

"It's getting better all the time"

... to quote the Beatles: new members, new groups, new activities, new outings! It's all positive stuff but we still need a little help from our friends not just to get by but to ensure that we satisfy all of the aspirations of our members.

*Nothing in **Ricky u3a** happens by chance; we have a great team of people working behind the scenes, especially our committee, our group leaders and many other volunteers. However, some wish to step down, so now is **YOUR CHANCE** to step up. Don't leave it to someone else, remember... **"You get out what you put in"**.*

*The **AGM** on 13 November is when you can put yourself forward for the committee. So don't be shy, please help **Ricky u3a** play an even more significant part in our community.*

The groups are the life-blood of our u3a; the group leaders a most precious resource. I have had the pleasure of attending more group meetings this year and have been most impressed with the quality of all. You may have a special interest, knowledge or skill – why not start a new group and share it with

other similarly minded members? The more things we try, the more that we will find we can actually do.

*As regards new groups, the **Pop & Rock Nostalgia** group's blend of music, memories and quizzes has proved extremely popular. The gardening group re-emerged as **Garden Inspirations** and is busy planning a full season of visits for next year, from April to September. **WAG Too** creates further opportunity for members to taste and judge favourite wines.*

The past period has been one of much activity and fun for all. Please step forward and contribute to make sure that it continues. Nomination forms for the officers of Ricky u3a are on page 4.



Kind regards,

Andrew Hicks,
Rickmansworth u3a Chair



“Turkey & Tinsel” Holiday

Warners Gunton Hall, 24–28 Nov

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.

Still a few places available so email mikegrosssmith@btinternet.com NOW!



Russian spies and high ranking HM Ministers caught with their pants down! And all those wonderful photos! Cliveden has never been the same!



**Quiz & Chips,
Friday 21 Nov**

By popular demand, Quiz & Chips has returned with your choice of chicken,

fish or sausage with chips, followed by prizes galore after the Quiz. Tickets are £15 per person.

**Christmas Lunch at Moor Park
Mansion, Wed 10 Dec**

Last year's Christmas Lunch at Moor Park was such that this year's event at the same venue is virtually sold out. Anyone who still wishes to attend had better get their skates on!

Upcoming Events



Ricky u3a AGM,
Thurs 13 Nov
Starting at 2pm
before the monthly
meeting, the AGM
is your chance to

find out about YOUR u3a, the annual accounts will be presented and new and existing committee members will be elected. Legally, we must have a quorum, so PLEASE make an effort to attend.



Profumo Affair,
Thurs 13 Nov
The 1960s favourite
shock horror 'Red
Top' scandal with
sex, prostitution,



Monthly meetings

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

13 Nov: *The Profumo Affair* by Andrew Baker, following the AGM

11 Dec: no meeting

08 Jan: *PC Yvonne Fletcher & the Libyan Embassy Siege* by Paul Barwick

10 Feb: *George Orwell* by Andrew Baker

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.**

Prospective new groups

We'd like to start these new groups, but we need organisers, teachers or volunteers. Do you know someone who could help?

- Pilates
- Film Appreciation
- Line dancing
- Spanish for Beginners
- Quizzers

"Ricky Review" intro writer

We need someone to source relevant content and then write the copy for the first few pages of Ricky Review; it is then forwarded to our resident tame designer. For the Groups section, each group leader sends their updated copy directly to the designer so you don't have to get involved. It's not an onerous task, only taking a few hours each quarter.

New member coffee mornings

We were delighted to gain 71 new members from our Open Day as well as other new members throughout the year. However, we have failed miserably by not welcoming them properly at coffee mornings. We hope to put this right very soon.

Look for the GREEN TICK



We remind members at every meeting that you **MUST** enter your car registration in the touch screen every time you use the car park at Our Lady's Church - otherwise you will receive a £60 fine. The touch screen is just inside the hall entrance.

Parking at Our Lady's Church

You **MUST** enter your car registration in the touch screen every time you use the car park at Our Lady's Church - otherwise you will receive a **£60 fine**. The touch screen is just inside the hall entrance.

- 1 Tap the welcome screen to register your car
- 2 Type in your car registration then click **enter**
- 3 message confirms your parking exemption.
- 4 If you cannot see the message with your car's registration, colour/ make, then re-enter your registration.

u3a
Rickmansworth

If you receive a **penalty notice** in the post, it is your responsibility to pay or appeal as directed in the notice. **PLEASE** do not contact the Church nor Rickmansworth u3a Committee.

Annual General Meeting

Rickmansworth u3a's **AGM** will be held at 2pm Thursday 13 November in Our Lady's Church hall. Please make every effort to attend. We need over 70 people for a quorum so that we can proceed with the business of the meeting.

We need your nominations for the officers of your u3a...

Chair

Andrew Hicks wishes to stand down as Chair having served his full term. Nominations for the new Chair are now needed. Andrew offers himself for nomination to the committee to ensure continuity.

Committee Members

Most, but not all, of the committee have indicated that they are willing to stand again. We need more members to put themselves forward and take responsibility for the running of your u3a

Current Ricky u3a Committee Members

Chair	Andrew Hicks	Vice Chair	Mike Grossmith
Treasurer	Lynda Northwood	Committee Member	Jeff Morris
Membership Sec.	Claire Guenebeaud	Committee Member	Anna Morris
Groups Coordinator	Jean Paddick	Committee Member	Michèle Bennett
Secretary	David Bennett	Committee Member	Harry Temmink
President	Maurice Delaporte	Committee Member	Ruby Maini

We need nominations for the officers of your u3a if we are to be able to offer the same range of activities in future.

Election of Ru3a Committee Members

I propose _____ for the position _____

Signed by _____ Print name _____

Seconded by _____ Print name _____

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

Please return to the Secretary by 3 November 2025 latest.
David Bennett, 156 Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green WD3 3LJ
Email: d.bennett637@btinternet.com

SHUTTLEWORTH



Our 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.

Art Appreciation

In September, Jenny Lewis gave a thought provoking presentation entitled "Controversial Art", with many images which were quite shocking at the time.



"Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe", Édouard Manet, 1863, oil on canvas

In early October, we visited the Heath Robinson Gallery in Pinner for their exhibition "Contraptions & Connections" and next is Cy Porter's presentation of the Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai.

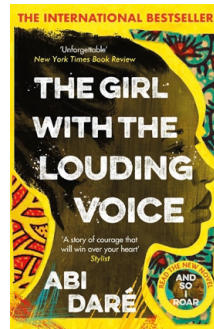
Next meetings include: 24 Nov, Mosaics; 26 Jan, annual lunch; 23 Feb, Review of "Local Sculptures".

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

(4th Monday, Our Lady's)

Books – Ricky Readers

We held our first poetry meeting, when each member read a favourite poem; very interesting, we'll do this once a year. In later meetings we read "Prophet Song" by Paul Lynch – a dystopian novel about

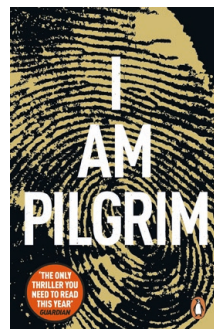


a family in the Republic of Ireland, struggling to cope as the country slips into totalitarianism. Then, we read "The Girl with the Louding Voice" by Abi Daré about a young girl's brave struggle to survive and receive education in Nigeria. The story is fiction but what happens is fact – quite a page turner, shocking and heart warming.

Our present book is "The Other Bennet Sister" by Janice Hadlow, followed by "A Divided Spy" by Charles Cumming.

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

Books – Pageturners



Our most recent reads are "I am Pilgrim" by Terry Hayes, "The Shipping News" by Annie Proulx and "Old Babes in the Wood" by Margaret Atwood.

We are currently reading Anthony Horowitz's "The Twist of the Knife" and our next books will be Kate Atkinson's "Shrines of Gaiety" and in December "Mapp and Lucia" by E F Benson, which we will discuss over lunch at a local hostelry as well as reviewing the books we have read over the past year.

Group Leader: **Gill Gowing**
(2nd & 3rd Tuesday, private home)

Bridge

"It is addictive... and frustrating", "I am a very good player... I just don't get the cards", "You can only play the cards you've got", "You've got to have a sense of humour!" - all quotes from a pleasant afternoon of Chicago bridge at a member's house over tea and biscuits.

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

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



Creative Writing

We've covered topics such as 'The Merry Go Round', 'Memories' and 'Lost and Found'. As always, there has been a wonderful mix of fact and fiction, prose and poetry, and an endless variety. There has also been lots of chat and laughter.

Our future plans include 'Overheard', and our fast-becoming traditional 'Christmas in

*There once was a selfish young elf,
Who at Christmas was full of himself.
He ate all the candy,
And drank all the brandy,
Then felt sick as he sat on the shelf*

Courtesy of Ursula Bartlett

January' lunch, complete with limericks, (no limerick, no lunch!).

The group is currently full, as space in our homes is limited, but if anyone is interested in setting up a second group, we would be very happy to provide support and guidance.

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



"Rain, Steam and Speed - Great Western Railway" by JMW Turner

Engineering Heritage

Recent meetings have been well attended, including "The GWR in Victorian Berkshire" by Richard Marks and "Railways prior to the Stockton to Darlington Railway" by Arthur Cunningham.

Future meetings are "Mushroom Clouds – the hidden enemy within the Royal Navy's wooden ships" by Lawrence Scales.

Group Leader: **Chris Hillier**

(2nd Tuesday, Our Lady's)

Fabric, Finery and Fashion

The group had a lovely return trip to BA Heritage Centre, Waterside. Alas, we couldn't get enough folks for a mini bus, so made the trip by car. It was disappointing that more people were not interested as it would appeal to fans of architecture, engineering, aviation and interest in BA. Highly recommended.

September's meeting was 'Show and Tell'. How fabrics and vintage clothes bring back memories. At the moment we are looking at going to Kew Gardens for the Material World exhibition.

December will see the group going for lunch locally with a quiz.

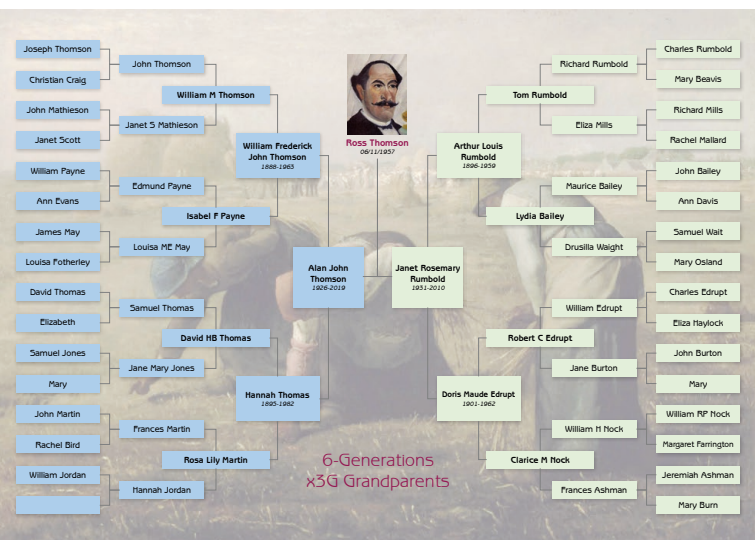
Please let me know if you wish to come along, join the group or are just curious.

Group Leader: **Denise Davies**

(2nd Monday, private home)

Family History – Researching Ancestors

Our latest 'homework' is for each group member to present their family tree of 6 generations, back to 3x great grandparents. A real challenge, getting past the inevitable 'brick walls'.



Also, not as macabre as it seems, but to research causes of death through the ages. Child deaths particularly were incredibly high, which nowadays can be easily avoided with antibiotics and immunisation.

We're delighted to have some new group members too.

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

Activities recently included a Greek afternoon with all kinds of dips, homemade meatballs, moussaka and peach dessert. In August we concentrated on various vegetarian dishes, such as fish pie, feta, tomato & cheese tartlets, mushroom open canapés and a Middle Eastern dish.



This month we plan on having 'Harvest' as the theme which may include such dishes as pumpkin soup and risotto, with root vegetables, apples, pears, plums and figs.

Going forward it was suggested we try out dishes typically from Scandinavia.

It is a really fun group and makes for a very interesting and enjoyable afternoon for anyone who loves trying new culinary delights. In this vein new members would be very welcome to join the group.

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

Languages

We have three current French groups and could start a Beginners group if sufficient interest. We also have German and Spanish groups.

French A – Intermediate

We are following the Bloomsbury Foundations Books, which are a fairly advanced level of French. We are going through grammar, learning more vocabulary, forming longer sentences together and writing passages of around 50 words in French. We sometimes study a song or watch film clips on YouTube to vary things.

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.

Recently we enjoyed reading "La Gloire de Mon Père" by Marcel Pagnol and will watch the film together soon.

We have now moved on to "Le Petit Prince" by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, which is proving quite challenging.

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 news of current affairs in France, together with interesting articles on French history and culture.

We have a range of abilities in the group from intermediate to native French speakers and the sessions are great fun.

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, whilst increasing everyday vocabulary.

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)

Spanish

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

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



Spanish for Beginners

This new group is ready to go, already with an organiser, charming private home as venue and waiting list of keen joiners. But, it needs a fluent Spanish speaker to join and help the group navigate the Spanish Coursebooks. If this sounds like you, or someone you know, PLEASE contact the group leader.

Group Leader: **Shona Thomson**
(dates TBA, private home)

Garden Inspirations

The new gardening group was reformed this year and trialled different types of events to find out what members "really, really want". The answer is clear..."Ooh, we love a coach!"

Planning is well advanced for the 2026 season with monthly coach visits to fabulous gardens from April to September.

Group Leader: **Ross Thomson**



Golf

The group is taking a winter sabbatical and will hopefully reappear in the spring of 2026 with everyone desperate to play and get out into the fresh air. But, we need a new leader, so please volunteer to keep us going.

Group Leader: **Silwen Lees**
(every Friday)

History – 19th & 20th Centuries

In June, guest speaker Andrew Baker's talk entitled "*And a little mouse shall lead them*" told us about Clement Attlee's post-war, reforming government and the strong leadership of the "little mouse" himself.

In July, John Dunne's excellent account of the "*Great Irish Famine 1845–52*" recounted the dreadful days of the potato blight, inept government and the acceleration of the transatlantic flight of the Irish.

Next, the subject is the "*Restructuring of Europe after the Great War*". Future topics include Canada, China, India & South Africa..

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

Mike Payne took us on a tour of Pinewood Studios, 'Britain's Hollywood', known for iconic movies such as Star Wars. We were entertained by excerpts from the "Carry On" films, with lively shouts of the titles from the audience and much laughter at the antics.

Fabian Hiscock read from "The Victorian Farmer's Diaries", a talk he presented on BBC's Countryfile portraying the life of John White, who kept a detailed diary every day of his working life from 1841 to 1896

We enjoyed two excellent tours of the stunning Moor Park Mansion, including the main hall, gallery and Arnhem Room.

We look forward to Colin Richards tour of Denham Film Studios, known for processing Oscar winning movies by directors Stanley Kubrick and Stephen Spielberg and the classics such as 'Brief Encounter', 'The Great Escape' and 'Superman'.

And, Fabian Hiscock will be making a welcome return to present the history of Woodoaks Farm in Maple Cross, way back to the 1200s. It's now a popular visitors centre and a place where wildlife can thrive and daily farm walks are welcome.

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

Music – Pop & Rock Nostalgia



We started at the beginning of 2025 with the idea of celebrating the wonderful music of the 60s and 70s; a time of huge shifts in music and social history.

The open fun meetings include quizzes, lively discussions with everyone's contribution welcomed and, of course, lots of wonderful music.

Members have presented their own 'Desert Island Discs', selecting a favourite 8 tracks with a commentary of their experiences in the 60s and 70s. Recently, we've turned to 'Room 101', with members choosing their most hated track of all time. Shudder!

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

Music – Singing 4 FUN

There are no auditions, it's not a choir, just come along and sing. Since our Open Day we have gained some new members and the group is going strong. It's light hearted but a lot of fun and a lot of singing – so, come and join us.

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

Music – Ukulele for FUN

The group is a mixture of Ricky and Chorleywood ukulele players, which makes for a varied and interesting format.

We have been invited to play at local Friendship clubs and care homes. Most of the songs that we play and sing are well known to residents, who are always encouraged to join in for a fun singalong.

In July, we were honoured to be invited to play at the Rickmansworth Folk Festival.



Unluckily, it was the only day in the summer when it poured, but undaunted we played on despite a few wet strings!

Coming up are gigs at the Stroke Club, Croxley, and at the Chorleywood u3a pre-Christmas meeting.

Group Leader: **Judy Younge**
(2nd Mon, Christ Church, Chorleywood)

Music – Ukulele Improvers

We do 'exactly what it says on the tin'. Please see above for how we combine with the 'for FUN' group in local performances.

Group Leader: **Judy Young**
(3rd Wed, Christ Church, Chorleywood)



Outdoor Sketching

We have been meeting in the Aquadrome by the 'Cafe in the Park', from where we wander to wherever it takes us. It is an untutored group, with no experience needed, just for the enjoyment of doing it rather than the end result. In fact, some of the results are tremendous.

Group Leader: **Irene Hamilton**
(2nd Tue, Ricky Aquadrome)

Philosophy

The philosophy group is eclectic in its approach and in the choice of discussion topics. It can be an individual philosopher to study or we often pick an interesting current topic.

For example, the recent death of the American philosopher John Searle may merit some investigation and discussion.

We recently discussed the philosophy of Descartes and then Julian Youngs' "The death of God and the meaning of life"... to be followed by the philosophy of Freud..... which may prompt us to look at Jung.

We are a lively, open-minded lot, and have space for a few more members... and no topics are off limits, philosophy meaning the love of wisdom.

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".

Enthusiasm is more important than experience. Come on, give it a try!

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

Singles – Sunday Lunch Club 3

As the name suggests, this is a chance for single people to come together and meet for a friendly Sunday Lunch, locally.

Recently, we've had excellent meals at Maurizio's, The Pomeroy, Coach & Horses and Dolce Caffè & Restaurant. We aim to try the new Boga Steak & Grill in the old Barclays building soon.

Group Leader: **Pat Graham**
(1st Sun, Ricky restaurants)

Table Tennis 1 & 2

We've had several new people join our community, who are very welcome. Our Tuesday and Friday sessions of doubles continue to be busy with a lot of chatting and laughing; it can be noisy but fun noisy.

Table Tennis increases wellbeing and it

doesn't only work your muscles, it also works your heart, your brain and your aerobic system. So, your overall health will also improve (lower cholesterol, lower risk of diabetes and heart disease, lower blood pressure, better sleep). If you fancy giving it a go, stop thinking about it and get in touch!

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

Theatre, Outings & Holidays

We've just had a fantastic time at a matinée performance of "SIX – The Musical" at the Vaudeville Theatre, Strand. And, we look forward to the "Turkey & Tinsel" Holiday at Warner Gunton Hall– see page 2.

Rumours abound for next year of a visit to "Just For One Day Musical" in the West End and a week's holiday in Llandudno, North Wales – more in due course.

Group Leader: **Mike Grossmith**

Walking – Strollers



In July, our walk was from The Greyhound in Wiggington, accompanied by some new members from our Open Day. In August, we had a local walk from Woodoaks Farm with lunch at The Dumb Bell, Maple Cross.

In September we were lucky enough to have a beautiful sunny day and our walk was from the Greyhound in Aldbury. It was a hilly walk over Pitstone Hill from where we had a good view of the windmill. Afterwards 25 of us enjoyed a good lunch in the pub. Our next walk is on the far side of the Chilterns from The Red Lion in Tylers Green.

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



Walks in London

The walks continue to be led by our excellent guide Colin Oakes. In July, we walked from Swiss Cottage station and it was sad to see that the 'original' swiss cottage is now derelict. We went past Sigmund Freud's house and now Museum.

The August walk started at Tower Gateway DLR station, and we admired the Cable Street mural celebrating the riot in 1936.



It also led us through the East End Homes Community Garden and the Church of St. George in the East with the new church inside the original Nicholas Hawksmoor's 18th century walls following the 1941 air raid.

September's walk was cancelled due to Tube Strike. In October, we walked from Leicester Square station and looked at 1900 London architecture. Our November walk will explore Woolwich town and Dockyard.

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

Wine Appreciation Group (WAGs)

One of the WAGs said recently... "We were strangers when we met for the first tastings three years ago. Now we're best friends". A perfect description of the benefits of a local and well run u3a.

And, we've tasted some wonderful wines. "Up the Balkans!" included some intriguing wines from Ukraine, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia – luckily we had a map!

"Beaujolais & Alsace" was an unusual combo, but one only produces red and the



other only white, so perfect.

After a birthday treat visit to Chapel Down in Kent, one of our WAGs was inspired to select and present English wines at our next tastings. Thanks to global warming, our English wines are getting better and better, though at what cost!

Our most recent tasting was a special selection from The Wine Society "The Adventurer's Case", wines that you wouldn't usually choose or find in the supermarket.

In December we look forward to the **Ricky WAGs Christmas Special**, together with WAGs Too. A challenging 8 wines have to be sampled and judged, with festive nibbles, and still stay sober to compete in the Quiz.

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

Wine Appreciation Group 2 (WAGs Too)

Our most recent tasting was a selection of Italian wines from The Wine Society. Probably the highest scoring selection of all the WAGs tastings. Scrumptious. "Multo bene" to quote the Godfather.

And this month it's Greek wines, this year's breakthrough recommendations from the national press.

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