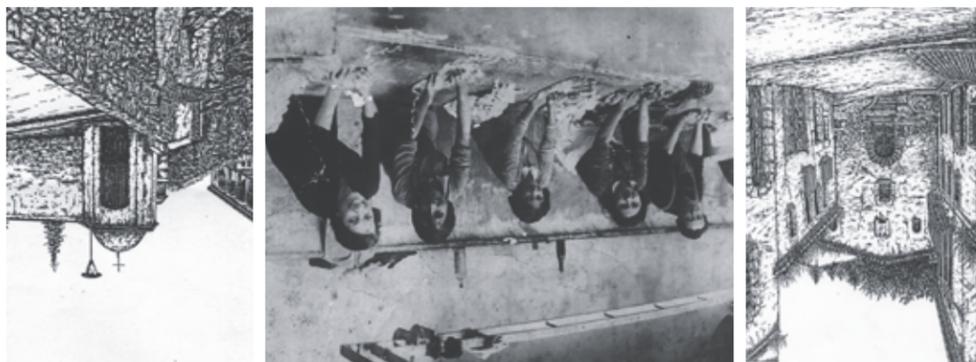




(ARCHITECTURAL, ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND MONUMENTAL HERITAGE)

ROUTE THROUGH THE HISTORIC CENTRE OF CALDES D'ESTRAC



THE BIRTH OF CALDES

We have written knowledge of the foundation of the old town of Caldes d'Estrac in the year 1219, following the donation by the owner, Mrs Guilleuma de Castellvell and her son Guillem de Montcada – the mistress and master of the Castle of Mataró – of the hill and some land for the establishment of a hospital or poorhouse. Pere Grony, a soldier in a religious military order, was its prior, and he managed the hospital and the small community of residents for ten years. On the hill, in the old town, are two watch and defence towers where the inhabitants of the small village guarded their beaches and defended themselves from pirate attacks.

We will start our journey in the washing place, at the junction between La Riera (the brook) and Carrer de l'Església. This street is the centre of the structure including many unique buildings in the history of our town, and has become a link between the old part or Dalt de Caldes, around Carrer Major (the high street), and the new part or fishing district, located around Carrer del Mar street (now Carrer Sant Pere).



1.- THE HOT WATER WASHING PLACE

The hot water washing room place built in the mid-nineteenth century is in La Riera, right where Carrer de l'Església begins. It was a meeting place for the village women, who were in charge of the hard work of washing clothes after carrying them from their homes in washing tubs, an effort which was quickly forgotten as soon as they arrived at the washing place, where they shared the work and some conversation. In addition, the hot water reduced damage to their hands in very cold weather, and the clothes came out whiter. We will now go up La Riera to the thermal baths, at the back of which is the source.



2.- HOT SPRING

The emergence of water, once naturally and now in a fountain, flows at a temperature of between 37.9 and 38.8 °C and belongs to the category of mesothermal waters. With its concentration of mineral elements, Caldes water is hypotonic and with medium mineralisation. It is also radioactive and contains sodium chloride and bicarbonate. We will now go back to La Riera and around the Town Hall, leaving the latter behind on the left. Before starting the climb to the church, you will find a chapel on the right.

3.- THE CHAPEL OF THE REMEDY

This is an old chapel where, according to legend, the Virgin of the Remedy (Verge del Remei), the patron saint of Caldes, was found in a cave located under the chapel by two oxen belonging to the cowherd of "Can Simó" (later known as "Can Busquets"). The image of the Virgin is not the original, which disappeared

during the Civil War. The Chapel of the Remedy (Capella del Remei) still remains a place of great devotion for the inhabitants of Caldes. We will now start walking up Carrer de l'Església.

4. CAN GILI (Casa Bellavista)

Here you will find a late mediaeval farmhouse, Can Gili, popularly known as Casa Bellavista, which was renovated in 1922 in the style typical of the early 1900s. It later became a Marist seminary, then a parish school and, more recently and until today, a nursing home. Note the gargoyle on the exterior wall, near the church, which may originate from the original farmhouse.



5.- PARISH CHURCH

Caldes parish church has been through three different stages in history:

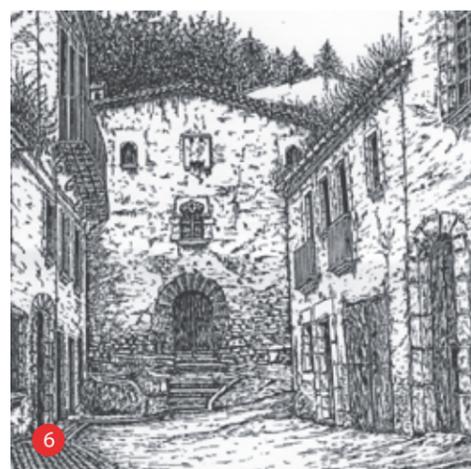
The first building, a hospital convent created in 1219, was managed by Pere Grony, as we have explained at the beginning of this tour. A new building was opened in 1557, and a few years later (in 1565) there is evidence of the first parish record books (now lost). It was renovated in the year 1603.

The current building is the result of a long process, which started in 1805, was completed in 1830 and was expanded in 1868. It was renovated in 1942, after the end of the Civil War. In 2005, after celebrating its second centenary, work began on the construction of the new roof and restoration of the façade. Annexed to the church is the rectory building, which housed the parish cinema for many years.



6.- CAN MILANS

Once you have passed the church, you can see at the end the stately home Can Milans that dates back to the sixteenth century, although the date 1627 can be read above the window. It is a two-storey building with gothic elements. Another floor was added in the eighteenth century, adding a parapet to defend the entrance. Late-nineteenth-century visitors described it thus: "The round entrance with long segments above the beautiful window with an artistic border, the top of the façade crowned by a strong parapet and a double roof with long slopes": The building was remodelled in 1991 and currently houses the public library of the same name.



7- CA "LA REGINA"

A house dating back to the fifteenth or sixteenth century which still has a window decorated with details of imagery and a square watchtower guarding the entrance to the town.



8- THE LITTLE CHAPEL OF THE HOLY CHRIST

Further up, turning left as you come down from the church, you will find the little chapel of the Holy Christ (capelleta del Sant Crist), a beautiful Mediterranean building causing great devotion among the residents. According to Joaquín Salarich, it was built in 1833.



9- THE HOUSE OF THE KING

A few metres further up, on the right, is house no. 5, popularly known as the "House of the King" (casa del Rey). There is written evidence that King James II signed documents in Caldes in 1312, and that his wife Mary spent time taking baths there. The term "the king's room" emerged later, in the year 1395 and in King Joan II's Decree in favour of the baths in Caldes.



10- THE GREEN TOWER (TORRE VERDA)

Torre Verda (the Green Tower), also known as "Torre de les Heures" ("Ivy Tower"), due to the colour given to it by this protective plant, is located on the left at the end of Carrer de l'Església street. As a result of the Berber pirate attacks which were particularly frequent between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, watchtowers were erected off the coast of the Maresme region. There are records of this watchtower as far back as 1549, in a document addressed by the town mayor to the town councillors of Barcelona asking for a licence to open a tavern and bakery in it, in order to generate revenue to meet the tower's repair costs.

As you continue along Carrer Major, you will find another farmhouse with a tower.



11- CAN BUSQUETS TOWER (TORRE DE CAN BUSQUETS)

The watchtower and farmhouse are now surrounded by a large garden, but until 1940 the grounds of Can Busquets were full of vines. One of the most interesting features of the tower is that a cantilever bridge links its first floor to a farmhouse. The first historical record dates back to 25 February 1586, when the councillor of Barcelona with responsibility for Caldes authorised Joan Busquets to build a "round tower in order to provide protection from the Moors and other enemies." On the crenellated top of the tower is an olive tree which is easily visible from anywhere in Caldes. For this reason, it is also known as "Torre de l'Olivera de la Pau" (the "Tower of the Olive Tree of Peace"). It is interesting to note that, until a few years ago, it was common to see storks nesting on top of the tower. Although the house dates back to the eighteenth century, it was renovated in the nineteenth century when, among other aspects, the arcades were added to the upper floor. The property has two entrances, one on Carrer Major and the other on Carrer de la Mercè. According to legend, it was a peasant from Can Busquets - formerly known as Can Simó - who found the image of the Virgin of the Remedy in mediaeval times.



12. CAN BASTOS (Carrer Major, 31)

A single-family house with a ground floor and two other floors dating back to 1880. Together with Can Cabanyes, the adjoining house (on the east), this is one of the finest examples of neoclassical composition architecture due to its master builders. The name comes from Dr. Bastos, a person well known in Caldes. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), it was the private residence of the French consul in Barcelona; the embassy was located in Can Coll, on the outskirts of the town. At its time of greatest splendour, the house had six servants.



13- SPRING AT THE SANT ANTONI SQUARE

This spring provides drinking water, not thermal water. Its current structure has nothing to do with the original, which was next to a well with a pulley for bringing up the water in a bucket. There was also a small trough. The spring was connected to the well, which meant the water was not wasted.



14. CARRER MAJOR AND PLAÇA DE SANT ANTONI

Carrer Major and Plaça de Sant Antoni (Sant Antoni square, formerly Plaça de la Constitució) form Caldes' oldest historic centre. For this reason, this square was the location for Caldes d'Estrac's first Town Hall. The people who lived on it were fishermen, sailors and peasants. According to Joaquín Salarich, in 1882 these lands produced wine (there were many vines), some cereals, legumes, carob beans, oranges and vegetables. The town's industry was limited to fishing, a job carried out by men with 18 boats in winter and 20 in summer, while



women engaged in the arts of blonde and bobbin lace.

15- CAN SANS (Carrer Major, 38)

The oldest information we have on Can Sans dates back to the sixteenth century. Its first owner was Baltasar Gerónima Viladomat. Important documents are kept in Can Sans library including, among others, a cartulary written in Latin in 1574, a family tree of Baltasar himself and his descendants, and a cabreo or document of recognition of rights dated 15 June 1685. Baltasar Gerónima Viladomat's surname did not live on because his offspring were all female. Thus, the next owner was Joan Alsina, who had married one of his daughters; and, after him, Joaquim Sans i Fontrodona, an important wine merchant who gave much splendour to the house. When he died in 1889, he was succeeded in his ownership by Alfredo Boada i Puig. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), it housed the Costa Rican Embassy which, like many other international delegations, had fled from Barcelona to escape the bombings that were destroying the city.

On 15 February 1951 the house was purchased by the spouses Antonio Senyé and Pilar Pocino, who used it as their summer house and for celebrations; its current owner is their son, Antonio Senyé-Pocino.

Inside the house, the nineteenth century period dining room is particularly worth noting. It also has a large stone cellar which was originally adapted for carriage access.

16- CAN BONIS (Carrer Major, 44)

A building with a ground floor and two other floors. Between the door and the window is a polychrome ceramic set depicting the image of the Virgin of the Remedy, Caldes's patron saint. Bonis studied with Pablo Ruiz Picasso and stood out for his figurative painting.

If you now go down the Escales del Fondo stairs, you will soon find the lime kiln on the right.

17- THE LIME KILN

This is half of a circular lime kiln with an internal diameter of 3.40 metres and a height of 4.50 metres, attached to the slope between the road and the stairs. It dates back to the seventeenth century, the time when it stopped working. The other half was demolished and destroyed when the Escales del Fondo were built (late sixties). Caldes Town Council decided to preserve this relic of the pre-industrial era as a first step in the recovery of unique archaeological items. Right in front of it, to the east, you can see the Puig Castellar hill, with the tower and town of Els Encantats, which belong to the municipality of Arenys de Mar.

We will now go down the Escales del Fondo stairs to Carrer del Remei.

18- CARRER DEL REMEI

This small cul-de-sac originally housed fishing families. After Carrer Major, it was the second street to be built since, as Arab attacks gradually decreased, the townspeople slowly became less scared and gradually descended almost to the seashore.

19- HOTEL ESTRAC

This is the old "Hotel Hispano-Alemán", built in the early twentieth century and run by the Constanseu family. It is now a listed building which retains its large pergola and terrace with a beautiful view over La Riera.

From Camí Ral, you can walk down the stairs to La Riera and then go up to visit the houses on Carrer de la Santema.

20. CARRER DE LA SANTEMA

This is the first street of summer holiday houses, built around 1900. As you leave the Palau Foundation behind on your left, you can begin the climb to the pergola in Muntanyà park.

21. MUNTANYÀ PARK

This park, and more specifically this pergola from where you can enjoy fantastic views of the whole of the historic centre you just visited, marks the end of our journey. From the top of Montalt to the sea, going through the whole village on both sides of La Riera, this is the end of our story. See you next time!