

**SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
NEWSLETTER**

April 2016



**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

**The Age of Baroque – Spectacle & Style
The National Gallery Collection**

This is an exclusive study day for U3A members at the National Gallery.

11 am–3.30 pm 2nd June. £18 per ticket available through Third Age Trust.

Following the success of joint ventures exploring paintings in the National Gallery's Collection both chronologically and thematically, the National Gallery is delighted to be hosting another U3A study day which will focus upon the 17th century Baroque style in Italy, Spain, France and the Netherlands. This follows on from the study days on Italian and Northern Renaissance paintings.

The meeting will introduce key themes and concepts, functions, chronology and techniques. The day will provide you with a well-rounded experience of various and fascinating aspects of the age of Baroque.

Join National Gallery experts for a Baroque extravaganza. Enjoy a feast for the eyes, from the courtly splendour of works by Rubens and Van Dyck, to the light, darkness and drama of Rembrandt and Caravaggio's revolutionary paintings.

George Murrell

Live Longer, Live Well – Seize the Day!

There will be a U3A Royal Society 'Staying Sharp' Lecture in association with The European Alliance for the Brain on Tuesday 7th June 2016 from 2:00 pm–4:00 pm. The speaker is Professor Richard Faragher, ARCS DPhil FSB, Chairman of the British Society for Research on Ageing, and Professor of Biogerontology, University of Brighton.

Professor Faragher is an entertaining and informative speaker who is familiar to some U3A members. He will explore the potential to transform health in later life, the current state of research and dispel myths about ageing, among other topics – helping us to 'seize the day.'

The cost is £15, including refreshments, and takes place in The Royal Society's City of London Rooms. Bookings may be made through Third Age Trust.

The Royal Society, 6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AG.

George Murrell

GROUP NEWS

Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden



Twenty-five years ago the Fan Museum in Greenwich opened, and it is now celebrating this event with a FANTastic display, which we were able to see in March. The curator gave us some general information about the making and use of fans, and the lady who started it all, Mrs. Alexander, took us round the main displays. She pointed out many things to us which we would otherwise have missed, explaining the significance of them, much of which related to the period in which the fans were made. The fans on view spanned three or more centuries and were from several countries. Mrs. Alexander was able to take us back to the times when fans were of great importance, especially in royal circles. We were most impressed with one fan depicting the court of the French Sun King, another fan with butterflies on it, a 'mask' fan, and some fans with jewels and gold included. The highlights, which were displayed in a large glass case, were several lace fans. We were so impressed with it all that several of us expressed a wish to make a fan for ourselves, even though we realised that they would in no way compare with the beautiful fans on view, as the making of fans requires a seven-year apprenticeship.

Val Gosden

Book Reading • Leader June Reid



Our book for March was *City of Veils* by Zoë Ferraris which was chosen by Jenny. We had already enjoyed the first book in this series, *Night of the Mi'raj*, and so decided to read the second. This story is once again set in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, where criminals are executed in public and women hide beneath suffocating black robes. We meet a familiar figure, Nayir, a Bedouin guide, and Katja, a forensic scientist. She is the woman he loves but is so scared of his feelings of love and desire that the relationship becomes troubled. They are investigating the savage murder of a young woman from a wealthy Saudi family who was involved in the making of a very controversial film before her mutilated body was found. We also meet an American woman, Miriam, a sympathetic character, whose husband had disappeared suddenly one night. Her desperation in such a hostile environment is brilliantly conveyed. This was a good crime novel and we all gave it the "thumbs up." We will probably read the remaining book in the series next year when we finish our current quota!

June Reid

Classical Music • Leader Olive Mercer



With two of our three new members very welcome to the group, our March meeting started with music from two different versions of *Romeo and Juliet*: one from Prokofiev, and the other from Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*. We had piano music by Schumann and Smetana, and Tchaikovsky's *Valse Scherzo* for violin. After Crusell's first clarinet concerto, we heard two very different singers: Maria Callas with an aria from *La Gioconda*, and a folk song sung by Kathleen Ferrier. Mozart's 21st symphony completed the programme.

Olive Mercer

Rummikub 2 • Leader Mary Hawes



A new group, Rummikub 2, has opened and the existing one has been renamed Rummikub 1. Unfortunately, its vacancies have been filled already, but anyone seeking to be a member of such a group is welcome start another one.

Trevor Ford, Group Coordinator

Family History • Leaders Judith Swain & Kate Berry



This group meets on the 2nd Tuesday and 4th Thursday – and Thursday meetings are now open to all. Contact details on Group Vacancies page.

Trevor Ford, Group Coordinator

Local History 2 • Leader Pauline Watling



The Royal Albert Hall was our trip on 9th March. Fifteen of us met at Sidcup Station and went by train and tube to the Royal Albert Hall to collect our tickets. We had enough time for a quick coffee before meeting our guide, Andy, at 11.30 am for our tour.

It had been Prince Albert's dream to have a concert hall built. When he died in 1861, Queen Victoria carried out his wishes and work began in 1867; it was finished 1871 and opened on March 29th the same year. The building is actually oval rather than circular and is a grade 1 listed building. Andy told us that they had had many problems with the acoustics but, finally, in 1969, fibreglass discs (which look like flying saucers) were suspended from the ceiling and they are still there to this very day. We could not go into the room where the Queen takes tea as it is being decorated.

We all enjoyed the tour. Andy was very informative and we thanked him for a pleasant morning. Most of us then went to Wetherspoons (The Tyburn) in Edgware Road for our lunch. It was a very pleasant day.

Diane Wingrave

Local History 1 • Leader Lesley South



Dennis Severs' House, Spitalfields

This is described as a time capsule and took the artist, Dennis Severs, 20 years to refurbish his 1724 house exactly as it would have been when a family of Huguenot silk weavers – who were probably refugees from France – lived here in in the early 18th century.

The hand-out reads: “The game is that you interrupt the family Jervis who, although they can sometimes be heard, always seem to be just out of sight. You journey off in a silent search through 10 authentically furnished rooms, each one lit by a coal fire and candlelight...with the smell of food cooking....a meal half eaten....the ticking clocks....and piece together their life.”

This is a unique experience, which, because you go in silence, is utterly absorbing. Before you rush to make a booking, be warned that it is on five floors, the stairs are steep and the only lighting is a candle or two in each room. That said, it's worth your best effort!

Annette Holland

Ramblers 2 • Leader David Wedderkop



In March we revisited one of our favourite rambling areas in Kent on a beautiful warm, sunny day. We drove to the Lullingstone Visitors Centre, and from there walked the Lullingstone Loop – but avoided the steepest part of that loop! We started by walking along the River Darent towards Lullingstone Castle. From here, we walked gently upwards along the path through the golf course, then slightly more steeply upwards before turning right along the path which leads through woodland, then undulates through open country, with delightful views over the Darent Valley on one side and the distant sound of the M25 on the other. With Eagle Heights ahead, we turned down a narrow path leading to the side of the Roman Villa and the narrow road leading us back to Lullingstone Castle. Here we stopped and visited St. Botolph's Church before retracing our steps alongside the River Darent and back to the visitors centre. We were pleasantly surprised at the quality of their homemade soup and fresh baguettes which we enjoyed in full sunshine at the picnic tables outside the centre. It was a refreshing end to a delightful morning.

Ilena Harrington

i Construction of Lullingstone Roman Villa began in around 82 AD and was repeatedly expanded and occupied until its destruction by fire in the 5th century when it was abandoned and forgotten until its excavation in the 20th century. Its owners were either wealthy Romans or native Britons who had adopted Roman customs. It is located in the Darent Valley, along with six others, including those at Crofton, Crayford and Dartford. In the Saxon period, the ruins of a Roman temple-mausoleum on the site of the villa were incorporated into a Christian chapel that was extant at the time of the Norman Conquest; this is one of the earliest known chapels in the country. Some evidence found on site suggests that, in about 150 AD, the villa was considerably enlarged and may have been used as the country retreat of the governors of the Roman province of Britannia. Two sculpted marble busts found in the cellar may be those of Pertinax, governor in 185–186 AD, and his father-in-law, Publius Helvius Successus.

Editor



Outlandish Projects: Hook New Town

Hook New Town would have been a commuter town for London designed to relieve the population pressure on the capital. In the 1960s, a team of ambitious young designers put together a plan for a new town in Hampshire to relieve London's population. It was one of most radical bedroom community settlements proposed in the era – a small, super-dense city of modern houses, where pedestrians and vehicles were completely segregated, and paths ran through parkland to an integrated central complex that contained all the civic and economic functions of the town.

It was passed over, but the book describing these proposals, *The Planning of a New Town*, would go on to be influential for planners across the world. Perhaps it's a good thing Hook New Town was never built, though: its closest relative, Cumbernauld in Scotland, has since become a laughing stock famed for the dismalness of its very own concrete town centre.

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Amblers (Group 1) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	John Harbert 020 8300 5361	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)	Olive Mercer 020 8300 3136	Vacancies
 Concerts/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 Tues  & 4 th Thurs 	Judith Swain & Kate Berry 020 8303 5759	Vacancies
 Meditation (Thursday Group) 1 st & 3 rd Thurs (10.00–11.30 am) £	Keith Alker 020 8850 2853	Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles)	David Wedderkop 020 8850 5042	Vacancies
 Rummikub® (Group 1) 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 3 rd Wednesday (7.30 pm) £	Roger Brown 020 8850 5362	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  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/bank holidays

£ A charge applies

 Certain seasons only

 Notice on the board at meetings

 Open to all

 Temporary point of contact

PROGRAMME

2016

April	Dennis Chambers	Some Kent Ghosts – Their haunts and their stories
May	Anna Austin	Motorina to Racing Driver
June	Vicky Fry	Murder, Myths and Misconceptions – Working with the Magistrates' Courts
July	Maurice Tripp	“Why the show must go on!”
August	Barbara Stevens	Charles and Emma Darwin/Downe
September	Alan Ashby	Life-Saving Work of the Lifeboat Service
October	Kevin Reynolds	Walking in Kent and Sussex
November	Steve Roberts	Tales of a Scotland Yard Detective
December	Roy Bilham	Christmas Music (on trumpet)

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	Pat Andrews	020 8300 2064
Asst. Membership Secretary	Lynn Plumer	07714 234398
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

If youth knew; if age could. (Henri Estienne, 1594)