

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

May 2007



**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**

**The Raffle**

The raffle continues to do well and for the year April 2006 to March 2007 the sum of £330 was raised. As usual, this is to support our chosen charity for the year, and St. Christopher's Hospice will benefit from this amount. We are thus helping them to continue their good work. As always, thanks are due to the many who support the monthly raffle, and also to those who donate good quality items to be included in future raffles.

**Val Gosden**



**Hearing Dogs**  
*for Deaf People*

On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2007 there is an interesting programme of Dog Demonstrations in the Millfield Meadow behind Ightham Mote from 2.00pm - 5.30pm and entry is free of charge. The event will be opened at 2.30pm by Ann Widdecombe MP. Demonstrations will be given by the Southern Golden Retriever Team (as seen at Crufts) and will include a Retriever Gun Dog display, and a parade of Hearing Dog partnerships. There will be a chance to meet lots of Hearing Dogs. If anyone would like to go, but has no transport, please let me know. If anyone can offer to take someone, please contact me, Annette Jansen ☎ 01322 522252 or email [bartant@talktalk.net](mailto:bartant@talktalk.net). Ightham Mote itself will be open that afternoon, but the usual entry fee will apply for this.

This is our Charity for the year and at the monthly meetings we have a superb assortment of handmade cards with all proceeds going to the charity; please remember to check your Birthday Book before coming.

At each meeting there will be a box for used postage stamps, both British and foreign. Please leave a half inch margin around each one torn from an envelope. In 2005 the charity raised £3,413 nationally from donated used stamps. There will also be a box for foreign coins left over from holidays, and a jar for all that small change that weighs so heavily in pockets and bags. If members could accumulate only 10p per week each and bring it in, it would be a great help towards the £5,000 needed to train a dog and partner. Many thanks.

**Val Gosden, Gay Braybrook, Annette Jansen**

## **A Shared Learning Project at Dulwich Picture Gallery: Opening up Dulwich's Visitor Books**

Famous visitors to Dulwich Picture Gallery include W B Yeats, Alphonse Legros, Samuel Palmer and the Japanese writer, Soseki, who studied in England between 1900 and 1902. Many more names are hidden in Dulwich's forty nine Visitor Books dating from 1860-1905 which, although recently conserved and re-housed in special protective sleeves, remain too fragile for regular visitor access.

Scanning or photographing all 49 books, researching their contents and publishing the results on a simple database would be a major undertaking but would provide a fascinating new resource for visitors and researchers. Whether or not we find the elusive Van Gogh signature, about which there has been some speculation, the names in the book will surely be a starting point for valuable research into local and social history as well as providing a tantalising glimpse of Dulwich's past.

In order to ascertain whether a full-scale project might be feasible, the Gallery would like to invite members of the U3A to undertake a pilot project analysing two books, one from the beginning of the period and one from the end, to provide a comparison of how visitor patterns may have changed. The Project will include creating a database of names and addresses and carrying out historical research on the visitors.

Preference will be given to applicants with either professional or academic experience in historical research, an interest in local social and economic history, and some experience of researching family histories and using census data. IT skills are essential, especially familiarity with databases such as Microsoft Access and a familiarity with internet research. The Project will run for twelve weeks beginning on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> September and the team will meet fortnightly from 2.00pm - 3.30pm. We are looking for a team of ten people; the leader will be Clare Barry from Wandsworth U3A. If you are interested, please contact her as soon as possible on ☎ 020 8672 8178 or email [clarebarry@waitrose.com](mailto:clarebarry@waitrose.com). Clare will be able to answer your questions and give you further information. The closing date for applications will be Friday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

**Thank you, Margaret**

When I joined the U3A I had been on my own for a couple of years. And then those holidays began: Wales, Hereford, the Isle of Wight, Lakeside, Liverpool, Nantwich, York, Germany, Chesterfield - memory blurs - but they are so important to me as independent travel is now out of the question. Thank you again, Margaret.

**Betty Deutsch**

## Creating New Groups

On the U3A Notice Board recently we asked you to name group subjects that would interest you, new and existing, and here are the results:

### New Group Subjects:

Conversational Spanish, Creative Writing, Family History, Public Speaking, The Internet.

### Existing Group Subjects:

Amblers (not Wednesdays), Armchair Travel, Computer Workshop, Conversational French, Play Reading, Scrabble.

Now we need to find interested members who will volunteer to lead a group, and/or provide a place to hold a group meeting where appropriate. There may be some who do not wish to lead, but would be happy to provide a venue once a month. It really isn't difficult to be a leader, especially where the whole group makes an input. Also, existing leaders may be willing to advise on getting started.

### Example of Basic Requirements:

Conversational French or Spanish: Small group, 5/6 members, once a month. Leader would require some knowledge of French or Spanish. Books available from library and bookshops. Learn together.

Creative Writing: 4/5 members, once a month. Person with some experience to lead.

Family History: Small group once a month, maybe with some outings for research. Use books and the internet. Learn together.

Public Speaking: Small group once a month. Leader and members to gain confidence together

The Internet: 4/5 members, once a month. Leader requires access to the Internet. Learn together.

Amblers (not Wednesdays): Group meets once a month. 3 miles maximum. Leader can plan walks, or members can take it in turn to plan and lead.

Armchair Travel: Group number dictated by venue, once a month. Share holiday videos and photos, and borrow travel videos and DVD's from the library, etc.

Computer Workshop: 4/5 members, once a month. Leader to have computer and basic knowledge. Learn together.

Play Reading: Small group (to ensure there are enough character parts to read), once a month. Scripts available from library, etc.

Scrabble: Suggest 4 to 8 members, once a month.

We would be pleased to hear from interested members to discuss their ideas regarding the above. Contact Group Co-ordinator, José Steward ☎ 020 8302 1627.

## **Tourist Prayer**

Heavenly Father, look down on us your humble, obedient tourist servants, who are doomed to travel this earth, taking photographs, mailing postcards, buying souvenirs and walking around in drip-dry underwear.

We beseech you Lord, to see that our luggage is not lost and our overweight baggage goes unnoticed at the customs.

Give us this day divine guidance in the selection of our hotels that we may find our reservation honoured, our rooms made up and hot water running from the taps.

Lead us, Dear Lord, to good, inexpensive restaurants where the food is superb, the waiter friendly and wine included in the price of the meal.

Give us wisdom to tip correctly in currencies we do not understand. Forgive us for under tipping out of ignorance and over tipping out of fear. Make the natives love us for what we are and not for what we can contribute to their worldly goods.

Grant us the strength to visit the Museums, the Cathedrals, the Palaces and the Castles listed as 'musts' in the guidebooks., and if, perchance we skip an historic monument to take a nap after lunch, have Mercy on us for our flesh is weak.

*(This part of the prayer is for husbands)*

Dear God, keep our wives from shopping sprees and protect them from 'bargains' they don't need and can't afford. Lead them not into temptation, for they know not what they do.

*(This part of the prayer is for the wives)*

Almighty Father, keep our husbands from leering at the foreign women and comparing them to us. Save them from making fools of themselves in cafés and nightclubs, for they know exactly what they do.

*(Everyone)*

And when our trip is over and we return to our loved ones, grant us the favour of finding someone who will look at our home movies and listen to our stories so our lives as tourists will not have been in vain.

**Ann & John Harlow** (The above was given to us on our recent trip to New Zealand)



### **Ramblers 1 : Leader Annette Jansen**

On a lovely spring day, 14 of us enjoyed a ramble of about 6 miles in the hills around Meopham. We decided to walk at a good speed to the pub halfway round at Harvel as another group was assembling at the same starting point and which intended using "our" pub for lunch. In the event, we arrived very thirsty and well ahead of our rivals before the landlord had opened up. The day was amazingly hot for April and the fields and tracks absolutely dry. Sadly, some of our long established members have decided the time has come to leave the group and we shall miss them. However, it's good to welcome some new faces - and boots.

**Annette Jansen**

### **Classical Music 2 : Leader Derick Johnson**

Michael Jordan presented his programme for April which he introduced to us as “Childhood Prodigies or Precocious Brats”. I’m sure that he was not relating this to our group as we have all passed this stage in our lives! Proceedings started on a cheerful note with Leopold Mozart’s “Toy Symphony” conducted by Sir Neville Mariner from the Academy of St. Martin’s in the Fields. Felix Mendelssohn’s Variations Concertantes CD did not function so we went on to Nicolo Paganini’s outstanding Violin Concerto No. 1 by Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra with Ilya Kaler playing the violin. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s Flute Concerto No. 2 by the Swedish Chamber Orchestra with Patrick Gallois playing the Flute and then Henry Purcell’s Abdelazar Suite followed the break. BBC Symphony Orchestra conductor Sir Malcolm Arnold Michael informed us how the great composer, Purcell, began as organist at St. Paul’s Cathedral having been given the job by the established organist who had seen his great talent. The last item was unusual in that it consisted of three pieces by the Mediaeval Babes Madrigals, followed by two small pieces from my own collection of these entertaining ladies rounding off the afternoon of music.

**Derick Johnson**

### **National Trust/English Heritage : Leaders John & Olive Mercer.**

Our March visit was to Bevis Marks Synagogue and, when my husband and I went to find it, we found St Ethelburga’s Place – a former church that is now a Peace and Reconciliation centre for different faiths. We decided to go there before we took the group to the Synagogue and we were made most welcome, given refreshments and an illustrated talk about the history and development of the centre. At midday in the Bevis Marks Synagogue we were given an interesting talk which was full of quirky Jewish wit. We rounded off our London visit with a meal at the S and M restaurant opposite Smithfields. It was a most enjoyable day.

**Joan Somerset**

### **National Trust/English Heritage : Leaders John & Olive Mercer.**

Our April visit was to Osterley Park and House where 14 of our group enjoyed an unexpected oasis in West London. Osterley Park House is renowned for its Robert Adam designed architecture and interior. The House today has many original 18<sup>th</sup> century furnishings and is often used as a location for feature films and television programmes. The current film “Amazing Grace” has some scenes filmed in the kitchen at Osterley. The rare 18<sup>th</sup> century garden is currently being restored to its former glory. Osterley is a venue well worth a visit.

**S & G Rozier**

### **Bird Watching Group : Leaders Gay Braybrook & José Steward**

On a beautiful cloudless spring day, eight of us met at Lullingstone Roman Villa. We walked along the river and saw herons, robins, blackbirds, chaffinches, a wren, house martins and probably blue tits and great tits. We could hear them but, as the trees are now coming out in leaf, they are difficult to see. Crows were worrying one of the herons and eventually it flew off. We made a refreshment stop at the Lullingstone visitor centre and visited the Hop Shop before walking back along the river hoping to spot a kingfisher - but we were out of luck. The next Bird Watch will be on 6<sup>th</sup> June and a notice will be posted on the Board.

**Gay Braybrook & José Steward**

## GROUP VACANCIES

GROUP NAME	LEADER	VACANCIES
<b>Birdwatching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook/José Steward</b> 020 8300 6372/020 8302 1627	<b>Open to all.</b> Notice on board at meetings
<b>Classical Music (Group 2)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (2.30 pm)	<b>Derick Johnson</b> 020 8850 1245	<b>3</b>
<b>Darts (at The Alma pub)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday (midday)	<b>Fred Green</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Gardening (Group 2)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Friday (2 pm)	<b>Audrey Hayes</b> 020 8850 1032	<b>2</b>
<b>Luncheon Club (Group 2)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	<b>Maureen Porter</b> 020 8300 6126	<b>6</b>
<b>National Trust/English Heritage</b> Various dates & times	<b>John &amp; Olive Mercer</b> 020 8300 3136	<b>Open to all</b>
<b>Ramblers (Group 1)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (10.30 am)	<b>Annette Jansen</b> 01322 522252	<b>Possible</b>
<b>Saturday Ramble</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8300 6372	<b>3</b>
<b>Sunday Ramble (4-5 miles)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday (morning)	<b>Pat Peeney</b> 020 8302 5061	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Tenpin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10 am) <i>except school holidays</i>	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8300 6372	<b>Open to all</b>

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 want to join a group that is full, why not start a new one? It's not difficult to run a group, and leaders of a full group should be willing to advise you how it's done.

