

# U3A Calpe NEWSLETTER

Suite 416, Total Postal • Calle Corbeta 10 • 03710 Calpe

[www.u3acalpe.org](http://www.u3acalpe.org)

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## U3A Annual Quiz Night

This will be on the 28th October

More details will be published in our next edition, and on our Web site.

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Hello everyone and welcome back to the world of the U3A Calpe.

Your Committee hopes you have had a good summer wherever you have been and are looking forward to getting back into the swing of our winter season of activities. I am sure you will all agree with me that it will be wonderful to get our roads and car parks back from all the tourists!

The Groups resume their meetings any time soon and I am sure we all look forward to meeting up with our friends and stretching the remaining brain cells which have not been fried in the sun a little.

This summer has been a complete break for your committee and I am sure we have all benefited from it.

## Coming events

The next General Meeting will be on **Thursday, 22nd September** at the *Hotel Ifach*, at 10:00AM for 10:30.

The speaker will be our member David Shute, whose subject will be 'Behind the Scenes at Pebble Mill.' It will be an interesting talk and we look forward to it

## Keep us informed!

I hope you will forward any news items for next time: remember we cannot produce a Newsletter without your input.

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## **Sad News**

a former member of our U3A, Jan Mitchell passed away on Saturday, 27th August, after an operation due to heart problems.

Our Vice-President, Diane Putnam, says, "Some of my favourite memories of trips with Jan and Arthur include Acapulco and the Falklands on the South American cruise that some 15 of us enjoyed. Jan, as part of the committee, was a very capable and active travel organiser for our U3A."

Diane also recalls the China trip in 2008, when Jan managed to get 49 members around this vast country by boat, trains and planes—ably assisted by her husband Arthur.

Further tributes have appeared on our Web site.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to Arthur and their daughters and families.

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## **Committee elections**

One thing we talk about with monotonous regularity is the topic of Committee members.

### **Vacant positions**

Several key positions, without which our U3A cannot function constitutionally, will become vacant at the AGM in November.

*Please*, especially newer members with fresh ideas, consider putting your own name forward to join this small committee.

It's not scary and if the workload is fairly shared it is not too onerous. You simply need to be competent in Word or Excel, as appropriate to the post, and be a team player.

We will be bringing some application forms to the next meeting and hope to be deluged with names!

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## **Travel and Culture**

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

Also Rod Anderton if you wish to be added to his Cultural Interest Group: [tranderton@yahoo.com](mailto:tranderton@yahoo.com).

### **Cofrentes and the Honey Festival at Ayora**

**7th – 9th October**

This was a trip much enjoyed a few years ago. There is a suggested itinerary on our Web site

### **Day trip to a brewery in Xátiva**

**5th November**

This will take in lunch and a visit to the castle. All the details are on our Web site

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## **Reports**

### **Day trip to the Valor Chocolate Factory and the Canelobre caves**

By: *Gordon Green*

I cannot find enough superlatives to describe this day.

After leaving Calpe we made the relatively short journey to Villajoysa where the Valor chocolate factory and museum is located. We were warmly greeted by the Valor representative and then given a short video of the factory's long history. Valor Chocolate is the foremost in Spain with exports worldwide. Always family owned, with

the current owners being the fourth generation, the last of the third generation dying only a short time ago at the age of ninety eight.

The museum contained original samples of the chocolate making machinery going back almost a hundred and forty years, the original coffee beans being brought from the coast of Guinea by Spanish fishermen. A very interesting if short tour of the incredibly sophisticated and hyper clean production lines followed, especially interesting for those of us with engineering backgrounds.

Having completed the tour it was time for what everyone was waiting for: the tasting and shop. And we were not disappointed. The array of chocolate bars, drinking chocolate and a mind boggling variety of soft-centred chocolates, many set out on plates for our delectation, sent all of us diving for our wallets.

The next step on our itinerary was Lunch. The travel team had selected a restaurant overlooking the port at Campello. This restaurant treated us to a three-course meal that was nothing short of superb. Although there were a lot of us to contend with it didn't faze the staff one iota and there was a good choice from the menu including a bottle of wine (between two). By the time we'd finished all most of us wanted to do was our feet up and have a kip.

But no, onward and upward (quite literally) we set off again for the third step of the day. This time it was to the Canelobre caves or literally translated Candelabra caves. Eventually we would see why it is called this. The caves are set high in the mountains to the north of Alicante, the coach taking a little over forty minutes to climb to the entrance of the caves. When we all stepped

down from the coach we were pretty high and the view was a staggering panorama of plains and hills, stretching away to the sea in the far distance.

We were taken into the caves via a set piece photo-shoot. Visitors were able to purchase the photographs on leaving. I mention the photo-shoot because from there we passed through a door into a space that drew a gasp from everyone that entered. We were in a cave that was so vast that I truly believe you could have set St Paul's Cathedral in there, quite staggering. The stalactites and stalagmites remind you of enormous candelabra hence the cave's name. They have been sitting there in a beautifully cool seventeen degrees quietly growing for 800,000 years—actually that's not quite true because during the Spanish Civil War the caves were used to assemble and repair aircraft engines, shattering the quiet and doing untold damage to the ecology of the surroundings. However that was a long time ago and the caves have recovered sufficiently to give all the visitors an unforgettable experience.

Overall a thoroughly enjoyable day. It only remains for me on behalf of all of us who went on this trip to thank Penny, Ellen and John for making the day such a memorable one.

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## ***A Musical Cat***

By: *Mary Groser*

*(The following story by Mary Groser was originally printed in Round Town News.)*

My beautiful, golden eyed, ginger young cat, Bertie has convinced me that he is turned on by Mozart, especially his magical slow

movements, which also obsess his owner.

Last week Bertie and his mate Mickey (grey and white and a totally different personality) were rolling over each other in a friendly fight. From the radio came the warm seductive tones of the Clarinet Concerto slow movement. The cats separated suddenly; Bertie leapt onto me in my armchair, stretched himself out with front paws on my chest, closed his golden eyes and adopted a smiling expression. No, I was not imagining things, I am willing to swear his face seemed almost seraphic. We were both under Mozart's spell.

Today a repeated experience, this time with the sublime slow movement of the Sinfonia Concertante for violin and viola. Bertie's expression seemed to me almost more ecstatic than last week. To attempt to prove my theory, a few hours later I played a CD of the same movement. I could hardly believe that this had exactly the same effect on Bertie as before.

What do readers of my letter think? To query Shakespeare, could music be the food of love for animals as well as humans? Maybe Bertie's name should be changed to Wolfie!

*(Has anyone else had a similar musical experience? Years ago we had a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel puppy—coincidentally also called Bertie—who used to go potty at the track 'The Walk of Life' on our Dire Straits CD—which was very popular at the time.)*

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### **Peter Purvey's Curious Corner**

Some scientists are proposing sending very small spacecraft to the nearest stars, propelled by lasers from earth. Eventually they would

reach almost light speed. (A waste of money?)

A random 585 bank customers were asked on leaving what made them happy. The answer: a good bank balance! (Very predictable.)

Recently found mastodon bones in Florida, together with associated stone tools, is evidence of humans having a feast 14,500 years ago. This is a thousand years before scientists believed the South-East United States was settled by humans. (Rewrite the history books, again!)

The much vaunted discovery of a ninth planet is only a hopeful mathematical prediction, following years of studying thousands of Kuiper belt objects whose orbits are being affected by an unknown object. They predict a trajectory that would take it 20,000 years to complete one revolution round the sun. (So far unseen, here's a great opportunity for back-yard astronomy fame.)

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### **Holiday complaints**

I could not resist the following which made me smile: I can't remember where I found them (maybe the AFPO magazine).

1) "Spotting the visibly aroused elephant ruined my honeymoon in Thailand by making me feel inadequate."

2) "The Fanta orange in Spain was a lot more Fanta-y than the Fanta at home."

3) "I think it should be explained in the brochure that the local store does not sell proper biscuits like custard creams or ginger nuts."

- 4) "You said the town was next to a volcano, but we went and there was no lava. I'm pretty sure it was just a mountain."
- 5) "No one told us there would be fish in the sea. The children were startled."
- 6) "My fiancé and I booked a twin-bedded room but we were placed in a double. I'm now pregnant."
- 7) "The bottle of shampoo provided at the hotel was clearly meant for midgets."
- 8) "There was a do not disturb sign on the back of my door in my room. I was confused and thought the staff had locked me in."
- 9) "The miniature golf was too small."
- 10) "Our jug of sangria didn't have a wide-ranging fruit selection in it."
- 11) "We went to Turkey and there was far too many Turkish people for our liking."
- 12) "The waiters were too nice so I felt obliged to tip them more and spent far more money than I would have liked."
- 13) "The food was so cheap by the time we got home I'd put on half a stone."
- 14) "The beach was full of kids making sand castles and noise. It was difficult to concentrate on my book."
- 15) "The beans on my Full English definitely weren't Heinz."

I hope you fared a little better if you went away!

Janet Bond