

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

August 2017



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

The Centenary of the Queen's Hospital, Sidcup (1917-2017) 7.15 pm on 7th October at St John's Church, Sidcup

As part of the local 1914-18 commemorations, Lamorbey and Sidcup Local History Society is presenting the unique story of the Queen's Hospital, Sidcup and the people who worked and were cared for within its walls. It is a story of cruel suffering in wartime and it inspired medical advances. Sir Harold Gillies pioneered innovative procedures in facial reconstruction that formed the new science of plastic surgery, and surgeons from the Commonwealth countries and America came to Sidcup to see the work at Queen's Hospital. The story will be told with images, music, drama and poetry. Tickets cost £3 including refreshments. Do come and share in the inspiring story that belongs to our town.

If you would like to buy tickets, please contact katherineharding@hotmail.co.uk or phone 07918 659612. Tickets are also now on sale at Urban Foods, 44 High Street, Sidcup.

New Members

All members who have joined this year are invited to a Coffee Morning on Thursday the 12th October at 10.30 am at Ockley Court. I hope this will provide an opportunity to get together away from the hustle and bustle of the main meeting.

Anne Evans

IN MEMORIAM

Geoff Rozier has died after a long illness, which he bore uncomplainingly. He was the first Group Leader of Ramblers II. I remember that, when I joined U3A in February 1999 and went on my first walk with the group in the Chelsfield area, uncertain that I could walk five miles, Geoff, his wife Shirley, and the whole Group, were so friendly and welcoming that I realised what a wonderful institution U3A is. Geoff was an excellent organiser, and he and Shirley began the Group's series of biennial walking holidays that were such a pleasure to us all. He will be sadly missed by those who had the privilege of knowing him, and our thoughts and prayers are with Shirley and their family.

Olive Mercer

GROUP NEWS

Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden



Initially, our trip out in July was a disappointment because we had hoped to see the *Hokusai: Beyond the Great Wave* exhibition at the British Museum. However, with a wait of over 3 hours before we could enter, we decided to visit other parts of the museum instead. This included viewing the Waddesdon Collection again with its fantastic collectors' items; seeing a replica of an Easter Island statue; walking through exhibits from various countries; glancing at mummies in the Egypt section (which was crowded with adults and school parties); and finishing up by looking at *Places of the Mind: British Watercolour Landscapes 1850-1950*. So, despite our initial setback, we ended up with the feeling that we had had a good trip out.

Val Gosden

Parks & Gardens Appreciation • Leaders Jill Bryant & Rinka Halliday



Numbers were very low for the July outing; only seven members came to the planned visit to Kew Gardens. For somebody who remembers going through the Kew turnstiles for one old penny, maybe the current concessionary entrance price of £14 was rather off-putting, but there is so much to see and do (all included in the price) that I thought it very good value for money.

The recently renovated Kew Palace and kitchens, the Hive, and the magnificent Princess of Wales Conservatory surrounded by water gardens are but a few of the attractions. There just simply wasn't time to see everything so as long as the feet held out, and we dodged the sharp showers of rain that peppered the day and saw all that we could manage. I, personally, didn't see the sights of Sidcup until after 8 pm. I can't wait to return.

Pat Laughton

Classical Music • Leader Olive Mercer



Ruth's selection of CDs included Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* which kept us intrigued with its great variety of subjects from the opening *Promenade* through to the imposing *Gates of Kiev*. Having visited the latter, Olive told the group they are not imposing at all, although no doubt they were when Mussorgsky was inspired to write – before they were dwarfed by modern structures which now dominate the area. The piece is great fun with its *Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks* and *The Hut on Hen's Legs* among others of a more sombre nature. One could almost see the individual pictures in the gallery with its eclectic artistic contributions. We also heard Shostakovich's 2nd Piano Concerto which proved to be a delightful composition in spite of the soporific effects of the second movement! We started the afternoon by listening to the scherzo from Bruckner's 7th Symphony – another old favourite of Ruth's which we had heard last time she was in the chair – and finished with Prokofiev's Classical Symphony. Prokofiev is generally not a popular composer, but his 1st Symphony, which is not at all typical, is the exception so that we were able to go home with his music ringing in our ears. The first night of the 'Proms' fell on the same day, and, with the promise of eight weeks' top class music from the Royal Albert Hall, we remain grateful to Olive for her hospitality and the opportunity to hear our own favourite compositions every month.

Ruth Nugent

Ramblers 1 • Leader Lesley South



On 25th July, 9 of us walked around Shorne Woods Country Park using a combination of the well-marked, but sometimes confusing, routes which vary from easy 1 km to difficult 10 km trails. Our chosen path first took in part of Brewers Wood then back to Shorne onto more challenging paths in Randall Wood, although we decided to take the easier gradient to the top of Cardiac Hill. There were mostly wide paths with plenty of brambles, ferns and tree roots, but only a few nettles to avoid. We walked a distance of approximately 4 miles which took us about 2 hours. It is an area well worth a day out, but maybe not at weekends or school holidays. The park is a Site of Special Scientific Interest in Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The land was originally part of the Cobham Hall estate and included the former main entrance and carriage rides of the great house. A former clay extraction pit is being allowed to return naturally to woodland, meadows and wetlands. The ponds and lakes in the country park are rich with reeds, rush and willow and dragonflies are regularly seen across the water where fishing is allowed. The following information is taken from Shorne Woods Country Park leaflet and Gravesham web site.

Shorne Woods Country Park

The sensory garden has been developed for everyone to enjoy, with plant life and tactile sculptures providing colour, scent, texture, shape and sound. The Green Man – representing the spirit of the trees, and a symbol of fertility recognised around the world – can be found in the centre of the garden. An arboretum in the park contains almost every species of native tree to be found in the county and they have been labelled to assist with identification.

Randall Manor. The manor house has now disappeared but the site is identifiable. Today, under a tangle of roots and coppice woodland, traces of the old building show that it had substantial stone foundations standing on a plateau surrounded on three sides by a moat and fishponds. Lying in a valley on the north side of Randall Heath, it was protected to the south and west by the high ground of the heath and had a distant view of the Thames. Excavations on the site show signs that it was probably on the site of an earlier building, the rebuilding being probably late 13th or early 14th century. The remains of a large medieval hearth consisting of a large flat sarsen stone surrounded by tiles set on edge were also found.

Heritage Trail. There are information boards at each point and archaeological finds are on display upstairs in the visitor centre. There is evidence of the clay industry on site, from the 1920s to 1960s. Other things there include The Hollow Way – a medieval track; Prehistory sculpture: evidence of Mesolithic ancestors; Carriage Drive, which once led to Cobham Hall; and a World War 2 Royal Air Force camp and World War 2 Army camp.

Explorer Trail. Darnley Mausoleum, a Grade 2 listed mausoleum built in 1786, can be seen on the hillside opposite from this point. The ponds and wetlands in the clay pit area are home to great crested newts, 19 species of dragonfly and damselfly, and, at night, Daubenton's bats feed on insects. Coppice woodland, where rotational cutting of sweet chestnut allows light to reach the woodland to promote growth of wildflowers.

Wood pasture and acid grassland. The veteran trees provide a habitat for insects and birds, including the green and lesser spotted woodpeckers. Bracken is controlled by cutting and grazing which allows grass and herbs to flourish.

Ancient woodland. These old trees are home to a wide variety of plants and animals. Lichen and mosses grow on the bark where cracks are home to beetles and other insects.

The clay pit. Here the silver birch trees shelter the newer oaks, sweet chestnut and hornbeam which will eventually return the area to semi-natural woodland. In autumn, the pit is filled with fungi.

Cynthia & Roy Morton

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



As we like to venture out further in the summer months, in June we travelled from London Bridge on the Jubilee Line to Rickmansworth in Hertfordshire. The River Gade and the Grand Union Canal meet the River Colne and the River Chess here. There are many lakes, so we walked a short way along the Colne Valley Trail, crossed the Grand Union Canal and walked through the quaint High Street. It is a nice area and worth a visit.

Twickenham was our destination in July. We walked to York House, near the Thames, now owned by Twickenham Council, where a wedding was in progress. We entered the beautiful gardens. In addition to a stunning sunken lawn, statues of sea nymphs imported from Rome adorn an impressive water feature. From here, we walked along the Thames to Eel Pie Island, a private island of mixed dwellings, a nature reserve and artist studios. In the 1960's, it was a major jazz and blues venue and the former site of the legendary Eel Pie Hotel where the likes of The Rolling Stones and David Bowie hung out. This was a very successful outing.

Christine Withams

Ramblers 2 • Leader Roy Black



Over the years, our group has covered most of the South East out as far as the M25 – and, occasionally, beyond. Even so, I have been pleasantly surprised that a few of our recent members have found new walks for us to enjoy. I first joined the group sixteen years ago so what better recommendation could you have to get out your walking boots and join us. Leading the walk in June, I fell back on a previous walk I had led a few years ago. After meeting at the We Anchor in Hope pub at the bottom of Shooters Hill, within minutes we were entering Oxleas Wood. Looping around, we took in Castle Woods and walked past Severndroog Castle, from the top of which you can see about seven counties around London. I had a photograph which showed me in 1966; the layout of the gardens was identical, as were four prominent trees (which are now very much larger) which led the eye towards the distant countryside. A couple of short, sharp showers sent us scurrying for shelter, but, otherwise, it was a very enjoyable walk. Then, of course, the incentive for all this walking was to go back to the pub for a deserving lunch.

Pat Cracknell

Book Reading • Leader June Reid



Our book for July, chosen by Carole, was *Kingdom of Strangers* by Zoë Ferraris. This was the third work in her trilogy. In the past, we had read and enjoyed the previous two crime novels, so expectations were high. Once again, the story was set in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. We visited this city through bourgeois sitting rooms and impoverished shanty towns inhabited by people who have overstayed their Hajj visas, maids who had fled from slavery and rape, and those who do not have the permission to leave their employers. The main plot concerns a grisly find of 19 bodies of mutilated immigrant women buried secretly in the desert. Chief Inspector Ibrahim Zahrani is in charge of the case, though he has problems of his own when his lover – an Asian immigrant woman – disappears. We then meet Katja Hijazi, a forensic worker, who is stifled by her Muslim culture. She does most of the leg work and puzzle-solving in the homicide department. Despite her frustrations, she is the main person to help Ibrahim solve the crimes and unmask the serial killer. It earned a “Thumbs Up” from all of us!

June Reid

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Amblers (Group 3) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	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
 Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon)  	Leader pending  needed, please	Vacancies
 Family History 2 nd Tues  & 4 th Thurs 	Judith Swain & Kate Berry 020 8303 5759	Vacancies
 Handcrafted Cards (Group 2) 1 st Wednesday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	1 Vacancy
 Pot Pourri 2 nd Tuesday (various times)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles)	Roy Black 020 8302 9942	Vacancies
 Rummikub® (Group 1) 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) £	Roger Brown 020 8850 5362	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 that group.

 Not during school/bank holidays

£ A charge applies

 Certain seasons only

 Notice on the board at meetings

 Open to all

 Temporary point of contact

PROGRAMME

2017

August	Groups & Members	Showcase: Sharing of Sidcup U3A Activities
September	Ian Bevan	the History of the Crystal Palace
October	Nigel Dawson	Comedy Heroes
November	Heather Woodward	Churchill & Chartwell
December	Joe Mendell	Bob Newhart Rides Again!

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Colin Barclay	07401 474844
Vice-Chairman	Carolyn Barclay	07401 474844
Vice-Chairman	Sandra Applegate	07717 020611
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	John Lapham	020 8854 6340
Membership Secretary	Patricia Andrews	020 8300 2064
Asst. Membership Secretary	Lynn Plumer	07714 234398
Speakers Secretary	Janet Lambern	020 8300 1786
Group Co-ordinator	Trevor Ford	020 8302 7635
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
General Member	Sue Brooks	020 8298 1117

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

Greater London South East Network: www.u3asites.org.uk/glondonsenetwork

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

Love is blind. And once you are married you get your eyesight back.