

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

May 2015



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

Events

The Story of Music and Memory

This is a lecture at the Royal Society, Carlton Terrace, London, SW1 on Thursday 11th June from 2–4 pm. Tickets including refreshments cost £15 pp are obtainable from the Third Age Trust. The talk is presented by Dr Victoria Williamson and explores the special relationship between music and memory.

Northern Renaissance Treasures

The National Gallery Collection. An exclusive study day for U3A members in the Sainsbury Wing of the National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, from 11 am–3.30 pm on Thursday 4th June. Tickets priced £18 may be obtained from the Third Age Trust.

Gilbert & Sullivan International Festival at Harrogate

This takes place from 12th–13th August and includes a special programme exclusively for U3A members. Full details are available on the U3A National Office website, Events Section.

Photography Competition 2015

The subject is Britain's Wildlife. Photographs must be in colour and submitted digitally. The closing date is 31st August. An online entry form is available in the members area of the U3A National Office website.

George Murrell

U3A Interest Groups

- There are 959 U3A branches with nearly 343,000 members.
- On average, individual U3A branches run groups in 30 different subjects.
- There are in excess of 36,000 U3A interest groups up and down the country.
- U3As run almost 1,500,000 hours' worth of interest group every year; this is equivalent to over 162 years every year!
- The most popular subjects are: Walking 22%; History 17%; Going out 15%; Art & Music 12%; Gardening 8%; Cards & Games 7%; Sport 6%; Literature 6%; Science 4%; Languages 3%.
- Unusual subjects include: Ancient Wisdom, Blacksmithing, Bus Restoration, Druidism, Old Icelandic Literature, Quilling and Well Dressing.

Extracts from Third Age Trust website

Medical Research

Researchers at the University of Greenwich are looking to recruit adults of all ages, but in particular those over the age of 65 for a research project funded by the University of Greenwich that is examining police procedures in cases in which older adults are victims of crime (*eg* doorstep fraud). The research is aligned with the Centre of Positive Ageing at the university.

There are two experiments and both have received ethical approval from the University of Greenwich Research Ethics Committee (UREC). Participants are invited to take part in both studies – or they can just contribute to one of the studies – it is entirely up to them. One study can be taken entirely online and takes about 30 minutes; email me if you want further information at a.c.maigut@greenwich.ac.uk.

For the second study, the researchers are inviting participants to the Avery Hill campus of the University of Greenwich where Andreea Maigut – the research assistant for the project – will guide them through the process. It normally takes about an hour. Andreea can also visit suitable venues in South East London (community centres, *etc.* if a few people would like to contribute – although she can only work with one person at a time).

The research has the support of Crimestoppers who have a current campaign against this type of crime, as well as the Metropolitan Police Service who assisted by supplying the materials for the study for which we are very grateful.

If you have acquaintances who you think would also like to contribute we would also be very grateful if you could forward this message to them.

Andreea Maigut, Research Assistant, University of Greenwich

 **020 8331 8859**

This Year's Charity – Missing People

Val and I would like to thank you all for your continuing support for this year's charity; we have raised £180 so far. For our new members, I thought that I would explain what goes on in our "little corner." Every year, our branch of U3A votes on a charity for which to raise money throughout the calendar year. This year the winner was "Missing People."

We sell paperbacks, DVDs and CDs which are donated by members for our "bring and buy" table. The suggested donation for each is between 50p and £2, which, I think you will agree, is good value. We also sell hand-made cards; these are priced between 50p and £2 which is exceptional value for the quality, and much better than the shop prices. These are all made by Val and, if you would like one which is not on display, I am sure Val can produce one for any occasion for you.

All the proceeds from the raffle also go to the charity, so please donate your unwanted gifts and remember to buy your tickets. We invite all new and existing members to remember to visit us each month so that we can raise a bumper amount this year.

Thank you for both past and future support. If you would like to know more about the charity "Missing People" we will be happy to answer your questions.

Gerry Kenny

 The collection boxes can also be used to dispose of those dreadful washers that turn up in our spare change now and then. (These are also known as 1p and 2p coins).

Editor

Local History 1 • Leader Lesley South



In April, on a bright and fairly warm day, twelve of us went to visit Linley Sambourne House, off Kensington High Street. From Charing Cross, we took the *N*o 9 bus to Phillimore Gardens, then had a short walk to the house. This uniquely well-preserved late Victorian town house was the home of Edward Linley Sambourne (1844–1910), the Punch cartoonist, illustrator and photographer. The house retains many of its original features, including much of its furniture, furnishings and decoration from the 1870s. Also, many of the walls were covered in William Morris wallpaper. The house featured in the Merchant Ivory films *A Room With a View* and *Maurice* and in the BBC film *The Enchanted April*. The guided tour took approximately one and a half hours, after which we were all ready for a drink and something to eat before making our way home.

Christine Spencer

Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



Visit to Marine Police Museum, Wapping, 8th April 2015

On a sunny April morning, 13 members of the group set out to visit the Marine Police Museum at Wapping. From New Cross, we travelled by Overground railway through Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Rotherhithe Tunnel into Wapping.

The Museum, which backs onto the Thames, is housed on the ground floor of the original three storey building first which was occupied by the Marine Police when established in 1829. We were given an interesting and informative talk by a retired member of the Marine Police. The talk covered the history of the Marine Police from its creation to the merger with Sir Robert Peel's Metropolitan Police in 1839, and to the present-day Marine Support Unit. The Marine Police was created to counter the ever increasing criminal activity of cargo pilfering by dock workers (nicknamed "lumpies") at the Port of London in the late 18th and 19th centuries. At that time in history, London was the world's largest trading port and pilfering of ship cargoes was costing the city considerable sums of money.

The talk was enlivened with accounts of some gruesome 19th century murders committed in the docklands, and the tragedy of the "Princess Alice" which sank in the Thames off Gravesend after a collision with a coal ship with the loss of over 600 lives. Although limited in floor space, the museum was crammed with marine artefacts, model sailing ships, navigational instruments, maps and charts. It also had on display the ensign from the ill-fated "Princess Alice".

When this Museum visit was over, the group dispersed with some members going onto the local eateries and the others to the dockland pubs to finish off an enjoyable day's outing.

Loges Rajaratnam

NB. The method used for building the (pedestrian) Thames Tunnel, as it was originally known, was invented by Sir Marc Brunel. He appointed his 20-year old son, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, as assistant engineer in 1826 when his first engineer fell ill through pollution in the river.

Editor

Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden



Visit to the Guildhall Art Gallery on 14th April 2015

The Art Gallery is set on one side of a lovely square beside the Guild Hall. The gallery is first class with good lighting, lush carpets, wood and marble floors. The art collection is extensive with plenty of Victorian artists. I was impressed by *The Music Lesson* by Frederick Leighton; *La Ghirlandata* {garlanded lady} by Dante Gabriel Rossetti; *The Opening of Tower Bridge*, 1894, by William Wyllie; and a huge painting 40 × 20 feet depicting *The Defeat of the Floating Batteries at Gibraltar*, 1782, by John Copley. In the basement of the gallery are the remains of a Roman amphitheatre where the public could come to watch people dying in fights to the death. No doubt thousands died in this amphitheatre during the lifetime of the building. We then visited the Wren church of St. Lawrence Jewry, which was faithfully reconstructed after suffering damage during the war. There was a lunch time concert given by a gifted young man playing the organ.

We had beautiful weather and there was hardly anyone in the art gallery.

Alan Godfrey

Ramblers 3 • Leader Trevor Ford



April 2015

Regular readers will be aware of some of the general themes: sun, mud, good food & drink and, of course, good company. The March ramble was no exception. However, it was pleasing to note that, after a few days “drought”, most of the mud around Scadbury and Petts Wood had solidified. With our largest group yet, 12, we set off from the car park in Scadbury and followed part of the London Loop (long-distance footpath) around the nature reserve, taking in the moated manor house *en route* and then crossing into Petts Wood. In the wood, we took a slight diversion to observe the memorial to William Willett, the campaigner for daylight saving – appropriate for this time of year as we have just experienced that loss of 1 hour in the spring which is only paid back in the autumn. A photo opportunity was exploited, as usual, and is displayed on the website. There was some discussion as to whether the sundial attached to the memorial was showing winter or summer time. Tim pointed out that in honour of ‘WW’, it was almost certainly the latter and that it would clearly be wrong in the winter, unlike most English sundials. Further on, there was another memorial to those far-sighted souls who purchased land around London to preserve these open spaces that we can continue to enjoy. By now we were walking on the overlapping London Loop and Petts Wood circular route to our “point of no return”. After curving around just in front of the railway line, we left the former and followed the latter route back towards Chislehurst; here we had lunch in the Crown Hotel. They had reserved a table for us indoors, so it seemed rather discourteous to eat outside, though that was a pity since the sun was shining greatly when we arrived. The meal and surroundings seemed to meet with approval and several members plan to come back to the pub on other occasions. (*I'm not on commission, by the way*). It had clouded over by the time we came out. There was a relatively short walk back via the board walk in Scadbury which completed our circuit. In fact, many of the group were surprised how close it is to Chislehurst.

Future walks will cover other sections of the London Loop.

Trevor Ford

Walking in London • Leader Val Gosden



Richmond Park – Isabella Plantation

The group of 8 walkers initially had a sightseeing tour of Richmond from a 371 bus to Richmond Park, the largest Royal Park in London, which covers an area of 2,500 acres. From King Henry's Mound we were able to see west towards Windsor Castle, and, looking eastwards through an archway, St. Paul's. Descending to the Isabella Plantation, we walked around and through the wonderful garden where we ate an alfresco lunch in an open barn-like structure. We dodged around a small number of deer – which were across our intended path – to enable our exit onto Kingston Hill for our transport home.

If you get the chance, visit this magnificent display of magnolias, azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias and countless other species of flowering shrubs. Isabella is designed to be interesting at any time of the year with many exotic plants and shrubs; in our opinion, if you time your viewing with forethought, the display is poles apart from anywhere else within our Freedom Pass zones.

Cynthia & Roy Morton

P.S. History of the Isabella Plantation (from Royal Parks website)

In the 17th century, this area in the south west corner of Richmond Park was known as The Sleyt. This is the name usually used for boggy ground or an open space between woods or banks. By 1771, it is shown on maps as Isabella Slade. Isabella may have been the wife or daughter of a member of staff. But it is more likely to be a corruption of the word isabel, which was used as far back as the 15th century to mean dingy or greyish yellow – the colour of the soil in this part of the park.

In 1831, Lord Sidmouth, the park's deputy ranger, fenced off 17 hectares (42 acres) of the Isabella Slade. He planted oak, beech and sweet chestnut trees as a crop for timber and gave the area the name it has today. The present garden of clearings, ponds and streams was established from the 1950s onwards. It is largely the work of George Thomson, the park superintendent from 1951–1971. Along with his head gardener, Wally Miller, he removed *Rhododendron ponticum* from large areas and replaced it with other rhododendron species. They established evergreen Kurume Azaleas around the Still Pond and planted other exotic shrub and tree species. The main stream through the garden from Broomfield Gate was dug in 1960 and the plantation was enlarged to include Peg's Pond. More recently, in 1989, a wild stream was dug in the northern section and this has now been colonised by ferns, water plantains and brook lime. The Bog Garden was reconstructed in 2000.

(i) My photos of the Isabella Plantation appear on the Gallery page of our website. In 1625, Charles I brought his court to Richmond Palace to escape an outbreak of plague in London and turned the area on the hill above Richmond into a park to hunt deer. His decision in 1637 to enclose the land was not popular with the local residents, but he did allow pedestrians the right of way. The walls remain to this day and full right of public access to the park was confirmed by Act of Parliament in 1872. Now a national nature reserve, Richmond Park is the largest of London's Royal Parks and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest of international importance and it includes many buildings of architectural or historic interest. It played an important role in both world wars and in the 1948 and 2012 Olympics, and, until 2005, was policed by the separate Royal Parks Constabulary.

Editor

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



On Monday 13th April, after a very long journey due to overrunning engineering works on the SE rail network, 10 of us met up at Teddington Station. As it was almost lunchtime, we found a pleasant café and had some refreshment. We then walked through the High Street, which had some interesting shops, and down to Teddington Lock. It was a glorious day and we progressed alongside the River Thames towards Twickenham. There were many dog walkers out and we witnessed a fight between Canada geese. We also saw a beautiful Mandarin duck and partner on the Thames. As the walk was rather long – and hot – we were getting weary so we took the ferry across the river to near Marble Hill House and thence to St. Margaret's Station for the train back to Waterloo. It was a long but enjoyable day.

Rosalie Woods

Classical Music • Leader Alan Griffiths



Norma Balfour led our April meeting and her first choice was the popular aria *O Silver Moon* from Antonín Dvořák's opera *Rusalka* sung by Frederica von Stade with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. This was followed by *Memories of the Alhambra* written by Francisco Tárrega and played by the guitarist Wolfgang Lendle. We next heard Kiri Te Kanawa singing Schumann's *You Are Like a Flower*. The final piece before refreshments was Symphony *Nº 1* in E Major by Sibelius with the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Colin Davis. The second part began with music by Darius Milhaud from the ballet *Le Boeuf Sur Le Toit* {the ox on the roof} for which Semyon Bychkov conducted the Orchestre de Paris. Finally, we heard the overture *Orpheus in the Underworld* by Jacques Offenbach and then a short piece by Felicity Lott.

This was a very enjoyable afternoon which was shared by a new member to our group.

Alan Griffiths

ENTERTAINMENT

The 'Nile' virus is coming!

Not even the most advanced programmes from Norton or McAfee can take care of this email virus. It appears to target those who were born prior to 1950 and the symptoms cause you to:

- Send the same email twice. (Done that)
- Send a blank email. (That, too)
- Send an email to the wrong person. (Yup)
- Send it back to the person who sent it to you. (Ah-ha)
- Forget to attach an attachment. (Done that)
- Hit 'SEND' before you've finished. (Oh, no, not again)
- Hit 'DELETE' instead of 'SEND' (Hate that)
- Hit 'SEND' when you should 'DELETE' (Oh heck, now what?)

Specifically, it's called the 'C-Nile' virus.

GROUP VACANCIES

| GROUP NAME | LEADER/CONTACT | VACANCIES |
|--|---|---|
|  Amblers (Group 2) 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) | Alan Griffiths 020 8303 6636 | Vacancies |
|  Concerts/Ballet/Opera Various dates and times  | Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693 | Vacancies  |
|  Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon)  | Leader pending  needed, please | Vacancies |
|  Family History 2 nd Tuesday & 4 th Thursday | Judith Swain 020 8303 5759 | Vacancies |
|  Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday morning | Lesley South 020 8300 8298 | Vacancies |
|  Local History (Group 3) 2 nd Wednesday morning | Christine Withams 020 8850 4144 | Vacancies |
|  Parks & Gardens Appreciation 4 th Thursday  | Jill Bryant 01322 524008 | Vacancies |
|  Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles) | David Wedderkop 020 8850 5042 | Vacancies |
|  Ramblers (Group 3) 1 st Friday (≈ 6 miles) | Trevor Ford 020 8302 7635 | Vacancies |
|  Rummikub® 4 th Monday (2.00–4.00 pm) | Margaret Platt 020 8309 6395 | Vacancies |
|  Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00 am)  £ | Gay Braybrook  020 8309 6372 | Vacancies |
|  Wine Appreciation Last Thursday (7.30 pm) £ | Michael Jordan 020 8302 3330 | 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 holidays

£ A charge applies

 Certain seasons only

 Notice on the board at meetings

 Open to all

 Temporary point of contact

PROGRAMME

2015

| | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|---|
| May | Rev. Stephen Sealey | John Betjeman |
| June | Peter Hartley | The Royals |
| July | Roy Ingleton | The Heartbeat Years |
| August | Cairis Hickey | The Wiggly Wild Show |
| September | Colin Lomas | Leonardo Da Vinci – Was he really a genius? |
| October | Ian Keable | The Corked Conjuror |
| November | Melanie Gibson-Barton | Bruges |
| December | <i>To be advised</i> | |

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 Rivett | 020 3302 2887 |
| Speakers Secretary | <i>Vacant</i> | |
| Group Co-ordinator | Trevor Ford | 020 8302 7635 |
| Welfare Officer | Kathy Cordell | 020 8300 4573 |
| General Member | Janet Lambern | 020 8300 1786 |

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
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

When I am right nobody remembers; when I am wrong nobody forgets.