

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

November 2017



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

December General Meeting

As the New Community Church Centre will not be available to us next month, the December General Meeting will take place at 2.00 pm on Thursday 21st December at the United Services Club, 108 Main Road, Sidcup (opposite St Lawrence's Church). Access to the hall is via a gate on the entrance road to the Council car park – not via the main front entrance to the club.

George Murrell

Gresham College Lectures

Members might find the following website interesting: www.gresham.ac.uk. It contains a host of interesting lectures on many varied subjects including Politics, History, Science, Law, Arts and Literature. They are well worth watching.

George Murrell

U3A Updates

Members who wish to receive U3A updates from the Third Age Trust direct to their email inbox can sign up for them at their website: u3a.org.uk/email.

George Murrell

Membership Renewal

Membership renewal forms are currently available from the Membership Secretaries table. Please collect one for yourself, or any other members, if you haven't already done so. Could you please return your form, together with a post-dated check for 1st January 2018, at your earliest convenience. This will enable us to have your membership cards ready for you in January.

If you need your card and booklet posted to you, please provide an A5 sized stamped addressed envelope with your renewal form.

Thank you.

Pat & Lynn, Membership Secretaries

Don't Throw It Away – Give It Away

In July's Newsletter, I cheekily asked for some donations for my Scout Group in North Cray. I stupidly omitted my phone number which I now provide (07729 391862 or 020 8302 2096). I am writing this, not only to thank those who have already donated to the tune of a few hundred pounds worth of goodies for the Scouts, but to tell you some of the things I have received. As I wrote before, "there are still a lot of quality items out there. In this modern age, throwing stuff out is often easier than giving it away, and, as a relaunched Scout group, we are willing to collect any items that people would rather donate than eject." I was impressed with those who did track me down – even the gentleman who posted a letter in my new post-box at the Scout Hall in Leaffield Lane. My original idea was for old scouting memorabilia or old camping equipment but some of the items have been amazing. We now have electric tools for all sorts of projects and two wonderful tents that can certainly be used, and even some badges. I must thank one man who wrote a cheque out to the group to thank 'scouting' for what they had done for his son way back when Robert Baden-Powell was alive. I have, however, been asked to collect items that the council won't collect, so it did backfire a little bit, but I'm sure someone will find a use for a double bed! Whilst writing, I'd like to tell you a little about the group.

The 1st North Cray (Geoffrey Hall) Scout Group were formed at the beginning of scouting, some 106 years ago, but the original 'Geoffrey Hut' was demolished, however, when the dual carriageway was built through to Bexley village around 1979. The new 'Geoffrey Hall' was built and donated to the group and flourished for many years. Sadly, after the turn of this century the hall and grounds fell into disrepair almost covering the site with ivy and weeds. A few years ago I was asked to re-claim the site and re-open it to Scouts, Cubs and Beavers. Alas, there was no money and any resources had either rotten and been thrown away, or sold to try and make ends meet. This I have done and the Scouts now actually camp there. In the nearby St. James Church there is a war memorial with Geoffrey Veasy-Holt's name on it and we discovered that he was killed at Passchendaele during the conflict 100 years ago. It was his name, Geoffrey, that was given to the group and they named their hall after him. It turns out he was a deputy Scout Master there, too.

In memory of this man, a coach outing was arranged for the Scouts and their families to visit his grave in Belgium. The day included various sites which amazed the kids along with a treat of a visit to a Belgian chocolate factory to wake them up again. Our day trip finished at the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate, Ypres, where, as Deputy Standard bearer for the Royal British Legion (Sidcup and Foots Cray branch), I was allowed to be on parade whilst the buglers sounded *The Last Post*. It was quite an honour.

This goes to show that scouting isn't just about knots and camp fires; it is an additional source of education for young people, not only in Sidcup, but around the world. I thank those who support us and the work we do and look forward to receiving some more badges – but no more double beds, thank you.



Bob Chapman, Chairman 1st North Cray Scout Group

(i) Lieutenant General Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell was a British Army officer, writer, author of *Scouting for Boys* which was an inspiration for the Scout Movement. He was founder and first Chief Scout of The Boy Scouts Association and founder of the Girl Guides. In 1899, during the Second Boer War in South Africa, Baden-Powell successfully defended the town in the Siege of Mafeking. Several of his military books, written for military reconnaissance during his years in Africa, were also read by boys. In 1907, he managed a demonstration camp on Brownsea Island in Poole Harbour; this is now regarded as the beginning of scouting.

Editor

GROUP NEWS

Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden



Many black and white photographs of canals and working barges, all dating from a much earlier period when water transport was *the* way to move goods, were on view when we visited the London Canal Museum. The Museum is full of information about canals, past and present, satisfactory and otherwise. We could peer into an ice well, sit in a barge and admire the clever use of space, watch some film of barging in days gone by, and read a lot of information about the development and use of the canals. Even Dartford and Crayford were mentioned. As rail and road travel developed, so canal use for business purposes lessened and many canals fell into disrepair. Nowadays, we have many dedicated people to thank for the clearance of rubbish and the general upkeep of the remaining canals so that we can enjoy them as we float through cities and out into the countryside.

Val Gosden

 For those wishing to visit this museum, it is at 12-13 New Wharf Road, London N1.

Editor

Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



Instead of our planned October outing, which had to be cancelled at short notice, we visited the Museum of Childhood at Bethnal Green. Most of us had visited the Museum before but we still enjoyed looking round at some of the toys we used to play with and seeing the modern versions that had now been added.

The special exhibition which interested us was about the life of Michael Morpurgo. He had been destined to go into the army, but, after a short time, decided it was not for him and went into teaching. He found how much he enjoyed story-telling and from there has become one of most loved writers of modern children's books. Many people will have encountered the play or film *War Horse*. Joey, the life-size horse puppet from the West End production was on show. We saw original manuscripts and illustrations from many of his other books and his love of the countryside and farming were evident.

Michael has lived in Devon with his wife Clare, and, besides writing, they have set up a charity called 'Farms for City Children.' There are now three farms which give children from cities the chance to stay for a week with their teacher to learn about the countryside and work on the farm.

Mary Webb

Local Theatre Trips • Leader Sue Brooks



I have started a Local Theatre Trips group. We go to watch matinée performances at theatres like the Orchard, Dartford, and the Churchill, Bromley. So far, we've booked to see *Grease* and *Crazy For You*, and I'll be organising another trip in the New Year. At today's meeting, I'll pin a sign-up sheet on the notice board with details of our next outing.

Sue Brooks



A Tale of Two Towers

September, Leith Hill

It was the best of views. It was the thinnest of attendance; just three of us met at Windy Gap car park below Leith Hill, the highest place in South East England. A steep climb up zig-zag steps led to the base of the tower which was built in 1765 by Richard Hull of Leith Hill Place as 'a place for people to enjoy the glory of the English countryside' and which had been given to the National Trust in 1923. The steps inside the tower lead to a viewing platform that has superb vistas on all sides across several counties. It was only when we got back down that I realised I had left the map and compass in the car. No problem! We had studied it the week before, but we did wander around a bit at the top until we got ourselves on the right track drifting downwards on the dip slope of the hill down through the woods following the line of the Tillingbourne into Friday Street. We had lunch at nice pub, The Stephan Langton (named after a former Archbishop), which describes itself as Surrey's most secluded pub. After lunch, we crossed the dam at the end of the millpond – a hammer pond created to power the hammers of the local ironworks in pre-industrial times. This was the start of a gentle, but long, climb back up the Greensand Way towards the peak again, but we were able to cut down a gully back to the car park.

October, Severndroog Castle

I saved the view this month till the end of the walk, which was a local one along the Green Chain Walk, starting from New Eltham Station out to Shooters Hill. An unlucky 13 of us set off past Sparrows Lane sports grounds into Avery Hill Park. Several of the group had lived in the area from a very young age and were able to regale us with personal historical details and the changes which had taken place from a pig farm. Several had worked or studied at Avery Hill College and shared their experiences with us. There was some discussion about both its future, and that of the Winter Gardens. Crossing over Bexley Road along Gravel Pit Lane bordering the Eltham Warren Golf Course, sparked a debate about golf's pleasures and pains. After negotiating the Rochester Way relief road at Falconwood, we entered the woods of Eltham Park North, some of whose leaves are just about on the autumn turn, with the sun sparkling through the colours and piles of leaves kicking up beneath our feet. The path does a strange wiggle to take you to the corner of Welling Way and into Oxleas Wood and Oxleas Meadows with its interesting café which houses various special events throughout the year. We had a short drop down into Jackwood to skirt the Memorial Hospital and then went up through the woods again which gave us an opportunity to share past experiences – in my case, cross-country runs. We then arrived at the base of Severndroog Castle, a folly built by a wife to celebrate the life of her husband, a leading light in the East India Company who won a famous battle at Suvarnadurg in India. It has been refurbished in the last few years and now houses a great little café of which we all took advantage. (It also featured in a TV restoration programme unsuccessfully in the 1990s). It runs a number of events, plus a permanent historical exhibition. The spiral staircase inside brings one onto a viewing platform with an amazing panorama across central London as far as Wimbledon in one direction, Crystal Palace and Croydon in another. We concluded our short walk at the Red Lion pub on Shooters Hill; the food was OK, but the service was extremely poor and morosely delivered.

Trevor Ford

 My pictures of Avery Hill Park, The Winter Garden and Jackwood can be viewed on the Gallery page of our website.

Editor

Book Reading • Leader June Reid



Our book for October was *The Readers of Broken Wheel Recommend* by Katarina Bivald and chosen by Pat. This was a light-hearted story about a community living in a small town in America. Sara, the main character, who has never previously left Sweden, travels to Broken Wheel to stay with Amy, a woman she has been corresponding with who shares her love of books. The only problem is that, when she arrives, she finds that Amy has died. Sara is a girl who prefers books to people and has never felt that she belonged anywhere. She remembers someone once telling her that every story begins with someone arriving somewhere – and so this beguiling tale unfolds. The many odd characters who live in Broken Wheel add to the flavour of the story. It is a warm, cosy, compassionate read; it is a story of belonging. We all enjoyed it.

June Reid

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Amblers (Group 3) 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
 Family History 2 nd Tues  & 4 th Thurs  	Judith Swain & Kate Berry 020 8303 5759	Vacancies
 French Conversation 3 rd Thursday (10.30 am) 	Steve Hunter hunterdigital@hotmail.com	Vacancies
 Local Theatre Trips   £	Sue Brooks 020 8298 1117	Vacancies
 Meditation 1 st & 3 rd Monday (10.00–11.30 am)	Keith Alker 020 8850 2853	2 Vacancies
 Mono Digital Photography Quarterly (approx.)	Roy Morton rory.m2014@gmail.com	3 Vacancies
 Needlecrafts 1 st Monday afternoon	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	Vacancies
 Pot Pourri 2 nd Tuesday 	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles)	Roy Black 020 8302 9942	Vacancies
 Rummikub® (Group 1) 4 th Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Margaret Platt 020 8309 6395	Vacancies
 Silver Surfers 3 rd Tuesday (2.00 pm)	Steve Hunter hunterdigital@hotmail.com	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 that group.

 Not during school/bank holidays £ A charge applies  Temporary point of contact
 Open to all  Certain seasons only  Times vary  Not intended for beginners

PROGRAMME

2017

November	Heather Woodward	Churchill & Chartwell
December	Joe Mendell	Bob Newhart Rides Again!

2018

January	Russell Bowes	“Dig For Victory”
February	Tony Harris	Henry VIII
March	AGM	<i>NB</i> at The United Servicemen’s Club
	Mike Clinch	Underground
April	Janie Ramsay	What’s It Worth?
May	Colin Pinney	“The Raven” & “The Ancient Mariner”
June	Tony Farnham	Thames Barges

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Colin Barclay	07401 474844
Vice-Chairman	Carolyn Barclay	07401 474844
Vice-Chairman	Sandra Applegate	07717 020611
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 Lamborn	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: 52 Lant Street, London, SE1 1RB ☎ 020 8466 6139 www.u3a.org.uk
Greater London South East Network: www.u3asites.org.uk/glondonsenetwork
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

Reincarnation is making a comeback.