

# SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

June 2016



**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

### Reminder

If you are not able to attend your group, please let your Group Leader know. If you miss several sessions, please do keep in touch with your Group Leader so that your place can be kept open.

### **Trevor Ford**

① The above is important because some full groups have a waiting list of members wishing to join. Members waiting to join anything are always welcome to form their own group. Any member may also organise a trip like the coach outing advertised on the next page.

### **Editor**

### Warm Home Scheme

Having received a rise of £9 a month inflation increase to my pension (which was more than swallowed up by the council tax and water rate increases), I was delighted to learn of Bexley Council's "Warm Home Scheme" which offers free advice to the over 60s on how to save money on fuel bills. I didn't really believe it, but, with nothing to lose, I applied for my free survey. Their adviser visited me at home and promptly and efficiently inserted foil cut to size behind the radiators, examined my light bulbs and thermostat before phoning (on his own mobile phone) to cancel my present fuel tariff and find a much cheaper energy supplier. I am absolutely delighted to find that I am now saving £17 per month. Many of us oldies lack the initiative and knowhow for schemes such as this, so many thanks to Bexley Council for their help and foresight. I would thoroughly recommend taking this action.

### **Ruth Nugent**

① Information and a leaflet is available online at [www.bexley.gov.uk/warmhomes](http://www.bexley.gov.uk/warmhomes) or call 020 8303 7777 and ask about the Warm Home Scheme.

### **Editor**

### Sidcup's Great War

The programme for Sidcup's Great War: A Living Pageant is now available to view here: [http://www.lam-sid-lhs.co.uk/resources/Sidcup\\$27s+Great+War+Pageant+Programme.pdf](http://www.lam-sid-lhs.co.uk/resources/Sidcup%27s+Great+War+Pageant+Programme.pdf)  
Paper versions will become available in due course.

## U3A AGM 2016

Bookings are now being taken from people who wish to attend the U3A Conference and AGM to be held from 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> August 2016 at East Midlands Conference Centre. More details and booking form may be obtained from either the Third Age Trust, or online from: [u3a-conference.eventbrite.co.uk](http://u3a-conference.eventbrite.co.uk).

### Proposed New Group

If there is enough interest, I would be happy to start up a "Creative Writing Group." I visualise the format as being monthly meetings at which a subject is selected for group members to compose a written story, article, poem or similar (length about one side of A4) which they then read out at the next meeting. The ideal number of members is about 6 to 9.

The main problems are:-

(a) Establishing a suitable venue. Is any prospective member able to host on a regular basis? Failing this, meetings could rotate at members' homes.

(b) Convenient date and time suitable for all. Looking at the current time table, vacant days seem to be the 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month. Other days are, of course, possible. Anybody interested can speak to me at the monthly meetings or contact me by email at [george.murrell@btinternet.com](mailto:george.murrell@btinternet.com) or phone 020 8850 2046.

**George Murrell**

### Coach Outing with Afternoon Tea

Faversham Brewery Tour, with afternoon tea, runs on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016. The cost is £33.00 per person. This is an award-winning guided tour on which an expert guide will lead you through the heart of this busy, working brewery to see how our traditional Kentish ales and contemporary lagers are brewed. You can round off your visit with an afternoon tea of homemade scones, tea and coffee. The price includes coach travel, entry fee, afternoon tea and a tip for the driver. The coach will leave Welling Library at 10.00 am.

This trip is being organised by Welling U3A who have ten spare places on this outing which are on offer to any members of Sidcup & District U3A. Any interested member should contact Pat Pitney of Welling U3A ☎ 01322 560113 or email [pitpat2005@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pitpat2005@hotmail.co.uk).

**George Murrell**

## GROUP NEWS

### Book Reading • Leader June Reid



The book for May, chosen by Kate, was *A Man Called Ove* written by Fredrik Backman. This book proved to be a pure delight, and hugely endorsed as a "winner" by all of us. Ove was a Swedish version of Victor Meldrew, the grumpiest man you would ever meet, who had an unswerving conviction as to how everything should be done. We laughed at the ridiculous situations, but saw the sadness he carried silently within after the death of his beloved wife. Ove is dragged into the present day by his new neighbours – a motley group of outlandish characters. He finally finds solace through the good deeds he performs unconsciously. We laughed and cried at this touching story and look forward to reading more from this author.

**June Reid**

## **Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden**



‘The best-laid schemes of mice and men...’ – I expect you know the rest of the saying, and this certainly applied to our trip out in May. We experienced a slight delay at Sidcup owing to a signal failure further along the line, but our plans were really scuppered when we looked at the information board at Waterloo mainline station. Due to a train breaking down, trains were not going to our chosen destination, so we decided to catch a train to Richmond. On this train journey, we enjoyed seeing mauve, lilac and horse chestnut trees in full bloom. On reaching Richmond, we walked past the many shops and then down to the river before entering a pub which had been there since the 1660s. Thai food was served here and Thai artefacts enhanced the restaurant, but most of us enjoyed ‘good old English food’ before returning home.

### **Val Gosden**

## **Local History 1 • Leader Lesley South**



Our May visit was to the Royal Albert Hall to discover its ‘Secret History.’ We were booked for the 1.00 o’clock tour and the majority of us met at Sidcup Station after a very wet start. That was when our problems began, with our train being cancelled owing to flooding on the line at Mottingham. We ended up going in the opposite direction, via Slade Green to Cannon Street, then the underground and a very quick walk to the Royal Albert Hall, arriving just in time at 1.00 o’clock. Phew!

Despite the bad start, however, the Royal Albert Hall was worth the visit. It was erected for the advancement of the Arts and Sciences and works of industry of all nations, in fulfilment of the intention of Albert, Prince Consort. The site was purchased with the proceeds of the 1851 Great Exhibition. The first stone of the Hall was laid by Her Majesty Queen Victoria on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1867 and then opened by her on 29<sup>th</sup> March 1871. There were, however, problems with the acoustics of the building and after many years these were improved, in 1969, by installing fibre-glass discs (which tend to look like mushrooms) suspended from the roof – and these are still there today. Our guide took us from the basement to the highest tier of the Hall recalling the famous people who had appeared there over the years; these included Cliff Richard, José Carreras, Albert Einstein, Stephen Hawking, J. K. Rowling and many others. Unfortunately, we were unable to visit all of the places on the tour as the main arena had been taken over by a ‘Watch’ promotion featuring ‘Will I Am’. Hey-ho!!

### **Christine & Richard Spencer**

## **Local History 2 • Leaders Pauline Watling & Joyce Savinson**



### **A themed medical walk with a visit to Guy’s Hospital**

The day consisted of a guided tour of Southwark Cathedral led by Valerie Lester, a visit to Guy’s Hospital Chapel and Crypt via a walk through St Thomas’ courtyards. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> church to have been built on the site. An information panel at the east end of the cathedral claimed that there had been a convent there founded in AD 606 for the care of the sick. The church and convent were rebuilt in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century by Augustinian Canons who also built and administered St Thomas’ Hospital as part of their priory. Stained glass windows illustrate these people and events. Before the NHS, these hospitals were built and supported by wealthy benefactors who dedicated income to build and improve the health and wellbeing of the patients. The day was enjoyed by all and ended with lunch at the George Inn.

### **P. Farncombe, J. Ianson & B. Miles**

### Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



Our May visit was to The United Grand Lodge of England – The Freemasons’ Headquarters in Great Queen Street near Covent Garden. The building is Grade II listed and was opened in 1933, its construction having started in 1927. It is a memorial to all the Freemasons who died in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, and is a very impressive example of Art Deco architecture.

Freemasonry values are based on integrity, kindness, honesty, fairness and tolerance, and they are one of the biggest donors to charity. They have recently funded London’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Ambulance. We enjoyed a guided tour around the building, led by Colin who came from Sidcup! Afterwards, we were free to wander around the museum and library, although there were some restrictions on that day as *The One Show* was being recorded there. (Something relating to the inheritance of Diana Dors).

Most of us think of The Freemasons as a secretive society, but they now embrace openness, and the free tours are open to everyone – it’s well worth a visit.

**Kate Berry**

### Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Holland



May 2016

Trosley Country Park, Vigo, Kent was the area we walked this month. Pat, Cynthia and Roy had already walked this route out at the beginning of the year at which time the morning ground was frosty underfoot, only evergreen foliage was showing, and icy puddles were there to catch out the unwary.

Needless to say, in May the undergrowth had become verdant green, but the steps and hills were still as steep and a few goats kept us company along part of the track. We walked along the blue Downland Trail and extension route as far as Quarry Field before joining the Pilgrims Way to a steep, stony uphill section of the North Downs Way. A few of us stopped a number of times to enjoy the splendid views on this section and also to catch our breath. We reached a gate that enabled us to re-enter the park, finishing up on the Woodland Walk back to the café where a wide range of freshly made sandwiches, picnic benches and car park were available. After lunch, eight of us stepped out briskly following the Trosley Trail for a further 1½ mile walk. On this section, two viewing points enabled us to spy out the land as far as what appeared to be the Hop Farm at Paddock Wood. A discussion ensued on how the village name “Trottiscliffe” should be pronounced.

It was an enjoyable ramble, not too far, but with taxing hills. If any reader wishes to carry out uphill training, we would suggest using the path at Quarry Field as this almost requires a zig zag approach. Exercise points on the Trim Trail have wooden steps, hurdles and poles; we looked but did not use them! Information on Trosley, including a map, is available on the [kent.gov.uk](http://kent.gov.uk) web site. Café, toilets at car park, parking charge £1.50 weekday £2 weekend.

**Cynthia & Roy Morton**

**(i)** Vigo Village takes its name from a pub reputed to date from 1471, which was re-named after the Battle of Vigo Bay – a naval battle fought in 1702 during the War of the Spanish Succession. An apocryphal story suggests that the inn was re-named by a man who bought it with the proceeds of war prizes gained during the battle. Although a nearby hamlet called Vigo was recorded on an 18<sup>th</sup> century map, the present village was built on the site of a disused World War II army camp.

**Editor**

## **Wine Appreciation • Leader Roger Brown**



Eleven members of the Wine Appreciation Group (WAGS) met at Ockley Court, Sidcup on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May. The presentation was given by Michael Jordan who introduced the evening session by saying he would try to give some reasonable entry points for the purchase of some of the classic wines as well as introducing two others, one of which would almost certainly be unknown to members.

There were, as usual, six wines for tasting – 3 white and 3 red. We started with the Turkish wine, Vinkara Dry White, which turned out to be the most popular wine of the evening, then a Riesling from Germany followed by a Gewurztraminer from Alsace. After these white wines we went on to the reds, starting with a Côtes de Bourg (Bordeaux), then a Pays d’Oc (Languedoc) and finishing with a Pinot Noir from the Puy de Dôme, which, whilst not strictly Burgundy, was close enough for our purposes. There was, as usual, a lively discussion with opinions on the various wines differing – as they should. The evening ended with this writer being deputed to write an account for publication in the Newsletter.

**Michael Jordan**

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



Our first outing this year was to Holland Park. This large park extends over 54 acres and was once the grounds of Cope Castle, a large Jacobean mansion. This had been built in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century by Sir Walter Cope who later became Chancellor of the Exchequer under King James I. It was renamed Holland House after the Earl of Holland’s wife, Lady Rich, inherited the property. Holland House was badly damaged during World War II, but one wing was saved and is now used as a youth hostel. A remaining section of the front terrace now serves as a distinct backdrop for the open-air theatre productions and classic concerts performed there. We entered the park from Kensington High Street and walked up to the park along a magnificent avenue of mature trees. Past the café is a colonnade and wall mural depicting a garden party as it would have been when the house was occupied. We passed a small water feature surrounded by irises and then entered a large formal area. We were then fortunate to see and hear a beautiful peacock as he strutted around for us. Further into the park is the Kyoto Japanese Garden which was donated by the Chamber of Commerce of Kyoto in 1991. I remember visiting it soon after the opening and now it has matured into a wonderful, tranquil place. It contains many Japanese Acers – my favourite plant – and shrubs, and a pool with a waterfall and stepping stones where you can see many very large Koi in the water waiting to be fed. Bamboo has been used for gates and fencing and is was a lovely place to sit and admire. Beyond this area was a large wood and many bluebells. As it was the end of April, we were lucky it was dry.

**Jill Bryant**

**(i)** Koi are ornamental varieties of domesticated common carp kept for decorative purposes in outdoor ponds or water gardens. Carp, a large group of cold water fish originally found in Central Europe and Asia, were originally domesticated in East Asia where they were used as food fish. Natural colour changes of these carp occurred across all species, but they were first bred for colour mutations in China more than a thousand years ago. The common carp was aquacultured as a food fish at least as long ago as the fifth century BC in China, and in the Roman Empire during the spread of Christianity in Europe. Common carp were bred for colour in Japan in the 1820s, but the outside world was unaware of the development of colour variations in koi until 1914 when they were exhibited at an exposition in Tokyo.

**Editor**

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



For our May visit we went to a private garden in Crockenhill – the White Cottage. The owner opens her garden for the National Gardens Scheme; however, for our visit we had exclusive access.

The weather was amazing – sunny and hot – because the day before and the day after were dreary and cold. We enjoyed browsing the weed-free and interesting layout of the garden which displayed many plants that we all could recognise. There was also a very tidy vegetable plot and well looked after chickens. We particularly enjoyed the homemade cakes, and we were able to purchase homemade jams, marmalade and fresh eggs as well as plants.

The gardens are open for charity and our visit to the White Cottage raised £80 for the St. Christopher's Hospice.

## **Gay Braybrook**



### **Outlandish Projects: Coin Street**

Fresh from designing two of the most shocking buildings in a generation, the Pompidou Centre in Paris and the Lloyds Building, the third part of Richard Rogers' hat trick was to be a mixed use scheme for Coin Street, on the South Bank of the Thames. Early versions from 1979 depicted a curving glass arcade, surrounded by high-rise housing and offices in his trademark "guts out" style. Had this gone ahead, it would have cemented Rogers's early, extreme approach to architecture, and might have made a difference in some of the battles with conservative neo-traditionalists that dominated the 1980s.

Instead, a local campaign led to Coin Street being built as a low-rise housing cooperative in what was widely considered a huge success for the provision of social housing to Londoners on lower incomes. Nevertheless, when Rogers returned to build in London more than a decade later, he had developed a mature, smoother, more commercially tasteful style, and one can't help wonder whether a whole generation of city buildings were far less bold as a result.

## GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 <b>Amblers (Group 1)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30 am)	<b>John Harbert</b> 020 8300 5361	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Amblers (Group 3)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30 am)	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (10.00 am)  	<b>Roy Black</b>  020 8302 9942	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Book Reading</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>June Reid</b> 020 8302 7887	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Classical Music</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (2.30–4.30 pm)	<b>Olive Mercer</b> 020 8300 3136	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Concerts/Opera</b> Various dates and times   £	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	<b>Vacancies</b> ↳
 <b>Darts (at the Alma pub)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday (noon)  	<b>Leader pending</b>  needed, please	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Family History</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tues  & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thurs 	<b>Judith Swain &amp; Kate Berry</b> 020 8303 5759	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Ramblers (Group 2)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (4–5 miles)	<b>David Wedderkop</b> 020 8850 5042	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Rummikub® (Group 1)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>Margaret Platt</b> 020 8309 6395	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Rummikub® (Group 2)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>Mary Hawes</b> 020 8300 0521	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10.00 am)   £	<b>Gay Braybrook</b>  020 8309 6372	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Wine Appreciation</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (7.30 pm) £	<b>Roger Brown</b> 020 8850 5362	<b>Vacancies</b>

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](mailto: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/bank holidays

£ A charge applies

 Certain seasons only

↳ Notice on the board at meetings

 Open to all

 Temporary point of contact

## PROGRAMME

### 2016

June	Vicky Fry	Murder, Myths and Misconceptions – Working with the Magistrates' Courts
July	Maurice Tripp	“Why the show must go on!”
August	Barbara Stevens	Charles and Emma Darwin/Downe
September	Alan Ashby	Life-Saving Work of the Lifeboat Service
October	Kevin Reynolds	Walking in Kent and Sussex
November	Steve Roberts	Tales of a Scotland Yard Detective
December	Roy Bilham	Christmas Music (on trumpet)

## 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 Andrews	020 8300 2064
Asst. Membership Secretary	Lynn Plumer	07714 234398
Speakers Secretary	Janet Lambern	020 8300 1786
Group Co-ordinator	Trevor Ford	020 8302 7635
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
General Member	Sue Brooks	020 8298 1117

## 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*

*Is physiology the study of carbonated drinks?*