

THE IRIS CONFERENCE IN VILAFRANCA

Wednesday evening before dinner we had a special session with local teachers and administrators from the Catalan region. In this session there was an opportunity to share our views on Productive Learning and answer questions from the floor.



A closer view of the Church.

Note the cannon on the right. There is an inscription that it was used to fight off the British navy during the Napoleonic wars. Shades of Horatio Hornblower and Jack Aubrey (two heroes of English historical novels about that period).

The combination kitchen dining room in the Cau Ferrat Museum in Sitges. It had been an artist's home.



On Friday the participants had a reception with the Speaker of the Catalan Parliament. It turns out the Parliament Building is in a large park right next door to a zoo in downtown Barcelona. The Catalans take great delight in pointing this out and asking slyly to one and all to guess which is which. After the reception they had a meeting with some key members of the Socialist Party to discuss educational reform. Roberto Lambardera, another old friend of Bret's and member of Parliament representing Vilafranca, had arranged this meeting and gave everyone a delightful tour of the building. Roberto and Bret hugged each other. Europeans are big huggers. Americans really enjoy this. The building had been a garrison for troops and later a royal residence. Then it became the seat of the Catalan Parliament. When Franco took over he closed the building down and it remained sealed during his dictatorship. The Catalans were always a very independent thinking people and Franco didn't like that. When Franco died and democracy was restored to Spain the Parliament returned. Incidentally the Catalans have their own language which they fiercely adhere to and all the signs are in both Spanish and the native tongue. So you can this is a very proud people. After the meeting Roberto invited a few to continue the discussion over lunch in the legislative dining room. Most of the participants had a chance to explore Barcelona before returning to Vilafranca.

A view of Sitges with the Church standing on the hill. The beach stretches out to the left.



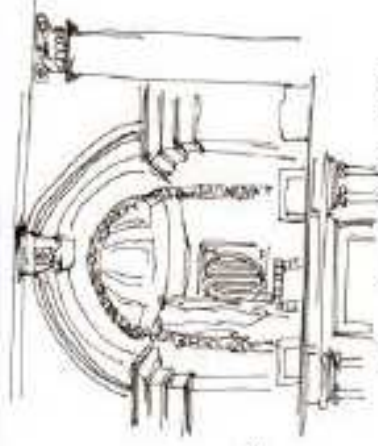
We also had a chance to visit the offices of IDAPS. It was very impressive indeed. There was a short meeting of INEPS' AC. They heard some of the arrangements Angela is making for the Congress in May. It sounds very exciting. We can't wait.



A street behind the Church.



In the afternoon Bret went out on one of the stone breakwaters and drew a modern hotel on the Sitges beach.



The podium in the legislative chamber of the Parliament.



The Catalan Flag.