



CYPRUS

Spotlight

ON THE U3A IN CYPRUS

Issue No. 13 March 2009

Contents

Page 2	Geology
Page 3	Computers & Computing
Page 6	Bridge
Page 6	Sailing
Page 7	Travel
Page 9	Cookery Corner
Page 10	Books
Page 10	New Groups
Page 11	Mosaics
Page 12	Philosophy Group
Page 12	From U3A News UK
Page 14	Editor's comment

MEMO

Spotlight can only continue as long as people are sending in contributions. Please ensure that items for inclusion in the next issue are sent in by June 10th.

CORRECTION—Please note that the Subscription Fees quoted in the last issue of SPOTLIGHT apply to the Paphos Branch ONLY. For details of fees for all other Branches please contact the relevant Branch directly.

We welcome your views and news!

Contact:

Beryl Townley (Larnaca)
Chris Curson (Limassol)
Olwyn Oliver (Paphos)

The views of contributors are not necessarily the views of the editors or committee members.

The editors reserve the right to modify contributions if considered necessary.

Change and Exchange

With the change from 2008 to 2009 many of us here in Cyprus have experienced something of a change in our fortunes—and I use the term loosely! Inevitably this will have some impact on U3A and its activities, and though it is unlikely that any of the groups will be unable to continue some may find that their numbers are down as members either reduce their level of involvement or even decide to return to UK. Hopefully most members will continue to enjoy the many and varied activities on offer, though already some travel groups are having to rethink their short-term plans. Fingers crossed that the exchange rate picks up sooner rather than later.

Having enjoyed a mild Christmas season the New Year arrived with a real chill and although January eventually turned out to be quite pleasant for the most part, February brought the longed-for rains and plenty of strong winds too—not what those returning from winter breaks in Britain would have been looking forward to. Now it seems that spring is well and truly on its way and everyone is making the most of the pleasant temperatures before summer arrives and makes it almost too hot to do anything at all. Assuming that all four U3A branches in Cyprus continue with their usual level of activity, I look forward to receiving lots of items for inclusion in the June issue of Spotlight. For the present, enjoy those articles which have been sent in for this issue.

A belated Happy New Year to all members.

Carole Manuel
Editor



Visit the U3A Cyprus website at :

www.U3Acyprus.org

Geology Group—Paphos

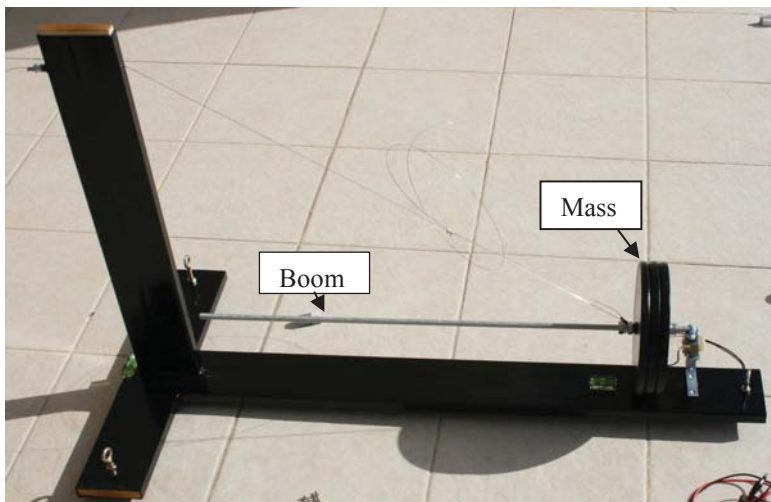
As you are probably all aware, Cyprus is located in a very active seismic zone. With this in mind, the Paphos Geology group started a small sub- group to look into the possibility of building a seismometer to detect seismic activity in and around Cyprus.

Seismometer Basics

After carrying out research on the internet, it was decided to build a seismometer based on what is called the Lehman design.

The main objective in the design of any seismograph is to translate a slight movement of the earth into a larger motion that can be put on some kind of permanent record, which can then be analyzed. The waves from a distant earthquake do not all arrive at the same time, some take longer paths through the earth and some travel more slowly. Hence the record should be plotted as a function of time so that the arrival of the various components of the waves can be noted and timed. The difference in arrival times of the types of waves can be utilized to determine the distance of the earthquake from the instrument.

The Lehman seismometer is based on a cantilever design rather like a swinging farm gate. Basically the 'gate' part consists of a weighted boom, pivoted at one end against an upright and at the other end of the swinging boom is a large mass. The weighted end of the boom is suspended from the upright by piano wire. When there is a seismic event, the floor and the frame move but the boom has inertia due to the large mass. The difference in the movement between the frame and the



boom is detected by a magnet at the tip of the boom which passes a coil and induces a voltage which is detected, filtered and stored by one means or another. The signal conditioning and data storage is '**Work in Progress**' and we have received some highly technical help from a non-U3A electronics wizard.

As can be seen from the photograph, the basic

seismometer is constructed and fine tuning of the design is now taking place.

Cyprus and Earthquakes

Cyprus is situated within the second most active seismic zone of the earth (based on intensity). This zone is referred to as the Alpine Himalayan Belt and extends from the Atlantic Ocean, along the Mediterranean basin, through Italy, Greece, Turkey, Iran and India to the Pacific Ocean. Earthquakes in this zone represent 15% of the world seismic activity.

Cyprus is situated on the southern side of the Anatolian Plate, north of the African plate and the west of the Arabian plate on what is known as the Cyprus Arc. This extends from the Island of Kastellorizo where it meets the Greek Arc, and easterly approximately 50-60 kms offshore of Cyprus's South coast to Alexandretta Bay (border of Turkey and Syria). The Arc is the region where there is subduction of the

African Plate under the Eurasian plate.

Historical references and recent archaeological findings indicate major earthquakes as far back as 180 B.C.

Between 1896 and 2006 there have been 430 earthquakes with their epicentre on the island which have caused major damage. Three major earthquakes occurred in the 90's (1995, 1996 & 1999) – with numerous injuries and some deaths.

The frequency of Earthquakes is not regular and they cannot be predicted with any accuracy. The return cycle for Destructive earthquakes in the Cyprus area, based on historical information, is around 75yrs, Catastrophic every 120 yrs.

Computers and Computing

The following letter was received just too late to be included in the last issue of Spotlight. Since then Mike has contributed two articles (see below) and, hopefully, he will continue to do so. Please contact him directly if you wish to benefit from the expertise of the group.

I am a member of the Larnaca Branch and one of my interests is Computer Communications. As a committee member of Icarus, the British Airways retired pilots association, I manage a Usergroup for the members and a couple of years ago I created a separate Group for those with more than a passing interest in computers. Since then the Group has expanded and, while the largest percentage of the group are ex BA pilots, we have two Cypriot surgeons, one of whom is also a mechanical engineer and computer programmer, a doctor with his own IT company, sailors, skiers, bankers, a retired accountant, a BA stewardess, company directors, IT Pros, a computer technician, U3A members - the list goes on. We use XP, Win 2000, Vista, MAC, Linux and something called Archimedes!

U3A members are invited to join my Group which is both secure and, of course, Free. If you are interested, contact me at <mike@oceangipsy.com>

The only stupid question to the Group, is the one you don't ask!



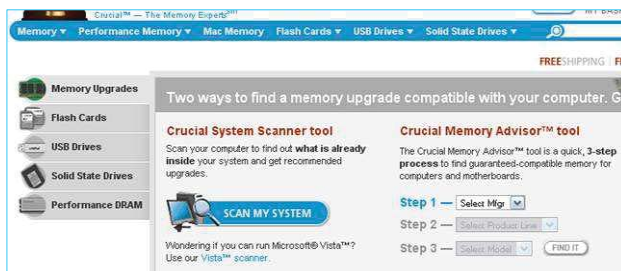
Upgrading RAM

The most common complaint I hear, particularly from Windows users, is 'my computer is running slow'. There could be several causes of this problem, but in many cases the motherboard RAM is insufficient.

MS are guilty of under-specifying so-called XP- or Vista-Ready PCs. I have an old Toshiba labelled XP-ready with a mere 256mb of Ram (Random Access Memory) installed. XP will not longer run on it so I have installed a light version of Linux Ubuntu.

I recommend a minimum of 1GB for XP and 2GB for Vista. Remember that if you install 4Gb, Vista 32 bit version can only address 3.25 GB.

I spent a couple of hours this afternoon helping a family member sort out a slow running PC with just 512mb RAM installed. This was done using Skype, UK to Cyprus.



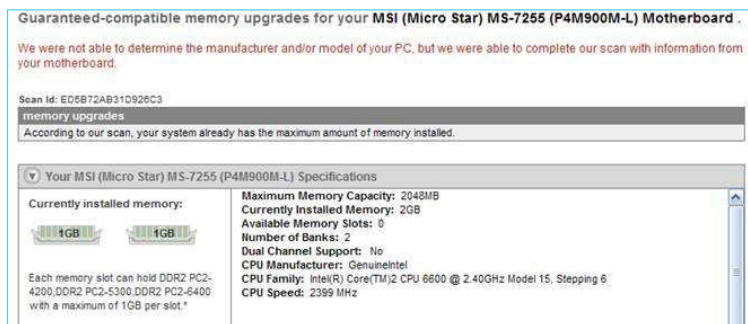
So, how difficult is it to upgrade RAM? It is actually quite easy and cost effective. I recommend you start at <http://www.crucial.com/uk/> if you live in the UK or Europe. You have a choice of using the Scan My System, or entering your motherboard data manually. Belarc Advisor is a good method of

obtaining this information. http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html

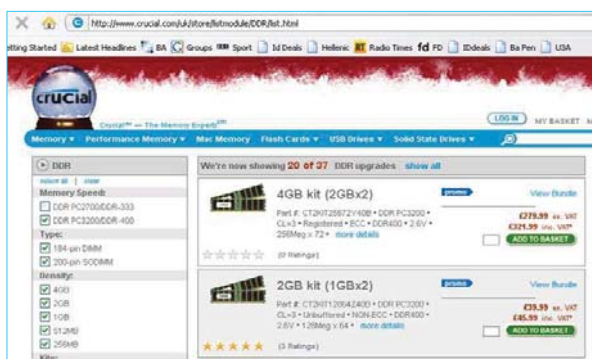
If you choose the Scan My System route (recommended) you will have the choice to Run or Save the utility. I suggest you choose Run, and await the results. In my case I have the maximum memory my motherboard can take.



Unfortunately, the PC motherboard in question today was not recognised by the Automatic Scan, nor was it listed using the Memory Advisor Tool. Taking the data from Belarc, I searched the web for info on the SIS 741, and found the specification I needed



Back to Crucial and I entered the data to find 2GB of suitable RAM for just £45.99 inc VAT and nil postage.



SIS Chipset SIS-741 Specification	
Memory Type:	DDR
Memory Speed:	PC3200
Chipset:	SIS-741
Memory Type:	Non-ECC Non-Registered,
Memory Slot(s):	3
Max. Memory Per System:	3072MB (3GB)
Max. Memory Per Slot:	1024MB (1GB)
Dual Channel Memory Support:	Not Supported
Tri-Channel Memory Support:	Not Support
Install Memory in Pairs:	Not Required

For advice on how to install RAM in a desktop, visit <http://www.memorysuppliers.com/howtoinstall.html>

I have upgraded the RAM in several desktop and notebook computers, including my Macbook Pro, with no problems.

It could be time to give your PC a memory-lift !!

Understanding The Terminology

Just a few years ago the word **Broadband** did not exist. It is a product of the communications revolution of the **Internet** – another new word. An explanation of some other new words follows.

Broadband A generic term for high speed digital internet connections.

There are essentially five commonly used methods of achieving a **Broadband** connection to the Internet - **ADSL** (via a phone line), **Cable** (via fibre optics), **Wimax** (an extended range wireless connection), **G3** mobile and **Satellite**.

The most common method is **ADSL** (Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line), a technology that transforms a standard twisted pair of copper wires telephone line into a high-speed always on **Internet** connection, capable of simultaneously carrying voice and data. It is termed 'asymmetric' because data moves in one direction faster than in the other i.e. data is transmitted faster from the

exchange to you rather than from your premises to the exchange. **ADSL** splits the wire into two so it can carry data (when you download from or upload to the web) and voice (when you are on the phone). The “asymmetric” part means that you can download from the web much faster than you can upload to it. As most domestic and small business users need to download more than they upload, this makes it a good choice. **ADSL Broadband** is available across most of the UK. It's provided through your existing BT phone line so there's no need for a new line, and it's easy to set up. You can still use the phone when you're surfing online, but you will need to have special microfilters fitted in your phone sockets to prevent interference from the broadband signal. You'll also need a modem, or router, to deliver the broadband. The copper wire was never intended for such use and its capabilities are being pushed to the limit as the “**pipe**” is quite thin.

Cable Fibre Broadband, also known as **FTTH** (Fibre To The Home) is the fastest and makes the most use of Fibre. Other uses of Fibre are **FTTC** (Fibre To The Cabinet), where the Fibre takes the data to the street cabinets and then copper wire takes it the rest of the way. This offers less benefits and speed than FTTH as the copper wire does not offer the same speeds and bandwidth as fibre. The largest UK Fibre broadband provider is **Virgin Media Broadband** who run their own fibre optic network. According to a report from the FCC, a single twisted copper pair can deal with 6 phone calls compared to a single fibre pair that can cope with 2.5 million phone calls!

Bandwidth The capacity of your internet connection to transmit and receive data. Bandwidth is usually measured in bits-per-second. Imagine your internet connection is a **pipe**, the bigger the pipe, the faster the information will flow.

IP address Stands for Internet Protocol address: the host computer assigned to you by your Internet Service Provider when you make a connection. A static IP address means your ISP permanently assigns your connection to a particular host computer. IP addresses are numeric, you may have noticed them occasionally in the address bar of your browser. For example, 84.92.1.4 is better known as www.broadband4lhanbryde.co.uk An internet service called DNS (Domain Name System/Service) translates the request for www.broadband4lhanbryde.co.uk into the corresponding IP address.

RADSL Rate Adaptive Digital Subscriber Line - A broadband technology which extends the outer reach of copper wire DSL from 3.5 km to 5.5 km distant from a DSL-enabled exchange.

SDSL Symmetric Digital Subscriber Line, a broadband variant that signifies equal or near equal bandwidth up and downstream.

While **Broadband** has been a positive revolution in communication, it has also produced many negatives as users are disappointed in the performance of their connections. In the case of **ADSL**, there are two main reasons for this frustration. The first is usually “noise” on the line. This can be a result of poor connections with the home telephone wiring. Remember that the telephone service provider is only responsible to the first point of entry into the home – the master outlet. Beyond that point, all telephone outlets are considered to be extensions. Running a telephone line alongside a power cable can degrade performance.

The most contentious reason for lack of expected performance is **Contention Ratio**.

Contention Ratio describes the maximum number of users sharing the bandwidth on the connection between your local exchange and the Internet Service Provider. A customer with a contention ratio of 20:1 never has to share this bandwidth with more than 19 other users.

This is taken from the BT web site : *To provide a cost effective service - our **ADSL** services are 'contended' (shared) at the following ratios:*

50:1	ADSL 500, 1000 & 2000 Solo
20:1	ADSL 500, 1000 & 2000 Business



Surfer Grandma

The computer swallowed grandma.
Yes, honestly it's true!
She pressed 'control and 'enter'
and disappeared from view.

It devoured her completely;
the thought just makes me squirm.
She must have caught a virus
or been eaten by a worm.

I've searched through the recycle bin
And files of every kind;
I've even used the Internet,
But nothing did I find.

In desperation, I asked Jeeves
My searches to refine.
The reply from him was negative,
Not a thing was found 'online.'

So, if inside your 'Inbox,'
My Grandma you should see,
Please 'Copy, Scan' and 'Paste' her
and send her back to me.



*This is a tribute to all the Grandmas
and Grandpas who have been fearless
and learned to use the Computer.*

BRIDGE - new class for beginners

Have you ever thought about learning to play bridge? The game is a great way to help improve your memory skills, as well as being fun!

I am starting a fresh series of bridge classes in March, designed especially for the total beginner. But I promise you that you will be playing a game of bridge by the end of the first session... This is achieved through the route of MiniBridge, a simplified version of the game of bridge. MiniBridge is a great social game, easily taught to your own families.



After a few weeks, when the group is comfortable with the tactics of MiniBridge, we will move on to the intricacies of bridge 'bidding'. But I shall endeavour to retain throughout the programme a sense of enjoyment! Bridge can be VERY serious, but it does not need to be.

The class will meet on Monday mornings (9.30 - 12 noon) at my home in Peyia. Please contact me if you are interested or want more information. Or perhaps you have played in the past and feel in need of a 'refresher'; in that case I can advise you at what stage it is appropriate to join the group.

I look forward to passing on to you my enthusiasm for the game of bridge.

Thanks to Vivienne Rathband for this information if you wish to contact her then please use this link - jovi@rathband.co.uk



Paphos

Announcement



YACHT SAILING

From Latchi Marina

Formation of a New Group

Plans are well underway regarding the formation of this new activity. We hope the "Launch" will take place soon. If you are interested please contact the Group Leader. (Preferably by email)

Frank Cuthbert

frank.cuthbert@cytanet.com.cy

26621527

News from the Paphos Travel Group.

Sadly, owing to the financial crisis and ensuing decrease in the exchange rate of the Pound v. the Euro, our planned trip to Morocco in February had to be cancelled due to lack of numbers. However, we plan to run it again in 2010 when the worldwide credit crisis should have stabilised.

But, the Paphos History Group is putting together a trip to Russia in 2010, the Archaeology Group is planning a trip to Jordan in 2009, and the Travel Group is planning a trip to Rome in September 2009.

A few of us had a wonderful time in Budapest in December 2008. We visited all the interesting sights, went to the opera, a concert in Budapest's new modern music hall, enjoyed a folklore show in a small jewel of a theatre, took a dinner cruise along the Danube, and went to a concert in St. Sebastian's cathedral. We sampled the local fare, went shopping in a huge covered market and admired the local produce, slept on a boat, and hopped on an off the sightseeing bus. The museums were visited where they had very good bookshops, and a Christmas market selling local handicrafts was a real treat.

Thanks to Sue de Groot, Paphos Travel Group coordinator



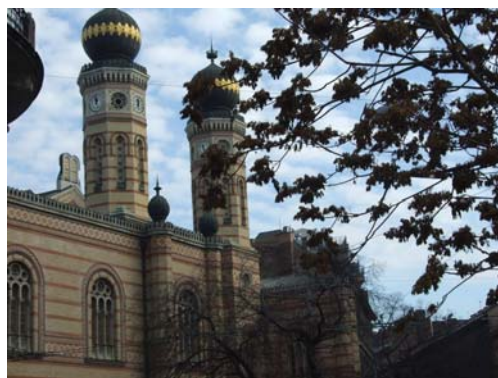
The Floating Hotel where we stayed for 5 days this was situated slightly out of the city of Pest but we enjoyed the brisk walk everyday.

St Stephens Basilica, Budapest's largest church. We attended a Carol concert here



June. Dorothy, Sue, & Angela well wrapped up against the cold

The Dohany Street Synagogue. This is truly a very impressive building seating 3,000. Completed in 1859 and it is the second largest Synagogue in the world after New York.



Behind the Synagogue is the Memorial Park. The most impressive object of the park is the Holocaust Memorial Tree commemorating the 600,000 Jewish victims of the Holocaust. The tree is made of stainless steel and silver- and is the work of sculptor Imre Varga.



Museum of applied Arts the roof is decorated with zsolnay tiles

The front of the Parliament Building. It was the largest parliament building in the world when it was opened in 1902 designed by Imre Steindl the building is beautifully sited: and has a prominent position on the curve of the Danube.



Side view of Parliament Building



Hungarian Embroidery



From Buda looking over the Danube to the Houses of Parliament



Shirley looking at all the goodies at the Christmas market

Photos provided by June Mirrington

Three old guys are out walking.
First one says, "Windy, isn't it?"
Second one says, "No, Thursday!"
Third one says, "So am I. Let's go get a beer."

Joe is telling his neighbour about his new hearing aid. "Cost me \$4,000 but it's worth it. It's state of the art—perfect." "What kind is it?" "Four thirty."

Cookery Corner

Carrot, Apple and Raisin Cake

(Low fat)

8oz SR flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking powder
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
1tsp cinnamon
5tbsp vegetable oil
Grated zest and juice of 1 orange
5oz light muscovado sugar
5oz grated carrot
1 apple peeled and grated
3oz raisins
2oz pumpkin seeds
Icing sugar for dusting

Oven 160C (or conventional 180C) gas 4

Mix flour, baking powder salt and cinnamon together in bowl. In separate bowl mix together oil, orange juice and sugar. Add the orange mixture to the flour along with carrot, apple, orange zest, raisins and pumpkin seeds, stir until well mixed.

Spoon into prepared tin and bake for 50 mins - 1 hour until cake pulls from side of tin. Cool before removing from tin. Dust with icing sugar.

Thanks to Sue Leslie for this lovely moist cake recipe

Irish Boiled Fruitcake

175g butter
175g soft brown sugar
300ml water
300g sultanas, raisins etc
50g candied peel
50g glacé cherries
225g plain or wholemeal flour
1tsp bicarbonate of soda
1tsp mixed spices (cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves)
2lg eggs, beaten

Heat oven to 180C or gas 4 and line a 15-17.5cm cake tin

Melt butter in pan; add water, sugar, fruits, peel and cherries. Simmer for 10 mins. Allow to cool.

Sift flour, add bicarb and spices. Add fruit and stir in beaten eggs, mix and pour into cake tin. Bake in centre of oven for 1 - 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours. Leave to stand for 10 minutes and turn out onto rack to cool.

Heather says she uses a wider cake tin and bakes for 50 - 55 mins. She also adds chopped walnuts to the cake mixture and decorates the top with whole walnuts before baking; or you could use almonds. This recipe is adapted from a Josceline Dimpleby recipe

Thanks to Heather Mathews

PAPHOS MONDAY BOOK GROUP

The book group meets on the last Monday of the month at 2.30pm. Discussion lasts about one to one and a half hours. Each member chooses a book and leads the discussion in their own home if possible. The host provides simple refreshments at the end of the session.



We have just read **'The Secret River' by Kate Grenville**, which was chosen by Rosalyn and is reviewed below by June.

This novel chronicles the lives of early British settlers in Australia, and their impact on the aboriginal people who had lived there for at least 40,000 years.

Will Thornhill is an impoverished waterman on the River Thames, until a petty crime leads him to be transported to New South Wales. Together with his family, he resolves to build a better life on his own piece of land. His encounters with the Aborigines are marked by fear, prejudice and incomprehension, but as he struggles to produce food, he is slowly forced to recognise their skills at living off the harsh land.

Sadly these glimmerings of understanding are doomed to fail, as tensions grow between the ambitious community of settlers and the native people. Finally the settlers force a violent confrontation, and Will has to choose sides.

Our next book will be **'The Woman in White' by Wilkie Collins**.

If you are interested in joining the group please contact June on junemirrington27@yahoo.co.uk

PROPOSED NEW COURSES FOR PAPHOS

International Cooking for Beginners

The course will be led by Anne Rapley, author of the "International Cookbook, Vol.1 & Vol.2, Essential Cooking for World Travellers" and will be held on 1 morning per week for 4 weeks, Mondays, 9am - lunchtime, starting 16 March (23rd, 30th, 3rd April)

The cost will be €10 per session to cover the cost of food & drinks. Lunch will be served.

4 places are available, all welcome (including men)

Location: Anne's house in Chlorakas

For more information, call Anne on 26270158 or 99921295

Email: <annerapley@hotmail.com>

NATURAL HISTORY GROUP

With your help, Judy and David Whaley would like to set up a Natural History Group covering as many disciplines as possible. The group would meet once or twice a month depending on the season, using cars to explore the island to find suitable sites for a more thorough search on foot. The meetings could be in the mornings only or all day, depending on the distances. A Monday might be a convenient day to meet. David and Judy are knowledgeable in ornithology, less in botany and butterflies, and this is where your help is required. If you have some knowledge and would be interested in co-leading the group, or if you are just interested in joining the group please let David and Judy know.

Please contact Judy and David direct, either by email or telephone, indicating whether you have some knowledge of the subject or you are just interested.

E-mail Address <whaleydawes@holitec.eu> tel:- 26815288: mobile 99965717

Paphos U3A Mosaics Crafts

It is amazing what we all create at the mosaics craft group on Thursday mornings. There have been many lizards, butterflies, a dolphin or two, a turtle, fish, flowers, fruit and so many birds. All in glorious technicolour. Yes! the mosaic tiles positively gleam in the sun as we proudly take them home to display around swimming pools as well as our houses. Of course living in this wonderful bright sunshine, here, in Cyprus just lends itself to the many colours that are available. The members who do come along to be shown how to cut and manipulate the tiles are amazed how easy the craft is to succeed in making a finished item.



We were pleased to display some of the finished mosaics at the annual AGM at Limassol recently. There were many enquiries about the craft. Especially from Larnaca members and Limassol also. If any of these members would like to come to Paphos and see how we work, they will be welcome. It may encourage them to start a mosaic group of their own.

Next year we hope to make larger projects and possibly a group one for an installation in the community. Where has not been decided. Any suggestions?

Anne Bateman (group leader)



RECOGNISING A STROKE

If a stroke victim is treated by a neurologist within THREE HOURS, the chances are that the effects of the stroke can be reversed—totally. Identifying the problem and getting help immediately is crucial.

Sometimes symptoms of a stroke are difficult to identify. The stroke victim could suffer severe brain damage if those nearby fail to realise what has happened. There is a simple and quick way to determine whether someone has suffered a stroke. All you have to do is ask them to perform three simple tasks. Just remember S T R

S—Ask the individual to SMILE

T—Ask the person to TALK, to say a simple sentence coherently, e.g. It is sunny today.

R— Ask the person to RAISE both arms

If he or she has trouble with ANY ONE of these tasks call the emergency number immediately and explain the symptoms to the dispatcher.

There is also a fourth indicator which may help identify a stroke victim. Ask the patient to stick out their tongue. If the tongue is 'crooked', i.e. goes to one side or the other, this is also an indication of

THE FINAL WORD ON NUTRITION

After an exhaustive review of the research literature, here's the final word on nutrition and health:

1. Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
2. Mexicans eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
3. Chinese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
4. Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
5. Germans drink beer and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than us.
6. The French eat foie-gras, full fat cheese and drink red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than us

CONCLUSION: Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you.

Philosophy/Discussion Group—Paphos

Intentionally labelled as both 'philosophy' and 'discussion', the Group continues to thrive with 14 people coming along to the last monthly meeting. The topic on this occasion was 'Species-ism', which caused a little head-scratching at first but which resulted in a most interesting and entertaining discussion. As is often the case, we wandered off-topic a little here and there but I suspect this is one of the aspects of the discussions people enjoy most. Those who prefer a stronger philosophical slant to the discussions are also well catered for with past topics having included *Social Responsibility*; *Capital Punishment*; *Do we need an external God for moral guidance* and *Ownership*. Some of the topics suggested for the future include *Death*; *Gender perceptions through history*; *the definition of Family* and *The Third Age*.

As ever, the group is indebted to Vivienne Rathband for making her home available for meetings and to all those members who volunteer to introduce and lead a topic.

SNIPPETS FROM THE U3A NEWS ONLINE NEWSLETTER

The talking U3A News

U3A News and Sources are to be reproduced as sound files, for members whose sight makes it hard for them to read the magazines. The files will be placed on the U3A website, accessible to any member who wants them, for a trial period. If enough members report finding the innovation useful to justify the cost, it will become permanent.

MBE for Ken

Ken Bates, who recently retired as chairman of Nottingham U3A, was made an MBE in the New Year Honours list for services to adult education in Nottingham.

Ken was also science and technology network co-ordinator for several years, and revitalised the network, as well as the original organiser of the very successful annual U3A science and technology summer school held in Abergavenny.

All in the mind for Aughton and Ormskirk

Twenty members of Aughton and Ormskirk U3A have been trialling a programme called Mindfit, designed to help keep the brain in efficient working order through later years. "Our members found it beneficial, particularly if they had taken physical exercise such as aerobics immediately prior to using the programme," says Aughton and Ormskirk U3A chairman Dr Alex McMinn.

An initial research trial has shown the effectiveness of this computer-based programme, which is endorsed by the neuroscientist Baroness (and Professor) Susan Greenfield, shown in our picture with Dr McMinn and Aughton and Ormskirk members. The occasion is the launch of Aughton and Ormskirk U3A's Mindgym programme – a weekly meeting for members to work on sustaining their mental well-being. Any other U3A thinking about setting up a similar programme is welcome to contact Dr McMinn to discuss how it works, at athena2007@tiscali.co.uk.

The Mindfit programme is believed to combat the natural slowing of our cognitive skills and to produce results in 10 weeks. It is now on special offer to U3A members, but only until 31 March. For one user, it will cost £44.38 plus p&p, instead of £88.08 (quote promotion code U3A 0985). For two users it will cost £59.16 plus p&p, instead of £117.43 (quote promotion code U3A 09852). You can order online at www.mindweavers.co.uk or by telephone on 0845 6432742.

Something for everyone at this year's national summer schools

The two national U3A summer schools will be held at Harper Adams University College, Newport, near Telford, from 20 to 23 July, and at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, from 24 to 27 August.

The Telford summer school will include courses in architecture, art history, crime and punishment, digital image editing, France, garden history, geology, industrial heritage, literature, philosophy, and writing.

The architecture course, tutored by Wilson Briscoe, will compare two very different urban settlements, Shrewsbury and Telford, and there will be visits to both of them. The course is suitable

for anyone, whatever your experience or lack of it.

Digital image editing, tutored by Chris Powell, is aimed at computer-literate people who are comfortable with their digital camera and are looking to gain experience in image editing techniques. A chance to explore the literature, culture, history and geography of France in its own language will be offered by Joyce Gibson's course on France. Participants will need to have some basic knowledge of French, even if it is a little rusty.

Meg Shaw's introduction to philosophy is a taster course, introducing ethics, metaphysics, epistemology and aesthetics. Previous experience is welcome, but the course will be suitable for people with little or none.

Those who take Maggie Smith's course on plays will complete a 10-minute play during the course of the summer school.

The second national summer school, at the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, will include courses on architecture, art history, Christianity in England, cinema history, history, literature, music appreciation, painting and drawing, Shakespeare, and Spanish.

The architecture and topography course, tutored by James Thompson, is subtitled 'Living on stone: the Cotswold inheritance' and is suitable for all – though you need to be up for a fair amount of walking.

Beth Butler will tutor Christianity in England, from Roman times to the Viking invasion – she will already have run a very similar course in Telford – and it will be useful to have a copy of Bede's History of the English Church and people.

Alan Coulson will lead 'A brief history of British film, from its origins to the present day', and a history course called 'Jesus: from Jewish teacher to Christian divinity' will be tutored by Ralph Blumenau.

Michael Goldman offers a poetry course – 'Screamatic monologues from Browning to Eliot' – and John Busbridge tutors 'Music appreciation: the music of Bela Bartok'.

The cost for the complete summer school, including full board residential accommodation, is £299; non-residential delegates pay £114 including lunches. Application forms are available from your U3A secretary or directly from the national office (address on page 4) or visit the members' area of the U3A website.

Children of the '60s

U3A News editor Francis Beckett is working on a book about the baby boomer generation, suggesting that it lived its dream but failed subsequent generations by allowing the good society it has benefited from to wither away. He would be delighted to hear from baby boomers and children of the '60s who have opinions or memories that may be relevant. Contact him at francis@francisbeckett.co.uk.

Experienced webmasters

Maura Bennett of Vale of Glamorgan U3A has taken on the post of webmaster for a small society. Her experience of computers goes back to 'pre-mouse' days and she has used the internet for 11 years, but she writes: "If any webmaster members would be kind enough to pass on useful information or helpful tips, I would be most grateful." Contact her at blethian@hotmail.com.

Best of the web...

U3A Signpost, who collect and tell us about education resources on the web, continue to come up with some important and useful websites. They make their research freely available to U3As and to U3A News, and ask that in return you send snippets of possible interest to them.

Here are some of their latest leads – the ones mentioned here have also been checked out by U3A News.

<http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk>

Oxford University is now making hundreds of lectures by top-flight experts available as podcasts. You will need to install iTunes to see/hear them.

<http://bartelby.org/reference>

Bartelby claims to be "the pre-eminent internet publisher of literature, verse and reference with

unlimited access free of charge". The reference section is certainly comprehensive.

www.oprah.com/ads/skype/skype_main.html

Do you want to try free phone and video calls around the world but don't know how? A brief commercial video explains how in two minutes.

www.wordreference.com

Language groups will appreciate the free online translation dictionaries offered on this site, which also contains excellent forums where you can ask questions about finer definitions, colloquial usage etc and native speakers from around the world give you their advice. Logophiles will be gobsmacked by www.worldwidewords.org (thank you, Claire Eglinton- Lower North U3A, South Australia).

www.frenchspanishonline.com

A website where you can find a lot of activities for beginners to learn French and Spanish for free.

www.bridgebase.com

is a site enabling bridge players of all levels to play live with people from all over the world whenever they like (thank you, Val Clowes - U3A in Kennet, UK).

www.undp.org/mdg

We are now at the halfway point of the UN's Millennium Development Goals and U3A Online Australia is creating an online course to explain them. For further information email Kathleen Rossini at kathleen@rossini.id.au.

Signpost is edited and issued by Tom Holloway in Hyderabad, India, and Rick Swindell in Brisbane, Australia. If you know of other members who would like to be on the list, ask them to write to tom@worldu3a.org and they will be added. Back issues of Signpost are available at <http://u3asignpost.pbwiki.com>.



Can you figure out what these words have in common ?.

Banana
Dresser
Grammar
Potato
Revive
Uneven
Assess

Are you peeking or have you already given up?

Give it another try . . .

You will kick yourself when you discover the answer.

In all of the words listed if you take the first letter, place it at the end of the word and then spell the word backwards it will be the same word.

Answer:

A FEW WORDS FROM THE EDITOR

Contributions from members were a bit thin on the ground this month but I make no apology for including quite a lot of information from the UK newsletter. I do not know how much use Cyprus U3A members make of the U3A's UK website but those who have yet to browse it really should do so. There is a wealth of information, ideas, news and details of past and forthcoming events. The letters page is currently hosting a lively debate on the merits (or otherwise) of having groups such as line-dancing operating under the umbrella of U3A. Some feel that more gravitas is required in the setting up of U3A groups—a point of view quite definitely NOT shared by most, it would seem. There are articles on hearing loss, book reviews, details of distance learning courses and much, much more. Just go to www.u3a.org.uk and widen your knowledge of just what the U3A is up to in the wider world. You may be surprised.