

# SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

May 2008



**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

### **U3A National Website Update** [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)

#### Photographs of U3A activities

If you have any photographs of U3A interest groups I would love to have them to:

- Use a selection on the home page of the website in place of the current photograph of 'the lady in red with the Grecian urn'
- Start a library of photographs which will be very useful for publicity purposes. I am often asked to provide photographs to accompany articles.

#### Shared Learning Projects

If you are undertaking any projects either on your own or with your local museum or art gallery, please send me some information and some photographs and I will put them on the shared learning project page in the members' area.

#### Heritage Page

We are going to set up a U3A Heritage page in which I should like to include photographs and accompanying text of any significant events/celebrations you are organising this year. It would be great to receive some.

#### Forthcoming Events

Please send details of any events which are open to members of other U3As.

#### Message Board/Forum

The following have just been added:

- A Newsletter Editors' forum
- A Committee Members' forum

In addition you will find:

- A Research forum
- A Computer Help forum
- A General forum

These are interactive and I hope you will find them useful.

#### Notice Boards

There are notice boards to cover U3A notices and U3A member notices. If anybody would like to put a notice on either of these boards please contact the National Office.

**Lin Jonas (U3A National Office)**

## **Coach Trip**

The trip to Arundel on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> May will leave Sidcup Station, Jubilee Way, at 9.00 am sharp. We plan to leave Arundel for the return journey at 4.30 pm sharp.

My contact numbers are 020 8302 2261 (home) and 07966 194109 (mobile) for last minute queries and on the day. If you need to cancel please let me know as early as possible.

**Anne Evans**

## **Photography Competition**

At the time of writing it is raining quite steadily, prompting a reminder of our photography competition, the theme of which is 'water'. Full details were given in last month's newsletter, but, in brief, 1 or 2 photos, maximum size 7" x 5", to be brought to the general meeting on September 18<sup>th</sup> when members will be voting.

**Val Gosden**

| I suggest that you also bring a drawing pin!

*Editor*

## **Group Holiday to Balmoral Hotel, Bridlington, Yorkshire**

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2009

I still have vacancies for double occupancy rooms on this holiday. If you require a single room I can put you on a waiting list; I often get holiday cancellations so there is always a chance that you can be fitted in. There is space in this month's Newsletter for the details to be repeated.

Situated on the Yorkshire coast, Bridlington has a fascinating history which is wonderfully preserved in the Old Town which has remained unchanged for centuries. At the heart of the Old Town is the Priory Church. The history of the Priory is told in colourful tapestry panels and there are fantastic stained glass windows. The town's historic harbour is the focal point of the seafront. Three excursions are included: Ripon via Pickering and Thirsk, Captain Cook's Whitby and Harrogate, England's Floral Spa Town.

The cost for 5 days (4 nights) Dinner, Bed and Breakfast is £205.00.

Optional cancellation insurance: £8.00

We can enjoy a pre-dinner sherry reception every evening and a complimentary glass of wine at dinner. There will be a Free Bar each evening from 20.15 – 22.30.

**Margaret Platt, Travel Group Leader** ☎ 020 8309 6395

## **Computer Help**

The U3A has recently published an excellent small book entitled "Computer Basics for Seniors" (a beginners introduction to computers and the internet). It is intended to help near beginners acquire basic computer skills, particularly in word processing, e-mailing and the internet. It is a printed version of an online course provided by eLSe (e-Learning for Seniors). The book contains a CD-ROM which can be used as an alternative to the book.

The book is available from the U3A (☎ 020 8466 6139) at a very reasonable price of £6.00 including postage. In my opinion it is a must for anybody new to computers.

**George Murrell**

## GROUP NEWS

### Local History 2 : Leader José Steward

Our April outing involved a visit to London Charterhouse. A sunny afternoon gave us the opportunity to see this most attractive site at its very best, with lots of spring flowers and blossom on the trees.

The London Charterhouse, founded in 1371, is a former Carthusian monastery. Today, the building is formally known as ‘Sutton’s Hospital in Charterhouse’, after a previous owner and is a registered charity. Since the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the house has served as a private mansion, a boys’ school and an almshouse. Henry VIII kept it for himself for a while and used it as a hunting lodge. Queen Elizabeth I came from Hatfield and occupied the house while she prepared for her coronation and was crowned there.

As a monastery it was home to twenty-five monks, each with his own accommodation where he lived in solitude from Monday to Saturday with his food being left in a hole in the wall with a lower hole for his other needs. Sundays must have been very welcome! The grounds were extensive in their time and the monks no doubt enjoyed exercising there. We saw a row of the accommodation the monks used – but from the outside only.

We were shown the chapel with its beautiful stained glass window and the organ with its ornately carved casing – and also the chapel’s very uncomfortable seats! The Great Hall is a splendid room with a high, decorated ceiling and balcony, and used as the dining room now for the forty gentlemen pensioners known as Brothers, who nowadays occupy a large part of the buildings. The guides for our tour were, in fact, three of the Brothers: Peter, Peter and Stephen, who were most entertaining with their knowledge and cheerful banter. London Charterhouse is a lovely place to visit and we had a good time.

### José Steward

‡ The Carthusian Order is a Roman Catholic religious order of enclosed monastics. The order was founded by Saint Bruno of Cologne in 1084 and includes both monks and nuns. The order has its own Rule, called the *Statutes*, rather than the Rule of St Benedict and it combines eremitical and cenobitic life.

### *Editor*

### Classical Music 2 : Leader Derick Johnson

Our April meeting, which was presented by Barbara, was entitled “A Little of This and That”. It is always a hope among the Group that, although the popular composers and musicians are always welcome, it is very interesting to have those who are little known to many of us. By introducing such composers as Giovanni Gabrieli, Étienne Nicolas Méhul and Domenico Zipoli she achieved something that most of us can never manage. We had these pieces interspersed with three items by Franz Liszt, namely “La Campanella” {the handbell}, Hungarian Rhapsody № 2, and “Liebestraum” {love dream}. Next came Giuseppe Tartini’s Violin Sonata in G minor, “Devil’s Trill”, Henki Wienclawski’s Violin Concerto № 2 with Marat Bisengaliev the soloist. The afternoon was crowned with Beethoven’s Triple Concerto for Violin, Cello and Piano in C performed by the Berliner Philharmoniker with David Oistrakh, Rostropovich and Richter, the whole conducted by Herbert von Karajan.

### Derick Johnson

## **Local History 2 : Leaders John & Olive Mercer**

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Our April visit was to the Embankment which was constructed by Joseph Bazalgette after the “Great Stink” of 1858, and which was completed in 1870. We began near Blackfriars Bridge and walked along the Embankment, crossing over this busy highway and back again twice at some peril. There was much to observe: Uniliver House on the site of Bridewell Prison; the lamp posts, comprised of entwined dolphins bearing alternately 1871 and Victoria at their base; the two former sloops “HMS President” and “HMS Wellington”; the new lifeboat station close to Waterloo Bridge, and Somerset House. We spotted the former watergate of Somerset House, now some 100 feet from the river, and the seats with cast iron ends along the riverside in the form of kneeling camels which later on became sphinxes. Under Waterloo Bridge across the road is an infilled section which was the southern entrance to the Kingsway Tram Tunnel. We crossed into Savoy Gardens and looked at the building where the BBC had its original studios. There is a statue of M. Faraday next to the building housing the Royal Institute of Electrical Engineers. We spotted many statues and monuments along our walk, most noteworthy of which honour I. K. Brunel (engineer), W. E. Forster (1870 Education Act), and A. Sullivan (composer). Close by is a memorial to R. D’Oyly Carte and his sister Helen (opera company founders), and W. S. Gilbert (librettist) who has a plaque on the river wall. Once past Hungerford Bridge the monuments become mainly those of service leaders and there are statues to Gordon, Portal, and Trenchard. Across the Embankment is Cleopatra’s Needle – did you know that there was an outcry against this as being pagan and unsuitable for a Christian country? Further along is a monument to Bazalgette and one to Samuel Plimsoll (of the line on ships). Near Charing Cross Station, in the watergate used by the Duke of Buckingham to reach the Strand (since it was once a sandy shore), is a statue of Robert Burns, and a modest memorial to the Camel Corps. We finished our walk at Westminster Pier having seen far more than is recorded here. The day was bright and sunny and everyone felt that it had been very worthwhile.

### **John & Olive Mercer**

! The Great Stink occurred during the hot summer of 1858 when the smell of untreated sewage almost overwhelmed people in central London. Part of the problem was due to the introduction of flush toilets which were replacing the chamber-pots that most Londoners had been using. These dramatically increased the volume of water and waste being deposited into London’s 200,000 cesspits. Costing one shilling to empty, they were frequently allowed to overflow into street drains originally designed only to cope with rainwater. The same drains also had to carry outfalls from factories and slaughterhouses, etc, and they contaminated the city even before emptying into the Thames.

*Editor*

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

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Our visit in April was to Bateman’s, the home of Rudyard Kipling. The day was fine and it was a pleasant drive down to Sussex through the picturesque village of Burwash. Bateman’s lies in the valley of the River Dudwell; built of sandstone in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it has pleasant gardens and a working mill. Kipling loved the place and wrote many of his stories and verse there and the contents of the house are strong reminders of the writer’s presence. His study is as he left it, and most the rooms reflect his interest in the East. It still has a lived-in feeling although it has been a National Trust property for some time. There is a good restaurant and a large bookshop.

### **John & Olive Mercer**

## **Freedom Pass Explorers : Leader Val Gosden**

Our February trip was to Stratford, where we saw the recently refurbished station, and then walked through an arcade with its market stalls and shops. Over coffee it was decided to walk to Victoria Park, a fair distance away, but unfortunately we found that we could not reach the park owing to all the work that was taking place in preparation for the Olympics in 2012. We therefore decided to change our plans and a suggestion to use the nearby DLR to travel to Mudchute was warmly agreed upon. The day was fine so we ate our lunches in the farm cafe area before exploring the rest of Mudchute Farm. This was larger than expected and proved most interesting.

We abandoned our March trip out as it was the day of the severe gales; whilst we don't mind a bit of rain and wind, we do like to see the new places we visit, rather than the insides of our umbrellas!

Our April visit was to West Drayton. Access to the Grand Union Canal was close to the station, and we walked along the towpath as far as Stockley Country Park, spotting some interesting plants en route. In the park we sat on benches at the top of a small hill to eat our lunch, and from there we could see planes arriving at, and departing from, Heathrow Airport in the distance. Despite a forecast of showers, we experienced only one April shower towards the end of our trip.

### **Val Gosden**

## **Ramblers 2: Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell**

The sun was shining and it was a beautiful warm day when eighteen of us set off from Richmond Station to walk up Richmond Hill, where the views over the Thames must be some of the best in London. We then went on to Richmond Park where we should have been able to see St Paul's Cathedral 10 miles away from King Henry VIII's mound, but unfortunately it was too hazy to see. We then went down hill through Petersham Park, over Richmond Bridge and back along the towpath to Marble Hill Park and ended our ramble at St Margaret's Tavern where we had an enjoyable meal. All in all we enjoyed beautiful weather, good company and good food.

### **Pat & Bill Garwood**

## GROUP VACANCIES

group name	leader	vacancies
<b>Amblers (Group 1) (3 miles)</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday (morning)	<b>John Harbert</b> 020 8300 5361	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Antiques Appreciation</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (10 am - noon)	<b>Martin Baker</b> 020 8300 1752	<b>1</b>
<b>Bird Watching</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook/José Steward</b> 020 8309 6372/020 8302 1627	<b>Yes.</b> Notice on board at meetings
<b>Darts (at The Alma pub)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday (midday)	<b>Fred Green</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Freedom Pass Explorers</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Monday	<b>Val Gosden</b> 020 8300 0664	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Lunch Club (Group 2)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday	<b>Joan Smith</b> 020 8300 3566	<b>1</b>
<b>Music (Group 2)</b> 2 <sup>nd</sup> Friday (2.30 pm)	<b>Derick Johnson</b> 020 8850 1245	<b>3</b>
<b>National Trust/English Heritage</b> Various dates & times	<b>John &amp; Olive Mercer</b> 020 8300 3136	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Online Computer Group</b> Does not meet	<b>John Harlow</b> 020 8300 3865	<b>Unlimited</b>
<b>Ramblers (Group 1) (6-7 miles)</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> Tuesday (10.30 am)	<b>Annette Jansen</b> 01322 522252	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Saturday Ramble (4-5 miles)</b> 1 <sup>st</sup> Saturday (morning)	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8309 6372	<b>3</b>
<b>10-Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath)</b> Mondays (10 am) <i>except school holidays</i>	<b>Gay Braybrook</b> 020 8309 6372	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Theatre (Group 2)</b> Various matinées	<b>Joan &amp; John Somerset</b> 020 8300 0890	<b>Yes.</b> 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

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](mailto:editor.u3a@ukonline.co.uk) or post them to me at 56 Crofton Avenue, Bexley DA5 3AR – typed if possible.

*Please submit contributions by 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month.*

website and forum

[www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk](http://www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk)

### Afterthought

Today is the day you worried about yesterday.