

# NEWSLETTER

## Portugal and the Western Front 1914 - 1918

WWI endured in Western Europe for more than four years, and although Portugal did not officially enter the war until 1916, every Portuguese memorial of WWI shows the dates 1914-1918. Why is this so? Peter Booker shows that Portugal was involved in an unofficial war for two years before joining the allies in March 1916. How was it that Portuguese infantry served in the cold and mud of Flanders and that the President of the Republic took steps to weaken the Portuguese war effort? How is it that on the Western Front, the victorious allies together lost more than twice the number of men as the defeated Germany? The annual remembrance of the Battle of La Lys took place on 9th April. Peter Booker shows how Portuguese troops were unable to perform the impossible at the battle of La Lys and discusses some of the other myths surrounding WWI.

## PORTUGAL AND THE WESTERN FRONT 1914 - 1918

**Peter Kingdon Booker**

**LAGOA - Convento São José\***  
**Tuesday 24 at 6.30 pm**

**TAVIRA - Municipal Library**  
**Friday 27 at 11 am**

**GUIDED WALK AROUND OLHÃO €3**  
**with António Brito Saturday 14 May 10 am**  
**Meet at Sociedade Recreativa Olhanense,**  
**Avenida da República, Olhão**

A main aim of the Algarve History Association is to celebrate the history and patrimony of the region and to ensure that English speakers have the opportunity to learn about the Algarve. We are lucky that António Brito, president of APOS, has agreed to follow up the hugely successful walk in Olhão last October, with another opportunity for us to learn about the 'exotic' town of Olhão. **PLEASE LET ME KNOW AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IF YOU WANT TO ATTEND.** *Lynne*

## CALENDAR FOR JUNE

**Tuesday 21 June 6.30 pm**

**Convento São José Lagoa**

**Friday 17 June 11 am**

**Municipal Library Tavira**

**THE PHILIPPINE LEGACY IN  
PORTUGAL**

**by Peter Kingdon Booker**

## CONTACTS

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**+ or Municipal Library, Lagoa if  
Convento still not open. To be  
confirmed later.**

**EVENTS IN JUNE and JULY**

**Saturday 11 June 6 pm Municipal Library,  
Tavira**

**Talk on conserving the built and natural  
environment in the Algarve**

*by António Brito*

**Saturday 16 July, 6 pm Municipal Library,  
Tavira**

**Talk on contemporary Portuguese  
Architecture**

*by Ricardo Gordon*

**Calendar of talks**

**LAGOA**

**TAVIRA**

26 JULY

29 JULY

The Marquis of Pombal (revisited)

27 SEPTEMBER 30 SEPTEMBER

The Visigoths in Iberia (David Johnson)

25 OCTOBER 28 OCTOBER

The Muslim Years and the Christian  
Reconquest

22 NOVEMBER 25 NOVEMBER

The Restoration of 1640

13 DECEMBER 16 DECEMBER

Stories and Myths of Portuguese History

*TBA The Bicentenary Celebration of the  
Battle of Fuentes de Oñoro*

**Water in Tavira**

All those who have accompanied Rita Manteigas on her tours of Tavira will know how informative are her presentations. Rita is one of the historians employed by the Câmara Municipal de Tavira. On Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> April Rita added yet another tour to her repertoire. She spoke about the supply of water in the town through the ages. The tour was not for those with weak knees because it lasted for more than three hours. Beginning in the Palácio da Galeria, we passed the site of the original source for the Phoenician town under the sacristy of the Igreja Matriz, toured the Muslim archaeological site within the Pousada and discussed the Phoenician remains in the open archaeological site of the Corte Real palace. We learned that although it is believed that the Pousada is sited on the old judaria, there is little archaeological evidence to support this idea.



In the Travessa da Fonte, we passed the rear door of the new Islamic museum (which faces the Praça da República and which is not yet open), and found our way down to the town pumping station. The display in this new museum details the efforts of the twentieth century town council to improve the supply of water to the inhabitants. The station itself is located in the square which occupies the site of one of the major gates in the town walls, and the Chapel at this gate is N<sup>a</sup> S<sup>a</sup> da Piedade. The original main spring for the town's water here was just inside the city walls, and watching at the bicos giving water today it is easy to imagine that their supply was plentiful. Regulations indicated that drinking water for human consumption had first call on the supply, followed by water for washing, for animals and for industrial use. The riverside road is even today known as Rua dos Pelames (Tanners' Street) because of the main industry carried out there. It is odd that the less clean uses for the water occupied sites which were further upstream. Inside the museum there is a picture of women doing their washing at this location in the river during the 1970s.

The pumping station is located here in Rua Gonçalo Velho and not in Atalaia, which also has a strong spring, because the original spring on the hill of Santa Maria is slightly higher (at 20m above sea level) than that at Atalaia (at 19m). The station pumped to the water tower next to the Igreja Matriz from the early 1930s. This water tower became a very popular feature of the town and when the new water supply from the barragens was instituted in the 1990s, popular opinion fortunately voted to retain the now redundant tower. It now of course houses the Camera Obscura of the town and is well worth a visit.

Moving in our crocodile up Rua da Liberdade, we learned that most houses in the town had their own private wells, some of which still exist. There is one under the bank opposite the Correios. The Post Office building itself is on the site of the former jail (on the ground floor) and Câmara Municipal (on the first floor). Close by was a spring which was known as the jail spring, since it supplied water to the prisoners. In 1910 the Câmara proposed to install a sewer beneath Rua da Liberdade and the outfall would have been in the river near the Praça da República. Political difficulties at the time fortunately precluded its installation. Such new fangled ideas were unpopular with ratepayers who preferred the cheaper old system of night-soil collection. Another notable town spring was that in the Largo do Cano; the water from this spring was valuable to livestock on the move along that particular entrance to the town. On the nearby railway arch there is an azulejo panel commemorating the importance of this chafariz.



Moving into Rua Dr Augusto Carlos Palma past the Horta d'El Rei shopping complex, we learned that the new buildings to the south and east of Rua da Liberdade occupy the space of the King's Garden which was built over from the 1970s. The law court, the modern flats and the shopping centre occupy an island of modernity in a sea of much older buildings. The water for this garden used to be stored in a large tank in the centre; latterly, the garden was split into three different ownerships. We moved past the Fonte do Bispo and the Bishop's Garden, which was reclaimed for building land even later. Moving up the hill towards the Atalaia barracks, we passed down the street named after the date of the Battle of la Lys in the Great War (Rua 9 de Abril) and arrived in sight of the Clube da Vela in Rua da Atalaia Pequena, at 19m above sea level. The Clube occupies a 19th century building which formerly housed a thermal bath – the spring water emerged from the ground at 25°. Inside the building is a café and the old bathing cubicles and the water pump are still in place.

Water was – and still is – an important resource and this tour of Tavira gives insight into how the previous inhabitants of the town managed that resource. If you ever have the chance to accompany Rita Manteigas on one of her tours of Tavira, please take it. You will improve your knowledge of the history of the town, and you will also get a free lesson in excellent Portuguese.

### **Peter Kingdon Booker**

#### **IMPORTANT NOTICES**

*Peter and I run the Algarve History Association on a voluntary basis and we have always held back from charging for AHA talks or for our time (other than the €2 which we charge in Lagoa to cover fuel costs). Now that we are using more guest speakers, we should like to introduce a system of monetary contributions at the Tavira talks for two reasons. First, so that we can offer hospitality to guest speakers who provide their time and expertise free of charge and second, to help fund the site costs and technical help involved in setting up our website. Unless a friendly benefactor comes forward, we shall begin to provide opportunity for those attending to contribute as from the May 27 talk in Tavira.*

*Best wishes, Lynne*

*For more information on the initiative TAVIRA ILIMITADA, please visit:*

[www.acasadasartes.com](http://www.acasadasartes.com)