

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

November 2007



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

NOTICES

A Shared Learning Project at the Museum in Docklands: a Warehouse of Memories

U3A members are invited to work with the archivists responsible for Dockland history and the Sainsbury Archive – which is about the history of Sainsburys. If you are interested in London and social history and enjoy working with research teams, this project may be ideal for you. It begins on 16th January at the Museum at West India Quay on the Docklands Light Railway and will comprise six sessions. Please contact Ursula Steiger ☎ 01227 711536 or email ursulae@btinternet.com for more information. The closing date is 23rd November.

A Shared Learning Project at the British Library

It is proposed to research into the portrayal of children (good and bad) in literature written over the last 100 years for children aged 5-11. Examples include “Tom, Tom the Piper's Son”, “My Naughty Little Sister”, and “The Water Babies”. If you are interested in stories about childhood, enjoy research and team working, this could be for you. The Project starts on 10th January. Apply to Max de Boo ☎ 020 8922 5623 or email maxann.deboo@antlworld.com by 23rd November.

John Mercer

Newsletter

Contributions for the Newsletter are invited from groups with vacancies which do not already submit reports. Keeping everyone apprised of your activities is an effective way of attracting new members. Anyone with an idea for a new group and who needs members to get it started may submit details to me for inclusion in the Newsletter.



Members who wish to pick up a copy of the current Newsletter from Sidcup Library should look in the newspaper rack to the right of the entrance. Those with internet access may download it in PDF format from the “Meetings” page of our website. My contact details and the website address are shown at the end of this Newsletter.

Editor



We are now halfway through our fund raising year and we feel that the fund raising is going very well thanks to the communal effort by all our members. Some identifiable amounts can be seen: for example, £8.00 for a tin of foreign coins, £60.00 for greetings cards, and £20 refunded to the Ten Pin Bowling Group for faulty lanes.

However, there are many sources of income which are ongoing such as the foreign coins, the 1p and 2p coins, used stamps, a percentage from the sale of Christmas cards, "bring and buy" goods generously donated, the raffle, the tea money, the "pay-as-you-enter" ramble on 3rd November, the collecting tin for donations – and who knows what other ideas may be thought of before The Year of the Dog is up.

We probably won't raise enough for a whole dog, but our efforts will be of help towards part of one. Many thanks for your continuing support.

Annette, Val and Gay



The Raffle

We have had a successful few months resulting in £120.00 being raised for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. As ever, our grateful thanks go to all who support the raffle either by taking part each month and/or donating quality gifts for future raffles.

Val Gosden

① A team representing the Hearing Dogs charity competed against the "Eggheads" in a programme broadcast by BBC2 on Thursday 1st November.

Editor

Norma Balfour

Norma is one of our longest standing members and has always been a very active one too. Norma obtains tickets for the concerts and ballets that we have all enjoyed, and also assists with the leadership of one of the ambling groups as well as taking part in other groups. Unfortunately, she had a fall recently which resulted in a broken hip. At the time of writing the hip has been repaired and she hopes to return home shortly from Queen Mary's Hospital. I'm sure everyone will be wishing her a speedy recovery and back to booking the concerts for us. Get well soon Norma!

Gay Braybrook

GROUP NEWS

Classical Music 2 : Leader Derick Johnson



I presented the programme for the month of October. John and Olive Mercer had just returned from their holiday in Russia, and I had returned from Poland; both journeys were successful and very enjoyable. The Poles are still very proud of their countryman, Chopin, and two of my selections were from his music. This Group has been going for many years and so I felt that it would be good to repeat Fernando Sor's Variation on a Theme from The Magic Flute played by classical guitarist Andrés Segovia, and then Tchaikovsky's Variations on a Rococo Theme with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras and played by cellist Ofra Harnoy. The other pieces were Georg Benda's Sonata No. 4, played by pianist Antonio Piricone, and Johann Hertel's concerto in A minor with bassoonist Daniel Smith. The Group's numbers were down this month as some members were away, but we had a pleasant afternoon nonetheless.

Derick Johnson

Gardening Group : Leader Audrey Hayes



We were very pleased to welcome four new members to our group at the beginning of the new session, so we were encouraged at our first meeting as we spent the afternoon making plans and getting to know each other.

We had three very enjoyable outings this year: Emmets Garden, Greenwich Park and Hall Place.

Emmetts Garden, a National Trust property near Sevenoaks, is a 'must' in early spring to see its beautiful carpet of bluebells. The azaleas were also wonderful this year. Greenwich Park, which is free except for car parking, has wonderful views. The most interesting plants are in set areas and there is an absolutely beautiful rose garden. Hall Place, which is also free and right on our doorstep, is always interesting, especially in the greenhouses which are open all year. We might have made a fourth trip, but our July outing was cancelled because of bad weather. Three of us opened our own gardens, and it was very interesting to see the different designs. One in particular was most unusual because it had no lawns to cut! Instead it had a winding grey brickwork path with two circular areas where one could sit. The garden was full of shrubs and trees, many of them grown from cuttings, and some of them were specimen shrubs. Our member gardener knew the names of them all!

In November we plan to go out for lunch together to end the session. Everyone agrees that it has been a good year. We have learnt a lot in our discussions, sharing ideas and experiences and exchanging cuttings. We are coming to the time of the year when we become "armchair gardeners" and spend time reading garden catalogues and making plans, dreaming of what we could achieve. Well, we can always admire other people's hard work and what they have already achieved. One thing is sure that, whatever winter might be like, spring is round the corner when the gardens and countryside will spring to life again in all their glory and colour, and hopefully we will again be able to enjoy the beauty of nature in gardens and interesting places there are for us to visit.

Audrey Hayes

Beginners Bridge Acol : Leader Barbara Shilling



My aim is to give groups of 4 people at a time 6-week introductory sessions on how to play Bridge. Everyone will receive a folder with regular handouts on each topic that we cover. So far, two groups of 4 have completed this beginners session, but Bridge is more than just a card game because without regular practice you can quickly forget all that you have learned.

Starting from 15th November for those people who have completed the 6-week induction course with me, I have negotiated for 2 venues where you can play bridge. One is alongside regular players where you will start on your own table, then, when you feel confident enough, integrate into the group. It is a small, friendly group where you can ask some of the other members for help with hands. They meet every Thursday from 1.00pm – 4.00pm at St. Lawrence's Church (where the Sidcup U3A once held its meetings) in the room above the side entrance. Ring the bell if the door is locked. The cost is £1 as we have to pay for the hire of the Hall. Please let me know if you would like to attend; if I am on holiday a message can be left on my answerphone.

The second venue will be from about 10.30am – 1.30pm on a Tuesday at Oakley Court. *The start date for this is to be notified.* This group will be comprised only of those who have completed the 6-week course with me.

Bridge for all. If there are other people who already play Bridge and who would like to join a group please ring me to discuss this.

I shall continue to take 4 people at one time to learn Bridge. The course is quite basic but it should give enough information to learn to play after practice. There are some adult education Bridge courses available, but they are mainly in Bromley.

Barbara Shilling ☎ 01322 400443

Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk



On Wednesday 17th October we met at Lewisham and travelled by Docklands Light Railway to Tower Hill for our walk round Whitechapel – the only walk determined not to mention Jack the Ripper. We started in Trinity Square, opposite the Tower of London, where we saw the massive Menin Gate style memorial to those who served at sea during World War I who have no known graves, and the more recent memorial to those lost in the Falklands War. Next we saw the Royal Mint, transformed into offices when the Mint itself moved to Wales. We explored the area of Whitechapel previously noted for warehouses and factories, now all converted to offices and flats, and finished in Commercial Road at Riga Mews which was formerly the warehouse for Baltic Timber. We were struck by the prosperity of this area, which we would never have entered years ago because of its previously unsavoury reputation.

Olive Mercer

① The original Menin Gate Memorial stands to the east of the town of Ypres in Belgium; it marks the starting point for one of the main roads out of the town that led Allied soldiers to the front line during World War I. Designed by Sir Reginald Blomfield and built by the British Government, the Menin Gate Memorial was opened on 24th July 1927 as a monument dedicated to British and Commonwealth soldiers who were killed in battles around the Ypres Salient area and who have no known grave.

Editor

Local History 1 : Leader John Harlow



Our October outing, which was arranged by Barbara Sayers, was to The Worshipful Company of Drapers Of The City Of London.

The date of the origin of the Drapers' Guild is unknown, but the guild's first charter was granted by Edward III in 1364. It is known to have been in existence as early as 1180 and, according to tradition, Henry Fitzalwyn, who was a member, was elected the first Mayor of London in 1189. Like many other livery companies, the Drapers' Company is based at a grand building named after itself; in this case it is Drapers' Hall, which is in Throgmorton Avenue, London. The company has owned the site since 1543, when it purchased the London mansion of Thomas Cromwell.

The Drapers' Company was from the first a benevolent Institution helping members who fell into distress. Whilst its earlier involvement in the woollen cloth trade, from which it took its name, has ceased, the Company continues to preserve its heritage and maintain the traditions of friendship and hospitality. The principle role of the Drapers' Company today is the administration of the many Charitable Trusts that have been left in its care over the centuries. It acts as Trustee for almshouses with some 200 residents and has strong links with a number of schools, charitable institutions and annually makes grants for the education and welfare needs of hundreds of people.

The Drapers' Company continues to play a role in the life of the City; its Liverymen carry out important functions in the elections of the government of the City of London.

Ann Harlow

Wine Appreciation : Leader Michael Jordan



WAGS Autumn trip to Givet, Ardennes. On Wednesday 17th October, 22 hardy souls set out in six cars in the pouring rain to find the best that the Reims region of France had to offer in the way of champagne. Givet is an attractive little town on the River Meuse, a very beautiful winding river, and our hotel, *Les Reflets Jaune* was comfortable.

Our visit to Reims came on our first full day. Some of us (no names, no pack drill, but a leader who should be able to find his way – especially having been there before!) actually got lost and missed the guided tour around the Ruinart champagne caves, only arriving in time for the champagne tasting. Well, maybe not so dumb after all! Those of us who made it in time actually found the guided tour fascinating and only regretted not having large enough handbags maybe to snaffle a few samples. Unfortunately, few of us felt wealthy enough to purchase the 'ruinartly' priced Blanc de Blancs champagne at 47 euros a bottle!

The rest of the four-day trip was ours to enjoy at leisure. Some of us discovered the meanders of the Meuse, some visited Sedan and its massive castle and others braved the funicular railway at Dinant for a guided tour around the very impressive Citadel (probably well known to those who fought in the Ardennes in the Second World War) and the wonderful stained-glass of the Collegiate Church. Thanks to France's involvement in the Rugby World Cup, we were able to enjoy a group meal at a lovely little restaurant on the Friday night, before a beautiful drive in the autumn sunshine to Calais on our way home on the Sunday.

Many thanks, as usual, go to Michael et al for arranging such an enjoyable trip.

Carol Edwards

Ramblers Intermediate : Leader Geoff Rozier



Date: Tuesday 23rd October 2007.

Meet: 10.15am for 10.30am start at Shorne Wood Country Park. Parking costs 50p and there are toilet facilities.

Directions: Take the A2 to Cobham/Shorne/Higham slip road. (This is the next slip road *after* Inn on the Lake). Then turn right at the T-junction and the Park is a few hundred yards on the left. There is one stile.

Lunch: At The Rose and Crown, which is about four-minute drive from the Park, or alternatively at the newly opened visitors centre.

Contacts: Pat & Alf ☎ 020 8302 0823

Pat Cracknell

Travel Group : Leader Margaret Platt



Holiday from 3rd – 7th March 2008 to Hotel Elizabeth Duke's Head, King's Lynn.

Please note that the balance of £224.00 per person is due to be collected at the General Meeting on 20th December 2007. Cheques should be made payable to “AIREDALE TOURS LTD/CLIENTS TRUST ACCOUNT”.

I have two twin rooms still available; the full cost is £249.00 per person. If cancellation insurance is required a further £8.00 is also payable on 20th December 2007. If any member is interested please let me know as soon as possible.

Margaret Platt ☎ 020 8309 6395

National Trust/English Heritage : Leaders John & Olive Mercer



On 11th October twelve members of the group set out for Forty Hall, which is a 17th century house in spacious grounds owned by the London Borough of Enfield. It was quite a journey! We went by train to London Bridge, a bus to Liverpool Street, a train to Enfield Town, and then finally a bus to Forty Hill – the village in which Forty Hall is located. The weather was beautiful, the house and its contents interesting, but the gardens and adjoining farmland were too large for any of us to explore very far. The residents of Enfield are fortunate in having such a good open space. Lunch was available in a cafeteria within the walled garden and we agreed to meet at 2.30pm for the journey home. It was a full day excursion and with the weather and the company it was a very worthwhile experience – and all with our Freedom Passes.

John Mercer

Ramblers 1 : Leader Annette Jansen



With incredible skill, 10 of Annette's finest managed to pick the best day of the month for our October ramble. The sun shone brightly, there were no clouds and the wind was just a whisper.

We met at 10.30am at Teston Lock Picnic Site – another Kent CC open space that is well presented and managed. It is good to know that some of our money is spent wisely. Before starting off we looked for the badger set; as there are no cars on the site after dusk, these normally shy animals have made a home under an oak tree. Teston used to be the home of Alfred Reader, the cricket ball maker; this company was established in 1808 and provided balls for County and Test matches.

We set off in a generally easterly direction along the tranquil west bank of the Medway, which divides the Kentish Men from the Men of Kent, towards East Farleigh Bridge, which is reckoned to be one of the finest in England. It is made of local ragstone and has four pointed arches. During the Civil War in 1648 Fairfax used this bridge to take the Royalists by surprise and went on to capture Maidstone from the south. He was expected to come from the north where the Royalist defences were positioned.

We continued over the narrow bridge and up the highest hill on the walk where, at the top, one nameless party member managed to hit his head on the 'Stop' sign at the road junction!

Leaving the river we walked via the footpaths into orchard country. Although the crop had been harvested it is debatable whether Brian either deliberately led the party to the area where a few very nice pears remained, or he simply got us lost! Whatever the truth, most of the party took advantage of the opportunity to ensure that the pears did not rot on the trees.

We saw the large houses of 'Gallants' which was the home of the Culpepper Family, and 'Tutsham Hall' which was part of a large Manor. Thomas was the Castellan of Leeds Castle but, having refused entry to Queen Isabella in 1321, he was executed by Edward II. It is recorded in the Domesday Book that soon after 1066 it was given to Odo, Bishop of Baieux and half brother to William the Conqueror.

Back on the right path and through more orchards (and a muddy field) we arrived at the Tickled Trout for a leisurely lunch and some very good real ale. The Tickled Trout is 15th century and claims smuggler connections in the past. After lunch we were on the hills east of the Medway with splendid views along the river. A well preserved pill box guards the bend in the river providing a reminder of a turbulent past.

After making our way through very pleasant walking country we slowly descended to Wateringbury Bridge and came back along the west side of the river. There were many boats, quite a lot of ducks, and a few geese – but no heron or kingfisher to be seen on this occasion.

Almost at the end of the walk was Teston Lock which was built in 1911; beside it is one of the last weirs on the Medway. (Most of the weirs were removed in the 16th Century because of the severe flooding they caused). We returned to our cars after 6¼ interesting miles in pleasant company.

The next walk is on Tuesday 27 November (fourth Tuesday of each month) for which we start at High Elms, Green Street Green. It's about a 6-mile walk with lunch in Downe and should be very pretty during this lovely Autumn. All are welcome to join us. New members should contact Annette (email bartant@talktalk.net) for confirmation of the meeting place and time. See you there.

Brian Anderson (October walk organiser)

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
Beginners Bridge Acol Tuesdays (11 am - 1 pm) <i>Weekly for 6 weeks</i>	Barbara Shilling 01322 400443	Vacancies on courses starting later this year
Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning)	Gay Braybrook/José Steward 020 8300 6372/020 8302 1627	Yes. Notice on board at meetings
Darts (at The Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (midday)	Fred Green	Yes
Freedom Pass Explorers 2 nd Monday	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	Yes
Gardening (Group 2) 3 rd Friday (times vary; Feb-Oct)	Audrey Hayes 020 8850 1032	2
Music (Group 2) 2 nd Friday (2.30 pm)	Derick Johnson 020 8850 1245	3
National Trust/English Heritage Various dates & times	John & Olive Mercer 020 8300 3136	Yes
Quilling (The craft of paper filigree) Occasional Saturdays (2 - 4 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	Please phone leader
Ramblers (Group 1) (6-7 miles) 4 th Tuesday (10.30 am)	Annette Jansen 01322 522252	Yes
Saturday Ramble (4-5 miles) 1 st Saturday (morning)	Gay Braybrook 020 8300 6372	3
10 Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10 am) <i>except school holidays</i>	Gay Braybrook 020 8300 6372	Yes
Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes. Notice on board at meetings

The above lists, 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 the Group Co-ordinator.

José Steward, Group Co-ordinator ☎ 020 8302 1627

Why not start a new group?

If you are on the waiting list to join a full group then why not create a new one? It's not difficult to run a group and leaders of a full one can advise you how it's done.

PROGRAMME

2007

November	Mr. J. Kennett	An aspect of local history
December	Mr. J. Weigle	Music and mince pies

2008

January	Dr. Ann Kneif	Leeds Castle
February	Mr. J. Beckham	Recognising birds
March	Annual General Meeting	
April	Mr. J. Ripley	An afternoon with John Ripley
May	Mrs. B. Stevens	Tales of Downe
June	Mr. M. Matthews	Around the world with music
July	Mr. M. Lloyd	Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies
August	Mrs. Eavis	The History of Blue and White China
September	<i>To be announced</i>	
October	Mr. T. Western	Magic as Entertainment
November	Wing Cmdr. Patrick Coulcher	Natural History of the South Downs
December	Mr. J. Buttress	Royal Parks

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	John Mercer	020 8300 3136
Vice-Chairman	Annette Jansen	01322 522252
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	Dennis Brittain	
Membership Secretary	John Harlow	020 8300 3865
Speakers Secretary	Valerie Gosden	020 8300 0664
Group Co-ordinator	José Steward	020 8302 1627
Raffle Organiser	Valerie Gosden	020 8300 0664
Welfare Officer	Gay Braybrook	020 8309 6372
Social Secretary	Anne Evans	020 8302 2661

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Travel Group Leader Margaret Platt 020 8309 6395

Newsletter Editor David Smith 020 8304 2305

Please either e-mail contributions to me at editor.u3a@ukonline.co.uk or post them to me at 56 Crofton Avenue, Bexley DA5 3AR – typed if possible.

Please submit contributions by 3rd of the month.

WEBSITE AND FORUM

www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk

Afterthought

Experience is something you get just after you need it.



Five Arches, Footscray Meadows