

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

May 2016



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

Swan Lake at The London Coliseum

Thursday 14th July at 12.45 pm. The Australian Ballet are one of the world's leading ballet companies and U3A members can attend a talk given by Adam Bull and Amber Scott – two of the principal dancers in the company, followed by a performance of *Swan Lake*. This will be a unique opportunity to ask the dancers about the challenges and rewards of being part of The Australian Ballet and just what it takes to bring a major production such as *Swan Lake* to the stage of the London Coliseum.

Tickets for the full afternoon cost £45.00 per U3A member for whom the booking fee is waived. This will consist of the pre-show talk in addition to best available Dress Circle and Upper Circle seats which will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. U3A members will receive a complimentary programme per transaction.

To take advantage of this special offer: call the London Coliseum Box Office on 020 7845 9300 and quote 'U3A offer' or visit eno.org and enter promo code 'U3A' (upper case) when prompted.

George Murrell

Email Notifications

Consideration is being given to setting up a list of members' email addresses. It would not be compulsory for members to supply this information and it is recognised that some members do not have access to email. The main reason is that, in the event of a last-minute cancellation or change of venue of a monthly meeting or similar situation, as many people as possible could be made aware of it. It has been suggested that the list be broken down into activity groups with messages being sent to the group leaders, who in turn can "cascade" the information to their own group members (with alternative arrangements *eg.* telephone, for messages to be passed on to group members without access to email). If any members have any comments on this suggestion would they please speak to any member of the Committee.

George Murrell

Refreshments at Monthly Meetings

Please note that, with effect from the June monthly meeting, the cost of tea/coffee and biscuits will be increased to 40p. Members are reminded that all profits from the sales are donated to the annual sponsored charity. (This year it's the RNLI).

George Murrell

GROUP NEWS

Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden



“DO NOT SIT ON THE PLANTS” is one of the first things you see when visiting the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum – apparently, people will sit anywhere! – along with a statue of Sir Fred Perry. Many of the items on display in the museum tell the story of the early days of Lawn Tennis: the clothes that were worn (long trousers for the men, long skirts for the women), the oddly-shaped rackets that were used, and the composition of the balls – the original ones had very little bounce in them. More modern items were met with recognition by members of our group (items such as frilly knickers!) and, of course, ‘meeting up’ with tennis personalities who are familiar nowadays. This included a presentation given by a ‘ghost’ of John McEnroe who included some famous names in his commentary. Using special glasses, we then viewed a short 3D film of tennis being played, and we could witness the excitement of the crowds. Following this we were able to see The Men’s Singles Cup and the Ladies Singles Plate, complete with the names of all the winners finely inscribed.

But, perhaps, the highlight of the trip was being escorted to the Centre Court where we saw so much of what is shown on TV during The Championships: the seats (nearly 15,000 of them), the Royal Box, the press seats, the scoreboards, and the area from which the commentators broadcast. The court was covered, but we were told about the work that goes on to have the grass in good condition for the matches; much care has to be taken throughout the year for just two weeks of tennis. Tickets, we were told, start at about £53 for the first day, rising to around £175 for the final day – if you can get one – and there is a limit of only two per household. Although it must be really exciting to be one of the spectators, perhaps in future we’ll be relying on watching from the comfort of our armchairs.

Val Gosden

Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



In April, 14 of us visited Two Temple Place. It was a lovely sunny day and we enjoyed our walk through Embankment Gardens. The building of Portland stone was built in 1892 for William Waldorf Astor as his office. This lovely building, which is now owed by the Bulldog Trust, is only open for a free visit early in the year and we were lucky enough to have a guided tour. This year it was the venue for the exhibition ‘Beauty and Beyond’ Transforming the Body in Ancient Egypt, an interesting display of painted coffins, funerary masks, mirrors, clothing and jewellery. It made a pleasant day with some of us taking a walk back through the Embankment Gardens to sit in the park with all the lunch time office workers taking picnics!

Christine Withams

① Two Temple Place – for many years known as Astor House – is a building near Victoria Embankment. It houses notable works by the likes of William Silver Frith, Sir George Frampton, Nathaniel Hitch and Thomas Nicholls. On 28th October 2011, Two Temple Place opened as a public gallery to showcase publicly owned art from regional collections in the United Kingdom; it is only open to the public during exhibitions. William Waldorf Astor, founder of the New York City Waldorf Astoria, owned the gothic mansion. He built or renovated the home that was to become a “crenellated Tudor stronghold” to be his office and a home away from the United States because he felt his children would be safer from the threat of kidnapping.

Editor

Book Reading • Leader June Reid



Our book for April was chosen by Carole – *The Greatest Knight* by Elizabeth Chadwick. This is an historical novel set between the years 1167–1194. Although a work of fiction, this story is based on true facts concerning William Marshal and his involvement with the Plantagenet King Henry II. William was a younger son with few prospects of inheritance and little money. He earned a living by serving as a household knight. His prowess on the jousting field earned him fame and prizes, but his great turn of fortune occurs when he saves Eleanor of Aquitaine from capture by enemy knights. William is rewarded by securing a place in the Royal Court as tutor to the princes Henry and Richard. There are many other characters introduced in the tale as William is involved in all the political machinations of Court and the ensuing battles for power. Loyalty is the major theme running through this novel as William struggles to emerge with his honour and his life intact. It was interesting to read of the details about the food, clothes, buildings and weapons of the time which brought the period to life. Everyone enjoyed the book and several of us will be reading more books from this author.

June Reid

Classical Music • Leader Olive Mercer



The April programme was compiled by Stan Pape and was enjoyed by a full room of music lovers. The programme commenced with *The Arrival of the Queen of Sheba* by Handel and included the 1st Movement of Mozart's Symphony *No* 40, Aaron Copland's 3rd Symphony (4th Movement) and Beethoven's Piano Sonata *No* 21. These were interspersed with shorter pieces and the programme concluded with a rousing rendition of Rodger's *Slaughter on 10th Avenue*. This programme created great interest with lively comment and discussion throughout the session. This was a great way to spend an April afternoon.

Eric Pape



Outlandish Projects: The Ringways

The Westway section of elevated roadway and the tower blocks that overlook it are, depending upon your point of view, either a thrilling ensemble of modernism, or a horrific example of the dominance of road engineering over post-war planning. But it could have been much better – or worse. The Westway is actually just one small part of the breathtakingly extensive traffic infrastructure being planned for London at the time.

By the late 1960s, the GLC had decided that four separate high-speed roads would encircle the capital, a system to be known collectively as the London Ringways. They would have ploughed through open countryside at their furthest extents, and at the innermost were to smash through much of inner London.

The Ringways awoke a great level of protest. People campaigned vigorously against the destruction of their neighbourhoods, and the plans were abandoned in 1973. What had been built of Ringways 3 and 4 were joined into the M25 orbital motorway – you can still see the awkward links in the north-west and south-east sections – and a handful of grimy inner sections, such as the Blackwall Tunnel approach, remain as a reminder of what could have happened.

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Amblers (Group 1) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	John Harbert 020 8300 5361	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
 Concerts/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 Tues  & 4 th Thurs 	Judith Swain & Kate Berry 020 8303 5759	Vacancies
 Meditation (Thursday Group) 1 st & 3 rd Thurs (10.00–11.30 am) £	Keith Alker 020 8850 2853	Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles)	David Wedderkop 020 8850 5042	Vacancies
 Rummikub® (Group 1) 4 th Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Margaret Platt 020 8309 6395	Vacancies
 Rummikub® (Group 2) 1 st Tuesday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Mary Hawes 020 8300 0521	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

2016

May	Anna Austin	Motorina to Racing Driver
June	Vicky Fry	Murder, Myths and Misconceptions – Working with the Magistrates' Courts
July	Maurice Tripp	“Why the show must go on!”
August	Barbara Stevens	Charles and Emma Darwin/Downe
September	Alan Ashby	Life-Saving Work of the Lifeboat Service
October	Kevin Reynolds	Walking in Kent and Sussex
November	Steve Roberts	Tales of a Scotland Yard Detective
December	Roy Bilham	Christmas Music (on trumpet)

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
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

*The amount of sleep required by the average brain
is five minutes more than it gets.*