

# SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

February 2008



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

## NOTICES



**Hearing Dogs**  
*for Deaf People*

The development of a Hearing Dogs scheme in 1982 heralded a new beginning for thousands of deaf people in the UK. It was launched as a three year pilot project under the auspices of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID), but became an independent charity in 1986. Since then it has created over 1,400 hearing dog partnerships. Below are some of the significant dates in its history.

- 1982 Pilot Scheme is launched
- 1983 First Hearing Dog partnership is established
- 1984 'Skipper' is matched with Kerena Marchant, who works at the BBC, and gets his own BBC staff ID
- 1987 Puppy socialising scheme is established
- 1992 HRH The Princess Royal becomes Patron of the Charity
- 1994 In partnership with others the Charity helps to set up Assistance Dogs (UK) scheme
- 1995 First charity shop opens in Chinnor, Oxfordshire
- 1996 Hearing Dogs website is launched
- 2000 Hearing Dog Jodie is the first dog to travel to Europe on the Passports for Pets scheme
- 2003 Deaf-Blind recipient Angela Hassel is the recipient of Roddy, the first hearing-guide dog
- 2007 'Team' hearing dog Cara is partnered to the O'Brien family – the first placement in a study examining the effects of hearing dogs on families with deaf children.

There have been so many great achievements in twenty-five years. Everyone at our Sidcup U3A who has supported the charity is helping the valuable work to go on. Many thanks to you all.

**Val, Annette & Gay**

## AGM

The Agenda for next month's AGM is attached to this Newsletter. Also attached are the Minutes from last year's AGM and the Committee's Annual Report. These documents may also be downloaded from our website. The Mayor of Bexley, Councillor Nigel Betts, has accepted our invitation and will be very pleased to attend our AGM.

*Editor*

### **South London U3A Half-Day Study**

#### Global Warming and Climate Change

by John Kirkbride

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2008, 10am–1pm. Room 137, Goldsmiths College, New Cross.

Any members of Sidcup and District U3A who might be interested are welcome to attend. Contact Janet Gould, Secretary South London U3A ☎ 020 8857 5225.

**George Murrell**



The cremation of Molly Harbert took place on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> January at Eltham Crematorium. It is a sad loss to John and his family after such a brave struggle. She will be missed by many. There is still the opportunity to send a donation to the Greenwich and Bexley Cottage Hospice at 185 Bostall Hill, Abbey Wood SE2 0GB in her memory.

The cremation of Grace Murdock took place on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> January at Eltham Crematorium. There is still the opportunity to send a donation to the Demelza Capital Appeal at 1 Wensley Close, London SE9 5AB. It is regretted that news of her passing arrived too late for inclusion in the last Newsletter.

### **The Chairman**

My family and I wish to thank all our friends for their kind support during the many weeks Molly spent in hospital, and afterwards for their many messages of sympathy, floral tributes and donations to her nominated charity with the passing away of their mother and my beloved wife. It was lovely to see so many U3A members at the funeral.

**John Harbert**

### **Newsletter**

Contributions for the Newsletter are invited from groups with vacancies which do not already submit reports. The announcement of forthcoming activities is another way of attracting new members.

*Editor*

## GROUP NEWS

### Freedom Pass Explorers : Leader Val Gosden



Since several people had expressed an interest in seeing the new St. Pancras Station it became the venue for our December 2007 trip. Being a station it was open to the *cold* fresh air, but we took time to look around us as we made our way towards somewhere to have a hot drink. It is still not fully developed, with some shopping spaces still to be let, but it was interesting to see the modern development. At one point we went outside to look at the old architecture which, not surprisingly, is completely different. It is on the upper level that one can see the famous statues of the embracing couple and John Betjeman, and also the longest champagne bar – which none of us patronised. Somewhere warmer to have lunch was required so we went ‘next door’ to the British Library before returning home to Sidcup.

Our January 2008 trip involved a train and bus ride to Crouch End; this is a fairly busy area with many individual shops rather than stores that one sees in almost any town. As we were on the top deck during the long bus ride to Crouch End, we saw much of London ranging from lovely garden squares to standard housing and shopping areas, and we also spotted signposts to Pentonville and Holloway prisons en route. After lunch we walked to Highgate underground station (for a quicker journey home) via residential side roads. Many of the houses were Victorian or Edwardian, and we were interested to see the various building styles and the different forms of decoration used. It was an interesting day out.

### Val Gosden

**(i)** Saint Pancras was a Roman citizen who converted to Christianity and who, at age 14, was beheaded in AD 303 for proclaiming his faith during the persecution of Christians under Emperor Diocletian. His name is Greek and literally means “the one that holds everything”. Pope Vitalian sent his relics to England as part of the evangelisation of England so that we would have relics of the Church at large, and to install in the altars of new churches. Saint Augustine of Canterbury dedicated the first church built in England to Saint Pancras, and subsequent churches throughout England are similarly named for him.

### *Editor*

### Classical Music 2 : Leader Derick Johnson



In the absence of Olive and John Mercer, Michael Jordan kindly hosted the Classical Music meeting for January at his home. Michael had a new idea for his programme and chose pieces to reflect the interests of each member. This idea worked very well and we started with Tomaso Albinoni’s Concerto No 2 for oboe followed by J. S. Bach’s concerto in D by the Slovakian orchestra Camerata Cassovia with Gerald Garcia on the guitar. This was followed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement of Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No 6 (Opus 29 “Pathétique”) and then W.A. Mozart’s Bassoon Concerto by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra – a beautiful piece. Next was Franz Schubert’s Symphony No 9 in C major (known as the “Great”) by the BBC Scottish Orchestra, then Ludwig van Beethoven’s String Quartet, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> movements, by the Borodin Quartet. G.F. Handel’s “Messiah” with the Choir of King’s College, Cambridge, and Director of Music David Willcocks provided the perfect conclusion to a very enjoyable afternoon.

### Derick Johnson

### Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk



Our year started off with a visit to Charlton House, which celebrated its 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007. The house was built between 1607–1612 for Sir Adam Newton who was tutor to Prince Henry, the eldest son of James I. Over the years it has had some wealthy owners and additions were made to the house up until the estate was sold to the Council in 1925 when it was converted to a public park and playing fields. The house is now used as a Community Centre and library. Alison, a ‘Friend of Charlton House’, took us round and pointed out some of its special features. The decoration of the principal oak staircase is original and becomes more ornate as you reach the second floor. The Minstrel Hall and many of the rooms have fine strapwork ceilings and several have their original fireplaces. We left the house through the gardens and noted in particular the Peace Garden dedicated to Amnesty International and the Japanese Peace Pole. We then crossed the road to the Parish church of St. Luke which Alison had arranged for us to visit. Mention is made of a church existing in 1077, but the present structure was funded with money left by Sir Adam Newton c.1630. The church has numerous monuments including a memorial to the Rt. Hon. Spencer Perceval, MP, who was assassinated in the House of Commons in 1812. Another memorial is to Edward Wilkinson, Master Cook to Elizabeth I. The latest addition to St. Luke’s is a tapestry worked by members of the church – some of whom had never before attempted embroidery – to celebrate the Millennium and which depicts the history of the River Thames and the surrounding area.

#### Mary Webb

**(i)** Strapwork is a decorative motif in flat relief consisting variously of interlaced scrollwork, braiding, shield forms, or cross-hatching, often pierced with circular or oval holes.

#### *Editor*

### Ramblers 1 : Leader Annette Jansen



We decided to leave the mud of Kent in the countryside and head for London. Pat Peeney, our greyhound, led the way. We assembled at London Bridge Station and headed across to the north side of the river. A pleasant riverside path took us under Cannon Street Railway Station and along to Southwark Bridge which we crossed north to south. This was originally built from cast iron in 1819, but it was replaced by a steel construction between 1912–21. We went down to Bankside and then westwards to the Millennium pedestrian bridge which, after its initial ‘wobble’ problems, opened in 2002. Its 325 metre span links Tate Modern at Bankside to the City of London at St. Paul’s. As we crossed it and proceeded westwards we enjoyed views across to the new buildings on Bankside before we reached and crossed Blackfriars Bridge (1864–69 designed by Joseph Cubitt). The South Bank is an enjoyable, busy area but we did not allow Pat to join the skate-boarders in the specially designated area; we needed her to lead us on and over the more southerly of the two Hungerford suspension footbridges, which were completed in 2002. While we were on the Victoria Embankment getting a rear view of many Whitehall Ministry buildings it was surprising to learn how many former civil servants we have in our group. We reached Westminster Bridge next; built in 1867 it has seven arches. After crossing this we turned northwards and, at the South Bank, some of us called in for refreshments while others made their way back to London Bridge Station.

It was all very enjoyable – thank you Pat.

#### Annette Jansen

## Ramblers 2 : Leaders Pat and Alf Cracknell



We started out on a bright, fresh sunny morning for our first ramble of 2008. Eleven of us met at the car park at Leaves Green. (In the 1500's Leaves Green was known as Leigh's Green. The Leighs were an important family who owned estates at Addington and West Wickham).

First we passed some old cottages, c.1700's, which are currently in the process of renovation. A bit further along we came to one of the last remaining Coal Posts erected to mark the point at which coal duty became payable. These became defunct when the London County Council was set up in 1889. We followed the footpath leading to open fields and lovely views, and, as we went over our second stile, we were greeted by several horses who gave us no trouble. At the last stile we joined a bridle path for about 1 mile passing some cottages that have unusual cruciform chimney stacks. Shortly after this we passed Keston Parish Church, which is a flint and stone building with a small bell tower. Records show that a church has been on this site since 1050. We then proceeded along Downe Road until we reached a footpath which brought us out onto fields alongside Biggin Hill Aerodrome; this brought back memories of the 1940's when this part of Kent was at the forefront of the war. We then continued to our lunch stop at the Crown Inn where we enjoyed a welcome drink and refreshment.

## Den Brittain

**(i)** About 250 coal tax posts forming a rough circle twenty miles from the centre of London were erected in 1851 to mark the points where taxes on coal due to the Corporation of London had to be paid. Coal sold in the City of London had been taxed since mediaeval times, and, as it had all been shipped in to one or two riverside wharfs, the tax collection had been relatively easy. By the nineteenth century, however, as a consequence of increasing trade by canal and rail, Parliament extended the catchment area to a radius of approximately twenty miles from London. The erection of these posts was a last ditch attempt to retain the tax despite growing opposition; however, within twenty years it was abolished. A book published in 1972 lists the position of 219 coal tax posts in varying states of repair still surviving in situ at that time; a survey has recently been commissioned to update this information.

*Editor*

## Bird Watching : Leaders Gay Braybrook and José Steward



We chose Footscray Meadows for our 6<sup>th</sup> February meeting and enjoyed superb weather with sunshine all the way. Our first sighting was a splendid green woodpecker busily feeding on the ground and we were able to observe him for at least ten minutes. Lots of noisy parakeets were enjoying the fine weather and large groups of pigeons gathered in the open fields. In the water close to Five Arches, eight little grebes were diving, alongside tufty ducks, gadwalls, mallards, coots, moorhens and swans. There was lots of birdsong, too – the great tit being the easiest to recognise. A grey wagtail gave us a good sighting, flitting among the gravel patches in the river. We also spotted blue tits, a long-tailed tit, a robin, blackbirds and magpies.

Since most of our group will be on the U3A holiday, our next meeting will be a return to Footscray Meadows. We will meet at 10am in the car park off Rectory Lane on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March.

Bird watching is open to all.

**José Steward**

## GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
<b>Beginners Bridge Acol</b> Tuesdays (11 am - 1 pm) <i>Weekly for 6 weeks</i>	<b>Barbara Shilling</b> 01322 400443	Vacancies on future courses
<b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook/José Steward</b> 020 8309 6372/020 8302 1627	<b>Yes.</b> Notice on board at meetings
<b>Darts (at The Alma pub)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday (midday)	<b>Fred Green</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Freedom Pass Explorers</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Local History (Group 3)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	<b>Pam Kirk</b> 020 8856 8372	<b>4</b>
<b>Music (Group 2)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (2.30 pm)	<b>Derick Johnson</b> 020 8850 1245	<b>3</b>
<b>National Trust/English Heritage</b> Various dates & times	<b>John &amp; Olive Mercer</b> 020 8300 3136	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Quilling</b> Occasional Saturdays (2 - 4 pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	Please phone leader
<b>Ramblers (Group 1) (6-7 miles)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (10.30 am)	<b>Annette Jansen</b> 01322 522252	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Saturday Ramble (4-5 miles)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8309 6372	<b>3</b>
<b>10-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10 am) <i>except school holidays</i>	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8309 6372	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Theatre (Group 2)</b> Various matinées	<b>Joan &amp; John Somerset</b> 020 8300 0890	<b>Yes.</b> 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? It's not difficult to run a group and leaders of a full one can advise you how it's done.



**SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE  
2008 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**20<sup>th</sup> March 2008**



The Committee invites all paid up members to our twelfth Annual General Meeting, which will take place at 2pm on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008 at the New Community Church, Station Road, Sidcup. We look forward to seeing as many members as possible.

**AGENDA**

- 1 Apologies for absence.
- 2 To receive and approve the minutes of the 2007 AGM (attached).
- 3 To receive and approve the inspected accounts.
- 4 Annual reports (attached).
- 5 Election of:-
  - Chairman
  - Secretary
  - Treasurer
  - Speakers' Secretary
  - Membership Secretary
  - Group Co-ordinator
  - Raffle Organiser
  - Social Secretary
  - Welfare Officer

Please note: The chairman is elected for a two year term in accordance with the constitution.

- 6 Appointment of Inspector of Accounts for next year.
- 7 Charity to be supported in 2008.
- 8 Any Other Business.

**SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE  
MINUTES OF AGM**

15<sup>th</sup> March 2007



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at The New Community Church Hall on  
15<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

The Chairman, Dr John Mercer welcomed all to the meeting and in particular our guests, Councillor Colin Tandy, the Deputy Mayor of Bexley, and Mrs Valerie Tandy. He expressed his thanks to committee members and all other members who had been involved in making the arrangements for the meeting and to the group leaders who had arranged displays of their groups' activities.

**1 Apologies for absence:** A. Jansen, B. Jansen, J. Harlow, A. Harlow, R. Carpenter, B. Savill.

**2 Minutes of the previous meeting:** Proposed by C. Owen seconded by J. Bishop that they be approved. Carried.

**3 Approval of accounts:** Proposed by E. Percival and seconded by D. Wallis that these be approved and accepted. Carried.

**4 Annual Reports:** Proposed by M. Jordan and seconded by S. Ford that these be accepted. Carried.

**5 Election of Officers:** The following nominations had been received:-

Vice Chairman: A. Jansen  
Secretary: G. Murrell  
Treasurer: D. Brittain  
Membership Secretary: J. Harlow  
Speaker Secretary: V. Gosden  
Raffle Organiser: V. Gosden  
Welfare Officer: G. Braybrook  
Group Co-ordinator: J. Steward  
Trust Liaison Officer: N. Slaughter

As there were no further nominations it was proposed by J. Bishop and seconded by C. Owen that the above named be elected to the posts "en bloc". Carried.

**6 Appointment of Inspector of Accounts:** Proposed by M. Jordan and seconded by M. Platt that A. Platt be re-appointed. Carried.

**7 Charity to be supported in 2006/2007:** Nominations had been received for "Hearing Dogs for Deaf People", proposed by A. Jansen and "The Eleanor Hospice" proposed by T. Hudson. The matter was then put to the vote with the result that "Hearing Dogs for Deaf People" will be the nominated charity for the coming year.

**8 AOB:** Members expressed their satisfaction with the change of venue and remarked upon the superior quality of sound amplification.

Dennis Brittain announced that Olive Mercer was retiring as editor of the newsletter, a task she had performed for the last five years. On behalf of the members he thanked her for all her hard work and presented her with a bouquet. Olive responded and announced that the task would now be undertaken by David Smith.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 2.50 pm.

After touring the displays the Deputy Mayor and Mrs Tandy thanked the members for inviting them to attend and congratulated the branch on its achievements.

**SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE  
ANNUAL REPORT**

2007



**Chairman's Report for year 2007**

This has been our first year in the new hall, and the move has been successful. There is more room, there are catering facilities, the sound system (though complicated) is improved and the staff of the church are always helpful. We had the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Colin Tandy, together with his wife to our last AGM when many of our groups displayed their activities. Councillor Tandy was interested in our activities and it was a good promotional exercise. John Harlow has been assiduous in promoting our U3A as well. We have had some good speakers; one or two were outstanding. I should like to commend Valerie Gosden in her work as Speakers' Secretary. Thanks are due to all committee members. Norman Slaughter has retired and Ann Evans, as Social Secretary has taken his place. Special thanks to David Smith for his editorship of the newsletter, and his skill in setting up the website. He and his team also put the chairs out for each meeting. The annual lunch was well attended. There were two coach trips, one to Winchester and one to Bury St Edmunds. Our membership has risen and we look forward to the activities and fellowship to be enjoyed by Sidcup U3A in 2008.

**John Mercer**

**Treasurer's Report for year 2007**

Another good year for Sidcup U3A, as we have managed to stay within the amount raised by subscriptions, and made an increase in our reserves. We have also donated an increased amount to the charities that we have supported during the year, and I would like to thank the members who have worked hard to achieve this. Our membership has risen, and hopefully this will increase further during 2008. My grateful thanks once again to Alan Platt for his inspection of the accounts for the year.

**Den Brittain**

**Membership Secretary's Report**

With the move to our new venue at the beginning of January there was a large increase in our membership during the year and this reached 246 at the end of December. However, due to various reasons, people moving away etc. the membership at the end of January 2008 stood at 223. Unfortunately during the past year four of our members passed away, namely, Myra Davies, Molly Harbert, Grace Murdock and Barbara Wilder who will be sadly missed. At the AGM a further update will be given on membership.

**John Harlow**

## **Group Co-ordinator's Report**

There are currently 44 groups, and we are still awaiting the outcome of a Family History Group. The Group Display Tables at the March 2007 AGM were really exciting and we will repeat the exercise.

New groups set up during 2007 were:-

- Beginners Bridge Acol, which is thriving
- On-Line Computers, still very new and proving interesting
- Freedom Pass Explorers has been a huge success
- Luncheon Club 2, instantly full
- Theatre Group 2, offering great variety

Groups closed during 2007 were:-

- Play Reading Group II, after only one month
- Sunday Ramble, lack of interest
- Antiques 1, course completed

We must again thank all Group Leaders for their continued interest, and for providing us with such a variety of subjects, month in and month out.

**José Steward**

## **The Raffle**

The Raffle continues to be well-supported, both by those regularly purchasing tickets and those who donate good quality items to be included each month, thus minimising the need to purchase items and enabling us to raise more money for the chosen charity each year. To date, January 2008, £300 has been raised since April 2007 for this year's charity, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Our thanks to all our supporters.

**Val Gosden**