

The Buntingford Banner

Registered Charity No. 1185575

www.u3asites.org.uk/buntingford/home

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A reminder this month that the County Council is having a consultation process regarding "improving" the area at the bottom of the High Street, and putting in a 20mph speed limit. Residents have until 26th April to get comments in at the Manor House or online.

The council has asked us to publicise this consultation, the effects of which will affect everyone in the town.

Meanwhile, more and more of our groups are flagging as full. There are waiting lists growing across the board. As we start a new membership year on 1st April I suggest again that you consider running a group. It isn't as hard as you might think and can be a rewarding way of spending your time.

Also of course come forward as a committee member, that too, is very rewarding and you are helping to promote and maintain the work of the Buntingford u3a as a whole. Just make contact with any of the existing committee members to find out more.



Martin Gray

BUNTINGFORD TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS

When I read Martin's Report (above) about the consultation process I went into the Manor House for more information.

I found a very good information table with coloured A4 'photos' detailing the new look.

I picked up several leaflets including the Consultation Survey itself which is very clear and easy to complete and there is a collection box to put it in.

Alternatively you can complete the online survey by going to

<https://letstalktransport.hertfordshire.gov.uk/Buntingford>



FYI

The Buntingford Film Club has changed its name to Buntingford Cinema although the Facebook page is still BFC (apparently it is very difficult to change the name on FB) and the emails about the films also come from Buntingford Film club so it is very confusing. Buntingford Cinema is on their posters though if you happen to see any around town.

CHURCH CRAWLERS



The Scrolls



Carefully unwrapping one of the Scrolls



Reading the Scroll

Rabbi Irit Shillor
Group Leader Keith Bradfield
Rev'd Sara Bagnall
(Asst Curate, Aspenden,
Buntingford, Westmill
Since June 2025)



"We are an open, inclusive and caring community, proud to belong to the Movement for Reform Judaism. We welcome every individual and family that wants to join us on their and our Jewish journey, regardless of background, religious practice and Jewish knowledge.

We blend tradition and innovation, adapting customs and prayers to suit our inclusive community, practising equality to the best of our ability.

We celebrate Jewish life throughout the year, through social events, services and study. We support members in times of joy and sorrow, through our welfare work, prayer and social gatherings.

We take ourselves seriously but we also have fun and enjoy ourselves.

We love to finish most events with a nosh and a chat."

I am a member of the u3a Church Crawlers and last month we visited the Harlow Jewish Community and I think everyone was as surprised as I was to be greeted by a very colourful Lady Rabbi.

Rabbi Irit Shillor was born in Israel and moved to England when she was 30. She got married, had children and became a Rabbi.

Irit's first language is Hebrew and she recently had the honour of being asked to be one of many proof readers for a new set of Torah Scrolls.

I commented on her kippot (ladies' skullcap –men's kippah) a lovely turquoise silk one matching her clothes. She said she had got many – all different colours to match what she was wearing.

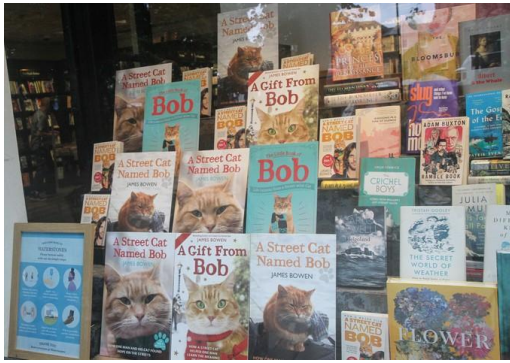
It was Irit who gave us the talk with a Q&A afterwards and she was great. I – and others – could have listened to her all day.

Also present was the Rev'd Sarah Bagnall the new Assistant Curate of Aspenden, Buntingford & Westmill who works closely with Irit on inter-faith engagement and understanding.

We had time to look round an excellent exhibition that was set up in the hall; then refreshments - tea and some gorgeous pastries - after which we reassembled for a talk, again by Erit, about the Torah Scrolls.

This was a super visit and one we will long remember.

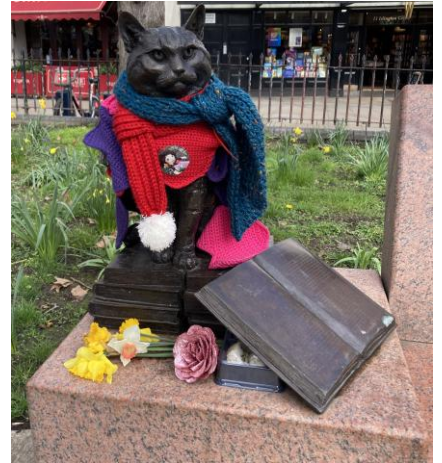
LONDON WALKS



Bob Books



The Statue & with knitted scarves



On last month's Islington Walk the group made a pilgrimage to see the statue of Street Cat Bob.

James Bowen met Bob in 2007 while struggling with drug addiction and homelessness, finding the ginger cat injured and abandoned in the hallway of his building. After a few failed attempts to find the cat's owner, James took Bob to an RSPCA clinic to be assessed and treated and chose to take the ginger tom in to make sure he recovered and received his medication.

Once Bob was well again, James found that the cat was following him to work, and the two of them quickly became unlikely companions, with Bob accompanying James as he was busking and selling The Big Issue in London. James believes the ginger tom cat rescued him from living rough and helped him recover from his addiction.

With writer Garry Jenkins, James wrote the book *A Street Cat Named Bob* in an Islington café, which was published in September 2010. When the book became a bestseller, things started looking up for Bob and James. The book sold over 9 million copies across the world and it was adapted into an award-winning film in 2016, with Bob playing himself in the movie.

When James lost his beloved, scarf-wearing companion in 2020, he and a group of Bob's fans called "Bobites" fundraised to create a permanent memorial of the cat. The fundraising achieved over 100,000 donations.

The life-sized bronze statue of Bob, created by sculptor Tanya Russell, depicts Bob in his trademark scarf, perched on a stack of books. It's positioned on a pink granite bench, engraved with the motto: "He is my companion, my best friend, my teacher and my soulmate. And he will remain all of those things. Always." Two other benches bear an inscription: 1. "Everybody deserves a second chance," 2. "Stronger together James and Bob Bowen.

Commenting on the statue, James Bowen said: "I am so incredibly proud of Bob and grateful for the time we shared. He enriched my life from the moment I met him. He saved me and he touched the lives of millions, providing optimism to people across the world."

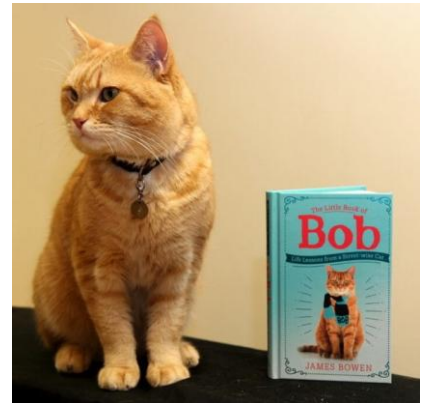
The memorial of Bob was unveiled in July 2021. The ceremony was covered by the BBC, ITV News, Sky News Radio, the Big Issue and the Islington Tribune, and drew in crowds of Bobites. Tanya spoke a few words and presented James with the first casting of a miniature foundry bronze statue just prior to the unveiling.

The statue of Bob sits upon a plinth to the side of a granite bench, seated upright on a pile of his books. He was placed on the left side as when James sat on the bench, Bob was close to his right shoulder, where he was always so comfortable when they were together.

"He came and asked me for help, and he needed me more than I needed to abuse my own body. He is what I wake up for every day now.

He's definitely given me the right direction to live my life." – James Bowen

A very emotional and inspirational story.



GROUP NEWS - LINE DANCING



Carol Hunt, Chris Newman, Julie Harris
Helen Nicholls. (Tutor)

Three members of our Line Dancing Group joined a party of 32 and a few men, from Stansted u3a, Bishop's Stortford and Wicken Bonhunt at the end of February, for a Friday to Sunday weekend at Warners, Runnymede, Windsor.

Helen, their tutor, had arranged a 2hour line dancing session in the main lounge for Saturday morning which was much enjoyed. The ladies then had free time to go into Windsor and explore the Thames/Runnymede walk and enjoy the facilities that Warners had to offer.

ERMINE STREET ALLOTMENTS ASSOCIATION

The Ermine Street Allotments are situated next to Freman College at the end of Bowling Green Lane and they currently have vacancies for new plot holders.

If you are interested please contact committee.esaa@gmail.com

FORTHCOMING MONTHLY MEETINGS

Monday 13th April: Neil Hanson – 'Inn and out at the Top.' Running a pub on the highest hill in Britain.

Monday 11th May: Sue Thiedman – 'Nepal Adventures'. Sue tells us about her Adventures trekking through Nepal and about the people she met along the way.

**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	Fairfield	Last Wed	Anne Austin 01763 272 066

FULL		2.30 – 4.30	anne.austin555@btinternet.com
Bridge	The Bury	Tuesdays 10-12	Phil Anderson 07484 122 847 philpoppy@btinternet.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	Monthly – contact GL	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	Black Bull Pub	1 st Thursday 7.30-.30pm	Susan Peters 07723 343 282 suemary1958@hotmail.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
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 07745 501 965 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
Quiz Nights	Various	Occasional	Tim Marks timbo2256@yahoo.co.uk

Scrabble FULL	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 FULL – reserve list	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 Making activity mats for people with dementia. Donations of buttons, ribbons, fabric, zips, etc., always appreciated	*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
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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
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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		