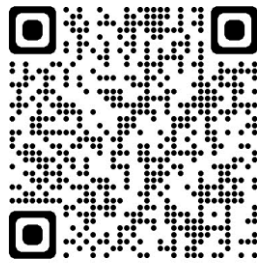


Ver-Colne Valley



Newsletter: No 180 December
2023



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

Username = valley



Hi Everyone,

I hope you are all keeping fit, healthy, and warm (I'll take 2 out of 3). We are heading headlong towards the great day, the committee are busy arranging the Christmas Party on 14th December. There will be tables laid out seating 10 people, so please fill up the tables and the nibbles will be served in the interval. **There will be no Card, Groups, Membership, Trips or Theatre tables on the day of the party.**

Some of you will be aware that 2024 will be the 15th Anniversary of VCV. With that in mind we are, hopefully, planning to do something a little different. So, watch this space and keep checking your e-mails. If you know of any members that do not have email please pass on information regarding trips, events, and anything that you think may interest them.

Please contact a member of the committee if you think there is anything that the VCV should be aware of, so we can act on it if necessary.

It just remains for me, on behalf of the Committee, to wish you all a great, safe, and happy Christmas and New Year

Nick Photi



You are invited to

VCV CHRISTMAS PARTY

14th December 2023

Refreshments

Prosecco or Orange Juice

Entertainment from the Ukulele Sunshine Band and

Singing For Fun

Christmas Quiz and Free Raffle.



To contact any committee member please go to

<https://u3asites.org.uk/ver-colnevalley/contact>

and select with whom you would like to communicate.

Committee News

Speakers' Corner

Gill Davies



There will not be a speaker this month due to party

There is a QR Code on the first page of this Newsletter. To use this, scan the code, from any directions for 360 degrees using the camera on your smart phone. It is a direct link to the home page of the VER-Colne Valley website. Not all phones are compatible unfortunately.

Bob Gettleon. Web master

Closing date for articles for Newsletter
NO LATER than the morning of **Friday 5th January 2024**

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

Remember to bring Membership cards when attending meetings, the new bar code reader is making booking you in faster.

Please make sure that you sign out if you leave the General Meeting before it ends. This is a Health & Safety issue; we would hate to have firefighters entering the building to search for you, if there is a fire, when you have already left.

Nick Photi

General Meeting Manager

Groups News from Julia Scott – Groups Co-ordinator -
groups@ver-colnevalleyu3a.org.uk

Hi Everyone,

Good to see you all at the last GM and thank you to the watercolour art group, and helpers, for providing us all with refreshments. A big thank you to all our groups for helping with teas and coffees this year, it is much appreciated. I will put a list together for next year as this seems to work well, giving plenty of advance notice.

The good news is we have a huge list of interested people for our Cinema and Yoga groups. Jo, our Yoga teacher will be in touch with everyone in due course with dates and times, she hopes to get going in the new year. The Cinema group will also start in the new year, when we have all recovered from the Christmas festivities.... I will be in touch!

If you have any ideas for new groups going forward, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Take care and look forward to seeing you at the Christmas party, I won't be having a groups table that day but please come and find me if you have any questions.

Julia



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

Sound & Lighting: Roger Barry / Trevor Spinage

Catering & Supplies: Steve Bowler

Welfare: Pam Kimber: Email:

c.kimber@ntlworld.com



Dates for your Diary

Event	Date	Contact	Current Position
High Society – Mill at Sonning	21 st December 2023	Maggie Fenn	Sold out come and put your name on the waiting list
Crazy for You cancelled replaced by The Time Travellers Wife	10 th January 2024	Maggie Fenn	Still a few tickets left
Guys and Dolls	1 st February 2024	Maggie Fenn	Sold out but put your name on the waiting list
Milestones Museum	6 th March 2024	Barbara Croom	On sale now
Calendar Girls	Saturday 20 th April 2024	Maggie Fenn	Sold out come and put your name on the waiting list

Day Trips and Events

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

On sale now

Milestones Museum - Basingstoke



Date – Wednesday 6th March

Price - £30pp

Depart GWP – 10.00am

Depart venue – 3.30pm

Come and visit this museum of living history, made up of a network of streets that have been recreated according to Victorian and 1930s Hampshire. Stroll along the cobbled streets to the seaside pier or wander round the vintage vehicles. Buy a ration of sweets from the 1940s sweetshop and have a go in the penny arcade. There is something for everybody to enjoy. The Baverstock Arms is an operating pub, and the Rooftops Cafe sells a variety of snacks and hot food. Alternatively, you can bring your own refreshments and eat them on the picnic tables just outside the museum.



Theatre Trips

MASKS - I think that you can wear a mask if you want to, but it is not obligatory.

The interest list does not guarantee a ticket. Payment is required before your name is added to the booking list for the event.

REMINDER

HIGH SOCIETY

Thursday 21st December 2023

Theatre

Pick up Point

Departure Time

Return Time

Price

The Mill at Sonning

Greenwood Park

The coach leaves promptly at 10.30 am.

Approx 5.00 pm.

£83



TIME TRAVELLERS WIFE

Wednesday 10th January 2024

Theatre

Pick up Point

Departure Time

Return Time

Price

Apollo Theatre, London

Greenwood Park

The coach leaves promptly at 10.30 am

Approx 5.00 pm

£50

GUYS AND DOLLS

Thursday 1st February 2024 matinee performance

Theatre

Pick up Point

Departure Time

Return Time

Price

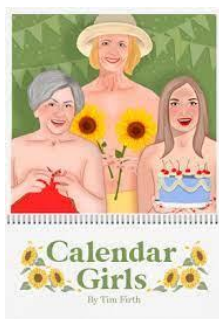
The Bridge Theatre, London

Greenwood Park

Coach leaves promptly at 10.30 am

Approx 5.00 pm

£62



CALENDAR GIRLS

Saturday 20 April 2024 – Matinee performance

Theatre

Pick up Point

Departure Time

Return Time

Price

The Mill at Sonning

Greenwood Park

The coach leaves promptly at 10.30 am

Approx 5.00 pm

£86



News and Features

LONDON WALK – MAYFAIR – 17TH NOVEMBER 2023

On a bright sunny day 17 happy folk met John Colman our Blue Badge Guide at Green Park Station. Our tour today was around the super area of Mayfair.

Firstly, we walked into Green Park, which is 53 acres, the greenest area in central London. Strangely minimal flowers were to be seen and it's thought few would grow because once a leper colony was located here. However, it does have many beautiful London Plane trees dotted everywhere. At the entrance we viewed the splendid looking Devonshire gates which were opposite Devonshire House, the home of the Duke of Devonshire, which was sadly demolished in 1921.



From the park we walked to the famous Shepherd Market which was built by Edward Shepherd in the 1700s where the river Tyburn flowed beneath. A famous May fair was held here and hence Mayfair derives its name. Shepherd market is full of small charming upmarket shops, it has a history of being inhabited by wealthy aristocrats and amongst other things has a reputation for prostitution and public hangings. Further on in Curzon Street we came across the magnificent Third Church of Christ, Scientist. An absolutely beautiful church.

The church is beautiful both outside and inside but sadly now rather sandwiched between other less appealing modern buildings.

Then we viewed the fine facade of Crewe house (now part of the Saudi embassy) which was constructed in the 18th century and full of history and also the place where Winston Churchill met his wife. Further on was Hereford Street which houses many foreign embassies and blue plaques on the walls. These plaques include one for the home of Benjamin Disraeli a former UK prime minister and at number 38 where Radio Luxembourg was broadcast from.

We stopped at a block of flat and heard some of its history where Carl Nielsen the musician lived. Two famous people from the music industry died here, one being Mama Cass from The Mamas and the Papas and also Keith Moon from The Who. Strangely later Pete Townshend also from The Who purchased the flat.

Further along came Chesterfield Street with more blue plaques showing where 3 famous people lived - Caroline Norton (English Social Reformer), Beau Brummell (the dandy) and Anthony Eden (ex UK Prime Minister). In Charles Street was a lovely English pub called the Footman which notably was previously called 'I am the only running footman' considered the longest pub name in London. Here footman met and apparently had races to see who the fastest runner was in order to run in front of carriages carrying gentry. We also saw many road names preceded by 'Mews' and were told that a Mews was a place that Falcons and other raptors were trained by the gentry.

After passing a nice church in Farm Street called "Church of the Immaculate Conception" and on to Mount Street Gardens we arrived at Berkeley Square near the famous Connaught Hotel. In Berkeley Square we were amongst the old Plane trees and sadly not hearing the nightingale sing we looked across to some charming town houses. Here more blue plaques showed the home of Clive of India, the Clermont and the famous Annabel's club. We were also told stories of ghosts living at number 50 Berkeley Square. We ended our walk in Bruton Street where few of us knew that at number 17, the townhouse owned by the Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne, our late Queen Elizabeth II was actually born.

So ended a super informative walk led by John Colman and our thanks to him. Also thanks to Bob Gattleson for organising this London walk. Unfortunately Bob had to abandon the other walk a few days earlier due to inclement weather. **Keith Rogers.**



ANNABEL'S NIGHTCLUB

News and Features



It is with great sadness that we have to let you know that Lyn Williams has passed away. She was an early member of VCV. A valued member of the Committee for two years, offering her astute observations on how the Committee could serve our lovely membership. She had a great sense of humour and would pass her comments with tact and kindness.

Lyn grew up in Shenley then Borehamwood. She was a social worker for many years, working ultimately as a manager, but prior to this in the Fostering and Adoption Team, where Lynn met her.

Lyn will be much missed by her husband Alan, who cared for her at home during her illness, their daughter Katie and their three grandchildren, of whom she was very proud. Also, by her brother Nigel, sister Gail, who live relatively close by, and her many friends.

In VCV, Lyn was a member of the first book group, Italian, Current Affairs, Wine Appreciation, etc. She was also a member of Bricket Wood Choir.

Her funeral will be at Cathedral Abbey Church in St Albans on 21st December at 1.30 pm.

Lynn Pragnell Fran Smith



Day Trip to Winchester - Brenda and Rob Kember

On a cold and frosty, but sunny, late November morning, 49 intrepid, and cheerful, members met at GWP and set off to Winchester. The journey was uneventful, and we were not delayed for too long at the usual hold ups on the M25. On arrival, we disembarked the coach at the end of Winchester High Street and headed for the usual comfort breaks.

There were two routes to the Cathedral open to VCV's travellers, one went along the decorated High Street, full of many shops and eateries, the other led members through the older part of town and into the Christmas Market, in the Cathedral's Inner Close and beyond. Temptation was put on hold for many who chose that route as we headed to the refectory for a coffee and loo break.

At noon, we were booked in for our tour of the Cathedral. Members were quickly, and quietly divided into three groups by the friendly tour guides. Our guide, Jeanie, took us into the nave where we sat down for her welcome and introduction, followed by an extensive tour that lasted more than an hour – we didn't notice the passing of time.

There was much to learn about the history of the Cathedral, (which has similarities with the building of our own Abbey). The first building dates back to 636CE when King Cenwalh built the first wooden church (the Old Minster) which soon became a Cathedral with the installation of a bishop's throne. King Alfred and King Cnut were buried there. Alfred began building a new church (the New Minister) on the present site. The original building was completed in 901

The patron saint of the church is St Swithun, - a former bishop- – but not because of the adage of rainy days- but for his divine healing powers.

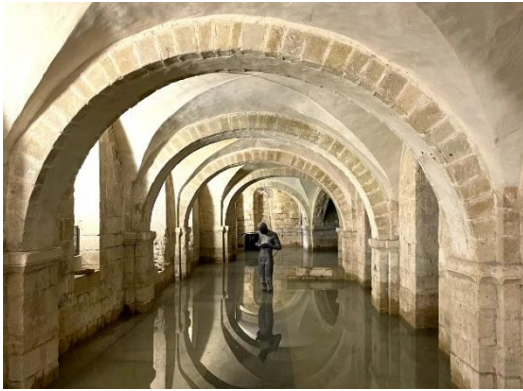
During the tour, Jeanie gave us just enough information about the building of the Cathedral; the dates, architecture, techniques, building materials, and royal influences, to keep us interested and on track.



Continued/....

News and Features

Day Trip to Winchester - Brenda and Rob Kember continued ...



A trip down into part of the flooded crypt was especially interesting, as in the centre was a statue donated by Anthony Gormely called "Reflection". It was very atmospheric and calming. It also showed how vulnerable the foundations of the Cathedral are to flooding damage.

Later, we were shown another statue of note, that of the "saviour" of the Cathedral, William Walker. It was in the 12th C extension to the Cathedral, behind the choir and presbytery, William was a deep-sea diver who conducted extensive



repairs on the Cathedral foundations, using just his hands, to stop it from sinking into the ground and disappearing forever. He had to descend into the filthy water of 235 pits, each about 6m (20ft) deep, to dig out rotten foundations and shore up the walls with concrete.

Diver Bill, as he was known, was recruited in 1905 after large cracks appeared in walls and vaulted ceiling of the Cathedral, putting it in imminent danger of collapse. He worked from 1906 until 1911, spending nearly six hours a day underwater, in darkness, working with his bare hands and entirely by touch. Eventually he propped the Cathedral up with 900,000 bricks, 114,900 concrete blocks and 25,800 bags of cement. Because it took him so long to put on and take off his heavy diving suit, when he stopped for a break, he would just take off his helmet in order to eat his lunch and smoke his pipe.

Following our tour, some members stayed in the Cathedral to enjoy a piano recital in one of the chapels, others continued to Jane Austin's grave marker and heard the explanation as how she became buried in the Cathedral despite not being a citizen of Winchester (of course, it was a family connection to the Cathedral that allowed her this place of honour inside). The inscription on the grave marker includes the words "the extraordinary endowments of her mind obtained the regard of all who knew her". Words that will resonate today with all of her fans.



After the tours, members made for the High Street and/or the extensive Christmas Market where mulled wine, hot chocolate and various sweet items were devoured, and Christmas gifts purchased with enthusiasm.

Everyone was back on board at four p.m., and we headed for home to Gary's (our driver) choice of Christmas music – not heard by many who were fast asleep.

Thank you, Barbara, for organising such an enjoyable day out.

The link below will tell you much more <https://www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/>

Walking Group 3 on a Rainy walk - Wendy (McLean)

On 14th November seven hardy walkers (and Toby, the dog) met at Flamstead to undertake the second stage of the Ver Valley walk.

Starting out across fields and along footpaths we circumnavigated the village with the church steeple often in sight. On passing back through the village, despite inclement weather, the group chose to continue. We descended through the woods and crossed the Ver before following the old Roman road to Markyate and returning on the other side of the valley. We were rewarded with magnificent views. After a hearty lunch at The Harvester, we emerged into the sunshine! Thank you, Bronwyn and John for organising an enjoyable walk.





Please save your used Christmas Stamps Every one of them is valuable and helps me to help the RNIB raise funds for this amazing organisation, who offer support, help and the tools needed by blind and partially sighted people. Everyday 250 people begin to lose their sight. The RNIB has a crucial role to play in creating a world where there are no barriers to people with sight loss.

PLEASE continue to bring me your used stamps, if I am not at the meetings, please hand them to Jill or Nick on the committee. **Mary Gotts**



Christmas Quiz – Traditions around the world

1. In which country is the giant straw goat known as the Gavle Goat erected annually; [a] Norway, [b] Finland, [c] Sweden or [d] Iceland?
2. Which fish is often eaten for a Christmas Eve meal across Central Europe; [a] Perch, [b] Carp, [c] Pike or [d] Sturgeon?
3. Who was the first US President to put a Christmas tree in the White House; [a] George Washington, [b] Abraham Lincoln, [c] John Adams or [d] Franklin Pierce?
4. In which country does Befana the Witch distribute sweets and gifts to children on the eve of January 5th; [a] Spain, [b] Portugal, [c] Greece or [d] Italy?
5. What household item is hidden on Christmas Eve in Norway to prevent witches and evil spirits stealing them; [a] Carving Knives, [b] Brooms, [c] Tablecloths or [d] Spoons?
6. Where in the World would you share an Oplatek, a thin wafer with a nativity scene embossed, before Christmas Eve dinner; [a] Poland, [b] Albania, [c] Australia or [d] Austria?
7. Who do the children in Syria receive their Christmas gifts from; [a] Mother Christmas, [b] A Shepherd, [c] The Wise Men's Camels or [d] Christmas Angel?
8. Where in the World do the children look forward to a Christmas treat of fried caterpillars; [a] South Africa, [b] North Korea, [c] Chile or [d] Samoa?
9. What flower is classed as the Christmas flower in Costa Rica; [a] Carnation, [b] Orchid, [c] Daffodil or [d] Rose?
10. How do children make their way to church on Christmas morning in Caracas, Venezuela; [a] On their father's backs, [b] On Donkeys, [c] On roller skates or [d] On stilts?

Christmas Quiz Answers
 1. Sweden. 2. Carp. 3. Franklin Pierce. 4. Italy. 5. Brooms. 6. Poland. 7. The Wise Men's camels. 8. South Africa. 9. Orchid. 10. On roller skates.

Please print and bring with you to the General Meeting on 14th December .

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

It came upon the midnight clear, that glorious
song of old
From angels bending near the earth to touch
their harps of gold
Peace on the earth, goodwill to men, from
heav'n's all gracious king
The world in solemn stillness lay to hear the
angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come with
peaceful wings unfurl
And still their heavenly music floats, O'er all
the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains they bend on
hovering wing
And ever o'er its Babel sounds the blessed
angels sing.



The Virgin Mary had a baby boy

The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
The Virgin Mary had a baby boy,
And they say that His name was Jesus.
He come from the glory,
He come from the glorious kingdom.
He come from the glory,
He come from the glorious kingdom.
Oh yes, believer! Oh yes, believer!
He come from the glory,
He come from the glorious kingdom.

The angels sang when the baby born,
The angels sang when the baby born,
The angels sang when the baby born,
And proclaimed Him the Saviour Jesus.
He come from the glory,
He come from the glorious kingdom.
He come from the glory,
He come from the glorious kingdom.
Oh yes, believer! Oh yes, believer!
He come from the glory,
He come from the glorious kingdom.

The First Noel

The First Noel the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in
fields as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their sheep
On a cold winter's night that was so deep
Noel Noel Noel Noel, Born is the King of Israel!

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the East beyond them far
And to the earth it gave great light
And so it continued both day and night
Noel Noel Noel Noel, Born is the King of Israel!

And by the light of that same star
Three Wise men came from country far
To seek for a King was their intent
And to follow the star wherever it went
Noel Noel Noel Noel, Born is the King of Israel!

This star drew nigh to the northwest
O'er Bethlehem it took its rest
And there it did both Pause and stay
Right o'er the place where Jesus lay
Noel Noel Noel Noel, Born is the King of Israel!

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our heavenly Lord
That hath made Heaven and earth of nought
And with his blood mankind hath bought
Noel Noel Noel Noel,,Born is the King of Israel!



We Wish You a Merry Christmas

We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We Wish You a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year.
Good tidings we bring to you and
your kin
We wish you a Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year