

# Summer Edition

## Newsletter

### Introduction

What a summer, heatwave, bulls running through the streets, fiestas, nowhere to park, houses full of non-paying guests and music through the night. But it is now the end of July and summer is half over so please make the most of it. Winter is long!

We have done a combined June and July newsletter as we have had fewer events. But Denia has not let us down. What a week of fiestas. The parade of floats was sensational, the ideas, colours and creativity had spectators gazing in wonder. And the firework display was magnificent.

I know it is tempting fate to write about the Bous a la Mar (bulls in the sea) Festival. This has been held for over a hundred years in honour of the patron of the city and to commemorate the Day of the Sacred Blood. Local lads try to drive the bulls into the sea without pushing or touching them. To Brits this is outrageous but we are in Spain and it is their tradition. I went to watch it and saw something I will never forget. When the bull is obviously far too intelligent to go near the sea and is tired of chasing the lads around, they bring out his mother. These are enormous cows, even Google could not tell me the breed. She walks into the ring, very dignified, no fear and the bull sees her and just trots up, nuzzles her and they leave the ring together. Every bull which goes into the ring has mother in the wings. It was awesome.





## Racket Ball

Albeit similar to decent interest rates on savings, we are a bit thin on the ground however, considering we have three players missing right now we have had a good start to the RB summer doubles campaign.

The first week saw four players coming to grips with the vagaries of playing doubles (not easy but fun) when both teams fought it out for an honourable draw.

Last week was a little easier as the same two teams managed a five stroke rally in one game so somebody had one stroke they did not expect.

With the onset of warmer weather, singles matches will be the usual hot house environment running around in a non air conditioned building, which is where our summer doubles league comes into its own, perhaps not as tough as singles matches but a good work out nevertheless, I hope to start the summer league officially 25th June with Dave, John, Graham & myself being the main protagonists.

Hopefully by September we shall have a result with the winners being rewarded with a prize that will reflect their efforts.

Ergo, if anybody out there would like try our new format whilst losing a pound, oops sorry kilo, not to mention any inhibitions, you're welcome.



## Singles Get-Together

The singles get together is growing rapidly but still not enough members. Where are you all? Come and join us. We had a lovely afternoon on the terrace at Club Nautico in July.

The Singles Get-Together is a group of single people who meet regularly. We can sharpen up our cooking skills by hosting a dinner party or barbecue (no haute cuisine required!). We also meet at restaurants for lunch or dinner or just catch up over coffee or a glass of wine; there really is no limit and we are open to new ideas. If you would like to join us please email Mia [singles@u3ade-nia.com](mailto:singles@u3ade-nia.com).

## Easy Cycling Group

A few friends made a lovely cycling trip on 19th June, beginning in Font Saladar, through to Pego and ending at the Margel rice fields. The group takes it easy, no strenuous cycling and no racing. They have a leisurely trip with a lot of fun and see interesting places. Do feel free to join them. Electric bikes are also welcomed.





## Patanca Group

The petanca group is struggling on through the exceptionally hot weather.

Numbers have reduced as expected in July. Some of our members have escaped the heat back to the UK and others have visitors or just can't cope with the heat.

We have changed our game because of the reduced numbers and are playing a 'singles' game for July and August. But we still have enough players to play for the sought after prize of .....wine .

Today a French couple came along to see if they could play. They were invited to join us as guests even though they only come along to enquire. The result ... they are joining the U3A and coming along next week. As well as the usual mix of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish, we have Belgian and French members. Quite a cosmopolitan bunch.

*2 July George and Peter but hot today  
16 July Cormac winner and Peter runner  
up a bit hotter  
23 July Norman winner and John  
runner up. hottest yet !!!!!*





## Intercambio

I continue to be surprised at the ease with which people from many different kinds of backgrounds find something to enjoy in the Intercambio / Meet and Learn scheme. What do they have in common? A wish to improve their language skills and an open-mindedness to consider different cultural backgrounds. Although the scheme is designed to appeal to English and Spanish speakers, we have people from many nationalities who are occasional or regular attendees at the Friday Intercambio meetings, the pub quizzes and the group excursions.

This year has been as busy and varied as any I've been involved in since I took over responsibility for representing the U3A on the scheme. Some of you may remember that I said I'd do it till you found someone else. Well that was around 6 years ago so I guess it ain't gonna happen now! (and nor do I want it to!)

### ***Matching up suitable Intercambio pairs***

The main element of the scheme, which you won't find anywhere else to our knowledge, is the development of the database that allows us to match Spanish speakers who want to improve their English with English speakers who want to improve their Spanish. My friend Enric Gil from the Denia Council co-ordinates this and during 2018 we matched 41 English / Spanish partnerships. Of course we don't keep in touch with everyone so if your Intercambio partnership isn't working for any reason please let us know and we'll find you someone else. Also, if you'd like to be linked to a partner for the first time again, let me know. My email address and mobile number are at the end of this article.

### ***Intercambio Pub Quizzes in Restaurante Amazing***

It's truly amazing (no pun intended) how successful the Intercambio Pub Quizzes have become. In the past 12 months Enric, Nieves Juan, who's from the official language school in Denia (EOI), and I have put on 5 quizzes with regular attendants around the 100 mark and a record 125 in the spring of this year.



*Friday night meeting at the Bar Amazing*

We've varied the format slightly with the introduction of a picture round which seems to be popular as it ensures everyone in the team is participating. The next quiz will probably be in October.

### ***Friday informal "drop-in" at Restaurante Amazing***

For many Brits who don't live here all year and don't feel able to make the commitment to have an individual partner, this is the (almost) perfect option to find someone with whom to practice your Spanish. I say almost as we never know exactly how many Spanish speakers will come although recently numbers have been excellent. We meet from around 6.30 to 8.30pm every Friday almost without fail, although during holidays attendance varies. In summer we meet at the tables in the street but in the colder weather we're of course inside. We've consistently had between become a social occasion in its own right, helping people to make new friendships. Often a group will continue the social experience by trying some beer and tapas in Calle Loreto afterwards!

### ***Other Intercambio Social events***

Another popular event has been the Speed Chatting, although the poor acoustics in Restaurante Amazing limits the numbers we can comfortably accommodate. I think we had 50 in the June event which was fine and there was a good mixture of Spanish and

English speakers in the end. We'll keep looking for an alternative venue for this activity – any ideas let me know.

Those involved in the Friday Intercambio at Restaurante Amazing have had the opportunity of some different outings this year.

### ***Cycle Ride***

Like other years I lead a cycle ride from Dénia through the Marjal de Oliva y Pego to the Font Salada. Although it's a 50km round trip it's mostly flat and there's the attraction of the opportunity for a swim and coffee or beer at the Font Salada to refresh those muscles! The Marjal is always such a treasure of bird and animal wildlife; we're so lucky to have this area on our doorstep.

### ***Boat Ride, Picnic and Walk***

In May a group of about 30 of us took the boat from Dénia to Xabia and walked up to the picnic site on Los Planes, via the Cabo de San Antonio. There we were joined by other friends who had come by car and were kindly bringing extra drinks and other refreshments. Then a slightly reduced group took the path back to Dénia via the Torre del Gerro and Las Rotas. We had left Denia at 10am and arrived back at Restaurant Mena at around 2.30. Honestly, not as far as some people had imagined and a really successful day.

### ***Visit to the Monastery of Santa Maria de la Valldigna***

Finally, a group of 20 in shared cars visited this fascinating monastery near Gandía. Our

guide was Josep, a retired teacher from one of the local secondary schools and regular attendee at the Friday gatherings. What made his impressive knowledge of the history and local significance of this monastery even more interesting was that he grew up in the village where it's located (Simat de La Valldigna) and could tell us lots of anecdotes not just about the restoration process but also running around the ruins as a teenager looking for treasure!

So people who have decided to participate in the Intercambio scheme have had the opportunity not just to meet new people, not just to have the opportunity to improve their Spanish which it undoubtedly does, but also to learn about the life and culture of the area where we've made our new home and to make some real and lasting friendships.

### ***An important anniversary***

This autumn the Intercambio / Meet and Learn project will be 10 years old. After the holidays we will meet up to plan how we can mark this event so keep an eye out for this information. In the meantime, if you have any stories, anecdotes or experiences of the scheme which you could share with me that we can use, anonymously if you're shy, I'd be delighted to receive them.

### ***Volunteers in schools.***

Finally, although this wasn't strictly part of the Intercambio project, I'm pleased to have helped a primary school in Ondara and two primary schools and a secondary school in Denia find some native English speakers to act volunteer helpers in English classes with the children. They still need to expand their available pool of people so again, if you're interested let me know.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this article. Any comments, questions, stories, experiences etc. please feel free to contact me on [neil.weatherall85mail.com](mailto:neil.weatherall85mail.com) or via my mobile with Whatsapp +34 634 31 87 36

Hope to see you at one of our events soon!

*Neil Weatherall*



*visit to the monestery Santa Maria de la Valldigna*



## Backgammon

Hello my Gammoneers, a good turn out for the 'BUMA' Trophy which meant sixteen rounds were played to provide eventual winner who was Maggie to rapturous applause seen receiving her prestigious, priceless, 'BUMA' award and a quality bottle of wine. Well done Maggie. This was followed by our monthly meal at Ya Oo (I think). Next Friday we will be playing for points at the new time of 11.00am start. See you then, Hasta Pronto, Dave.

Maggie Whitmore won the July trophy



## June Memories

Many members braved it to the beach for the San Juan Festival, or Bonfires of Saint John, held on 23rd June. This festival relates to the summer solstice when bonfires were lit to



## Diary Reminders

There are no events planned for August but all the group activities will continue as usual. Please don't forget the coffee mornings at Cafe Soles on Saturday 3rd, 17th and 31st. These are great occasions to meet old friends and make new ones. Cafe Soles are very happy for us to meet there but the staff only serve the drinks and food. They do not have to move tables for us or find cushions. That is down to us.

In September we have the Denia Allotment Open Day on Sunday 22nd.

The next members meeting will be held on Thursday 12 September at the Cultura de Dénia at 11am. Our speaker this month is Rosa Mansell, ex Children's education worker in Africa.



protect against evil spirits which were believed to roam freely when the sun was turning towards the south. As always, when Dénia U3A members get together, there was plenty of food, booze and laughter and the unexpected pleasure of a little concert from the ukulele group!



## Allotment Group

This years Allotment Open Day will feature a **cake competition!**

Dénia and the surrounding villages are famous as gastronomic centres so finding the best baker seems appropriate.

After judging, all entries will be used to gain donations at our tea and cake stall, either in slices or as complete item.

We have invited Olivia's own domestic goddess, Pam O'Neil to be the judge.

There will be one overall winner in each category:

- A loaf of bread
- A biscuit
- A Tray bake
- A tart
- A Cake of any description

Simply what ever is your favourite bake.

The appearance will of course be important but Pam has a vast knowledge of everything to do with food and will define flavours and ingredients.

There will be no favouritism regarding age, sex, religion or hair colour but a twenty euro note to the judge may illicit some influence!

Seriously, we are simply all about your best bake ever. The prize is only a token but the main prize is winning. You will be 'the best bake of Denia and surrounding areas.'

All entries must be in by 2.00pm with your name and phone number.

The open day starts at 1 pm with a delicious lunch from our food stalls.

Pam will begin the judging at 2.30.

And at 3.00pm Betty and Pearl will have the tea tent steaming and the cakes awaiting. (Pete, Pams' husband, is banned from entry).

There is a fridge but please be mindful of fresh cream melting away before we can even see your entry

Please call Pauline +44789189487 For any additional information





## Editors Notes

We have The Allotment Open Day to look forward to on 22nd September and this year there will be a cake competition. I went last year and despite the rain it was a fantastic experience. The U3A Dènia allotments are a sight to behold. The produce and flowers of allotment owners would enhance The Prada. Plenty of stalls selling hot food, beer, wine, cava and cold drinks, a book stall and lots more. Do go, you will love it.

Many members have taken holidays in Spain during June. I went to Figueres to see the Dali Museum. Well worth a visit and an hour away from Coulioure in France and a

delicious seafood lunch with French wine. Others have been to Asturias, Extremadura and Galicia and thoroughly enjoyed it. There is a lot to see in this country, travel is easy and hotels inexpensive. I also went with the travel group to Guadalest and Algar Falls, loads to see, fair bit of walking but great day out. Can I just put in a reminder that u3a is about meeting people and if someone is alone at an event please talk to them and invite them to join you.

Enjoy the remainder of the summer and keep applying the sunscreen. Next newsletter will be in September.

## Recipe

We have had a request to ask members for a favourite recipe which we can all enjoy. Our first is a Tex-Mex Salad sent in by Chef Talia

### **TEX-MEX SALAD**

Jar of red kidney beans, drained, rinsed and returned to the jar

#### **For the marinade**

6 tbsp extra virgin olive oil 3tbsp red wine vinegar

1/2 tsp salt

2 tsp ground cumin

Clove of garlic, crushed 1 tsp chilli paste to taste

#### **For the salad**

Finely shredded lettuce, leaves or spinach, 1/2 red pepper, sliced

Small tin of sweetcorn, drained

Two large tomatoes, sliced Small cucumber, deseeded and sliced into cubes. Small red onion, sliced into rings

Two medium carrots, grated

3 tbsp coriander leaf, chopped

Shake together the dressing ingredients and taste for seasoning. Pour over the jar of beans and leave to marinate for an hour.

This salad looks very pretty if served in a glass dish, preferably a straight-sided one. Assemble



the salad ingredients in coloured layers. Pour over the beans and marinade and sprinkle with chopped coriander to serve.  
*Chef Talia.*