Uggaby, the visit

The Alquerian delegation blinked at their first sight of Britain. It was grey, overcast and raining. Manuela wondered why the sky was so low. A chill wind ripped through the group as they made their way to the waiting transport. A minibus which had certainly seen better times. The number-plate sported a crest with the letters RoU, Republic of Uggaby. Sid Bognurdler the driver, welcomed them in a strange strangled fen accent which Blythe Gruntmore vaguely recognised. He responded in his Geordie English and Bognurdler thought, 'What a strange language Spanish is'.

Manuela, Gruntmore, Rodriquez and Poyato enjoyed the journey north. The view through the window of the minibus was of a dank green countryside, so different from the sun bleached Alquerian Valley. Manuela was on her best behaviour. The others were worried about her attitude problem and sent her to an 'anger management' specialist. However after her first consultation the 'specialist' himself was seeking professional help.

Uggaby's history is on a parallel with that of Alqueria's. It was founded by time-expired men of the VI Victrix Roman legion. Their descendants lived in peace, their way of life changing little until the summer of AD820. In that year the Viking, Sitrik the Putrid was exiled to Uggaby. His successors have ever since been a constant source of aggravation to the dark-eyed descendants of the Victorious 6th Legion.

With the River Waveney to the north and Sitrik's stream to the south Uggaby was technically an island. Both the Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils used the island status to wash their hands of the place. On application to central government for clarification they too denied responsibility. Uggaby became an independent republic.

A reception at the Uggabian Town Hall offered traditional village fare. Unfortunately this was also on a par with Alquerian food and therefore virtually inedible. An

acquired taste, Pugh the Mayor had said, however this was a euphemism for 'ruddy awful'.

A particularly sticky moment occurred when Manuela, champion of the Alquerian Hill People met Marta, the Uggabian matriarch. Dark eyes examined dark eyes. The girls circled each other. They could find no fault. They became firm friends, a union of anarchistic souls. The relief in the hall was almost akin to rejoicing. Homing pigeons brought from Alqueria were released. Seizing their chance for freedom they headed north east towards Scandinavia and were never seen again.

To put this new found alliance on an official footing a treaty was signed. The Treaty for Autonomous Republics and Territory Security (T.A.R.T.S) came into being.

A contented hush fell over Uggaby as it and its guests settled down for the evening. The only sounds were the gurgling of the Waveney along with Marta and Manuela giggling in the dark.