

# ANDALUCIA

THESE ARE MEMBERS' BLOGS – HAVE YOU SEEN ALL THE PHOTOS IN THE GALLERY?



On 28th April 52 members of the Vall del Pop U3A set forth on their long-awaited 9 day 'Grand Tour' of Andalucia. Three guided tours were included, starting with the wonderful city of Cordoba we also saw Mezquita and Alcazar. The light show playing in the Alcazar's gardens at night was beautiful and delighted our U3A party...even if it was drizzling !

Journeying on to Jerez we were offered interesting visits to the Royal Equestrian Horse show and a sherry bodega. Cadiz, Puerto Santa Maria and Sanlucar de Barrameda were also covered during our stay there.

Andalucia's capital, Seville, has the largest cathedral in Spain and the beautiful Alcazar to name just two of the many attractions in this vibrant city. An evening Flamenco show was a real treat and added some extra Spanish 'passion' to our holiday !

En route to the Costa del Sol we stopped for a guided tour at jaw-dropping Ronda with its enormously deep gorge. Our last two days were spent based in the Costa del Sol to enable to group to see either Gibraltar or Tangiers. Most opted for the latter, enjoying a very full day of new experiences from another culture.... snake charming, the busy souk, the Medina and a Moroccan style lunch complete with belly dancer ! During our journey home we visited Nerja and its pretty Balcon de Europa. By then our heads were bursting with facts, figures and fabulous places !

Our driver and courier were great and made a fantastic team, keeping us safe and thoroughly informed at every turn.

Anne and Derek already have another tour for 2014 in the planning stages.....

Andalucia Trip

## Review by Teresa Boyle

Although I was enthusiastic about the trip to Andalucia, having never been on a touring holiday in a coach I was also rather apprehensive. Thankfully, our fellow travellers were all very well behaved, well, most of the time! Frequent stops and a good book made the journey very pleasant.

Our first 2 night stop was in Cordoba. Wow, what a treat! Our hotel was located in the heart of the medieval city opposite the magnificent 8th century Mesquita - a mosque turned cathedral built on a site of 6.5 acres. Stepping inside the building, the Islamic arches and forest of column are truly breath-taking. The city itself is a fascinating tangle of narrow cobbled streets which we had plenty of time to explore.

We then travelled on to Jerez where we opted to see the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Art perform a spectacular horse show. From here we also visited the ancient port of Cadiz.

On then to Seville. We were given a guided tour of the city in the coach and on foot and then had time to visit the cathedral, palace, plazas and even take a boat trip along the river running through the centre. Two days just wasn't long enough to enjoy this beautiful city.

Towards the end of this memorable trip we visited my favourite place - the bizarre old white town of Ronda, perched high up in the mountains above Malaga. With its handsome mansions, terraced gardens and cute cobbled streets it has a fairy tale quality about it. The focal point of the town is the 'new bridge' which was built in the 18th century and spans the massive 120 metre canyon and provides access to the town. Dramatic scenery surrounds this town and it is definitely the place I want to come back to explore.

## And on a different note....Andalucia Poem by Stan Hatly

Day one, on the coach and in the rain  
With Pepe the driver taking the strain  
Herr Rolfe, our multi-lingual guide  
'fiz" lots of information during the ride.

The overnight stops were good in the main  
and one or two we might try again  
So with a pinch of salt and tongue in cheek  
take this lightly as an honest critique.

Hotel Maimonides, the least said the best.  
Sherry Park, much better than the rest,  
Nearby Don Paco inhabited the strangest fungi\*\*  
where the sights of Seville, were seen from on high.

The Royal Costa situated in front of the beach"  
At 20 minutes away, was well within reach.  
However none of this should detract  
from the one unanimous, undeniable fact,

that after all is said and done,  
we all had such wonderful fun.  
Many heart felt thanks go to Derek and Anne,  
as a group we are all your number one fan.

Stan Hatly

\*\*This is a architectural oddity nicknamed "The Mushroom"

## Andalucia – Dave Wicks Blog.....

We set off on Sunday morning in the rain for several stops.  
Later we arrived in Cordoba in the rain!  
Hotel was just 10 metres away from the Mezquita.

Next morning we had a guided tour of Mezquita and old town.  
In the evening a light and water display at The Alcazar - great show.

Tuesday set off for Jerez, hotel was brill, Wednesday day trip to Cadiz, Santa Maria and Sanlucar de Barrameda.

Thursday headed for Sevilla and tour of city with guide.

Next day was a free day.

We spent all day walking ...also had a trip on tatty tour bus.  
Really good day.

Saturday.. off again.. to Costa del Sol with a visit to Ronda. What a beautiful place.

Sunday off to Tangers on ferry. Med was as flat as a pool table. Would not like to holiday there but had a good laugh.

Last day Monday and home to Jalón.

This holiday has been great, met some wonderful people. Derek and Anne have pulled it off again.  
Roll on next one !

Dave Wicks

## And finally ....

In Seville.....

After dinner we were treated to an evening with a mind reading act by a mystery "blond" gypsy.



Madame Davina arriving (David Brain) in the capable hands of Mike Broadley!

This was followed by a round of Mr & Mrs which was absolutely "bonkers"

In the Mr and Mrs competition we had: -

Mike and Jackie Broadley,  
Dave Brain and Teresa Boyle,  
Roger and Rosemary Brown  
and Sandra and Bob Welham.

Mrs and Mrs Brown won quite conclusively ! Well done!

Goodness knows what the other guests in the Seville hotel thought ....  
What a good sport Dave Brain is - we were all in stitches with his act.

Anne Martyr.