

# SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

May 2014



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

## NOTICES

### **Thoughts & Suggestions for the 2014 U3A Photography Competition**

Theme: Architectural Britain – old and new. Details on the U3A website (see page 8)

When travelling around the UK, whether in groups or as individuals, why not keep a look out for a possible winning photo opportunity for this year's competition? Listed below are some basic guidelines to taking photos that might be helpful.

1. Subject or Theme

What is the subject or theme about?

Is it about someone or something?

The purpose of the photograph should be clear.

Make the subject stand out.

When the image is viewed the theme is immediately obvious.

2. Focus of Attention

The viewer's eye is drawn to the subject

Crop the image to do away with unnecessary detail.

3. Simplify

Include what draws attention to the subject only.

Eliminate distracting and non-essential background.

Move around the subject looking at the screen or viewfinder.

Focus the viewer's attention by emphasising the main subject. Use one or a combination of:

- Use the rule of thirds. An off centre subject stands out more.
- Frame. Whether cropping or using part of the image, *eg* look through an open door.
- Selective lighting, *eg* a spot light.
- Selective focus. Blurred background – foreground using the correct 'f' stop and shutter speed.
- Repetitive or converging lines, *eg* a row of columns in a building.
- Motion. Blur either the main subject or background, *eg* demolition of a building.
- Try to make the photograph appear different, an unusual viewpoint for example.

Look at Photo Library web sites both for ideas of what images are too common and what are not, or even try plagiarism of the idea, but with your own interpretation of the theme.

**Roy Morton**

## Attendance

It is not unknown for some group members to absent themselves from several group activities throughout the year for no known reason and without notifying the leaders. This is particularly disappointing since many groups have waiting lists. When such absences occur, in accordance with our Branch policy group leaders are likely to request the absentee to relinquish membership of the group.

## Open Day

The monthly meeting on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August will be an “Open Day” when all groups are invited to mount a display on table tops or similar illustrating the group’s activities. Individual members who enjoy a craft or hobby that would be of interest to others are also invited to mount a display.

**George Murrell**

## GROUP NEWS

### Freedom Pass Explorers • Leaders Christine Withams & Joy O’Donnell



Our March outing took us to Turnpike Lane. After coffee in the High Road, we were keen to get away from the busy roads and found ourselves in Lordship Recreation Ground. This was opened in the 1930’s and in 1938 the Minister of Transport created a ‘model traffic area’ where children could learn about traffic in a safe environment and hire model cars or bicycles to ride around its mini road system. It had miniature traffic lights, pedestrian crossings, roundabouts and a police call box, too! Thousands visited it. Sadly, it is no longer there except the pathways. The River Moselle flows through the park and there is a small lake with ducks, swans and Egyptian geese. We then took the bus to Wood Green where we had lunch at ‘Spouters Corner’ before taking the № 29 bus back to Trafalgar Square. As this was an hour long journey, we travelled upstairs for our views of Finsbury Park, Holloway, Camden and the Art Deco style Carreras Cigarette Factory.

On a sunny day in April we went to Barnes Bridge Station. After visiting a smart venue for morning coffee, we crossed the Thames and walked along the north side through green areas and smart residences until we arrived at Church Street. Here we paused to look at Hogarth’s tomb in the grounds of St. Nicholas’s Church. We had lunch in Chiswick Park and wandered around the lake and beautiful gardens before returning via Chiswick Station.

### Christine Withams

**(i)** The River Moselle – also referred to as Moselle Brook – flows through Tottenham towards the Lea Valley. It was originally a tributary of the River Lea, but now flows into Pymme’s Brook, another Lea tributary. The river’s name derives from ‘Mosse-Hill’ in Hornsey – the high ground containing one of its sources – which also gave its name to the district of Muswell Hill. For a time, the river was known as the Moswell and today’s name has no connection with Germany’s river of the same name. Once posing a serious flooding threat to Tottenham, it now has quite a modest flow. Until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the whole length of the river remained above ground, but, following major culverting, the river is now completely enclosed from Tottenham Cemetery to the point at which it runs into Pymme’s Brook.

*Editor*

## Ramblers 2 • Leader pending



Our April ramble was through Petts Wood, around the Hawkwood Estate – which is owned by the National Trust – across the Kyd Brook river, and finally through Jubilee Park. Jubilee Park was purchased to mark the Queen’s Jubilee and it was opened as a country park in 1981; in recognition of its wildlife it was declared a Local Nature Reserve in 1996. The park was an area new to many of our group. Our walk was meant to be 4 miles, but, having taken the wrong path in the wood on two occasions, I ended up lengthening the ramble to 5 miles! However, since it was a pleasant day nobody seemed to mind; the woods were covered in bluebells and there were plenty of birds singing to us. Following our return to the car park to change our boots, we went to the local Wetherspoon for a well-earned meal and drink.

**Mary Webb**

## Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden



In March we took an afternoon trip out to the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich to see the Exhibition of Turner’s Sea Paintings. There were both oil and water-colour paintings, large (very large!) and small. Turner was fascinated by the sea, and it remained at the centre of his work until the end of his life; this exhibition included some of his unfinished works. Some of the paintings depicted angry seas, with churning waters and heavy skies, whilst others showed calmer scenes, with Turner giving as much interest in painting skies as to seas. And there was real pleasure for us all in being able to see the *original* ‘The Fighting Temeraire’.

In April we visited the Bunhill Fields Burial Ground – an ‘oasis of calm and greenery in a busy, congested locality’ according to the information leaflet with which we agreed. Many non-conformists have been buried here – William Blake, John Bunyan and Daniel Defoe are among them. After our break for lunch, we had a guided tour round Wesley’s Chapel, House and Garden. The Chapel, when built by John Wesley in 1778, was of simple style, with plain glass windows. During Victorian times some changes were made, and stained glass windows and remodelling of the seating arrangements can now be seen. A more recent addition is the communion rail which was donated by former Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher. We were taken into the garden to see John Wesley’s tomb before viewing inside the House. The House contained several items that were used by John Wesley, including a study chair which can be sat on in normal fashion or straddled and used as a desk. Bureaux, bookcases, a long case clock and an electrical machine (for the treatment of depression and other ailments) were among the many items on view. Throughout the house and in the museum are many paintings and other items recording John Wesley and Methodism over the years.

**Val Gosden**

**(i)** The name Bunhill derives from “Bone Hill” which is possibly a reference to the area having been used for occasional burials since Saxon times. From about 1549, some 1,000 cartloads of human bones were periodically taken there to make space in St Paul’s charnel house for new interments. The dried bones were deposited on the moor and covered with a thin layer of soil; this built up a hill across the otherwise damp, flat fens. In 1665 the City of London Corporation decided to use some of the fen as a common burial ground for inhabitants who had died of the plague and who could not be accommodated in the churchyards. Although the burial ground was later enclosed with walls, the Church of England never consecrated the ground nor used it for burials. Finsbury, in which district Bunhill Fields lie, was once called Fensbury owing to its marshy terrain.

**Editor**

## Handcrafted Cards 1 & 2 • Leader Val Gosden



Both groups (1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday & 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday in the month) normally achieve at least one finished product per session, but, as well as working on the current activity, there is much chatter and laughter as we cut and glue. This year we have done ‘chalking’ using rubber stamps, ‘glass-painting’ on acetate (creating ‘sun-catcher’ cards), decoupage (always popular), pyramid cards, and a ‘Sending You a Smile’ card. We enjoy making these cards and we find that friends to whom we send them are most appreciative of our efforts – after all, since they are individually crafted, there won’t be another one *exactly* the same because each of us has our own ideas for embellishing the final product. Techniques other than those mentioned are also used, and some of these will be on display at the August general meeting.

### Val Gosden

## Walking In London • Leader Val Gosden



The April walk was partly around the edge of Blackheath, along roads and paths and across the grass heath itself which is not often visited. We also went through Greenwich Park to the Cutty Sark and followed the Thames Path to the Dome. An urban myth is that Blackheath was associated with the Plague of 1665 or the Black Death of the mid-14th century – although there may well have been burials on the heath during these periods. The name *Blachehedfeld*, which means “dark coloured heathland,” was recorded in 1166.

Our first point of interest was Lloyd’s Place which looks down at the expanse of Blackheath and All Saints Church which was built between 1857–1858. During the Second World War, Nissan huts were positioned just north of All Saints; these accommodated German prisoners of war and the last ones were demolished in 1953. Across the heath towards Greenwich Park, beyond and to the right of the roundabout had been a massive dip – probably a one-time gravel pit that had accommodated a barrage balloon and RAF personnel. This pit was filled in after the war, but another pit further north still exists and has always been a children’s play area. We proceeded across the heath towards a couple of ponds, Wat Tyler Road and Holly Hedge House. This site was once the home of Lady Emma Hamilton, but it was bombed during the Second World War and later rebuilt.

Crossing Blackheath Hill near a cattle trough, we walked towards the Ranger’s House, home of the Wernher Art Collection. We followed the park boundary wall to Macartney House, home of James Wolf, Victor of Quebec, through Crooms Hill Gate into Greenwich Park. In front and slightly to the left are Saxon burial mounds. Walking a roundabout route, we viewed Queen Caroline’s Bath, which had apparently been used for bathing parties. Caroline of Brunswick, wife of the Prince of Wales, had had an extravagant social life and her indiscreet behaviour and adoption of a child (widely believed to have been her own illegitimate son) had led to a scandal so great that George III had been persuaded to set up a Commission of Enquiry – known as the ‘Delicate Investigation’ – because of allegations of misbehaviour against her. She never became Queen.

We had lunch in Greenwich after which we carried on along the river past Trinity Hospital Garden and Riverside Almshouses for Sailors to our journey’s end at the Dome. The latter part of the Thames Path is a dusty building site; our progress was interrupted twice as we waited for cranes that crossed our path to load and offload barges. Fortunately, the body spied in the river by some of the group was only an inflatable doll.

### Cynthia & Roy Morton

## Classical Music 1 • Leader Alan Griffiths



Our April meeting started with the final two movements of Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* played by the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Zubin Mehta. This work was commissioned by Paganini for the viola and Berlioz decided to base it on Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. In the event, Paganini hated the work, never played it, but still paid Berlioz. Next we heard *Piano Pieces*, Op.76 by Brahms, played by Stephen Kovacevich who, by the time this recording was made, had reverted to his birth name. The first part of our meeting finished with Fauré's *Dolly Suite* by the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields conducted by Sir Neville Marriner.

After refreshments, we heard the *Moulinet Polka* composed by Josef Strauss who is the brother immediately after Johann. This was played by the Rundfunkblasorchester of Leipzig and got the second half of our meeting off to a lively start. We next heard ballet music from Gounod's *Faust* with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra conducted by José Serebrier. Our final items were Telemann's *Violin Concerto in A Major – Die Relinge* (The Frog), in which – with a certain amount of imagination – the croaking of frogs can be heard, and Zdeněk Fibich's *Trio in F* played by the Hartley Trio, which made a pleasant finish to the meeting.

### Alan Griffiths

## Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



On the 12<sup>th</sup> March a small group of us met at Charing Cross Station and set off via the № 23 bus to The Museum of Brands, Packaging & Advertising. As it was a lovely spring day, some of us took advantage of it and sat upstairs on the bus. It was interesting to see how London has changed over the years, and this made the 40-minute journey not seem so long. We alighted at Westbourne Grove and our final destination was only a five-minute walk away.

This is one of London's smaller specialist museums that, at first sight, might appear dull or too obscure, but it is actually fascinating and exists because of Robert Opie, an author and consumer historian, who was eager to record the products around us. He began collecting at the age of 16 with a packet of Munchies – how many of us remember those! The collection features over 12,000 items and displays which are regularly reviewed and rotated. The cabinets are themed from Victorian times to the present day and are brimming with all sorts of oddities, ranging from the First World War Oxo cubes to a 1970 Chopper Bike. It brought back many fond memories of childhood and was somewhat worrying as I still own one or two of the exhibits myself. (Must have a clear out soon). At the end of our tour several of us took advantage of the museum's coffee shop.

Anyone connected with the creative industries of advertising, art, branding, design, fashion, graphic design – or just wanting to take a stroll down memory lane – will find this museum educational and inspirational. Indeed, you can take some of it home with you as the shop sells merchandise related to Robert Opie's collection.

### Sue Upton

## Help Desk Enquiries

TECH SUPPORT: "What's on your monitor now, ma'am?"

COMPUTER CUSTOMER: "A teddy bear my boyfriend bought for me at the 7-11."



TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Computer assistance; may I help you?"  
CALLER: "Yes, well, I'm having trouble with my word-processing package."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "What sort of trouble?"  
CALLER: "Well, I was just typing along, and all of a sudden the words went away."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Went away?"  
CALLER: "They disappeared."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Hmm. So what does your screen look like now?"  
CALLER: "Nothing."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Nothing?"  
CALLER: "It's blank; it won't accept anything when I type."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Are you still in the system, or did you get out?"  
CALLER: "How do I tell?"  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Can you see the C: prompt on the screen?"  
CALLER: "What's a 'sea-prompt'?"  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Never mind, can you move your cursor around the screen?"  
CALLER: "There isn't any cursor: I told you, it won't accept anything I type."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Does your monitor have a power indicator?"  
CALLER: "What's a monitor?"  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "It's the thing with the screen on it that looks like a TV. Does it have a little light that tells you when it's on?"  
CALLER: "I don't know."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Well, then look on the back of the monitor and find where the power cord goes into it. Can you see that?"  
CALLER: "Yes, I think so."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Great. Follow the cord to the plug, and tell me if it's plugged into the wall."  
CALLER: "Yes, it is."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "When you were behind the monitor, did you notice that there were two cables plugged into the back of it, not just one?"  
CALLER: "No."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Well, there are. I need you to look back there again and find the other cable."  
CALLER: "OK, here it is."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Follow it for me, and tell me if it's plugged securely into the back of your computer."  
CALLER: "I can't reach."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "OK. Well, can you see if it is?"  
CALLER: "No."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Even if you maybe put your knee on something and lean way over?"  
CALLER: "Oh, it's not because I don't have the right angle - it's because it's dark."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Dark?"  
CALLER: "Yes - the light is off, and the only light I have is coming in from the window."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Well, turn on the light then."  
CALLER: "I can't."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "No? Why not?"  
CALLER: "Because there's a power failure."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "A power ... a power failure? Aha, OK, we've got it sorted now. Do you still have the boxes and manuals and packing stuff your computer came in?"  
CALLER: "Well, yes, I keep them in the cupboard."  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Good. Go get them, and unplug your system and pack it up just like it was when you got it. Then take it back to the shop you bought it from."  
CALLER: "Really? Is it that bad?"  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Yes, I'm afraid it is."  
CALLER: "Well, all right then, I suppose. What do I tell them?"  
TECHNICAL SUPPORT: "Tell them you're too \*\*\*\*\* stupid to own a computer."

## GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 <b>Amblers (Group 2)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30 am)	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Art (Group 2)</b> Alternate 1 <sup>st</sup> Tuesday	<b>Sue Moore</b> 020 8301 1952	<b>1</b>
 <b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday 	<b>Margaret Scambler</b> 020 8315 0108	<b>Yes</b>
 <b>Book Reading</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>June Reid</b> 020 8302 7887	<b>2</b>
 <b>Classical Music (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	<b>Alan Griffiths</b> 020 8303 6636	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Concerts/Ballet/Opera</b> Various dates & times	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	<b>Yes</b> 
 <b>Darts (at the Alma pub)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday (noon) 	<b>See Group Co-ordinator</b> 020 8300 4291	<b>Yes</b>
 <b>Family History</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	<b>Judith Swain</b> 020 8303 5759	<b>Yes</b>
 <b>Handcrafted Cards (Group 1)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday (2.00 pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	<b>1</b>
 <b>Handcrafted Cards (Group 2)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (2.00 pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	<b>1</b>
 <b>Local History (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday morning	<b>Lesley South</b> 020 8300 8298	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Ramblers (Group 2)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (4–5 miles)	<b>Leader pending</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>
 <b>Rummikub®</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>Margaret Platt</b> 020 8309 6395	<b>2</b>
 <b>Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10.00 am) 	<b>Various</b>	<b>Yes</b>
 <b>Theatre (Group 2)</b> Various matinées	<b>Joan &amp; John Somerset</b> 020 8300 0890	<b>Yes</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.

**Christine Spencer, Acting Group Co-ordinator** ☎ 020 8300 4291

Email: rjcmspncr@gmail.com.

### 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 page 8. It is easy to run a group and any current leader can advise you how it's done.

 Not during school holidays

 Certain seasons only

 Notice on the board at meetings

## PROGRAMME

### 2014

May	Robert Vidler	The War Years (1914–1918)
June	Brian Williamson	Chislehurst Caves
July	Julia Burnett	Entertainer
August	Open Day	
September	Romy McCabe	I Married the Vicar
October	Sue Spiel	Pam Ayres
November	Mr Halfors	The Spa Valley Railway
December	Alan Simmons	Entertainer

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Acting 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	Carole Owens	020 3663 6028
Asst. Membership Secretary	Patricia Rivett	020 3302 2887
Speakers Secretary	Sue Brooks	020 8298 1117
Acting Group Co-ordinator	Christine Spencer	020 8300 4291
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
General Member	Trevor Ford	020 8302 7635

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

**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.*

Third Age Trust, 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QE (020 8466 6139) [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)

## 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*

*Law of Selective Gravity: An object will fall so as to do the most damage.*