

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

August 2010



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 Publications

These two new U3A publications in the “Older and Wiser” series may be of interest.

Digital Photography Tips and Tricks by Kim Gilmour.

This includes:

- Choosing a digital camera;
- Getting more control of your photos;
- Tips for taking holiday photos;
- Photographing children;
- Getting and storing photos on your computer.

Price £12. 99.

Social Networking Tips and Tricks by Sean McManus.

- Using your PC to find and keep in touch with friends;
- How to make it easy for them to find you;
- How to protect your privacy and your security.

Price £12. 99.



Copyright Licence for Adult and Community Learning (ACL)

The Third Age Trust has now negotiated a licence that covers all U3A branches. This enables students to copy extracts from books, journals and periodicals *within clearly defined limits*. Examples of the limits are – one complete chapter from a book, or one article from a journal or magazine. The licence does not include printed music (including the words), newspapers, maps and charts.



Special Offer for U3A members

John Milton in Voice and Verse – a special concert of poetry and music.

7.00pm Monday 7th September at LICC, St Peter’s, Vere Street (off Oxford St).

7.15pm Thursday 9th December at St Giles’ Cripplegate, Barbican.

Concerts include a collection of songs inspired by Milton’s poems sung by soprano Belinda Yates and verse performed by actor Lance Pierson. The normal price of tickets is £10, but for a group of five or more U3A members it is £7. The contact phone number is 020 773 1 6544.

George Murrell

Proposed New Group

A Chance to Speak

If there is sufficient interest, it is proposed to form a small group (of up to eight) to meet on the first Monday afternoon of each month for a trial period of six months. The purpose is to provide members – who are perhaps overawed at the prospect of facing a large number of people – with an opportunity to try their hand at “Public Speaking”. A subject would be chosen in advance for each meeting and all members invited to prepare a short presentation of 5 to 10 minutes upon that subject. This would be entirely for your own satisfaction since we have no one qualified to offer advice. By selecting subjects such as “my schooldays”, and “an unusual holiday”, etc, we might be able to build up a written compendium of interesting memories. We anticipate starting in October; if you are interested, please contact George Murrell on 020 8850 2046. It would also be helpful if you are able to host meetings.

George Murrell

Thanks

Fred Till wishes to thank all kind and sympathetic friends at the U3A for the cards, letters, and support given in my recent sad loss. It's very helpful and much appreciated.

Fred Till

Bridging The Gap SE Your chosen charity for 2010

On behalf of our charity, I would like to say a big thank you for your continuing support. We have been given a cheque for £342.00 which represents the money raised so far this year and I promise you this will be put to good use, and is extremely welcome. In these increasingly stringent times we are grateful that you still dig deep into your decreasing pot and give to us.

As some of you may have noticed, one of our fundraisers is individualised poems. We have a member who came to us having reached rock bottom; he had spent his entire life wondering why he didn't “fit in”. He was isolated and without any hope. When he engaged with us it became apparent that he had an absolute gift for writing. He knew this himself but had never explored it or had recognition for it so we supported him to attend a creative writing course. Initially, he had a volunteer in class with him at all times, but he slowly withdrew as he felt more confident and comfortable. The other writers were very supportive and understanding, and recognised his talent. He has now had some of his work published and I am sure we will hear more about him in the future.

He was desperate to give something back. As a result, as you can see on our table, we are able to offer personalised poems for special occasions. You supply information about the recipient, and he will include this in a poem. We have an example of his work for you to see. We can either supply just an insert which we will happily affix to a blank card supplied by you, or we can offer a selection of blank cards from which you can choose. You then approve the poem before buying. If you know somebody with a special event coming up, or you would like something different for somebody special, do speak with us. The charge is very modest – £1.00 for a poem only, or £1.50 for poem plus card.

Again, thank you all. Your support is enabling people to engage in social situations which we all take for granted, but which have been denied to them by their condition.

Gerry Kenny for “Bridging the Gap”

Sidcup Operatic Society

Sidcup Operatic Society is presenting an “Old Time Music Hall” at the Bob Hope Theatre, Wythfield Road, Eltham, from Thursday 7th – Saturday 9th October at 7.45pm; the Saturday matinée is at 2.30pm. Ticket prices start at £10.50 – but there is a discount for booking before 1st September. The booking office phone number is 020 8301 2681. The Presentation includes music hall favourites such as “singalong”, highlights from “Pirates of Penzance”, “Sweeney Todd”, traditional drama, and special surprise acts including puppetry and live budgies. The programme concludes with a Proms finale – “Land of Hope and Glory” complete with waving Union flags – plus a Victorian hat competition.

George Murrell

GROUP NEWS

Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



On 27th July ten of us walked along the banks of the Medway at Wateringbury and Teston. (We later discovered that this name is pronounced Teeson; this recalls Trottiscliffe which is pronounced Trosley). We parked in a country park between the railway line and the ancient pack bridge at Teston. Our walk took us to Wateringbury Station, which was built in semi-Elizabethan style in mid-Victorian times. Nearby were some elegant caravans, and there were many boats tied up to the river bank. We then crossed the railway line and walked past the medieval church of St. Mary at Nettlestead; it was locked on this occasion. Our path took us through large fields of maize and wheat, past a millpond and into Nettlestead village where we crossed the river to walk along the other side. We had splendid views of the Medway and the hills beyond. We went past an elegant farm with charming Kent boarded cottages, back to the ancient bridge and the country park. We had walked five miles in humid weather, dry until the last mile when it began to rain very gently. We drove to the “Tickled Trout” at West Farleigh and were well pleased with the menu. It was a successful ramble.

John & Olive Mercer

National Trust/English Heritage Group • Leaders Olive & John Mercer



On July 28th twelve of the group went to Belmont, a little-known 18th century house south of Faversham. It has a large estate, part of which is now a golf course. It was originally built for Edward Wilks, the storekeeper of the Royal Powder Mills in Faversham. Later it was enlarged by the Harris family, who achieved fame and fortune in India and at Waterloo. The fifth Lord Harris, who died in 1984, was a great collector of clocks, and his collection is one of the largest in the world. The house has many interesting architectural features, such as under floor central heating – way ahead of its time. The estate is now administered by a trust. The house is a gem, with large rooms, elegant staircase, pleasing decor and many mementos from India, and connections with the military. The gardens are beautifully kept and are worth a visit alone.

John & Olive Mercer

(i) A photo taken during this visit may be found on the “Gallery” page of our website.

Editor

Wine Appreciation Group • Leader Michael Jordan



WAGS Day Out

On Saturday 17th July members of the Wine Appreciation Group (WAGS) had a day out visiting the Meopham Valley Vineyard. The day was beautifully sunny but not too hot, and, after exploring and finding our destination down a path opposite the village green and cricket ground, we were given an entertaining talk by the owner, David Grey. We also had the opportunity to taste five of the Meopham Valley Vineyard's wines, some of which have deservedly been winners in international wine competitions. In classic vineyard style, this vineyard is set on a southern slope and on the same chalk strata as the Champagne vineyards, but the sparkling wines we tasted did not suffer in comparison to many Champagnes. After the tasting we all went to the George Inn at Meopham and enjoyed a truly lovely lunch. We all left feeling extremely pleased with ourselves – although how much that had to do with the wine is hard to say.

Michael Jordan

National Trust & English Heritage Group • Leaders John & Olive Mercer



Visit to Scotney Castle on Thursday 8th July 2010

Eight members of the group set off in fine weather in two cars and enjoyed a very easy journey to this beautiful location.

Scotney is currently celebrating the wedding in 1936 of the last owner, Christopher Hussey, to Elizabeth (Betty) Kerr-Smiley. On arrival one is issued with an invitation to the festivities, and in the house on display are the congratulatory telegrams, a reproduction of their wedding cake, her dress, and the table set for their wedding breakfast. Christopher died in 1970 and Betty in 2006, and it was at this time that the Trust took control of the House and opened it to the public in stages. Our party toured various rooms which are left much as they were when Betty died. Her skills at colour co-ordination were much in evidence as was her love of cats. Also evident was the great interest in historic architecture of Christopher who had been editor of "Country Life".

After the house visit and lunch we walked down to the famous gardens and the romantic ruins of a medieval castle and moat.

Eric & Frances Percival

(i) A group photo taken during this visit may be found on the "Gallery" page of our website. Scotney Castle was built between 1378–1380 by Roger Ashburnham. It began life as a roughly rectangular fortified house with towers in each corner. In 1580 the south wing was reconstructed in Elizabethan architectural style, and around 1630 the three-storey eastern range was rebuilt in the style of Inigo Jones. The Elizabethan wing remained a bailiff's residence until 1905, but the eastern range was partially demolished after completion of the new house in 1843, leaving the ruin as a garden feature.



Scotney Castle

Editor

Freedom Pass Explorers • Leader Val Gosden



The first thing we saw on alighting from the bus at Chase Cross, North Romford, in May, was a myriad of furry caterpillars, both on the ground and in the nearby overhanging trees. These we carefully avoided before walking to Bedfords Park. This large park consists of open grassy areas, woods with swathes of bluebells, a deer park, (with jackdaws enjoying some of the food set out for the deer), and a lake with ducks, moorhens, and geese. We walked steadily to the top of the hill from where we could see for miles over London, and a nearby information plaque informed us that the hill we could see on the horizon was Shooters Hill, and which was only eleven and a half miles away. For much of the time the sun came out and we could really enjoy this park with its lovely features, including some really large horse chestnut trees in full bloom. We interrupted our bus journey back to the Tube station with a stop at a friendly café where we enjoyed sandwiches and drinks before returning home.

We started out in lovely sunshine for our June visit, which was to Dulwich Park, although it clouded over later on. However, we very much enjoyed this park, with its grassed areas, lake, and gardens including the American Garden which must be lovely when the rhododendrons are in full bloom. A visit to the park café provided us with coffee before we strolled round the park, admiring the many trees and flowers in the garden beds. This proved to be one of our more leisurely trips out.

It was a warm day in July when we travelled to Chipstead. Only a small parade of shops greeted us at the station, none of which was a café, but we were advised that there was a pub about half a mile away. This turned out to be a ‘country’ half mile along the main road, bordered by detached houses, and which seemed to be a shorter half mile on the return journey! After a welcome coffee and a study of the maps, it was decided that we visit a local nature reserve and woods, where we enjoyed both the sunshine in the open, and then the cool air in the woods and where we sat and ate our lunches before returning to Sidcup.

Val Gosden

 Photographs of Bedfords Park can be found on the “Gallery” page of our website.

Editor

Local History 2 • Leader José Steward



Vauxhall City Farm

With my harem of 10 lady members of “Local History 2” (I should be so lucky) we set out on Wednesday 14th July to pay the farm a visit. Just ten minutes walk away from Vauxhall Bus Station, over the far side of Spring Gardens, it occupies a relatively small site which houses all sorts and types of animals.

There are 2 very large pigs, 2 calves – as yet unnamed – sheep and goats, chickens of various breeds, rabbits, guinea pigs, ducks, and a really irascible goose whose only pleasure in life seems to be in attacking any duck that gets in its way, and attempting to destroy a plastic drinking water container by chewing its edge. Do geese have teeth? They also have a pony and 3 horses, which, assisted by a walking volunteer, take it in turns to give rides to disabled children around a fairly considerable paddock. It would appear that the place is run by a skeleton permanent staff assisted by a host of volunteers – all of whom are vetted, and who clean, feed, and generally help to keep the place ticking over. Needless to say, they encourage visitors to make donations and contributions, all of which are, ironically, placed in a ceramic cow’s nether orifice.....

Chas Owen

Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Jansen



July's ramble was our now traditional annual visit to the coast. We shared cars to Eastbourne and then all met up at the pier. We used our bus passes on the number 12 bus to East Dean from where we had a steep climb up to the South Downs. We then proceeded to Birling Gap where we ate our lunch in a shower of rain. After that our waterproofs came off pretty quickly and we covered a few miles of undulating terrain before stopping for a welcome cuppa at the Beachy Head café. It was mostly downhill from there on the way back to Eastbourne – where some of us stopped for fish and chips at Harry Ramsden's – before returning home after a lovely day out. We covered about seven and a half miles in all. New members to the group are always welcome to join us.

Gloria Exeter

Classical Music • Leader Derick Johnson



Our July meeting was held on the hottest day of the year, and Symphony № 3 in C by William Boyce, played by the Aradia Ensemble, set the right note. This was followed by Vivaldi's seldom heard concerto for bassoon, strings, and basso continuo played by the Rotterdam Symphonia with Bram van Sambeek on the bassoon – a splendid performance. We followed this with J.S. Bach's violin concerto in A minor by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra with Nigel Kennedy playing the violin with verve. As a change from string instruments, we then had Mozart's trumpet concerto in D, and, before the break, Tomaso Albinoni's concerto for strings and oboe. After the break we introduced guitar music, which seems to have gained in popularity recently. In the 16th century Alonso Mudarra produced a very early piece of written music for the instrument and we heard his Fantasia with Narciso Yepes on the guitar. This was followed by Girolamo Frescobaldi's "Aria detta Frescobalda", dedicated to his wife, played by Segovia and then Isaac Albéniz's Suite Española – again with Narciso Yepes on the guitar. For variation we then had Mozart's flute and harp concerto played by James Galway. The last piece for the afternoon was the 1st movement of Mauro Guiliani's concerto in A major.

Derick Johnson

(i) Alonso Mudarra (1510–1580) was a Spanish composer and vihuelist of the Renaissance. An innovative composer of instrumental music, he was the composer of the earliest surviving music for the guitar. Vihuela is the name for two different guitar-like instruments – the one from 15th and 16th century Spain usually has 12 paired strings, and the other from 19th century Mexico has five strings and is typically played in Mariachi bands.

Editor

GROUP VACANCIES

	GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
	Amblers (Group 1) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	John Harbert 020 8300 5361	Yes
	Amblers (Group 3) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	Norma Balfour/José Steward 020 8303 6372/07957 181808	Yes
	Antiques Appreciation 3 rd 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
	Bridge Mondays (2 pm)	Fred Till 01322 528605	4
	Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (midday)	Fred Green	Yes
	First Aid Course 2 nd & 4 th Wednesday	Gladys Davidson 020 8850 9252	3
	Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	John Harlow 020 8300 3865	2
	Local History (Group 2) 2 nd Wednesday	José Steward 07957 181808	3
	Play Reading 1 st Tuesday (2–4 pm)	Frank Whipp 020 8300 1064	1
	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 3 rd Wednesday (2 pm)	Mary Hawes 020 8300 0521	6
	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 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 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's not difficult to run a group and leaders of a full one can advise you how it's done.

PROGRAMME

2010

August	Zazia Pratt	Third Age Trust and Open Forum
September	Mr. H. Townsend	Harry, the Wheelbarrow Man
October	Dr. Ann Kneif	The Bevin Boys
November	Mr. V. Creek	R.A.F. Museum, Hendon
December	Miss Ann Carter	A Celebration of Christmas

2011

January	Mr. J. Halligan	Paintings in the Guildhall Art Gallery
February	Mr. M. Parkin	The Story of Sevenoaks Market

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
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	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
Social Secretary	Vacant	

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

This Newsletter (including previous editions) may be read or downloaded from our website.

Afterthought

warning: dates in a calendar are closer than they appear.