

# SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

July 2009



**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

### **Shared Learning Project at King's College London** Researching details on staff and students remembered on War Memorials at King's College London and other related sites

King's College London was founded in 1829 and has gone on to become one of the country's leading universities with courses in arts, science and medicine. The modern King's College, however, is the result of the merger with a number of other institutions, most recently the medical schools of Guy's and St. Thomas' hospitals. Its staff and students are remembered in a series of war memorials and plaques dotted around King's various central London campuses and this project seeks to compile a definitive list of the war dead along with short biographies where information is available.

The College Archives preserves the College's heritage and includes lists of former students, College magazines, photographs and access to online databases such as *The Times*, which can all be used on site.

The team will be working mainly in the Research Room of the College Archive in the Strand and at the National Archives at Kew. Each team member will be expected to attend regularly and will also be expected to devote some time to useful research on the topic outside scheduled meetings.

There will be a team of twelve plus a project leader. Project members will meet fortnightly from 10.30am to 12.30pm on Wednesdays from 23<sup>rd</sup> September to 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009. There will be no formal presentation at the end of the project but there will be an extra meeting on Armistice Day, 11<sup>th</sup> November, presenting our interim findings to a small, invited audience.

As there is insufficient space in the Research Room in the King's Archive for the whole team to carry out research on the designated meeting days, it is envisaged that members may like to team up in pairs and arrange their own working times.

It is essential that all applicants are dedicated to the project. As most of the research and all of the inputting will be on computer, applicants must have good computer skills and preferably previous experience of similar research, e.g. family history.

If you think you might be interested in joining this project, please contact Wendy Mott for an application form. Her contact email is: [wendymott@btinternet.com](mailto:wendymott@btinternet.com). The closing date for application forms to be returned to Wendy is Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2009.

**John Mercer**

**Photography Competition**  
Animals

Please bring your photographs along to either the August or the September main meetings between 1.30 and 1.55 pm. You will be given a clear plastic pocket and sheet of A5 paper in which to put your prints – one or two entries, no larger than 7" x 5". Your entry may be given a title if you wish, but please do not include your name. Each photograph will be numbered for voting purposes.

All members attending the September meeting will be given a voting slip when they arrive; please make sure you receive yours when you register.

This information is being included in the July newsletter for the benefit of members who may be away on holiday in August; it will be repeated in the August edition.

**Val Gosden**

**Do you play the recorder?**  
Descant/Treble/Tenor/Bass

Would you like to join a group playing in parts? All music provided.

Please contact Mary Hawes ☎ 020 8300 0521 or email [MaryHawes@talktalk.net](mailto:MaryHawes@talktalk.net).

**Group Holiday to Crown Hotel, Weymouth, Dorset**  
Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> September – Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2009

8 days (7 nights). Price includes dinner, bed and breakfast, coach to hotel and return home. All bedrooms have en-suite bathrooms, colour TV, radio, tea/coffee making facilities, and the hotel has a lift. Reception is manned 24 hours per day.

Excursions: Wimborne Minster, Beaminster, Bridport, Cathedral City of Salisbury, Wareham, Corfe & Swanage.

Cost: £437.00 per person. Cancellation insurance, if required, is £8.00 per person.

I will collect the balance £412.00 per person at the July General meeting. Make cheques payable to "Airedale Tours Ltd/Clients Trust Account".

**Group Holiday to Ramada Jarvis Hotel, Gloucester**  
Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March – Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010

The City of Gloucester has a unique history from its Roman Foundations to its Victorian Docklands; one of its converted warehouses and the magnificent museums are full of antiques.

The hotel is set in 240 acres of grounds. The facilities of the Sebastian Coe Health Club include indoor pool, gym, sauna, steam rooms, squash, tennis and beauty salon. Price includes bed, breakfast and evening meal, coach to hotel and return home. All bedrooms have en-suite bathrooms, colour satellite TV, radio, hairdryer, trouser press, direct telephone, and tea/coffee making facilities.

Excursions: Wye Valley, the Cotswolds, Cheltenham & Bath.

Cost: £321.00 per person. Cancellation insurance, if required, is £8.00 per person.

I will collect the £25.00 deposit for this holiday at the September General Meeting.

**Margaret Platt** ☎ 0208 309 6395

### **Visit to the Magic Circle**

On Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 4 members arrived in style by taxi for an evening with the Magic Circle. We took advantage of our punctual arrival to visit their museum which showed the history of magic in many cabinets containing unique apparatus of the past, memorabilia and references to famous people past and present. Then, as if by magic, we were drawn to the reception room for sherry and another opportunity to look at more displays featuring well known magicians David Nixon, Houdini, and Tommy Cooper et al. Following this, the evening really took off with separate groups of us being entertained with all manner of magic tricks and illusions by different magicians before our very eyes. We were all amazed at their dexterity and skill under such close scrutiny and, of course, we took part. I was completely stunned when a card which was being held face down on the palm of my hand (by a member of the group) physically changed format! How did they do it? We never really got anywhere near the answers but were hugely entertained and laughed a lot as all the magicians had a great line in comic patter. After a short visit to the theatre for an entertaining talk on the origins of magic and how the Magic Circle was formed in 1905, we returned to our tables for sandwiches and coffee. At 9.30 we returned to the theatre for the final part of the evening – a stage show featuring a number of acts all different but equally skilful and entertaining; six in all, I think, but I lost count! The show was rounded off expertly by a magician comic who had started out on the northern club scene and this was reflected in his act of non-stop humour and magic involving dubious jokes, audience insults and participation. He was a larger than life character and hugely enjoyed by everyone. The whole evening was thoroughly magical and entertaining; we all had a great time!

**Anne Evans**

### **Coach Trip to Salisbury** Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September

Please note that, unless I can fill this 29-seater coach, this trip WILL NOT HAPPEN. Please complete the attached form and return to me with your cheque as soon as possible but no later than 31<sup>st</sup> July. Make cheques payable to Sidcup & District U3A and send to Anne Evans, 22 Harborough Avenue, Sidcup DA15 8HP. If you book at a meeting please use this form.

- We leave at 8.30am sharp from Jubilee Way, Sidcup Station.
- The journey time is 2½ to 3 hours with a coffee stop.
- The price is £16.00 per person.



### **Coach Trip to Salisbury** Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September

I should like to reserve ..... places on this trip in the name of .....

I attach full payment of £.....

My contact number is .....

Signed .....

(Return to Anne Evans, 22 Harborough Avenue, Sidcup DA15 8HP by 31<sup>st</sup> July ☎ 020 8302 2261)

## GROUP NEWS

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



June's programme was presented by Barbara Carpenter. Barbara started her programme with the ever popular Egmont Overture by Ludwig van Beethoven which was played by the Berlin Philharmonic and conducted by Herbert von Karajan. With a change of emphasis, this was followed by Allegri's "Miserere" {prayer for mercy} sung by The Tallis Scholars directed by Peter Phillips and this gave us beautiful unaccompanied choral music. Although the composer declared that he didn't wish this work to be written down by anybody, the next century saw a teenage Mozart listening to the music and writing it down; this enabled people like us to enjoy it. We then heard Mozart's Concerto in C for flute, harp, and orchestra by the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields with Sir Neville Mariner conducting. This was followed by Beethoven's Cello Sonata No 5 with Adrian Brendel on the cello, and Alfred Brendel on the piano. After our usual break for tea or coffee, Barbara presented us with J. S. Bach's Violin Concerto in A minor Allegro played by the English Chamber Orchestra with Pinchas Zukerman on the violin and also conducting. The longest piece followed with Antonin Dvořák's Violin Concerto in A minor played by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, with Itzhak Perlman on the violin and Daniel Barenboim conducting. We then had Tchaikovsky's Melody in E flat played by Vadim Repin on the violin, and Alexander Markovich on the piano. We concluded the session with Saint-Saëns' Symphony No 3 in C Allegro played by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra with Peter Hurford on the organ and conducted by Charles Dutoit. This completed another varied afternoon of music, and, although numbers were down, we were pleased to see Mary Biggs again after her recent problems.

### **Derick Johnson**

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



On a lovely sunny, but windy, day in May we went to Hampstead Heath. Firstly, we took a quick look at the outside of Keats House, which is closed for renovation, before walking up Parliament Hill Road, passing many splendid mid- to late-Victorian houses on the way. We then went on to the Heath itself, climbed to the top of Parliament Hill, and looked down on much of London disappearing into the distance. We then wandered downhill to the ponds where we ate our lunch while enjoying the sunshine and sheltering from the blustery wind. After continuing our walk, we reached Kenwood House (English Heritage), appreciating the general landscape and the many superb rhododendrons in the gardens. We had a quick look around the House before making our homeward journey.

Our June trip out necessitated three changes of transport, but we finally reached Chesham at midday, so our usual coffee stop became time to have lunch. The view from the upstairs café was over a park to which we wandered after lunch and a quick visit to local shops; these were very individual and not the usual selection of major chain stores. Once in the park, we walked alongside a small lake where we saw swans, geese, and several varieties of duck before walking further into the park. Looking up we saw a red kite (the bird) soaring on a thermal high in the sky; these birds have been successfully re-established in this area. Continuing our walk we visited a church which, although old, contains many modern features and evidence of a thriving church community. Wandering on, we came to the beautifully clear water of the River Cress, and walked alongside it until we returned to the High Street and station.

### **Val Gosden**

### Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk



Our June visit was to the Savoy Chapel, which is just off the Strand. It was the first day of the underground strike and the Verger arrived a little late to find us all huddled under umbrellas! This Chapel belongs to Her Majesty the Queen in her right as Duke of Lancaster. The Queen provides a Chaplain, a Master of Music, an Assistant Organist, a Choir, and a Verger. The Chapel stands on an area of land, or manor, given by Henry III in 1246 to Peter, Count of Savoy. Later reacquired by the wife of Henry III, it then became the home of the Dukes of Lancaster including, in 1361, John of Gaunt whose magnificent palace was destroyed during Wat Tyler's Peasants' Revolt. Later, in 1512, Henry VII built a great hospital for the poor on the ruins, but the principal chapel is all that now remains. On his Coronation in 1937, the late King George VI commanded that the Chapel should be placed at the disposal of the Royal Victorian Order. The many plaques on the walls are the Coats of Arms of Knights Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order. It has eleven lovely commemorative windows and these were explained to us by the very informative Verger.

#### Christine Withams

**(i)** In the Middle Ages the most desirable location for housing the nobility was Strand; this appeared between the City and the village of Charing (then in Middlesex but now the site of Charing Cross) in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. There a nobleman had a water frontage on the Thames and was free of the stink and social



*Savoy Palace*

tumult of the City of London to the east with its constant threat of fires. The Savoy was the most magnificent nobleman's mansion in England and renowned for its owner's wonderful collection of tapestries, jewels, and ornaments. During the Peasants' Revolt in June 1381, the rioters, who blamed John of Gaunt for the introduction of the Poll tax that had precipitated their revolt, systematically demolished the Palace and everything in it. What could not be smashed was dumped in the river. Despite this revolt, the name Savoy stuck to the site and the Savoy Theatre now occupies the place it once stood.

#### *Editor*

### Wine Appreciation Group : Leader Michael Jordan



The WAGs had an outing to Vinopolis, near London Bridge and Southwark Cathedral, on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June. We were very lucky with the weather, although it did get very humid later on. Eighteen of us descended on Vinopolis rather like wolves descending on the sheepfolds. Fourteen had decided to have lunch in the Cantina at Vinopolis – and excellent it was, too. After what may be described as a leisurely lunch, we took advantage of the rail 2 for 1 scheme whereby each couple was admitted for the price of one. We were able to explore, with the help of audio prompters, the vinous world – together, naturally, with some (actually 6) wine tastings. There was a very wide choice of wines from all over the world ranging from Australia to Thailand. At the end of the tour we were given a choice from among three Bombay Gin cocktails, and we can assure our readers that they were very much appreciated. At the end of the visit we departed and stopped at the Southwark Cathedral Refectory for tea before catching the train back home in the middle of the rush hour! It was a lovely day.

#### Michael Jordan

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



Gloria Exeter led us from Meopham Green on a 5½ mile ramble with a pleasant lunch break at Harvel. The scenery was pleasant all the way – a mixture of pastures and woodland. The countryside seemed deserted as we passed and only our friendly chatter broke the silence. After arriving back at the cars there was an optional extra 2 miles but only 4 people braved the heat and continued. Many thanks, Gloria.

**Annette Jansen**

## **Ramblers 2 : Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell**



On Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> June nine of our group assembled at Goddington Park and set off walking through a section of suburban Chelsfield. We soon reached open country of woods, farmland and paddock where we crossed through the middle of a large field sown with rape seed which was standing quite high. The field was full of poppies and they made an unforgettable sight. After more fields and woods and road walking, we reached Chelsfield village; passing the “Five Bells” we entered another huge field of rape seed – but there were few poppies this time. After reaching our cars, we drove back along the Orpington by-pass to the “Five Bells” where our orders for lunch were soon taken. We were blessed with fine weather.

**John & Olive Mercer**

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



Sevenoaks Reserve was looking especially beautiful when we visited there on 1<sup>st</sup> July. The temperature was high, the trees provided us with lots of shade, but the thick foliage hid the birds. However, we found the heron’s nest in a tree on an island, complete with three large and healthy young ones. The herons have nested there three years running. On the first big lake there were many coots with young; the young being at all stages from a few days old to “bigger than Mum”. An angry swan with feathers puffed up kept chasing a rival away from his mate and young, hissing and charging. We also spotted there great crested grebes, pochards, young cormorants, pied wagtails, and a few dunnocks in the bushes. We strolled around the lake and came to a bridge across a fast flowing river, and on the water’s edge stood what we thought could be water rail – before a mother moorhen claimed them for her own!! Our next stop was the “Willow Hide”, and on that lake were Canada geese, grey lag geese, coots, great crested grebe with a chick, swan with young, and a heron. After a picnic back at the Information Centre, we visited the largest hide and lake, and the first sighting was a pair of Egyptian geese with seven goslings, then several Canada geese, cormorants, coots, little ringed plovers, lapwings, pied wagtails, and, finally, a shoal of large carp breaking the surface of the water!

Our next outing is on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> August. Meet at Sidcup station for the 10.08 train to London Bridge. We will then walk along by the River Thames to Tate Modern where the RSPB have the “Peregrine Watch”. If the tide is out, we could also see some birds along the water’s edge. Everyone is welcome!

**José Steward** (Please note that I have a new phone number: 07957 181808)

**(i)** On 5<sup>th</sup> August low tide at London Bridge will be at 7.41 am. High tide is at 1.39 pm.

**Editor**

## GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
<b>Amblers (Group 3)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30 am)	<b>Norma Balfour/José Steward</b> 020 8303 7693/07957 181808	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Antiques Appreciation (Group 3)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday (10 am)	<b>Martin Baker</b> 020 8300 1752	<b>2</b>
<b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook/José Steward</b> 020 8309 6372/07957 181808	<b>Yes.</b> Notice on board at meetings
<b>Boules (Danson Park – seasonal)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday (10 am)	<b>Bart Jansen</b> 01322 522252	<b>5</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>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>José Steward</b> 020 8302 1627	<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>Parks &amp; Gardens Appreciation</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday (Feb to Oct)	<b>Jill Bryant/Barbara Olney</b> 01322 524008/020 8302 4289	<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>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>Saturday Ramble (4-5 miles)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8309 6372	<b>Yes</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.

**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

### 2009

July	Dr. Gill Stoker	Essentially Ethel
August	Mrs. J. Hay	Freelancing for the BBC
September	Photo competition & quiz	
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	Christine Spencer	020 8300 4291
Welfare Officer	Gay Braybrook	020 8309 6372
Social Secretary	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

<b>Travel Group Leader</b>	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
<b>Raffle Organiser</b>	Judith Bishopp	020 8468 7342
<b>Newsletter Editor &amp; Webmaster</b>	David Smith	020 8304 2305

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

*Please submit contributions by 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month.*

## WEBSITE

[www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk](http://www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk)

*Afterthought*

*The truth is rarely pure and never simple.*