

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

June 2009



**SIDCUP & DISTRICT U3A meets at 2.00 pm on the 3rd Thursday of every month in the
Community Church in Station Road, Sidcup**

NOTICES

Photography Competition

The chance for you to take some outdoor photographs of animals is enhanced now that the sunnier weather is here, so here are some brief reminders of the requirements for the competition which will be held on 17th September at our main meeting.

- Subject – Animals, which can be simple portraits, or as quirky as you like.
- Maximum size – 7 x 5 inches in either ‘portrait’ or ‘landscape’ format.
- One or two photographs taken within the last 18 months can be submitted.

Val Gosden

Group Holiday to Crown Hotel, Weymouth, Dorset
Saturday 26th September – Saturday 3rd October 2009

This holiday was announced in the April Newsletter. I still have a number of rooms available for those who are interested in coming with us.

Please note that I shall be collecting the balance of your payments at the July general meeting.

Margaret Platt ☎ 0208 309 6395

Thanks

This is a thank you to Val Gosden for the recent very enjoyable sessions that she set up for us. The idea was to hire from U3A Headquarters DVDs on various subjects for a total of five sessions. Five of us met once a month and we watched the history of Canals, Clocks, the buildings of the Spanish architect, Antoni Gaudi, the East End of London, and the Occupation of the Channel Islands. Watching the clocks DVD prompted a visit to the Clock Museum at the Guildhall in London; this is well worth a visit and it is free. This could be something that other members might want to take up. Headquarters has DVDs on a vast range of subjects and watching these is something, perhaps, that could be done during the winter months.

Gay Braybrook

The Resource Centre

The Resource Centre at the National Office in Bromley has a collection of non-book material available to all U3A groups to borrow free of charge except for the cost of return postage. Slides, videos, cassettes, DVDs and CDs are available for a wide range of subjects. Individual subject lists can be obtained from the Resource Centre on request, and the whole catalogue is available on the website with an ordering facility. Please note that you first have to register with the Resource Centre as a user either by telephoning between 9.30 am and 4.00 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, or by going into the online resource centre catalogue and clicking on 'sign up'. Bookings can be made nine months ahead and loans are for an initial period of 3 weeks. Over 75% of U3As make regular use of the Resource Centre to support and enhance their study groups and, if you would like more detail about a particular item, do not hesitate to contact the Resource Centre.

Third Age Trust Website www.u3a.org.uk ☎ 020 8315 0199

Greater London Forum of U3As

Our Sidcup U3A is a member of this Forum. It brings together members from other U3As, gives guidance and leadership, and organises courses and various programmes. The Forum needs new committee members and, if you are interested in helping in this way, please let the chairman know and find out more.

John Mercer

Coach Trip to Salisbury Wednesday 16th 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 31st 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 16th 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 31st July ☎ 020 8302 2261)

GROUP NEWS

Local History 2 : Leader José Steward



English Heritage – Chiswick House, Wednesday 13th May.

Before the day of our visit had even arrived, nearly half of the group had cried off for one reason or another – maybe the walk time from the station to the house put them off! Before we left home the absence had increased to about two thirds!! However, 5 of us left Sidcup and were joined at Waterloo by two more who had boarded the train at New Eltham. Everything was then delayed at Waterloo Mainline by a British Rail ‘incident’ which delayed everybody, regardless of destination, by about 20 minutes. We arrived eventually not much later than our English Heritage permit specified.

The renovation work to the house has been completed, but the grounds are still cordoned off to allow for the re-laying of turf and pressure washing of the Grecian Urns and Vases which line the pebbled paths. As for the house itself, there is little or no furniture, except in three studios where the walls are adorned with blue, red, and green velvet-type coverings. These are very decorative and each room has chairs covered to match.

The main interest, of course, is in the Marble Statues and paintings which are mainly portraits and country scenes. The Great Hall has an interesting domed ceiling, and here the walls are hung with family portraits painted over the years. Several other rooms have painted ceilings surrounded by horizontal crenallated plasterwork. An audio guide is a *must* at Chiswick House, since it is necessary to backtrack to complete the circuit, for, although the rooms are numbered, there is only one narrow circular staircase in use for both directions.

The café, not yet completed, will be of modern exterior design – not at all in keeping with the general ambience of the house. Fortunately, a ‘cabin’ café, complete with adjacent marquee, provided us with a very welcome coffee and refreshments after having walked by the stream to the north west corner of the grounds. It was during this walk that we were entertained by a pair of Canada Geese with their brood of 9 little ones, who paddled like the dickens towards us in the hope of being fed; unfortunately for them, no such luck – we had not a biscuit between us!

Chas. Owen

National Trust/English Heritage : Leaders Olive & John Mercer



We went to Hampton Court Palace on 14th May. We travelled by train – 35 minutes from London Waterloo – and took advantage of the Palace’s inclusion in the venues and attractions featured in the railway’s “2 for 1” special offers leaflet – which is available at local railway stations. After producing completed coupons from the leaflet and our freedom passes at the reception desk, we gained admission to the Palace by paying one full-price (£14) admission charge covering two people. This was somewhat less than either the concessionary advance (on-line) booking fee, or the group booking rate.

In the Palace we went our separate ways, and had a choice of apartments and exhibitions to visit in addition to the gardens, maze, and “real” tennis court. Probably two, three or even more visits would be needed to take in everything without exhausting oneself.

Christine & Richard Spencer

Classical Music : Leader Derick Johnson



Jean Wallis provided the programme for our May meeting. It started with Joseph Haydn's Trumpet Concerto in E with Håken Hardenberger playing the trumpet accompanied by the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Chamber Orchestra directed by Sir Neville Mariner. Haydn was keen to produce a piece to bring out the many advantages of the keyed trumpet. This was a major innovation brought about for Anton Weidinger (Viennese Court Trumpeter) who commissioned Haydn to compose his concerto with this in mind. Switching from wind instrument to keyboard, we then had J. S. Bach's Toccata & Fugue in D with the impressive organ playing of Simon Preston. We then had Felix Mendelssohn's violin concerto in B minor with Nigel Kennedy on the violin accompanied by the English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Jeffrey Tate. After our customary break for tea/coffee, etc, and the enjoyable chatting that inevitably takes place, we finished the afternoon in fine style with Ludwig Van Beethoven's Symphony No 7 in A, opus 92, played by the Staatskapelle Berlin conducted by Herbert Von Karajan. Jean is no enthusiast for playing single movements at our meetings and demonstrated this today perfectly.

Derick Johnson

i The keyed trumpet is a brass instrument that, contrary to today's valved trumpet, uses keys. It is rarely seen in modern performances, but it was relatively common up until the introduction of the valved trumpet in the early nineteenth century. The keyed trumpet has holes in the wall of the tube that are closed by keys. The experimental E flat keyed trumpet was not confined to the natural notes, but was chromatic in all registers of the instrument. Before this, the (natural) trumpet was commonly valveless and it could play only a limited range of harmonic notes by alteration of lip pressure. These harmonic notes were clustered in the high registers, which meant that early trumpet concertos could contain melodies only with very high pitches.

Editor

Ramblers 1 : Leader Annette Jansen



Seven hardy walkers recently spent a five night holiday at Corsham in the North Wiltshire Cotswolds. On the first day we followed the Wilts and Berks Canal to the amazing village of Laycock. This is a village mainly owned by the National Trust and it is like taking a step back in time. Many films and TV series have been filmed there including "Cranford", "Pride and Prejudice" and "Harry Potter", etc. En route we came across a newly restored canal bridge which was to be opened the next day by Lady Camilla. The following day we walked through meadows of thigh-high buttercups and up Weets Hill to a huge statue of Maude Heath. She lived in the 15th century and became a substantial landowner through her four marriages. She was responsible for building an impressive raised cobbled causeway to make travel easier to nearby Chippenham market, plus many other public works. On Wednesday we awoke to rain so, suitably clad, we set off to the village of Ford where we took refuge in the White Hart for coffee and fudge. The rain stopped and most of the party walked on to Box to see the Railway Tunnel built by Brunel. Thursday was another lovely bright day and we were taken by bus to Silbury from where we walked to and visited the West Kennett Long Barrow. We continued along the Ridgeway, where we had lunch, before descending to Avebury where we had time to explore the stone circles and museum. We had a lovely holiday in nice company. Thank you, Annette, for arranging it.

Gloria Exeter

Freedom Pass Explorers : Leader Val Gosden



For our next trip out on 13th July we shall be travelling away from London, and need to catch the 10.04 train from Sidcup to Dartford, before travelling on from there (last train carriage as usual).

Val Gosden ☎ 020 8300 0664

Antiques Appreciation : Leader Martin Baker



The object of the group is to give the members a basic understanding of the main groups of antiques that people are most likely to come across – or perhaps inherit. We talk about everything from ceramics to furniture. I try to illustrate this either from my own collection or from objects members bring in. We look at the means of dating objects by style or marks etc. I try to show how, for example, ceramics in Europe have evolved from Chinese origins, or how English furniture design was influenced by European ideas. Most importantly, I hope that members will come to appreciate antiques for what they can tell us about the period in which they were created and used, rather than for their monetary value.

Martin Baker

Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk



In November 2008 a new Gallery for Clocks and Watches opened in the British Museum and on 13th May eleven members of our group visited this gallery. We were presented with an interesting story of timekeeping and its development from the earliest church and monastic clocks to the innovations of the 16th and 17th centuries right through to the advent of atomic timekeeping in the 20th century. Mechanical timekeeping began developing in the 13th century as cathedrals and monasteries started installing the new clocks to announce the time both day and night. As technology progressed in the 16th century, clocks began to be used as status symbols. A brief look at how clocks have changed in the 20th and 21st centuries brings the story up to date. One clock is claimed to be accurate to 1 second in 60 million years. The gallery shows the development of watches from their invention in the early 16th century to the radio controlled watches of today. Spectacular watches from the 18th century contrast with the mass market examples produced in the second half of the 19th century and the contemporary quartz watches of today. There have been many beautiful and unusual watches, including a diamond ring watch, a dog shaped watch, and one in the shape of a skull – perhaps to remind us of the fleeting nature of time.

How apt it was that the member of this group with the worst record for punctuality was asked to organise this visit. (She did arrive on time!)

Pam Kirk

(i) The word clock is derived ultimately (via Dutch, Northern French, and Medieval Latin) from the Celtic words ‘clagan’ and ‘clocca’ meaning ‘bell’. Few, if any, of the earliest clocks had hands or dials and announced the passage of time audibly. For horologists the word clock continues to mean exclusively a device with a striking mechanism that rings a bell, gong, or chimes.

Editor

Bird Watching : Leaders Gay Braybrook & José Steward



We chose Sutcliffe Park Nature Reserve, Eltham, for our June meeting; easily accessed via the № 321 bus, it was a first time visit for all of us. We were delighted with the layout of the Reserve, which has the River Quaggy meandering across the parkland creating a lake along the way, and ending with a well established wetlands complete with boardwalks. There are large areas of reed beds and lots young trees and hedges, not forgetting the many mature trees throughout the park. The grass areas are mostly left uncut and are full of wild flowers at this time of year. Also along the Quaggy were lovely yellow irises.

We saw much activity from the large crow population, and on the lake families of coots along with mallards, Canada geese, heron, a white goose, and moorhens. Several grey wagtails kept us amused and there was lots of singing from the reed beds, but we were not lucky enough to sight any reed bunting. Other birds seen were sparrows, wren, long-tailed tits, blue tit, robin, parakeets, pigeons, and blackbirds. It was an interesting morning.

Everyone is welcome!

José Steward



We Are Survivors

(For those born before 1940.....)

We were born before television, penicillin, polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, contact lenses, videos, and the pill. We were before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams, and ball-point pens; before dishwashers, tumble driers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes, and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and then lived together – (how quaint can you be?) We thought ‘fast food’ was what you ate in Lent, a ‘Big Mac’ was an oversized raincoat and ‘crumpet’ we had for tea. We existed before house husbands and computer dating; ‘sheltered accommodation’ was where you waited for a bus.

We were before day-care centres, group homes and disposable nappies. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, artificial hearts, word processors, or young men wearing earrings. For us ‘time sharing’ meant togetherness, a ‘chip’ was a piece of wood or fried potato, ‘hardware’ meant nuts and bolts and ‘software’ wasn’t a word.

Before 1940 ‘Made in Japan’ meant junk, the term ‘making out’ referred to how you did in your examinations, ‘stud’ was something that fastened a collar to a shirt, and ‘going all the way’ meant staying on a double-decker bus to the terminus. In our day, cigarette smoking was ‘fashionable’, ‘grass’ was mown, ‘coke’ was kept in the coalhouse, a ‘joint’ was a piece of meat you ate on Sundays, and ‘pot’ was something you cooked in. ‘Rock Music’ was a fond mother’s lullaby, ‘Eldorado’ was ice-cream, a ‘gay person’ was the life and soul of the party, while ‘aids’ just meant beauty treatment or help for someone in trouble.

We who were born before 1940 must be a hardy bunch when you think of the way in which the world has changed and the adjustments we have had to make. No wonder there is a generation gap today.... BUT, by the grace of God.....we have survived!!

Anon

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
Amblers (Group 3) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	Norma Balfour/José Steward 020 8303 7693/020 8302 1627	Yes
Antiques Appreciation (Group 3) 2 nd Wednesday (10 am)	Martin Baker 020 8300 1752	2
Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning)	Gay Braybrook/José Steward 020 8309 6372/020 8302 1627	Yes. Notice on board at meetings
Boules (Danson Park – seasonal) 2 nd & 4 th Thursday (10 am)	Bart Jansen 01322 522252	5
Darts (at The Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (midday)	Fred Green	Yes
Freedom Pass Explorers 2 nd Monday	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	Yes
Hand Crafted Cards (Group 2) 1 st Wednesday	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	1
Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	John Harlow 020 8300 3865	2
Local History (Group 2) 2 nd Wednesday	José Steward 020 8302 1627	3
Luncheon Club (Group 2) 2 nd Friday	Joan Smith 020 8300 3566	2
National Trust/English Heritage Various dates & times	John & Olive Mercer 020 8300 3136	Yes
Parks & Gardens Appreciation 4 th Thursday (Feb to Oct)	Jill Bryant/Barbara Olney 01322 524008/020 8302 4289	1
Ramblers (Group 1) (6-7 miles) 4 th Tuesday (10.30 am)	Annette Jansen 01322 522252	Yes
Ramblers (Group 2) (4-5 miles) 4 th Tuesday	Pat & Alf Cracknell 020 8302 0823	Yes
Saturday Ramble (4-5 miles) 1 st Saturday (morning)	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
10-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10 am) <i>except school holidays</i>	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes. 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

PROGRAMME

2009

June	Mr. N. Arnold	Big Cats in Kent
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

Travel Group Leader	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
Raffle Organiser	Judith Bishopp	020 8468 7342
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster	David Smith	020 8304 2305

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

Please submit contributions by 3rd of the month.

WEBSITE

www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk

Afterthought

Life is a horizontal fall. (Jean Cocteau, 1930)