

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

March 2011



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

NOTICES

AGM Agenda

Apologies for absence
Matters arising
Minutes of 2010 AGM
Approval of accounts
Annual reports
Election of officers
Appointment of inspector of accounts
Any other business

IN MEMORIAM

Sadly, I report that Frank Whipp died suddenly on 9th February 2011. He had been a very active member of Sidcup U3A, joining soon after it was formed in 1994. He had just retired from the Civil Service.

Right from the start, he was a lively participant in a variety of groups as well as having many other outside activities. Although Vera, his wife, was busy in the voluntary sector, they hosted both Play Reading and Armchair Travel U3A groups for many years. Their vast knowledge of Kentish walks helped them to run Ramblers U3A.

They both reached their 90th birthdays last summer and inevitably age, hearing problems and decreasing mobility meant they had to give up most U3A activities. But they have continued to follow what has been happening in the U3A with interest.

Frank will always be remembered as the kind, thoughtful and gentle man that he always was.

The Memorial service was held on 11th March at the United Reformed Church, Bexley, where he had worshipped for more than 60 years.

Annette Jansen

250,000

The University of the Third Age is now a quarter of a million members strong. Our 250,000th member belongs to the newly-formed Odiham District U3A in Hampshire.

Editor

Group Changes

- ‘A Chance to Speak’ has closed owing to lack of support.
- Bird Watching leader is now Gay Braybrook only; she is no longer sharing this with José Steward.
- Local History 2 leaders are now Pauline Watling and Barbara Olney.
- The Cathedral Group, which is now full, now meets at 3.00 pm (rather than 2.30 pm) on the 2nd Wednesday.
- The National Trust and English Heritage Group leader is now Frances Percival; she has taken over from John and Olive Mercer.

We would like to thank John, Olive and José for their many years of leadership and thank Frances, Pauline and Barbara for taking on these groups.

Christine Spencer

Behind the Scenes at Kew

This is a unique opportunity for U3A members to learn more about the work of Kew Gardens. It takes place at 1.25 pm–4.30 pm on Thursday 5th May 2011 in the Jodrell Lecture Theatre, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew.

Admission is by ticket only at £12.50 each including refreshments. Applications should be made in writing to Third Age Trust, 19 East Street, Bromley, BR1 1QE enclosing SAE and cheque payable to Third Age Trust. Only individual applications are accepted.

Programme:–

- 1.25 pm: Welcome and introduction.
- 1.30 pm: Introduction to the herbarium.
- 2.15 pm: The Jodrell Laboratory: More than 150 years of cutting edge plant science.
- 3.30 pm: Tea.
- 3.30 pm: Saving seeds for life: Kew’s Millennium Seed Bank Partnership explained.
- 4.15 pm: Questions.
- 4.30 pm: Close.

George Murrell

Annual Subscriptions 2012

Acting upon advice received, the Committee has decided that the amount currently held as “cash in hand” should be reduced. In order that all members should benefit, it has been decided that the annual subscription for 2012 will be reduced to £10. It is emphasised that this is for one year only.

George Murrell

Your PC Problems Solved

A booklet bearing the above title is available free of charge from the publisher of “Which?” magazine. Contact them on 0800 920185 – but be ready for them to offer you a subscription. In the meantime, my informal “Computer Problem Help” document remains available from the home page of our own website. Its content derives from the Q&A section of a periodical magazine for the retired.

Editor

GROUP NEWS

Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



Our February ramble was an urban walk starting from North Dulwich station; from here we walked through Dulwich village admiring many large houses along the way. We then walked around part of Dulwich Park, stopped to look at the birds on the lake, and then went through much of the Dulwich Park Estate passing the striking buildings of Dulwich College. The College was founded in 1619, but the present building dates from 1870. After passing the Dulwich tollgate – the only one left in London – we turned left on to a path which was a steep climb through Low Cross Wood. Shortly after reaching the top, we went into Sydenham Hill Woods which is managed by the London Wildlife Trust. Parts of the wood were very muddy but volunteers were working to improve the pathways. This ancient woodland is a haven for nature in suburbia, and incorporates a disused railway line and a folly designed to look like the remains of a Gothic abbey. Our ramble ended at a pub where we hoped to have lunch only to find it was being re-furnished; we split up and the majority of the group ended up at a pub in Lewisham.

Mary Webb

Freedom Pass Explorers • Leader Val Gosden



Our January trip out was to Ealing Broadway, a seemingly typical suburban town, and we soon found a café for morning coffee. We then walked round Walpole and Lammas parks, one of which has a water feature and fountains, the other having a sunken garden. Many trees in the parks were planted by councillors in the 1940s, but more recently a tree was planted in the Millennium year in recognition of the 50 years that the Polish community has been established in Ealing.

It was a bright, sunny day in February when we went to Finsbury Park. This is a large, open park with many trees and shrubs, and on our visit yellow and mauve crocuses were in evidence. We enjoyed walking round the park, some of it being quite high up and providing us with a view across intervening houses and far into the distance. The park includes a sports arena with, among other facilities, a running track. Tennis and basketball are also catered for in the park, as well as football, we noticed. Water always seems to add to a park's attractions, and we enjoyed seeing the variety of ducks, geese and swans on the lake. All in all, it was a most enjoyable trip out.

Val Gosden

(i) Finsbury Park covers 115 acres of the London Borough of Haringey. It was one of the first of the great London parks laid out in the Victorian era on what previously had been part of Hornsey Wood which had been cut back repeatedly for grazing during the Middle Ages. During the first half of the 19th century, following developments in Paris, Londoners began to demand the creation of open spaces and petitioned for a park to alleviate conditions of the poor. Originally to be called Albert Park, the first plans were drawn up in 1850. Renamed Finsbury Park (after the area where the benefactors who created it lived), plans for the park's creation were ratified by an Act of Parliament in 1857. Despite considerable local opposition, the park was formally opened on Saturday 7 August 1869.

Editor

Classical Music 1 • Leader Derick Johnson



In February we had a programme from Sonny Hopkins which included a few pieces with operatic interludes. We started with Beethoven's "Adelaide", sung by Jussi Björling, followed by Rossini's "The Thieving Magpie" played by the Royal Opera House Orchestra. During the course of the afternoon, we had three works for the piano starting with Sergei Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto No 2 with Cécile Ousset on the piano and the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. We followed this with Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata", with Walter Gieseking on the piano, and Satie's Gymnopédie No 1 with Anne Queffélec on the piano. The items which introduced famous singers into our programme were Canteloube's "Songs of the Auvergne", sung by Victoria de los Ángeles, and Puccini's "La Bohème", sung by Nicolai Gedda. We also heard Dvořák's "Song to the Moon" from his opera "Rusalka" {water nymph}, sung by Lucia Popp, and Giuseppe Verdi's "La Vergine Degli Angeli" {the virgin of angels} from his opera "La Forza Del Destino" {the force of destiny}, sung by Lesley Garrett. We then heard Gabriel Fauré's "Pavane", with Atarah Ben-Tovim on the flute; Pietro Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana" {rustic chivalry}; Camille Saint-Saëns's suite, "Carnival of the Animals"; Joaquín Rodrigo's Adagio Concierto de Aranjuez; the final scene of Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake"; and Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings. This completed a very full afternoon of music.

Derick Johnson

Local History 3 • Leader Pam Kirk



Our visit for February was to the Victoria & Albert Museum to see "The Imperial Chinese Robes Exhibition" which featured more than fifty garments from the collection of the Palace Museum in the Forbidden City of Beijing. The exhibition tells the story of court life through exquisite and intricate clothes for grand state functions as well as simple, beautiful garments that were worn daily. It also provided an opportunity to study the intricacies and rich colours of the Chinese silk used to make them. From 1644 to 1911, when Imperial Rule ended, the Forbidden City was the residence of the Qing rulers, and, as the Emperor carried out various official tasks, he wore different clothes to suit both the ceremonial and practical duties that he performed. The V&A was exhibiting these amazing Imperial robes for the first time, and these garments, which have been carefully preserved for over two hundred years, tell the story of a vanished court life.

Marie & Den Brittain

Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Jansen



Because of the wet and muddy conditions in the countryside, we decided on a walk along the Thames Path from London Bridge Station to Greenwich. It was cold and misty and woolly hats were the order of the day! We walked through Hays Galleria to the river bank then soon passed HMS Belfast, Butler's Wharf and the Design Museum. It was very striking how much of the old dockyard paraphernalia, anchors and chains, etc, have been used as features along the way. The whole area along the path is full of history, and, after passing Brunel's Engine House and continuing along Rotherhithe Street, we stopped for an excellent lunch at "The Ship York" pub. We continued on the Thames Path into Deptford and then on to Greenwich and the shrouded Cutty Sark. We covered about 6½ enjoyable and interesting miles.

Gloria Exeter

GROUP VACANCIES

	GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
	Amblers (Group 1) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	John Harbert 020 8300 5361	Yes
	Amblers (Group 3) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	Norma Balfour 020 8303 6372 José Steward 07957 181808	Yes
	Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning)	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
	Classical Music (Group 2) 2 nd Friday (2.30 pm)	Maureen Porter 020 8300 6128	1
	Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (midday)	Fred Green	Yes
	German Thursdays (2 pm; not 3 rd Thurs)	Betty Deutsch 020 8302 6526	On hold until further notice
	Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	John Harlow 020 8300 3865	2
	Local History (Group 2) 2 nd Wednesday	Pauline Watling 020 8300 3910 Barbara Olney 020 8302 4289	3
	Philosophy (Group 1) 3 rd Monday (2 pm)	Bernard Catallo 020 8300 8651	1
	Ramblers (Group 1) (6–7 miles) 4 th Tuesday (10.30 am)	Annette Jansen 01322 522252	Yes
	Ramblers (Group 2) (4–5 miles) 4 th Tuesday	Pat & Alf Cracknell 020 8302 0823	Yes
	Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10 am)	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
	Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes. Notice on board at meetings

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 the Group Co-ordinator.

Christine Spencer, Group Co-ordinator ☎ 020 8300 4291

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's not difficult to run a group and leaders of a full one can advise you how it's done.

PROGRAMME

2011

March	Annual General Meeting Miss E. Turner	In the Spirit of Shackleton
April	Mr. I. Bevan	Tudor London
May	Mrs. J. Bruce	Knickers and Things
June	<i>N/A</i>	Group Displays
July	Mr. C. Durack	Major Rowland George Hallam Shears, BEM, TD, G8KW, 1919-2009
August	Mr. R. Spiller	Entertainer & Comedian
September	Mr. A. Stockwell	Puppets, Piers & Pantomimes – 40 years in show business
October	Mr. J. Newson	Her Majesty's Crown Jewels
November	<i>TBA</i>	
December	Mrs. P. Mortlock	A Country House Christmas

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
Vice-Chairman	Annette Jansen	01322 522252
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	Dennis Brittain	
Membership Secretary	John Harlow	020 8300 3865
Speakers Secretary	Valerie Gosden	020 8300 0664
Group Co-ordinator	Christine Spencer	020 8300 4291
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
Social Secretary	Vacant	

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Travel Group Leader	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
Raffle Organiser	Pat Garwood	020 8306 0013
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 DA5 3AR – typed if possible.

Please submit contributions by 3rd of the month.

WEBSITE

www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk

This Newsletter (including previous editions) may be read or downloaded from our website.

Afterthought

They say that money talks, but mine only ever says goodbye.