

# SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

January 2012



**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

### **Concert “In Honour of Saint Cecilia”**

A concert especially for U3A members will take place Queen’s Chapel of the Savoy, Savoy Hill, London, WC2R, at 2.00 pm on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012. Tickets are available from the Third Age Trust (telephone 020 8466 6139) at £18.00 per person and are limited to 4 for each applicant.

The Chapel belongs to Her Majesty the Queen in her Right as Duke of Lancaster. It is a “free” chapel or “peculiar”, not falling within any bishop’s jurisdiction, but remaining within the Church of England. It is the last surviving building of a hospital founded in 1512 by Henry VII for homeless people. It is a beautiful, intimate space for a concert with a fine acoustic and a splendid Walker organ.

### Programme

The Trinity Laban Chamber Choir conducted by Stephen Jackson

After a short, informal pre-concert talk, the programme will run as follows:–

Britten – Hymn to Saint Cecilia

Howells – A Hymn to Saint Cecilia

Peter Phillips – Cecilia Virgo

Bernard Rose – Feast Song for Saint Cecilia

Elgar – There is Sweet Music

Richard Rodney Bennett – Verses on Saint Cecilia’s Day

During the interval, there will be a short, informative address about the provenance of this unique chapel given by the Reverend Professor Peter Galloway OBE.

**George Murrell**

**(i)** Saint Cecilia is the patroness of musicians and Church music. It is reputed that, as she was dying, she sang to God. It is also written that, as the musicians played at her wedding to Valerian, she “sang in her heart to the Lord”. An only child, her feast day is celebrated in the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Eastern Orthodox, and Eastern Catholic churches on November 22<sup>nd</sup>. It was long presumed that she was a noble lady of Rome who, along with her husband, his brother Tiburtius, and a Roman soldier called Maximus, suffered martyrdom in about AD 230 under Emperor Alexander Severus. Recent research appears to cast doubt upon this.

**Editor**

## U3A Summer Schools 2012

No 1: Harper Adams University College, Newport, near Telford, Shropshire  
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> July – Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

Courses include:–

- Cinema History – Aspects of UK Film during and after World War II.
- Design Principles in Art – Exploring the elements of LINE.
- Spoken French and contemporary France.
- History – England in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
- Music Appreciation – Making friends with music around the world.
- Philosophy/Fiction – Exploration of disparate ideas through fiction published in 1961.
- Poetry Priest-Poets – Exploring poems by George Herbert, Gerard Manley Hopkins and R. S. Thomas.
- Recorder Ensemble Playing – Suitable for those able to play a simple tune but wishing to progress further.

No 2: Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, Gloucestershire  
Monday 20<sup>th</sup> August – Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2012.

Courses include:–

- Drama - Exploring the changing nature of comic drama (lectures and workshops).
- History “An enduring affair: The Orient and the Occident” – The relationship between Britain and India over 250 years.
- Literature “Late!” – Exploring works acknowledged to be the “last” produced by writers such as Shakespeare, Jane Austen etc.
- Needlepoint Lace Making – Mainly individual tuition.
- Philosophy “What has Greek Philosophy done for us?”
- Psychology “Reality and Imagination” – Lectures, discussion and group activities.
- Singing for pleasure – For those who enjoy singing, ability to read music is an advantage but not necessary.
- Website design – Build your own website.

The fee for both Summer Schools on full board with en suite accommodation is £315.00 per person. (Deposit £70.00 per person). Early booking is advisable. Full details and application forms are available from the Third Age Trust.



U3A Explores Science at the Royal Institution, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1  
2.00pm–5.00pm Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

Three lectures:–

- Forensic Science – An Overview.
- How particle accelerators have changed our lives and what they will look like in the future.
- Food production in a changing climate.

Admission is by ticket only which is obtainable from the Third Age Trust (£18.00 including refreshments).

**George Murrell**

**i** The Third Age Trust: 19, East Street, Bromley, BR1 1QE. Telephone 020 8466 6139 or email [national.office@u3a.org.uk](mailto:national.office@u3a.org.uk). Website: [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk).

**Editor**

## **Theatre & Drama – Advance Notice**

### Dates to note for U3A members interested in theatre and drama

4 Workshops have been created by the Ambassador Theatre Group at the Piccadilly Theatre, London, from 10.45 am–4.30 pm on 12<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012. The cost is £20.00 per person including lunch and refreshments.

Subjects:–

- Directing.
- Backstage.
- Theatre History.
- Writing – From page to stage.

Booking forms will be available in mid-January.

**George Murrell**

## **Tablet Computers**

Tablet computers like the iPad, made by Apple, are becoming increasingly popular. They are smaller than laptops, highly portable and perform many of their functions. There is a new guide for the over 50s user who has little or no experience of tablet computers, offering advice on how to choose and buy one, how to set it up and how to use it to send emails, surf the internet and more. Entitled “iPad For The Older And Wiser”, it is published by Wiley, costs £12.99, and bears the logo of the Third Age Trust.

*Editor*

## **Charity for 2012**

Our Charity for this year will be Guide Dogs for the Blind. This organisation started in 1931 with just 4 guide dogs. They now have 4,500 across the UK and train 700 dogs every year. They have also opened their own breeding centre in Leamington Spa with a potential for 1350 puppies. Guide Dogs are not only for older people as thousands of children also benefit from the charity. This, of course, costs money and their funding relies on voluntary donations and sponsors.

At the meetings there will be two collecting boxes – one on the raffle table and one on the tea counter. I do hope you will support this very worthwhile charity.

**Gay Braybrook**

## **Tea Rota**

The rota for 2012 is now ready and is on the “Group Notices” table for collection. I do hope that everyone will be able to help again this year, but, if not, please let me know. We are also looking for more volunteers – it is just once a year that your help is needed even if you can only go on the reserve list.

You may like to know that the surplus money from the teas (after expenses) amounted to £79.71 which was given to last year’s chosen charity. It is worthwhile having a cup of tea!

**Gay Braybrook**

## Thank you

A sincere thank you to our editor, David, for placing December 2011's Newsletter on our website ([www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk](http://www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk)). I very much enjoyed the Entertainment items (especially the jokes) and look forward to checking my answers online in January 2012.

**Val Gosden**

## Silver Surfers

Last term 24 U3A members joined the above group at Blackfen Girls School to improve their computer skills. We were a mixed class of complete beginners and members who just wanted to brush up our uncertain knowledge of various aspects of the computer and Tony Fishpool made the sessions both informative and fun. The next Silver Surfers course is due to begin in April, and, as soon as more information is to hand, I will pass it on.

**Christine Spencer, Group Co-ordinator**

## GROUP NEWS

### Philosophy • Leader Bernard Catallo



The Philosophy Group is now into its second year; enjoyment and insight remain our prime objectives. The group is not troubled by the standard caricatures of Philosophy – instead the group's thought processes are offered a gentle and stimulating flow of freshness. Meetings take place twice a month on Monday afternoons and our approach varies. For example, we listen to lectures, watch professional philosophers in dialogue over specific points, and we stage group discussions. The 'Concept of Fairness' generates a wide-ranging and intricate discussion. Whereas some professional philosophers may enjoy talking about abstract tables, we share stimulating insights around our real table and a community of interest, as well as real refreshments.

**Bernard Catallo**

### Local History 3 • Leader Pam Kirk



In October, our group visited the Cartoon Museum in Little Russell Street. This museum is dedicated to preserving the best of British cartoons, caricatures, comics and animation.

We were given a 50-minute talk by the Curator who presented each of us with a folder of cartoons and caricatures; this enabled us to follow her talk on the history of cartoons, starting with William Hogarth in the 17<sup>th</sup> century up to the present day. After the talk, we were free to laugh our way around this fun museum which is self funding and well worth a visit.

**Christine Withams**

## **Freedom Pass Explorers • Leader Val Gosden**



In October we were again fortunate to have reasonable weather – breezy, but sunny and mild. Our trip out was to Alexandra Palace and Park, and our stop for coffee was at the café in the park itself, overlooking the lake, from which we could watch the many ducks swimming and diving. We also spotted a heron on the island in the lake, and this we later saw flying around, scattering the innumerable pigeons that lined the lake. Following the much needed pause for coffee, we walked round the lake and up to the Palace; this is a vast edifice, and some of it looks very much in need of some TLC (and lots of ££££), but the front has been cleaned up and looks quite impressive. Looking around from this high point, we could see much of north London, and, in the distance, the Post Office Tower, the Shard, Canary Wharf and other tall buildings. We continued walking through the park; some of the trees were losing their leaves, but there was still a great amount of greenery around. After leaving the park, we were lucky enough to find a clean and inexpensive café where we enjoyed refreshments before returning home.

Our November trip out was to Gunnersbury Park, via Acton Town underground station and a clean and friendly café for coffee. We were impressed with the museum in the park with its interesting display of items from the past, including carriages, hansom cab and bath chairs, all of which were attractively arranged. The gardens became famous after the mansion and estate were bought by the Rothschild family in 1835; the hothouses supplied pineapples and orchids, and one person who enjoyed these was Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli. Some rare trees still survive and their autumn colours gave us pleasure. We had a most satisfactory lunch in the park café, following which we wandered near the pond with its many birds and geese, before we continued through the park to Kew Gardens railway station and home.

On a sunny, though cold, day in December we travelled to Uxbridge – a station at the end of the Metropolitan Line. On leaving the station platform, we paused to admire a really clear large round clock and some stained glass panelling above the station exit. After an early lunch we explored the town a little with its several shopping malls as well as the ‘usual’ High Street shops and stores; it is a well-kept, thriving, place. We decided to walk alongside the Grand Union Canal, if possible, but we found, instead, a river beside which we walked a little way, noticing the many narrowboats moored in the marina. We then returned along a narrow path alongside a branch of the river where we spotted many ducks and a couple of swans. Our train journey home was uneventful until we reached Mottingham, when the emergency alarm was activated (possibly because a set of doors would not open), and we had to leave the train. At this point we separated to go home our own ways – waiting for the next train, catching a bus to Eltham, or even walking home. This was taken in good spirit by our group, but I cannot promise to provide such excitement every time!

**Val Gosden**

## **Wine Appreciation • Leader Michael Jordan**



### WAGS Annual Dinner

The Annual Dinner of the Wine Appreciation Group was held at Sophie’s Choice restaurant, Sidcup, on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2011. Twenty-six members and partners attended for a splendid evening which started at 7.00 pm with Kir Royale, followed by a wonderful three-course meal accompanied by wines chosen by Brian Edwards – a Pinot Blanc from Alsace and a Côtes du Rhône Villages. It was a memorable evening.

**Michael Jordan**

## **Parks & Gardens Appreciation • Leaders Jill Bryant & Barbara Olney**



For our October outing a group of us visited Holland Park; this is the largest park in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. It extends over 54 acres of what used to be the grounds of Cope Castle, a large Jacobean mansion hidden in the woods. It was built in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century by Sir Walter Cope who later became Chancellor of the Exchequer under King James I. It was renamed Holland House after the Earl of Holland's wife, Lady Rich, inherited the property. Holland House was badly damaged during World War II, but one wing was saved and is used as a youth hostel. A remaining section of the front terrace now serves as a distinct backdrop for the park's summertime open-air theatre productions and classical concerts.

Upon entering the park, we noticed the many trees in their vibrant autumnal colours – an amazing sight. Further into the park is the Kyoto Japanese Garden which was donated by the Chamber of Commerce of Kyoto in 1991. This garden is exquisite and tranquil and contains many Japanese Acers and shrubs, a pool with a waterfall, gates, and fences made of bamboo which are an absolute delight to see and are very well maintained.

We all agreed, as we made our way home, that we had had a lovely day and decided that we would come back again next year, possibly in the summer, as there is still so much more to see.

**Diane Hilder**

## **Classical Music 1 • Leader Derick Johnson**



John Mercer presented his programme for December on a cheerful note beginning with the overture to the Marriage of Figaro by Mozart played by the German Opera Berlin conducted by Karl Bohm. This was followed by Aria № 9 where Figaro tells of military life in a vocal by Hermann Prey. We then heard Rossini's String Sonata № 1 in G minor, which was played by the Rossini Ensemble conducted by Andrea Kiss. (Rossini once claimed that if he was given a shopping list he could set it to music – and we could all well believe it!) The next item was Grieg's Piano Concerto by the BBC Symphony Orchestra accompanied by pianist Stephen Kovacevich and conducted by Colin Davis. The draft of this concerto was shown to Liszt who liked it so much – even though he thought it was badly written – that he played it all through. Grieg became so famous that the Norwegian Government granted him an annuity. During the break we had home made mince pies and heard some impromptu poetry composed and read by Shirley Haynes. The second part started with the famous Weber Clarinet Concerto № 1 by Academy of St. Martin's in the Fields Chamber Orchestra conducted by Sir Neville Marriner with soloist Yan Pascal Tortelier. The final part began with Tchaikovsky's String Quartet № 1 in D major played by the St. Lawrence Quartet. Our afternoon's music concluded with the carol "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" which was sung by the BBC Welsh Choir conducted by Hugh Williamson.

**Derick Johnson**

**i** The traditional Christmas carol, "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen" was published by William B. Sandys in 1833; its author is unknown. However, in an earlier publication of the carol on broadsheet dated about 1760, it is described as a "new Christmas carol," suggesting that its origin is actually in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. It is interesting to note that the word "rest" here denotes "keep" or "make", and that "ye" was originally written as "you"; this alteration appears to have been deliberate and makes the carol look quaintly archaic.

**Editor**

## Bird Watching • Leader Gay Braybrook



The group met in Regent's Park for our November outing. We identified 24 ducks/waders, the more unusual ones being the European eider duck, golden eye, Mandarin, pintail, smew, shoveler, red crested pochard, whooper swans (which we watched take off and fly *under* the bridge – a fantastic sight) and many of the more common ducks. There is also a heronry in the park, and the herons walk among your feet, just like pigeons, so you get a very close view.

For December we went to the Wetland Centre at Barnes. It was not as busy there as it usually is, but there were a great number of cormorants and herons. We did see a lapwing (which is a bit scarce these days), a little grebe, shelduck, shoveler, teal and widgeon, as well as the more common ducks.

Both days were very enjoyable and the weather was kind to us. The next meeting for Bird Watching will be on 7<sup>th</sup> March when we will be going to Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve.

## Gay Braybrook & Margaret Scambler



### A Ballade of Procrastination

The allotment badly needs the application of the hoe,  
I'd attack the black and green fly, but I think I've lost the spray,  
If I find that missing spanner, I could give the lawn a mow,  
But perhaps I'll leave it till another day.

Autumn's leaves have blocked the gutters and stopped up that wretched drain,  
The lace curtains need a wash – they've turned an ugly shade of grey,  
I ought to clean the kitchen carpet – it's got a nasty stain,  
But perhaps I'll leave it till another day.

I must find time to have a shave and remove this three day beard.  
I really meant to feed the dog – but the ingrate's run away.  
I thought I'd give my shoes a clean, but the brush has disappeared,  
So perhaps I'll leave it till another day.

### *Envoi*

Oh, Sir, there is so much to do, it fills me with repugnance,  
And the very thought of tackling it is causing me dismay.  
It might be best to write it down in order of importance,  
But perhaps I'll leave it till another day.

## Ian Brydon

## GROUP VACANCIES

	GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
	<b>Amblers (Group 1)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30am)	<b>John Harbert</b> 020 8300 5361	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Amblers (Group 3)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30am)	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Antiques Appreciation (Group 5)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday (10.00am)	<b>Martin Baker</b> 020 8300 1752	<b>3</b>
	<b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> (co-ordinator only) 020 8309 6372	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Classical Music (Group 2)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (2.30pm)	<b>Maureen Porter</b> 020 8300 6128	<b>1</b>
	<b>Darts (at the Alma pub)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday (midday)	<b>See Group Co-ordinator</b> 020 8300 4291	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Local History (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	<b>John Harlow</b> 020 8300 3865	<b>2</b>
	<b>Local History (Group 2)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	<b>Pauline Watling</b> 020 8300 3910 <b>Barbara Olney</b> 020 8302 4289	<b>3</b>
	<b>Philosophy (Group 1)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday (2.00pm)	<b>Bernard Catallo</b> 020 8300 8651	<b>1</b>
	<b>Play Reading</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday (2–4 pm)	<b>See Group Co-ordinator</b> 020 8300 4291	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Ramblers (Group 1) (6–7 miles)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (10.30am)	<b>Annette Holland</b> 01322 522252	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Ramblers (Group 2) (4–5 miles)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	<b>Pat &amp; Alf Cracknell</b> 020 8302 0823	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10.00am)	<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
	<b>The Cathedral</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday (3.00pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	<b>1</b>

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 the Group Co-ordinator.

**Christine Spencer, Group Co-ordinator** ☎ 020 8300 4291

### 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

### 2012

January	John Beckham	A Woodland Mix
February	Alan Payne	What's on the Cards
March	Tony Farnham	Sailing Barges in their Heyday
April	Matthew Jackson	Korean Spirit & Culture
May	Michael Gandy	Seeing it Through Their Eyes
June	Mrs. Sandra Winter	Hand-Bell Ringing
July	Chris Hare	40 Years Without a Proper Job
August		
September	<i>TBA</i>	Guide Dogs for the Blind
October	John Halligan	The Lord Mayor of the City of London
November	Derek Fulford	Antique Clocks & Watches
December	Pat Mortlock	A Country House Christmas

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
Vice-Chairman	Vacant	
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	Christine Smith	020 8304 2305
Membership Secretary	John Harlow	020 8300 3865
Speakers Secretary	Valerie Gosden	020 8300 0664
Group Co-ordinator	Christine Spencer	020 8300 4291
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
Social Secretary	Vacant	

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

<b>Travel Group Leader</b>	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
<b>Raffle Organiser</b>	Pat Garwood	020 8306 0013
<b>Newsletter Editor &amp; Webmaster</b>	David Smith	020 8304 2305

Please either email contributions to me at [editor@sidcup-u3a.org.uk](mailto:editor@sidcup-u3a.org.uk) or post them to me at 56 Crofton Avenue, Bexley, Kent DA5 3AR – typed if possible.

***Please submit Newsletter contributions by 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month – but at any time for the Website.***

## WEBSITE

[www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk](http://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. Solutions to puzzles in the online December 2011 Newsletter are currently also available here.

*Afterthought*

*Why do people with closed minds always open their mouths?*

**SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE  
NOMINATION FORM**

2012-2013



**We the undersigned being persons whose names appear on the membership list of the above U3A hereby nominate:-**

Name .....

Address .....

**As candidate for:-**

Chairman/Vice-Chairman/Secretary/Treasurer/Membership Secretary/Speakers Secretary/  
Group Co-ordinator/Welfare Officer.

**Proposer** ..... **Secunder** .....

**Declaration and Consent.**

I declare that I am a member of Sidcup & District U3A and that, if elected, I consent to serve.

Signed ..... Date .....

The present Committee is as follows:-

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Anne Evans        | Chairman (elected in 2010 for 2 years) |
| Vacant            | Vice-Chairman                          |
| George Murrell    | Secretary                              |
| Christine Smith   | Treasurer                              |
| John Harlow **    | Membership Secretary                   |
| Christine Spencer | Group Co-ordinator                     |
| Valerie Gosden ** | Speakers Secretary                     |
| Kathy Cordell     | Welfare Officer                        |

\*\* Not seeking re-election

All nominations are to be returned by 1<sup>st</sup> March to any Committee member or by post to the Secretary, George Murrell, 76 Chester Road, Sidcup, Kent, DA15 8SH