

# SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

July 2007



**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

### U3A Website

This year the U3A celebrates the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation in Britain under the auspices of the Third Age Trust. For those with internet access, information about the U3A and its history can be obtained from the Trust's own website at [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk).

For those who join and then log in as a member of the site the following is also available:

- Mailings from the National Office of Third Age Trust.
- Information on educational resources (U3A has a link to the Open University).
- Information for U3A committees.
- Computing advice.
- Message board and discussion forum.
- Notice board and the latest news from the Third Age Trust.
- U3A national travel (which publishes its own newsletter).
- Subject networks (which contain shared information for study group leaders).
- Non-book information - available from the Trust's Resource Centre.
- Small online shop that sells publicity material.



Consideration is being given to the creation of a website for the Sidcup & District U3A. Details of its specific content have yet to be determined, but it seems reasonable to include reports of Group activities (including photographs where appropriate), a list of currently active groups (identifying those with vacancies), plus news and information that any member wishes to distribute quickly. Another possibility for the site is that this Newsletter can be made available for download a couple of days before the monthly meeting, and those who print their own copy will help save us duplication costs. A further benefit of a website is that it raises awareness of our existence at little cost; although numerous U3A groups around the UK operate websites, no local group has one, and it should help to increase our membership.

Comments upon this proposal are invited from those members who already have internet access. Do you think this would be useful, and are you likely to use it? It would also be helpful for the Committee to know how many members currently have internet access.

Please email your comments to [editor.u3a@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:editor.u3a@ukonline.co.uk) before 8<sup>th</sup> August and I shall pass them to the Committee.

*Editor*



## Hearing Dogs *for Deaf People*

The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary for the Hearing Dogs was held at Igham Mote on the 30<sup>th</sup> June. In spite of the rain there was a fair turnout and the dogs performed without a hitch. It is incredible what these dogs can do. Ann Widdecombe opened the event and also took part in one of the demonstrations - such as lying on a bed and when the alarm went off the dog had to wake the sleeper. Unfortunately for Ann, the dog was quite large and very enthusiastic and landed on top of her. However, she took this in her stride.

Don't forget your used stamps for the jar, old printer cartridges (but not Epson) and old mobile phones. Also, if you have any surplus from your garden, plants or produce, that can be sold at the charity table.

**Gay, Val and Annette**

### **The Weather**

Last month's speaker, Mr. Ian Currie, supplied hand-outs giving his website address for daily weather forecasts. For those of you who were unable to get one of these handouts, his website address is [www.FrostedEarth.com](http://www.FrostedEarth.com).

**Val Gosden**

### **Visits to Royal Festival Hall**

There is a concert at 3.00 pm on 21<sup>st</sup> October; this will feature Grieg's Piano Concerto, and Holst's The Planets. Tickets for this cost £14.

**Norma Balfour**

### **Trip to Brighton on Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>**

The list for members to sign will be opened at the next meeting on July 19<sup>th</sup>. The cost will be £15 plus entry fees (which are still to be ascertained). Members who cannot attend the meeting and who are interested should phone or write to John Mercer at 65 Longlands Road, Sidcup DA15 7LQ. ☎ 020 8300 3136.

**John Mercer**

### **Hotel Elizabeth Duke's Head, King's Lynn, Norfolk, 3-7 March 2008**

A deposit of £25.00 will be collected at the September 2007 meeting in respect of this holiday.

**Margaret Platt**

### **Newsletter**

Those members who wish to pick up a copy of the monthly Newsletter from Sidcup Library should look in the newspaper rack to the right of the entrance.

**John Mercer**

## GROUP NEWS

### **Wine Appreciation : Leader Michael Jordan**

**WAGs go to Italy.** On 30<sup>th</sup> April 19 members of the Wine Appreciation Group set off on a new venture - a six-days visit to Diano Marina, a small resort on the Italian Riviera. We flew to Nice where a coach picked us up and took us to our hotel. It can be safely asserted that we all enjoyed ourselves to the full. We had a visit to the Piedmont area of Italy with a wine tasting, shopping in nearby towns - and oh, what joy - there was a market in Diano Marina the day after our arrival, which just happened to be a national Bank Holiday.

I think most members will count the lunch on our last day as the highlight of the holiday. It was in a beautiful setting overlooking the sea; we were the sole customers of the restaurant and we enjoyed a meal consisting of six courses and four wines that we shall all remember for many years.

Now we are investigating the idea of a short break to the Ardennes in northern France, although I am sure there are going to be many of our members who will want to return to Italy. Our thanks are due to Linda Marshall who had the idea behind this tour, and who worked so hard to make sure everything went well.

**Michael Jordan**

### **Bird Watching : Leaders Gay Braybrook & José Steward**

For our June meeting we visited the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve. There wasn't much activity on the lakes, but we did manage to see Lapwings, a family of Grebes with their babies, a Mistle Thrush, and the usual Herons, Coots and Moorhens some with babies. But the highlight of the day was the sighting of a family of Egyptian Geese with four babies. These are large, very colourful geese. The wardens of the reserve were quite excited about them as this is only the second time that they have nested at the reserve. Usually they are seen only in the Norfolk area. What other surprises will be in store for us?

For future meetings please see the Notice Board.

**Gay Braybrook & José Steward**

### **Classical Music 2 : Leader Derick Johnson**

Mary Biggs's selection for June was presented without a related theme - and it was probably the better for it commencing and finishing with Rossini's overtures to the Barber of Seville and the Thieving Magpie, both of which were familiar to the cognoscenti present. The second piece was Haydn's Symphony No. 103 in E Flat Major known as the "Drum Roll" played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir George Solti. This was followed by Beethoven's Quintet for piano and wind instruments movements 2 & 3 with the virtuoso Vladimir Ashkenazi at the piano. Mozart's Concerto for Piano No. 23 in A Major movements 3 & 4 was brilliantly played by Svetlana Stanceva. The penultimate piece was Chopin's Les Ballades 3 & 4 with the American Garrick Ahissou at the piano. It was considered a delightful and varied programme by Mary ably supported by our resident disc jockey, Olive Mercer.

**'Sonny' Hopkins**

### **Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk**

On 13th June sixteen of the group boarded the “Millennium of Peace” (run by City Cruises) for a round trip to Greenwich, stopping at the London Eye and Tower Pier on the way. A very chirpy member of the crew showed us points of historical interest, etc, en route. On the Thames we also saw many cormorants. We were indeed lucky to see the Ark Royal which had docked near Greenwich only that morning. It was a relaxing trip in lovely weather.

**Rosalie Woods**

### **National Trust/English Heritage : Leaders John & Olive Mercer**

Our June visit was to Sissinghurst Castle Garden - and what a beautiful day we had. Lovely weather and good company enabled us to spend a few hours browsing through the various types of garden layouts.

Sissinghurst occupies an ancient site which has had a settlement since the late 12<sup>th</sup> century; the name itself derives from a Saxon word meaning “clearing in the woods”. During the early middle ages a stone manor house surrounded by a moat (of which two arms remain) was built. In 1480 the property was purchased by the Baker family who were related by marriage to the Sackvilles of Knole. The old manor house was allowed to fall into ruin and an impressive brick mansion was built to replace it. It was one of the first large houses in Kent to be built of brick instead of stone and timber. Only the long front range survives today.

An Elizabethan house, based on a double courtyard, was built by Sir Richard Baker from 1560-70 and was known as one of the most magnificent houses in the Weald. In 1756, after a change in the family’s fortune, the house was let to the government and used as a prison camp for French prisoners of war. Over 3,000 inmates were held during a period of seven years. In 1855 the estate reverted to the Cornwallis family who built the farmhouse as the old buildings were scarcely habitable. The estate was put up for sale in 1928, but, for two years, a buyer could not be found. In April 1930 Vita Sackville-West came with her son, Nigel, looking for an old house where she could make a new garden. Vita fell in love with Sissinghurst Castle and bought it along with 400 acres of farmland. Together, Vita and her husband Harold made a garden which reflects their different personalities. This garden was first opened to the public in 1938 for an admission price of one shilling (5p!) Vita died in 1962 and Harold and her two sons decided that the best way to preserve the garden was for ownership to be transferred to the National Trust. This was completed in April 1967.

**Pam Kirk**

### **Amblers 2 : Leader Olive Adkins**

The weather was perfect for our June amble - cloudy but warm. Starting from Baker Street tube station we made our way into Regents Park. At this time of year there is much to see - the flowering shrubs, colourful flower beds and the fresh greenery all immaculately tended. The Lake was busy with several varieties of duck herding baby ducklings along. We also saw the odd heron and cormorant. Walking along the canal bank, we skirted the Regents Park Zoo and were able to see hyenas and several other unidentified animals. Upon entering the Rose Garden, we were taken aback by the perfume and colours of the many varieties in abundance. All the roses were in full bloom and it was an impressive sight. There was so much to see in this lovely park with its very cosmopolitan atmosphere.

**June Reid**

### **Saturday Rambling : Leader Gay Braybrook**

For our June walk we explored the Hanwell Locks area on the Grand Union Canal from Brentford to Hanwell. Starting out from Kew Bridge the route followed the Thames for a while where there were many boat homes, some of which were quite derelict. We followed the canal past a couple of locks and then reached the Hanwell Locks which are a flight of six locks close together called a staircase. Continuing on we made towards Brunel's Wharncliffe Viaduct (which is still in use), some 900ft long and 65ft high with 8 arches and completed in 18 months! From there we were able to get to Hanwell railway station and thence into Paddington. The walk was nearly 6 miles but we had a beautiful sunny day and a good coffee and lunch stop so the miles melted away.

**Gay Braybrook**

### **Ramblers 1 : Leader Annette Jansen**

Ramblers Group 1 walking holiday this year took us to Shropshire - a beautiful "land of lore and legend" on the Welsh borders. We enjoyed a comfortable hotel with beautiful views and good walking straight from the front door, plus the bonus of a friendly leader and extra company from five strangers who soon became friends. We walked 9 miles on each of our four days and conquered the Long Mynd (height 1700 feet), the Stiperstones (1758 feet), Wenlock Edge, plus Caer Caradoc (1506 feet) in the rain. En route, we encountered alpacas, the beautiful bee orchid and a golf course on top of a precipitous hill. We were granted privileged entry into Wilderhope Manor YHA to see the lovely ceilings, and a Baptist chapel way up in the hills which has an immersion pool and which was used in the filming of the Mary Webb novel "Gone to Earth". We were somewhat surprised to be told by our leader on our first night that, by the end of the week, we would have seen and identified the Big Five! No, not lions etc, but five beautiful grasses - Yorkshire Fog, Tall Oat grass, Foxtail, Rye grass and Cocksfoot - and he was right. Well, he was a botanist! We would like to thank Annette for once again organising this stimulating holiday for friends.

**June Brown**

### **Ramblers 2 : Leader Geoff Rozier**

Our June ramble started with ten walkers from the green at Leigh on an ideal day for walking. As we passed our first lake at Powder Mills about two hundred geese decided to follow us apparently hoping to be fed - but they were sorely disappointed. We then walked beside the River Medway which, owing to the previous rain, was flowing fairly fast. We crossed the dam built to prevent Tonbridge flooding before passing between Haysden and Longfield Lakes where there was only one fisherman. On completing our walk we retired to the Bat & Ball for refreshments. It was a very enjoyable day.

**John Harbert**

## GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
<b>Amblers (Group 3)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (morning)	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	<b>2</b>
<b>Beginners Bridge Acol</b> Tuesdays (11 am - 2 pm)	<b>Barbara Shilling</b> 01322 270814	Vacancies for courses starting later this year
<b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook/José Steward</b> 020 8300 6372/020 8302 1627	<b>Open to all.</b> Notice on board at meetings
<b>Classical Music (Group 2)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (2.30 pm)	<b>Derick Johnson</b> 020 8850 1245	<b>3</b>
<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>Handcrafted Cards (Group 2)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (2 - 4 pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	<b>3</b>
<b>Local History (Group 3)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday (morning)	<b>Pam Kirk</b> 020 8856 8372	<b>2</b>
<b>Music (Group 1)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Friday (2 - 4 pm)	<b>Ian Brydon</b> 020 8304 0231	<b>1</b>
<b>National Trust/English Heritage</b> Various dates & times	<b>John &amp; Olive Mercer</b> 020 8300 3136	<b>Open to all</b>
<b>Quilling (The craft of paper filigree)</b> Occasional Saturdays (2 - 4 pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	Please phone leader
<b>Play Reading (Group 2)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday (2 - 4 pm)	<b>Ian Brydon</b> 020 8304 0231	<b>1</b>
<b>Ramblers (Group 1) (6-7 miles)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (10.30 am)	<b>Annette Jansen</b> 01322 522252	<b>Possible</b>
<b>Saturday Ramble (4-5 miles)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8300 6372	<b>3</b>
<b>Sunday Ramble</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday (morning)	<b>Pat Peeney</b> 020 8302 5061	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Tenpin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10 am) <i>except school holidays</i>	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8300 6372	<b>Open to all</b>
<b>Theatre (Group 2)</b> Various matinées	<b>Joan &amp; John Somerset</b> 020 8300 0890	<b>Open to all.</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 want to join a group that is full, why not start a new one? It's not difficult to run a group, and leaders of a full group should be willing to advise you how it's done.

## PROGRAMME

### 2007

July	Mr B. Bedford	Marquetry
August	Mr A. Burnett	Liquid history: a trip up the Thames
September	Mr P. Harris	The history of pantomime
October	Mrs J. Hungerford	Caveman orchestra
November	Mr J. Kennett	An aspect of local history
December	to be announced	

## 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
Liaison Officer	Norman Slaughter	020 8300 9460

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

<b>Travel Group Leader</b>	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	David Smith	020 8304 2305

56 Crofton Avenue, Bexley DA5 3AR  
Please email contributions if possible as this saves having to retype them, to:  
**editor.u3a@ukonline.co.uk** *Contributions by 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month please.*

*Afterthought*

*Minds are like parachutes - they only function when fully open.*