



### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Where do I begin? Once again so much has happened since the last Newsletter. Our new website has been launched and you can view this at [www.torreviejau3a.org](http://www.torreviejau3a.org). Thanks must go to Joe Christie for developing and maintaining the site

There is a list of discount opportunities on the "Members Discount" page and the list continues to grow. This page is to inform our members about companies who wish to offer discounts on their products and services to Torrevieja U3A Members. Please be advised that these companies have NO affiliation to our Association whatsoever.

In recent months we have begun to take steps to forge links with Alicante University. I have initiated a small working party to continue liaising with the University with a view to U3A members having opportunities to participate in elements of the University curriculum in the future.

Successful trips to Onda and Sagunto, and also to Cordoba and Granada have been enjoyed by members. The Social Committee have been busy too with visits to Carmen del Campillo a.k.a the Moroccan Tea Rooms, and a Summer Barbeque at Casa la Pedrera overlooking the beautiful lake. None of these trips and events can happen without a huge amount of work by the organisers. I would like to thank Penny, Sheila and Barbara for all they have done and continue to do in arranging a variety of trips and events for us all to enjoy.

For the autumn there is the guided walk around the historic buildings in Orihuela city to look forward to. This will be followed by lunch. See the Social Committee report on page 4 for details.

After many months of hard work, I was able to announce at the May meeting the plans for our ticket only U3A Gala Evening to take place at the Palacio de la Música, Torrevieja on 27th October in the presence of the British Consul in Alicante, Mr Paul Rodwell. The new Mayor of Torrevieja, Eduardo Dolón Sánchez has also been invited to attend. The evening will begin with a cake and cava reception for members. Following an address by the British Consul there will be a concert performance by members of the Torrevieja Symphony Orchestra. Further

details of this exciting event are available on the website. See page 7 for full details.



A growing team of Group Leaders continue to offer opportunities for members to participate in a wide range of studies and activities. I cannot thank our Group Leaders enough for all the work they do in planning, preparation and organising their groups. Full details of the Groups can be found on the website and printed lists are always available at the monthly meetings.

We have enjoyed some excellent speakers at our meetings. We continue with guest speakers throughout the summer months, although the style of the meetings change gear to a more relaxed, informal gathering. This style of meeting affords members time to chat over coffee and for guests to discover more about our U3A. From 1st June the fee for new members joining reduces pro rata to 6 euros for the remainder of this year.

I am always grateful for the humorous stories and jokes you email to me and these seem to be enjoyed by everyone at the meetings. There is never time to read them all out though.

I hope you find the time and the opportunity to relax during the summer months and enjoy some sunshine. The Committee, although never actually off duty, will officially reconvene again in early September. If you are staying in Spain I hope to see you at one of the summer meetings.

Bob Hill      Chairman

### U3A SUMMER ACTIVITIES

The U3A are continuing to meet throughout the summer. These meetings afford members the chance to relax over a coffee, and for prospective members and guests to have the opportunity to discover more about our U3A.

We will meet at the La Rustika (formerly Los Arcos) bar in Avenida Balearics at 10.30am on

**30th June 2011** Chris Sumpter Subject: Costa Blanca Samaritans. Current services and future plans

**28th July 2011** Margarita Manresa Clemente: Spanish Lawyer (Subject to change)

**25th August 2011** Aranzazu Corbí Ramos Subject: Spain Past and Present.

We will have a bric-a-brac stall for anything you find lurking at the bottom of your cupboards, a book stall and a cake stall.

Come along and join the fun.

These meetings are open to all; there will be no entry fee.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

May I say hello to all our new members this year. You may not know me as Jean and I left Spain mid December and did not return until 7<sup>th</sup> May. We had a super long cruise holiday and the stories going around that we ran out of U3A spending money are NOT TRUE!!!

First of all, my sincere thanks to Rolf, the Deputy Treasurer, for all his work standing in for me at short notice without a great deal of "training" on what I have to do. He kept me "in the frame" no matter where we were in the world. Also there are several other members who stood by him in helping out at each meeting. My sincere thanks to them.

I have now updated myself with all the current events and those for the rest of the year and have a set of files for the Club that allows me to carry on doing my job as Treasurer. Although we are returning to the UK on the 27<sup>th</sup> May, Rolf and I will be in constant touch to keep the Club working well.

I hope you all have a wonderful summer and look forward to seeing you all in September as the exciting winter season starts.

Robert C Cook, Hon. Treasurer [cook2cookies@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cook2cookies@yahoo.co.uk)

## MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

Following our May meeting, the last of the winter 2010/2011 season, we have 345 paid up members. There are few former members who have let me know that they will renew when they return to Spain. I thank them for keeping me in the loop.

### Protecting Members' Details

The Club's committee takes its responsibilities in this area very seriously. Members can be sure that we will use the personal data collected from your Application Form only for U3A activities. Occasional requests for addresses, phone numbers or email addresses from individuals not involved with the running of the club will always be rejected until the member has been contacted for authorisation.

The Terms and Conditions section of the application form has been amended to make this clearer.

### Cascading Information to Members by Email

The last few months have seen an increase in the information that we have been able to circulate by this method. Over 93% of members now have direct access to email, and others have access through friends or relatives. Everyone who has commented about the system has been pleased with the information they have received.

You do not have to own a computer to have email: setting up an email account and accessing it through an Internet Café is cheap and easy. If you would like to do that so you can receive our circular emails please let us know. Committee members will be pleased to help you, or we can find someone within the membership to help you.

We would love to be able to communicate with all members through this medium which is – unlike telephoning, texting or the postal service - free to the Club.

Geoff Crane Membership Secretary  
[geoff.crane@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:geoff.crane@hotmail.co.uk)

## SPEAKER'S SECRETARY REPORT.

Whilst on our travels this past winter and spring, Bob and I have surely missed some super speakers! I must thank Barbara Hill for doing a grand job corresponding with them and making sure that all went to plan. I have been looking at all those photographs of members in their Victorian clothes, and so wished I had not missed the fun that day!

In May we welcomed Graham Knight, Director of the Oficina de Atencion al Residente Internacional in Torrevieja. Graham is a mine of information on the culture and history of the town, and gave us a fascinating talk, particularly in relation to the salt works and the habaneras. He has given our U3A an enormous amount of support and advice, particularly in recent times, and we welcome a continuing association with him in the future.

Our first talk of the new 'term' on 29th September will be given by member Chris Davidson, and will be about the "**Moors and Christians Fiesta in Crevillente**", very appropriate since a visit afterwards to the fiesta is planned.

As you all know now, we are honoured to have the British Consul, Paul Rodwell, addressing us at our Anniversary Gala Evening, full details on Page 7.

In the meantime, I wish you all a very pleasant and happy summer, and look forward to seeing you in September.

Jean Cook

## GROUP CO-ORDINATORS REPORT

Welcome to another newsletter and a brief update on what's happening with the groups we have.

Some of the groups do not run through the summer and the Group Leader will have told their members if they are stopping or not. If you are a new member and thinking of joining a group, please go to the website where you can find all the contact details for each group, and either drop the group leader an email or call them. He/She can then give you all the necessary information on date, time, venue, etc and also look out for you when you go along for the first time.

There are some new groups starting in the Autumn - Scrabble, Cribbage, Really Awful Choir, Spanish Conversation and Watching Opera - details of the group leaders for these groups are on the website. Please get in touch if you are interesting in joining them.

There is a wide and varied selection of groups currently running, however there is always room for more. If you have



any ideas for new groups that you think would go down well with the members, please get in touch with me and we can take it from there. Everyone has something they are interested in, has researched or even wants to find out more about in the company of like-minded people, and you might just find that there are other people among our 300+ members who share the same interest or thirst for knowledge! Don't be shy - get in touch with me and let's see if we can't get some more groups going.

Finally, on a personal note, my sincere thanks to all the group leaders for continuing to lead interest groups on behalf of all the members.

Sue Kenyon Groups Co-Coordinator  
[torreviejau3agroups@gmail.com](mailto:torreviejau3agroups@gmail.com)

### ARMCHAIR TRAVEL

First of all, my very grateful thanks to Bob and Barbara Hill for hosting the meetings whilst Bob and I were away on our extensive trip around the world. My thanks too to Jan Dirksen for her entertaining and thought-provoking travel quiz (we now know where the Remarkables Mountains are, Jan!). Also to Jean Logan for her colourful and musical talk about her involvement with a school in Kenya, which we were so sorry to have missed.

The April meeting had to be cancelled, but many of us met up again in May at Florantilles to view Mary Jolly's excellent collection of photographs from her trip around South America. And what an exciting trip!



of photographs from her trip around South America. And what an exciting trip! Limon, Machu Picchu, Buenos Aires, home of the Argentinian tango and the tomb of Eva Peron.



Perhaps the most stunning of all, the amazing blue ice-bergs and glaciers of Patagonia, set against dark, brooding mountains and cloud-strewn skies.

We break now for the summer months, and resume on the second Tuesday of October, when Geoff and Pat Crane, and Bob and I tell of our eventful, hilarious boating holiday on the Canal du Midi, and our visit to the Cite of Carcassonne.

In the meantime, I wish you all a happy summer, and look forward to meeting up again at the September general meeting.

Jean Cook

## SOCIAL REPORT

The series of monthly coffee mornings which began in March at La Mirada, La Zenia Beach, increased in popularity as the months progressed. It is a very popular venue and a nice place to relax. All agree it would be helpful if members wore their valid U3A badges. This will help us all recognise each other and aids introductions. Members and guests are welcome to come along when the coffee mornings re-commence on Wednesday 14th September. Barbara will look forward to seeing you there around 11 a.m. to hearing all your news after the summer break.

The three summer meetings to be held at La Rustika (formerly Los Arcos) on the last Thursday of June, July and August and organised by the Social Committee, take on a more relaxed atmosphere providing more time to mix with old and new friends. These meetings present an ideal opportunity for guests and non-members to come along and find out what our U3A is all about. There will be information on the U3A Groups, a cake stall, bric-a-brac (for which donations would be appreciated please) book stall and tombola. We continue with our formula of welcoming a guest speaker to these meetings too. See the website for details of the speakers.

On the evening of Saturday 21st May a large group of members assembled at the wrought iron entrance gate to Carmen del Crevillente. For many this was a first time visit into the secluded gardens, courtyards and the property itself, known locally as the Moroccan Tea Gardens. Please see the website [www.torrevejau3a.org](http://www.torrevejau3a.org) for a more detailed report, photographs and opening times. This was a most successful evening in a magical location that many of us are planning to visit again during the summer with family, friends and visitors.



It was barbeque time on Saturday 11th June. Over 100 members and friends gathered around the pools and on the terraces of Casa La Pedrera overlooking the lake. The food was wonderful. The building of the house was the subject of the popular Channel 4 TV programme Grand Designs. This was a fabulous setting for the first of our fifth anniversary celebrations. Music ranging from folk, country and western and hits of the 60's, 70's and 80's was supplied by Allan, Steve and Smithy, who soon had us all singing and dancing to those favourite tunes of yesteryear. The evening continued with us witnessing a beautiful sunset over the vast expanse of water in front of the house that is Embalse La Pedrera. Then it was time for a series of barn dances that provided a good laugh for everyone as the dancers whirled and twirled around with a lot of us going the wrong way and causing mayhem!! All agreed it was a fabulous fun evening held in a truly remarkable location. Definitely one to be repeated.

We now look forward to the next social occasion being organised for Wednesday 19th October. This is the guided walking tour led by a member of the Tourist Office to some of the historical buildings in Orihuela city. A most interesting visit, taking in the Cathedral, Bishops Palace and Museum of Sacred Art, to name just a few places. Travel to Orihuela is in our own cars. The price is just 15€ and includes lunch after the tour. For full details visit the Travel and Social Diary on the website. Subject to availability, tickets can still be purchased at the summer meetings or contact Barbara Hill at [babshill2003@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:babshill2003@yahoo.co.uk) or Sheila Rolt (during the month of July). Sheila's email address is [sheilarolt@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sheilarolt@yahoo.co.uk)

Finally, information about our second anniversary celebration, which promises to be the highlight of the year. This is a ticket only members Gala Evening on Thursday 27th October to be held at the Palacio de la Música in central Torrevejeja. Commencing with a cake and cava reception, the British Consul in Alicante will be the keynote speaker. The evening will then continue with a concert performance given by some of the members of the Torrevejeja Symphony Orchestra.

A limited number of tickets are still available at the time of the newsletter going to press. Subject to availability these can be obtained at the summer meetings too. Please read the full details of the event on the website [www.torrevejau3a.org](http://www.torrevejau3a.org) or contact Sheila or Barbara (contact details above)

Barbara Hill & Sheila Rolt Social Organisers

## BACKGAMMON GROUP

We are currently in abeyance due to lack of members. If anyone is interested the group will restart. A location will be decided if we re-start.

Sue Kenyon [torreviejau3agroups@gmail.com](mailto:torreviejau3agroups@gmail.com)

## BRIDGE GROUP

As we approach the 5th Anniversary of the Bridge Group, from those humble beginnings of between 4 to 8 members, we have now grown to 60.

Approximately half are resident and coupled with those who visit periodically, an average of 6 or 7 tables play Duplicate Bridge each Wednesday morning at the Asturias Restaurante Punta Prima (N332). Carlos the Asturias' owner has kindly accommodated us at both his restaurants during this time.

From almost the outset we were fortunate in having Derek Rush, a retired English Bridge Union Tutor, on hand to advise and guide us but unfortunately Derek returned to the UK early this year. Back in April we held a lunch at the Asturias and to provide a moment of surprise a presentation of a bottle of vino tinto each to Tom Walshe, Guttorm Franck, Marion and Robert Delacour, and Liz and David Huglin for heroic achievements at the table over the past 8 months. To Audrey Wallace an exotic pot plant in recognition of her unstinting support to the Group during her Leader's (me!) incapacity during this period and also her reliability in being on time to set up the tables each Wednesday.

Whilst the Group has grown exponentially over the past two years we are disappointed that since the commencement of the Beginners Bridge Group 2 years ago not one graduate has joined our elite band of duplicate bridgers?

Bob Kiss

## CLASSICAL MUSIC GROUP

This Group is "resting" for the summer but has been meeting weekly in San Miguel de Salinas regularly on Saturday afternoons. Interest has been encouragingly strong with an average attendance of about 12 members. Our music encompasses concertos, symphonies, string quartets, piano sonatas etc. We sometimes listen to an entire work, but always include one or two movements from others to whet the appetite for future listening.

Members are encouraged to nominate their particular favourites from our large collection of CDs etc, or even to present their own weekly programme.

For further information contact David Evans  
[noelevans@waitrose.com](mailto:noelevans@waitrose.com)

## CREATIVE WRITING GROUP

Just a short piece to say how happy I am to have such a bright, interesting and interested, group of people in my Creative Writing 'Workshop'. preferring it to 'class'. I learn plenty from the members who attend each month and hope they pick up a few tips from me.

Lovers all of words, we get great enjoyment from reading, writing poetry, and/or short stories, etc. Anything consisting of words, gets discussed or written about sooner or later.

Recently, we have written in the present and past tense to study the effect (the present having an immediacy that the past does not.). However, it is a little trickier, as it is all too easy to veer from the path. Married couple Natalie and Elliott Sampford both write well and are more than capable of handling any genre; as does Diane Pierrot, who has had several articles and short stories published.

Sue King is writing her autobiography, which we look forward to reading, and James Fitch kindly let us read his published autobiography recently. My husband and I found it most interesting as he has led a life and a half... Working as a cartographer in some harsh places: particularly many parched deserts of the world (where he often – miraculously – found refreshment) he had many adventures. It was a worthy read. I hope the group will continue on the same praiseworthy path.

Joy Lennick

## FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

Our monthly meetings start with member's family history problems where we all try to help each other. Sometimes a fresh pair of eyes can be invaluable in solving the whereabouts of an ancestor who may have "disappeared?". Each month we discuss a topic and bring along an item or a memory.

The topic for March was "A Treasured Possession" and old family bibles with their potted family trees were popular, as were many sentimental items. Interestingly the items brought were of little monetary value, very refreshing in today's materialistic society.

Our Education topic in April, saw us looking at an old village school, a landmine on a school in WW11 and from a member who is fortunate to have a father-in-law who never threw anything away, a set of General School Exam papers set by the University of London in 1928. I have shown two of them at the end to see how you get on. In today's exams of choosing from multiple answers I think you will agree that 16 year olds would find the standard difficult and to be fair so would the 60 plus age bracket!

In the spring we held two Workshops which are aimed at beginners and how to make use of sources on the Internet. Invariably we all go away having learnt something new. Many thanks to Lynda and Jenny for kindly hosting these meetings.

I personally think that May's meeting was the most interesting we have had so far. "A **Photograph and its story**" produced some fascinating snaps into lives of our members and ancestors.

Jenny showed the family in Spain where she had been an au pair, first learnt Spanish and fell in love with the country and the rest (as they say) is History.

Jim and Dorothy's ancestor was a Doctor who made a decision to enrol to be a Ship's Doctor on the Titanic and was unfortunately lost on that terrible voyage at a young age.

Lynda shared the photos of her Uncle and explained the story behind a newspaper cutting. He with several other young soldiers was killed in the troubles in the south of Ireland in the early 1900's.

I brought a photo of my 2 X Great Grandmother, my namesake Janet. She is dressed in her finery and it is hard to believe that she was born in 1830 and on the death of her first husband, together with her four children she captained a Barge on the Leeds & Liverpool canal.

My favourite story with its great photo of Sue & Tony is taken on board a splendid ship as they returned to the UK after living in South Africa for several years. One of their travelling companions was Nelson Mandela who they had the opportunity of conversing with as well as the photo which was taken with him.....Beat that, as they say!

Our final topic on 21st June will be "A **Special Place**". We will then meet as usual at 2p.m.on the third Tuesday of September at the Asturias Restaurant, Punta Prima and look forward to meeting friends old and new.

If you are interested in joining us please contact me on [janirenep@gmail.com](mailto:janirenep@gmail.com)

Time to get your thinking caps on!

#### **Question 1.**

Contrast the climates of Chile and Argentina and say how far the contrast can be traced to the influence of the Andean Chain.

#### **Question 2.**

For what reasons was the Triple Alliance formed in 1717 and what were its consequences?

Sorry but funds don't run to prizes.

Janet Pogson Family History Group Leader



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\* **NEW GROUP – WATCHING OPERA** \*  
\* The group will be held on alternate Thursdays, \*  
\* (alternating with Graham and David's Shakespeare \*  
\* group) at my house in La Marina Urbanisation, from \*  
\* 2.30 to 5 (ish). Exact start date will be decided later, \*  
\* but will be either the 1st or second week in October. \*  
\* We will start with something light – Verdi, Donizetti or \*  
\* Puccini and then if the group feels like watching a more \*  
\* challenging work, we can do that. \*  
\* I am by no means an expert on opera but I do enjoy \*  
\* watching and listening, have many recordings and some \*  
\* literature, more of which can be found on our good \*  
\* friend the internet – even the libretto of many well \*  
\* known works. The group is intended to provide an \*  
\* enjoyable experience both for the knowledgeable and the \*  
\* uninitiated. \*  
\* Marion Delacour [mariondelacour@hotmail.com](mailto:mariondelacour@hotmail.com) . \*  
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#### **SHAKESPEARE GROUP**

We have been meeting fortnightly on Thursday afternoons in San Miguel de Salinas but are now "resting" for the summer. I would like to recommence in October, but much depends upon the degree of interest from members. Although we have watched, and compared, various versions of a number of Shakespeare's tragedies and comedies, sometimes only two members have turned up. Consequently, unless I can expect a total of 6 members at any one time I feel I will not be able to continue with the Group.

For information etc contact Graham Evans - [noele-vans@waitrose.com](mailto:noele-vans@waitrose.com)

#### **SPANISH CONVERSATION GROUP**

As we get older, the phrase 'If you don't use it, you lose it', becomes more meaningful! Several members, who have been attending Spanish classes, have found that they are not getting as many opportunities as they would like to practice what they have learned.

If you count yourself among the above then two Spanish conversation groups will be starting in the first week of October. Monday at 10 30am in San Miguel de Salinas and Wednesday at 10 30am in Playa Flamenca, Torrevieja.

If you want to speak Spanish, no matter how slowly, please contact me –

Jean Logan [logan.jean1@gmail.com](mailto:logan.jean1@gmail.com)

# Torrevieja U3A 5th Anniversary Gala Evening

## 27th October 2011



\*This year we celebrate the 5th Anniversary of the formation of our U3A.

\*On Thursday 27th October there will not be a morning meeting at our usual venue, La Rustika (formerly Los Arcos).

\*Instead, by way of celebrating this milestone anniversary, U3A members are invited to attend a Gala Evening at the Palacio de la Musica in central Torrevieja.

\*The evening will commence at 7p.m with a cake and cava reception. Dress code is smart, evening style for the ladies and suit or jacket and trousers for the gentlemen. A tie is optional. The wearing of shorts is not permitted in any theatre in Torrevieja.

\*The British Consul in Alicante Mr Paul Rodwell has accepted our invitation to attend and will be the keynote speaker.

\*Invitations are also being sent to the new Mayor of Torrevieja Eduardo Dolón Sánchez and other Town Hall dignitaries.

\*Following the address by the British Consul the evening will continue with a concert performance by members of the Torrevieja Symphony Orchestra.

\*Attendance at the Gala Evening will be by ticket only and initially, for U3A Members only.

\*Tickets were available at the 26th May meeting and subject to availability will continue to be available at all meetings and only at these meetings, up to and including the September 29th 2011 meeting.

\*The Committee are asking you, the members, in order to secure your seat to make a commitment and pay a 5€ seat reservation fee. This will help us control the seating allocation which as you will understand, because of the restriction of seat numbers in the theatre, has to be strictly monitored.

\*In return for this commitment from you, I as your Chairman make a commitment to you, that after the event, this 5€ seat reservation fee will be returned to all who attend the Gala Evening, commencing from the November 2011 meeting.

\*The reservation process will continue until everyone who attended the Gala Evening has received their money back. If you so wish, the Treasurer has confirmed that this €5 can be carried over and deducted from your 2012 membership fee. The choice is yours.

\*You are asked to retain the larger portion of your ticket on the night, as that will be your receipt. No refunds can be given without this portion of your ticket.

\*If the evening is oversubscribed, a waiting list for members will be started.

\*Of course we are aware there may be some non-members who would wish to attend and a waiting list for those non-members will be started too. Then in the event that seats become available after all members have had an opportunity to reserve their seat, non-members will be contacted.

\*A seat reservation fee of 5€ is also required from those whose names are placed on the waiting lists.

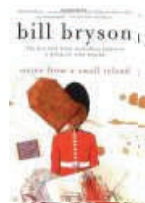
\*If you obtain a ticket and are then unable to attend the event then please advise us so that your place may be released to somebody on the waiting list.

I am sure this will be a night to remember and an important milestone in the history of our U3A. I strongly recommend you plan to obtain your ticket/s at one of the forthcoming meetings throughout the summer. The meeting dates are 30th June, 28th July and 25th August.

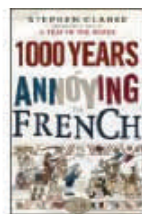
We do have a very small number of members who do not have access to the Internet. If you know someone who this applies to, may I ask you to kindly inform them of this exciting event and the procedure by which they may obtain a ticket.

Bob Hill            Chairman

## Featured Group article for Summer newsletter



### LITERATURE GROUP



I'm Jenny Bassett and I lead the Reading Group which meets every month in Punta Prima. We started small some **4 years** ago but have gone from strength to strength and we now have 14 members (a bit of a squeeze but we manage).

We all love reading and, as you can imagine, there are always some interesting opinions to be heard. Sometimes the discussions are short, because everyone loved the book (or hated it), but more often than not there is a lot of discussion, which sometimes gets a bit heated!! Most of the time the book being reviewed triggers a lot of discussion about other topics.

For example, this year we read Dark Star Safari by Paul Theroux and, whilst most of us didn't like his style, the book generated a lot of discussion about the state of Africa, the reasons for it being in such a position and the role of Aid Agencies. We don't always agree with each other but that's half the fun of being in a reading group.



Each year in May members of the group recommend books to be considered for the next year's reading list. We had over 25 on the list this year which had to be cut down to our 12. We always try to include a Spanish author, a Science Fiction/Fantasy book, a biography/autobiography, a non-fiction and a travel book. Our list is often quite difficult to cut down, so as Group Leader I put a 10 euro limit on the books and this helps with our selection.

We have now chosen our list for 2011-2012 and we start in August. Books chosen include:- The Return, Victoria Hislop; Cathedral of the Sea, Ildefonso Falcones; Notes from a Small Island, Bill Bryson and The immortal life of Henrietta Lacks, Rebecca Skloot and 1000 years of annoying the French, Stephen Clarke.

Because the group is so popular I have had to close it to new members at the moment. But for all you budding Reading Group members, Maureen Moffatt is starting another reading group in the autumn so please get in touch with her (contact details on the website) if you are interested in joining a Reading Group.

Happy reading everyone.

Jenny Bassett [jennybassett@aol.com](mailto:jennybassett@aol.com)

## Pearls of Wisdom

*Summer afternoon - summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language. ~ Henry James*

*Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability. ~ Sam Keen*

*A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows.-- St. Francis of Assisi*

## SPANISH FOR BEGINNERS



This year's students have successfully completed the course and a great deal of revision as well, my congratulations to them all. I hope they get the opportunity to practice with some Spanish friends or neighbours, as that is the only way to build confidence and improve vocabulary. Of course they can also sign up for the conversation classes being organised by Jean Logan, the ideal next step.

I am looking for a volunteer to run the 2011/2012 course as I have the opportunity to go on an extended vacation in 2012 and feel it would be unfair to stop mid-stream. There has already been a lot of interest, so we need to try to keep this group going. It would start in September or October (to suit your own commitments); it is great fun; you get to know a bunch of very nice people who come to you for the weekly classes and there is no lesson preparation, as we just follow the Michel Thomas CDs (which will be provided) and the students are given transcripts by e-mail, couldn't be easier!. Please let me know if you are interested.

Penny Godfrey [pennygodfrey0502@hotmail.com](mailto:pennygodfrey0502@hotmail.com)

## WALKING GROUP REPORT



In our absence the early spring-time walks ended with Geoff and Pat Crane leading the group on a favourite route of ours, around the El Pinet dunes and skirting the La Marina salt lakes.

Beginning and ending at the beautiful beach, with a welcome refreshment stop en route, the walk was enjoyed by all who took part.

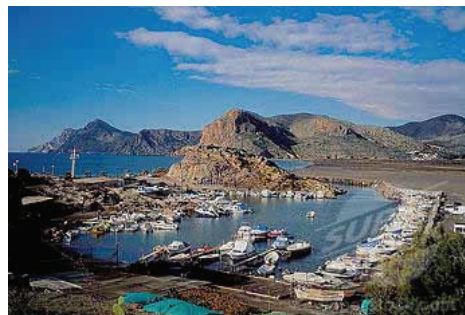
The April walk heralded the second phase of the spring schedule. The walk began near the La Mata Parque Natural de la Lagunas. The weather was perfect and upon entering the Parque itself we saw numerous wild flowers as the group made its way towards the lake. The birds were in full song as we progressed along the sandy track and skirted the shore line, making our way to the picnic spot furnished with tables and benches.



The track then progressed up the steep incline known locally as Pigeon Loft Hill. The climb afforded us far reaching views over La Mata and Guardamar, with glimpses of both the lake and the sea.



In May we met at the tiny fishing harbour of Playa Lastre near Portman. On the edge of the Calblanque Natural Park, this area with its breathtaking scenery, will hopefully soon see a massive project begin to remove the mining waste silts from the magnificent bay and return it to its former glory. The route started on the narrow tarmac road before entering into the welcome shade of the pine trees. Initially the terrain was very challenging but eventually levelled out. The view back to the starting point far below us was amazing.



Continuing through a flower filled valley with wild lavender perfuming the air, the scenery changed to wide panoramic views of the surrounding hills before we ascended into the Baranca de Moros and onto the Calzado Romano (Roman road) now no more than a stony track.

There are no walks planned for June, July or August as it is not sensible to embark on a walk when it is so hot. Our next walk will be on Saturday 24th September. Details and directions will be emailed to Walking Group members in due course.

Bob and Barbara Hill      Walking Group Leaders

## SPANISH LIFE & CULTURE

The group has continued to discuss topics on food and drink, the legacy of the invaders, Spring fiestas, and aspects of daily life. The group has now finished until October.

In May the group had an evening visit to Crevillente where



members enjoyed a short walk around the town, followed by visits to an exhibition of photos from the Moors & Christians fiesta 2010, and the Moors & Christians museum with its exhibition of costumes.

An interlude took place in the headquarters of the Christian group, Almogávares, who offered refreshment. The members



were then given a conducted tour of the church, followed by a visit to the Semana Santa museum.



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## TRAVEL

*Well we've been on two tremendous trips this spring and my thanks go to all of you who come on as many of the trips as you can and support our efforts.*

In late March we visited Onda and Segunto, a trip that would not have occurred to us had we not received a call from the Tile Museum in Onda, but we are so glad we went. In just two days we planned to visit some caves, the tile museum, the castle in Onda and the Roman Amphitheatre and castle ruins in Sagunto.

At the eleventh hour the cave trip was cancelled as the caves were flooded! Help! What can you find to fill the gap with less than 24 hours to go before departure? Luckily there was a monastery en route and they were able to take a late booking and saved the day.

The tile museum was fascinating, with a special exhibition of English tiles as well as all the local ones dating back many centuries.

In May a smaller group of us undertook a four day trip to Cordoba and Granada. Having never been to Cordoba before I was overwhelmed by the beauty of the old part of the town, the entrance via the Roman Bridge across the Guadalquivir River is majestic and the Mezquita rises imposingly above it all.

The main reason for going at this time of year was to see the Patios. Private patios full of flowers in every conceivable type of container and covering every inch of space, be it floor or wall, are opened to the public, although their criteria is to win a coveted prize in the competition for best patio, the public just enjoy the flowers and the ingenuity of the owners.

We had a wonderful driver and on the last morning he took us out of town to see the ruins of an Arab town, another remarkable site.

In Granada we went to a flamenco show on our first evening, which Vivien organised for us. The next day some of us visited The Alhambra, whilst Vivien took the rest of the group to the Albaicín district of the city. A very busy 24 hours and my thanks go to Vivien for all her help.

*Many photographs from the trips can be seen on the web site.*

*I hope you have enjoyed reading about the places we visited and that you will be able to join us next time.*

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## SPANISH HISTORY

We are steadily proceeding through the vast subject that is Spanish History. We started Spain's history back in 1.8 million BC and have now reached the 17th Century. On the way we have met some very interesting characters - El Cid, Hannibal, Augustus - and cultures, my personal favourite still being the Bell Beaker People! Some of the key things we have witnessed so far include the Celts, Visigoths and Romans in the Peninsula, the rise of the Inquisition and its influence and the defeat of the Spanish Armada.

With another 300 years to go before we reach the end of our tour, we are sure to meet a lot more interesting characters on the way, as we continue along the timeline of Spanish History.

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