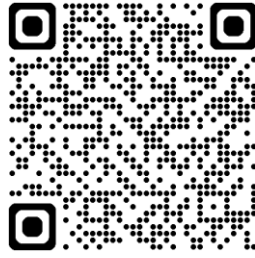


Ver-Colne Valley



Newsletter: No 210 June
2026



General meetings 3rd Thursday each month at 10am
Greenwood Park Community Centre,
Tippendell Lane,
Chiswell Green, AL2 3HW

Charity No:1156215

VCV Web Site: www.ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

Annual VCV u3a AGM

2025 – 2026

25th June 2026

Annual General Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Minutes of the last AGM. To approve the minutes of the 16th Annual General Meeting held on 18th September 2025. These will be sent by email to all members or by post as appropriate.
4. Committee report for 2025/2026
5. Receive the Financial Report for 2025/2026. Please note that copies of the above reports will be sent to all members by email or by post as appropriate.
6. Appointment of an Independent Examiner for the accounts
7. Elect the committee. The VCV constitution requires that all members of the committee stand down each year. All members of the existing committee offer themselves for re-election with the exception of Nick Photi and Ken Pragnell,. Two co-opted members offer themselves for election. (In accordance with our Constitution, if insufficient nominations are received to fill the vacancies for Officers or committee members, a decision can be taken by the committee to ask the retiring Officer(s)/member(s) to remain in post until the next AGM). There is a need for further committee members to share the workload and to ensure future continuity.
8. Any other business
9. Date of the next Annual General Meeting (provisionally) 17th June 2027.

To contact any committee member please go to:

www.ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk/contact

and select with whom you would like to communicate.

Committee News



Speaker's Corner

Groups News

Hi Everyone,

Thank you to the Current Affairs and Family History group for helping with refreshments at the last GM, it was greatly appreciated.

The new Amateur dramatics group still has room for more members, we have had a good response so far, but if you missed the chance to sign-up please let me know. Full details of time and place will follow in due course.

The boules/pétanque group still have vacancies for players they meet in Highfield Park on Monday afternoons from 2 – 4 pm, I won't be at the General Meeting in June but please contact me if you are interested.

I have had an enquiry for beginners French, if there is anyone who would be able to run a group, or be willing to pair up with someone please let me know.

I hope to see you all at the July GM, come and find me if you have any ideas for a new group or you want more information about an existing one.

Julia

25th June Please note this is change to previous speaker.

Sam Irving, who is the daughter of one of our members, is a Respiratory Physiologist, and she will give a talk on "Heart and lung health and how we measure it". She will talk about her work at Royal Brompton and hopefully demystify what they do there.

16th July

Martin Aldridge will be giving a talk on "Len the ex-racing greyhound"

Martin gives these talks to raise money for Whittingham Kennels, the charity who first gave Len a home after he retired. I'm really looking forward to hearing about Len's life. Martin has asked us to try to make sure all biscuits are put away before Len joins us.

20th August

Jody Huizar is giving a talk titled "From Texas to town crier". He describes his talk as a fast-paced amusing and interesting journey from San Antonio Texas to official Great Dunmow Town Crier. He will come in his full regalia and members will have opportunities to try out as a Town Crier.

STAMPS

Please continue to collect stamps, if you could please trim the edges so that there is only a half a centimetre of envelope around them.

There will be a box at the General Meeting for you to put your stamps in and they will be given to a charity.
Thank you. Penny Haigh

Closing date for articles for Newsletter
NO LATER than the morning of Frida 3rd July 2026
Please note articles received after the deadline will be published in the next newsletter if appropriate.
Please send your articles to
newsletter@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

u3a

If you wish to receive the monthly National u3a Newsletter follow the link below, they also do a "Bitesize" edition, signing up is easy. (Control and click to follow link) [You can sign up via website.](#)

Link to the East of England June Bulletin

- [2026-06 E of E Bulletin](#)

(Control and click to follow link)

Dates for your diary



Refreshment Rota 2026

AMBLERS Joy Dabson

Please meet, for an 11am start, Friday June 26th, Aldenham Country Park, Aldenham Road, Radlett WD6 3BA, far end of car park, near overflow car park.

Group	Month
Garden Allotment/Geology	June
Grumpy Old Men	July
Grumpy Old Women	August
Singing For Fun	Sept
Table Games/Spanish	October
Walking Group 1 Amblers	November

Event	Date	Contact	Current Position
Annual General Meeting 2026	25 June 2026		
 Walking in London - Mayfair	7 th & 10 th July	Bob Gettleson	Waiting list
 Garden Appreciaton Sweet Briar Flower Farm	14 th July 2026	Pat Hammond	Garden Appreciation members only
 Walking Group 3	14 th July 2026	Penny Collins	All VCV members welcome
Tereza Joanne – Totally Tropical	Thursday 30 July	Barbara Croom	On sale
 Walking Group 3	11 th August 2026	Penny Collins	All VCV members welcome
 CATS	13 th August 2026	Maggie Fenn	Sold out but put your name down on waiting list
 Garden Appreciaton Bhaktivedanta Manor	14 th August 2026	Denise Manning	Garden Appreciation members only
 Garden Appreciation Serendi	22 September 2026	Jill Fownes	Garden Appreciation members only
Kentwell Hall – a Tudor Michaelmas Day	27 th September 2026	Barbara Croom	On sale June GM
 Best of Bulgaria	27 th September - 4 th October 2026	Nick & Tina Photi	
Annual VCV Dance	17 th October 2027		
 Phantom of the Opera	21 st October 2026	Maggie Fenn	Sold out but put your name down on waiting list
 North West & Liverpool	15 – 19 th November	Nick & Tina Phot	Waiting List
 Garden Appreciaton Group Christmas Lunch	25 th November	Brenda Kember	Garden Group members only
 Paddington	10 th December 2026	Maggie Fenn	Sold out, but put your name on the waiting list
 Anything Goes	3 rd January 2027	Maggie Fenn	Sold out, but put your name on the waiting list
Annual Barn Dance	17 th April 2027		
 Rhine in Flames	29 th April to 3 rd May 2027	Nick & Tina Photi	Waiting list
VCV u3a AGM	17th June 2027		Provisional

Theatre Trips

Theatre Trips Organiser: Maggie Fenn
Email: theatre@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

THE INTEREST LIST DOES NOT GUARANTEE A TICKET. PAYMENT IS REQUIRED BEFORE YOUR NAME IS ADDED TO THE BOOKING LIST FOR THE EVENT.

CATS

Date Thursday 13th August 2026
Theatre Regents Park Open Air Theatre
Pick up Point Greenwood Park, Chiswell Green
Depart The coach leaves promptly at 10.30 am
Return Approx 5.15 pm
Price £57.00



PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Date Wednesday 21st October 2026
Theatre His Majesty's Theatre, London
Pick up Point Greenwood Park, Chiswell Green
Depart The coach leaves promptly at 10.30 am
Return from Theatre Approx 5.15 pm
Price £56

PADDINGTON

Date Thursday 10th December 2026
Theatre The Savoy
Pick up Point Greenwood Park, Chiswell Green
Depart The coach leaves promptly at 10.30 am.
Return Approx 5.15
Price £82.00



ANYTHING GOES

Date Sunday 3rd January 2027
Theatre The Mill at Sonning
Pick up point Greenwood Park, Chiswell Green
Depart The coach leaves promptly at 10.30am
Return Approx 5.15pm
Price £104 includes lunch, coach and driver's tip

HANDOUTS FOR ALL PRODUCTIONS ARE ON THE THEATRE TABLE AT THE BACK OF THE HALL
PLEASE COLLECT

THERE IS AN INTEREST LIST ON THE THEATRE TABLE TO BE SIGNED, IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN GOING TO SEE "SINATRA THE MUSICAL" AT THE ALDWYCH THEATRE IN LONDON AROUND MARCH/APRIL 2027

Day Trips and Events

Trips Contact Barbara Croom – trips@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

On Sale

Tereza Joanne – Totally Tropical

Date: Thursday 30 July

Price: £60

Depart GWP: 10am

Depart venue: 4pm

We are back on this very popular venue, this time with a tropical theme sung by Pete George who entertained us with Golden Oldies. This time he is singing an exciting mix of Latino, Mamba, Disco Salsa (including Copacabana) and the Hula sounds of Hawaii. Also a helping of Calypso from Harry Belafonte, Reggae from Bob Marley and Ska from The Specials and Madness. Dressing up is encouraged – sombreros, Hawaiian shirts and flower garlands all add to the atmosphere.

There are still a few places available and it is now open to friends and family.



On Sale in June

Kentwell Hall – a Tudor Michaelmas Day

Date: Sunday 27 September

Price: £35

Depart GWP: 8.30am

Depart venue: 4.00pm



With its origins mentioned in the Domesday Book, this timeless moated manor house has had a very chequered history through the centuries, including a spell as a transit camp for the army during WW2. Bought in a near derelict state in 1970 by the current owners, it has been extensively restored and now presents re-enactment events involving fully-costumed volunteers.

On the day of our visit we will be able to step back to 1553 and experience the sounds and sights of everyday Tudor life from the gentry to more ordinary folk, brought to life by Kentwell's skilled Living Historians. With the crafts, cooking, food, music and dancing – as well as the gossip that accompanies the life of a small village – wander round the house and gardens on a self-guided tour for a fascinating visit with a difference.

Really Useful Members

Joint Membership Secretary: Sue Darvell

New Members' Liaison: Neil Hutchison

Third Age Magazine Co-Ordinator: David Collins tam@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

Speaker Secretary: Ann Hutchison speakerssec@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

Theatre Trip Organiser: Maggie Fenn theatre@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

Trips Organiser: Barbara Croom – trips@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

Newsletter: Tina Photi: Email: newsletter@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

Sound & Lighting: Roger Barry / Trevor Spinage

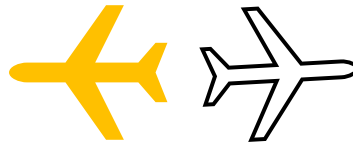
Welfare: Pam Kimber: Email: welfare@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

Raffle: Lai Hughes

Northwest & Liverpool Waiting list

5 days / 4 nights departing Sunday 15th -
Thursday 19th November 2026
4 nights half board 3* Farington Lodge Hotel
Double or twin room - £799pp
(Single supplement £99 (4 nights))
Return Executive Coach Travel
Excursion package included

- National Memorial Arboretum + Land Train • Leighton Hall Guided Tour + Lunch
- Lakeland Motor Museum • Liverpool Guided Tour • Magical Mystery Tour
- World of Glass + Demonstration • Imperial War Museum North • Fish 'n' Chip Dinner, Dance & Singalong
- World of Wedgwood & Light Lunch



RHINE IN FLAMES 2027 - Waiting List

PRICES: £1099pp No single supplement - 5 days/4 nights - 29th April - 3rd May 2027

DEPOSIT: £200pp (non-refundable/ non-transferable) Balance due in full by the 01.03.27

Executive Coach Travel

Short Channel Crossings

4 nights B&B + 3 hotel dinners

HIGHLIGHTS

Rhine in Flames Spectacular Cruise, Champagne Reception + Buffet Dinner + Music Excursion • • Vulkan-Express narrow-gauge railway
Benedictine Abbey Maria Laach, Lunch + Tour
Andernach Geyser + Museum
Boppard
Anton Hammes Wine Cellars
City of Bonn



News and Features



Fraudsters are currently targeting residents in Hertfordshire using a fake WhatsApp account bearing the name and logo of the Financial Conduct Authority. The fraudsters request bank account details which are then used to withdraw money.

NO FINANCIAL INSTITUTION WILL EVER ASK YOU FOR YOUR BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS, PASSWORDS AND PIN NUMBERS AND YOU SHOULD NOT PROVIDE THEM.

Walking Group 3 - Redbourn

Once again Elaine Roberts and Maggie Simpson kindly led our walk from the charming village of Redbourn. We all met at The Holly Bush, located in Church End, Redbourn. It is a historic 16th-century timber-framed building, with the earliest written reference dating back to a 1591 survey. There is a 19th-century schoolroom in the yard behind the pub, which was the Old School House and was connected with the nearby Workhouse.

We made our way over Redbourn Common, through the village and crossed the River Ver to the Nickey Line, which is disused branch railway linking Hemel Hempstead to Harpenden.



Redbourn was a strategically positioned roman settlement along Watling Street and is famous locally as the scene of the first recorded cricket match in Hertfordshire in 1666. Due to its position on the way from London to the Northwest, it was a key overnight stop for stagecoaches, boasting 25 pubs and inns at its peak, although there are now only three pubs left. It is recorded in the Domesday Book but the settlement dates back to at least Saxon times and the name Redbourn is derived from "Hredburna," meaning "reedy burn" (stream.)



Crossing the Nickey Line and the Redbourn bypass, we wandered through fields until we came to Harpenden golf course. Skirting the golf course, we turned into a wooded footpath passing donkeys and sheep with their lambs. Although it was windy, it was a lovely sunny day, as we walked round more fields until we came to Redbournbury Fisheries. The lake and the trees were so pretty, that we stopped there for our usual group photograph. A little further on, we stopped again to admire the old Redbournbury water mill. The bread shop wasn't open, so we carried on along more pathways, crossing the Redbourn Road until we returned to Redbourn village. Known

for its traditional atmosphere, the staff at the Hollybush made us very welcome, as they served us all with a delicious lunch. Thank you, Maggie and Elaine for another lovely walk!

News and Features

Walking in London – May 2026 Highgate

Before we set off, John told us a little about Highgate. It was once woodland owned by the Bishop of London. Dick Whittington was mentioned, of course, as he has a close association with Highgate.

We walked a short distance along Highgate High Street to The Angel pub. Graham Chapman, of Monty Python fame, used to drink here. There is a commemorative Blue Plaque in recognition.

Next, we went into Waterlow Park. The park is named after Sir Sydney Waterlow. Our route through the park took us past Lauderdale House. Built in the 16th century, this was the manor house of Sir Richard Martin who was also a three times mayor of London. It is now an arts museum with a café.

On leaving the park, we crossed Highgate Hill and walked along The Bank. We paused at the Ghana High Commission (Cromwell House) then made our way back up Highgate Hill to Southwood Lane.

Pausing at Dyne House, which is the administration centre for Highgate School, we walked a little further and stopped at a Blue Plaque to Mary Kingsley. A nineteenth century explorer and travel writer, Mary was the niece of author Charles Kingsley.



A little further along, we stopped to admire the view from the top of Kingsley Place.

We then went along Castle Yard and turned right into North Road. With John as our guide, Charles Dickens usually gets a mention. This walk was no exception as we stopped at a Blue Plaque to the great author.



On the other side of the road there are grade 1 listed buildings, Highpoint 1 and 2. Built in the 1930's for the entrepreneur Gestetner, they were never used to house his staff as was originally intended. They are now luxury flats with a reputed ground rent of £1,000 per calendar month!

Heading back along North Road, we paused at Byron Cottage where there is a Blue Plaque. We next stopped at Halfway House where there is a Blue Plaque for John Betjeman.

Highgate School is on the other side of the road. This is a fee-paying private school founded in 1565. John Leyton and Barry Norman are among the many famous people who were educated here.

We stopped at the Gatehouse Pub which has a theatre above the bar. John was modest about the many plays he has performed in and directed at this theatre.

A short walk along Hampstead Lane took us to The Grove. This is a posh road to say the least. Some famous past residents are Anthony Blunt, Annie Lennox, George Michael, Samuel Coleridge, JB Priestly, Yehudi Menuhin and Sting. Coleridge and Priestly have Blue Plaques.

Moving on to Highgate West Hill, we took a short detour to St Michaels Church then made our way along South Grove where we could see The Flask. Hogarth and Karl Marx are known to have enjoyed a drink or two here.

We stopped at Old Hall, which was built on the site of Arundel House. This Grade 2 listed building is now flats.

Bacon's Lane is where Herbert Bacon experimented with mechanical refrigeration. A little further along, Moreton House is where Coleridge lived – trying to cure his opium addiction.

Arriving at Pond Square, John told us about the Highgate Literary & Scientific Institution. We finished at Church House. Anecdotal evidence links this with the character James Stearforth in David Copperfield.

Once again, John treated us to a fascinating walk in a lovely part of London.

The next walk is in July, and it will be in Mayfair.



News and Features

Garden Appreciation Group visit to Ware

Just some of the twenty-eight members of the Garden Appreciation Group who went on a two-centre visit.

The first was to Fanhams Hall is an 18th-century Queen Anne Style country house in Wareside, in the southeast of England. It is a Grade II listed building which is now operating as a hotel. There was a magnificent Wisteria and a Japanese Tea House and bridge as well as Monet inspire bridge.

Not to mention a very large manmade mound which two of our intrepid party climbed. The house was surrounded by a beautiful terrace and lake.



We were met at the gate by a delightful gentleman who gave us the tour of his garden at Thundridge Hill House

He described the garden as chaotic. We think organised chaos. We were free to explore the 2-acre garden which had a wooded area, swimming pool and tennis court and a very large flower filled borders.

There was a wonderful view over the Ribble Valley and a very interesting barn full of memorabilia and pictures. It really was a really lovely garden. We finished the visit by enjoying tea and scones. Thank you Jill Fownes for organising.

Walking Group 2

On Friday 29th of May we set off from The Bell at Studham and walked to Whipsnade village by the edges of fields and through woods. The paths were dry and we managed to cover an extra mile, so the drink and the lunch were even more welcomed. The Bell is a lovely pub and the food is good. Unfortunately, like a lot of pubs now, it is only open for about half the week but walking groups represent a large part of their lunchtime business.



News and Features



I'll tell you the group(s)...you tell me the 'Leader'.



1. Shadows
2. Roulettes
3. Tremeloes
4. Dakotas
5. Union Gap
6. Rebel Rousers
7. Dreamers
8. Stingers
9. Zig Zag Jive Flutes



10. Athenians
11. Four Seasons
12. Luvvers
13. Gladiators
14. Crickets
15. Hurricanes
16. Juniors
17. The Waves
18. The Pips
19. Miracles
20. Pacemakers



How many of you have never heard of some of these groups? I know there are some I don't know!
Thank you Mick Taylor

1. Cliff Richard 2. Adam Faith 3. Brian Poole 4. Billy J. Kramer 5. Gary Puckett 6. Cliff Bennett 7. Freddie and the 8. B. Bumble 9. Elias and his 10. Nana Mouskouri 11. Franki Valli 12. Lulu and the 13. Nero and the 14. Buddy Holly 15. Johnny and the 16. Danny and the 17. Katrina 18. Gladys Knight 19. Smoke Robinson 20. Gerry and the.