

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

June 2017



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

Group Leaders Meeting

A coffee morning and meeting for group leaders took place on 4th May. Preliminary plans for the “Showcase” event at the August General Meeting were discussed. Approximately 18 groups will be arranging table-top displays to demonstrate their activities. Discussion also took place seeking ideas to overcome the lack of vacancies for new members wishing to join groups and also ways to make new members more welcome when attending General Meetings for the first time.

It is proposed to hold a further meeting at 11 am on Thursday 6th July at Ockley Court – which it is hoped that as many group leaders as possible will attend – to finalise arrangements for the “Showcase.”

George Murrell

① Activities available to members are not limited to those provided by Sidcup & District U3A. See the website for Greater London South East Network for information about others.

Webmaster

GROUP NEWS

Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden



Our trip out in May was to The Mall Galleries in London, where the Royal Society of Portrait Painters was holding its annual exhibition, showcasing both new talent and that of eminent Society members. A wide variety of portraits was on show, some pencil or charcoal sketches, some strongly coloured paintings, but many were so realistic that they looked like photographs rather than paintings. Not surprisingly, most were not for sale as presumably they were of family or friends, although there were a few that depicted well-known people. We had the opportunity to sit and watch a portrait painter at work – a painstaking task as he took a lot of time to get the detail right. Not having visited an exhibition of portrait painting before, we were most impressed with the overall standard of work.

Val Gosden

Local History 2 • Leaders Pauline Watling & Joyce Savinson



Shakespeare Walk

Our journey from Sidcup Station was straightforward with no travel problems. We arrived at Southwark Cathedral and took coffee in the Refectory Café before meeting our tour guide, Valerie. We walked to Bankside and learnt how, in Shakespeare's time, the city of London had to be 'pure' so all bawdy entertainments were moved across the Thames. Being separated by the river and on the outskirts of the city's jurisdiction, Bankside developed into a vibrant disreputable cosmopolitan underbelly of London. With its butchery sports of bear and bull baiting, dog and cock fights and night moths (prostitutes) working at the stews (brothels), theatres and more inns and taverns than anywhere else, it was a great inspiration for the writers of that time. The Globe Theatre was built in 1599 on the site of an old theatre, but in 1613 during a play a theatrical cannon misfired and the theatre went up in flames. It was rebuilt in 1614 but pulled down thirty years later to build tenement housing. The present Globe Theatre was built near the original site, and, using old pictures, as close as possible to the original design. Apart from the rain, we had a great day and retired to a pub for lunch to talk about the tour.

Betty Miles

Ramblers 2 • Leader Roy Black



Prior to our recce, I had never been to this neck of the woods and the only mention of Woolwich and its Common and Barracks had been on the news. I was, therefore, very wary and took the precaution of emptying my purse of all except my bus pass and a few notes. Had I been offered a Kevlar vest, I may have accepted it! The start of the walk, past the cemetery and on to Ha-ha Road and Woolwich Common Road, was along the busy main road so we decided that we would forego this on the actual day of the walk and start at Trinity Church instead. All my misgivings faded away when we reached Plumstead Common (so-called from the number of orchards which once covered this area) where we found a gentle Sunday morning café vibe reminiscent of Chislehurst or Blackheath. Friendly, happy people guided us (because we got confused a few times) through this very green and pleasant walk down to the pond at the Slade and up across Winn's Common. We descended down to Great Bartlett Woods and climbed the slope to enter Bostall Woods where we walked through a beautiful beech wood and then onto Bostall Heath.

Nine of us attended on the actual day and agreed that we are very lucky to be able to have access to such green open land and wonderful woods. Helen and I had thought that, by reducing the length of the walk, we had "short-changed" our group, but the steepness of many paths gave us all a good workout! We eventually caught a bus into Bexleyheath and enjoyed a very pleasant lunch in The Furze Wren. (I'm sure our wise and wonderful editor will tell us what this is or was!!) This walk was led by Helen Salmon and me.

Rinka Halliday

(i) One reference source states that the furze wren is a local name for the Dartford warbler. There are about 80 species of true wrens, but only the Eurasian wren lives in Europe. Most wrens have complex songs and occupy a wide range of habitats including dry, sparsely wooded countryside to rainforest where they live mainly at low levels. *Ulex* (commonly known as gorse, furze or whin) is a genus of flowering plants.

Editor

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



In May, we travelled north west from Bank Station on the Central Line to Perivale. A short walk brought us to the Grand Union Canal where we walked on the towpath – a quiet stretch with a few boats, ducks, coots and moorhens and not too many joggers and cyclists! We had intended to cross the canal at the second footbridge (according to my 2012 A-Z – which was obviously out of date!) but one of the bridges had been removed so we had to backtrack and cross over. This threw me and we had some trouble finding our way to the road. Two of the group helped out with their phone maps and we eventually found our way to The Ballot Box pub for lunch. On our way back, we climbed Horsenden Hill which gave us views across London and we returned via Perivale Station.

Christine Withams

Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



We had a good turnout for our visit to Bevis Marks Synagogue in the City. We learned, from the informative talk we were given, that Jews originally came to the UK in 1066 but were banned by Edward I. In 1657 Oliver Cromwell allowed them to return and this area of London was where they settled. After the room they had as a meeting place nearby became too small, this synagogue was built by Joseph Avis, a Quaker, and it was dedicated in 1701. It is the only synagogue in Europe to have held services continuously for over 300 years.

We heard that much of the design and decoration had been influenced by the synagogue in Amsterdam, which had opened twenty-six years earlier. The seven hanging multi-branched candelabra represent the days of the week. The largest, in the centre, represents the Sabbath and was donated to the synagogue by members of the Amsterdam Sephardi Congregation. In front of the Ark are six large brass candlesticks and four more stand on the Reading Desk, making ten in total and symbolising the Ten Commandments. Around the building, supporting the Ladies' Gallery, are twelve pillars. These symbolically represent the twelve tribes of Israel. The men sit on seats facing each other in the main part of the synagogue.

The congregation nowadays is fairly small as only a few Jews live locally, the majority having moved to north and west London. However, the synagogue plays an important part in major ceremonial services in the City and is an important tourist venue.

Mary Webb

Book Reading • Leader June Reid



Our book for May was *Family Life* written by Akhil Sharma and chosen by Liz. This was a darkly comic story of great tragedy. The storyteller, Ajay, lives with his mother, father and older brother, Birju, in Delhi. Their lives change dramatically when their father takes them to America to ensure a better future for his family. They find America a land of carpets and elevators, swimsuits and hot water on tap – all this being very exciting to the boys. They do very well at school and the elder boy is preparing to enter university when tragedy strikes. As Ajay grows up, he finds himself torn between love, duty and survival. This story is quite heart-rending. Told in a plain style, although laced with some black humour, it is a gripping tale based on the author's own memoirs. Our group was quite divided on this one but agreed it was rather an important work.

June Reid

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Amblers (Group 3) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Vacancies
 Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (10.00 am)  	Roy Black  020 8302 9942	Vacancies
 Book Reading 1 st Thursday (2.00–4.00 pm)	June Reid 020 8302 7887	Vacancies
 Classical Music 2 nd Friday (2.30–4.30 pm)	Olive Mercer 020 8300 3136	Vacancies
 Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon)  	Leader pending  needed, please	Vacancies
 Family History 2 nd Tues  & 4 th Thurs 	Judith Swain & Kate Berry 020 8303 5759	Vacancies
 Handcrafted Cards (Group 2) 1 st Wednesday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	1 Vacancy
 Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles)	Roy Black 020 8302 9942	Vacancies
 Rummikub® (Group 1) 4 th Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Margaret Platt 020 8309 6395	Vacancies
 Scrabble® <i>Timings to be advised</i>	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Vacancies
 Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00 am)   £	Gay Braybrook  020 8309 6372	Vacancies
 Wine Appreciation 3 rd Wednesday (7.30 pm) £	Roger Brown 020 8850 5362	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 that 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

2017

June	Russell Bowes	Dig for Victory
July	Professor Akbar	Ageing Immunity Research Project
August	Groups & Members	Showcase: Sharing of Sidcup U3A Activities
September	Ian Bevan	The History of the Crystal Palace
October	Nigel Dawson	Comedy Heroes
November	Heather Woodward	Churchill & Chartwell
December	Joe Mendell	Bob Newhart Rides Again!

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Colin Barclay	07401 474844
Vice-Chairman	Carolyn Barclay	07401 474844
Vice-Chairman	Sandra Applegate	07717 020611
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 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. 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
Greater London South East Network: www.u3asites.org.uk/glondonsenetwork
London Region U3A: www.u3asites.org.uk/london-region
World U3A: www.worldu3a.org **Virtual U3A:** www.vu3a.org

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

Laugh and the world laughs with you. Snore and you sleep alone.