

# SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

July 2018



**SIDCUP & DISTRICT U3A meets at 2.00 pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month in the New Community Church Centre, 24 Station Road, Sidcup**

## NOTICES

### **Welling U3A Trip to Eastbourne**

We at Welling U3A have spare places on a trip we have arranged to see the Eastbourne Air Show and we would welcome members of Sidcup U3A who would like to join us.

It takes place on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> August and our coach will leave from Welling Library at 9.15 am sharp. The cost will be £15 per person.

We have spoken to the owners of the Fisherman's Club and arranged that we can go there if we wish to watch the air show. Drinks and food will be available and it will offer us shelter if it rains. It is about a fifteen minute walk from the town or you can catch a bus outside. The coach will be stopping in Eastbourne and at the Fisherman's Club so the choice is yours.

Any member who would like to join us to may contact me, Pat Pitney, on 07811 157109 or email [pitpat2005@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pitpat2005@hotmail.co.uk).

**Pat Pitney, Welling U3A**

**(i)** Please note that this trip takes place on the same day as the August General Meeting.

**Editor**

## GROUP NEWS

### **Book Reading • Leader June Reid**



Our book for June was *Sweet Dreams* written by Michael Frayn and chosen by Linda. This was one of those "Marmite" books again! Some loved it and some loathed it. Although written in the 1970s, this very clever book was still fresh and not "dated." It must have caused quite a stir when it was first published. I learned that it is now considered a cult classic. The tone of the story is comic but not openly so, and satirical but not biting. It is quite a slim volume and an easy read. I will not disclose much of the content of the story, other than it is one man's view of Heaven, and the main character, Howard Baker, never quite realises where he is but tackles the same problems he had on Earth but with wonder at all the new possibilities around him. It is a very thought-provoking book.

**June Reid**

### **Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams**



Our 13<sup>th</sup> June 2018 visit was to the Brunel Museum, Rotherhithe. There were 13 of us on this trip which, bizarrely, cost us £13. Luckily, this pattern didn't jinx our day.

We met a guide at Embankment Station and set off on the first part of our journey by Thames Clipper. Our guide was an American lady whose passion was Isambard Kingdom Brunel and his family. She pointed out lots of their work along the Thames, including three bridges. She also mentioned many interesting local history facts.

We left the river at Masthouse Terrace. This was the launch site for the Great Eastern ship, which was also known as The Leviathan because of its great size. After learning more about its construction and launch, we walked along the riverside to Island Gardens DLR. We then caught the train to Shadwell where we transferred to the Overground for the final step to Rotherhithe.

A short walk from there took us to the Brunel Museum where we had a final talk in the Grand Entrance Hall shaft. This is where work on the Thames Tunnel began. It opened in 1843 and was once described as the Eighth Wonder of the World, having welcomed one million visitors in the first 3 months. It is now used as a performance space and hosts many varied events.

At the end of a very interesting tour, eight of us decided to have lunch at The Ship pub and the others went their own way.

### **Lynn Plumer & Barbara Buckland**

### **Freedom Pass Explorers • Leader Christine Withams**



For our May trip, we travelled out on the Central line from Bank to Gants Hill. A short walk brought us to Valentines Park. The Mansion House is Grade II listed but unfortunately it is not open on Mondays. It was built in 1696 for Lady Tillotson, widow of the then Archbishop of Canterbury. It is now owned by the London Borough of Redbridge. On a beautiful, sunny, warm day we enjoyed our walk around the lake. The perfume from the yellow azaleas filled the air. There is also a rose garden, vegetable garden and Gardeners Cottage, where we had lunch outside under the sunshades.

In June, we went on the Northern line to Golders Green and then to Golders Hill Park. They have a small zoo here which was created in 1905. There are ring-tailed lemur, coati, donkey, eagle owl and many water birds, including a whistling duck and a laughing kookaburra, but they were not whistling and laughing on Monday morning! The gardens are beautiful and there is also a butterfly house. We again used the very good park café. From here, we took a short walk to Hill Garden and pergola, originally part of the private gardens of Hill House, now managed by the City of London Corporation and open to the public. The pergola was extended twice in the early twentieth century, and, though it fades in comparison to its former splendour, it retains its beauty and ambience. What a lovely outing!

### **Christine Withams**

 Pictures taken during the two trips above can be viewed on the Gallery page of our website. Pictures from the same group's trip to Hill Gardens and Pergola, Hampstead Heath, on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2018 can also be viewed there.

### **Editor**

## Pot Pourri • Leader Pat Laughton



Our group returned to Greenwich for the June outing. After visiting The Painted Ceiling last December, many of us were keen to explore other attractions that Greenwich has to offer. Every day, three free tours of the former Royal Naval buildings take place, which include the history of the buildings from their beginnings to the present day. There are visits to the Chapel, where regular concerts take place, and which finish in the square where the world's biggest frieze made of Coade stone celebrating Nelson's battle of Trafalgar is situated. Living so near Greenwich, one assumes that there is nothing left to see but every visit finds new horizons.

Most of us visited the Queen's House during the day which has just opened after a recent makeover. It now houses a painted ceiling which can be viewed from comfy armchairs strategically placed beneath the renovated Elizabeth I Armada painting, and, as well as many of the old familiar paintings, there are now works by more modern artists to admire.

An easy reach by bus from Sidcup, I urge you to go and take a look – and we didn't even have time to visit the Maritime Museum. Perhaps we'll save that for another occasion!

**Pat Laughton**

## Ramblers 2 • Leader Helen Salmon



Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2018

Unfortunately, because of a heatwave warning on the news that morning and because there were only a few of us (owing to holidays and injuries *etc*), I decided to abandon the planned ramble. Instead, we took a bus to Footscray to walk in Footscray Meadows, the largest public open space in the London Borough of Bexley. We took a leisurely stroll following the river keeping to the Sidcup side so that we were in the shade. There were numerous 'tiddlers' swimming in the river and we all thought it quite amazing how fast the river was flowing considering that we had not had rain for quite a while. We crossed a small bridge at the far end of the meadows and walked up Water Lane, and, dicing with death, crossed North Cray Road. We took the footpath (hidden by brambles) through a field full of horses to Mount Mascal stables. Following Stable Lane to Vicarage Road, we walked on to St. Mary the Virgin Church in Bexley Village. Again, we were amazed at how many fish were in the River Cray when we looked over the bridge at the Old Mill. The ramble ended with a delicious lunch in Hamers Fine Food and Delicatessen.

**Helen Salmon**

**(i)** Footscray Meadows was once part of two estates: North Cray Place (to the east of the River Cray) and Footscray Place. In around 1780, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown was paid £1,300 by the then owner of North Cray Place to widen part of the River Cray to create a ribbon-like lake, and design the Five Arch Bridge and weir to link the two estates. Brown also landscaped the parkland to create a series of walks and drives around the estate. On 18<sup>th</sup> October 1949, Footscray Place caught fire and the house was destroyed. The ruins were subsequently demolished and the grounds became a public park. An alms-house was built adjacent to the woods at about the same time as the bridge, and in 2008 it was excavated by archaeologists belonging to the Bexley Archaeological Group. (£1,300 in 1780 is worth close to two million pounds today).

**Editor**

### **Ramblers 3 • Leader Trevor Ford**



Twelve of us set off from London Bridge Station on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> June on a warm a sunny day; everyone was in great spirits. Our walk took us along the south side of the River Thames following the Thames Path for 6 miles to Greenwich. The number of steps recorded was approximately 16,000 (depending on the device used!) so we all indulged with lunch at the Gypsy Moth Pub in Greenwich when we arrived at 1.30 pm. En route we stopped at the Surrey Docks City Farm for a comfort break which was most welcomed by all.

The river was at its best on Friday and, as usual, busy with a mix of river traffic. We passed the bronze statues dedicated to Dr. Salter who did so much for the people of Bermondsey and the plaque that commemorates the dock from which the Mayflower left for America. The walk passed numerous famous old dock areas until we reached Deptford which again is steeped in maritime history. The statue of Tsar Peter the Great of Russia (1672-1725), is impressive and attracts much interest. Peter the Great lived in Deptford for three months in 1698 to learn the art of shipbuilding, staying at Sayes Court. It seemed that the Tsar pretended to be an ordinary carpenter in the nearby dockyard but, unfortunately, his height of 6 feet 7 inches, Russian accent and extrovert personality fooled no-one!

### **Carolyn Barclay**

### **Parks & Gardens Appreciation • Leaders Jill Bryant & Rinka Halliday**



Our journey to Charlton was rudely interrupted when, as we were changing buses, one of our party discovered that she had sat in what appeared to be an Olympic-sized puddle of water. (Phew, what a relief). What to do? Happily, a very helpful fellow passenger chivvied her into the nearby hairdressers who would, she said firmly, “sort her out.” The sight of the hapless victim standing in the middle of the salon and staring fixedly at the floor whilst the two hairdressers, summoning all their training and expertise, gave intent scrutiny to her nether regions as they delivered a full and professional blow-dry will be forever burnt onto my retina! Problem sorted...and no appointment necessary!

We reached the end of our journey with no further delays. What a wonderful sight is Charlton House crowded in amongst the worst excesses of 1960s architecture. A real jewel in Charlton’s baseball cap and one of only four complete Jacobean mansions left in England. As we are “Parks & Gardens” the intent, when we did our recce, was to visit the three walled gardens and surrounding parkland and perhaps look round the House. On this visit, we decided that the House was too precious to be ignored so we visited the very pretty “Peace” and “Sensory” gardens before giving our full attention to the House. It was built between 1607 and 1612 by tutor Andrew Newton, Dean of Durham, for his pupil Prince Henry the son of James I. Sadly, Prince Henry died when he was 18 so Newton, who continued in the King’s employment, lived in the house until his own death in 1629. I won’t go into more detail as I feel that you should not miss the chance to see it for yourselves.

The porch leads to the Minstrel Hall which is currently the site of the tea room which provides a very good cuppa and tasty food. There is a wonderful and original oak staircase, much beautiful panelling and fabulous fireplaces. We all thoroughly recommend a visit!

### **Rinka Halliday**

 Pictures taken during this trip can be viewed on the Gallery page of our website.

**Editor**

## GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 <b>Amblers (Group 3)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30 am) 	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	Vacancies
 <b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (10.00 am)  	<b>Roy Black</b>  020 8302 9942	Vacancies
 <b>Book Reading</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>June Reid</b> 020 8302 7887	Vacancies
 <b>Family History</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues  & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs  	<b>Judith Swain &amp; Kate Berry</b> 020 8303 5759	Vacancies
 <b>Handcrafted Cards (Group 2)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	2 Vacancies
 <b>Local History (Group 3)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday morning	<b>Christine Withams</b> 020 8850 4144	Vacancies
 <b>Mono Digital Photography</b> Quarterly (approx.) 	<b>Roy Morton</b> rory.m2014@gmail.com	3 Vacancies
 <b>Needlecrafts</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	Vacancies
 <b>Pot Pourri</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday 	<b>Pat Laughton</b> 020 8302 9984	3 Vacancies
 <b>Ramblers (Group 2)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (4–5 miles)	<b>Helen Salmon</b> 07786 465862 or 020 8309 1689	Vacancies
 <b>Rummikub® (Group 1)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>Kathy Cordell</b>  020 8300 4573	Vacancies
 <b>Science</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>Trevor Ford</b> 020 8302 7635	2 Vacancies
 <b>Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10.00 am)   £	<b>Gay Braybrook</b>  020 8309 6372	Vacancies
 <b>Theatre Trips: Musicals</b>   £	<b>Sue Brooks</b> 020 8298 1117	Vacancies
 <b>Wine Appreciation</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (7.30–9.30 pm) £	<b>Roger Brown</b> 020 8850 5362	Vacancies

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.

**Trevor Ford**  020 8302 7635 email: [trevor.ford@talktalk.net](mailto:trevor.ford@talktalk.net)

### Why not start a new group?

If your name is on the waiting list to join a full group, or no group that specialises in your interest exists yet, you can create a new one and advertise it in this Newsletter – see the last page. It is easy to run a group and any current leader can advise you how it's done. Members of groups are reminded that they should always let the group leader know if they cannot attend a meeting, particularly if they wish to withdraw from that group.

 Not during school/bank holidays  
 Temporary point of contact

£ A charge applies  
 Certain seasons only

 Open to all  
 Times vary

## PROGRAMME

**2018**

July	Christoph Bull	Pocahontas – without Disney
August	Heather Woodward ✕	Nelson: The Myths and the Truths
September	Michael Grillo	Two Kinds of Teardrops (Del Shannon & Roy Orbison)
October	Ian Waller	Workhouse Life – Bread, Gruel & Suet Dumplings
November	Janie Ramsay	What's it Worth?
December	The Serenade Singers	

✕ *The original speaker has cancelled for health reasons*

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Colin Barclay	07401 474844
Vice-Chairman	Carolyn Barclay	07401 474844
Vice-Chairman	Sandra Applegate	07717 020611
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	John Lapham	020 8854 6340
Membership Secretary	Lynn Plumer	07714 234398
Asst. Membership Secretary	Patricia Andrews	020 8300 2064
Speakers Secretary	Janet Lambern	020 8300 1786
Group Co-ordinator	Trevor Ford	020 8302 7635
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
General Member	Sue Brooks	020 8298 1117

## USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

**Raffle Organiser** Jackie Burke 020 8302 7395  
**Newsletter Editor & Webmaster** 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. Photos taken during group outings and events may be shared on the website's "Gallery" page.  
**Third Age Trust:** 52 Lant Street, London, SE1 1RB ☎ 020 8466 6139 [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)  
**Greater London South East Network:** [www.u3asites.org.uk/glondonsenetwork](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/glondonsenetwork)  
**London Region U3A:** [www.u3asites.org.uk/london-region](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/london-region)  
**World U3A:** [www.worldu3a.org](http://www.worldu3a.org)      **Virtual U3A:** [www.vu3a.org](http://www.vu3a.org)

## 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 things get better with age, then I am approaching "magnificent."*