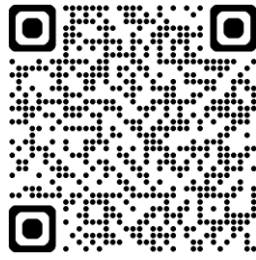


Ver-Colne Valley



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

Newsletter: No 211 July
2026

Committee June 2026 / 2027



NICK PHOTI
CHAIRMAN



BOB GETTLESON VICE
CHAIR & WEB MASTER



RON FENN VICE CHAIR &
NEW MEMBERS LIAISON



LYN BRANDRITH
VCV SECRETARY



LINDA MARIS, MINUTES
SECRETARY



KEITH MANNING
CO-TREASURER



TISH WATTS
CO-TREASURER



PENNY HAIGH
NEW MEMBERS SECRETARY



JULIA SCOTT
GROUPS CO-ORDINATOR



DENISE REES
EVENTS CO-ORDINATOR



GILL DAVIES
COMMITTEE MEMBER



PAM BALADI
COMMITTEE MEMBER

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

A warm greeting to you all.

I would like to thank everyone who came to the AGM on the 25th June especially on such a hot day.

I must also give special thanks to Ken Pragnell, our retiring Treasurer, for the exemplary job he has done. He has helped us manage our spending carefully and has dealt with the many demands of communicating with the banks, the Charity Commission and u3a Head Office.

I must also thank you for placing your trust in the committee for another year. I have accepted the invitation to remain as Chair for one more year, on the understanding that this will be my final year in the position. I would also like to welcome Keith Manning onto the Committee; he will serve as co-Treasurer with Tish Watts.

As always, your committee will continue to keep you informed about all VCV activities and interest groups. We are all looking forward to seeing what 2026/2027 has to offer.

Nick Photi, Chair

Speaker's Corner



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.

17th September

Nigel Crompton's talk is "Did we really use animals for that during the Great War?" Nigel has been giving talks for over 30 years. At the age of 55 he gained a master's degree in British History specialising in First World War studies. During his career in the fire service, he gave many presentations on the development of the fire service and other emergency services

15th October

Fabian Hiscock "A Victorian Farm, the diaries of John White of Rickmansworth"

John White farmed in Rickmansworth 1841 to 1896 and kept a diary every day of his life. From this we learn a great deal about what it was like to live and work in Hertfordshire during that time.

19th November

Jeff Evans "Pop on the Box"

Jeff is an acknowledged expert in popular culture and has written numerous books about television including "The Penguin TV Companion" which is Britain's most comprehensive and detailed television encyclopaedia. He is also a passionate quizzer having appeared on several TV quiz shows. He is currently on the Mastermind question setting team.

Committee News



Groups News

Hi Everyone,

Thank you to the Garden Allotment group for helping with refreshments at the AGM, it was greatly appreciated.

The Bridge group are looking for more intermediate players; they meet on Tuesdays from 9.30 – 12.00pm at Greenwood Park. I will have a signup sheet available at the next GM, please add your name if you are interested, or contact me directly if you are unable to attend.

The Amateur Dramatics group also still have availability and will be ready to start very shortly, let me know if you are keen to join in the fun!

I will also have a sign-up sheet available for beginners French, and we are still looking for someone who would be able to run the group, let me know if you are interested in doing this.

I look forward to catching up with you all at the next GM.

Julia



Refreshment Rota 2026

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

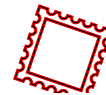


STAMPS

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



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

- [2026-07 E of E Bulletin](#) (Control and click to follow link)

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@vercolnevalleyu3a.org.uk

Theatre Trip Organiser: Maggie Fenn theatre@vercolnevalleyu3a.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

Closing date for articles for Newsletter
NO LATER than the morning of Friday 7th August 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

Dates for your diary

Event	Date	Contact	Current Position
Tereza Joanne – Totally Tropical	Thursday 30 July	Barbara Croom	Waiting list
 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 Appreciation Bhaktivedanta Manor	14 th August 2026	Denise Manning	Garden Appreciation members only
 Walking Group 3	8 th August 2026	Penny Collins	All VCV members welcome
 Garden Appreciation Serendi	22 September 2026	Jill Fownes	Garden Appreciation members only
Kentwell Hall – a Tudor Michaelmas Day	27 th September 2026	Barbara Croom	Open to friends and family
 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 Photi	Waiting List
 Garden Appreciation 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
Sinatra the Musical	9 th March 2027	Maggie Fenn	On sale at next meeting
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

AMBLERS Joy Dabson

Please meet for an 11am start, car park, The
Boot, Sarratt, Rickmansworth, WD3 6BL,
Friday, July 24th.

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

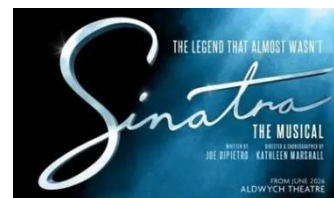


ANYTHING GOES

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

SINATRA THE MUSICAL

Date: Tuesday 9th March 2027
Theatre: Aldwych Theatre in London
Pick up point: The coach leaves promptly at 10.30am
Return: Approx 5.15pm
Price : £69 inclusive of coach and the driver's tip



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

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.

Waiting list only.



On Sale

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.

Now open to friends and family



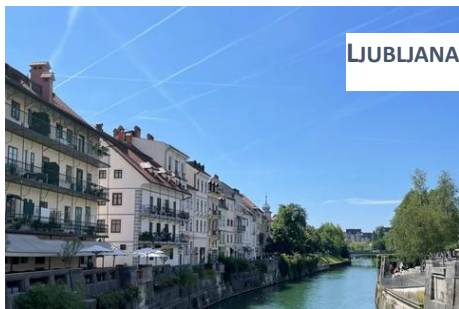
Holidays

GP TRAVEL EXPERIENCE HOLIDAY TO ADRIATIC

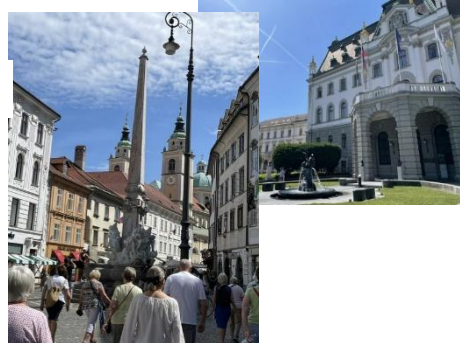
Our band of travellers, happy but weary outside the hotel just before we boarded the coach to return home.



POSTOJNA CAVES



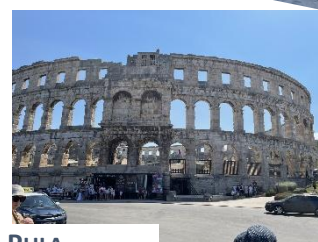
LIUBLJANA



LAKE BLEĐ



JUST CHILLING AFTER A BUSY DAY



PULA



ROVINJ



DAY OF REST BUT SO MUCH TO SEE AND DRINK - CHEERS



News and Features

Wisley Gardens

We set off in hope, following a day when there had been heavy rain, thunder and lightning. It was raining when we arrived at Wisley and we all headed for the Food Hall for a coffee. Luckily the rain eased after a while and the weather improved through the afternoon. We were then able to get out and start wandering round the incredible range of plants – everything from the tiniest growth appearing in cracks in rocks to some magnificent trees, including a giant sequoia, although I believe the one at Wisley is a mere teenager compared to the ones in California. We also found an Indian bean tree, so named from the 6/8-inch seeds that look just like dangling beans. The tree has branches that spread widely and near the ground. It would have made a great climbing tree.



There are so many gardens to see, including the Bowes Lyon garden where the roses were looking superb, in a range of colours including some multicoloured blooms. We wandered through a cottage garden, and through the wisteria walk, visited the rock garden alongside a selection of bonsai trees, and admired the water gardens to name just a few. Also to be seen were the greenhouses that have some very colourful tropical plants. In addition, the entire site is dotted with sculptures.



We spent a fascinating afternoon wandering round spotting the plants we knew and plenty we didn't. We even walked up the Hilltop to admire the view across the whole garden.

Barbara Croom

Walking Group 3 Tuesday 9th June

Sixteen hardy walkers set out from the Wicked Lady Public House in Nomansland. We followed a route we had found on the Herts Walker website adapting it slightly. The walk followed marked bridleways passing through Symondshyde Great Wood which apparently is particularly attractive in Autumn. At this point we were quite near to Symondshyde Farm where there is the 3 Brewers Brewery. Unfortunately, we didn't have time for a visit. The walk also crossed several fields of crops such as peas and cereals. From these fields we could see the picturesque views of the surrounding countryside. We did suffer one fairly heavy downpour quite early in the walk. But as it was the only one we thought we were quite lucky. We finished the walk going down Dyke Lane and returning to the pub well dried out and ready for our lunch.



News and Features

Visit to Amazon Fulfilment Centre LTN4

We visited the centre to get a behind the scenes look at how the parcels we've ordered online arrive in our homes. In my opinion the visit was very interesting, informative and quite mind blowing. If we had gone expecting to see lots of boxes and forklift trucks we were soon very disillusioned.



The LTN4 is a robotics sortable centre. This means human operatives work alongside thousands of robots to pick and pack items smaller than a conventional microwave. It contains over 20 km of conveyor belts and is known for its high-tech massive fulfilment. We were shown round by a very knowledgeable member of the corporate staff accompanied by two other staff members.

We started by watching an employee who was at a workstation where he had several totes (boxes) containing a range of packages. Robotic containers arrived at his post. He picked an item from a tote and then scanned the bar code. The robotic container lit up showing him where to put the item. That robot then moved away and was replaced by another. From there we walked along to another area where we could view many robots moving around the area on tracks. It was amazing watching them moving around. Apparently when the motors need charging they automatically head off to the charging point. We also went to a packing station. Here we saw items delivered to the station where the operative would scan the bar code. This would then tell them which size box to choose. It also automatically distributed the correct amount of tape to seal the box. The box was then put back on the conveyor belt and went on its way to have its address label added. The parcel then continued on the conveyor belt to the correct place for it to be ready to be taken to the truck for distribution. The bar code we see on the parcels we receive from Amazon contain every piece of information to allow the item to be picked packed and delivered to our door without human intervention.

The company representatives were very keen to inform us of the workers, conditions and benefits and also how hard Amazon worked to ensure their processes were as environmentally friendly as possible.

Ann Hutchinson



- 1 Name one landlocked country in Europe.
- 2 What is the capital of Denmark?
- 3 What is the capital of South Africa?
- 4 Who played the character of Jack Dawson in the movie "Titanic"?
- 5 In which part of your body would you find the cruciate ligament?
- 6 What is the capital of Switzerland?
- 7 What is the chemical symbol for chromium?
- 8 Which footballer is known as "The Egyptian King"?
- 9 What colour is the tongue of a giraffe?
- 10 The Needles off the western tip of the Isle of Wight are an example of what type of geographical feature?

1: Any of the following 14 countries: Andorra, Austria, Belarus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Macedonia, Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Switzerland, and Vatican City 2: Copenhagen 3: Pretoria (administrative), Bloemfontein (judicial), and Cape Town (legislative) 4: Leonardo DiCaprio 5: Knee 6: Bern 7: Cr 8: Mohamed Salah 9: Purple 10: Stack