The border incident

The forthcoming return visit by a delegation from the Uggabian Republic had begun to get very complicated. The Spanish authorities, having granted the necessary visas had a change of heart and revoked them. It appears that a whistle-blower from the Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y de Cooperación leaked the information. Anti-Uggabian pressure groups in the UK and their sister groups in Spain swung into action, arranging demonstrations and applying for a legal injunction to stop the visit.

There was wide spread rioting from Cádiz to Barcelona, the streets of Madrid resembled a battle field while in Córdoba a giant Alquerian tricolour was burnt. Unfortunately the fire spread to the Great Mosque which was completely gutted. The authorities had to act and they did. Swiftly closing the border with Alqueria and revoking the visas. During a news interview the leader of the anti-Alquerian group, Ernesto Twitto worried that the Uggabians would not get around to leaving again said " They can't get rid of their surplus idiots on us". In reality of course the UK has been quietly doing this for years.

Alqueria reacted by closing the already closed border with Spain. The Republic's militia was mobilised, all ten of them. Only ten passed the required intelligence test to join the Militia. Actually the test was based on the Spanish under-five Kindergarten assessment. Manuela offered to supply comfort to the troops. She was however sent to the high sierra with Carmen the barmaid from the Bar La Casa Devante instead. Here they manned or rather womaned a crossing point. A solitary track led from Spain down the sierra and into the Village. It is known as the 'Alquerian Trail', a semi-official smuggling route. Remitroot Liquor out and Abyssinian Goat Shirling accoutrements in. On the high sierra it was still cold with the Winter snow still laying in the shadows, the only shelter an old hollow tree trunk.

During an emergency meeting of the Alquerian Cabinet the decision was taken to go ahead with the visit and not be pushed around by their powerful neighbour. The

problem of getting the Uggabians into the Republic was next on the agenda. Gruntmore had the solution. Bring the delegation in from the sea and up the Río Verde to Alqueria. He had experience of this clandestine method of travelling. Whenever he or his relatives went anywhere abroad they usually had to swim the last three miles by night.

That night at Harwich Docks four cloak draped figures boarded the tramp steamer SS Founder. The mist rolled in from the North Sea as the ship's propeller began to bite into water.

What will befall the inveterate travellers?
Will they make the Mediterranean?
Will they be invited to the Captain's cocktail party?

Find out soon.