

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

April 2015



SIDCUP & DISTRICT U3A meets at 2.00 pm on the 3rd Thursday of every month in the New Community Church Centre, 24 Station Road, Sidcup

NOTICES

Virtual U3A

The Virtual U3A (or vU3A) is like a local U3A Group except that its activities take place on the Internet. An important target group for the vU3a is older people who are isolated through location, illness or immobility – but all are welcome. It has members from around the world. Members of the vU3A are encouraged to form their own informal learning and discussion groups, choose their own topics, and share their experiences in the social areas of the site. It follows the U3A's core principles of participative learning and its activities are carried out in writing using a secure, membership only, workspace. The Virtual U3A neither creates nor delivers formal structured online courses.

Members are free to join any of their groups or interest pages and primarily social pages – for example, the Coffee Shop. They email a regular vU3A Newsletter to keep everybody in touch. Each member will be able to buy things at a discount where National Office (www.u3a.org.uk) has arranged this.

The subscription is £12 per year. Subscriptions are paid using a credit or debit card online. The vU3A likes to operate entirely online but, as a last resort and by special arrangement, they are able to accept cheques or payment by bank transfer. The requirement to join falls into two parts, (a) Equipment and (b) Computer Skills. You may wish to consult with a knowledgeable friend or family member to help you make a decision about these items, the details of which are as follows:

(a) **Equipment.** A computer capable of connecting to the Internet (including a browser such as Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, Chrome or Safari) and which can also send and receive emails. A broadband account for connection of the computer to the Internet would be a very useful addition.

(b) **Computer Skills.** Experience in using a mouse and keyboard or a laptop with equivalent. Experience at an elementary level in receiving, sending/replying to emails (and occasionally handling attachments), and finding one's way around the Internet and writing text, *eg* letters, articles or keeping a diary, *etc.* Experience in saving and retrieving files, *eg* word processing files.

The concept behind these requirements is to facilitate members of the vU3A to communicate effectively with one another so they can work in groups on projects of shared interests using written contributions. For more information visit their website at www.vu3a.org.

Edited extracts from website of Virtual U3A

The Gallipoli Memorial Chapel
Holy Trinity Church, Southend Crescent, Eltham

During WWI, Henry Hall, the vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Eltham, was chaplain to the 29th Army Division which was heavily involved in the Gallipoli landings on 25th April 1915 and the subsequent campaign during which the Division sustained 34,000 casualties. The Vicar accompanied the men during the landings and subsequent battles, showing great courage and was mentioned in dispatches. On his return home, he was so haunted by his experiences that he determined to set up a memorial to the men of the 29th Division who did not return. With the aid of donations from his parishioners, a newly built chapel at the church was converted into the Gallipoli Memorial Chapel where the shields of all the regiments in the 29th Division are prominently displayed. Since 1921, a Gallipoli Memorial service has been held every year on 25th April (ANZAC Day).

To mark the centenary of the Gallipoli landings, a special commemorative service is to be held at 2.00 pm on Saturday 25th April at which many of the regiments commemorated in the chapel will be represented, along with other guests including foreign military and diplomatic representatives. Further information may be obtained on the church website www.ht-e.org.uk.

Footnote: The battalions comprising the 29th Division were drawn from the following regiments: Lancashire Fusiliers, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, Royal Munster Fusiliers, Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, Leinster Regiment, Royal Guernsey Light Infantry, Royal Fusiliers, The London Regiment, King's Own Scottish Borderers, South Wales Borderers, Essex Regiment, Hampshire Regiment, Royal Scots Regiment, and the Royal Newfoundland Regiment.

George Murrell

Note to Group Leaders

Following the AGM, it is time again to check the details of your group in the annual Booklet; please and let me know of any changes. Just a reminder also that, if you close your group, you should keep me informed. Likewise, if anyone starts a new group, they should let me know.

Trevor Ford, Group Coordinator.

AGM

This year's AGM, which was accompanied by a very interesting talk by Andy Thomas entitled "The Crop Circle Mystery", attracted a high attendance (115). Unfortunately, because of the limited space at St Lawrence's Church Hall, uncomfortable seating arrangements resulted. Our apologies go to members but, because of the unavailability of our normal venue, St Lawrence's was the only option available other than cancelling the meeting. Thanks are very much owed to the caretaker at St Lawrence's for his help and cooperation in making the arrangements.

George Murrell

U3A Twitter

The Third Age Trust has an account on Twitter, the online social networking service. To read "tweets" posted to this service by other members visit https://twitter.com/u3a_uk; to reply or post your own short messages you will need to sign up to the service. The more enterprising U3A branches (and some of their groups) also have their own Twitter and Facebook accounts which they routinely use to communicate and disseminate information between themselves.

Editor

Visit to Spa Valley Railway

At last November's general meeting we had a talk about the Spa Valley Railway. I propose to visit it on Saturday May 16th, and I am inviting anyone who wishes to join me to come along. Travel will be by train so bring your Freedom Passes and Senior Railcards. At Sidcup Station purchase your beyond Zone 6 ticket to Eridge Station in good time to catch the 10.16 am train from Sidcup to London Bridge. (Meet on the platform at Sidcup towards the far end of the platform). The fare should be in the region of £6 with Senior Railcards. At London Bridge we need to catch the 11.08 train to Eridge. From there, it seems, we can readily access the Spa Valley Railway in time to purchase tickets for the steam train: £10 all-day travel for seniors.

There is a 15-minute 'turn-around' at Tunbridge Wells West before our steam train returns to Eridge, where we have just over an hour for refreshments and use of toilet facilities before our return home by around 4 pm.

I hope to see some of you at Sidcup Station – no need to let me know, just turn up!

Val Gosden (020 8300 0664)

N.B. Please note that a diesel train will be used should there be any operational difficulties.

GROUP NEWS

Freedom Pass Explorers • Leaders Christine Withams & Joy O'Donnell



Our February visit was to Balham – Gateway to the South. It was a lovely sunny day. Most of our walking was through Tooting Bec Common. We peered into the beautiful Art Deco lido with flowing fountain and brightly painted cubicles in a variety of colours. After passing a lake, we arrived at the small café in the park where we actually sat outside in the February sun. After lunch, we walked through roads with lovely houses until we met the main road where we passed Du Cane Court, which, when built in the 1930s, was the largest privately owned block under one roof in Europe.

We were not so lucky with the weather in March; it was overcast but it stayed dry. This time we used the Piccadilly Line to Southgate, North London. Our highlight was Wilton Patisserie where we called in for coffee. It was a large premises filled with the most wonderful gateaux, some in the shape of handbags, a shoe and Elsa the 'Frozen' star. Some of us indulged in a mini pastry! We then made our way to Grovelands Park – a very impressive park with many ancient oak trees. The manor house is now the North London Priory Hospital. We walked around the lake before heading back for lunch at The New Crown.

Christine Withams

① My pictures of Tooting Bec Common and Grovelands Park appear on the Gallery page of our website. Du Cane Court is an Art Deco apartment block in Balham opened in 1937. With 676 apartments, it is Europe's largest privately owned block of flats under one roof. So distinctive is it from the air that it was reputedly used as a navigational landmark by German bombers during the Second World War. It was thought that Du Cane Court escaped bombing because it was wanted for use by German military officers in the event of a successful invasion. Many music hall stars of the 1930s and 40s lived there when a social club was on the top floor before it was converted into more flats.

Editor

Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



On Wednesday 11th March, 13 members of our group visited the museum of the Order of St. John, Clerkenwell. We had booked a private tour and with the benefit of our guide, John, we discovered the fascinating story of the Order from its origins in the 11th century to its role today with St. John Ambulance and the St. John Eye Hospital in Jerusalem.

The museum occupies two sites: St. John's Gate (1504), the entrance of the former priory of the Knights of St. John, and, across Clerkenwell Road, the Priory Church of St. John with its surviving 12th century crypt. The diverse collections explore all aspects of the Order's history and include rare illuminated manuscripts such as the Rhodes Missal of 1504, armour, weapons, silverware, paintings, coins, furnishings and textiles, plus historic first aid equipment and memorabilia from St. John Ambulance's role in both World Wars. The story spans over 900 years beginning with the Crusades, through revolutions, war and peace. It shows how warrior monks set out from Clerkenwell to fight for the faith and tend the sick. The Order originally consisted of knights who took vows of poverty, chastity, obedience and the care of the sick. Later, it took on a military role and took control of Crusade castles. When Palestine was recaptured in 1291, the Order moved to Cyprus and then to Rhodes. In 1522, the Knights moved to Malta and stayed there until 1798 when the island was lost to Napoleon. We learned that the Order was rewarded by one Pope with land upon which Temple Church was built, but, as the Order did not wish to have two main offices in such close proximity, they rented it to the legal profession and, as such, avoided dissolution by Henry VIII. (This information tied in with our outing to Middle Temple in January led by Christine; it's funny how things connect – almost like the bits of a jigsaw puzzle).

After the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII, the Priory housed the office of the Master of the Revels – the official who organised plays and feasts for the Tudor monarch. Thirty of Shakespeare's plays, often performed at Court, were licensed here and it is thought that many rehearsals would have taken place in the old priory buildings. It was also the childhood home of the artist William Hogarth, and the writer Dr. Samuel Johnson worked in the building when it was home to The Gentleman's Magazine. By the 19th century, the building had become the Old Jerusalem Tavern, where Charles Dickens came to drink.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit and can't urge you enough to visit this delightful corner of London history if you have not already done so.

Lynn & Doug Welch & Susan Upton

 The Gentleman's Magazine, founded by Edward Cave in January 1731, ran uninterrupted for almost 200 years and was distributed throughout the English-speaking world. The world's first periodical to use the term 'magazine', from the French word *magazine* {storehouse}, it provided Dr. Samuel Johnson's first regular employment as writer. Cave's magazine contained a monthly summary of news and commentary on any topic which might interest the educated public; this ranged from commodity prices to Latin poetry. It carried original content from a stable of regular contributors, plus extensive quotations and extracts from other periodicals and books. Cave, who edited the magazine under the pen name "Sylvanus Urban", normally received contributions in the form of letters addressed to "Mr. Urban". An iconic illustration of St. John's Gate on the front of each issue depicted the magazine's "office". Sylvanus Urban is nearly an anagram of the Latin words *urbanus* {city} and *sylva* {forest/woodland}; as many gentlemen of the period understood Latin, we can assume that most readers picked up on this pseudonym. (*N.B.* 'Storehouse' is a translation of a now obsolete meaning of the word *magazine* and it was used because this publication was considered to be a storehouse of information).

Editor

Ramblers 2 • Leader David Wedderkop



It was a dull, damp start on the morning of our March ramble, but, by the time we started, it had improved. We left Farnborough High Street and made our way past St. Giles Church, across fields and into the High Elms Country Park. In order to miss the golf balls, we walked through wooded areas, past the Clock House, along Beechy Walk – a long avenue of beech trees – and, after going down into the valley and up the other side, we reached a road. After crossing this we soon found our next footpath. There was a short distance of road walking before we turned back into woodland walking parallel to Old Hill. This was where I failed to read my notes properly so took the group a short way to the right (instead of left), but, having retraced our steps, we were soon back on track and completed our 5-mile ramble with a visit to the “Change of Horses”.

Mary Webb

Book Reading • Leader June Reid



This month’s book, *The Kingmaker’s Daughter*, was chosen by Carol. Written under the heading of “Historical Fiction”, it was the story of Anne Neville. Starting in 1465, it followed Anne through her life from a child aged 8 to the end of her life as the wife of Richard III. Her father was Richard, Earl of Warwick, the most powerful man at court. Through his machinations, both his daughters became queens in his aim to be the power behind the throne. There is much talk of witchcraft and spells throughout the story as all the characters try to further their positions. The book was an easy read and we were all reaching for our history books to check out the facts! There are several books written by Philippa Gregory about this period in history – The Wars of the Roses. One recently on TV was *The White Queen*. We found much to discuss as Richard III is such a controversial figure, and the fate of the “Princes in the Tower” is still an enigma today.

June Reid

Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Holland



March Ramble

Fifteen of us started at Blackheath Station and proceeded in a fairly orderly fashion across the heath to enter Greenwich Park at the Vanbrugh Gate on Maze Hill. We passed through the Flower Garden and then saw swathes of golden daffodils in the Ranger’s Field. We then entered unexplored territory, walking past The Dell, Queen Caroline’s Bath, Ranger’s House, Rose Garden, and then having a fleeting view of the Anglo Saxon Tumuli and Henry Moore’s “Knife Edge” sculpture. If any of our readers use this roundabout route, we suggest looking across the landscape for a slightly different perspective to the paths normally trod and reading any signage, blue plaques *etc*.

We left the park at the Park Row Gate, went down to the Thames and turned left along the Thames Path to Deptford Creek before returning to Greenwich and lunch. It was a shorter ramble than normal – nearly all downhill and without stiles – just a stroll, really.

Cynthia & Roy Morton

 My pictures of Greenwich Park appear on the Gallery page of our website.

Editor

Ramblers 3 • Leader Trevor Ford



I had studied my Chart well, so there was little chance we'd get lost as we made our way around Churchill's estate. Mind you, one of the first climbs was up and over Mariner's Hill, so you could get a little confused as being so far from the sea. For a large part of the walk, we followed the Greensand Way, though it was mostly black mud. It was another glorious day in terms of weather and we had spectacular views of Westerham coming down off The Chart. We walked up the High Street to lunch at "The Grasshopper on the Green", though luckily there was more on the menu than insects. When I went to book, I had been directed to the "menu for small appetites", which didn't quite sound like us, but it did prevent that heavy-stomached somnolence setting in and delaying our departure. Since they are usually busy on a Friday, they had asked us to make our choice in advance, which seemed to work out well, and we were all pleased with servings, including Caroline who wanted to sample the herring roes which she hadn't had for years. We also had to supply plastic bags to store our boots in. The restaurant was upstairs and overlooked the village green with its statues of General Wolfe and Churchill. I was tempted to paraphrase the great man by saying that, "I have nothing to offer you but mud, toil (& soil), sweat and (possibly) tears. We set off back over the hill, crossed over an interesting stone stile and waded through yet more mud to make our way back to Chartwell. Some of the party were then able to partake of the excellent teas (and cakes) supplied by the National Trust.

Trevor Ford

ENTERTAINMENT

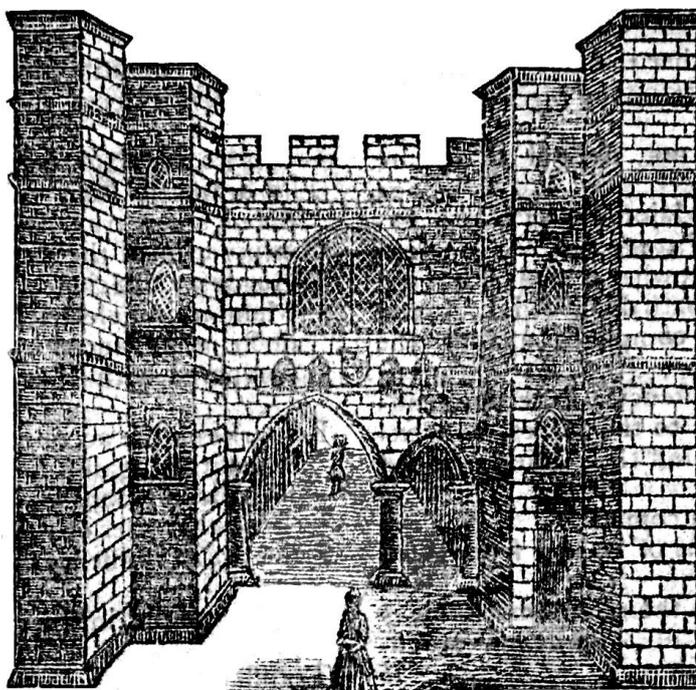
You're not supposed to enjoy modern art; it's made to be written and talked about, not looked at.

Modern art is like trying to follow the plot in a bowl of alphabet soup.

A modern artist is one who throws paint on a canvas, wipes it off with a cloth and sells the cloth.

I'm a very good sculptor. In fact, I come from a long line of chisellers.

I paint nothing but modern art. My model has the hiccups.



St. John's Gate as depicted on The Gentleman's Magazine

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Amblers (Group 2) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Vacancies
 Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (10.00 am) 	Roy Black  020 8302 9942	Vacancies
 Book Reading 1 st Thursday (2.00–4.00 pm)	June Reid 020 8302 7887	Vacancies
 Classical Music 2 nd Friday (2.30–4.30 pm)	Alan Griffiths 020 8303 6636	Vacancies
 Concerts/Ballet/Opera Various dates and times 	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Vacancies 
 Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon) 	Leader pending  needed, please	Vacancies
 Family History 2 nd Tuesday & 4 th Thursday	Judith Swain 020 8303 5759	Vacancies
 Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday morning	Lesley South 020 8300 8298	Vacancies
 Local History (Group 3) 2 nd Wednesday morning	Christine Withams 020 8850 4144	Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles)	David Wedderkop 020 8850 5042	Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 3) 1 st Friday (≈ 6 miles)	Trevor Ford 020 8302 7635	Vacancies
 Rummikub® 4 th Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Margaret Platt 020 8309 6395	Vacancies
 Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00 am)  £	Gay Braybrook  020 8309 6372	Vacancies
 Wine Appreciation Last Thursday (7.30 pm) £	Michael Jordan 020 8302 3330	Vacancies

The above groups, unless I am told otherwise by Group Leaders, are the ones with vacancies. Please contact the Group Leader concerned in the first instance, and, if accepted, inform me.

Trevor Ford, Interim Group Co-ordinator  020 8302 7635 email: trevor.ford@talktalk.net

Why not start a new group?

If your name is on the waiting list to join a full group, or no group that specialises in your interest exists yet, you can create a new one and advertise it in this Newsletter – see the last page. It is easy to run a group and any current leader can advise you how it's done. Members of groups are reminded that they should always let the group leader know if they cannot attend a meeting, particularly if they wish to withdraw from a group.

 Not during school holidays

 Notice on the board at meetings

£ A charge applies

 Open to all

 Certain seasons only

 Temporary point of contact

PROGRAMME

2015

April	Roy Bilham	Blowing my own trumpet
May	Ian Keable	The Corked Conjuror
June	Peter Hartley	The Royals
July	Roy Ingleton	The Heartbeat Years
August	Cairis Hickey	The Wiggly Wild Show
September	Colin Lomas	Leonardo Da Vinci – Was he really a genius?
October	Will Cooban	The Good, The Bad and The Bexley
November	Melanie Gibson-Barton	Bruges
December	<i>To be advised</i>	

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
Vice-Chairman	Lesley South	020 8300 8298
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	John Lapham	020 8854 6340
Membership Secretary	Patricia Rivett	020 3302 2887
Speakers Secretary	<i>Vacant</i>	
Group Co-ordinator	Trevor Ford	020 8302 7635
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
General Member	Janet Lambern	020 8300 1786

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Raffle Organiser Jackie Burke 020 8302 7395
 Newsletter Editor & Webmaster David Smith 020 8304 2305
 Please either email contributions to me at: editor@sidcup-u3a.org.uk or post them to me at 56 Crofton Avenue, Bexley, Kent DA5 3AR – typed if possible since this facilitates scanning. Please submit Newsletter contributions by 3rd of the month – but at any time for the website. Photos taken during group outings and events may be shared on the website’s “Gallery” page.
Third Age Trust: 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QE (020 8466 6139) www.u3a.org.uk
London Region U3A: www.u3asites.org.uk/london-region
World U3A: www.worldu3a.org **Virtual U3A:** www.vu3a.org

WEBSITE

www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk

This Newsletter (including previous editions) may be read or downloaded from our website; our annual booklet, Scambuster, and help with computer problems may also be downloaded. Also available is an index of Newsletter ‘Notices’ covering the period April 2007 to this issue.

Afterthought

There are days when, no matter which way you spit, it's upwind.