

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

June 2013



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

NOTICES

CRISIS – Tina’s story

Tina was just 17 when she started sleeping rough. Life on the streets was tough, and, with no friends or family, she turned to drugs to erase the horrors of her reality. The vicious cycle of drug addiction and homelessness continued for 12 years, until Tina came to the “Crisis At Christmas” women’s centre where she took part in various activities. During these activity sessions she found that she could talk to volunteers and other homeless people and share her experiences. Her confidence grew and eventually she gained a food and hygiene qualification. Tina is now off drugs, living in supported accommodation, and earning her own living. She says, “The volunteers at Crisis are the family I haven’t had”.

Thank you for supporting *CRISIS* and helping people like Tina.

Val Gosden

Are You Retired?

A new television series on Channel 4 wants to hear from retired workers about their past jobs, careers and skills. From catering to gardening, DIY to hairdressing, it doesn’t matter what you did for a living. If you are retired and want to be a part of an exciting new project we want to hear from you! If you are interested and want more information please call 020 7184 7794 or email theagency@plumpictures.co.uk.

Please note that emailing or calling in does not commit you to taking part in the series.



Janet Griffith

I regret to inform you that John Griffith’s wife, Janet, died recently following a long period of illness. The funeral took place on 30th May at St. Lawrence’s Church. Prior to Janet becoming ill, she and John were both regular members of Ramblers Group 1. Our condolences go out to John and his family.

George Murrell

GROUP NEWS

Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



Our May visit was to Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Street, where we had a most informative talk by Father Graham. The original church was demolished in the 1880s; the cornerstone of the present church was laid on Ascension Day 1889 and it was consecrated just one year later by the Bishop of London on 12th May 1890. The church was built on a grand scale by the architect, John Sedding. John Betjeman described it as the ‘Cathedral of the Arts and Crafts Movement’. It is the widest church in London and contains an important collection of stained glass. The enormous east window was designed by Edward Burne-Jones and William Morris, and the other windows are equally interesting. The organ is of special significance; it is the largest organ in a parish church with almost 4,200 pipes and it has just been restored. Holy Trinity has had a reputation for Anglican Church music from its early days. The church forms part of the Cadogan Estate and has the present Earl as its patron. Following the talk, we were given tea, coffee and biscuits while Father Graham continued to answer questions and show us photos of the church in previous decades.

Mary Webb

Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



Ten intrepid walkers ignored the gloomy forecast and gathered at the Fleur de Lis pub in Leigh and set out on a walk through the Kent countryside. After passing through the village and past the cricket ground, we were quickly into the open fields. The weather at this point, although overcast, was quite pleasant and we were able to make enjoyable progress. Our path then took us across the River Medway and out towards Penshurst Place – which we viewed from the top of the hill. Walks in the countryside are punctuated by having to negotiate stiles, and unfortunately our leader, Gordon, got into a bit of a ‘flap’ at one of them which resulted in the sole of his boot being separated from the upper. However, emergency repairs were at hand in the form of an elastic hair band (which did the trick!) and he was able to continue. After the view of Penshurst, the walk swung round and continued along paths, the highlights of which included the sight of a deer crossing one of the adjacent fields, and the last of the bluebells. It was at this point the rain, which had mainly held off, became more significant and it was a rather damp party who returned to the Fleur de Lis. Seven of us remained at the pub where we enjoyed some excellent food for lunch.

All in all it was a good day, but, unfortunately, our last with this group and we would like to thank you all for making us most welcome during our all too short a time with you.

Janet & Gordon Young

NB. We would like to extend our thanks to Christine Withams, the leader of Local History group 3; to Norma Balfour, the leader of the Concerts group, and all the members of these groups whose company we have enjoyed on our visits. If the Cheltenham U3A is as vibrant and interesting as Sidcup U3A, we will be very lucky indeed. Our thanks go to the Committee for their excellent organisation and programme, the raffle and this Newsletter.

Our regards, Janet & Gordon Young

Parks & Gardens Appreciation • Leaders Jill Bryant & Barbara Olney



Japanese Garden. On the 25th of April, 14 of us travelled to Sevenoaks via public transport to view a Japanese style garden. Jack Wheeler, the owner, greeted us and we all (including 2 who had travelled by car) had a drink on the patio and enjoyed the wonderful view before us. When Jack retired he took a four-year degree on Garden Design, specialising in Japanese Gardens. The garden is large, 200ft. long and 65ft. wide and a small bamboo and stone water feature with a white camellia and mauve hellebore had been placed on the stone as a symbol to welcome us to view the garden.

The first principles of garden design are to ensure that it cannot all be viewed with one glance. A large raised area $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way across the lawn with a large cedar and trees obscured the full length view. On the right was a pond with goldfish, small shrubs and a hexagonal seated summerhouse alongside a small stream with a red wooden bridge over. Because of the cold weather, the azaleas and rhododendrons that flanked the water were not in bloom. Further on, a Tea House construction confirmed the Japanese style. An open gate enticed us through to a raked stone area with stepping stones across. All around were different Acers and a large Cornus Controversa, which has horizontal branches. This is an area in which to relax and contemplate on a bench that disguised a shed, but on the wall facing were two Japanese heads peeping over the wall. The weather was sunny and warm and complemented a very enjoyable visit to a wonderful garden.

Jill Bryant

(i) Traditional Japanese gardens use highly abstract and stylised ways of creating miniature idealised landscapes. Nevertheless, the idea of these unique gardens did not originate in Japan; during the Asuka period (AD 538–710) Japanese merchants who saw gardens that were being created in China frequently became so inspired by them that they took many facets of Chinese culture back to Japan. Styles include Karesansui – rock or Zen gardens, which are meditation areas where white sand replaces water; Roji – simple, rustic gardens with tea houses where the Japanese tea ceremony is conducted; Kaiyu-shiki-teien – promenade or stroll gardens, where visitors follow a path to see carefully composed landscapes; and Tsubo-niwa – small courtyard gardens.

Editor

Parks & Gardens Appreciation • Leaders Jill Bryant & Barbara Olney



Ten of us caught the train to Lee Station followed by a short bus ride to a private garden. The lady of the house greeted us in her front garden, which was well stocked with plants and shrubs. While having coffee and homemade Victoria sponge, we were told that the Queen Mother had visited the garden in 1975. Each of us gave £2.00 (as an entry fee) which was to be given to the owner's nominated charity supporting older people with learning disabilities. It was a cold and damp day (23rd May) and we decided to brave the weather and go outside. What a lovely surprise it was – what a beautiful garden. The garden had a rare Tree Heather (at least seven feet tall), a Euphorbia Hellifera (which smells of honey that you could almost eat), a pretty Tiarella, and many more plants. A small greenhouse there was full of unusual cacti. There was a vegetable plot at the very end of the garden which also contained a few fruit bushes. The stream running almost the full length of the garden had a walk over bridge which led to a pond containing goldfish. Before leaving, we were told that there were plants for sale and this led to a mad dash to see what we could buy. Armed with plants, we thanked the couple for opening their garden to us and headed home.

Diane Wingrave

Walking in London • Leader Val Gosden



Our April walk was in Hampstead. Although we actually walked about 5 miles, because of the hilly nature of the area it seemed as though we had done about twice that distance! Some of the walk was along roads, but much of it was through woodland and included a pleasant pond, with swan and ducks, in the Vale of Health. A hidden delight of Hampstead Heath is the Pergola and Hill Garden, built in the early 1900s by the industrialist and philanthropist Lord Leverhulme (the soap manufacturer). We walked along the upper level of the Pergola and then continued to the Hill Garden, all being most pleasant and possibly worth a revisit in the sunnier summer months. Some of the houses surely command a high purchase price; many well-known people have lived here, and we saw blue plaques on several houses. By contrast, set in a wall in a side street was the door and two barred windows of the former lock-up, which was built in about 1730. Having walked for some time, we made our way back to the town for refreshments at a café, and so back home.

For our May London walk we followed part of the Jubilee Walkway (Silver Jubilee, that is), starting in Leicester Square. Soon we were in St. James's Park watching the military in full dress uniform as they rehearsed their moves for Trooping the Colour, which takes place in June. We then threaded our way through crowds of tourists as we passed the Houses of Parliament. For the rest of our route we found we could walk at a steady pace going along the north side of the River Thames, crossing the river at Lambeth Bridge, and then walking back along the Albert Embankment until we reached the Millennium Bridge, where we stopped for refreshments before making our way home. It was a walk of about 4½ miles.

Val Gosden

Local History 2 • Leaders Pauline Watling & Barbara Olney



Our May outing was to Hereford House in Manchester Square, just behind Selfridges. This elegant 18th century town house is the ideal location for the Wallace Collection; this was founded by the 1st Marquis of Hereford and was brought to England from Paris in the late 19th century by Richard Wallace. It was bequeathed to the nation in 1897. Five generations of collectors have each made their own special contribution. All rooms are beautifully decorated with a wealth of furniture and wonderfully dressed windows. The rooms are themed as an art gallery and contain 17th century Flemish art, 17th century Dutch art, and 18th century French art including Fragonard's "The Swing" dated 1767. It also houses the famous "The Laughing Cavalier" by Hals. My favourite room was the West Gallery which housed many paintings by Canaletto – famous pictures that entice you along the Grand Canal of Venice. The room next to this room contained British portraits by Joshua Reynolds and Thomas Gainsborough.

If your interest is in porcelain, there are display cabinets of elaborate Sèvres to gaze upon, and a collection of snuff boxes and beautiful miniatures. Everywhere you look there is something of interest, including elaborate clocks and Medieval and Renaissance works of art. Hereford House also houses the largest collection of arms and armour outside the Tower of London – that should keep the men happy. The Wallace Collection is a unique experience in a luxurious house which may be visited each year since you will discover something new and interesting because there are usually items on loan to view. The bonus is that it is all free of charge.

Jill Bryant

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Antiques Appreciation (Group 5) 3 rd Friday (10.00 am)	Martin Baker 020 8300 1752	2
 Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday	Margaret Scambler 020 8315 0108 Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
 Book Reading 1 st Thursday	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	2
 Cinema Various Tuesdays	Various	Yes
 Classical Music (Group 1) 2 nd Friday	Derick Johnson 020 8850 1245	Vacancies
 Concerts/Ballet/Opera Various dates & times	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Yes ↳
 Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon) 🖐️	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	Yes
 Family History Various days	Judith Swain 020 8303 5759	Yes
 Handcrafted Cards (Group 1) 1 st Thursday (2.00 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	1
 Knit & Knat Day to be decided	Various	2/4
 Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	Lesley South 020 8300 8298	2
 Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00 am) 🖐️	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
 Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes ↳
 Walking in London 3 rd Tuesday (various times)	Val Gosden 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.

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

June	Paul Gourden	Age UK
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

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

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 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 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 you are feeling good, don't worry, you'll soon get over it.