

NEWSLETTER

Issue No.246

May 2026



Registered
Charity No.1116143

From the Chair A Big Thank You

I would like to take this opportunity to tell all our group convenors and volunteers how much they are appreciated. Our u3a continues to go from strength to strength and this is because we have so many people willing to run groups and support us at events.

So, on behalf of the committee, I would like to say -

A Big Thank You

to all those members that make our u3a such a fantastic group. You are truly valued and we should tell you more often.

Membership Renewal – 1 June 2026

It is almost time to renew your Roding Valley u3a membership. The committee decided that we would raise the subscription fee by £1 to £20 a year. This is in line with inflation.

You will receive a reminder to renew your membership on 1 June 2026. This will explain the various options for paying. If you wish to renew your membership at the monthly meeting on Monday, there will be a table in the small hall where you can pay by cheque or cash.

Responding to Emails

I would like to ask all our members a big favour. If a group convenor sends you an email to remind you of their next meeting and they ask you to reply, please do so. A group was cancelled recently, due to lack of positive responses for a particular day. When the cancellation notice went out, then people replied that they were going but forgot to say!

Thanks again, Laura.

MONTHLY MEETINGS AT THEYDON BOIS VILLAGE HALL

9.30 for 10.00am. Refreshments available before the meeting.

18 May 2026 - Alex Mair Bodyguards: The World of VIP Protection

The talk provides insight into the work of a protection officer with the Diplomatic Protection Group, from static armed protection outside residential homes, guarding No 10 (the most famous address in the country) and the close protection of Diplomats as a Close Protection officer. The highs, lows, boredom, and frustration with occasional unwanted excitement.



15 June 2026 St Paul's Cathedral - An Unusual Guide

Wren's cathedral has shared in three centuries of British history – built after the Great Fire of London destroyed its predecessor in 1666- it has many secrets hidden behind its walls. This talk looks at those who have passed through and those who remain in this historical building.



THE NEXT 4 WEEKS - IN BRIEF

NON-FICTION GROUP will read *The Finest Hotel in Kabul* by Doucet.

LADIES AND LADS THAT LUNCH will eat at The Bull in Theydon.

CURRENT AFFAIRS GROUP will consider the local elections.

LIVES OF ARTIST GROUP will study Vermeer.

DISCOVER LONDON hope to visit the Royal Courts of Justice.

CINEMA GROUP will see "The Christophers" starring Ian McKellen.

Dates and times for all these groups are on the website: just search "Roding Valley u3a" and click on the groups tab. If you want to join, email RVu3a@hotmail.com and we will make the arrangements.

VOLUNTEERS

I have asked the editors if I can have a full page spread to ask for volunteers for the following roles:



VICE CHAIR

I have been chairing Roding Valley u3a for almost 3 years. During all that time, I have never had a vice chair to help. This means, that if I go on holiday or when I am not 100%, there is no one to chair the committee or welcome people to the monthly meetings. As I have said on a number of occasions, the role of chairman is not that onerous. The reason I am so busy is that I am also acting as Groups Coordinator and Publicity Officer while running half a dozen groups.

NEW GROUPS COORDINATOR

This is just one element of the role of Groups Coordinator, which can be done separately.

As I am sure you know by now, I am always keen to set up new groups, but this takes time. I would therefore like some help. This role would involve working with the convenor of a new group to establish the “where and when”, helping to advertise the group and keeping an eye on the group until it is up and running. I would be alongside for advice. This is not a committee position.

PUBLICITY OFFICER

I also need help with publicity. Designing flyers, posting on Facebook, and updating the prospectus. This can be done at any time. You just need basic computer skills and a little imagination.

TWO COMMITTEE MEMBERS

We are also looking for two more people to join our committee. If you join, you will not have jobs “dumped” on you, but if we are looking for help and you feel up to the task, then you can volunteer.

**If you would like to volunteer or find out more about any of these roles, please give me a call or send me an email.
RVu3a@hotmail.com**

Many thanks Laura

IF YOU WISH TO JOIN ANY OF THE GROUP OR ACTIVITIES LISTED BELOW, PLEASE EMAIL RVU3A@HOTMAIL.COM

OUTINGS



DOWN TO MARGATE - A TRIP TO THE SEASIDE!! THURSDAY 16 JULY 2026

Margate is a town on England's southeast coast. It's known for its sandy beach. Near the Harbour Arm stone pier, the modern Turner Contemporary art gallery has rotating exhibitions. Dreamland Margate is an amusement park with vintage rides. Millions of seashells decorate the Shell Grotto's underground passages. In a former police station in the old town, the Margate Museum has local history displays.

- Relive childhood thrills at Dreamland's retro arcade.
- Discover modern art at Turner Contemporary.
- Uncover the mysteries of Shell Grotto and Margate Caves.
- Or just stroll along the prom – maybe take a quick paddle!!

Cost: £16.00 per person (includes all gratuities).

Pickup Point: Lidl, Loughton 9.00am, then Theydon Bois Village Hall 9.15am. Please note parking spaces at the hall are limited and must be requested when booking. We leave around 4.00pm to arrive home around 6.00pm, depending upon traffic.

ONLINE ACTIVITIES

AN ABC OF VICTORIAN PAINTING

Thursday 11th June 2:00 to 4:00 pm – online.

The u3a Trust – online events have a talk about Victorian Painters.

This engaging talk explores the work and legacy of three contrasting painters whose careers illuminate the richness and diversity of 19th-century British art. Go to u3a - Online learning events for more details.

Around the Groups

Afternoon Tea

Our next meeting will be on Monday June 1st at 2.30pm at the Harlow Garden Centre.

Please contact us for further details and let me know in advance if you would like to join us.

Chair Yoga

This warm & friendly group meets every Friday morning from **10:00–11:00 am** in the **Wesley Hall at Methodist Hall, Loughton High Road.**

Sessions are relaxed, great fun and fully inclusive, welcoming all abilities — **irrespective of any aches, pains or niggles.** Everyone is encouraged to move safely, stretch a little further, and enjoy the shared experience in a supportive atmosphere..

Creative Writing Group

Our Creative Writing Group is so popular that we are moving our meetings to a larger venue, which means we can welcome more of you. Here is a link to some of our recent work: <https://bit.ly/4agxfZd>

We meet to share short stories, poems, rants and ideas in a friendly, safe and supportive space. Sessions are relaxed, lively and encouraging, and no previous writing experience is needed — we genuinely believe everyone has it in them to write.

If you'd like to join, get in touch. Thank you for your interest — it's lovely to see such enthusiasm for creative writing.

Discover London

On 27 March, 28 members ventured into the City of London for a tour of the Bank of England Museum, starting with coffee at the Royal Exchange. We all enjoyed exploring the history of the Bank, viewing rare banknotes a, learning about economic stability through interactive displays. We also got a very rare chance to lift a very heavy real gold bar which was not as easy as it looked. Afterwards, around 14 members enjoyed a drink at the Lamb Tavern in the beautiful Leadenhall market. A good afternoon was had by all.



IMPROV

IMPROV – A Real Tonic!

Our Improv group is an absolute tonic—and it just keeps getting funnier and more enjoyable each session.

Improvisation is all about making things up on the spot—being spontaneous and inventive, creating stuff in the moment and light playful acting. There are no scripts, no lines to learn, no pressure, and no performing for an audience. Just imagination, connection, and plenty of laughter.

Why join?

• **Fun** – full of silly moments and surprises • **Good for the brain** – boosts creativity and confidence • **Social** – an easy, relaxed way to connect with others • **Energising** – you'll leave smiling

No experience needed—just bring yourself and a sense of humour.

Whether you're outgoing or a little shy, you'll find your place.

Go on—give it a try. You might just surprise yourself.

Interested? Email Michael (details above)

Venue: The Hub, Loughton Methodist Church, 260 High Road, Loughton IG10 1RB

When: 2nd & 4th Thursdays of the month, 2:00 – 3:30pm

Spanish Conversation

The Spanish Conversation group meets at " Mi casa" on the 2 and 4 Wednesday at 11.00am. Weather permitting, we sit in the garden.

Wednesday 22 April was declared globally "International Mother Earth Day" (established 1970) encouraging worldwide events, such as tree planting, cleaning up garbage and educational workshops, directed to protect our Planet Earth. In South America, the indigenous tribes, people of the Amazon maintain ancient traditions and belief, giving Thanks and leaving gifts " Ofrendas" to Mother Nature" La Pachamama" The Amazon is known as "Earth's lungs stabilizing rainfall and Climate Regulation. With this in mind, the group, with containers of compost and seeds spread them in the garden. We got busy, laughing, singing and even dancing. The birds competed loudly with us. We had time toasted the day with a Fruty Bright drink and enjoyed "Una buena mesa" - plenty to eat, to laugh and to tell funny family stories. Arriba! Chicas! Ole! Ole, Ole!

Walking Group

Please note revised dates due to planned tube strikes.

Tuesday 26 May 2026 – Hainault Forest Country Park walk

Travel to Hainault Forest Country Park – **meet** in 1856 Café 10.30am (use the furthest car park from entrance to be nearest the café.

Parking requires payment using Ringo app so best to car share where possible).

A circular walk, through woods, which may be muddy in places depending on weather conditions so appropriate footwear advised. Approximately 2.5 miles.

As usual please let us know if you intend to join the walk.

Tuesday 23 June 2026 – Canada Water to Greenwich –

Cutty Sark DLR

Travel to Canada Water – Jubilee Line from Stratford – meet in the Bellucci Café, 9 Maritime St, SE16 7FU at 10.30am.

Walk through Greenland Quay to Thames Path - follow Thames Path over Deptford Creek to Cutty Sark DLR station return to Stratford via DLR.

Approximately 4.0 miles. As usual please let us know if you intend to join the walk.

NEW GROUPS

PHOTOGRAPHY

RVu3a@hotmail.com

Our new photography group will be focused on improving members' skills by exploring how compelling images are created, edited, and evaluated. It will cover the full process—from idea and shooting (light, composition, storytelling) to editing and presentation—while also examining why certain images resonate using visual theories like the rule of thirds and Gestalt principles. We will meet monthly to discuss and agree assignments, and review images, drawing inspiration from both photography and painting. Members will need to own a DSLR or a phone camera, along with a computer for using free editing software. More details are on the website.



If you are interested in joining or want more information, please let us know by emailing RVu3a@hotmail.com. We will be finalising the time and venue shortly and will keep you posted.

2025/2026 Executive Committee	
Chair Laura Blake	RVu3a@hotmail.com
Vice Chair	Vacant
Groups' Co-ordinator	Vacant (Laura Blake is standing in for this position)
Secretary Andrew Forrest	
Treasurer Silvia Newton	
Membership Secretary Peter Rowles	
Speaker Secretary Catherine Doran	
General Committee Members	David Linnell George Howard Louise Howard Anne Scurfield Vacant Vacant
Non committee member Hall Bookings - Dennis Stoner	

As Trustees of Roding Valley U3A (Charity Trust No.1116143), the Executive Committee members are legally responsible for the finances and administration of RVu3a and their decision on all matters is final. Roding Valley u3a cannot accept responsibility for any commercial activities carried out by any convenor, speaker or member that may be advertised or promoted at any time. Members use such services at their own risk without any recourse to Roding Valley u3a or its Trustees