

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

September 2010



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

NOTICES

Holiday to Belsfield Hotel, Bowness on Windermere
Monday 21st March – Friday 25th March 2011

The Belsfield Hotel, built in 1845, stands in six acres of beautiful gardens overlooking Windermere and the Cumbrian hills. The houses and little narrow streets in this area provide a picture of Bowness before the advent of the railway in 1847. Bowness on Windermere was well known to the poet William Wordsworth; the White Lion – now the Royal Hotel – was patronised by him and mentioned in “The Prelude”.

The hotel has a heated swimming pool, a sauna, snooker room, and a lift which serves most floors. All rooms are en-suite and have TV/satellite/radio/pay movies, hospitality tray, trouser press, hairdryer, and direct dial telephone.

Cost: £362.00 per person for bed, breakfast, and evening meal.
Cancellation insurance, if required, is £9.00.

I will collect the deposit of £30.00 per person at the October General Meeting. Cheques should be made payable to “Airedale Tours Ltd/Clients Trust Account”.



Holiday to Maritim Hotel, Königswinter, Germany
Tuesday 6th September – Monday 12th September 2011

The Maritim Hotel, situated on the Rhine Promenade, has splendid views of the passing ships and the green hills with the Drachenfels {dragon’s rock}. Each year there is a horticultural show called the Bundesgartenschau; in 2011 it will be in Koblenz {under 30 miles away}.

The hotel has an indoor swimming pool, sauna, steam bath, solarium, hairdressing salon, massages, and a cosmetic studio. Guest rooms have bath/WC, hairdryer, air conditioning, satellite TV, telephone with voicemail, minibar, and writing desk.

The final itinerary has not yet been arranged, but there are many places of interest nearby.

Cost: £519.00 per person. There is a single supplement of £42.00 per person.
Cancellation insurance, if required, is £12.00.

I will collect the deposit of £40.00 per person at the January 2011 General Meeting. Cheques should be made payable to “Airedale Tours Ltd/Clients Trust Account”.

Margaret Platt Travel Group Organiser ☎ 020 8309 6395

Shared Learning Project - Guildhall School of Music and Drama

Participants will work together with professional musicians from the Guildhall School as a creative ensemble, and will research the transferability of the “Connect approach” to mature learners. This is a 10-week project which will run on a weekly basis on Thursdays (10.30 – 12.30) from 7th October until 9th December. Email Sally Winter on saw201@yahoo.co.uk for further details.

George Murrell

U3A in Sidcup

Many years ago I instituted a newsletter for Lamorbey & Sidcup Local History Society, and in 2008 I wrote a piece on Sidcup’s U3A. This was called to mind after the August meeting at which the speaker, Zazia Pratt, said that she was not speaking on the origins of the U3A for the purpose of that meeting. As an historian, I was interested in its origins and wrote the following piece illustrating the modern Sidcup scene.

It has a dedicated membership in Sidcup of over 200 members – so what is it all about and where did it all begin?

It commenced in France in 1972 as the “Universités du Troisième Age” and in 1981 three friends who felt they were embarking on the third age of their lives founded the U3A in this country. The French model was based upon “Second Agers” deciding what “Third Agers” should learn; that was not taken up here as it was decided that older people were perfectly capable of teaching each other.

The U3A website says that three things influenced the founding of the U3A,

- A. The rise in the elderly section of the population as the nation’s health improved.
- B. The wish to provide for the educational, cultural and social needs of this section.
- C. The wish to do this through self and mutual help with no external help.

No qualifications are required to join and no qualifications or degrees are awarded. There are now over 660 branches throughout the UK with a membership of over 188,000. Our Sidcup branch began in 1994, meeting monthly at St. Lawrence’s Church Hall with, eventually, ‘A’ list and ‘B’ list memberships. This came about because the branch had expanded so much that accommodation could not be found for everyone at the monthly meeting; the ‘B’ list members had to forgo the meeting. The situation has since been rectified as meetings now take place in the New Community Church Centre in Station Road where everyone has the opportunity to attend.

There are 45 individual groups that are a mixture of social, craft and study such as Ramblers, Amblers, Play Reading, French, German, Antiques, Concerts, Discussions, Gardening and Criminology(!) plus many others. Some are obviously outdoor meetings but many take place in people’s homes. Friendships have been forged due to the U3A and like for like members have met up on their particular subjects.

My personal feeling is the U3A has taken off so well due to the high fees now required by the Adult Education Authority and the requirement of the eternal assessment. Our U3A in Sidcup certainly answers a need and has now become part of our Local History.

Frances Percival

(i) Update: there are now 767 branches around the UK with a membership of over 248,000.

Editor

Northumbria Region U3A Residential School

The Physics Department of Durham University are hosting the following lectures:

The subjects will be Biology, Earth Sciences and Physics and an evening lecture on Stem Cells.

Dates: Monday April 11th – Thursday April 14th 2010. For more detailed information and cost please see the General Notice board at the back of the hall. If you are interested, please see Anne Evans, Chairman.

The Committee

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre and the Rose site

Open days for U3A members

Thursday 25th November – Wednesdays 1st and 8th December.

Programme:

- 1.30pm Welcome and access to Shakespeare's Globe exhibition
- 2.15pm Elizabethan dressing demonstration (guided)
- 2.45pm Rose theatre tour (guided)
- 3.30pm Globe theatre tour (guided)
- 4.15pm Tea and biscuits
- 4.45pm Ends

Admission fee is £15.00 pp. (senior price) including afternoon refreshments. Numbers are strictly limited and issued on a first come first served basis. Written application with cheque payable to Third Age Trust to be sent to Third Age Trust, 19 East Street, Bromley, BR1 1QE stating name address, phone number, U3A of which a member, plus preferred and second choice dates and enclosing a stamped addressed envelope.



Il Barbiere di Siviglia by Gioachino Rossini

(The Barber of Seville sung in Italian with English subtitles)

Recorded at the Teatro Real, Madrid, this cinema screening in high definition and surround sound exclusively for U3A members will take place at the Odeon cinema, Covent Garden, from 1.45 – 4.30pm on Tuesday 23rd November. Tickets are £12.00 per person. Written application for tickets should be made to the Third Age Trust, 19 East Street, Bromley, BR1 1QE stating full contact details, U3A of which a member, and enclosing a cheque payable to The Third Age Trust together with a stamped addressed envelope. Tickets are on a first come first served basis.

George Murrell

Nominated Charity 2011

Members are reminded that the charity to be supported throughout 2011 will be decided at the November monthly meeting. Any member wishing to propose a charity should submit his or her nomination with a short supporting written statement to the Secretary, George Murrell, 76 Chester Road, Sidcup, DA15 8SH (or to any committee member) by 1st November 2010.

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

George Murrell

GROUP NEWS

10-Pin Bowling • Leader Gay Braybrook



Annual 10-Pin Bowling Day Outing

Some went by mini-coach, others by car, and so 21 of us met up at “Bugsby’s” in Cliftonville for two very competitive rounds of Bowling. Some scores were good, but I confess that mine was the worst of all. Between the games we were given coffee and cake – which was a nice gesture. After emerging from the dim lights we found the sun breaking through and headed for Herne Bay where we went our separate ways for a few hours – some for fish and chips and some for a walk along the coast. Visible from here is the Kent Flats Wind Farm 8½ miles out in the estuary. 30 Vestas turbines have been built on a shallow plateau just outside the main shipping lanes. Power thus generated is fed into the electricity network and the project is expected to last for 20 years. During this time the Thanet Offshore Wind Farm 12 kilometres off the east coast will be completed. This will comprise 100 Vestas supplying 240,000 homes with clean energy and will be the largest operational offshore wind farm in the world. We left Herne Bay at 5pm having had a very enjoyable day out skilfully organised by Gay, our leader; to her, and her assistant Kathy, go many thanks.

Annette Jansen-Holland

Local History 3 • Leader Pam Kirk



On 11th August we visited Wilton’s Music Hall. Wilton’s is the oldest surviving grand music hall in the world and is tucked away down an alleyway off Cable Street, just 10 minutes walk from the Tower of London. Opened in 1859, it lasted as a music hall for only 22 years. During that time one of the most famous performers there was “Champagne Charlie” and today the hall is used for concerts, plays, operas, gigs, music hall, exhibitions, and filming.

Rosalie Woods

 A group photograph taken during this visit can be found on the “Gallery” page of our website.

Editor

Bird Watching • Leaders José Steward & Gay Braybrook



In July we visited the Sevenoaks Kent Wildlife Reservoir – the reservoir was busy and we had some very good sightings. We saw greylag geese, Egyptian geese (with four of their young), pink footed geese, grey heron, mute swan, cormorant, common gull, coot (with their young), moorhen, tern, pied wagtail, tufted ducks, mallard, crested grebe (with young on their back), lapwing, robin, magpie, and – the highlight of the day – a kingfisher. As we sat quietly in the hide, the kingfisher suddenly flew past us twice. Gladys then spotted it sitting on a low branch under some trees where it remained for a while so we all had a good view.

Our October outing will be to Oxleas Woods when John Beckham (warden of Oxleas) will be leading us on a bird spotting walk.

José Steward & Gay Braybrook

Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



We began our August walk at Beacon Wood Country Park, which is one of Kent's many managed nature parks. Having walked around half of the park, we crossed into farmland and eventually entered Lord Woods; here there is a clay pigeon shooting range and shattered orange "pigeons" covered the opposite hillside. After leaving the woods, we arrived at the top of a hill with panoramic views overlooking the Darent Valley and beyond. Beacons were lit here during the Elizabethan age to warn of invasion by the Spanish Armada. Hence, the park was named Beacon Wood. Arriving back at the park, we then walked around the other half. We enjoyed refreshments at The Ship Inn, Green Street Green.

Pat & Alf Cracknell

Classical Music • Leader Derick Johnson



Michael Jordan favours the baroque period in music and this is generally enjoyed by most of the group. He opened his programme with Mozart's Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra (Adagio) by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karl Bohn with Alfred Pring on the clarinet. This was followed by Vivaldi's Trio Sonata in C major by The Camerata Cassovia with Gerald Garcia on the guitar. Bizet's Carmen Suite No 1, played by the London Festival Orchestra and conducted by Alfred Scholey, lacked only the choral content but was, nevertheless, enjoyable. Before the break we heard the session's longest piece – Beethoven's Symphony No 8 in F major by the Staatskapelle Dresden conducted by Herbert Blomstedt. During the break the group became garrulous and Michael revealed many facts unknown to most of us about the composers. The last part began with Borodin's Polovtsian Dances played by the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra and conducted by Gennady Rozhdestvensky, which was lively, and this was followed by J.S. Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No 2 by the English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Benjamin Britten. It always seems to me a great injustice that Bach was never paid for these splendid concertos. We finished the session with "Unter Donner und Blitz Polka" {thunder and lightning polka} by J. Strauss II played by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Georgiadis. It was a satisfying and varied programme which we all enjoyed.

Derick Johnson

National Trust/English Heritage Group • Leaders Olive & John Mercer



On 3rd August, seven of the group (travelling in two cars on a beautiful sunny day) visited Dover Castle – surely one of English Heritage's most splendid properties. For over 2,000 years the fortifications have protected the English coast, and the oldest structure on the site is a lighthouse dating back to the Roman occupation. Also worth seeing is a well preserved Saxon church and also the tunnels, excavated in the cliffs, which housed the Second World War Command Centre, and a hospital where wounded Battle of Britain fighter pilots were treated. The main attraction at the time of our visit, however, (following a visit to the NAAFI café) was the 12th Century Great Tower – mightily impressive from the outside and offering breathtaking views of the port far below and across the Channel. Inside the Tower was a fascinating reconstruction of the court of its builder, King Henry II, with a blazing log fire, furniture and wall hangings in the style of the period and there was even a live appearance of the irascible king and some of his troublesome family – or at least their representation by "live interpreters".

Christine & Richard Spencer

Another extract from Ian Brydon's History of Western Music

Phil McCavity, the son of a Scottish dentist, was born just outside Weddloch in the Western Isles. A keen student of the bagpipes, he sought to improve them by filling the bag with air from a foot pump rather than his lungs. However, the vigorous motion of his leg caused such a disturbance to the hang of his kilt that the Watch Committee forbade further public performances. He is well known for his other inventions in the musical field. For example, McCavity's "carborundum cone" is widely used by cellists to sharpen the spike at the foot of their instrument so that they can drive it firmly into the stage. Music scores printed in rolls and mounted on variable speed rollers, accelerating or slowing at the whim of the conductor, were promoted by him as a labour saving device, but the Conductors and Allied Workers Union foresaw massive redundancies in the posturing trade, and bought up the patent to suppress it. McCavity then introduced a range of brass and woodwind instruments powered at first by steam, and later (after it had been found that water vapour had a deleterious effect on most instruments – and on players when seals deteriorated) by compressed air. Equalisation of the air flow from a central compressor gave McCavity a problem which he was never able to solve. Moreover, the valves in the tubes conveying the compressed air were inclined to squeak at inappropriate times. It is believed that a delegation from The Middle European 12 Tone Composers Guild was present at a particularly leaky and squeaky Promenade Concert, and were inspired to write music in which such unfortunate noises would pass undetected. His double bass with an integral seat for the player caused some spectacular accidents: the domino effect of one such disaster hurled the front row of violins into the audience. A tuba player in the orchestra was prompted to draw a cartoon of the incident which launched him into a second career as a comedian and humorist. Abandoning music, McCavity turned to Industry. He is now revered as the inventor of the café teapot, from which tea emerges from the lid more readily than the spout. Rumours persist that he had a substantial interest in a firm producing serviettes and paper towels.

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/José Steward 020 8303 6372/07957 181808	Yes
	Antiques Appreciation 3 rd Wednesday (10 am)	Martin Baker 020 8300 1752	2
	Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning)	Gay Braybrook/José Steward 020 8309 6372/07957 181808	Yes
	Bridge Mondays (2 pm)	Fred Till 01322 528605	4
	Darts (at the Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (midday)	Fred Green	Yes
	First Aid Course 2 nd & 4 th Wednesday	Gladys Davidson 020 8850 9252	3
	Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	John Harlow 020 8300 3865	2
	Local History (Group 2) 2 nd Wednesday	José Steward 07957 181808	3
	Play Reading 1 st Tuesday (2–4 pm)	Frank Whipp 020 8300 1064	1
	Ramblers (Group 1) (6–7 miles) 4 th Tuesday (10.30 am)	Annette Jansen 01322 522252	Yes
	Ramblers (Group 2) (4–5 miles) 4 th Tuesday	Pat & Alf Cracknell 020 8302 0823	Yes
	Recorder Playing 3 rd Wednesday (2 pm)	Mary Hawes 020 8300 0521	6
	10-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10 am)	Gay Braybrook 020 8309 6372	Yes
	Theatre (Group 2) Various matinées	Joan & John Somerset 020 8300 0890	Yes. Notice on board at meetings

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 the Group Co-ordinator.

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's not difficult to run a group and leaders of a full one can advise you how it's done.

PROGRAMME

2010

September	Mr. H. Townsend	Harry, the Wheelbarrow Man
October	Dr. Ann Kneif	The Bevin Boys
November	Mr. V. Creek	R.A.F. Museum, Hendon
December	Miss Ann Carter	A Celebration of Christmas

2011

January	Mr. J. Halligan	Paintings in the Guildhall Art Gallery
February	Mr. M. Parkin	The Story of Sevenoaks Market
March	Annual General Meeting	
	Miss E. Turner	In the Spirit of Shackleton
April	Mr. I. Bevan	Tudor London
May	Mrs. J. Bruce	Knickers and Things
June	<i>TBA</i>	
July	Mr. C. Durack	Major Rowland George Hallam Shears, BEM, TD, G8KW, 1919-2009
August	Mr. R. Spiller	Entertainer & Comedian
September	Mr. A. Stockwell	Puppets, Piers & Pantomimes – 40 years in show business
October	Mr. J. Newson	Her Majesty's Crown Jewels
November	<i>TBA</i>	
December	Mrs. P. Mortlock	A Country House Christmas

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
Vice-Chairman	Annette Jansen	01322 522252
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	Dennis Brittain	
Membership Secretary	John Harlow	020 8300 3865
Speakers Secretary	Valerie Gosden	020 8300 0664
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	Pat Garwood	020 8306 0013
Newsletter Editor & Webmaster	David Smith	020 8304 2305

Please either e-mail contributions to me at editor.u3a@ukonline.co.uk or post them to me at 56 Crofton Avenue, Bexley DA5 3AR – typed if possible.

Please submit contributions by 3rd of the month.

WEBSITE

www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk

This Newsletter (including previous editions) may be read or downloaded from our website.

Afterthought

Always remember you're unique, just like everyone else.