



2016 GENERAL MEETING FRIDAY 19TH FEBRUARY

GROUP REPORTS

1. Art Appreciation (Janice Galloway)

The Art Appreciation group meets at two locations, El Morche on the third Wednesday of the month and Canillas de Albaida on the second Wednesday, both meetings start at 11am. I have 30 people on my mailing list and normally we get about 10-15 people at both locations with 20 people attending the last few trips. The trips are joint for the two groups.

Our format is a short introduction, followed by a DVD and then a lively discussion. Over the last six months we have explored Russian Art. Our basis was the videos by Andrew Graham Dixon. I spoke to Andrew at the Edinburgh Festival and our group has his permission to use any of his material. He was very impressed by our group and the ethos we uphold. Thanks for the Support, Andrew Graham Dixon.

In December, we had a guided tour in English to the Russian collection in Malaga. This trip was well attended and the guide was very informative. It rounded off the series of videos on Russian Art that we had watched, during the autumn. Due to the fact, that the group had previously visited the collection we were all aware of the knowledge we had gained. Normally a guided tour cost 20 Euros per person, but because we were U3A and I had booked the trip in advance the fee was waived. Thanks to the Education Unit of the Russian Collection, Malaga for their support.

In January, we had a trip to Granada to visit the **Rodriguez Acosta Foundation** in Granada. This trip was the first time we had hired a bus. It was a fantastic success. Thanks to Gordon and Sue Kind for arranging this wonderful trip. The feedback from this trip was very positive. The collection of Spanish Art was a real treasure.

In February, Janice lead a talk on Kandinsky titled "A Journey into Abstraction". The aim of this talk was to explore Kandinsky's journey into abstraction whilst traveling your own journey. Kandinsky is known as the Father of Abstraction and is attributed with painting the first abstract canvas. The feedback was positive and everyone progressed on their understanding of abstraction.

Future plans are:

- March. The secrets of the Mona Lisa by Andrew Graham Dixon
- April. Visit to Sculpture Gardens at Al Munecar
- May Members talk. Possibly Valasquez.
- June Visit to Malaga. Location to be decided depending on exhibitions available.
- The schedule for next year is under construction.

Everyone is welcome.



2. Walking Group (Maggie and Gerry Silwood)

We currently have 32 people on the list but average between 8 to 12 regular walkers plus dogs. Visitors are always welcome.

We have had 3 walks since September, the first being to the National park of the Sierra Almirallas behind the caves in Nerja and October's was along the paseo and through the tunnels at Rincon de la Victoria. November's was cancelled and December's fell on Christmas Day and we didn't have chance to rearrange it.

Our last walk in January was to the Buddhist stupa at El Trapiche and February's will be to the nature reserve by the Rio Guadalhorca, near Malaga.

We are a sociable group and always enjoy lunch or tapas after in a local bar close to the walk.

The walks are normally held on the 4th Friday of the month and meeting places vary.

They are usually between 2 to 3 hours duration and all you need is a reasonable level of fitness, some suitable shoes and enthusiasm.

We look forward to welcoming new walkers.

3. Meditation Groups (Helen)

Torrox 11.00 every 1st and 3rd Thursday

Competa 16.00 every 2nd and 4th Wednesday

Both groups have a good attendance, meetings usually last about an hour, we listen to different types of Meditation from Visualisation, affirmations and music only, they last about 40 minutes and then discuss the CD and have a chat.

4. Petanque Canillas de Albaida (David Wolfe)

We meet every Thursday at 1030 at the old football pitch at the top of the village.

We are a friendly group of mainly expats who meet to enjoy the game,

we welcome new members and visitors and will ensure that you are made to feel welcome. We do have spare balls and they will be available to visitors to use.

This year we hope to be able to arrange games with other villages or clubs

5. Scrabble (Maggie Gardner)

Still going strong with currently 15 members (one has returned to the UK). Monthly attendance averages 10 members, hopefully this will improve once the warmer weather comes.



6. Photography (Marianne Cottier-Brown)

The Photography group continues to flourish, with new and experienced members joining our monthly meetings. Despite many members not being able to attend every meeting, we regularly have 8 to 10 attendees.

We get together on the last Wednesday of each month, with alternate months being a photo-shoot around the local area.

Our permanent photography exhibition continues at Gastrobar Las Perlas, with great success and encouragement from the owners. Our exhibits there are changed every six weeks.

We are hoping to hold an indoor photography studio day in the coming months, along with learning how to make the best use of our camera equipment. We also have plans to practice our night photography as well as photo-shoots at the old railway tunnels in Rincón de la Victoria, and the Buddhist Stupa near Vélez-Málaga.

We are a friendly and supportive group, keen to help each other to improve our photography, whatever our individual levels of expertise.

7. Mahjong (Maggie Gardner)

Sadly this group has not taken off, due to the lack of local interest; so play has been suspended for the time being.

8. Petanque (Torre del Mar, Rolland Gillett)

One of our longest running groups, Petanque at Torre del Mar continues to be popular and long may it be so.

We play on the area just along the road from the blue and white lighthouse in Torre del Mar every Monday from 3pm with the exception of bad weather conditions and a summer break of July and August when there are lots of tourists and no parking!

If you have never played and would like to have a go - just turn up and I can lend you boules. We stick to the basic rules but have good fun doing so!

9. Maria Zambrano College (Torre del Mar, Rolland Gillett)

Part of the College in Torre del Mar concentrates on working towards securing positions in the hospitality/tourism world. These students are generally older than the normal college students and many of them have some English as a second language. Our members volunteer their time to attend and assist the teachers in some of their lessons. Please email to u3a.spanishstudents@gmail.com if you would like to know more.



10. Art/Painting (Rolland Gillett)

Following the sad death of our group leader Beryl, we are keen to keep the group going and would welcome new members. Members use a variety of mediums - watercolours, Pastels etc. We meet at Casa Matilde, Benajafe. This is a beachside Cafe/Restaurant just off the main coast road eastwards from Torre del Mar, turn left at the roundabout off the main road after passing the BENAJARAFE sign. We meet every other week on Wednesday mornings at 11am.

11. Singing for Pleasure (Linda Henbest)

Meets: 11am first Monday of the month, at Parquesol Restaurant, El Morche.

If you enjoy singing and would like to sing with others in a non threatening atmosphere this is the one for you. The choice of songs are many and varied and there is always an opportunity to include your favourites.

We are a very friendly group of men and women who all sing together (no parts) and who come together with the aim of having a couple of enjoyable hours. Of late, we have introduced a couple of Spanish songs but on the whole we sing in English - anything and everything.

People often say they can't sing but in truth everybody can sing and in a relaxed atmosphere it is great fun. Singing promotes a feeling of well-being. People in the singing group quite often comment how much happier they feel in the afternoon having been singing in the morning and how they leave the session with a spring in their step.

If this sounds up your street, do come and give singing with us a try. You will be most welcome.

12. Cycling (Vernon Wheatcroft)

This has continued to ride every two weeks throughout the year as we had very few interruptions for weather.

However, the numbers did not increase with any new members and was really only supported by two couples. Going forward I will continue to organise the rides but I point out that both of the couples will be spending more time away from the Costa Del Sol during 2016. So we are just hoping for new members.

13. Classical Music Exploration – James Tayler/Katherine Paterson

The Classical Music group continues to meet on the second Friday of the month at 11am in the room above the bar called Rincon de Mateo in Canillas de Albaida, our thanks to Antonio for the use of this room.

James introduces us to some wonderful music each meeting, with a different theme each time. February's meeting was all about "The Overture" and other short pieces, for example. Next month we will learn about the life and music of Dvorjak. There are always some well known pieces plus some that are rarely heard and James' breadth of knowledge is phenomenal.



14. Munch Bunch Norma and Maggie Silwood)

We continue to enjoy gathering U3A members to the monthly Munch Bunch food celebrations.

For example in 2015 we enjoyed two outings in Nerja; one Japanese, one continental cuisine at Rick's Cafe; several venues in Torrox such as Guadalupe Restaurant and Las Palmeras right on the beach. We took the summer off as last year, summers months saw a poor attendance. The end of the year took us to Benajafate to the Castillo del Marques and in December a few but earnest members shared an intimate pot luck at our home including reminiscences from our childhood holidays celebrations.

We generally meet the 3rd Friday of the month even though last month we started the year with a bang and shared a lovely evening dinner at El Descorche, right on the Torrox Promenade which included a Flamenco show. A wonderful evening all around. The staff, entertainment and food excelled to the delight of the 20 U3A members who attended.

Our main challenge continues to convince members to share in the planning of the outings as it puts a heavy burden on Maggie and myself to be a step ahead of each calendar month. Should you have any suggestions, we would appreciate your input.

15. Polymer Clay (Chris Hobbs)

Polymer Clay dates back to the 1930s when it was first invented in the USA. In the last 10 years in particular it has become very popular in Europe. It's an interesting medium that encourages creativity and experimentation. It requires very little specialised equipment and is rewarding for both beginners and the more experienced. Because polymer is a relatively young medium, new ways of using and developing it are always being discovered and often shared freely online.

This is the second year of the Polymer Clay group. It meets every two weeks at the Parquesol Restaurant in El Morche. The meeting starts at 11am. We have a large mailing list from which we usually get between 9 and 12 members at meetings.

At present we are reaching the end of an introductory beginners course. This is a small hands on group where ideas are freely shared and experiment is encouraged. There is always help available, but the essence is sharing knowledge and hands on experience. Each member has their own equipment. However, we will lend you materials for a few weeks to get you started. The list of equipment required is available from the group leader.

So far we have learnt to make small items of jewellery. We have also created embossed mirrors, photo frames, boxes and faux gemstones.

Everyone welcome.



16. Discussion (Terry Brady)

The group continues to thrive on the basis of a monthly meeting held at 11.00 a.m. on the second Friday in each month at Casa Matilde Restaurant, Benajarafe. Currently between 6 to 12 members spend a pleasant 2 hours by the sea putting the world to rights.

Subject matters, (which are predetermined), include light observations on life as well as the heavier serious aspects of current issues of the moment.

For example, as a taster, on February 12th we will expect to discuss:

- The Monarchy: has it any place in a modern democracy?
- Modern Art: do you really understand or appreciate it? Is it right to spend public money on it?
- Sharia Law: could we see the day when it can either replace British Law or be incorporated within British Law?
- Spanish General Election: have the parties involved managed to agree on the formation of a new government or can we expect a fresh election later this year?
- Do you believe in reincarnation after death? If so, in what form would you hope to be reincarnated at some time in the future?
- Is it the time to delve into the foreign aid budget to undertake projects to prevent a reoccurrence of the flooding in Britain?
- In the future, any member of the U3A is welcome to attend: could that be include you?

17. Spanish History (Patricia Shaw)

We have had a very successful year with many excellent talks throughout 2015 and ending with our excellent Christmas lunch at TK's as usual. So far we have 40 in the group although they do not always attend each meeting. We have lost a few, but also gained a few.

Andrew (Henbest), of course always comes up with something, and he has taken us through the "Discovery of the Americas" then "The Inquisition", "The life of Cervantes" and his latest talk was on "El Cid".

Norma has also been giving talks on her childhood in France after her parents fled Spain during the civil war. A series of talks called "From Darkness to Lightness".

John and Patsie have given three excellent talks on the "Spanish Civil War", very well researched and presented and extremely interesting.

Part 1 was on the "The Causes of the Civil war" and Patsie followed with a talk on the English woman Priscilla Scott Ellis which was then followed by Andrew giving a talk on the "Life of Cevantes" covering the period when he was held in captivity in Algiers.

Part 2 by John Daniell's was "The Course of the Civil War" was followed by Patsie giving a talk on Robert Capa the famous photographer.



Part 3 of Johns talks was "The Aftermath of the Civil War" and the Franco Years" with Patsie retelling stories of "The years of Hunger" as told to them by a neighbour Manuel who lived through these times. We also had an excellent talk by Maggie on the "History of Flamenco".

I am, as members know following the route of History down through the ages and my last talk was on the "Visigoths", my next talk will be on the Arabs who were here over a period of 700 years.

We also have had some very good outings and one of these was to the Motor Museum; a must for anyone visiting Malaga, and our latest trip was a very enjoyable trip to the Glass museum recently. We had a guided tour by the owner of the museum with whom we all fell in love with and who made it very interesting. Thank you Andrew for that suggestion as well as the one for the Motor Museum.

We are looking forward to having a tour around Torrox, with two lovely Spanish ladies (friends of Alan's) giving the history as we walk around and Alan will translate for us. We have visited the village before with Moy acting as our guide which we all enjoyed and we discovered all sorts of hidden little alley ways which we would never have known about if Moy had not been with us.

After the visit around Torrox we will go to the Pena Sevillana which is owned by Alan's Spanish friend Carmen and enjoy a very economical meal!

Alan is also going to bring along an ex mule driver who is 90 years young to talk informally about his life in the village which should be absolutely fascinating. Again Alan will translate for us.

Future talks will include two talks by Roger Martanez on the Peninsular Wars, Angie, I gather has something in the "pipe line" and I shall be continuing my talks on the Arabs, so we have plenty to look forward to.

However We are also looking for more people to give talks. because without people taking the time read and give talks the Spanish History Group would not exist. I do understand that it is not everyone's "cup of tea" and it can be very nerve wracking, but we are with you all the way.

Sue, who is our Librarian has updated the book list with a few more books. Thank you Sue! New books will be ordered later in the year as well as the "Voice Enhancer" that I have been given the authority to purchase to make hearing easier.



18. MAHJONG ON THE COAST (Richard Jones)

The Mahjong Group meets every week all year round! It keeps active throughout the summer months and in 2015 there were even games in progress during the mornings of Xmas Eve and New Year's Eve. You've guessed it! We are hooked!

On the second and fourth Thursday's in the the month we play from 10.30am at Bar Restaurant Piscis on the promenade at Algarrobo Costa. We normally finish at about 1.00pm. On the first, third and any fifth Thursdays in the month we play in Benajafe at Bar Restaurant El Rinconcillo - again, a location very easy to find along the coast road.

The game sounds and looks complicated but isn't - and newcomers are normally able to join in to play at a table (of up to four players) after just a short private introduction to the game. If you enjoy playing card games like gin rummy you are already half way to playing Mahjong! But all you need really is to enjoy playing games. Come and get hooked! You'll have a lot of fun and in no time at all you'll be suggesting we play to different rules!

You can contact us at any time to talk about coming along. Just drop a line by email to jorichjones@hotmail.com giving us your telephone number and we will be pleased to get in touch with you for a chat!