

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

April 2019



**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

New Members Coffee Morning 11.30–12.30 am 2nd May

An invitation is extended to all members who have joined Sidcup U3A in the last 6 months to share a cup of tea or coffee (and biscuits!) with some group leaders. This is an opportunity for the group leaders to tell you about their groups and have a chat with potential new members to their groups. Members of the Committee will also be present to welcome you to our cosy co-operative.

Trevor Ford, Group Coordinator

U3A Monthly Email Newsletter

The University of the Third Age publishes a monthly newsletter by email which contains much interesting material. Any member who is interested in receiving the newsletter can sign up at u3a.org.uk/email.

George Murrell

Blankets Wanted

A manager at Darent Valley Hospital would like Knitters and Sewers to make the items listed below to provide comfort to premature babies and blankets for the elderly.

- a) Incubator Nests size approximately 22 by 17 inches
- b) Incubator Covers size approximately 40 by 35 inches
- c) Bonding Hearts size approximately 10.5 by 8 centimeters
- d) Crocheted or knitted Octopus for premature babies
- e) Large brightly coloured blankets size approximately 3 feet square

I would be able to pick up the knitted goods at the U3A meetings. Thank you.

Pauline Springhall

(i) Details of these items are shown on a document that can be read or downloaded from our website; the link to it is on the first page and is called “knitting blankets.”

Editor

Template

A group leaders' handbook entitled *Template* (consisting of 9 pages) which may be of interest can be downloaded from the Advice pages of the Third Age Trust website.

George Murrell

Message of thanks from June Reid

Thanks to everyone who sent their good wishes and support to me during the weeks of my recovery. It was good to know that I have so many friends, which has helped me enormously. Although I still have a long way to go, I look forward to seeing you all before too long.

June Reid

New Members

We would like to welcome Anne Novis, Caroline and Michael Tyler as new members. We hope that you enjoy your time with us.

Carolyn & Lynn (Membership Secretaries)



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



In March, we visited Battersea Power Station, travelling out from Waterloo Main Line Station. Access to the site is via Pump House Lane off Battersea Park Road and past the Dogs Home. This lane takes one around the towering power station, still under construction, and behind hoardings. It is amazing to look up at the rebuilt towers and the mass of cranes. Around and towards the River Thames is Circus West Village, an all-new development of apartments, shops and places to eat and drink. There is a riverside walk, but, by the time we arrived, a bitterly cold wind had got up so we had to retreat into an Italian restaurant called "Mother" housed in a railway arch. It was lit by candles and there was a lovely pizza oven to warm us. We all had a huge Panini, the best ever, they make their own dough. They run a shuttle bus back to the entrance to the site and they welcome visitors to this developing area.

Christine Withams

i Pictures taken during this visit are available to view on the Gallery page of our website. Battersea Power Station, situated on the south bank of the River Thames, comprised two coal-fired power stations. These were built in two stages in a single building; Battersea A Power Station was built in the 1930s and Battersea B Power Station to its east in the 1950s. They were built to a nearly identical design, providing the iconic four-chimney structure. The station is one of the world's largest brick buildings and notable for its original, lavish Art Deco interior fittings and decor. It was decommissioned between 1975 and 1983 and remained empty until 2014. It was designated as a Grade II listed building in 1980. The site was also listed on the 2004 World Monuments Watch by the World Monuments Fund.

Editor

Ramblers 3 • Leader Trevor Ford



March 2019

We had a bit of a drive out to Lamberhurst, but it was well worth it with glorious countryside and views and sounds. (In particular, birdsong with larks already ascended, cock pheasants calling and hen pheasants scared out of the hedgerows by our passing). Talking of hedgerows, they seemed to have been heavily scalped, but I guess they'll recover, perhaps, though, too late for nesting birds. The village itself is delightful now that the A21 bypass is routing the traffic elsewhere. Climbing out of the village, we went firstly through a vineyard, again heavily pruned, but clearly productive later in the year. We crossed a road and then went on to a woodland path down a dip, and scrambled over a collapsed fence to avoid a blocked and extremely muddy path. We went past three lakes and over a couple of attractive footbridges belonging to Owls Castle Farm, where there are oast houses rather than battlements. We climbed steadily and crossed another road to a path that skirted a copse. The next field was bisected by a tiny stream which is the county boundary between Kent and Sussex. However, we didn't recognise the moment we re-entered Sussex. Entering the next field via a stile led us to another farm and then out to the road towards Hook Green and the Elephant's Head where we had an excellent lunch. (Where's the rest of the elephant? In the room).

I didn't lose our way, nor any of the party. However, I did lose the map, compass, measuring wheel and guide book. At least they were not lost; I left them in the pub and didn't realise for the first mile, so I wasn't going back. (I picked them up later). We went over the road in single file through a crop field heading north east down to Furnace Mill. The track crosses the River Teise and then goes out to the road with a lengthy climb. After plunging down a path through a wood to a lake, we then passed another attractive cottage (described in the book as ruined – but no longer!) We then began the horror of the steep, muddy slope of which I had warned the group after my experience the week before – but now it was even worse. The treads of our boots rapidly filled up so they could not get a grip on its surface. Several of us slipped over or sat down forcibly, and some were even forced to crawl up. Eventually, we made it to the top, muddy and only slightly bloody from neighbouring brambles. We reached white railings and the drive leading to Owl House Garden, which is now shut. (The several references to Owls are a nod to the old name for smugglers). We went past a fruit farm – which had one of the orchards now grubbed up – then out to a road. As we crossed it, the view opened up on a fabulous vista of the valley containing Lamberhurst, which by then was very welcome. We then went down into the village again, and crossed the river once more via a footbridge.

Trevor Ford

Theatre Trips: Musicals • Leader Sue Brooks



On Wednesday 6th March, a group of us met at The Orchard Theatre, Dartford, to see a matinée performance of *The Calendar Girls*. The show is a collaboration between Gary Barlow and Tom Firth (who wrote both the film and the play) and it had taken them five years. If you think that after the film and play there is just nothing left, you could not be more wrong. The whole musical will make you both laugh and cry. There are brilliant performances from many familiar faces, and the cast is headed up by Fern Britton as you have never seen her before! Denise Welch is very, very funny and Ruth Madoc has worn extremely well. Most of us would not be courageous enough to get our kit off at her age! Who knew that they could all sing? It is well worth seeing if you get the chance. Thank you, Sue Brooks, for all the work you put into arranging this, even giving up your seat to a new member, and thus sitting upstairs alone. We all appreciated the experience and look forward to *Priscilla*.

Shirley Haynes

Pot Pourri • Leader Pat Laughton



In March, we visited the Royal Geographical Society-IBG where I had worked for 20 years in the Journals Office. The Society was formed in 1835, and, being very pro-active in the field of exploration, it has amassed a large collection of artefacts, maps, photos and books since that time.

Presentations are given to U3A groups by the Library staff and we were given a presentation entitled *Disasters* by the Head of the Library which incorporated the earthquakes, volcanoes and storms that have changed the face of the world. We were allowed to handle books over 200 years old and saw many photos and maps from the collection showing the damage that had occurred following such major events. I was able to take my group into the Lecture Theatre and give them an insight into the history of the building and a tour of the ground floor rooms. The building was built in the 1870s and many of the features have been kept to this day despite an extensive renovation following a successful bid from the National Lottery at the start of this century.

The weather was not kind to us and we had to abandon plans to walk in Hyde Park due to heavy rain. Let's hope the weather is better for our April meeting where the group are visiting The Museum of Childhood at Bethnal Green.

Pat Laughton

Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



Our visit in March was a tour of the Kings Cross area but, as this was not till 2 pm, we first visited the Crick Institute to see their free exhibition, *Art and Graft*. We were introduced to the work being undertaken from fly breeders, laser guiders, cell growers, tech fixers and bottle washers.

Our next visit was to Old St Pancras Church which can trace its history back to the Norman Conquest. It is a small church set in a large churchyard. During the 1860s, many graves had to be moved to make way for new railway lines. The Hardy Tree is a good example of this with gravestones growing out of its roots. There is also the Sir John Soane's memorial – the top is said to be the inspiration behind the red telephone box.

We had a short introduction about the history of the Kings Cross site and what has already been built on the 67-acre site and heard what else was planned by 2022 when the complex should be complete. It was a very interesting walk with our guide, Anne, who pointed out the various buildings and who was using them. Three of the old gas holders which had been in the area for 150 years have been retained. They were dismantled and sent to Yorkshire to be refurbished and now Gasholder Park provides a place to pause and look at the views over the Regent's canal. The other two gasholders form the framework to some very iconic apartments.

The latest area to be completed is Coal Drops Yard. Originally, coal had come to London by canal or sea. This later changed to delivery by rail and the area was used to hold the coal before it was distributed to the numerous coal merchants and industries. Now it has been transformed into a mix of shops, restaurants and open spaces using much of the original Victorian architecture. Wherever possible, local people are being employed in what was underused industrial wasteland. Now there are homes, shops, bars, galleries, schools and a university. We found it a very interesting visit.

Mary Webb

Our trip out on a lovely sunny day in February was a local one; we went to a place which most of us had visited before, but some time ago – Chislehurst Caves. We joined a good-sized party which included children of various ages, took up lanterns, and, following our guide, ventured deep underground. Our guide gave us some history of the place which included use by Druids, Saxons and Romans, who mined the area. Narrow in places, wobbly underfoot, and low overhead sometimes, we passed areas that were used as shelters during World War II. Beds (three-tier and very basic), lavatories (also very basic!) dentist, hospital, canteen, all were there and well-used by hundreds seeking shelter from the bombs. After returning our lanterns at the end of the tour, we returned to the bus stop, caught a bus for just one stop *up* the hill, then descended into Susan Wood to have a light lunch at The Ramblers Rest.

Our trip out at the beginning of March was to the Sewing Machine Museum, where over 700 machines were on display – all in working order. These ranged from large ones used for such things as sewing fur, leather, and other tough materials, to smaller domestic machines, some of which were very small indeed. An enthusiastic lady gave us information about some of the machines, one of which was the first machine ever, built by a Frenchman, and which was the forerunner of many of today's machines. A most fantastic machine was one that was given to Queen Victoria's daughter at the time of her marriage, a grand machine which was able to do more than just sew a seam. At one time, sewing machines, as items of work done by lower class people, had to be hidden away by their 'betters,' and this could be inside writing desks, cabinets or even in an item such as an ornamental lion – items which could thus be on display. Eventually, of course, they became much wanted items, so many makers, all with their own ideas of decoration as well as their working methods, was indicative of the value placed on owning a sewing machine. Some were worked by hand, others using a treadle mechanism, with interesting 'foot' designs, including one with a strap to keep the foot in place. The more one looked the more one saw. Next door to this was a most wonderful haberdashery shop.

Towards the end of March, we visited the Banqueting House in Whitehall, this being the one surviving building from the Palace of Whitehall, which was in use in Elizabethan times. An excellent audio guide gave us relevant history, and notable names such as the architect Inigo Jones and the artist Peter Paul Rubens were to the fore. The Rubens painting is the only one which is still in its original position, on the ceiling, with others being hung elsewhere. Grand masques were held in this building and notables were presented to the King here, but once a year a number of poor people had the opportunity to come to the King, who would wash their feet and give them some money, this being the origin of the Maundy Money ceremony which continues to this day – but minus the foot-washing which was discontinued in the 19th century. The kings who used this building were James I (of Scotland), Charles I, and Charles II. Charles I was beheaded on a scaffold just outside this building in 1649, wearing two garments under his shirt so that he wouldn't shiver with the cold, which might give onlookers the impression that he was afraid. By contrast to this, our visit was on a lovely sunny day so we afterwards strolled further along Whitehall, found a café. It was interesting to see so much history in one building.

Val Gosden

i The London Sewing Machine Museum is at 292-312 Balham High Road, London SW17. (Tooting) It is free to visit.

Editor

Book Reading • Leader June Reid



Our book for February was *The Music Shop* by Rachel Joyce. She is a favourite author of ours as we have already read *The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* and *The Love Song of Queenie Hennessy*, greatly enjoying both. *The Music Shop* was again peopled with quirky characters, as in the previous novels. There is a basic theme of music running throughout the story, and the effect upon everyone in life. At times sad, at times hilariously funny, the characters jump out of the page at you. The amount of research done by the author was amazing as all types of music: classic, jazz and also pop were included into the storyline and characters. It was an easy read and is highly recommended.

June Reid

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	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
 Craft & Chat 1 st & 3 rd Thursday (10.00 am) 	Pauline Springhall 020 8308 1975	Vacancies
 Family History 2 nd Tues  & 4 th Thurs  	Kate Berry 020 8309 7429	Vacancies
 Handcrafted Cards (Group 2) 1 st Wednesday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	1 Vacancy
 Local History (Group 3) 2 nd Wednesday morning	Christine Withams 020 8850 4144	Vacancies
 Mono Digital Photography Quarterly (approx.) 	Roy Morton rory.m2014@gmail.com	3 Vacancies
 Needlecrafts 1 st Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	Vacancies
 Parks & Gardens Appreciation 4 th Thursday 	Jill Bryant Rinka Halliday 01322 524008 020 8300 2699	2 Vacancies
 Pot Pourri 2 nd Tuesday 	Pat Laughton 020 8302 9984	3 Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles)	Helen Salmon 07786 465862 or 020 8309 1689	Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 3) 1 st Friday (5–6 miles)	Trevor Ford 020 8302 7635	5 Vacancies
 Rummikub® (Group 1) 4 th Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Kathy Cordell  020 8300 4573	Vacancies
 Science 3 rd Tuesday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Trevor Ford 020 8302 7635	2 Vacancies
 Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00 am)   £	Gay Braybrook  020 8309 6372	Vacancies
 Theatre Trips: Musicals   £	Sue Brooks 020 8298 1117	Vacancies
 Wine Appreciation 3 rd Wednesday (7.30–9.30 pm) £	Roger Brown 020 8850 5362	Vacancies

The above groups, unless I am told otherwise by Group Leaders, are the ones with vacancies; *any* sort of change should be advised to me as soon as possible. Those wishing to join a group should contact the Group Leader concerned in the first instance, and, if accepted, inform me.

Trevor Ford  020 8302 7635 email: trevor.ford@talktalk.net

 Not during school/bank holidays
 Temporary point of contact

£ A charge applies
 Certain seasons only

 Open to all
 Times vary

