

"Help! I need somebody..."

We steal Beatles lyrics again, "we'll get by with a little help from our friends", but it describes exactly what we need!

We've just enjoyed another successful **Open Day** for which our group leaders



produced some excellent displays. We have welcomed over 100 new members from the last two Open Days.

The groups are the lifeblood of our u3a and its leaders the heartbeat. They've started several new groups recently: **Pilates, Film Club, Garden Inspirations, Spanish for Improvers, Monday Table Tennis** and resurrected **Theatre** group.

There is no limit to what **Ricky u3a** can achieve. We want all of our members to participate fully, enjoy their chosen activities and the friendships that result. We would welcome more volunteers to help support the increasing number of groups and, indeed, to start new ones.

Nothing is off the table or too outrageous – well, perhaps a few things!

You may have a special interest, knowledge or skill. If you have an idea for a new group, please share it with the Committee and together we can bring it to life. We are fortunate to have a great team of people working selflessly behind the scenes; we just need more of you to step forward to help.

Communication is vital. Our excellent website www.rickyu3a.org.uk is now the prime source of information for all of Ricky u3a's activities and groups, together with emails drawing attention to specific events. We will help those who have issues accessing the website.

Harry Temmink has taken over as our new Chair, and thanks the previous incumbent Andrew Hicks, who will continue to serve as Vice Chair, as well as Michèle and David Bennett for their many years on the Committee.

Together, the Committee, group leaders and members look forward to continuing the good work of previous years and expanding the range of activities and interests available.



Upcoming Events



Ru3a FILM CLUB,
Fri 24 April
Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid is not only a "Classic", but also the cult

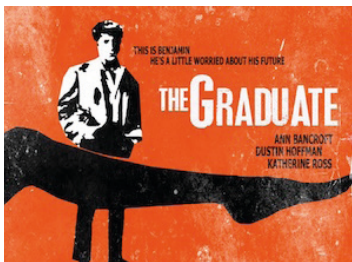
"Western" of all time.



Capel Manor Gardens,
Tues 19 May

Quite unique, as it is a campus of Capel Manor

College, a horticultural college, and its students play a big part in designing and maintaining the gardens.



Ru3a FILM CLUB,
Friday 22 May
Starring Dustin Hoffman as a recent college graduate who is seduced by

an older married woman, Mrs. Robinson (Anne Bancroft), but falls for her daughter, Elaine (Katharine Ross).

Monthly meetings

Held in Our Lady's Church hall from 2pm, open to all Ru3a members, followed by tea/coffee and biscuits. Next topics and speakers are:



14 May: "We sail the Ocean Blue: Piracy and its History - fact and fiction" by Vivien Morgan.



11 Jun: "What the Butler saw!" An autobiographical presentation by William "The Butler" French.



09 Jul: Wildlife Photography by Tom Way.

RHS Garden Wisley, June TBC

The flagship garden of the Royal Horticultural Society and one of the great gardens of the world.



Introducing the.. Really Useful Group

The London Olympics 2012 started the **Volunteer** movement as people gave up their free time willingly to help others – and they found they really enjoyed doing it.

People turn up and expect things to be done and ready, but nothing gets done unless someone does it.

We need about 12-20 **Really Useful** members who are happy to help, including in the kitchen serving tea and coffee, putting out or putting away

chairs after monthly meetings, and anything else that comes up. The more, the merrier.

And, hopefully we'd have regular group meetings at a convenient pub or afternoon tea at someone's home.

Please email jean.paddick@gmail.com to **volunteer**.



Ricky u3a Open Day



Friday
20 March
12-4pm



Our Lady's
Church
Hall



Over 50
interest
groups



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

We have had a very successful year so far. In January we had our group Christmas lunch social at The Artichoke, followed by members choosing to present a diverse



"The Tête à Tête", William Hogarth, c.1743 (credit: National Gallery)

range of artistic subjects including "Ravenna Mosaics" in February and "Local Sculptures" in March.

Next up in April is "William Hogarth" – perhaps, Britain's greatest artist?

Our group has grown to 32 as five new members were welcomed after the Open Day in March.

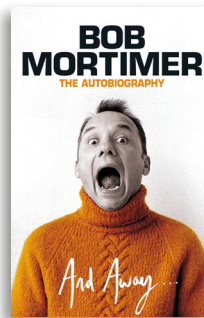
Group Leaders: **Jean Dodds** and **Sharon Kassemzadeh**

(4th Monday, Our Lady's)

Books – Ricky Readers

After our regular group book selection processes, here are some of the books we have read and discussed recently:

"And Away..." by Bob Mortimer; "Small Things like These" by Claire Keegan; "Cold Comfort



"Farm" by Stella Gibbons; "Silence of the Girls" by Pat Barker; and, "Two Women in Rome" by Elizabeth Buchan.

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

Bridge

It's a hive of activity at the Mill End Community Centre when the Bridge Group meets. We have bought two new tables now there are 24 playing Duplicate.



And that's not all, we have relaxed and enjoyable play at a member's home too on alternate weeks, for either Chicago or Duplicate and we are very grateful for superb

hospitality on these occasions (our host is a star baker too!).

Check out the Ru3a website soon, as a new Bridge Group is about to start.

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

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

Creative Writing

We started the year with our "Christmas in January" lunch at the Feathers in Rickmansworth. We've moved on from "limericks at lunchtime" to "haikus before home time", which were definitely more challenging!

In February we tackled "A Day in the Life

of a Historical Character”, resulting in a wonderful selection of writing ranging from Little John to Dusty Springfield, while in March we had fun with Making Excuses, and also celebrated one of our group having her children’s book, Dylan the Droplet, published (take a bow, Ursula Bartlett!).

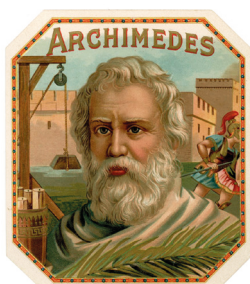
Next month our subject is “Time Machine” and we look forward to another morning of coffee, chat and laughter.

The group is currently full, as space in our homes is limited, but we are currently setting up another Creative Writing group. If you would like to join, please email me at franceschater@gmail.com as soon as possible.

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

Engineering Heritage

Last year our talks were mainly about railways, as 2025 was the 200th anniversary of the start of the railways in the UK. But, the talks this year have been on a variety of subjects from "The Future of Hydrogen" to a condensed



History of Engineering from Archimedes to the Tay Bridge disaster. We learned that the Romans had no word for Engineer, though they were good at surveying.

In December we had a Members' afternoon when several group members gave short talks on a variety of subjects: Workaid, the Industry of the Yorkshire Dales and Beck's Tube Map. Future talks will be about Josiah Wedgwood and Developments in Submarines.

The group is a joint group with other local u3a's and all are welcome.

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

Fabric, Finery and Fashion

In early April, Debbie Garrett gives us her well received slideshow and talk entitled "Fashion in Art 1837–1901".

On 8 May, join us for an outing to the exhibition "**WOMEN IN PRINT**" at the William Morris Gallery – "Exploring the evolving influence and status of women in textiles over the past 150 years of Liberty Textiles."

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

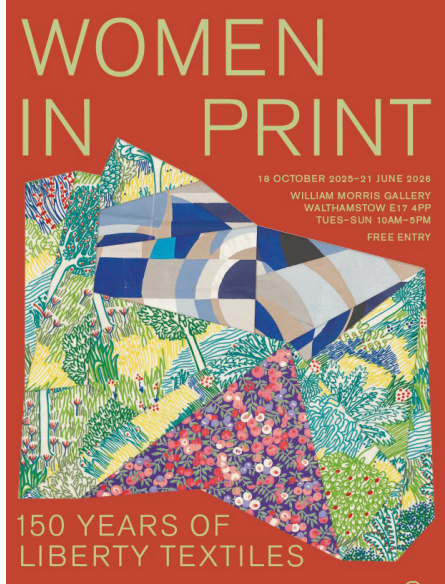
Group Leader: **Denise Davies**
(2nd Monday, private home)

Family History – Researching Ancestors

Last year ended in sadness, but we now look forward to continuing our research both physically and digitally.

Since most of us have spent many hours on our own family trees, we are set a new challenge to research the family tree of someone famous – but, not too famous, so that their tree is already online.

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



Film Club

A new group launched this year, it already has over 80 members. It invested in a brand new 65" 4k TV, mobile stand and PA speaker, showing movies in Our Lady's small hall as the acoustics and daylight in the big hall are so difficult.

We've enjoyed "On Golden Pond", "Breakfast at Tiffany's" and the stunning "Moulin Rouge!" so far, and our future showings are updated on the website regularly. You can join the group online too.

Group Leader: **Ross Thomson**
(Fridays as publicised, Our Lady's small hall)



Food - Delicious Delights

Each meeting has a set theme or ingredient, and each member prepares and brings a dish to taste and discuss. This gives us an opportunity to try new and old recipes and gain inspiration in a very relaxed manner.

Our January meeting celebrated Burns Night, complete with piper in full regalia and reciting the "Address to a Haggis".

Shrove Tuesday was commemorated with

savoury pancakes filled with mushrooms, goat cheese and sweet peppers, followed by sweet pancakes with blueberry fruit and cream, waffles with chocolate sauce.

In March, we had afternoon tea with a "Hint of Easter", including a wonderful assortment of tasty sandwiches, ginger scones with rhubarb and clotted cream, chocolate brownies and a beautifully decorated simnel cake.



We often finish the afternoon with a food related quiz. Such as... What is the fruit of love? Answer: tomato.

Future plans are to have a country theme such as Scandinavia and chose an ingredient such as pineapple to test our culinary skills.

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

Food - "Free From"

Food groups are very popular with u3a members; in fact, six groups already exist.

Now we are hoping to bring you something new - a group especially designed to cater for those members who are "Free From".

Please register your interest on our group page on Ru3a website.

Group Leader: **Shirley Longman**
(TBA, private home)

Languages

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

French A – Intermediate

In the last three months we have been going through a few lessons of our textbook Bloomsbury Foundations French 2 and in the next three months we will carry on going with the book. We also watch sometimes French films and study some French songs.

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.

Group Leader: **Margaret Pereira**
(alternate Fridays, 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 translation and discussion. It contains news of current affairs in France, together with interesting articles on French history and culture.

We have 12 members in the group with a range of abilities from intermediate to fluent. We have discussed splitting the group into two if we attract more members.

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



German – Beginners/Intermediate

We have been reading and discussing texts about Germany, some grammar and now we are reading thrillers written especially for students by Andre Klein.

The previous 'Conversation' group has ceased, but the remaining group now caters for beginners and intermediate level and meets three times a month.

Group Leader: **Anne Thorniley**
(2nd/3rd/4th Wednesday, private home)

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 Monday, private home)

Spanish for Improvers

This new group had its first meeting in January, followed by sessions in which we used various resources to help us generate conversation including videos, listening to stories, reviewing some Spanish magazine articles and books aimed at improvers.

We have a topic for discussion each month that people can prepare in advance if they wish and we do a short session on reading and translating some text.

The group has 12 members and is currently full. But, if we can find a willing fluent speaker or former teacher, we may be able to start a group for beginners. Interested? Please contact me.

Group Leader: **Shona Thomson**
(3rd Thursday, private home)





Kew Gardens

Garden Inspirations

The 2026 season of garden visits kicks off in late April in style with a bumper, SOLD OUT trip to Royal Botanical Gardens, **Kew**. In fact, so popular, we had to order a bigger 70-seater coach!

Next up on 19 May is a visit to **Capel Manor Gardens**. The beautiful 30 acre estate provides a colourful and scented oasis surrounding a Georgian manor house and Victorian stables, featuring 40 gardens and landscapes, including Walled Garden, Historical Gardens, The National Gardening Centre, Temple Lake, Which? Gardening Trial Gardens – and a mini zoo.

Then, to be finalised in June, are possibly the best gardens in the world... **RHS Gardens Wisley**. "Ooh, we love a coach!"

Group Leader: **Ross Thomson**
(*Mostly Tuesdays, spring/summer 2026*)



History – 19th & 20th Centuries

The meetings have been postponed for three months as the group leader is away, but we anticipate starting again in May. A full programme has been arranged for the remainder of the year, including talks on the Canadian Pacific Railway, the development of USA from Independence (Revolution?) to the Civil War and the German Chemical Industry in the 19th Century.

New members are welcome, as are ideas for new topics, and willing presenters.

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

History – Ricky Historians

In January, Helen George took us back to August 1945 to "The Khaki University of Leavesden". For a brief eight months, Canadian servicemen were able to study and prepare for civilian life before returning home from their military service.

In February, Colin Richards presented "Denham Film Studios" – the rise and fall in the 1930s of Britain's largest, most glamorous and modern film studios.

Looking forward, John Trotman will be taking us on a virtual tour of "The Cathedral & Abbey Church of St Albans" – a shrine to Britain's first saint and is the oldest site of continuous Christian worship in Britain, dating back 1700 years.

Even further forward will be "Metroland: Railway Paradise" – the suburban development by the Metropolitan Railway from the 1880s. It shaped areas like Money Hill and was famously documented by John Betjeman.

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

Music – Pop & Rock Nostalgia

We recently celebrated our first year running the group which focuses on music from the 60s and 70s, with informative conversations peppered with playing music and pop quizzes.



It's an opportunity to share and grow their musical knowledge in a fun atmosphere with like minded music lovers.

It certainly triggers memories of youthful times and is a great two hour distraction once a month from everyday life issues.

We currently have a mixture of quizzes and factual background. There is a monthly topic, which recently has featured the story of Tamla Motown writers Holland-Dozier-Holland, who wrote and produced hundreds



of hit records. The Brill Building in New York where the most successful pop was produced in the early 60s. The tragic story of Badfinger, a band that should have been so much more successful.

We currently have a great group of members who embrace the format and generate a fun atmosphere with lots of participation and occasional bursts of singing in the room when the right song is played. Apologies, the group is full, but please add your name to the waiting list.

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

Music – Singing 4 FUN

The group continues to grow with new members joining after our recent Open Day. This month some of our group are going to sing with the Stroke Association group in Croxley at the request of one of our members who is one of their organisers.

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 composed of Ricky, Croxley and Chorleywood u3a ukulele players. We play and sing well known songs generally from the 1960s onwards, such as the Beatles, folk songs and rock 'n' roll. We have an evolving repertoire with simple songs as well as slightly more complicated ones. The ukulele is relatively simple to learn, and the

majority of our members are self-taught.

We now have a **Uke 'n' Smile** performance group made up of members from both the Ukes for Fun and Improvers groups. Our latest gig was at Clarendon Lodge on St Patrick's Day and the residents joined in the singing of a variety of well-known Irish songs, as well as dancing and clapping along... great fun was had by all.

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



Music – Ukulele Improvers

We are Ukulele players with some experience who want to improve our technique, including different strumming patterns, bar chords, some theory, understanding tabs and we also sing a bit.

We have been performing for local care homes/centres and church groups/clubs, and opened at the Rickmansworth Folk Festival. So, If you play a bit, give us a go.

Group Leader: **Dave Cronin**
(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

We have recently discussed Justice and the Law, The Open Society and its Enemies (past and present).

We may next consider established religion – always addressing issues that cannot be resolved simply by observation or reference to established rules.

Group Leader: **Bob Mountain**

(3rd Monday, Our Lady's small hall)



Pilates

Another new group launched this year which is a **SMASH HIT**. We meet every Thursday and are coaxed into unusual positions by the wonderful Janine, a Level 3 Mat & Reformer Pilates Instructor. The jolly reasonable charge of £7 covers the class, hall hire and tea/coffee and biscuits.

Unfortunately, the group is full already, but please add your name to the waiting list via the Ru3a website as we may start a second group if sufficient interest, following on directly after the first group.

Group Leader: **Ross Thomson**

(every Thursday, St.John's, Berry Lane)

Play Reading

Led for many years by the engaging Paul Kendall, he is unfortunately emigrating to Aylesbury, so the group will now be led by Cynthia, who will bring her undoubted enthusiasm and vocal chords to the task. She'll be a great success.

In fact, enthusiasm is more important than experience, so why not give it a try!

Group Leader: **Cynthia Al-Obaidi**

(4th Thursday, Our Lady's)

Singles Sunday Lunch Clubs 1,2,3

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

All three groups are separate but do exactly the same. Each has a maximum number of around eight members as this is the most comfortable number for general conversation.

Although all three groups are virtually full, please add your name to their waiting lists as there are regular drop-outs each month. If we have enough people on the waiting lists, we'll start another new group.

Group Leaders: **Sheila Green (1), Sam Stuart (2), Pat Graham (3)**

(Sundays, Ricky pubs & restaurants)





Table Tennis 1 & 2

We have a great group of people that currently take part in the table tennis sessions on Tuesday and Friday. The atmosphere is always good fun and generates a lot of laughter in the room. We play mixed fours in the games so the dynamic is always changing.

Table tennis is a great way to exercise, utilising hand eye coordination and 'fetching the ball' are just some of the many benefits.

It is noticeable how quickly new players soon attain a level of ability and fit in with the group of more established players.

Our all Inclusive groups are very social and our enjoyable sessions could easily be called 'bat and chat'.

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

Table Tennis 3

Table Tennis is so popular, that we've just started a third Monday group. After an hour of playing there were immediate improvements to be seen as people became more comfortable with each other and the format of the game itself.

The enrichment of joining was evident during our tea/coffee/biscuit break as meaningful connections took place (you could tell by the noise).

The group is still open to TT newcomers and those that wish to revisit the game; it's fun!

Group Leader: **Alan Read**
(every Monday, Our Lady's)

Theatre visits & Outings

This group has been relaunched with its first SOLD OUT London West End show "Kinky Boots - The Musical". Fab seats in the Dress Circle for a matinée performance at the end of May.

Look out for future shows on Ru3a website.

Group Leaders: **Jean Paddick & Ross Thomson**

(ad hoc throughout the year)



Walking - Strollers

In January, in an attempt to avoid the mud of Hertfordshire, we took the train to Finchley Road for a walk across Primrose Hill and along the canal to Paddington, where we enjoyed lunch in a pub alongside the canal basin.

The February walk was from St Michael's village in St Albans on the St Albans Green trail along the old railway line. We had lunch in the 6 Bells in St Michael's village.



Our walk in March was from the Windmill in Chipperfield. We were lucky to have a fine sunny day with signs that spring was

approaching. The walk led through woods where the bluebells were just beginning to appear and through fields of rape with the yellow flowers emerging.

Unfortunately, the group is full as 25 is the maximum that any local pub will take for lunch, and there is a waiting list.

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

Walks in London

The walks continue to be led by our excellent guide Colin Oakes.

In January we walked from Cannon Street station and visited several City of London churches, one of which has been converted for use as a coffee bar.

The February walk started at the Barbican and was a tour round the halls of many of the London livery companies halls. We were sorry to learn from Colin that the Guild of Polecat & Ferret Skinners had been disbanded but that the latest Guild was of Human Resource professionals.

In March Colin took us to the "pleasant" village of Shepherd's Bush. We saw the remains of the BBC TV Centre and the White City exhibition site of 1908, now both overwhelmed by the Westfield Shopping Complex. We are limited to 30 people on each walk and so we now have a waiting list.

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



Wine Appreciation Group (WAGs)

After 45 tasting meetings over almost four years, you'd think we were running out of regions, themes and ideas. No way.

Recently we've tasted some wonderful Iberian wines, the latest in our series of "Grapes, Part IV" and a springtime Laithwaites Selection.

We are delighted to join together with **WAGs Too** on as many occasions as possible. Our latest example was a presentation by the Chorleywood owners of Languedoc winemakers "**Caizergues**". Bob & Pat Middleton bought the vineyard in 2017 after they had both 'retired'. Six beautiful wines and most of us bought a case or two at their generous discount prices.

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

Wine Appreciation Group 2 (WAGs Too)

Based upon the same tasting format as WAGs 1, our 15 members each taste 50ml of six different wines and rate them out of 25. No one is 'right', everyone has a different personal opinion.

Recent tastings have included wines from Nova Scotia and Portugal.

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