

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

August 2013



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

NOTICES

Forthcoming events

Forthcoming events available to U3A members include:-

Tuesday 8th October 11.00am – 3.45pm “Elgar Unveiled” (Elgar’s life and the women who influenced him) at the Elgar Birthplace Museum, Lower Broadheath, Worcester. The cost is £15.00 per person which includes lunch and refreshments.

Wednesday 16th October 10.45am – 4.30pm “West End U3A Sing Out” at the Playhouse Theatre, Northumberland Avenue, London. A chance to learn, rehearse and record songs from West End musicals working with a Musical Director. The cost is £35.00 per person which includes lunch and a copy of the CD recorded during the afternoon.

Tuesday 12th and Wednesday 20th November 1.50pm – 4.15pm at the Odeon Cinema, Covent Garden: Tchaikovsky’s “Nutcracker” Ballet (filmed at the Mariinsky Theatre, St Petersburg). Tickets cost £14.00 per person.

Tickets for all the above may be obtained by application to the Third Age Trust, 19 East St, Bromley, BR1 1QE ☎ 020 8466 6139

George Murrell

① “The Nutcracker” is a two-act ballet that was originally choreographed by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov with a score by Tchaikovsky. The libretto is adapted from E. T. A. Hoffmann’s story “The Nutcracker and the Mouse King”. Its première was staged at the Mariinsky Theatre in St. Petersburg on Sunday, 18th December 1892, on a double-bill with Tchaikovsky’s opera, “Iolanta”. Although the original production was not a success, the twenty-minute suite that Tchaikovsky extracted from the ballet was. However, the complete “Nutcracker” has enjoyed huge popularity since the late 1960s and it is now performed by countless ballet companies.

Editor

Registrars Rota 2014

It is now time to organise the rota for Registrars for 2014. Unless I hear to the contrary, I will assume that all existing Registrars will be continuing. However, I will be putting a notice on the Notice Board at the General Meetings from September requesting new volunteers to put their names down. Please look for it and consider volunteering. Thanks.

Margaret Scambler, Membership Secretary

New Members

The Committee welcomes the following new members so far this year:-

Patricia Andrews, John Baker, Mary Burden, Bob Chapman, Josephine Crow, Moira Fairweather, Carolyn Haynes, Joan I'Anson, Rhona Lockey, Pauline Louth, Eric & Valerie Mackenzie, Linda March, Betty Miles, Margaret Miller, Marie-France Muldoon, Patricia O'Neill, Carole Owens, Denise Palmer, Audrey Pitman, Patricia Rivett, Peter Rozier, Bryan & Joyce Rushen, Elizabeth Sampson, Tom Shiels, Sue Upton, Douglas & Lynn Welch, Gordon West, Sheila Williams, June Williamson, Beverley & Michael Winstanley, Anthony Youngman.

Margaret Scambler, Membership Secretary

Humour Group Advisor

The newly appointed U3A national advisor for "Humour Groups" is Jean Bishop who can be contacted by email at JeanBs2@aol.com or by phoning 01903 695215. She would be pleased to offer advice to anybody toying with the idea of setting up a "Humour Group". In December 2012 Jean set up a Humour group in her own U3A – Worthing – which meets monthly. The basic format of a meeting is an hour learning about a comedic person, and an hour entertaining each other with jokes and anecdotes, etc. A supplementary group focusing on humour in the theatre and film has since developed and the group plan to produce a humorous entertainment package in 2014.

George Murrell

Flynn's Bee Farm

Having won a Cream Tea for two at Flynn's Bee Farm in the February U3A Raffle, I set off with my daughter in early July to claim my prize.

On arriving at the farm, I recognised Sudi Austin who gave us the talk about the history of honey and the products they provide. The visit was very interesting, the team room pleasant, the staff welcoming and the cream tea delicious. The farm staff were busy potting the honey for the stand they had at the Detling County Show the following week, but their shop still had plenty of products to buy. We purchased honey, insect repellent and some propolis capsules hoping they will help us with some health issues we have.

As we left the honey farm, further up the lane we visited a really good farm shop and bought some local produce.

It was a good day out thanks to the U3A Raffle.

Pauline Watling

Newsletter

Members who wish to pick up a copy of the current Newsletter from Sidcup Library should look in the newspaper rack to the right of the entrance; when unused copies remain after a meeting, this is where they are placed. Those with internet access may download it in PDF format from the "Home" or "Meetings" page of our website at any time. Issues dating back to April 2007 are also still available.

Editor

Bird Watching Group • Leader Margaret Scambler



From Reservoir to Reserve

July's visit was to the WWT London Wetland Centre's tranquil reserve on the bank of the River Thames in Barnes. The Centre, which opened in 2000 and which realised the dream of WWT founder, Sir Peter Scott, was created from four disused Thames Water reservoirs. Looking across the vast network of lakes, reed beds and meadows, it was hard to believe we were in the heart of London – except for the continuous passage of low-flying aeroplanes. It was a very pleasant day, dry and warm with occasional sunny spells, and the bird count was as expected for this reserve for the time of year. The few stragglers in the group were rewarded firstly by hearing marsh frogs (what a noise!) and then by catching a glimpse of them. This species was introduced to the UK in the 1930s and it is much larger than our common frog.

Margaret Scambler

(i) The London Wetland Centre covers an area of 105 acres; its creation was the first urban project of its kind in the United Kingdom. Recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 2002, it was voted the UK's Favourite Nature Reserve 2012 by Countryfile Magazine. Made up of a range of habitats linked by over two miles of pathway and bridges, it is a nurtured and unique sanctuary for flora and fauna which attracts numerous species of birds, amphibians, bats, insects, reptiles and water voles.

Editor

Walking in London • Leader Val Gosden



Our June walk started at Green Park tube station, and we soon began appreciating the various styles of buildings as we walked along some of the less busy streets of Mayfair. We enjoyed a short visit to Thomas Goode's shop – no, shop is too ordinary a word for this 'emporium', which boasts London's first automatic opening doors, and has some of the most fantastic items for the home that you could want, but at a price! We took a look inside a beautifully decorated Jesuit Church, which had much ornamentation from floor to ceiling, with little space for any further enhancements. Our walk included several items dedicated to Americans – statues of Roosevelt, Reagan and Kennedy, and a quiet garden dedicated to all who had died in the September 11th attacks. On a happier note, we continued on to Regent's Park where we walked round the lake and spotted 2 herons as well as ducks and geese, etc. We then went on to Queen Mary's Gardens where we enjoyed the flowers – especially the many roses that were in bloom, some of which had a lovely perfume.

It was a swelteringly hot day in July when we undertook a Riverside London walk along first one side of the Thames, then the other, as we crossed four bridges between Vauxhall and London Bridge. Some of the group accomplished about a third of the route, approximately 2 miles, but the other stalwart members continued for a further 2 miles. Even so, we did not complete the intended route, for, despite drinking lots of water, the hot weather made us feel that a return home was indicated. However, en route we saw many tourists, some of whom were cycling using 'Boris bicycles', and many more were enjoying the attractions on the South Bank. We ourselves were grateful for the shade given by the many plane trees, and appreciated the occasional breezes as we walked along.

Val Gosden

Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



Ramblers 2 Holiday

At the end of June, 19 ramblers and ex-ramblers took a week's holiday on the Isle of Wight. A coach took us from Hall Place to our hotel in Sandown. Our coach driver, a native of the Isle of Wight, showed us most of the island over a period of four days. Some of us did our own thing – including Osborne House – while others were more interested in the botanical gardens or taking a trip on the steam train.

One of our members celebrated his 90th birthday while we were there. We had a cake, of course, but with no candles, along with balloons, streamers and party poppers. It was hilarious to put it mildly.

Everybody agreed that the food and accommodation were excellent and that we had all had a very enjoyable time. Incidentally, we did manage to fit in two four-mile rambles.

Pat & Alf Cracknell

Parks & Gardens • Leaders Jill Bryant & Barbara Olney



Our July outing was to Gunnersbury Park, Acton where others from Sidcup & District U3A had previously trodden. Owing to the hot weather, our group number was somewhat depleted but we braved the District Line and duly arrived at Acton Station which was an interesting Art Deco building from the early 1930s.

After coffee, we made our way to the park's entrance; like many London parks, Gunnersbury Park was previously the grounds of an old house gifted to the Nation by the Rothschild family and opened by Neville Chamberlain in 1926. Covering a large acreage, it has a vast selection of trees – but little in the way of flower beds. The grounds are unkempt, the house is in a very poor state of repair and we were dismayed to see a large number of dead fish floating in the pond. (These were victims of oxygen deficiency due to the hot weather). Apparently, the park is jointly managed by two local Councils, who, maybe in this modern age of cut-backs, have just concentrated their efforts towards what they consider “essential maintenance” – but all is not lost. Whilst visiting the museum – which is situated within part of the original mansion – the staff informed us that they were hoping to secure a large lottery grant which would fund a refurbishment programme of the big house and outbuildings; this would secure its future and enable much of the house to be opened up to the public in the future.

The park had a pleasant café and an interesting museum but, as we made our way home, there was a feeling of sadness that such a treasured gift to the nation had been so sadly neglected. Perhaps future members of Sidcup U3A might mark this park for a revisit after 2015 at which time the refurbishment programme should have been completed.

Pat Laughton

Freedom Pass Explorers • Leader Val Gosden



It is good to know that this group will be continuing with two new leaders, Christine Withams and Joy O'Donnell, who will be leading the group for the first time in September. Initially, the leaders will not be adding to the size of the group, but those whose names are on the waiting list – all 19 of them – will remain on the list. However, it would be really good if a new group could be formed, and maybe a husband and wife, or a couple of friends, could volunteer to lead it. Any help required in setting up a second group would be willingly given.

Val Gosden

GROUP VACANCIES

	GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
	Antiques Appreciation (Group 5) 3 rd Friday (10.00 am)	Martin Baker 020 8300 1752	1
	Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday	Margaret Scambler 020 8315 0108 Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
	Cinema Various Tuesdays	Various	Yes
	Classical Music (Group 1) 2 nd Friday	Derick Johnson 020 8850 1245	Vacancies
	Concerts/Ballet/Opera Various dates & times	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Yes ↳
	Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon) 🖐️	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	Yes
	Family History Various days	Judith Swain 020 8303 5759	Yes
	Handcrafted Cards (Group 1) 1 st Thursday (2.00 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	1
	Knit & Knat Day to be decided	Various	2/4
	Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles)	Pat & Alf Cracknell 020 8302 0823	Vacancies
	Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00 am) 🖐️	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
	Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes ↳

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; email rjcmspncr@gmail.com.

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.

🖐️ Not during school holidays

↳ Notice on the board at meetings

PROGRAMME

2013

August	Peter Gilman	Coastline National Trust
September	Chris McCoory	Rogues, Rascals & Rebels
October	Jack Wheeler	Japanese Gardens
November	Bernard Locket	Author
December	Jack Ripley	Max Miller & Friends

2014

January	Claire Rogers	Greenwich and Bexley Hospice
February	John Halligan	The Life and Times of Samuel Pepys
March	Peter Maggs	Henry's Trials
April	Don Dray	Down Memory Lane
May	Robert Vidler	The War Years (1914–1918)

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

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.

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 you try to please everybody, nobody will like it.