

**SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
NEWSLETTER**

December 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**

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year 2016



NOTICES

New Members

The Committee welcomes the following new members: Maureen Barone, Ruth Dunster, Sheila Fallon, Alan Harding, Ann Harris, Christine James, Michael McCarthy, David Pratt, Helen Salmon, Jacqueline Thomas, Nicola Tolfree, Maureen Watson and Barbara Whiting.

Patricia Rivett & Kate Berry

Miscellany

24-hour telephone legal advice service. This helpline service is available to all U3A members and is paid for by the Trust. There is no limit to the number of calls you can make and advice is available on all aspects of law. Telephone 0344 770 1040 and quote U3A Legal Helpline.

U3A West End Sing Out! Thursday 3rd March 11 am–4.15 pm at the Savoy Theatre in The Strand, London WC2. Working with West End musical director, Louisa Ridgeway, U3A members will have the opportunity to learn and perform a series of songs from West End musicals and produce a free CD of their efforts. Price is £35 and includes a sandwich lunch. Booking is through the Third Age Trust

Royal Air Force Museum, Hendon – The Battle of Britain. Welcome refreshments followed by a lecture and tour of the Battle of Britain exhibits available to U3A Groups (of between 15 and 30 members) on various dates between 3rd February and 6th July. Price is £10 pp. To book telephone 020 8358 4896.

The Importance of being Earnest. Tuesday 15th March 1.45 pm–4.15 pm at the Odeon Covent Garden. A production filmed live at the Vaudeville Theatre, London. Stars include David Suchet as Lady Bracknell. Tickets are available from the Third Age Trust at £15 pp.

George Murrell

GROUP NEWS

Explorers • Leader Val Gosden



Our November viewing took us back to a time when parts of the world had not been discovered and therefore did not appear on maps. However, by the 1400s, scientists had realised that the world was round, and in Spain it was thought that, by sailing west, Cathay (China) could be reached which was where valued items of spices and gold were surely to be found. Christopher Columbus, therefore, entreated Queen Isabella of Spain for approval to lead an expedition to Cathay. On his travels he discovered several islands, notably Haiti and Cuba, but he was unable to find Cathay. On his first expedition, three vessels set out, the crew of one of them deserting as no gold had yet been found, and another struck a reef and sank. Columbus left some of the crew behind, returned to Spain in the remaining ship, taking some of the natives with him. He returned to the island where he had left his remaining crew, only to find that they had been killed and their fortress burned. His further voyages failed to find Cathay, and, although a long stretch of coastline was found, it was actually America.

Columbus died not knowing of the discovery of America – a land which nobody had even imagined would be there.

Val Gosden

Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden



Visit to Houses of Parliament on 12th November

Our visit to the Houses of Parliament (which I have wanted to do since I was about 10!) was made even more exciting by the first visit in a decade of an Indian Prime Minister. We entered by the Norman Porch, which is also where the Queen enters for the State Opening, and came to Westminster Hall. Its magnificent oak hammer-beam ceiling forms the largest unsupported structure in the UK. As well as being where Royalty and heads of state are brought to lie in state, it was used in Edward I's reign as a soup kitchen which fed 12,000 people! After this, we entered the Queen's Robing Room with its carved oak reliefs which tell the story of King Arthur. We then went on to the Central Lobby, which you would recognise from news reports, and into the Members' Lobby with its fabulous decorations, which, to our surprise, we learned had been rebuilt between 1949 and 1953 after bomb damage, although Churchill insisted that some areas were left untouched. In the Commons Chamber, the voting was explained, but, owing to a very loud guide and a wailing baby, (Yes!) I was not able to understand more than that the system still uses no technology. For me, the whole hour consisted of wonderful friezes, fantastically decorated ceilings, beautiful wood carvings and much noise (there are LOTS of concurrent tours) but the "Crowning Glory" (literally) was the solid gold throne in the House of Lords. It is simply stunning and was designed by Augustus Pugin who mastered the art of Gothic Revival and whose influence is seen all around. You can go to listen and watch any sittings in the House of Commons or Lords, but we were told that the debates are not nearly as entertaining as when there are no cameras!

It was a brilliant day – well done again, Val!

Rinka Halliday

Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



On 11th November, our group of 14 got off a number 13 bus opposite Selfridge's as the clock was striking eleven. The traffic in Oxford Street came to a halt, and we stood in a circle to observe the two minutes silence. We then crossed into Duke Street, and headed for the home of the Wallace Collection in Hertford House, Manchester Square.

The galleries have undergone a complete refurbishment in the last few years, and we enjoyed rediscovering the great art exhibits: Canaletto, Rembrandt, Titian, Rubens and Gainsborough among others, not forgetting *The Laughing Cavalier* by Frans Hals, and the great collection of 18th century French artists, including Watteau and Fragonard. There are also cases of porcelain, glass, silver and bronze, and some beautiful French furniture. 2015 is the 400th anniversary of the death of Louis XIV, the 'Sun King', and the stair balustrade in the house was brought from France; its ironwork includes sunflowers and stylised letter Ls. It is also the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, and there is a temporary exhibition of armour on the lower ground floor.

We sat in the glass-covered atrium for coffee or a light lunch.

Mary Hawes

i *The Laughing Cavalier*, painted in 1624 by Frans Hals, is not actually laughing; his smile is much amplified by his upturned moustache. Generally, commissioned portraits such as this rarely showed adults smiling until the late 18th century, but Hals is an exception to the general rule and he often showed sitters with broader smiles than this, and in informal poses that bring an impression of movement and spontaneity. It is considered to be one of the most brilliant of all Baroque portraits and its title is an invention of the Victorian public and press dating from its first exhibition in 1872–75. The subject was probably a wealthy civilian as the embroidered sleeve and lace cuff bear emblems representing “the pleasures and pains of love” and “bees, arrows, flaming cornucopiae, lovers' knots and tongues of fire.”

Editor

Ramblers 3 • Leader Trevor Ford



The November walk was based on an Incident-Night-Hike Competition that I'd walked with scouts a few weeks before. Luckily, with U3A we were able to do it during daytime (when it was mostly dry). Moreover, I didn't subject them to strange challenges like solving Magic Square puzzles, building a raft for a toy bear, or shepherding the rest of the team blindfold through a series of obstacles. The main obstacle for the U3A team arose because we lost temporarily – not the route – but a couple of members of the group. (I blame the leader! Some shepherding!) We set off from Farnborough retracing the route of a former U3A walk through High Elms Country Park. We then went through the glorious autumnal colours of Cuckoo Wood and onto Cudham Lane North, cutting down Snag Lane, without any further snags. We passed the Girl Guide campsite at Cudham, which brought back memories for Caroline, at least, then went steeply down through woodland and over a field to reach a route march upwards (heart-challengingly so) along a road past Christmas Tree Farm (“good entertainment for the grandkids”) into Downe for lunch. Our return was through the village and over fields to Farnborough.

Trevor Ford

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



We have had two successful trips: the first to Highams Park from Liverpool Street Station, and in October we caught a train to Hayes in Kent from where we walked across Hayes Common to Keston for lunch.

Our November trip to Newbury Park was a mess! A very kind road sweeper directed us to a Sainsbury's café, as there were no coffee shops in the area – can you believe it! It was rather out of our way, so, having got back to the main road, we caught a bus to a Museum in a park area only to find that the Ambulance Museum had closed two years ago and that its exhibits are now in store. With still no sign of anywhere to have lunch, we took another bus to Gants Hill where we were directed to The George for a well-deserved lunch with a glass of wine. That's what Explorers is all about!

Christine Withams

Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Holland



November Ramble

Our November Ramble this year was a deer park walk around Knole Park of 4½ to 5 miles. From the car park we took a path down to The Gallops. This valley was formed by a river in the prehistoric era. In Medieval and Tudor times it was used for show hunts; visitors would place bets on which hound would reach the end of The Gallops first. We saw the hoof prints of today's horses and spied a number of deer, including what appeared to be an albino. Knole Park has been home to the same fallow deer herd since at least the 15th century and home to some Japanese sika deer since the 1890s. On reaching the end of the gradual rise in the valley, we climbed up to the road surface of Chestnut Walk, which we followed to its end. We went into the undergrowth and woods following paths that were boggy in places. Merriment was caused when, whilst indicating a rather "soft" section, Roy stepped back and ended up with a very wet, muddy boot. We arrived at the road again before crossing a section of golf course through which a footpath meanders – or so it appears as we were not chased off by irate golfers waving flag poles at us! We walked beside the stone wall of Knole House Garden and back to our cars.

One of our group mentioned that the house was once a calendar house which we investigated using Wikipedia as follows:

Knole Park is a 1,000-acre park, within which the house is situated, and Knole House is one of England's largest houses. The National Trust reports there is a possibility of its having at some point been a calendar house, which had 365 rooms, 52 staircases, 12 entrances and seven courtyards. Its construction began in the late 15th century, with major additions in the 16th century. Its Grade I listing reflects its mix of Elizabethan to late Stuart structures, particularly in the case of the central façade and staterooms. The surrounding deer park has also survived with few man-made changes in the last 400 years. However, its formerly dense woodland has not fully recovered from the loss of more than 70% of its trees in the Great Storm of 1987.

Knole hints: Parking for non-National Trust members costs £4. The restaurant is closed for rebuilding, although an outdoor food van serves a very limited range of food and drink. Tea, coffee and cake is available in the book/gift shop.

Cynthia & Roy Morton

Book Reading • Leader June Reid



Our book for October was *Northern Lights* by Phillip Pullman and chosen by Jan. This was the first book in the trilogy *His Dark Materials*. It was also published in America as *The Golden Compass* and later made into a film of the same name. Although this was originally aimed at the teenage market, it has become a cult classic and is readily embraced by readers of all ages. It is a “must read” for all fantasy lovers. The heroine, Lyra, is a feisty, strong-willed young girl brought up by a guardian amidst the colleges of Oxford. Her search to find her true father takes her to the frozen lands of the Arctic where witch clans reign and ice bears fight. The story moves along at a fast pace due to the many new characters introduced and constantly changing landscapes. This is a book which will cause you to think of as many questions as answers. The majority of us liked it and it certainly gave us a lot to discuss.

June Reid



Vodka Christmas Cake

1 cup of sugar, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 1 cup water, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 cup of brown sugar, lemon juice, 4 large eggs, nuts, 1...bottle Vodka, 2 cups dried fruit.

Sample a cup of Vodka to check quality. Take a large bowl, check the Vodka again to be sure it is of the highest quality then Repeat. Turn on the electric mixer. Beat one cup of butter in a large fluffy bowl. Add 1 teaspoon of sugar. Beat again. At this point, it is best to make sure the Vodka is still OK. Try another cup of Vodka just in case. Turn off the mixerer thingy. Break 2 eegs and add to the bowl and chuck in the cup of dried fruit. Pick the fruit up off the floor, wash it and put it in the bowl a piece at a time trying to count it. Mix on the turner. If the fried druit gets stuck in the beaterers, just pry it loose with a drewscraver. Sample the Vodka to test for tonsisticity. Next, sift 2 cups of salt, or something. Check the Vodka. Now shi... shift the lemon juice and strain the nuts. Add one table. Add a sugar of spoon, or somefink. Whatever you can find. Greash the oven. Turn the cake tin 360 degrees and try not to fall over. Don't forget to beat off the turner. Finally, throw the bowl through the window. Finish the Vodka and wipe the worktop with the dog.

Had to check the spellings again to make sure it was correct!!! Hic.

Cynthia Morton

ⓘ This recipe carries a variety of government health warnings!

Editor

SUDOKU

Place a number from 1-9 in each empty cell below so that no row, column, or 3 x 3 block contains any number more than once.

				6		4	
9				8	5		
		4	3				9
2			4	5		9	3
				7		6	1
	7						
				3			
	8	5	7	4	3		
1			6				7

Using the same principle, place the supplied letters in each empty cell below. A word will form in either a row or a column.

		L		Y			I	
I						G	L	
		O		G				Y
	G	Y					A	L
L		A						
			V					
					O			
Y				L		A	G	
N	O		A				R	V

Across:

- 1 Raptures (9)
- 8 Discard (4)
- 9 Fighting force (4)
- 10 Item of clothing (3)
- 11 Animal (3)
- 13 Nap (3)
- 14 Sends out (5)
- 16 Nocturnal insect-eating mammal (9)
- 18 The lending of money (5)
- 20 Hair treatment (3)
- 22 Distress signal (3)
- 23 Polynesian staple food made from taro plant (3)
- 24 College (4)
- 25 Central Asian ruler (4)
- 26 Part of a golf stroke (9)

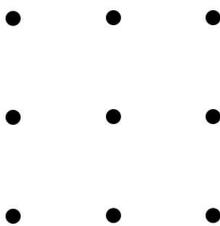
Down:

- 1 Driven apart (9)
- 2 Stylish (4)
- 3 Notice (3)
- 4 Hard-working (9)
- 5 Vex (3)
- 6 Muslim ruler (4)
- 7 Diverting or setting aside funds (9)
- 11 Accumulate (5)
- 12 Uses a spoon (5)
- 14 Bird (3)
- 15 Cunning (3)
- 17 Ban (4)
- 19 Complain (4)
- 21 Sound made by cattle (3)
- 23 Φ (3)

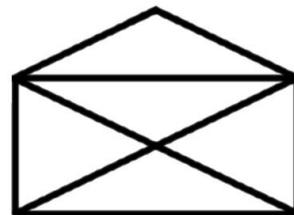
BARRED CROSSWORD

1	2	3		4		5	6	7
8					9			
10			11		12	13		
		14				15		
16								
	17	18					19	
20		21	22			23		
24					25			
26								

Draw four straight connected lines through these nine dots without lifting your pen from the paper.



Draw this figure without lifting your pen from the paper and without going over the same line twice.



SIDCUP & DISTRICT **U3A** CROSSWORD

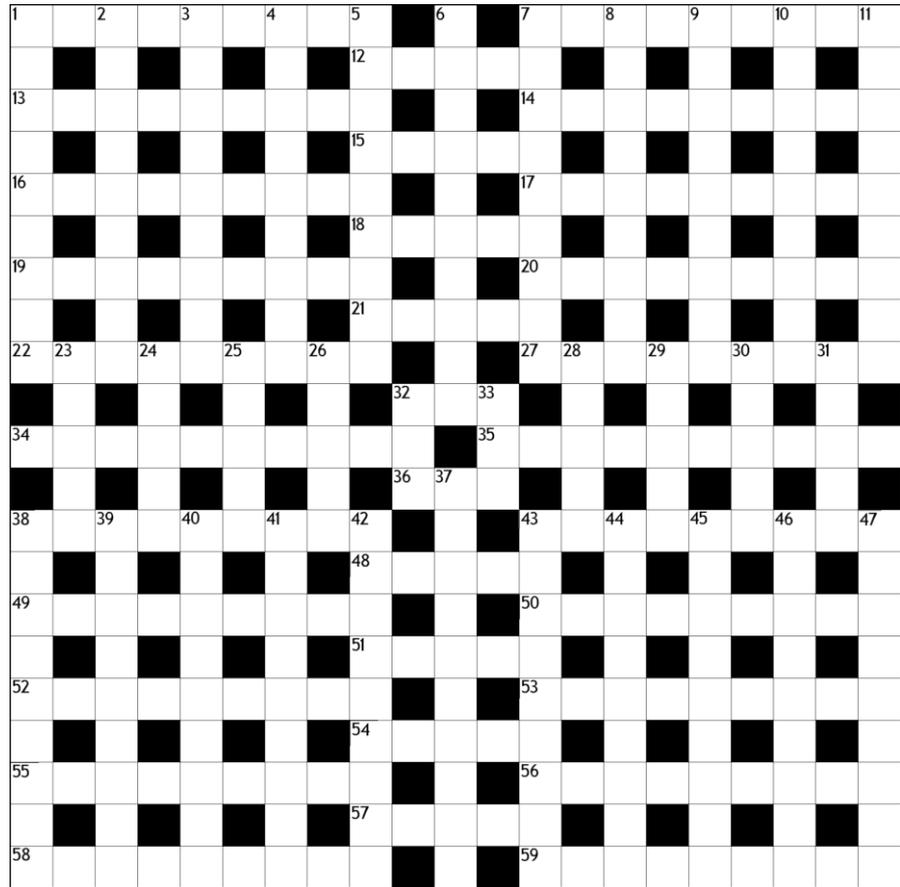
No 7

Across

- 1 Nocturnal termite eaters of S. Africa (9)
 7 Chattering (9)
 12 Astound (5)
 13 Find out (9)
 14 Gad about (9)
 15 Loafer (5)
 16 Playwright (9)
 17 Stress (9)
 18 Clumsy (5)
 19 Loudness (9)
 20 End (9)
 21 Eagle's nest (5)
 22 Made evil (9)
 27 Planners (9)
 32 Unit of work (3)
 34 Music performed very loudly (10)
 35 Lavish (10)
 36 Negative vote (3)
 38 Hired (9)
 43 Laid up (9)
 48 Bury (5)
 49 Memos (9)
 50 Helper (9)
 51 Atmospheres (5)
 52 Nastiness (9)
 53 Water distributor (9)
 54 Exchange (5)
 55 Hobnob (9)
 56 Carefully selected (9)
 57 Bones of the arms (5)
 58 Apportions (9)
 59 Eternally (9)

Down

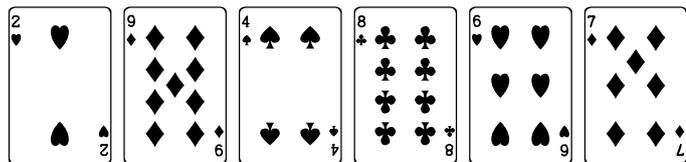
- 1 Left (9)
 2 Prejudice (9)
 3 Diversity (9)



- 4 Willingness (9)
 5 Disinfected (9)
 6 Coffin carrier (10)
 7 Rued (9)
 8 Approximations (9)
 9 Copying (9)
 10 Lifeless (9)
 11 Collectors (9)
 23 Beginning of an era (5)
 24 Aquatic mammal (5)
 25 Topic (5)
 26 Banishment (5)
 28 Happen afterwards (5)
 29 More chilly (5)
 30 Recorded (5)
 31 Wash lightly (5)
 32 An eternity (3)
 33 Bloke (3)
 37 Later on (10)
 38 Polled (9)
 39 Archaeological items (9)
 40 Pleasantly excite (9)
 41 Bird colonies (9)
 42 Calamities (9)
 43 Restaurant (9)
 44 Shamed (9)
 45 Untruthful (9)
 46 Stalemates (9)
 47 Infamy (9)

RIDDLE

A head but no body,
 a heart but no blood,
 just leaves and no branches,
 I grow without wood.



What are the next two cards in the sequence above?

Solutions next month

Crossword Puzzles

Although word puzzles had been published in periodicals years before, the first one regarded as a “word-cross” puzzle appeared in the New York World newspaper on 21st December 1913. It is reproduced below. Created by Arthur Wynne, a journalist from Liverpool, it embodied

FUN'S Word-Cross Puzzle.

F **U** **N**

FILL in the small squares with words which agree with the following definitions:

<p>2-3. What bargain hunters enjoy.</p> <p>4-5. A written acknowledgment.</p> <p>6-7. Such and nothing more.</p> <p>10-11. A bird.</p> <p>14-15. Opposed to less.</p> <p>18-19. What this puzzle is.</p> <p>22-23. An animal of prey.</p> <p>26-27. The close of a day.</p> <p>28-29. To elude.</p> <p>30-31. The plural of is.</p> <p>8-9. To cultivate.</p> <p>12-13. A bar of wood or iron.</p> <p>16-17. What artists learn to do.</p> <p>20-21. Fastened.</p> <p>24-25. Found on the seashore.</p>	<p>10-18. The fibre of the gomuti palm.</p> <p>6-22. What we all should be.</p> <p>4-26. A day dream.</p> <p>2-11. A talon.</p> <p>19-28. A pigeon.</p> <p>F-7. Part of your head.</p> <p>23-30. A river in Russia.</p> <p>1-32. To govern.</p> <p>33-34. An aromatic plant.</p> <p>N-8. A fist.</p> <p>24-31. To agree with.</p> <p>3-12. Part of a ship.</p> <p>20-29. One.</p> <p>5-27. Exchanging.</p> <p>9-25. Sunk in mud.</p> <p>13-21. A boy.</p>
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most of the features we know today. The puzzle's name was later changed to “crossword,” which first appeared in a dictionary in 1930.

Crossword puzzles became a weekly feature in the New York World and spread to other newspapers in USA. By the 1920s, the crossword phenomenon was starting to attract attention. In 1925, the New York Public Library reported “The latest craze to strike libraries is the cross-word puzzle,” and complained that when “the puzzle ‘fans’ swarm to the dictionaries and encyclopedias so as to drive away readers and students who need these books in their daily work, can there be any doubt of the Library’s duty to protect its legitimate readers?”

The first book of crossword puzzles appeared in 1924. “This odd-looking book with a pencil attached to it” was an instant hit and crossword puzzles became the craze of that year. Initially, some viewed the crossword puzzle with alarm, and some expected (maybe even hoped) that it would be a short-lived fad. In 1924, The New York Times complained of the “sinful waste in the utterly futile finding of words the letters of which will fit into a prearranged pattern, more or less complex. This is not a game at all, and it hardly can be called a sport. Solvers get nothing out of it except a primitive form of mental exercise, and success or failure in any given attempt is equally irrelevant to mental development.” A clergyman called the working of crossword puzzles “The mark

of a childish mentality,” and said, “There is no use for persons to pretend that working one of the puzzles carries any intellectual value with it.” However, another wrote a complete “Bible Cross-Word Puzzle Book.” Also in 1925, Time Magazine noted that nine Manhattan dailies and fourteen other big newspapers were carrying crosswords, and quoted opposing views as to whether “This crossword craze will positively end by June!” or “The crossword puzzle is here to stay!” In 1925, the New York Times noted, with approval, a scathing critique of crosswords by The New Republic, but concluded that, “Fortunately, the question of whether the puzzles are beneficial or harmful is in no urgent need of an answer. The craze evidently is dying out fast and in a few months it will be forgotten,” and in 1929 declared, “The cross-word puzzle, it seems, has gone the way of all fads.” In 1930, a correspondent noted that “Together with The Times of London, yours is the only journal of prominence that has never succumbed to the lure of the cross-word puzzle” and said that “The craze – the fad – stage has passed, but there are still people numbering it to the millions who look for their daily cross-word puzzle as regularly as for the weather predictions.” The New York Times, however, was not to publish a crossword puzzle until 1942; today, it is one of the most popular in the USA. Britain’s first crossword appeared in Pearson’s Magazine in February 1922, and in The Times from 1930.

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Amblers (Group 1) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	John Harbert 020 8300 5361	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/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
 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

£ A charge applies

 Certain seasons only

↓ Notice on the board at meetings

 Open to all

 Temporary point of contact

PROGRAMME

2015

December Colin Hill & friends Comedy Cabaret

2016

January	Nicky Brooks	Exercise in Retirement
February	Bob Ogley	The Great Storm and how it changed my life
March		Annual General Meeting
	Penny Duggan	History of Blackfen
April	Dennis Chambers	Some Kent Ghosts – Their haunts and their stories
May	Anna Austin	Motorina to Racing Driver

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
Asst. Membership Secretary	Kate Berry	020 8309 7429
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
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

*Have communion with few, be familiar with one,
deal justly with all, speak evil of none*