

# SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

June 2015



**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

### Missing People

Our thanks go to everyone who has been putting their small coins into the collecting boxes each month; the total collected is not inconsiderable. Our thanks also go to group leaders who donate to the charity the moneys received for cuppas at their meetings. Together with the moneys received from the sale of books, CDs, DVDs and greetings cards, we have been able to send a cheque for £235.17 to our charity of the year, Missing People, as this is the total amount raised during the first four months of this year. Your continuing support is much appreciated.

**Val & Gerry**

### U3A Stand at the 50+ Show at London Olympia

The Third Age Trust has a U3A stand at the 50+ Show at London Olympia on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> & Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July and is looking for volunteers to help on the stand.

This involves answering enquiries from the public about the U3A, providing contact details of their local U3A if required, and handing out publicity material. We usually book times to cover on the stand for 2 hours which allows members time to look round the rest of the show. The hours we would be looking to cover would be between 9.00 am to 4.30 pm approximately.

Thank you very much for your assistance and I look forward to hearing from you shortly. Please contact me at the National Office on 020 8466 6139 or by email: [julie@u3a.org.uk](mailto:julie@u3a.org.uk).

**Julie Travers, U3A National Office**

### Speakers Secretary

This Committee post remains vacant. We urgently need a member (or 2 to job share) to come forward and take on this role. Without monthly speakers our meetings would be – what?? – an expensive hall hire for a cup of tea and a chat? I don't think so. Good speakers are often booked up months ahead so we should be looking for a January speaker *now!*

Please, please come forward; it really is vital to fill this post if Sidcup & District U3A is going to continue in 2016. Help will be available to willing volunteers; please speak to, or telephone, any member of the Committee.

**Anne Evans**

## **Waterloo Baby**

The publication date of this month's Newsletter coincides with the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1815, an event which shaped the future of Europe and which is well chronicled in great detail. Whilst researching the role played by the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers at the battle of Waterloo, I came across the following extract from the Regimental Museum archives:-

“Elizabeth, the wife of Pte. Peter McMullin of the 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment, although pregnant, had followed her husband into the field of action at Waterloo on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 1815. In the heat of battle, she helped carry wounded soldiers to the rear and she herself received a severe wound to the leg. Shortly afterwards, her husband after having his cap knocked off by one shot and his knapsack by another, was deprived of both arms and sustained a severe wound in the body. Thus disabled and with little hope, both survived and were returned to the York Hospital, Chelsea. After a few days, Mrs McMullin was delivered of a fine baby girl unhurt by the alarms of war. His Royal Highness, the Duke of York, with that recognizance of a soldier and amenity which distinguished him, stood Godfather to the baby who was christened Frederica McMullin of Waterloo.

Pte. McMullin is possibly the only Private soldier in the Army ever to have a Royal Duke, Commander-in-Chief, be Godfather to his child.”

**George Murrell**

## **David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation Wildlife Artist of the Year 2015**

This fabulous exhibition of wildlife art is to be held at The Mall Galleries (in The Mall, near Admiralty Arch) from 29<sup>th</sup> June – 4<sup>th</sup> July, 10 am – 5 pm (4 pm on the final day). Traditional and contemporary works in all mediums from established and exciting new artists from around the world come together under one roof for this amazing charity event. All sales support endangered wildlife. The David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation supports a range of innovative, vital and far-reaching projects throughout Africa and Asia, achieving real results for wildlife survival. Entry is free, and there is a small area set aside for coffees and light lunches.

**Val Gosden**

## **Jazz Study Day 2015**

“Sounds Like Jazz” 15<sup>th</sup> July 11 am – 4 pm includes one hour for lunch. Scott Stroman and the Guildhall School of Music Jazz Orchestra at The Kennedy Hall, Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regents Park Road, London NW1 7AY. The cost is £20 a head. Cheques payable to Third Age Trust. Further details are available from Mike Whitaker, Jazz Appreciation subject adviser, telephone 01278 663492 or email [mjo.whitaker666@btinternet.com](mailto:mjo.whitaker666@btinternet.com).

**George Murrell**

## **New Members**

The Committee welcomes the following new members: Alan Douglas, Ruth Dunster, Alan Eells, Lesley Eells, Peter Holmes, Suzanne Holmes, Peri Marshall, Ruth Nugent, Barbara Russell, Barbara Sutton and Michael Sutton.

**Patricia Rivett & Kate Berry**

## IN MEMORIAM

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of **Pat Coyston** after a short illness. Pat was my best friend and we shared so much together – holidays, concerts, and walks in the park. I know she had many friends, and always impressed us with her boundless energy, enthusiasm and her sunny nature. She will be much missed by all who knew her.

### **June Reid**

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of **Alan Griffiths** after a short illness borne with great dignity. Alan had become Leader of the Classical Music Group only in the past year due to the retirement on ill-health of his predecessor, Derrick Johnson.

Alan joined the U3A about 12 years ago and became a member of the Wine Appreciation Group (WAGS) in which he played an increasingly active role, becoming one of the four presenters in the group. He was appointed a magistrate to the Bexley Magistrates' Court in 1984 and he served there until his retirement from the Bench at the age of 70. He served with distinction on a number of the committees of the court. On his retirement from the bench, he channelled his energies into Probus which he served for many years, becoming its Chairman for the year 2008/2009.

He was serious in everything he did, and, if asked to undertake a particular task, would never stint in his time or effort until it had been completed. He worked hard and always with a quiet and modest demeanour which won him many friends. We will all miss him and our sympathies go to his wife, Maureen and their family.

### **Michael Jordan**

## GROUP NEWS

### **Parks and Gardens Appreciation • Leader Jill Bryant**



For our May outing we went to Peckham Rye Park, an area known to several of our members from their earlier years. Our first bonus was a bright sunny day; although a little breezy, it was very pleasant. Our second bonus was an unexpected tour of the gardens by Southwark Council's Head of Gardens. He was very informative about the shrubs and trees, and the changing aspects of the gardens through the seasons.

The park features ornamental gardens, a formal garden complete with rose pergolas, a Japanese garden, woodland and a lake that is fed by a small stream, the River Peck. There is also a community garden which is funded by Southwark Council and maintained by the Friends of Peckham Rye Park.

We enjoyed lunch in the café overlooking the common which ended a very enjoyable day.

### **Pat Cracknell**

① My pictures of Peckham Rye Park appear on the Gallery page of our website.

### **Editor**

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



Our book for May was *Blue Diary* by Alice Hoffman. The story is set in the small town of Monroe in Middle America. This is a town with a very peaceful and tight-knit community. The very peace is widely disrupted by the arrest of Ethan Ford – a very pillar of respectability and a revered football coach. He had been running from his past for thirteen years and the revelations of his past split the community and his family. The question implied is “what would happen if someone you know and loved is seen on America’s “Most Wanted List?” We question the true nature of Ethan Ford. The prose is very descriptive and many observations of the natural world are drawn in. Members of our group had very mixed feelings about this book – mainly due to the author’s style.

### **June Reid**

## **Walking in London • Leader Val Gosden**



All prepared for the bad weather forecast with gloves and scarves, five of us set off for our May London walk. Sunshine and blue skies greeted us at Charing Cross. As we walked down The Mall, we saw a VIP car with outriders, and then, as we passed Buckingham Palace, we enjoyed seeing a troop of mounted Horse Guards. We continued through Green Park and entered Hyde Park. In the Rose Garden, we admired the beautiful display of irises, then went along Nannies Lawn to the Serpentine Kitchen Café where we enjoyed coffee and a cake. Continuing along the north bank, we were delighted to see many fluffy baby ducks. We went under the bridge and into Kensington Gardens and walked beside The Long Water to the Henry Moore sculpture “The Arch.” This frames a lovely view over the water towards Kensington Palace. As we reached the Italian Garden it began to rain, but, by the time we got to the Peter Pan statue, it was sunny again. We walked along the south bank, past the Isis and Diana Memorials, and the Cavalry and Achilles statues before leaving the park. While walking along The Mall, the VIP car and outriders passed us again as they returned to the Palace. (Who was it?) We got back to Charing Cross as the sky turned black, but the sun still shone, and the skyline looked spectacular. As the train arrived at Sidcup, so did the rain, but, never mind, we were nearly home and we had had a lovely day.

### **Kate Berry**

**(i)** Hyde Park derives its name from the Hyde, an ancient manor of the priory of Westminster and was created by Henry VIII as a deer park in 1536. It was then enclosed and remained a private hunting ground until James I permitted limited access to gentlefolk. In 1637, Charles I opened the park to the general public. In 1689, William III had a drive laid out across its south edge; now called Rotten Row, it was originally known as “The King’s Private Road” and led to his new residence at Kensington Palace. Formal landscaping was completed in 1733 and the Serpentine was formed by damming the little Westbourne that flowed through the park. In 1814, the Prince Regent organised fireworks to mark the end of the Napoleonic Wars. The Crystal Palace was constructed on the south side of the park for the Great Exhibition of 1851; however, the public in general did not want the building to remain there so funds were raised to purchase and move it to Sydenham Hill. The combined areas of Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park (625 acres) are larger than the Principality of Monaco. My pictures of Hyde Park appear on the Gallery page of our website.

### **Editor**

### Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May, just 5 people from this group met at Lewisham DLR station to travel to Pudding Mill Lane Station. From there we walked through the ongoing rail and road works to enter the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park near to the former Olympic Stadium. This is still undergoing changes but will shortly be used as one of the venues for the Rugby World Cup. It was a beautiful spring morning and we enjoyed walking beside the canal and enjoying the landscaping, vibrant with spring colours. We visited the three venues that are open to visitors and participants. We were amazed at the height of the diving boards in the Aquatics Centre where we hoped to catch a glimpse of Tom Daley practising; instead, we were pleased to watch a class of young children doing forward rolls from the pool's edge into the water. Maybe there was a future Olympic diver amongst them! Our second venue was the Copper Box, but there was no activity there on this occasion. Finally, we went to the Velodrome and watched cyclists on the track there.

We parted company at the Westfield Centre, some going into John Lewis – or other equally exciting shopping experiences – and others ‘hotfooting it’ to Stratford Station and the DLR train back to Lewisham and home.

#### Ilena Harrington

 My pictures of two former Olympic venues appear on the Gallery page of our website.

#### Editor

### Ramblers 3 • Leader Trevor Ford



#### May Walk

Our May walk covered another section of the London Loop. Since these sections are written as linear treks, it is sometimes tricky to make them into small circles. For us, therefore, this meant an attractive route *outwards* along the London Loop, but a slightly tedious trudge *back* along a narrow pathway hemmed in by tall wooden garden fences on one side and a rather dense fenced woodland to the other. Nevertheless, we set out from Farnborough, an attractive village in its own right, following the edge of woodland to High Elms Country Park. This was the country home of the Lubbock family. Their classic Italian-style mansion was burnt down and all that remains is the stable block (now used for environmental education) and the Eton Fives Court. Emerging from the estate near the Golf Clubhouse, we crossed the road to join Bogey Lane, whose name my scouts had great fun with on a night hike the previous year. Farthing Street and Shire Lane brought us to Holwood Farm. From there we ascended fairly steeply to the Wilberforce Oak, where William Wilberforce conversed with William Pitt, the Prime Minister, about bringing forward a slavery abolition bill (photo on website). Still on the London Loop, we crossed the road to Keston Ponds, starting with Caesar's Well, a spring that is the source of the River Ravensbourne. Passing between the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> ponds, we made our way via woodland and a suburban street to the Fox for lunch. Following my general principle not to cover the same ground twice, we came back over that last part of the route again along a parallel track to re-join the Westerham Road. We then proceeded along the aforementioned enclosed path past Lake Wood and Ninhams Wood – which would have looked very attractive if only we could have seen them – then A21 back into Farnborough, where some of us had parked near the church.

#### Trevor Ford

## Local History 2 • Leader Pauline Watling



### Dickensian Walk – with a visit to St George The Martyr Parish Church

On a bright sunny day, we left London Bridge Station to walk to the Millennium Court Yard at Southwark Cathedral where we had coffee and met Valerie, our guide. We were led across the road to view the River Thames and hear a little history about the activities, condition (and smell!) of the Thames in Victorian London. We then moved onto the George Inn (London's oldest inn) and marvelled at the height of the arch and gates which secured the area at night. Once inside the Inn, we saw Charles Dickens's actual signature on documents promising to leave £1,000 to cover his bar bills in the event of his death – he seldom carried money!

Valerie then went on to explain more about Victorian London and the slums that had existed. Many slums had pockets of land between them, and the one we visited was a small graveyard which contained the remains of a prison where Dickens's father was interned for debt. We then ventured across the road to see St. George The Martyr Church with its impressive stained glass window where Amy "Little Dorritt" was baptised and later married. Also of interest was the wonderful ceiling depicting cherubs – a tribute to a visit by Queen Victoria. Our visit then continued to the Red Cross Garden which has connections with Octavia Hill (founder of The National Trust); like Dickens, she was a social reformer working for improvements in housing, living conditions and education. Also, in the garden you can see a hall where the Boys Brigade was started and some almshouses which are still occupied today.

Time was running out, but, on our way back to Southwark Cathedral, we paused by another garden where the railings were festooned with ribbons commemorating the deaths of fallen women and abandoned babies who were not allowed burial in sacred ground at the time of their death. The ribbons had been on the railings for many years and many included the year they had been hung there; some of them dated back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

After the tour, we ventured into the Kings Head Pub for lunch – delicious "Steak and Kidney Pud" which finished our excellent trip off nicely.

## Betty Miles

### Ten-Pin Bowling • Contact Gay Braybrook



The group made its regular outing to Cliftonville in May. Photographs taken there can be viewed on our website.

## David Smith

## ENTERTAINMENT

Wife texts husband on a cold winter's morning:

"Windows frozen, won't open."

Husband texts back:

"Pour some lukewarm water over it and gently tap the edges with something solid."

Wife texts back five minutes later:

"Computer really messed up now."

## GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	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>Classical Music</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (2.30–4.30 pm)	<b>Olive Mercer</b> 020 8300 3136	Vacancies
 <b>Concerts/Ballet/Opera</b> Various dates and times £ 	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	Vacancies 
 <b>Darts (at the Alma pub)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday (noon)  	<b>Leader pending</b>  needed, please	Vacancies
 <b>Family History</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	<b>Judith Swain</b> 020 8303 5759	Vacancies
 <b>Local History (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday morning	<b>Lesley South</b> 020 8300 8298	Vacancies
 <b>Local History (Group 3)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday morning	<b>Christine Withams</b> 020 8850 4144	Vacancies
 <b>Parks &amp; Gardens Appreciation</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday 	<b>Jill Bryant</b> 01322 524008	Vacancies
 <b>Ramblers (Group 2)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (4–5 miles)	<b>David Wedderkop</b> 020 8850 5042	Vacancies
 <b>Ramblers (Group 3)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Friday (≈ 6 miles)	<b>Trevor Ford</b> 020 8302 7635	Vacancies
 <b>Rummikub ©</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>Margaret Platt</b> 020 8309 6395	Vacancies
 <b>Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10.00 am)  £	<b>Gay Braybrook</b>  020 8309 6372	Vacancies
 <b>Wine Appreciation</b> Last Thursday (7.30 pm) £	<b>Michael Jordan</b> 020 8302 3330	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

### 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 a group.

 Not during school holidays

£ A charge applies

 Certain seasons only

 Notice on the board at meetings

 Open to all

 Temporary point of contact

## PROGRAMME

### 2015

June	Peter Hartley	The Royals
July	Roy Ingleton	The Heartbeat Years
August	Cairis Hickey	The Wiggly Wild Show
September	Colin Lomas	Leonardo Da Vinci – Was he really a genius?
October	Ian Keable	The Corked Conjuror
November	Melanie Gibson-Barton	Bruges
December	<i>To be advised</i>	

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
Vice-Chairman	Lesley South	020 8300 8298
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	John Lapham	020 8854 6340
Membership Secretary	Patricia Rivett	020 3302 2887
Speakers Secretary	<i>Vacant</i>	
Group Co-ordinator	Trevor Ford	020 8302 7635
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
General Member	Janet Lambern	020 8300 1786

## 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: 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QE (020 8466 6139) [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)  
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*

*Yesterday's a memory. Tomorrow's a vision. Today's a bitch.*