

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

November 2013



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

NOTICES

Brandenburg Christmas Concert

You may have noticed the traditional Brandenburg/U3A Christmas Concert advertised in the latest U3A magazine. This year it is taking place on 4th December in what has almost become the U3A's dedicated venue – the exquisite Queen's Chapel of the Savoy. There are, as usual, two concerts but they are both moving towards being sold out.

The Grove Singers will be performing again in a festive programme packed full of familiar favourites. If you can come along, you will need to be in good voice! Mulled wine and mince pies will be on offer so it is a splendid opportunity for you to get into the right mood for the upcoming Christmas Season.

George Murrell

Opera CD presentations

Paul Foss of Bristol U3A has 80 CD presentations of operas which he is pleased to make available to other U3A members. Each presentation is designed to be covered in a 90-minute session and most include a handout. If you are interested please contact Paul directly by email paulfoss123@btinternet.com.



Humour Group

National Humour Group Advisor, Jean Bishop ☎ 01903 695215, email JeanBs2@aol.com, has prepared a starter pack for U3As that may be considering starting a humour group. Ho, ho, ho, ho.

George Murrell

Station Closure

Transport for London has announced that, as from 8th January next year, Northern Line and Bakerloo Line trains will not stop at Embankment Station. Upgrading of the escalators there will last for about 43 weeks. The Circle and District Lines will remain open.

Val Gosden

Bexley Local Studies & Archive Centre

A proposal has been made at a Bexley Council Cabinet meeting that the Bexley Local Studies and Archive Centre, currently located at Bexleyheath Central Library, be moved to Bromley Central Library as part of the shared library services across the two boroughs. The proposal is subject to consultation from 21st October to 16th December. Further information is available on the Bexley Council website (<http://www.bexley.gov.uk/>) which invites feedback from residents.

George Murrell

Shared Learning Project at the British Postal Museum & Archive “Hidden heroes of the Postal Service”

Researchers are required to find out the stories behind the contributions made by individual Post Office workers. Volunteers will be required to commit to attending formal meetings at the museum fortnightly commencing on Monday 13th January and finishing on 14th April. Further information is available from Alan Clayden, the U3A co-ordinator, by email on alanclayden@ymail.com.



Shared Learning Project with the Bethlem Royal Hospital Archives & Museum Service “Museum on the Move”

The Museum and Archives will be moving to another location within the hospital grounds (Monks Orchard Road, Beckenham, BR3 3BX). Volunteers are required to research selected items in the collection in order to produce captions and guides. Volunteers will be required to commit to a 12 week program of meetings between 11am and 1pm on alternate Tuesdays commencing 4th February. Further information is available from Jo Walters, telephone 01689 854880 or email bobandjo.walters@openworld.com.



Shared Learning Project with Fenton House (National Trust)

Researchers are required to gather information about the various collections of pictures, ceramics and musical instruments which have been donated to the house, and also the family histories of the five main donors. The material gathered will form the basis for “web history pages” on the property website and, possibly, room guides. There are no archives on site so research will be mainly “online”. Fortnightly meetings for volunteers will take place at Fenton House, Hampstead, between 11am and 1pm on alternate Tuesdays from 18th January until 8th April. Further information is available from Ella Marks, telephone 020 8998 5776 or email davidella@tiscali.co.uk.

The closing date for applications for all three projects is 30th November.

George Murrell

Renewal of Membership for 2014

A facsimile of the membership renewal form handed out at the last meeting is attached to the back of this Newsletter. Those who require an additional copy can either use this or download another from our website to print for themselves.

Editor

West End U3A Sing Out

Responding to an invitation in the Newsletter a few months back, I applied for a place on the above workshop event at the Playhouse Theatre, Northumberland Avenue, and on Wednesday 16th October I finally made my West End singing debut. Well, to be honest, I didn't actually make it on stage, but, in company with a few hundred other "mature" singers, I sat in the stalls and was coached in performing (and recording) four chorus songs from musicals – "Pure Imagination" (Charlie and the Chocolate Factory), "The People's Song" (Les Miserables), "Top Hat/Let's Face the Music" (Top Hat) and "Spice Up Your Life" (The Spice Girls). Not all necessarily my particular favourites, but I really enjoyed the experience.

The event was put on by the Ambassador Theatre Group for the U3A as part of its (ATG's) "extensive programme of creative learning activities across its many theatres". The coaching was given by Louisa Ridgway, a very patient, encouraging and non-judgmental professional musician.

I would encourage anyone, whatever their vocal abilities, to give it a go if another such event is organised. Ask me if you want to know more. I'm just waiting for my CD to arrive – signed copies may be available soon!

Richard Spencer



Parks & Gardens Appreciation • Leaders Jill Bryant & Barbara Olney



Our last outing was to Crystal Palace Park in September. We caught the train to Lewisham and then 122 bus which took us to the main gate at the upper part of the park. Although late in the summer, there was plenty of colour in the small formal beds of Pelargoniums. We went down a flight of steps past the small museum, which is housed in the only building that was left after the fire of 1936, and came to the upper Italian Terrace which had Sphinxes copied from an Egyptian original in the Louvre. Looking down and along this vast area below us, we could sense how large the Palace had been. The retaining walls, steps and other features of both upper and lower terraces survived largely intact and are Grade II listed. There had been statues on each of the plinths depicting the national dress from countries of the empire, of which just one remains intact. We descended more steps and came to Paxton's Bust which had been donated by public subscription. The Grand Central Walk, originally 2,660ft long and 96ft wide, linked up to the Palace building; however, now it only extends to the National Sports Centre. On reaching the lower level, we had coffee and lunch at the café outside in the sunshine. Close by is the Boating Lake and, further along, the Prehistoric Monsters. There are 33 in total and they were built in 1854 under the guidance of Professor Richard Owen who invented the word dinosaur. It is now known, however, that many errors were made but this does not spoil the overall spectacle of these animals amongst trees and shrubs. We walked around the whole of the lake and up through the Park, passed the Concert Bowl and went out through the Westwood Gate. It was a very pleasant day especially as the sun was shining, and it brought back many memories of a past visit when my children were small.

Our pre-Christmas Lunch was in Green Street Green at The Queens Head where a table was set up for 12 of the group. We arrived at 11.30 for lunch at 12.00. A good time was had by all. A couple of us left at 2.30 while the remainder were still enjoying themselves.

Jill Bryant

Local History 2 • Leaders Pauline Watling & Barbara Olney



On 9th October, 14 of the group visited the Museum of the Order of St. John in Clerkenwell. The Museum is based in St. John's Gate, a 16th century gatehouse which once formed the entrance to the Priory of Clerkenwell. This dates back to the 11th century and was once the English headquarters of the Order of St. John. From here the Knights Hospitaller went out to the Holy Land and later to Cyprus, Rhodes and Malta where they served in hospitals treating pilgrims. Our tour took us to the oldest surviving part of the medieval Priory, the Norman crypt, and the 16th century church above with its lovely cloister garden, which is open to all.

We then returned to the Gatehouse, which, after the dissolution of the monasteries, was put to many uses, with Shakespeare, Dr Johnson, Hogarth and Dickens playing a part. The Gate was eventually bought back, with fine furniture and painting collections, in the 19th century by the revived Order of St. John, and it is beautifully decorated with heraldry, stained glass, gilding and carvings.

We finished our tour back at the Museum which tells the story of the Order of St John from its origins in the 11th century to its role today with the St John's Ambulance. Although this is a little known Museum (I don't think any of us had ever heard of it before) I think we were all pleasantly surprised at how much there was to see and how interesting the history is.

Pat Garwood

 The Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem is the oldest independent international Order of Christian Chivalry. Its historical and spiritual roots are linked to a hospice founded about 1048 in Jerusalem before the first crusade. It was devoted to ministering in the name of Christ to the sick, injured and needy regardless of race or religion. Their dedication and courage was acknowledged by all, and in 1113 the Church recognised the Hospitallers as a religious Order and thus the "Knights of St. John" was created. After the Western Christian conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 during the 1st Crusade, the organisation became a religious and military order under its own Papal charter charged with the care and defence of the Holy Land.

Editor

Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Holland



We were looking forward to a walk in The Weald led by Avril Wallace, but the weather forecast was for wet and windy conditions which we thought would make an uncomfortable journey and walk. With adaptability by Avril and phone calls all round, we rapidly changed to a local venue. Meeting at the lay-by on North Cray road and setting off along Water Lane, we followed the Cray to Five Arches. The original bridge was built in the 18th century and linked the two former estates of North Cray Place and Footscray Place as part of the landscaping of both. It was extensively restored in the early 2000s with new stone and is now grade II listed – and always much admired. We crossed this and turned north to Bexley Village where, by using back-alleys and the car park, we soon entered St Mary's Church grounds and exited by the Lych Gate. There is so much history in this area that it is a separate subject altogether. Walking uphill and then through woodland, we followed the track to Hall Place. The rain was really heavy by then and the restaurant staff seemed to be a little shocked to have 16 dripping customers at their tables. Excellent snacks were quickly served and then we were off again! We headed for Bexley Village and took the path at the back of St. Mary's Church to get to Mount Mascall stables, commiserated with the horses in their very wet coats and headed for our cars. Everyone enjoyed the day – after all, what's a bit of rain when you're with friends?

Annette Holland

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



It was not a good start to our September visit – our train to Waterloo was cancelled and the rain began. We had to make a run for the train out of Waterloo Mainline, platform 19 – the very last one! We stopped at Putney for a welcome cup of coffee and then caught the bus to Wimbledon Park. It is a lovely park with lake, athletics track, golf course, bowling green and lots of tennis courts. We headed for the café because the rain was persistent; it was welcome business for them as no one was taking a walk in the park!!

Our October outing was to Fairlop. We had been there in January, but, because of driving snow, it had been a hurried visit. This time we managed to keep dry and the sun even came out. We were able to enjoy Fairlop Country Park by taking a walk around the lake. It would be a good place to take young teenagers as there are large rocks and other structures waiting to be climbed on. We declined to try!

Christine Withams

Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



At 10.00 am 8 members of our group began a five-mile circular ramble beginning at Cobham. We crossed the street and walked through the grounds of the church and passed an orchard to our right. We then crossed over the railway line, followed a footpath to the Cock Inn and then took a bridle path down to Luddesdown by which time it had started drizzling. After crossing a field, we climbed our first hill and went through the woods to the main road. The rain had become heavier as we started to climb our second hill, and, when came to a fork in the path, we decided not to take rough track but to stay on the road to Cobham. We then called in at the Leather Bottle pub for refreshments; this pub was much frequented by Charles Dickens.

John Harbert

Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



Nine members of Local History Group 3 gathered at London Bridge Station on 9th October ready for a visit to the Dickens Museum at 48 Doughty Street, Bloomsbury, London. Our journey continued by bus followed by a short walk at the other end, and we reached the museum in good time despite a lot of traffic hold-ups and in spite of having detailed instructions on how to get there.

The Museum is based in Dickens's only surviving London home where he and his family resided from 1837 to 1839. It was here that two of his daughters were born and, sadly, where his sister-in-law died in his arms. It was also where he wrote his best loved novels including the Pickwick Papers, Nicholas Nickleby and Oliver Twist, and where he worked on Barnaby Rudge. We found it to be a small, intimate museum that is spread over four floors that exhibit paintings, rare editions, manuscripts, original furniture and other items relating to his life and works all of which contribute to giving one a sense of his life and times. Re-opened following extensive restoration work, the displays of exhibits and memorabilia were very much more ordered, whilst the addition of a café and an eating area in the garden provided very welcome tea and cakes. It was a successful visit and we all came away with a greater appreciation of Charles Dickens and his works.

Wing. NG

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Amblers (Group 1) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	John Harbert 020 8300 5361	Vacancies
 Art (Group 2) Alternate 1 st Tuesday 	Sue Moore 020 8301 1952	1
 Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday	Margaret Scambler 020 8315 0108 Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
 Cinema Tuesdays & Wednesdays	Various	Yes
 Classical Music (Group 1) 2 nd Friday	Derick Johnson 020 8850 1245	Vacancies
 Concerts/Ballet/Opera Various dates & times	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Yes 
 Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon) 	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	Yes
 Family History Various days	Judith Swain 020 8303 5759	Yes
 Handcrafted Cards (Group 1) 1 st Thursday (2.00 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	1
 Handcrafted Cards (Group 2) 1 st Wednesday (2.00 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	1
 Knit & Knat Day to be decided	Various	2/4
 Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4-5 miles)	Pat & Alf Cracknell 020 8302 0823	Vacancies
 Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00 am) 	Various	Yes
 Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes 

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; email rjcmspncr@gmail.com.

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  Notice on the board at meetings  Starts January 2014

PROGRAMME

2013

November	Bernard Locket	Author
December	Jack Ripley	Max Miller & Friends

2014

January	Claire Rogers	Greenwich and Bexley Hospice
February	John Halligan	The Life and Times of Samuel Pepys
March	Peter Maggs	Henry's Trials
April	Don Dray	Down Memory Lane
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	TBA	
November	Mr Halfors	The Spa Valley Railway
December	Alan Simmons	Entertainer

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

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.***

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

You know you're getting old when your blood group is discontinued.

SIDCUP & DISTRICT U3A
RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP
FOR 2014

This is to remind you that your membership to the Sidcup & District U3A is renewable on December 31st 2013.

The renewal notice at the bottom of this reminder, duly completed, with a cheque for £15.00 per person, being the annual subscription for 2014 should be paid in one of the following two ways. (1) At the November or December General Meeting or (2) If you are unable to attend a General Meeting then it should be sent to our TREASURER MRS CHRISTINE SMITH, 56 CROFTON AVENUE BEXLEY KENT DA5 3AR.

IF RENEWALS ARE NOT RECEIVED BY THE ABOVE DATE, THIS WILL BE TAKEN THAT YOU DO NOT WISH TO CONTINUE YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND NO FURTHER REMINDER WILL BE SENT.

At the January General Meeting, you will be issued a new Membership Card for the year 2014. The card will not only act as a receipt for your renewal of membership but also acknowledge that you are a bona fide member and that it should be shown to Group Leaders when attending a Group.

Yours faithfully
Margaret Scambler
Membership Secretary.

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Membership No

RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP 2014

Please tick box if you wish to continue receiving the magazine THIRD AGE MATTERS

To renew your membership, please complete this form and present it with your cheque for £15.00 (made payable to SIDCUP & DISTRICT U3A & POST DATED 1st JANUARY 2014)

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Surname

First Names

Address

.....Post Code

Telephone Number

Signature Date

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND THE JANUARY GENERAL MEETING PLEASE ATTACH A STAMPED SELF ADDRESSED ENVELOPE WITH YOUR RENEWAL FOR RETURN OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD & PROGRAMME FOR THE COMING YEAR.

DATA PROTECTION ACT. Members are reminded that details they give are kept on a computer data-base. These details are kept in the strictest confidence. Anyone objecting to their details being kept in this way should inform the Membership Secretary.