

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

February 2009



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

NOTICES

Educational Leaflets

These are available from the National Office free of charge for a single copy. If you require multiple copies please contact The National Office for a price.

Leaflets To Support Group Leaders/Co-ordinators

1. U3A VOICES – Starting Interest Groups & Supporting Group Leaders/Co-ordinators.
2. So you think you can't run a U3A Group.

Information Technology Leaflets

1. Teaching ICT Skills to Third Agers
2. Email Communication Skills – cover / Part 1 / Part 2
3. MS Word Features

Writing Leaflets

1. Creative Writing – Stella Claydon, Lewes U3A.
2. Notes and Discussion Topics for U3A Creative Writing Groups – Michael Wood, Emsworth & District U3A.
3. Autobiography for the 21st Century – Write for your Life Right for your Life
4. Towards Poetry Writing – Jill Dawson

National Arts Network Leaflets

1. Study & Visit to Florence.
2. Study & Visit to Siena.
3. Calligraphy
4. Art Appreciation and Art History – Suggestions for starting and maintaining a group.
5. Crafts.
6. Painting Tips and Techniques.
7. Basic Skills – Pastels, Mixed Media, Acrylics.
8. Sources and Suggestions for Art History Convenors.

We are in process of reviewing the 'Subject Start Up' leaflets and these will be available in due course.

Third Age Trust website ☎ 020 8466 6139 email: website@u3a.org.uk

George Murrell

Those of you present at the January General Meeting will recall the announcement that George Murrell, our Committee Secretary, was at that time at the City of London Police HQ receiving from the Commissioner “the very highest recognition for courage, determination and dedication to duty”. George had joined the City Police in 1951 and by 1973 had risen to become Inspector at Snow Hill Police Station. Part of the Citation reads as follows:-

George was always in operational duty and it was as an Inspector on 8th March 1973 that he conscientiously arrived early for ‘late turn’ duty. Having heard on BBC Radio about the IRA activity that morning, George came prepared for action: a car bomb had already exploded in the Metropolitan Police District at Great Scotland Yard, Whitehall, and another had been defused near New Scotland Yard. On arrival at Snow Hill he was told that the ‘early turn’ Duty Officer was already busy dealing with a suspect car bomb in Aldersgate Street and that there was currently a suspect car parked in Old Bailey opposite the Central Criminal Court.

At this point it is worth recalling the ongoing general scene. The police in London were on full alert, as they had already experienced numerous explosions, some in key public buildings. Forty bomb calls per day in the City were commonplace; the public was understandably wary and nervous and, though some calls were deliberately malicious, most alerts were originated with good intent. Some explosions occurred without warning and all alerts had to be handled professionally.

George immediately went to the Old Bailey where constables already present indicated they had been unable to trace the driver of a suspect parked car. There had been a 15 minute delay. He telephoned the vehicle licensing authority about the reason for the delay and was told it was because the vehicle was registered in Northern Ireland. This was enough for George. He gave instructions to evacuate all buildings and people in the area and, with the PCs, set about doing this. He went into the George Tavern public house and asked the customers to leave; being used to this situation, however, they displayed no urgency. He shouted, using expletives for emphasis, and the drinkers evacuated, following his lead.

He then spotted a coach containing young schoolchildren caught in traffic in Fleet Lane. With the assistance of their teachers he told them urgently to run down the street and take shelter under a railway bridge. Just as they reached it, the car bomb exploded and the force of the explosion threw him face down on the pavement, his cap travelling 100 yards. He luckily escaped injury and, as he got to his feet, he heard the noise of falling glass and debris and the screams of injured persons. Looking round he saw people, including police, nursing wounds. The glass of Hillgate House was blown out, the exterior wall of the George Tavern public house had collapsed and mains water was gushing into the street.

Emergency vehicles arrived, the police incident vehicle became operational and George was appointed ‘Incident Officer’, and he continued to perform long hours at the scene. George was always a fit athlete and a credit to the Service. Lesser men may have wilted at the scene. His actions on this day were determined, brave and selfless.

It would be a good question to ask why his bravery was not duly recognised 36 years ago. The Force was stretched to limits in 1973. Just nine days after the Old Bailey incident the Queen opened the new London Bridge and the focus of security necessarily shifted to that important, memorable event and the large crowds consequently present. Police and public had been injured in the Old Bailey explosion, some seriously. Ongoing policing and welfare were necessary and, as the police force moved on, George’s heroic actions became sidelined by the potential magnitude and continuing pressure of other events. With the benefit of hindsight one can now wonder what might have happened – especially to the children – if he had not taken decisive action at the scene.

Annette Jansen

European Health Insurance Card (previously E111)

This is the card you must show if you need medical help on holiday in Europe. I checked ours the day before we left and found they had expired. Luckily, we stayed well. I hadn't realized that they had expired, so I suggest that you check yours. The words "Expiry date" appear in tiny writing at the bottom right of the card. There is a printout on the Notice Board from the Internet to tell you how to renew.

Summary:

1. On the Internet you can only get a first-time card (but not renew it); this costs £9.95.
2. You can renew an existing card either by telephone, or by getting a form at the Post Office.
3. The Post Office offers a check-and-send service (like the one they do for a passport) for £2.
4. I have just renewed our cards by telephone. It was quick (only one button to press!), easy and free, and I did John's as well as mine. Have your National Insurance number ready in case they ask for it.

Olive Mercer

Events in London

I shall be booking a "behind-the-scenes" tour of Covent Garden Opera House this year and I suggest making our visit in either April or May. Anyone who is interested in joining this should sign the notice on the Notice Board, state your preferred month, and indicate whether you prefer a morning or afternoon visit. The cost will be £9.00 per head at group booking rate and cash payment will be needed in March. Please see me for further details.



Other items of general music interest.

EXPLORE VIENNA 1: Music, Literature, Society – Saturday 28th February 10.00am-4.30pm at the British Library Conference Centre, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB.

This is a day of talks and chamber music by leading musicologists and specialists in the art and literature of Vienna between 1900 and 1935. The speakers include Julian Johnson, Peter Vergo, Robert Vilain and Jonathan Cross, with live chamber performances by the Brodowski Quartet. Concession tickets cost £10.00.

EXPLORE VIENNA 2: Visual Art, Design, Song – Sunday 24th May 2.00pm-5.30pm at the Recital Hall, Royal College of Music, Prince Consort Road, London SW7 2BS.

This complementary event explores the Viennese Secession with particular reference to the influence that the art and design had on the period. Concession tickets cost £8.00. Following on from this at 6.30pm is a related chamber music concert at the Royal College of Music. Concession tickets for this cost £5.00 and the music you will hear is:

Debussy, arr. Sachs "Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune" {Prelude to the afternoon of a faun}
Reger, arr. Schoenberg & Kolisch "Eine romantische Suite" {A romantic suite}
Johann Strauss, arr. Schoenberg "Rosen aus dem Süden" {Roses from the south}
Johann Strauss, arr. Berg "Wein, Weib und Gesang" {Wine, women and song}
Mahler, arr. Stein "Symphony No. 4 (1st movement)"

Tickets for "Explore Vienna 1 & 2" and the chamber music concert are all available from the Philharmonia Orchestra, 11 York Road, London SE1 7NX. ☎ 0800 6526717 or website www.philharmonia.co.uk/vienna.

Norma Balfour

Cream Tea with Constable

National Portrait Gallery – Wednesdays 11th March, 25th March or 29th April 2009

Programme: Meet in the Main Hall of the National Portrait Gallery at 2.45pm for a welcome presentation followed by an unguided tour of Constable Exhibition and a cream tea. Tickets, which cost £14 per person, are strictly limited and will be issued on a first come first served basis. Application forms available from Third Age Trust, 19 East Street Bromley BR1 1QE.

George Murrell

① Those with internet access may download the application form in PDF format from the “Home” page of our website.

Editor

March Newsletter contributions

Please note that I shall be away on holiday from 2nd to 6th March and will be unable to acknowledge contributions received during this time. The deadline for this issue is 6th March.

Editor

Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre

At the November meeting it was announced that tickets were available for U3A members to visit Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre in London. We applied for two of these tickets and, on a wet Wednesday 28th January, we set off by train for London Bridge. After having lunch at the “Barrowboy and Banker” we took a walk past Southwark Cathedral and through the Borough Market towards the Globe Theatre. We arrived a little early so we went for a stroll across the nearby Millennium Bridge – the first time either of us had seen this structure in real life. After returning to the Globe we visited its museum before watching an Elizabethan costume dressing demonstration which had been specially laid on for the U3A. An excellent guide then took us on a short historical walk around the outside of the theatre to see the preserved foundations of the Rose Theatre, and the site of the original Globe Theatre which is now half covered by a Georgian building. We also saw the only surviving wherryman’s seat now preserved in the wall of a Bankside building. (In Shakespeare’s day London Bridge was London’s only bridge and any customer wishing to cross the Thames to Bankside needed to hire a wherry – a light barge or rowing boat). Afterwards, we took our seats on wooden benches in the lower tier of the auditorium of the Globe Theatre itself – the first thatched building built in London since the Great Fire of London – to hear more information about Shakespearean performances at the theatre. Our tour ended at the Swan café for included tea and biscuits where we chatted to members of other U3A districts. On our way back to London Bridge we walked along Clink Street passing by the Prison Museum, and taking a look at the replica of Sir Francis Drake’s “Golden Hind” in St Mary Overie Dock.

The Rose Theatre, built in 1587, staged Shakespeare’s early plays. It was rather small, however, and Shakespeare involved himself in the foundation of the Globe Theatre – just across the road – and this opened in 1599. Eventually, the Rose Theatre could no longer compete with the Bard and it was pulled down. Its foundations were re-discovered in 1989 and are now preserved below a modern building. The Globe Theatre burnt down in 1613, was rebuilt in 1614, but was finally closed by the Puritans in 1642 and the site used for tenements.

Christine & David Smith

Sponsored Charity

To facilitate accounting procedures, the committee has agreed that the “financial year” for our sponsored charity will in future run from 1st January to 31st December (instead of 1st April to 31st March). To cover the changeover during 2009, the charity nominated at the next AGM will be restricted to the period 1st April to 31st December. We shall vote on the nominations for 2010 at the November 2009 meeting.

George Murrell

Trip to Canterbury – Thursday 30th April

This day out was announced in the December Newsletter. For those interested in coming on this trip would you please note that it costs £15 and that I shall require full payment at or by the meeting on 19th March at the latest.

Anne Evans

GROUP NEWS

Classical Music : Leader Derick Johnson



January’s music programme started with movements 2 & 3 of Franz Schubert’s Quintet in C with Isaac Stern & Alexander Schneider on the violins, Milton Katims on the viola, and Pablo Casals & Paul Tortelier on the cellos; this was first recorded in 1952. Incidentally, not one of Schubert’s symphonies was published until some 50 years after his death. This was followed by three dances from Manuel de Falla’s ballet “Three Cornered Hat” played by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Eduardo Mata. Igor Stravinsky was then introduced by extracts from his ballet “Pulcinella” (which is based upon earlier music by Giovanni Battista Pergolesi), played by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Claudio Abbado with Teresa Berganza, soprano and Ryland Davies, tenor. This was an unusual but successful amalgam. After the break we had Dmitri Kabalevsky’s Concerto in C for violin and orchestra with Gil Shaham on the violin accompanied by the Russian National Orchestra conducted by Mikhail Pletnev. Kabalevsky was a new name for us. We then heard Ottorino Respighi’s “Ancient Airs and Dances” by the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra conducted by Neville Mariner – it was unusual to see Mariner in another role away from St. Martin in the Fields! The finishing piece was Astor Piazzolla’s Undertango with Emiko Mizuki & Izumi Tateno on the pianos. This was a perfect finish to the afternoon of music.

Olive Mercer

① Appreciation of Schubert’s music during his lifetime was limited at best, and, for most of his career, he relied upon the support of friends and family. He made some money from published works, and occasionally gave private musical tuition. He died at the age of 31. The manuscripts of many of his longer works remained hidden in cabinets and file boxes of his family and friends. In 1838 Robert Schumann, on a visit to Vienna, found the manuscript of the C major symphony (the “Great”) and took it back to Leipzig where it was performed by Felix Mendelssohn. The most important step towards the recovery of the neglected works was a journey to Vienna which Sir George Grove and Arthur Sullivan made in 1867. They rescued from oblivion seven symphonies and a vast quantity of other pieces and songs. This led to more widespread public interest in Schubert’s work.

Editor

Local History 2 : Leader José Steward



For our January outing, Local History 2 visited SELCHP (South East London Combined Heat & Power), at New Cross. Opened in 1994, the conspicuous Works can be seen to the left-hand side as the London bound train leaves New Cross station, and I am sure that most members of Sidcup U3A have noticed it. We were given a pre-arranged tour of the works by Mike Groom, a semi-retired engineer of SELCHP, who began his career at the Battersea Power Station. After a 30 minute talk and film show (including coffee and question time) we donned hard hats, goggles and safety vests ready for our walk around the Works. There is a constant stream of lorries loaded with refuse arriving at the Works, and they bring 420,000 tonnes of refuse per annum. Each lorry is weighed before tipping its load into the massive refuse bunker, where huge grabber cranes lift the refuse towards the hoppers where it is fed into the vast ovens where temperatures reach 800+ degrees and the incineration begins; after this it all gets too technical for me!

But the recycling element is interesting. I remembered a few facts: eg, electricity produced goes to the National Grid and it is enough for 48,000 homes per annum; ferrous products are separated out by a complicated chemical process and sold at the rate of one large lorry load per week; and approximately 8 large lorry loads of ash per week are transported away for use in road building and construction. SELCHP is in the Borough of Greenwich, but, large as it is, it can only deal with two thirds of the Borough's rubbish.

SELCHP has the "WOW" factor; everything is on a grand scale and all designed to resolve the problems of recycling and disposing of our rubbish. Engineering companies from all over the world send representatives to view the Plant at work. We would highly recommend a visit there.

José Steward

Bird Watching : Leaders Gay Braybrook and José Steward



January 7th was a bitterly cold day and when the U3A Bird Watching Group arrived at the Barnes Wetlands we found the water areas frozen and a distinct lack of birds. However, after hot drinks and food in the restaurant, we set off on our search. The first hide revealed a small area of what proved to be almost the only melted ice in the Wetlands and it was teeming with birds, tufted ducks, pochard, mallard, teal, little grebe, cormorant, greylag geese, moorhens, coots and black headed gulls. Upon leaving the hide, we passed a small bird feeding station and saw a greater spotted woodpecker, chaffinch, great tit, robin and jackdaw. On a frozen lake black crows were walking across the ice and fighting over some carrion, while grey herons hugged the bank. We walked on to the viewing tower and were rewarded with a very clear sighting of two common snipe, and the carcass of a swan which provided good pickings for the crows and magpies. There were several Reserve staff cutting back the reeds and hedges. We then moved on to the large "Clay" hide where we all got very excited when we found a water rail a few feet away, walking and pecking its way along the bank because the water was frozen, and it was soon joined by another common snipe, then several lapwings on the open grass. Other birds sighted were fieldfare, Canada geese, lots of pigeons and, last but not least, a bittern which flew across a lake and landed nearby in a clump of reeds. Altogether it was a rewarding day's "birding."

Bird watching is open to all.

José Steward

Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk



Our January 2009 visit was to the Household Cavalry Museum which opened in 2007 and is located in one of the city's most historic buildings dating from 1750. On the orders of Charles II, the Household Cavalry was formed in 1661; it now consists of the two senior regiments of the British Army – The Life Guards and The Blues and Royals. We were given a guided tour which lasted just over one hour, and then spent more time looking around by ourselves. Among the exhibits are two silver kettledrums given to the regiment by William IV, the pistol ball that injured Sir Robert Hill at Waterloo, and Sefton's bridle – the horse that was injured in the 1982 Hyde Park bombings. This is a very interesting, though small, museum which is well worth a visit, and just the place to be the start of our 2009 programme.


Marie & Den Brittain

Gardening : Leaders Jill Bryant/Barbara Olney



Would members and potential members please note that there will be a meeting in March at which we will decide upon our programme of visits. The venue and date have yet to be chosen so would members who wish to attend please call either of us to find out when it will take place.

Jill Bryant

 Contact numbers are on the “Group Vacancies” page.

Editor

Play Reading Group : Leader Frank Whipp



The Play Reading Group recently celebrated its one hundredth session. “Production” is hardly an accurate title for our meetings since no physical movement is involved. The mechanics of the system are that members of the group, mostly in rotation, select and borrow play-sets from a local library. To be within our capacity the characters in the play must not (1) number more than our venue can accommodate, (2) exceed the number of participants. The numbers of men and women in the cast must match those of the participants to whom the Group Organiser assigns the parts. The selected cast does not see copies of the play in advance. If there are insufficient members it is sometimes possible for a small part to be added to another so long as they do not overlap. Occasionally an author may give a thumbnail sketch of the characters as they appear in the play, but usually readers make their own assessment of the character as the action unfolds and play it accordingly. Since we do not appear before an audience the age of the actors as given by the author is disregarded when reading – this is a great advantage for senior citizens! Our experience is that the most suitable plays to perform are the drawing room comedies in vogue shortly before and after the war; the “Angry Young Men” approach is not our genre. Ayckbourn, Rattigan, Coward, and Emlyn Williams have stood us in good stead, but we have spread our wings on occasion to Alan Bennett, Harold Pinter and, of an earlier vintage, Somerset Maugham, John Galsworthy and J.B. Priestley. And we have had the pleasure of reading two plays by one of our own members which were very favourably received by the U3A's highest Drama Panel. So, as I learnt in maths at school, the Highest Common Denominator can be associated with the Least Common Multiple.

PS This month's play is “The White Sheep of the Family” by L. Du Garde Peach and Ian Hay.

Frank Whipp

Theatre Group 2 : Leader Joan Somerset



We have had a successful year of outings to numerous theatres and I have learnt quite a lot on the way!

On 1st November nine people went to Greenwich to see “Over The Rainbow”. On Saturday 25th October ten went to see “The Norman Conquests: Living Together” at the Old Vic. On 8th November twenty went to the Bob Hope Theatre, Eltham, to see “The Mikado”. On 21st January twelve are going to see “Sunset Boulevard” at the Comedy Theatre. On Wednesday 11th February ten of us are going to the Gielgud Theatre to see Alan Bennett’s play “Enjoy”. This month I am putting forward “Billy Liar” at the Greenwich Theatre on 14th March. On 5th March six of us are going to the National Theatre to see “Warhorse”.

This takes quite a bit of planning, etc, but the participants of this theatre group seem very grateful.

Joan Somerset

Ramblers 2 : Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



This month sixteen of our group enjoyed a local walk from Leyton Cross, Dartford Heath. With spring-like weather and glorious sunshine we were soon peeling off layers of clothing for a relaxing walk in the Wilmington/Hextable area. It’s a real “feel great” feeling being with friends and enjoying all that the countryside has to offer. An extra bonus was that we had no muddy boots to clean after the walk.

Shirley & Dennis

ENTERTAINMENT

Multi-tasking

by Ian Brydon
(For Bernice)

She tells me how to mow the lawn,
And mend the carpet where it’s torn,
To clean the drains and window panes,
Tie runner beans to bamboo canes.
She keeps me at it all the day;
My life’s all work – no time to play.
I dust the shelves and clean the kitchen,
Mend all the clothes that need a stitch in.
Wash the car, and wash the dishes,
Clean the pond and feed the fishes,

Vacuum all the rugs and carpets,
Organise the household budgets,
Cook and serve her weight loss diets
Strive to meet her workload targets.

So it goes, I’m always working –
She views leisure time as shirking.
I’m proud to see her use her skill,
And multi-task while sitting still.

NB: At a recent meeting of Ann Harlow’s Discussion Group I suggested that multi-tasking was as common in men as in women. All the ladies present voted against me, and one suggested that I should write a verse on the subject. This is it. **ILB**

GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
Amblers (Group 3) 3 rd Wednesday	Norma Balfour/José Steward 020 8303 7693/020 8302 1627	2
Antiques Appreciation 2 nd Friday (10 am - noon)	Martin Baker 020 8300 1752	1
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
Gardening 4 th Thursday	Jill Bryant/Barbara Olney 01322 524008/020 8302 4289	3
Hand Crafted Cards (Group 2) 1 st Wednesday	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	Yes
Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	John Harlow 020 8300 3865	2
Luncheon Club (Group 2) 2 nd Friday	Joan Smith 020 8300 3566	2
National Trust/English Heritage Various dates & times	John & Olive Mercer 020 8300 3136	Yes
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
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 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

2009

February	Mr. & Mrs. Wagner	Phantasmagoria
March	AGM	DVD – Passion for Churches, by John Betjeman
April	Mr. M. Heard	The Gardens of Impressionism
May	Mr. T. Moorey	The Most Popular Indoor Activity
June	Mr. N. Arnold	Big Cats in Kent
July	Dr. Gill Stoker	Essentially Ethel
August	Mrs. J. Hay	Freelancing for the BBC
September	Photo competition & quiz	
October	Mr. M. Parkin	Women in Print
November	Mr. R. Smith	Village Signs in Kent
December	Mrs. P. Mortlock	Ightham Mote

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
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
Raffle Organiser	Judith Bishopp	020 8468 7342
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 6th of the month.

WEBSITE

www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk

Afterthought

No situation is so bad that getting angry won't make it worse.

**SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
2009 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

19th March 2009



The Committee invites all paid-up members to our thirteenth Annual General Meeting, which will take place at 2pm on Thursday 19th March 2009 at the New Community Church, Station Road, Sidcup. We look forward to seeing as many members as possible.

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence.
- 2 To receive and approve the minutes of the 2008 AGM (attached).
- 3 To receive and approve the inspected accounts.
- 4 Annual reports (attached).
- 5 Election of:-
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Speakers' Secretary
 - Membership Secretary
 - Group Co-ordinator
 - Social Secretary
 - Welfare Officer

Please note: The Chairman was elected for a two year term in 2008 in accordance with the constitution.

- 6 Appointment of Inspector of Accounts for next year.
- 7 Charity to be supported in 2009 (From 1st April until 31st December).
- 8 Any Other Business.

**SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE
MINUTES OF AGM**

20th March 2008



**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the New Community Church Hall on
20th March 2008**

The Chairman, Dr John Mercer, welcomed everyone to the meeting, and expressed his thanks to committee members and all other members who had been involved in making the arrangements for the meeting, and to the Group leaders who had arranged displays of their groups' activities.

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Doreen Freeman; Ron Carpenter.
- 2. Minutes of the 2007 AGM:** Proposed by E. Percival and seconded by A. Platt that they be approved. Carried.
- 3: Approval of accounts:** Proposed by Mary Webb and seconded by Annette Jansen that they be accepted. Carried.
- 4. Annual Reports:** Proposed by M. Platt and seconded by Michael Jordan that they be accepted. Carried.
- 5. Election of Officers:** The following nominations had been received:

Chairman: J. Mercer
Vice Chairman: A. Jansen
Secretary: G. Murrell
Treasurer: D. Brittain
Speakers' Secretary: V. Gosden
Membership Secretary: J. Harlow
Group Co-ordinator: J. Steward
Raffle Organiser: V. Gosden
Social Secretary: A. Evans
Welfare Officer: G. Braybrook

The Chairman reminded the meeting that, according to the Constitution, The Chairman's election is for a period of two years. The above were elected en bloc by the members.

- 6. Appointment of Inspector of Accounts:** Proposed by M. Platt and seconded by M. Jordan that A. Platt be reappointed. Carried.
- 7. Charity to be supported in 2008-2009:** In the absence of any nominations, the Chairman said that he and Olive Mercer would undertake to collect for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. This was accepted by the members.
- 8. Any Other Business:** J. Harlow stated that membership stood at 235, and was increasing, with seven enquiries so far at the present meeting.

There being no further business to discuss the meeting closed at 2.15 pm.

The Chairman welcomed the Mayor, Councillor Nigel Betts, to the meeting. The Mayor toured the displays and expressed his admiration for the work of U3A, and the enthusiasm of the group leaders and the members with whom he discussed the organisation.

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE ANNUAL REPORT

2008



Chairman's Report 2008

This has been our second year in the church hall. The staff at the Community Church has been most helpful in setting up the audio equipment and looking after our needs in general. The attendance at our monthly meeting has been consistent and, thanks to Valerie Gosden, we have had a succession of interesting speakers. Thanks are also due to Anne Evans for taking on the task of Social Secretary with such enthusiasm. Dennis Brittain continues to exercise his accounting skills as our treasurer. All of the committee have worked as a team. I am grateful to Annette Jansen for taking over the chair when I have been unavailable. Thanks, too, for the stalwarts who put out the chairs and tables each time. David Smith continues to produce an interesting newsletter. May we grow in membership and friendship in the year 2009.

John Mercer

Treasurer's Report for 2008

Once again we have managed to increase our reserves through an increase in Membership; however, the next couple of years will see an increase in our expenditure as the hire charge for the hall is up from January 2009, and the fee levied by U3A will be increasing in 2010. During the year you raised the sum of £1,203.94 for the two charities that we supported. £621.73 was paid to The Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, and £582.21 to the RNLI. To reach this amount our thanks must be given to the members who ran the Raffle, Tea Bar, Bring and Buy, as well as the Music and Jazz Groups plus what was raised through the Collection Boxes. My thanks go to Alan Platt for examining the Accounts, and I hope he will agree to continue next year.

Den Brittain – Treasurer

Membership Secretary's Report for 2008

Although we had another good year with membership rising to 250, it was disappointing at the time of renewal when 32 members decided not to renew their membership, some due to illness or moving house, but the reason for the majority not to renew was that they could not get into groups and this is a worrying situation.

Whilst we are getting an increasing number of people making enquiries about joining us, when they come along to a General Meeting and speak to the Group Co-ordinator they find that there are not groups for them to join and so decide not to join us. If Sidcup & District U3A wants to grow and attract more members then this situation needs to be addressed urgently with more members willing to lead or host groups.

Over the last 12 months, 3 of our members have passed away, namely Molly Harbert, Grace Murdock and June Packman, all of whom will be sorely missed. At present our membership stands at 221 plus 4 honorary members.

John Harlow – Membership Secretary.

Group Co-ordinator's Report for 2008

There are currently 42 groups, with very few vacancies. Our thanks go to all the Group Leaders who keep the enthusiasm alive.

New Group set up during 2008 is:-

A totally new idea, "One Off Tasters", which uses DVD's, borrowed from the U3A Resource Centre at the National Office, each on a different interesting subject. This Group is experimenting with 5-off monthly meetings, then reviewing its success before continuing. Good luck to the leader, Val Gosden.

Groups closed during 2008 were:-

Beginners Bridge Acol – lack of motivation to move on after 6 weeks of tuition.

Thanks to Barbara Shilling for all her efforts.

On-Line Computers – lack of interest.

Music 1 – lack of hosting when Peggy and Pelham moved to Chester.

Thanks for their 14 years as hosts!!

Many of the groups have been running for many years and all are thriving. It was hoped that the move to the Community Church Hall and our increased membership would stimulate the creation of new groups, but this has not happened and that is very disappointing. We look forward to 2009 with confidence.

José Steward – Group Co-ordinator

Social Secretary's Report for 2008

Our social calendar opened with the annual lunch at Sophie's Choice Restaurant in Sidcup. A lively, well attended event with good food, good service and good company!

On a lovely sunny day in May we had a coach visit to a bustling Arundel. The "bustle" was due to the celebration of Corpus Christi taking place at the time enabling us to join the many visitors looking at the carpet of flowers laid out in the Cathedral.

Our second outing in September was to Oxford. With so much to do in and around this lovely city some of us joined a very interesting and informative guided tour of Christ Church College.

The Christmas social meeting rounded off my first year as social secretary. Many thanks to all who supported these events; please continue to do so in 2009.

Anne Evans