

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

September 2011



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

**NOTICES**

**An Inviting Opportunity from HOST**

People come from all over the world to study at universities in the UK. Apart from gaining academic qualifications, they hope to immerse themselves in the life, language and culture of this country – sometimes only to find that their university is not the best place to achieve this. The ‘real Britain’ is found outside the campus, in local communities, and, above all, in people’s homes. You can get to know what makes a country tick by chatting to the natives, cooking and eating with them, asking their views, and seeing their views when they take you to their favourite local places. And in sharing their own culture with their hosts, students can make their countries come alive, too. Hosting a student for one weekend, or at Christmas, or just for one day, makes a personal and meaningful contribution to international understanding and goodwill. U3A members make ideal hosts! If you would like to know more, please visit [www.hostuk.org](http://www.hostuk.org), or call HOST on 020 7739 6292.

HOST is a national charity founded in 1987 by the British Council, the Victoria League and the Foreign Office. Hosting students is a voluntary activity.

**Margaret Stevens, Publicity Officer, HOST**

**Committee Vacancies**

Members are invited to apply for the post of Social Secretary which has been vacant for rather too long.

Two more posts will become vacant at the next AGM in March 2012 because the current holders have expressed their intention to stand down. These posts are Chairman and Speakers Secretary – jobs in which, so far, nobody has shown real interest. I would ask members seriously to consider applying for these so that our group does not lack effective leadership in the future. Indeed, if the posts are not filled the group’s viability could be doubtful. (The jobs of Vice Chairman and Membership Secretary – advertised in last month’s Newsletter – have now thankfully attracted some interest and we hope that the new Committee members will take up their positions in due course). The remaining jobs are not arduous and anyone who feels tempted to take one on may speak to the current holder (at an early date, please) to discover exactly what it entails. Contact details are shown on the back page.

**Anne Evans, Chairman**

## U3A - Forthcoming Events for Winter 2011-2012

National Institute of Medical Research Annual Meeting to be held at 2.30–4.30pm Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November. Free of charge but admission is by ticket only.

First U3A Christmas Concert. Traditional carols, mulled wine featuring the Mosaic Chamber Choir and Brandenburg Brass and Organ. 2.30 pm–4.30pm Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December at St John's Waterloo SE1. Tickets cost £16.00 per person.

The Marriage of Figaro. Opera screening at the Odeon Cinema, Shaftesbury Avenue WC2. 12.45pm–4.45pm Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Tickets cost £12.50 per person.

Applications for tickets for any of the above should be made as soon as possible to The Third Age Trust, 19, East Street, Bromley, BR1 1QE enclosing a SAE. Cheques should be made payable to "The Third Age Trust".

**George Murrell**

### Newsletter

Members who wish to pick up a copy of the current Newsletter from Sidcup Library should look in the newspaper rack to the right of the entrance. Those with internet access may download it in PDF format from the "Home" or "Meetings" page of our website at any time. Issues dating back to April 2007 are also still available.

*Editor*

## GROUP NEWS

### Various Groups

Play Reading: Would members who have entered their names on the list of interest for this group please meet me at the back of the hall at the end of the September meeting.

Antiques Appreciation: Martin Baker is prepared to open another group to meet either on a Wednesday or Friday once a month. If you are interested in joining this group, please enter your name on the notice on the board at the back of the hall and I will pass this information on to Martin Baker.

Classical Music 2: Please note that Maureen Porter's phone number is 020 8300 6128 and not as currently shown in the handbook.

**Christine Spencer, Group Co-ordinator**

### Park Strollers • Leader Various



We are a small, friendly group; we do non-energetic walks ending with refreshments at the nearest café or pub. The next walk is then suggested by members.

We usually meet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month and we would love more of you to join us. Please contact me if you are interested.

**Dorothy Mason (020 8859 4933)**

## Classical Music 1 • Leader Derick Johnson



Olive Mercer presented her programme starting with a cheerful piece – Rossini’s Overture La Cenerentola (Cinderella) played by the Zagreb Festival Orchestra and conducted by Michael Halász. We then had Charles Camille Saint-Saëns with his Bassoon sonata, opus 168, played by Canada’s National Arts Centre Wind Quartet, following this with Jean-Phillippe Rameau’s “Abaris” or “Les Boréades” {the descendants of Boreas} played by Capella Savaria ensemble conducted by Mary Téry-Smith. We then had Tomaso Albinoni’s Adagio from his Concerto for two oboes played by I Solisti Veneti Chamber Orchestra conducted by Claudio Simonetti. Just before the break, we heard Pyotr Tchaikovsky’s Valse-Scherzo, opus 34, for violin and orchestra performed by The Russian National Orchestra conducted by Mikhail Pletnev, with Gil Shaham on the violin. Following the break, we had Franz Schubert’s “The Trout” Piano Quintet in A, played by The Nash Ensemble. We enjoyed our session of music as Olive had struck the right balance with works we had never heard before.

### Derick Johnson

**(i)** Abaris – from Hyperborea (near the Caucasus) – was known to the Ancient Greeks as a legendary sage, healer and priest of Apollo. He is reputed to have acquired these skills in his homeland from which he fled during a plague. Said to have the gift of prophecy, he was held in high esteem because of his Scythian dress, simplicity and honesty. According to Herodotus, he was said to have travelled around the world with an arrow symbolising Apollo, eating no food. Plato classes him amongst the “Thracian physicians” who practice medicine upon the soul as well as the body by means of incantations.

### Editor

## Freedom Pass Explorers • Leader Val Gosden



In August a number of us met at the bus stop near Sidcup Station where we boarded the 51 bus to Orpington War Memorial, and then the 353 bus to Addington Village. From there we caught the Wimbledon tram to Lloyd Park, only three stops away. The park is beautiful open parkland with many mature trees and tennis courts, but, unfortunately, there wasn’t anywhere to have refreshments, so we boarded the tram again and continued on to Phipps Bridge to visit Morden Park. The day was sunny and bright and the journey on the tram was most enjoyable. We arrived at Phipps Bridge, walked into Morden Park and found a National Trust café where we had the much appreciated refreshments. Later on, we browsed around the gift and second hand bookshops where several of us bought gifts and books. Some of us then went for a walk around the park, while the rest went to look around some other shops in the vicinity of the café. All in all, it turned out to be a fabulous day and we all thoroughly enjoyed the visit.

### Barbara Olney

### We’ll Meet Again.....

Philosophy group: Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> October (2 vacancies)

Handmade Cards group II: Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> October (no vacancies)

Handmade Cards group I: Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> October (no vacancies)

Freedom Pass Explorers group: Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> October (no vacancies). Group members please phone Val to get train times.

The Cathedral: Wednesday: 12<sup>th</sup> October (1 vacancy)

### Val Gosden

## **Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Jansen-Holland**



Even with rain before dawn and five cancellations, six of us decided to ignore the weather and head for our meeting point at Camer Park, Meopham. Suitably wrapped, we ventured forth for the scheduled 6½ miles with the lure of a good lunch stop in Cobham where we headed for the Leather Bottle Inn. This was built in 1629 during the reign of Charles I and its name was derived from a leather bottle containing gold sovereigns that was found there in 1720. Charles Dickens used to stay there and it is featured in *The Pickwick Papers*. They also do a tasty two course lunch for pensioners for £4.95 – we had forgotten the taste of a “proper” rice pudding. Refreshed and partly dried out, we set off for the return via orchard after orchard of heavily laden apple and pear trees – bumper crops! – with a good scattering of windfalls beneath them. Back in the cars, we wrung out our wet socks and then headed for home after a really nice day – honestly.

There are plenty of vacancies in this group.

## **Annette Jansen-Holland**

## **Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell**



### Group Holiday

For the second time, we spent five nights in August at the lovely Cooden Beach Hotel near Bexhill-on-Sea. We arrived on a Sunday and had the day free to relax. A very pleasant and considerate Ramblers Holiday leader met us and went through the itinerary for the week.

Monday: Icklesham to Rye via Winchelsea. We spent two hours exploring Rye following this walk.

Tuesday: Battle to Crowhurst. We spent two hours in Battle before the start of our walk so that we could explore this historic town.

Wednesday: Alfriston to Jevington via Wilmington. This year we omitted the ascent of ‘The Long Man’ by walking around the hill and this time viewed the ancient chalk figure from the bottom.

Thursday: The planned walk was from Beachy Head to Birling Gap then inland to East Dean. Unfortunately, because of gale force winds, some of our party were unable to stand, let alone walk. Therefore, we adjusted our plans and spent the rest of the day in Eastbourne.

Friday: The last day. Some of us spent our final day sightseeing while others drove straight home.

We had good food, fresh air, and friendly company; what more could you ask for on a short break? We, as leaders, were thrilled that those who used to walk with us in the past were able to join us on this break – although unable to take part on our walks. The bond of friendships made still continues. Is this not what the U3A is all about?

Footnote: We are always pleased to welcome new members to our group. We are a mixed group of couples and singles who enjoy walking and lunching together afterwards. If you are interested, please speak to Christine, the Group Co-ordinator, who will point us out to you. You can always try it one month to see if this is for you.

## **Pat & Alf Cracknell**

## Bird Watching • Leader Gay Braybrook



In July we visited Leybourne Lakes Country Park, which, apart from the birds and waders, was a very interesting place to visit. It has numerous lakes and various activities were going on; we saw a couple of hardy swimmers in the lakes performing what, I suppose, was wild swimming. There were not many waders to see, but one bird of interest was a Berwick swan (with a yellow beak) – they are usually winter visitors so maybe he forgot to go home!

For August we went to our old favourite Sevenoaks Wildlife Trust where we did see very many waders, and it was good to see lapwings and a ringed plover there. A goldfinch also appeared, which is a very colourful bird. The other waders: coot, grey heron, black headed gull, grey lag goose, Canada goose, moorhen, mute swan, Egyptian goose, tufted duck, great crested grebe, pochard, magpie, blackbird, herring gull, mallard, cormorant, jay, pied wagtail, and dab chick. Again, it was a pleasant walk around the lakes.

**Gay Braybrook, Co-ordinator**



### Letter from Shere Khan

I wrote the poem below following the publication in *The Local Government Review* of “Complainant” – a poem by my friend and colleague, Geoffrey Hoffman. It was about the response of a Government Department to a persistent writer who could not accept that his complaint was completely unjustified and without any merit. Geoffrey sent my “poem” to the *Local Government Review* which published it under my customary nom de plume, Shere Khan. Geoffrey later included it in his collection of poems “Trial by Verse” (printed in 1991 by Barry Rose Publications) and in which he revealed my authorship. It was written in one quick sitting as a joke, and not a lot of thought went into its composition. The last few lines in particular could have been improved, but, as the poem has already been published, I do not feel inclined to change it now.




**Ian Brydon**

Sir,

Although it's quite unknown to you,  
*The Local Government Review*  
Appears in public libraries,  
Where chaps like me will sit at ease  
Composing letters full of facts  
And not, as you suggest, vile tracts  
Abusing those who serve the State  
And make their correspondents wait,  
And wait, and wait, and wait, and wait  
Until appeals are far too late  
Or they have reached the final date  
On which they may perpetuate

The action which some months before  
Led to me being shown the door  
By some officious jumped-up clerk  
Who's managed, Sir, to keep it dark  
And hidden from your sleepy eyes  
That he was taken by surprise  
When I appeared before the Court  
And told them what I really thought.  
But this is all just by the way,  
I had intended, Sir, to say –  
I cannot think, try how I can,  
What I had meant when I began.

## GROUP VACANCIES

	GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
	<b>Amblers (Group 1)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30 am)	<b>John Harbert</b> 020 8300 5361	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Amblers (Group 3)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30 am)	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Antiques Appreciation</b> Wednesday or Friday	<b>Martin Baker</b> 020 8300 1752	<b>6</b>
	<b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> (co-ordinator only) 020 8309 6372	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Classical Music (Group 2)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (2.30 pm)	<b>Maureen Porter</b> 020 8300 6128	<b>1</b>
	<b>Darts (at the Alma pub)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday (midday)	<b>See Group Co-ordinator</b> 020 8300 4291	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Local History (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	<b>John Harlow</b> 020 8300 3865	<b>2</b>
	<b>Local History (Group 2)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday	<b>Pauline Watling</b> 020 8300 3910 <b>Barbara Olney</b> 020 8302 4289	<b>3</b>
	<b>Philosophy (Group 1)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday (2 pm)	<b>Bernard Catallo</b> 020 8300 8651	<b>2</b>
	<b>Ramblers (Group 1) (6–7 miles)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (10.30 am)	<b>Annette Jansen</b> 01322 522252	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Ramblers (Group 2) (4–5 miles)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday	<b>Pat &amp; Alf Cracknell</b> 020 8302 0823	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10 am)	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8309 6372	<b>Yes</b>
	<b>Theatre (Group 2)</b> Various matinées	<b>Joan &amp; John Somerset</b> 020 8300 0890	<b>Yes.</b> Notice on board at meetings
	<b>The Cathedral</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday (2.30 pm)	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	<b>1</b>

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

### 2011

September	Mr. A. Stockwell	Puppets, Piers & Pantomimes – 40 years in show business
October	Mr. J. Newson	Her Majesty's Crown Jewels
November	Mr. G. Murrell	A policeman's lot was perhaps a happy one! (Memories of a City Policeman in the 1950s)
December	Mrs. P. Mortlock	A Country House Christmas

### 2012

January	John Beckham	A Woodland Mix
February	Alan Payne	What's on the Cards
March	Tony Farnham	Sailing Barges in their Heyday
April	Matthew Jackson	Korean Spirit & Culture
May	Michael Gandy	Seeing it Through Their Eyes
June	Mrs. Sandra Winter	Hand-Bell Ringing
July	Mr. Chris Hare	40 Years Without a Proper Job
August	TBA	
September	Myriam Steadman	Guide Dogs for the Blind
October	John Halligan	The Lord Mayor of the City of London
November	Derek Fulford	Antique Clocks & Watches
December	TBA	

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
Vice-Chairman	Vacant	
Minutes Secretary	George Murrell	020 8850 2046
Treasurer	Christine Smith	020 8304 2305
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

<b>Travel Group Leader</b>	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
<b>Raffle Organiser</b>	Pat Garwood	020 8306 0013
<b>Newsletter Editor &amp; Webmaster</b>	David Smith	020 8304 2305

Please either email contributions to me at [editor@sidcup-u3a.org.uk](mailto: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 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month – but at any time for the Website.***

## WEBSITE

[www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk](http://www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk)

This Newsletter (including previous editions) may be read or downloaded from our website. Also available is an index of Newsletter 'Notices' covering the period April 2007 to this issue.

*Afterthought*

*Sleep: that fleeting moment just before the alarm goes off.*