

NEWS4U! - THE SMALL ONE FOR DIAL-UPPERS.

- all the news from the newsletter , without file-consuming graphics. May 2011

GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE— PART 3.

This month we meet Mike and Heidi, who have done such a brilliant job on the re-vamp of the website. They tell us

We grew up in different parts of the Midlands, went to University in different parts of Yorkshire, and finally met when we were both working for the IT department of Warwickshire County Council in the late 1970s, though we didn't become an item until 1984. In 1985 we moved to Hove in Sussex, and worked in IT separately for a number of companies in the area, and together for Brighton and Hove Council for several years. We also got married eventually in 1999 – well, we didn't want to rush into anything!

During this time we took several long breaks from work to go back-packing in places such as India, Nepal, South America, Australia, New Zealand and Thailand, and travelling by camper-van all through Italy. We decided that given the choice between working and travelling, we would prefer to spend our time travelling, so we saved up hard and managed to retire early, in 2004. For various reasons, we started coming to this area of Spain each winter for several weeks, gradually extending our stay each time until several weeks became several months. After we found the fabulous U3A Vall del Pop, we moved to Alcalali in 2009, and we now regard this as home, although we still go back to the UK for the summers, and try to fit in some travelling occasionally.

Mike is a keen tennis player, cyclist and mountain walker. Heidi likes computer-gaming and crochet (not usually at the same time). We both play bridge, enjoy dancing and quizzes, and go to several of the U3A groups, and we also run the U3A bridge group on Wednesday afternoons.

Having had no previous experience of web development, we were obviously ideal candidates to take over running of the U3A website when the previous webmaster, Colin, who had done such a fantastic job for the last three years, decided he wanted to hand over to someone else. Mike initially learned by helping Colin in converting the web-site to run on new software earlier this year, and since we took over in March, Mike has added a number of new features to help make the website more informative and easier to use. Heidi's contribution has been mainly in ideas and design, documentation, and liaison with the U3A committee. We hope you like the website, and we are always open to comments, and to suggestions for improvement!

Heidi Morgan and Mike Burke – Webmasters since March 2011

FOR SALETwo "Jet2" air tickets from Alicante to any chosen airport in the UK used by this airline. Vivien Johnson has a number of vouchers in units of £100 and £10, selling for €100 and €10. Booking must be made before July 22nd for flights of your choice in dates. Email johnsonmnv@gmail.com.

DID YOU KNOW

Did you know that it's really easy now to catch a comfortable bus to and from Alicante airport? All you have to do is go onto the bus company's website at www.alsa.es/portal/site/Alsa/menuitem for times and prices. It is in English! (Or simply Google ALSA)

Once on the website, type in the "from" box "Benisa" (spelled just like this) and "to" Benidorm. Then do it again from Benidorm to Alicante Airport. The bus takes you from Mercadona in Benisa to the new bus station in Benidorm, where you have to buy a ticket to the airport at the ALSA kiosk. You have to wait only a few minutes before a very fast bus takes you right to the airport.

This will cost about 12€ in total for one-way and can take only just over 2 hours. So for ease and economy, (not to mention the ecological saving) it compares well to the car option, particularly if you are travelling alone and rely on someone making the trip to the airport specially for you. Even if you have to transport a non-street-wise visitor—why not put them safely on the bus in Benidorm, knowing that the first and only stop will be at the airport?

Dentist very good.: very good price, next door to the Ayuntamiento in Calpe. Abscess drained and refilled with root canal filling. 3 visits, 150 euros.

Clinica del Pino. 96 583 18 58

FINANCIAL ADVISOR IN UK. Is your advisor ripping you off? Read the article in the money section Sunday Telegraph of 27th February! (You can get this via a Google link.)

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH THE COMPUTER GROUP - by Vernon Pierce.

A lot has been happening in the U3A Computing group over the past 6 months. It has been one of the biggest U3A Vall de Pop groups for some time now, with as many as 30 members attending the weekly meetings at 11:00 on Wednesdays. In order to cope with this large number of members and their varying levels of IT skills, we now have 4 co-ordinators – Kris Shaw, Ken Grant and Vernon Pearce, led by Roy Deavin.

We have also moved our meeting place to the Social Centre behind Bar Creu in Alcalali, enabling us to run two sessions simultaneously in separate rooms, one for beginners and another for those who are more advanced. In addition, we have an informal meeting area in the foyer, where one of the co-ordinators can talk to members who have specific questions or problems and who are encouraged to bring their own laptop computers where possible.

We had hoped to use the broadband facilities at the Alcalali Centre but we have so far been unable to get permission. However, we have arranged internet access via a mobile 'phone network. More equipment has also been purchased and the group now has two state-of-the-art Netbook computers, running Windows 7 and XP, on which we are able to demonstrate word processing and spreadsheet skills using Microsoft Office and Works, as well as how to use email and the internet and how to edit digital photographs and scan documents. Other subjects on which talks are given include how to receive TV over the internet, which is a rapidly growing area and will affect all of us in the near future, alternative telephone systems, using a PC for downloading and listening to music and the many other ways in which we can take advantage of the increasing range of IT capabilities.

Following a discussion earlier this year as to what group members wanted to see included in the course, it was suggested that a project would be a practical way of utilising the IT skills being learned. The group is therefore attempting to produce a booklet and slideshow, aimed at ex-pats, describing the facilities and places of interest available in the town of Alcalali. The content being researched includes shops, restaurants, bars, places of interest, etc. with their opening days and times, names of contacts, telephone numbers and website addresses. Other useful information includes the town hall, sports clubs, doctors' surgeries and other organizations and places of interest.

The group also has its own website, www.switchedonsurfers.com, which not only keeps members updated with what is happening in the group but also provides useful tips on where to find free software, word processing and keyboard skills and links to other useful websites.

New members are always welcome at 11:00 on Wednesdays at the Alcalali Social Centre. A small charge of €/head is made for attending each meeting and all this money is being used to buy more computer equipment for the benefit of the group.

U3A COACH TRIP.

John CHILCOTT

8.30AM Thursday 14th April 2011 and a very dull, misty Jalon valley, but within thirty minutes the sun had put its hat on and shone, the mist cleared and blue skies appeared ! After an hour we arrived at our first destination, the Real Monasterio de Santa Maria de la Valldigna. where we were met by a charming Spanish guide, who for an hour gave us a most interesting talk. She explained that it was originally built in the 14th century, but because of three earthquakes serious destruction occurred which caused much reformation to be made over the following centuries. In 1991 the Valencia Regional Government acquired the Monastery and began work on restoring it, that is going on to this day. The beauty of the Church was exceptional, a photographer's paradise.

We then continued our coach journey north to Albufera Park, located south of Valencia. This is an area famous for its freshwater lagoon, fishing, and its rice fields. Albufera is apparently the birth place of paella. This we found when eating in the local restaurants, most menus consisted of rice and seafood dishes, including of course varieties of paella Valenciana.

After lunch we made our way to the lagoon for a boat trip. The Park is one of the largest places of freshwater in Spain. And is a great attraction to the tens of thousands of birds which flock to the area. A "twitchers'" paradise. The lagoon itself is fairly shallow, the water being only three to eight feet deep. We didn't really know what to expect; I think we all had a bit of a shock when the two boats arrived, forget all about the QE2, the Queen Mary or Brittany Ferries. Think rather of a wooden lifeboat, those we used to see in World War 2 films, with Jack Hawkins manning the helm in "The Cruel Sea". We were not deterred, two boats were put at our disposal, and embarkation was skillfully managed by all. We set off for a 45 minute trip around the lagoon, everyone was amazed at the number of herons we encountered whilst travelling through the reeds close to the bank. I suppose we saw at least 30-40 on this short trip, photographing them proved a little difficult. Each time we came within camera range they flew off before we could click the button. I should think several hundred useless photographs were deleted that evening.

We arrived back in Jalon at 6.15pm thoroughly pleased with the day's outing. We have now experienced several outings with the U3A, everyone has been great and we look forward to others in the future. A big thank you must be given to the organizers of these events, a lot of time and effort must be put into organizing them.

Jalon Valley Help May Fayre....

Sunday 15th May .

Can you help?

We have booked a stall for this event.,
but we need your ideas! Let us know your
fund raising idea.

Ring Sandra 96558135 or
email

FOR SALE ! Complete set of "Readers Digest" learning tapes
"AT HOME WITH GERMAN" in a nice sturdy case.

20 TAPES—

NUMBERS 7-20 STILL IN THE ORIGINAL CELLOPHANE!

Offers to rodwaspe21@hotmail.com

*Items of interest, "Did you Know" items for sale or
wanted, for the Newsletter should be sent to Pat Thorpe
at pands_thorpe@hotmail.com on or before the General
Meeting. Word documents please—and no more than 200
words.*

ENTERTAINING SPEAKERS AT THE NEXT TWO U3A GENERAL MEETINGS

BRUNO GOFFIN

As speakers for the next monthly meeting we will have Virginia and her husband Carlos from Murla. They are running a cooperative where we can all buy high quality and inexpensive organic food that has been produced locally. Organic farmers are not destroying Mother Earth with chemicals and the food they produce is better medicine than drugs. Visiting the website of the coop called "Moviments" we can see what is available and send them an order.

If you want to know more about how to buy organic food on the internet, come to the meeting. If you cannot wait any longer and want more information today, simply call 690 19 29 76.

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JUNE 2ND— A physiotherapist for you and your dog.

A while ago I got to know Ellen Mischke who told me she had completed her studies of canine physiotherapy. I introduced her to one of my clients and could witness how she treated a dog suffering from hip dysplasia. At that time Ellen had already been working for nearly 18 years in human physiotherapy, gaining expertise in Germany, Switzerland, Australia, Russia, and since 2005 in Spain. She got interested in dog physiotherapy when she had the opportunity to help with the treatment of a friend's dog who was suffering from severe hip dysplasia. In order to become a canine physiotherapist she started studying anatomy, physiology, pathology, dog behaviour and physiotherapy methods and techniques in the German town of Linkenheim. She successfully passed her exams in front of a commission composed of vets and practicing dog physiotherapists.

As she is fluent in German, English, Spanish and Russian, rest assured she will be able to understand your dog.

SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIAL

Pat Thorpe

My wife and I decided to go for an Italian meal, on a Saturday night, early in April, to a restaurant we had not been to before on the road from Moraira to Calpe. The restaurant was lovely and the meal was very nice, if somewhat limited in choice. After a nice meal and a bottle of very acceptable wine, we decided not to have coffee there, but to go down to a bar by the beach in Moraira. As we were sat having our coffee we noticed a strange thing. There appeared to be a hot air balloon on the beach. We watched this for a while and decided to stroll down for a closer look, and noticed that there was a queue of people waiting to go up in it. We then joined the end of the queue and after asking the people in front, we found that they were giving free rides in the balloon. 'Nuff said! I had always wanted to go up in a hot air balloon and this seemed too good an opportunity to miss.

Our turn came and we climbed on board - my wife managing this in a skirt and stilettos. The flames shot up and up we went. Although it was only a short ride and we were tethered, and we only went up a few hundred feet, it was exhilarating!

I'm still not totally sure as to why they were giving free rides, I guess it was for some fiesta or other, but who cares. It was a totally unexpected end to a nice evening and fulfilled a lifetime dream. That's another one ticked off!!

WHAT'S ON ?

Our Travel and Culture People always have a whole variety of events organised for us - check the website for the latest news.

JUNE 9TH

Day trip to Alicante to enjoy a day out sightseeing, shopping or adding a little culture to your life! 10€
Call Sandra.965 581 353

JUNE 10th.

QUIZ NIGHT ! Bar Nou, Senija at 7.30. Only 10€ includes the marvellous fish and chips, AND prizes!
Teams of 4 drawn from a hat on the night. Book fast – these places go very quickly! Anne and
Derek. 966 481 069 after 5pm

JUNE 24TH

Javea Players present their summer play and BBQ. At La Micheta Restaurant. A Mad Breakfast—a
comedy. 8pm 16€ This is always a popular event, and places are limited. Tickets at the May meeting,
or ring Derek and Anne (after 5pm) 96 648 1069

SEPTEMBER 13TH—16TH

4-day trip to Barcelona. With guided tours and plenty of free time. Three star hotel , bed and breakfast.
235€ per person. Tel Sandra 965 581 353.

NOVEMBER 24TH

Day trip to Orihuela. 19€ Guided tour included. Places of interest we hope to include are the Church
of Santiago, City Walls, Subterranean Hall, Church of Santa Justa y Rufina, Palace of Count of La
Granja, Cathedral. Lunch in the Casino is an optional extra. Afterwards visit the Convento Santo Do-
mingo. If you would like to go on this trip , please tel Annie on 965 732 771 or book at the next General
Meeting.

FUTURE U3A GENERAL MEETINGS

MAY 12TH Carlos and Virginia talk about “Moviments”, a co-operative in Murla selling
organic produce. Plus display by the card-making group.
JUNE 2ND Talk by a physiotherapist who specialises in working with animals.

U3A CARD-MAKING GROUP DEMONSTRATION AT THE MEETING ON MAY 12TH

In its short life, the card-making group has raised its
standards, attended various workshops, learned a
myriad of new skills, and thoroughly enjoyed itself !

The members would now like to demonstrate some of
what they can do—see them in action at the next Gen-
eral Meeting, and take the opportunity to purchase
some really professional, hand-made cards for as little
as 2€! All proceeds go into the card-makers kitty for
the purchase of more exciting equipment.

WEST END NIGHTS

Sounds Familiar will present 'West End
Nights' at the Casa de Cultura, Calpe on
May 25th commencing at 8.00 pm. Doors
will open at 7.30 pm.

The price of the ticket is normally 12 €,
but there is 1€ discount for U3a Members.
(Tickets at the May meeting.)

The show will include many songs from well
known musicals with dancing and comedy as
well.