

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

March 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

Swimathon

On Saturday 17th April George Murrell (our U3A Secretary) will be taking part in Swimathon – a nationwide event. He will spend his evening swimming 60 lengths of the pool (1.5 Km) at Sidcup Leisure Centre. He says it's not because there's nothing worth watching on TV, but because he is hoping to raise money for the Marie Curie Cancer Care charity. Last year he raised £150 and was second fastest in the UK in the over 70s group. We all hope to improve on both of these figures this year.

Marie Curie Cancer Care is the UK leading charity for end of life care. The charity provides nursing care to patients in their homes and is also the largest provider of hospice beds outside the NHS.

If you would like to contribute to Marie Curie Cancer Care by supporting George's efforts please contact Annette Jansen either at the U3A meeting, or by email bartant@talktalk.net, or telephone 01322 522252. The amount can be small or large – it's the support that counts. I have the official sponsorship form for signing when I receive your donation. Thank you.

Annette Jansen

AGM AGENDA

Apologies for absence
Matters arising
Minutes of 2009 AGM
Approval of accounts
Annual reports
Election of officers
Appointment of Inspector of Accounts
Any other business

GROUP NEWS

Classical Music • Leader Derick Johnson



Jean Wallis presented her programme for February and started with Mozart's Overture to the Magic Flute played by the National Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Charles Gerhardt. We then had two items from the Promenade Concerts; this reminded me of the time in the 1950s when a nurse from St. Thomas's Hospital invited me to attend the Prom as she had a spare free ticket and nobody to accompany her. She had been on duty all the previous night and ended up sleeping soundly on the floor of the Royal Albert Hall. I had to wake her at the end of the performance and she was sad to have missed it. The first item was Henry Wood's Fantasia on British Sea Shanties by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and this was followed by Thomas Moore's famous Rule Britannia sung by Constance Shadlock accompanied by the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Basil Cameron. We then heard Giuseppe Verdi's Triumphal March from Aida, again played by the National Philharmonic Orchestra, but this time conducted by Charles Gerhardt. This was followed by Grieg's Piano Concerto in A minor by the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Basil Cameron with Gina Bachauer on the piano, and then Beethoven's Piano Sonata No 10 in G major by the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Basil Cameron with Sviatoslav Richter on the piano. The last two pieces were a change from our norm: firstly we heard Sibelius's Finlandia played, unusually, on the organ by Jeffrey Howard on an American organ – something our group found not quite appropriate, but, nevertheless, worth the experiment. Finally we heard the 4th movement of Beethoven's Symphony No 9 in D minor, Ode to Joy, by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and sung by the Beecham Choral Society conducted by René Leibowitz. This completed the afternoon's programme.

Derick Johnson

(i) The patriotic song, "Rule, Britannia", actually originates from a poem of the same name by James Thomson which was set to music by Thomas Arne in 1740; it is often regarded as the UK's unofficial national anthem. Its debut occurred in "Alfred", a masque performed at Cliveden House, the country home of Frederick, Prince of Wales. So flattered was Frederick after the first performance that he immediately ordered an encore.

Editor

Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



Our ramble this month was around the Ingress Park area of Greenhithe. People have lived in this area for 250,000 years. Swanscombe Wood, where coins and pottery have been found, was home to Stone Age man. There is also evidence of at least six sites from pre-Saxon times.

In 1920 British Cement sold house and grounds to Thames Nautical Training College for £30,000; this meant that HMS Worcester, which had been moored in the Thames since 1871, could have a shore base. The Abbey then became the College Sanatorium and the library was converted to a chapel and used during the Second World War as a parish church after St Mary's was bombed. The new housing estate is very well planned and made an interesting walk on a cold day. A welcome stop at The Pier public house finished an enjoyable ramble.

I have some fact sheets which I will lend out to anyone interested.

Doreen Freeman

Local History 3 • Leader Pam Kirk



Morden College, Blackheath, was the destination for our February outing. The archivist met us at the west front and took us to the chapel where she gave us a history of the College from its inception in 1695. It was founded by Sir John Morden, a member of the old Turkey and East India Companies, to provide accommodation for merchants who had fallen on hard times. The buildings are of red brick and enclose a quadrangle. There is a sundial on one of the chimneys dated 1725 and statues of Sir John and Lady Morden are over the main gateway. Originally there were homes for 40 men, but, over the years, the College has expanded and there are now additional buildings in the grounds and nearby which provide various types of accommodation for both men and women.

We also saw the dining rooms, magnificent library, and archivist's room in each of which items of historical interest were pointed out to us. Our visit was on a very cold, sleety day so the grounds did not look their best, but from photographs in the library we saw how beautiful it could look.

Mary Webb

Freedom Pass Explorers • Leader Val Gosden



Monday 8th February, which started out very cold and wet and with a tendency to snow, was not the most exciting day to undertake a Freedom Pass walk; however, 13 hardy members of the group collected on the platform at Sidcup to board the 10.02 am train to Waterloo. From there we took the underground to Kennington from which, after a short walk, we found a café for a welcome cup of coffee to see us on our way. Across the road from the café was the entrance to Kennington Park, a very large area covering several acres of grass, trees and flower beds, where we saw crocuses, snowdrops and polyanthus in abundance and a walled garden which, although not at its best now, will look quite spectacular in the coming months. The ground at the far end of the park was given over to sports, including an enclosed hockey pitch, netball and tennis courts and there were plenty of playgrounds for children and nursery accommodation. As we walked round the sports area and started to explore the final part of the park it began to snow and we decided to call it a day. Some of the group took the tube to London for a little light shopping; some caught a bus to the Lewisham Centre, while the rest wended their way home.

Pat Jackson

(i) Kennington Park was opened in 1854. Previously, (since 1600) the site had been called Kennington Common, a site of public executions between 1678 and 1799, as well as being South London's venue for public speaking. Two of the most illustrious orators to speak there were Methodist founders George Whitefield and John Wesley, the latter of whom reputedly attracted a crowd of thirty thousand. The common was one of the earliest London cricket venues, and is known to have been used for major cricket matches in 1724, the first of which was London v. Dartford. It is also where the Chartists gathered for their biggest rally on 10 April 1848. Soon after this demonstration the common was enclosed, and, sponsored by the Royals, made into a public park. The first all-night illuminated footpath through a park was installed there in 1899.

Editor

Rambling Group 1 • Leader Annette Jansen



Having decided once again not to head for the mud of Kent, ten of us assembled at London Bridge to tread the paved Thames Path to north Greenwich – and beyond if desired. We crossed the river at Tower Bridge and reached Thomas Telford's St Katharine Docks; this opened for trade in 1828, but today it houses a very grand marina and the Dickens Inn, a former 18th century brewery warehouse. Next we arrived at Wapping High Street which was created in 1560 and is a surprisingly unhurried, cobbled and historic street with some fine houses – at a price. At one time there were 36 pubs in this street, and soon we passed one called “The Town of Ramsgate”, so named because the fishermen of Ramsgate used to land their catch at Wapping Old Stairs which are down an alleyway to one side. Judge Jeffreys, of the Bloody Assizes, was captured in the pub in 1688. We then arrived at the probable location of Execution Dock where pirates, including Captain Kidd in 1701, received the Grace of Wapping; this entailed being tied to a stake until the tide had washed over it 3 times. Wapping Underground is in wraps until July this year when it is expected that this area will become *the place to live*.

We later passed the former London Hydraulic Pumping Station, which is now a restaurant, and which has preserved part of the machinery. We then crossed the bascule bridge that marks the entry to Shadwell Basin and which was built to take the overflow of ships from London Docks. The Free Trade Wharf, built in 1760 for the East India Company, is a fine example of the luxury housing which now abounds along this foreshore – for the wealthy! We lunched in the Grapes pub – its history can be traced back to 1585 – but it is now very Dickensian and serves good food and drink. Suitably satisfied, we continued towards Canary Wharf where building works meant we had to divert inwards past the Traffic Light Tree Sculpture by Pierre Vivant at Heron Quay; we wondered whether drivers are ever perplexed at meeting dozens of sets of ever changing traffic lights. We regained the Thames Path on the Isle of Dogs; sadly the rain came but we continued on to Mill Wall embankment where, in the 17th and 18th centuries, there had been seven working windmills producing flour, but where there is now a garden aptly named after Sir John McDougal.

By now it was too wet to linger and we fast forwarded to be treated to the beautiful view across the river towards Greenwich Naval College with the Observatory rising behind. After this, six of us headed for the DLR and home and the rest walked the foot tunnel to Greenwich. We thought how fortunate we are to have such venues for wet days – but we liked the look of some of the pubs in Wapping and will have a summer repeat!

Annette Jansen

① Execution Dock was used for more than 400 years up to 1830 to hang pirates, smugglers and mutineers who had been sentenced to death by Admiralty courts. Since the Admiralty had jurisdiction only over crimes at sea, the dock was placed within their area of authority just off-shore beyond the low-tide mark.

Editor



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 7693/07957 181808	Yes
Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning)	Gay Braybrook/José Steward 020 8309 6372/07957 181808	Yes. Notice on board at meetings
Boules (Danson Park – seasonal) 2 nd & 4 th Thursday (10 am)	Bart Jansen 01322 522252	5
Bridge Mondays (2 pm)	Fred Till 01322 528605	4
Darts (at The Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (midday)	Fred Green	Yes
Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	John Harlow 020 8300 3865	2
Local History (Group 2) 2 nd Wednesday	José Steward 020 8302 1627	3
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
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

March	A.G.M.	A Presentation by Students from Blackfen School
April	Mrs. B. Sadler	The Great Flood of 1953
May	Mr. S. Robinson	The City
June	Mr. M. Harrison	Midsummer Madness
July	Miss J. Aviolet	I am a tulip, what are you?
August	<i>TBA</i>	
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

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	Christine Spencer	020 8300 4291
Welfare Officer	Kathy Cordell	020 8300 4573
Social Secretary	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261

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

The older I get, the better I was.



Annual Lunch



Friday 23rd April 2010. Meet at 12.00 for 12.30pm start in the Sidcup Sports Club, Sydney Road, Sidcup. The cost is £18.00 per head.

MENU

- | | | |
|-------------|---|---|
| Starter | { | 1 Soup
or
2 Asparagus with Parma ham |
| Main course | { | 3 Roast pork with apple sauce
or
4 Steamed salmon with Hollandaise sauce |
| Dessert | { | 5 Bailey's cheesecake with Espresso cream
or
6 Deep filled apple pie with custard |

As an alternative to the above there is also:

- 7 Vegetarian option
- 8 Gluten-free option
- 9 Other, please state

Anne Evans



Please make your choices from the menu (1, 3, 5 etc) and return this slip to me with a cheque made out to "Sidcup & District U3A" for £18.00 per head. Payment may be posted to reach me by 31st March at the latest, please, or handed to me at the March meeting. My address is 22 Harborough Avenue, Sidcup, Kent DA15 8HP.

Starter { 1
 { 2

Main course { 3
 { 4

Dessert { 5
 { 6

Vegetarian option 7

Gluten-free option 8

Other, please state 9

Name/s..... Phone no.....