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## From the Chair

I would like to start by wishing all our members a happy and healthy new year.

### Looking Back

During 2025 our membership grew by more than 10% and we set up 8 new interest groups. So, thanks to everyone that made this happen. I had a really fun year and I hope you did.

### Looking Forward

I want 2026 to be just as successful, but I need your help.

If you have any ideas for new activities, please let me know; however weird they may sound. Out of a membership of nearly 500 I am sure a few people will also be interested.

I am very keen to set up more evening and weekend activities. This is the time when a lot of people have gaps in their diaries. Have a think about this and send me an email with your suggestions.

Most of our new members come from recommendations from existing members. If you have any friends, family or neighbours who might be interested in joining, let me know and I will send them our guide to groups and activities. You can bring them along to a monthly meeting, and they can see what a really friendly bunch of people we are. They can also attend a group as a “taster” session without joining, just to see if Roding Valley u3a is for them. Again, let me know and I will make the necessary arrangements.

Take Care, Laura (Chair Roding Valley u3a)

## MONTHLY MEETINGS AT THEYDON BOIS VILLAGE HALL

9.30 for 10.00am. Refreshments available before the meeting.

**19 JANUARY 2026**

Stephen Spencer

### **Border Farce - Tall tales from passport control.**

The British Isles have been attractive to immigrants for millennia. There is nothing new in people arriving on these shores in boats, or in our apparent inability to regulate the flow. The speaker has experience of operating passport control and recounts anecdotes to illustrate a talk which promises food for thought.



**16 FEBRUARY 2026**

Andy Relf

### **When was it best to be ill?**

The speaker will give a light-hearted and illustrated timeline of 'Medical Milestones' and how things in medicine are not always what they seem. From Cataracts to Radioactive Water, it's not always what you think! Things are definitely better now with modern intervention.



Be advised that u3a cannot endorse the content of the speakers' presentation or speech

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**IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND ANY OF THE ACTIVITIES  
MENTIONED BELOW – EMAIL [RVU3A@HOTMAIL.COM](mailto:RVU3A@HOTMAIL.COM)**

## **SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERTS AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL**

**Sunday 8 February 2026, 3.00pm**

Marin Alsop conducts Star Wars and The Planets

Marin Alsop – conductor - Sean Shibe – guitar

Williams Star Wars Suite

Rodrigo Guitar Concerto, 'Concierto de Aranjuez'

Holst The Planets

Front balcony seats: £24.50; rear balcony £17



**Sunday 22 March 2026, 3.00pm**  
Lisa Batiashvili plays Tchaikovsky  
Santtu-Matias Rouvali – conductor  
Lisa Batiashvili – violin  
Bacewicz Divertimento  
Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto  
Walton Symphony No. 1

Front balcony seats: £20.75; rear balcony £13.25

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## **Around the Groups**

### **Afternoon Tea**

Our next meeting will be on Monday February 2nd at 2.30 pm at the Village Deli in Epping High Street. Please let me know in advance if you would like to join us.

Happy New Year to everyone!

### **Book Group**



In December we read **Bridge of Clay** by Marcus Zusack, a Coming-of-Age Fiction. It scored 6 out of 10.

Over Christmas we read a book of our own choice, and we will review these in January.

For a full review of all our books please visit our website.

The Book Group meets at 2:45 pm on the third Tuesday of the month in Theydon Bois Village Hall. If you would like to join the group, please send email [RVu3a@hotmail.com](mailto:RVu3a@hotmail.com)

### **Current Affairs**

The Current Affairs Group provides an opportunity for members to discuss issues of current global, national, and local importance.

In **December**, our discussions included:

- The importance of Trial by Jury
- The new mansion tax.

A full review of the topics discussed can be found on our website.

The group meets at 2:45 on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Theydon Bois Village Hall. New members welcome



## Curry Club



On 26 January members will visit the **India Grill** in Loughton. If you want to be notified of upcoming meals, please let me know. The Curry Club meets on a Monday or Tuesday evening at 7:00 pm every 6 or 7 weeks.

## Dog Walking Group

### A walking group where dogs are allowed!

The group meets each Thursday morning at 10:30 am, subject to the weather. A 1-hour wander through Epping Forest with friends. What could be better?



## Keep Fit

The Spring term started on Tuesday 13 January and the group will meet each Tuesday, 1.30-2.30 at Theydon Bois Village Hall. We will have an Easter break. Keep Fit is a mixture of chair exercises and more energetic ones.

## Ladies (& Lads) that Lunch



The January 2026 lunch will be at Tom Dick and Harry, Loughton on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup>.

If you want to be kept informed about our lunches in 2026, just drop me an email.

## Mah-Jong

The Mahjong group meets on the third Tuesday of the month at 2.45 in Theydon Bois Village Hall. If you are an experienced Mahjong player or a complete beginner why not come along and join this friendly group.



## Singles Sunday Lunch

The Singles Sunday Lunch meet on the fourth Sunday of the month. We have now had three very enjoyable Sunday lunches and are looking forward to the next lunch which will be on 25 January.

Venue to be confirmed.

## Spanish Conversation

Our group, from Covid time have benefited from WhatsApp. and a range of others: Google, Netflix, Play Music. With Netflix we started the series: "Ancient Apocalypse, The Americas" We, also follow, short programmes from Spain and South America. We are learning not only different accents but different ways of expressing a similar situation with a sound emphasis or just with body language. We make use of real material to write or tell a story: Funny, important, or just describing an old object found in the garage. The purpose is to learn and have a good way to enjoy ourselves: Clapping. Singing in good "Latino Spirit". The Pantomima was a great example of feeling together round la "MAMITA" Vamos muchachas. Arriba! Arriba! "La Mamita" OLÉ! OLÉ! OLÉ!

Feliz 2026 y Paz en el Mundo. May one day a Universal language be spoken all round the world 🌍

## Walking Group

### Tuesday 17 February 2026 – Hyde Park/Royal Albert Hall/Mayfair

A walk across Hyde Park starting in the Italian Gardens via Albert Memorial and Royal Albert Hall, "Rotten Row", Serpentine and Mayfair.

Meet at 9.30 at Loughton Underground Station (Contact Gloria if you want to meet there 07800 591227) or at 10.30 at The Italian Gardens Café, Kensington Gardens, Lancaster Gate, W2 2SD (in Hyde Park, entrance nr Royal Lancaster Hotel. Nearest tube Lancaster Gate (Central Line) – Bayswater Rd exit.).

Return via Bond St (Central/Elizabeth Line) or earlier Hyde Park Corner (Piccadilly Line).

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## NEW GROUPS

### Whist

I am hoping to start up a new whist group. This would be on the first Tuesday of the month at TBVH at 2:25. If you are interested, please let me know. A number of members have said they would like to learn Whist, so if you can play and would be happy to teach others, send me an email.



## Non-Fiction Book Group



The non-fiction book club is where members read and discuss books grounded in reality. The group dives into topics like history, science, psychology, politics, and economics. **The group meets at 7:15 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of each month, in the Queen Victoria in Theydon.**

Our first full meeting was on the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2026. We discussed “PATRIOT: The Life Story and Secret Prison Diaries of Putin’s Most Feared Opponent by Alexei Navalny. If you would like to join the group, please send email [RVu3a@hotmail.com](mailto:RVu3a@hotmail.com)

## Cinema Club



We recently launched the Cinema Club. The group is run on WhatsApp. It does not have a regular date, but suggestions are posted, when there is a popular film on at Stratford or in London.

In January we went to see Hamnet. Let me know if you would like to be added to the new WhatsApp group.

## Pub Club Plus!

The Pub Club Plus will take off in earnest in 2026. The aim of the Club is to provide members with the opportunity to meet with friends in the evening for a drink and a chat. Members are encouraged to bring along ideas for other evening activities. We will meet about once a month in various locations around the local area. If you wish to be added to the Pub Club Plus WhatsApp Group, just let me know.



## Pickleball

**Interested in trying pickleball?** Pickleball combines elements of tennis, badminton, and table tennis. The game uses solid paddles - larger than a table tennis bat but smaller than a tennis racquet and a plastic ball with holes. The court size is similar to that of a badminton court. The net is slightly lower in height than a tennis net. We would be playing indoors and as doubles (two players per



side).

Paddles and balls will be provided - all you need are trainers and loose-ish clothing and a sense of humour! If you are interested in having a go, please email [RVu3a@hotmail.com](mailto:RVu3a@hotmail.com). More details on location and timing will be provided once we know how many members want to play.

## NEW GROUP IDEAS

**Is there a board or card game you would like to play?**

### **1st Tuesday of the Month Theydon Bois Village Hall**

On the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month, we have space in the hall at 2:45 pm for another group. (Scrabble will be on at the other end of the room).



If there is a card or board game you would like to play, please let me know and I will see if anyone else is interested. This could be anything from cribbage to canasta; it's up to you.  
*Thanks Laura*

## DO SOMETHING NEW IN 2026

If you want to do something different in 2026, why not join a new group. A few examples of where we have spaces are provided below. All our groups are listed on our website. <https://rodingvalley.u3asite.uk/groups/>

### **Backgammon**

Queen Victoria – TB

Monthly, 4th Wednesday - Afternoon

### **Book Club - Non-Fiction**

Queen Victoria – TB

Monthly, 2nd Thursday - Evening

### **Improv Group**

Loughton Methodist

2nd and 4th Thursday - Afternoon

### **Lives of Artists**

Member's Homes

Monthly, 1st Thursday - Afternoon

### **Mah Jong**

Theydon Bois Village Hall

Monthly, 3rd Tuesday - Afternoon

### **Rummikub**

Theydon Bois Village Hall

Monthly, 4th Tuesday - Afternoon

### **Scrabble**

Theydon Bois Village Hall

Monthly, 1st Tuesday - Afternoon