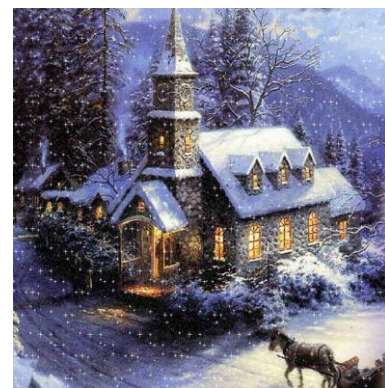


2025 Christmas



The Buntingford Banner

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www.u3asites.org.uk/buntingford/home

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As we come to the end of another year I reflect on how we have fared. Our u3a has continued to grow in strength, new members, new groups and even new venues for those groups.

The new year approaches and there are a number of talks in 2026 that I'm looking forward to. As ever, the list is on the website and will be going up on the Seth Ward Community Centre notice board shortly. It is also in this Newsletter. I hope to see you all at these meetings, but first, enjoy the Christmas meeting, our last of 2025.

As always this is a chance to get together and start on the mince pies. I wish a merry Christmas to you all and all with whom you spend it, and a happy and healthy new year.

On a final note, we find ourselves, once again, without a Secretary. Can you help us please. We just need someone to take the Minutes at our Monthly Committee Meeting, which is held on the second Monday of the month at the Seth Ward Community Centre, and handle any correspondence which is usually passing it on via email or bringing it to the committee meeting.

You don't have to be a long standing member to come on to the committee and will be given every help. If you are new to the town or the u3a this is an ideal way to get to know people.

Martin Gray



MONTHLY MEETINGS & MEMBERSHIP CARDS

As from January you will need to show your Membership Card at the Monthly Meeting.

The Membership Lists will be in numerical order so we will need your Membership Number.

This should greatly speed up the checking in process.

GROUP NEWS

PICKLEBALL 3

STOP PRESS - Pickleball 3 started on the 5th November and is now FULL!!

PILATES – new date

Please note that w.e.f. Thursday 15th January, Pilates will be changing from Fridays to Thursdays 3.30-4.30pm.

JEFF JONES

On the 26th November 2025 Jeff Jones became an Honorary Alderman of Hertfordshire County Council for Services to Local Government.

The service was held in the Council Chamber of County Hall with a reception afterwards upstairs in the ballroom. He was accompanied by his wife Jill, Buntingford Town Council Town Clerk.

Jeff served as a councillor for eighteen years representing the residents of Buntingford and villages for ten years at East Herts District Council and eight years at Hertfordshire County Council. He served as Chairman of East Herts District Council in 2017.

Apart from serving on many committees, Jeff instigated the Flower Troughs along Market Hill, financed from his Locality Budget when our County Councillor. This is now funded jointly by his successor Cllr Terry Smith and Buntingford Town Council.

Ten years ago Jeff started the BCAT bus (Buntingford Community Area Transport) and in response to local demands to help the people of Ukraine with delivering humanitarian aid when Russia invaded their country, he made three trips to Ukraine returning with refugees, dropping them off with host families in Europe and bringing two families to pre-arranged families in Buntingford as part of the Homes for Ukrainian national scheme. Richard Hall and Adam Compton accompanied Jeff on these trips to assist with driving those long arduous journeys.

He also undertook another arduous trip to Turkey delivering aid in response to the earthquake which took the life of a popular business owner and member of our High Street community. This time he was helped by three Turkish drivers, not local.

An Honorary Alderman represents the Chairman of Hertfordshire County Council at functions that he is unable to attend.

Although a proud day for Jeff and the others who were also made Aldermen, the day was tinged with sadness as this was the last ceremony to take place in our County Hall after 86 years, as the Council relocates to modern offices in Stevenage.



Eric Clare Midwinter OBE (1932 – 2025) Co-founder of the U3A

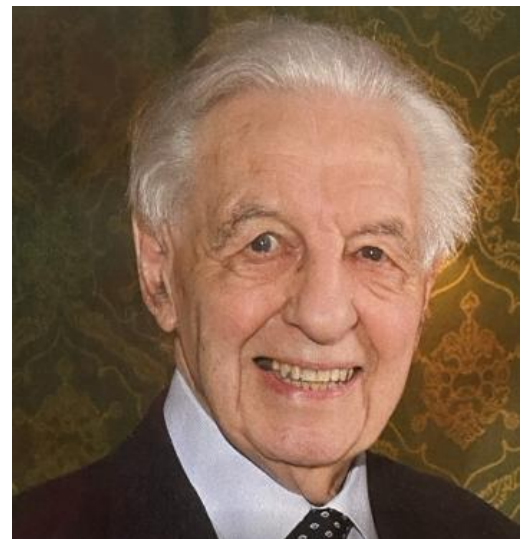
In the current 'u3a Matters' there is a four page tribute to Eric Midwinter, with photos and memories from u3a members who had worked with him.

"A social historian, he was acutely aware of the need to recognise senior people as valued members of society: he was adamant the older person should be seen as a positive, active citizen, not as a negative, passive social casualty.

To that end he held a number of pivotal positions. This included his appointment as Director, and later Chairman, of the Centre for Policing on Ageing (1980-1981) and Consultant to the Millennium Debate of the Age project.

Not least of course, in 1982 he co-founded the University of the Third Age. He was awarded an OBE ten years later."

(The U3A (uppercase!) was started in France and was connected to the universities. Eric, with others, went to France, liked what they saw and brought it back to the UK. They tweaked it and dropped the link to the universities but kept the name and it is this version that is used all over the world.)



LEISURE GROUP



Val Reedman, Sylvia Hamilton, Marion Ling, Elaine Gibson, Beverley Stringer, Maggie Bell (Group Leader), Norma Oxford, Val Morgan, Alma Andrews

The Leisure Group went out for a first time lunch at The Beefeater, Ware. No - not in Christmas gear – as it was still November!

OUR NOVEMBER SPEAKER



The Inquisitive Mind of a Child

"Why are they selling poppies, Mummy?
Selling poppies in our town?"

"The poppies, child, are flowers of love.
For the men who marched away."

"But why have they chosen the poppy, Mummy?
Why not a beautiful rose?"

"Because, my child, men fought and died
In the fields where the poppy grows."

"But why are the poppies so red, Mummy?
why are the poppies so red?"

"Red is the colour of blood, my child,
The blood that our soldiers shed."

"The heart of the poppy is black, Mummy,
Why does it have to be black?"

"Black, my child, is the symbol of grief
For the men who never came back."

"But why, Mummy, are you crying so?
Your tears are giving you pain."

"My tears are fears for you, my child
For the world is forgetting again."

Our speaker for November was Richard Thomas: "Flanders Fields to the Tower" – a topical talk about remembrance especially as we met the day after Remembrance Sunday and the day before Armistice Day.

He told us about the making of the ceramic poppies for the centenary commemoration of WW1 and that his two daughters were volunteers who helped to 'plant' them. He then showed us photos of the rain drenched moat which became a quagmire when the poppy displays were being dismantled. We also learnt about the Poppy Factory where disabled veterans were employed.

It all began because of the war poem 'In Flanders Field' written during WW1 by Canadian physician Lieutenant-Colonel John McCrae.

Richard ended his talk with the poem above.

NEW GROUP LEADER – CURRENT AFFAIRS 1

A former member of the group, Susan Peters, has kindly volunteered to take over as Group Leader. The group will now meet on the first Thursday of the month beginning Thursday 8th January 7.30pm – 9.30pm in 'The Bull Pen' rear of the Black Bull Pub, in the High Street opposite Baldock Road. For further information please contact Susan on: 07723 343 282 suemary1958@hotmail.com

FORTHCOMING MONTHLY MEETINGS

DECEMBER 8th 'Welwyn Harmony' is a ladies' a Cappella choir based in Welwyn Garden City who sing and perform in a Cappella, four-part harmony.

We will be given a short history of a Cappella before the choir performs some Christmas music. Their varied repertoire includes well-known songs by artists such as Adele and Queen alongside traditional barbershop & musical theatre numbers.

They currently have around 40 members from a variety of ages and backgrounds with a shared passion for singing. The chorus is affiliated with the Ladies Association of British Barbershop Singers (LABBS) and the singers enjoy taking part in the annual Convention where they meet and compete against sister choruses from around the UK.

They also take part in local music festivals, and in 2025 won the award for best a capella performance in the Watford Music Festival. Their Musical Director, Oli Goodall, coaches singing and directs choirs full-time. He is also a member of 'Hot Ticket,' the 2023 National Barbershop Mixed Quartet Champions."

Monday 12th January our speaker will be **Kate Hufton 'East Herts & Essex Air Ambulance.'** Your Local Life-Saving Charity: 25+ Years of Progress at EHAAT. Join us as we look at the incredible work of the East Herts Air Ambulance Trust (EHAAT). Donations will be greatly appreciated.

Monday 9th February, Will Pascoe 'Alzheimer's UK' A remarkable insight into this worthy organisation on their research to find a cure for Alzheimer's. Donations will be greatly appreciated.

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

Buntingford u3a - Speakers 2026

<u>Date</u>	<u>Speaker & Title</u>
January 12 th	Kate Hufton - 'East Herts & Essex Air Ambulance.' Your Local Life-Saving Charity: 25 + Years of Progress at EHAAT. Join us as we look at the incredible work of the East Herts Air Ambulance Trust (EHAAT). Donations will be greatly appreciated.
February 9 th	Will Pascoe - 'Alzheimer's UK' A remarkable insight into this worthy organisation on their research to find a cure for Alzheimer's. Donations will be greatly appreciated.
March 9 th	Malcolm Wells MBE - 'So far so Good'. Covering topics on his time in the Army (Gulf War) receiving his MBE and training assisted dogs.
April 13 th	Neil Hanson - 'Inn & Out at the Top'. Neil has some humorous tales from

	running a pub on the highest hill in Britain.
May 11th	Sue Thiedman - 'Nepal Adventures' . Sue tells us about her Adventures trekking through Nepal and about the people she met along the way. *donations - 'just giving page'
June 8th	Nick Dobson - 'Florence Nightingale & Mary Seacole' . Two extraordinary Victorian Ladies - an illustrated look at two amazing and controversial women who won fame in the Crimean War.
July 13th	Andrew Baker - 'The Profumo Affair' . Over 60 years on, a fascinating British Political Scandal and the consequences that followed.
August	NO MEETING
September 14th	Jon Mein - 'Room at the Inn' . Traveling through Georgian Hertfordshire.
October 12th	AGM
November 9th	Janine Machin, BBC Look East News Journalist/Correspondent - Her life with the BBC from Stoke on Trent to Norwich.
December 14th	Michael Buck - 'Merry Santa' . A one-man show entertainer who brings us all things Christmas.

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	Friday 19th December 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	'The Bull Pen' Black Bull Pub	1 st Thursday 7.30-9.30pm	Susan Peters 07723 343 282 suemary1958@hotmail.com
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 FULL – no casual drop-ins	~URCH Opp Post Office	Thursdays 1pm	c/o Ron Brighten 01763 273 175 ron.bofcw@tiscali.co.uk
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 FULL	Cottered Village Hall	Wednesdays 10-12	David Baxter 01763 274519 coverupholstery@aol.com
Pilates FULL New day and time w.e.f. Thurs 15 Jan 2026	*SWCC	Thursdays 3.30-4.30	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 FULL – no casual drop-ins	-	-	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	vacant		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
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Our Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/groups/143301880900601/?locale=en_GB		