

ALGARVE HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER FOR MARCH 2020

FRIDAY 6 at 11h00 Tavira

Library

The Visigothic State in Iberia

with Peter Kingdon Booker

TUESDAY 17 at 18h00 Lagoa

The Jewish Diaspora

with Peter Kingdon Booker

FRIDAY 20 at 11h00

Tavira Library

D Maria II

with Isabel Stilwell

TUESDAY 31 at 18h00 Lagoa

Library

The Visigothic State in Iberia

with Peter Kingdon Booker

PREVIEW FOR APRIL

FRIDAY 17 at 11h00 - Tavira

Library *and*

TUESDAY 28 at 18h00 Lagoa

Library

The Carnation Revolution

with Peter Kingdon Booker

PREVIEW FOR MAY

FRIDAY 29 at 11h00 Tavira

D Sebastião

with Peter Kingdon Booker

TUESDAY 26 at 18h00 Lagoa

D Maria II

with Isabel Stilwell



The Visigothic State in Iberia

Does the existence of the Roman Empire in Hispania and its collapse in the face of barbarian pressure hold any interest for us in the twenty-first century? The rise and fall of civilisations is of great interest to all of us, since our own civilisation seems at present to be under existential pressure. How do dominant and seemingly powerful nations suddenly fall away, to be replaced by something quite different, but which itself seems also to have a limited life span? The Visigothic state took over from the Roman Empire, not without a struggle; it lasted for just over two centuries, and seemed well established, but collapsed completely and suddenly. How did it succeed against the Romans, and yet collapse and disappear 250 years later?

The Sephardic Diaspora

We are well aware of what happened in Iberia to the Jews. Subjected to the Inquisitions of Castile and Portugal, they were hounded and harried out of Iberia. But where did they go? Many of course went to North Africa, where they made ready recruits for the Barbary Corsairs, and they wrought their vengeance on the Iberian nations at first hand. Others went off to the Levant; some to Northern Europe, and in particular the Netherlands where they found a degree of toleration that perhaps they had dreamed of. From the Netherlands, they also found their way to South America and the Caribbean. Peter traces the flight of the Sephardic community.

The Carnation Revolution

The Carnation Revolution began life as a misnomer, but was eventually correct. Why did Portuguese wait so long before they threw off the dictatorship? Were there any precedents in Portugal? And just why did the revolt happen on 25 April 1974? Could the regime have forestalled it? As in many instances in history, when an idea reaches a certain maturity, there seems to be no force which can prevent it taking root. In retrospect, the military revolt which led to the revolution was in gestation for some time, but there were certain triggers which set it in motion. Peter demonstrates some of the history of resistance, and shows how it was that the Captains of April made their move in 1974.

Dom Sebastião (1554 - 1557 - 1578)

There are some monarchs in history who made such a poor showing that we wonder how the idea of hereditary kingship survived as long as it did. D Sebastião was one such king. He may have been the worst king in Portuguese history, and he is up against some pretty stiff competition for that title. Coming to the throne at the age of three, he assumed monarchical power at age fourteen. He was a prisoner of his own feeble constitution; of his education in Christian dogma; and of the weight of his family's crusading past. Disregarding the advice of his elders, D Sebastião embarked on one of the maddest adventures in history. Unsurprisingly, he came completely unstuck, and his legacy to his country was a loss of independence, the loss of a generation of aristocrats and grinding poverty for his people.

D Maria II

D Maria II was Queen of Portugal during the Civil Wars of the nineteenth century. Her opponent was her uncle, D Miguel, who had also been her prospective bridegroom. After the tragedy of the Napoleonic Wars, and the following British Occupation of Portugal, the intermittent Civil Wars (1828 - 1850) sapped the strength of an already impoverished country. D Maria came to the throne at the age of seven and died in 1853 at age 34, exhausted after a last and inadvisable pregnancy. D Maria herself did not completely understand the need for the monarch to stand remote from politics, but for all that, at the end of her reign, Portugal had established a constitutional monarchy on the British model, and enjoyed until 1890 a certain stability. Isabel Stilwell has published a novel about other women in history, and her latest novel is based on the events of the life of this contemporary of Queen Victoria. We are lucky that Isabel comes again to the Algarve to discuss the reign of D Maria II for Algarve History Association.