

CHAIRMANS REPORT MARCH 2010

Our Annual General Meeting (A.G.M) was held in January. There was a high attendance of members to hear the reports from the Treasurer, Secretary and Acting Chairman and to participate in the election of Officers. With unanimous votes Bob Cook was re-elected Treasurer, Sheila Rolt was re-elected Secretary and I was elected Chairman. Two new Committee members were elected and welcomed to the team, Sue Kenyon, who now takes on the role of Groups Co-ordinator and Geoff Crane who takes over from Maggie Oldfield as Membership Secretary.

Following the A.G.M the very first Groups Exhibition was opened. There was a high level of interest at all the tables as members and guests learnt all about the activities of the groups from the Group Leaders. The Tai Chi, Play reading and Shakespeare Appreciation groups gave interesting and entertaining presentations. The whole event was a great success and 23 new members were enrolled. My thanks to Mike Law for all his hard work in organising the exhibition, and of course to all the Group Leaders for their time and effort.

In February we received the news that our Articles of Association had finally been approved by the Valencian authorities. This means we are now a legally approved Association. Four years ago Lynda Kiss had the germ of an idea to launch a U3A in our area. Lynda became our first Chair and worked tirelessly together with her husband Bob to begin the building block process that has led to our current growth and success.

Now with 28 groups operating there is a huge amount for members to participate in. Check out the website www.u3atorrevieja.com for information on existing groups and new groups as they are launched throughout the year. We are always interested to hear from members who have the interest and enthusiasm to develop a new group. There are Guidance notes to assist in the setting up and running a group. Please contact myself or Sue Kenyon at iansuekenyon@gmail.co for information.

The range of travel opportunities continues to expand and information can be obtained from U3A Travel Co-ordinator at pennygodfrey0502@hotmail.com. We hope to welcome you all to our summer social mornings that will take place again this year on the last Thursday of June, July and August at Los Arcos restaurant. Read the report on Page 5 by Jean Law: Social Organiser. The social mornings which were very popular last year, are open to all and are a great opportunity to make new friends and to find out more about our U3A.

The second Group Leaders meeting also took place in February. These meetings are designed to strengthen the link between the Groups Leaders and the Committee and have proved enlightening and positive.

I continue to stand in awe of all the time and effort that is voluntarily given by Group Leaders in order to provide members with opportunities to pursue and develop their interests.

The Committee said its sad farewells to U3A member Jean Wilson at a luncheon on 14th March hosted by David and Graham Evans. Jean and her husband Peter are moving to live near their family in England. Jean has been involved with Torrevieja U3A since its inception and served on the Committee holding the post of Deputy Chair under the Chairmanship of David Evans. Many members will of course remember Jean as the Leader of both the popular Psychology and Discussion groups. I am grateful to the members who have now taken on the running of both of those groups.



And, finally another goodbye, this time to Maggie Oldfield who is leaving the Committee after two years of successful management of the demanding and vitally important role of U3A Membership Secretary. We wish Maggie every success for the future. There will be an opportunity to say thank you and farewell to Maggie at a later date.

On a personal note I hope to see many of you in Torrevieja during the nightly Semana Santa Easter processions. Together with other U3A members I will be taking part again as an International Costalero helping to carry shoulder high the paso of Jesus praying in the Garden of Olives

I spoke about my experience as a Costalero at our May meeting last year. Look out for the men in green shirts, and the ladies involved, on Monday 29th March and Good Friday 2nd April. This latter procession usually lasts for over four hours as all fourteen pasos take part. After weeks of practice we are all raring to go.

The Committee hopes that you enjoy your involvement with Torrevieja U3A. We continue to work to fulfil your expectations and really do appreciate receiving your feedback.

Chairman.

TREASURERS REPORT

While I am thinking spring has arrived, the rains and winds return, the heating is turned back on and I return to my little study. This is the only good point, I am not missing the sun while working on the Club accounts!

We have received a good income from the raffle, thanks to Jeremy and Angela Meyrick-Jones. The effort they put into a very hard job is enormous, including prizes to be purchased each month helped by great donations from our members and beyond.

I would like to thank the members who have helped me over the last few months owing to our Deputy Treasurer's wife, Janet, being unwell and Philip's time spent looking after her.

The last but one items have now been purchased and after a minor problem on the first time using them, the microphones are ready for use each month. These items, plus all the other electronic items, will help the club run more smoothly and have been paid in part by the raffle income.

Finally, I am sure it is mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter that we are now fully set up, paid for and running as a legally recognised club of Valencia that has a new "Management Team" who are the three Directors, and your committee.

Robert C Cook, cook2cookies@yahoo.co.uk

HAVE I GOT YOUR NUMBER?

This is a plea to all members of our club: if you have changed your email address, telephone number or home address since joining us, please will you let me know the new details via my email address geoff.crane@hotmail.co.uk or by a note at a monthly meeting in Los Arcos.

A couple of weeks ago I tried to contact a group of members by email and some of the mails were bounced back with the "undeliverable" message. I feel sure that some of you may have changed telephone numbers, perhaps getting a different or a first mobile phone, and some of you may have moved home within the area.

Please let me know any changes.

Geoff Crane Membership Secretary

CURRENT MEMBERSHIP

At the time of writing we have 198 paid up members. Recruitment of new members was very good in the last 3 months: 6 in December, 24 in January and 15 in February.

There is a potential membership of 247 though because we have 49 of last year's members who have not renewed. If you are one of those members, please would you renew as soon as possible? You can renew at the monthly meetings, or through the leaders of any groups you belong to. Renewal this year remains at €12

If you are not going to renew this year it would be really helpful if you could let me know (geoff.crane@hotmail.co.uk). Even more helpful would be to know if there is anything we could do as an organisation which would enable you to join us again. Feedback of all sorts is essential for us to maintain and develop the work of our branch of the U3A.

Geoff Crane Membership Secretary

DISCUSSION GROUP

This is the group which discusses and puts to right all those subjects which we all talk about or rage about when we watch television or read newspapers.

We are a lively group who share our views and learn from each other. It is always interesting to hear another opinion and surprisingly we almost always find common ground.

We have covered several subjects which took us along tangential routes and led us to another subject of interest and at our next meeting the group have decided to tackle,

"Rights have never been so extensively defined as today, but what happens when the perceived rights of two individuals or groups clash? Is there any basis for resolution."

Hopefully we can once again find the solution to the problem!!

We meet at my home and the next meeting is on 23rd March at 2pm 'till around 4.

If you are interested please send an e-mail to dianepierrot@gmail.com.

Instructions on how to find us can be sent to you.

SPEAKERS SECRETARY REPORT

The February meeting was the first of 2010 at which there was a speaker. Member Janet Pogson was due to give a talk on Family History, but, unfortunately, her husband was ill, and she had to postpone. On behalf of you all I would like to wish Geoff well and hope that his treatment will be successful. We look forward to Janet's talk at some time in the future.

Artist and art tutor Graham Strachan kindly stood in at the last moment, and gave us an amusing and informative talk on the therapeutic benefit and the pleasure of learning to draw and paint.

At the time of writing, member Lubbertus Fletcher is due to give a talk on the 25th March on 'Protecting your Computer for Free'. He has offered to download the relevant programme on to a CD for any member who wishes.

In April singer, musician and voice coach Nigel Hopkins will be giving a talk entitled: 'Nigel Hopkins – a Musical Journey', with some musical illustrations. Those of us who were at the recent excellent concert of his new choir 'Melody Makers' will be particularly interested in hearing more of his life and work.

In May we will have a visit by one or two members of the British Consulate staff, who will talk of their work and take questions from among the audience. They will also have a 'clinic' afterwards for individuals who would like to ask them a question in private. I would ask any member who wishes to take advantage of this facility to give their name well in advance to my Deputy, Barbara Hill (I will not be in Spain for that meeting), as this will be on the basis of 'first come, first served' depending on the time available.

Well, folks, I hope that there is something for everyone in the choice of speakers. I do try to vary the programme with this in mind. However, any comments would be welcome, as would suggestions for the future, which I am always happy to add to my file.

Jean Cook

RUMMIKUB CLUB

We are continuing to meet the second and fourth Friday of the month, but note venue change.

This will now take place at LO MARIBOU in Quesada. It is just off the slip road before you get to La Laguna Hotel.

You are most welcome even if you are a beginner, as you soon won't be. We have a lot of fun.

For more information, ring Barbra 966 718 788, deanbabsie@gmail.com.

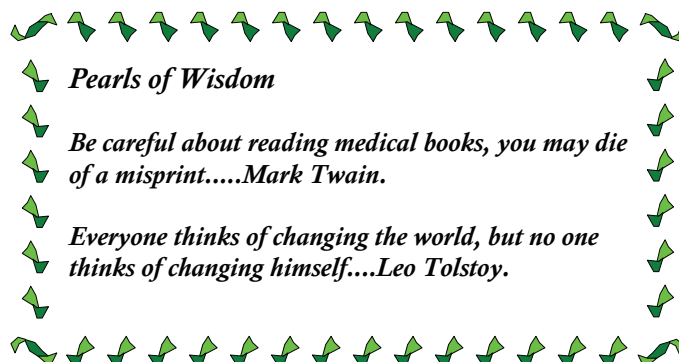
PROGRAMME FOR 2010

March 25. Lubbertus Fletcher, also a member, will speak on 'Protecting Your Computer for Free'.

April 29. 'Nigel Hopkins – A Musical Journey.

May 27. A member of staff from the British Consulate in Alicante will be visiting us.

Jean Cook Tel: 620 705 958
cookonejcook@yahoo.co.uk



Pearls of Wisdom

Be careful about reading medical books, you may die of a misprint.....Mark Twain.

Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself....Leo Tolstoy.

ART APPRECIATION

WHEN AND WHERE?

We usually meet the third Monday of every month at 2.30pm at The Sophia Wellness Centre, Cabo Roig, Orihuela Costa. This may be subject to change due to gallery opening times/visits etc.

WHAT WE DID IN 2009

There were talks on Picasso, Lowry, Seurat, Mackintosh, El Greco and Flint by club members. We also visited the Viste Allegre exhibition hall in Torreveja, Museo De Belles Artes in Alicante and the Sorolla Exhibition in Valencia.

WHAT WE HOPE TO DO IN 2010

Already this year we have had a talk on Dali. We have two events arranged so far, a trip to Orihuela to view Religious Art and a discussion group on The Nature of Art. We are hoping to explore some of the following areas this year. Fine Art, Architecture, Manufacture and Design, Advertising, Photography, Poster Art, Graffiti, Film, Sculpture, Art in Religion, Dance, Rock Art/Cave Painting, Native Art, Folk Art, The Turner Prize, Printworks and Roundabouts.

Helen Fuller

BATTLE OF THE GENERATIONS

Do you enjoy playing Trivial Pursuit, or are you a whiz when it comes to a quiz? If the answer is yes, then you might be interested in an on-line challenge that is due to commence mid-March and will last about three months. (Not live as of 12 March).

Having recently completed a similar test between the sexes, the people from Trivial Pursuit are now setting up a challenge between the under 30s and the over 30s. When asked why the cut off age was so low they said they were confident that as the younger generation were more savvy using technology, that they would play the game more often than the older contestants and therefore accumulate a higher score.

Let's not let them have it all their own way. If you would like to have a try log on to www.trivialpursuitexperiment.com and answer a few questions.

By the way, the women were victorious in the last trial.

Penny Godfrey 968 971 789

ARMCHAIR TRAVEL GROUP

The New Year began with an excellent talk and CD of photos by Bob and Barbara Hill on their visit to the Eden Project in Cornwall. It looks an amazing place, and the flowers in the grounds outside the dome were spectacular. Many of us, still resident in the UK, who have never been, were inspired to plan a visit in the near future.

The February meeting was held at Bob and Barbara's house, since husband Bob and I were in the UK. Margaret Daniel kindly loaned a DVD of a Mediterranean cruise, and the Hills combined this with a very interesting 'Planet Earth' DVD.

Lillian Pownall, due to complete her talk on Singapore in March, unfortunately has shingles, and we wish her a speedy recovery from this painful illness. Peter and Maureen King kindly stepped into the breach, and, having just returned from the U3A trip to Valencia, showed their official DVD (the best I and many others have ever seen), and regaled us with stories of this super holiday, organised so brilliantly by Penny Godfrey.

On April 13th, new member Jean Logan is going to talk about her trip to Mexico and the Mayan villages. On the 11th May Maureen Moffat will repeat her talk on her trip to Nepal (which many of us missed before). This meeting will be held at Mo and Duncan's home.

Then we break for the summer, before returning on the 12th of October to hear of Geoff and Pat Crane's

adventures flying around the world.

I would just like to say a big thank-you to those Armchair members who make it the success it is with their contributions, and to all of you for your continued enthusiasm and friendship. Bob and I look forward, as always, to our next get-together.

Jean Cook

BRIDGE GROUP

From a membership base of around 40, of which some 30 are residents or spend most of the year in Spain; we have an average of 24 playing bridge each week. This is double the average number of a year ago. Four new players have joined since the February U3A monthly meeting.

Since we have been meeting at the New Asturias, we feel the Restaurante Management are pleased with our patronage and make us feel welcome. I no longer arrive each Wed morning wondering if there is 'no room at the inn'!

Derek Rush our retired English Bridge Union (EBU) tutor is back in harness after an extended Xmas break and we have currently 2 'new to bridge' under training who no doubt will soon be challenging the other members at the tables.

Our present crop of players are also looking forward to meeting the graduates from the Beginners' course, I understand it restarts again in May. We look forward to reading of their activities in the forthcoming newsletters.

Bob Kiss – Wednesday Bridge Group (10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m.)

New Asturias Restaurante, Punta Prima.

ABSOLUTE BEGINNERS BRIDGE

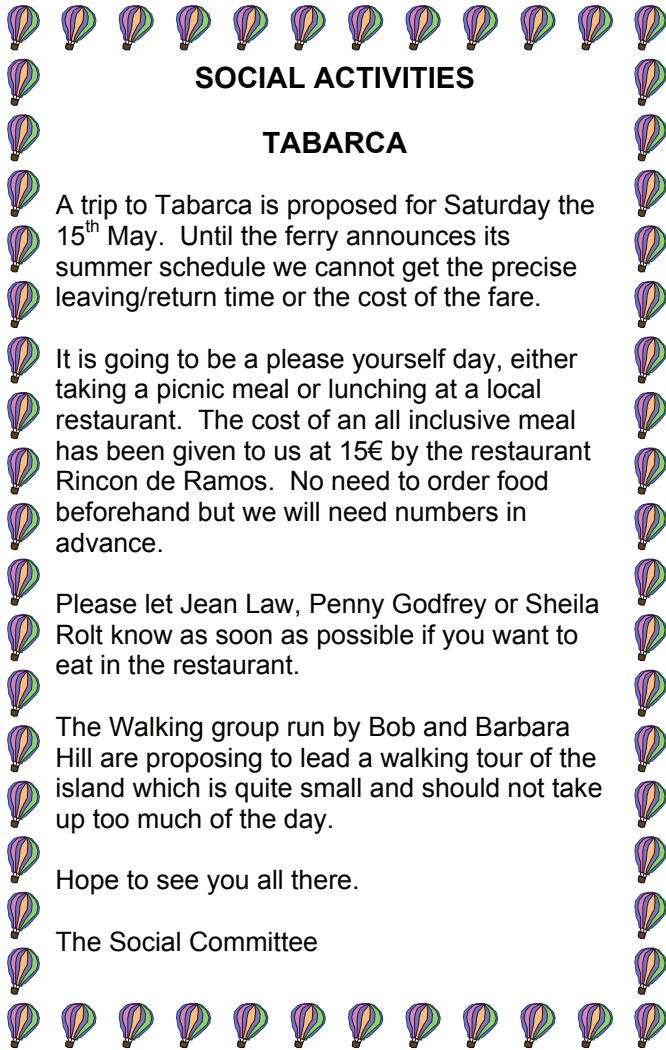
This group is aimed at people who have not played bridge before. If you have played previously be prepared to start at the very beginning again.

Venue - NEW Asturias, Punta Prima - Mondays 10.00 am.

We will be starting again in early May. If anybody is interested contact me by e-mail at jimcowing@talktalk.net and I will let you know the start date.

Anybody not having access to e-mail please ring Jean/ Mike Law on 965 319 311.

Group Leader James Cowing



SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

TABARCA

A trip to Tabarca is proposed for Saturday the 15th May. Until the ferry announces its summer schedule we cannot get the precise leaving/return time or the cost of the fare.

It is going to be a please yourself day, either taking a picnic meal or lunching at a local restaurant. The cost of an all inclusive meal has been given to us at 15€ by the restaurant Rincon de Ramos. No need to order food beforehand but we will need numbers in advance.

Please let Jean Law, Penny Godfrey or Sheila Rolt know as soon as possible if you want to eat in the restaurant.

The Walking group run by Bob and Barbara Hill are proposing to lead a walking tour of the island which is quite small and should not take up too much of the day.

Hope to see you all there.

The Social Committee

SUMMER MEETINGS

JUNE 24th- JULY 29th - AUGUST 26th

In 2009 the committee ran 3 very successful coffee mornings on the last Thursday of the month during the summer break. We would like to repeat these this year on the above dates.

The format will be the same as last year, a raffle or tombola will be on offer (all donations gratefully received), the books will be on display, there will be a cake stall and in June there will be a bric a brac stall.

We intend to put on a couple of speakers (June and July short talks only) on subjects not covered by normal monthly meetings. We are aiming to get advice on Medical and Financial matters, with the speakers having an area where they can later hand out leaflets and discuss individual needs.

It is hoped that if you are in Spain you will come along for a social morning and bring your friends.

Again we hope to see as many of you as possible.

The Social Committee

MUSIC & THEATRE NOTICE BOARD

Websites covering professional music and theatre topics include the following:

Torrevieja	www.torreviejacultural.com
Murcia	www.auditoriomurcia.org
Orihuela	www.aytoorihuela.es
Elche	www.elx.es
Cartegena	www.ayto-cartegena.es
Alicante	www.teatroprincipaldealicante.com

Music

San Javier's annual jazz festival starts in July and, if past experience is anything to go by, is well worth attending. Full details can be found by visiting "San Javier Jazz Festival 2010".

Theatre

The U3A Shakespeare Group will now be meeting weekly on Thursday afternoons in San Miguel until the end of April. At the beginning of March we completed viewing scenes from Twelfth Night and are now starting on The Merchant of Venice. We are watching excerpts from two productions with fine contrasting performances from both Al Pacino and Warren Mitchell as Shylock.

Anyone wishing to start, renew, or enlarge their knowledge of the plays is most welcome to come along and join us.

Contact: Graham Evans phone 966 723 909 or
noelevans@waitrose.com

SPANISH HISTORY GROUP

We are nearing the end of our journey through the history of Spain and what a fascinating journey it has been! During our journey we have met some interesting people, looked at the Black Legend, investigated the two Republics and the Monarchs – both good and bad. We have also considered where and how Spain fits in to Europe – or does Africa really begin at the Pyrenees as one observer wrote?

The current journey ends in the year 2004 and the last talk is in June. If there is enough interest I will be more than happy to start from the beginning in September. There will be a list available from the next monthly meeting for people to register their interest. If you would like to know what periods we cover please contact me at the next meeting.

Sue Kenyon iansuekenyon@gmail.com

VALENCIA TRIP 2nd to 5th MARCH 2010

After a pleasant ride on the coach, we arrived in Valencia just in time to be met by thousands of people who had gathered in the Plaza del Ayuntamiento (Town Hall Square), right outside the hotel, for a firework display. Not the usual display, this one, called the Mesclatá, is all about noise; it lasts about five minutes and really shakes you up. It felt as if it was arranged just to welcome us, even though it had something to do with the up and coming Fallas celebrations.

Valencia proved to be a very interesting and exciting city with impressive architecture (both old and modern), also some quiet and peaceful parks, squares and quaint alleyways. We had the opportunity to enjoy a Picasso exhibition and a special tour around four Baroque churches as well as all the usual places to visit. The city was explored on foot or by bus (even by metro) and the little rain on Wednesday morning did not dampen the spirits of the intrepid explorers.



Evenings saw some groups forming for most enjoyable dinners accompanied by the odd bottle of wine and a lively exchange of impressions gained and places visited during the day and recommended to others to visit the next day.



Only too soon did we have to prepare for the return journey and to leave our pleasant hotel. Prior to our departure there was yet another firework display, this time to say "goodbye". Altogether a splendid few days.

MEMBERS TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

GOLDEN OLDIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

For our joint Golden Wedding anniversaries, we spent 3 weeks in South Africa – Cape Town, North East to Port Alfred and back to Constantia. Driving was easy – 2hr shifts, long, straight excellent roads with hardly any traffic at all.

Three weeks of glorious weather, friendly people, inexpensive meals, wonderful scenery, glorious empty beaches, new tastes to savour, new wines to experience and not a sign of trouble anywhere we went. Truly the 'Rainbow Nation' made it an unforgettable experience. So here are just a few highlights from the three weeks.

5 days in Cape Town: The Victoria & Alfred Waterfront with the majestic Table Mountain as a backdrop – hustle & bustle everywhere, bands playing, busy shops and restaurants – a perfect place for dinner on our first night. A special treat for us all one day was a thirty - minute helicopter trip over the Cape Peninsula, which was breathtaking. Then on and off the Red buses which travelled all over the city to major points of interest, all for very little cost. When we had the hire car, we drove to Cape Point and Boulders Penguin Sanctuary (penguins sunbathing on the beach), and to other beauty spots near Cape Town. Unfortunately the weather was too windy to take the cable car up Table Mountain.

2 days in Stellenbosch: a visit to the Spier Estate for wine tasting and picnicking, then on to Franschoek to visit the Heugenot Museum & Monument to refugees from religious persecution in France. It was very emotional to read the long lists of families who had travelled to make a new life for themselves and what had happened to them on arrival.

3 days in Knysna: a quiet waterfront town, again with glorious empty beaches. We visited tiny Belvidere village which had been built by an Englishman in 1833, and which was very tranquil, particularly as no cars were allowed in.

5 days in Port Alfred: a beautiful village coastal resort, and the most easterly part of our trip where we played golf (in January sunshine), and had a boat trip and BBQs. We drove out to Grahamstown and visited the 'Camera Obscura' dated circa 1850, and another outing was a game tour through the Addo Elephant Park where we saw zebras, wart hogs, ostriches, hartebeest, and other game, in addition to the hundred of elephants in all sizes. We then turned westward back along the Garden Route and spent

3 nights in Swellendam: a lovely typically Afrikaans village. While there we drove to Cape L'Aguias, officially the most southerly point of South Africa, where the Atlantic & Indian oceans meet. Unfortunately we missed the whale watching in Hermanos as it was the wrong time of year, but we visited a shipwreck museum where there was plenty of evidence of the difficulties of navigating in these waters.

Final 2 days in Constantia: We were now back on the outskirts of Cape Town and spent the last day in the beautiful Kirstenbosch Gardens, viewing the wonderful plant collection & native sculptures.

We set off home having driven 3250 kms through outstanding scenery in glorious weather. We had excellent accommodation everywhere, were treated royally, and were left with golden memories to savour for the rest of our lives.

U3A Members Brian & Sheila Hodkinson with friends Bill & Maureen

Your Newsletter is available as a printable image from our U3A web site at
www.u3atorrevieja.com

It is in a PDF format and will require Adobe Reader to read it. This can be downloaded free
from the web site.

Editor: Keith Jones newsletteru3a@gmail.com

WALKING GROUP REPORT



We began 2010 with a walk in January to the Bateria de Cenizas near Portman. For some of the 40 members that joined us, this was a first visit to this beautiful area..



The walk had a surprise at the top of the hill; not only amazing views of the coastline but also two 381mm British built guns that were capable of firing a 900 kilogram shell a

distance of 35 kilometres.

Wet weather in the preceding week meant we had to make a change to the planned February route which was to have been the Secret Valley near San Miguel de Salinas, and instead walk the five beaches of La Zenia and Playa Flamenca. The group enjoyed this walk which incorporated a welcome coffee stop at a bar.

Our next walk will take place on 3rd April. We plan to walk from Quesada to the old part of Rojales. The route will take in the mid 19th century cave dwellings that are now mostly used as craft exhibition centres or shops and one has been converted into a bar. Due to ongoing disputes with the Ayuntamiento we understand it is impossible to confirm whether the caves will be open or not. There may be an opportunity also to visit the intriguing Shell House nearby. The walk continues with a visit to the hill known locally as Calvary, with three enormous symbolic Crosses dominating the skyline. The fourteen Stations of the Cross are also commemorated.

Plans are now firmly in place for our first 3 night Walking Holiday in early October, to the Espuña National Park west of Murcia. At the time of going to press this is fully booked.

Bob and Barbara Hill
Walking Group Leaders

FAMILY HISTORY GROUP

I was asked to take over as Group Leader in December. I have been researching my own family for over 20 years, am passionate on the subject and very keen to help others with our shared hobby.

12 of our members met on the 18th December for informal instruction in the use of Genealogical websites aimed at novices with help and guidance from our more experienced members. With lunch and Christmas treats, it proved very popular and will probably be repeated at a future date.

The day led to the idea of a "BUDDY" system, where our more experienced family historians are "buddied" with less experienced members, offering support and assistance on a one to one basis with mutual benefits.

The AGM and our exhibition (see Photo) brought 3 new members to make a total of 25. We now have an average of 12 at each of our group meetings which are held at 2pm on the third Tuesday of the month at one of our members' homes in Pueblo Bravo.

This year I decided to introduce an Annual Programme with a different topic each month. It has proved to be a very popular idea with all members. This is possibly as each topic is chosen to be inclusive to all, from the complete novice to the few old hands. So far we have covered "Memories of a Grandparent"; "An Ancestor's Occupation" and "Treasured Ephemera".

It has been very informative, educational and entertaining and the research which has been very thorough will be a useful addition to any members who wish to record their own families in the future.

The group was formerly the Genealogy group but members interests span not only direct lines of descent but also social conditions, geographical locations, occupations and much more and it was agreed that FAMILY HISTORY was a far more appropriate group name.

Our Group members are researching their family histories and meet regularly in a friendly atmosphere to share knowledge and assist each other in their common interest.

We welcome new members. I can be contacted on 966 188 300 and look forward to seeing you at one of our friendly meetings in the future.



Janet Pogson. Family History Group Leader