

"Gonna be a bright, bright sun-shiny day"

We move into **Summer** with an even greater range of activities and outings for all members to enjoy.

A sunny day in March brought over 250 new visitors to our **Open Day** and our

car park wardens did a great job controlling the traffic. Our group leaders rose to the occasion and put on some magnificent

displays. The result was more than 60 new members, re-energising some parts of Ricky u3a, the opening of new interest groups and inspiration for starting others – even a "Shooting Group", for which we might nominate a few targets, though I doubt our insurance would cover the risks!

Let me offer a great big **THANK YOU** to all those who helped in the organisation, preparation, communication, catering and running of the event. It surpassed our expectations. We are considering making the Open Day an annual event.

We enjoyed a brilliant performance of **Oliver** in March and another well-attended **Quiz & Chips** in April. Our holiday at **Warners**, Norfolk, in May was enjoyed by all. June is full of action: a

WAGs trip to **The Wine Society**, the **British Airways Heritage Collection**, the acclaimed **Great Gatsby** and the **Festival of Flight** at Shuttleworth including the **Red Arrows**. More exciting visits, theatre outings and a winter holiday are planned. Don't let these activities pass you by – **JOIN IN!**

I have had the pleasure of attending different group meetings recently and have been very impressed, reflective of the time and effort put in by group leaders and presenters. Particularly pleasing is the re-energised **Garden Inspirations** group, featured overleaf.

As always, nothing happens without the input of our fantastic team: the committee, group leaders, technical support, webmaster, catering team and other unsung heroes whose efforts mean that **Ricky u3a** can continue to deliver the things that you enjoy.

Lastly, please regularly check out our website www.rickyu3a.org.uk for information about future events. Contributions are always welcomed.



'**Sun-shiny**' regards,
Andrew Hicks,
Rickmansworth u3a Chair

Ricky u3a

Open Day

Our Lady's Church

Friday 28 March 12-4pm

A photograph showing a group of people, including a woman in a white jacket and a man in a dark jacket, standing outdoors at what appears to be an Open Day event.

“Turkey & Tinsel” Holiday

Warners Gunton Hall, 24–28 Nov

Following the recent successful spring Warners holiday, we are returning again to Warners, this time Gunton Hall, near Lowestoft, Suffolk. The hotel provides dinner, bed & breakfast, together with evening entertainment. The cost is £539 per person in a twin or double chalet, with a £60 single supplement. Insurance, if required, is £17 per person.



Theatre visits



The Great Gatsby,

Thurs 26 June

Matinee tickets, at £75, are still available for the Tony Award-

winning Broadway musical at the London Coliseum, St Martin’s Lane.

Coach leaves Our Lady’s at 10:30.



SIX The Musical,

Thurs 16 Oct

6pm matinee tickets are available, at the Vaudeville Theatre,

Strand, for this musical comedy which retells the story of the six wives of Henry VIII. The cost is £69; coach leaves Our Lady’s at 12:30.

Outings

Festival of Flight, Sat 28 June

We are visiting the **Shuttleworth Collection** and **Swiss Garden** again this year, plus the **Red Arrows**. The cost is £63; coach leaves Our Lady’s at 09:45.



Thames River Boat Cruise & Hampton Court, Wed 3 Sep

From Westminster Pier, a 2 1/2 hour cruise on the River Thames takes us to Hampton Court, where we will tour the Palace and stunning grounds. The cost is £65 per person; coach leaves Our Lady’s at 08:30.

Holidays and outings are very popular, so places are on a ‘first come’ basis. Please make your reservation ASAP via mikegrossmith@btinternet.com.

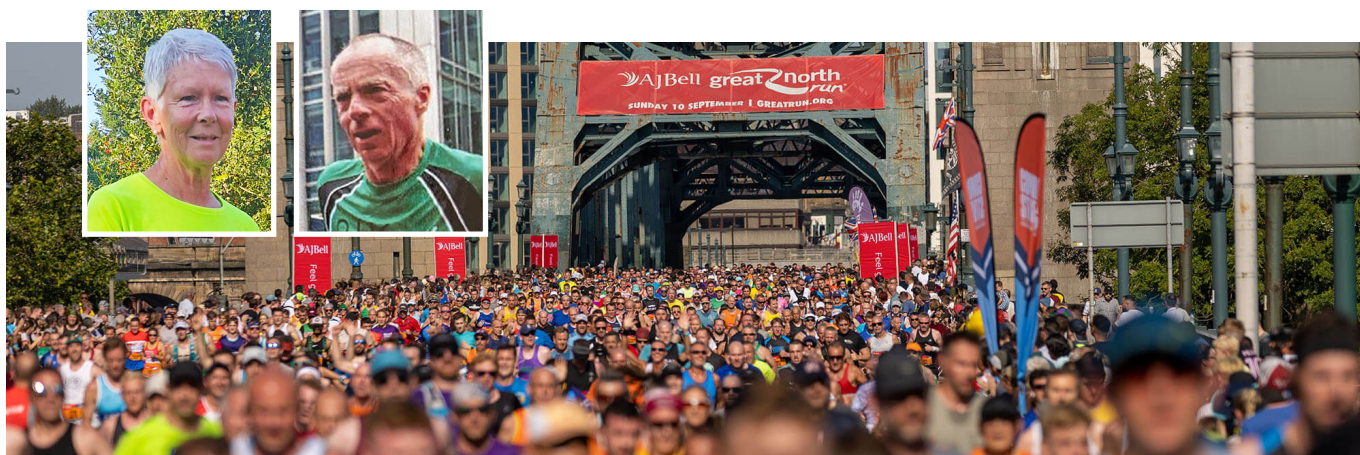
Monthly meetings

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

12 Jun: *The History of Bletchley Park* by Mike Barbakoff

10 Jul: *From ‘Titanic to Cruella’ – the Highs and Lows of a Stunt Woman* by Lucy Allen

14 Aug: *What the Butler saw!* by William “The Butler” French



Great North Run: support our Ricky Runners!

Two **Ricky u3a** members will be taking part in the Great North Run 2025 – **Frances Chater** and **Rik Edwards** – running the 13.1 miles with 65,000 others on 7 September.

As part of the u3a's Team of five runners, they aim to raise its profile, encourage activity amongst older people and support its work with the retired community.

Frances and Rik have committed to raise £375 each. We may not see them challenging the leaders but we should be proud of them for representing **Ricky u3a**. If you wish you may support them by donating via the [National u3a website](https://www.nationalu3a.org).

Good luck Frances and Rik!

Why don't YOU volunteer...

Group Leaders

Our wonderful group leaders are the real heroes of Ricky u3a. They make things happen, providing many hours of interest and enjoyment to our members. We have some excellent groups with brilliant leaders... but, we need more group leaders to run groups and set up new groups.

Please come forward with your ideas and volunteer to lead a group.

"Ricky Review" Editor

We need someone, perhaps with marketing or comms skills, to compile content and photos from group leaders and write the text for each issue. It is then forwarded to our resident tame 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.

"Think ANPR"

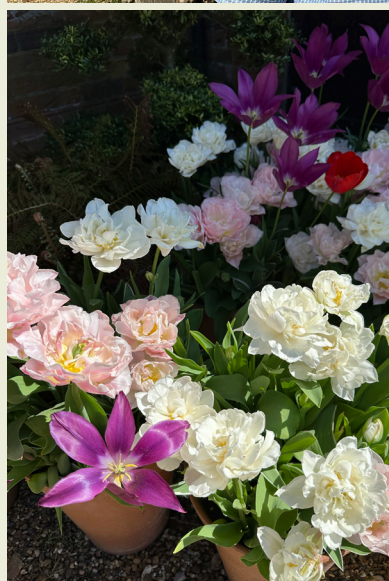
We remind members at every meeting that the **Automatic Number Plate Recognition** system operates in Our Lady's Church car park. Please think first of ANPR every time you come into the building and ensure that you enter your vehicle registration number correctly on the screen. This applies even if you have someone to drop you off or collect you.

ANPR systems are becoming an increasingly common feature of parking in private and public car parks. **"Think ANPR"**



We're delighted the **Garden Inspirations** group is already being supported so well. So far, we've had two beautiful sunny days at **Chenies Manor** and **Waterperry Gardens**, near Thame. Our next outing is to **The Savill Garden** in Windsor Great Park on 8 July. The group is open to all Ricky u3a members, so book up now at www.rickyu3a.org.uk.

Future outings are planned and, hopefully, some excellent presentations at Our Lady's Church hall during the winter.



Groups

We would love to include all our groups in this Ricky Review, but we need to know what your group has been doing over the last three months and what you're going to do in the next three months. Photos are especially appreciated. If you don't send the content, there's nothing to say.

Please go to www.rickyu3a.org.uk to contact a Group Leader – just click on the link at the top of the individual Group page.

Art Appreciation

At our next meeting on 23 June, Bob Wallace will take us through his intriguing title of "*Cosmetics, Colour and Portraits.*" His presentation will be followed after a tea break by Members' Choices: "*Beautiful People, My Favourite Portrait*" when a maximum of eight members will give a five minute comment on their choice.

On 28 July we will have another Members' Choice meeting: "*Four Seasons in Art*".

Do come and join us!

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

(4th Monday, Our Lady's)



"Girl with a Pearl Earring", Johannes Vermeer, 1665, oil on canvas

Books – Ricky Readers

So far this year, we have read: *Lessons in Chemistry* by Bonnie Garmus; *Old Filth* by Jane Gardam; *Clara and the Sun* by Kazuo Ishiguro; *Agatha Christie* by Lucy Worsley; *The Girl with the Louding Voice* by Abi Dare.

We also had a poetry session for the first time., with each member choosing a poem to read out – the variety was amazing!

Group Leader: **Cilla Alexander & Silwen Lees**
(2nd Monday, private homes)

Bridge

Playing duplicate, we now have 4 or 5 tables each time – the maximum the hall can accommodate. Fortunately, we have a member who can work out the results.

We are now trying to set up an additional meetings on 2nd & 4th Wednesdays playing Chicago, when we do our own scores.

Apparently, bridge is good for our mental health! There are always interesting hands to challenge us and friends to chat with over tea and biscuits.

Group Leaders: **Valerie MacDonald** and **Mary Kingsley**
(1st & 3rd Wed, Mill End Community Centre)

Creative Writing

Recently we've covered topics including: 'The Train', 'Fleeting Friendships' and 'Remember that Weekend?' Each month we choose a different title and have until our next meeting to write up to 1000 words, when the original works are read. It is always fascinating to discover how a single title can generate so many different avenues.

Group Leader: **Frances Chater**
(2nd Wednesday, private home)

Engineering Heritage

Recently, Peter Trotman gave a talk on "At your Convenience". He worked at the Building Research Establishment in Garston and the talk was about sanitary ware.

A possible visit is planned to an Amazon distribution centre if enough interest. New members are always welcome.

Group Leader: **Chris Hillier**
(2nd Tuesday, Our Lady's)

Fabric, Finery and Fashion

An outing is planned to the British Airways Heritage Collection, which spans from the 1920s to the present day, including posters, photographs, uniforms and aircraft.



In July we will go to Whitchurch Silk Mill, the oldest working silk mill still in its original building; preserving endangered crafts in beautiful, rural Hampshire. The "Riches to Ribbons" exhibition showcases its stunning collection of silk ribbons woven in a creative collaboration with Jane Austen's House.

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

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

Family History – Researching Ancestors

We helped our second 'guinea pig' research her WDYTYA family history and invited her to one of our meetings. However, it was a real challenge as it included building a

Welsh family tree which comprised almost exclusively the surnames Davies, Jones, Williams and Evans. We didn't get as far back as we would have liked with certainty, but it was a fascinating story anyway.

Separately, we were delighted to have a new group member who joined at the Open Day.

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

Family History – for Novices

As the title implies, this is a new group for those who are interested in researching their family history but don't know where to start. The answer is... join the group!

Group Leader: **Mike Grossmith**

Food – Delicious Delights

In March we had a French themed afternoon, with home-made onion soup, a chicken dish, home-made pâté, quiche and apple dessert. In April we made Easter biscuits of different kinds, as below.



Going forward, we are planning a Greek afternoon in July, unless the Annual Picnic with other food groups takes place again this year. In August we explore Scandinavian cuisine.

We would welcome a couple of new members.

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

Languages

We have three current French groups; there are vacancies but we would be delighted to start new groups if more members wish to improve or practice their French. We also have German and Spanish groups.

French members enjoyed another excellent *French Gourmet Dinner* at West Herts College. The students provided excellent fayre; four courses with paired wines. Many thanks to Jocelyn Menyhart for organising.

French A – Intermediate

The group has progressed from 'Beginners' to 'Intermediate' under Claire's tutelage. Meetings are based on course books but conversation is at its heart.

We could start a new 'Beginners' group if there are more who wish to learn or brush up their rusty French.

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

French B – Vive la France

We are a very lively, friendly and mixed-ability group. We start each meeting with general conversation, sharing what we have been up to and everybody gets a chance to speak. At the moment we are reading "La Gloire de Mon Père" by Marcel Pagnol, which is a good way to learn vocabulary.

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

French C – La Vie Outre-Manche

We use the bi-monthly French language magazine "La Vie Outre-Manche" as the basis of our discussions. It contains many interesting and contemporary articles which promotes discussion with some valuable help from our native French speakers in the group.

Recent topics for our French conversations have included 'gastronomie' and recipes,



European history, music – and even politics, with everyone on their best behaviour.

Group Leader: **Andrew Hicks**
(2nd & 4th Wednesday, private homes)

German – Conversation & Beginners

Conversation: we discuss current issues in Germany and the world, helping to speak German fluently and with confidence.

Beginners: we learn the basics of language, vocabulary and grammar using unusual books, such as 'Learning German through Storytelling: Detective Stories'.

Group Leader: **Anne Thorniley**
(Conversation 3rd Wed, Beginners 2nd/4th Wed)

Garden Inspirations

Please see our 'Feature' on page 4.

Group Leader: **Ross Thomson**
(ad hoc outings/presentations)

Golf

We play nine holes every week at Aldenham, Grimdsyke, Nine of Herts and Wexham Park – but we need a new leader? Please volunteer to keep this great group going.

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

History – 19th & 20th Centuries

In March, Paul Kendall presented "Talkin' 'bout a Revolution", a brilliant appreciation of the development of 60s and 70s music.

Andrew Hicks told us about the Paris Commune in April, followed in May by Stacey Wrighton's excellent account of the life and works of the formidable Florence Nightingale during the Crimean War.

The group now has 30 members but 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, private home)

History – Ricky Historians

30 Ricky Historians enjoyed a tour of Moor Park Mansion, including the beautiful Neo-Palladian Mansion and its stunning paintings and Arnhem Room. The flat ceiling of the Main Hall and its Gallery is painted to give the astonishing illusion of a 3-D dome and the mythology portrayed in the paintings around the walls and ceilings are stunning.



The tour ended in the gardens where we were shown the famous 'Moor Park Apricot' bushes – mentioned in Jane Austen's 'Mansfield Park'.

24 Jun: Mike Payne will be presenting "*The History of Pinewood Studios*".

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

Music – Singing 4 FUN

There are no auditions, it's not a choir, just come along and sing anything and everything: Hello Dolly and Oliver! Show songs, Disney tunes, Sound of Music, folk songs like Scarborough Fair, Iona boat song, ABBA, Beatles and many more. Let us know what you like; everyone welcome.

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

Philosophy

We discuss the work of an individual philosopher or philosophical movement,

led by one of our group, assisted by video or radio recording. Then, if there is time, we might discuss a topic of recent significance; for example, in recent months we have discussed Isaiah Berlin, Chomsky and Karl Popper.

Our next session is on Descartes. Please forward any suggestions for future sessions. The group consists of eight or nine members, but newcomers are welcome.

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

Play Reading

Our lively group does a wide range of plays, from restoration comedy and classics to '60s kitchen sink dramas and contemporary works – with the emphasis very much on reading, rather than performing. Recent reads include 'Noises Off', 'The Cherry Orchard' and 'One Man, Two Guvnors'.

You don't need to be Sir Ian or Dame Judy. Enthusiasm is more important than experience; meetings usually last a couple of hours. Come on, give it a try!

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

Pop & Rock Nostalgia

This new group has got off to a flying start! It is a monthly regression to our youth in the 60s and 70s, with the sounds and musicians we all grew up with.

It is brilliantly orchestrated by Steve and Martin with a blend of music quizzes, occasional vocal renditions and individual members giving a personal "*Desert Island Discs*" presentation, accompanied by their 8 favourite tracks. It is fun for all.

Group Leader: **Steve Bailey & Martin Park**
(1st Monday, Our Lady's)



Spanish

We are a friendly, relaxed group and hopefully everyone has the opportunity to expand and practice their Spanish conversational skills.

There was quite a bit of interest at the Open Day for a new Beginners group, which we could consider if pushed.

Group Leader: **Jane Castellot**
(2nd Mon, private home)

Table Tennis 1 & 2

Our group is a fun-loving team of sociable people who play once or twice a week, of course, always followed by a break for tea/coffee, biscuits and a good old 'chinwag'.



Apart from the great social interaction with everyone there are the real benefits for mind and body... eye ball coordination, spacial awareness, whole body movement with good footwork too.

It is very popular and we have a regular turnout of over 20 members each day. All standards are welcomed, including those who have never played before.

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

Walking - Strollers

In March our walk was from The Coy Carp in Harefield and in April we walked along part



of the Nickey disused railway line, enjoying lunch in The Hollybush in Redbourn. Our walk in May was around Commonwood with lunch after in the Cart & Horses. The next walks, usually about 4 to 5 miles, are planned for 26 June, 24 July and 28 August. At the Open Day, a large number of people asked to join the group. So, we have started a waiting list as pubs cannot accommodate more than 30 people for lunch. One solution would be to start a second Strollers group and we would be willing to give help if someone volunteers to lead it.

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

Walks in London

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 take about two hours at gentle pace, pausing at points of interest. Most of us have lunch together after the walk.

Please join us. It's educational, healthy and great fun. And, it only costs £6.

12 Jun: "Southwark, London's Oldest Village", London Bridge Station

17 Jul: "Swiss Cottage: Tube, Tavern & Turnpike"

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

Wine Appreciation Group (WAGs)

Next month will be our third birthday; can't believe how time flies. It's such FUN.

Our latest monthly tastings have included a presentation of Celebrity wines as pictured, wines from "A Land Down Under" and wines from Waitrose's N°1 premium brand.

We have just visited the impressive HQ and warehouses of *The Wine Society* in Stevenage. A warehouse tour explained the logistics of keeping 10 million bottles in perfect condition, with a average of 5,500 individually picked and packed boxes per day, going up to 20,000 boxes a day in the pre-Christmas busy period. It was followed



by a superb Members' Lunch of four courses with six selected wines. FAB!

Group leader: **Ross Thomson**
(2nd Wednesday, private homes)



Can you guess which bottle is produced by which celebrity?

Wine Appreciation Group 2 (WAGs Too)

Launched earlier this year, the group has already had tastings featuring the wines of Côtes du Rhône, Portugal, New Zealand and a fascinating "drink off" between the New World and Old World wines – the Old World won, but only by a small margin.

We are looking forward to a combined WAGs and WAGs Too Summer Picnic next month, when all 30 members bring their personal choice of wine for all to share, as well as tables laden with a delicious cold buffet to soak up the alcohol. Can't wait.

Group leader: **Sabah/Mary**
(4th Wednesday, private homes)

Check out www.rickyu3a.org.uk for all the latest events

