

A hazy shade of winter...



"It's winter: the greyest, gloomiest winter that one could wish. But don't let the weather get you down, join in the fun, activities and outings of **Ricky u3a** to put the sunshine back into your lives.

The **Winter Holiday** in the Isle of Wight in November was enjoyed by all notwithstanding a minor peccadillo with the lunchtime turkey! Further theatre trips, outings and an early summer holiday are planned this year.

The **Christmas Lunch** at Moor Park was a resounding success with 105 attendees. Given such positive feedback, we have already booked at the same venue for this year!

We enjoyed another **Quiz & Chips** in October followed by our first **BINGO!** in January. Activities are coming thick and fast, don't let them pass you by, join in!

We are holding a **Ricky u3a Open Day** on 28 March to show our members and prospective members the range of activities and groups. Please come along and bring your friends and

neighbours too, so they can see the benefits of joining **Ricky u3a**.

As always, nothing happens without the input of our fantastic team: the committee, group leaders, technical support, webmaster, catering team and many other unsung heroes who deliver the things that you enjoy.

But, what we really need is **more group leaders** to run groups and start new ones. The more and diverse groups we have, the more we can expand the offering to our members.

So please step forward. The only requirement is the enthusiasm to coordinate a group of people pursuing a common interest.

Lastly, www.rickyu3a.org.uk, our website, has been updated as a prime source of information. Please check it out; contributions are always welcomed. //



Keep warm,
Andrew Hicks,
Rickmansworth u3a Chair



Spring Holiday

Warners Corton Village, 12–16 May

Following the two successful and enjoyable holidays last year, we have arranged another holiday at Warners Corton Coastal Holiday Village, near Lowestoft in Norfolk. The hotel provides dinner, bed and breakfast, together evening entertainment. Excursions are arranged for the three full days. The cost is £569 per person in a twin or double room, with a £60 single supplement. Insurance, if required, is an additional £17 per person.



Theatre visits

Oliver!, Tuesday 4 March

There are still 5 seats available for the evening performance of Cameron Mackintosh's new production of Lionel Bart's "Oliver" at the Gielgud Theatre. The cost is £89; coach leaves Our Lady's Church at 3:30pm.



The Great Gatsby,

Thurs 26 June

Matinee tickets are available for the Tony Award-

winning, Broadway musical of F.Scott Fitzgerald's 1925 classic novel about the mysterious Jay Gatsby. The cost is £75; the coach leaves Our Lady's Church at 10:30am.



Outings

Festival of Flight, Saturday 28 June

Following the success of the visit last summer, we are arranging to visit the Shuttleworth Collection and Swiss Garden again this year. It is a full day's outing and anticipated to be around £60 per person for the coach and entrance. More information will follow.

Monthly meetings

Held in Our Lady's Church hall from 2pm. Next topics and speakers are:

13 Feb: "*The Black Dress*" by Deborah Moggach

13 Mar: "*Hydrogen; beneath the public relations, what is the reality?*" by Phil Millette

10 Apr: "*Ooh Matron!*"
A history of "*Carry On*"
films by Steve Dimmer

Please refer to www.rickyu3a.org.uk for more information on forthcoming events.



Automatic Number Plate Recognition

PLEASE remember to enter your vehicle registration number every time you attend a meeting, however short, at Our Lady's.

*“Ask not what your u3a can do for you.
Ask what you can do for your u3a”*

Why don't YOU volunteer...

Group Leaders

We have some excellent interest groups with brilliant leaders. But, the simple fact is that we need more groups with more members to step forward as **leaders**. You will see in the “**Interest Groups**” section that we are looking for support to start two new interest groups, particularly leaders. Please come forward with your ideas and volunteer to lead a group.

“Ricky Review” Editor

We need someone, perhaps with marketing or communications skills, to compile content and photos from group leaders and other sources. Once assembled into a coherent document, we have a semi-tame but excellent designer who can turn it into an attractive PDF for distribution to

members. It is not an onerous task, only taking a few hours each quarter. Our Chair can show exactly how it works.

Leaflet Team

We have produced an excellent leaflet all about **Ricky u3a**, together with smart acrylic dispensers. But, we **need perhaps 3 or 4 people** to persuade our local GP surgeries, shops and venues to display the leaflets – and, of course, to make sure they are being maintained and filled correctly. I'm sure all our near 400 members can contribute with suggestions and local influence.



Open Day

Friday 28 March, 12–4pm
Our Lady's Church hall



As mentioned by the Chair, we are holding an **Open Day** on Friday 28 March when **Ricky u3a** will display its wares to members and the public.

It is intended that many of **Ricky u3a**'s interest groups will set up a table in the

hall, occupied by each group's members, to show visitors exactly what they do and encourage them to join the **u3a**.

All members are invited to attend and to bring their friends and neighbours along. More information will follow.

Interest Groups

If you wish to contact a particular Group, please go to the website at www.rickyu3a.org.uk and select the individual Group page, then click on the Leader link at the top of the page and complete the online form.

Prospective new Groups

Current Affairs

We have had much interest in forming a group to debate current issues. The proposal is to adopt the format followed by the Oxford Union.

There would be a motion chosen for discussion with a Proposer and an Opposer, putting forward their reasoned arguments. The merits would then be discussed by the audience with questions asked of the speakers. A moderator would chair the proceedings, to ensure fair play and keep order. It could be quite interesting and highly entertaining.

Contact: jean.paddick@gmail.com

Family History – for novices

We already have two well established family history groups with considerable experience and skills. But, this group is for complete novices who are interested in finding out about their family history but have no idea where to start or what to do.

Contact: mikegrossmith@btinternet.com

Garden Inspirations

The idea is to have a group open to all Ricky members, that acts on an 'ad hoc' basis rather than strict monthly timetable.

From spring to autumn we would visit gardens, both large and small, such as Waterperry Gardens, RHS Wisley, Chenies Manor and Savill Garden – all within an hour's coach ride. During the winter months we would invite speakers to give presentations on subjects, such as roses, designing a garden, growing your own veg.

Contact: jean.paddick@gmail.com

Travel Wanderlust

Many of us have travelled to interesting places; some of us have lived in interesting countries. The proposed group would invite speakers, Ricky u3a and guests, to talk about their experiences in other countries: the main places of interest, the sights and sounds, the people and the culture. It should make for a most interesting group.

Contact: jean.paddick@gmail.com



GARDEN INSPIRATIONS

Current Groups

Art Appreciation

We discuss a variety of art topics chosen by the members using PowerPoint to aid the presentation. Of course, we compare notes over tea and biscuits! Future meetings include:

24 Feb: H.K.Brown, "The Artist who put the PHIZ into Dickens" by David Green.

24 Mar: Topic TBC

28 Apr: Topic TBC

Do come and join us!

Group Leaders: **Jean Dodds** and **Sharon Kassemzadeh**

(4th Monday/month, Our Lady's)



H.K.Brown

Books – Pageturners

We read a wide range of books and push ourselves out of our comfort zone. We would welcome a few new members and their book suggestions.

Group Leader: **Gill Gowing**

(3rd Tuesday/m, private home)

Bridge

We usually have three tables playing duplicate. We are very pleased that the group has grown since we took over. Our success is partly due to one member who is qualified to Direct at Duplicate Bridge. We also have two more u3a members who wish to join, at which time our twice-monthly group will be at capacity.

There may be other u3a members who wish to join or play more often. Some may prefer Chicago bridge. Similar to other groups, the solution would be to start another group, perhaps on another day. As always, a leader would be essential?

Group Leaders: **Valerie MacDonald** and **Mary Kingsley**

(1st/3rd Wed/m, Mill End Community Centre)

Creative Writing

We choose a subject for the following month and read to the group what we have each written over the preceding month. This can be poetry or prose, fact or fiction

Group Leader: **Frances Chater**

(2nd Wednesday/m, private home)

Engineering Heritage

This is a joint group with other local u3as, with talks on a variety of engineering or heritage subjects.

At the last few meetings we have had speakers covering a range of subjects from the Construction of the Settle–Carlisle Railway, the History of the Fire Service and the Role of the Royal Flying Corps. New members are always welcome.

Group Leader: **Chris Hillier**

(2nd Tuesday/m, Our Lady's)

Fabric, Finery and Fashion

In December we met at the "Feathers" for a delicious lunch and a fashion quiz. In January, inspired by "The Traitors", we based our assignment on Best of British and a lively debate. February brings... join to find out more!

Please let me know if you wish to come along, join the group or are just curious.

Group Leader: **Denise Davies**

(2nd Monday/m, private home)

Family History – Researching Ancestors

We helped our first 'guines pig' research his WDYTYA family history, mainly on his mother's Pizzala side. This fascinating story



included earlier ancestors emigrating from Como in the 1860s to Hatton Garden's 'Little Italy', probably to avoid conscription into the Habsburg's Austrian army to fight against France – Italy did not exist at this time. They were highly skilled craftsmen as opticians and makers of barometers and compasses, setting up a successful business next door to Bleeding Heart Yard.

Last week we enjoyed our "Christmas/February" lunch at Biggles, Denham Aerodrome – love the dessert trolley.

Group Leader: **Dennis Murphy**
(4th Monday/m, private home)

Food – Delicious Delights

In November, Denise Davies kindly organised a very interesting demonstration of a Thermomix machine. This elaborate, digital food processor does absolutely everything, from weighing the ingredients to washing up afterwards. It is no surprise that it commands a high price tag and is probably more suited to commercial premises. The photos show the machine and some of the dishes that it produced: risotto as red cabbage and feta cheese salad. In December, we met at the Artichoke in Croxley Green for a very pleasant Christmas lunch.

At the start of this year, we were back in the kitchen preparing all sorts of delicious home-made soups, including leek and potato, broccoli and stilton, fish chowder with home-made bread, coconut and cauliflower and mushroom.

In February, we will be concentrating on all dishes Spanish.

Group Leader: **Jenny McGrath**
(3rd Wednesday/m, private home)

Languages

French has proved very popular – we have three current groups. There are vacancies in 'Vive La France' but we would be delighted to start new groups if more members wish to begin, improve or practice their French. We also have German and Spanish groups.

French C – La Vie Outre-Manche

The group now has 11 members, but usually, we have 6 to 8 attendees which is a good size for the participation of all. We use the bi-monthly magazine "La Vie Outre-Manche" as the basis of discussion.



We have a range of abilities in the group from intermediate to native French speakers and the sessions are much fun. The group has grown from its four original members, still present and with much improved French.

Group Leader: **Andrew Hicks**
(2nd/4th Wednesday/m, private home)

French – Intermediate

This group has progressed from "Beginners" to "Intermediate" under the tutelage of Claire Guenebeaud. The sessions are based on course books but conversation is at its heart.

The group is at optimum size and has

progressed well together from a “standing start”. It would be necessary to start another group if there are more who wish to learn or brush up their rusty French.

Group Leader: **Claire Guenebeaud**
(1st/3rd Tuesday/m, private home)

French B – Vive la France

The group is very friendly and everybody makes a contribution, regardless of their level of French. We have a varied programme, studying articles from French newspapers and magazines, playing games and discussing subjects of interest. We have space for one or two new members if you are interested in joining us.

Group Leader: **Margaret Pereira**
(2nd Friday/m, private home)



French Gourmet Dinner

Jocelyn Menyhart is kindly organising another dinner for the French groups at West Herts College on **14 May**. The students provide excellent fayre: four courses with paired wines. Invitations on a first come, first served basis.

Golf

We are a friendly group playing nine holes at Aldenham, Grimsdyke, Nine of Herts and Wexham Park. Please join us; you don't have to be an expert, but need to have had a few lessons and have your own clubs.

Group Leader: **Brenda Smart**
(every Friday)

History – 19th & 20th Centuries

The group now has 22 members. In the last meeting of 2024, Andrew Hicks cheered up everyone with a presentation on the 'Great Depression' of 1929–39. Global economies were severely impacted by protectionism with retaliatory import tariffs by the USA and others. Sound familiar?

In the next presentation on **14 February**,

Bill Fraser will give us an account of the 'Franco-Prussian War', which unified the German States and finally brought down the monarchy in France.

On **21 March**, Paul Kendall will present "Talkin' 'bout a Revolution", an appreciation of the music of the 60s and 70s.

New members are welcome as are ideas for new topics, together with those willing to present or lead group discussions.

Group Leader: **Andrew Hicks**
(3rd Friday/m, private home)

History – Ricky Historians

The agenda for the first half of the year is:

25 Feb: Fabian Hiscock, Chairman of Three Rivers Museum Trust, will join us to read some of the stories from "The Victorian Farmer's Diaries". This is the talk Fabian presented on the BBC's "Countryfile".

25 Mar: Laurie Elvin will present "Watford Pumphouse (1854–1919)". In the 19th century Watford's water supply was in a very unhealthy state. The Local Board of Health stepped in to remedy the evils by building the pump house – this building was converted into the Watford Pump House Theatre in the 1970s.

22 Apr: Colin Richards is going to entertain us with the Historic Folk Art of the Canals in his talk entitled "Roses & Castles".

Group Leader: **Jean Paddick**
(4th Tuesday/m, Our Lady's)

Music – Singing 4 Fun

We have a lovely, friendly joint group with Sarratt u3a. But, it is not a choir. You don't need to read music, but just like singing. We sing everything: folk, show songs, old musical songs, Beatles, ABBA – you name it and we will have a go at it. So don't just sing in the shower! Come and sing with us and you will be made very welcome.

Group Leader: **Carole Eldridge**
(3rd Wed/m, Christ Church, Chorleywood)

Philosophy

The format is flexible but we agree the topic and who will introduce it in advance. We often use material from BBC Radio programmes and podcasts as a starting point. Melvyn Bragg's "In our Time" is often based on the work of an individual philosopher, eg Philippa Foot. More recently we looked at pre-Socratic philosophers, eg Pythagorus, about whom we have little information other than his dislike of beans!

Some recent, vexed issues discussed have included the acceptance of gifts by politicians and the use of reasonable force in self-defence!

Group Leader: **Bob Mountain**
(3rd Monday/m, Our Lady's)

Play Reading

Our lively and friendly group covers a wide range of plays, from restoration comedy and classics to 60s kitchen sink dramas and contemporary works, with the emphasis on reading, rather than performing. We're about to do 'One Man, Two Guvnors' in February and March.

You don't need to be Sir Ian or Dame Maggie (though we won't turn you away if you are). Enthusiasm is more important than experience. And, new male recruits will be especially welcome – ladies outnumber gents by some distance at the moment. Come on, give it a try!

Group Leader: **Paul Kendall**
(4th Thursday/m, Our Lady's)

Poetry

It is hoped to relaunch the group this year whether it be to enjoy the poems composed by members or reciting and discussing the famous and popular poetry that we all appreciate. Please step up to bring this once popular group back to life.

Group Leader: **it could be YOU!**

Table Tennis 1 & 2

It started during a Ru3a visit to the BBC in 2014. Whilst waiting outside for our coach to take us home we noticed a table tennis table, picked up the bats and ball and had a quick game. The winner then suggested it would be good if we could play regularly.



At our first meeting we were surprised when over 20 people arrived. We only had one table, owned by the Church, but Ru3a helped to buy another. Initially we played twice a month, but as it has become so popular we now play twice a week.

Group Leaders: **Paul Tublin & Alan Read**
(every Tuesday & Friday, Our Lady's)

Walking – Strollers

We had a very successful year of walks in 2024 and we were pleased to welcome several new members to the group. Unfortunately, we had to cancel our first walk this year due to heavy rain and wind.

We normally gathering at the tennis courts at the top of Baldwins Lane to share cars to drive to a local pub. We then walk for about 4 to 5 miles. Some of us enjoy lunch in the pub after the walk. The next walks are planned for **27 Feb**, **27 Mar** and **24 Apr**.

In October, our walk was in Ashridge with lunch at the Bridgewater Arms. In November, we had a local walk in Croxley and Cassiobury Park followed by lunch in the Red House, Croxley Green.

Group Leader: **Sue Hillier**
(4th Thursday/m)

Walks in London

“When a man is tired of London, he is tired of life; for there is in London all that life can afford”, the words of Samuel Johnson.

Although we have been arranging walks in London for many years, we never tire of London nor repeat the same walk. We are led by our excellent guide, Colin Oakes, who takes us to places we probably wouldn't consider going to ourselves. Colin has a strong, loud voice so the whole group can hear his knowledgeable comments.

The walks normally take about two hours at gentle pace, pausing at points of interest. Most of us have lunch together after the walk. And, it only costs £6.

26 Feb: “Crypts, Cellars & Coffee”, St.Paul’s

20 Mar: “Greenwich Village & Cutty Sark”

30 Apr: “Historic St.James: formal & infamy”

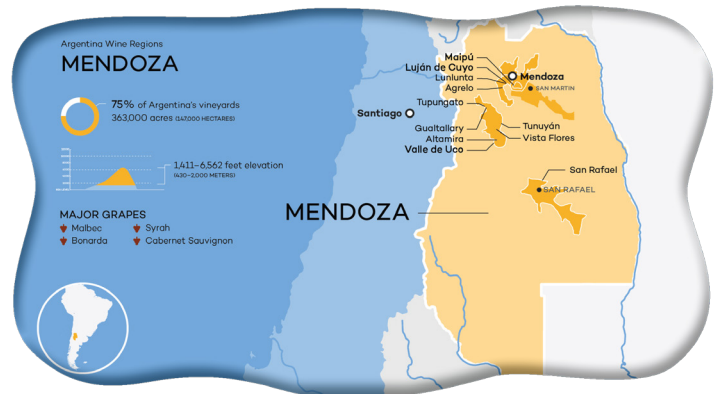
15 May: “Exploring Fleet River”, Blackfriars

Group Leaders: **Sue Hillier & Paul Tublin**

Wine Appreciation Group (WAGs)

It's just great fun! And, from strangers to good friends in two years.

Our latest monthly tastings have included Part III of Bill Fraser's "Grapes", his detailed research into the thousands of different



varieties. Also, the wines of the Argentina and two intriguing themes “Golden Oldies” and “Saturday Kitchen”, when wines are paired with foods from a well-known TV show. All very lubricating!

But, the group is restricted to 15 members by the format of tasting and sharing six bottles of wine each tasting (ie 6 x 50ml). So, we thought we'd start another group...

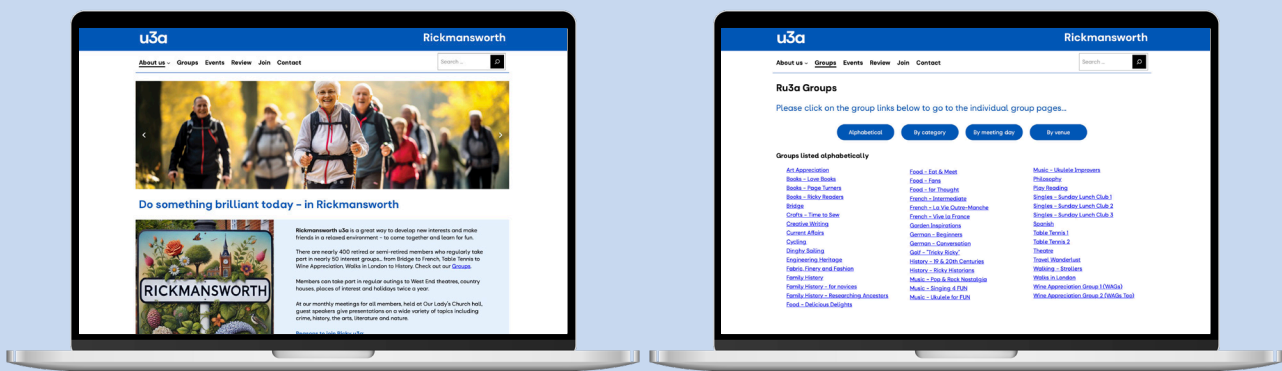
Group leader: **Ross Thomson**
(2nd Wednesday/m, private home)

Wine Appreciation Group 2 (WAGs Too)

A fantastic response to the recent email for new members for this new group has already led to a 'full house'. Our first meeting is on Wed 26 Feb. Hopefully, we'll all be good friends too in due course.

Group leader: **TBA**
(4th Wednesday/m, private home)

Check out the new updated Ru3a website



... at www.rickyu3a.org.uk for all the latest events and group information.