

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

October 2012



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

NOTICES

November Speaker

(Repeated from September's Newsletter)

Our speaker on 15th November is Mr. D. Fulford who will speak on the subject of Antique Clocks and Watches. He is willing to discuss items brought along by U3A members, and to give valuations along the lines of the BBC's 'Antiques Roadshows'. If you have an item that is too large to carry, Mr. Fulford suggests that you bring a photograph to show him.

Val Gosden

Our Charity – Dogs For The Blind

After the very interesting talk that Myriam gave us at the last meeting, I thought that you would like an update of how the collection is going. So far, the dog boxes have taken £87.88 and the surplus tea money up to September amounts to £51.08, and we will add that to money taken for the raffle. There are three more months to go for this charity so I hope we can keep the money coming in.

Gay Braybrook

Greenwich Park

I recently had the opportunity to visit the park and was very pleased to see that all the gates are open now. The top of the park is now accessible, but at the bottom the workmen were still clearing the mountains (and I mean mountains) of sand. They had yet to dismantle the show-jumping arena but I expect it will all have been done by the time this Newsletter is issued.

A new garden is being created at the bottom of the park opposite the children's play area. It is a walled garden called the Orchard which has been there for many years but not open to the public. I understand that it will be opening to the general public sometime either this year or next spring.

Gay Braybrook

(i) Parts of the Olympic Park itself will re-open to the public in July 2013. It will be known as the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

Editor

New Channel 4 Series – Looking for Over 60's

We are making a new series for Channel 4 and would like to speak to over 60's interested in learning about young, entrepreneurial businesses and exploring new and potentially lucrative investment ideas.

In the current economic climate traditional savings schemes are not making much money. We would love to hear from people who are interested in being shown new ways of making their money work harder for them so that they can enjoy their retirement years and save for future generations.

At this stage there's no obligation for anyone with whom we speak to be involved in filming, and any filming at this point would be for a taster tape, which will not be broadcast on TV.

If anyone is interested in experiencing the exciting world of new businesses and would like to find out more, I'd be delighted to hear from them. You can contact me on 020 7432 3141 or email victoria.balfour@studiolambert.com.

Victoria Balfour

GROUP NEWS

Parks & Gardens Appreciation • Leaders Jill Bryant & Barbara Olney



On 27th September a small group of us met at Sidcup station to travel to London. Because the weather seemed very unsettled, I decided to change our destination. We made our way to St. James's Park, and, on entering The Mall, we were fortunate to see the wonderful sight of the Queen's horses and riders looking splendid in their coloured uniforms, shining helmets and highly polished boots making their way to change the guard in Whitehall. We then walked to the park and enjoyed a coffee at the café. Some of the flower beds were empty and awaiting the autumn planting, but a large bed of begonias was still looking good. Some clearing up was going on which I think was from the Olympics. As we proceeded along the path, a crowd was gathered and we could then see two large pelicans on the wooden bench cleaning themselves while quite oblivious of the onlookers. How I wished I had taken my camera with me. The shrub borders and late flowering dahlias and some Japanese anemones were still flowering. All the trees were looking fine after the recent rain we have had. There seemed hundreds of pigeons and plenty of ducks, coots and a family of swans. Standing in the grass surrounded by railings was a large crown for the Queen's Jubilee. This had been created on a frame and then covered by a large variety of sedums, and, although past its best, it was still impressive. We then left the park and saw Buckingham Palace looking magnificent and with the surrounding gardens in full bloom. We then walked through Green Park to see the new and impressive monument to Bomber Command. I recommend a visit there as really worthwhile. We then crossed the road to Apsley House since we were so near and I had never visited it before. This is the London house of the Dukes of Wellington. Inside were palatial state rooms including the sumptuous Waterloo Gallery hung with rare Old Masters. The house contains an unrivalled collection of porcelain, silver and Wellington memorabilia. An audio guide is provided and 2 for 1 offer going by train. This was real value for money and everyone enjoyed the visit. The rain held off although it was a little chilly.

Jill Bryant

Local History 3 • Leaders Christine Withams & Barbara Savill



On Wednesday 12th September members of the above group met at The Ranger's House, on the borders of Blackheath and Greenwich, for a guided tour of the house and its contents. Our guide directed our attention to items and details that we had probably missed on our previous unguided visit about ten years ago. She also gave us a glimpse into the lives of the Wernher family.

Julius Wernher was born of Protestant parents in Germany in 1850. He moved to England 21 years later and from here travelled to Kimberley in South Africa where he made a vast fortune due to his expertise in the diamond trade. He amassed a large collection of very valuable objects including jewellery, porcelain, tapestries and works of art. It seems that he chose things that he liked rather than just for their intrinsic value. The Wernhers never lived in the Ranger's House but their collection – minus a large proportion of it lost by their eldest son owing to his gambling habits – was moved there early this century. This son was subsequently disinherited and went to live in the USA. His father died aged 62 but his son never met up with him again. The Wernher's youngest son died in battle.

The ground floor of the house displays paintings chosen by Julius Wernher's wife, "Birdie". We were all attracted to different objects in this collection; the jewellery and tapestries caught the attention of some of the women. A ring, with the Lord's Prayer printed on it, amazed us all. Even with the help of a magnifying glass we weren't able to read the words, but we didn't doubt the veracity of the ring. Some of us were impressed with the brown and somewhat unattractive looking tin plated porcelain which we were informed was maiolica. Tin was a very valuable commodity that could be mined only in Cornwall and Afghanistan. On small parts of some of the objects the brown covering had been rubbed away and the tin was glinting through.

Our guide confessed that her favourite piece in the collection was the life-sized marble statue in pride of place in the large, downstairs hall. This depicts a beautiful, semi-nude lady and an angel. You can arrange to be married in this hall if you are so inclined. The more practically minded members of the group wondered at the way the statue had to be cut into several pieces and reassembled once it had been moved into place. And where was her second foot? Could that be her heel under the marble drape? How can marble be made to look like draped material?

Ilena Harrington & Mary Webb

i Maiolica is Italian tin-glazed pottery and dates from the Renaissance. Decorated in bright colours on a white background, it frequently depicts historical or legendary scenes. The name is believed to derive from a medieval Italian word for Majorca which is on the route for ships that took Hispano-Moresque wares from Valencia to Italy. Moorish potters from Majorca are reputed to have worked in Sicily and it has been suggested that their wares reached the Italian mainland from Caltagirone.

Ranger's House is a red brick Palladian style Georgian mansion built on wasteland adjacent to Greenwich Park in about 1700 for Captain Francis Hosier (1673–1727). The house then had a superb view and enjoyed easy access to London by both road and river. Hosier occupied the house from 1700–1727 during which period he was promoted to Admiral. He had made his fortune through trade at sea, and both the ship on which he served as a lieutenant and his own ship were called the Neptune. Hosier died of yellow fever at sea in 1727 during the disastrous blockade of Porto Bello in Panama.

Editor

Walking in London • Leader Val Gosden



On our September walk from the Angel to Charing Cross Station we saw several buildings from previous centuries. These included St. Bartholomew's the Greater (this was established in medieval times but rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1666), and St. Etheldreda's Church,* the oldest R.C. church in England – built in 1250, it contains both modern and traditional stained glass windows. Somewhat newer is Charterhouse, London's only surviving Tudor town house, which is home to 40 'retired gentlemen'. St. Sepulchre is home to London's first drinking fountain, and, more sombrely, the Executioner's Bell.** Only the west tower of a Wren church (Christchurch Greyfriars) in Newgate Street remains, but a rose garden now replaces the church, and its layout matches the floor plan of the original church. A more recent church (1863) is St. Peter's Italian Church, which contains many paintings and religious artefacts, all of which look most fresh and clean.

We also visited Postman's Park and looked at the Watts Memorial which contains plaques commemorating deeds of bravery undertaken by ordinary people – both adults and children. These actions include saving from fire or drowning, but which led to the rescuer's own death. Our final visit was to the Silver Vaults, a most amazing place, with many shops displaying a great variety of useful and decorative silver items.

*This church is within the see of Ely, and is therefore outside the jurisdiction of the City of London, and was thus much favoured by criminals on the run.

**Whilst ringing the Executioner's Bell, the clerk would repeat the following verse three times as he paced outside the condemned cells:

*All you that in the condemned hold do lie,
Prepare you, for tomorrow you will die.
Watch all, and pray, the hour is drawing near
That you before the Almighty must appear.
Examine well yourselves, in time repent,
That you may not to eternal flames be sent;
And when St. Sepulchre's bell tomorrow tolls,
The Lord have mercy on your souls!*

Val Gosden

Classical Music 1 • Leader Derick Johnson



Betty Deutsch presented her programme this month and she started with a pleasurable piece by Pyotr Tchaikovsky – the “Romeo and Juliet” Fantasy Overture by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Charles Groves. This led to Beethoven's Symphony № 9 in D minor (Choral) 4th movement by the Northern Sinfonia of England conducted by Richard Hickox accompanied by the Sinfonia Chorus and members of London Symphony Chorus. We then had Symphony № 3 in D minor known as the “Scottish” by Mendelssohn, a composer who always pleases, this time with Münchner Symphonika Orchestra conducted by Alfred Scholz. This was followed by Gustav Mahler's Adagietto from his Symphony № 5 with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jacek Kasprzyk, after which we had a break for tea. The second half began with Antonin Dvořák's Symphony № 9 played by the Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Stephen Gunzenhauser. We then had “Geschichten Aus Dem Wiener Wald” {tales from the Vienna woods} by Johann Strauss II played by the Radio Bratislava Symphony Orchestra conducted by Otto Aeber with Karl Jancik on the zither. The afternoon concluded with Handel's Music for the Royal Fireworks.

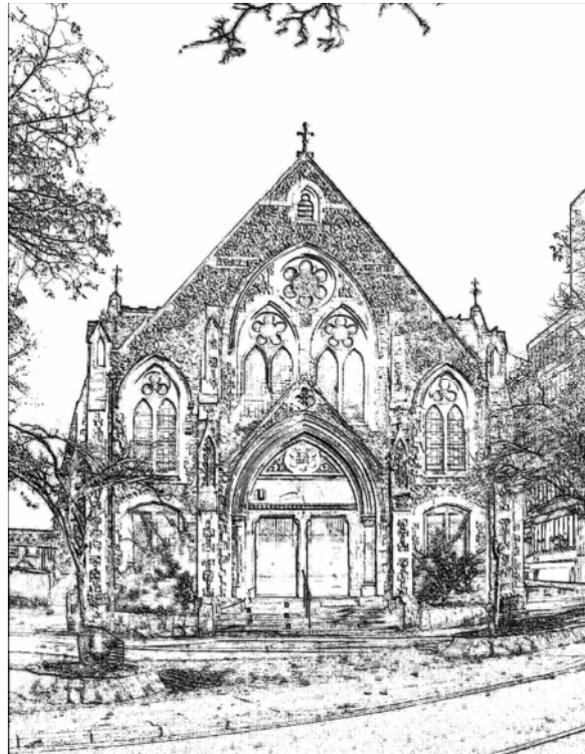
Derick Johnson

Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



On 25th September a depleted group of six met at Limpsfield Chart for a ramble via Crockham Hill. Despite a bright start, the weather soon deteriorated and alternated between wet and dry. Early on in the walk we passed Trevereaux Mansion; a Grade II listed manor, it was gutted by fire in 1987, but the Queen Anne façade survived. Sir Richard Stilgoe, the well-known writer, broadcaster and performer, rebuilt it in the 1990's. Further on, we walked through Crockham Hill, passing the church where Octavia Hill, who is best remembered as a joint founder of the National Trust, is buried. The walk was surprisingly less muddy than we had expected and we finished it with lunch at the Carpenters Arms.

Roy Black



GROUP VACANCIES

	GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
	Amblers (Group 1) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	John Harbert 020 8300 5361	Yes
	Amblers (Group 3) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Yes
	Book Reading 1 st Thursday	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	2
	Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon) <i>(Not during school holidays)</i>	See Group Co-ordinator 020 8300 4291	Yes
	Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	John Harlow 020 8300 3865	2
	Luncheon Club (Group 2) 2 nd Friday (noon)	Pam Kirk 020 8856 8372	4
	Philosophy (Group 2) 1 st & 3 rd Monday (2.00 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	2
	Ramblers (Group 2) (4–5 miles) 4 th Tuesday	Pat & Alf Cracknell 020 8302 0823	Yes
	Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00 am) <i>(Not during school holidays)</i>	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
	Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes. Notice on board at meetings
	Walking in London (3-6 miles) 3 rd Tuesday	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	2

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.

PROGRAMME

2012

October	John Halligan	The Lord Mayor of the City of London
November	Derek Fulford	Antique Clocks & Watches
December	Pat Mortlock	A Country House Christmas

2013

January	Bob Ogley	Biggin Hill
February	Mrs. Austin	Honey
March	John Beckham	Birds of Rye Harbour
April	Ann Knief	Lola Montez – a 19 th Century Adventuress
May	Mr. Guerdon	Chickens

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

Travel Group Leader	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
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.

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

Fools rush in where fools have been before.