

# SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

September 2014



**SIDCUP & DISTRICT U3A meets at 2.00 pm on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month in the New Community Church Centre, 24 Station Road, Sidcup**

## NOTICES

### Open Day

The “Open Day” held on 21<sup>st</sup> August proved to be very successful and I am sure was enjoyed by all who attended. The displays mounted by the various groups gave us all far more idea of the range of interesting activities catered for. Congratulations must go to the groups for their imagination and effort. A lot of hard work went on behind the scenes by our “table and chair lifters,” tea makers, meeter/greeters, registrars, Group Co-ordinator, Membership Secretary, and not forgetting Acting Chairman, Anne, who did most of the planning and cajoling. Stands were also provided by the WEA Bexley, Bexley Age UK and Lamorbey & Sidcup Local History Association to whom we extend our thanks for their participation. Forty-six visitors attended, a much greater number than anticipated, several of whom have indicated a wish to become members.

**George Murrell**

**(i)** George has omitted to mention the huge amount of preparatory work that he performed before the event; without it the Open Day would have been decidedly mediocre. Three groups have filled their vacancies, and three photographs taken by George at the event can be viewed on our website’s Gallery page.

***Editor***

### **Médecins Sans Frontières : Doctors Without Borders**

The donations for this charity for tea in August came to £60.63 which is a really good amount and will be well used. MSF works to ensure that donations are spent on saving lives, and not on administration and management. Being mainly independent of any government’s funding gives the freedom to respond to the greatest needs as quickly as possible.

In South Sudan this week, I have heard that the equipment was brought in by helicopter for the staff to dig a drainage ditch 3 feet wide × 4 feet deep × 2 Kms long to take the deep flood water in the camp out to the swamp, but, owing to the flat terrain, so far this has been only partially successful. The refugees are existing in water so deep that the adults, children and babies cannot even lie down to sleep. Food is scarce and foraging for fire wood beyond the perimeter is out of the question for fear of rebel guns.

Our next collection for MSF is at the December U3A meeting – start saving!

**Annette Holland**

## **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 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.

Thanks.

**Patricia Rivett, Membership Secretary**

## **Events**

### **House of Lords Chamber Event 28<sup>th</sup> November**

U3A members have been invited to participate in an inter-generational debate – “In a digital society, is politics for politicians or is everyone a decision maker?” Debate training for potential participants will take place on a Saturday in October at various locations throughout the country. Anyone interested in taking part should email Lin Jonas at Third Age Trust without delay.

### **“Renaissance Treasures”**

An exclusive study day for U3A members at the Sainsbury Wing Theatre, National Gallery, London on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014 from 11.00 am–3.30 pm. Tickets cost £18.00 per person and are available by phoning Third Age Trust.

### **“Cinderella”**

Prokofiev’s ballet performed by the Dutch National Ballet at the Amsterdam Music Theatre and screened at the Odeon, Covent Garden Cinema, Shaftesbury Avenue from 1.40–4.10 pm on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November exclusively for U3A members. Tickets cost £14 per person and are available by phoning Third Age Trust.

### **“VC10 and Her Royal Connections”**

12 dates are available in 2015 for exclusive visits by U3A groups to Brooklands Museum, Weybridge to visit one of the Museum’s VC10s. The cost is £15 per person and also includes introductory talk, refreshments and free entry to the museum’s collection of racing cars, motor cycles and aircraft. Group size Min 20/Max 40. For further details phone 01932 857381.

**George Murrell**

**(i)** The contact email address for the 28<sup>th</sup> November event has not been provided. I suggest this is done through the Third Age Trust’s website. Other contact details are on the back page.

***Editor***

## **Advance Notice to Group Leaders**

A coffee morning meeting for group leaders will be held at 10 am on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> November at Ockley Court, Alder Road, Sidcup. Please put this date in your diaries. The main purpose of the meeting is to try and identify means of accommodating members who wish to pursue an activity of a group that is already over-subscribed. Please invite members of your group who might be prepared to form a new group also to attend. Nearer the date, please let Keith Alker, Group Co-ordinator, know whether you will be attending. If you cannot attend, could you please nominate a deputy. Further details will be published in the October Newsletter.

**George Murrell, Secretary**

## GROUP NEWS

### Classical Music 1 • Leader Alan Griffiths



Olive Mercer led our August meeting which started with a lively composition by Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari. This was the overture *Susannah's Secret* played by the Orchestra Filharmonica di Roma conducted by Massimo Freccia. (*The secret was that Susannah smoked!*) This was followed by Symphony № 1 in C by Carl Maria von Weber performed by the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields conducted by Sir Neville Marriner. This carried on the lively theme, but it is not as well-known as Weber's clarinet concertos. We next heard Rondo in A for violin and strings by Schubert with Nigel Kennedy accompanied by the English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Jeffrey Tate. The final piece before the interval was by Mozart with three arias from *Don Giovanni*: Act 1 Scene 3 and Act 2 Scene 1. They showed what a wicked man Don Giovanni was with the ladies. The orchestra was the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden with Anthony Rolfe Johnson as soloist.

The second part of the programme started with Concerto № 2 for clarinet and orchestra by Bernhard Crusell with Emma Johnson and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Guntther Herbig. Crusell was a Swedish-Finnish clarinetist and composer. This concerto has a languorous and beautiful second movement with a lively third movement to finish. Our final piece was *Four Piece Suite* by Richard Rodney Bennett with Jennifer Micallef and Glen Inanga on pianos. It was a very enjoyable afternoon.

### Alan Griffiths

### Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Holland



This was a wet, rainy summer's walk without any really steep hills or stiles of about 4 miles. Starting from Farnborough Village, nine of us walked first through the picturesque, but rain sodden, grounds of St Giles the Abbott Church. Not recorded in the Domesday Survey, a church existed here prior to 1070. Proceeding down to High Elms Country Park, we began the rest of our undulating walk along mostly well-maintained paths.

During 1840, the astronomer and banker, Sir John Lubbock inherited the estate and built a grand new mansion in the Italian style. In 1938, the estate was sold to Kent County Council and the house became a nurses' training centre. In 1965, the London Borough of Bromley took possession and the land became public open space; the mansion burnt down in 1967.

We walked through the estate woodlands until we reached Bogey Lane, an ancient sunken trackway. Instead of trying to walk along this very uneven track, we used a short section of the London Loop, a parallel uphill path in the adjacent field. After reaching the hilltop, we squeezed through a hedge opening to join the path back towards Farnborough along field footpaths, woods and across a meadow. Fortunately, one of our members knew some shortcuts to enable us to reach the dry welcoming pub quicker. We took a well-deserved, satisfying and tasty lunch at The Woodman.

### Hint

If any reader wishes to visit High Elms Country Park with its listed buildings, parkland and wooden sculptures then avoid Tuesday mornings. Walking For Health has three groups that exercise around the park starting at 10am so car parking can be a problem.

### Cynthia & Roy Morton

## Book Reading • Leader June Reid



This month's book, chosen by Liz, was *Apple Tree Yard* by Louise Doughty. Part courtroom drama, part psychological thriller, this was a real page-turner. The story was narrated by a top woman scientist who is charged with being the accessory to a brutal murder. Driven by passion, she betrays her husband and children jeopardising her career for an illicit affair. Much of the background is set in and around the Houses of Parliament, which was quite intriguing. The dialogue moves quickly and makes for very tense reading. This is not a tale for Auntie Ada, though, as some of the scenes depicted could probably shock her. Thanks Liz – although the comments were mixed, we all enjoyed the read.

### June Reid

## Pot Pourri • Leader Val Gosden



Our trip out in July was to Tate Modern to see the Matisse Cut-Outs. Matisse died in his mid-eighties and towards the end of his life health problems limited his mobility, forcing him to turn to an entirely new approach for his work. His assistants painted long lengths of paper the colours he wanted and then, with large scissors, he cut out shapes which his assistants would then fix onto canvas, following his directions as to where to place them. Some of the shapes were quite intricate, many looking like the fronds of underwater plants, and all had strong colours. Other cut-outs were far more straightforward, yet, in themselves, were not 'perfect', until placed on the canvas when they produced recognisable figures and were full of action. The final work of art that we saw consisted of Matisse's plan for a stained-glass window and, in the same room, we could see the resultant vibrant stained-glass window.

Our visit to the Royal Academy of Arts to see their Summer Exhibition was in August. The rooms were filled with all forms of art, ranging from traditional paintings right through to the ultra-modern, free-standing models using materials such as wood, metal and plastic, and a few exhibits using fabrics. On a more practical note, there were some items which were models for full-size buildings. Items ranged in size – many so large that a vast wall area would be needed for their future display. There was such a wide range of categories of art on show that it was inevitable some items would appeal more than others, but I felt there was something that each of us could really appreciate. Most items were for sale, but, with a four- or five-figure price attached, none of us came home clutching a masterpiece.

### Val Gosden

① Henri-Émile-Benoît Matisse (1869–1954), regarded principally as a French painter, was a draughtsman, printmaker, and sculptor. He was known for his use of colour and his fluid and original draughtsmanship. Initially labelled a 'Fauve' (wild beast), by the 1920s he was increasingly being hailed as an upholder of the classical tradition in French painting. His mastery of the expressive language of colour and drawing, displayed in work spanning over fifty years, won him recognition as a leading figure in modern art. Brought up in Picardie, he went to Paris in 1887 to study law and worked as a court administrator. He started painting in 1889 discovering, as he later described it, "a kind of paradise". It greatly disappointed his father when he decided to become an artist. (A 'Fauve' was a member of a loose group of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Modern artists whose works emphasised painterly qualities and strong colour over the representational or realistic values retained by Impressionism. Their style was termed Fauvism; this began circa 1900 but was short-lived and appeared in only three exhibitions).

### Editor

## Ten-Pin Bowling • Leader Various



17 of this group travelled to Bugsby's bowling alley in Cliftonville for our annual 'Away Day'. We are always treated very well at Bugsby's and they served us coffee and cake at half time for a very reasonable price – 20p for refreshments. We all did well with our scores, and Bob introduced more competition by presenting two trophies. Pauline won the trophy for the ladies with a score of 120 and for the men it was David with a score of 125. (These will need to be kept polished!)

The weather was kind and after the game some of us then went into Whitstable and others into Broadstairs for lunch. Thanks must go to Pat Andrews who completely organised this day for us but who, unfortunately, was unable to join us. Better luck next year. Thank you Pat.

## Gay Braybrook

**(i)** In 1930, British anthropologist Sir Flinders Petrie accompanying a team of archaeologists discovered various primitive bowling balls, bowling pins and other materials in the grave of a protodynastic Egyptian boy. This dated to 3200 BC – shortly before the reign of one of the very first Egyptian pharaohs. Their discovery provides the earliest known historical trace of bowling, although some have claimed that it originated in Germany around 300 AD as part of a religious ritual in which people rolled stones at clubs (or “kegels”) to absolve themselves of sin. The rules, equipment and principles of bowling at pins or skittles have evolved and diversified enormously over the intervening years, particularly recently through technological advances.

## *Editor*

## Local History 3 • Leader Christine Withams



On 13<sup>th</sup> August eight members of the group met at The Red House in good time to have a stroll around the gardens on a lovely, sunny morning before enjoying the first tour of the day led by an efficient and informative guide. Most members of our group had visited the Red House on several occasions before, and, indeed, some have been regular guides there for many years, so the size of the group visiting on this occasion was understandably small. For some, however, it was their first visit. We enjoyed our wander around the garden and were impressed by the outside of the house and found the tour, which was an hour long, interesting. It was good to see that, in some rooms, furniture of the time when William Morris was in residence had been acquired. A painting on the wall in one of the upstairs rooms, originally seen behind an open cupboard door, is now fully exposed, albeit in very dim lighting, and the cupboard has been removed. More of the painting exists than was discovered originally. The small café provided adequate refreshment after our tour while the National Trust shop provided more information, in the form of books, cards, notelets and other gift items with a William Morris theme. We were pleased to be able to visit a National Trust property like this so close to our own homes.

## Ilena Harrington

## GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER/CONTACT	VACANCIES
 <b>Amblers (Group 2)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (10.30 am)	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	Vacancies
 <b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday 	<b>Roy Black</b>  020 8302 9942	Yes
 <b>Book Reading</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Thursday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>June Reid</b> 020 8302 7887	2
 <b>Classical Music (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	<b>Alan Griffiths</b> 020 8303 6636	1
 <b>Concerts/Ballet/Opera</b> Various dates and times	<b>Norma Balfour</b> 020 8303 7693	Vacancies 
 <b>Darts (at the Alma pub)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday (noon) 	<b>Leader pending</b>  needed, please	Vacancies
 <b>Family History</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday & 4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday	<b>Judith Swain</b> 020 8303 5759	Vacancies
 <b>Local History (Group 1)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Wednesday morning	<b>Lesley South</b> 020 8300 8298	Vacancies
 <b>Ramblers (Group 2)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (4–5 miles)	<b>David Wedderkop</b>  020 8850 5042	Vacancies
 <b>Rummikub®</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Monday (2.00–4.00 pm)	<b>Margaret Platt</b> 020 8309 6395	2
 <b>Ten-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10.00 am) 	<b>Gay Braybrook</b>  020 8309 6372	Yes
 <b>Theatre (Group 2)</b> Various matinées	<b>Joan &amp; John Somerset</b> 020 8300 0890	Yes 

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.

**Keith Alker, Group Co-ordinator**  020 8850 2853 Email: alker@btinternet.com.

### 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 last page. It is easy to run a group and any current leader can advise you how it's done.

 Not during school holidays  
 Notice on the board at meetings

 Certain seasons only  
 Temporary Point of Contact

## PROGRAMME

### 2014

September	Romy McCabe	I Married the Vicar
October	Sue Spiel	Pam Ayres
November	Mr Halfors	The Spa Valley Railway
December	Alan Simmons	Entertainer

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Acting 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	Patricia Rivett	020 3302 2887
Speakers Secretary	Sue Brooks	020 8298 1117
Group Co-ordinator	Keith Alker	020 8850 2853
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
General Member	Trevor Ford	020 8302 7635

## 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](mailto: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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.u3a.org.uk)

## 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; 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 argue with a fool; people might not be able to tell you apart.*