



University of the Third Age

REVIEW OF THE YEAR
SEPTEMBER 2008 - JUNE 2009

www.u3a-oliva.org

From the President

The first two years have been very positive for U3A Oliva. We now have over four hundred members and twenty eight groups offering a



range of activities. Our objective is to enhance the mental, physical and social wellbeing of our members. I hope you feel we have succeeded, at least in part.

One mental challenge we have all faced has been adapting to Information Technology. Our 'younger' members probably had to interface with I.T. in the latter part of their working lives. For 'older' members, computers were not part of their everyday lives and they are probably self taught or have attended one of U3A Oliva's excellent IT groups. One of the ways we achieve mental 'enhancement' is to share our knowledge and skill with others.

The physical wellbeing of members is well catered for in U3A Oliva. The groups reflect the demand and it is encouraging that the Keep Fit, Tai Chi, Dancing and Walking groups are so well supported.

The word 'social' does not just mean having a drink in a bar! Of course the social aspect of having a meal together is good fun and positive and an opportunity to get to know new people. However the real benefit lies in pursuing interests and activities together.

I am particularly proud of the Caring element within the Association, which provides support not only for our members, with the Almoner's role and the Solos group, but also for the wider community with our chosen Charity "El Bastidor" and previously the Red Cross.

My aim in the future is to try to integrate with the Spanish population of Oliva, sharing those activities, such as Petanque, ballroom dancing

and art, where language does not create barriers.

Finally, I thank the Committee and Group Leaders who give so freely of their time, enthusiasm and expertise to ensure that U3A Oliva continues to enhance our lives.

Joe Bellenie

From the Travel & Events co-ordinator

Apart from the regular monthly events of Tenpin Bowling and Quiz Nights, initially it was difficult to elicit enthusiasm from the membership. But this year has seen a gradual increase in interest, indicating that we are learning what our members want (as they are generally reluctant to say, leaving us to guess).



We have offered four coach trips this year. The Albufera one was just viable but lost out to bad weather and the Oliver! Trip was under-subscribed. We thought that the Valencia Fallas trip would go the same way but in the end we had more than enough to run it. Finally the trip to the Gandia Winery has sold out and was a brilliant finish to the session. Our biggest successes have been our social evenings - the Christmas Dinner and May Ball - which each attracted over 160 people.

The History Group has made several visits, the most popular being to the Monastery of San Jeroni. In May sixteen Wednesday Walkers went on a memorable two day excursion to Chulilla. It is hoped that more Groups will organise visits next year.

This year's Christmas Dinner is being planned and details will be announced soon. February saw our first, and so far only, 'Fine Dining' evening at Bhudda Eyes in Pego. We were overwhelmed

with the response of 38, which nearly filled the restaurant. More of these are planned but finding a calendar slot and the resources to organise one have meant postponing until the new session.

Finally my thanks to the team - Glen and Lynda - for their hard work and support. Special thanks must also go to Valerie Robinson for making the wonderful tickets, table decorations and place cards for the May Ball.

Geoff Evans

From the Groups' co-ordinator

My first visit to the U3A monthly meeting was in



January 2008. I found the reception cool and the hall positively arctic, so as soon as I arrived home I emailed El Presidente and told him so... The next thing I knew I was sitting in a bar in

Oliva, being 'asked' to be Groups Coordinator!

The very next month was the Group leaders Conference which sent a bit of a chill down my spine. And so the months have rolled by till we come to the present where we are nearing 30 Group Leaders, all giving their time freely for the benefit of you members. Some have even offered to increase their input come September... all very good news.

Of course there have been uncomfortable moments but they were brief and soon forgotten so for most of the past 18 months I have enjoyed the role immensely. Meeting new people for me is the very essence of life and I have met many of you now in different groups and can only say it has been a pleasure which I shall miss in my new life in France.

I cannot take you all with me as my next home is a shoebox by current standards but I have left my details with the committee so if you are passing through you can call in for a brew or

even a casual libation for the non drivers. I am sure the Oliva U3A will grow in numbers and strength over the coming years and now that you have been accepted into the local community your fame and good works will spread like a bush fire, which only leaves me to commend the new Groups Coordinator, Karmanie Hastings, to you and to bid you Au Revoir.

Nella Price

From the Almoner

As most of you will be aware I am giving up the role of Almoner for the U3A. I have had an enjoyable and rewarding two years and would like to thank all those members who have offered the use of their equipment such as wheelchairs, walkers and much more. Also thanks to all of you who have given your services in a voluntary capacity to help in an emergency in whatever way you feel able, be it translating at the hospital or the doctors, shopping, or transport.



The role of the Almoner is to put people who need help in touch with those who can give help on a short term basis, in order to give them time to assess their needs before making more permanent arrangements.

Over the past two years several people have benefited from this service, and I believe it has been very successful. It would be a rewarding role for someone to take on in September, so please give this some thought over the holiday period.

Thank you all again and I will see you in September.

Pamela Barsby

From the Press Officer: Democracy and the U3A - a personal reflection

With so many achievements in the first two years of its existence it would be easy to become complacent about the future of our association.

Most of us hope the U3A will continue to grow and develop and perhaps even surprise us.



When I first joined the committee the President told me that one thing he was very keen to avoid was having a clique running everything. This I think is terribly important if the U3A is to preserve its "broad church" character, a place for as wide a range of interests and activities as possible, an organization with a welcome for everyone.

Obviously this is a slightly utopian aspiration but I think we can get close to that ideal. One way this can be achieved is for the committee to be more varied in its make-up. As stated in our Constitution, 4 officers and 2 ordinary members of the committee are elected annually. The remainder (currently 8) are co-opted by existing committee members. This has worked quite well so far but the obvious danger is that the full range of opinions in the U3A as a whole are not being represented and as the organization keeps growing it increasingly loses touch with "rank and file" opinion. That is why I hope some new people will come forward for the committee (the nominations have to be in before the 9th of September, so there is plenty of time to think about it). The election is on September 24th and there will be more details soon.

What would you be letting yourself in for if you stood for election? Well, the duties of an ordinary committee member are not that demanding. We have monthly meetings to make broad policy decisions and monitor developments in the organization. The overall tone of the meetings is cooperative; differences of opinion are resolved democratically and in a friendly way. This is very important and we are

committed to this continuing. There is no excuse for a lack of, at the very least, civility in any U3A discussions or communications. I am confident that any new faces would receive a friendly welcome even if they are bringing a quite different perspective to meetings. New blood is essential if the U3A is to continue to develop and grow.

So really it's up to you, the members of the U3A, what happens in the future. How involved you want to be? Everybody is a volunteer, giving their time and doing their best to make this U3A as good as it can be. To criticize is easy; to participate is more difficult but much more rewarding.

Anybody interested in finding out more about the nomination process should contact secretary@u3a-oliva.org or tel. 96 285 1877

Julian Griffin

LOOKING AHEAD

Membership renewals (11 euros) for 2009/10 are due on September 1st. Please note that if you do not renew by October 31st your membership will lapse. To renew:-

1. Log in as usual and select 'View profile'
2. Select 'Edit Profile' and check your details are correct, especially the groups attended. **SAVE**.
3. Click 'Renew until September 2010'. You can pay on line, which we encourage as it saves so much work, or if that is impossible you can pay over the counter at Solbank, Oliva, or by transfer from your own bank. Cash will not be accepted for renewals. Paying in slips will be available on the website or at the monthly meetings.

Elections for the 4 officers and 2 ordinary committee members will be held at the AGM on September 24th. Nomination forms will be available on the website or at the June meeting. (Telephone 96 285 1877 if you have any queries)