

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

August 2009



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

NOTICES

U3A Shared Learning Project

The U3A has been invited by King's College London, to work with the College Archives on what could be a very exciting and rewarding project. The theme will be medicine in the community, and the proposal is for a small number of our members to work with a group of young people who aren't in education, training or employment, and unemployed second agers to digitise heritage material held by the College. Anyone watching the BBC series *Casualty 1909* will understand how much medicine in the community has changed over the years.

If you, or people you know, might be interested in taking part and would be willing to travel to the King's College in the Strand, we would like to hear from you. The project is expected to run in two phases – one from mid-October 2009 to mid-December 2009, and the second from mid-January to mid-March 2010, and will require some basic IT skills, particularly in relation to scanning and image processing. Some training will be given in the use of the project kit, and any specialist software will be provided.

Lots more background information is available and, at this time, we just want people to register their interest. Once the funding is confirmed, we'll ask you to apply for one or other of the project phases. Please contact Jennifer Anning by e-mail jennifer@anning.eu, the London Shared Learning Project Co-ordinator, for more details.

George Murrell

Home Fire Safety Checks

Age Concern England and Help the Aged provide a service whereby arrangements can be made for a "Handyvan Fitter", Mike Ryan, to visit the homes of persons aged 60 years and over, by appointment, to carry out a fire safety check of their home and install smoke alarms. This service is free of charge. To request an appointment please telephone "Penny", Home Support Administrator, Age Concern England and Help the Aged ☎ 01255 477934.

The London Fire Brigade also provide a similar service and will offer personal fire safety advice in your home and fit a free smoke alarm where needed. To request a home visit phone 0800 284428 or e-mail smokealarms@london_fire.gov.uk.

George Murrell

Photography Competition ANIMALS

Please bring your photographs along to the September main meeting between 1.30 and 1.55 pm. You will be given a sheet of A5 paper and a clear plastic pocket in which to put your prints – one or two entries, no larger than 7" x 5". Your entry may be given a title if you wish, but please do not include your name. Each photograph will be numbered for voting purposes.

All members attending the September meeting will be given a voting slip when they arrive; please make sure you receive yours when you register.

Val Gosden

Group Holiday to Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Gloucester Monday 1st March – Friday 5th March 2010

Excursions: Wye Valley, the Cotswolds, Cheltenham & Bath.

Cost: £321.00 per person for bed, breakfast and evening meal and coach to hotel and return.

Cancellation insurance, if required, is £8.00 per person.

Only twin and double rooms are now available.

I will collect the £25.00 deposit for this holiday at the September General Meeting.

Margaret Platt ☎ 0208 309 6395

Coach Trip to Salisbury

Owing to lack of support this trip has been cancelled. Please see me at the meeting for return of monies and cheques.

Anne Evans

GROUP NEWS

Classical Music : Leader Derick Johnson



My programme began with Luigi Boccherini's Cello concerto № 12 in E flat major played by the Northern Chamber Orchestra conducted by Nicholas Ward with Raphael Wallfisch on the cello. This was a rather peaceful start, and it was followed by Vivaldi's Concerto for Lute (guitar) two violins (strings) and basso continuo in D major by the Franz Liszt Chamber Orchestra conducted by Janos Rolla, with John Williams and Benjamin Verdery on the guitars and Norbert Blum on the viola d'amore. It seems a shame that, in modern recordings, the lute is so often replaced by the guitar. After this we had Johann Wenzel Anton Stamitz's Trumpet Concerto in D played by the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields conducted by Sir Neville Mariner with Håkan Hardenberger on the trumpet. This was something our group had never heard – as was the next one before the break: Johann Joachim Quantz's Flute Concerto in G major played by the Zürcher Kammerorchester conducted by Edmond de Stoutz with Peter-Lukas Graf on the flute. After a prolonged break, which we all enjoyed, we heard J. S. Bach's Concerto for two violins in D minor by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra with Kennedy and Daniel Stabrawa on the violins, and Albrecht Mayer, oboe, which has always been a favourite piece. To conclude, we played Santa Lucia sung by Hayley Westenra – which sent us away with a smile.

Derick Johnson

10-Pin Bowling : Leader Gay Braybrook



This group meets every Monday at the SuperBowl Bexleyheath at 10 am. We start playing again on 7th September. We recently had our ‘away’ game at Cliftonville and we were greeted with coffee and home made cakes – including bread pudding – on this occasion. The alley at Cliftonville is a family run business and it looks very successful. Afterwards we had lunch at Westgate-on-Sea and we then went on to Herne Bay for a stroll along the promenade when the sun came out!

Gay Braybrook

Saturday Rambling : Leader Gay Braybrook



In July we had our coastal walk which, this year, was from Hastings to Bexhill – a distance of 5 miles. It was very pleasant walking next to the sea with the sound of the waves. This was a mostly flat walk with a couple of inclines into Bexhill. We lunched at the De la Warr Pavilion and afterwards split up to explore. The weather was good and some of us stayed into the early evening. We were able to use our Freedom passes down there so getting back to Hastings on the bus was no problem.

This group meets on the 1st Saturday of the month.

Gay Braybrook

National Trust/English Heritage : Leaders John & Olive Mercer



On 9th July 8 of us travelled from Sidcup to London Bridge and thence by No 48 bus to visit Sutton House. This Tudor house, which survives in the heart of an East London community, was built in 1535 by Sir Ralph Sadleir, a prominent courtier of Henry VIII, who wanted to escape London and enjoy the countryside. Hackney was then a salubrious area, and the house was surrounded by open green spaces. He extended the property to accommodate himself, his wife, and eight children. Later occupants included a succession of merchants, Huguenot silk weavers, the clergy, and school mistresses who all made alterations.

In 1740 the solid oak window frames were taken out and fashionable sash windows installed. Inside remains one large Tudor window dated 1535 which overlooks the courtyard. In 1750 the house was divided into two to provide additional revenue for the owners, and there are now two front doors. The ground floor Linen Fold Parlour – one of the finest Tudor rooms in London – is lined with oak panelling that resembles draped cloth. Although the house has only a small amount of furniture, there are many rooms to view. In places, some of the alterations made to the house over the years have been left on show.

The Great Chamber was an important room during the 16th & 17th centuries for ceremonial purposes, entertaining and feasting; adorned with pictures, it was impressive. Another room had Victorian furniture. The National Trust bought Sutton House in 1938 but it was neglected and occupied by squatters. There were plans to demolish the house, but, owing to opposition from the local community who raised the sum of £500,000 towards the cost of £2.1 million, a three-year restoration took place between 1991–1994. There is a wide ranging programme of events throughout the year for the local community together with educational events. I think it is worth a visit and wonder how many people who belong to the Trust have done so.

Jill Bryant

Ramblers 1 : Leader Annette Jansen



We set out on Tuesday 28th July in the shadow of a large and stormy looking cloud, and we were rather apprehensive as to what sort of day to expect for our ramble. We need not have worried. By the time the six of us met at Oare, just outside Faversham, the sun was bright and warm, and the rest of the day was just right for walking, with sun and some cloud to give a little relief. Our walk took us along the Saxon Shore Way – which is a wonderful place for those interested in bird watching. We then turned inland and continued through fields and lanes, and, memorably, through an abandoned plum orchard, where we took the opportunity to ‘scrum’ some free refreshments! Our circular route then brought us back to the car park of The Three Mariners where we ate a truly delicious meal. This walk was a change from our usual kind of itinerary, and it was enjoyed by all who came.

Lesley South

(i) The Saxon Shore Way starts at Gravesend and traces the coast for 163 miles as it was in Roman times as far as Hastings.

Editor

Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk



Our July visit was a walk around St. James’s – Clubland. We started in Waterloo Place and discovered a dog’s grave at the head of Waterloo Steps. A German who happened to be nearby told us that it was not (as commonly believed) Ribbentrop’s dog, but the dog of the German ambassador who preceded Ribbentrop in the early 1930s when the adjacent building had been the German Embassy. We passed the Athenaeum and then turned into St James’s Square. Passing the oddly named “In And Out” Club, we found Chatham House which bears a blue plaque which informed us that three Prime Ministers, including Gladstone, had lived there. Next, the town house of Lord Castlereagh who died at Loring Hall in 1822. We walked on past the RAC Club (the only London Club to have a swimming pool), and the adjoining houses of Gainsborough and Nell Gwynne, to St James’s Palace. Outside St. James’s Club was a waiter holding a tray containing two glasses of champagne, and a television interview in progress. There was also a parked Lotus sports car (with skis strapped to the roof and soon to be auctioned), which had belonged to James Bond in “The Man with the Golden Gun”, and the interview was broadcast on TV that night. We visited the next club, the Royal Over-Seas League, and explored its rooms. We ended our visit, via the Royal Academy, in Sir Christopher Wren’s St James’s Church, Piccadilly, where a harp recital was about to begin.

John & Olive Mercer

(i) The German ambassador who owned the dog was Dr. Leopold von Hoesch (1881–1936) who was a career diplomat. He was not a Nazi and was well liked by most British statesmen. His reputation among the British as a knowledgeable and able statesman helped to enhance Anglo-German relationships during the early 1930s. In 1934 Hoesch began challenging Hitler indirectly, and, by 1936, was becoming a thorn in his side. He distrusted Ribbentrop, whom Hitler had appointed Commissioner of Disarmament Questions, and the relationship between Hoesch and Hitler continued to sour as Ribbentrop gained more power within the German government. When Hitler broke the 1919 Treaty of Versailles by invading the Rhineland on 7 March 1936, Hoesch denounced the act as designed to provoke the French and, ultimately, the British. (His dog was an alsatian called Giro).

Editor

Parks & Gardens Appreciation : Leaders Jill Bryant & Barbara Olney



On the 23rd July six of us travelled to London and onwards by No 11 bus to Chelsea. After a coffee stop at the Army Museum, we walked to The Chelsea Physic Garden; this was known as the secret garden because it was opened to the general public only in 1983. The garden was founded in 1673 by the Society of Apothecaries of London so apprentices could learn to grow medicinal plants and study their uses. The site covers 3.8 acres beside the Thames – which was the preferred way to travel as it was both safer and quicker than travelling by road. It is free draining and has a southerly aspect that creates a microclimate in which tender species may be cultivated.

Dr. Hans Sloane bought the Manor of Chelsea from Charles Cheyne in 1712 and took over the freehold of the garden. He had studied there in his youth and was sympathetic to the Apothecaries who were struggling with its upkeep. He leased the land for rent at £5 a year in perpetuity on condition that “It be forever kept up and maintained as a Physic Garden” and that plant specimens be delivered to the Royal Society each year. This is not a pristine garden with bedding plants and tidy lawns; it is divided by gravel paths into quadrants and subdivided into narrow rectangular beds. Our knowledgeable guide showed us medicinal and other useful plants, poppies for morphine, the plants used for aspirin, warfrin and the relief of asthma, and St John’s wort for depression. The formal design of the Botanical Garden is broken by trees including male and female Ginkgo Biloba trees. This is a relaxing garden with seats to rest and enjoy the mature trees and flowering shrubs. The oldest man-made rock garden in Europe is in the centre, and carved stone around the pond was once part of the Tower of London.

Dr. Sloane certainly showed forethought to keep the garden for the future; it would otherwise have now been luxury housing.

Jill Bryant

Wine Appreciation Group : Leader Michael Jordan



Thursday 30th September was the occasion for the summer meeting of WAGs and their partners. Fortunately the weather was fine, if a little breezy, so we were able to sit in the garden for the evening. As people gathered, we had sangria to get us into the party mood and then Brian Edwards gave us a tasting of six wines – 3 white and 3 red. Brian started with 3 Australian whites, the first being a Jacob’s Creek 2008 Riesling which perfectly matched its description of being ‘crisp, dry and elegant’. This was followed by a 2008 Horseshoe Bend 2008 Chardonnay from, yes, you guessed it, Horseshoe Bend in SE Australia which had just the right amount of oak, and, finally, for the whites a Yarrunga Field Special Reserve 2008 which was an unusual blend of Trebbiano with Semillion and Verdelho and which was very well received. We then had a short break during which Ann Jordan provided us with a range of warm savouries – very much appreciated. Brian started the second half of the programme with a Château Courac 2004 Côtes du Rhône Village from the village of Laudun in the Gard Departement. Following this was a glorious Châteauneuf-du-Pape by Antoine Ogier Reserve des Argentiers. Everyone loved its brambly fruit flavour and chocolate and coffee spicy flavours. We finished with a Crozes Hermitage 2006 from the Caves de Tain, the cooperative which is based in the district of Tain l’Hermitage. It was a lovely wine with which to end the evening, but Brian put the icing on the cake by producing out of the hat a half bottle of Sagrantino di Montefalco Passito 1994, a most unusual but lovely red dessert wine. We rushed to our wine books to look it up! It was a really lovely evening and our thanks go to Brian and to Ann for making it so successful.

Michael Jordan

Boules Group : Leader Bart Jansen



An irregular number of players have settled down to fortnightly games on our self-claimed patch in Danson Park. Meeting at 10 am, we manage two games per group taking about two hours, and on one occasion we were joined by the patrolling Police team who also had a couple of throws. Another extra was a dog, but he was really only interested in the retrieving part of the play. The exercise of the game is very beneficial and, yes, we are having fun with our newly formed group.

Bart Jansen



Agnes

(An evocative vocative poem – or paeon)

Oh, Agnes, I'm besotted with you,
As you hurl all your boules into play.
Oh, my aim and my heart will be true.
Oh, dear Agnes, be my cochonnet!

Chorus

Pétanque, Pétanque, Pétanque.
Hear the music of the spheres!
Pétanque, Pétanque, Pétanque
Such onomatopoeias!
Pétanque, Pétanque, Pétanque.
Runs through my head all the day.
Pétanque, Pétanque, Pétanque.
Agnes, I'm bouleversé!

Ian Brydon

False Pride (and Prejudice)

Tell you what, Guv, I've got a new love:
She's a waitress in Thornton's café.
But I'm working class, and she's far above –
She's from Sidcup – and I'm from Foots Cray.

She won't have no pity, though I work in the City,
And I bring home respectable pay.
She says she don't care, just sings the same ditty –
"I'm from Sidcup – and you're from Foots Cray."

I've plenty of brass, but the question of class
Is between us, and won't go away.
I drink from the can: she has hers in a glass.
She's from Sidcup – and I'm from Foots Cray.

Ian Brydon

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
Amblers (Group 3) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	Norma Balfour/José Steward 020 8303 7693/07957 181808	Yes
Antiques Appreciation (Group 3) 2 nd Wednesday (10 am)	Martin Baker 020 8300 1752	2
Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning)	Gay Braybrook/José Steward 020 8309 6372/07957 181808	Yes. Notice on board at meetings
Boules (Danson Park – seasonal) 2 nd & 4 th Thursday (10 am)	Bart Jansen 01322 522252	5
Bridge Monday	Fred Till 01322 528605	4
Darts (at The Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (midday)	Fred Green	Yes
Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	John Harlow 020 8300 3865	2
Local History (Group 2) 2 nd Wednesday	José Steward 020 8302 1627	3
National Trust/English Heritage Various dates & times	John & Olive Mercer 020 8300 3136	Yes
Ramblers (Group 1) (6-7 miles) 4 th Tuesday (10.30 am)	Annette Jansen 01322 522252	Yes
Ramblers (Group 2) (4-5 miles) 4 th Tuesday	Pat & Alf Cracknell 020 8302 0823	Yes
Recorder Playing Day to be arranged	Mary Hawes 020 8300 0521	6
Saturday Ramble (4-5 miles) 1 st Saturday (morning)	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
10-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10 am)	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes. Notice on board at meetings

The above lists, 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 the Group Co-ordinator.

Christine Spencer, Group Co-ordinator ☎ 020 8300 4291

Why not start a new group?

If you are on the waiting list to join a full group why not create a new one and then advertise it in this Newsletter and on our website? It is not difficult to run a group and the leader of a full one can advise you how it is done.

PROGRAMME

2009

August	Mrs. J. Hay	Freelancing for the BBC
September		Photo competition & quiz
October	Mr. M. Parkin	Women in Print
November	Mr. R. Smith	Village Signs in Kent
December	Mrs. P. Mortlock	Ightham Mote

2010

January	Katherine Eames	Climate Change
February	Dr. P. Brandham	Kew in Close-Up
March		A.G.M.
April	Mrs. B. Sadler	The Great Flood of 1953
May	Mr. S. Robinson	The City
June	Mr. M. Harrison	Midsummer Madness

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	John Mercer	020 8300 3136
Vice-Chairman	Annette Jansen	01322 522252
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	Dennis Brittain	
Membership Secretary	John Harlow	020 8300 3865
Speakers Secretary	Valerie Gosden	020 8300 0664
Group Co-ordinator	Christine Spencer	020 8300 4291
Welfare Officer	Gay Braybrook	020 8309 6372
Social Secretary	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Travel Group Leader	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
Raffle Organiser	Pat Garwood	020 8306 0013
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster	David Smith	020 8304 2305

Please either e-mail contributions to me at editor.u3a@ukonline.co.uk or post them to me at 56 Crofton Avenue, Bexley DA5 3AR – typed if possible.

Please submit contributions by 3rd of the month.

WEBSITE

www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk

Afterthought

Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.