



FLASHBACK: How the Olive Press first reported the funding over a year ago



VERTIGO: Guide Martin approaches an obstacle, and (left) Londoner Tom Williams shuffles on the beam

actly a year ago, that it had been added to the official government *boletín* as a key tourism project.

A strategy document seen by the paper, estimated that around 1000 people a day would pay three to five euros to travel along the path. They will be carefully monitored by up to 100 employees with safety being of major importance.

"There could even be special trains brought in from Madrid, just for the experience," revealed a local hotelier. The village of El Chorro itself is a peculiar outpost of several dozen houses perched between hydroelectric plants and imposing crags. Little would tell an unsuspecting visitor that this hilly hamlet between Malaga and Antequera is a world-famous

climbing hub. One of the main focal points for foreign climbers is undoubtedly the Olive Branch B&B run by Surrey expats Gary and Melanie Burns. On Boxing Day when I visited it, the B&B was packed with outdoor enthusiasts from around the world recovering from a large communal Christmas meal the night before.

Just bring a harness and chances are you'll meet someone to climb with here

"We took over this inn in 2008, without realizing it

was right at the foot of the Las Encantadas crag, one of the best climbing locations in the world," said Gary. After a late communal breakfast, lodgers head off for the crags. "If the sun is out, it's perfect conditions for a day of climbing. It's never too cold around here," said my guide Martin. "The limestone rock here has plenty of nice holds and there are loads of pre-made

routes," he continued. "You just need to bring a harness and chances are you'll meet someone to climb with here. It's a very friendly place. "Whatever grade you climb doesn't make it any more or less enjoyable." Londoners Matt and Tom Williams, who came to El Chorro for a Christmas holiday, agree. "It's been a great experi-

ence," said Matt, 25. "The climbing community is very welcoming, even if you

haven't done much climbing. People are always trying to help you out."

A mountain of activities for outdoor enthusiasts

Whether it is 'bridge-jumping' or 'canyoning', or 'paintballing' or 'sphering', there is so much on offer in Andalucia, as Anatoly Kurmanaev found out. Firm Experience Box organised his day out

MOUNTAIN path traverses and climbing are just some of the exciting outdoor activities on offer in inland Andalucia.

While most holidaymakers come for the Costa del Sol beaches and night-life, as most seasoned expats know, this mountainous region has much more in store.

In fact, inland Andalucia is an outdoor heaven for activity lovers. One of the best places to look for inspiration is website *ExperienceBox-Spain.com*, which offers an incredible 250 activities in southern Spain. "There is so much to do here, people are often actually overwhelmed

by the options," explains its Belgian boss Rob Magits, who is based in Estepona.

"That's why we've set up a voucher service so customers can spend them on the activities that suit their mood that day."

To try out the service, we assembled an adventure package ourselves. We began as close to the coast as possible, near Puerto Banus, in fact, where South Londoner Peter Smith rolls people down a 150-metre hill in a giant rubber ball at breakneck speeds.

Called 'sphering', it is certainly a

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