

A VISIT TO ALBAOLA: THE SEA FACTORY OF THE BASQUES.

(<http://www.albaola.com/en/site/special-place>)

The Basque people have always had a close relationship with the sea.

The Basques were pioneers in whaling and cod fishing in Newfoundland (Canada) and the Gulf of St. Lawrence since the early part of the sixteenth century.

The sixteenth century marked the golden era of Basque fishing. At that time 2,000 “arrantzales” (sailors) are estimated to have set sail every year from Basque ports to the St. Lawrence River – at that time known as Nueva Vizcaya – in search of the giant mammals that reproduced and fed in the waters of the estuary on their migration from the Arctic. Their blubber rendered down into oil was a great source of wealth for the Basque Country.

The Basques left many traces of their presence in Canada, including place-names such as Mingan (Québec) and Ingornachoix, Port au Choix and Port au Port (Newfoundland). Five Basque shipwrecks have been located in the area; the earliest, the *San Juan*, dates from 1565 and it shows how good shipbuilders they were. (<http://www.albaola.com/en/site/investigation-process>)

Our pupils visited Albaola (**and Petteri came with us!**): The Sea Factory of the Basques, where a replica of the San Juan Whaleship is being built using the same materials, procedures and tools that our ancestros did.

Albaola is located in Pasaia. We got to Pasaia by bus and then we took a boat to the factory.



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There, we visited the museum with Ander and Eider, our monitors. Our monitors gave us some information about the relationship our ancestors had with the whale and our students showed that they already know quite a lot about that because they worked on this theme in the 2nd grade.



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Our pupils, also, made a compass.



And worked with maps, locating the points of the compass and drawing some routes using the given latitude and longitude coordinates.



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We saw the San Juan Whaleship they are building.



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There is an International Boat Building School in Albaola. The school takes place in an atmosphere centred on the recovery of our maritime heritage.



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