

NEWSLETTER

Issue No.249

August 2026



Registered
Charity No.1116143

From the Chair Getaway with u3a!

Did you know you can join u3a members from around the country on a range of bespoke holidays. Examples include:

- **The Agatha Christie Story** - 14 Sep 2026 - 4 nights - Torquay
- **Appreciating Shakespeare** - 12 Oct ,2026 - 3 nights – S-on-A
- **Yorkshire Festive Treats** - 18 Nov 2026 - 2 nights - York
- **Aviation Heritage** - 19 Mar 2027 - 3 nights - Milton Keynes
- **Going Wild in Dartmoor** - 9 Apr 2027 - 2 nights
- **Wine Lovers Unite** - 23 May 2027 - 3 nights – Harrogate.

Please note you have to make your own way to the location.

Join an Online Groups

The u3a trust also provides a large number of online groups. Examples include:

- **Tai Chi Qigong** -Creative Calm
- **Digital Skills** - helping people to become more comfortable in this digital world.
- **Wine Appreciation**
- **Soundtracks of our Lives**
- **Virtual Walks** – for those no longer able to go on walks.
- **Exploring Science Fiction Novels**

For more information email RVu3a@hotmail.com

MONTHLY MEETINGS AT THEYDON BOIS VILLAGE HALL

9.30 for 10.00am. Refreshments available before the meeting.

17 AUGUST 2026

Simon Waterfield **The Agincourt Archer**

The talk is about war and remembrance centred round a fourteenth century archer and his experiences in France at the Battle of Agincourt. It covers the archer's journey to join the army; along the way he meets Chaucer and the pilgrims on the way to Canterbury



21 SEPTEMBER 2026

Paul Barwick **Georgi Markov and the Poison Umbrella Murder**



This is an extraordinary story of state sponsored murder and revenge. In 1978 Bulgarian journalist Georgi Markov was assassinated on Waterloo Bridge with a microscopic pellet containing the deadly toxin Ricin, fired from a modified umbrella supplied by the KGB. The talk will recall the tragic events that shocked the world over 47 years ago.

**TO JOIN ANY OF THE GROUPS OR ACTIVITIES
MENTIONED BELOW – PLEASE EMAIL
RVu3a@HOTMAIL.COM**

In place of Keep Fit

Join us for

Tea and Biscuits





On
Tuesday
18 August



1:30 - 2:30 pm



**Theydon Bois
Village Hall**



This is an informal gathering of u3a friends -
nothing posh - donations of **£1** welcome

**Booking
required**



A chance for a natter and catch up with friends



Email Laura at RVu3a@hotmail.com or call 07968 174388



ChatGPT is an AI assistant that answers questions helpfully.

You can get it on your phone – no problem

Did you know ChatGPT can:

- ✓ Plan simple meals and recipes
- ✓ Explain letters and documents
- ✓ Find local services and places
- ✓ Suggest suitable gifts
- ✓ Help with writing
- ✓ Provide help with technology

Come to our introductory talk & learn more.

Tues. 25 August 2026 • 1:30pm • T Bois Village Hall

Email RVu3a@hotmail.com to book a place £1.50 on the door

SUNDAY AFTERNOON CONCERTS AT ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

I have reserved tickets for each of these Sunday afternoon concerts in the Autumn. Please let me know if you are interested in coming to one or more. For the moment I will just take note of your interest and will only ask for payment about a month before each concert.

All tickets will be subject to a Southbank £2 levy on top of these prices for the restoration fund.

1. Sunday 4 October 2026, 3.00pm

Bruckner 5 with Herbert Blomstedt Rear balcony tickets £15 and further forward £22.50

Herbert Blomstedt – conductor Bruckner Symphony No. 5

2. Sunday 1 November 2026, 3.00pm

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto with Nicola Benedetti.

Rear balcony tickets £15 and further forward £30.

Jakub Hrůša – conductor - - Nicola Benedetti – violin

Smetana Overture, The Two Widows

Mendelssohn Violin Concerto

Schumann Symphony No. 3, 'Rhenish'

3. Sunday 29 November 2026, 3.00pm

A German Requiem: Diana Damrau and Gerald Finley

Side balcony tickets £18.75 and more central tickets £26.25

Simone Young – conductor Diana Damrau – soprano

Gerald Finley – bass-baritone Philharmonia Chorus

Strauß Mondscheinmusik from Capriccio

Strauß Das Rosenband Strauß Ständchen

Strauß Freundliche Vision Strauß Zueignung

Brahms A German Requiem

Around the Groups

Here's just a taste of what our members enjoyed in July



BOOK GROUP read *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins



NON-FICTION GROUP discussed *Little Englanders* by A Turner.



DISCOVER LONDON visited the Wellcome Collection.



LADIES & LADS THAT LUNCH enjoyed a meal at *The New Boar*.



LIVES OF ARTISTS learnt about the life of *Caravaggio*.



CURRENT AFFAIRS debated Andy Burnham & the World Cup.



FILM CLUB discussed *Munich – The Edge of War*.



MONTHLY TALKS took off with *Adventures in a Helicopter*.



CURRY CLUB enjoyed a meal at the *Indian Ocean* in Theydon.



DOG WALKING spent a lovely morning around *Connaught Waters*.



OUTINGS explored the seaside town of Margate.



PUB QUIZ tested their knowledge at The Queen Victoria.



THEATRE GROUP enjoyed *High Society*.

Afternoon Tea

Our next meeting will be on Monday 7 September at 2.00 pm at the Blue Room Café at the Patch Park Garden Centre, Abridge. If you would like to join us, please contact me in advance for further details.

Backgammon Group

Have you always wanted to learn to play backgammon?

Now's your chance. Come along to the backgammon group and we will show you how. It's easy to learn and the element of luck means the best players do not always win! It usually takes about **20–30 minutes to teach someone the basic rules of backgammon.**

A typical learning session might be:

- **10 minutes:** how the board is arranged and how the pieces move
- **10 minutes:** hitting, entering from the bar and bearing off.
- **20–30 minutes:** playing a practice game with help

The Backgammon Group meets on the 4th Wednesday of the month at 2:00-4:00 pm at the Queen Victoria Pub - Theydon Bois.

Chair Yoga

We're having a break over August and will be back Friday 11 September

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.

To join, or to find out more email or call Michael who is happy to take your enquiries during August. To see more pictures go to https://rodingvalley.u3asite.uk/u3a_groups/chair-yoga-2/



Creative Writing Group

Our Creative Writing Group has become so popular that we've moved to a larger venue, which means we can welcome new members. We share short stories, poems, memoirs, reflections and ideas in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. There is no pressure to be an experienced writer — many people simply come because they enjoy words, memories, imagination or the challenge of trying something new.

Venue: The Hub, Loughton Methodist Church, 260 High Road, Loughton IG10 1RB. **Parking :** Easy

When: We meet on the first Wednesday morning of each month. Next meeting Wednesday 2 September

Recent work by members: <https://bit.ly/4agxfZd>

Discover London - Royal Courts trip.



On Friday 31 July, a group was taken on a tour of the Royal Courts of Justice by our knowledgeable city of London guide Len Williams. Len worked in the Royal Courts for many years as a clerk to several judges.

Len told us about the decision in the 19th century, to have a purpose-built structure for the courts on the 6-acre (24,000 m²) site. This decision required the demolition of 450 houses. George Street's Victorian Gothic Revival style design was the winner of a competition to design the buildings in 1866. Building started in 1873, but a strike by stone masons at an early stage caused a stoppage of the works. As a result, foreign workmen were brought in. This aroused bitter hostility on the part of the men on strike, so the newcomers had to be housed and fed within the building. Len showed us where these workmen had started carving their own designs on some of the columns. The buildings are made of expensive Portland stone in the public areas and cheaper red brick in less important areas. Because of the need to keep different groups (judges, lawyers, witnesses, prisoners and members of the public) separated from each other there is a complex arrangement of public spaces, stairways and approaches to each court as well as offices, jury rooms, waiting and interview rooms.

Street died before the building was opened, by Queen Victoria in 1882. The £700,000 cost of building was paid for by cash accumulated in court from the estates of the intestate

During the visit we were allowed to sit in a court - which unfortunately was not in session.

After the visit we walked through beautiful Lincoln's Inn and Gray's Inn gardens to a local hostelry for lunch.

Keep Fit

Keep Fit will restart on 8 September 1.30-2.30 at Theydon Bois Village Hall and meets each Tuesday afternoon. It's a combination of chair exercises and more energetic ones which people adapt if needed. New members are welcome to come for a free taster session. Please contact Janet for information.

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 or screening on at Stratford or in London. National Theatre Live Screenings are become a firm favourite of the group.

Sometimes there are a dozen of us at a film and then other times just 3 or 4. Let us know if you would like to be added to the WhatsApp group.

We are already planning a trip in November to see a screening of **GIANT – The Play** at the Vue Stratford on Thursday 19 November at 7:00 pm. Let us know if you would like to join.

IMPROV

Improv is one of the most enjoyable and uplifting groups we run. It's not about acting, learning lines or performing for an audience. Through simple, playful activities we make things up together, share ideas, laugh a lot, and often surprise ourselves.

Many people come along feeling unsure at first but quickly discover a relaxed and friendly atmosphere where there is no pressure to be funny or clever. It's a wonderful way to keep the mind active, build confidence and enjoy good company.

No experience needed — just come and give it a try.

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

When: 4th Thursday of each month, 2:00–3:30pm. Next meeting: Thursday 27 August

Interested? Contact Michael (details above)

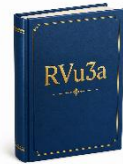
Practical Art

The Practical Art group now has space for someone with previous experience to join its ranks. We don't provide tuition, and everyone works to their own abilities. We are a very sociable group and support one another, where appropriate.

If you would care to phone me at the above number, I can answer any questions you may have.

RV U3A Book Reviews

Each month both our book groups write reviews of the books we have read. If you are looking for reading ideas and want to read an unbiased review, then take a look at our web site.



For fiction books search “Rodding Valley Book Club”

For Non-Fiction Books Search “Roding Valley Book Club - Non-Fiction”.

Scroll down and click on the name of the book you are interested in.

Non-Fiction meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7:15 pm, in the Queen Victoria Theydon Bois.

Fiction Book Club meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 2:45 pm in Theydon Bois Village Hall.

Scrabble

Do you know what the **best possible opening rack in Scrabble** is?

M U Z J I K S. It forms **MUZJIKS**, an old word meaning *Russian peasants*. Place the **Z** on a **double-letter square** while the word crosses the centre star:



- Letter score: 29
- Double-letter bonus on Z: +10
- Double-word centre square: total becomes 78
- Seven-letter “bingo” bonus: +50
- **Total: 128 points**

We meet on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 2:45 in Theydon Bois Village Hall.

Spanish Conversation

The group meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 11am at "Mi casa" Learning and speaking another language is a real challenge so we always add other tools to make it easier, friendly and fun. Plus, we are in contact by "Spanish WhatsApp", so we are always in touch with photos, requests, latest news, also we heard one of the groups was doing humanitarian work in Africa and another being very brave!

Other topics are "The importance of Climate Change" - which is always a time for reflection for the group and "The Amazon and the study of ancient tribes" (Mayas, Aztecs: and Incas) is also a good subject for study and research. We always welcome new members to join. Arriba! Vamos muchachas! Olé. Olé!

Walking Group

Planned walks as below – subject to weather conditions...

Tuesday 18 August 2026

Canada Water to Greenwich – Cutty Sark DLR

Travel to Canada Water Station – take the Jubilee Line from Stratford – meet in the Bellucci Café, 9 Maritime St, SE16 7FU at 10.30am - 2 minutes from Canada Water tube. Bellucci Café is upstairs in the Decathlon store which is next to the Viking exhibition. Exiting the ticket barriers at Canada Water head up the stairs on the right (signed Viking exhibition) turn left at the top of the stairs and you will see Decathlon store on the left.

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.

Tuesday 22 September 2026

Kings Cross to Blackfriars – The Fleet river walk.



Travel to Kings Cross/St Pancras to meet at the Betjeman Arms, N1C 4QL at 10.30am. From the Euston Road facing the main St Pancras building, the Betjeman Arms is on the right-hand end of the St Pancras building on the terrace – up a flight of stairs from street level.

Meet on the outside terrace (weather permitting) facing Euston Rd.

Walk to Old St Pancras Church, back via Coal Drops Yard to Kings Cross Road, continue past Mount Pleasant Sorting Office/ Postal Museum, Clerkenwell, Farringdon to Blackfriars. Approximately 3 miles.

Return via Circle/District Line from Blackfriars to Liverpool St/Whitechapel/Stratford.

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

Current Affairs

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

In **July**, our discussions included:

- When is it justified to call a by-election and
- What will Andy Burnham do when he gets to No 10?

A full review of the topics discussed can be found on our website. [Current Affairs - Roding Valley](#)

The group meets at 2:30 on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Queen Victori Theydon. New members welcome.



Mahjong



The Mahjong Group still needs more members. The group meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 2:45 pm in Theydon Bois Village Hall.

NEW GROUPS

PHOTOGRAPHY:

— SHARE • LEARN • INSPIRE —



START DATE:

Tuesday
8th September



FREQUENCY:

Second
Tuesday
of the month



VENUE:

Theydon Bois
Village Hall



START TIME:

2:45 pm



PURPOSE OF THE GROUP

The purpose of the group is to develop a shared understanding of how to create and evaluate interesting photographic images in order that group members can refine their photographic skills.

Interested?

contact
RVu3a@hotmail.com
to register
an interest

SOME PICTURES FROM OUR DOG WALKING GROUP

