



May 11th, 2010, cloudy 20°

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### Hirundo rustica

The barn swallow can be distinguished by its reddish throat and forked tail. Legend has it that the devil threw a piece of wood at the swallow, not only wounding its head, hence the red stain, but also cutting a bit of its tail.

## 1. PAINTERS ON THE HILL

It was a close call whether the painting week at the end of April could proceed at all. The volcano continued to frustrate all air traffic. Two participants were actually forced to cancel, but



fortunately the others managed to come. Heavily loaded with portable easels, canvases, paints, camera and sun visor. The latter was a real necessity: we had a glorious week. At times, it was so hot that the paints on our palettes dried out before we could apply them on the canvases.

People have worked really hard. Paintings were made in the Milfontes harbour, on the Carvalhal beach, among the Picota mill and the ruins of Atalaia.

The most delightful pictures have been made. Everybody was stunned by their own capacities, for which they should, of course, also thank Jenny Helder's supervision. In October, we'll have another go.

## 2. OUT OF AFRICA

For the third successive year, we are housing a barn swallow couple in our garage. On February 5, they suddenly showed up; elatedly twittering, they demonstrated to us how happy they are to be back. Well, we like it too. We were quite curious to see if they appreciate our well-meant alterations. As the former nest had broken off from the cable flex, we have built a kind of apartment block.

By now, the first hatch (six eggs) has flown the nest and the nest is being made ready for the second brood. The swallows are rather messy, but in the breeding season a couple catches up to a million insects. So you won't hear us complain.



## 3. THE ROOSTER FROM BARCELOS

While on the subject of birds, one of the participants in the painting week was wondering why the black rooster with the bright red crest and

the bright decorations on its body is for sale as a souvenir throughout Portugal. To my shame I could not tell him, but some detective work yielded the following result:

*A pilgrim on his way to Santiago de Compostela stops over in the town of Barcelos. Here, he is falsely accused of theft. Standing before the judge, the pilgrim insists he is innocent. Nevertheless, the judge, who is eating a fried rooster, condemns him. Then the pilgrim predicts that the rooster on the judge's plate will crow three times to prove his innocence. At the moment the pilgrim is about to be hanged, the rooster actually crows and the man is released.*



The rooster has been national symbol of Portugal ever since and stands for 'incredible' luck, but also for honesty, integrity, trust and honour.

## 4. PAPAL VISIT

Like every year around this time, thousands of Catholics (from Portugal, but also from far beyond) are on their way to Fátima, the Portuguese pilgrimage site where almost a century ago the Virgin Mary appeared to the peasant children Francisco, Jacinta and Lucia. This year, approximately 35,000 people will take part in the nearly 125-mile walk, far more than usually. The reason is that

ten years ago, Francisco and Jacinta were canonised (Lucia only died in 2005) and in honour of that the Pope Benedictus XVI will attend the festivities. The Pope seizes the opportunity to visit Lisbon and Porto as well, by *papamovel*. That is why public life came to a virtual standstill this morning, only to

start up again after May 14. It is hard to find a metro car or bus to take you to work, schools are out and 675.000 civil servants get a day off, to the great annoyance of employers and trade unions. There is plenty to do logistically and organisationally: just think of the 50,000 hosts that are to be handed out every day.



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More information:

<http://www.nhptv.org/natureworks/barnswallow.htm>

[http://pastorinhos.com/livros/en/MemoriasI\\_en.pdf](http://pastorinhos.com/livros/en/MemoriasI_en.pdf)