

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

June 2014



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

NOTICES

The Evolutionary Secrets of Your Garden Plants

There will be a talk by Dr Martin Ingrouille from 2.00 pm until 3.30 pm on Thursday 3rd July at Birkbeck's Stratford Campus, University Square, London E15 1NN. The talk is intended for U3A members and forms part of the University's "Science Week". Admission is free, but by ticket only which is obtainable from the U3A National Office; send a written application with stamped addressed envelope and include your telephone number and/or email address.

Shared Learning Projects

"Handling Collection Researchers" at the British Museum on Thursdays from 2nd October–4th December. For further information contact Christine Cranridge, email c.cran.sip2@gmail.com. The project is based at the British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG.

Repacking and reorganisation of archaeological collections from early 20th century. 1 afternoon a week from Wednesday 1st October–3rd December at Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED and the Museum of London, 150 London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN. Volunteers will be reimbursed for travel and lunch expenses up to £10 per day. For further information email Linda Crook at linda.crook.slp@gmail.com.

George Murrell

U3A AGM

This will take place at the Royal Agricultural University, Cirencester, from 9th–10th September 2014. Applications for a place at the AGM must be made on a form that may be downloaded from the Members' Area of the Third Age Trust website (see back page). There is no charge for attending the AGM, but various charges apply to those requiring meals, accommodation (and cream teas!) or who wish to attend the lectures or other activities that will be taking place. There will be workshops for Chairmen, Treasurers, Group Co-ordinators, Newsletters and Technology for Learning, *etc* as well as subjects like drama, ukulele, singing, creative writing, geology, art history, philosophy and computers. Further details are available from the U3A National Office.

For anyone who is interested, there is a link on our own website to a document that describes the vision and mission statement of the U3A as a whole as revised in January 2014.

Editor

50+ Show

Members who enjoy an active lifestyle – and who admit to being over the age of 50! – may be interested to know that the 50+ Show will take place at Olympia from 10th–12th July. Admission normally costs £10, but, by registering with Olympia beforehand, you can get a free entry ticket.

Editor

Around the Country

Wendover U3A's Brewing Studies group has visited the local Chiltern Brewery – the oldest independent brewery in Buckinghamshire – for a tour of the brewing plant, a history of the brewery and a tutored food and beer tasting.

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Milton Keynes U3A's new exhibition, showcasing the talents of Milton Keynes U3A Members, was launched at a preview event held on the evening of Wednesday 6th March prior to opening to the public 7th–30th March. The preview was attended by the National Chairman of the U3A, Barbara Lewis, the Mayor of Milton Keynes, Councillor Brian White and Mayoress Leena Lindholm-White, the Head of Learning at MK Gallery, Emma Fry, as well as the Chairman of Buckingham U3A. Barbara Lewis commented that this was one of the best exhibitions she had seen presented by any U3A in the country in both content and presentation. In his speech, the Mayor said that he hadn't realised quite how much the U3A has to offer and that, with the population of MK increasing fastest in the 50+ age range, we play a major role in providing opportunities for its citizens who are no longer in full-time employment.

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Warrington U3A's Singing for Pleasure Group has raised £183.40 for their local hospice (St. Rocco's) by carol singing in Golden Square Shopping Centre in December 2013. They received a very nice certificate and letter of appreciation.

**

Norwich U3A's recent coach outing to London was a great success, taking in the sights and sounds of Greenwich Park, the Royal Observatory, National Maritime Museum, the Queen's House and the Old Royal Naval College. The afternoon's highlights were a tour of the 'Cutty Sark' and a circuit on the Thames Cable Car.

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A dozen ladies from Great Glen U3A have used their brushes and palette knives to produce a landscape masterpiece under the supervision of group leader, Jayne Good.

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Members of Ripon & District U3A have been making waves in their advertising by setting up stalls at local markets, fayres and shows to spread the word. Business Secretary, Sheila Burney, even publicised the group from inside the pen at a cattle market.

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Leeds U3A Book Group read *Black Diamonds – The Rise and Fall of an English Dynasty* by Catherine Bailey. Black Diamonds is a powerful tale of intrigue, family feuds, forbidden love, civil unrest, the downfall of a mining dynasty and rumours of a changeling child. The story is set around Wentworth in Yorkshire which used to be surrounded by 70 collieries employing tens of thousands of men. Wentworth House is the finest and largest Georgian house in Britain, once owned by the Fitzwilliam family; it is England's forgotten palace lived in by Britain's richest aristocrats. Intrigued themselves, the book group paid a visit to Wentworth House, the setting for the story, and spent a wonderful day walking through the pages of history.

GROUP NEWS

Book Reading • Leader June Reid



The Book Group is a fairly new and informal one. A book is chosen by each member in turn, and the many varied topics raised lead to some lively discussions. During the past year, we have enjoyed books written by an assortment of authors, namely Hilary Mantel, Jane Austen, John Steinbeck, Sue Townsend, Victoria Hislop and Kate Atkinson. The choice for May was *The Cleaner of Chartres* by Sally Vickers. We all enjoyed this but agreed it did not have all the mystery and enchantment of her previous offering, *Miss Garnet's Angel*. We all feel that, having read such a varying programme of titles, we have all learned a little something and kept the grey matter working.

June Reid

I am a great fan of historic fiction – my favourite author being Bernard Cornwell. As a newer member of the book group, I wasn't sure whether I would enjoy the chosen books. How wrong I was. I have read, over the past year, a whole new genre of books that I would not have given a second glance previously. The group takes it in turns to choose a book; I must admit some I have not enjoyed but the majority have been a revelation. I continue to be surprised each month and I have made a lovely group of friends. Thank you, June.

Carole Owens

Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



Our May visit was to the London Silver Vaults which were originally opened in 1876 as the Chancery Lane Safe Deposit where Londoners could safeguard their household silver, jewellery and personal documents. Nowadays the vaults – which are 3 floors underground – contain an arcade of 40 shops packed with silver of every type imaginable as well as watches and jewellery.

Four members of the group became 'oversilvered' so took the option to visit Sir John Soane's Museum in nearby Lincoln's Inn Fields. This houses an incredible collection of art, sculpture, antiquities and architectural drawings collected during the late 18th and early 19th centuries and which are displayed in 3 houses that Sir John Soane rebuilt to accommodate them.

Those of us who stayed in the Silver Vaults found the people in the shops very willing to answer our questions – especially as they knew we would not be purchasing any of the items which mostly ran into at least four figures. However, I did learn afterwards that one member had treated herself to a pair of earrings! This was an interesting visit to somewhere that most of us had not known existed.

Mary Webb

i John Soane, the son of a bricklayer, lived from 1753–1837. An architect, he specialised in the Neo-Classical style and became professor of architecture at the Royal Academy. He was also an official architect to the Office of Works and received a knighthood in 1831. His architectural works are distinguished by their clean lines, massing of simple form, decisive detailing, careful proportions and skilful use of light sources. However, it was not until the late 19th century that the influence of his architecture was widely felt. His best-known work was the Bank of England (although his work there has largely been destroyed); this building has had a widespread effect on commercial architecture.

Editor

Parks & Gardens Appreciation • Leaders Jill Bryant & Barbara Olney



Richmond Park

Our first outing in April was a re-visit to the Isabella Plantation – a new experience for new members and members who had missed our previous outing. The weather was dry and sunny and ideal for walking in the park. The Isabella Plantation is an ornamental woodland garden, full of exotic plants, that is designed to be interesting all year round. In 1831, Lord Sidmouth fenced off 42 acres in which he planted oak, beech and sweet chestnut trees as a crop for timber. The present garden was established from the 1950's onwards. The garden now has 15 known varieties of azaleas and the national collection of Kurume azaleas. There are 50 different species of rhododendrons and 120 hybrids. The result of this is that, almost immediately you enter the garden, you are surrounded by the most amazing plants of all colours, and none of them seem to clash. On a slow walk through it, you cannot fail to wonder at the beauty of nature. On our way to the café for lunch, we stumbled upon a group of deer. An enjoyable day was had by all.

Jill Bryant

 Pictures of the Isabella Plantation appear on the Gallery page of our website. There are also pictures of Little Venice, Regent's Canal and Camden Lock which were mentioned in last month's Newsletter.

Editor

Local History 2 • Leader Pauline Watling



Visit to Southwark Cathedral on 14th May 2014

We had a pleasant start for our journey to London Bridge and the short walk to the Millennium Court Yard. Here we met our guide, Valerie, who ushered us into the Refectory where we had coffee. After coffee we proceeded to the Archaeological Chamber, which had been opened by Nelson Mandela, then along Lancelot's Link with its floor plaques naming the churches in the diocese and then finally into the cathedral itself.

Over time, the site has been a convent (in AD 606); a priory (in AD 1106); a parish church (in AD 170) and finally a cathedral in AD 1905. The history, diversity and character of the area are revealed in the tombs, monuments and stained glass windows within the cathedral. Among them is one for John Gower, poet and friend of Chaucer, a memorial to William Shakespeare, and the stained glass window above it which depicts scenes from his plays and a plaque to Isabella Gilmore, a pioneer of women's ministry.

Other areas of interest include the Harvard Chapel which commemorates the baptism of John Harvard in 1607, a Southwark born man whose legacy founded the USA's oldest university, and a colourful stained glass window designed by Leifur Breidfjord to commemorate the diamond jubilee of Elizabeth II; this is very different from the window designed for Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee which you can also see.

After the guided tour we visited the shop and then decided on where we would go for lunch. Some of the group had lunch in the cathedral refectory whilst some ventured to the George Inn (1677), once frequented by 'pilgrims' in Chaucer's day, and which is now maintained by the National Trust which continues to perform excerpts from Shakespeare's plays. All in all, it was an enjoyable visit made interesting by our excellent cathedral guide, Valerie.

Betty Miles

Freedom Pass Explorers • Leaders Christine Withams & Joy O'Donnell



For our May outing, we were going to Amersham, but, as the weather forecast looked wet, Christine decided upon a different destination. How happy we were! We ventured to Golders Green via train and tube. After coffee in the High Street, we headed towards Golders Green Park. No-one had been there before so it was an adventure in itself! Upon entering the park, we saw a small zoo with birds and animals. They were not the usual livestock, but all very interesting and tested our knowledge of wild life. From here we went into the well-kept and interesting Water Garden for just a little stroll round as it was getting towards lunch time. We enjoyed lunch in the Park café in beautiful sunshine. (We should have taken the sun block). After lunch we decided to head to Hammersmith for the bus back to London. Unfortunately, the park paths were not particularly well signposted, but, by using printed maps and phone GPS, we managed eventually to arrive in Hammersmith by the tube station. We took the tube and train home as it was getting close to commuter time. Keith and I had a thoroughly enjoyable introduction to the Freedom Walks and are looking forward to visiting Amersham in June.

Joy Alker

Classical Music 1 • Leader Alan Griffiths



We welcomed a new member to our group at our May meeting and are hopeful that others will be joining. We were given an international flavour at this meeting which was provided by Barbara Carpenter.

Our first visit was to Spain to hear the overture to *The Barber of Seville* by Rossini played by the Zagreb Festival Orchestra conducted by Michael Halász. Following this rousing start, we heard Haydn's Symphony № 104 in D major, *London*, played by the Austro-Hungarian Haydn Orchestra conducted by Adam Fischer. Then we went across the water to hear Aaron Copland's *Appalachian Spring* – a ballet inspired by American life which depicts the preparations for a wedding in a Pennsylvanian farming community. It was played by the Los Angeles Philharmonic conducted by Zubin Mehta.

After refreshments, we had a bright start by listening to a *Spanish Dance* by Manuel de Falla with Joshua Bell on the violin and Samuel Sanders, piano. This prepared us for *Songs of the Auvergne* beautifully sung by Anna Moffo accompanied by the American Symphony Orchestra **conducted** by Leopold Stokowski. From France we went to Finland for the majestic *Finlandia*, Opus 26, with the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Finally, we went to Germany for *Six German Dances K600* by Mozart, played by the London Mozart Players led by Matthias Bamert.

Alan Griffiths

① *Finlandia* is a symphonic poem by the Finnish composer, Jean Sibelius. Composed in 1899 for orchestra, Sibelius revised the entire work in 1900 for solo piano. It was created for the Press Celebrations of 1899 and was a covert protest against increasing censorship from the Russian Empire. It was the last of seven pieces performed as an accompaniment to a tableau depicting episodes from Finnish history. To avoid Russian censorship, *Finlandia* was performed under alternate names at various musical concerts. Titles under which the piece masqueraded were numerous, a famous example being *Happy Feelings at the Awakening of Finnish Spring*, and *A Scandinavian Choral March*. Often incorrectly cited as a traditional folk melody, the hymn section is of Sibelius's own creation.

Editor

Help Desk Enquiries

HELP DESK: "How may I help you?"

CALLER: "I have spent all week trying to rewind my DVD. How do you rewind it?"



A help desk took a call from a client having trouble with his 'print screen' feature. After lots of discussion, a technician was dispatched...

CLIENT: "My 'print screen' feature doesn't work."

TECHNICIAN: "I've tested it, and it seems to be working fine."

CLIENT: "Oh, let me try it again." Client presses a blank sheet of paper against the monitor screen and then pushes 'print screen' key. Technician starts laughing.

CLIENT: "What's wrong?"

TECHNICIAN: "I'm sorry, but when you push the 'print screen' key, the document comes out of your printer."

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Amblers (Group 1) 3 rd Wednesday	John Harbert 020 8300 5361	2
 Amblers (Group 2) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30am)	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Vacancies
 Art (Group 2) Alternate 1 st Tuesday	Sue Moore 020 8301 1952	1
 Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday 	Margaret Scambler 020 8315 0108	Yes
 Book Reading 1 st Thursday (2.00–4.00pm)	June Reid 020 8302 7887	2
 Classical Music (Group 1) 2 nd Friday	Alan Griffiths 020 8303 6636	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 2 nd Tuesday & 4 th Thursday	Judith Swain 020 8303 5759	Yes
 Handcrafted Cards (Group 1) 1 st Thursday (2.00pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	1
 Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday morning	Lesley South 020 8300 8298	Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles)	Leader pending	Vacancies
 Rummikub® 4 th Monday (2.00–4.00pm)	Margaret Platt 020 8309 6395	2
 Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00am) 	Various	Yes
 Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes 

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.

Keith Alker, Group Co-ordinator  020 8850 2853 Email: alker@btinternet.com.

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 page 8. It is easy to run a group and any current leader can advise you how it's done.

 Not during school holidays

 Certain seasons only

 Notice on the board at meetings

PROGRAMME

2014

June	Brian Williamson	Chislehurst Caves
July	Mary Moore	Hidden London
August	Open Day	
September	Romy McCabe	I Married the Vicar
October	Sue Spiel	Pam Ayres
November	Mr Halfors	The Spa Valley Railway
December	Alan Simmons	Entertainer

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Acting 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	Carole Owens	020 3663 6028
Asst. Membership Secretary	Patricia Rivett	020 3302 2887
Speakers Secretary	Sue Brooks	020 8298 1117
Group Co-ordinator	Keith Alker	020 8850 2853
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
General Member	Trevor Ford	020 8302 7635

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.

Third Age Trust, 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QE (020 8466 6139) www.u3a.org.uk

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

Life is a yo-yo, and mankind ties knots in the string.