

## U3A TRIP TO CUENCA – 7<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2013

Report put together by the U3A Editor, Jazz Waspe.

What a trip this must have been! Those of us who stayed at home have been deluged by descriptions of a 3-day trip where sightseeing seemed to take second place of importance to eating and sampling wine! Look at this photo! The loaded trestle table was an integral part of the bus !



There are lots more photos in the Gallery .. but the following reports are from various trippers, all of whom were eager to praise Angela and Alan for organising such a memorable event.



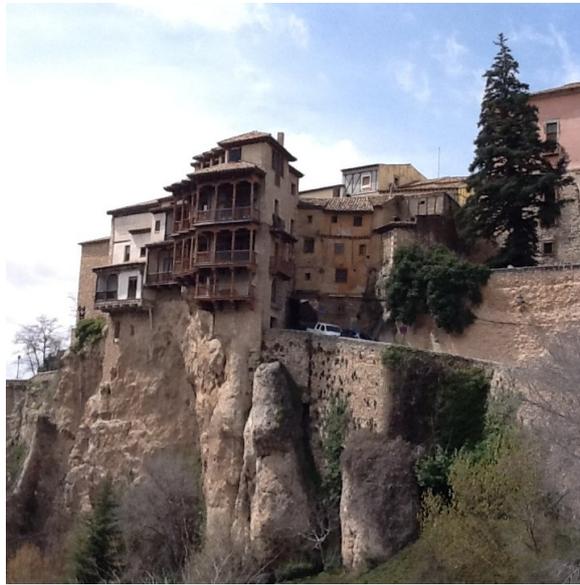
### **April 7<sup>th</sup> we set off for a 3 day visit to Cuenca !**

We laughed,  
We dined,  
We danced,  
We had too much wine,  
It was all fun and laughter  
And we even visited Cuenca

Angela Woodhouse



Graham Cherrington remembers .....



What a trip, to say we were very well dined, wined, entertained, surprised and educated, would be an understatement.

From the moment we got on the coach, we were entertained by a courier, who I am sure, had a chip of the blarney stone in her pocket.

The hotel was nicely situated (not that we cared) and the staff really made sure that our stay was fault free.

Just how did we fit in all that we did on the Monday, Excursions, Walks, a Picnic, a Lunch, a Fancy Dress party, dinner, and then we were expected to dance the right way (I did wonder, if they had us mixed up with an 18 - 30 group).

The trip was posted as a visit to “Cuenca”, (which we did on the Tuesday morning), but after all that went before, it did seem a little low key, to visit there.

Angela is to be congratulated on what she achieved, and her attention to detail in making sure we were all “Looked After”, can only be described as brilliant.



John Simpson writes;

Leaving Jalon early on Sunday morning we had a leisurely drive to our hotel on the outskirts of the medieval village of Canete, where we enjoyed lunch before taking a walk around the village, taking in the impressive waterfall, town walls and castle. At a height of 1,170 metres above sea level the temperature was noticeably colder than when we left home. Dinner on Sunday night, which included a bottomless carafe system for the wine, was followed by a fairly raucous session of dancing organised by the hotel staff, where we were joined by a party of Spanish tourists.

After breakfast on Monday we left the hotel for a morning tour, we were constantly aware of the wildlife with regular sightings of vultures, both in the air and alongside the road on the

ground. We took in local sights such as the Ciudad Encantada , an interesting area of limestone that has been eroded over time into amazing shapes. On returning to the coach at 1 pm we were greeted with a trestle table set out with bread, cheese and ham and the obligatory red wine, which was to keep us going until lunch at 2pm !! It was then on to the Nacimiento de Rio Cuervo, the source of the River Cuervo with yet another very impressive waterfall.

Those that did not walk to the source of the river were invited to help prepare our lunch, which was taken in a very rustic stone cabin with a roaring log fire. Sandra managed to steal the recipe for the home made ali oli, which I believe she is prepared to share for a price.

Unfortunately, it was here that Angela's organisation failed. Possibly due to a breakdown in her command of the Spanish language, the chef, instead of cooking for a coach of English tourists, cooked a meal for **four** coaches of English tourists !! For the next 2 hours the food just kept coming and coming and coming. Just as well we were able to wash it down as the same bottomless carafe system was in place. After 2 hours of being force fed someone decided a disco would be a good idea, this culminated in a conga which turned into fancy dress half way through. This involved a nun, superwoman and your President dressed as a virgin bride, ( don't ask).

We finally escaped at 6.30 to return to the hotel at 8pm, just in time for dinner ! This was followed by yet more dancing.

On Tuesday the last day dawned and after checking out of the hotel we set off via the Lagunas before arriving at Cuenca, two and a half days after leaving Jalón, ( I could have walked it quicker!).

Spending the afternoon admiring the architecture and the hanging houses, we had resolved not to eat after the all that food on Monday, but the 4 course menú del día in the Plaza Mayor looked too good to miss at 10 euros.

So back to the coach for our journey home. Well done to all concerned, especially Angela, but ironic that when we needed them, the only time we didn't see vultures was Monday lunchtime !



“ Wasn't it nice eating masses of food?  
then we strolled around the streets  
Then we ate some tapas and drank some more wine  
As we walked around the town”

*(Quote from Angela)*

Margaret Staines has contributed a lot of the photos in the Gallery. Her version of events is.....

We had I think 49 people on the trip and we arrived at the hotel which was a family run hotel at about 1.00. We had about 45 minutes to unpack and then we were served our lunch. At 3.45 we all met outside to be taken on a walk around Canete. There were arches built by Romans and Arabs.

That evening we had dinner in the hotel and dancing. Our next day excursion took us to Ventana del Diablo (devil's window), then Ciudad Encantada (enchanted city) with the rocks, and then onto Nacimiento de Rio Cuervo (source of the river). Lunch was served with paella and more food and then dancing which was at the hotel owner's other restaurant.

Dinner that night was back at the hotel with more dancing. Last morning City of Cuenca with the hanging houses, and we left at 4.00 for the journey home. Absolutely wonderful.



This is the Trip According to Emmy Meyers .....

It was pretty cold!!!

That was my first impression of the U3A trip to Cuenca and we hadn't left the Jalon Rastro yet!!!!

However the weather was the coldest thing that we encountered as the Hotel that we got to was very warm in both attitude to the guests, and also the temperature in the rooms.

We arrived for a late lunch after a great trip in the bus with our guide Karen, another warm personality, giving us lots of information about the areas that we passed through. After lunch we had an option to rest in the hotel or take a trip around Canete where the Hotel was situated about 40 miles outside Cuenca itself. I opted for the walk around the town, again with Caron giving us lots of information about the history and architecture.

After the walk there was time to have a long soak in the bath and prepare for a fun night! The meal was good and the entertainment even better with a (cute) young man encouraging all the wallflowers to get up and have a dance! This was very popular, with lots of the group dancing into the wee small hours.

The next day we visited the Ventana del Diablo (Devil's Window), an amazing natural rocky area with holes (or windows) looking out onto the stunning views. There were quite a few vultures around as this is an area where they are being reintroduced and encouraged to nest.

After the Ventana we visited the Ciudad Encantada (The Enchanted City) which is a wonderful area with odd shaped natural rock formations – lots were given names like the

'Elephant' and the 'Seal', it was easy to see how the names were found. Although very cold it was a wonderful excursion, I would go back there again any time. We were then treated to a 'surprise' that Karen had promised which was an impromptu picnic of wine, cheese and ham.

Next, we moved on to the lunch venue, in the area where the River Cuervo has its source and after a great trip up the side of the wonderful waterfalls to the source of the river, it was time for lunch, which was an amazing amount of food including a massive paella. After that there was another opportunity for dancing and at one time the 'conga' that was in progress at the time went into another room and, after a short interval, the line came out again in Fancy Dress!! This had to be seen to be believed, Crusaders, Brides, Matadors and all sorts of costumes with a special mention for 'Superman', who really entered into the spirit of the fancy dress!!!!



We were a happy and tired bunch that got back to the Hotel for a late dinner and, of course, more dancing!!

The next day we had a quick trip to see some natural lakes – all perfectly round and each one a different colour, (black, blue, turquoise), the colour is due to the various natural elements in the lakes. We then got to see around Cuenca itself. This is a lovely historical town with the famous Casa Colgadas (hanging houses), located at along the side of the ravine of the River Huecar. We walked across the San Pablo Bridge where lovers attach a lock to ensure their love does not die, there are numerous churches, a stunning cathedral, and the baroque town hall and of course, shops and restaurants. There was just time for a look around, lunch and then it was time to go home.

All in all, a great time was had by all.



Finally, the leader, Angela Woodhouse, came up with her rhyming version of events. More wine – more food – not much culture-visiting!!

What an amazing trip, Angela!

### **U3A Trip to Cuenca...with apologies to Fiddler's Dram**

Chorus:

Didn't we have a lovely time  
The trip we did to Cuenca  
A beautiful day, we had wine on the  
way...  
And all for under a Euro you know  
and on the way there I cuddled with Jack  
And we opened a bottle of vino  
Singing a few of our favourite songs  
As the wheels went around  
Do you recall the thrill of it all  
As we sat in the bar  
Then nearby we heard a loud band  
That made a tiddy tum ta ra ra  
Elsie and me had one glass of wine



Then we ordered another  
drinking away as folks walked about  
And the wheels went around  
Wasn't it nice eating masses of food?  
then we strolled around the streets  
Then we ate some tapas and drank some more wine  
As we walked around the town  
We had to be quick 'cause Elsie felt sick  
And we had to find somewhere to take her  
I said to her “sad, what made you feel bad  
were the wheels going around”  
Can't you still hear the noise by the bus  
As we took a breath of fresh air  
Having a drink at every small bar  
We passed along the way.... we had  
plenty more, when it turned a bit cold  
Elsie and me, we finished our wine  
And we said good bye to Cuenca...  
we jumped on the bus, Flo said to us  
there go the wheels going around.

