in. The baths are not natural hot springs, but are highly placed and highly hyped amongst cold springs generated by snow melt. Several popular brands of drinking water, with and without fizz, come from Lanjarón and are drunk in all of Spain. We also chose Lanjarón because Bill saw a bus with that town on its destination placard one day.

On Friday, we took a four hour bus trip through many coastal and mountain towns and villages, ultimately landing in Lanjarón. We noted many persons of our generation walking (shuffling, limping) around near the baths carrying plastic shopping bags in which to carry towels and other bathing gear and maybe a small plastic bottle of bath-water. Bill drank some of the sulfur water in Bath, England many years ago and didn't want any more for life. We walked around a bit and saw a good sampling of the natural beauty of the area. The town itself has under 2000 residents with the highway constituting the only real street; the rest of the town is networked with alleys. The general calmness of the village is broken periodically by several of the local youths driving too fast on their motor scooters and dirt bikes.

We really enjoyed the scenery and felt that by walking a couple of kilometers out of each end of town that we did a good job taking a look. We were thrilled that in some spots one could look north and see the snow-capped Sierra Nevadas and look south and see the Mediterranean.

Our hotel supplied us with a map called "Paso a paso" which gives an excellent description of hiking, cycling, and other activities that can be enjoyed in the Alpujarras. We found one hike of seven days duration, from village to village that would be an excellent spring or fall adventure (actually, the hike is described in thirteen stages, but some of them are just an hour or two long and the week-long trip is a natural combination of the given stages). For anyone interested, we recommend obtaining a copy of *The Rough Guide to Spain* for general information, reading *Driving Over Lemons* for a good background to the region, and sending a email to "Turismo Alpujarra" ([ata-alpujarra@asociacion-tierra.org](mailto:ata-alpujarra@asociacion-tierra.org)) asking for a copy of the map "Paso a Paso".

This was our last bus trip of our stay. Our next trip will be by train and ferry.

\*With apologies to *Monty Python*.

## **Bill and Cathy**