

Chairman's Report – September 2008

Welcome back to the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness (or words to that effect). I am writing this in August, ready for the beginning of the new season in September. While I have been more or less out of action since the May meeting at Los Alcos, members have dispersed to all points of the globe, and it has not been possible to contact some of them for updates. Entirely my fault, so I apologise if this Newsletter is less than comprehensive. For the same reason, there will be no illustrations in this edition.

I think we can all agree that the move to Los Arcos has been a great success. Our numbers are growing - we now have 173 members - as are the number of activity groups. The latest additions, Play Reading, Life Coaching Spanish for Beginners and Spanish History, add to the great variety of subjects available. We think, however, that the Music and Theatre Visits group should be renamed, since we have not found it possible to arrange visits. The Music and Theatre Notice Board would be a better description. We are still looking for a leader for the Spanish Art group. Anyone interested?

However, I must add that with this growth comes more work, and we need helpers to share the load. For a start we need someone to act as liaison with the website. To prevent spammers and other unauthorised users from getting stuff onto our website (and believe me, they try) we agreed with our Webmaster, Andy, that he would take amendments only from me. That means that every addition or change is given first to me and then I pass it to Andy. So if I'm not around the website gets out of date very quickly. Would someone like to take over that role. It's all done by email, and involves a few hours a week. So if you are on the net and have a little time for some light duties, please let me know.

There is also a vacancy for an editor for the Newsletter, preferably with greater knowledge of layout and illustrations than I have. There's no hurry - I can carry on until someone comes along, but if any of you would like to have a go, please let me know. You spend about three months gathering and storing information as it comes along, and then a week or so turning it into the Newsletter.

We also need back-ups for the members of the Committee. All of us visit UK from time to time, and when there is nobody here to mind the shop, continuity is lost. The same is true of activity groups, some of which could continue despite the leader being away. So contact any committee member or your group leader to see if they want help, and if so, muck in.

So, welcome to the new season, and have a great time. If you don't enjoy it, it's your fault.

Bridge

Bob Kiss writes:

The Bridge section continues to thrive and from January to April there were three or four tables, 12 to 16 players, regularly each week. Since May numbers have dropped due mainly to those returning to the UK and Ireland for the Summer. We have however managed one or two tables and will continue through the Summer, players and weather permitting.

Derek Rush our retired English Bridge Union tutor has been a great inspiration to many members, particularly the new players and improvers, teaching bidding and card play. We continue to meet at the Asturias restaurant Playa Flamenco on Wednesdays from 10.00 to 12.30 and look forward to new members who wish to learn Bridge and improvers who enjoy a social couple of hours – no pressure!

Bob Kiss

Armchair Travel

Jean Cook writes:

We begin again on the second Tuesday in October, at our winter 'home' in Camping Florantilles, with a video and photographs of wildlife reserves in South Africa.

In November Keith and Gill Jones will be hosting the meeting at their home, with Keith's magnificent DVD of China.

I have only the first two meetings planned in the autumn, so if any member feels able to offer a talk, or a presentation, or discussion, I would love to hear from you. We have had a very varied programme to date, and not just items about far-flung places. We are all interested to hear about people's experiences, ranging from day trips, or short breaks, at home or abroad, to longer travels, and even living in different countries.

At the moment our group is full, but, as with all groups, members come and go, so if you are interested, please give me your contact details. If you are willing to lead a group, we may be able to start a second one. If not, then can I contact you when a space becomes available

Jean Cook



Discussion Group

Jean Wilson writes:

Following Jane Cronin's information about percentages of different nationalities on the Costa Blanca, the discussion group looked at the ramifications of immigration as a world-wide phenomenon. The reasons of course are many and we were reminded that this has happened again and again throughout history.

The loss of cultural identity, changing values and expectations, language difficulties, age variations, rising crime, resurgence of diseases (T.B., leprosy, hepatitis, AIDS) and split loyalties are a few of the considerations discussed.

Jean Wilson

Food

Many of you will be unaware that Laurie Winstanley has been in hospital, having been diagnosed with a brain tumour. After successful surgery she is now home, and is expected to make a full recovery.

We all wish her well, and look forward to seeing her at future meetings very soon.

Genealogy

The Genealogy class resumes on Tuesday 21st October at 2.30 at Jean Law's apartment.

Jean Law

Holistic Health

Mike Law writes:

The last meeting of the Holistic health group took place at the Rocajuna Bar on Thursday 8th May at 10.30 am. 12 members attended for a very interesting presentation by Serena Morris a Shiatsu practitioner from Campoamor. Her presentation and demonstration were so good that the meeting overran. She was assisted by Fiona Harlowe a Holistic skin care specialist, so we had two for the price of one.

Next meetings are: 9th October, Reiki, theory and treatments, 13th November, Magnetic Energies, 11th December, speaker to be decided.

Mike Law

Life Coaching

A new subject for us.

Migel Jayasinghe has tried to contact those who expressed an interest in Life Coaching at he last meeting. Unfortunately, most of them seem to be away, so Migeligel will contact them at the next meeting, September 25th .

Migel Jayasinghe

Literature 2

David Evans writes:

Books are chosen to give a diversity of topics, as can be seen from the selection for this year.

The 'difficult' book is Salman Rushdie's The Ground Beneath her Feet, the travel book is The Great Railway Bazaar by Paul Theroux, and the classic is Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte. The other novels are The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox by Maggie O'Farrell, The Island by Victoria Hislop, and Half Broken Things by Morag Joss.

Meetings take place in David Evans' apartment in San Miguel at 10.30 on the first Friday of every month. New members are welcome, and the first book to be discussed will be the Rushdie.

David Evans

Pilates

Maureen Moffatt will resume her Pilates classes on Monday 6th October at 1.30 in the Asturias. Further dates are 6th 13th and 20th October and 3rd November until 8th December. Maureen is thinking of changing the name of the class since it also includes basic stretching and toning sessions. She says she will contact members of the class individually before classes start.
Maureen Moffatt

Music & Theatre Notice Board

Graham Evans writes:

Although September is almost upon us, the cultural web sites of Alicante and Orihuela do not provide any programme details beyond June 2008! The Torrevieja web site tempts the visitor to view programmes for July, August & September but does not respond when any specific month is clicked! I did manage to obtain a brief reference to a Spanish play being presented there on 28 September entitled "How to Make a Man Absolutely Wretched" (my translation) but there is no indication of the theatre company involved or the playwright.

However, dear old Murcia comes up trumps (www.auditoriomurcia.org). Between now and February visiting orchestras include:

Finish Radio Symphony Orchestra (31 October) Mozart & Sibelius;

Murcia Symphony Orchestra (14 November) Beethoven Bizet; (12 December) Liszt & Bruckner; (16 January) Smetena & Martinu [all having very good seat prices];

Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Roger Norrington (20 November) Haydn & Mahler;

Academy of Ancient Music (17 December), Bach Christmas Oratorio;

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (21 January) Schumann & Vaughan Williams

Surprisingly, I could find no theatre, chamber music, flamenco or vocal recitals in the Murcia venues between now and April 2009.

But for dance enthusiasts there are to be visits in the new year by the Eifman Ballet, from Russia; Leipzig Ballet; and Houston Ballet. Murcia Dance Company will also be appearing.

Full details of the particular programmes, locations and prices are all on the Murcia web site

Psychology

Jean Wilson writes:

1.Neuro-linguistic Programming has become well known in those areas whereby for some reason or other a person wishes to change their responses to certain experiences, such as flying, fear of open spaces, shyness, smoking, blushing, road rage, etc. This session dealt with the power of persistent positive language using positive affirmations which can help in the transformation of perception and its responses.

2.Brain chemistry dealt with the ways different types of chemicals have an effect on behaviour as a person passes through the various stages of growth to maturity, the adrenaline high of adolescence, the dopamine feel-good chemical brought about by hedonistic behaviour, smoking, drugs and ego satisfying self esteem needs, to chemicals such as oxytocin which comes into play after childbirth, which reinforces bonding responses.

3.The uses and abuses of subliminal persuasion. The three main concerns were the use of techniques to influence ideas and attitudes for marketing power and religious and political control.

Some kinds of fanaticism are developed in this way, plus the use of N.L.P. The techniques have become highly sophisticated especially now that world wide communication is available to the majority of people.

October meetings commence on the 1st Monday of the month at the Water Tower on the 332, at 10.30.

Jean Wilson

Walking Group

Bob and Barbara Hill report on their latest walk:

GUARDAMAR del SEGURA

14 JUNE 2008

This was our last walk of the season and we were blessed with blue skies and, most importantly, a breeze. Seventeen members left the entrance to Reina Sofia Parque, Guardamar and commenced a circular walk lasting some three hours, which included a well-deserved cafe/bar stop at the marina.

The walk embraced the park itself, where we saw peacocks strutting around and a few turtles in the newly refurbished ponds. We sighted our first red squirrel here, and then spotted more as the walk progressed.

On to the beach and past the higgledy-piggledy cottages that line this section of the beautiful sands leading to the dunes. From the dunes we walked to the end of the breakwater which some say is reminiscent of the famous Cob at Lyme Regis in Devon. From here we marvelled at the spectacular views stretching from Gran Alicant right round to La Mata. A truly stunning bay.

After refreshments at the marina café/lbar, we entered the Parque Alfonso XIII, which offered shade under the pine trees as we walked towards the historically interesting Viveros Forestal. This is effectively the nursery for the many species of plants that are raised and continually planted on the dunes to arrest their encroachment on the town.

At this point, in line with U3A principles, some of our members who had recently visited this location as part of the tourist train ride around Guardamar, were able to impart to us some very interesting facts about this plant raising and planting activity, plus historical facts about Guardamar itself.

From this point we continued on through the leafy pathways of the parque which has been left in its natural state, and arrived back at our cars in time for members to wander along the sea front and find a restaurant for a welcome drink and lunch.

We have had some excellent speakers this year, thanks in a large part to the efforts of Lynda Kiss initiating the contacts in the early days. I am confident that, in the new 'term' beginning in September, this trend will continue and we are going to enjoy the speakers to come. All being well, they are as follows:

- Sept.25.** Bill Singleton, leader of the Vega Baja Band, will be talking on his experiences in the world of industrial espionage.
- Oct.30.** Phillip Bruce, who leads tours around Cartagena. His talk is entitled "Cartagena – Home of Hannibal".
- Nov.27.** David Hudson, from the Torrevieja Classic Car Club
Subject: Safe driving in Spain.
- Dec.16.** Our Christmas lunch with musical entertainment, organised by Jean and Mike Law.
- Jan.29.2009** Member, Grahame Evans, will be giving us an insight into the life and work of Haydn, with accompanying music.
- Feb.26.** A new member, Geoff Crane, will tell us about his journey from P.E.teacher to Headteacher of a 2,000-strong comprehensive school.

I hope this has whetted your appetites, and look forward to seeing you at the monthly meetings. At this point I should like to thank all those members who have given me suggestions for speakers, or offered to give a talk themselves. Please do not be offended if I haven't as yet come back to you. I appreciate and value each one, but having to try to balance the programme takes quite a bit of time, and I have been given lots of suggestions. Please keep them coming! Many thanks.

Jean Cook Tel: 620 705 958
