

## NEWS4U! – THE SMALL ONE FOR DIAL-UPPERS.

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

Dear Members,

‘Tis the season to be jolly and we hope everyone enjoyed the General meeting last Thursday.

I counted over 150 members present, and a big thank you to the cast of many willing contributors who helped to make it such a pleasant event. Again at this time of year it’s time to meet and socialise with friends and family here in Spain, and to make contact with those huddled up besides their log fires and braving the elements. (That could actually be Spain as the weather has been less than Mediterranean this last few weeks.)

Of course this is always the time at the end of the year when you look back at the year’s highs and lows and look to the New Year .

If this year has been a good year for you, may I wish that next year is even better ,and if the out-going year has not been so good for you, I hope 2012 is vastly better.

And finally, let me share with you a little Christmas trivia.....The first eight reindeer that pulled Santa’s sleigh were Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen, and of course who could forget the first reserve, Eric.

Merry Christmas.

First reserve,  
Eric.

*Editor’s note :*

*This letter came to me signed “Eric”, as you can see, but I can’t help noticing that the President’s letters have arrived lately adorned in a similar fashion to this one. With a mysterious penguin waving from the top .....*

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24 Nov 2011 – ORIHUELA

By Paul Leniston

After three days of rain we were all very relieved that it was dry, and even a little sunny, for our U3A coach trip to Orihuela We were lucky to have Mateo, a local chap, as our city guide for the whole tour. His English was very good and he turned what could have been a boring cultural visit into an interesting experience.

The coach dropped us at what appeared to be the main shopping centre, and we spent the rest of the day on our walking tour

Orihuela was once the second most important city in Valencia. It is now overshadowed by its neighbouring cities of Murcia and Cartagena. Much of the new city is typical of a large rural town, but the old city is interesting and very beautiful.

... cont. ....

ORIHUELA cont ....

After a very busy morning we were all more than ready for our menu del dia. The group was too large for one table and we were divided into two, each with their own room. The staff did not speak any English, and there was some confusion when we were served with bottles of beer, but wine and water soon followed. We had a selection of tapas and were then offered a choice of meat balls with chicken or pasta. We thought that this was the main meal, and were pleasantly surprised when we were then offered a choice of chicken or fish for the main meal. Finally a sweet and coffee. Excellent meal, and very good value for 12 euros.

After lunch it was off on tour again. We visited two churches, a cathedral, a Moors and Christians museum, the private house of a local nobleman and an underground tour of the old city walls. Unfortunately none of the photos I took were very good. So you will just have to take my word for it.

Walking is by far the best way to see a small city or town. You get a much better impression than driving around in a coach, and you also get a feel for the people and buildings. But it is quite tiring, especially when there is so much to see and do.

It was our first visit to Orihuela, and we were surprised that there is so much to see and do. I suspect that we saw much more due to our official guide than we could have hoped so see on our own. It was a lovely day out and introduced us to one of the less well known attractions of Valencia.

Many thanks to Anne for making it all possible. It was our first coach trip with U3A, but I am sure that it will not be the last.

## **HOLIDAY TO MALLORCA !!!!!!!!!!!!!**

**6 DAYS / 5 NIGHTS**

**16TH TO 21ST MAY 2012**

**HALF BOARD IN 3 \*\*\* HOTEL IN SANTA PONSA ( DOOR TO DOOR SERVICE )**

### **OPTIONAL EXTRA EXCURSIONS...**

**A FULL DAY TO VALLDEMOSSA AND SOLLER**

**HALF DAY TO CAVES OF DRACH AND PORTO CRISTO**

**HALF DAY TO PALMA'S HIGHLIGHTS**

**GENEROUSLY DISCOUNTED PRICE OF ONLY 314.50 EUROS PER PERSON.**

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT 85 EUROS**

**50 EUROS DEPOSIT PER PERSON REQUIRED TO RESERVE PLACES, PAYABLE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OR AT NEXT MEETING ON 12TH JAN.**

**THE BALANCE WILL BE DUE MIDDLE OF APRIL.**

**HOLIDAY WILL ONLY RUN IF SUFFICIENT INTEREST FROM MEMBERS, SO PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU WISH TO COME !**

**PHONE DEREK OR ANNE ON 96 648 1069 AFTER 5PM OR email on [themartyrs103@gmail.com](mailto:themartyrs103@gmail.com)**

## DO YOU HAVE A TENNIS COURT ??

The new tennis group will start playing in the New Year - a number of very keen players have already expressed a lively interest. But where to play? We know that there are single municipal courts in Jalon and Parcent - but two adjacent courts would be a huge advantage. Does anyone know of anywhere locally? Or does any member have a private tennis court they would be willing to lend once a week to the group?

Any ideas to Rod Wasp please - 605231331 or rodwaspe@hotmail.com.

## DINERS EXPERIENCE ALFAZ DEL PI

On November 20th members of the Dining Experience Group met at Residencial Forum Mare Nostrum in Alfaz del Pi. Our hosts were Carol and Brian Wakefield, also members. They showed us round their lovely apartment and then served us with a delicious lunch. The sun shone and the views from their balcony were impressive. They have been resident there for nearly a year and are very content with their home and the facilities offered by the Forum - social centre, medical centre, spa, swimming pools, gyms, restaurant and library. There are events and trips organized by the Forum.

After lunch we had a tour of the Forum though, unfortunately, some areas were closed as it was a Sunday afternoon. A very interesting visit and our thanks to Carol and Brian for their hospitality. We are always looking for new members to join us on our monthly visits - either to someone's home or a restaurant.

*Sue Willis*

## CHRISTMAS – A TIME TO CARE

Looking in windows on Christmas cheer

The view is the same every year

For homeless folk on the street

No turkey roast for them to eat

Cold, alone with none to care

Their bed's a box, no home to share

Their sad plight could be yours or mine

**So spare a thought this Christmas time**

While others laugh and sing and dance

Give these folk a fighting chance

Imagine no family joy in your life

Would you be able to cope with the strife?

From broken homes with broken lives

It's a miracle that so many survive.

For people supported by charity

**Please spare some time and little money**

Elderly people living alone

Unable to cope or to keep warm,

Battered wives in hiding places

So frightened to show their faces

War torn families with children crying

Surrounded by other people dying,

So everyone be generous this year

**It's Christmas time – please show you  
care**

## ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR THE NEWSLETTER ?

If you have anything you would like to share in the newsletter, let us have it in a Word document, about 200 words or less by the 6th of any calendar month.

Send to [pands\\_thorpe@hotmail.com](mailto:pands_thorpe@hotmail.com).

Quiz Night 9<sup>th</sup> December. By Roger Davis

A packed Bar Nou saw the last of the Quiz Nights for 2011. Little did the members know that to start with they had to learn to sound like a flock of sheep! A man purporting to be chief shepherd at Bethlehem, but with a Welsh surname, regaled them with a story of a lost flock one night and invited them to sound off like sheep to attract the missing ones. Nothing daunted, and in true Christmas Spirit, they did just that....with "sheepish" faces.

There was a rumour that the man responsible for it all was to be "baa'd," but that was not to be!

Next, each table was given part of the song "12 Days of Christmas," and invited to jump up and down, singing the stanza....with suitable arm movements ...two turtle doves....what does one do to imitate a turtle dove? It was hilarious.

We also discovered what Frument was....a type of porage...One learns weird things at a Quiz! Questions involving the "Grinch" passed the writer by....(what is a Grinch?), but others succeeded where he did not. One party question was for the first man to produce a pair of tweezers....I ask you...when did a man ever carry a pair, but tweezers duly appeared miraculously ...how do they do it?

The Fish and Chips (and ice-cream and fruit) duly appeared and were well up to standard, and we all departed for home with thanks to Derek and Anne and Bar Nou, for yet another successful night. Roll on February 10<sup>th</sup>!

Thursday December 1st, after a highly entertaining "end of term" Meeting, we got down to some more serious business. Josefa and Paquita of Jalon's Caritas workers, representing in his absence Don Pablo the priest, busy covering his parishes in Jalon, Alcalalí and Lliber were delighted with the generous donation of 4 cartons of non-perishable foods collected from Members.

The Alcalde of Jalon, Joan Miquel Garcés i Font also joined the group and expressed thanks to Bob Welham, President of U3a Vall del Pop. Alcalalí councillor Hazel was also present and between them they will ensure that the foodstuffs are distributed to the most needy of local families.

Sadly Caritas finds more and more families and individuals in vital need of basics, including food and these items were delivered to the Jalon store. Warm and sincere thanks were sent to all our Members and it was obvious that this is an area where ongoing support is needed.

*Sheila Skinner.*

### **PLEA FROM THE TREASURER AND MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY .....**

Subs are now due at the special birthday rate of 5€ for the year. Pay at the door at the next meeting at 10.15am.. Please download the renewal form from the membership section of the website if you can, and fill it up before you come. OR - you can sit comfortably at your computer and pay by bank transfer to "U3A Vall del Pop" (account 2100-6033-21-0200038126), stating your name and membership number. Pick up your membership card at the meeting.

### ***DID YOU KNOW ??***

**Egg yoke** on wind-screen: possible remedy at scene ....

have a mini-spray in car with vinegar in the bottle & egg will dissolve

Or: put vinegar in car window wash bottle

**Gourmet Tapas:** not traditional Spanish ones  
Variety; textures; decorative to the eye  
Mouth-watering to the taste; superb service  
Easy on the Euros  
6 tapas plus glass of cava is 15 euros  
More than enough for each person: we were full!

La Polenta in Teulada 96  
574 1423

A number of U3A members have been to this dentist of late.

They are very efficient and not too costly.

CLINICA DENTAL,  
AVDA. DE IFACH, 18,  
EDIFICIO CENTRAL 2  
-A,  
03710 CALPE.

WWW.CLINICADELPINO.COM

info@clinicadelpino.com

### **A GRANNIE'S RANT**

Has anyone else noticed that there is a trend to deter us from internet shopping for presents for our families in the UK? HOW ANNOYING is it to spend hours on the computer, lovingly choosing gifts, only to be told, on attempting to pay, that "we only accept bank accounts with a UK billing address"! Huh?

Mothercare, Early Learning Centre and Toys R Us are just three who have come on the sharp end of my literary tongue this week. UNITE! It's up to us to point out this stupidity. Send them emails! And if a robot replies, send them more emails!! How will they know that we are annoyed, if we don't complain? Why do they want to lose our business? Why don't they firmly set out this rule before we give up our precious hours?

Anyone know any other good toy company who will take our money?

Good Old Amazon!

**RUFUS ROO** is a jacket with huge pockets! It's used to gain an extra 10 kgs of hand baggage. Read about it on the web: even Ryanair like it!! Then order from Amazon UK for £24.99 (Will need to buy something else to go over £25 for free delivery to Spain.)

*NEW ONE-TO-ONE COUNSELLING SERVICE starting in January for members of our U3A. Money worries, Trauma, Partnerships, Loneliness, etc.. One hour sessions cost just 10€ to cover travelling. Tel 605231331. Absolutely confidential. British trained and qualified counsellor.*

## **MORE WAYS OF SAVING MONEY - WITH THE U3A DISCOUNTS !**

The latest recruit to our list of local organisations willing to give U3A members a discount is highly recommended by members who have already used him .....

### **Grahame Ward – Car Mechanic**

Grahame is a mobile mechanic, fully qualified and has lived on the Costa Blanca for 15 years, covering an area from Calpe to Gandia, from Monday to Friday, but with an emergency breakdown service whenever needed. Callout charge of 10€ ( deducted from final bill when work is completed). ITV service – 120€ for petrol and 130€ for diesel. Discount of 18% offered to members for all work except ITV's. Ring 626902732 for more details.

See the webpage ( [www.u3avalldelpop.com](http://www.u3avalldelpop.com)) for more discount offers - and remember

**THE SALAMANCA RESTAURANT IN JALON HAS A DISCOUNT FOR MEMBERS ON NEW YEAR'S EVE !**

### **The Season of the Olive - by Pat Thorpe.**

Around this time of year you may have noticed that the olive trees which are so prevalent in our area are heavy with fruit. It is the season of the olive.

For possibly thousands of years man has grown and harvested olives, not only for the fruit but for the oil which comes from them. For the past few months the olives have slowly grown in size and have changed in colour from green to black.

At this time of year, those of us who have olive trees and who harvest the olives from them have laid out our nets under them prior to the falling of the berries. Over the past few days it has been hectic, with plucking from the trees those berries which have not already fallen and finally collecting them prior to delivery to the local co-operativa.

We only have about thirty trees, but each year we harvest the olives and deliver them to the co-operativa in Gata. It is hard work, but worth it. Once the nets have been laid we have a few days waiting for the majority of the olives to fall and then we approach the trees armed with long bamboo poles. These are used to give the trees a “darned good welting”.

Once we have the olives we deliver them to Gata, where they are all loaded into a huge hopper. They are then cleaned further and then pressed for the oil . One has to have an account at the co-operativa, but once in situ the process is simple. The cost is 20c per kg for the pressing, but for each 5 kgs of olives one gets a litre of oil. The first pressing is known as Virgin Olive Oil, and then further pressings are just “Olive Oil”.

### **Jalon Valley Help**

Debbie and Steve of Bar Olè in Jalon have been raising money for Jalon Valley Help by selling paperback books for the last 6 months. At only 50cents a book in that period they have raised an amazing 660€ Their target is 1000€ so please go along the bar, buy a book and help them realise this aim.

*Jalon Valley Help would like to thank everyone who has donated wool or even made whole blankets for their appeal for the residents of Fontilles. Now they are again asking for wool or if you love knitting, jumpers for children up to the age of 10 years. These will be passed to Carritas to help needy families in the Jalon Valley and will be very much appreciated by the children who receive them.*

**WELCOME TO THE NEW MEMBERS!**

30 new members joined our ranks at the Christmas meeting on the 1st December! We should like to welcome you all, and hope you find lots to do and enjoy with our groups and events. Remember - the website is where you can find everything you need to know about us - [www.u3avalldelpop.com](http://www.u3avalldelpop.com).

## FOR SALE !

### **YAMAHA PORTA-TONE KEYBOARD.**

Model No PSR-303,. Model No PSR-303, YPT-300. Comes with folding stand, Owner's manual, Original Box. Hardly used and in immaculate condition. Genuine reason for sale. €75 ono. Call Carol or Jim on 96 573 2607 Mob 616 103 167. Near Benissa

### **JUICING JACK - Electric Juicer**

This juicer cost €240 euros and has only been used about a dozen times. It is in immaculate condition but just not being used. It needs a good home with someone who will use it to its full potential. It comes with a juicing book, an apron and in its original box. Price €95 ono. Contact Carol or Jim on 96 573 2607.

### **FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON !**

DINNER JACKET AND TAIL COAT ( chest 114 cm / back width 47 cm )  
PANTS ( waist 98 cm / inseam 75 cm )  
CUMBERBAND and BOW TIE ; all in moth proof wool material ; sale of individual pieces can be discussed

Information Yvonne JURGENS -  
Liber 96 573 1415

Vacuum cleaner in working order; needs a new home ! Geoff Slater, Tel: 966481065  
Email: geoffbslater@gmail.com

### **MORE ABOUT THE MOORS OF OUR AREA - by Bill Bradley**

After the excellent talk at the October meeting I remembered the occasion, many years ago, when my husband and I visited La Era Jardin de Te in the Vall de Laguart and were given a leaflet telling us about the Legend of the Caballo Verde.

The Moors who remained out of sight in the hills named their mountain Caballo Verde, (the great green horse who would materialize and protect them forever in their beloved Laguart). However, after the final battle of 1609, those who had survived were rounded up and shipped off to Africa.

Joaquim Borrell was inspired to write his novel "Caballo Verde" when he visited Morocco in 1982 and heard and heard a wrinkled old woman singing a child to sleep. The word "Petraços" caught his attention – a name from his own valley, the Vall del Pop. Intrigued, he had the song translated. It is a song of the dispossessed for their beloved Laguart: the distant views of sea and misty peaks, almond blossom and grapevine. This is the song.

#### **The Moors' Lament**

I was born in a far valley, beyond the waves,  
beautiful between mountains of wild solitude,  
under brilliant sun, surrounded by cherries,  
Allah protect forever the valley of Luguar.  
The bones of my people within that white earth  
Were left in confusion for all eternity.  
O valley of Petraços!  
Your oleanders still preserve reflections of the blood they saw drain away.  
The fresh red sap you store in your inmost heart maintains the seed  
That will never die.  
Laguart, your sweet name , engraved on our lips,  
Is an ardent flame from across the sea,  
Retaining the memory of those who died  
For a green horse that never came.

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. Find “Upcoming Events” and hover over the event which interests you for more details and contact addresses.

### **Forthcoming Events**

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> December** – The Benidorm Christmas special at the Hotel Bali. 4 days/3 nights and includes full board and the Christmas gala meal. Book your tickets at €285 for a double room from Alfarooms.

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January** – Time to stock up after Christmas with the trip to Murcia to shop to your heart's content at Ikea and Primark. Coach leaves the Rastro car park at 8:30.

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January** - The panto at Alcalali. This year, it's Beauty and the Beast (No, not Rod and Jazz!!). Tickets still available at €10.80

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> February** – The tea dance at El Cid's. This starts at 3 o'clock. Tickets are €6 and this includes Victoria sponge and tea and biscuits. How English is that?

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> September** – The Big One!! Following the sailaway success of last year's cruise, Anne and Derek have arranged a cracker. This will go from Barcelona and take in France, Italy, Greece and Turkey. Tickets still available, so phone Anne or Derek to book your place.

### **FUTURE U3A GENERAL MEETINGS**

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January** – Don't forget, this is the one where you renew your subscription, and “Whoopie!” it's only €5 for the year.

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February** – The speaker this month is Eric Olveston, who will be telling us about his African bike ride for charity.

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March** – The general meeting followed by the AGM, so there is no speaker this month.

*Jalon Valley Help will again be Carol Singing around the Christmas Tree on Jalon Market Square this year.*

*Everyone is welcome to come along and join in with traditional carols on Monday 19th December, 7pm to 8pm.*

**COSTA BLANCA MALE  
VOICE CHOIR  
COMMUNITY CAROL CONCERT  
WITH GUESTS  
“THE DOLCE DIVAS”  
BENITACHELL CHURCH  
FRIDAY 16TH DECEMBER  
7PM  
ENTRANCE FREE**

Mince pies and Gluwein after in the Church  
Square

Are you a budding Fred Astaire or Ginger Rogers?

Come and join us at the  
**TEA DANCE**  
Thursday 9th February at El Cid. Starting  
at 3.00 until 6.00  
Cost : 6 euros.  
to include Selection of Sandwiches,  
Victoria Sponge, Chocolate Swiss Roll  
Gourmet biscuits and  
ENGLISH TEA or Coffee.  
Tickets will be available at the GENERAL  
MEETING  
OR TELEPHONE SANDRA 965581353.

You don't have to be good at dancing , just  
come along for a great afternoon.