



Thank you for presenting this well thought out connection with our club and it's members faithfully every month during this forgettable year of disconnection.

It was a great innovation on your part which deserves to continue.  
Honnie Oostenbroek

Thank you for the beautiful photos of the Christmas luncheon!

We wish everybody a very good and healthy year !!  
Michel et Dominique

I would like to thank you, our friends from the CICB for the beautiful floral arrangement you sent in honor of the memory of my Flor. Also a very sincere thank you to all of you who have written a message or who have sent a card expressing their appreciation, their condolences and their sympathy. Your kind words are greatly appreciated.

I include a picture of the beautiful flowers we received from CICB.

Kind regards, Terrie



**SOUP**  
was the theme on a sunny

afternoon in TJ Mudan's new modern kitchen. Florence demonstrated how a real French shrimp bisque is prepared; although it sounded difficult, it was easy as long as the steps are followed! Nine members and one guest enjoyed coffee while the bisque simmered.



Once finished, everyone sat down and enjoyed the delicious shrimp bisque, flavorful coriander chicken soup and finished with a spicy peanut butter soup. Of course, good wine and conversation made the afternoon more enjoyable! The next meeting is scheduled for March 3rd, hopefully an excursion, if not three members have offered their kitchen for the next demonstration.

Anneke deVroom







**Where in the world have Tony and Rosa Tysoe been?**

**Back in the day, before our daughter hitched her wagon to that of an Irish helicopter engineer and went with him to Brunei, we knew next to nothing about the place. Certainly not where it was. I'd heard it boasted a Sultan of course, though what a Sultan did when he was at home I didn't have a clue. If pressed, I'd have probably wagered Brunei was another of those Middle East desert sheikhdoms, stripped of meaningful vegetation and perched prettily atop a vast, underground oil lake. And Rosa, I dare say, wouldn't have got much nearer the truth.**



**How wrong we both were, at least regarding the bit about it being in the Middle East. I must have been conflating Dubai and Bahrain to have been thinking along those lines, I reasoned, after consulting an atlas. We know better now, don't we? Yes, we certainly do. Since those early days Rosa and I have visited the place three times, each time staying in our daughter's beautiful house on the northwest shoreline of the island of Borneo, which is where - surprise, surprise - Brunei turns out to be. A mere 8,000 km from the Middle East, as the crow flies.**

**We are just back from the third of these visits. Like always, it felt as if we were living on another planet while we were there.**



**A few facts and observations, some admittedly a tad exaggerated for dramatic effect (Ha ha. Fat chance. Ed.) that anybody thinking of going to Brunei might like to bear in mind:**

**+Thanks to its oil and natural gas reserves it's very wealthy - one of the five richest countries in the world in terms of average per capita income according to some. And its citizens pay no income tax. Petrol is a virtual giveaway if you compare it to prices in Europe.**

**+It's very small, about the same size as the English county of Norfolk, and has a population of around 450,000, not counting the large number of expats working there.**

**+It's located on the northern shoreline of Borneo, sandwiched between the Malaysian states of Sabah and Sarawak, looking out onto the South China sea. Borneo is the fourth largest island in the world and in days gone by was famous for its long houses and headhunters, as many an intrepid explorer found to their cost.**

**+The Sultan of Brunei governs as an absolute monarch, one of the few remaining in the world, and the only one in Asia.**



+The place is covered in rainforest, and has amazingly diverse flora and fauna. Gangs of monkeys roam the streets of the sprawling and somewhat haphazardly developed towns, getting up to all sorts of mischief.

Huge monitor lizards queue up to cross the road. Occasionally, prehistoric-looking birds are to be seen patrolling the skies, lurching this way and that while flapping their wings in what looks like an exhausting effort to stay airborne.

+Saltwater crocodiles have been known to hang out in the bunkers of the golf course near to where our daughter lives.

According to the *Tips For Newcomers* section of the newsletter the expat community produces each month, the thing to do if one of them gives you the eye and starts heading towards you is run away as fast as you can, always keeping to a straight line, never zig zagging. I'll leave it to someone else to work out the logic behind that advice.

+Like the rest of Borneo, Brunei enjoys (if that's the right word) a subtropical climate. Average temperature is around 28 degrees Celsius throughout the year. There are two monsoon seasons, December to February and June to September. When it rains, it rains hard, really hard, like bathtubs full of water being emptied directly above your head, one after the other.

+Brunei is a largely Moslem country, one where as far as I can see a fairly relaxed interpretation of Sharia law applies. For example, alcohol cannot be consumed in public, but can be brought into the country if you are not a Moslem, and consumed at home. And believe me, a lot of it is.

The history of Brunei, how it came to be an independent country and remain one to this day, is fascinating, and very complicated. A lot of it is tied up with the past exploits of European (and other) colonial powers in that part of the world, with Brits to the fore (*Well, what did you expect? Ed.*) in what seems like another age now, but in fact is no time ago at all when viewed under the gaze of eternity. A reminder of Britain's role in the post Second World War shenanigans that went on in the region is the 2000 strong reserve unit of Gurkhas permanently stationed in Brunei. Their main job is to protect the Sultan, the Royal Family, and the country's major oil installations. In their spare time, they help with the training of other British army units in jungle warfare. So now you know!



Our daughter is no stranger to living and working abroad. The first time we visited her in Brunei she'd recently moved there from her previous British Council posting in Malaysia. Before that she'd worked for seven or eight years in Mexico, where we'd also managed to get to see her three times. But for obvious reasons this latest visit to Brunei was considerably less straightforward than any of our other trips. The place is now emerging from a total lockdown but when we went we still needed to get a special Permission to Travel form from the authorities, comply with various other protocols, and do a week's quarantine in a hotel. We counted ourselves lucky though. Up until a few days before we left Spain, the quarantine period had been set at two weeks. That would have been a real challenge.

Much water has passed under the bridge of our daughter and her Irish helicopter engineer husband since our first visit, not least her recovery from a serious illness. Her beautiful daughter, who we had last seen when she was just two months old, is now well into her third year. Hopefully it won't be another two years until we see her again.

end.



## The first GPL of 2022....

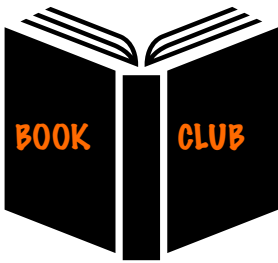
was the last Monday in January. The day got off to a late start due to frost on the golf course. When it was finally time for lunch, 38 members were definitely ready! Vice President, Marlies Pothmus congratulated the winners of golf, Dave Cuffe and Roger Bevan and petanca, Guy Claude and Agnes Marie Allard; all were happy to receive their prize, a bottle of red wine.

The big news of the day was the retirement of Gaby, the restaurant manager of the Costa Brava Golf Club for over 20 years. Both the International Club and the Friday Club thanked Gaby for the years of patiently organizing events on their behalf. Marlies presented Gaby with gifts from both groups. Toasts to Gaby and everyone's good health carried on until the early hours of the evening!

January  
GPL







There was a lively discussion of the American novel, *Mrs. Bridge* by Evan Connell. Set in the 1930's and 40's, it is an inside look of the life of an upper middle class wife and mother. Mrs. Bridge was very busy trying to please everyone, particularly those in her social circle. She didn't appear to be capable of self reflection or contemplating



what made her or her family happy.

The book everyone agreed was a social commentary about the things that give life meaning, or not...a most peculiar book, commented Ana Osario as the group sipped their tea and coffee at Tipipark on the afternoon of February 7th.

The next book group meeting will be Monday, February 28th....and the novel is the classic, *Lucky Jim* by Kingsley Amis.



### SCHEDULE:

1st Thursday: Más Torrellas

2nd Thursday: Franciac

3rd Thursday: Platja D'Aro

4th Thursday: Más Tapiolas



Pitch'nputt will be starting up again on Thursday, February 17th. Location will be in Platja D'Aro; Hita will WhatsApp everyone the time, probably later than usual due to cold mornings. Interested in joining in?

Email Hita: [hita.sfdg@gmail.com](mailto:hita.sfdg@gmail.com)

### WHAT TO DO

#### Thursday mornings

at 10:30 is an exercise class geared to the older set. The location is Tipipark in Santa Cristina; class is about an hour. Cost is 5€. Participants just do what they can do! This activity is not a CICB activity but many participants are members. Usually coffee after.

The 2022 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) will be held on Tuesday, March 1st at 12:30. Lunch to follow. All members will receive an invite soon.

The March GPL will be held on Monday the 7th at the golf club. Invitations will be sent out in a few weeks for the event.

February 24th will see many of you sharing a calcotada lunch organized by Richard Nobbs. ENJOY!

Mark you calendars...

The First Ladies luncheon is scheduled for Wednesday, March 16 at Calendula in Regencos