

*The independent journal for Buntingford & Villages
published by Buntingford Civic Society*

Buntingford Journal



**Snowdrops carpet our churchyards at this time of year,
heralding Spring to come.**

***Inside this month:* The refurbishment of Buntingford Library;
the Centenary Service of the Royal British Legion Buntingford Branch;
our Town Council and local churches combine to provide 'warm spaces';
and the last call for *Calendar Girls* – tickets selling fast!**

70p

**February 2023
Volume 48, No.1**



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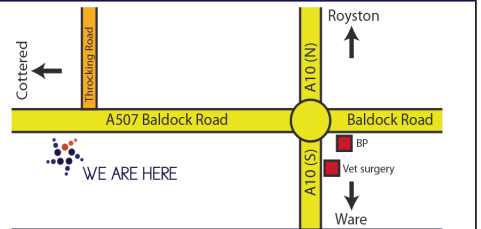
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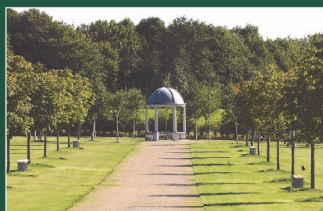
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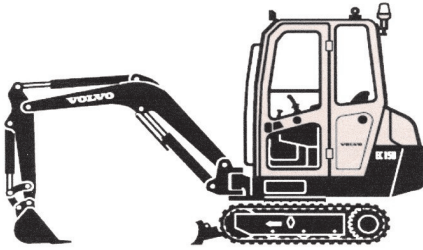


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membership@buntingfordcivic.org.uk

EDITOR'S LETTER

As it's only a few days past mid-January, I don't think it's too late to wish you all a very **Happy New Year!** Mine hasn't started too well to be honest. As a few of you will know, I had to say goodbye to my old friend Toby and it's going to take me a while to get over it. Here's a photo of him in his prime, before the wear and tear of life took its toll. Rest in peace, my beautiful boy!



Toby used to take me far and wide on long walks, often taking in local churchyards which at this time of year are carpeted with snowdrops. These and other seasonal flowers are the subject of the Hundred Parishes Society this month (page 15) and they also supplied the cover photo of the snowdrops in Takeley churchyard. Yes, I would rather have used a more local photo but I didn't have anything nearly as nice, and it looks a bit like St Mary's in Aspenden, don't you think? I guess it's similarities like this across the Hundred Parishes area that inspired the formation of the Society.

You will no doubt have noticed that the Library is closed for refurbishment and we have news on this on page 7. Also, work on the first phase of remedial work on the Rib is now complete (page 6), although the 'berms' are still to be planted up when the weather warms up. One thing certain to warm everyone up is the coming production of *Calendar Girls* from the Dramatic Society. If you still need a ticket, you had better get in quick!

We have a trio of short stories this month, thanks to Buntingford Writers' Group. Although I wouldn't normally feature so many in one issue, they are all very different and I hope you enjoy them. The Town Council, St Peter's and URC churches between them are starting a 'warm spaces' initiative for residents who may be struggling with the cold – see page 16. If you're more concerned about the state of our roads, Jeff Jones explains how pot holes form and how to report them for repair.

A milestone coming up this month is the centenary of the Buntingford Branch of the Royal British Legion, which will be marked by a special service at St Peter's, and Buntingford also sees the launch of an AFVBC Breakfast Club at the Fox & Duck (both on page 12).

Christine Noble

**Editorial copy deadline for the March 2023 Journal
is Saturday 14th February 2023**

Editorial submissions: Christine Noble – 01763 273095
68 Hare Street Road, Buntingford SG9 9HN
email: Journal@buntingfordcivic.org.uk

Advertising enquiries: Keith Edwards – 01763 272032
email: Advertising@buntingfordcivic.org.uk

**The views expressed in the letters, emails and articles in the
Buntingford Journal are not necessarily those of the editor.**



Church Street One-way System

Despite previous awareness-raising activities about the Church Street One-way System in Buntingford, including a message on our OWL message system, some drivers continue

to make illegal turns in Church Street. Even worse, some drive the full length of the road against the no-entry and one-way signs, often claiming that they “didn’t know” despite living in the town for many years!

To be clear, Church Street in Buntingford is a one-way street. Turning or reversing out of the street is a failure to comply with section 35 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and Rule 143 of the Highway Code which states: “One-way streets. Traffic MUST travel in the direction indicated by signs”. Failing to comply with Section 35 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 can result in prosecution.

Buntingford Senior Citizens’ Club

Our Senior Citizens’ Club would like welcome you to a New Year and look forward to seeing you for a another eventful and enjoyable year.

We meet every Monday afternoon (except Bank holidays) at the URC Hall in Baldock Road for Bingo, tea/coffee and chat at 1.30 for 2pm.

We are beginning to think about where we would like to visit and events we would like to do this year. Do come and join us, we are a friendly bunch of ladies and gents of “mature years” who enjoy life and want you to join us.

For more info, please contact Val on 01763 272019.

Advance Notice is hereby given that the

Buntingford Civic Society

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

will be held on **Tuesday 25th April 2023**
at the Seth Ward Community Centre, Luynes Rise

Further details (of guest speaker etc.) to follow

The Buntingford Journal is delivered FREE to members of the Buntingford Civic Society, or it can be purchased from:

THE CO-OP • LOCKS, STOCK & MORE • MARK DOEL BUTCHERS
McCOLL’S • KIM on the CARD STALL on Buntingford Market



Buntingford Civic Society

(Reg. Charity No. 1014873)

www.buntingfordcivic.org.uk

Member of



A very Happy New Year to all Journal readers!

Well where did 2022 go? It started with such optimism, with Covid seemingly on the back foot, but it descended into another year of attrition. The mad Russian started a war in Ukraine leaving the legacy of a cost of living crisis which will be with us for some time. Countless strikes by essential public services are making life difficult for everyone. Let us just hope that 2023 can perhaps, eventually, be a little kinder to us all.

The work being carried out on the River Rib is starting to show progress. The stretch of the river from the Ford to the Tannery has seen a number of overhanging trees removed or cut back in order to allow more light and rainwater to get to the river. The removed branches have been used to create 'berms' in the river bed, which will help improve the flow of the river. The newly constructed berms will be planted up this Spring to stabilise them and further enhance the biodiversity of the river.

Work continues on the Active Travel Fund scheme along London Road. The scheme is certainly causing comment within the Town – mostly negative. Perhaps we should not pass judgement until it is completed.

Warm Space is an initiative being jointly hosted by Buntingford Town Council, St Peter's Church and the United Reformed Church. On different days one of the three venues will be open to the public and will offer a warm environment with teas and coffees and TV and Wi-Fi provided. It is hoped that this will give the most vulnerable somewhere warm and welcoming where they will not have to worry about heating bills. (There's more detail on this in the Town Council article on page 16.)

Planning is underway to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III. On Sunday 7th May the Seth Ward Community Centre playing fields will host an event very similar to that which was held last year to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of the late Queen Elizabeth II. Live bands, kiddies' fairground rides, face painting, lazer light show, bar and food outlets will be the highlights. Put the date in your diaries!

The Civic Society AGM will be held this year on 25th April (notice opposite). Further details to follow.

Graham Bonner, BCS Chairman /
graham_bonner123@yahoo.co.uk



Buntingford Civic Society was established in 1971 with the aim of improving the fabric of the Town. **Annual household membership is just £10** and includes delivery of the Buntingford Journal (10 issues a year) to your door. If you would like to join the Civic Society, you can download an application form from the BCS website or email the Membership Secretary, Peter Hay, at membership@buntingfordcivic.org.uk

Bringing Buntingford's Rib Back to Life

It's happened at last! The first stage of the river improvement has now been completed. In June 2019 the Town Council embarked on a project to improve the River Rib through the town. This was mainly to improve the rivers flow at low water levels and benefit the wildlife habitat. It would also make the river a more pleasant aspect for residents.

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) became involved and drew up a draft plan in 2019. Then Covid struck and everything stopped. In October 2020 the Town Council agreed to fund a detailed survey of the river by a company recognized by the Environment Agency (EA). Without the Council's financial commitment to the project at this stage nothing more would have happened. Once the plan was produced there followed lengthy detailed discussions with the EA which, because of their expertise, was led by HMWT. A flood risk activity permit was received from the EA in 2022 with other departments within the EA providing the necessary funding.

So the first stage is complete. This entailed dredging 40 years of built-up silt from the river bed and reducing the tree overhang, from the ford down the length of Layston Court Gardens to allow more light to reach the river. Then the felled timber was used to build berms that alter the water flow, helping to keep the bed clean in the future.

The second stage will take place in spring this year. This entails planting up the berms with plants native to chalk streams, such as water crowfoot, starwort, reed sweet-grass and water speedwell. Once everything settles down, more work may be possible in the future depending on obtaining the necessary funding. The steering group are due to meet in January to discuss future work.

I would like to thank Buntingford Town Council for the original funding and their ongoing support. Also HMWT for all their support and expertise, and the 'know how' needed to raise funds for the work. Thanks must also go the steering group members: Sarah Perry, Graham Waite, Derrick Guy and David Edwards.

Brian Lemay / brianlemay@btinternet.com



Refurbishment of Buntingford Library

Last month saw the temporary closure of Buntingford Library, ahead of its long-awaited refurbishment. Building work has now begun and is progressing smoothly, and we hope to bring you updates as often as possible. The library will reopen again in early April, date to be confirmed as the work progresses.

The refurbishment includes a number of significant improvements:

- New shopfront and entrance area to improve accessibility
- Upgraded ventilation and heating
- Upgraded lighting
- Complete redecoration of the public area
- New flooring and carpets
- Improvements to the meeting room including heating and redecoration
- New shelving and furniture throughout the public area



An artist's impression of how the refurbished Library will look through the new shopfront window on the High Street.

If you need to return books while Buntingford Library is closed, you can either return them at any Hertfordshire Library or you can leave them at our drop-off point at the Manor House. If you borrowed your books from mid-December, your loan period will have been extended and you can hold onto them until 18th April. Please check your receipt or the front of the book to find the due date.

We are so looking forward to welcoming you back in April and hope that these improvements will enhance your experience of the library and showcase the wide range of services we provide. We are planning a full calendar of both regular and one-off events, with new and exciting things for the whole community to try. In the meantime, you can contact us via the Herts County Council website or via Facebook.

Chloe Russell, Buntingford Library Manager

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BUNTINGFORD



What is Lent about?

This month sees the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday, 22nd February, the period of 40 days leading up to Easter, though the 40 days doesn't include Sundays! The word Lent comes from the old English word 'to lengthen' when, during Spring, the daylight hours are getting longer. For Christians, Lent is a time of prayer and fasting, preparing oneself for Holy Week, the final week of Lent. In our churches, we will be holding services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Day as we journey with Jesus through the final days of his earthly ministry leading to his death and then celebrating with great joy in his resurrection.

Shrove Tuesday, which this year falls on 21st February, is the day of preparation for fasting, a time to clear the cupboards of rich foods, hence why we also call this Pancake Day. Butter, eggs, flour and milk are used up to make delicious pancakes, to be laced with sugar, syrup, lemon, chocolate and all manner of scrummy toppings. I will certainly be making pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and also considering what else needs clearing out of my own internal cupboards. Fasting from food, as practised by many religions, reminds us of how our physical, emotional and spiritual lives are intrinsically joined. When we compartmentalise these important elements into separate siloes in our lives, we become poorer versions of ourselves, living a half-life as a shadow of our former selves.

Serious fasting should never be undertaken without a robust understanding of our physical needs, but many people choose to give up a luxury, like chocolate, sugar, alcohol, or meat. However, 'doing without' could be something very different, another form of clearing something out that will be good to have a break from. Some people take a break from social media, or curtail their smartphone usage, particularly time spent on the internet. It could be a period of resisting our habits of despair and moaning. Maybe this Lent, consider what daily practice you might want to adopt or a habit you choose to let go of. Whatever you do, be realistic and sensible. Finding yourself failing because you set the target too high will only lead to terrible disappointment. It's 40 days, but remember, we live in the present moment: we can only do one day at a time.

Kirsty Wainwright

ST RICHARD OF CHICHESTER Catholic Church

3 Station Road, Buntingford. Telephone 01763 271471

Parish Priest: Reverend Father Cyril Chiaha

VIGIL MASS for Sundays is at 6pm every Saturday

SUNDAY MASS is at 9.15am and 11am every Sunday

WEEKDAY MASS TIMES, SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMMES

& OTHER PARISH NEWS are available on the parish website:

<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/buntingford/>

All Masses will take place at St Richard of Chichester in Buntingford until the works on the parish church of St Edmund of Canterbury & English Martyrs, Old Hall Green, and St Thomas of Canterbury, Puckeridge, have been completed.





The
United
Reformed
Church

Christ Church

Baldock Road, Buntingford SG9 9AA

Minister: Rev. Sue Fender
revsuefender@gmail.com
Tel: 01223 375 588

Secretary: Peter Godbert
buntingford.urc@talktalk.net
Tel: 01763 281359

Services at 11am / Junior Church in the Hall at 11am

February	5	Holy Communion	Rev Sue Fender
	12	Morning Worship	Faith Paulding
	19	Morning Worship	Rev Allen Morton
	26	Morning Worship	Rev Elizabeth Caswell
March	5	Holy Communion	Rev Sue Fender

BOOKING THE CHURCH HALL

There are a few slots available for either a regular booking or for occasional use.
Contact Tracey Palin on 01763 271749 for further details.

BUNTINGFORD CHURCHES TOGETHER Lent Courses - Prayers of Jesus

Lent Group (1) will be a **daytime** event, based on the prayers of Jesus, at Christ Church URC on **Wednesdays** from **22nd February** for 6 weeks. The course material will be provided. Come along at 12.15pm – *please bring your own lunch*, hot drinks will be provided. Study will begin at 12.45pm and finish at 1.45pm. All are welcome, no booking is required, just turn up.

Lent Group (2) will be an **evening** event, 7.30-9.00pm, at The Vicarage, Vicarage Road, Buntingford, on **Thursdays** starting on **16th February**. If you are interested in coming to these evening sessions, please email Kirsty at vicarabw@gmail.com as places will be limited.

REGULAR EVENTS

Morning Prayers, every Tuesday and Thursday at St Peters
9.00 to 9.30am – all are welcome

'Lunch, Laughter & Light'

Our topical discussion group meets on the first Wednesday of each month in the URC Hall. Lunch 12.30pm (*bring your own lunch*, tea & coffee provided).
Discussion 1 to 2pm.

Coffee and Company

Meets every Thursday, 10.30am to 12.30pm, in the Hall. If you're elderly, or living alone, new to the area, perhaps working from home, and would like some company, come along to share Coffee, Cake, Company and Chat.

All are welcome – just turn up and give a small donation for refreshments.

Website: www.buntingfordurc.org.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/URCBuntingford



United Benefice of
Aspenden, Buntingford
and Westmill

United Benefice of Aspenden, Buntingford & Westmill

Reverend Kirsty Wainwright

Website: unitedbenefice.org.uk

Email: admin@unitedbenefice.org.uk

Telephone: 01763 271552 or 07484 345027

Postal address: C/O St Peter's Church, Chapel End, Buntingford SG9 9AL

Our Services for February 2023

Sun 5 th	9.30am	Morning Worship	St Mary the Virgin, Westmill
	9.30am	Morning Worship	St Mary's, Aspenden
	11.00am	Holy Communion	St Peter's, Buntingford
Sun 12 th	9.30am	Sung Eucharist	St Mary the Virgin, Westmill
	9.30am	All Age Worship	St Mary's, Aspenden
	11.00am	All Age Worship	St Peter's, Buntingford
Sun 19 th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Mary's, Aspenden
	11.00am	Holy Communion	St Peter's, Buntingford
Wed 22 nd	10.00am	Ash Wednesday	St Peter's, Buntingford
	7.00pm	Ash Wednesday	St Mary the Virgin, Westmill
Sun 26 th	9.30am	Sung Eucharist	St Mary the Virgin, Westmill
	11.00am	Morning Worship	St Peter's, Buntingford



Lent Courses
Prayers of Jesus

For details of the
Lent Courses for 2023,
see Christ Church
notices on page 9.

For further
information
please contact
our Benefice
office, details
above.

LENTEN REFLECTIONS 2023

Every Tuesday evening in Lent, 7.30 for 8pm start – 28th February to 4th April

At The Stables, 57 Wyddial Road, Buntingford, Herts SG9 9AX – 01763 271 459

(Access via the small door on the left near the top of Church Street, or via the main entrance on Wyddial Road, beyond the Fox & Duck Pub just past Flint Cottage.)

What are the Laws we must obey?

After a break of 3 years, Rosey and David Woolcombe are pleased to welcome you back to their home for the 6th series of Lenten Reflections. Designed for people of all faiths and of none, this series seeks to explore the Values which dictate the choices we make and determine the standards by which we live, which influence the decisions we take about our careers, our leisure, our relationships, the food we eat, and how we express our faith. The first two sessions are:

28th February – ‘Christian & Community Values’ – led by Revd. Kirsty Wainwright, the new Priest in charge of Buntingford, Aspenden and Westmill

7th March – ‘Jesus, the Ultimate Yogi’ – How death and rebirth are central to yoga, psychotherapy and the story of Lent – with Jessica Drake, psychotherapist, author & yoga teacher.

We hope you want to come and join the discussion and look forward to seeing you on the 28th.

GATHER THE GANG AND GET COMPETITIVE!

QUIZ NIGHT

Form a group of up to 8 people per team and get ready to battle it out.



SATURDAY 4TH MARCH



Door open at 6:30pm
7:00pm prompt start



St Peter's Church, Buntingford



Tickets £10 per person
Includes supper



Drinks available for donations or bring your own



To reserve your ticket or team please email:

unitedbeneficeabw@gmail.com or phone 07484345027

**Buntingford
Community
Choir**



After a short Christmas break, we are now back and singing on Monday evenings at Millfield School in Monks Walk. We begin at 7.30 and finish around 9.30pm.

We are always looking for new members. There are no auditions, and you don't need to be able to read music to join the Choir. Anyone over 16, with or without any singing experience, will be made welcome. Our subscription rate is still only £4 per week. If you are interested in joining the Choir, or would like to come for a free trial evening, please contact us via email at:

info@buntingfordchoir.co.uk

Or for more information go to our website: **www.buntingfordchoir.co.uk**



**Buntingford Branch
Royal British Legion
CENTENARY SERVICE
Saturday 4th February 2023
10.45am at St Peter's
Church in Buntingford**

Buntingford's Branch of the Royal British Legion was formed on 8th February 1923 to care for servicemen and their families in the wake of the Great War. To mark this milestone, you are warmly invited to join me, the current Branch Chairman, along with members of the Branch for a commemorative Centenary Service in St Peter's Church.

The service is an opportunity to thank all those who have kept the Branch going for 100 years and to show our continued commitment to the Armed Forces Community in Buntingford and its surrounding villages. At the conclusion of the service, light refreshments will be available in the Buntingford Town Council's Manor House for all attending, and I hope you will be able to stay to enjoy them.

I very much look forward to welcoming you to what should be a fitting celebration of the Legion's work locally. To get some idea of numbers, I would be grateful if you could let me know by 27th January if you will be attending.

Andrew Huggins, BA Hons

Buntingford Branch Secretary, Royal British Legion

Tel: 07495 388 819 / Email: Buntingford.MemSecretary@RBL.Community



Outside my role with the British Legion, I have arranged to launch an Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Club (AFVBC) here in Buntingford.

The initial event will be held from 12noon on [Sunday 19th February](#) at the Fox & Duck in Church Street.

Thereafter the club will meet quarterly on the 3rd Sunday of the month in May, August, November, then again in February. The club is free to join, but attendees are asked to buy their own breakfast.

Could anyone wishing to attend please give me a call on 07495 388 819 so I can have an idea of the numbers. The purpose of the club is to provide a social space for those who have served or are still serving in the forces to get together, swap stories, support one another and enjoy a bit of military banter.

Andrew Huggins / Tel: 07495 388 819

Patient Participation Group

Buntingford and Puckeridge Medical Practice

There are currently 19,969 patients registered with the practice and in the 4 weeks to 27th November there were 9812 face-to-face appointments carried out, 5797 of which were same day appointments. A further 3088 telephone consultations were held and a total of 10,164 telephone calls were managed by the Reception Teams. On average, that equates to 490 face-to-face appointments, 150 telephone consultations and over 500 telephone calls to the practice *each working day*. To say that the practice is very, very busy and working under huge pressure is to put it mildly.

Much of the current demand is due to seasonal issues which have been compounded by media-generated anxiety regarding issues such as Strep A in children. This pressure is being experienced by most GP practices, as well as in A&E departments across the country. Please be assured that staff are working their socks off to manage and respond to patients. Please be patient if you are held on the phone – the team will get to you. The practice has been fortunate to have been able to continue recruiting new, additional staff – doctors, admin and nursing staff, with more to come.

Having said all that, the question of appointment availability and access was discussed at some length in the group. Local social media platforms have carried a few disgruntled comments but, overall, the public mood is positive, albeit somewhat frustrated at the length of time that some calls are taking to answer. Perhaps, with greater understanding of the volume of calls being dealt with, which is published in the monthly Newsletter, patients will understand the impact on the waiting time for calls to be answered. Patients can assist by calling after 11am to discuss routine and non-urgent appointments. Also, could the pharmacist help? They are available to give professional advice on a wide range of issues. From early February the new telephony system should be in place which will inform patients of their position in the telephone queue.

The practice would like to thank everyone who has signed up to order their medication electronically. They have been pleasantly surprised by the numbers now using this method of reordering prescriptions. It really helps to streamline the system and avoids the risk of paper requests going astray. If you have any concerns about signing up and getting started, please contact the surgery who have a team member available to assist with the set-up.

Annual chronic disease and long-term conditions management is on track and has been maintained alongside the volume of acute needs. The latest newsletter is now available on the practice website. During 2023 we hope to issue a more concise monthly and focussed newsletter. Please ensure that the practice has an up-to-date mobile number and consent for SMS so that you receive an alert about publication.

Finally, except for some snagging and external landscaping, the Puckeridge building works are complete. The site is now fully open and functional and it is good to have the physiotherapist back on site, along with a mental health practitioner. Discussions regarding the Buntingford site are ongoing and the practice are considering a number of development options.

Thank you, again, for your patience and understanding. Everyone is doing their very best to provide a top-class service in challenging times and the practice is grateful to everyone for their consideration and support at this very busy time.

Jenny Dingley, PPG Member

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE PPG, PLEASE CONTACT THE SURGERY

Birthday Bash – A Short Story

The plan was for a change of scene and a lovely lunch to commemorate another year of me being on this Earth. We arrived in Letchworth by bus, but do not confuse me with someone who is trying to reduce their carbon footprint and save the planet, because what we really wanted was to have several glasses of wine, hence the car was spared for the day. The problem with living in Buntingford and trying to navigate to almost any other town within the county, without a car you need a lot of time and patience. With our celebratory lunch finished, we had nearly two hours to kill before our return bus was due.

Letchworth to us country folk in the east is like a metropolis, with shops aplenty, many pubs, a cinema and best of all a really good bookshop. So it was to David's we headed, where for nearly half an hour we perused all those titles that we know one day we really ought to read. Eventually my wife chose to wait outside on a bench while I gawped at the two shelves of Bob Dylan books. Having had to put up with his music bravely for the last 50 years, she balked at the thought of further written words on my musical hero.

When I tore myself away from the array of Dylan biographers, I left the shop to find her caught up in a minor skirmish. She had been sitting on the bench when a large delivery lorry pulled up at the kerb behind her. In doing so his vehicle collided with several large branches on a tree above her head. The loud crack alerted her and summoned the thought that at some future date these would fall onto either pedestrians or vehicles in the vicinity. At this time on the wide pavement outside the adjoining café, two women with their babies were taking tea. With the arrival of this lorry they must have thought like Chicken Little that the sky was about to fall in.

My wife was booting up her phone, intent on photographing the lorry and the potential damage it had caused. Meanwhile the driver was in the process of lowering the tailgate in order to extricate the load he had to deliver. On noticing the possible use of a camera, he demanded to know whether his vehicle was being photographed and why. In answering, she accused him of totally reckless and inconsiderate driving, at the same time damaging a tree that had previously done him no harm at all. Not having witnessed the incident, only arriving after the event, I was loath to add to the driver's problems – he had already encountered my wife! So with the necessary look of detached concern I watched as he busied himself about his delivery. His snarling look towards my environmentally concerned partner and the other passers-by was only matched by the buttock cleavage he revealed as he went about his task.

She circled around his vehicle, snapping away at all angles and trying to assess the damage inflicted upon the tree. At one point the driver stopped his unloading activity and approached her. "Have you been shopping today?" he asked, then without waiting for her response followed up with, "How do you think all the goods get to these shops? They'd be empty if it wasn't for us." Always one to be precise, my wife answered, "No, we haven't actually." She omitted to add that we were in fact on our way to the florist next. As the driver carried on taking products into the shop, we decided that our departure from the scene might be the better option. So, to the florist we headed, where the young lady there was regaled with our story of the unfortunate tree. From her we were able to ascertain the whereabouts of the local council offices. By this point my wife was on a mission to bring this driver to justice and was intent on reporting the incident.

The rather swanky and modern office block that houses North Hertfordshire Council doesn't look like it belongs in the county, let alone in quaint old Letchworth. The automatic double doors opened as we approached and with a swish they closed behind us. Another set of doors resisted our efforts to go any further and there emblazoned on the glass were the instructions for trying to see anybody. We were directed to a telephone which sat on a

shelf and a notice promised that someone would be on the other end to deal with our enquiry, provided of course that it couldn't be handled through their website.

We were encapsulated in this bubble between two sets of glass doors, surrounded by typical council posters. With every bodily movement the sensors on the outer doors would cause them to swish open again. I was left to reflect on the impersonal way that the people of this area were treated by their council. Were they still hiding from Covid, or was it their way of avoiding their citizens? Meanwhile my wife was on the telephone running through her story with a council employee. This person, presumably sited somewhere within the building, didn't even know the location of the bookshop where the incident took place, less than 500 metres away. Eventually her story got told; she was given some names of those likely to be responsible and asked to forward a report by email with photographs. With the satisfaction that she had at least done everything possible, we returned home on our bus, pessimistically expecting that we would hear no more of it.

The following day to our surprise she received an email from a council employee who had been to see the damaged tree. A report had been filed and a letter sent to the company whose name was on the side of the lorry. We were told that this firm would be pursued for the costs involved in making the tree safe, while the driver would be questioned and probably disciplined for the incident. Although for the time being I might not recommend sitting on the pavement tables outside David's Bookshop café (unless you wear a hard hat!), I would recommend taking a look at Letchworth, Britain's first garden city.

'Meadonian', Buntingford Writers' Group



The Hundred Parishes Society

www.hundredparishes.org.uk

Flowering snowdrops are a welcome sight at this time of year. Although not native to this country, from the 16th century they were planted in churchyards and as their seeds are dispersed by ants they became naturalised in



suitable locations. Snowdrops carpet parts of Hatfield Forest and the gardens of Audley End and Easton Lodge where visitors can admire them, and they feature in most old churchyards around the Hundred Parishes, including at St Bartholomew's (Layston Church) in Buntingford and St Mary's in Aspenden. Several snowdrop walks are recommended on the 100 Parishes website, or take a stroll to your local churchyard.

Bright yellow aconites soon follow, then as the days lengthen come other spring flowers – pale primroses, lesser celandines and sweet violets, all producing pollen and nectar, vital food for early-foraging honeybees, queen bumblebees and other insects. Surveys of churchyards indicate they can be havens for wildflowers, supporting species now rare in the wider countryside. The Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland organises a wildflower hunt to record what is in flower at the start of the year. The aim is to record how flowers are responding to a warming climate. Enthusiasts search their local area, but the number of species they recorded in the Hundred Parishes this year was reduced, almost certainly due to the wintry weather experienced in December.

Tricia Moxey, Trustee



BUNTINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL

A QUALITY TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council has joined forces with St Peter's Church and the United Reformed Church to help provide warm spaces for residents throughout the rest of the winter months. The sessions will be held at St Peter's on Mondays and Wednesdays, the URC on Thursdays, and the Manor House on Tuesdays. Please feel free to call in at any time between 9.30am and 2.30pm and help yourself to free tea, coffee and snacks. Wifi and TV will be available at the Manor House.

Planning permission has now been granted for the proposed pump track at Norfolk Road Playing Field. Following a dedicated meeting of the Council to reaffirm the Council's commitment, our contractor is hoping to commence work in early March. The work should take six to eight weeks to complete. Prior to this the Council has approved a programme of tree surgery at Norfolk Road Playing Field which involves the felling of one tree that was identified in a recent tree survey of the whole area. This work will take place in late February and is not connected with work to the pump track.

The play area in Hare Street Road park is almost finished now, funded partly from S106 developer contributions and partly from Town Council reserves. The final part of the scheme is to install a large climbing boulder; this is being worked on and will hopefully be in place shortly.

If your organisation would like to apply for grant funding from the Town Council the application form can be downloaded from our website.

Jill Jones, Town Clerk

In line with GDPR Regulations, the Town Council has published a number of Privacy Notices. These can be viewed on the Town Council website.

Office hours: Monday–Thursday 9am–5pm; closed Friday
The Manor House, High Street, Buntingford SG9 9AB
Tel: 01763 272222 Email: clerk@buntingford-tc.gov.uk
Twitter: [@buntingfordtc](https://twitter.com/buntingfordtc) Facebook.com/BuntingfordTC
Website: www.buntingford-tc.gov.uk

Town Council meetings for February 2023

Thurs 2 nd Feb	7:00pm – Amenities Committee
Thurs 9 th Feb	7:00pm – Planning Committee 7:30pm – Resources Committee
Thurs 23 rd Feb	7:00pm – Planning Committee 7:30pm – Full Council meeting

All meetings to be held in the Council Chamber at The Manor House.
Members of the public are welcome to attend.

News from Your District and County Councillor

Council Budgets 2023/24

My focus at the start of this year has been working at council on setting the budgets for the forthcoming financial years at both County and District Council. I am pleased to see that a balanced budget will be presented without a reduction in front-line services.



Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)

The proposed budget continues to invest in the council's Corporate Plan priorities while maintaining the services we all use and providing support to the people who need it most. Like councils across the country, Hertfordshire CC continues to face huge financial challenges due to soaring rates of inflation and high demand for services. Overall, HCC will spend over £1 billion next year delivering essential services for residents. As a result, the council has had to make some difficult decisions in order to be able to propose a balanced budget for the new financial year, which begins on 1st April 2023.

In order to deliver a balanced budget in 2023/24, HCC will be making savings of £27.4 million – the highest level of savings since 2017 – and only a small proportion of these savings (£2.9m) will impact on service provision or partners. These savings are in addition to those already made in the autumn to ensure a balanced budget for the remainder of the current financial year.

However, these savings alone are not enough. To protect frontline services HCC is also proposing to raise council tax by 4.99% (this includes 2% specifically for social care). This means a typical Band D household will be paying £1,605.63, an increase of £1.47 per week.

The proposed budget reflects the commitments made in the council's Corporate Plan to deliver a cleaner, greener and healthier Hertfordshire, including:

- £38m to ensure adult care providers can continue to support residents – including a 9.68% wage increase for care staff to help with recruitment and retention, matching the increase in the national living wage and continuing to ensure that Hertfordshire care wages are well above both the national and real living wages (supported by the social care precept).
- £15m is expected from the extension of the Household Support Fund to support our most vulnerable residents with the cost of living.
- An extra £19m for Children's Services, including an extra £5.2m to support the children in our care.
- £10m for home-to-school transport for children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities to ensure they can get to school easily.
- £6.4m to support waste disposal services, alongside new contracts that will mean that no waste in the county will go to landfill from 2024.
- £4.6m of extra funding into highways revenue budgets to cover inflation and ensure we can continue repairs and maintenance work on our roads.

HCC is also investing in projects that will ensure future savings. This investment will go into a number of projects that will help residents remain independent for longer, keep families together through early intervention schemes and save taxpayers' money by transforming partnership working.

By the time you read this, these proposed budget plans will have been considered by the Council's Cabinet at its meeting on Monday 16th January.

Pot holes – your help is needed!

The recent snow and ice, followed by cold and wet weather, has led to a big increase in the number of potholes appearing in our road network. So Hertfordshire County Council is encouraging residents and road users to report any potholes they find. Reports should be made online at www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/highwayfaults so that they can be added to the repair and maintenance programme.

The key cause of potholes is repeated fluctuation in road surface temperature from below to above freezing. In this freeze-and-thaw process, rain water within the road surface expands by almost 10% when frozen, then melts back down as the temperature rises, filling the cracks formed by the expansion with more water, which re-freezes and expands again as the temperature drops, creating more and bigger cracks. The more the freeze-and-thaw process is repeated, the more damage is done to the road surface, with wet weather compounding the problem by washing away the loose surface materials.

The council's highways team aims to make the most significant potholes safe within 24 hours of receiving a report, but most potholes big enough to need rapid attention receive a permanent repair either within 5 days or 20 days, depending on factors like pothole size and how busy the road is. Smaller, less urgent potholes are repaired as part of planned road resurfacing. HCC maintains 3,200 miles of roads and in an average year fixes more than 21,000 potholes, as well as carrying out more than 1,500 maintenance and improvement schemes.

Boundary Review

Following a boundary review due to the growth of our town, changes were recommended to balance out the number of electors represented by each councillor. Buntingford Ward will now include, in addition to Buntingford Town, the villages of Cottered, Throcking, Aspenden, Hormead and Hare Street, as well as Wyddial and Buckland & Chipping. The expanded ward will be served by three councillors, as opposed to the current two. These changes will come into effect at the District Council elections on 4th May 2023.

Walking Football

Buntingford Walking Football are keen to attract new members at our Saturday morning sessions at the MUGA, Norfolk Road Playing Fields. If you are over 50, keen to stay active, and enjoy the 'beautiful game', come along at 10am on Saturday and give it a try. The first session is free, then £3 for future sessions. We have a mixture of abilities and ages, ranging from 50 years to our oldest member of 73. Come and give it a try!

Councillor Advice

I receive many requests for help and advice on District or County Council matters. I now hold monthly Councillor Surgeries for face-to-face meetings. With a Town Councillor present this gives residents the opportunity to discuss any concerns they have in the town. These Surgeries are by appointment by calling the Town Council on 01763 272222. And I am always available by phone or email on the contact details below.

Cllr Jeff Jones

East Herts District and Hertfordshire County Councillor, Buntingford Ward

0300 123 7493 / jeff.jones@hertfordshire.gov.uk

If you would like to advertise in the *Buntingford Journal*, please contact Keith Edwards on 01763 272032 or by email at: Advertising@buntingfordcivic.org.uk

MUDDY MAYHEM in aid of the ISABEL HOSPICE

There will be mud, sweat and cheers along this outdoor obstacle course when it returns on **Sunday 26th March**. Back by popular demand, the family-friendly event is staged on the beautiful private estate of Woodhall at Watton-at-Stone and, with lots of new obstacles, it promises more hills, spills and thrills than ever before!



There's a **5km Adult Muddy Mayhem** course, as well as a **1km Mini Mudder** route for children under 11. **Advance registration** before 25th March is £35 for adults, £25 for 11 to 16-year-olds. To turn up and pay on the day costs £40 and £30 respectively. Youngsters aged 11 to 16 must be accompanied on the Muddy Mayhem course by a paying adult.

Registration for under-11s on the Mini Mudder course is £5 whether paid in advance or on the day. Entry includes a commemorative medal and refreshment at the finish line. On the day, there will also be an 'event village' with a variety of stalls and caterers offering a range of refreshments for sale and more.

The event is run by Isabel Hospice in conjunction with Garden House Hospice Care, and the funds raised will go to help both hospices. Participants of all ages are encouraged to raise as much sponsorship as possible, as every pound helps make a difference to patient care.

Tickets are expected to sell fast, so if you want to make sure of your place why not register today? Then come and experience for yourself the madness of Muddy Mayhem on 26th March. It really is fun – just take a look at the photos! You can register at isabelhospice.org.uk/events/muddy-mayhem-2023, then as Katy O'Sullivan, head of fund-raising, puts it: "Get ready to slip, slide and scramble ...!"



'Nutwood Community Lunch' – Christmas food and festivities for seniors at the Woodman and Pheasant inns



Sister pubs the Woodman Inn, Nuthampstead, and the Pheasant in Great Chishill gave a warm Nutwood welcome to well over 100 seniors who had been nominated by their local communities to enjoy a delicious Christmas lunch 'on the house'.

Nutwood Pubs, who own both the Woodman and the Pheasant, re-started their 'Christmas Community Lunch' tradition after two years' absence due to Covid, and what a bumper re-start it turned out to be! With the help of local friends and neighbours, over 100 deserving seniors were invited to the Pheasant on 19th December or the Woodman on 22nd December for a complimentary Christmas lunch with all the trimmings, served by teams of helpful and happy Nutwood elves.



VIPs in attendance included many familiar faces: the Town Mayor of Buntingford, Duncan Wallace, resplendent with his beaming smile, ceremonial chain and Christmas jumper (above, standing on the left); Jeff Jones, County and District Councillor for Buntingford (centre); plus Buntingford Town Councillors Pat and Mick Furness, along with Buntingford

Town Clerk Jill Jones. There was a free raffle and at the Woodman Nutwood Pubs' very own Martin Prescott led a boisterous '12 Days of Christmas' sing-a-long – despite fears that his singing voice might crack the wine glasses! "Everyone had a really great time, including staff and other customers", said Events Manager Natalie Duncker, adding that "it's heart-warming for us to be able to give something back to the communities that have been so supportive of our pubs through the last few years."

Sincere thanks go to Councillor Jeff Jones and the Buntingford Community Bus for transporting residents from Dixon Place, to the drivers of HertsLynx for providing transport for other guests, and to all local people for their generosity in contributing to the Nutwood Community Lunch fund – the surplus will now be donated to local good causes.

Look out for further Nutwood information and events on www.thewoodman-inn.co.uk and www.pheasantgc.com, on social media and the local press.



Buntingford W.I.

I hope you all managed to go along to the Library during December to see our lovely Christmas arrangement which was beautifully made as usual by our talented craft ladies – in case you missed it, I'm including a photo with this article (right). The next project will be creating something to commemorate King Charles' Coronation, so watch this space!

In December we held our Christmas Celebration in Christ Church. The Church looked beautiful with its new ceiling and it was lovely to see everyone who came. After carols and readings, we all moved into the Church Hall for mince pies and mulled wine. In January we held our traditional New Year Party for members, with a delicious selection of party food, mulled wine and bucks fizz, a table quiz and plenty of chat.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 9th February at the United Reformed Church Hall in Baldock Road (opposite McColls), from 7.15 for 7.30pm start. Our guest speaker is Joy Hall, who has visited us before so we know we're in for a treat. Her subject this time is 'Awesome American National Parks'. We welcome visitors to all our meetings and would love to see you if you are new to Buntingford (and even if you're not!) – just turn up on the night and come to see what Buntingford W.I. is all about. If you would like more information about Buntingford W.I. call Pat on 01763 271305.

Val Hume



BUNTINGFORD FILM CLUB



Saturday 4th February at 7.30pm

TICKET to PARADISE

At the Seth Ward Community Centre,
Luynes Rise, Buntingford SG9 9SG

After our sell-out January screening of the brilliant thriller *Operation Mincemeat*, our February movie is *Ticket to Paradise*, starring Julia Roberts and George Clooney as a bickering divorced couple. It tells the story of their daughter Lily (played by Kaitlin Dever), who takes a trip to Bali after finishing

her Law exams before starting work in a Chicago law firm. There, she falls in love with a drop-dead gorgeous seaweed farmer played by French-born Indonesian actor Maxime Bouttier. When they hear she intends to marry him, Clooney and Roberts are horrified and agree to muzzle their differences in order to stop her making the same mistake that they'd made 25 years earlier – with hilarious consequences.

Clooney and Roberts are great as the embittered exes whose forced reunion just *might* give them a second chance. Their banter will make you chuckle, while the stunning scenery will make you, like their on-screen daughter, want to ditch any city job for life in an Indonesian beach-side paradise. The Indonesian aspects of the film are fascinating as ceremonies and family traditions are lovingly re-created, mostly by first-time actors like Agung Pindha as Lily's father-in-law-to-be.



Written and directed by Ol Parker, who brought us *Mamma Mia 2*, the film was a box office success taking close to \$200m worldwide. It is worth seeing not just for the chemistry between Roberts and Clooney but also for fine performances from the young lovers and from Lucas Bravo as Roberts' toyboy boyfriend, who some will remember as Gabriel, the chef in *Emily in Paris!* If you want to banish those February blues, this feel-good movie provides pure escapism to locations most of us can only dream about! So come and escape to Paradise with us. In the meantime you can check out the trailer at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkP4tVTdsz8>

Book your tickets at: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/buntingfordfilmclub/>
Or you can book them in person at Keith Ian Estate Agents, 42 High Street

COMING UP on 4th March: Mrs Harris goes to Paris

Lesley Manville plays a widowed cleaning lady in 1950s London who falls in love with a Christian Dior dress. The film follows her amazing adventures as she goes to Paris to acquire one of her own! The cast includes Isabelle Huppert and (again!) Lucas Bravo in a scene-stealing role as André, the accountant who befriends her. The film has been chosen as a fund-raiser for the new Buntingford Live initiative which seeks to bring more fun live events to Buntingford through the year and, we hope, another Summer Festival in Layston Court Gardens in 2024. Come and help that dream come true by enjoying Mrs Harris make her dream a reality!

David R. Woolcombe

CALENDAR GIRLS

An (up)date for your diary

Oh my, Oh my, OH MY!
Just rub me down with

baby oil and shower me with glitter! **Have you got your ticket? Have you?** This is no time to mess about or procrastinate. (Isn't that what you take tom cats to the vets for?)

I've just checked the website for those lovely luvvies at the Buntingford Dramatic Society and tickets for **Calendar Girls** are selling like jolly hot cakes with a cherry on top and some of those sprinkle things – I'm not sure what they are called, but I swear there are hundreds and thousands of them! Almost all the tickets for the four fabulous evening shows on 10th, 11th, 17th and 18th February have now gone – snapped up by the early birds and eager beavers! BUT there are some tickets for the **matinee on Saturday 18th February**, so if you are quicker than a querulous quail and more rapid than a ravenous rabbit you can still get a seat on a table. Don't miss it!



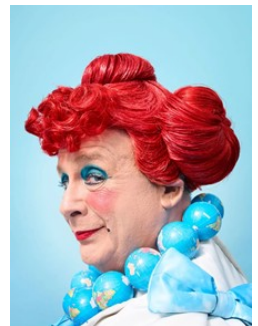
How do you get a ticket I hear you ask? Hot-foot it down to Keith Ian Estate Agents in the High Street if you are in need of exercise, or are already popping down to our vibrant town centre, or do what I did and order them online, with a robust put-hairs-on-your-chest coffee and a jolly big sticky sugar riddled cake, at www.buntingforddrama.uk.

This performance of **Calendar Girls** is going to be such a feast for the eyes! I even sneaked down to the Seth Ward Community Centre with a ladder to take a peek at the rehearsals ... and I had to laugh! No, really. The security man caught me, and it was the only way I could woo him. So, just remember that come February when all your friends are saying what fun they had watching the show ... I did tell you.

Oh my, post Covid it is **SO** good to have some real live drama in the town again and some that doesn't involve my friend Lily, a rolling pin, some putty and her window cleaner! But that's by the by. It is even better when that live drama has been rehearsed and does not involve the local constabulary! So get your perfectly shaped posteriors to the show ... it will be such a blast, a laugh, a jolly good time, or indeed all three ... See you there my lovelies!

With lots of love and kisses on the bottom,
Gladys Aman

P.S. Now where did I put my baby oil and glitter ... ?



BUNTINGFORD ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY (BACCS)



WHAT DO YOU WANT
BUNTINGFORD
TO LOOK LIKE IN
2050?



NEW FOR 2023!

GREEN DRINKS

We would like to announce a **new monthly event** to take place in the back bar of the Crown pub on Market Hill every second Thursday from 7pm, starting on Thursday 9th February.

Come and join us to share your thoughts or concerns on environmental issues, local or global – everything from the Buntingford 20's Plenty campaign to global warming and our current predicament.

Learn more via an assortment of books on Sustainability and the Environment available to borrow through our 'Green Library'. Everyone is welcome.

Madela and the Team

Find us on Facebook: [@BACCSBuntingford](#)

Email: baccsbuntingford@gmail.com



More Facial Aesthetic treatments added to Attend2Health's services

I'm pleased to announce that as well as having our private GP, Dr Suren Naidoo (right), offering the following skin treatments ...

- Anti wrinkle treatments
- Therma Vein for skin blemishes
- Skin tag removal
- Mole checks
- Hair loss treatments

... we now also have an Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Lucie Cockerton (below), offering additional skin treatments such as:

- Dermaplaning
- Profhilo
- Microneedling



Lucie also offers further anti-wrinkle treatment options and Vitamin B12 Injections. More information can be found on our website www.attend2health.co.uk or by calling us on 01763 87 80 87. We offer a free 15-minute chat to check if any of these treatments would be suitable.



Louise Hampton

Buntingford & Stortford Hybrid Studio



Personal Training, Venue
Exercise Classes, Online
Exercise Classes and Pre
Recorded Workouts

Fitness Pilates, Circuits, Dance Fit,
HIIT, Hooping, Boxing & Mindfulness



WWW.JACQUI-SMITH.NET

07956 647806

We decided for 2023 to mix up some of our classes and working with fitness trends. We have introduced two additional variety classes allowing participants to work on specific fitness elements. Each week, over four months, you take part in a different class. Monday Evenings are Cardio based, Wednesday Evenings are Strength based and Friday Mornings are a mix of both.

Our second 8-week FREE beginners' fitness course has been a success in Buntingford. Soon we will be signposting delegates into classes to set them up for a healthy lifetime. Also 'Move, Meditate & Relax', funded by Buntingford Town Council, was an amazing 'me time' morning event in Hormead and will be repeated again soon.

Over Christmas we ran the FREE HAP^{PY} Kids Camps, another success – our next dates are being set for the Easter Break. Please message me for information and to be added to our mailing list. And our last FREE sessions between Christmas and New Year were our Festive Workshops (photos below), one being Arts & Crafts and the other Exercise for Body & Brain.



Our monthly challenge for February focuses on 'burpees'. We do offer regression & progressions, so no excuse for anyone not to perform in our classes!

Want to come to an Exercise Class or need help getting into a Healthy Lifestyle? Then contact:

theteam@jacqui-smith.net / 07956 647 806

**Jacqui Smith, Personal Trainer & Chair of Community Initiative
Buntingford, Braughing & Bishop's Stortford Hybrid Studio**



Scan for Full
Class Listings

Buntingford Local History Group: Project High Street

This month the group has been working on our project on the shops in the High Street over the years. Jennie Keeling has for many years been collating information on the changing High Street, from both her local knowledge and sources such as census results, maps and adverts that have appeared in the Journal and old newspapers. Alison Piano, daughter of our late local historian Philip Plumb, has given us copies of invoices from some of the shops that her father had collected, along with other information. We have been able to get a clear picture of the properties within the High Street in 1838 when a tithe map was drawn up and each property in the town was listed with the owners' details and the occupiers' names. Most of the buildings have remained the same although many have changed their use.

It transpires that the people who collated the census results over the decades since 1841 appear not to have walked in any sort of order. We had assumed that they would have started at a given point and then proceeded from one property to the next, writing the occupiers' details down in a logical order. But this appears not to be the case – you have to wonder if they frequented too many of the pubs and beer houses en route! What makes it even more difficult is that properties didn't have numbers until the early 1900s so everything is listed just as 'High Street'. Added to that confusion, Buntingford was originally made up of four parishes – Layston, Throcking, Aspenden and Wyddial. Whilst the bulk of the High Street was in the parish of Layston, parts of the southwestern end fell under Aspenden, bits on the eastern side were in Wyddial, and the far northwestern end was in Throcking. This means we have to check census results for four parishes instead of just one, with four different sets of handwriting to transcribe – not an easy task!

We have quite comprehensive records on establishments selling alcohol as there are lots of records on who was the licensee and often which brewery owned the property. Many former pubs are now either private domestic dwellings or different businesses. We are now undertaking a survey of the current occupiers of the shops and offices and will be asking them if they have details of the owners and when they moved into the property.

Another member of the group is trawling through Buntingford in Old Photographs on Facebook and its sister site, Buntingford in Old Newspapers, to see if there is anymore information there that we can use. We are also going through all the articles that Val Hume did based on interviews with Buntingford residents to see if any of them mention working in shops within the High Street or memories of different shops.

We will be making trips to the archives at Hertford to see if we can find any further documents or information to enhance what we already have. Unfortunately, for quite some time solicitors, banks and the Land Registry have been destroying original copies of property deeds. Now when you purchase a property, be it domestic or commercial, all you need is a brief statement from the Land Registry giving the current owner. No longer are the large documents used that often came with seals and a full historical record of the property. Whilst anyone can buy a copy of the current register for about £4, it will contain very little information. My advice is, if you hand these original documents to your solicitor when you sell your house ask for them back so that you can then deposit them in the Hertford Archive where they will be kept for future historians to view. If anyone in the High Street does have their original deeds and would be willing to allow us to have sight of them, we would be extremely grateful as it would give us an insight to the past history.

We have also now set up our own Facebook page, called 'Buntingford Local History Group', where we can advertise forthcoming meetings and people can leave messages for us or contact us regarding local history. We have also now added an email address – Buntingfordlocalhistorygroup@hotmail.com – so people can contact us.

What we would particularly like help with is if residents have any stories of working in any of the High Street shops over the years, or if they can remember any of the owners of the shops. Also, if anyone has any photos and would be willing for us to take copies. We are keen to get as much information as possible so please message us on Facebook, or email Buntingfordlocalhistorygroup@hotmail.com, or phone me on 07944 265753.

Due to the library being closed for refurbishment we are meeting at Buntingford Bowls Club in Wyddial Road. Our next meeting is on 8th February 2023 at 2pm. It costs just £2 per person which includes tea and coffee.

Carol Emery, Buntingford Local History Group

BALA Buntingford Action for the Less Able

Registered Charity No. 1094426

Minibus Trips February 2023

February	Time	Destination	Price
Tues 7th	10-3pm	Hitchin (Market Day)	£6
Thurs 9th	10.30-3pm	Welwyn	£7
Tues 14th	9.30-1pm	Harlow (Harvey Centre and Market)	£7
Wed 15th	10.30-2pm	Debden Barns (gifts, homeware, antiques, café)	£6
Mon 20th	10-2.30pm	St Ives	£8
Wed 22nd	11.30am	Pub Lunch (to be confirmed)	£5
Mon 27th	10-1.30pm	Brookfield Centre (M&S, Tesco)	£6
March			
Wed 8th	9.30-3pm	Bury St Edmunds	£13

All trips start from the Benson Hall car park unless otherwise agreed.

To book a seat or for more information ring:

01763 271909 or 07870 638480

(please be prepared to leave a message)

BALA Coffee Morning at URC Hall, Baldock Road

Friday 17th February 2023, 10-11.30am

Sausage rolls, cakes, raffle

Buntingford Gardeners' Club

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 1st February when our speaker will be Susan Lees talking about Lyveden and the Gunpowder Plot. Set in the heart of rural Northamptonshire, Lyveden is now owned by the National Trust. The house and gardens were begun by Sir Thomas Trencham to symbolise his Roman Catholic faith during the reign of Elizabeth I. The talk covers the restoration of the gardens as well as the infamous Plot and its impact on the family.

Our meetings are held in the URC Hall in Baldock Road (opposite the post office) on the first Wednesday of the month, 7.45 for 8pm. Visitors are warmly welcomed for an entrance fee of £3. Please contact the Club Secretary for more information on 01763 271885.

Liz James



It is great to see the work that has been done recently on the River Rib through Buntingford. It is such an improvement and should benefit the Rib as a whole, not just through the town.

Local historian and writer Kathryn Shreeve has been with FORQ since it started. Kathryn has published several books on the Puckeridge area through the ages. Her latest book, *Life Along the River*, tells the story of our river valleys through history. It is being serialised into 10 chapters, which are available on the FORQ website where you'll find them in the History section.



Also in the History section is a page entitled 'The Rib at Buntingford in Pictures'. If you follow our Facebook page you may have seen the film of the 1968 Buntingford flood that our chairman, Mark, shared; this came from the Buntingford in Old Photographs group. Alison Piano, who curates Buntingford in Old Photographs, very kindly sent Mark a number of photos from her collection that give us some insights into how the river looked in past times. It is a wonderful pictorial archive and we are extremely grateful to Alison. This is also something we would like to collect for other places along the Rib and Quin, so if you have old photographs of our rivers, please do let us know.

At this time of year life on the river can be quite quiet. Due to their closeness to some trout redds (breeding grounds) we are not able to do Riverfly Monitoring (RFM) at our regular sites in Braughing or Standon. This is the recommendation from HMWT (Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust). Monitoring at these sites will restart in March.

The RFM sites in Buntingford are not, as far as we are aware, near any trout redds therefore monitoring can continue through the winter. All RFM sessions are recorded on our website. Of course, we can only monitor when it is safe to do so. With all the rain in recent weeks the rivers are flowing very quickly so we will assess the river's flow before each RFM session to ensure it is safe to enter the river.

Pauline Ayres, Communications FORQ
forqcomms@gmail.com <https://friendsoftherib.wordpress.com/>



This year our wonderful charity is celebrating its 40th anniversary!

Home-Start has been helping families in Royston and surrounding villages, Buntingford and South Cambridgeshire since 1983. That's 40 years of offering friendly, confidential, compassionate help to families who are facing tough times.

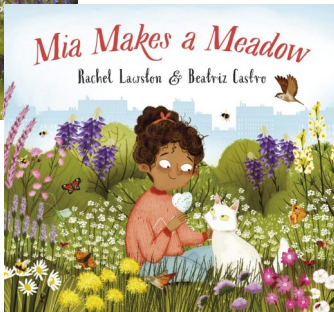
We are planning some exciting ways to mark this anniversary, so please watch out for details on our website and social media – and of course in the Buntingford Journal! – to see how you can be a part of our special celebratory year. If you would like to get involved with our fundraising, or perhaps have some ideas of your own, then please get in touch by emailing

admin@hsrsc.org.uk or call us on **01763 262 262**. For starters we have created a special 40th anniversary donation page and are aiming to mark this amazing milestone by raising £40,000. Please help us reach our target and fill the stars with your lovely messages at: <https://visufund.com/hsrsc-40th-anniversary-fundraiser>



Home-Start's first Literary Lunch of 2023 is on Tuesday 28th February

in The Ballroom at The Old Bull, Royston, from 12.15 to 2.15pm, when our guest will be children's author Rachel Lawston (below). Interviewing her will be the wonderful Jude Simpson, finding out all about Rachel's beautifully written and illustrated children's books.



As well as writing books, Rachel is also a book designer, illustrator and natural history enthusiast, a keen amateur orchid hunter, birdwatcher

and bat detector. Growing up in the countryside gave her a deep connection to the environment. Living in London now, she knows that there is a world of nature waiting for children to discover – even in the town or city. In her free time, Rachel loves being involved as an education volunteer at WWT London Wetland Centre in Barnes. Her husband, Paul, is the Learning Manager at the Centre and as Environmental Education Consultant to publishers, he brought his expert natural history knowledge to *Finn's Garden Friends* and *Mia Makes a Meadow*.

Tickets to the event cost £15, which includes a buffet lunch. Please book online at <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/homestartroystonbuntingfordandsouthcambridgeshire/831327> or email events@hsrsc.org.uk or call us on **01763 262 262**.

Where Am I ...? (answer opposite page)

The Adventures of a Removal Man – A short story

Simpsons Removals: established 1926 – *Your Future is in our Careful Hands*

Like my father and his father before him, I have always had the greatest pride in handling all manner of goods for transportation. Simpsons Removals was established by my grandfather in 1926, handed on to my father and then the running of the firm came to me. Now the time is coming to hand over the reins to a younger, more able person than I.

It has been the most incredible sadness in my life that my only son Timothy died following a short childhood illness. My wife Gloria now resides in a care home where her dementia can be managed far better than I can help her at home. So this morning I'm interviewing candidates for the job of transport manager. Before long I believe I'll be ready to retire and hand the management over to the right person.

My thoughts were interrupted by a gentle tap on my door, then a young man pushed it open and, smiling, said "Good morning Mr Simpson, your receptionist told me you are expecting me."

"Yes, come right in" I told him, "take a seat." He appeared to be a strong, capable young man, with a bright, confident demeanour. He introduced himself as Tony Gibbs and handed me several references. Whilst I was reading them he said, "Please, Mr Simpson, tell me a little about Simpsons Removals."

"Something I can tell you is be prepared for the unexpected!" I replied, then found myself reminiscing. "Let me see, it would have been during the late 1950s we were asked to deliver to a castle on an island in the North Sea. That was a removal job that turned into an expedition to remember!"

"We were weary, nearing the end of our 8-hour journey, when the coast came into view and we saw the Castle on the distant skyline across the water. We made our way down to the causeway, a road uncovered twice a day at low tide making it possible to cross to the island. We were driving the biggest lorry on the fleet because of the size of the load, but we made the crossing successfully without incident."

"Leaving the causeway, we made our way along the rocky roadway towards the Castle, where on arrival we saw a sign clearly displaying: **Clergy Conference 1958**. I pulled up outside the carved entrance door and Charlie and I had begun unloading the heavy boxes and tea chests when two young men clad in monks' robes emerged to help and began carrying the heavy boxes in through the oak door."

"Then something extraordinary happened. As we began uncovering one of the biggest tea chests, I was sure I saw a movement and when I opened the chest there was a young man crouched inside. He sprang up, declaring: 'I'm here now, and you can't send me back.' Charlie and I looked at each other amazed, while the monks hurried to see what the fuss was about. 'Take me to the Prior', the young man demanded nervously. He was shaking and seemed poised for flight. Hastily he clambered out of the chest, jumped down from the lorry and ran towards the door with the two monks in pursuit."

"We quickly learnt that the young man believed we were going to the Priory, but the Priory had long been a ruin. We discovered that the young man believed he had received a calling from St Cuthbert, a devout seventh-century monk and sometime hermit who had lived on the island. His intention was to answer that calling, but his parents opposed him joining a religious order. As their only son, they expected him to marry and give them grandchildren, and for a career they wanted him to join the bank, like his father before him. His opportunity to follow his heart's desire came when he passed by our lorry while

we were loading up and he heard us discussing our destination. He instantly decided to stow away and waited his opportunity to climb on board without being seen.”

“The monks and other clergy taking part in the conference made the young man welcome and amidst all the commotion Charlie and I found ourselves enjoying their hospitality, imbibing a glass of excellent elderberry wine. Then with darkness falling we made to depart, but were told to our horror that we couldn’t return to the mainland that night. The tide was already coming in, so the causeway would soon be flooded. We must wait for morning’s low tide.”

“Charlie and I spent a restless night in a cold cell-like room in the castle, the wind howling beyond its walls. It was an extraordinary experience that neither of us will forget, but morning came at last and the young man greeted us heartily at breakfast. He was now clad in a monk’s habit and looked as if he had slept soundly, but he told us how he had spent the night on his knees in prayer in the ruined priory, and that he firmly believed that the saintly Cuthbert had been his companion. ‘I have found my calling,’ he announced with a joyful expression in his shining eyes. ‘Thank you for making it possible and bless you my dear friends.’ Then he bid us goodbye.”

“Soon after, one of the monks escorted us back to our lorry. ‘It is time for you to go’ he said. ‘God speed’. Then we drove back to the causeway bound for the mainland. We couldn’t wait to get away from that chilly castle on its bleak shore. It was a long way back home, but Simpsons had got the job done, as we do to this day.”

I stopped, lost in memory, then my attention returned to the young man sitting opposite me, who had listened wide-eyed to my story, with not a sign of scepticism.”“I think I would like to work for you, Mr Simpson, if you will have me,” he said. “Do you have any other stories to tell?”

I found myself warming to this eager young man and relaxed back in my chair. “Well, there was this time only last week when ...”

Mary Godfrey, Buntingford Writers’ Group

Reed Garden Club

**Wednesday 8th February 2023, 2–4pm
in Reed Village Hall**

This month: ‘Practical chicken keeping’ with speaker Mr Nigel Start.
The fee for entry is £2, as usual, and includes tea and coffee.

If you would like to advertise an event in the *Buntingford Journal*, please contact either **Christine Noble** on **01763 273095** / email **Journal@buntingfordcivic.org.uk** or **Keith Edwards** on **01763 272032** / email **Advertising@buntingfordcivic.org.uk**



East Herts

Citizens Advice East Herts operates a unique Messageline service. Call **01920 459 944** at anytime and leave a message (we aim to return calls within 24 hours, except at weekends) or visit **www.citizensadviceeastherts.org.uk** for our other advice options.

citizensadviceeastherts.org.uk

‘Buy Now Pay Later’

I’ve seen offers for ‘Buy Now Pay Later’ when I’m doing online shopping. It seems like a good way to spread the cost of some of the things I need to get for my family but how can I make sure I don’t get into debt?

With everything getting more expensive, this is a really difficult time for a lot of people, so it’s sensible to be thinking about how you can manage. There are lots of things you can do to try and stay in control of your money.

Before you start spending, work out exactly what money you have coming in and going out each month. Be realistic about what you need for essentials like food and travel. Take a look at the **budgeting tool** on the Citizens Advice website. This can help you to set a budget you can stick to. You’ll also be able to find tips on the website on **how to reduce your regular living costs**, which might be helpful if you’re struggling to keep within your budget.

While it can be tempting to split payments with schemes like Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL), you’ll need a plan to pay the money back. If you’re using something like that repeatedly, you might be managing for now, but it could also be a sign that it’s unaffordable in the long run. Keep a record of how much you owe in total.

Always make sure you understand what you’re signing up for, how you’ll make the repayments and what will happen if you can’t pay on time. It’s important to check the returns process for both the retailer and credit provider. Paying through BNPL may also affect the cost of postage returns if you’ve ordered online. The riskiest thing about it is that you’re not guaranteed to be protected if something goes wrong. For example, you can’t go to the Financial Ombudsman Service if you have a complaint.

If you find yourself turning to credit cards, an overdraft, or store cards for your spending, keep track of what you owe. You should prioritise paying your rent or mortgage first, plus energy bills and Council Tax, because not paying these has the most serious consequences. On the **Citizens Advice website**, you can find information on what bills to prioritise and how to manage debts. There’s also information on **the support available for paying these and other bills**.

If, like many during this crisis, you find you can’t afford to reduce your debts after paying your priority bills and essentials, seek advice as soon as possible. If you need specific support or don’t feel able to manage your situation alone, call our **debt helpline: 0800 240 4420**.

Everyone’s circumstances are different, particularly when it comes to managing personal finances. Our advisers are here to help you find a way forward.

www.citizensadviceeastherts.org.uk

Citizens Advice East Herts is a registered charity.

u3a learn, laugh, live Buntingford

Twelve U3A members, led by Group Leader Tim Marks, competed in a Quiz at The Blind Fiddler in Anstey on Wednesday 23rd November. They split into two teams – U3A (right) and, obviously, U3B (below) – and they all performed to the very highest level. After 8 rounds, including identifying every *I'm A Celebrity* contestant, the two teams that tied with the highest score of 90 points were U3A and U3B!

This year many of our Groups Leaders were able to take their groups out to enjoy a Christmas meal and/or outing without the need to wear a mask.

Our second Book Group will not now be starting until March due to the alterations being made to the Library.



So a tie-break question was needed to decide the eventual winners, and this is where both teams really showed their true colours by giving answers so far removed from the correct one that the Question Master had to decide whether the team that was the nearest (U3A) could be declared the winners! The tie-break question was: How many dogs entered Cruft's in 2022? (answer at bottom of page).

Our next meeting is on Monday 13th February when a member of Herts Police will give us an Awareness Session on Cybercrime and Cyber-enabled fraud. Several million cases of fraud and computer misuse are reported to the police every year. It's staggering, but even more staggering is that so many of those crimes could have been prevented by making a few small changes in online behaviour. To avoid becoming a victim of online crime you don't need to be a computer expert. Developing a few good online habits drastically reduces your chances of becoming a victim of cybercrime, makes you less vulnerable and lets you use the web safely.

Jean Cook

Membership of the u3a is open to anyone not in full-time occupation. We meet monthly, at the Seth Ward Community Centre, on the second Monday of the month – doors open at 1.30pm. **New members are always welcome.**

Please visit our website for news and details of all our groups:

www.u3asites.org.uk/buntingford

Tie-Breaker: U3A guessed 750, U3B guessed 475. Actual answer was 22,000.



BUNTINGFORD SCHOOL of DANCE

The end of last term saw us hand out Certificates of Achievement to our youngest pupils (right) and some pupils took Ballet exams (below), some for the first time.



BSD offers ISTD syllabus classes in Ballet, Tap & Modern, and recreational classes in Commercial Dance and Tap & Ballet for adults.

If you wish to register with us to join classes please use the QR code below or email us on admin@buntingfordschoolofdance.co.uk for more information. All new pupils get a NO OBLIGATION TRIAL in the classes they wish to join.



'Baby Boppers'

'Baby Boppers' is an introduction to dance, movement and music for parents and young children to do together. We reintroduced the class in January and still have some spaces if you would like to come and join us. It's a fun class for boys and girls who are

2 to 3 years old and confident walkers, accompanied by a parent (or carer). **The class is in Hormead Village Hall on Saturdays at 11–11.30am.** No special dancewear is required, just something easy to move in and trainers or securely fastened shoes.

To register for a place please complete the Registration form on our website Contact page or scan the QR code (right). Places are allocated on a first-come first-served basis. If oversubscribed we will add you to our waiting list.

'Take a Bow' – Sunday 7th May 2023, 1.30 & 5.30pm

We are delighted to be back at the Gordon Craig Theatre in May with our show 'Take a Bow' after 4 years away. 'Take a Bow' will showcase all our classes, from our 3 year olds to our teenagers and adults, incorporating Ballet, Modern/Jazz, Tap and Commercial Dance. Tickets will go on sale direct from the Gordon Craig Theatre in March.



Our aim at Buntingford School of Dance is for pupils to aspire to be the best they can be, whether dancing recreationally or aspiring to a career in dance.

admin@buntingfordschoolofdance.co.uk / www.buntingfordschoolofdance.co.uk



Layston C of E First School

*Loving to Learn, Learning to Love
For every child a chance to shine!*

We start the new Spring term exploring the value of Courage. Many Christians believe that God asks us to offer our skills, talents and abilities in the face of adversity, and that he will use that courageousness to achieve great things. The word 'courage' comes from the Latin word 'cor', meaning heart.

With the New Year ringing in our ears we have cause to celebrate the two superb drama productions that took place just before Christmas. First we had 'Hoodwinked' (right), a pantomime production based on the story of Robin Hood involving our years 1 to 4. Under spotlights, against an extravagantly painted backdrop, with handmade costumes and make up, the children



demonstrated great courage and performed with imagination, flair and total commitment to the absolute delight of packed audiences over three performances. This was followed by the Reception Class production of 'Wriggly Nativity' (left), a musical. The Nativity performance by Reception children remains a unique and important aspect of the preparations for Christmas at Layston and this year was no exception ... the children were amazing.

Our Layston Choir also showed courage, confidence and compassion when they performed Christmas carols for residents of Layston Grove Care Home (right).



We send a New Year wish of health and prosperity to our local community. We are a friendly Church of England First School and welcome visits. For information call 01763 271235 or see www.layston.herts.sch.uk.

Adele McMurrough, Headteacher



Millfield First & Nursery School

www.millfield.herts.sch.uk



Spring Term Learning

Millfield children are all enjoying their new topics this term. The children in Nursery are learning all about Stories, such as Owl Babies, and about Growing. Children in Reception are learning about Fairy Tales, Healthy Eating and Jungle Animals. The topics for Year 1 this term are Monarchs and Our World. Year 2 are learning about Different Countries Around the World. Year 3 topics include Romans and Extreme Earth. And Year 4's main topic is America. Teaching at Millfield is cross-curricular to enable children to become immersed in the topic they are learning about. Class assemblies to parents and carers help to share how motivated and engaged Millfield children are with their learning.

The Cabin

We are thrilled to offer our children and their families wrap-around care provision at Millfield and the Cabin, which was established in Autumn term 2022, is a big part of this. A classroom was transformed to offer an exciting and interesting space for our children to have fun in both before and after school and it is now home to both our Breakfast and After School Clubs.



Pupil Voice Groups

At Millfield, we value the thoughts and opinions of all our children and therefore offer a wide range of Pupil Voice Groups within our school. The children selected to these groups represent their peers to ensure that the views of the children have a clear forum; this helps to shape the direction of the school. Millfield Pupil Voice Groups include:

- Millfield School Council
- Reading Rockets
- Assembly Committee
- Sports Stars
- Eco-Action Team
- Online Safety Team
- Peer Mentors

You can find more information about our Pupil Voice Groups on our website in the section called 'Children – Pupil Voice Groups'.

Laura Kennedy-Weeks , Headteacher

If you would like to know more about our school, you can go to our website at www.millfield.herts.sch.uk, contact us by email on admin@millfield.herts.sch.uk, or call the School Office on **01763 271717**.

Millfield First & Nursery School in Buntingford is looking for new co-opted governors to join our friendly Governing Body



Our governors come from a range of different backgrounds and have a range of skills and experiences, but all share a common interest in wanting the best possible education for the children in our school. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who:

- ◆ Has knowledge of and experience in the community (not necessarily related to schools)
- ◆ Is interested in children's education and the performance of the school
- ◆ Is willing to commit the time and energy required for the role

These volunteer positions are open to any person from our community. Co-opted governors are not elected by an election, but instead are appointed directly by the governing body. For more information about school governance, please see:

<https://www.nga.org.uk/Be-a-Governor/Be-a-Governor.aspx>

If you feel this may be of interest to you, or you have further questions, please contact me directly in the first instance by email at governors@millfield.herts.sch.uk

On behalf of our Governing Body

Alex Tomkins, Chair of Governors, Millfield First & Nursery School

www.millfield.herts.sch.uk



Edwinstree Middle School



A Voluntary Controlled Church of England School

*As a Christian school, we recognise the unique and wonderful in everyone.
As a community, we support one another to flourish and live life in all its fullness.*

How did we celebrate the joy of Christmas?

While we are not always big fans of the winter darkness, we do use it to help us create a spiritual feeling in Collective Worships in the winter – in particular the effect that candles can have in helping us to reflect and worship. Year 5 took part in their traditional Christingle, with the help of Year 8 to guide and help them stay safe with the candles.



Students took time to explore the real meaning of Christmas, sing hymns and reflect on what it means for us in the 21st century. With the lights low and the smell of the oranges and cinnamon, it felt like stepping back in time and both students and staff enjoyed the feeling of spirituality as they experienced a 'WOW' moment.



End of Term Service

Finally, after 3 years of COVID, we were able to take our students to our Parish Church in Aspenden for their Christmas service. This took place on the last day of term and to help us get there we called on our Year 8 leaders to sledge bags of salt to the bridge over the A10 to make it safe from the snow and ice. They then spent the morning guiding 480 students over the bridge and keeping everyone safe. I am very grateful to Year 8 leaders for their support as the morning risk

assessment concluded that without this we would not have been able to get the children to the church. Inside the church the students sang traditional carols that they had been practicing with the help of our choir and musicians. The Reverend Kirsty Wainwright led the service and our confident readers took part in telling the story of Christmas.

Fullness Day

At the end of November 2021, students explored the issues of climate change through a 'Fullness Day'. The day was designed by students to explore how small changes in their lives, and in the life of the school, could reduce our emissions of the green-house gas methane. This led to a huge change in the school, where we now recycle substantial amounts of food waste with the help of tiger worm bins. At the end of 2022 we revisited the topic as students made it clear to us just how important and concerning the issue is to them. This time we explored how we could reduce emissions of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide, and due to the cost of living crisis, we concentrated on reducing fossil fuels in our homes and in our school. The students interviewed our Premises and Finance team to find out what they are doing to reduce our energy usage and the students also explored further strategies that they might use at home and at school.

Lights of Love Ceremony

Edwinstree Choir supported the Lights of Love Ceremony outside the Manor House at the end of November, marking the start of the Advent season. On a cold night it was lovely to see both students and staff enjoying singing to a crowd and engaging with the community.



Christmas Concert

We were lucky enough to take part in a joint Christmas concert with Freman College, where students from all year groups (5 to 13) were able to showcase their skills and entertain relatives and friends. It was lovely and inspiring for the Edwinstree students to see how, with practice and commitment, their musical talents can develop into something wonderful by year 13. The students absolutely loved working with the Freman students to produce joint orchestral and choir music. We would like to thank Freman staff and students for their patience and compassion in working with the Edwinstree students, they were truly inspiring for our community.

As we move into the New Year we begin a new value, beginning with the students voting which of our 16 values they think is the most important for them to learn about next. Currently votes are tied between Koinonia (the power of many together) and forgiveness. Each value is explored for half a term giving us time to consider the relevant bible stories and role models from history who have used these values to shape their lives and to live life well and with love. I look forward to finding out this week which value we will explore.

Jo Gant, Headteacher

Not One – A Short Story

Exasperated, John shut down the browser. He had procrastinated enough. Time to do the lesson plan for tomorrow's year 7 history class. Last week's lesson on medieval medicine had resulted in the death of half the class at the hands of the medics. They hadn't actually died, of course, but the other half of the class who pretended to administer leaches and poultices were never going to have a good patient outcome if they were 'diagnosed' with demonic possession.

There was much about that period that was barbaric, but today it seemed to John that people were still being demonised in the press for no good reason other than they were units of production or assets to garner the greater wealth of shareholders. He heard comments around school all the time, kids parroting the latest opinions of their influencers, little of it based on fact, and certainly not contextualised. He had gone into education to help kids think for themselves. They needed to see what injustice was, what doing good was. Being 'woke' was not bad, it was a badge of empathy for the rest of humankind. And then he got an idea ...

Year 7 filed in with the usual enthusiasm for history on a Wednesday morning, some sneaking looks at their forbidden phones and some hitching their skirts up from the regulation level that had been inspected at assembly, folding over the waistband. Gum was swallowed or stuck under the plastic chairs. John stood in front of his desk as they settled down, wondering how many of them would die in this lesson.

John walked between the desks explaining the task for the lesson. He handed each of the 25 young women in the class a folded slip of paper that they were to open in secret and assume the role allotted to them. At no point were they to tell anyone if they were a witch. They could deny it, but then a witch would, wouldn't they? All they had to do in the next 38 minutes was discover which one of them was a witch. He fielded the expected questions – how could they tell? could they use torture? would the witch be burnt? – and one he hadn't anticipated: was he the witch for setting the task? John thought about it then said he might well be, but it was up to them to discover who it was. They now had 32 minutes.

The group settled into its break-time cliques and friendship groups. The three 'different' ones who were often picked on for the slightest social *faux pas* gathered together in fear and solidarity. The time ticked by and as the interrogation of the three became a bit intense John added a bit of a twist, simply saying that it was often the loudest accusers who had the most to hide. This changed the dynamic quite a bit. Suddenly it was the group influencers under interrogation. The three latched onto this and cited all the times these people had been evil to them. Groups shifted and the noise level grew as the lesson neared its end. The three now led the larger group, two or three others vacillated between four other groups. They all began to look to John for some kind of resolution. With a few minutes left he brought the class to order and sat on the edge of his desk.

"OK, let's look at where we are. Did we find out who the witch was? No, we didn't. Did we use facts to find out or bullying and threats? I saw both tactics being used. Some of you used kindness, forming protective pacts, but the witch could have hidden in that group. Consider this: how did it feel to be unjustly accused? How did it feel to be powerless against authority? How loud did the influencers have to get when they were not being listened to? This is what happens when society gets turned on itself. Today's lesson was about the witch hunts in medieval times, things like the famous American Salem witch trials happened in our society too. It still happens today."

The bell rang. The class was silent. "Off you go," said John. No one moved but a few hands went up. "I know what you want to ask" John said, "so I'll tell you. None of us was a witch. Not one."

Richard Wood, Buntingford Writers' Group



BUNTINGFORD TOWN FC

www.buntingfordtownfc.com

I hope you all had a great Christmas and wish you all a Happy New Year! The run up to the Christmas Break here at Buntingford Town Football Club was somewhat disrupted by the weather with the First Team, Reserves, Ladies and Vets all only managing to get one fixture played during December before the snow brought about a premature end to 2022.



First Team! – The Firsts finished 2022 sitting in 14th position in the Premier Division of the Herts Senior County League with 3 wins, 2 draws and 6 losses, but with 21 games still to play in the 22/23 season, and most of the fixtures against the top sides now played, the second half of the season could see a significant upturn in their fortunes.

Reserves! – The Reserves reached Christmas in very good shape and occupy fifth spot in Division 3 of the Herts Senior County League with a record of 5 wins, 1 draw and 3 losses. Given that there's only 9 points between the top spot and 8th, the second half of the season could see sides rise and fall on an almost weekly basis.



Ladies! – The Ladies are also in pretty good shape despite finishing the year in an apparently disappointing 8th spot in Division 2 of the Beds and Herts Women's League. What this doesn't reflect is that, of their 7 league games played to date, 5 have been against the teams sat in the top four spots of the table. Their record of 3 wins and 4 losses is bound to be improved upon during the second half of the season.

Vets! – The Vets have struggled so far this season, they are yet to win a game in the East Herts Vets League, but given the talent in the squad it can only be a matter of time before results start to go their way and we expect to see them rise up the table.

Walking Football – The big news for our Walking Footballers is that the Herts FA have finally got their act together and will be starting a Walking Football League in the next few weeks. The Club will be entering an over 50s and an over 65s side and we look forward to seeing that squad test their skills against other clubs in due course.

Sponsors wanted!!!

Our Ladies Team is now looking to build on its success, especially whilst the Lionesses Euros win is still fresh in people's minds. As a grassroots Club we have seen an increase in women wanting to take up football, inspired by the stories and success of the England Ladies' team. With our Ladies team now in its 5th season, we have a whopping 32 female players signed on, most of them local to Buntingford. Having started in Division 3 of the Beds and Herts Women's Football League in 2018, the Ladies gained promotion two seasons ago and now play in Division 2 where they currently sit in a comfortable mid-table position with their sights firmly fixed on the teams above them.

Running any team at this level is an expensive proposition and we rely heavily on the support of local businesses for sponsorship. We are now looking for support and sponsorship to continue our story as a Club and build this team for future generations. If you would like to be a part of our journey, now is a great time to get involved and we have put together the following range of sponsorship options for the 23/24 season:

Sponsorship:	Cost:	Duration:	What's included:
Home Kit	£2,000	2 seasons 23/24 – 24/25	Sponsorship of The Ladies home kit with your company name and/or logo printed across the front. Your logo will also appear on our website, social media pages and in our weekly matchday programme
Away Kit	£2,000	2 seasons 23/24 – 24/25	Sponsorship of The Ladies away kit for two seasons (23/24 and 24/25) with your company name and/or logo printed across the front. Your logo will also appear on our website, social media pages and in our weekly matchday programme
Training	£1,800	1 season 23/24	Sponsorship of The Ladies training sessions at the new 3G pitch being constructed at Freman College. This will allow The Ladies to train at the best facility within the local area. Your logo will appear on any new training/warmup t-shirts purchased for The Ladies by The Club as well as our website, social media pages and in our weekly matchday programme.
Equipment	£500	1 season 23/24	Sponsorship of The Ladies training and Matchday equipment, including training balls, match balls, training bibs, cones etc. Your logo will appear on our website, social media pages and in our weekly matchday programme

If you would like to be part of our journey by sponsoring the Ladies Team and need any further information, please do not hesitate to contact:

Robyn McFayden – Manager – robynmcfayden@hotmail.com, or
Mark Cotton – Chairman – mark@aands.co.uk

Supporters wanted!!!

Why not make it your New Year's Resolution to come and watch a home game at The Bury? You can find information on all our fixtures at www.buntingfordtownfc.com. You can also follow us on facebook [@BuntingfordTownFC](https://www.facebook.com/BuntingfordTownFC), Twitter [@BuntTownFC](https://twitter.com/BuntTownFC) or Instagram [@buntingford_town_fc](https://www.instagram.com/buntingford_town_fc) for details of upcoming games.

Mark Cotton, Chairman, Buntingford Town FC

‘Stop the world, I want to get off!’

When I first heard that expression it was in the Sixties and Anthony Newley was playing at one of the West End theatres. It was a catchphrase that caught on, reflecting the feelings of the time and confusion at the speed of change. It came to mind again as I overheard someone from the medical centre telling my good lady wife that she should order repeat prescriptions online. Never mind that she has never used a computer or owned a mobile phone, or that a notice in the chemist’s says that patients over 75 don’t have to order online, especially if they don’t have a computer! It seems to me we’re being led by the nose and letting IT dictate how we live. This feeling is not something new, it’s the effect of things changing faster now than I can remember at any other time.

So-called movement is being confused with progress, and if one takes a moment to look at the facts the frightening truth is we have not moved very far in the last six decades. We have allowed ourselves to be drawn into a fantasy world where, as in the tale of the emperor’s new clothes, only the brightest and cleverest minds can see the truth and if anybody challenges the current on-trend idea or rejects the latest must-have item they are branded as Luddites.

Just for a moment humour me by examining the facts rather than the hype. Firstly credit, what a con that is to get you drawn into debt and thus be controlled by those who seek to demand your attention. Most days the advertising on our TV screens boasts they can help you get a better credit rating so you can buy bigger and better things (mainly cheap imports from across the globe). Back in the day, credit was not something you boasted about! Loans were hard to come by and were generally obtained from mutualty organisations or under strict banking terms. Soon that was to change and the Thatcher government thought it would be a wizard idea to get people to buy their own houses, which they had rented for many years and probably paid for over and over again. So people took out mortgages and to help pay them off women were encouraged to go out to work. All this was promoted by the so-called equality lobby which was both a plus for women who wanted to expand their contribution to the work place and a negative as it made some women feel inferior if they wanted to continue in the traditional role of home-maker. As the combined household income grew, house prices soared and now everybody was on the wheel. Oh and repairs to the houses, formerly part of the rental agreement and the responsibility of the landlord, were now down to the mortgagees.

Then credit cards took off with gigantic APR interest charges. So the population ran up even bigger bills, unaware of what inflation was waiting to inflict on the great unwashed. Currently the press and so-called experts on things financial have regular attacks of the vapours when they see inflation and interest rates rising, overlooking the fact that interest rates have been kept near zero for a decade or more, encouraging us all to ‘enjoy’ more affordable credit.

The biggest confidence trick was cunningly introduced as the brave new answer to our prayers – IT. Like the naïve creatures we are, we rushed into getting the latest kit so we were seen to be at the cutting edge. Formerly if you wanted to buy a product or service you went to a provider, such as a bank, shop or showroom, and you looked at the goods and discussed it with a staff member, then selected the item you wanted and paid with a cheque or cash. Now nothing is done by cheque or cash – transactions involve credit facilities, taking you even deeper into debt and dependency. Not to mention the expense of computer kit and support as we bought into the whole IT issue, with all its spin offs. Suddenly everybody had a mobile phone which acted like an oxygen bottle to the masses as we spent hours looking at tiny screens and talking gibberish to ‘friends’. And in doing so we all became trackable, not only by location but also by where and what we spent our money on and even what we talked about. With cash used less and less, and ‘on-line banking’ all the rage, many people – especially the young – seem no longer aware of what cash looks like, never mind what it represents. So nothing has any value anymore.

Meanwhile in the background another idea was creeping in, not new as there is evidence that it was always part of the big plan to snatch back the population's biggest asset: property! With parents now having to support children into their 20s and beyond with student loans, cars etc, and those same children starting to take an interest in what will be their 'share' when mum and dad pass on, more and more people are sleep-walking into equity release schemes, often with eye-watering rates and terms. And even if you avoid equity release, money from your hard-earned property could still end up paying for God's waiting room, now mostly owned by dubious property organisations and supported by underpaid staff.

'Face to face' was a new name for getting to see your doctor, played via video on a computer or smartphone (oh yes, don't forget you're supposed to have a computer, smartphone and all the apps – whatever they are?) Only a few years ago you could call the doctor and get an appointment within days, even hours. Now you have to invest in IT kit to the value of many hundreds of pounds, instead of making a phone call to one of the town's (back then) two surgeries where a knowledgeable kind receptionist, who knew all about you as you have been 'on their list' for decades, would book you in wielding only a pen or pencil. Then the doctor actually saw you and you felt at least somebody knew what they were doing.

Now we are encouraged not to attend a clinic unless absolutely necessary. You stand more chance with the local pharmacist or in the last resort A and E. We now have all sorts of experts and staff dealing with our daily needs, be it financial, medical or business, but try and contact them! (Don't forget a flask and a packed lunch.) The latest edict from the PM is that children must study maths in some form up until the age of 18. When we left school at 15 and went to work, most of us could do basic arithmetic and read and write English – the 'three Rs' as they were known. Most schools now seem to operate around the ever-present computer (more cash outlay), electronic boards (even more outlay), technical support (yet more outlay). Yet we are now going to make children (well, hardly children) spend another three years learning arithmetic and other mathematical tools that they will probably never use again in their lifetimes. (Heaps of extra outlay for more staff!)

In short, where is the progress? We are over-populated, over-weight and heavily dependent on IT and debt, and a whole new problem with the NHS is coming down the road towards us. An institution that was a guiding light and example to the world is on its knees. That is progress? Where's the next bus stop, I want to get off! What's that? It's been privatised? Would you credit it!

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WHAT'S ON – DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FEBRUARY

- Wed 1st** 7.45 for 8pm: **Buntingford Gardeners' Club** at URC Hall (p.28)
Sat 4th 10.45am: **Centenary Service** of RBL Buntingford Branch (p.12)
Sat 4th 7.30pm: **Buntingford Film Club – Ticket to Paradise** (p.22)
Wed 8th 2–4pm: **Reed Garden Club** in Reed Village Hall (p.31)
Wed 8th 2pm: **Buntingford Local History Group** at the Bowls Club (p.27)
Thur 9th 7.15 for 7.30pm: **Buntingford W.I.** at URC Hall (p.21)
Thur 9th 7pm: **BACCS Green Drinks** at The Crown, Market Hill (p.24)
Fri/Sat 10/11, 17/18th Feb: **Buntingford Dramatic Society Calendar Girls** (p.23)
Mon 13th 1.30 for 2pm: **u3a Monthly Meeting** at Seth Ward Community Centre (p.33)
Fri 17th 10–11.30am: **BALA Coffee Morning** at URC Hall (p.27)
Sun 19th 12.00noon: **Armed Forces & Vets Breakfast Club** at the Fox & Duck (p.12)
Tue 21st: **Pancake Day!** (p.8)
Tue 28th 12.15–2.15pm: **Home-Start Literary Lunch** at The Old Bull, Royston (p.29)
Tue 28th 7.30 for 8pm: **Lenten Reflections** at The Stables (p.10)

LOOKING AHEAD

- Sat 4th Mar:** **Buntingford Film Club – Mrs Harris Goes to Paris** (p.22)
Sat 4th Mar: **Quiz Night** at St Peter's Church (p.11)
Sun 26th Mar: **Muddy Mayhem** in aid of the Isabel Hospice (p.19)
Fri 31st Mar: **Buntingford Film Shorts Local Showcase** at Christ Church
Tue 25th Apr: **Buntingford Civic Society A.G.M.** (p.4)
Sun 7th May: **Coronation Day Celebration** at the Community Centre (p.5)
Sun 7th May: **'Take a Bow'** Buntingford School of Dance (p.34)

Mondays: From 8.30am: **Buntingford Market** on Market Hill

10am–12noon: **Coffee Morning** at St Peter's Church

10–11.45am: **Chatter Table** at the Manor House – 1st and 3rd Mondays

1.30 for 2pm: **Buntingford Senior Citizens' Club** at URC Hall (p.4)

7.30–9pm: **Buntingford Community Choir** at Millfield School (p.11)

Tuesdays: 7.30–9pm: **Braughing Sing Community Choir** in Jenyn's School Hall

Wednesdays: 10 for 10.30am: **BALFF Winter Course** at Seth Ward Community Centre

8–10pm: **Ware & District Photographic Society** in Thundridge Village Hall

Buntingford Meditation at St Peter's Church, except the 1st Wed in the month which is online: www.mindful-worklife.com/buntingford-meditation

Thursdays: 10.30–12noon: **Coffee & Company** at the URC Hall (p.9)

12.30pm: **Functional Movement Class** in Reed Village Hall; contact Jessie Skeggs on 07977 146 380 / www.peacefulchangePilates.com

2–3pm: **Mind & Music** to aid memory and wellbeing at Standon & Puckeridge Community Centre (p.43)

Saturdays: 10am: **Walking Football** at the MUGA, Norfolk Road Playing Fields (p.18)

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Buntingford Civic Society

Reg. Charity No. 1014873
<http://www.buntingfordcivic.org.uk>



WHO ARE WE?

We are your local amenity group, established in the early 1970's initially as a conservation group covering the ancient parishes of Buntingford, Layston, Aspenden, Wyddial and Throcking. We obtained charity status in 1993.

Our main aims are to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic and public interest within the locality and endeavour to promote high standards of planning and architecture while our archives are a source of reference on local geography and history.

Over the years, the Society has broadened its interests within the community. Whilst conservation issues will always be important to us, we now try to take a greater interest in many other local organisations and activities.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE?

Publish the Buntingford Journal
Restored the town pump twice.
Restored the Town Cage

Initiated erection of Christmas lights in the High Street and Market Hill
Present an annual school civic award

Updated the set of Town Trails with the Discovering Buntingford booklet.

Erected a Town Sign and replaced it on a like for like basis in 2018

Installed a seat on the hill to and paid for works at the Layston Cemetary.

Erected Town Gateway signs complete with Planters and pay for the plants.

Contributed financially to the Freman College sports hall, Buntingford Film Club, previous Buntingford Carnivals, and to the planned Summer Arts in Buntingford 2022 weekend, and given a grant to the Friends of the River Rib and Quin Done River Rib cleans

Fitted a sign in the Community gardens at the Police Station and paid for new plants there in 2019.

Were actively involved with the production of the Neighbourhood Plan

Arranged four Buntingford in Bloom competitions our fifth in 2020 cancelled due to the pandemic.

Updated the circular walks on local footpaths leaflet in 2017
Hosted annual Civic Day walks

WHAT ARE WE PLANNING TO DO?

Monitor future housing development and continue to work with local organisations for the benefit of Buntingford, including the River Rib Project.

TO JOIN PLEASE SEE THE MEMBERSHIP FORM ON OUR WEBSITE
www.buntingfordcivic.org.uk

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Carers in Hertfordshire Online



Due to the situation with the coronavirus most of Carers Support Hub groups are meeting online via Zoom. The main purpose of the groups is to bring carers together so they can offer each other practical and emotional support.

If you would like to join in a group online we request that you book a place. If the group for the area where you live is at a time you can't make, or is not yet running online, you are welcome to book a place at another meeting. Please note the meetings may be subject to change so contact us to check details.

To book email contact@carersinherts.org.uk or phone **01992 58 69 69** and let us know which group you are interested in. Once you've booked a place we will send you confirmation and the meeting login details. If you're booking by phone it would be useful if you could confirm your email address. **Please do let us know if you have any other technical issues or requirements, as we may be able to help.**



Carers in Hertfordshire Hub groups meeting online via Zoom

Name of Group	When Meeting
Berkhamsted (a joint meeting with Hemel Hempstead)	Second Tuesday of the month, 10.30am – 11.30am.
Bishop's Stortford	First Wednesday of the month 10.30am – 11.30am.
Borehamwood	Second Thursday of the month, 10.30am – 11.30am.
Buntingford	Last Tuesday of the month, 10.30am – 11.30am.
Chorleywood & Rickmansworth	Third Monday of the month 10.30am—11.30am
Harpenden	Third Thursday of the month 10.30am – 11.30am.
Letchworth Garden City	Third Wednesday of the month 10.30am – 11.30am.
Potters Bar	Last Wednesday of the month 10.30am – 11.30am
Royston	First Thursday of the month 10.30am – 11.30am.
Stevenage	Last Thursday of the month 10.30am – 11.30am.
Ware	Third Friday of the month, 11am – 12pm noon.
Watford	Second Monday of the month, 10.30am - 11.30pm.

Our **Men's Carers' Group** is also meeting online on the last **Tuesday of the month, 1.30pm – 2.30pm** and twice a week we have some informal meet ups on Zoom for any carers to join in with so they can have a chat. Please contact us for more details or if you'd like to join any of these meetings.

Our Carer Support Advisors should also be able to advise you of other groups for carers that are meeting online during the coronavirus pandemic. You can contact them 9.30am – 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am – 4pm on Fridays for advice or support related to your caring role.

To contact us call: 01992 58 69 69
Email: contact@carersinherts.org.uk
Visit: www.carersinherts.org.uk



Making Carers Count

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For more information call Keith Edwards on 01763 272 032 or email advertising@buntingfordcivic.org.uk

For one-off adverts or to advertise a specific event, contact the Journal editor, Christine Noble, on 01763 273 095 or email journal@buntingfordcivic.org.uk. Adverts for charitable or community events are normally free of charge.

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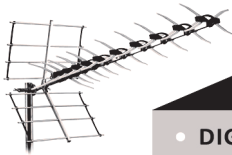
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Annual General Meeting 2023

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Buntingford Civic Society will take place on **Tuesday, 25th April 2023**, 7 for 7:30pm in The Bunters Suite, Seth Ward Community Centre, Luyes Rise, Buntingford.

Following the business of the meeting, there will be a short presentation by a guest speaker on a topic relevant to the Civic Society.

Light refreshments will be served at the end of the Meeting.

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LAYSTON GROVE CARE HOME

BUNTINGFORD



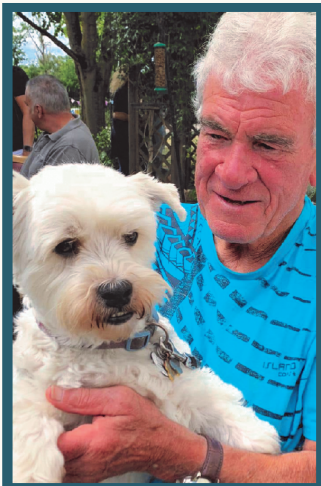
Layston Grove

Layston Grove is a luxury, 66 bed, residential care home in Buntingford, Hertfordshire. Boasting a host of 5 star facilities that include en-suite wet rooms, fully stocked bar, beautiful tea room, modern lounges, hairdressing and beauty salon, cinema room, spacious dining rooms and landscaped gardens.

Layston Grove offers the luxury of a five star hotel but feels like home.

Layston Grove offers residential, dementia and respite care

LAYSTON GROVE CARE HOME NEWS



LAYSTON GROVE DOG SHOW This week we hosted our very own dog show here at Layston Grove raising funds for Hessa's Homeless Hounds. The event was well attended and we were delighted to meet members of the local community and their wonderful four-legged friends. The day was a great success, so much so that we are hoping to make this an annual event



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