

U3A Calpe NEWSLETTER

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In this issue

March 2016	1
New members	1
Coming events	1
Winter visitors.....	2
Beniconnect.....	2
Travel and Culture ...	2
Day Trip to Villena	2
Trip to Cordoba and	
Granada	2
Groups	2
Choir	2
Social.....	2
Reports	2
Table Tennis Match	
Calpe U3A vs CCC.	2
Annual Dinner	
Dance	3
A True Story.....	3
My first trip to Spain	4
Peter Purvey's Curious	
Corner.....	5
Answers to February	
Quiz.....	5

Friends/family coming to stay?

Are you getting a little weary of going back and forth to Alicante airport?

You may like to notice my suggestion about *Beniconnect* on page 2!

Hello everyone and welcome to the newsletter for March.

First of all we have the sad news, which by now I am sure has done the rounds of everyone who knew her, that **Shirley Cuesta** has passed away, after moving back to the UK.

We all knew Shirley as the fun loving person she was and she kept in touch with many of her friends after moving back. We will not forget her and she will be missed by many.

New members

The following new members joined us in February.

Rosemary Niedermann
Geuens Rik
Elke Bailey
Peter Simidian
Jean-Claude Fassotte
Irma Lehnen
Christine Grady

We welcome them and hope they enjoy their membership of the Calpe U3A.

Coming events

The next General Meeting will be on **Thursday, 24th March** at the *Hotel Ifach*, at 10:00AM for 10:30.

The speaker will be our Webmaster, Michael Scannell, and President John Pickford.

They will be explaining how to navigate the (very big) U3A Web site, and how to get the most out of it (including how to contribute yourself).

Winter visitors

We have really enjoyed the company of many winter visitors over the last couple of months, many of them from U3As in England.

It is good comparing notes, and we were surprised to learn that some U3A members there pay up to £42 for their membership. What excellent value we have here for €10!

These visiting members were happy to pay membership to attend our groups during their stay, as this is common practice for visitors to UK U3As.

Beniconnect

I received an email from *Beniconnect* that “summer starts on 1st April.” No, it's not an April Fool joke—just their way of saying they have a new more extensive summer timetable—which may interest many of our members as the 'visitor season' approaches.

I can testify that their Web site is easy to navigate and their service is good. Sorry to advertise but there are many (ourselves included) who no longer wish to make repeated trips to Alicante to pick up visitors and like to use this service.

Travel and Culture

Contact Penny and Ellen on the travel team for details of forthcoming trips: ellen.mitchell1@btinternet.com or penelopebrighton@hotmail.com

Also Rod Anderton if you wish to be added to his Cultural Interest Group: tranderton@yahoo.com.

Day Trip to Villena

Departure point for this trip is Esmeralda Hotel at 8:00 AM.

Trip to Cordoba and Granada

For all members going on this trip, the final balance is due by 1st April: this has to be paid into the bank.

All details on our Web site.

Groups

Choir

Calpe U3A Choir are having their Concert in aid of *Caritas*, singing songs from popular musical shows, on **13th April** at the *Salo Blau, Casa de Cultura*, at 7:30 PM.

Tickets, priced at 6 euros, will be on sale at the General Meeting, where Lee O'Neill will be available in the hall.

This is the only opportunity to buy tickets, as our general meeting in April occurs after the concert. If you are unable to attend the next meeting please telephone **96 587 4776** to reserve your ticket.

Social

Anne Melling, Social Group Leader is looking into venues for a summer lunch towards the end of June.

Any ideas would be welcome: why not put a suggestion in the Suggestion Box?

Reports

Table Tennis Match

Calpe U3A vs CCC

By: *Keith Cherry*

A recent table tennis match between Calpe U3A and the German club CCC resulted in the Germans winning 10 games to 9. A very close and hard-fought match, after which we all,

some 42 people, partook in a *paella* and lots of wine—for us, the losers, to console ourselves, and the Germans of course to celebrate.

In all a very enjoyable day. We look forward to the decider to be held later.

Annual Dinner Dance

By: *Ian Taylor*

The U3A annual Christmas dinner and dance for 2015 was a little late this year: 27th February 2016 to be precise! But it was definitely worth waiting for.



About 140 attended the event, which was held at the Venta de Chata, a new location for Calpe U3A. It's a beautifully restored old *finca* with fabulous views over Calpe and the *Ifach*.

The members were welcomed by our president, John Pickford and Teresa along with the organiser, Ann Melling, who did a wonderful job at all the details which go along with such a prestigious event. The round tables were wonderfully presented as we all enjoyed the various courses, complemented by inclusive wines and drinks. Following the delicious meal, we were entertained by the duo *Timewarp* who did their job very well, filling the dance floor with expats who were out to enjoy themselves from the very start.

What a fabulous evening of fun and laughter—just what the U3A should be about and all at a very competitive price. Our thanks to all involved who made the event so special.

Note: many more photos of the event can be found in a shared area of John Pickford's OneDrive:

<https://onedrive.live.com/redir?resid=3F164AF39C0F0051!4362&authkey=!AEAwFL9KPAneBnA&ithint=folder%2c>

A True Story

By: *Keith Cherry*

When I was a young apprentice carpenter a few years ago or so—well all right fifty five years ago—I worked in a place called Windsor Castle. Now this is a place where, unlike your home, if you pull up a floorboard it was dusty underneath, if you took up a floorboard in the castle it was packed with dust along the whole of the underside of the floorboard, everything you touched produced a cloud. It was like working in a London smog; we could not see across the room where we worked.

Now to the crux of my story. One unsuspecting day a whisper went round that the Queen was coming round; well this was poo-pooed straightaway as you might expect. The Queen coming to our dirty dust filled building site. I don't think so.

Anyway, tea break arrived and all the workers except the site foreman, as he was called in those days, retired to a large room with two doors in opposite corners, to partake in what was claimed to be tea—brewed, no, stewed—in a galvanised bucket, left boiling over a gas ring, and then ladled into your tin mug. Yuk.

Suddenly the door opened, and a head popped round, and gave us one

of those knowing looks, then a man stepped in who looked to be about eight feet tall. With us by now looking at him, palms up he raised his hands sharply. The reaction to this was for every man in the room to stand up like he had springs under his bum. And yes, you've got it, in walked Her Majesty with two corgis in tow, stood for some time whilst the tall man who seemed to know what he was talking about explained what was happening. The Queen then turned to one of the workers, all of us still standing, and suggested we pick up our teas because the corgis would drink it. Well, not wanting to get into trouble with HM for killing corgis we promptly picked them up. At which point the aforementioned foreman stepped through the other door saying, (I quote) "Come on, you lot, I have heard the Queen is ... Oh!" Then, rather embarrassed, he realised it was too late. He was then introduced to HM. Lucky beggar. All's well that ends well.

However, one still to this day, dines out on this story. They left after about five minutes.

My first trip to Spain

By: *Jen Smith*

During the early 60s my sister and I decided to go to the Costa Brava for two weeks' holiday with friends. I began the journey in Newport with the car, an Austin A40 loaned by my mother, carefully packed. Tent, sleeping bags and tins of food (including tins of butter) enough to last two weeks, all packed away in a roof box that my mother and I had constructed from Dexion and aluminium sheets!

First stop Oxford and the Radcliffe Infirmary, to collect my sister and her friend, both first-year trainee nurses and then on to Reading station to

meet my friend, also a nurse, who was working in Edinburgh. Long drive then, no motorways, to Lydd airport in Kent where we were to fly in a Silver City Bristol aircraft to Le Touquet. All very excited as first flight ever. Two other cars plus ours and passengers were all quickly loaded and we were soon airborne, landing in France 25 minutes later. Cost then was £24 per car and £5 per passenger which in today's money would be £500 per car and £80 per passenger. (My gross wages then £10 ten shillings a week before tax and NI, but I had earned extra holiday money by painting a neighbour's railings and cutting hedges etc.)

Landing in France presented the first problem. The car had to be pushed off the plane onto the runway as it would not start. Once on firm ground it eventually started and we were 'off to go' along the long straight, tree-lined roads in France, following instructions in our yellow bound note book AA route to Spain. No motorways then and with three drivers on board we took it in turn to drive non stop to Tossa de Mar.

Finally arrived, tired but very excited, at our camping site and quickly erected the ridge tent, which was painted in camouflage green, having been used during the war. Thoroughly enjoyed our days of camping with meals prepared on Primus Stove in a biscuit tin! Quickly discovered the wine, which was safer to drink than the water, and went down very well in our plastic tumblers. Purifying tablets had to be used in the drinking water giving it a strange taste. Most of our holiday spent on the beach but we did drive along a very twisty, bumpy country road to Barcelona to see the much talked about playing fountains. Journey back that night in dark, to our camping site, where we had arranged a late night pass, was a

little hair raising but we were thankful to get to our 'beds'—lilos and sleeping bags on the floor. All too soon our two-week holiday came to an end and we carefully repacked for long journey back.

All went well until the French side of Pyrenees. Exhaust pipe strap broke so fixed it back with wire. Finally it fell off so we had no choice but to strap it on roof rack. Three nurses aboard were all convinced we would get gassed from fumes so we travelled through the night with windows open! Next problem was fuel running low and no petrol stations open. Remedy: knock up a *Gendarme*! Our luck was in as he knocked up owner of petrol station, who, hearing the exhaust noise decided to fix back the exhaust for us before filling up with fuel. All fixed, fuel paid for and no charge for work on exhaust, we were soon away, driving non stop to catch our plane in Le Touquet back to Britain.

After dropping my sister and friends off at the various points I returned to Wales feeling as if I had been on an expedition. Naturally my mother was very relieved to see me back safely and pleased to have her car back.

For a very nervous 21-year-old it had been a great achievement!

My next road trip to Spain was in 1973 when we found Calpe and became the first owners on Marisol Park. That journey is another story!

Note: by 1960 Silver City aircraft had made 40,000 flights, carried 90,000 vehicles and 220,000 passengers. Stars of screen and stage, politicians and members of the Royal Family, all found Silver City the way to travel to France. Lydd airport at that time was carrying more passengers than Heathrow. Silver City Airways finally closed down in 1963 with the introduction of roll-on/roll-off ferries.

Peter Purvey's Curious Corner

Forever Amber

A randy daddy long legs and a new flower species.

A piece of amber recently discovered in Burma was found to contain a daddy long legs with a huge fully erect penis. The poor thing was just getting ready for an amorous encounter when it became encapsulated in a piece of amber where it has remained for for almost one hundred million years. Because of its size It has been awarded the distinction of being named a new species.

A new flower species has been found, perfectly preserved in a piece of amber where it has lain for the last fifteen million years.

(How about digging out that old amber necklace or ring—you never know what you might find.)

Einstein Centenary

Just 100 years ago Albert Einstein gave us $E=Mc^2$ and his prediction of gravity waves. These ripples in the very fabric of space-time have at last now been confirmed.

For Men only!

Dr Adam Roberts, on the BBC's *Today* programme, reported the discovery that some bacteria species are able to produce natural antibiotics. And where were they found? Living in men's face beards. So if your doctor prescribes an antibiotic (and goodness knows we need some new ones) grow a beard !

Answers to February Quiz

By: *John Pickford*

1. Which Company Created The First Digital Camera?

Answer: Kodak.

If you were an early adopter of digital cameras, there's a good chance that you thought of your mid-to-late 1990s digital camera as a revolutionary but bulky and slow device. Those old Sony Mavicas with their floppy disk drives, 0.3 megapixel resolution, and brick-like construction have absolutely nothing on the first digital camera when it comes to heft and slow operation.

The first digital camera was a product of research conducted in the Eastman Kodak labs by engineer Steven Sasson. In the winter of 1975 he created a device that was a veritable Frankenstein of cobbled together parts. The lens was from a Super 8 movie camera, a portable digital cassette recorder served as the storage, 16 NiCad batteries powered it, and an experimental CCD array served as the digital film that captured the image. The whole thing was packed into large frame stuffed with digital and analogue circuit boards to control the entire operation.

The 8 pound monster could take one picture every half minute and required another half minute to process the photo and display it. The results were displayed on a standard television set.

It would be nearly two decades before a commercial digital camera hit the market and, ironically, Kodak was beat to the punch. Despite inventing the whole process, the first digital camera on the market was the Logitech Fotoman, released in 1990. A year later Kodak released the DCS-100, the first digital SLR; it retailed for a whopping \$13,000 and less than 1,000 were sold.

Although Kodak was a leading innovator in both film and digital

photography throughout the 20th century, the company found itself in decline by the early 21st century. Due to economic woes and shifting markets, Kodak announced in early 2012 that they were shutting down their camera divisions.

2. Extensive Human Engineering Helps Preserve Which Of These Natural Wonders?

Answer: Niagara Falls.

The general rule of natural wonder stewardship is to leave nature alone: we set aside nature preserves, fence off geysers, and stop people from altering the land. In the case of Niagara Falls, however, a little intervention is required to keep all that rushing water, the very thing that makes Niagara Falls so incredible, from destroying the falls.

The combined falls (Horseshoe, American, and Bridal Veil), located on the Niagara River (which drains Lake Erie into Lake Ontario), form the highest flow rate of any waterfall in the world. During peak flow, 225,000 cubic feet of water can cascade over the falls each second (although the yearly average is 85,000 cubic feet per second). Historically the high rate of water flow lead to an erosion of approximately three feet per year. Engineering projects intended to both harness the huge amount of water for hydroelectric projects and to preserve the falls have reduced the yearly erosion rate to only one foot per year.

Still, even with human intervention the current rate of erosion means that 50,000 years from now the erosion will have completely worn the rock back all 20 miles to Lake Erie and the falls will cease to exist (replaced instead with a canyon carved down through the surrounding rock).

3. The Tomb Of Which Famed Ruler Is Said To Be Hidden Beneath A Diverted River?

Answer: Genghis Khan

Despite the reach and power of his empire and the awe inducing size of his armies and entourage, the Mongolian conqueror Genghis Khan requested that his burial site be hidden with no markings, no signs, and most definitely no visible temple, tomb, or other structure.

After centuries of speculation and searching, including earnest efforts involving excavations and the dedicated work of scholars, the burial site of Genghis Khan has never been located. It is widely believed that he was buried near his alleged birthplace close to the Onon River in Mongolia, but it is just as possible he was buried at a location somewhere else in his empire. Compounding the search process is the larger problem: there is no accurate historical record of what happened after the death of the great conqueror. In fact, a prominent legend on the matter, passed down by oral history in the region, is that the funeral escort killed anyone and anything that crossed their path on the way to the burial site, that Khan was buried in a subterranean tomb and the slaves who constructed it were killed by his soldiers and then, in grisly turn, those soldiers were killed by other soldiers who had no knowledge of the location of the tomb.

That alone would make it difficult enough to locate, but to add further complexity to the search, a parallel legend also states that the slaves who built the tomb also excavated the area so thoroughly that they rerouted a river to conceal the site of burial.

While it's always possible (and more than likely) such great tales are the

product of Genghis Khan's larger than life achievements and not necessarily the truth of his actual burial, it's also always possible that future archaeologists may find evidence via satellite analysis that such a project was in fact undertaken.