

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

April 2008



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

NOTICES

March 2008 General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting was held on 20th March and was well attended. Members put on a great display of their activities. The Mayor, Councillor Nigel Betts, attended and showed much interest, talking to members and looking at the exhibits. Shall we repeat this event next year? What do members think?

Sixty-seven members had lunch at “Sophie’s Choice” restaurant on 25th March. It proved to be a successful occasion, with a varied menu and good service.

John Mercer, Chairman

① 24 photographs taken at last month’s general meeting are now available for viewing on the “Gallery” page of our website. Please contact me if you wish to display other photographs relevant to Sidcup & District U3A on that page.

Webmaster

Photography Competition

This is open to all members of Sidcup U3A and it will be held at the September general meeting, Thursday, 18th September. The theme for the competition is “water”, and any images of water from torrents to trickles, pools to puddles, drips to downpours, raging seas to tranquil lakes, can be submitted. Your photograph can be highly technical, or just ‘look and click’. Sidcup U3A members will be asked at the September meeting to vote on which photograph they like the best.

Photographs must be no larger than 7” x 5”, and members can submit one or two entries only. This is the first time we have launched a photography competition, and we hope that many members will enter by submitting photographs taken at home or when abroad on holiday.

Val Gosden

① If contributors would like their photo entry displayed on our website, would they please either endorse the back of their photograph accordingly, or send it to me for inclusion.

Webmaster

The Raffle

The Raffle continues to be well supported with many donations of items to be used as prizes, and since April 2007 £405 has been raised for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Your continued support in participating each month is much appreciated, and it is hoped that a similar amount can be raised for the RNLI in this coming year.

Val Gosden

GROUP NEWS

Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk



SELCHP Site Visit – Wednesday 13th February 2008

It was a cold day, but a warm welcome with tea and coffee awaited us in the Conference Room, followed by slides and a history of the site. We were divided into two groups of seven, and, to conform to health and safety regulations, supplied with protective clothing before our tour started. We were first taken into the control room; this had electronic panels on the walls, computers on desks and had several men keeping an eye on everything. This room overlooked a huge tipping area where trucks were unloading rubbish to be grabbed by a large crane and hoisted over a dividing wall into a furnace out of our sight. The man who operated this crane was seated with all the controls at his side and had a good view of the proceedings through a vast window. We were then taken to see the furnace, which we could view through a small window downstairs, before we continued through various areas that dealt with the rubbish of which it is not so easy to dispose, but the noise and vibration indicated that this was likely to be a non-stop area. We were told that the whole system is very eco-friendly and that little or none of the fumes escaping into the atmosphere are toxic after treatment in the plant. Our thanks go to all the staff, especially to our two guides and Abigail in reception; they answered all our questions and made our visit very interesting and enlightening.

Doreen Freeman & Gloria Stevens

(i) SELCHP is a major incineration plant located in Deptford. SELCHP is the acronym for the “South East London Combined Heat and Power” energy recovery facility.

Editor

Ramblers 2 : Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



The sun was shining (albeit briefly), the birds were singing (well, one or two), the wind was blowing and the temperature was a couple of degrees above freezing; despite this, ten of us met for our March walk of about 6½ miles around the paths and fields of Crockenhill. It was a rather bleak landscape without much greenery and the farm fields had been ploughed but only about half planted up. We came across a large badger’s sett with three or four entrances near the edge of a field. Back to our cars, muddy boots off, we then had a welcome lunch at The Chequers. It was a very enjoyable outing.

Pat & Alf Cracknell

Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk



Visit to the Wellcome Collection 12th March 2008. Twelve members of the group set off from Charing Cross Station on a “bendy” bus towards Warren Street. Halfway there two of the other passengers, seeing ticket inspectors waiting for the bus, attempted to leave by using the emergency valve to open the doors – they failed and were taken off the bus by police. TFL Inspectors boarded but, after a mass waving of our Freedom Passes, we were wished a good journey. On arrival at the building in Euston Road there was time for a coffee before joining our guide, Chris, for a pre-arranged tour. He started by explaining the origins of the Wellcome Trust and how its founder, Sir Henry Wellcome, became a pre-eminent collector of medical artefacts. We were shown a variety of exhibits including a 4000-year-old skull bearing signs of trepanning that had been done to relieve pressure within the head; this must have been done with flint tools. All the items on show had a medical connection, sometimes rather tenuous, such as a guillotine blade designed by a doctor as a humane method of execution! After the historical gallery we were taken to the contemporary exhibition where Chris explained the human genome, malaria life cycle and the major western health risk – obesity. We thanked our guide for a fascinating tour after which the group members went their separate ways.

Eric & Frances Percival

① The human genome is the genetic material of *Homo sapiens*; it contains all of the biological information needed to build and maintain a living human. It is stored on 24 distinct chromosomes containing around 20,000–25,000 genes. The entire human genome occupies a total of just over three billion DNA base pairs, and has a data size of about 750 Megabytes; this slightly exceeds the capacity of a standard Compact Disc.

Editor

Bird Watching : Leaders José Steward & Gay Braybrook



Eight of us set out to Bough Beech in spite of the rain and managed to see quite a few birds. There was not much activity on the lakes, although there were some cormorants, a couple of swans, Canada geese of course, and the usual moorhens and coots. However, at the visitors centre, where there are a few feeding stations, we saw great tits, blue tits, long-tailed tits, robins, a treecreeper, greater spotted woodpecker, siskins, greenfinches, and, the highlight of the day, some bramblings. Bramblings are visitors from Scandinavia; they are quite small and it is amazing how they manage to fly such a distance. On the water near the visitors centre there were a couple of shelducks but not much else. At Bough Beech a home has been created for sand martins in a large bank; it will be interesting to see if they take up residence when they begin arriving from Africa – which should be very soon now.

The next Bird Watch will be on the 7th May and we will meet at the Sevenoaks Wildfowl Reserve. This is open to all.

José Steward & Gay Braybrook

Freedom Pass Explorers : Leader Val Gosden



May I suggest to members of this group that, if at any time for any reason I am not at Sidcup station to lead the group, you continue on the train into London and visit one of the museums there, many of which are free. I trust this situation will never occur – but one cannot be sure.

Val Gosden

Classical Music 2 : Leader Derick Johnson



The March meeting, presented by Olive Mercer, was both interesting and unusual – the two elements we strive to achieve. First we heard Antonin Dvořák’s “Serenade For Wind” with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Christopher Warren-Green; this is seldom heard in its entirety and one wonders why. This was followed by Robert Schumann’s “Märchenbilder” {fairytale picture}, by The Plane-Dukes-Rahman Trio, then Georg Philipp Telemann’s “Trio in D” performed by the Musica Antiqua Köln Ensemble conducted by Reinhard Goebel. After a pleasant break, during which conversation flowed within our friendly gathering, we had an organ music interlude with Christopher Herrick playing “Toccata di Concerto” composed by Edwin Lemare. Grieg’s “Holberg Suite”, played by The Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields directed by Neville Marriner, had us all in a comfortable mood and ready to hear what was introduced to us as “The Russian Lollipop”; nothing can emulate the deeply satisfying tones of a Russian choral group and Kovcheg Vocal Ensemble’s “Since the Days of My Youth” followed by Vivat Vocal Ensemble’s “Twelve Brigands” provided an excellent conclusion to a splendid afternoon of music.

Derick Johnson

Ramblers Group 1 : Leader Annette Jansen



This month nine of us set off upwards from Shoreham Village for a 6½ mile circular ramble via Romney Street. It was tough going, with hills and mud, but the weather was good and the foodless pub provided freshly cooked chips for those who felt that their own picnic lunch needed a supplement. Duly refreshed, we made our way downhill, with only a few ups, to Shoreham noting the Cross engraved in the chalk on the other side of the valley.

When I went down to Shoreham
Some time another year
I found a cross for sorrow
And pain for men to bear
For lads I knew aforetime
Were sleeping elsewhere.

A Kentish Lad (from “Kent Ways” by George H. Vallins, 1923)

Annette Jansen

ENTERTAINMENT

Sound Advice

A man who was deaf in one ear
Said, “Don’t stand too far or too near.
If you whisper or shout
I’ll hear next to nowt;
Speak clearly, face to face, and I’ll hear.”

Anon

Last Month’s Anagram Solution : University of the Third Age

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
Amblers (Group 1) (3 miles) 3 rd Wednesday (morning)	John Harbert 020 8300 5361	Yes
Antiques Appreciation 2 nd Friday (10 am - noon)	Martin Baker 020 8300 1752	1
Beginners Bridge Acol 1 st & 4 th Thursday (11 am - 1 pm) (6 sessions)	Barbara Shilling 01322 270814	Vacancies on future courses
Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning)	Gay Braybrook/José Steward 020 8309 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
Local History (Group 3) 2 nd Wednesday	Pam Kirk 020 8856 8372	4
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
Online Computer Group Does not meet	John Harlow 020 8300 3865	Unlimited
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 8309 6372	3
10-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10 am) <i>except school holidays</i>	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 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 why not create a new one and then advertise it in this Newsletter? It's not difficult to run a group and leaders of a full one can advise you how it's done.

PROGRAMME

2008

April	Mr. J. Ripley	An afternoon with John Ripley at the Music Hall
May	Mrs. B. Stevens	Tales of Downe
June	Mr. M. Matthews	Around the world with music
July	Mr. M. Lloyd	Passports, Assassins, Traitors and Spies
August	Mrs. Eavis	The History of Blue and White China
September	N/A	Photography competition
October	Mr. T. Western	Magic as Entertainment
November	Wing Cmdr. Patrick Coulcher	Natural History of the South Downs
December	Mr. J. Buttress	Royal Parks

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman	John Mercer	020 8300 3136
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	José Steward	020 8302 1627
Raffle Organiser	Valerie Gosden	020 8300 0664
Welfare Officer	Gay Braybrook	020 8309 6372
Social Secretary	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261

USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

Travel Group Leader	Margaret Platt	020 8309 6395
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 AND FORUM

www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk

Afterthought

For those in touch with it, Reality is the leading cause of stress.