Roding Valley u3a learn, laugh, live

NEWSLETTER
Issue No.252
November 2026



Registered Charity No.1116143

From the Chair

New Groups

As we approach the end of another year, I am beginning to wonder whether retirement was supposed to be quite this busy!

It has been encouraging to see so much interest in new activities. Our Cribbage Group has just started, another Book Group is getting underway, and we have plans for Line Dancing and a new Days Out of London by Train group in 2027. It is lovely to see members coming forward with fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

If you have an idea for a new group, or a suggestion for improving what we do, please let us know. Roding Valley u3a belongs to all its members.

Free online talks, workshops and courses

Roding Valley u3a members can also access a wide range of free online talks, workshops and courses through their membership. Details of these activities are on this link u3a - Online learning events or search *'u3a online learning activities'*. Once on the page, scroll down to find the link to the talk. It then explains how to book.

Any problems give me a call.

I have listed below a few of the talks that may interest you.

Christmas Stories, Images, Music & Acts of Hope - Fri Dec 11 – 10.30

The ultimate guide to editing your creative writing - Thurs Nov 26 – 10am

Capturing your youth: memoir writing in 12 easy steps
Thurs Dec 3 – 10am

Flight Inspirations Aviation Group Tues Dec 1 – 10am

Laura Blake
Chair, Roding Valley u3a.

MONTHLY MEETINGS AT THEYDON BOIS VILLAGE HALL

9.30 for 10.00am. Refreshments available before the meeting.

16 November 2026

‘A Coppers Guide to the Dark’ - Secrets of London's Squares

Gary Powell



The iconic London square is much-loved by Londoners and visitors alike. However, unsavoury residents and shocking incidents add a colourful tone to their history. The talk will examine a little of the origins of the London square but a lot about those – good and evil – who left their mark, not only on this great city, but a nation’s dark history.

21 December 2026

'Tis the Season to be jolly...’

Danielle Barnett



Back in April Daniele gave us a great talk on Queen and Freddie Mercury and has been invited back due to her popularity.
The talk is a fun look at the weird, wonderful and wonderfully wacky Christmas traditions found all over the world.

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

If you want to join any of our groups or activities email RVu3a@hotmail.com

Understanding IT & Staying Safer Online



Join us for a series of friendly and informative workshops presented by AbilityNet, designed to help you get more out of your smartphone or tablet and stay safer online.

Getting to Know Your Smartphone or Tablet

Friday 5 February 2027 – 2:00 pm

Learn how to use your device with greater confidence. Topics include navigating your device, understanding the home screen, typing, managing notifications, using quick settings and connecting to Wi-Fi.

Apps: What They Are and How to Use Them

Friday 12 February 2027 – 2:00 pm

Discover what apps are, how they work and how they can make everyday life easier. Learn how to find, install, use and uninstall apps on your smartphone or tablet.

WhatsApp and Messaging

Friday 26 February 2027 – 2:00 pm

Learn how to keep in touch with friends and family using WhatsApp and other messaging services. Discover how to send messages, share photographs and make the most of these useful communication tools.

Staying Safer Online

Friday 12 March 2027 – 2:00 pm

Find out how to protect yourself when using the internet. Learn practical tips for recognising scams, protecting your personal information and staying safe online.

Information for All Workshops

Venue: Theydon Bois Village Hall
Time: 2:00 pm
Cost: £3 per workshop, including tea and biscuits
Booking: Advance booking is required for all workshops.
To reserve your place, please email RVu3a@hotmail.com, stating which workshop or workshops you would like to attend. Everyone is welcome.

Sunday Afternoon Concerts at the Royal Festival Hall

If you would like to join us at any of the following concerts, please email RVu3a@hotmail.com

1. Elgar Symphony No. 1 with Alexander Soddy

Sunday 7 February 2027 3pm

(rear balcony £17 further forward £24.50 including Southbank levy)
Alexander Soddy – conductor
Piotr Anderszewski – piano
Vaughan Williams Fantasia on a Theme of Thomas Tallis
Mozart Piano Concerto No. 24, K. 491
Elgar Symphony No. 1

2.Beethoven 2 & Tavener's Protecting Veil

Sunday 28 February 2027 3pm

(rear stalls row MM £17 and row HH £24.50 including Southbank levy)
Andrew Manze – conductor
Steven Isserlis – cel
Elgar Serenade for Strings
Tavener The Protecting Veil

3.Beethoven 5 & Gubaidulina's Offertorium

Sunday 14 March 2027 3pm

(rear stalls row PP £17 and row JJ £24.50 including Southbank levy)
Thomas Hengelbrock – conductor
Daniel Hope – violin
Beethoven Overture, The Creatures of Prometheus
Gubaidulina Offertorium
Beethoven Symphony No. 5

4.Beethoven 8 & Shostakovich 15

Sunday 11 April 2027 3pm

(rear stalls row UU £17 and row RR £24.50 including Southbank levy)
Leonidas Kavakos – conductor
Nobuyuki Tsujii – piano
Jason Evans – trumpet
Beethoven Symphony No. 8
Shostakovich Concerto for Piano, Trumpet and Strings
Shostakovich Symphony No 1

Around the Groups

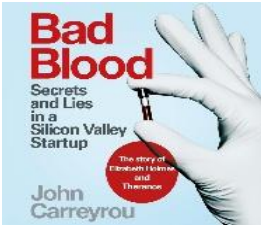
Creative Writing Group

Our Creative Writing Group is so popular that we're moving 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 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

Keep Fit

Keep Fit will end this term on Dec 8 with a shorter session and a Christmas tea. The group will re-start on Tuesday 5 January.
We have welcomed 4 new members to the group this term with another coming for her taster session soon. It may be necessary to start a waiting list but if you are interested in our group please get in touch.

Non-Fiction Book Group



This month we read '**Bad Blood',** the true story of Theranos, a Silicon Valley startup that promised to revolutionize blood testing. The book is a gripping warning about unchecked power, blind trust in innovation, and the dangers of fake success.
If you want to read all the reviews of the books that we have read to date, go to Book Club - Non-Fiction - Roding Valley.
The group meets monthly at the Queen Victoria Theydon. We gather at 7:15 pm on the 2nd Thursday of the month. Drop me an email if you would like to find out more.

Chair Yoga

Weekly on Fridays 10.00 - 11.00 am

Afternoon Tea

Our next meeting will be for lunch on Monday December 7th at 12.30pm at the Queen Victoria pub in Theydon Bois. If you would like to join us, please let me know as soon as possible thank you. 🎄 🎄

Scrabble



Love words? Enjoy a challenge? Come and join our Scrabble Group! Whether you're a word wizard or just enjoy a friendly game, everyone is welcome. Expect plenty of laughs, a little friendly competition and perhaps a few words you've never heard of!
Come along, have some fun and see how many points you can score!
We meet on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 2:45 in Theydon Bois Village Hall.

IMPROV – A Real Tonic!

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 Thursdays of the month - 2:00 – 3:30pm
Next Meeting *- Thursday 26 November*

Backgammon group



Backgammon is one of the oldest board games – and one of the most enjoyable! It's a brilliant mix of skill, strategy and a little bit of luck, which means even a complete beginner can beat an experienced player! You can learn the basics in just 20-30 minutes! Come along to our friendly Backgammon group and we'll happily show you how to play. No experience necessary – just bring a little enthusiasm!
Come and join us 4th Wednesday of every month – 2-4pm

Walking Group

Tuesday 17th November 2026 – Circular Southbank Walk
Meet in The Sun Wharf (Wetherspoons) 50 Tooley St SE1 2TF from 10.30 to leave at 11.00am. The Sun Wharf is in the arches by London Bridge Station – can be reached by Jubilee Line from Stratford.
Walk South Bank to Waterloo – The Cut via Borough Market, Tate Modern and return via Roupell St and Union St to London Bridge Station. *As usual please let us know if you intend to join the walk.*
Winter Break: walks will resume in March. No walks Dec/Jan/Feb



Spanish Conversation

As Halloween was approaching, we studied and broadened the knowledge of ancient rituals performed to honour the departed. It is known to have been practiced from "Cave man" to nowadays with their own historical values and meanings. 'Halloween' rooted in ancient Celtic Festival of the Sanhain, is associated with "Mystery of the Spiritual'. In contrast: "Day of the Dead" in Mexico, has a different meaning. It is a colourful and joyful Mexican celebration where families remember their departed loves ones with flowers, music and much food. A celebration that shares the fascinating belief that death does not mean the end of connection with the loved ones or no longer among us. On the contrary, it is a strong feeling that they are always next to us. On this subject the group will be asked to make Questions and Answers. A good way of reaffirming what has been learned. Finally, exploring these themes and traditions are strong reminders that learning another language is an excellent way for discovering different way at looking at Life.

New Groups

Book Club 2

Our second fiction book club had its first meeting at the start of the month. We discussed "An Unwanted Inheritance". It was a good book to discuss for our first meeting, but no one would actually recommend it! The new book club meets on the 1st Tuesday of the month in Theydon Bois Village Hall at 2:45 pm. New members are welcome.




LINE DANCING GROUP
Roding Valley u3a
Starting in 2027
Monthly on a Monday afternoon
Details to be confirmed
1:30 pm – 3:30 pm
(Details to be confirmed)
Loughton Bowls Club
There will be a tutor
Cost: £7 a session
If you would like to join us or would like more information, please email:
RVu3a@hotmail.com


NEW GROUP
"Days Out of London by Train"
Way out
Launch Date - Spring 2027
This group will run on WhatsApp
If you want to join the WhatsApp group email
rvu3a@hotmail.com

Cribbage



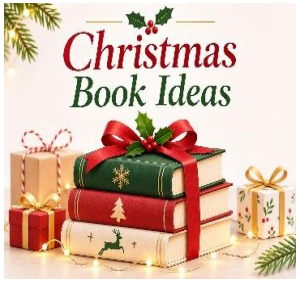
In October we had our first gathering of the new Cribbage group. Eight members played a few rounds with two players per team and then went on to play with four players. It was great fun and no one, (well almost no one) took it too seriously.
The group will meet monthly at the Queen Victoria Theydon. We gather at 7:15 pm on the 4th Thursday of the month. Let me know if you want to join us. If you are a bit rusty, no problem, we will remind you how to play.



Kalooki

Buckhurst Hill u3a have asked if any of our members would like to join their Kalooki Group. The group meets monthly on the 3rd Tuesday afternoon at a member's home in Buckhurst Hill.

Christmas Presents – Book Ideas



Stuck for Christmas present ideas? Give the gift of a good read! Whether it's a gripping thriller, a heartwarming story or a book that's impossible to put down, there's something for everyone. Our Roding Valley u3a bookworms have been busy reading, reviewing and occasionally disagreeing! We've now got over 40 book reviews to help you find the perfect Christmas gift.
Simply visit Book Club – Roding Valley and scroll down to discover our reviews. And to make Christmas shopping even easier, we've picked out some of our favourites below. Happy reading and shopping!

Book	Author	Genre	Score
Found	Erin Kinsley	Mystery / Family	9.1
The Silent Patient	Alex Michaelides	Thriller	9.0
American Dirt	Jeannie Cummins	Political Fiction	8.7

What We Did in October 2026	
BOOK GROUP 1	read *An Unwanted Inheritance* by Imogen Clark, which scored 4.9.
NON-FICTION BOOK GROUP	read *A Bunker in Kyiv* by John Lyons. It scored 6.9.
DISCOVER LONDON	visited the London Museum Docklands.
LADIES & LADS THAT LUNCH	dined at Piya in Epping.
LIVES OF ARTIST	learnt about William Blake.
FILM CLUB	discussed *Where the Crawdads Sing*.
MONTHLY TALKS	enjoyed a fascinating lecture on De Havilland and its role in WW2.
WALKING GROUP	enjoyed wandering around Marylebone.
DOG WALKING	had a lovely stroll around Connaught Waters.
CURRENT AFFAIRS	discussed inheritance tax and “How Would You Prepare for an Emergency”.
QUIZ CLUB	had its last meeting for 2026.
AFTERNOON TEA	had a cuppa at Harlow Garden Centre.
RUMMIKUB	had a record number of players.