

SIDCUP & DISTRICT UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE NEWSLETTER

October 2007



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

NOTICES



Hearing Dogs *for Deaf People*

Throughout 2007 Hearing Dogs for Deaf People is celebrating 25 years of changing lives, and supporters are offered the opportunity of donating to the *Faithful Friends Appeal*. Anyone making a gift of £25 or more before December 31st 2007 will be sent a personal certificate including information and a photograph of the *Faithful Friend* they've helped to sponsor. Each dog costs £5,000 to train and partner to a deaf person, so up to 200 sponsors are needed to train him or her.

It's a unique opportunity for supporters to share in the sponsorship of 25 young hearing dogs - all with their own special story. The dogs are all very different, but, as a sponsor, you'll be privileged to learn about your own *Faithful Friend* and the unique gifts he brings to his deaf partner.

Please make cheques payable to Hearing Dogs for Deaf People (U3A), and send to:

Hearing Dogs for Deaf People,
Faithful Friends Appeal (U3A),
The Grange,
Wycombe Road,
Saunderton,
Princes Risborough,
Bucks, HP27 9NS

(Smaller donations are also always welcome).

Val Gosden, Annette Jansen & Gay Braybrook



The Raffle

Thanks to the continued support of members we have raised £100 since April and this has been sent to Hearing Dogs for Deaf People. Thanks also go to members who donate quality items which can be included in the raffle; these are always much appreciated.

Val Gosden



Items for sale

We have on order from Hearing Dogs for Deaf People a selection of Christmas cards, table napkins and small soft toy dogs which we hope will have arrived in time to be on sale at the October general meeting. Bring all your spare small change, used postage stamps, and also buy from our selection of birthday cards and “Bring and Buy” items. Also on sale will be the usual raffle tickets and cups of tea.

Annette Jansen



Saturday Rambling Group – November 3rd

This will be a walk for our charity – Hearing Dogs for Deaf People – and everyone is invited to participate, including family members and the other rambling groups. We hope our members will sponsor us and there will be collection boxes at our October general meeting for this purpose.

Meet in the car park in Scadbury Park at 10.30 am. Buses also stop in Perry Street and the entrance to Scadbury Park is a little way along Old Perry Street just past the Sydney Arms. It will be a 4-mile easy walk with either a picnic lunch, if the weather is good, or lunch at the Sydney Arms. We may have to book at the Sydney Arms if there are going to be a lot of us for lunch so perhaps you could let me know if you intend to come.

Gay Braybrook ☎ **020 8309 6372 or mobile 0775 1117325**

Newsletter

Contributions for the Newsletter are invited from groups with vacancies which do not already submit reports. Keeping everyone informed of your activities should give you the best chance of attracting new members. Anyone with an idea for a new group and who needs members may submit details to me for inclusion in the Newsletter.



Members who wish to pick up a copy of the current Newsletter from Sidcup Library should look in the newspaper rack to the right of the entrance. Those with internet access may download it in PDF format from the “Meetings” page of our website. My contact details and the website address are shown at the end of this Newsletter.

Editor

GROUP NEWS

Ramblers 2 : Leader Geoff Rozier

It was a warm, sunny day and it provided ideal conditions for our August ramble. Fourteen of us set off from the White Cross pub in North Cray Road for a five mile circular walk. After crossing the road, we took a lane through Gattons Plantation and on to Chalk Wood. Nestling in the wood is a mobile home site containing beautifully kept homes with their well tended gardens. We also came across a dell which is about fifty feet deep, and which was originally excavated for chalk several hundred years ago to be used as a fertiliser on the Kent farmlands. There are many tunnels and caverns underground which are now home to hibernating bats. We carried on past a farm and skirted the 15th hole of Birchwood Golf Course. We passed many riding stables and open fields where the horses were grazing. It was a very enjoyable walk with plenty to hold our interest, and it was virtually on our doorstep. We then went back to the White Cross for welcome refreshments.

Pat and Alf Cracknell

Wine Appreciation Group : Leader Michael Jordan

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The WAG (Wine Appreciation Group) held its summer outing on the evening of Thursday 30th August 2007. The evening took the form of a wine tasting and supper at The Weavers restaurant pub in Southborough, Kent. There was a Chilean theme for the wines; two white and two red all coming from that country. We first tasted all the wines and then decided which wines we, individually, preferred for drinking with our meal. As may be imagined, there followed a very convivial evening (but then, WAG evenings always are). I am sure you will all be pleased to know that we took the basic precaution of arranging to be taken there and brought back by coach. It was a most enjoyable and entertaining evening.

Michael Jordan

Theatre Group 2 : Leader Joan Somerset

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I feel that it is time to report the activities of Theatre Group 2. Our first outing, which was well supported, was to see “The Entertainer” at the Old Vic. This was followed by a second trip to the Old Vic to see “Gaslight”, which was a marvellous performance of this old play. Later we went to see “Fiddler On The Roof” at the Savoy; again, this was well supported and was the best musical I have seen in years.

On Saturday 8th September five of us went to see “The Emperor Jones” by Eugene O’Neill in The Olivier Theatre at the National Theatre. This was excellent and was in keeping with the history of the black people living in America with the dreamlife experience of Emperor Brutus Jones. Next month thirteen of us are going to see “Wicked” at the Apollo Victoria, and in January we hope to go to the National Theatre again to see Shakespeare’s “Much Ado About Nothing”. Our programme for November and December has yet to be decided and any suggestions would be welcome. Two items I am considering include “The 39 Steps” and “All About My Mother”.

Joan Somerset

Local History 2 : Leader José Steward

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The intention for our outing on 12th September was to do a boat trip up the Thames from Greenwich to Tower Pier and then visit Allhallows by the Tower (the oldest church in the City of London) and/or St. Katherine Docks. However, ‘clever clogs’ decided to change the established transport and go for a 286 bus from the High Street; what followed this decision might best be described by paraphrasing a song from Evita: “Oh, what a circus, what a show!”

Fifteen of us were due to make the trip but, owing to an ‘incident’ on the Lower Road into Greenwich, we were all turned off the bus at the old Greenwich Police station. This meant that we could not meet up with two, who, for business and personal reasons, had arranged to join us at Greenwich. These two, plus one who had fallen at the first fence, meant that our numbers were down to twelve. While we discussed what best to do two decided to walk it – at least half an hour, I would have thought – which meant our group was reduced to ten.

Since no traffic was going towards Greenwich, we decided to change the destination and head for the Dome. On the way to the bus stop, however, we lost another through fatigue which left us with nine. As we looked for somewhere to have coffee at the Dome, a further two decided to walk the Thames path back to Greenwich leaving us with seven. After that, we decided to take a ‘supposed’ 20-minute walk in an anti-clockwise direction round the Dome on the River Walk. However, because of pauses for chats, sightseeing, and the spectacle of a reproduction three-masted galleon going upstream under power, this walk actually took an hour before we, too, decided to call it a day and return home.

Subsequent phone conversations established that the two pairs we had lost early on had made the boat trip on different sailings, and had also visited both original tour destinations. They reported as having had a thoroughly enjoyable day, as I think we *all* did, despite the mishaps. We hope for better luck next time.

Chas Owen

! Our new website has a picture taken during this particular outing.

Editor

Local History 3 : Leader Pam Kirk

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Our September visit was to Wesley’s Chapel in City Road, London. The Chapel was built as John Wesley’s London base in 1778 opposite Bunhill Fields, the nonconformist cemetery. We were given a talk about John Wesley, founder of Methodism and one of the most influential men of the 18th century. The Chapel was originally quite austere and had a very high pulpit so that the preacher could see those in the balcony. A fire occurred in the late 19th century and money donated from countries around the world enabled the Chapel to be redecorated as we see it today. We were then taken round Wesley’s House, which was built in 1779, and which is a very good example of a Georgian house of the lower middle class. It has two rooms on each of five floors and contains many of Wesley’s belongings. He would have used this house in the last eleven winters of his life when he was not touring the country. It also provided a home for preachers of the Chapel, their families and servants. We then visited the Museum housed in the original crypt which contained a comprehensive history of Methodism and an excellent video.

Pam Kirk

Classical Music 2 : Leader Derick Johnson

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The September programme was presented by Betty Fletcher and began with a piece by George Butterworth: "The Banks of Green Willow" by the English Sinfonia conducted by Neville Dilkes. This was a favourite of Myra Davies who, sadly, died in a car accident last month and who will be missed by everyone in the group. Afterwards we listened to Vaughan Williams's "Five Variants of Dives and Lazarus" by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra conducted by Norman Del Mar. Myra used to go to the weekend concerts presented by this orchestra when she lived in the area. We then heard Dmitri Shostakovich's Jazz Suites 1 and 2 by the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Mariss Jansons which, although good, could hardly have been titled in this way by the great composer himself. This highlights the inappropriateness of allocating music to separate categories. Felix Mendelssohn's violin concerto in E minor, played by Yehudi Menuhin with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Efrem Kurtz, was the star of the afternoon, and this was followed by the first movement of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. Berlioz's Symphony Fantastique "March to the Scaffold" by the French National Orchestra with Leonard Bernstein conducting raised some laughs as the lugubrious music emphasised the mood of the unfortunates in the tumbrils. We finished an interesting afternoon with Frédéric Chopin's Piano Concerto No 2 by the Czechoslovak State Orchestra, and "Roses from the South" by Johann Strauss II which was performed by the Czechoslovak Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Andrej Lenard.

Derick Johnson

Ramblers 1 : Leader Annette Jansen

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Lesley South led our September ramble starting from One Tree Hill, Sevenoaks, through open countryside and across Knole Park to our lunch stop at Godden Green where we had a good welcome at the Buck's Head public house. A few hills later Lesley said, "If I can do it, so can you" – and we did! What a lovely day out; we enjoyed good weather and company and we saw very few other people.

Annette Jansen

National Trust/English Heritage : Leaders John & Olive Mercer

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Visit to Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst, 13th September. Eleven members of the group made their way on a lovely sunny morning to tour the newly opened ground floor rooms of this Victorian house built by the Hussey family. They had once inhabited the medieval castle, but this is now a romantic ruin in the centre of the gardens. The house has a much more 'lived in' appearance than most National Trust houses, and this is due to the fact that when the Trust took over the building recently it came fully furnished, complete with a cat which avoids visitors. The rooms are full of family memorabilia and have beautiful views across the surrounding countryside. After a picnic lunch it was time for a garden visit; all gardens have their own particular magic and at Scotney it is the walks around the old castle and its moat.

Frances & Eric Percival

Ramblers 2 : Leader Geoff Rozier

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Our ramble this month started from Horton Kirby and, once again, we were blessed with fine weather. Walking through the village we were surprised to see the paper mill had been demolished and many homes being built on the site. The factory chimney was still standing but we were unable to find out if this is soon to be demolished. After a shorter walk this month, we all enjoyed refreshment at the Fighting Cocks.

Shirley Rozier

GROUP VACANCIES

group name	leader	vacancies
Beginners Bridge Acol Tuesdays (11 am - 1 pm) <i>Weekly for 6 weeks</i>	Barbara Shilling 01322 270814	Vacancies on courses starting later this year
Bird Watching 1 st Wednesday (morning)	Gay Braybrook/José Steward 020 8300 6372/020 8302 1627	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
Gardening (Group 2) 3 rd Friday (times vary; Feb-Oct)	Audrey Hayes 020 8850 1032	2
Music (Group 2) 2 nd Friday (2.30 pm)	Derick Johnson 020 8850 1245	3
National Trust/English Heritage Various dates & times	John & Olive Mercer 020 8300 3136	Yes
Quilling (The craft of paper filigree) Occasional Saturdays (2 - 4 pm)	Val Gosden 020 8300 0664	Please phone leader
Ramblers (Group 1) (6-7 miles) 4 th Tuesday (10.30 am)	Annette Jansen 01322 522252	Yes
Saturday Ramble (4-5 miles) 1 st Saturday (morning)	Gay Braybrook 020 8300 6372	3
10 Pin Bowling (Bexleyheath) Mondays (10 am) <i>except school holidays</i>	Gay Braybrook 020 8300 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.

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 then why not create a new one? It's not difficult to run a group and leaders of a full one can advise you how it's done.

