

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

May 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

Events in London

Please note that the “behind-the-scenes” tour of Covent Garden Opera House (provisionally arranged for April/ May as notified in the February Newsletter) has been postponed until later in the year.

Norma Balfour

Alzheimer’s Society

This is our chosen charity for 2009 and we will be running the ‘Bring and Buy’ table again. So please donate your no longer required items. Please remember that, if they don’t sell, we ask that you take them home and bring them again the following month. Many thanks.

Ron Spittles & Annette Jansen

**Group Holiday to Crown Hotel, Weymouth, Dorset
Saturday 26th September – Saturday 3rd October 2009**

This holiday was announced in the April Newsletter. I still have 4 single rooms and 5 twin rooms available for those who are interested in coming with us.

Please note that I shall be collecting the balance of your payments at the July general meeting.

Margaret Platt ☎ 0208 309 6395

New Groups

Please see the notice board at the back of the hall for details of the following new groups.

1. Family History – Leader Ron Anthony
2. Antiques Appreciation – 3rd group – Leader Martin Baker
3. Boules – Leader Bart Jansen

If you are interested in joining any of these groups please enter your names on the sheets on the notice board. For any further information please come and see me.

Christine Spencer

June Meeting

Please note that, owing to expected absence among our helpers, we will need one or two extra members to volunteer to assist with laying out the hall before the June meeting.

Editor

GROUP NEWS

Classical Music : Leader Derick Johnson



We began April's session of music with Carl Maria Von Weber's Concertino for Clarinet and Orchestra played by the Philharmonia Slavonica with the brilliant clarinetist, Rudolf Schlegel. This is a standard work in the repertoire of a clarinet player but it is always enjoyable. Next we had John Field's Nocturne in E No 6 played by Pietro Spada. According to the notes on this CD, Field invented the Nocturne. We then had Felix Mendelssohn's Concerto for Violin, Piano, and Strings played by the Northern Sinfonia accompanied by Marat Bisengaliev on the violin and Benjamin Frith on the piano. This was followed by Vivaldi's Bassoon Concerto in C by the English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Philip Ledger and accompanied by the American bassoonist, Daniel Smith.

After the break we had Francesco Geminiani's "La Folia" {the mad} by the Purcell Quartet and The Purcell Band. We then had more of Antonio Vivaldi with his "Nulla In Mundo Pax Sincera" {in this world there is no honest peace} by the Liszt Chamber Orchestra with the outstanding soprano, Magda Kalmar. Concerning this soprano, Classic FM tell me that this item, which they provided, is the only recording they have but others could conceivably be obtained from Hungary – which is her home country. We signed off with Augustin Barrios's "El Sueno de la Munequita" {the sleep of the little doll} which features the fine guitar playing of Kurt Schneeweiss.

Derick Johnson

(i) A nocturne is a musical composition inspired by, or evocative of, the night. The name was first applied to pieces in the 18th century when it indicated an ensemble piece in several movements, normally played for an evening party.

Editor

Ramblers 2 : Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell



Our April 28th ramble began in the village of Shipbourne (pronounced Shibbun) in fine weather. As you probably know, the name Shipbourne is derived from the practice of washing sheep in the stream. We then continued past the Victorian St. Giles' Church and through Fattening Pen woodlands, where the bluebells were in full bloom. We then passed the manor house of Ightham Mote, which means the meeting place, and into the splendid grounds of the famous 17th century Fairlawne estate. The 4½ mile walk ended with lunch at The Chaser Inn which we reached just as the rain began.

Brian Ginn

Wine Appreciation : Leader Michael Jordan



WAGs Meeting 30/6/09. The Wine Appreciation Group met at 16 Victoria Road on Thursday 30 April. We had a selection of 6 wines from The Wine Society. These included a Sauvignon Blanc from the Loire, one from New Zealand and an unusual white wine from Spain from the Godella grape – of which none of us had heard previously.

The second half of the programme was devoted to red wines, the first being a Grenache and Syrah blend from the Languedoc, a Tempranillo from Spain (which was not a Rioja, but from the current wine hot spot in Spain), Ribera del Duero, and, finally, a Pinot Noir from Concha y Toro in Chile. Interspersed with the usual banter, we had a very pleasant evening.

The group decided to try to make a visit to Vinopolis, near London Bridge, at the end of June.

Michael Jordan

Freedom Pass Explorers : Leader Val Gosden



I have several times been asked where we have been on our travels, and the answer is that we have explored Greater London in almost every direction. West London included Feltham and West Drayton, to the north-west it was Amersham, to the north it was Cockfosters and Epping, and to the east it was Harold Wood. South of the Thames included the Hampton Court area, Epsom Downs and Peckham Rye. These are just some of the places we have visited, but there are, of course, others. So far we have visited 22 destinations, many of which were new to most of us. We have enjoyed looking around these areas, which vary from the distinctly urban to the more rural, but, wherever we have been, we have found something to interest us.

There are still places we want to visit and explore, and, should you wish to join us, you will be most welcome. Please contact me for details.

Val Gosden ☎ 020 8300 0664

Bird Watching : Leaders Gay Braybrook & José Steward



Bough Beech Reservoir was the destination for our May meeting. We made our way via the W.I. Market at Ide Hill where we stopped to buy picnic lunches such as sausage rolls, red onion quiche, fruit pies, cheese scones and rock cakes, etc – all home made. There was a stall selling fresh garden produce, home made preserves and chutney, and lots of craft stalls.

When we arrived at Bough Beech the Information Centre was closed due to flooding, so we sat in the barn and ate our picnics where Gay managed to make 8 cups of tea from one flask of hot water! In the roof of the barn there were house martin and swallow nests, and we could hear the young ones. A blue tit had nested in the bird box above the Centre door and flew back and forth. In the orchard, where the bird feeders hang, we saw lots of green finches. Out on the flooded field in the reeds we had good sightings of reed warblers, and in the bare tree above a cuckoo called. We walked along to the causeway and heard a nightingale singing – which was a rare treat! On reaching the reservoir, we watched great crested grebes performing their courtship display, and common terns dashed back and forth over the water. We also saw little grebes, tufted ducks, shell ducks, mallards, nesting coots and swans, herons, kestrels, lapwings, jackdaws, magpies, hedge sparrows and blackbirds. Good Birding!

Everyone is welcome!

José Steward

Ramblers 1 : Leader Annette Jansen



We enjoyed Pat Peeney leading our Ramble this month. We started in a pleasant residential area of Petts Wood and then, by a variety of footpaths, reached Farningham and the open countryside to High Elms Golf Club. It was a joy to see field after field of cowslips. These once common native plants have been greatly reduced by the widespread use of herbicides, chemical fertilisers and the ploughing of old grassland, but here they have been protected and are now well established once more. Lunch was enjoyed in the Club House before we retraced the woodland paths to Petts Wood. It was a lovely day.

Annette Jansen

Parks & Gardens Appreciation : Leaders Jill Bryant & Barbara Olney



On 23rd April our group travelled to Waterloo East and onward to Norbiton and then by bus to the Ladderstile Gate entrance to Richmond Park. Our destination was Isabella Plantation, now an ornamental woodland garden full of exotic plants. This area was shown on maps in 1771, but it was not until 1831 that Lord Sidmouth, the park deputy ranger, planted oak, beech and sweet chestnut trees. The present garden of clearings, ponds and streams was established from 1950 onwards. The main stream through the garden was dug in 1960 and included a pond. Additional improvements include a wild stream colonised by ferns, water plantains and brook lime. The Bog Garden was reconstructed in 2000.

The garden now has 15 deciduous azaleas and 50 Kurume azaleas which were in flower. This provided a spectacular show of different colours that was enhanced by the sunshine. Many of the rhododendrons were also flowering of which there are 120 hybrids. We finished our walk at Peg's Pond where we all fed the hungry ducks. This is a garden for all seasons and worth another visit. We then walked to Pembroke Lodge for lunch and were fortunate to pass a small group of deer which were resting in the shade of some trees and quite oblivious to passing cars. The patio where we had lunch had a spectacular view over the rest of the park. We then descended steep steps and were rewarded with a wonderful sight of bluebells before leaving the park at Petersham Gate for a short bus ride to Richmond Station and then home. It was a very full day, but everyone enjoyed our first outing.

Jill Bryant

Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk



Our visit for April had been arranged to see the British Coastal Life Exhibition at Greenwich Maritime Museum which had snapshots, posters and seaside memorabilia dating from 1880–1950. Fifteen of us met at the museum on the morning of 8th April only to be told that the exhibition had closed a week early in order to prepare for the next exhibition due to open on 24th April. The exhibition we had hoped to see should have been on display until 13th April. Needless to say, we all felt rather deflated and let down so made our way to the cafeteria for a coffee! Some of us then visited Queen's House while others made their own arrangements. This just goes to show that even the best laid plans can sometimes go wrong, especially as I'd checked the week before that the exhibition was still on.

Pam Kirk

Boules : Leader Bart Jansen



Are you interested in joining a new BOULES group? We shall meet at 10am on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays during summer months in Danson Park. Please contact me for further information.

Bart Jansen ☎ 01322 522252

① As early as the 6th century BC, the Ancient Greeks played a game of tossing coins, then flat stones, and, later, stone balls called spheristics, trying to make them go as far as possible. The Romans modified the game by adding a target that had to be approached as closely as possible. This Roman variation was brought to Provence by Roman soldiers and sailors.

Pétanque is a form of boules where the goal is, while standing with the feet together in a small circle, to toss hollow steel balls as close as possible to a small wooden ball called a cochonnet (jack). The current form of the game originated in 1907 in La Ciotat, Provence, in southern France. The English and French name pétanque comes from la petanca in the Provençal dialect of the Occitan language; this derived from the expression “pès tancats” meaning “feet anchored”.

Editor

National Trust/English Heritage : Leaders Olive & John Mercer



We went to Fulham Palace on 14th April. We had intended to go to Keats' House, but it was closed. On the way to Fulham Palace we had meant to go to All Saints Church in Fulham, but that was closed, too. So, on the way to Fulham Palace we went instead to St Mary's Church, Putney, where Oliver Cromwell and his supporters met in 1647 to discuss how to set about dislodging King Charles I. They met round the altar still wearing their hats – presumably to demonstrate their nonconformity. This church, reduced to a shell by arson in 1973, has been sympathetically rebuilt, with wide wooden buttresses inside the church supporting the walls. We went on to Fulham Palace, which, until 1975, was the home of the Bishop of London. It now incorporates a museum and art gallery. The estate belonged to the Bishops of London for 1300 years, and the present imposing building is mainly Tudor. Like so many palaces, it was built by the Thames with extensive gardens (now under restoration) reaching down to the river, to facilitate transport to London.

Olive & John Mercer



What Senior Citizens are Worth

Did you know that we old folks are worth a fortune?

We have silver in our hair, gold in our teeth, stones in our kidneys, lead in our feet and gas in our stomachs.

I have become older since I saw you last, and a few changes have come into my life. Frankly, I have become a frivolous old woman!

I am seeing six gentlemen every day! As soon as I wake up Will Power helps me out of bed, then I go to see Jimmy Riddle and then it is time for breakfast with Mr. Kellogg, followed closely by the refreshing company of Mr. Tetley or my other friend who I know only by his initials – P.G. Then someone arrives who I don't like at all – Arthur Itis. He knows he's not welcome but he insists on being there, and, what's more, he stays for the rest of the day. Even then he doesn't stay in one place, and he takes me from joint to joint.

After such a hectic day I'm glad to get to bed (and with Johnny Walker too!) What a hectic life. Oh, yes, I'm now flirting with Al Zheimer! The vicar came to call the other day and said that at my age I should be thinking of the hereafter. I told him I do that all the time; no matter where I am – the bedroom, the kitchen, the sitting-room or the garden – I ask myself, "Now what am I here after?"

And watch out for the crafty one – Gerry Atric!

Anon

Broadstairs

(Written after visiting Broadstairs for the first time – in 1987 – and finding an underground aviary with budgerigars flying below a grill set into the pavement).

Though golden grains are sheltered still
By ageing arms of chalk,
The crooked ways still lead downhill
Through bleak despairing talk
Of gentlefolk now on the beach,
The end of an élite:
Their gulls have flown beyond their reach,
And cagebirds peck their feet.

Ian Brydon

GROUP VACANCIES

| GROUP NAME | LEADER | VACANCIES |
|---|--|---|
| Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning) | Gay Braybrook/José Steward 020 8309 6372/020 8302 1627 | Yes. Notice on board at meetings |
| Boules 2 nd & 4 th Thursday (10 am) | Bart Jansen 01322 522252 | 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 |
| Hand Crafted Cards (Group 2) 1 st Wednesday | Val Gosden 020 8300 0664 | 1 |
| 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 |
| 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 |
| Parks & Gardens Appreciation 4 th Thursday (Feb to Oct) | Jill Bryant/Barbara Olney 01322 524008/020 8302 4289 | 3 |
| 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.

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

2009

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 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 | Christine Spencer | 020 8300 4291 |
| 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 DA53AR – typed if possible.

Please submit contributions by 3rd of the month.

WEBSITE

www.sidcup-u3a.org.uk

Afterthought

You're only young once but you can be immature forever.