

All the leaves are brown and the sky is gray...

// *It is autumn and the clocks go back to herald the shorter days. But the activity continues apace in **Ricky u3a**. The last quarter has seen a continuation of the increased level of the activity started earlier in the year. We have also planned an action-packed next quarter and beyond. But nothing happens by chance.*

*As always, many thanks go to the committee, interest group leaders, technical support, webmaster and all those whose support means that **Ricky u3a** functions smoothly. It is your u3a. We need your input to make it all happen. The more support you give the more we can all do and the more we can enjoy together.*

Please read Margaret Lemarie's delightful summary in the 'Food for Thought' report on pages 5/6. Margaret encapsulates the value of the u3a in learning, sharing experiences and enjoying each other's company. It is what the u3a is all about!

The 'Researching Ancestors' group also has a proposition that will be of interest to members who are keen to explore their family's impeccable or murky past.

There are still places available for the Christmas Lunch to be held at Moor Park Mansion. Please see the menu on page 9. Act now to reserve your place.

*The AGM beckons. We have vacancies for Treasurer, Interest Group Liaison, Committee members and editor of this Review. These roles need to be filled to ensure that **Ricky u3a** continues to function properly. Don't be shy, there are abundant skills within the u3a membership. Please step forward and share them for the benefit of all.*

We also need volunteers to lead interest groups. The more and diverse groups that we have, the more we can expand the offering to the members. We have additional groups planned for the new year: a Current Affairs discussion group, a Travel Group and to rekindle the Gardening and Poetry groups. They all need leaders. You don't need to be an expert. The only qualification required is enthusiasm. //



Keep warm,

Andrew Hicks,
Rickmansworth u3a Chair

Visit to Blenheim Palace

We were blessed with a beautiful sunny day to stroll around Blenheim Palace's fabulous grounds, the Formal and Italian Gardens, Temple of Diana, the butterfly house, lunch 'al fresco' in the Stables courtyard, then an escorted tour of the State Rooms and Churchill Exhibition.

Theatre visits

In September, we travelled to see "*Hello Dolly*" which was outstanding and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

There are still seats available for the evening performance of Lionel Bart's "*Oliver*" at the Gielgud Theatre in Shaftesbury Avenue on Tuesday 4 March 2025.



Winter Holiday

4-8 Nov: **Norton Grange** on the Isle of Wight - fully booked!

We hope to expand the programme of outings in 2025. Many thanks to Mike Grossmith for organising the outings, theatre and holidays.

Monthly meetings

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

14 Nov 2024 "*Who was our greatest post-war leader?*" by Andrew Baker

Dec 2024 No meeting.

11 Jan 2025 "*Georgi Markhov and the poisoned umbrella murder*" by Paul Barwick

13 Feb 2025 "*The Black Dress*" by Deborah Moggach

Reminders will be emailed before each meeting. Please refer to the Ricky u3a website for more information on forthcoming events.



Annual General Meeting

Rickmansworth u3a's **AGM** will be held at 2pm Thursday 28 November in Our Lady's Church hall. Please make every effort to attend. We need 55 people for a quorum so that we can proceed with the business of the meeting.

We have the following vacancies on the committee...

Treasurer

To manage the u3a's finances, record income and expenses, authorise payments and control the bank account. To report at Committee meetings and present an annual report at the AGM. No formal accounting knowledge is necessary but some experience of finance is desirable.

Interest Group Liaison

To liaise with Rickmansworth u3a's 50 interest groups, to act as a catalyst to start new groups, support existing groups as/ if required, to encourage interest group leaders and persuade members to become interest group leaders. The more thriving groups, the better.

Officers and Executive Committee willing to stand for another year

President	Maurice Delaporte	YES	Committee Member	Anna Morris	YES
Chairman	Andrew Hicks	YES	Committee Member	Jeff Morris	YES
Vice Chairman	Mike Grossmith	YES	Committee Member	Michèle Bennett	YES
Hon. Treasurer	Vacant		Committee Member	Harry Temmink	YES
Hon. Secretary	David Bennett	YES	Committee Member	Vacant	
Membership Sec.	Claire Guenebeaud	YES	Please only make nominations with the member's consent.		
Interest Group Liaison	Vacant				

Election of Officers & Committee Members

I would like to propose _____ for the position of _____

Signed by _____ print name _____

Seconded by _____ print name _____

Please ensure that you have the agreement of the person(s) you propose.

Please return to the Secretary – David Bennett
156 Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green WD3 3LJ. Email: d.bennett637@btinternet.com
by 14 November 2024 latest

Interest Groups

In accordance with data protection recommendations from the National u3a, we do not publish personal contact details of Interest Group Leaders. To contact a *specific* Group, please go to the Ricky u3a website at... www.rickyu3a.org.uk.

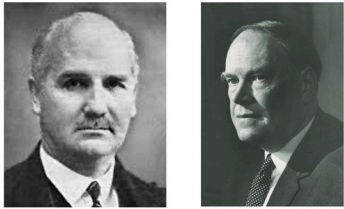
You will be directed in the first instance to the Interest Group Liaison, who will ask the *specific* Interest Group Leader to get in touch with you.

19th & 20th Centuries' History

Earlier this month, Bill Fraser gave us an excellent presentation on "Lindemann &

Lindemann & Jones

Two of Churchill's War-time Boffins



Jones". The former was Churchill's war-time principal Scientific Adviser and the latter was Assistant Director of Intelligence (Science). Not only were they men of great

scientific knowledge, they also possessed immense strength of character, unbending self-belief and formidable determination.

Our next presentation on 15 November, will be on the "Wall Street Crash" and "Great Depression" - just to cheer us all up!

The group now has 22 members with an attendance of about 15 at each meeting, held at a private home.

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

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

Art Appreciation

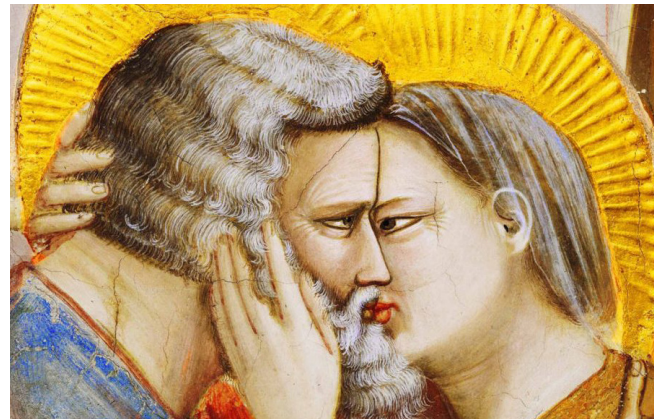
We discuss a variety of art topics chosen by the members using PowerPoint to aid the presentation. Of course, we compare notes over tea and biscuits! Future meetings include:

25 Nov: Giotto by Sally Crosher

23 Dec: No meeting

27 Jan: Art Appreciation Lunch
Do come and join us!

Group Leaders: **Bob Wallace, Jean Dodds, Sharon Kassemzadeh**
(4th Monday/month, Our Lady's)



Giotto di Bondone

Bridge

We normally have three tables playing duplicate. The cost of £2.50 covers the hall rent and refreshments.

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)

Delicious Delights' Food

In October, we made a trip to Jordans Flour Mill in Biggleswade. We had an enjoyable afternoon tea with delicious home-made cakes, scones and sandwiches in their on-site café. This was followed by a pleasant stroll in their gardens as time did not allow for a visit to the mill itself which is perhaps for another occasion. Many thanks to Denise Davies for arranging this visit.

It is interesting to note that Jordans Mill, famous for its cereals, offers food fairs and craft weekends: something to check on their website www.jordansmill.com.

The theme of our October meeting will be "Autumnal Dishes" such as home-made pumpkin soup, a butternut squash dish, and apple crumble.

The group has welcomed two new members and is planning a festive celebration – probably a meal out.

Group Leader: **Jenny McGrath**
(3rd 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.

Past subjects have included 'Bricks and brick making', 'History of early ironclad warships' and 'OS maps and mapping'. Future talks will include 'The idle women of the canals', about the ladies who operated the fleet of canal boats during WW2 and 'Smoke, steam and soot', the story of the early days of the Metropolitan railway. New members are always welcome.

Co-ordinator: **Chris Hillier**
(2nd Tuesday/m, Our Lady's)

Fabric, Finery and Fashion

After a break in August, in September we made a visit to the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden for a fascinating behind-

the-scenes tour. We were lucky enough to see an opera and ballet rehearsal during the visit. It was followed by a pub lunch.

In October we will visit an exhibition at Leighton House in Kensington. In November, we plan to invite a speaker. In December, the group will have a festive lunch with a just-for-fun quiz.

Please let me know if you wish to come along, join the group or are just curious and want to find out more.

Group Leader: **Denise Davies**
(2nd Monday/m, private home)

Food for Thought

Ricky u3a's longest running food group with over 20 years of meetings, food and fun. In fact, five of the current ten members were there at the start!



Over the years, we have been to Food Fairs and "Ready, Steady, Cook", visited lavender fields, a herb centre, flour mill, vineyard and countless restaurants. We have cooked cuisine from all over the world, entertained other food groups at Celebration Lunches and run afternoon Charity teas.

As with any good wine or cheese, we have all matured. It is now time to sit back and enjoy the friendships that we have built up over the years. We still meet once every month but the main dish on the menu is "meeting together" and "sharing news". The food element has been simplified to dishes

that we find easy to cook and platters with salads or sandwiches.

We are all grateful to Ricky u3a for providing the framework for us to share so many happy times together as a group. The group is perhaps evidence of the value to be gained by joining or starting an interest group to share experience, gain knowledge and, above all, make excellent friends.

Group Leader: **Margaret Lemarie**
(1st Tuesday/m, private home)

Languages

French has proved very popular – we have three current groups. There are vacancies in French 'B' 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 for Beginners

The sessions are based on course books but a conversational approach is encouraged. The group comprises 8 members and meetings are held in private homes. 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'

It 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 'C'

The group now has 13 members. It is rather crowded if everyone attends. Generally, 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.

Co-ordinator: **Andrew Hicks**
(2nd/4th Wednesday/m, private home)

Gardening or Garden Visits

We are looking for members to come forward with new ideas to get this popular group up and running again. It is sadly missed, so please put on your gardening wellies and guide us into creating a vision of tranquility and beauty in our garden or allotment.

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



Cliveden Rose Garden

Golf

We are a friendly group playing nine holes at Aldenham, Grimsdyke, Nine of Herts and Wexham Park. 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)

Pageturners

We are a book club and we try to 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)

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!

On 21 October, I will be introducing Socrates and Plato. I have chosen to link them because most of what I know about Socrates comes from the writings of Plato.

Come along, bring a mug, and perhaps a discussion topic – 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.

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.

New male recruits will be especially welcome – ladies outnumber gents by

some distance at the moment. Please get in touch if you fancy giving it a try.

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

Poetry

It is hoped to relaunch this group in the New Year. Previously, the group doesn't read out poems composed by members but like to hear famous and popular poetry that we can all appreciate. PLEASE step forward to be Group Leader or member

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

Researching Ancestors

We have been going for over 20 years and members have accumulated a wealth of knowledge and experience in researching family history. But, everyone has researched their own family trees thoroughly, so we thought we might offer our services to other Ricky u3a members!



As a trial, we'd like to research a member's family history. We would not charge, but request a £30 donation to Ricky u3a. There might also be small charges if ordering certificates is necessary which we would advise in advance. It would involve an initial chat to gather all the available information.

If you're interested, please contact Ross Thomson through the [Ricky u3a website](#) or via the Chair. We will have a Lucky Dip for the first 'winner'.

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

Ricky Historians

In September, our speaker presented the 'History of Batchworth Lock', run by Rickmansworth Waterways Trust, which is a Heritage Education Charity.



And, earlier this month, Laurie Elvin gave his talk entitled "Watford Pump House (1854-1919)" – a time when Watford was in a very filthy condition, with insufficient arrangements to remedy the evils. Of course, nowadays it hosts the wonderfully fragrant Watford Pump House Theatre.

26 Nov: Colin Richards will take us on a journey on 'The Ovaltine Narrowboat Fleet 1925-1960". Early in the 20th century, A.Wander Ltd built a factory and farms at Kings Langley to make the traditional Ovaltine beverage.

28 Jan: Helen George will present "A Service of which we can be proud" – the first 25 years of the National Health Service in Watford 1948-1973.

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

Singing 4 Fun

We have a lovely, friendly joint group with Sarratt u3a. You name it, we sing it. If you enjoy singing, come and join us.

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

Table Tennis

A well-attended, healthy and popular activity which takes place every week.

Group Leader: **Alan Read**
(1st/2nd Tuesday/m, Our Lady's)

Group Leader: **Paul Tublin**
(3rd/4th Tuesday/m, Our Lady's)

Walks in London

Last month, we visited Greenwich Palace, Cutty Sark and walked along the River Thames – Maritime Greenwich is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



The following walks with Colin Oakes have been arranged for the immediate future:

31 Oct: Chelsea Halloween Special, Sloane Square station (Circle and District lines)

21 Nov: Stepney. News from the East. Stepney Green station (District and Hammersmith & City lines)

Dec: no walks

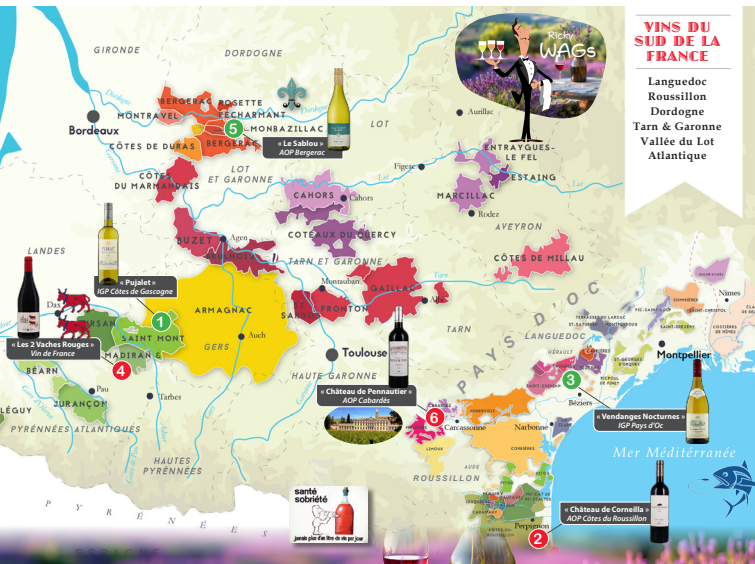
16 Jan: Chelsea Churches – Betjeman and Beheadings, Sloane Square station. A chance to stay in the warmth of historic churches.

The walks generally last two hours and are at a gentle pace, stopping regularly to hear the history of the area. We limit the number to 30 walkers and have no problem hearing Colin. Afterwards we usually lunch together. Each walk is £6 per person.

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

Wine Appreciation Group (WAGs)

Our latest monthly tastings have featured the wines of the Southern French countryside, Aldi Favourites and Central Italy, including the mouth watering regions of Tuscany, Umbria, Marche and Lazio.



In fact, we have suggested some “**Top Wines for Christmas**” for your delectation and judgement over the page.

All great fun, but unfortunately the group is full at present. Salut!

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

We judge all the wines out of 25, with 5 each for bouquet, value and appearance and 10 for taste. The range of opinions is astonishing!

Automatic Number Plate Recognition

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



A splendid **Ricky u3a Christmas Lunch** is arranged for Wednesday 11 December at Moor Park Mansion.

Please view the mouth-watering menu right – a fabulous selection for only £47.50 per head.

There are still a few places available, so please email Andrew Hicks at hicks5462@hotmail.com to reserve your place.

STARTER

Parsnip and sweet potato soup served with croutons (v)
Duck liver parfait with Cointreau orange glaze served with sourdough
Duo of smoked salmon mousse, caper berries and melba toast

MAIN COURSE

Roast turkey, brussels sprouts, parsnips, carrots, roast potatoes, pigs in blankets and stuffing
Roast lamb shank served with root vegetables, champ mash and mint gravy
Lemon sole fillets stuffed with crab mousse, Champagne butter sauce and fondant potato
Nutless roast with brussels sprouts, parsnips, carrots, roast potatoes and stuffing (v)

DESSERT

Christmas pudding with brandy sauce
White chocolate pyramid served with milk chocolate ganache
Orange and passion fruit cheesecake served with raspberry ice cream (v)
Tea, coffee and mince pies



u3a Ricky WAGs Top Wines for Christmas



Araldica Barbera d'Asti Superiore DOCG
[Waitrose £10.99](#)





Campo Viejo Rioja Reserva, Tempranillo
[Tesco £8.75](#)





Côte du Rhône Villages Signargues
[Tesco £8.00](#)





Bodega Y Viñedos Catena, Malbec, Mendoza
[Majestic £13.99](#)





Castellone, Valpolicella Ripasso Superiore DOC
[Aldi £8.99](#)





Cono Sur Bicicleta Pinot Noir, Colchagua Valley
[Tesco £6.00](#)





Springfield Estate Special Cuvée, Sauvignon Blanc
[Waitrose £14.99](#)





Viña Taboexa Albariño, Rias Baixas, Galicia
[Waitrose £7.99](#)





The Society's New Zealand Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc
[Wine Society £11.50](#)





Azevedo, Vinho Verde DOC, Loureiro & Pedernã
[Waitrose £9.99](#)





Famille Perrin, AOC Lubéron 2023, Grenache Blanc
[Wine Society £8.95](#)





Prima Luna, Frascati DOC, Malvasia & Trebbiano
[Tesco £6.50](#)





Langlois-Chateau 'Classique' Crémant de Loire Brut
[Majestic £15.00](#)





Freixenet 'Cordon Negro' Brut Cava
[Tesco £9.00](#)





Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG, Finest
[Tesco £8.50](#)





Chapel Down 'A Touch of Sparkle' Bacchus & Chardonnay
[Majestic £15.00](#)





Les Pionniers, Champagne Brut NV
[Co-op £22.75](#)





Graham Beck Brut Rosé NV
[Majestic £12.00](#)





Famille Bougrier Rosé d'Anjou AOP, Gamay-Grolleau
[Wine Society £8.25](#)





Denbies Rose Hill Rosé, Dornfelder & Pinot Noir, Dorking
[Waitrose £11.49](#)





Montgravet Cinsault Rosé, Languedoc-Roussillon
[Waitrose £6.49](#)




Here is a **Christmas selection** of favourites from **u3a Ricky WAGs** for your delectation and judgement. Why not taste and score the wines yourself out of 25 in the circles? Click on the underlined links to go to the individual retailer webpages. **Salut!**

Prices correct at 23 Oct 2024

