

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

May 2012



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

NOTICES

Community Learning Programme

The following courses are all available FREE at Arden School, Crown Woods College, 145 Bexley Road, Eltham. They run for 10 weeks between 6.30pm–8.30pm on Tuesdays from 24th April to 3rd July.

- Beginners ICT
- Beginners Photoshop
- Excel Beginners & Improvers
- PowerPoint
- Pilates (on the same dates, but from 6.00pm–7.00pm)

Contact Julie Taylor on 020 8850 7678, email jctaylor@crownwoods.org.uk for more details, or just turn up on the night. The atmosphere is very relaxed and friendly.

Anne Evans

Older & Wiser Publications

These are perfect for individual reading if you're struggling with a particular topic, so you can take yourself through these books chapter by chapter at your own pace in the comfort of your own home. There is a supporting website where you can find more information on the books as well as extra tutorials and videos from the authors: www.pcwisdom.co.uk.

- Computing for the Older and Wiser – Adrian Arnold
- Computing with Windows 7 for the Older and Wiser – Adrian Arnold
- The Internet for the Older and Wiser – Adrian Arnold
- iPad for the Older and Wiser – Sean McManus
- Laptops for the Older and Wiser – Bud E. Smith
- Microsoft Office for the Older and Wiser – Sean McManus
- Family History for the Older and Wiser – Susan Fifer
- Digital Photography for the Older and Wiser – Kim Gilmour
- Social Networking for the Older and Wiser – Sean McManus

For further details on the series please contact Kate Parrett on email kparrett@wiley.com.

The “Older & Wiser” series is published by Wiley in partnership with the Third Age Trust.

Excerpt from the Third Age Trust website

Bexleyheath

John Mercer has written a new book called “Bexleyheath”. It relates the history of the town, beginning with the lawless heath on the Dover Road which developed into a 19th century new town, and which is now the borough’s civic and shopping centre. It is published by Amberley, costs £14.99, and can be obtained from WH Smith, Asda, and Tesco in Bexleyheath. Copies will also be available in the library.

GROUP NEWS

The Cathedral • Leader Val Gosden



We are now more than half way through our course of DVD lectures, which are being given by a most enthusiastic professor. We started by looking at basilicas and then learned about the addition of transepts, which today we accept as forming the traditional shape of cathedrals. The Romanesque period began around 1000 AD and was followed by the Gothic style – a style which was used extensively thereafter.

We have noted the demands made upon architects and builders to overcome the limitations of certain materials – mainly wood and stone – especially since the requirements were to build grand cathedrals that soared high and needed strong support.

We have looked at several cathedrals, mostly in France, and have had explained to us the significance of many of their statues and rose windows. During the rest of this course we shall also be looking at cathedrals in other parts of Europe, including England and the New World.

Val Gosden

Local History 3 • Leaders Christine Witham & Barbara Savill



A group of Local History III members went on a history trail in Kennington on 10th April. We took the 133 bus from London Bridge to Kennington underground station, and then crossed the road into Cleaver Square. This is a beautiful 18th century square, with a tree-lined park in the centre, where a number of recent politicians have lived: James Callaghan, John Major, Jack Straw, and Jonathan Aitken. Most of the area of Kennington is owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, and there are numerous features to remind us of this: The Prince of Wales and Black Prince pubs, the Prince of Wales feathers on buildings, and certain road names. Here are two houses where once Charlie Chaplin lived, and the London Board School – which has been converted into flats – which he attended. There are several other charming little squares with small, but elegant, houses hidden away from the busy main streets. There is even a late 18th century terrace close to the gas holders which overlook one end of the Oval Cricket Ground. The walk ended in Kennington Park, where there is a model working man’s house designed by the Prince Consort as part of the 1851 Exhibition, and there is a moving tribute to the many killed by a bomb in 1940 which struck a shelter in the park. It was in this park that the Chartists gathered to march on Westminster in 1848 to demand the vote for the working man. They were halted at Westminster Bridge and turned back peacefully. It was only later that all men received the vote.

John & Olive Mercer

Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Holland



We decided to stay local this month as we had had three attempts at new walks thwarted by lack of parking, tree-felling or difficult terrain.

Despite a miserable weather forecast, 13 of us assembled in a lay-by on North Cray Road and set off uphill to Joyden's Wood. After a muddy track to start with, we were soon on higher ground and in the woodland the rain had mainly soaked away. We were delighted to see new chainsaw-cut wooden sculptures by Peter Leadbeater funded by a grant of £50,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Cory Environmental Trust. In a small clearing there was a life size Roman soldier facing a Saxon warrior – and looking quite formidable! We also saw a smaller arrangement of six bats and a larger than life dormouse, and in nearby scrub was a crashed aeroplane. New tracks are being designated and later there will be guided walks; we know our way around, but, to the newcomer, it would be easy to get lost in the 331 acres. How amazing to have such an unknown area right on our doorstep. We wanted to get to our lunch stop at the White Cross Inn so we increased our pace since tables had been set aside for the group there. Suitably refreshed, we set off for a tour of Footh Cray Meadows; despite all the recent rain, only one of the four new standing-water ponds so far has water in it. These will form a new natural wetlands area. It was a great day and the rain didn't fall until we were home.

This group has become so popular that we have started a waiting list; maybe someone will start a new group?

Annette Holland

Parks & Gardens Appreciation • Jill Bryant & Barbara Olney



Despite the inclement weather, a small brave group left Sidcup to travel to Forest Hill on 26th April to visit Horniman Museum and garden. Designed by Charles Harrison Townsend in the Arts and Craft style, the museum was commissioned in 1898 and opened in 1901. Situated in sixteen acres of gardens, the museum displays world cultures, natural history collections, and musical instruments from all over the world. There is also an aquarium in the basement. We were interested in the garden which is undergoing a £2.3 million refurbishment to restore it to its original purpose of linking the museum's exhibitions with the living world outside. Central to the plan is the World Food Garden – a botanical display of plants used for food, medicine, and textiles. I believe that the project has been delayed because of the wet weather, but I am sure it will be worthy of another visit next year when completed.

The sunken garden near the entrance was looking good and had a Japanese feel with swaying bamboo, wonderful colourful acers, and the large leaves of *fatsia japonica* with its tiny cream globular heads. We walked up the hill towards the Bandstand which was looking very good and which was constructed in 1912. A large and very new looking area with plenty of picnic tables was nearby waiting for the sun to appear! The large established trees looked wonderful and were appreciating the rain. When we turned around to walk back, a window of blue sky appeared and we had a glorious view over London. After returning down the hill, we saw the Grade II listed Conservatory of 1894 which had been moved from the Hornimans' family home in Croydon in 1980. Although it was turning windy and colder, I think that the outing was worthwhile.

Jill Bryant

Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



On Tuesday 24th April, ten members of Pat and Alf's rambling group met at the Lullingstone Visitors Centre. Following weeks of dry weather, there had been heavy rain on the previous two days and conditions underfoot were far from dry in places. We walked along beside the River Darent towards Lullingstone Castle and then made a gradual ascent through the central path that meanders through the golf course. At the engraving of a woodpecker (no – not a kingfisher!) we took the bridle path towards Redmans Lane which emerged at a point that was a surprise to us all. After a moment's hesitation, we were led confidently to the footpath that traversed the fields towards Shoreham. We reached a waterlogged pathway beside the River Darent, and completed our circular route across fields to the Visitors Centre at Lullingstone. We were disappointed that the sun didn't shine, but very thankful that the rain was minimal. The views throughout the walk were beautiful.

Ilena Harrington

① A tributary of the River Thames, The River Darent's name is believed to derive from a Celtic word meaning 'river where oak trees grow'. Rising from springs in the hills south of Westerham, it flows for 21 miles eastwards and then northwards past the villages of Otford, Shoreham, Eynsford, Farningham, Darent, and then through Dartford. North of Dartford the Darent joins the River Cray in Crayford Marshes and forms a boundary between Bexley and the borough of Dartford. Dartford ('Tarentefort' in the Domesday Book) was once a fording place over the Darent where it crossed the road from London to the Kent coast. Records show that a ford existed in Roman times, and, by 1235, a ferry operated by a hermit was established there. The post of hermit lasted until 1518, long after the first bridge was built – a footbridge constructed during the reign of Henry IV which survived until the mid-18th century.

Editor

ENTERTAINMENT

Travellers' Joy

What is this that thunders by?
It's one of London's omnibi.
Hail it with your Freedom pass,
A boon for the non-working class.

Swaying on the bendy-bus,
Standing riders glare at us
Lolling on the precious seats
Dropping crumbs from home-made treats.

Swarming on the rush-hour train
We're first into the seats again.
The other passengers all play
With gewgaws on their homeward way.

Trip no further pretty sweetening –
Journeys end with twitters tweeting.

Ian Brydon

GROUP VACANCIES

	GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
	Amblers (Group 3) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30am)	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Yes
	Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning)	Gay Braybrook (co-ordinator only) 020 8309 6372	Yes
	Book Reading 1 st Thursday	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	2
	Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon)	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	Yes
	Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	John Harlow 020 8300 3865	2
	Luncheon Club (Group 2) 2 nd Friday (noon)	Pam Kirk 020 8856 8372	4
	Play Reading 1 st Tuesday (2.00–4.00pm)	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	Yes
	Ramblers (Group 2) (4–5 miles) 4 th Tuesday	Pat & Alf Cracknell 020 8302 0823	Yes
	Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00am)	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
	Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes. Notice on board at meetings
	Walking in London (3-6 miles) 3 rd Tuesday	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	4

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

PROGRAMME

2012

May	Bruce Jerram	London in Paint
June	Mrs. Sandra Winter	Hand-Bell Ringing
July	Chris Hare	40 Years Without a Proper Job
August	Tony Farnham	Sailing Barges in their Heyday
September	TBA	Guide Dogs for the Blind
October	John Halligan	The Lord Mayor of the City of London
November	Derek Fulford	Antique Clocks & Watches
December	Pat Mortlock	A Country House Christmas

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
Vice-Chairman	Lesley South	020 8300 8298
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	Christine Smith	020 8304 2305
Membership Secretary	Margaret Scambler	020 8315 0108
Speakers Secretary	Sue Brooks	020 8298 1117
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, Kent DA5 3AR – typed if possible.

Please submit Newsletter contributions by 3rd of the month – but at any time for the Website.

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

Nothing is foolproof to the sufficiently talented fool.