

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

March 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

In March 2017 only, the meeting will be held at The United Services Club, 108 Main Road, Sidcup

NOTICES

Group Leaders Meeting

A meeting for group leaders and any other interested members will be held at 11.00 am on Thursday 4th May at Ockley Court. The main purpose of this is to discuss arrangements for the "Summer Showcase Meeting" to be held in August. Additionally, an update on activities planned by the South East London U3A Network will be provided. If you are unable to attend, it would be appreciated if group leaders could arrange for a deputy to attend and represent their group.

George Murrell

Japan

On behalf of Croydon U3A, I am pleased to invite members of U3As in the Greater London South East Network to our Japan study morning on Tuesday 28th March 2017, at Braithwaite Hall, Croydon. The venue is easily accessible by public transport via East Croydon or West Croydon stations. It is located within the old Town Hall Buildings in Katharine Street, Croydon.

Cariss Smith, Croydon U3A

(i) More information about this will appear on the notice board at the March meeting.

Editor

GROUP NEWS

Concerts/Opera • Leader Norma Balfour



Please note that I have retired from leadership of this group and it is now closed. If anyone is prepared to take it over, I would be willing to show them the ropes.

Norma Balfour

The World's Greatest Churches • Leader Val Gosden



Our 5th lecture covered the Great Churches of Russia, and we were surprised at the number of churches that still existed despite years of Communism. The most famous Russian church, the Cathedral of St. Basil in Moscow, is atypical of other churches; beautiful on the outside but undecorated on the inside. Many of the churches have suffered from a lack of care over the years, but one can still see paintings and sculptures. For our 6th lecture, we looked at the fantastic painted churches of Romania. These churches have paintings both inside and outside, covering every space available, depicting important people that are featured in the Bible and also telling Bible stories in a series of sequential squares.

Val Gosden

Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden



On 14th February, St. Valentine's Day, what could be more appropriate than a visit to the 'wedding cake' church, St. Bride's, in Fleet Street? This is a church with a lot of history, there having been a building on the site since Roman times, and we were able to see floors and walls from that time and from various periods thereafter. The guided tour included a visit to the crypt and to the charnel house where we could see old bones laid out. St. Bride's once had 12 bells in its belfry, but these fell down during the blitz, and were later melted down to form just one bell, which is still rung from time to time. But this church is not just a museum piece and it has regular services each Sunday in its recently refurbished interior which has wonderfully executed paintings, including *Christ in Glory* in the reredos. St. Bride's is also known as the 'Journalists Church', and in one corner there is a 'Journalists Altar', with a display of photographs of journalists who were killed whilst reporting on wars.

Val Gosden

Local History 3 • Leaders Christine Withams & Patricia Henry



Our visit in February was to the Queen's House in Greenwich. The house, which was the first Palladian building in England, was commissioned by Anne of Denmark when she was the wife of James I. James reputedly gave her the manor of Greenwich to apologise for swearing at her in public after she accidentally shot one of his favourite dogs while out hunting in 1614. She commissioned Inigo Jones to design the house, but construction was halted when she died in 1619. Ten years later, Charles I gave it to his new Queen, Henrietta Maria. Inigo Jones was recalled and the exterior work was completed. The Queen's tenure ended with the Civil War, although her son, Charles II, enlarged it upon his restoration and Queen Henrietta returned and remained in residence until her death in 1669. The house was used as the Royal Hospital School until the 1930s.

Apparently, there is the ghost of a maid who fell over the handrail of the beautiful Tulip Staircase, although we neither saw nor felt any evidence of her. The highlights of our visit have to be the Tulip Staircase (the first of its kind in Britain), the exquisite paintings on the upper floors and the magnificent Grand Hall on the ground floor. This is one house worthy of another visit, especially if it is combined with all the other fantastic attractions within the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site.

Patricia Henry

Freedom Pass Explorers • Leader Christine Withams



Our January trip was thrown into disarray by the underground strike. Instead of disembarking at New Cross, we stayed on the train to Cannon Street. We then walked towards St Paul's. One of the group suggested a visit to a viewpoint above a shopping mall in New Change which gave us views to the west and south of the Thames. We crossed over the Millennium Bridge, by which time it had started to rain, so we took shelter in the Tate Modern, making our way to the top floor restaurant, not to eat, but to view the north side of the Thames. We did take a look at the free exhibitions, but had mixed thoughts about the art on display. We were not sure about car bumpers tied and suspended by ropes made of human hair!

In February, on a sunny but still cold day, we travelled to Wandsworth Town from Waterloo mainline. We split for coffee in Old York Road as it was rather a big group. We then made our way to the Thames via yet another exclusive riverside development, taking a peep into their swimming pool! We continued along by the river through Wandsworth Park and onto Putney High Street where we lunched at The Railway Inn before returning via Putney Station.

Christine Withams

Ramblers 3 • Leader Trevor Ford



In February, we were due to go to Victoria Park in north London, but, because of transport issues and various strikes, *etc*, that is now delayed to next month. Instead, we walked to Bexley across Foots Cray Meadows, starting from the car park/information centre. This is a glorious open space on our doorstep, and for those who don't know it, I urge you to sample it. Crossing the River Cray at Five Arches Bridge, we were also able to a look at the bank reconstruction work undertaken by volunteers from Thames 21. Beyond the playing fields of Loring Hall, we crossed the plateau of a former (illegal) rubbish-tip, the background of which was described by Mick, who had worked in environmental departments. Past the immaculate greens of the cricket and hockey grounds of Bexley, we crept into the back of Bexley village and then steered round back onto North Cray Road. Sparkling spring (?) sunshine made this rather more attractive than the dreary rain which beset me and other walkers the following Friday. The White Cross loomed large for lunch. We went back along the southern towpath to cross back over the river at the Penny Farthing Bridge (1¼ arches only) and hence back to the car park.

Trevor Ford

Book Reading • Leader June Reid



Our meeting in February was once again at Ockley Court where we discussed *Out of the Blue* written by Robert Goddard. This was originally published in 1990 and was chosen by Trevor as one of his favourite reads. The main character in the story is Harry Barnett, a shabby overweight, middle-aged failure. He is living under the shame of a past disgrace. A rich and powerful friend of his employs him as caretaker to his villa in Rhodes, and he ekes out his existence by working as a part-time barman. The mystery begins when a young guest, who Harry innocently warmed to, disappears suddenly. Harry is the main suspect as the girl is presumed murdered. To clear his name, he returns to England. From then on the action is fast-paced as the mystery unravels. We all enjoyed this book very much and look forward to reading more from this author.

June Reid

Local History 2 • Leaders Pauline Watling & Joyce Savinson



On February 8th most of our group (21) met at the Maritime Museum in Greenwich hoping for a tour of the main museum. Unfortunately, the voluntary guide was not present on our day so it was a do-it-yourself tour. Many of the group visited the recently renovated Queen's House where we attended a talk on *The Boys in Blue* which told the history and development of naval uniforms from the mid-1700s.

Joan I'Anson

① The National Maritime Museum is the world's largest maritime museum. Greenwich has been home to a naval-based art gallery since the early 1800s, but the idea for the National Maritime Museum as we know it today originated in 1927 when a public appeal was launched by the Society for Nautical Research to develop a 'national naval and nautical museum'. Sir James Caird, a wealthy member of the Society, purchased the A. G. H. Macpherson Collection of over 11,000 maritime prints, along with ship models and many other items, to help begin the museum's collection. The Caird Archive & Library is named after Sir James in recognition of his contribution. The National Maritime Museum was opened by King George VI on 27th April 1937, with the museum's name having been suggested by Rudyard Kipling. Since then, it has grown to host the most important artefacts in the world on the history of Britain at sea, including maritime art, cartography, manuscripts, official public records, ship models & plans.

Editor

Agenda for today's AGM

Apologies for absence
Matters arising
Minutes of 2016 AGM
Approval of accounts
Annual reports
Election of officers
Appointment of inspector of accounts
Any other business

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
 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 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

2017

March	A. G. M	
April	Joseph Woodcock Peter Jones	Springtime in the Garden National Trust Properties of the South East
May	Nicky Brooks	Exercise in Retirement – Pilates
June	Russell Bowes	Dig for Victory
July	Project Representative	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	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 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

Is there an imaginary cure for hypochondria?