

The Buntingford Banner

Registered Charity No. 1185575

www.u3asites.org.uk/buntingford/home

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A handful of new groups have appeared. Largely through a process of mitosis, existing groups have spawned new copies of themselves meeting on different days. Some of these new sessions are up and running already, others still waiting for new leaders to be finalised. I know several members who have not joined some groups as the days were not convenient, maybe with additional sessions things will be easier. Also, we hope that some of the waiting lists can be reduced this way. Keep an eye on the website as we are updating it with the new groups and changed group leaders immediately we hear the changes. Even if the group list is beginning to look like the football results: Pickleball 3 – Sunday Lunches for Solos 2.



At last month's AGM we welcomed Caroline Nash to the committee. She will take over the role of Welfare Officer.

I will now commence what must be my last year in the Chair. But I am delighted to be able to tell you that Mike Murfitt has intimated that he would be willing, subject to normal approvals, to take over from me as the new Chairman next October.

This would therefore leave us needing a new Treasurer so I am appealing to anyone with a liking for figures to step forward and help our u3a. If you think you could serve our u3a in this way please come forward and you can 'shadow' Mike this year thus making the transition smooth and easy.

This is an important appeal as without either a Chair or Treasurer there is a very real prospect that Buntingford u3a would be unable to continue in 2026/2027. So if you feel able to act as Treasurer or indeed wish to explore the role of Chair, you will be made very welcome and given every help possible. If you are new to Buntingford and/or our u3a this is a great way to get to know our town and its people.

The u3a is run by volunteers for the members, we just need people to volunteer. The only requirement is to be willing to help and if this is you, please feel free to contact either Mike or I in confidence and without obligation.

Martin Gray

2025/6 COMMITTEE

Mike Murfitt
Susan Peters
Julia Bush
Martin Gray
Tim Marks
Sue Batchelor
Fran Feek
(not in photo)
Lesley Stevens
Caroline Nash)



Photo Lesley Lowers

THE NORMAN OLIVER AWARD 2025

The Norman Oliver Award for Outstanding Service to Buntingford u3a was presented to our u3a by his widow Mary in recognition of him being our very first Treasurer.

This year the award went to Maureen & Ron Brighten, Group Leaders of the Wine Appreciation Group, having stepped in to take over from Dave Austin when he stood down.

Ron has also served as the Group Co-ordinator, before subsequently taking over the management of the three u3a Keep Fit Groups.

He was the first Group Leader for both the Quiz and Clay Pigeon Shooting Groups. Ron is a member of the Bridge Group and LETs.

The award was presented at the October meeting of the Wine Appreciation by Julia Bush (Buntingford u3a Secretary).



STOP PRESS – WARD FREMAN POOL

On the 23rd October I received the following in an email:

Ward Freman Community Pool Group CIO has been offered the freehold of the pool by Hertfordshire County Council!

This is still subject to negotiation, but represents a significant step forward and would mean the pool would be wholly owned by the charity. This will bring with it greater up-front costs and means that it is more important than ever that we continue to fund raise to achieve the ambition. We are also working hard in the background preparing grant applications for when the freehold is transferred.

GROUP NEWS

NEW GROUP - PICKLEBALL 3

We are pleased to announce another Pickleball Group, number three, which will be starting on Wednesday 5th November at Cottered Village Hall 10-12noon. The cost is £3 per session and the Group Leader will be Dave Baxter

Pickleball is quite a new sport (a little like badminton) that has taken the world by storm and this is our third group because the other two are full. If you would like to give it a try please come along and have a go. Equipment will be provided (courtesy of a donation from Dave's own company 'Coverup Upholstery'), just wear comfortable clothing and non-slip footwear. For more details please contact Dave on coverupholstery@aol.com

NEW CURRENT AFFAIRS GROUP

Pamela Leemeijer has volunteered to run a new Current Affairs Group. This group would meet once a month on a Wednesday or Thursday afternoon at Pamela's house.

If you are interested in joining this group please contact Pamela by email at pamelaleemeijer@gmail.com

ORIGINAL CURRENT AFFAIRS GROUP

The original current affairs group is still looking for a new Group Leader.

A new venue has been found for this which is The Black Bull in Buntingford on the first Thursday of the month from 7.30pm to approximately 9.30pm.

LONDON WALKS

A wet and soggy evening was spent walking around Whitechapel and discovering the area where Jack the Ripper performed his deadly deeds.

SOLOS' SUNDAY LUNCH 2

When Sunday Lunches for Solos 2 visited the Blind Fiddler at Anstey they were joined by some unexpected guests.

LtoR: Sue Batchelor, Gill Jackson, Mary Palmer, Glynis Jaycock, Anne Franks, Betty Stocker, Laurie Bullen, Lesley Jerome.

(Photo Fran Feek)



THURSDAY MORNINGS WALKING GROUP

Back Row:

Steve Hisgrove, Naomi Olley, Keith Bradfield, Malcolm McKimmie, Cynthia Kattau, Paul Clifton, Chris Burleigh, Steve Deeks (hiding!), Greg Amos, Peter Remnant.

Middle Row:

Roger Henderson, Clare Roberts, Chris Newman, Margaret Burleigh, Brian Tebbutt

Front Row:

Sue Hisgrove, Barbara Henderson, Carol McKimmie.

(Photo: Byan Roberts)



Thursday Mornings Walking Group's October walk was a circular walk from Therfield Village. The photo was taken at the old cross in Kelshall. The walk started off with misty weather but soon cleared to allow us to appreciate the extensive views from the high points. The walk leaders on this occasion were Sue & Steve Hisgrove (both wearing the hi-viz jackets).

Roger Henderson (Group Leader)

LETs (LONDON, ELSEWHERE & THEATRES)

Visit to the Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey



The Land Train - Sitting Joan Jones, Lyn Kendal-Archer, Ian Round, Gill Alderton, Jean Cook, Rita Eastman, Sue & Brian Tebbutt, Susan Byrne, Gill Jackson and Lesley our lovely volunteer
Standing but in the shadows - Nita & Keith March, Jane Farish, Jeni & Roy Hornby, Fran Feek, Laurie Bullen, Julia Peacock and Phil our brilliant Guide.

Despite threats from Storm Benjamin, members of LETs visited the Royal Gunpowder Mills at Waltham Abbey and enjoyed a very interesting day learning about its history, the making of gunpowder, cordite and its Top Secret Research Centre 1945-91. It is now a Heritage site run by trustees and volunteers and has over 21 Listed Buildings. The making of gunpowder needed a lot of water, some of it for safety reasons, so the site had many ponds and access to the River Lea, which has greatly helped it become a thriving wildlife haven.

We started the day off with heavy rain and winds which abated whilst we were on the coach; it was still cold but the sun did come out later. Then when we boarded the coach to come home it started to rain again!

I DID IT!!

In November 2012 Norman and I climbed Sidney Harbour Bridge so perhaps it was only to be expected that I would want to walk over the Dome (O2) which began during the 2012 London Olympics.

I thought it would make a great outing for my u3a LETs group but when I made enquiries I was told that they didn't have groups. Then I forgot about it.

But it was always there at the back of my mind and recently I decided that it was now or never.

So I asked my son, Stuart, if he would take me and straight away he said 'Mum, you can't do it! There are steps at the beginning and the slope of the Dome will be too much for you!'

I then went back to their website and looked at the photos. Stuart had showed me the steps on his phone - yes, there were a few and they looked steep but there was a handrail. Likewise the Dome itself - you can clearly see the slope of the Dome but there is a rail and the 'youngsters' in the photos were all holding on to it.

So I told Stuart that I thought I would be able to do it because there were handrails.

He chose Monday 29th September - we didn't pre book in case the weather was bad, in the event, the weather was perfect so we were off.

We drove to Cheshunt, train to Stratford then underground to North Greenwich, walk to the O2 and a walk to 'the walk' itself when inside - weather now quite warm, so put fleece in backpack. Stuart arranged the tickets and we went straight in for the 11.15 slot - just the two of us.

Our lovely guide 23 yr old Irish graduate, Kayla, (an Emma Raducanu lookalike!) working to raise £9,000 to pay for her Master's Degree in Architecture, played the short video, gave us a form to complete, gave us shoes to change into and a harness to wear. We were then given the very heavy chain and lock to clip on to the wire on the dome. We put our own shoes, bags, etc into a lidded box. We gave our phones to Kayla for when we reached the top and so it began.

First the steps up to the walk - four flights of seven steps - with a photo shoot at the end.

Kayla then clipped us onto the main wire that goes right over the Dome and we stepped onto the Dome. This was not what I was expecting - the floor was a soft continuous blue slatted flooring (like a trampoline) and the first part was quite steep and extremely difficult to climb.

We are used to walking on the flat on firm ground not soft and sloping. So I had to use the two thick wires to pull myself along - sideways! In addition, at regular intervals, we had to negotiate a safety device with our clip-ons.

Fortunately Kayla saw that I was having difficulty so walking on the otherside of the wires, was able to help me and I was left with trying to cope with pulling myself along the wire and walking on the wobbly floor.

Eventually the climb flattened out and the flooring changed to a smoother material - but it was still like walking on a trampoline - and the slope was a little (not a lot) flatter and we headed for the centre. At the centre, we were given our pre-booked and paid for, celebration drinks.

Originally called the Millennium Dome, it was opened on New Year's Eve 1999 with a huge show attended by HM Queen Elizabeth 11, Prince Philip and the then PM Tony Blair and his wife Cherie.

Its 12 yellow support towers, are named after the twelve months of the year; the height of the Dome is 52 feet - the number of weeks in a year - and its diameter is 365m being the number of days in a year. Kayla pointed out

various landmarks and we had time to walk across the metal grid to take in the views and take photos.

There was a group already up there and now it was time for them to go down so Kayla had to close the gate behind them. A few minutes later the group behind us arrived and Kayla opened the other gate for them. We stayed a few minutes more and then it was our turn to descend.

We were told this would be easier than the ascent - no way! It was different from coming up so you had to work out how you were going to do it. In the end, we walked down backwards but it was not easier than coming up - just different.

We were lucky being just the three of us and we chatted all the way down with Kayla again doing my clip-ons for me.

I told Kayla how I had tried to bring a u3a Group (she'd never heard of the u3a) and she said they do take groups; she had once taken a group of 30 with another guide. They even have wheelchair sessions. The oldest person they had had on a walk was celebrating his 100th birthday and on another, a young boy with two prosthetic legs whose story was featured on Good Morning Britain.

When we were at the top she pointed out someone's woolly hat that had blown off in the wind and was still on the roof of the O2 below us. And one romantic young man proposed to his girlfriend at the top only to drop the ring through the metal grid that he was standing on, onto the roof below. It cost him £1,000 to get it back!

This time we walked right down to the ground - we did not have the 28 steps that we had at the beginning.

It was now 12.38 so it had taken just under an hour and half. I was just so relieved. But yes I had done it. I do have a sense of achievement and I am pleased that I did do it. But it was the hardest thing I have ever done and I was completely and utterly exhausted.

There are numerous eateries at the O2 but we chose to have lunch at Wetherspoons which was next to the exit from the walk. At last a chance to sit down!

After our lunch we still had to retrace our steps home - a lot of steps just to reach the exit of the O2; then the walking, steps and escalators to our underground station and more to our main line station (we even came out on the wrong platform so had to go back down and come up on the correct one!) and then we were back at Cheshunt.

But it was a great day, we hadn't booked anything but everything went like clockwork - the trains, the O2, being just the two of us and the lovely Kayla and the perfect weather.

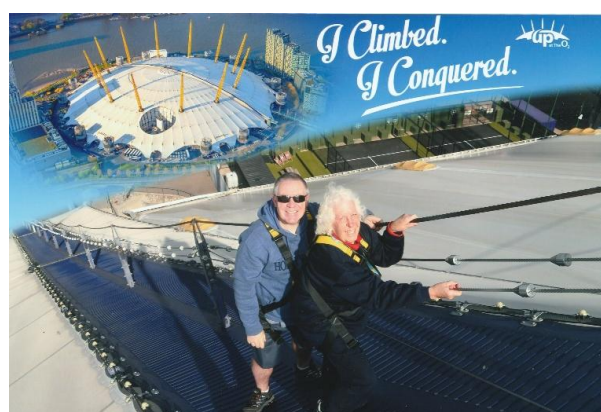
And Stuart - not normally known for his patience with me - was brilliant! And he even mowed my lawns when we got back to Bunty!

Yes, I did it.....but the Sydney Harbour Bridge was so much easier!!



2025.09
At the
Top of the O2

2025.09
The Descent



2012.11
Climbing Sydney Harbour
Bridge

2012.11
Group Photo at the top of
Sydney Harbour Bridge



FORTHCOMING MONTHLY MEETINGS

NOVEMBER 10th Richard Thomas: **"Flanders Fields to the Tower"** – a topical talk around Remembrance Day

DECEMBER 8th An a cappella choir: **"Christmas themed a cappella"** – a short history of a Cappella, before they perform their music.

We meet at the Seth Ward Community Centre on the Second Monday of the month - doors open 1.30pm.

OUR GROUPS

Buntingford u3a Interest Groups			
*SWCC – Seth Ward Community Centre ** BBC – Buntingford Bowls Club #OGPS – Old George Pottery Studio, Puckeridge ~ URCH United Reformed Church Hall (opposite the Post Office)			
If you wish to join a group please contact the Group Leader			
Group Co-ordinator Fran Feek fran.feek@hotmail.com			
<u>GROUP</u>	<u>VENUE</u>	<u>DAY & TIME</u>	<u>GROUP LEADER</u>
Badminton FULL	*SWCC	Fridays 11-12 noon	Gill Alderton 07984 039 016 gillalderton@yahoo.com
Bookworms FULL	Fairfield	Last Wed 2.30 – 4.30	Anne Austin 01763 272 066 anne.austin555@btinternet.com
Bridge	The Bury	Tuesdays 10-12	Phil Anderson 07484 122 847 philpoppy@btinternet.com
Canasta	The Golden Fleece Braughing	Tuesdays 2-4pm	Shelagh Mavin shelagh.disney@gmail.com
Carpet Bowls FULL	**BBC (Late Sep-Mar)	Thursdays 10-12	Gill & Martin Gray 07717 220 431 gill.gray@mail.uk
Church Crawlers	Various Churches	1 st Tuesday 10am	Keith Bradfield 01763 448 914 - 07704 945 209 u3abuntchurchcrawlers@gmail.com
Clay Pigeon Shooting	Nuthampstead Herts League Grnd	Wed 26 th November 1pm	Bill Hooper 01763 273 123 bunthoop@hotmail.com
Computer Group	On-line	Email	Martin Gray buntingfordu3a@proton.me
Crafty Chat	Various	1 st Monday 2-4pm	Kate Farquhar 01763 287 393 farquharkate@yahoo.co.uk
Current Affairs 1 New Group Leader Needed	New Venue Black Bull Pub	1 st Thursday 7.30-9.30pm	New Group Leader Needed
Current Affairs 2 tbc	Home	Wednesdays or Thursdays	Pamela Leemeijer pamelaleemeijer@gmail.com
Guitar for Beginners	Crown Pub	Alternate Mons 2-4	Bill Hooper 01763 273 123 bunthoop@hotmail.com
Keep Fit	*SWCC	Mondays 9.30-10.30 10.30-11.30	c/o Ron Brighten 01763 273 175 ron.bofcw@tiscali.co.uk
Keep Fit Seated Exercise	~URCH Opp Post Office	Thursdays 1pm	c/o Ron Brighten 01763 273 175 ron.bofcw@tiscali.co.uk

FULL – no casual drop-ins			
Leisure Afternoons Come along for company, chat and learn some new board games.	*SWCC Bunter Suite	3 rd Monday 2pm-4pm with some adjustments for bank holidays!	Maggie Bell 01763 274 259 07485 360 012 a.bell100@btinternet.com
LETs (London, Elsewhere & Theatres)	Various	Various	Jean Cook Jean.M.Cook@btinternet.com
Line Dancing	*SWCC	Tuesdays 4.15-5.15	Gill Alderton 07984 039 016 gillalderton@yahoo.com
London Walks See Walks			
Mah Jong	The Bury	Tuesdays 2-4pm	Liz Cooper 01763 271 027 lizandmikecooper1@gmail.com
Musicians United The A Train Jazz Band	Cheshunt u3a	Mondays 10-12	Cheshunt u3a Colin Meehan 07768 278 064 Steve Deeks 07392 298 788
Pétanque	The Crown	Fridays 1pm–3pm Summer	Dave Austin 01763 272 066 daustin2020@btinternet.com
Photography	Tann Bar	3 rd Tuesday 10am	David Dixon interestingplace@hotmail.com
Pickleball FULL	Cottered Village Hall	Mondays 11-1pm	Gill Alderton 07984 039 016 gillalderton@yahoo.com
Pickleball 2 FULL	Cottered Village Hall	Fridays 10-12	Ditto
Pickleball 3	Cottered Village Hall	Wednesdays 10-12	David Baxter 01763 274519 coverupholstery@aol.com
Pilates FULL	*SWCC	Fridays 12.30-1.30	Jacqui Plummer plummerkj11@aol.com
Pottery FULL	#OGPS	Thursdays 10-12	Gill Alderton 07984 039 016 gillalderton@yahoo.com
Quizzes	Various	Occasional	Tim Marks timbo2256@yahoo.co.uk
Scrabble	Vicarage Road	Thursday afternoons Fortnightly	Sue Neal 07862 220 787 sueneal2957@yahoo.co.uk
Seated Exercise - See Keep Fit	-	-	c/o Ron Brighten 01763 273 175 ron.bofcw@tiscali.co.uk
Sunday Lunches for Solos 1 FULL	Various	2 nd Sunday	Lyn Kendal-Archer 01763 271 972 lkendalarcher@outlook.com
Sunday Lunches for Solos 2	Various	4 th Sunday	Fran Feek 07775 857 335 fran.feek@hotmail.com
Table Tennis	*SWCC	Wednesdays 1.30-3.30	Dave Austin 01763 272 066 daustin2020@btinternet.com
The Thursday Group Go along and try your hand at darts, crib, dominoes, snooker, pool or just for a chat.	Social Club	Thursdays from 2.15	Ian Round 01763 272 276 ianround@yahoo.com
They Matter FULL	*SWCC Bunters Suite	Last Monday 2-4	June Fairbrother 01763 271 600 fairjune1181@gmail.com
Walks – 3 Mile Walk	Various	Last Wednesday 11am	Norman Jones 07766 367 983 normanbjones1@gmail.com
Walks	Various	Wednesdays am	Carol McKimmie 01763 271 054 carolmckimmie@yahoo.com
Walks	Various	Thursdays am	Barbara & Roger Henderson 01763 272 035 barbarahenderson87@outlook.com

Walks in London	London	Monthly Wed or Thurs	Mike Murfitt 07803 708 181 mikemurfitt@sky.com
Wine Appreciation FULL	*SWCC Bunters Suite	Last Thursday 7.30pm	Ron & Maureen Brighten 01763 273 175 ron.bofcw@tiscali.co.uk

Committee Contact Details

Chairman	Martin Gray	07588 708 257	buntingfordu3a@proton.me
Vice Chairman	Tim Marks	07754 583 599	timbo2256@yahoo.co.uk
Treasurer	Michael Murfitt	07803 708 181	buntingfordtreasureru3a@gmail.com
Secretary	Julia Bush	07905 117 675	buntingfordu3asec@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Lesley Stevens	07767 152 259	buntingfordu3a@gmail.com
Groups Co-ordinator	Fran Feek	07775 857 335	fran.feek@hotmail.com
Asst Groups Co-ordinator	Sue Batchelor	01763 271 884	sue.clark2007@googlemail.com
Speaker Secretary	Susan Peters	07723 343 282	speakersecu3abunt@gmail.com
Welfare Officer	Caroline Nash	07746 068 275	carolinandynash@aol.com
Webmaster	Martin Gray	07588 708 257	martingray@mail.uk
Monthly Meeting Chairs Rota	Mike Murfitt	07803 708 181	mikemurfitt@sky.com
Non-committee: Greeters	Val Reedman	01763 272 135	valbuntu3a@gmail.com
Non-committee: Tea Rota	Sue Batchelor	01763 271 884	sue.clark2007@googlemail.com
Non-committee: Raffle	Evelyn Smith		
Non-committee: Library	Maureen & Dennis Robertson		
Non-committee	Newsletter Editor & Buntingford Journal	Jean Cook	Jean.M.Cook@btinternet.com
Our Website	https://buntingford.u3asite.uk/		
Our Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/groups/143301880900601/?locale=en_GB		