

Venice in the Autumn. – report of Group visit from **Mike Streeton (Group Leader)**

In my opinion, autumn in Venice is the ideal season to visit this mysterious and beguiling city. Our U3A Italian Beginners Conversation Class spent five days there at the beginning of October. There were no bustling crowds of tourists blocking the narrow alleys and the weather was kind to us with a mixture of blue and grey sky and some sunshine and pleasant average temperatures of 19-20c. It was an opportunity for our group to put into practice the phrases and vocabulary they had learned. They certainly did use them and each day I feel they grew in confidence. They were happy when ordering food and drinks in bars and trattorias and even had an opportunity to ask locals directions when lost.



We were fortunate to find a comfortable hotel in the heart of Venice that meant that we were close to many tourist attractions as well as the vaporetto stop. During our daily excursions, we always found time to stop for a mid-morning coffee in an outdoor cafe and at lunchtimes we again sat down in a pizzeria or a trattoria for panini, pizzas, salads in the open. We also slipped into the very Italian habit of sampling cocktails at the end of the afternoon and certainly after our evening meal a stop at a gelateria on our way back to the hotel was a must!!

We paid visits to the enchanting islands of Murano, home of the world famous glass and Burano, renowned for its pretty, colourful houses and lace making. Another day we went to see the wonderfully sumptuous opera house, La Fenice that in spite of 3 fires like the phoenix has risen from the ashes. We also went to the Jewish Ghetto, the

Accademia art gallery and numerous churches containing fabulous paintings by the great artists Caravaggio, Bellini, and Tintoretto etc. As the photos show, Venice is a city of moods with bright sunny days and at other times damp, misty days I was determined that the group should have time every day to explore this fascinating and unique city on their own. We certainly filled our days with plenty of walks and thankfully we never lost anyone...though at times there were temporary disappearances!

I think that all the group thoroughly enjoyed our Venetian holiday and it has undoubtedly enhanced their understanding of the Italian language and the country's rich culture.

MIKE STREETON(Group Leader)