

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

August 2015



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

NOTICES

Events

Exploring Elgar

11 am to 3.45 pm on Wednesday 7th October at the Elgar Birthplace Museum, Worcester. Tickets costing £17, including lunch and refreshments, are available from Third Age Trust.

What makes great theatre?

A day of workshops and debate at the Piccadilly Theatre 11 am to 4 pm on Wednesday 4th November. Tickets costing £35, including sandwich lunch, are available from Third Age Trust.

U3A Annual Conference and AGM

25th–27th August at East Midlands Conference Centre, Nottingham. This is open to all U3A members and includes a programme of discussion groups, workshops and entertainment. Cost residential Tuesday to Thursday £190, bookable on line.

Theatre Royal Newcastle Experience

The Theatre Royal Newcastle is one of only nine Grade 1 Listed theatres in England and is regarded by many as the UK's finest theatre building. Since opening in 1837, the theatre has been renovated many times, and, following a major fire after a performance of Macbeth in 1899, the entire auditorium was re-designed by one of the world's greatest theatre architects, Frank Matcham. In anticipation of our 175th birthday in February 2012, a major six-month restoration was undertaken to recreate Matcham's classic 1901 Edwardian design. Come and see for yourself the stunning result; 1901 in style but modern in comfort. We are delighted to offer a visit exclusively tailored to U3A Groups.

Tour, Talk & Afternoon Tea Experience: U3A Price £35 per person.

Your visit includes:

- A guided tour of the theatre. Join us front of house, backstage and on stage as we give you a guided tour around our historic theatre.
- A talk on the history of the theatre and season briefing with highlights for groups.
- A free copy of *The Theatre Royal Newcastle – A New Short History* book for each person.

This tour is available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays on the following 2015 dates:

8th & 9th September 2015; 22nd & 23rd September 2015; 20th & 21st October 2015.

Theatre Royal Newcastle, 100 Grey Street, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6BR ☎ 08848 112122, email groupbookings@theatreroyal.co.uk

George Murrell

Workers Educational Association Courses for Adults in Bexley

Art History:

Art & Music Studies – Anniversaries & Exhibitions 2015 (Course ID C2418056)

2.00 pm – 4.00 pm, Tuesdays 15th September 2015 to 1st December 2015 at LCB.

Full Fee: £88.00 or FREE based on selected means tested benefits (proof must be supplied)

We will explore topical subjects concerning the history of the arts, related to anniversaries, such as Sibelius (born 1865), or to current exhibitions in major London galleries *ie* Barbara Hepworth or Goya. The weekly order will be negotiated by learners. Other significant anniversaries include the artist Poussin, and composers such as Nielsen and Scriabin. We will also be examining significant historical events, such as the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, and its consequences.

Literature:

What Kind of Book Are You? (Course ID C2418062)

7.30 pm – 9.30 pm, Wednesdays 16th September 2015 to 2nd December 2015 at HCC

Full Fee: £88.00 or FREE based on selected means tested benefits (proof must be supplied)

An introduction to eight types of popular genre fiction: horror, science fiction, crime/detective, fantasy, thriller, absurdist/nonsense, samizdat and twitterfic/flash fiction. If you want to be able to tell apart your horror from your fantasy, your Private Eyes from your Hannibal Lecters, this is the starting point for you! Maybe you are already an enthusiast but would like to know more. However, if you have not ventured into these areas before, this is a chance to be adventurous and, with the guidance of an inspiring tutor, widen your reading experience.

History:

A History of the 20th Century – Through the Eyes of the People (Course ID C2418061)

7.30 pm – 9.30 pm, Thursdays 17th September 2015 to 3rd December 2015 at LCB

Full Fee: £88.00 or FREE based on selected means tested benefits (proof must be supplied)

This course provides an opportunity to look at the events of the last century from the perspective of the “ordinary” man and woman. It will evaluate the twentieth century and its impact on modern society and will explore the features that made the century unique, studying social and political developments that most defined its character.

Art History:

Art & Music Studies – Anniversaries & Exhibitions 2016 (Course ID C2418058)

2.00 pm – 4.00 pm, Tuesdays 5th January 2016 to 22nd March 2016 at LCB

Full Fee: £88.00 or FREE based on selected means tested benefits (proof must be supplied)

This course will include studies of artists whose works are being exhibited in London (to be announced nearer the actual time), and of those with significant anniversaries such as Giotto, Hals, Kandinsky, Marc or Boccioni. We will also study composers with significant anniversaries such as Satie and Butterworth. The weekly topics will be negotiated by learners. The sessions will include plenty of opportunity to discuss and ask questions.

Locations { HCC: Hurst Community Centre, Hurst Place, Hurst Road, Bexley, Kent DA5 3LH
LCB: The Learning Centre Bexley, 5 Brampton Road, Bexleyheath, Kent DA7 4EZ

For further details email: weabexley@hotmail.co.uk or ☎ 020 8300 1845 or visit their website: www.wea.org.uk/courses.

George Murrell

GROUP NEWS

Wine Appreciation Group • Leader Michael Jordan



After 17 very happy years being hosted at Ron and Barbara Carpenter's house, the WAGS is moving its monthly meeting to the Pop-in Parlour, Hadlow Road, Sidcup with effect from the July 2015 meeting. The day (or evening, to be precise) of the meeting has also been changed to the third Wednesday in the month and will start at 7.30 pm. This means that there will be a charge for the hire of the room so the monthly fee has had to be increased from £4 to £5 per person each evening. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ron and Barbara for all their help and hospitality over the years. The move has been brought about because a number of members were finding it increasingly difficult to manage the stairs. We will now be able to increase our membership and, if anyone is interested, please do get in touch with me.

For your information, members are given a wine tasting, normally of 6 wines, with discussion about each and often with further information or anecdotes. We currently have a team of three who take turns to choose and present the wines and lead discussions.

Michael Jordan

Explorers • Leader Val Gosden



Alexander von Humboldt, a Prussian, was the subject of our July session, and is regarded as the first truly scientific explorer. His travels in 1799, together with a French colleague, were in South America, where they studied the flora and fauna of the area, keeping a daily journal and bringing back to Europe many species that were previously unknown. They travelled along the Orinoco River by canoe, coming ashore at night and using their scientific instruments to study what they had found. In trying to understand how the electric eel functioned, Humboldt put his hand in the tank containing the eel and received a shock which gave him pain in all his joints for a week. Later on, in a village, they came across The Poison Master who showed them how curare was prepared; this the natives used when searching for animals and birds for their food. Interestingly, curare was also used as a remedy for stomach ache, but it had to be carefully administered. The length of their journey, 1,500 miles, resulted in food running short, which was relieved when they reached Angostura and its Governor. The explorers were keen to show a selection of their specimens, only to find that ants had eaten some of them. Despite this, over 6,000 plants were brought back, 2,000 of which were unknown in Europe. Humboldt wrote 30 books, the reading of which inspired Charles Darwin in his studies.

The series of videos we are watching was made by the BBC and are introduced by a young David Attenborough from the Map Room at the Royal Geographical Society. We were most pleased to welcome Pat Laughton, a fellow member of our U3A, to this session. Pat worked at the Royal Geographical Society in London for several years, and shared with us some of her experiences in meeting with current day explorers. What a lucky lady!

Val Gosden

(i) The Royal Geographical Society was founded in 1830 as an institution to promote the advancement of geographical science. It later absorbed the older African Association, which had been founded in 1788, as well as the Raleigh Club and the Palestine Association. Like many learned societies, it had started as a dining club in London, where select members held informal dinner debates on current scientific issues and ideas.

Editor

Local History 2 • Leaders Pauline Watling & Joyce Savinson



Our July outing was to Kenwood House, but, because of the tube strike, we decided to go to Danson House. From Sidcup, a 51 bus took us to Welling and a pleasant walk to the park gave us our first view of Danson House. As the weather was overcast, we made our way to the Tea Room for refreshment which is situated on the ground floor. Danson is a Palladian villa which was designed by Sir Robert Taylor for Sir John Boyd and was completed in 1766. Boyd had made a fortune founded on the sugar trade. The house was built for his young bride, Catherine Chapone. It was designed as a suite of rooms for entertaining by a man besotted with his new wife. The layout and interiors reflect themes of love and enjoyment. The exquisitely furnished principal floor boasts a cycle of seventeen original wall paintings by Charles Pavillon in the dining room, and the restored George England organ in the Library. By 1995, Danson was a building at risk. After the west bay collapsed, English Heritage began a ten year restoration project. We are very fortunate to have this wonderful house on our doorstep!

The house opens at midday, and, at the present time, there is an exhibition on the top floor of Vivienne Westwood designs called “Cut from the Past.” Ground breaking design from the 1990’s influenced by the 18th century are on loan from the V&A and Private Collections.

Jill Bryant

 My pictures of Danson Park and the mansion appear of the Gallery page of our website.

Editor

Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden



Despite being well into my seventies, I had not heard of the London Metropolitan Archives before, but, having picked up a leaflet about an exhibition entitled ‘Victorian London in Photographs,’ I decided that this would make an interesting visit out for our group in July. The arrival of photography in London in 1839 changed the way people saw their city, and each other, forever. The photographs on display showed street scenes, ranging from slums to the Albert Hall, portraits of boys who were being sent to Canada for, hopefully, a better life, portraits of asylum inmates and, in quite a contrast to these, portraits of theatrical personalities of the day. The Society for Photographing Relics of Old London recorded buildings that were going to be demolished, and also work in progress on such constructions as The Crystal Palace and the Metropolitan Underground line. The quality of the photographs was amazing, and included some pictures of sellers of pies, herbs, *etc.* in Greenwich.

The Archives themselves include records under the headings of genealogy, social history, London government, businesses, health, education, legal history, London churches, with information about parishes, diocese, livery companies, and hospitals. There are maps, books, information available on their computers, but, if you want to actually handle original archival material, you have to register beforehand. The staff assure me they are most willing to help anyone who wants to use their archival material. So engrossed were two of our group that they stayed behind and searched for information about areas they were familiar with as children in the Limehouse and Friern Barnet areas. We also spotted two books about Sidcup and Bexleyheath – these having been written by our U3A member, John Mercer. All in all, it was a most interesting visit.

Val Gosden

Parks and Gardens Appreciation • Leader Jill Bryant



For our June trip we arranged to visit an 'Open Garden' in Crockenhill which we were able to reach by public transport. This was to be a special opening for our group so everything was put in place for us. However, the day before we were due to go, the lady of the garden rang frantically to say the visit would not be possible as road works had started right outside the entrance to her cottage – as well as the removal of the bus stop.

So plan B was put in action – we visited Regent's Park instead, and it was glorious; the roses were spectacular and some of the more energetic of the group managed to find the Secret Garden.

So all was not lost and it was a most enjoyable day.

Gay Braybrook

Ramblers 2 • Leader David Wedderkop



For our June walk, we went to Hampton Court. Here we walked through some of the gardens and had a quick refreshment stop whilst some of the group visited the allotments(!) which were well worth a visit. We then followed the towpath to Hampton Wick. The weather was perfect and we enjoyed seeing the wildlife on the river. At Hampton Wick we had lunch at a pub from which we had an easy journey back home.

Gay Braybrook

Ramblers 2 • Leader David Wedderkop



Following several days with heavy showers, we were delighted to enjoy a breezy, sunny morning for our 4½ miles ramble in the Knockholt area. The Chevening parkland estate and part of the North Downs Way provided some great views. To the distress of animal lovers, we heard and then saw a young deer escaping from the thicket and later came across a pheasant farm! The Three Horseshoe pub at Knockholt Pound provided a wonderful setting for lunch and a reminiscing conversation for the group.

Helga Fastenbauer

Walking in London • Leader Val Gosden



Nine of us took part in the July walk. Cynthia and Roy took charge at very short notice owing to Val's injury. Many thanks for that. We travelled to Cyprus DLR Station, followed the Jubilee Greenway past the University of East London campus and crossed the Sir Steve Redgrave Bridge – so named because he used to row in the Albert Dock in his early career. We watched flight activity on the City Airport runway and enjoyed views of Canary Wharf. We then went on to Royal Victoria Gardens which had been laid out in the 1860s as a pleasure garden. After refreshment, some of us returned home by Woolwich Ferry. The rest of the party visited the Thames Barrier Park; opened in 2000, it is a 22-acre park with a sunken garden called the Green Dock with planting that resembles the waves on the nearby Thames. We returned south by DLR to Woolwich.

Pam Wargent & Alan Godfrey

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (10.00 am)  	Roy Black  020 8302 9942	Vacancies
 Book Reading 1 st Thursday (2.00–4.00 pm)	June Reid 020 8302 7887	Vacancies
 Classical Music 2 nd Friday (2.30–4.30 pm)	Olive Mercer 020 8300 3136	Vacancies
 Concerts/Ballet/Opera Various dates and times £ 	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Vacancies 
 Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon)  	Leader pending  needed, please	Vacancies
 Family History 2 nd Tuesday & 4 th Thursday	Judith Swain 020 8303 5759	Vacancies
 Local History (Group 3) 2 nd Wednesday morning	Christine Withams 020 8850 4144	Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles)	David Wedderkop 020 8850 5042	Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 3) 1 st Friday (≈ 6 miles)	Trevor Ford 020 8302 7635	Vacancies
 Rummikub @ 4 th Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Margaret Platt 020 8309 6395	Vacancies
 Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00 am)  £	Gay Braybrook  020 8309 6372	Vacancies
 Wine Appreciation 3 rd Wednesday (7.30 pm) £	Michael Jordan 020 8302 3330	Vacancies

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.

Trevor Ford  020 8302 7635 email: trevor.ford@talktalk.net

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 the last page. It is easy to run a group and any current leader can advise you how it's done. Members of groups are reminded that they should always let the group leader know if they cannot attend a meeting, particularly if they wish to withdraw from a group.

 Not during school holidays

 Notice on the board at meetings

£ A charge applies

 Open to all

 Certain seasons only

 Temporary point of contact

PROGRAMME

2015

August	Cairis Hickey	The Wiggly Wild Show
September	Colin Lomas	Leonardo Da Vinci – Was he really a genius?
October	Ian Keable	The Corked Conjurer
November	Melanie Gibson-Barton	Bruges
December	Colin Hill & friends	Comedy Cabaret

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
Vice-Chairman	Lesley South	020 8300 8298
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	John Lapham	020 8854 6340
Membership Secretary	Patricia Rivett	020 3302 2887
Speakers Secretary	<i>Vacant</i>	
Group Co-ordinator	Trevor Ford	020 8302 7635
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
General Member	Janet Lambern	020 8300 1786

USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

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. Photos taken during group outings and events may be shared on the website’s “Gallery” page.
 Third Age Trust: 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QE (020 8466 6139) www.u3a.org.uk
 London Region U3A: www.u3asites.org.uk/london-region
 World U3A: www.worldu3a.org Virtual U3A: www.vu3a.org

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

A pessimist's blood type is B negative.