

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

May 2010

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

NOTICES

Marie Curie Cancer Care A “Thank You” from George Murrell.

As a participant in the nationwide “Swimathon” in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care, I made my way to Sidcup Leisure Centre on the evening of Saturday 17th April. I was allocated a place in a lane and then swam up and down for 60 lengths; this represents a total of 1.5 km.

Over that particular weekend, this event was taking place in over 500 pools throughout the country with 20,000 swimmers taking part. These ranged from top class “elite” swimmers trying to produce a personal best time to family teams swimming as a relay for the fun of it, and with distances ranging from 1.5 to 4 km. All of us, despite our widely ranging abilities, shared a common purpose – to raise money for Marie Curie Cancer Care to enable them to continue providing care and support to people with cancer and other terminal illnesses.

Over the years, I have taken part in many swimathons, usually raising about £200. After each one I have said “never again” as it does require considerable time-consuming and boring training – particularly over the longer distances – for months beforehand. However, last year I decided to give it a go again and was quite pleased when the results placed me as second fastest in the country in the “over 70s” category. Even more pleasing was the fact that I raised just under £150 for Marie Curie Cancer Care. As a result of this, I decided to enter again this year. I had two targets, (a) to improve on last year’s time and (b) to increase the amount raised for the charity. The first target was down to me, ie, train harder, but the second was a problem as I find it difficult and embarrassing to ask for people to sponsor me. Solution: send for Annette.

An appeal in the Newsletter, followed up by Annette’s gentle persuasion, resulted in a total of £230 being very generously donated by the members of Sidcup and District U3A. Thank you all very much indeed – particularly to Annette for her tremendous efforts.

I was also lucky with the response from another couple of associations to which I belong, and the total raised from my swim at the moment amounts to £810 which, when “Gift Aid” is claimed, could reach £1,000.

Once again, my grateful thanks to all members of Sidcup U3A for your generous donations.

P.S. My time was 37 minutes 26 seconds – an improvement of 30 seconds on last year.

George Murrell

Groups

Because of holidays, the German Group will now run only from September to May.

The Boules Group has closed and the French Group requires a new leader if it is to continue.

Leaders are also required for an Art Group, Singing Group and Hand Bells Group. If you are willing to become a leader of any of these new groups, (or perhaps share running a group with a friend) please see the Group Co-ordinator.

Christine Spencer, Group Co-ordinator



Ramblers 1 • Leader Annette Jansen

The weather looked as if spring had come and so, at last, we returned to the countryside. Eight of us met in Shoreham and set off along the river valley towards Eynsford. From there we turned upwards and westwards to the Golf Club for lunch. Here the toasted bacon sandwiches were the order of the day for the group, and these were washed down by a variety of liquid refreshments. We ate out on the terrace and marvelled at the change in weather, so warm and hot, but, still having far to go, we moved on. It was great to see new-born lambs playing tag in the fields and rather docile calves grazing by their mothers. Spring flowers were everywhere and early crops of yellow rape were heading skywards. From the terrace above the Cross at Shoreham the whole of Kent spread sleepily into the distance; it almost made the earlier hill climbs worthwhile.

Alas, this week we are back in winter!

Annette Jansen

Ramblers 2 • Leaders Pat & Alf Cracknell

For our April ramble twelve members started at Mottingham Station and proceeded along King John's Walk, around Eltham College Playing Fields, through Chinbrook Meadows, and alongside the river Quaggy. We then skirted Grove Park Cemetery and, while passing through Marvels Wood, we came across a couple of trees which had several bears sculpted into them. They were very nice to see. After crossing Mottingham Playing Fields, we finished our walk and had refreshments at the cafeteria in Mottingham Village. It was a very enjoyable day.

John Harbert

‡ River Quaggy is 17 km (10½ miles) long and flows through the boroughs of Bromley, Greenwich and Lewisham; it is known as the Kyd Brook in its upper reaches. The river rises from two sources near Farnborough Hospital and is a tributary of the River Ravensbourne into which it flows near Lewisham station. Its name has existed for many years and references to it are found in several works of 19th and 20th century British fiction – for example in E. Nesbit's "The New Treasure Seekers". The name probably derived from the words quagmire and quag.

Editor

Classical Music • Leader Derick Johnson

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Alan Griffiths produced a fascinating programme for April beginning with Georg Telemann's Trumpet Concerto in G played by the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields conducted by Neville Marriner; the trumpet being played beautifully by John Wilbraham. Albert Ketèlby's Chai Romano (Gypsy Lad) played by Czecho-Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Adrian Leaper came next. Since the gypsy race has never been respected in that part of Europe, some of us were puzzled about why the composer chose this subject – but we were pleased that he did! We then had Chopin's Ballade in G minor played by Vladimir Ashkenazy on the piano followed by Variations on a Theme by Rossini played by the Ex Novo Ensemble composed by Giovacchino Giovacchini (about whom little information can be found). Before the interval we had Shostakovich's Tahiti Trot Op.16 played by the Russian State Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dmitry Yablonsky. During the break we wished the new Classical Music group every success. After the break we had Arnold Bax's "Tintagel" played by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir John Barbirolli; this endeavoured successfully to describe musically the sensation of standing on that wild Cornish headland. Carl Stamitz's Concerto in F with Yoshiyuki Nakanishi on the bassoon accompanied by the London Mozart Players conducted by Nicholas Cleobury was a fine piece. We finished the afternoon with John Ireland's "A London Overture" played by the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir John Barbirolli which completed a satisfying varied selection.

Derick Johnson

Local History 3 • Leader Pam Kirk

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In Anglo-Saxon England the Archbishops of Canterbury owned a large estate in Croydon; the church and the Archbishops' manor house occupied the area still known as the Old Town. From the Middle Ages, the Archbishop with his large entourage used this, and several other palaces he owned, as staging posts on his way from Lambeth Palace to Canterbury, as he travelled at a pace of about ten miles a day. By the 16th century the manor house had become a substantial palace used as the main summer home of the Archbishops, and it was visited by monarchs and other dignitaries. Many of the buildings of the original Croydon Palace survive and are in use today as Old Palace School. One of our number had even been at the school! The 15th century Great Hall and Guardroom, the Chapel, the Tudor Long Gallery, and the bedroom used by Queen Elizabeth I (did she ever sleep at home?) are now used by the girls attending the school. Other illustrious visitors were King James I of Scotland (as a prisoner), Henry VIII, Katherine of Aragon, and Mary Tudor.

We went on 7th April, when there was supposed to be a train strike (but later cancelled), so at the last moment some of us decided to travel by two buses via Bromley. The buses wove through numerous back streets and we had views we had never seen before – a local history tour we had not expected. Afterwards, some of us returned by the Croydon tramway. It turned out to be quite an adventure.

Olive Mercer

Freedom Pass Explorers • Leader Val Gosden

We had a very pleasant trip out in March which, despite the somewhat cold wind, was sunny with blue skies. Our visit was to Battersea Park which many of us had not visited since 1951, the year of the Festival of London, when we enjoyed the special festivities provided there. This time we saw the park in daylight, and were fortunate enough to find the park café open for coffee, and, later on, for lunch. We wandered round the lake, which sported several kinds of duck and goose, then on to the island before turning towards the bandstand and Peace Pagoda, passing en route the semi-tropical garden. The park is a fair size and will probably be worth a visit in the summer-time, when, presumably, the several fountains will be giving a good display.

Our first impressions of Greenford, which we visited in April, were of an industrial area with many offices and warehouses. However, after walking a short way we reached a pleasant park, and enjoyed seeing the blossom on some of the trees and the green of unfurling leaves on others. Our route then took us to the Grand Union Canal. We followed the towpath for some way, spotting swans, ducks, and coots on the water and, incredibly, two turtles (we think they were turtles) on the opposite bank. Our stop for lunch was in a park overlooking the canal; the sun came out and we enjoyed the peaceful scenery, before continuing our walk to Perivale Underground station and our journey home.

Val Gosden



Little Known Composers

Extracts from the ILB Collection of Biographies

BELPUSCZ

Preszter Belpuszc was born in Bedd in Poland. He is best known as the first realist composer of oratorio. The short lived manifestation of realism in opera and in music (he always distinguished between the two arts) was seized upon by Belpuszc who was looking for a distinctive style to bring him to the attention of his contemporaries. Perhaps the most notorious of his works was the oratorio “Saint Francis in the Batcave”, a drama about vampirism. The aria “I left my teeth in San Francisco” has been adapted for the popular market. The public refused to attend performances of “Saint Francis” when it became known that to attain the realist ideal the chorus had to chew garlic before launching into the Halitosis Chorus. Many conductors were overcome at this point. Belpuszc claimed that they succumbed to emotion. The Bavarian conductor Schtickfarst disagreed. “This oratorio stinks”, he said. Belpuszc’s revenge soon followed. In his “Judas Maccornibus” a character obviously based on Schtickfarst is portrayed as the incompetent conductor of a tramcar. Critics differ in their opinion of Belpuszc. Some think him useless; others regard him as thoroughly useless. His works have never been recorded, but an amateur operatic society in Foots Cray has applied to the National Lottery Fund for a donation to enable them to mount a Belpuszc Festival to mark their second anniversary.

Research by Ian Brydon

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
Bridge Mondays (2 pm)	Fred Till 01322 528605	4
Darts (at The Alma pub) 2 nd Monday (midday)	Fred Green	Yes
First Aid Course 2 nd & 4 th Wednesday	Gladys Davidson 020 8850 9252	3
Local History (Group 1) 2 nd Wednesday	John Harlow 020 8300 3865	2
Local History (Group 2) 2 nd Wednesday	José Steward 07957 181808	3
Music (Group 2) 2 nd Friday	Maureen Porter 020 8300 6128	1
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

May	Mr. S. Robinson	The City
June	Mr. M. Harrison	Midsummer Madness
July	Miss J. Aviolet	I am a tulip, what are you?
August		Open Forum
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	Anne Evans	020 8302 2261
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

Born free - taxed to death.