

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

June 2012



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

NOTICES

The Great British Story: Bexley
A free BBC local history event

Saturday 23rd June 2012, 10.00am – 4.00pm.
Hall Place and Gardens, Bourne Road, Bexley, DA5 1PQ.

In a new TV series presented by Michael Wood, “The Great British Story” looks at history through the eyes of ordinary people, and reveals what life was like for everyday Britons over the last 1600 years.

Now it’s your chance to become involved! Come along to a BBC local history event, discover Bexley’s fascinating history, and learn how to delve into your own past. Find out more about family history, archaeology, oral history, artefacts and local heritage.

Find *your* place in history:

- Listen to historian, broadcaster and writer Michael Wood discussing “The Great British Story”.
- Track down your ancestors with help and advice from family history experts.
- Learn how experts conserve and protect treasures from the Museum of London. (*sic*)
- Find out how to date your old photos; if you’ve inherited a family photo, bring it along to find out more.
- Learn how to discover the history of your home using local archive sources.
- Discover Bexley’s archaeological treasures and show your own mystery finds to our experts.
- Explore the history of Bexley through local heroes, landmarks, working lives and industrial heritage.
- Take part in a reminiscence session and share your memories of working in and around the Thames Gateway.
- A full programme of talks will run throughout the day.

...and much more.

The event is open to ticket holders only. Apply for free tickets by calling 03709 011227, or visiting www.bbc.co.uk/showsandtours/events.

This item was extracted from Bexley Historical Society website.

George Murrell

Update on Our Charity – Guide Dogs for the Blind

I have just had the two collecting dogs emptied and the total to date amounts to £23.03. The surplus money from the sale of teas (after expenses) is £30.00. £98.00 from the raffle has also been accumulated. All this money is destined for our charity.

Let us hope we do as well for the rest of the year.

Gay Braybrook

Around the Country

Crewe and Nantwich U3A ‘Striders’ walking group are calling for help make a success of the “Shropshire Union Canal Challenge” – a walk to raise money for Parkinson’s UK.

29 members of St Albans U3A paid a trip to Iceland in February to see the Northern Lights.

3 intrepid members of Island of Skye U3A braved the February elements to scale the heights of the lighthouse at Waternish Point in the north of Skye.

Members of the Hessle U3A’s ‘Busy Fingers’ group have been knitting garments for families in Ethiopia who can’t afford clothes for their children.

Ealing U3A have made available a DVD of the Hawaiian show that took place when member, Rajnish Sethi, gave a talk on Hawaiian history and culture, brought to life by a vivid tropical backdrop. (Email vkeerti@aol.com).

Todmorden U3A’s Science and Philosophy group crossed the channel to spend two days at the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN) in Geneva.

Harwich Peninsula U3A’s Quilting Group has produced its first jointly made quilt, which has been donated to the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre at Headley Court in Epsom for the use of armed forces personnel injured in service and confined to a wheelchair.

Sidcup & District U3A needs a Social Secretary.

GROUP NEWS

Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



Our day out began well – a coolish start with promise of sunshine later. Thirteen of us set off for Hampton Court where we walked through some of the gardens, including the Laburnum arches, and then on to Home Park. A herd of deer awaited us by a long avenue of trees and bird song was very evident. We appeared to have the whole area to ourselves and eventually came to a peaceful lake where we spotted a pair of swans with their cygnets, moorhens and a heron. At Hampton Wick we had a leisurely lunch in a local pub and then walked back, past house barges, and along the three mile towpath. The sun had come out in force and plenty of people were seen enjoying themselves on craft ranging from rowing boats to paddle steamers. However, the end of the day did not go well; an attempted suicide at Wimbledon, plus delays at Vauxhall, meant we had to leave our train at Surbiton and take a bus to Kingston. We split up there and tried our various ways to get home. More problems at Lewisham caused further delays on our local line. On average it took four hours to get home, but it had been a lovely ramble!

Olive Adkins & Gay Braybrook

Walking in London • Leader Val Gosden



We had a rainy start for our first trip out in April, but this did not last long; with the exception of a sudden heavy squall at lunchtime – which sent us rushing into a nearby pub for lunch – it stayed clear for most of the day. Our walk started with a visit to Camley Street Natural Park, which turned out to be a small green oasis within the noisy area of Kings Cross/St. Pancras. Walking on to the St. Nicholas flats in Aldenham Street, we saw unusual lamp posts which all bear a ship at the top – St. Nicholas is the patron saint of sailors.

Upon reaching St. Pancras Church, we stopped to look at the Coade stone Caryatids. These Grecian ladies were sculpted off-site, but, after transportation to the Church, it was found that they were too tall. The remedy was to cut out the ‘ladies’ midribs, and then to drape the gowns in such a way as to cover the damage.

Near to Goodge Street tube station is The Eisenhower Centre. This tube station was converted during World War II for use by the U.S. President when he was Supreme Commander of the Allied forces in Europe. Underground are 8 deep-level air raid shelters with 8,000 bunk beds.

The Petrie Museum, which we later visited, contains a collection of Egyptian antiquities, and we saw a marble bas-relief of the Egyptian God Min, the god of fertility and sexuality, who is portrayed with a huge, erect penis. Nearby, in the South Cloisters of University College, we looked at the mummified auto-icon of Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) sitting serenely in a wooden cabinet, wearing his own clothes. Bentham was a radical philosopher and reformer, and a believer that education should be available to all. (Auto-icon – according to Bentham himself – is ‘a man in his own image’). After a short walk, we reached Warren Street tube station where we discussed how far we had walked; we agreed that it was 5–6 miles.

For our second trip out in May, we used as inspiration a City of London information leaflet ‘City Gardens’; we walked around the ‘Square Mile’ seeing and visiting some of the gardens depicted. Some of these are small oases within the busy City area, others are more extensive, but most contained seats for tourists and workers alike. Quite a few of the gardens are within church grounds, but one formal garden, the Tower Hill Garden, contained memorials to those in the Merchant Navy & Fishing Fleets who gave their lives during the 1914–18, 1939–1945, and Falkland Wars. Much building work is being carried out in London, and we found many features in both old and new buildings to interest us as we walked along.

Should you think to use the same leaflet then please note that there are no gardens at Finsbury Square at present as this area is now a construction area for the Crossrail project. If you want to see gardens there, you will have to wait until 2018!

Val Gosden

Parks & Gardens Appreciation • Leaders Jill Bryant & Barbara Olney



On the 24th May, our group made its way to Holland Park by train and № 9 bus. This park is considered one of the most romantic and peaceful parks of the West End. The area consists of about 54 acres of woodland gardens, children’s play areas, a youth hostel, and the Japanese Garden built to celebrate the 1992 Japan Festival in London. We hoped to see rhododendrons, but there were only a few; however, we were rewarded with a wonderful display of camellias. These included some rare varieties unseen by us before. We then came into a small formal area with colourful square beds of beaded iris in yellow, white, purple, pale blue, and two shades of terracotta. Because these had been planted en masse, it created a ‘wow’ factor. The Japanese Gardens were superb – as they always are any time of the year – but again the small blue irises on the edge of the small lake caught our eye. It was too early for some of the other areas as they were waiting to be planted up. A dry sunny day was had by all.

Jill Bryant

GROUP VACANCIES

	GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
	Amblers (Group 3) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30am)	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Yes
	Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning)	Gay Braybrook (co-ordinator only) 020 8309 6372	Yes
	Book Reading 1 st Thursday	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	2
	Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon)	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	Yes
	Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	John Harlow 020 8300 3865	2
	Luncheon Club (Group 2) 2 nd Friday (noon)	Pam Kirk 020 8856 8372	4
	Play Reading 1 st Tuesday (2.00–4.00pm)	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	Yes
	Ramblers (Group 2) (4–5 miles) 4 th Tuesday	Pat & Alf Cracknell 020 8302 0823	Yes
	Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00am)	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
	Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes. Notice on board at meetings
	Walking in London (3-6 miles) 3 rd Tuesday	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	4

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

PROGRAMME

2012

June	Mrs. Sandra Winter	Hand-Bell Ringing
July	Chris Hare	40 Years Without a Proper Job
August	Tony Farnham	Sailing Barges in their Heyday
September	<i>TBA</i>	Guide Dogs for the Blind
October	John Halligan	The Lord Mayor of the City of London
November	Derek Fulford	Antique Clocks & Watches
December	Pat Mortlock	A Country House Christmas

2013

January	Bob Ogley	Biggin Hill
February	Mrs. Austin	Honey
March	John Beckham	Birds of Rye Harbour
April	Ann Knief	Lola Montez – a 19 th Century Adventuress
May	Mr. Guerdon	Chickens

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

Travel Group Leader	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
Raffle Organiser	Jackie Burke	
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster	David Smith	020 8304 2305

Please either email contributions to me at editor@sidcup-u3a.org.uk or post them to me at 56 Crofton Avenue, Bexley, Kent DA5 3AR – typed if possible.

Please submit Newsletter contributions by 3rd of the month – but at any time for the Website.

WEBSITE

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 at first you don't succeed, you are running about average. (M H Alderson)