

Ver-Colne Valley



General meetings 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk)

Newsletter: No 213 September  
2026

Please Note: Date of September General Meeting  
is now 24<sup>th</sup> September 2026

A very warm welcome to you all,

After such a long, hot summer it may seem unusual to be pleased to see the rain—but it is wonderful to see the grass turning green again.

The VCV Annual Dance will take place on 17 October. Tickets will be available to buy at the General Meeting on 24 September.

The booking form is included in the newsletter. If possible, please complete it in advance and bring it with you. The ticket table will be in its usual location near the committee tables.

The “Dates for Your Diary” page in the newsletter is packed with interesting trips, walks and events, offering plenty of opportunities to take part with friends and fellow members.

Our monthly newsletter is made possible by contributions from members and contains useful information for everyone. If you have any news relevant to the VCV or u3a more generally, please send it to the editor for consideration in a future issue.



If you are joining a VCV day trip or theatre visit, please:

- Do not park in the Greenwood Park car park.
- Use the surrounding side streets instead.
- Be considerate of residents and avoid blocking driveways or causing obstructions.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Best regards,

Nick Photi

To contact any committee member please go to:

[www.ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk/contact](http://www.ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk/contact)

and select with whom you would like to communicate.

# Committee News



## Speaker's Corner

### 24<sup>th</sup> September

Due to the change of date for the General Meeting Trevor Spinage is stepping in to be our speaker this month.

### 15<sup>th</sup> 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.

### 19<sup>th</sup> 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 quizzier having appeared on several TV quiz shows. He is currently on the Mastermind question setting team.



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.](https://eastofengland.u3asite.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/September-26-Bulletin-FINAL.pdf)

Link to the East of England September

<https://eastofengland.u3asite.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/09/September-26-Bulletin-FINAL.pdf>

(Control and click to follow link)

## Refreshment Rota 2026



| Group                   | Month    |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Singing For Fun         | Sept     |
| Table Games/Spanish     | October  |
| Walking Group 1 Amblers | November |
|                         |          |



### Groups News - Julia

Hi Everyone,

Thank you to the Grumpy Old Women group for helping with refreshments at the GM, they also didn't live up to their name as I caught them smiling and laughing whilst attending to their duties, it was greatly appreciated.

This past month has seen a lull in group requests, probably coinciding with the warm temperatures that we have experienced this Summer.

There is still availability in our new Yoga group, which takes place every Friday from 11.30 – 12.30pm in the URC in Chiswell Green. Please let me know if you are interested in joining and I will pass your details to our teacher.

Remember if you would like to start a new group please contact me, either by email or come and chat at the next GM.

Take care and see you soon.

Julia

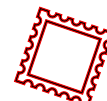


### STAMPS

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



## Dates for your diary

Closing date for articles for Newsletter  
NO LATER than the morning of Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 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

| Event                                                                                                                          | Date                                                      | Contact              | Current Position                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
|  Garden Appreciation Serendi                  | 22 September 2026                                         | Jill Fownes          | Garden Appreciation members only                |
| <b>GENERAL MEETING</b>                                                                                                         | <b>24<sup>TH</sup> September 2026</b>                     |                      |                                                 |
| Kentwell Hall – a Tudor Michaelmas Day                                                                                         | 27 <sup>th</sup> September 2026                           | Barbara Croom        |                                                 |
|  Best of Bulgaria                             | 27 <sup>th</sup> September - 4 <sup>th</sup> October 2026 | Nick & Tina Photi    |                                                 |
|  Walking Group 3                              | 13 <sup>th</sup> October 2026                             | Penny Collins        | All VCV members welcome                         |
| Annual VCV Dance                                                                                                               | 17 <sup>th</sup> October 2026                             |                      | On sale at GM – order form on back page         |
|  Phantom of the Opera                         | 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2026                             | Maggie Fenn          | Sold out but put your name down on waiting list |
| Walking Group 2                                                                                                                | 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2026                             | Angela & John Wright | Contact Angela or John,                         |
|  Walking Group 3                            | 10 <sup>th</sup> November 2026                            | Penny Collins        | All VCV members welcome                         |
|  North West & Liverpool                     | 15 – 19 <sup>th</sup> November                            | Nick & Tina Photi    | Waiting List                                    |
|  Garden Appreciaition Group Christmas Lunch | 25 <sup>th</sup> November                                 | Brenda Kember        | Garden Group members only                       |
| Walking Group 2                                                                                                                | 27 <sup>th</sup> November 2026                            | Angela & John Wright | Contact Angela or John,                         |
| Hampton Court                                                                                                                  | 2 <sup>nd</sup> December                                  | Barbara Croom        | Waiting List                                    |
|  Paddington                                 | 10 <sup>th</sup> December 2026                            | Maggie Fenn          | Sold out, but put your name on the waiting list |
|                                                                                                                                |                                                           |                      |                                                 |
|  Anything Goes                              | 3 <sup>rd</sup> January 2027                              | Maggie Fenn          | Sold out, but put your name on the waiting list |
| Sinatra the Musical                                                                                                            | 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2027                                | Maggie Fenn          | Waiting list                                    |
| Annual Barn Dance                                                                                                              | 17 <sup>th</sup> April 2027                               |                      |                                                 |
|  Rhine in Flames                            | 29 <sup>th</sup> April to 3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2027        | Nick & Tina Photi    | Waiting list                                    |
| <b>VCV u3a AGM</b>                                                                                                             | <b>17<sup>th</sup> June 2027</b>                          |                      | <b>Provisional</b>                              |

### AMBLERS - Joy Dabson

Please meet for an 11am start, car park, Waffle House , Kingsbury Watermill, St Michaels Street, St Albans, AL3 4SJ, Friday September 25<sup>th</sup>.



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



## 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 10<sup>th</sup> 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

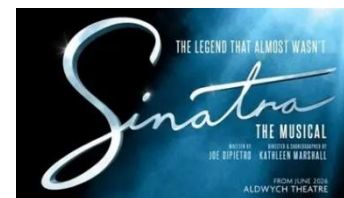


## ANYTHING GOES

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



THERE WILL BE SEVERAL INTEREST LISTS FOR YOU TO SEE. If you think you would be interested in a particular show please put your name down, it gives me some idea how many people would be keen in seeing that show.

## Day Trips and Events

**Trips** Contact Barbara Croom – [trips@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk](mailto:trips@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk)

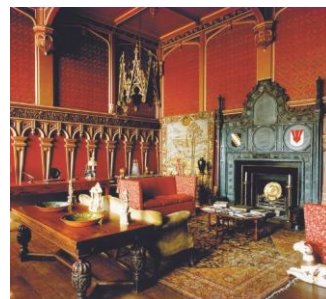
### Kentwell Hall – a Tudor Michaelmas Day

**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.

### Hampton Court Palace

**Date:** Wednesday 2 December

**Price:** £39

**Depart GWP:** 9.00am

**Depart venue:** 4.30pm

Step into the enchanted world of the Winter Palace. Wander through the spectacular rooms where each one is different, dressed in gold, emerald and copper with frosted Christmas trees and garlands. Meet friendly puppets and gentle mythical creatures. See moments of mischief and encounter a sleeping dragon.



You will also be able to visit the other rooms of the palace, and the gardens – if the weather allows.  
Waiting list only

### On Sale in October

#### Queen Elizabeth II – Her Life in Fashion

**Date:** Monday 1 March 2027

**Price:** £61

**Depart GWP:** 11.00am

**Depart venue:** 5.30pm

Marking the century of her birth, this is the largest exhibition of her wardrobe, comprising more than 300 items. Visually spectacular, it includes dazzling gowns, sumptuous colour palettes and rich embroidery. The Queen was totally committed to British fabrics and craftsmanship, and a relative absence of glass cases allows for an unusually clear view of the garments. They vary from the superb wedding dress designed by Norman Hartnell to a clear plastic macintosh so that people could still see what she was wearing if it was raining.

A two-course lunch is also included in the trip.



# Holidays

Contact :Nick & Tina Photi - [gptravel@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk](mailto:gptravel@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk)

## 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



## WINTER SUN 2027 – CYPRUS

**Sunday 14th - Sunday 21st November 2027, 8 days / 7 nights'**

**PRICES:** £1239pp two share ; Single supplement £149 (7 nights)

Classic Seaview supplement £199 per room

**DEPOSIT:** Early booking initial low deposit £100pp; 2nd deposit by 28.02.27 - £300pp

(both non-refundable/ non-transferable)

**Balance due in full by the 10.09.27**

Return UK airport coach transfers / Return flights Gatwick—Paphos

Private transfers Paphos airport—hotel—airport

4\* Athena Beach Hotel, Paphos 7 nights B&B + 6 x hotel dinners + BBQ Cruise

- HIGHLIGHTS** - • Troodos & Kykos Mountains Full day + Guide • Authentic Cyprus by Coach Full day + Guide • Blue Lagoon BBQ Cruise



# News and Features

The Garden Appreciation Group visited Bhaktivedanta Manor, Aldenham on a very hot August Morning.



The manor is a Hare Krishna spiritual sanctuary spread over 78 acres of land with plentiful gardens, an organic farm, a protected herd of cows, a temple, a monastery and a community of spiritual seekers!

We enjoyed a very informative guide around the Gardens & pristine, sacred Cow Sheds by the Head Gardener. There was time to feed the cows, if you wished, before strolling & exploring the gardens on our own.

Many of us had the honour of watching the daily 12 noon Spiritual Service in the Temple and tour of the upper rooms of the Manor House. At 1pm all guests visiting the Manor are invited to a Vegetarian Prasad meal which is given free to everyone (donations welcomed).

Bhaktivedanta Manor is open daily to the public should you wish to visit. Details of opening times and other information can be found on their webpage.

Denise Manning



## Walking Group 2

We met at The Marquis of Granby pub and walked through the Batsford Nature Reserve, up to the disused Hatfield to Luton railway line and then to Mackeyre End House and back to the pub for lunch.

## 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](mailto:tam@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk)

Speaker Secretary: Ann Hutchison [speakerssec@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk](mailto:speakerssec@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk)

Theatre Trip Organiser: Maggie Fenn [theatre@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk](mailto:theatre@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk)

Trips Organiser: Barbara Croom - [trips@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk](mailto:trips@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk)

Newsletter: Tina Photi: Email: [newsletter@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk)

Sound & Lighting: Roger Barry / Trevor Spinage

Welfare: Pam Kimber: Email: [welfare@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk](mailto:welfare@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk)

Raffle: Lai Hughes

## News and Features

### Walking Group 3 - August – Panshanger Park

Despite the misleading information given by some satellite navigation systems, we all met together in the car park at Panshanger Park for a walk, which was new to most of us and kindly led by Suzie. Having eventually figured out how to pay at the parking meter because we needed more than one hour, we were finally able to set out on a very interesting and historical walk of about 4 miles, through the fields, woods and lakes around the park. The ground was dry and although it was a warm day, there was plenty of shade under the trees and a very welcome breeze made the walk a lot easier.



A significant portion of Welwyn Garden City was built on land purchased from the 10,000-acre Panshanger estate. The remaining Park is now owned by Tarmac, which extracts sand and gravel from the site. Panshanger House was a grand Gothic mansion built in 1806 for the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl Cowper and no longer exists, but we stopped to look at what was left of the Orangery, built in 1856 to replace the original glasshouses. It's enormous and is one of the few examples of ornamental Victorian glasshouses that have survived in England.



We wandered on to look at the Panshanger Great Oak, as the park contains the largest maiden (not pollarded) oak in the country, with a circumference of nearly 25 feet. It is believed to have been planted by Queen Elizabeth I and acorns from the tree have been used as seedlings for notable oaks in other parts of the country.

There were plenty of colourful information boards along the way, describing the various forms of wildlife that could be seen, as we ambled along the River Mimram, around the many picturesque lakes and then back to the car park.

We then drove to the nearby White Horse pub, where we were made very welcome and served with a very tasty lunch to round off the morning. A big thank you to Suzie for a great walk.

### Flower Arranging Group - Flower Petals

What an amazing display.

Flower Petals had a very enjoyable & fun morning making Floral Chanel Handbags! These handbags would be a great idea to decorate Wedding Reception tables or to give to a Friend for a Special Birthday Present.





# VCV

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2026

Doors open at 7.30

Music from 8.00 till 10.45

Price: £16.00  
per person

to include sandwiches and cakes  
supper but bring your own drink  
& water

(Please let us know of any special  
dietary needs)

If you wish for a group of over 8 please  
let us know and we can put you on 2  
tables next to each other.

(PLEASE DO NOT MOVE TABLES  
TOGETHER) There will be a table plan

music by

*“Simply 60s Band”*

**Tickets on sale NOW at the General Meeting**

| Name | Mem No | Cheque No | Dietary Needs |
|------|--------|-----------|---------------|
|      |        |           |               |
|      |        |           |               |
|      |        |           |               |
|      |        |           |               |
|      |        |           |               |
|      |        |           |               |
|      |        |           |               |
|      |        |           |               |

If you wish for a group of over 8 please let us know and we can put you on 2 tables next to each other.

(PLEASE DO NOT MOVE TABLES TOGETHER) There will be a table plan on the night

**Cheques only**