

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

July 2013



**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**

**The Musical Experience  
“Seven Brides for Seven Brothers”**

This has been created for U3A members by the Ambassador Theatre Group at the Churchill Theatre, Bromley, on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2013. This is a unique opportunity for U3A members to get involved in a musical. After a buffet lunch, watch the show before it goes on national tour.

‘The Musical Experience’ programme is as follows:

11.00 am	Registration & refreshments in Stalls Bar.
11.30–12.30pm	Page to Stage seminar in the main auditorium.
12.30–1.10pm	Musical Director’s talk & vocal warm-up in the main auditorium.
1.10–2.10pm	Buffet lunch in Stalls Bar.
2.10–2.30pm	Watch matinée performance of “Seven Brides for Seven Brothers” from the main auditorium’s stalls seats. Finishes around 5pm.

Apply in writing before Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July with your full contact details to: The Third Age Trust, 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QE enclosing S.A.E and stating to which U3A branch you are a member. Cheques are payable to The Third Age Trust. Tickets cost £41.50 per person and include seminars, lunch and show ticket. A maximum of four tickets may be ordered per booking.

80–100 places are available and allocations will be made on a first come, first served basis. If insufficient bookings have been received by 26<sup>th</sup> July, the event will be cancelled and your cheque(s) returned. Should you be unable to attend, we cannot refund ticket money unless we are able to offer your place to another U3A member – if there is a waiting list. Those placed on a waiting list will be given first refusal to attend any future ATG/U3A events.

Contact Philippa Bassett at U3A National Office with any queries:

☎ 020 8466 6139. Email: [philippa@u3a.org.uk](mailto:philippa@u3a.org.uk).

***Ambassador Theatre Group/Third Age Trust flyer***

① “Seven Brides for Seven Brothers” is based upon the short story “The Sobbin’ Women”, by Stephen Vincent Benét, which was in turn based upon the Ancient Roman legend of “The Rape of the Sabine Women”. The music is by Saul Chaplin and Gene de Paul, and lyrics by Johnny Mercer. The 1954 film was nominated for an Oscar for best picture. This musical is particularly known for its unusual choreography which makes dance numbers out of mundane frontier tasks such as chopping wood and raising a barn.

***Editor***

## Off-cuts

A member is offering “off-cuts” of material which is suitable for craft work. Anyone who is interested should contact me.

Anne Evans ☎ 020 8302 2261

## Shared Learning Project at the Langdon Down Museum

The Langdon Down Museum of Learning Disability at Normansfield in Teddington tells the story of Dr John Langdon Down, Normansfield and the Royal Earlswood Asylum through exhibitions and events. It displays objects made by the savant, James Henry Pullen. The Grade 2 listed theatre is a rare example of a private Victorian theatre that contains original painted scenery and other ornate fixtures and fittings. Normansfield is the former home of Dr John Langdon Down and his family who brought a revolutionary and enlightened approach to the care of those with all forms of learning disability from 1888 until 1970. The building was an NHS hospital from 1951 until 1997.

The museum contributes to the social history of learning disability and is currently working on an oral history project. It welcomes visits by local history groups, schools and universities. The museum is a member of the London Museums of Health and Medicine and the Open University Social History of Learning Disability Group.

Website: <http://langdondownmuseum.org.uk>

Blog: <http://langdondownmuseum.wordpress.com>

### The project

You have the opportunity to undertake research on the residents of Normansfield from 1888 to 1997. We aim to produce a profile of the residents, their numbers and conditions and how this changed over time and to identify the buildings they lived in and the activities, schooling, therapy and treatment they received. Volunteers may have an interest in the social history of learning disability and asylums.

### We ask volunteers to:

- Commit to a 12-week programme and attend meetings at Normansfield between 11am and 1pm on the following six Wednesdays: 4<sup>th</sup> Sept, 18<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct, 16<sup>th</sup> Oct, 30<sup>th</sup> Oct, 13<sup>th</sup> Nov with the final presentation on the 27<sup>th</sup> Nov.
- Be willing to visit Normansfield, the London Metropolitan Archives and any other source of information within the London area to undertake research in between meetings.

### What's in it for you?

- To work as part of a team.
- To make a contribution to the history of Normansfield which will be used on the website, the blog, in talks and kept in the archives for future researchers.

### Why the Museum wants you

To produce original research that contributes to its knowledge of the history of Normansfield.

### Location

Our full address is: Langdon Down Museum of Learning Disability, The Langdon Down Centre, Normansfield, 2A Langdon Park, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 9PS. The nearest railway station is Hampton Wick from which we are a short 10 minute walk away. Buses 281 and 285 stop outside. There is parking at the museum.

For an application form contact: David Aitchison, email [aitchison@talktalk.net](mailto:aitchison@talktalk.net)

The closing date for applications is 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013.

**George Murrell**

## Interesting Historical Website

During the last couple of weeks I've been enjoying watching "The White Queen" on television but I have found it more and more complex to remember who is who and what the relationship of the characters is to each other. By chance, I stumbled upon a website which provides a wealth of information well set out and easy to navigate – <http://www.englishmonarchs.co.uk/>. I now know that Henry Tudor's mother (Margaret Beaufort) was married 4 times and was only just 13 years old when Henry VII (son of her second husband) was born. The content ranges from the Anglo Saxon monarchs until the present day Royal Family. Any members interested in English history should find a visit to this site well worthwhile.

**George Murrell**

## CRISIS

My thanks go to everyone who supports *CRISIS* by popping a coin or two, however small or large in value, into the collecting boxes. So far this year £172.29 has been raised. The sale of greetings cards alone has raised £82. These are all individually made and no two are exactly the same; with prices ranging from 50p to £2.00, they are cheaper than many mass-produced shop ones. Many cost £1.00 or less and, in addition to birthday greetings, Happy Anniversary, Get Well Soon, Thinking of You, and With Sympathy, etc, are also available.

**Val Gosden**

## Visitors

Group Leaders need to check and make sure that any 'visitor' to their groups is made aware that they can come once or twice to see how the group functions. If they then wish to continue attending the group they must join Sidcup & District U3A.

**Christine Spencer**

**(i)** Please remember that only fully paid-up members of the U3A are covered by its overall insurance policy during group activities.

*Editor*

## GROUP NEWS

**Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell**



Ten of our group gathered in the car park off Edenbridge High Street for a four-mile ramble in the Eden valley. This is one of a series of ten walks issued by Edenbridge Town Council. The weather was exceptionally good, and, as a result of all the rain previously and latterly the warmer weather, all the plant life was rampant – so much so that many of the footpaths were obscured. The route crosses more than once a grass airfield for light aircraft, and at one point we watched a small blue aeroplane take off. There are also numerous small bridges crossing the River Eden and the smaller Kent Brook. At one point we passed a WWII pill box beside the River Eden. After a very warm walk, we returned to Edenbridge High Street for lunch at Ye Old Crown Inn.

**Roy Black**

## **Bird Watching • Leader Margaret Scambler**



Our trip in June was to a new site for the Group. Journeying on the DLR from Lewisham, we alighted at East India Station. A short and pleasant walk along Virginia Quay – during which we passed a monument dedicated to the first settlers who set forth from this spot to the ‘New World’ in 1606 – brought us to the East India Dock Basin Nature Reserve. The site is steeped in history associated with the import and export of goods during the 1800’s. Within sight of Canary Wharf and the O2 Arena, the Basin is now enjoying a new lease of life as a wildlife sanctuary. It includes a tidal lagoon and central London’s closest patch of genuine salt marsh, along with a reed bed and small areas of meadow and woodland. We walked down to Trinity Buoy Wharf for lunch; this is another area with a rich history which, following a regeneration programme in the late 1990’s, became a growing centre for the arts and creative industries. It is also home to one of London’s smallest museums, ‘The Faraday Effect’, which documents the life of chemist and physicist, Michael Faraday (1791–1867), who contributed to the study of electromagnetism and electrochemistry. After lunch, we returned to the reserve before making our way home.

### **Margaret Scambler**

**i** The East India Docks was a group of docks to the north-east of the Isle of Dogs; only the entrance basin remains today. Following the successful creation of the West India Docks in 1802, an Act of Parliament in 1803 set up The East India Dock Company. The docks, designed by Ralph Walker, were based upon the existing Brunswick Dock, which had originally been connected directly to the Thames and used for fitting out and repairing ships, and which then became the Export Dock. To the north, the company built a larger 18-acre Import Dock and both were connected to the Thames via an eastern entrance basin.

*Editor*

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



In June we travelled to Herne Hill Station to visit nearby Brockley Park. We walked up the hill to the house/café at the top, from where we could see much of the rest of this large park. While we were looking at the four-faced clock, the park’s landscape manager came over and informed us that the park had received Heritage Lottery funding, and that some improvements had already been made, with more still to come. The clock tower itself is sadly in need of renovation having been painted black with gold finials some time ago; this will eventually be painted green, which was its original colour, and the gold finials will shine again. The park contains an oak tree which is said to have been planted during Henry VIII’s reign. There are ponds with the usual ducks and geese and a heron, and some of us spotted five fluffy balls – these were goslings which were being carefully guarded by the adults. Rhododendrons were in flower, and yellow irises lined the ponds. The park contains a walled ‘Quiet’ garden with flowers and a fountain, and a children’s play area.



Having led this group for about six years now, I feel it is time for me to leave. I sincerely hope that the group will continue to enjoy exploring other parts of London, as I have, but for this to happen a new leader is required. This could be either one person on his own, or two collaborating with each other; alternatively, more than one group could be formed – there are enough names on the waiting list to make this possible. Also, it need not be on the second Monday of each month if a different day would suit members better. I would be happy to help anyone taking on this leadership role should they require it. The August trip out is the last one that I shall lead, and offers to lead the group from September onwards would be welcome.

**Val Gosden**

## Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Holland



### Yalding – Nettlestead River Walk

Our 6-mile June ramble started from the Lees car park by the Tea Pot Museum in Yalding, Kent. From here we able to view the Twyford Bridge which was originally built in 1475, and which is now a Grade 1 Listed Ancient Monument. Local land owners and the gentry were charged with maintenance and repairs until Kent County Council took over responsibility. The terrain we crossed included riversides, unmanned rail crossings, gentle hills, open fields, and woodland with magnificent views. We saw various types of deer as we neared Roydon Hall, which dates from about 1535. Until now, its ownership has changed only three times in its history. One of the previous owners found a collection of large silver dishes after a water diviner suggested digging into the lawn; these are thought to have been hidden during the Civil War. The Maharishi bought the Hall for a Transcendental Meditation Centre in 1974. The grounds looked to be in a sorry state of maintenance when we passed. We saw from the outside St Mary Church, Nettlestead, with its pyramidal shingle roof. It is a typical country church the construction of which began in about 1438. Sadly, it was locked so we were unable to view the stained glass windows. Close by we were able to see part of Nettlestead Place, circa 1250, which is built of local ragstone and which is now used as a wedding venue. After crossing the railway line again, we were back on the banks of the Medway. This opened for navigation two and a half centuries ago and its 930 square mile catchment area is the biggest in England. Journey's end meant a well-deserved drink, etc, at the Teapot Island Café.

### **Cynthia & Roy Morton**

**(i)** Pictures of Nettlestead have been placed on the Gallery page of our website.

*Webmaster*

### **Help Desk Enquiries**

Customer: "Hi, this is Celine. I can't get my diskette out."

Tech Support: "Have you tried pushing the eject button?"

Customer: "Yes, sure, it's really stuck."

Tech Support: "That doesn't sound good; I'll make a note."

Customer: "No, wait a minute. I hadn't inserted it yet - it's still on my desk. Sorry."



Caller: "Can you give me the telephone number for 'Jack'?"

Operator: "I'm sorry, sir, I don't understand who you are talking about."

Caller: "In section 5 of the user guide, it clearly states that I need to 'unplug the fax machine from the AC wall socket and telephone jack before cleaning'. Now, can you give me the number for Jack?"

Operator: "I think you mean the telephone socket on the wall."

## GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 <b>Antiques Appreciation (Group 5)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday (10.00 am)	<b>Martin Baker</b> 020 8300 1752	2
 <b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday	<b>Margaret Scambler</b> 020 8315 0108 <b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8309 6372	Yes
 <b>Cinema</b> Various Tuesdays	Various	Yes
 <b>Classical Music (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	<b>Derick Johnson</b> 020 8850 1245	Vacancies
 <b>Concerts/Ballet/Opera</b> Various dates & times	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	Yes ↳
 <b>Darts (at the Alma pub)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday (noon) 🖐️	<b>See Group Co-ordinator</b> 020 8300 4291	Yes
 <b>Family History</b> Various days	<b>Judith Swain</b> 020 8303 5759	Yes
 <b>Handcrafted Cards (Group 1)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday (2.00 pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	1
 <b>Knit &amp; Knat</b> Day to be decided	Various	2/4
 <b>Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10.00 am) 🖐️	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8309 6372	Yes
 <b>Theatre (Group 2)</b> Various matinées	<b>Joan &amp; John Somerset</b> 020 8300 0890	Yes ↳
 <b>Walking in London</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday (various times)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	1

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.

**Christine Spencer, Group Co-ordinator** 📞 020 8300 4291; email [rjcmspncr@gmail.com](mailto:rjcmspncr@gmail.com).

### 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 is not difficult to run a group and leaders of a full one can advise you how it's done.

🖐️ Not during school holidays

↳ Notice on the board at meetings

## PROGRAMME

### 2013

July	Ian Porter	Suffragettes
August	Peter Gilman	Coastline National Trust
September	Chris McCoory	Rogues, Rascals & Rebels
October	Jack Wheeler	Japanese Gardens
November	Bernard Locket	Author
December	Jack Ripley	Max Miller & Friends

### 2014

January	Claire Rogers	Greenwich and Bexley Hospice
February	John Halligan	The Life and Times of Samuel Pepys
March	Peter Maggs	Henry's Trials
April	Don Dray	Down Memory Lane
May	Robert Vidler	The War Years (1914–1918)

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
Vice-Chairman	Lesley South	020 8300 8298
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	Christine Smith	020 8304 2305
Membership Secretary	Margaret Scambler	020 8315 0108
Speakers Secretary	Sue Brooks	020 8298 1117
Group Co-ordinator	Christine Spencer	020 8300 4291
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
Social Secretary	Vacant	

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

<b>Raffle Organiser</b>	Jackie Burke	020 8302 7395
<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 since this facilitates scanning.

*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.

*Afterthought*

*If you had your life to live over again, you'd need more money.*