

# SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

August 2012



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

## GROUP NEWS

### **Classical Music 1 • Leader Derick Johnson**



I started this month's classical music with the first part of the Pastoral Symphony № 6 by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra conducted by Walter Weller. This was followed by Jiří Antonín Benda's Sinfonia in F performed by the Czech Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra. The interest I have in music for the bassoon then led me to play two interesting items: first was Édouard Du Puy's Concerto For Bassoon played by the Sinfonia Rotterdam, accompanied by Bram Van Sambeek on the bassoon. The second was Johann Melchior Molter's Concerto in G minor played by the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra with Albrecht Holder on the bassoon. These pieces varied from one another considerably. We then heard Tomaso Albinoni's Concerto For Oboe and Strings by the Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra. Since I have always had an interest in the classical guitar, we then heard Andrés Segovia playing Prelude № 1 Villa-Lobos; this was followed by Alonso Mudarra's "Fantasia Que Contrahaze La Harpa" {fantasy that imitates the harp} which is the earliest known music written for the guitar. We then had Antonio Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in G transcribed and played by Alison Balsom on the trumpet, accompanied by the Scottish Ensemble. To finish, we had one of Giuseppe Tartini's violin concertos in B flat major performed by Raglan Baroque Players, with Elizabeth Wallfisch on the violin. This concluded our satisfactory afternoon of music.

**Derick Johnson**

### **Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell**



On the hottest day of the year, nine hardy souls met at Swanley Village for our July ramble. We walked through farmland and then climbed Canada Heights and past Sidcup Motocross circuit. It was a relief to enter the shade of Farningham Woods Nature Reserve. These woods are designated a site of Special Scientific Interest and were officially opened by Sir David Attenborough. These managed ancient woodlands have abundance of wildlife, and, owing to the soil types ranging from acidic to alkaline, support many varieties of trees. Kestrel and sparrowhawk are the two main birds of prey found here, plus the strictly nocturnal tawny owl. After a hot and tiring five-mile ramble, we were ready for refreshments and made our way to The Bull at Swanley and the wonderful invention of air-conditioning.

**Pat & Alf Cracknell**

## Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Holland



This year we decided to look for a walking holiday other than one with “Ramblers Holidays”. We came upon “Bath & West Country Walks” in the U3A magazine and found that they had vacancies on a 5-day walking holiday in July in the Mendips, Somerset. Eight of us booked and were joined by eleven other walkers from various parts of the country.

The Mendips are classified as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which stretches from Frome in the east to the Bristol Channel in the west; it has a varied landscape of limestone summits and pasture land known as the Somerset levels. We discovered that the summits are rocky and challenging with clear panoramic views, and that the levels are sometimes wet and impassable after earlier heavy rain.

We had 4 days of walking in dry and hot weather. One day started at Burrington Combe – a limestone gorge – where Reverend Toplady is said to have written “Rock of Ages”. Climbing up through woods we reached the Iron Age hill fort of Dolebury Warren, so called because after its use as a defence post, holes were tunnelled in the grassy mounds and rabbits were trapped and reared there to supplement a meagre diet. From there we went downward and then upward to Black Down, the highest point on the Mendips.

On another day we started from Wells, the smallest city in England, and passed through pretty villages and climbed to get wonderful views over the Somerset levels. There was time in the afternoon to visit the beautiful cathedral with the famous scissor arches dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and to have an award winning ice-cream.

Glastonbury Tor stands out from the levels, and on another day we climbed 518 feet up to the ruins of St Michael’s tower on the top. The original church was built in 1360 and destroyed in 1539 when the last Abbot of Glastonbury Abbey was hung, drawn and quartered there. It’s a mystic place and, of course, in the valley the Glastonbury Festival takes place.

You may think that this was an endurance test – it was! But it was also very enjoyable and refreshing.

### Annette Holland

**i** Glastonbury Tor has been designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument now managed by the National Trust. Tor is a local word of Celtic origin that means rock outcropping or hill. It occupies a striking position in the middle of a plain called the Summerland Meadows – part of the Somerset Levels. The plain is reclaimed fenland from which the Tor once rose like an island; now, with the surrounding flats, it is a peninsula bordered on three sides by the River Brue. The remains of Glastonbury Lake Village were identified nearby in 1892, proving that there had been an Iron Age settlement in about 300–200 BC on what was an easily defended island among the fens. Earthworks and Roman remains also prove later occupation. The spot seems to have been called Ynys yr Afalon (meaning “The Isle of Avalon”) by the Britons, and it is believed by some to be the Avalon of Arthurian legend. A model of Glastonbury Tor was incorporated into the opening ceremony of the 2012 Summer Olympics in London.

*Editor*

## GROUP VACANCIES

	GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
	<b>Amblers (Group 3)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30 am)	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> (co-ordinator only) 020 8309 6372	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Book Reading</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday	<b>See Group Co-ordinator</b> 020 8300 4291	<b>2</b>
	<b>Darts (at the Alma pub)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday (noon)	<b>See Group Co-ordinator</b> 020 8300 4291	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Local History (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	<b>John Harlow</b> 020 8300 3865	<b>2</b>
	<b>Luncheon Club (Group 2)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (noon)	<b>Pam Kirk</b> 020 8856 8372	<b>4</b>
	<b>Philosophy (Group 2)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday (2.00 pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	<b>2</b>
	<b>Play Reading</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday (2.00–4.00pm)	<b>See Group Co-ordinator</b> 020 8300 4291	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Ramblers (Group 2) (4–5 miles)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	<b>Pat &amp; Alf Cracknell</b> 020 8302 0823	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10.00 am)	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8309 6372	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Theatre (Group 2)</b> Various matinées	<b>Joan &amp; John Somerset</b> 020 8300 0890	<b>Yes. Notice on board at meetings</b>
	<b>Walking in London (3-6 miles)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	<b>2</b>

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.

**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 leaders of a full one can advise you how it's done.

## PROGRAMME

### 2012

August	Tony Farnham	Sailing Barges in their Heyday
September	Myriam Steadman	Guide Dogs for the Blind
October	John Halligan	The Lord Mayor of the City of London
November	Derek Fulford	Antique Clocks & Watches
December	Pat Mortlock	A Country House Christmas

### 2013

January	Bob Ogley	Biggin Hill
February	Mrs. Austin	Honey
March	John Beckham	Birds of Rye Harbour
April	Ann Knief	Lola Montez – a 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Adventuress
May	Mr. Guerdon	Chickens

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
Vice-Chairman	Lesley South	020 8300 8298
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	Christine Smith	020 8304 2305
Membership Secretary	Margaret Scambler	020 8315 0108
Speakers Secretary	Sue Brooks	020 8298 1117
Group Co-ordinator	Christine Spencer	020 8300 4291
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
Social Secretary	Vacant	

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

<b>Travel Group Leader</b>	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
<b>Raffle Organiser</b>	Jackie Burke	020 8302 7395
<b>Newsletter Editor &amp; Webmaster</b>	David Smith	020 8304 2305

Please either email contributions to me at [editor@sidcup-u3a.org.uk](mailto:editor@sidcup-u3a.org.uk) or post them to me at 56 Crofton Avenue, Bexley, Kent DA5 3AR – typed if possible.

*Please submit Newsletter contributions by 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month – but at any time for the Website.*

## WEBSITE

[www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk](http://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*

*Anyone can make mistakes, but only an idiot persists in his error. (Cicero)*