

**SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE  
NEWSLETTER**

November 2012



**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**

**Inaugural Founders' Day Lecture**

2pm Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2013 at Friends Meeting House, 173 Euston Road, NW1 2BJ (opposite Euston Station).

Schooldays Stories, Educational Failure and the U3A Ideal. Eric Midwinter, one of the U3A's three founders, will explain how schoolboy books and comics contributed to a secondary school system that is unfit for purpose.

Admission £5. Ticket applications to the National Office, 19 East Street, Bromley BR1 1QE.

**In-Depth Study Groups**

The U3A wishes to offer an opportunity for the in-depth study of subjects to members who wish to devote a significant amount of time to their studies. Initially, the Trust is attempting to run pilot groups making use of the Internet.

The Third Age Trust would like to hear from U3A members (giving the name of their U3A)

- (a) who are interested in becoming a member of an Internet based in-depth study group, stating their preferred subject(s), or
- (b) who have the enthusiasm/expertise to lead an Internet in-depth group.

Please email the National Office at [nationaloffice@u3a.org.uk](mailto:nationaloffice@u3a.org.uk) with "IDS Groups" as the subject. All emails will be acknowledged and the writers kept informed of developments.

**Prison Reform Trust Lecture**

"Reforming Women's Justice" 7pm Monday 26<sup>th</sup> November at Friends Meeting House, 173 Euston Road, NW1 2BJ. This will be followed by a discussion and reception catered by the Clink Restaurant. Admission is free – for more details and to register your place go to <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/>

**Metropolitan Police Publication**

A downloadable version of a booklet entitled "The Little Book of Big Scams" produced by the Specialist and Economic Crime Directorate can be found at [www.met.police.uk/fraudalert/](http://www.met.police.uk/fraudalert/).

**George Murrell**

**i** Members are reminded that "Scambuster" is still available from our own website.

**Editor**

## Student Discount

Members may be interested to know that we managed to get a Student Discount on a Mac Computer at the Apple Store in Bluewater by using Cynthia's U3A Card. A staff member checked the U3A web site – as it is not on Apple's approved list – and then with a manager who agreed the discount. We were also given AppleCare at a very big reduction.

The Mac specialist who advised us was very positive in respect of passing this information on to U3A members. However, it is essential to show a U3A membership card to obtain Student Discounts. Excellent advice is available at this Apple store, and there are more details of products online.

### Cynthia & Roy Morton

**i** Many businesses offer discounts to U3A members upon production of a membership card – although there is no definitive list and situations vary locally. It is always worth asking.

*Editor*

## Tea Rota

It is time again to organise the Tea Rota for next year. I have pinned a blank sheet on the Notice Board so I hope some new members will volunteer as well as the ones who have willingly helped in the past. It is only a one-time duty for the year.

### Gay Braybrook

## U3A Websites

For those of you who enjoy browsing websites, may I recommend a visit to the U3A website [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk). If you have not previously visited, I think that you will be surprised at the amount of useful and interesting information that is available, particularly if you register to view the "members' area". It is well worth looking at the subject newsletters which can be downloaded and which could provide encouragement and information to members interested in forming a new group. I know that not everybody has access to a computer, but why not ask your grandchildren to bring the website up on their "I-pads" for you to look at next time they visit you. We are very lucky to have an attractive and useful website of our own thanks to the skill of David Smith. Again well worth a visit at [www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk](http://www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk)

### George Murrell



### Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



Leaving our cars behind us, we boarded the 233 bus to Swanley for our October ramble. We started at Swanley Park and then walked past the lake and miniature railway and across the Birchwood Arena and skirted the golf course to Joydens Wood. It was here on the downward part of the walk using the bridle path that we encountered the mud all the way down to the Keeper's Cottage before we reached the road and went past Mount Mascall Stables to Bexley village for well earned refreshments.

### John Harbert

## Local History 2 • Leaders Pauline Watling & Barbara Olney



On Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September, a small group of us travelled to Gravesend and managed to purchase the group fare for the journey. On arrival there, we walked to the excellent Tourist Office and collected a street map of the area. Nearby is St. George's Church, and in its grounds is the statue of Pocahontas. She was born in 1595 in Virginia, America. Her father was a native American Indian – a powerful man who ruled 40 American tribes. While she was growing up, Europeans started arriving eager to find gold and set up their colonies. There was mistrust between native Americans and Europeans and Pocahontas became involved in saving the life of Captain John Smith when he was caught on native American territory. She fell in love with him and he later became leader of the settlers who built Jamestown. He returned to England badly wounded in 1609 but Pocahontas was still fascinated by the settlers and was held captive for a ransom. However, she enjoyed her captivity and was baptised Rebecca. She then married John Rolfe who was the magistrate of the colony. They lived for two years on his plantation and had a son named Thomas. In April 1616 the Rolfes sailed to England with Sir Thomas Dale, the Governor. She spent a year in England and arrived in Gravesend to set sail for Virginia, but became seriously ill and spent her last few hours there. She was quickly buried in St George's Church aged 21. The church was destroyed by fire 1727 and the whereabouts of her body is unknown. There is an increasing number of American visitors to the borough, and a stained glass window was given to the church by the Society of Colonial Dames of America. The church was open so we were able to see this window.

We then proceeded through a narrow cobbled street to the High Street where the Old Town Hall has been a significant building since the 16<sup>th</sup> century; it has an imposing Grecian portico which was added in 1836. This has an intriguing past and its many uses include police station, gaol, fire engine storage, council committee rooms and offices, magistrate's court and museum. Further down the road is the river crossing to Tilbury where the Town Pier is the world's oldest surviving cast iron pier. We then walked along the riverside passing the Clarendon Royal Hotel which would have been used by visitors when Gravesend became the first English resort town. We finally reached the river front and found a café for a late coffee and an all English breakfast. We continued through to the Gordon Gardens and further on to the Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara. This Temple is really worth a visit whatever your religious beliefs are. Anyone can visit but you must cover your head and take off your shoes. It is beautifully decorated and has carved wooden doors. We returned to the town past the tall Clock Tower and onto the station. Most of the group live in Sidcup and moved there in later life so were quite unaware of Gravesend's history; having lived within the area all my life, I remember it as a bus ride and day out to paddle in the river.

**Jill Bryant**

## Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Holland



Considering the rain and fog which had persisted for so many days, I was pleasantly surprised that 14 Ramblers came for the October Ramble. We met in Camer Park, Meopham – this was originally a country estate owned by the Smith-Masters family which covers 40 acres. The countryside around it is completely unspoilt, with gently undulating fields and orchards. The views on a good day are spectacular but the group's newer members had to be content with a photo taken last year on a mobile phone! We lunched at the Leather Bottle in Cobham – a lovely, authentic pub which Dickens used to frequent. The return route was through orchards where we gathered sweet windfall apples and a few pears. The final assault was through wet grass – the real test as to whether boots are waterproof but where some failed!

**Annette Holland**

## **Classical Music 1 • Leader Derick Johnson**



John Mercer started his programme with the lively Bedřich Smetana Overture “The Bartered Bride” played by the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra conducted by Christoph von Dohnányi. We then had Frédéric Chopin’s Revolutionary Étude opus 10 played by Vladimir Ashkenazy, Waltz № 1 Grande Valse Brillante, and then Dmitry Kabalevsky’s Concerto for Violin and Orchestra in C major played by the Russian National Orchestra conducted by Mikhail Pletnev. This was considered correct by the Soviet authorities influenced by Tchaikovsky and Glinka. Before our break for tea, we had Bernhard Crusell’s Clarinet Concerto № 2 played by Emma Johnson. After the break, we had Pyotr Tchaikovsky’s Symphony № 5 played by Orchestra di Santa Cecilia (Rome) conducted by Antonio Pappano. This work plagued Tchaikovsky with doubts as he felt he might be repeating portions of his earlier works. We overran our schedule so the last two choices will be played at another time.

Whilst we were all together, we felt the time had come to ask if there were any U3A members who would like to join our classical music group. We do not expect new members to know a great deal about classical music and we all take a turn in providing the programmes. We all enjoy the diversity of music chosen by the members. If you are interested ring Derick Johnson 020 8850 1245 or Olive Mercer 020 8300 3136.

### **Derick Johnson**

## **Freedom Pass Explorers • Leader Val Gosden**



The last part of our trip out in September was on a bus which passed through the very busy and extensive town of Hounslow before arriving at our final destination, Hounslow Heath. From the 11<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup> centuries this area was retained as hunting grounds for royalty, later used for military training purposes, and in the 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> centuries it was well known as an area frequented by highwaymen and robbers. Public hangings could also be witnessed here. Our visit was much less exciting, fortunately, for the heath is now a wildlife conservation area. We saw much ‘flora’ but little ‘fauna’; the latter being simply a few birds which we spotted whilst we were eating our lunch. The ‘flora’ consisted of typical heathland plants, with many bushes sporting red berries, and pink sweet peas amongst the ground plants. The quietness experienced here in the 21<sup>st</sup> century surely made a complete contrast to its earlier days. Our October trip out was, unfortunately, on a somewhat wet day. We travelled to Watford on the tube – this station lies outside the main part of the town – then walked towards the town, found a café and had lunch. With our hoods and umbrellas up yet again, we walked back to the tube station via Cassiobury Park. This is quite a large park and we walked along paths which were lined with trees, some of which were displaying autumnal colours, whilst others were already shedding their leaves. A visit here during the summer months could be very rewarding.

### **Val Gosden**

## GROUP VACANCIES

	GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
	<b>Amblers (Group 1)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30 am)	<b>John Harbert</b> 020 8300 5361	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Amblers (Group 3)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30 am)	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Book Reading</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday	<b>See Group Co-ordinator</b> 020 8300 4291	<b>2</b>
	<b>Classical Music (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	<b>Derick Johnson</b> 020 8850 1245	
	<b>Concerts/Ballet/Opera</b> Various	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	<b>Yes. Notice on board at meetings</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>Local History (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	<b>Lesley South</b> 020 8300 8298	<b>2</b>
	<b>Luncheon Club (Group 2)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (noon)	<b>Pam Kirk</b> 020 8856 8372	<b>4</b>
	<b>Philosophy (Group 2)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday (2.00 pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	<b>2</b>
	<b>Ramblers (Group 2) (4–5 miles)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	<b>Pat &amp; Alf Cracknell</b> 020 8302 0823	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10.00 am) *	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8309 6372	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Theatre (Group 2)</b> Various matinées	<b>Joan &amp; John Somerset</b> 020 8300 0890	<b>Yes. Notice on board at meetings</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, 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.

\* Not during school holidays

## PROGRAMME

### 2012

November	Derek Fulford	Antique Clocks & Watches
December	Pat Mortlock	A Country House Christmas

### 2013

January	Bob Ogle	Biggin Hill
February	Mrs. Austin	Honey
March	John Beckham	Birds of Rye Harbour
April	Ann Knief	Lola Montez – a 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Adventuress
May	Mr. Guerdon	Chickens
June	Paul Gourden	Age UK
July	Ian Porter	Suffragettes
August	Peter Gilman	Coastline National Trust
September	Chris McCoory	Rogues, Rascals and Rebels
October	Jack Wheeler	Japanese Gardens
November	Bernard Locket	Author
December	Jack Ripley	Max Miller & Friends

## 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

<b>Travel Group Leader</b>	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
<b>Raffle Organiser</b>	Jackie Burke	020 8302 7395
<b>Newsletter Editor &amp; Webmaster</b>	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.

***Please submit Newsletter contributions by 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month – but at any time for the Website.***

## 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*

*Good judgement comes from experience which comes from poor judgement.*