

# SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

August 2014



**SIDCUP & DISTRICT U3A meets at 2.00 pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month in the New Community Church Centre, 24 Station Road, Sidcup**

## NOTICES

### Registrars

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

**Patricia Rivett**

## GROUP NEWS

### Local History 2 • Leaders Pauline Watling & Barbara Olney



For our July trip, we enjoyed a guided tour of the museum of the Royal Academy of Music. First, we heard some of the history of the Academy which was founded in 1822; it is the oldest conservatoire in the UK and is devoted to training many of the world's greatest musicians. Some of you may have watched 'The Choir' hosted by Gareth Malone, which was televised inside the Academy.

We then went on to the strings gallery where we saw plucked and bowed instruments. There is on display a Stradivari violin from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which was once played to Queen Marie Antoinette. We then went up to the piano gallery where you can walk through 400 years of keyboard history. The collection traces the development of keyboard instruments from 1600 to the present day. We saw the shift from the harpsichord to the pianoforte and from square pianos to grands and the addition of metal parts which all created greater dynamism. One of the Academy students gave a demonstration on various keyboards, which brought the sounds to life.

For anybody who may be interested, the Academy runs free afternoon concerts throughout the year.

**Pat Cracknell**

### **Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams**



Members of the group of the group took a walk around the City of London on July 9<sup>th</sup> to find some of the 200 open spaces within the Square Mile. The walk began at St Paul's underground station. Some open spaces, like St Paul's Churchyard, have been there for many a year but most of the others were bomb sites, often where ancient churches had been built, but, as so few people now live in the City, it was not considered practical to rebuild them. The site, which has won many awards for its charm and tranquillity, is near St Dunstan's and has what many consider to be Wren's finest tower. This garden was established in 1971 at a cost of £30,000 and contains the remains of the Gothic walls of the medieval church. We passed the site of the medieval Stele Yard near London Bridge; this was the enclave for members of the Hanseatic League who brought timber from the Baltic and took back wool. We observed members of the Watermen's Guild in their red robes on their way to some function. Our walk finished at the Monument. The weather was kind and we all appreciated the charm of the little gardens which are havens of peace in a busy city.

**John & Olive Mercer**

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



Our June visit was to High Barnet, one end of the Northern Line. Mostly underground, it was not until we reached Finchley that we emerged. After our usual coffee, we tried to enter a green area on our map – only to find that it was part of a school playing field! We then walked along the High Street to the leafy area of Monken Hadley, an ancient country village, where half the group ate their sandwiches by one of the many ponds in the area. The rest of the group took the bus back to High Barnet for lunch. It was an enjoyable visit.

On a lovely sunny day in July, we took the SW Train from Waterloo to St Margaret's. We always seem to find the most accommodating proprietors at our coffee stops, and this one was arranging tables for us which spilled out on the pavement. We walked through the grounds of Marble Hill House and down to the River Thames. We walked towards Richmond Bridge, a lovely walk with activity on the river and views of fine buildings. We crossed the bridge and, after a cup of tea, headed for Richmond Station.

**Christine Withams**

### **Wine Appreciation • Leader Michael Jordan**



On 28<sup>th</sup> June we had our summer outing – all the way to Halfway Street, Sidcup, where we enjoyed an evening of wine tasting at Lamorbey Wines. The great success of the evening was due in no small measure to the marvellous array of canapés and nibbles which went with the wines on offer. We were given generous amounts of nine wines starting with an Italian Prosecco followed by three further white wines and five reds. It is a measure of the evening that the owner of Lamorbey Wines, Bob Cuthbert, insisted that no one should attempt to drive home, but must go by taxi or walk. The theme of the evening was "Favourites" and the wines were a selection of Bob Cuthbert's favourites and the wines which were his customers' favourites. We were asked to mark each wine so as to give an idea of the relative popularity of each one. Some of us even managed to mark all nine wines.

Our thanks are due to Bob Cuthbert and his wife Tracy for hosting such an enjoyable evening.

**Michael Jordan**

## Classical Music 1 • Leader Alan Griffiths



Jean Wallis provided a varied programme for our July meeting.

The first piece was Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor, and this was followed by Widor's Toccata from Symphony № 5, Opus 42 № 1. Both of these were played by Michael Austin at the organ of the church of St. Augustine, Kilburn. We next heard the Waltz from Act 1 *Swan Lake* by Tchaikovsky played by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Riccardo Muti. *The Romance* and *The Rondo* from Mozart's Piano Concerto № 20, K466, played by Daniel Barenboim with the English Chamber Orchestra, completed the first session.

After refreshments, the second half of the programme started with Vivaldi's Oboe Concerto in D minor. The soloist was Sidney Sutcliffe with the Virtuosi of England. We next heard Huber Parry's *Choral Fantasia on an Old English Tune* performed by Donald Hunt on the organ of Worcester Cathedral. Our final item was Elgar's *Enigma Variations* played by the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Giuseppe Sinopoli. Sinopoli was an Italian conductor/composer who died at the early age of 54 whilst conducting *Aida* at the Deutsche Oper Berlin.

### Alan Griffiths

## Book Reading • Leader June Reid



Unfortunately, I was away during last month's meeting. However, I did read the book chosen by Pat – "Me Before You" by Jojo Moyes which I enjoyed very much. It is a bittersweet love story, and, although classed as popular fiction, this novel contains some very serious themes. The main character suddenly loses her mundane and predictable job which she had enjoyed. Being the breadwinner for her family, she becomes a carer to a young man suffering major disabilities owing to a motorcycle accident; thereby hangs the tale of sustained bravery and effort. There is also an interesting "Pygmalion" theme running through the story. I believe my colleagues kept a box of tissues handy for the ending!

### June Reid

## Parks & Gardens Appreciation • Leaders Jill Bryant & Barbara Olney



On the 24<sup>th</sup> June twelve members travelled to London to visit Regent's Park. We had coffee at a grand Wetherspoons nearby which had at one time been a hotel. The Rose Gardens are everybody's favourite venue. On entering the park, we passed some very colourful mixed flower beds. The cannas looked splendid and they are one of my favourites. There were plenty of beds of floribundas and hybrid roses, and many of us smelt them for perfume. Most of them were labelled and, despite the hot weather, were looking good. However, the Delphiniums were not as good as last year. On entering the circular bed of roses which climb on thick ropes attached to pillars around the edge, we saw that most of the blooms had finished. The weather had been too hot too early and everything had bloomed early. However, the trees were all towering high above us magnificently. We then came upon a large water feature and fountain. The weather was getting hotter and a decision was made to leave and have lunch.

### Jill Bryant

*PS* Usually I am worried about the weather being too wet for our outings, but on 24<sup>th</sup> July it was TOO HOT and our planned visit to Barnes Wetland Centre was cancelled.

## Walking In London • Leader Val Gosden



### Chislehurst, Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July

This month our walk was around Chislehurst, around the Common and through woods. I would highly recommend visiting the web site below for detailed information, more points of interest and other walks: <http://www.chislehurst-society.org.uk>.

We started near the War Memorial and the first landmark was Rush Pond from which we went onto Prickend Pond; both are former 19<sup>th</sup> century gravel pits in which fairly large carp swam by. The latter of these is adjacent to Chislehurst High Street. In the high street itself, we talked about the tall house next to the old Police Station; in a previous existence it had been a Coffee Tavern – a Temperance Movement development by George Somers Leigh Clark “designed as a refuge for sober and industrious working men.”

We then went onto the common and along the footpath that is parallel to Prince Imperial Road which led eventually to his Memorial. Prince Napoléon Eugène Louis Jean Joseph Bonaparte, known as the Prince Imperial, was born in Paris in 1856. The Prince was the son of the President of France, the great-nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte, who was fourteen when he arrived in Chislehurst. He was killed in Zululand in 1879 during a skirmish with a group of Zulus. His death caused an international sensation with much speculation abounding.

A Blue Plaque commemorating William Willett, originator of British Summer Time, is on a rather impressive house at the junction of Old Hill and Bromley Road. Hangman’s Corner, nearly opposite the Rambler’s Rest, was the site of gallows in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is rumoured that the small area of grassland exists because no tree can grow there.

One of our group remembered seeing Norland Nannies; they were trained in Chislehurst during the 1940s and 1950s, but moved away during the mid-sixties financial crisis. The Cockpit, near St. Nicholas Church, is a traditional meeting place – also presumably once used for cockfighting. St. Nicholas Church has been here for over a millennium and the current one was built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and enlarged in the 19<sup>th</sup>. The clock in the tower is by Dent with a design used later for Big Ben. The Walsingham Tomb in the Scadbury Chapel commemorates various members of the Walsingham family – one of whom was spymaster to Queen Elizabeth. The churchyard contains many interesting graves, including Sir Malcolm Campbell – world land and water speed record holder – and William Willett. During our preparation for this walk, we talked to a church parishioner who was very helpful, and whose exceptional knowledge of condensed history was outstanding.

After a pleasant lunch at the Tiger’s Head, we walked into Hawkwood and The Gorse before returning to the Memorial. It has been suggested that we were “exploring” the woods, *ie* lost! Chislehurst is on our doorstep, but do you know its history? It deserves an in-depth investigation far greater than space allows.

### Cynthia & Roy Morton

**(i)** The name Chislehurst derives from Saxon words – cisel (gravel) and hyrst (wooded hill). Chislehurst Common, a popular destination for bank holiday trips in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, was rescued from development in 1888 following campaigns by local residents. It now provides a valuable green space, as do nearby Petts Wood, Hawkwood and Scadbury. The caves are ancient and were originally used to mine flint and chalk. During World War II, thousands of people used them as an air raid shelter and there is even a chapel. A child born in the caves during the war was given a middle name of ‘Cavina’. The caves are reputedly haunted, but they have been used as a venue for live music and druids are believed to have made grisly human sacrifices in their depths. Films and television programmes, including Doctor Who, have been recorded there. 3 of my photos of the area are on our website’s Gallery page.

*Editor*

## **Ramblers 2 • Leader Pending**



It was a hot, sunny day for our July ramble. Starting from the White Cross, we crossed the road and took a lane through Gallions Plantation and into Chalk Wood. We came to a dell that had been excavated for chalk several hundred years ago to be used as fertiliser for the surrounding farms. There are many caverns underground, as at Chislehurst, and they are now home to bats. We then carried on through farm grounds, skirted Birchwood golf course, past a mobile home site, and entered Joydens Wood. This was an interesting walk through paths that none of us had negotiated before – unfortunately nor had our leaders. We made it safely back to a riding school at North Cray and followed a footpath through their grounds back to the White Cross for some welcome refreshments.

**Pat & Alf Cracknell**

## **Bird Watching • Leader Pending**



Seven of us explored Sutcliffe Park at the bottom of Eltham Hill; this has now been developed as a wetlands and nature reserve with the River Quaggy running through it. We saw two herons, coots, moorhens, mallards and, of course, the Canada geese. Skylarks have also been seen there recently. It should be a good place to visit later on in the year as little egrets have also visited this reserve. There was also an enormous black bird flying over the new flats which we couldn't make out – until we noticed it was attached to a piece of string! Apparently, it was a deterrent to pigeons and crows to stop them sitting on the aerial.

We need someone to suggest/organise our next outing on 3<sup>rd</sup> September.

**Gay Braybrook**

## GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 <b>Amblers (Group 1)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	<b>John Harbert</b> 020 8300 5361	2
 <b>Amblers (Group 2)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30am)	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	Vacancies
 <b>Art (Group 2)</b> Alternate 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	<b>Sue Moore</b> 020 8301 1952	1
 <b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday 	<b>Roy Black</b> 	Yes
 <b>Book Reading</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday (2.00–4.00pm)	<b>June Reid</b> 020 8302 7887	2
 <b>Classical Music (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	<b>Alan Griffiths</b> 020 8303 6636	Vacancies
 <b>Concerts/Ballet/Opera</b> Various dates and times	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	Yes 
 <b>Darts (at the Alma pub)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday (noon) 	<b>Leader pending</b>  needed, please	Yes
 <b>Family History</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	<b>Judith Swain</b> 020 8303 5759	Yes
 <b>Handcrafted Cards (Group 1)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday (2.00pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	1
 <b>Local History (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday morning	<b>Lesley South</b> 020 8300 8298	Vacancies
 <b>Ramblers (Group 2)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (4–5 miles)	<b>Alfred Cracknell</b> 	Vacancies
 <b>Rummikub®</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday (2.00–4.00pm)	<b>Margaret Platt</b> 020 8309 6395	2
 <b>Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10.00am) 	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 	Yes
 <b>Theatre (Group 2)</b> Various matinées	<b>Joan &amp; John Somerset</b> 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.

**Keith Alker, Group Co-ordinator**  020 8850 2853 Email: alker@btinternet.com.

### Why not start a new group?

If your name is on the waiting list to join a full group, or no group that specialises in your interest exists yet, you can create a new one and advertise it in this Newsletter – see last page. It is easy to run a group and any current leader can advise you how it's done.

 Not during school holidays

 Notice on the board at meetings

 Certain seasons only

 Temporary Point of Contact

## PROGRAMME

### 2014

August	Open Day	
September	Romy McCabe	I Married the Vicar
October	Sue Spiel	Pam Ayres
November	Mr Halfors	The Spa Valley Railway
December	Alan Simmons	Entertainer

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Acting 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	Carole Owens	020 3663 6028
Asst. Membership Secretary	Patricia Rivett	020 3302 2887
Speakers Secretary	Sue Brooks	020 8298 1117
Group Co-ordinator	Keith Alker	020 8850 2853
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
General Member	Trevor Ford	020 8302 7635

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

<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 since this facilitates scanning.

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

Third Age Trust, 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QE (020 8466 6139) [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)

## 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*

*Monday is a hard way to spend one seventh of your life.*