

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

December 2008



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



NOTICES



Computer Information

Hardware

The Third Age Trust has arranged special deals for U3A members who want to buy computer equipment. Dell Computers offer a better-than-usual deal – including an increased warranty. Contact Linda Kavanagh ☎ 0844 444 5254.

When you make contact with any of these companies please say that you are a U3A member. Also, please contact us at The National Office to let us know how you get on as this will help us secure even better deals in the future.

Software

The Trust can get software with an educational discount, so check with The National Office before purchasing upgrades or programmes.

U3A Online courses

U3A Online courses are short courses specially designed for older people, and are available through a partnership between the Third Age Trust and the U3A Online Inc. which is based in Australia.

These are courses for which no entry qualifications are required. They offer no credit upon completion and are designed purely for personal interest and enjoyment. They have been written by volunteers who are experienced tutors or course leaders in their fields. These courses are aimed at U3A members, ex-U3A members who are no longer able to attend a U3A, and those unable to access conventional courses for one reason or another (restricted mobility, disability, for example). Further details are available from The Third Age Trust's website: www.u3a.org.uk.

Help with computers (Repeat of information given in the May 2008 Newsletter)

The U3A has published an excellent small book entitled “Computer Basics for Seniors” (a beginner's introduction to computers and the internet). It is intended to help near beginners acquire basic computer skills, particularly in word processing, e-mailing and the internet. The book contains a CD-ROM which can be used as an alternative to the book.

The book is available from the U3A (☎ 020 8466 6139) at a very reasonable price of £6.00 including postage.

Third Age Trust website

Forthcoming meetings for U3A members

Staying Sharp : Wisdom, Ageing and Cognitive Fitness

Thursday 12th March 2009 from 2.00pm – 4.30pm

At the The Royal Society, Carlton House Terrace, London SW1

- What can we do to increase our chances of having healthy, busy brains into old age?
- What is the evidence for the ‘use it or lose it’ hypothesis?
- Senior citizens are the future of society. How can we continue to make important contributions?

The meeting takes place in the Wellcome Trust Lecture Hall at the Royal Society and interval refreshments will be served in the City of London Rooms.

Admission is by ticket only at £11.50 per person including refreshments.

Apply to: The Third Age Trust (Dana), 19 East Street, Bromley BR1 1QE enclosing an s.a.e. Cheques are payable to The Third Age Trust. Tickets will not be available on the door.

The Royal Society is located at 6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AG, just off Waterloo Place, between Pall Mall and The Mall. It is five minutes walk to Piccadilly Circus underground station and ten minutes to Charing Cross mainline and underground stations. Trafalgar Square, and all bus services through it, is also very close.

U3A Explores Science At The RI

Tuesday 31st March 2009 at 1.30pm for 2.00pm and finishing at about 5.00pm.

At the Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1

Each year the Royal Institution and the U3A team up to produce an afternoon of the best speakers from the RI's programme. On 31st March 2009 this event will return to the recently refurbished Royal Institution building in Mayfair with another line up of fascinating science. Places are limited so admission is by ticket only at £15.00 each including refreshments. Applications can be received immediately and tickets, programmes and maps will be sent out from January onwards.

Please apply in writing to: The Third Age Trust, 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QE enclosing a 27p stamp for up to 4 tickets, or a large letter stamp (42p) if you require more, plus a cheque made payable to The Third Age Trust.

You will be notified immediately if the event becomes over-subscribed and asked if you wish to be placed on the waiting list.

Third Age Trust website



Late Winter House Party

The Balmoral Hotel, Bridlington – Tuesday 17th February to Saturday 21st February 2009

I will collect the balance of £180.00 per person at the December 2008 meeting. (This is the cost of £205.00 minus the deposit of £25.00). Cheques should be made payable to Airedale Tours Ltd/Clients Trust Account.

Margaret Platt, Travel Group Organiser ☎ 0208 309 6395



Christmas Greetings & Tea Helpers



A very big THANK YOU to all of our members who helped to serve teas over the past year. I am sure it has been much appreciated, especially on these very cold days. I am hoping that most of you will help again next year, but we still need a few more people to volunteer – just once each during the year. The tea money (after expenses) has donated £61.10 so far to our charity the RNLI.

I shall be cutting back on sending my U3A Christmas cards this year of which I usually send out over 50. The reason for this is that I shall instead be donating to a very worthwhile cause in Cameroon where the orphans have very little of anything. An After School programme is available but they desperately need accommodation, and, for £500, this project can be started; our money goes a long way out there since volunteers do most of the work. The After School programme is an essential part of providing a better future for these children. I hope you will understand. I would like to wish everyone a Very Happy Christmas and, importantly, a Very Peaceful 2009.

Gay Braybrook, Welfare Officer



Future Events 2009

The annual lunch and coach outings to Canterbury, Salisbury and a visit to the Magic Circle are now at the planning stage. The dates for these outings will be as follows:

- The Annual Lunch – Monday 16th March at Sidecup Sports Club, Sydney Road.
- Canterbury – Thursday 30th April.
- Magic Circle – Tuesday 16th June. This will be a full evening event near Euston, London.
- Salisbury – Wednesday 16th September.

Further details will follow at the monthly meetings and in Newsletters in the new year.

Anne Evans



Summer Schools 2009

Harper Adams University College, Newport (Shropshire) 20th –23rd July. £299 full board. Subjects include Architecture (Old Town New Town); Art History; Crime and Punishment; Digital Image Editing; France (La Belle France); Garden History (Near and Far); and the Geology of South Shropshire.

Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester 24th –27th August. £299 full board. Subjects include Living on Stone; the Cotswold Inheritance (Architecture and topography); Art History 1975–2000; Christianity in England from Roman Times to the Viking Invasion; A Brief History of British Film; Jesus from Jewish Teacher to Christian Divinity; Poets with many voices (from Browning to Eliot); The Music of Bela Bartok; Painting and Drawing (Water colour and drawing for beginners); and Short Stories in Spanish.

Full details are available on, and can be downloaded from, the main U3A website.

George Murrell



GROUP NEWS



Classical Music : Leader Derick Johnson



Our November meeting was led by Alan Griffiths. We began with Sergei Prokofiev's Piano Concerto № 1 in D played by The Polish National Radio Orchestra with Michael Boriskin on the piano; coincidentally, we had a young lady guest from Poland with us. Pablo de Sarasate's Carmen Fantasy followed and this was played by the London Symphony Orchestra with the superlative Itzhak Perlman on the violin. With a brief change of mood we then had J. S. Bach's "Wachet Auf" {wake up} which contained splendid organ playing by Simon Preston. Itzhak Perlman featured once again in Christian Sinding's Suite in A minor; this was a Norwegian composer about whom none of us had heard, and whose music on this occasion was played by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by André Previn.

After a somewhat protracted tea break, during which we had cake provided by our Polish guest, we continued with Anatole Liadov's Baba Yaga, "The Enchanted Lake". This is a folk story set to music concerning, inter alia, witches on broomsticks and this was played by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Efrem Kurtz. Next we heard Francis Poulenc's Sonata for Piano & Flute by the Pierrot Lunaire Ensemble Wien-Berlin with James Levine on the piano and Wolfgang Schulz playing the flute. This was followed by Ottorino Respighi's "Fountains of Rome" played by the NBC Symphony Orchestra, with Toscanini conducting, and it included a musical interpretation of the spray from those fountains. We finished with Robert Schumann's "Adagio & Allegro for Horn and Piano" with Barry Tuckwell on the horn and Vladimir Ashkenazy on the piano. At this meeting we had a full house which added to the pleasure of the afternoon.

Derick Johnson

(i) Baba Yaga is a witch-like character in Slavic folklore who lives in a house on chicken feet, and who flies around on a giant mortar kidnapping small children. In most Slavic folk tales she is portrayed as an antagonist; however, some characters in other mythological folk stories have been known to seek her out for her wisdom.

Editor



Ramblers 2 : Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



On the 15th November fifteen members of this rambling group met in the car park at Otford and had a short walk around Otford before crossing some fields and stiles towards Shoreham. We took a short walk along a road before skirting a farm and then back across fields towards Twitton. We stopped to admire a small public house, which was closed, but made a mental note to return next day when the beer would be free! We tried to find something else worthy of note before continuing by road back to a more welcoming hostelry in Otford. The intended path across fields back into Otford was avoided as the group had not been alerted to bring two watertight plastic bags, and only one member was wearing Wellington boots. The leader had waded through a fickle kissing gate a few days previously and arrived in Otford dripping with cool, clear water from mid-calf downwards. Not wanting to fall out with her fellow ramblers, she thought it best to leave out this part of the walk.

Ilena Harrington

Local History 2 : Leader José Steward



Our November visit was to Lord's, the home of cricket, on a cold, but dry, bright day. We congregated in the Museum awaiting our tour guide. Here we saw the very small Ashes Urn, and over 400 hundred years of cricket history. We then moved to the Pavilion which houses the legendary Long Room; this overlooks the pitch and contains an art gallery which shows different cricket grounds, and also leads into the Committee Room. Upstairs are the players' dressing rooms which display the famous honours board, and the balconies where well-known cricketers are often seen on TV. The all-round seating holds 30,000 and it is now dominated by a very modern media centre which was added in 1999.

It was an interesting visit and enjoyed by us all.

Jill Bryant

① The Ashes Urn, often wrongly believed to be the trophy of the Ashes series, has never been formally adopted as such. Replicas are often paraded by victorious teams as a symbol of victory, but the original urn has never been presented or displayed as a trophy in this way. Whichever side holds the Ashes, it normally remains in Marylebone Cricket Club's Museum at Lord's. The urn dates from the 1882-83 test matches in Australia and is reputed to contain the ashes of an item of cricketing equipment.

Editor



Ramblers 2 : Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



Luck was with us for our October ramble – the sun shone all the time. We did a local walk starting with Hornfair Park, then on to Charlton Park, Maryon Wilson Park and then towards the Thames Barrier where we had refreshments. Some of us returned through the parks while others took different routes home. I would like to thank the group members for their support.

Doreen Freeman



Bird Watching : Leaders Gay Braybrook & José Steward



Our trip to Bough Beech Reservoir in November began with a visit to the Ide Hill Village Hall for the W.I. weekly market. Here it was warm and dry, and the food and drink were most inviting. However, as soon as the rain stopped we were on our way again to Bough Beech. There were lots of birds to see out on the water and many waders just too far away for good identification. We saw great crested grebes, shoveler ducks, mallards, pochard, wigeon, teal, gadwell ducks, coots, swans, grey herons, cormorants, moorhens, and lapwings. Back at the Visitor Centre the feeders in the orchard attracted blue tits, great tits, coal tits, long-tailed tits, nuthatch, green finch, starlings, blackbirds, magpies and robins. We missed the brambling on this visit – better luck next time, maybe. We ate our packed lunches in the barn at the tables provided and were served tea on a tray complete with milk jug and sugar bowl by the Centre volunteers.

José Steward

Bird Watching : Leaders Gay Braybrook & José Steward



Danson Park was the destination for our December meeting. It was very cold, but dry and pleasant, and we set off well wrapped up for our bird hunt. Our first sighting was a large number of moorhens grazing by the lake alongside a group of crows, and, as we watched, a flock of black headed gulls flew overhead and landed on the lake. We wandered amongst the trees near the pond where lots of noisy mallards gathered hoping we would produce some food. A large heron perched high in a tree and we also saw collared doves, robins, blackbirds, and a duncock. In trees by the lake, cormorants stretched out their wings to dry, and a large grey heron sat with his feathers puffed up to keep warm. As we walked along the pathway back to the car park, we spotted in the shrubbery wrens, goldcrest, chaffinch, blue tits, great tits, long tailed tits and robins. Finally, in the car park, we saw a pair of pied wagtails. Hot chocolate in the restaurant was welcome!!

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 7th January 2009 at the London Wetlands Centre, Barnes. We will take the 9.43 am train from Sidcup. The “two for one” offer applies, so entry will cost £4.50.

Bird watching is open to all.

José Steward



Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk



On the 12th November a group of nine visited the Museum of London to see “The Great Fire of London Exhibition”. The display consisted of original paintings, diagrams, maps and eyewitness reports from, among others, Samuel Pepys. Although the exhibition was quite small and contained in just two rooms, there was a great deal of information. The Museum is currently being refurbished so most of the building was closed. However, there was enough to occupy and interest us.

Gill Brown

① The Great Fire of London was a major conflagration that swept through the central parts of London from Sunday 2nd September to Wednesday 5th September 1666. The fire gutted the medieval City of London inside the old Roman city wall. It consumed 13,200 houses, 87 parish churches, St. Paul's Cathedral, and most of the buildings of the City authorities. The death toll from the fire is unknown and is traditionally thought to have been small since only a few verified deaths were recorded. This reasoning has recently been challenged on the grounds that the deaths of poor and middle-class people were not recorded anywhere.

Editor





Lady Librarian – Ian Brydon

She works for Bexley Libraries,
A world of printed fantasies,
Where you may study as you please
The Lives of the Saints – or the lady librarian.

Do you think she noticed you,
When at three you joined her queue,
Bringing back the underdue
Volumes which you chose at two?

It doesn't matter what you pick,
A book on verse or rhetoric,
A book on how to work the trick
With the girl with her "best before" date stamp.

Did she glance askance at you,
When, yet again, you joined her queue,
To make her take a look at you?
Take her books, and take her too.

She has her break with Mills and Boon,
A sweet and sickly afternoon,
Like eating honey with a spoon.
Dreaming every day of a large issue.

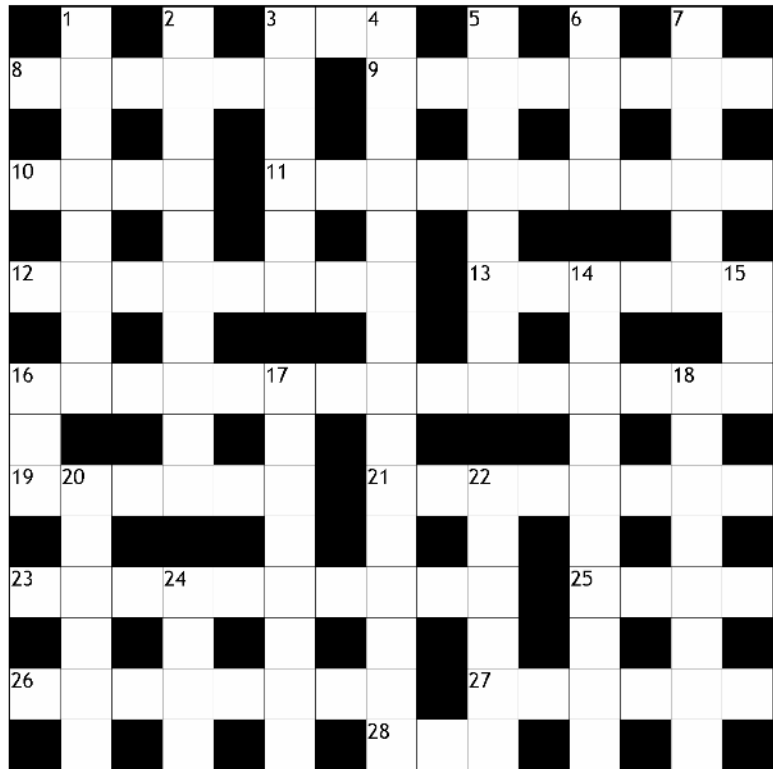
Ask her for an interview;
Make a date, or maybe two.
It may only take a few
Before you're shelved – or she brings you
Something old, something new,
Something borrowed but now your own
Kept at home on permanent loan.



№ 1

Across

- 3 Quadruped (3)
- 8 Coat of the angora (6)
- 9 Intimidated (8)
- 10 Water colour? (4)
- 11 Mental lapse (10)
- 12 Opera texts (8)
- 13 Deceptions (6)
- 16 The meeting place (9,6)
- 19 Part of a gas cooker (6)
- 21 Nonentities (8)
- 23 Harshly or hurtfully (10)
- 25 Common sense (4)
- 26 Type of monkey (8)
- 27 Empty (6)
- 28 Number (3)



Down

- 1 Biting insect (8)
- 2 Soldier (10)
- 3 Downright (6)
- 4 Overseers (15)
- 5 Disorderly (8)
- 6 Court command (4)
- 7 Clear off! (6)
- 14 Copiously (10)
- 15 Quiet! (3)
- 16 Domed loaf (3)
- 17 Bulbous plants (8)
- 18 Breaks between words within a metrical foot (8)
- 20 Optimistic (6)
- 22 Famous tapestry (6)
- 24 Pinnacle (4)



Solution next month



GROUP VACANCIES



GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
Antiques Appreciation 2 nd Friday (10 am - noon)	Martin Baker 020 8300 1752	1
Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning)	Gay Braybrook/José Steward 020 8309 6372/020 8302 1627	Yes. Notice on board at meetings
Darts (at The Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (midday)	Fred Green	Yes
Freedom Pass Explorers 2 nd Monday	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	Yes
Hand Crafted Cards (Group 2) 1 st Wednesday	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	Yes
Local History (Group 3) 2 nd Wednesday	Pam Kirk 020 8856 8372	Yes
Music (Group 2) 2 nd Friday (2.30 pm)	Derick Johnson 020 8850 1245	2
National Trust/English Heritage Various dates & times	John & Olive Mercer 020 8300 3136	Yes
Ramblers (Group 1) (6-7 miles) 4 th Tuesday (10.30 am)	Annette Jansen 01322 522252	Yes
Ramblers (Group 2) (4-5 miles) 4 th Tuesday	Pat & Alf Cracknell 020 8302 0823	Yes
Saturday Ramble (4-5 miles) 1 st Saturday (morning)	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	3
10-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10 am) <i>except school holidays</i>	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes. Notice on board at meetings

The above lists, 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 the Group Co-ordinator.

José Steward, Group Co-ordinator ☎ 020 8302 1627

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's not difficult to run a group and leaders of a full one can advise you how it's done.

PROGRAMME

2008

December Mr. J. Buttress Royal Parks

2009

January	Mr. T. Swan	Canterbury Oast Trust
February	Mr. & Mrs. Wagner	Phantasmagoria
March	AGM & Mr. S. Robinson	The City
April	<i>To be announced</i>	
May	Mr. T. Moorey	The Most Popular Indoor Activity
June	Mr. N. Arnold	Big Cats in Kent
July	Dr. Gill Stoker	Essentially Ethel
August	Mrs. J. Hay	Freelancing for the BBC
September	<i>To be announced</i>	
October	Mr. M. Parkin	Women in Print
November	Mr. R. Smith	Village Signs in Kent
December	Mrs. P. Mortlock	Ightham Mote

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	John Mercer	020 8300 3136
Vice-Chairman	Annette Jansen	01322 522252
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	Dennis Brittain	
Membership Secretary	John Harlow	020 8300 3865
Speakers Secretary	Valerie Gosden	020 8300 0664
Group Co-ordinator	José Steward	020 8302 1627
Raffle Organiser	Valerie Gosden	020 8300 0664
Welfare Officer	Gay Braybrook	020 8309 6372
Social Secretary	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Travel Group Leader	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster	David Smith	020 8304 2305

Please either e-mail contributions to me at editor.u3a@ukonline.co.uk or post them to me at 56 Crofton Avenue, Bexley DA5 3AR – typed if possible.

Please submit contributions by 3rd of the month.

WEBSITE

www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk

Afterthought

History repeats itself because nobody listens.