

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

September 2007



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

NOTICES



Hearing Dogs
for Deaf People

The support for this year's fund raising is magnificent. The hand-crafted cards are selling well as are the raffle tickets and the refreshments in the coffee bar. Goods from your gardens have sold like hot cakes and there have been many donated items for sale. The foreign coins, our own small coins and the mauve collecting tin are swelling the funds.

From April to the end of July we have all raised £235.82. Many thanks for your support - please carry on!

Annette, Val, Gay



The following was contributed by one of our own U3A members - Joyce Hall.

I returned to U3A in June and was delighted to find that Hearing Dogs was the Charity for the year. About five years ago I decided to become a Hearing Dog Supporter. Within a few months I received news that I would sponsor a puppy called Specks who had just begun his training. Since then Specks has sent me an A4 Newsletter with a photograph three times every year. His letters explained in great detail the various stages of his training and the tests he had to take. Last year he was really excited when he went to live with Jon and Karen in a lovely home. They are both deaf and have a young son. A few weeks later Specks took his final exams and passed.



Specks

Specks helped the family move to a new home earlier this year! They have also been to Wales for a week-end break.

Joyce Hall

Royal Festival Hall Concert 3pm Sunday 4 November

Sibelius Karelia Suite, Sibelius Violin Concerto and Tchaikovsky Symphony No 4. Tickets cost £14.00 each, but will be cheaper with group discount; a minimum of ten people is needed to qualify for this. I require payment by the end of September, please. See the notice board at the meeting or phone me for further details.

Norma Balfour ☎ 020 8303 7693

Newsletter

Contributions for the Newsletter are invited from groups with vacancies which do not already submit reports. Keeping everyone informed of your activities should give you the best chance of attracting new members.



Those members who wish to pick up a copy of the monthly Newsletter from Sidcup Library should look in the newspaper rack to the right of the entrance.

Editor

Hilarious WC Story

In the days when one couldn't count on a public toilet facility, an Englishwoman planned a trip to India and she registered to stay in a small guest house owned by the local School Master. However, she was concerned as to whether the guest house contained a WC and wrote to the owner asking about this. (In England, the bathroom is commonly called a WC - which stands for water closet). The School Master, *not* fluent in English, asked the local priest if he knew the meaning of WC. Together they pondered possible meanings of the letters and concluded that the lady wanted to know if there was a "Wayside Chapel" near the house; a bathroom never entered their minds. So the School Master, with the priest's help, composed the following reply:

"Dear Madam, I take great pleasure in informing you that the WC is located 9 miles from the house. It is located in the middle of a grove of pine trees, surrounded by lovely grounds. It is capable of holding 29 people and is open on Sundays and Thursdays. As there are many people expected in the summer months, I suggest you arrive early. There is however, plenty of standing room. This is an unfortunate situation especially if you are in the habit of going regularly. It may interest you that my daughter was married in the WC as it was there that she met her husband. It was a wonderful event; there were 10 people in every seat. It was wonderful to see the expressions on their faces. My wife, sadly, has been ill and unable to go recently. It has been almost a year since she went, which pains her greatly. You will be pleased to know that many people bring their lunch and make a day of it. Others prefer to wait till the last minute and arrive just in time.

I would recommend your Ladyship to go on a Thursday as there is an organ accompaniment. The acoustics are excellent and even the most delicate sounds can be heard everywhere. The newest addition is a bell which rings every time a person enters. We are holding a bazaar to provide plush seats for all since many feel it is long needed. I look forward to escorting you there myself and seating you in a place where you can be seen by all.

With Deepest Regards, The School Master."

Ann Harlow – *from a story told to us on a recent holiday*

Sidcup & District U3A Website

In the July Newsletter it was stated that consideration was being given to the creation of a website. This has now come into being and those with internet access can visit it here:

www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk

It should be stated that we are still in the early stages of developing our website and it is unfinished at this time. Sidcup is one of the smaller branches of U3A in this country and we hope that our website will help us to attract new members. Any member wishing to help us save on paper usage and Newsletter production costs may download a copy of the Newsletter in PDF format up to a couple of days before each meeting. Copies of old Newsletters dating back to April are also available and links to all of them can be found on the “Meetings” page.

The website’s “Home” page contains a link to our newly created internet forum. This is a web application for holding discussions and posting user generated content. It may also be called a message or discussion board with its messages displayed either chronologically or as threaded discussions. It is intended that matters relevant only to Sidcup U3A shall be discussed there. However, the forum is experimental and will be closed down if not required. Full information on how the forum works, and how you may post messages to it, can be obtained by clicking on the “FAQ” (frequently asked questions) link within the forum itself. Any group leader who identifies the need for his members to have the facility to discuss matters solely of relevance to themselves may request me to set up a separate sub-forum.

Editor



Classical Music 2 : Leader Derick Johnson

David Wallis put together a programme which he justifiably called an eclectic selection. This started with a familiar J.S. Bach concerto for violin and oboe in C Minor played by the Academy of Ancient Music with their conductor Christopher Hogwood. We next listened to Adagio “Sospiri” (which means sigh) written by Edward Elgar for strings, harp and organ and played by the Wiener Philharmoniker conducted by John Elliot Gardiner. Next we heard Johannes Kalliwoda’s variations and rondo for bassoon and orchestra played by bassoonist Albrecht Holder with the Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra. Following this was an unusual piece – Sergei Prokofiev’s Lieutenant Kijé suite with the L.S.O. conducted by André Previn; this is based on a story of a clerical error in which Lt. Kijé was listed in army records when he didn’t really exist, and, as the Tsar wished to know about him, a fictitious and complete life had to be constructed for him. We then had two piano pieces by Isaac Albéniz and Brahms played by Joseph Cooper, who is considered as being the finest accompanist for eminent singers. After the interval we had part of Ernő Dohnányi’s suite “Veil of Pierrette” in F# Minor by the B.B.C. Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Matthias Bamert. Another unusual piece followed named Sho, Shtil, Markt Nisht, Gestrider played by The Burning Bush Ensemble which held a strange mystery for most of us. The last two items were Vaughan Williams’s concerto for tuba and orchestra with the L.S.O. and, lastly, Antonio Salieri’s concerto for flute and oboe which concluded a most diverse musical afternoon.

Derick Johnson

Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk

In August 13 of us enjoyed a most informative visit to Clarence House, the official residence of The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall and the home of Princes William and Harry. An excellent guide took us through the five ground floor rooms where the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall undertake official engagements and receive guests from around the world.

Built between 1825 and 1827 to the designs of John Nash, Clarence House is one of the last remaining great aristocratic town houses in London. It takes its name from its first occupant, William Henry, Duke of Clarence, later King William IV, and has been home to several members of the Royal family during the 19th and 20th centuries. When Princess Elizabeth married Philip Mountbatten in November 1947, Clarence House was chosen as their London residence and after renovation work they moved there in June 1949. Much of the furniture came in the form of wedding presents from members of the Royal family and the people of the Commonwealth. Princess Anne was born at Clarence House in August 1950. Upon the sudden death of King George VI in 1952, when Princess Elizabeth became Queen, they moved to Buckingham Palace and Clarence House was prepared to accommodate Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, where she remained until her death in 2002. The arrangement of the rooms and the grouping of their contents remain much as they were in the Queen Mother's time, with her collection of works of art, including outstanding 20th century paintings, and furniture items in their former positions. English porcelain and silver, particularly pieces relating to the Bowes-Lyon family, are also on display.

Pam Kirk

10 Pin Bowling : Leader Gay Braybrook

In August, when Bexleyheath Superbowl was unavailable to us owing to school holidays, eleven members of the group made our way to Cliftonville and met up for our traditional mid-summer game at the seaside. The weather started off a little dull and rainy, but this soon gave way to sunshine and several of us took picnics into the cliff-top gardens opposite the bowling alley afterwards. A few of us explored the area individually, and my wife and I visited a mysterious ancient grotto decorated with millions of seashells.

David Smith

Ramblers 2 : Leader Geoff Rozier

Our July ramble was a five mile circular walk from Farningham Village when 13 members enjoyed a peaceful time admiring the countryside in this area of Kent. The walk took us through Farthing Street to Downe where we passed the Church which has a sundial and a plaque on its tower dedicated to Charles Darwin. From Downe we made our way via Cuckoo Wood and High Elms estate back to Farnborough. En route we saw a ground-level stone with the initials J.L which is thought to stand for Sir John Lubbock, a former owner of High Elms. Lunch at the "Change of Horses" was a welcome conclusion to our walk.

Pam Kirk

Sir John Lubbock's son, Lord Avebury, was one of the foremost public figures of his day and was responsible for the Open Spaces Act of 1896 which enabled his former estate to be transferred to Bromley Council in 1965 as a Green Belt open space.

Editor

Ramblers 2 : Leader Geoff Rozier

Corsham holiday August 2007

Here are comments from different members of our group.

This was our 4th holiday with Ramblers 2 and it was probably the most enjoyable. We stayed in a good hotel in Corsham which served wholesome food with plenty of choice and which provided substantial packed lunches. Our guide, Elizabeth, was excellent and she prepared walking routes to suit all requirements. Her local knowledge was a great asset and made each area very interesting. Our first walk was to Lacock, which was not too strenuous, and, instead of walking back to Corsham, we returned by hired transport. The Skyline walk gave excellent views of Bath and our guide's walk round the city was particularly interesting. After our free day the next two walks stretched us a bit more with a variety of terrains and some mud. Each walk was about 8 miles and we had 23 stiles to climb on the second one. On our final walk everyone went to Silbury Hill and enjoyed Avebury. During the longer walk we visited a number of ancient burial mounds and barrows before reaching the National Trust centre. Here we saw exhibitions in the barn and the museum, visited the church, and walked among the stone circles. It was a very friendly group.

In spite of a bad start the weather improved and we had some good walks including visits to Bath and a really enjoyable and interesting visit to Avebury. Despite our aching legs, we had a fabulous holiday with fantastic company.

On our visit to Bath Abbey we were lucky enough to hear the choir practising their music for Evensong. The beautiful singing and wonderful surroundings made the visit a pleasure not to have been missed!

I first visited the stone circle at Avebury 50 years ago when I was working for Her Majesty for 4 shillings a day – but not in prison! The stones have worn better than I have over the years and it is still a very interesting place to visit. More information about them is coming to light as the years pass.

I enjoyed watching thatchers at work and seeking out a particular stone I photographed 50 years ago. Elizabeth was an inventive and obliging tour leader who was also good company, all of which made for a most enjoyable holiday.

All week we had about 5 minutes of rain. Otherwise it was fine and often sunny while it was raining in London, we heard. What a shame! Our guide was super, explained everything very clearly, and changed the programme according to our needs.

There were no weak links in this group; they gave me their support and I am now back to 'short walks.' Thank you, everyone.

Pounds lost during exercise were put back on at meal times. Our food was good and plentiful and the waiting staff very pleasant.

This was a very pleasant week based in the pretty Cotswold village of Corsham in friendly company.

Having been responsible for arranging this walking holiday for 15 members, I am so pleased that everyone enjoyed their week together. My thanks go to a splendid group.

Geoff Rozier

Ramblers 1 : Leader Annette Jansen

This month Derick took us to the coast. We met at Westgate-on-Sea, Kent, and I am told that John Betjeman wrote poems describing his fond memories of this Victorian seaside resort with its church bells and steeples, and of galoshes and geraniums. We went in an easterly direction along the sea front passing through Birchington and thence to Margate where we searched our backpacks and came up with an assortment of coffee-break items. Some of us recounted tales of Sunday school outings here by train, including trips to Dreamland; this has long since closed and is only a skeleton containing the rotting wooden frame of the famous scenic railway - now a listed relic. There were a few holidaymakers on the very clean beach but we continued on, passing the derelict lido and former entertainment venues, through Cliftonville to a grassy area where we devoured our well earned lunch packs while we observed the shipping using the Thames Estuary. We continued along the grassy cliff tops and rounding Foreness Point and saw the North Foreland Light house with a mobile phone mast attached to it. Later we had our first view of Bleak House where Charles Dickens lived and wrote, and, rounding the corner, we saw Broadstairs - our destination. What a delight this still is; a real old world view as we looked down from the cliff tops onto the scene below with family groups enjoying the wonderful summer weather in this sandy bay and a rock pool for shrimping. For me there were so many happy memories of holidays here when I was a child, but I think my companions were glad to head for Morelli's Italian Ice Cream Parlour for some delicious cornets. However, they didn't escape my tales because it has been there for 100 years and this, too, was part of the family treat in the 1940's. In our own time we took the train or bus back to Westgate for our cars. It was a really great day out thanks to Derick.



New members are welcome.

We don't usually ramble this far away - but this was our summer outing. We normally aim to walk about 6 or 7 miles, have a lunch stop en route, and get home by about 3.30. We're a friendly group and would welcome new members. Car sharing can usually be arranged.

Annette Jansen

Freedom Pass Explorers : Leader Val Gosden

Our August trip was by train to the end of the line at Hampton Court. Across the road from the station are several coffee shops and choosing one to patronise was not easy. Over drinks it was decided to explore nearby Bushy Park which we reached by walking through the rose gardens in the grounds of Hampton Court Palace.

In Bushy Park itself we walked down the Chestnut Avenue, saw a really large fish in a small stream, and then walked on to Heron Pond where there were ducks with ducklings (little balls of fluff), geese and a mother swan with two cygnets. The father swan was also in attendance, and, determined to protect his family, lifted his wings and chased the geese away as fast as he could. We were fortunate enough, too, to see a few deer and herons. Also in the park is the Diana Fountain (Goddess of Hunting) set in a circular pond containing yet more geese.

The next trip out on Monday 8th October will be led by Christine Withams, 020 8850 4144, who will join the rest of the group at New Eltham station. The others should catch the 9.42 am from Sidcup Station and board the last carriage.

Val Gosden ☎ 020 8300 0664

The Saturday Ramble : Leader Gay Braybrook

For the September ramble we travelled down to Deal for a coastal walk. We went by train from Orpington with half price tickets for groups of 4 people with our Freedom Pass, and our Railcards made it even cheaper! The weather was ideal for walking - sunny, not too hot and with a light breeze. The original plan was to walk along the coast for about 3 miles and then retrace our steps back to Deal. However, upon reaching the 3 mile point it appeared to be less mileage to walk inland to the town of Sandwich. This turned out to be a very pleasant walk and we passed the famous golf course, some very exclusive houses, and a bird observatory while catching glimpses of the River Stour. On reaching Sandwich we had a welcome lunch stop with plenty of cafes, etc, and those of us with a picnic were able to sit by the river and watch the boats go by. After exploring the town, which had plenty to see, we were able to catch the train back home from Sandwich. The train was very comfortable with a trolley service but no etched windows. Drinks at this point were very welcome and, since we didn't have to drive, (saving footprints) we were able to have something a little stronger than tea! We want to do this walk again - but in reverse. Things always look different going backwards.

Gay Braybrook

Sandwich is an historic town; it was one of the Cinque Ports and still has many original medieval buildings. Once a major port, it is now two miles from the sea. Sandwich is no stranger to odd events in English history - it was there in the year 1255 that the first captive elephant was landed in England.

Editor

Amblers 1 : Leader John Harbert

Owing to personal reasons I am sorry that I shall be unable to lead Amblers I for the foreseeable future. I hope very much that you will be able to continue walking.

John Harbert



Members will be sad to learn of the death of Myra Davies. She was knocked down by a car on Maidstone Road on Wednesday August 28th and died on September 3rd having never regained consciousness. Because there has to be an inquest it may be some time before the funeral can take place. When that time comes her family request no flowers but, if desired, a donation may be made to the Kent Ambulance Trust. She leaves two sons, a daughter and two grandchildren.

Myra was born in Birmingham and lived in Somerset and South Wales before coming to Sidcup in 1973. Once her family were old enough she worked as a medical secretary for the Ministry of Defence in Woolwich. She was an early member of Sidcup U3A and took part in many U3A activities. She was in the Classical Music group, and both a rambling group and an ambling group, and took part in a local history group. She was pianist and loved going to concerts and travelling. Myra was quiet and gentle and was well liked by all who knew her. She will be much missed.

John Mercer

GROUP VACANCIES

| GROUP NAME | LEADER | VACANCIES |
|---|--|--|
| Beginners Bridge Acol Tuesdays (11 am - 1 pm) <i>Weekly for 6 weeks</i> | Barbara Shilling 01322 270814 | Vacancies for courses starting later this year |
| Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning) | Gay Braybrook/José Steward 020 8300 6372/020 8302 1627 | Yes. Notice on board at meetings |
| Darts (at The Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (midday) | Fred Green | Yes |
| Freedom Pass Explorers 2 nd Monday | Val Gosden 020 8300 0664 | Yes |
| Gardening (Group 2) 3 rd Friday (times vary; Feb-Oct) | Audrey Hayes 020 8850 1032 | 2 |
| Handcrafted Cards (Group 2) 1 st Wednesday (2 - 4 pm) | Val Gosden 020 8300 0664 | 3 |
| Music (Group 1) 1 st Friday (2 - 4 pm) | Ian Brydon 020 8304 0231 | 1 |
| Music (Group 2) 2 nd Friday (2.30 pm) | Derick Johnson 020 8850 1245 | 3 |
| National Trust/English Heritage Various dates & times | John & Olive Mercer 020 8300 3136 | Yes |
| Quilling (The craft of paper filigree) Occasional Saturdays (2 - 4 pm) | Val Gosden 020 8300 0664 | Please phone leader |
| Ramblers (Group 1) (6-7 miles) 4 th Tuesday (10.30 am) | Annette Jansen 01322 522252 | Yes |
| Saturday Ramble (4-5 miles) 1 st Saturday (morning) | Gay Braybrook 020 8300 6372 | 3 |
| Sunday Ramble 2 nd Sunday (morning) | Pat Peeney 020 8302 5061 | Yes |
| 10 Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10 am) <i>except school holidays</i> | Gay Braybrook 020 8300 6372 | Yes |
| Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées | Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890 | Yes. Notice on board at meetings |

The above lists, 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 the Group Co-ordinator.

José Steward, Group Co-ordinator ☎ 020 8302 1627

Why not start a new group?

If you are on the waiting list to join a full group then why not create a new one? It's not difficult to run a group and leaders of a full one can advise you how it's done.



Tudor Cottages, Footscray