

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

October 2015



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

In October 2015 only, the meeting will be held at St. Lawrence's Church Hall, Hamilton Road, Sidcup

NOTICES

Membership Renewal

All members are reminded that their membership will be coming up for renewal at the end of the year. Please collect a membership renewal form from Kate or myself at the October, November or December General Meetings. If you are unable to attend one of these meetings then please arrange for a form to be collected on your behalf.

Patricia Rivett, Membership Secretary

Missing People

We are pleased to let you know that we have recently sent a cheque for £157.46 to Missing People, our charity for the year. This amount was raised by the sale of books *etc*, and hand-crafted greetings cards, plus the amount put in the collecting boxes.

The collecting boxes were quite heavy as there was a lot of small change – 1p & 2p coins – amongst the silver coins, yet in total they added up to quite a noticeable sum. Please continue to put your small change in the collecting boxes.

We are grateful, too, to those group leaders who make a small charge at their meetings for teas and coffees, yet feel they are happy to donate these sums to our chosen charity.

Val & Gerry

Nominated Charity 2016

Members are reminded that the charity to be supported throughout 2016 will be decided at the November monthly meeting. Any member wishing to propose a particular charity should submit his or her nomination with a short supporting written statement to the Secretary:– George Murrell, 76 Chester Road, Sidcup, DA15 8SH, email george.murrell@btinternet.com or to any Committee member by 1st November 2015.

Members nominating a charity must accept responsibility for the collection arrangements.

George Murrell

Antiques Appreciation Groups 3, 4 & 5

The leader, Martin Baker, is due to have some fairly extensive surgery followed by a long recovery time. For this reason, his Antiques groups will be closed down, but he hopes this will be temporary as he wants to restart them in the future. We thank him for his contribution to our U3A branch and our thoughts are with him.

Trevor Ford

Host UK

Make the world a little friendlier! Small charity, HOST, is seeking friendly people who would like to learn more about other countries and cultures and share their home life with adult international students at UK universities. Young adults from many countries would love to have a short homely break and discover the real life of this country.

One host, Kit Millington-Hore, wrote "Meeting students from around the world is hugely fulfilling and satisfying. Watching their pleasure as you introduce them to our ways of living, particularly over Christmas, is extremely rewarding."

Visits can be for a day, weekend, or four days at Christmas. Offering a Christmas invitation to someone who would otherwise be alone on a University campus can make a big difference. Invitations are urgently needed from volunteer hosts, no matter their age, or how far they live from a university. To find out more, or to be put in touch with your local organiser, please visit www.hostuk.org or call 020 7739 6292 or email dce@hostuk.org.

Our address is: Unit K106, The Biscuit Factory, Tower Bridge Business Complex, 100 Clements Road, Southwark, London SE16 4DG.

Kimberley Brough, Deputy Chief Executive, HOST

GROUP NEWS

Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden



Our trip out in September was a visit to Golders Hill Park. After coffee in the café there, we left the park and walked up the hill to view the pergola in Hampstead Heath. This is quite extensive and most impressive and has interesting views from its upper level. At ground level, we saw many different varieties of plants which we could not identify. On our return to the park itself, we enjoyed the vista of green fields stretching down the hill before we visited the flower gardens, with again many questions relating to their names. We then walked down the hill, past the pond and the ducks, to the zoo area with its animals and birds, some of which are far more exciting than our usual cats, dogs and garden birds. At this point we decided to return to the café for a light lunch before visiting the Butterfly House with its unusual butterflies and caterpillars. A small herb and vegetable garden greeted us on our exit from the butterfly house, prompting yet more discussion as to the names of the various items. The grounds are very well kept and we all felt it would be worth a visit at a different time of year.

Val Gosden

Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Holland



Eight hardy souls set out on a very wet 5-mile walk from Cudham for our September ramble. A circular walk took us across farmland with one very muddy ploughed field, through woods, along bridleways and some short road sections. The roads had running water with one section completely flooded to a depth of 2 inches which, at least, gave us a chance to wash mud from our boots. After changing back at the car, we all headed for the Blacksmiths Arms for some well-deserved refreshment. In spite of the weather, we all enjoyed the walk.

David Mead

Explorers • Leader Val Gosden



In September, we followed the journeys of Captain James Cook, who, in 1768, when aged 39, was appointed Commander of the ship *Endeavour*. The purpose of his journey was to travel to the Pacific in order to chart the transit of Venus across the sun, an event that would not happen again for another 100 years. His instructions were to sail round Cape Horn to King George's Island (now called Tahiti), carry out his scientific observations, then sail southward to look for a continent that was thought to be somewhere south east of Australia. The ship, which carried out the first *scientific* exploration, was self-sufficient and even had a forge on board.

It was in April 1769 that they reached King George's Island, where they were made welcome, and were able to set up their astronomical instruments. They also made arrangements for trading with the natives – nails and beads being the 'currency' used. They used smoked glass through which to view the sun and chart their findings but, unfortunately, 50 years later their findings were found to be inaccurate – as were others from around the world. The botanists on board ship studied local plants, making over 1,300 drawings and sketches. The journeys continued and very accurate maps of both of New Zealand's islands were made.

In 1770 they reached Australia, which Cook claimed for Great Britain, naming their landing place Botany Bay in recognition of the many unique plants found there. The leading botanist, Joseph Banks, has plants bearing his name. They then headed northwards, eventually encountering the Great Barrier Reef, which they hit one night, stranding them on the reef; a gash in the side of the boat let in so much water that they were in danger of foundering. All heavy items were thrown overboard, but still the water was rushing in and a way to seal the gash in the side of the boat was needed. This was done by 'fothering' the hole, and, after 23 hours stuck on the reef, they managed to get to sea again.

No land was discovered south east of Australia, simply because there isn't any until you reach the Antarctic. They were at sea for 3 years, returning home with 1,300 new species discovered and nearly 1,000 sketches. This voyage of exploration was the first of three made by Cook, who was killed in 1779 in Hawaii on his third voyage.

- Fothering was carried out by laying oakum on a sail and covering it with a mixture of dung and spoor obtained from the animal pens. This was lowered over the gash, the pressure of sea-water forcing the 'mixture' to stick to the side of the boat.
- 'Health and Safety' operated on board, too, with a mixture of gunpowder and vinegar being scrubbed into boards below decks in order to keep the men as fit and well as possible. It seemed to work, but was somewhat smelly!
- It was on Tahiti that they watched the native men 'adorning' themselves by a process which led to our custom of tattooing.

Val Gosden

Ramblers 3 • Leader Trevor Ford



We were back on home territory for the September ramble. We started at Lullingstone Roman Villa, which is well worth a visit in its own right. (Curiously, I'd only been to Crofton Roman Villa near to Orpington Station only the week before for the first time so it was interesting to compare them). The walk initially hovered between OS Explorer maps 162 & 147 so we needed both maps. We headed steeply upwards, finding some mud en route, rising above the Roman villa with the Bird of Prey centre across the fields to our right. Although we were channelled along narrow paths in places, there were still wide views across open fields on this side of the Darenth Valley and across to woodland the other side. Turning the corner at Parkgate Farm, we took our lives lightly in our hands to cross Lullingstone Park golf course where some of the group had played in the past. We plunged down into the darkness of Upper Beechen Wood and again crossed our fingers as we crossed another fairway before going up again and across Redmans Land and down a narrow, rather overgrown lane past Homewood Farm. We went steeply down to the Crockenhurst Road and reached the triangular crossroad. Some rebels, innocently, were planning to take the short cut down the road to Shoreham village, but leadership (or bullying) prevailed and we took the road along the edge of Meenfield Wood – with some wailing about more climbing. It did afford us some more wonderful views across the valley, particularly where we sat on a bench by the white memorial cross to take a breather. We then plunged down into the village for lunch. I wasn't sure if I should have booked at the "better" of the two pubs at that end of the village, but I think the group was happy with their offerings. The afternoon walk was a leisurely stroll along the Darenth River Way, calling in at the Hop Shop at Castle Farm, with its acres of lavender fields. Some of us stopped also at the café by the river to use the facilities after all that beer. We returned back past Lullingstone Castle, home also to the World Garden, itself a fascinating venue to visit.

Trevor Ford

Ramblers 2 • Leader David Wedderkop



Tuesday 25th August South Darenth to Farningham

9 Ramblers met outside the Bridges Pub, Station Rd, South Darenth. There was some concern as it had rained on the previous three days and it was expected again in two hours. We set off on the Darenth river foot path, which started under the road bridge, and headed towards Horton Kirby. This part of the walk is ideal as it is protected by flowering bushes with the water flowing fast over weirs. After a short time, the path opened up across a parkland area, but still following the river to one side. This stopped when we reached Franks Lane – a great place for paddling – but, unfortunately, the river continued ahead across private land. We turned left and took the first path on the right following the Darenth on the far side of the field. Here we stroked some horses. After leaving them behind us, we walked beside a narrow and fast moving river which wound into woodland and went under a very noisy motorway. Continuing through the trees (quieter now) we reached the Lion Hotel, famous for its 100 seats outside; this was the end of our trip to Farningham village where half the group relaxed on benches while the others investigated the village real estate. We returned by road in order to do some apple scrumping, then did a right down Franks Lane; this time we went straight over the Darenth and took a path on the left to Horton Kirby and the Fighting Cocks Inn. This is a large pub with lots of accommodation for food and drinks; everyone was pleased to be there. This was not for long as there was a funeral occasion going on. There was no food and the garden was shut, but we enjoyed coffee and beer before we left. We continued down the Darenth as the rain got harder. We reached Station Road just in time.

David Wedderkop

Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Holland



Annual Holiday

For this year's holiday we chose to book with Holiday Fellowship as they offer a variety of grades of walking from their large country houses. Church Stretton in Shropshire was our choice; 10 of us booked – 7 for “Discovery Walks” (4 miles and visits), and 3 for the “Easier Walks” (7 miles and hills).

Discovery Walks: on day 1 we walked gently uphill for 4 miles to Acton Scott Victorian Farm (featured on BBC's Victorian Farm series) which is a re-enactment of a working farm as it was 100 years ago. I was mortified when the “kitchen maid” said to me that I would probably remember some of the utensils! Actually, I did! From there our transport took us to the delightful Carding Mill Valley with the original wool mill and a further walk up the valley for those so inclined.

“Discovery Walks” took us to the beautiful medieval, well preserved town of Much Wenlock, birthplace of William Penny Brookes who started the Olympic movement. We then went on to the Ironbridge Gorge (a World Heritage Site) where we marvelled at the iron bridge dating from 1779 and still in perfect order although through traffic is restricted. After that, we went to Blitts Hill, a huge working industrial village complex where you can change your cash into £.s.d in the bank. We used some to buy a bag of chips “like your mother used to make” – and they were!

We also visited the county town of Shrewsbury, walking the river bank to St. Chad's Church (1792) distinctive for its round shape and high tower and then to Attingham Georgian House and gardens. We walked through the hilly terrain of Mortimer Forest to the market town of Ludlow – said to be one of the most attractive towns in England. The Feathers Hotel, built in 1619 and noted for its Jacobean furniture, is a fine example of how unspoilt this town is. We returned to base via Stokesay Castle, a fortified manor house built in the 13th century.

On our final day we went to Wales. In Welshpool we stopped for coffee, and from there we walked along the river to the medieval Powys Castle where we had a picnic amidst the peacocks before touring the furnished interior and the terraced gardens. The latter featured in the press recently as it will take 12 weeks to trim the “cloud” yew hedges with “cherry picker” machines.

The food at the house was delicious and plentiful, the evenings had their own entertainment for those who wished to join in. We all agreed it had been a happy, memorable holiday.

Annette Holland

(i) Thomas Arthur Leonard, OBE, (1864–1948) was a British social reformer who pioneered organised outdoor holidays for working people. He began this with the Co-operative Holidays Association (which he had founded in 1893), but, because he disapproved of the CHA General Committee's policy of encouraging middle class rather than working class clients to stay in its centres, he stepped down in 1912 and founded a new organisation – the Holiday Fellowship. The HF established its headquarters in Conwy and took over some of the CHA's centres. He worked as General Secretary of the HF until it moved its head office to London in 1925. By 1947, the HF had expanded to operate some 30 centres with over 45,000 guests – more than the CHA. He helped to establish the Youth Hostels Association and the Ramblers Association, and also founded the Friends of the Lake District in 1934 with whom he pressed for the creation of what later became known as the Pennine Way.

Editor

Local History 1 • Leader Lesley South



We visited Tower Lifeboat Station on the Thames near to Waterloo Bridge on a lovely day. Following the Marchioness disaster in 1989 in which 51 people died, the Government called on the RNLI to extend their lifesaving skills to the River Thames. They are located on the Victoria Embankment on the old Waterloo Police Pier. The RNLI was sold the new station for just £1 by the Metropolitan Police who later donated that £1 back to the RNLI. Tower is one of four lifeboat stations on the Tidal Thames operating alongside Gravesend, Chiswick and Teddington. Since its inception in 2002, Tower Lifeboat Station has been the busiest station in the British Isles. A crew is on duty at the station all the time and the boat can be launched in under 90 seconds. The duty crew are drawn from a pool of 10 paid staff members and 50 volunteers. Based on the busiest stretch of waterway in the UK, crews are called to capsized rowers, sinking yachts, people ill on board vessels, boat fires and people who have fallen or jumped into the water. The annual running costs are about £525,000. The station operates the new E Class lifeboat which is powered by twin waterjets designed to meet the demands of the hostile Thames at a top speed of 40 knots. The cost of this type of lifeboat is £400,000. If you see someone needing help in the Thames, phone 999, ask for the Coastguard and you will speak to Coastguard Control at the Thames Barrier at Woolwich. A person falling into the Thames will probably die from a heart attack because of the cold water. The RNLI also patrols 220 beaches in the UK to prevent accidents and to rescue people. The RNLI do not receive any money from Government sources so they can make decisions based on changing life saving needs and not be subject to Government cut backs.

Alan Godfrey



Outlandish Projects: King's Cross Airport























In 1931, architect Charles Glover proposed to increase airborne traffic by building an elevated airport above the railway sidings of King's Cross Station. It was a remarkable plan: a pinwheel arrangement of concrete runways, supported directly on top of new buildings, allowing planes to take off in different directions across the city. Like other plans for runways built over the Thames, King's Cross Airport didn't quite see the light of day. But the perennial problem of air capacity and obsolescent air infrastructure could be very different today if they had.

Outlandish Projects: Maplin


By the beginning of the 1970s, there were serious ambitious plans to upgrade south-east England's airport capacity and take some of the pressure off Heathrow, which even then was straining. One proposal was to build Maplin airport, at Foulness, on an artificial island eight miles long. The development would include a deep-water container port and a whole new town to serve it.

Trial land reclamations began but the project, like so many others, was scuppered by the oil crisis of 1973. It marks the last hurrah of what one might call the "planned" era, after which Britain began to give up on large-scale infrastructure. Today's fevered talk of airport expansions, Boris Island and an estuary airport underline its failure.

GROUP VACANCIES


GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 Amblers (Group 1) 3 rd Wednesday (10.30 am)	John Harbert 020 8300 5361	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
 Classical Music 2 nd Friday (2.30–4.30 pm)	Olive Mercer 020 8300 3136	Vacancies
 Concerts/Ballet/Opera Various dates and times £ 	Norma Balfour 020 8303 7693	Vacancies 
 Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (noon)  	Leader pending  needed, please	Vacancies
 Family History 2 nd Tuesday & 4 th Thursday	Judith Swain 020 8303 5759	Vacancies
 Local History (Group 3) 2 nd Wednesday morning	Christine Withams 020 8850 4144	Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 2) 4 th Tuesday (4–5 miles)	David Wedderkop 020 8850 5042	Vacancies
 Ramblers (Group 3) 1 st Friday (≈ 6 miles)	Trevor Ford 020 8302 7635	Vacancies
 Rummikub ® 4 th Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	Margaret Platt 020 8309 6395	Vacancies
 Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10.00 am)  £	Gay Braybrook  020 8309 6372	Vacancies
 Wine Appreciation 3 rd Wednesday (7.30 pm) £	Michael Jordan 020 8302 3330	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 a group.


 Not during school holidays

£ A charge applies

 Certain seasons only

 Notice on the board at meetings

 Open to all

 Temporary point of contact

PROGRAMME

2015

October	Ian Keable	The Corked Conjurer
November	Melanie Gibson-Barton	Bruges
December	Colin Hill & friends	Comedy Cabaret

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
Vice-Chairman	Lesley South	020 8300 8298
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	John Lapham	020 8854 6340
Membership Secretary	Patricia Rivett	020 3302 2887
Speakers Secretary	<i>Vacant</i>	
Group Co-ordinator	Trevor Ford	020 8302 7635
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
General Member	Janet Lambern	020 8300 1786

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: 19 East Street, Bromley, Kent BR1 1QE (020 8466 6139) www.u3a.org.uk

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

Never test the depth of the water with both feet.