

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

August 2018



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

GROUP NEWS

Ramblers 3 • Leader Trevor Ford



11th May 2018

Eight members of the group met at Dartford Station from where we wound our way past the Hufflers Arms Pub to cross Dartford Creek via the now fixed lifting bridge. One of my aims of the walk was to introduce Sidcup U3A members to the history of both the creek and Dartford Marshes.

Dartford Creek is the tidal part of the River Darent flowing down to the Thames. Many people are unaware of its existence due to it being surrounded by many large factories – like Burroughs & Wellcome – and smaller ones which included many paper mills. These mills were serviced by barges until the middle of the 1980s when the creek was effectively abandoned. As we know, Burroughs is also long gone and is being replaced by many blocks of flats. We walked along the east side of the creek until we reached the lock where we were able to meet the owner of the Decima, an 85-foot Thames sailing barge which is over 100 years old and has been berthed in the lock since before Christmas. (There are photos on the Gallery page of our website). A couple of days before had seen a spring tide so I was concerned we might not have been able to walk through the footpath under Bob Dunn Bridge. We were OK – the tide had receded. From the north side of the bridge, we followed the high footpath which serves as a flood barrier and crossed the salt marshes to the Thames. Still in place are the old concrete armament and firework storage units; these were structured, in the event of an explosion, to blow the tops off rather than the sides.

Dartford marshes were also used as an airfield in WW1. This land had been bought by Vickers in 1911. The first aircraft tested at this riverside airfield was a monoplane (single-winged plane) built under licence at Vickers's Erith works. Drainage ditches were still in place and covered by planks of wood which made landing very precarious.

On reaching the Thames path, we walked east along Long Reach until we reached the area where the smallpox boat had been moored. Here we turned south leaving the Thames and following the long straight path which was built to carry patients from the ships to the newly built Long Reach Hospital (1901). This path now finishes at the edge of the new Bridge Estate. We then followed the Fastrack bus route through the estate, over Bob Dunn Way and back into Dartford via Central Road and Overy Street to the bottom of East Hill where we had an excellent meal at the Malt Shovel Public House. The distance we travelled was approximately 5½ miles.

Sandra Applegate

Ramblers 3 • Leader Trevor Ford



13th July 2018

The group met in the NT car park at Knole House and the walk that day was led by Colin. We collected our maps from the refurbished visitor centre; there were three walks to choose from. Red, Wheels Walk which is good for those people with buggies, *etc*; Blue, Family Woodland Ramble; and Black, the Sevenoaks Walk which took us around the edge of the park. We chose to follow the Black route but extended it via part of Red route.

We walked to the left and back of the house following the signs around the edge the woodlands, then followed the path along the perimeter fence which ran parallel to a rather noisy road. The directions say this path can be muddy. No mud that day – it was hot! The seven oaks that Vita Sackville-West helped to plant can be viewed near this part of the walk, but we didn't see them. However, we did see lots of fallow deer, some with their young. We followed the path along Chestnut Walk to the way marker posts and the stony path through the woods. We then turned left and followed the Green Sands Way.

The final stretch was uphill so we were all pleased to see eventually the garden wall appear indicating that we were near to the refreshments. We had walked about 4½ miles; it was a lovely day out.

Sandra Applegate

Ramblers 2 • Leader Helen Salmon



Once again the weather forecast gave out an amber warning so we decided to reschedule today's ramble to August. After a quick discussion, John suggested we walk through Scadbury Park as we would be sheltered from the sun by the canopy of the trees. We entered the park via the entrance next to the A20 which some of the group were unaware of. I had forgotten that there are a few steep paths but we made it with plenty of water stops. Unfortunately, we found ourselves in a private road only to find a hidden treasure – Scadbury Lodge. This Grade II octagonal building had fallen into disrepair but the new owner is employing master craftsmen expertly to renovate and sympathetically extend the property. The roof tiles have been replaced with a thatch – see photos in the U3A Sidcup gallery. It is a stunning property with a pretty garden. We ventured on through Petts Wood and Hawkwood climbing bridges to cross the various train lines and into Jubilee Country Park. We finished our walk with lunch at the Sovereign of the Seas pub in Petts Wood.

Helen Salmon

Book Reading • Leader June Reid



Our book for July was *The New Mrs Clifton* written by Elizabeth Buchan and chosen by Liz. This was a mystery/love story set in London after the Second World War; the images of post-war London and the ravages left by the blitz are very well drawn. The deprivations suffered by the people at that time brought back many memories to those of us old enough to remember! Those were the grey days of shortages, ration books and queuing for a loaf of bread. The story centres around an intelligence officer and his German wife returning to his family home in London. Their sudden marriage is seen as a betrayal by his two sisters and erstwhile fiancée. How far would the three friends go to get rid of this enemy usurper? This was an engrossing story with a tragic outcome. We all enjoyed it.

June Reid

Mono Photography • Leader Roy Morton



July meeting

The topics for this month from each member were four pictures depicting ‘Summer’ and ten ‘Environmental.’ Our choices for Summer included the RAF 100 flypast, a frog (forgot to ask if he was playing panto as Prince Charming), a woman dressed as a clock, seaside shots of our glorious summer and a street entertainer blowing bubbles.

The Environmental category allowed a lot of room for interpretation. Top of the list was the environmental pollution here in Bexley. Discarded rubbish, including two pictures of possibly disposable barbecues, which could not be placed in containers owing to size, left on top of bins in Footscray Meadows. Why not take home rubbish, you may well ask? Another was a shot of a coot’s nest with parents and chicks surrounded by plastic flotsam on Danson Park Lake; both these subjects led to comments of concern. Examples of fly-tipping, an abandoned petrol tanker, trashed shopping trolley and other metal objects stuck in the River Hull at low tide were also depicted. There was also a photo of an unusual vehicle for South East London – a T34 tank on undeveloped waste ground at the Bermondsey end of the Old Kent Road. It had not been even clamped!

We are not meeting in August. The September get together will involve taking black and white close up/macro shots. Any member interested in mono photography using a camera should please get in touch with me at: rory.m2014@gmail.com.

Roy Morton

Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



Osterley Park & House – 11th July

Eleven of us met at Charing Cross to take the Piccadilly Line to Osterley. After about a 20 minute walk, we arrived at Osterley House.

The original building on this site was a manor house built in the 1570s for banker Sir Thomas Gresham who purchased the manor of Osterley in 1562. A few centuries later, the house fell into disrepair, and, as a result of a mortgage default, it was acquired by Sir Francis Child, another banker. A couple of generations later, the family employed Robert Adam to remodel the whole house. This red brick house is approximately square with a turret on each corner. The interior is typical of Adam’s neoclassical style. In 1991, the National Trust took charge of the house from the Lord Jersey.

Sue Upton

(i) Robert Adam (1728–1792) was a Scottish neoclassical architect, interior and furniture designer. With his brother, John, he trained under his father, William Adam, Scotland’s foremost architect of the time. After William’s death, Robert took on the family business with John and this included lucrative work for the Board of Ordnance. In 1754, he left for Rome and spent nearly five years on the continent studying architecture under Charles-Louis Clérisseau and Giovanni Battista Piranesi. On his return to Britain, he established a practice in London, where he was joined by his younger brother, James. Here, based on his studies of antiquity, he became one of the most successful and fashionable architects in the country, and where he developed the “Adam Style” and his theory of “movement” in architecture. He influenced the development of Western architecture, both in Europe and in North America.

Editor

Parks & Gardens Appreciation • Leader Jill Bryant



Because of the very hot weather, our trip to Fulham Palace was cancelled and we went to Hall Place instead. The building is a mansion of chequered flint and brick, but it was the garden in which we were interested. The topiary in the form of the Queen's Beasts looked immaculate. The last of the roses were in bloom and the long flower border at the side of the house was very colourful. The gardeners were cutting back in the herbaceous border and told us it was time-consuming to keep watering the plants. One of the advantages of parks is that the trees are left to grow tall allowing shade for the seats underneath. Many of our ladies welcomed the rest there to chat and admire the view.

This is a lovely garden – practically on our doorstep – which has daffodils in abundance in early spring followed by azaleas and rhododendrons, and a wonderful handkerchief tree. Further, over the bridge, there is a rock garden, a sculpture, and more trees and shrubs. An enjoyable day was had by all – and it was free.

Jill Bryant

- ① Bexleyheath Clock Tower was designed by architect Walter Epps; it cost around £590, and was intended to stand “as a memorial to the enterprise and loyalty of the inhabitants of Bexleyheath.” The foundation stone was laid on 8th January 1911, and officially unveiled on 17th July 1912 to commemorate the Coronation of King George V the previous year. Nearby businesses and shops decorated their premises with bunting, and at the opening ceremony, a bust of King George V was unveiled in the west niche when Walter Epps stated, “I hope to see all the niches filled with busts of members of the Royal Family.” Members of the council, religious bodies, school children, the Fire Brigade, Boy Scouts, and Boy's Brigade attended the ceremony. In the 1930s, King George's bust disintegrated and then completely fell apart during cleaning; it was recast by a Bexleyheath resident and re-installed in its niche. A bust of William Morris, who lived at the Red House, was unveiled on 18th January 1997 in the east alcove to commemorate the centenary of his death in 1896. The Queen's bust was installed in the south niche for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012.



Editor

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
 Craft & Chat 2 nd & 4 th Thursday (10.30 am) 	Pauline Springhall 020 8308 1975	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	2 Vacancies
 Local History (Group 3) 2 nd Wednesday morning	Christine Withams 020 8850 4144	Vacancies
 Mono Digital Photography Quarterly (approx.) 	Roy Morton rory.m2014@gmail.com	3 Vacancies
 Needlecrafts 1 st Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	Vacancies
 Pot Pourri 2 nd Tuesday 	Pat Laughton 020 8302 9984	3 Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles)	Helen Salmon 07786 465862 or 020 8309 1689	Vacancies
 Rummikub® (Group 1) 4 th Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Kathy Cordell  020 8300 4573	Vacancies
 Science 3 rd Tuesday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Trevor Ford 020 8302 7635	2 Vacancies
 Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00 am)   £	Gay Braybrook  020 8309 6372	Vacancies
 Theatre Trips: Musicals   £	Sue Brooks 020 8298 1117	Vacancies
 Wine Appreciation 3 rd Wednesday (7.30–9.30 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
 Temporary point of contact

£ A charge applies
 Certain seasons only

 Open to all
 Times vary

PROGRAMME

2018

August	Heather Woodward ※	Nelson: The Myths and the Truths
September	Michael Grillo	Two Kinds of Teardrops (Del Shannon & Roy Orbison)
October	Ian Waller	Workhouse Life – Bread, Gruel & Suet Dumplings
November	Janie Ramsay	What's it Worth?
December	The Serenade Singers	

2019

January	Joe Mendell	Mark Twain Live
February	Andy Thomas	A Conspiracy History of the World
March	<i>To be confirmed</i>	AGM
April	Toni Mount	Ration Book Britain
May	Melanie Barton-Gibson	From Passchendaele To Peace

※ *The original speaker has cancelled for health reasons*

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	Lynn Plumer	07714 234398
Asst. Membership Secretary	Patricia Andrews	020 8300 2064
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

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: 52 Lant Street, London, SE1 1RB ☎ 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

It has been "one of those days" all week.