

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

Buntingford Journal



Buntingford High Street in the winter of 1964.

Merry Christmas & Happy
New Year to All Our Readers

70p

Dec 2020 / Jan 2021
Volume 45, No.7



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DECEMBER 2020 / JANUARY 2021

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USEFUL LOCAL INFORMATION

POLICE STATION: Baldock Road, Buntingford	Non-emergency telephone: 101 In emergencies dial 999
GAS: ELECTRICITY: WATER (Veolia): SEWERAGE (Thames Water): FLOODLINE:	Emergency (gas leaks) – Freephone 0800 111 999 Emergency (power loss) – Freephone 0800 7838 838 Emergency – Freephone 0800 376 5325 Emergency – Telephone 0800 316 9800 Emergency – 0345 988 1188 or 0845 988 1188 Environment Agency Incident Line: 0800 80 70 60
DOCTORS:	Buntingford Medical Centre – White Hart Close Tel: 01763 271362 (24 hours)
B A S H (Buntingford Action For Social Help):	Providing transport for hospital and doctors appointments. Tel: Colin Horgan 07733 091731
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, RAPE, RACE or HATE CRIME:	Confidential Information Helpline: 01992 554440 (in emergency, dial 999)
LOCAL COUNCILS:	Buntingford Town Council – 01763 272222 East Herts District Council – 01279 655261 Housing – 01279 714714 Benefits – Freephone 0800 373852 For emergencies out of office hours: 01279 655261 Adult Care Services – 0300 123 4042 Children’s Services – 0300 123 4043 Hertfordshire Highways – 0300 123 4047, or report faults online: www.hertsdirect.org/highwayfaults
BUNTINGFORD LIBRARY: High Street, Buntingford	Opening times: Mon, Tues, Thurs 10:00 – 16:00 Friday 14:00 – 16:00 Saturday 10:00 – 13:00 Telephone enquiries – 0300 123 4049 Option 1 – Renewals 03:00–23:45 every day Option 2 – All other enquiries Mon–Fri 08:00–20:00, Sat 09:00– 6:00
CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU: The Manor House Market Hill, Buntingford	Offices are currently closed due to Covid. For telephone advice call 03444 111 444 (Mon to Fri 10am–4pm) or call the local Messageline on 01920 459 944 for a call back
HOUSEHOLD WASTE & RECYCLING SITE: Watermill Industrial Estate Aspenden Road	Usual opening: Mon to Fri 17:00 – 20:00 Sat & Sun 10:00 – 13:00 Currently closed due to Covid. Our nearest open recycling site is in Royston.

The Buntingford Journal is published by, but is editorially independent of, the Buntingford Civic Society. For information on how to join the Society and have the Journal delivered to your door, please email: membership@buntingfordcivic.org.uk

EDITOR'S LETTER

Regular readers will no doubt have noticed that we're a week late with the Journal this month. The Civic Society decided to delay publication by one week in the hope that Lockdown 2 will have ended by the time the Journal is published, because this makes delivery much easier. Fingers crossed the plan worked and I hope we haven't confused anyone. Something that is confusing many people is what we will or will not be able to do this Christmas, but hopefully this will be clearer by the time you are reading this.

Christmas is certainly happening in this issue of the Journal. Carol Emery of the Local History Group takes us on a journey through Christmas in Buntingford Past and Present. Her article is full of fascinating details of how they did things in days gone by. We have a heart-warming Christmas story from Sue Shearing of the Buntingford Writers Group. And Vyse reminds us of the joys of the traditional children's Nativity play, with his usual warmth and amusement at the foibles of humankind.

One contributor I must mention this month is Alex Kanold, who wears three different hats in three separate articles – one as a Here to Help volunteer, another as the new Member Pioneer for the local Co-op, and a third as the Christmas Promotion Coordinator for the Chamber of Commerce, all of them aimed at enhancing and supporting our local community. Let's do as she suggests and support our High Street this Christmas!

Several people have commented to me how much they enjoyed John's poem, 'Raindrops', which I featured in October. In publishing it I hoped it would encourage others to write and submit poetry for publication and I have not been disappointed. In fact I've been blown away by the creativity and would like to thank all the contributors this month. If I pick just one to highlight here, it has to be Jackie Smith's 'My Covid Journey', a very moving account of her illness and slow recovery.

I was very sad to hear of the death of Maxine, a lovely lady I often chatted with while out walking Toby. She always had her own little dog with her, and a kind word and a smile for anyone who took the time to stop and talk. Peter Wonnacott, an old friend of hers and ex-Buntingford resident, pays tribute to her on the letters page.

Finally, I just want to mention the cover picture, which was sent in by Fiona Selby. I wonder when we'll ever see snow like that again? Merry Christmas everyone!

Christine Noble

Many thanks to Brian Austin for proof-reading.

**Editorial copy deadline for the February 2021 Journal
is Saturday 16th January 2021**

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

LETTERS & EMAILS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Christine

I have just sat and read the pre-publication draft of Carol Emery's article on 'Christmas in Buntingford Past and Present'. As always, her research is very thorough and I loved the advert for Moss's shop which suggested we should:

'Buy in Buntingford and keep Buntingford Busy'

Wouldn't it be a great idea to recycle this as a motto for local businesses today?

Kind regards, **Chris Scott-Hake**

Dear Christine

In Memory of Maxine 'Maxie' Franklin

I was very sad to hear of the recent death of long-term Buntingford resident Maxine Franklin. I knew her as Maxie and we were friends for many years, and when I moved away from Buntingford she was one of the people I kept in touch with. I was just about to give her a phone call to see how things were when news reached me that she had died. She will be greatly missed by those folk still around who knew her.

Maxine Juliet Paxton made her entry into the world on the 1st June 1944 and remained with us until 1st October 2020. She resided at Pelham during her youth and her parents were in charge of the Puckeridge Hunt hound pack. Maxie got very involved with looking after the hounds and prided herself on the fact that she knew the name of each and every dog in the pack. It was the start of a love of dogs that stayed with her all her life.

I first met Maxine in the 1950s when we both attended Buntingford Secondary Modern School (now Edwinstree). Like so many of the girls she was always immaculately turned out every day in a smart, nicely ironed uniform. She eventually married and the couple moved into Buntingford. They never had children but were very happy together until her husband's death which left her alone. Well, not quite alone because Maxie always had a dog to keep her company and she would often chat to it as though it was a person.

Maxine was a very easy-going person with a homely nature and kind personality. She was always happy to help others if she could and was so easy to chat to, perhaps because she always made a person feel welcome and at ease. One thing is for certain, the world is a poorer place without her. R.I.P. dear 'Maxie'!

A Good Friend & Acquaintance, **Peter G Wonnacott**





Buntingford High Street – the place to be this Xmas!

Forget your winter visit to Oxford Street. This year it's all happening right here on our very own High Street!

Without our usual Late Night Shopping event, the Buntingford Chamber of Commerce wanted to come up with something special, something to spread some Christmas cheer in what we know will be a very

different kind of Christmas for us all. Throughout December our High Street shops will be participating in Buntingford's own '**Living Advent Calendar**', organised by the Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with Home-Start. Each day from the 1st to 24th December, a poster will appear in a different shop window for you to find. Collect an activity sheet from the Community Noticeboard in the entrance to Buntingford Co-op, fill in all 24 days of the Living Advent Calendar, draw your own Christmas picture on the back of the sheet, then enter our prize draw to win a tasty treat!

You'll find much more than posters in High Street shop windows this Christmas! We know that most stores always make an effort to bring festive cheer to their shop fronts, but to encourage them even more we're running a competition for '**Most Christmassy Business**'. High Street businesses, including local pubs, are invited to really go to town as they deck out their store fronts for the holidays, which means you'll be able to get your Christmas window fix right here in Buntingford! We are delighted to have the Head Boy and Head Girl of Freman College to judge the competition, along with our Town Mayor Graham Waite. In particular they will be looking out for: visual impact as seen from the High Street; creativity and uniqueness; and artistic effort. So come on business owners! Make it visible and make it festive! Winners will be announced on the Chamber of Commerce website and social media on Friday 18th December.



Living Advent Calendar: Here's the first poster, so you know the sort of thing you're looking for!

Please remember – Shop Local this Christmas and Support your High Street!

Look out for our update in the next issue of The Journal (February 2021) to see the winning picture from our Living Advent Calendar competition, and find out which High Street businesses were deemed the 'Most Christmassy' – although you'll probably have seen them proudly displaying their rosettes! We hope you enjoy our festive activities and we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Alexandra Kanold

Christmas Promotion Coordinator, Buntingford Chamber of Commerce

For a full list of local businesses ready to take Christmas orders, visit:
www.buntingfordchamberofcommerce.co.uk/membership/
(Click on a business to go straight to their website and start shopping!)



Buntingford Civic Society

(Reg. Charity No. 1014873)

www.buntingfordcivic.org.uk

Member of



Such a shame that the Remembrance Sunday commemorations were so badly impacted this year. I did feel, however, that the service that took place was small but perfectly formed! The service was live streamed and I hope many of you were able to watch it. I did lay a wreath on behalf of the Civic Society after the event.

Some very worrying statistics regarding Covid cases in Buntingford/Horstead seem to be developing. There were 36 positive tests in the seven days to November 13th and a rate of 430.5 per 100K of population, which is well above average compared to the rest of England and on a par with hotspots in the North West of the country. I am sure investigations are ongoing to identify the reasons for this upsurge. Please all be aware. This virus is still very much alive.

If you want to track the level of infection in our area, or anywhere else in the UK, go to the government website at coronavirus.data.gov.uk. Scroll down the Summary page and enter a postcode where indicated to get details for that unique area.

And just remember – HANDS ... FACE ... SPACE.



Aspenden Road continues to be a real problem, especially near the Dandara development (photo, left). It is difficult not to draw the conclusion that the new development and flooding go hand in hand. Dandara now want permission to build an additional 23 dwellings using the same access. Madness!!

At the time of writing it is still very unclear what form of Christmas celebrations with our families will be allowed this year. Whatever happens, please try to enjoy and celebrate as

best you can – I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a virus-free and stress-free New Year.

Graham Bonner, Chairman Buntingford Civic Society
graham_bonner123@yahoo.co.uk

Buntingford Civic Society was established in 1972 with the aim of improving the fabric of the Town. It has led or been involved in many restoration and enhancement projects and in planning, communication and financial support to improve aspects of life in Buntingford. **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 Buntingford Civic Society, an application form is available on the website at www.buntingfordcivic.org.uk. Or you can email the Society's Membership Secretary, Peter Hay, at membership@buntingfordcivic.org.uk.



'20's Plenty Children's Petition' plates by Welwyn school children. To join in email us for a copy of the template designed by Sue Nicholls. We hope children from across the County will show Herts CC what 20mph limits would mean for them.

There are lots of developments to tell you about this month, both locally and county-wide. You might remember in a previous article we talked about the **Herts County Council SMS Consultation** that took place a few months ago? Well, the HCC Highways & Environment Cabinet Panel had their follow-up meeting recently, where they debated proposed amendments to the current strategy and a motion brought forward by Councillor John Hale for a county-wide, default 20mph limit. We at 20's Plenty for Herts have also been calling for a default limit and, as a result of our **647 signature Petition** (thank you if you signed), were given the opportunity to present both a short statement and report to the Cabinet Panel meeting.

Unfortunately, both the motion and our briefing notes pointing out the many flaws in the new proposals were ignored. This means that proposed schemes will now be even more difficult to implement. Currently, to introduce a 20mph limit without physical calming measures, the existing speeds must be 25mph or below in at least 90% of the roads in the proposed area. The new strategy changes this to require existing speeds below 24mph on every single road. A new policy is also introduced removing new 20mph limits if speeds remain too high after the first year of implementation. These new vehicle-biased rules continue to allow drivers to dictate the speed of traffic on our roads and further marginalise the needs of vulnerable roads users, who will continue to be put at risk from speeding traffic, air and noise pollution. This surely can't be justified, and appears to ignore recent Dept of Transport recommendations, which emphasise the importance of 20mph implementation in both Active Travel and plans for COVID-19 recovery.

It's not all gloom, there is some good news! Buntingford Town Council's Resources Committee have unanimously voted to bring a recommendation for a town-wide 20mph speed limit recommendation to the full Council meeting on 26th November. If agreed, this will then be put to both the District and County Council. I think everyone would agree that urgent steps need to be taken to reclaim our town's roads for the benefit of the whole community, and not just serve as a rat run and cut through for commuters, HGVs and speeding drivers.

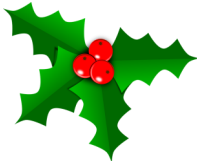


JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN

Join Mailing List/Contact: buntingford@20splentyforus.org.uk
 Facebook: @20's Plenty for Buntingford
 Instagram: 20splentybuntingford
 Twitter: @20sbuntingford
www.buntingford20splentyforus.org.uk

Buntingford 'Walking' Christmas Market

A date for your diaries. After the successful local walking markets in Buntingford earlier this year, you will have the chance to purchase Christmas presents on the **6th December from 2pm** at the Buntingford Walking Christmas Market. Residents will once again be placing stalls outside their homes selling a huge variety of items – you're bound to find a present or two! A map will be produced on the Buntingford Walking Market Facebook page showing the stall locations. Enjoy.



Yew Tree Alpacas Christmas Shop

Meet our lovely Alpacas & buy your Christmas gifts

Monday 7th – Saturday 12th December
10.30am – 4.30pm each day

Our range of alpaca products and other Christmas gifts include:

- Supersoft Alpaca socks
- Premium alpaca yarns from the Yew Tree herd
- Hand knitted luxury accessories including a wide range of alpaca hats & scarves
- Handmade Alpaca pillows *
- Alpaca greeting & Christmas cards
- Scented Christmas candles
- Yew Tree chutneys & marmalades

* made to order - samples on display

N.B. Covid measures will be in place



Complimentary refreshments



Yew Tree Alpacas
Anstey, Herts SG9 0DA
Tel: 01763 848257
Email: info@yewtreealpacas.co.uk
www.yewtreealpacas.co.uk

BUNTINGFORD & DISTRICT BIRD SOCIETY

**A Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year to All.**

Chairman T Robinson 01763 243143



Ware & District Photographic Society meetings at Thundridge Village Hall are still suspended due to the virus. However, we have been holding weekly ZOOM meetings and these will continue in 2021 commencing on **Wednesday 6th January**.

With so many people taking photographs during this difficult time, why not join your local Club where you will see a variety of work and lectures. New members are always welcome. The remainder of the programme is available on our new website www.wareps.org.uk Although we had to cancel our annual exhibition in November, we are planning a virtual exhibition details of which will be posted on the website.

Happy Christmas & New Year

New Faces on the High Street

Usually when a business closes on the High Street, the shop will be shut and empty for a while waiting for a new business to come along and move in. That didn't happen when Carl gave up Piggotts, the family butchers at the south end of the High Street that he had run for 30 years. Carl isn't hanging up his butchers apron just yet, he has another shop in his home town of Biggleswade and he wants to build up his online sales from there, but his time in Buntingford was over.

What would happen to the shop? Various rumours circulated about who and what would be moving in, including yet another takeaway. But then up stepped Gary Riley to maintain the shop as a traditional, friendly family butcher. Just days after Carl had gone, Gary re-opened the door to welcome customers once more.

Many readers will have already met Gary, but for those who haven't here's a little background. Gary learned the butcher's trade from his father, Donald, who had a butcher's shop in Tottenham. After 15 years working for his Dad, he wanted a change of direction and became a chauffeur. Before long he started his own company and for 20 years ran a very successful chauffeur hire business in London, but then along came Covid and Gary, like so many others, saw his custom dry up overnight. The business still ticks over but is essentially on hold, and Gary was left looking for something else to do.

His very first thought was to return to his original skill and open a butcher's shop, so he began looking around for suitable premises. He and his wife Janine had moved out of London to Bishop's Stortford more than 20 years ago and he wanted to stay as local as possible to the family home. When Piggotts became available, he seized the opportunity with both hands. His Dad was over the moon.

Visitors to the shop will have already noticed changes. The shop has had a complete refit, and behind the scenes Gary is handmaking sausages from local produce. At the time of writing Gary (on the left in this photo of the team) is still awaiting delivery of his new shop sign – shortages of materials due to the pandemic has meant a longer than usual wait for this, but when it does arrive it will read:

Riley's Family Butchers

The name is very apt because this really is a family run business. Gary's wife Janine is helping with the admin side of things, alongside her full-time job, and their two daughters Lauren and Danielle will be helping out in their spare time whenever possible. Lauren (centre in the photo) has already graduated from Southampton University, while Danielle is still studying. And as for Dad Donald, he is itching to get stuck in, but due to his age and the pandemic that is not going to be possible just yet.

So far, Gary is delighted with the warm reception he has had in Buntingford. Welcome to the High Street!



Hello

If you are self-isolating,
we are here to help.

We are the Buntingford and surrounding villages community support against coronavirus team

Our volunteers can help you with:

- Doing your **grocery shopping** and delivering it to your doorstep
- Helping you get in touch with other **relevant services**
- Calling for a **chat** if you are feeling lonely
- Running certain errands, such as **collecting prescriptions** and **posting letters** for you

THIS IS A FREE SERVICE PROVIDED BY VOLUNTEERS FROM YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Please call 01763 877 545

Or email heretohelp.buntingford@gmail.com

Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly. Items should be left on doorsteps.

Please also get in touch if you are able to help others and would like to join our team of volunteers.

#ViralKindness

We are still Here to Help!

Over the past 8 months, the Here to Help initiative in Buntingford has matched 117 volunteers with 183 households using a 'buddy' system. The purpose of the initiative was to ensure that every single resident of our town knows that they are not alone, that they are part of a united community and that support is available to everyone.

Graham Waite, our Town Mayor, says of the scheme: "As Mayor ... during these scary

times, it has made me immensely proud to be part of this community, especially the 'Here to Help' initiative. This scheme was set up back in March of 2020 to ensure those who live in the Town, who are vulnerable to the virus, did not go without essential items, like medication, food and limited contact with other human beings. My heartfelt thanks go out to all who volunteered to help and are still doing so. It is my fervent hope that these contacts remain in place when this pandemic subsides. Thank you all so much."

One 'buddy' shares their experience: "I have a lung condition, so I have been shielding with my family for the majority of this year. It could have been an awful situation, but the support we have received from our Here to Help volunteer has been a life changer. She called one Friday evening in March, and had a long chat so that she could fully understand us and our circumstances. By Saturday lunchtime, she'd already gone to the shops and dropped those items at our house. We then felt so reassured, and confident that we were going to be supported ... Every week our volunteer picked up food or medicine for us, diligently following safety precautions and always delivered it with a smile, checking to make sure that we were all mentally and spiritually healthy too. When Lockdown 1 ended, she offered to keep supporting us if we needed anything, and she checked in with us again at the start of Lockdown 2. Thank you, your support has been amazing and humbling and we couldn't have done it without you."

Other 'buddies' also had words of gratitude: "Our shopping buddy walked through the lockdown with us. Her selflessness and support was the deepest act of kindness. We could not have managed without her." "The care that I received ... made all the difference when I couldn't get out ... it was lovely to see [my buddy] from the door step and have a few words, which made the lockdown go much quicker."

The strength of the initiative was the collaboration between residents and Buntingford Town Council. By working together, we demonstrated what a 'community' is capable of! Supporting others gave many of us a purpose in a time of great uncertainty. Volunteer Andrea Allen explained how the initiative helped her: "At the start of the pandemic when we were fearfully moving into uncharted territory, it was brilliant to be part of the team organising and distributing the leaflets ... Then being able to support vulnerable families locally with shopping and prescriptions. I am so grateful to have been able to help ..."

The Here to Help initiative is still running – volunteers remain active and able to assist those isolating due to illness or contact tracing requirements, as well as those shielding for medical reasons. One thing that Buntingford residents never need worry about is that in this town there will always be someone Here to Help! Please get in touch if you need support or if you would like to volunteer.

Alexandra Kanold, Here to Help Volunteer

01763 877 545 / heretohelp.buntingford@gmail.com / @HereToHelpBuntingford on Facebook / Join our "Buntingford Support Group – Here To Help" on Facebook

Introducing Buntingford Co-op Member Pioneer

The Co-op is always striving to do more for its members, and has been rolling out a new initiative of introducing Member Pioneers to better support communities through more local engagement. I am very happy to introduce myself, Alex, as your Member Pioneer for Buntingford.

The role, which for me involves 4 hours a week, is to connect Co-op members, colleagues and local causes to make our community a better place to work, play, live and learn. I can put you in touch with like-minded people, offer practical advice, and help in any way possible. I will be working with our Buntingford Co-op Food Store and it is with great pleasure that I would like to introduce Phil, the new Store Manager, who joined in October. Phil is keen to use his experience in food retail management to ensure the store meets the needs of the town. Although not a Buntingford resident, he is eager to support our local community, and is even a Scout leader himself!



We can achieve so much more when we work together, so I hope to meet as many individuals and organisations as possible! Whether you are already involved in a local initiative, have an idea for a project, or just want to get involved with a good cause, I would love to hear from you!

Alexandra Kanold, Member Pioneer, Co-op Buntingford

07929 840 582 alexandra.kanold@coop.co.uk @LoveBuntingford on Facebook

Lockdown!

A world full of fear, the virus is here
Lockdown! Lockdown! Lockdown!
Nothing is heard but the song of a bird
Isolate! Isolate! Isolate!
Medics unite to join the fight
Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
Volunteers aware, don't despair
Help! Help! Help!
Care of a nation whatever their station
Love! Love! Love!
Work from home all alone
Lonely! Lonely! Lonely!
Masks on faces, in shops 2 spaces
Alert! Alert! Alert!
2 metres apart breaks my heart
Family! Family! Family!

Closed are the pubs and all the clubs
Misery! Misery! Misery!
Foodshops survive to keep us alive
Hunger! Hunger! Hunger!
Economy down, no work to be found
Furlough! Furlough! Furlough!
Schools were shut, transport cut
Despair! Despair! Despair!
The weeks have passed, easing at last
Hope! Hope! Hope!
Hopes abound a vaccine is found
Relief! Relief! Relief!
What a scene, the world is green
Delight! Delight! Delight!
Nature revives, saving lives
Exist! Exist! Exist!
God's world's alive, man will survive
Lockdown! Lockdown! Lockdown!

Maureen Smith

The Ash and Quin Valleys Group

Living God's Love

Rev Julie Gawthrope

01920 823531

St Mary the Virgin



ST. MARY'S

FURNEUX PELHAM

*St. Mary's
Stocking Pelham*

Services for Dec 2020 & Jan 2021

St Mary's, Braughing

Sun 6 th Dec	11.15am	All Age Holy Communion
Wed 9 th	9.30am	Holy Communion (said)
Sun 13 th	10.00am	All Age Morning Worship
Sun 13 th	5.45pm	Refresh Service (in Church Hall)
Wed 16 th	9.30am	Holy Communion (said)
Sun 20 th	11.15am	Holy Communion
Sun 20 th	6.00pm	Live streamed Carol Service **
Wed 23 rd	9.30am	Holy Communion (said)
Thurs 24 th	3.00pm	Live streamed Nativity **
Fri 25 th	10.30am	Christmas Day Celebration *
Sun 3 rd Jan	11.15am	All Age Holy Communion
Wed 6 th	9.30am	Holy Communion (said)
Sun 10 th	10.00am	All Age Morning Worship
Sun 10 th	5.45pm	Refresh Service (in Church Hall)
Wed 13 th	9.30am	Holy Communion (said)
Sun 17 th	11.15am	Holy Communion
Wed 20 th	9.30am	Holy Communion
Sun 24 th	9.30am	Holy Communion
Wed 27 th	9.30am	Holy Communion

St Mary's, Furneux Pelham

Sun 6 th Dec	9.30am	BCP Holy Communion
Sun 13 th	11.15am	Holy Communion
Sun 20 th	9.30am	Café Church Christingle
Sun 27 th	10.30am	Christmas Morning Worship
Sun 3 rd Jan	9.30am	BCP Holy Communion
Sun 10 th	11.15am	Holy Communion
Sun 17 th	9.30am	Café Church
Sun 24 th	11.15am	Morning Worship

St Mary's, Stocking Pelham

Sun 20 th Dec	12.30pm	Advent Morning Worship *
Sun 31 st Jan	10.30am	Holy Communion

* Entrance by ticket only. Please book your seat in advance for ticketed services.
More details from Rev Gawthrope or churchoffice@braughing.org.uk.

** Live stream only. No service in church.



SUMPTUOUS SOUPS

*Homemade soups delivered to your door!
Individually frozen for your convenience.*

2 portions
2 fresh bread rolls **£4.50**

Red Pepper and Tomato

Wild Mushroom and Walnut

Celery and Stilton

Chilli Lentil

Creamed Leek and Potato

Carrot and Orange

To order ring – 07501 495 940 or 01763 289 738



Christmas isn't cancelled here!



United Benefice of Aspenden, Buntingford & Westmill

We can't deny that 2020 has been a challenging year for us all.

Although we may not be able to spend Christmas in the usual way this year, let us share a little Christmas cheer. Join us with these two special events and gather our wonderful community together at this special time of year. God Bless you and best wishes for 2021



Christmas Carols

Sing Along

Sunday 20th December at 4pm

You can also sing as loud as you like, no one else will hear you as we have the technology to do so!

For those with internet access please follow this link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcod-gopz8pE9NrGtSHaqQ3xPqJpbXj_aq

Those who would like to join us by phone please dial either of these telephone numbers and follow the instructions:

Dial: 0203 481 5240 or 0131 460 1196

Meeting ID: 835 0309 4397 Passcode: 906350

All Age Interactive Christingle Service

Christmas Eve at 3pm

Whether you join us with or without video link via Zoom or on the telephone, let us share a little bit of Christmas spirit with you all. Our team have been busy putting our Christingle Service Activity packs

together with everything you need to join in. To ensure we have enough packs please contact us to pre-order yours.



To pre-register for our Christingle Service please contact Nina Kingsley on **07484 345027** or email: admin@unitedbenefice.org.uk

For further details of all our Services and Events please head over to our website www.unitedbenefice.org.uk



BUNTINGFORD TOWN COUNCIL

A QUALITY TOWN COUNCIL

It seems that the rules change faster than I can update people. At the time of writing we are in lockdown and the Council offices are closed to the public except by appointment. The Community Centre is also closed. We are still at the end of a phone and on email, so please contact us if you need us for anything. When lockdown finishes, we

will resume our opening hours of Monday to Thursday 10am to 4pm.

It is very worrying to see the Buntingford Division figures of 430.5 Covid cases per 100,000 population. This is far in excess of the national average and even the East Herts average. I'm not sure where we are going wrong, but please follow the guidelines and be extra careful.

Remembrance Day, given the circumstances, was very successful. Many thanks to those who stayed away and instead watched the live stream. A small meaningful ceremony was held at the War Memorial, during which only three wreaths were laid, but many more have been added since.

Not surprisingly, Christmas events are limited this year, if not non-existent. We are unable to hold the Lights of Love ceremony but we do have the silver stars. Please call in for a star to hang on the tree in memory of your loved one and if possible please make a small donation to Isabel Hospice. The tree will be lit from the 27th November.

Although the new cemetery will not officially open until April, we will be able to accept interments in the near future. Please contact us for further information. We will shortly be contacting those who have already asked about interments.

If after lockdown you feel the need to work away from the house, we have an empty office at the Manor House, on the 2nd floor, which will accommodate a small business. If you are interested, please give us a call; the office comes with one parking space.

Jill Jones MILCM Cert HE, Town Clerk

**Office hours: Monday–Thursday 10am–4pm; 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

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

Town Council meetings for December 2020 / January 2021

Thurs 3rd Dec & Thurs 7th Jan

7:00pm – Amenities Committee

Thurs 10th Dec & Thurs 14th Jan

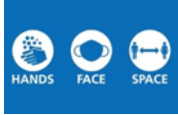
7:00pm – Resources Committee

Thurs 28th Jan 2021

7:00pm – Full Council

All meetings will be held remotely, details for observing the meetings are published on the agenda and can also be obtained from the Clerk's office.

News from Your District and County Councillor, Jeff Jones



COVID-19

I am afraid Coronavirus is once again the headlines. As you read this I hope we have just come out of Lockdown 2, but infection rates have worryingly spiked in Buntingford Division. At the time of writing our health and track-and- trace professionals are looking into the cause of this very high increase.



Infection rates for the 7 days to 19th November per 100,000 resident population:

Hertfordshire **241**; Buntingford **406.6** with 34 people testing positive for the virus. These are very worrying figures for Buntingford when compared to Hertfordshire overall and to other towns. We have to ensure that we all stick to the Government guidance, **Hands – Face – Space**, to get the infection rate down.



On a more positive note it is fantastic to finally receive some good news! The roll-out of a vaccine will hopefully start in December. It will take some time to be fully rolled out, but hopefully this will be the first step to getting back to some form of normality.

There is a huge amount of work currently going on at the County Council in preparation for setting up mass vaccination and testing centres. Places like Duxford have already been selected as an appropriate location for the East of England area with its obvious military use, and others will come forward closer to home.

Covid Marshals

East Herts Council has introduced a team of Covid marshals to help local people and businesses understand and stick to the national Covid guidance and requirements, which are all aimed at driving down the Covid infection rate and keeping everyone safe.

The marshals will be out talking to people and businesses across East Herts and can be recognised by their high-viz jackets. Their role is to help businesses to comply with the regulations and resolve any queries or issues that arise. At the same time, the marshals will be reminding the public of the importance of maintaining social distancing, wearing face masks and frequently sanitising or washing their hands. They will report concerns / issues to Environmental Health or to the Police where appropriate to investigate further.

Cycle Rack

I am sure readers will have seen the new 2-tier cycle rack that has been installed at the top of Church Street (right). It has created a lot of comment with a mixture of positive and negative opinion.

The rack was installed by East Herts Council following a successful bid from the Department for Transport (DfT) to improve and increase cycle parking provision in High Street and Town Centre locations. The area at the junction of Church Street and the High Street was chosen as an ideal location to encourage visitors to the High Street to



use sustainable transport instead of private cars. Unfortunately the cycle rack system chosen, streetpods, were incorrectly supplied. I will be seeking to relocate the 2-tier rack to the more suitable car park area and obtain the correct racks for Church Street.

Remembrance Sunday

Due to the Covid-19 restrictions a reduced and socially distanced Remembrance Sunday Ceremony was held at the Buntingford War Memorial at Market Hill, organised by the Town Council with a service conducted by Rev Ian Hill. A limited number of wreaths were laid including those by Cllr Graham Waite, Mayor of Buntingford, two wreaths laid by Andrew Huggins on behalf of the Buntingford Branch Royal British Legion and the Armed Forces, and one by myself on behalf of the Chairman of East Herts Council. Residents were encouraged not to attend the ceremony and view the live webcast on the Town Council website. Despite that a good number of socially distanced residents did attend.



Local councillors laying wreaths on Remembrance Sunday.
Left to right: Jeff Jones, Andrew Huggins and Stan Bull.

Councillor Advice

I receive many requests for advice and help on District or County Council matters. If you have any concerns that you need assistance with, I am always available on the contact details below.

Wishing all residents a Very Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy New Year.

Cllr Jeff Jones
District and County Councillor, Buntingford Ward
07836 232963 / Jeff.jones@hertfordshire.gov.uk



East Herts Council Community Grants Programme – upcoming deadline

East Herts Council is looking to support projects that strengthen the community and lead to the improved health and wellbeing of residents. There is more than £80,000 of grant funding available for building improvement projects as well as socially distanced activities and services. These must be delivered according to government guidelines. Past projects which have been supported by Community Grants include a community garden, training for volunteers, Parkinsons Support Group, arts and crafts outreach, Men's Shed projects and improvements to a bowls club. To find out more and to apply, go to <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/community-wellbeing/funding-community-organisations-and-individuals> The deadline for applications is **4th January 2021**.

Are you an informal voluntary group who needs some help to get back on your feet? Or someone with a new idea which will benefit the local community during this difficult time? If so, you are invited to apply for up to £300 any time. Please contact Claire on claire.pullen@eastherts.gov.uk to discuss your idea and ensure it meets our criteria.

East Herts Council launches Lockdown Support Grant Scheme

East Herts Council is now accepting applications for Covid-19 Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRSG) to help businesses across the district while national lockdown restrictions are in place. Eligible businesses are those that have been told to close by the government and include non-essential retail, leisure, personal care, sports facilities and hospitality business.

Those eligible must have a rateable value, be liable for business rates, and have been trading before Wednesday 4th November and been required to close on Thursday 5th November. The grants will cover a four-week period to Wednesday 2nd December when the national lockdown is scheduled to end.

The amounts payable are:

- For properties with a rateable value of £15k or under, a grant of £1,334 per four weeks will be payable.
- For properties with a rateable value of over £15k and below £51k, a grant of £2,000 per four weeks will be payable.
- For properties with a rateable value of £51k or over, a grant of £3,000 per four weeks will be payable.

Cllr Geoff Williamson, Executive Member for Finance, said: "We know this year has been incredibly difficult for local businesses, who were just starting to get back on their feet and are now facing further uncertainty. If your business is eligible then please apply and we will process payments as quickly as possible. We would also encourage people in East Herts to spread the word and share the details of the scheme with those businesses they are aware of that might be eligible for support."

For details of the Covid-19 Local Restrictions Support Grants (LRSG) and to apply visit: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-businesses-0/local-restrictions-support-grant-lrsg>.

Over the next few weeks the council will also be launching a new discretionary scheme called the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG).



The FORQ executive were delighted that funding has been released by Buntingford Town Council for the River Rib Restoration Project and Detailed Design Plan. Please see the separate article below by Brian Lemay on the history of this project.

The FORQ executive are very much missing direct contact with group members. We are therefore busy organising a public meeting, to be held via Zoom, for January 2021. Details will be sent out when available. We look forward to 'seeing' as many people as can join us at the meeting.

A new idea, called Chalk Streams First, has the potential to completely re-naturalise the flows in all of the Chilterns' chalk streams, according to Charley Rangeley-Wilson, author, conservationist and river restorationist. Furthermore, he says it could achieve this with potentially only a small net loss to overall public water supply. Charles presented his proposal and answered questions from various river groups during a Chalk Aquifer Alliance event in October. If you are interested to know more about the initiative, there are links to the recording of Charles' lecture on both the FORQ and CAA websites.

The CRAG Chalk Streams Summit was also held in October. CRAG is the Chalk Rivers Action Group, a high-level strategic group comprised of the water companies, regulators, DEFRA and the Chilterns AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), who are working together to find ways of returning water to England's chalk streams, in the Chilterns and beyond. Always keen to hear what other groups are looking to do to help their chalk streams, FORQ were pleased to be able to 'attend'. There is a link to the recording of event on the FORQ website.

Also on FORQ's website is a report on the Chiltern Champions Conference 2020. At first glance this may not seem to be all that relevant to FORQ and our own rivers, the Rib and Quin, but it gives a good insight into what Citizen Science is already delivering. We depend on Citizen Science to help us monitor our rivers. Useful links:

<https://friendsoftherib.wordpress.com/blog/>
<https://chalkaquiferalliance.wordpress.com/events/>

Pauline Ayres, Communications FORQ

Restoration Plan for the River Rib in Buntingford

I would like to give readers an update on the progress of the Restoration Plan for the river through our town. First perhaps some background for anyone who is not aware of the plan. Our historic chalk stream – yes, the Rib is a chalk stream – has been neglected for many years. In summer we have very low water, stagnant muddy puddles with banks of silt and along Pigs Nose even the ducks have to walk. In the winter when the river is in spate more silt is washed into the river from the fields to the north. Silt kills all the river life in the natural gravel beds by cutting out the oxygen and the wildlife suffers from lack of drinkable water and food. Also over the last 50 years the river course has become heavily overgrown with bushes and trees.

Early in the summer of 2019 the Town Council asked Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) to help us improve this valuable town asset. They produced an outline improvement plan for the river from north of the town, near the last houses in

Vicarage Road, to where the A10 crosses Aspenden Road in the South. This plan called for tree thinning to allow more light and rain into the river, river bed sculpting and re-gravelling to narrow and speed the flow of water to clean the gravel. It also called for alterations to weirs and fords to improve water flow. Buntingford Town Council expressed its commitment to the plan.

The voluntary organisation called the Friends of the Rib and Quin (FORQ) was formed last year. Its remit is to care for and improve the whole of the Rib and Quin and our MP Sir Oliver Heald agreed to become FORQ'S president.

In February this year our Mayor Graham Waite hosted a meeting between members of FORQ, the Town Council and HMWT with representatives of the Environment Agency, Affinity Water and Thames Water. The aim was to establish contacts and a working relationship and to tell them of our plans. Actions were agreed and a follow-up meeting planned for May. Then the Covid pandemic struck bringing everything to a halt for most of the spring and early summer.

While people were working behind the scenes it was discovered that to bring the HMWT plan to fruition we first needed to hire a consultant to produce a Detailed Design Plan based on the HMWT outline plan. This new plan will be like an architect's drawing of the outline plan, which would be acceptable to the Environment Agency, to obtain the necessary permissions for any work in the river. HMWT suggested a company called Five Rivers, very experienced in producing river Detailed Design Plans, and a quotation was obtained. After discussions the Town Council agreed to fund this work and our first meeting with Five Rivers is at the end of November 2020. The Town Council have asked a representative from FORQ to join the discussions. Hopefully the completed plan will be ready to submit to the Environment Agency by the end of March 2021.

In the long term FORQ are working with the Chalk Aquifer Alliance and an All Party Parliamentary Group on Chalk Streams with the aim of stopping water companies abstracting water from the chalk aquifers. When this happens the depleted chalk aquifers will fill again and start putting clean water into our river.

I do urge all readers who are interested in this project to join The Friends of the Rib and Quin – see their website for details – as the more support they have the stronger their voice becomes.

It's hoped that by early next year I will be able to update you again on the work Five Rivers have done. Once the plan has been accepted by the Environment Agency the real work will begin as we try to raise funds for the improvement work in the river itself.



This is how a chalk stream should look and hopefully how the Rib will look once restoration is complete.

Councillor Brian Lemay, Buntingford Town Council
brianlemay@btinternet.com

MY COVID JOURNEY

I opened my eyes as though I had been sleeping
There were people around me and machines were bleeping,
Where was I? What's happening? I wanted to say.
My voice didn't work, and I hurt where I lay.

You're in hospital, the nurse said, do not worry or be scared.
The expression in her eyes told me she cared.
Behind their masks the staff did not look real,
But I could tell they had looked after me while I had been so terribly ill.

I wanted my family; I wanted my mum.
But she is no longer here, and my family weren't allowed to come.
My legs were so weak, my chest was so sore.
There was a hole in my throat that was not there before.

This can't be happening I wanted to say.
When I came into hospital it was just for a day.
A month had gone by while I laid in this bed.
You're so lucky they stated, we thought you'd be dead.

The long road began to get on my feet and strong
I was allowed home to my family where I belong.
The battle was hard, I needed lots of help.
It was going to be a long journey to get back to myself.

My legs wouldn't work, my arms were so weak.
I had a gravelly voice and it was hard to speak.
The physios came, they helped me so much.
Family and Friends tried to stay in touch.

There were flowers and cards and lots of good wishes.
The district nurse came to remove tracheotomy stitches.
This was all going on and I was crying inside.
I was in a dark place and I wanted to hide.

I was tired and emotional and full of fear.
I didn't want to go out and wanted only family near.
I had lots of counselling and it helped to talk.
I started to feel I could go out for a walk.

Then again, the COVID-19 numbers started to rise.
With demonstrations and drinking it was no surprise.
People were against lockdown but people were dying.
There were more families losing loved ones and so many were crying.

Stay in your bubbles and keep yourselves safe.
Keep your distance and try to be brave.
I am coming through now but it's taken its toll.
To be back to my old self is my final goal.

I am so lucky to be here and thank the NHS staff
All the nurses, the doctors, the physios who tried making me laugh.
The councillor, my family, friends and partner who are getting me better
This poem is to you. It's my own Thank You letter.

*Thank you one and all.
You know who you are and I can never thank you enough.*

Jackie Smith

BUNTINGFORD W.I.

It's a shame that the Remembrance Service and parade could not take place as usual this year, but we laid our handmade wreath (right) on the War Memorial on November 11th after the service was over. I think our craft ladies have done really well with their use of colours to make the wreath a bit different this year.



By the time this Journal comes out our 'Christmas Project', a crocheted and knitted Christmas cake (left), should be on display at the Library. Please do pop along to see it in all its full-sized glory if you can.

Our Secretary, Pat Webb, continues to keep us updated with news from the Hertfordshire Federation, which arranges regular 'Zoom' talks on a wide range of subjects. We have no idea when we will be able to resume our meetings but with a vaccine hopefully not too far away we will keep our fingers crossed for the Spring. Best wishes for Christmas from Buntingford WI

and here's looking forward to some good news for 2021!

Val Hume

Christmas in Buntingford Past and Present

As Christmas draws nearer, we are left to wonder if this year's festivities will actually happen and what form they will take. We can be certain of one thing – Christmas this year will definitely be different. You may think you are hard done by but what did the people in Buntingford do in years gone by? In this article we take a light-hearted look at how things were and what they are now.

Have you ever wondered why we celebrate on the 25th December? You can read so many explanations but most religions say this was the day that Jesus was born, even though there is no actual record of his birth date. Most countries celebrate on the 25th, although some choose the 24th for their main festival. It appears that it may have first been celebrated in the Roman Empire as early as 336 AD.

Christmas cards are a more recent invention. In 1843 Sir Henry Cole got an artist friend John Horsley to design a card that sold for 1 shilling (5p), which was a huge amount of money at the time. By 1870, due to improvements in printing, cards were more popular and could be posted for half a penny. Christmas crackers were invented by Tom Smith in the 1840s. They contained sweets and a motto but were not very popular until, in 1861, he added the bang and sales improved. Christmas trees have been used in pagan and Christian winter festivals for thousands of years. Many countries claim to have had the first Christmas trees, but Germany certainly made them very popular and they hung them with sweets, glass ornaments and biscuits. During Oliver Cromwell's reign from 1640 to 1660 Christmas festivities were banned in England as they were deemed too wasteful, with people eating and drinking far too much. Christmas as we know it really took off in the Victorian period, partly due to Prince Albert's influence.

B. A. EDWARDS, Market Hill, Buntingford,
Agent for
J. LYONS & Co. Ltd.
Cadby Hall, Kensington.
*It is not too early to think about Christmas. Let us help
you to make it a real time of joy.*

Watch our windows for all Lyons' "Leading London Lines" at London Prices, of
**CHRISTMAS CAKES, Choice Boxes of CHOCOLATES,
BON-BONS and NOVELTIES.**

These will be displayed, not only in our windows, but customers are invited to come and inspect our goods, which will be shown under modern, hygienic conditions, in our dust-proof glass cases, free from germs.

By the 20th century, Christmas was well established and in Buntingford the shops would be stocked with treats to suit every pocket, as can be seen from this sample of adverts from the time. B.A. Edwards, the baker on Market Hill, advertised Christmas cakes, chocolates and bon-bons from the famous Lyons of London (left), boasting of displaying them in "hygienic ... dust-proof glass cases, free from germs". N.L. Heselton, a High Street hairdresser (bottom left), offered "Hair Waved for Christmas" for 1 shilling (5p) or 1 shilling 6 pence (7.5p). The draper Browne's had a range of Yuletide gifts at a range of prices (top left). While the local electricity company, North Met, urged people to give "useful" gifts for Christmas (top right).

Buntingford.
Have your **HAIR WAVED** for Christmas
by N. L. HESELTON, High Street,
Buntingford. Prices 1/- and 1/6.
(Closed (Thursdays).

A big event from 1919 was the Annual Christmas Fat Stock Show and Sale, held on Market

Yuletide Gifts Yuletide Gifts
From 6d. to £5.

Selection and Value in Bags, Purses,
 Manicure Sets, Music Cases, Attache Cases,
 Gloves, Scarves, Ties, Socks, Hosiery,

YULETIDE GIFTS

Evening Dresses, Umbrellas, Slippers,
 Down Quilts, Cushions, Blankets, Furs,
 Handkerchiefs, Fancy Boxes, &c. &c.

**BROWNE'S, HIGH STREET,
 BUNTINGFORD.**

Hill. Local farmers would enter their prize animals and the local butchers would bid against each other to buy the best for sale in their shops for Christmas. The advert below was for the 12th annual show,

MONDAY NEXT.
Buntingford

**12th Annual Christmas Fat
 Stock Show and Sale**

On **MONDAY, DECEMBER 7th, 1931.**
 The Market Hill, Buntingford.

Auctioneer :

G. SCARBOROUGH TAYLOR, P.A.S.I.

Hon. Secretary :

Mr. Ernest G. THODY, Buntingford.

Judging commences at 10 a.m.
 Sale at 11 a.m.

Present Entries include :

42 PRIME FAT BEASTS,
160 GRAND FAT SHEEP,
180 FINISHED HOGS, PORKERS and
SOWS.

All entries of Beasts, Sheep and Pigs
 should be penned by 9 o'clock.

Further particulars of the Hon. Sec.
 or the Auctioneer.

A week after the Fat Stock Show another show was held in the town, this one for poultry, rabbits and eggs. In 1931 the auctioneer was once again G. Scarborough Taylor and the prices achieved were reported in the local press (page 24, top right). Much of the produce would find its way into the local butchers' shops, producing impressive displays to tempt the public. The photo on page 24 shows the Christmas display of meat and poultry outside Jackson's, the local butcher on Church Street.

**Give Useful
 ELECTRICAL GIFTS
 this Christmas...**



THESE ARTICLES
 represent only a small
 selection from the many
 useful Electrical Gifts
 now on view at your
 Northmet Showroom.
 Each is thoroughly
 reliable, and is British
 Made.



W. B. MOSS & SONS LTD.

PRIZE PIGS

Bought at

BUNTINGFORD CHRISTMAS FAT STOCK SHOW

will be used in the making of our Famous

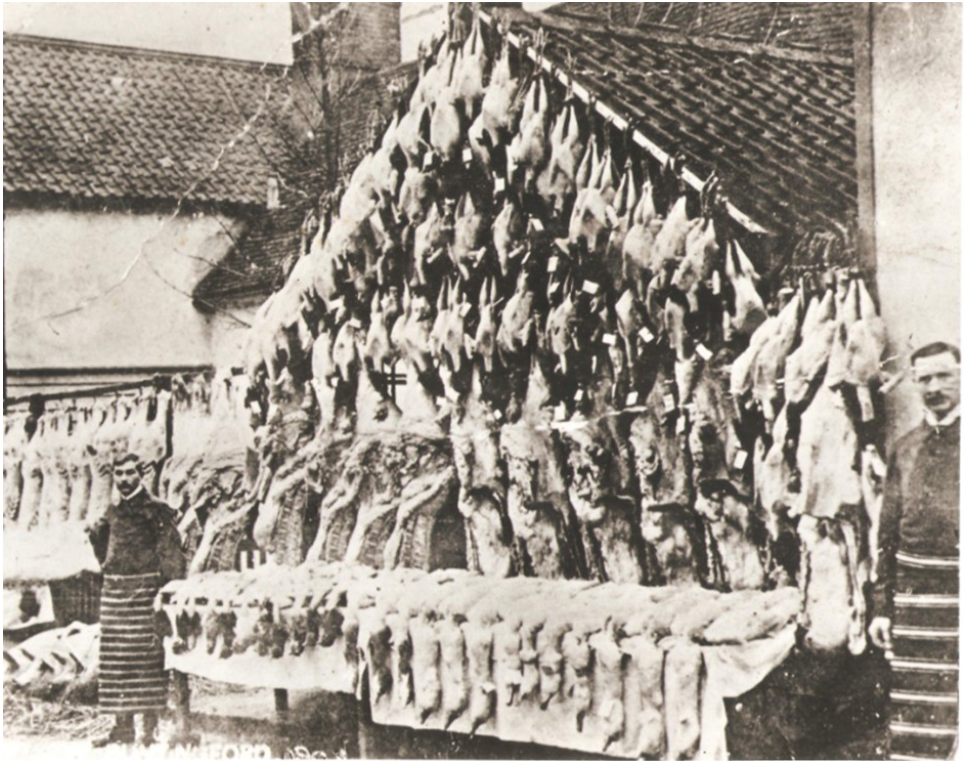
PORK PIES AND SAUSAGES

To prevent disappointment, orders for these must be sent in by Monday Next, December 19th.

**Buy in Buntingford and
keep Buntingford Busy.**

TELEPHONE 23.

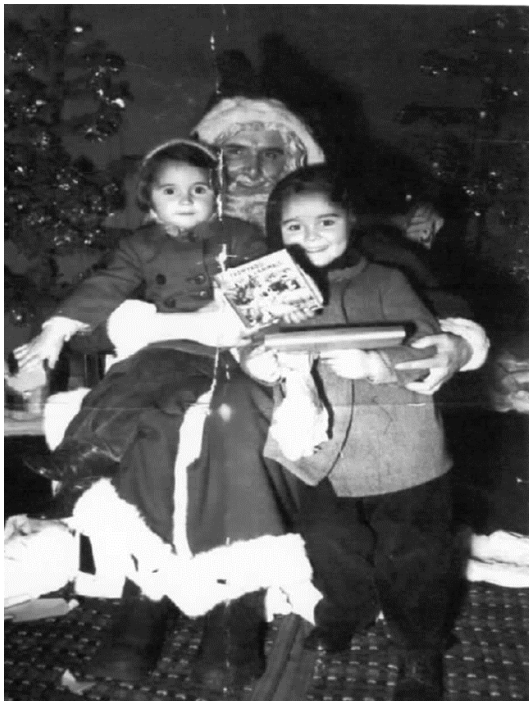
On Monday last, Mr. G. Scarborough Taylor reports on his annual poultry show and sale as follows: Very good supplies to hand, especially in the turkey class, where there were 112 entries—all of which changed hands to a large and keen company of buyers at satisfactory prices. Cock turkeys from 22/6 to 48/- Hen birds from 17/6 to 33/6: to 2/1 per lb. live weight, the average price being from 1/9 to 1/10 per lb. Geese from 5/9 to 10/- Ducks from 3/- to 4/6. Cockerels (170) from 3/9 to 12/-, with other pens making 7/-, 8/9, 9/6, 11/- etc. Old hens (110) from 2/6 to 6/- Eggs—Hens eggs from 2/9 to 3/7, average 2/11 per score. Rabbits 1/10 to 2/8 per brace.



Many residents seem to remember Burrells, formerly Days Newsagents (now The Coffee Shop). In the lead up to Christmas children would visit the room at the rear of the shop to decide what presents they hoped to get. Jennie Keeling remembers going there and the excitement of seeing all the toys – they all thought it was a huge display but by today's standards it must have been quite small. A couple of weeks before the big day Father Christmas would arrive and local children would visit him to place their wishes. Most of the children realised this was actually Mr Milton from Norfolk Road, but they dared not say anything in case they didn't get a visit from the real Santa on the 25th. Jennie

remembers going to see the “real” Father Christmas at Welwyn Stores (now John Lewis), travelling there with her parents and sister Karen in her Dad’s milk round van. Jennie still has this photo (right) of the event.

There was plenty of entertainment going on in Buntingford in the build up to Christmas. The cinema would put on films – in 1932 the main attraction was Buster Keaton in ‘The Passionate Plumber’. Local clubs and societies held parties for their members and the children. In 1932, Aspenden WI held a party for about 100 people which included a film show about the local area from Harry Clarke, a talk by the W.I. president’s husband, Captain H Williams, then a sumptuous tea and a visit from Santa who gave the children presents. This was followed by games, dancing and singing, which went on till 11pm. Tyneholme School, at 10 High Street, gave a concert at which £6 was raised for the WI and the Nursing Association.



It wasn’t until the 1950s that TV became more accessible, prior to that the radio played an important part in entertaining people. The BBC started radio broadcasts in 1920 and in 1932 King George V made the first Christmas speech by a reigning monarch, although he had first been asked to do this as early as 1923. The Queen made the first televised Christmas speech in 1957. As TV became more popular the broadcasters commissioned Christmas Specials of their big programmes. I wonder what programmes we will see this year? One film I think we can be sure of is ‘The Wizard of Oz’!

The local churches would be especially busy, although in 1931 a newspaper report said that the children’s carol service was “disappointingly attended” by parents, who didn’t hear the children singing as they put their heart and soul into the songs. At St Richard’s the Catholic priest was very busy. The first service was a Midnight Mass that was always very well attended. Jennie remembers going with her family even as a young child. The crib was the highlight, the stable being about 6ft square, and the event culminated with baby Jesus being laid in the crib. The next service was at the convent chapel at St Faith’s, with a third service at St Richard’s at 9am on Christmas morning. The United Reformed Church always held a Christmas Day service. They often attended Bridgefoot House in the weeks before to sing Carols to the workhouse residents. In more recent times the children have written and performed their own nativity to the URC congregation, although unfortunately this won’t be the case this year.

Most of the pubs in the town had a “slate club” which a group of the patrons would pay a small amount into each week. This was mainly to cover periods of sickness as there was no national health service, but any remaining money was shared out amongst members at Christmas to help with the extra expense. In 1932 it was reported that The White Hart was able to pay out £1.23p to each member as only one person had drawn on the sick fund. The Chequers had paid out over £18 in sick benefits so their members received

just £1.04p each. Members of The Jolly Sailors club, reported to be the oldest, paid out £1.50p to each member. In 1912 the URC had a newly formed club with 50 members. In 1932 they had paid out £20 in sickness benefit so there was less to share out at Christmas, but even so members received £1.08p each.

You might think that Bridgefoot House, the workhouse or Union as it was better known, would be an awful place to spend Christmas, but the Butlers, the last master and matron, tried to make it as festive as possible for the residents. They decorated the rooms with evergreen sprigs and paper chains and the day began with a breakfast of ham and coffee. Dinner was roast pork with vegetables followed by plum pudding. Ale and mineral water accompanied the meal, with chicken being given to sick residents.

The piano was played by a local and the vicar and his wife held a carol service during the afternoon. Many local dignitaries – including Frank Cannon of Hyde Hall, Dr and Mrs Dixon, and Mr Marshall to name but a few – provided treats for the residents. On Boxing Day there was a party after tea at which, since 1922, Stanley Thody came with his Buntingford Fireside Pierrots to give a human puppet show. Many of the residents joined in with songs and poems and more presents were given by local people. It must have been quite a jolly affair as a local newspaper report from the 1930s stated that James Dilly (83), described as a “young resident”, was still dancing at 10pm.

In December for many years Buntingford charities would distribute “Little Loaves” and a quantity of coal to poor families in the town. In 1930 local baker Mr G Pearce supplied 200 loaves for distribution and the local coal merchants supplied the coal.

During the war years Christmas was, of course, a far more subdued affair with so many families having loved ones either killed in action or serving away from home and, in the Second World War, evacuees living locally who were not able to see their parents. Food was rationed in both wars. In 1940 a week’s ration per person was 4oz bacon/ham, meat to the value of about 2 chops, 2oz butter, 4oz margarine, 4oz cooking fat, 3 pints of milk

and 8oz of sugar. Toys and sweets were in short supply, so Santa’s sack would have been a lot lighter.

POST EARLY FOR CHRISTMAS.—
Every effort will be made by the Post Office to deliver by Christmas Day all parcels, packets and newspapers posted not later than Thursday, 22nd December, and all letters and cards posted not later than mid-day on Friday, 23rd December. All letters and cards for local delivery should be posted not later than 4.30 p.m. in rural areas, and 6 p.m. in the town area, on 24th December. Christmas letters and parcels for more distant places should be posted early in the day and well in advance of the times given above.

Rosemary English (nee Cannon) remembers her father Frank, owner of Hyde Hall Farm, packing up chickens for friends he thought might appreciate them. Decorating the house and Christmas shopping was left until Christmas Eve, but food preparations had been going on for weeks. The extended family of about 15 sat down together for Christmas dinner consuming a turkey bred on the farm. After dinner Rosemary and her cousin Elizabeth Davies would put on a play they had written with Frank’s help. Elizabeth remembers getting a stocking filled with small items, sweets and chocolate if available. She often asked for books as presents from family members.

These days we’re all used to having holiday over the Christmas period, but as this 1930 advert for postal services shows, back then they even delivered post on Christmas Day, a service that only ended nationally in 1960.

On Boxing Day local football teams would often play, weather permitting.

The Puckeridge Hunt would ride out – in 1927 they met at Brent Pelham. In the evening there would often be an event at Benson Hall, like this fancy dress carnival (right); the Ladies' first prize went to Mrs Tompkins for her gypsy costume. In 1933 the British Legion held a party for their members' children, with a large tea followed by singing and games. The children went home with a gift, sweets, an orange, piece of cake and a sausage roll. And Baronet Sir Arthur Lushington of Aspenden Hall always laid on a party for the children and the old people of the village, with a sumptuous tea and gifts from the Christmas tree, all supplied by Sir Arthur.

BENSON HALL, BUNTINGFORD.

FANCY DRESS CARNIVAL

— ON —

BOXING NIGHT

(Monday, 26th December).
8 p.m. to 1.

Ladies' and Gents' Prizes for Best Costumes.

SPECIAL PRIZE for Ticket bought before the day.

USUAL SPOT PRIZES.

TICKETS 2/-

JANUARY 2nd :
NEW YEAR'S DANCE.
Particulars later.

Buntingford's biggest employer in the 60s and 70s was Sainsbury's, which would have been very busy in the lead up to Christmas, with staff working extra shifts to keep the Sainsbury's stores well stocked. Then on New Year's Eve a dance was held in the staff canteen, with excess tickets being snapped up by town's people. Elsewhere on New Year's Eve dances were held in local halls with local bands playing. It was a busy time of year for the many bands in the Town, which included the Brass Band, Silver Band, Mavis Band and Mascot Band, to name but a few. New Year at Bridgefoot House saw their annual sausage dinner, which in 1933 was supplied by Mr and Mrs Harnett of the Manor House. They also distributed tea for the ladies and tobacco for the men and the residents gave hearty cheers to the couple for their generosity.

So, what will this year be like for the residents and trades' people of Buntingford? There will be no physical church services, only Zoom, or for those without computers a printed home pack. The Lights of Love ceremony also moved online, although remembrance stars will be available from the Manor House for people to hang on the Christmas tree. The Christmas market was cancelled, although there are plans for a daytime 'walking market' on December 6th. The local Scouts' Sleigh Run will not be doing the rounds, the Seniors' Christmas Lunch is cancelled and even visits to see Santa have gone 'virtual'.

But let's not be down-hearted! By the time you read this the Christmas lights will be lit, bringing a bit of Christmas cheer to the town. Hopefully the 'non-essential' shops, pubs, and restaurants will be able to open, even if we do have to observe social distancing and wear masks to go in them. Buckland Barn, which has been selling all things Christmas for 13 years, had to close its doors for November, but they are doing 'click and collect' and hopefully customers will be able to visit in December to see their enchanting display. We may find our stockings filled with different things this year – soaps, hand sanitizer, face masks come to mind, and the essential loo rolls, a definite must have – but it will still be Christmas so try to be of good cheer!

Whatever form your Christmas takes this year, from all at the Local History Group have a Happy and Safe Christmas and hopefully a Better New Year in 2021.

Carol Emery

All newspaper clippings are courtesy of Buntingford In Old Newspapers and the photo of Jackson's the butcher is from Buntingford In Old Photographs, both on Facebook.

The London Marathon 2020 with a Difference!

It's the beginning of November as I sit here and write this and I'm thinking about how things have changed since my last piece for the Journal. Life for us all is very different no matter where we are in the world. So, it was with a heavy heart, but not a surprise, that I heard the news that the London Marathon was postponed to 4th October! I accepted the fact that I wouldn't be running it this year but thankfully was able to defer my place to next year. Then it was announced that the mass race could be run virtually, anywhere in the world! Initially the thought of running 26.2 miles around Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, was not very appealing, but then I thought: • This is the 40th race; • I'd have 24 hours to complete it; • I will be running the London Marathon in Kalgoorlie, during a pandemic! • My friend Louise offered to run it with me; • This is a once in a lifetime experience (hopefully); • I'll still get the official medal and finisher's t-shirt.

So Louise and I planned the route.(my hat goes off to anyone who plans race routes – getting the exact distance is REALLY hard!) The idea was to take in local landmarks such as The Super Pit, one of the largest open cut goldmines in Australia, the School of the Air (SOTA) and the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS), along the 42.2km (26.2 mile) route and have our photos taken with pictures of London landmarks at about the same distance as we would have seen them in London.

It worked out really well on the day. Some friends and members of our local running club came to see us off, a few runners joined us along the way at different points and a small welcoming committee saw us arrive home! Two of Louise's children held the finishing tape, which was an Anthony Nolan banner because, remember, this was all to raise money for the Anthony Nolan charity that works in the areas of leukaemia and stem cell transplantation and has a registry to match donors with people in desperate need. I am pleased to announce that I raised over £3000, with my mum Hilary Curtis raising over £400 through sponsors (£331) and making muffins (£100). Thanks Mum, and thanks so much to the many generous people in Buntingford who supported me!



Although there was no official medal awaiting us as we crossed the line, another friend, Lyndel, had kindly got some made for us – here we are at the finish line, medals in hand. All in all, the day was a great success and I was over the moon to knock 17 minutes off my time at last year's London Marathon time. It would have been even quicker if my knee hadn't given me such pain from mile 22 onwards!

While the pandemic continues, so does the work of the charity. People are still being diagnosed with blood cancers and still need stem cell transplants. Maybe you could become a donor or know someone who might? If you're between 16 and 30 years go to www.anthonynolan.org to find out more. As the charity says "...our charity helps three people each day find that lifesaving match. But without you, there is no cure." Be a lifesaver and join the register today!

As it stands right now, I will be flying over to England to run the London Marathon again in April 2022 – and, of course, visit my Mum and Buntingford. Hopefully the world will be a different place by then and the London Marathon will back to the incredible event it has always been.

Sally de Koning



Vurchoo Jewellery – the gift that gives twice



If you're looking for a special gift for someone this Christmas, or any time of the year, why not take a look at Vurchoo Jewellery, elegant designs with a meaning far beyond the price tag. Vurchoo was founded in 2015 by Alex Angel-Benscher, who lives in Buntingford with his partner, his two young boys and Ollie, their cocker spaniel. Starting the company was made possible by help and funding from The Prince's Trust, a charity founded more than 40 years ago by Prince Charles which has

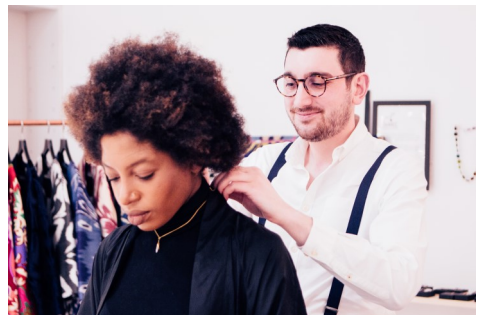
enabled many young people to make the most of their talents and follow their dreams.

Alex's artistic journey began in Essex where he grew up and first learned to draw, putting his skills to use on the streets as a graffiti artist. He was in his late 20s when he was made redundant in the last recession, so he bought a one-way plane ticket and set off travelling. For 14 months he explored the world, sometimes working, sometimes volunteering, until one day a 'lightbulb' moment showed him a way to focus his passion for design into something worthwhile. The idea for Vurchoo was planted as Alex watched Cambodian street children making and selling whatever they could to survive, some of them displaying fantastic creative abilities. At that moment Alex knew he wanted to use his talent for design to help these children and others like them. If he could create timeless pieces of jewellery inspired by the children, perhaps he could build a brand that would have a positive impact on the world we live in.

Returning to England, Alex set about trying to get his idea off the ground. The breakthrough came when The Prince's Trust agreed to back him. His plan was to work with schools from around the globe that needed an extra source of income. For inspiration he drew on the stories of the children themselves. He asked them to draw whatever meant the most to them, and as he describes it the results he got were fantastic, not only reflecting each child's story but also the culture they came from, from the colours of Africa to the emotions of Asia.

Just a year after launching Vurchoo, Alex was named as one of the rising stars of the retail jewellery trade and a finalist in the UK Jewellery Awards. He was a finalist again in 2018 and in 2020 was nominated for their Ethical Business award. Each design has a story behind it and for every piece sold Vurchoo returns a portion of the sale to the schools involved and to charities in the UK and overseas. In this way every sale helps the children and their communities. By giving Vurchoo jewellery you are not only giving a beautiful gift to someone you love, you are also giving hope to someone who needs it.

You can find out more about Alex and view the collection at vurchoo.co.uk. Vurchoo jewellery is also now stocked by 17 shops around the UK. If you want to place an order online, enter the code Web10 to obtain a 10% discount offered to Journal readers. If you have any queries, you can contact Alex at alex@vurchoo.co.uk.



“Christmas won’t be Christmas ...”

Borrowing the first line from ‘Little Women’ by Louisa May Alcott: “Christmas won’t be Christmas without any presents!” Lucy was inconsolable. Jack burst into tears. “Doesn’t Father Christmas like us any more?” he wailed.

Lucy was a bit older and hadn’t really been expecting Santa, but she had been expecting presents. “It’s not fair” she said. “My friends will all have presents and I’ll be left out!”

Their Mum tried to console them. Of course Father Christmas still liked them. It’s just that he has too many children to get to this year, so some will have to wait for a while. Jane could hardly hold back the tears as she hugged her children to her.

“You have lots of toys,” she said, “some children don’t even have food or shoes.”

Jack was not impressed. “They can have my shoes if they want,” he said, “and they can have my sprouts and my yucky porridge.”

Jane had always struggled to give the children a good Christmas, but this year she was behind with the rent and had to buy extra jumpers from charity shops to keep them all warm. There was no way she could afford to put the heating on. She would manage to give them a good meal on Christmas Day, but presents were out of the question.

Children these days wanted expensive gifts, and weren’t satisfied with the cheap bits and pieces that Santa had left in her stockings when she was a child. Children have far too much, she thought, and are selfish and self-obsessed. It wouldn’t hurt them to go without for once.

Suddenly anger enveloped her. Anger at herself for losing her job, anger at her husband for leaving her, anger at the children for their constant demands and expectations, anger at the world for expecting her to look after the children, the house and find a full-time job. Anger at her loneliness and uselessness.

Her rage felt dangerous, out of control, so she reigned it in and sobbed the despair from her body. Exhausted, she applied herself back to her everyday chores. The school run, shopping, cleaning, washing. Groundhog Day.

It was three days before Christmas and Jane sat with the children, wrapped in blankets, cutting out strips of old newspapers, which the children painted in bright colours and tied with cotton to make decorations. They were happy enough when they went to bed, and Jane, overcome with exhaustion, fell asleep on the sofa.

She awoke with a start as she thought she heard the back door open and close. Her watch said 1.34am. Could she really have slept that long? Rain hammered at the windows. Had she misheard? Was it the wind? Surely she had locked the back door?

And then, in front of her stood a youth in a hoodie. The intruder was dripping wet. She recognised him at once.

“Michael James”, she snapped. “What on earth do you think you’re doing? Dear God, are you trying to give me a heart attack?”

“Sorry Mrs Goodwin, I forgot you lived here”, came the sheepish reply. “You really shouldn’t leave your door unlocked.”

“Of course you know I live here! My kids could have seen you ...”

“Sorry”, he repeated as he turned to leave. Michael was not much more than a child himself.

“Come back here”, demanded Jane. “What were you planning to do?”

To her amazement he burst into tears and slumped onto an armchair.

“Mum died a few months ago and the flat was repossessed. I went to live with Dad, but he threw me out...”, his voice cracked and his body shook with the sobs. “I just needed somewhere to stay and I didn’t know what to do.”

Jane had known Michael since the day he was born. He was a good kid. She hated to see him heading for a life of crime. His mother worked hard to do her best for him, and Jane was saddened to hear of her death.

“Get those wet things off,” she said. “Mr Goodwin left some of his clothes here. I’m sure I can find you some jeans and a jumper.”

She went in search of the clothes, feeling shaky, but in a strange way amused that she was giving a burglar her husband’s clothes.

Christmas dinner could stretch to one more, and the children adored having a rough and tumble with Michael. He even told them the Christmas stories that his mother used to tell him, and while Jane cooked the dinner he took the children to the park where they collected some small branches to make their own Christmas tree, which they decorated with ribbons and glitter.

Santa didn’t come, so there were no presents for the tree, but the children learned that they could have fun without new toys, and a young man found a new family.

Sue Shearing – Buntingford Writers Group

Buntingford & Stortford Hybrid Studio

Back in October we were running our Hybrid Studio, 8 Zoom classes a week and were back up to 13 face-to-face classes – Full Body Workouts, U3A classes, Fella’s Fitness, Pilates and Dance Fit, with excellent turnouts. Then BOOM, Lockdown 2 arrived. Was this going to stop us? NO! We went back to our Live Studio full time, with many face-to-face participants joining us back online.

During November we set a Challenge of ‘3000 squats for November’, which means 100 squats per day! And WOW,

I was blown away by how many took part, especially as I could never have predicted Lockdown 2 when I planned the challenge. Thank goodness we had recorded squat videos for everyone to perform along to! As I write this, we have raised over £500 for Refuge.



What do we have planned for December?

During Lockdown 1 we held quiz nights, Bingo & Fun evenings, so this December we decided to hold a Christmas Quiz. Hopefully (fingers crossed!) we’ll be allowed out of Lockdown on the predicted date so we can continue to keep the community fit, both physically and mentally, but otherwise we’ll carry on with our fitness family online.

I would like to thank the Seth Ward Community Centre and Layston School for allowing me to run most of my classes outside on their grounds, when the weather permitted.

Jacqui Smith, Personal Trainer



East Herts

TIPS FOR FINANCIAL WELLBEING

This has been a challenging time for many of us. The following short guide is intended to help you maintain financial wellbeing and to provide practical steps if you're struggling to make ends meet.

Maximise your Income

A reduction in income means you may not be able to meet your expenses but there are many ways in which you can top up your income. Applying for benefits is one way of doing this. Our online benefits calculator shows you what benefits you might be eligible for – see www.citizensadviceeastherts.org.uk/benefits-calculator/

Minimise your Expenses

When your income drops, you need to cut your overheads. Start with the non-essential expenses. Cancel unnecessary services, but check the contracts to make sure you are not breaching any agreements. Cancel the related direct debits to make sure that payments do not go out, and inform the service provider that you have cancelled the service. It has to be a mutual agreement.

Rent/Mortgages

Speak to your landlord or mortgage provider. You may be able to get a payment holiday or a payment break. To read the FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) announcement regarding Mortgage Payment Holidays go to: <https://www.fca.org.uk/consumers/mortgages-coronavirus-consumers>

Manage your Debts

- **Credit Cards/Unsecured Loans** – Speak to your credit card companies and loan providers as they will have Covid policies in place. They may have policies in place to support you in managing your debts, but beware and read the fine print. You may end up increasing your monthly contractual repayments to repay any amounts owed during the break.
- **Secured Loans (Car Finances/Hire Purchases)** – These are priority debts. Non-payment of these debts will result in the loss of the items secured within the contract. You should be very careful when negotiating any reduced payments. Once again, most contracts include provision for payment holidays or breaks. Read the fine print before agreeing to anything.

Budgeting

This will help you to manage your finances. The Money Saving Expert has a great article on how to budget: www.moneysavingexpert.com/banking/budget-planning

For more help or to speak to someone: We are always on hand at Citizens Advice to provide you with free, confidential and impartial advice and support.

For more details: www.citizensadviceeastherts.org.uk

Message Line – 01920 459944 (any time)

Advice Line – 0800 144 8848 (Mon-Fri 10am-4pm)

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

THE CO-OP • DELISSIMO • LOCKS, STOCK & MORE • MARK DOEL
McCOLL'S (The Post Office) • PIGGOTTS

Things That Go Bump in the Night

Sitting at home one evening, in the last week of October, watching TV, I was startled by a loud bang that seemed to come from my kitchen. Katie shot off the sofa – she claimed this as her downstairs bed shortly after I got her – and started barking furiously in the kitchen. I went outside but could see nothing and the street was dark and deserted. Next morning when I drew the blinds there was an imprint of a bird on the window. Going outside I spotted a dead wood pigeon on my driveway. It must have flown into my kitchen window and that was the bang I heard. Other than owls, I had no idea birds flew at night; most odd.

Talking about birds, I read Christine's snippet in the October journal about lack of garden birds and how some thought red kites were to blame. There was also a nice picture of a cat, but as Christine said kitty might be the guilty party rather than the kites. The RSPB estimate that cats in the UK catch up to 100 million prey items over spring and summer, of which 27 million are birds. The most frequently caught birds are house sparrows, blue tits, blackbirds and starlings.

Red kites like this, on the other hand, are opportunistic hunters and they feed mostly on dead animals. They do capture some live prey, such as young gulls and crows and small rodents, but the most common live prey they eat is earthworms. Small birds are generally too quick for red kites, which are not designed to catch agile prey as they are not the most manoeuvrable of birds. They could almost be described as lazy hunters and are much better suited to scavenging for carrion. That's probably why I see them circling over the A10 most days looking for road kill. Road kill is rather slow moving – it can't run or fly away!



Seeing the abundance of berries and seeds in our hedgerows, I rather suspect garden birds are still feeding in the countryside. Holly, hawthorn, blackthorn, rowan, juniper and dog rose are all abundant. Once this food source is exhausted and the cold weather starts I think the wild birds will return to our garden feeders. But pigeons and collared doves have returned to my garden in some numbers already!

There is an 'old countrymen's tale' that says that lots of autumn fruit indicates a cold winter to come. The more likely cause of lots of fruit is favourable growing conditions during a warm moist summer and autumn, but I still wonder if we are going to get a cold winter this year and will our garden birds return? I do hope so.

Be warned, a silly joke follows:

There was a turkey that walked into a shop and said, "Got any sweets?" The shopkeeper said, "No, we don't." The next day, the turkey went into the same shop and asked the same thing and got the same answer. The turkey kept going back every day for a week and asked the same thing and kept getting the same answer until the shopkeeper got so angry he said, "if you come in here and ask that again, I will hit you on the head with a hammer!" The next day, the turkey returns to the shop and asks, "Got any hammers?" The shopkeeper says, "No." Then the turkey asks, "Got any sweets?"

Happy Christmas

Brian Lemay

It's been a very busy few weeks here at Attend2Health. I realise this latest lockdown has been tough on a lot of businesses and Attend2Health is very grateful this time round to be classed as essential healthcare.

This means we have been able to remain open for Chiropractic, Osteopathy, Physiotherapy, Podiatry and Sports Massage – but not just for a relaxing massage, it has to be to treat an injury.

The new premises have also made good progress. The partitions have gone up and the plaster boarding has been completed in several places so I can really see how big the new rooms are going to be. There will be six treatment rooms downstairs, a couple of which are shown here (below left). Upstairs there are a further three rooms plus a meeting room, waiting room and staff room.



The new Reception area with the partitioning almost complete.



The children have been a great help with taking the wallpaper off the walls (below).

Next week the plasterers will start plastering the partitions downstairs.

It's great to see the clinic taking shape!

Louise Hampton





**Let's hope for good news in the New Year, and have
us all singing together once more!**

For information go to our website: **www.buntingfordchoir.co.uk**

Or e-mail: **info@buntingfordchoir.co.uk**

Introducing 'The Studios @ Watermill'

The Studios – shown here in an artist's impression – are being developed by Tony Hoodless, who lives with his family in Little Hadham. Last year, Tony developed 17 larger industrial units on the Watermill Estate off Aspenden Road.



Of those units, the first phase was reserved even before completion and Tony noted that there was significant demand for smaller, more affordable creative spaces in the area, so he asked his architect what could be done. The result is The Studios.

The concept is to provide a comfortable, relaxed environment that will feel good and encourage creativity and productivity. Set in a sustainable natural setting on the edge of open farmland, The Studios will provide new creative office space within a short walk of Buntingford town centre, with good accessibility and ample parking on site. There is a community feel within the existing businesses on the estate and it is felt that The Studios will add to this. The area is going to be very green, with sustainable construction methods and surfacing – even the roads are going to be grasscrete. The estate has superfibre broadband and this will be available to all studios. Too many people drive south down the A10 every day, so hopefully these new workspaces will improve people's lives and the environment by encouraging more local employment.

The Studios range from 200 to 720sq.ft. and will be available on flexible terms from early 2021. They are in Class E of the new planning use regulations which came into operation in September, so can be used for a wide variety of businesses, from retail to professional services, sports and recreation to research and development. For the complete list of approved uses go to **http://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/9/change_of_use**

So if you are looking for space to do business, space to be creative, or just some more space, get in touch with Tony on **07973 531040** or email **tony@billingford.com**



We have now finished a one-month Second Lockdown which meant that we couldn't even meet in groups of six. All our meeting and chats were either on WhatsApp or Zoom. Our monthly Zoom meeting was 'Fool's Gold', when Carol and Steve Robson entertained us for an hour with folk songs and their background stories. We have also received invitations to join other u3as as well as BALFF at their Zoom talks. Sadly, there is nothing more for me to report on so, just

like the tele, I thought perhaps we should have a repeat. Here is an extended report on the Church Crawlers' visit to St Nicholas in Stevenage.

Jean Cook

U3A Church Crawlers is a group with an interest in church architecture and history and visits churches on secular visits. As Group Leader, when I was asked to write about one 'special' visit we have done, I was bemused. We have had so many varied, interesting visits in the past 6 years, not all to Christian churches as we go to different faiths.

I decided on St Nicholas Church in Stevenage. As a Grade 1 listed building it is, unsurprisingly, the oldest building in Stevenage and among the oldest churches in Hertfordshire. It was built on the site of a 7th-century Saxon settlement. It's Tower, with the Hertfordshire spike on top, is a local landmark and built of flint from hills north of the town, with some local Hertfordshire puddingstone. At 900 years old, the Tower is the oldest part of the church. It is 52 feet high, with walls 5ft thick at the base narrowing to 3ft at the top. It was probably built for defensive purposes with arrow slits at one time.

The Parish boundaries were set in the 1100s and lasted for 850 years. The word Stevenage is thought to stem from the Old English 'Stigeace or Stithenace' meaning Strong Oak or Gate. St Nicholas Church started off in the Diocese of Lincoln, then London and is now in the St Albans Diocese.

Some of the early church ornaments, statues and glass was damaged during the Reformation and more damage came during the Civil War. There is very little stained glass left except for a small window tucked away behind the organ in what was once known as the Trinity Chapel. The glass in the window at the top is thought to be Tudor.

There is some ancient graffiti on some columns interesting enough for a student to write a thesis on. The Lady Chapel has an effigy which was found in the 1800s, at the time being used as a step. From her clothing, it is thought that she is in memory of an unknown lady from the time of Edward I.

There are 6 miserericords – old seats for clergy, which lift up and would partially support a tired monk during long periods standing at prayer! They are thought to have come from a nearby Abbey closed during the Reformation.

I was amazed by the stairs leading to the 8-Bell Tower, having never seen any like them before. They have been dendro-dated (the scientific dating of tree rings which can be very exact apparently) to 1360-1382 and are a rare example.

The present pews are from the 1960s by the famous craftsman Richard Thompson, whose trademark is a mouse. Both children and adults alike go round counting them but I am not telling you how many there are; you must visit and count them yourselves!!

Outside, when we went, the police were just leaving after one of their regular visits as the secluded churchyard is, unfortunately, used by drug addicts. The large churchyard is a conservation area with many ancient trees and several War Commission Graves. The most well-known memorial is to E.M. Forster who wrote 'Howard's End' and 'Room with a

View' and lived nearby. You will not believe you are so close to Stevenage New Town. Do visit this church if you are in the area, and WHEN the Covid crisis is over, do think about joining Buntingford U3A Church Crawlers.

Marion Ling, Group Leader, Church Crawlers

www.u3asites.org.uk/buntingford



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Parents section - Induction

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To make a Reception application apply online
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BUNTINGFORD
SCHOOL of DANCE

It's been an unusual year but we've kept on dancing!

Just as we were up and running in our lovely new venue, so Lockdown 2 came and forced us to get back on Zoom. However, undeterred we continued to deliver our classes online into people's homes to keep everyone dancing.

We have welcomed some new pupils who joined us for their first ever ballet class via Zoom and loved it, with one parent reporting her daughter was practising her curtsey all week following her first lesson.

To keep things exciting we have started working on Show dances as 2021 is our Show year, and while it looks unlikely we will be able to hold our show in the normal way we are determined to have some kind of performance in 2021, most likely filmed in a studio without an audience for a DVD, rather than in a theatre with an audience.

Not only have we moved classes to Zoom, we are also holding our Choreography Competition on Zoom. This will be a charity event with donations to Isabel Hospice to enter and watch. This year, as friends won't be able to perform in groups, we have opened the competition up to welcome family groups or parent entries.

Pupils can get creative choreographing their own dance in any genre to any music, and they can create their own costumes and keep busy and active in Lockdown. They will perform their finished dances on Zoom on 28th November before Lockdown ends.

Below are some of our pupils of all ages taking part in their Zoom classes at home during the first Lockdown.

New pupils are always welcome. Contact us for a **NO OBLIGATION TRIAL IN ANY DANCE GENRE!** We currently offer Ballet, Tap, Modern & Jazz and Commercial Dance classes. We have waiting lists for some classes but review these every half term.

Have a look at our website www.buntingfordschoolofdance.co.uk

Find us on **facebook** and **instagram**





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 are we managing in a COVID school? Our story so far...

At the start of the year we spent a lot of time researching and listening to the advice from Educational Psychologists about how such a strange time might impact on our children. We learnt that although challenge and trauma can cause damage, it can also be an opportunity for students to grow. We have been using their advice and guidance to design a curriculum programme that addresses how we can help our students to manage and grow during this time. During each morning session, our students spend some time discussing their feelings and students and staff have been learning together how to manage these strange and challenging times. The advice explained that in order to grow, students and staff should have a sense of the following:

Safety: We spend time helping students to feel safe in school and discussing what we need to do and the Science behind the measures we are being asked to introduce. As Lockdown 2 began, all schools with students 11 years of age and above were asked to wear masks in corridors. Our students spent time learning why, the Science behind this request, and how to wear and care for their masks to make sure they were effective. At Edwinstree, we are clear that we are working with children, so if they forget their mask, they are gently reminded and supported with a disposable mask for the day.

Control and Efficacy: It is really important we continue to get feedback from our students, what they feel about the restrictions and how we can make things better. At least once a week, students are consulted on ideas and measures in the school, and we listen and adapt wherever possible. Students told us that they missed the opportunity to learn all their subjects in school and we have a timetable in waiting that will support students to be in the classroom, not move around the school, and cover all their lessons. However, this timetable has a greater risk of more teachers having to self-isolate, so it is on hold over winter. We hope that, as we get to the other side of Christmas, the threat of COVID-19 will decrease and we can implement the improved timetable.

Calm: Students have looked at 'stress buckets, anxiety, fight and freeze, and ants in their head'. This is helping them to recognise when they are really worried or anxious. It has helped them to identify and notice what happens when they feel like this and to develop a series of techniques to help them feel calm. Students at Edwinstree now have the language to communicate what is happening and get help.

Hope: Really important! In the past we have held Fullness Days where the school moves to vertical learning and year groups mix off timetable to raise money for a charity that has a particular meaning to a student in the school. Currently we are unable to do this as we cannot mix year groups, so instead each year will be working hard in December to raise funds for Christmas hampers for the Buntingford Food Bank. They are going to devise a series of sponsorship and creative opportunities to help encourage you to part with a little cash. Each tutor group hopes to fund one hamper, which is worth around £40.

Connectedness: What we are really missing are the opportunities for our KS3 students to mix with our KS2 students and connect. Normally our Year 8 leaders would be working to support the lower years in a variety of roles. As we can't mix bubbles across year groups, we are writing letters to each other to help this connection. They are also matched into a dance competition where each class of Year 8 and Year 7, will support

the Year 6 and Year 5 to learn a dance to compete in a 'dance off' at the end of November! They are having fun sharing their ideas and learning together, even if this is through remote connections and live TEAM's meetings!

Remembrance Day at Edwinstree

On Wednesday 11th November, our students and staff were privileged to listen to the Last Post played by one of Freman College's talented musicians. He came to a central point outside, and as all class windows were open, wherever we were we could hear him play. A two-minute silence was then observed in honour of those who lost their lives. The students were respectful and thoughtful throughout and we were really impressed with the Freman student, who played beautifully under such pressure.

'We will remember them': WW2 is part of our history curriculum, but sadly the Year 8 visit to Normandy had to be cancelled last year, and it is unlikely school visits will take place anytime soon.

Multi-Academy Trust

Many of you will know that in recent years Edwinstree Middle School and Freman College have been working closely together, which has proved really beneficial. Year 8 students have been taking part in a variety of lessons at Freman, which has been advantageous in preparing them for transition into Year 9. Shared network management has meant that we have been able to get better value for money in ICT purchasing and students arrive at Freman familiar with the platform and software which is used across both schools. There are lots of examples of how working together has been really positive.

As the Governors and Headteachers of our two schools feel that by continuing and developing this close working relationship we can do even more to benefit students in years to come, we would like to formalise the relationship by forming a Trust together. This will not result in any dramatic changes as the schools will continue to be separate, just as they are now. We have no intention of changing the school names, uniforms, Headteachers, Governing Bodies and so on. Edwinstree will remain a Church of England school, while Freman College will remain non-faith. The Diocese has been fully consulted and support our application. We are really excited about our future together.

Do we intend to have fun and celebrate Christmas?

Absolutely! We think that the Church of England vision for our school that '*supports each individual to flourish and challenges us to live life in all its fullness*' requires us to work hard to find opportunities for fun, especially in these strange times. In order to support a sense of control, we listened to their Student Voice and they have requested: a Christmas Jumper Day; an opportunity for competition; Christingle; carol services; the world's largest chocolate calendar; and a Fullness Day. Historically, during Advent a small choir visits the Lister Hospital in Stevenage to sing Carols to the patients, but unfortunately due to the Covid-19 restrictions, this year we will be unable to take part.

Golden Broom Award

We have introduced a few awards that make us smile! Our students are now aware of the cleaning team who do most of the school's cleaning after we leave at night. To encourage students to keep their classrooms tidy, we have introduced a 'Golden Broom Award' for the class with the cleanest room! Each key stage will have one class per week nominated for the award and the winning class is rewarded with a non-uniform day. The students are loving the competition and the 'golden broom' is distributed each week to the winning class! Can you guess what our 'golden toilet brush' award is for?!



Jo Gant, Headteacher



An alternative Christmas

As I write this, we are in the second lockdown due to the pandemic and we have no idea whether we will be able to spend Christmas with family and friends outside our own household. It is a very uncertain time for us but one thing is certain ... Christmas is coming! So let's take a look at some alternative ways of giving this Christmas.

Undoubtedly, we will be using online shopping more than ever this year, but this doesn't mean that we

can't also support local businesses – many of our local businesses have online shopping services and need our support in these difficult times. Amazon, as we know, is a favourite mainly because of ease and reliability, but it is not the only online option. If you want to buy a book for someone, take a look at www.hive.co.uk. This is an online bookstore which supports local independent bookshop at the same time – they also sell CDs and much more. No matter where you shop online, why not sign up to 'Give as you Live', www.giveasyoulive.com, which enables you to support your favourite charity as you do your online shopping. Choosing ethical shopping to minimise the impact of consumerism on both people and the environment is not always easy, but Ethical Consumer magazine has published an article you might find helpful. at <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/retailers/shopping-guide/ethical-online-retailers> And Friends of the Earth have published some eco tips at <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/lifestyle/21-ecofriendly-christmas-tips>

Peace on Earth – especially in Buntingford as we support the 20's Plenty campaign to reduce car speeds to 20 miles an hour and keep our roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists and our air cleaner for all of us. Contact us at buntingfordintransition@gmail.com if you want to join us, or find us on Facebook for the latest news.

Madela and Team



Royston, Buntingford & South Cambridgeshire

Supporting parents when it matters
because childhood can't wait

Registered Charity No. 1105385

In Buntingford we're working with the Chamber of Commerce to create an Advent Calendar around the town centre: 24 images will be going up in the shops during Advent, with a new one available to find every day. A calendar trail is available from the Buntingford Co-op. Follow the trail, find the windows and explore the town. There's also a Christmas drawing competition!

In Royston, we've put together an interactive calendar all over the town: 24 locations around the town will be revealing a fabulous window display over the lead up to

Christmas. Download our map from <https://www.hsrs.org.uk/2020/10/home-start-living-advent-calendar/> and find the windows.

If you'd like to know more about our campaigns, please take a look at our website: www.hsrs.org.uk, send us an email: admin@hsrs.org.uk or give us a call on: **01763 262 262**

Crafty Christmas

Sorting paper thick or thin
That is where my cards begin
With blade or scissors cut the
shape
Then join together with sticky
tape
What style, colour or picture
use?
Objects or super views?
Then added is a fine insert
No words to help from your
expert
Does the front page need a
bright gem?
Or a few lines with a gilding
pen?
It is so easy and great fun
Elation when the whole things
done!
Crafting is a healthy game
When locked indoors it keeps
you sane
UTUBE can teach you may
things
Like baking cakes and making
BLING.
Smiles for you all out there

Sandra



POST CHRISTMAS

'Twas the day after Christmas, and all through the
house,

Every creature was hurting, even the mouse.
The toys were all broken, their batteries dead;
Santa passed out, with some ice on his head.

Wrapping and ribbons just covered the floor,
While upstairs the family continued to snore.
And I in my T-shirt, new Reeboks and jeans,
I went into the kitchen and started to clean.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the sink to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the curtains, and threw up the sash.

When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a little red van and it became very clear.
The driver was the postman, so lively and grand;
Delivering mail from every part of the land.

With a handful of bills, he grinned like a fox,
Quickly stuffing them through our letter box.
Bill after bill, after bill, they still came,
Whistling and shouting he called them by name:

"It's Tesco's, then Sainsbury's, now Asda and
Marks,
Morrisons, then Littlewoods, Boots, and now
Clarks.
To the tip of your limit, every store, every mall,
Now charge away – charge away – charge away
all!"

He whooped and he whistled as he finished his
work,
He filled up the box, and then turned with a jerk.
He sprang to his van and he drove down the road,
Driving much faster with just half a load.

Then I heard him exclaim with great holiday cheer,
"Enjoy what you bought.. You'll be paying all
year!"

*This variation on 'Twas the Night Before
Christmas' came to me courtesy of Robin
Southgate, via Carol Emery, but Robin can't recall
where it originated from. Many thanks to the
unknown author! CN*

One of Our Angels is Missing!

Here we are, Christmas again. Each year it comes around quicker and quicker and every year a little more of the magic is lost. This despite the fact I am the oldest child in the world and Christmas is my favourite holiday. The deterioration of the festive feel is mainly because the various bodies who constantly try to tell us what to do and think are gradually eroding the last great festival of Anglo-Saxon Britain. During my lifetime this marvellous event has gone from being a time of anticipation and magic to another shopping opportunity, while the thought police have ensured that any vestige of Christian reference is wiped away lest we offend other groups. Strangely enough, any one of the likely offended groups I have discussed this with is more offended by the implication that their particular religion is not strong enough to withstand the perceived affront. However, this year Christmas faces a different threat – the Covid-19 virus and our Government's response to it, which looks set to strip away all remaining festive cheer. So I thought I would take you back to share the joy of what for me is the jewel in the Yuletide crown: the children's nativity play.

The nativity play we go to is at my daughter's church, where she is sometime Sunday school teacher. It takes place in a small country church located some distance from any habitation. The darkness of late afternoon only provides to add to the atmosphere of the occasion and the candlelit church, standing aloof on a high bank above the road, penetrates the blackness and beckons us onwards. Following the flickering lights we ascend the rough steps cut into the bank and the bare fingers of the leafless hedge shifting in the northerly wind create their own sense of movement and mystery. Behind us we can hear the small voices of the children responding to the careful ministrations of the grown-ups to "mind the steps" and "be careful of Amanda's wings".

We skirt the buttresses of the edifice that has seen four hundred Christmases and so many unrecorded winter festivals of the ancient midwinter solstice. The cold December wind encourages us to make all haste towards the church door and its welcome protection. As we enter the reassuring smell of old wood and cold stone greets us, together with the evocative perfume of the Christmas spruce.

A stalwart of the community greets us with a smile and an enveloping whiff of Avon's December bargain offer. For a moment, the multitudinous horde seems to faze the unfortunate parishioner, more used to the Sunday service that only yields a smattering of the old, the lonely and the very committed faithful. A look of deep consternation creeps across her countenance as she realises that the order of service sheets are wildly underestimated and she is forced to enquire with exaggerated politeness if we can share. This example of old-fashioned charm throws many of the throng, who are usually versed in the 'grab it' philosophy of our modern world. The request is answered by the loud response of papers being passed back to the duty verger who is now overwhelmed and many of the sheets fall to the floor or are upside down. In her haste to collect the fallen items she is attacked from the rear by a careless passing shepherd's crook and a look somewhere between surprise and a smile appears fleetingly on her gaze. Perhaps in her spinster's fantasy she thought she had attracted the attention of a new friend, but the moment soon passes and she covers her embarrassment with even more diligence to distribute the sheets.

The church gradually fills with families and many of the children are obviously dressed to play their part in the anticipated production. The vicar is showing signs of pre-concert nerves and, in his haste to greet every new and potential convert, places his foot on one of the papier-mâché cows who will now forever lean against the manger with a drunken air of cavalier abandonment. We settle down to await the hush of the audience and players. There is something of the mad hatter's tea party about the assembly as angels

and shepherds jostle to stand near their best friends. This leaves a rather forlorn, lonely and mangy sheep sharing his part of the stage with one of the wise men, whose sumptuous robes barely cover his Buzz Lightyear outfit from which he cannot be parted.

A rather bedraggled young mother joins us in our pew together with an infant clamped under her arm. The child has obviously been dressed in some haste as she is sporting one Wellington boot on one foot and a pink sandal on the other. As a pacifier the child clutches a half-eaten lump of waffle cake that regularly explodes and covers everything in proximity with copious crumbs. The mother adjusts her charge and with a sigh settles down to watch the pageant unfold, but her moment's calm is short lived. She cranes her neck towards the area below the pulpit looking at the assembled angelic host and I cannot fail to observe that she is studiously counting, at first with some confidence, then with concern that quickly turns to outward panic. It is apparent that one of the angels is missing and that particular cherub is hers. She half rises in her seat trying hard to restrain her twin nightmares of the lost angel and the disapproval of her fellow villagers. But her maternal instincts are too strong to resist and she moves to the aisle, clutching the now annoyed child beneath her arm, who in turn retaliates by letting out a loud wail and bashing what is left of the cake against the back of the person in the pew in front.

Once in the aisle, she creeps down towards the front of the church, but by now she has attracted the attention of the assembly and one undisciplined offspring enquires in a theatrical voice "What's that lady doing, Nan?" The shepherds, who are now taking the occasional swipe at the wise men, take up the chorus and the mass gaze is now centred on the hunched figure creeping towards the front. Back in our pew we hold our breath, sharing the poor women's panic for the whereabouts of her lost angel. Suddenly, from behind a music stand, a bespectacled imp with tinselled halo askew makes an entrance like some pantomime fairy. "Hello mum, what are you doing?" she directs towards the hapless mother, now covered with equal amounts of embarrassment and what's left of the pacifying confectionery.

The relieved mother rejoins the audience and we collect ourselves to enjoy the nativity telling. Adults who are both shy of their vocal abilities as the choir and chuffed at their five minutes of fame join the children at various discordant junctures of each carol. The organist is in her element and launches into the overture like a galleon in full sail, arms rotating as if she is about to take off. One father, ably assisted and frustrated by his copper-headed son, struggles with the sound system which at one moment records for posterity the interesting sounds of the Virgin Mary's stomach and at the next cuts off the reading of the chair-lady of the W.I. who is about to announce the Saviour's birth.

The play lurches forward with every child playing their part with enthusiasm. However, there are inevitable ad-libs and new twists to the plot, amongst which was the little known, but now graphically portrayed, incident where one angel uses Joseph's carpenter's saw to decapitate one of the lambs. The formerly lost angel, boosted on adrenalin and pre-production drinks high in caffeine, seizes every opportunity to pad out her part and join in with every other participant. Her crowning glory was an impromptu duet with one of the wise men in a rendition of Bob the Builder.

Overcome with indignation at being up-staged, the Virgin Mary tried to silence the errant messenger by snatching the microphone from her angelic grasp. This prompted a free-for-all between the shepherds and an alliance formed between the wise men and what was left of the assorted livestock. The motley stock turned on the angels during *Silent Night* and could have spoilt the whole effect had it not been for the quick thinking of the vicar who divided the warring factions with all the diplomatic panache of Koffi Anan.

The play descends to successful climax with the whole assembly joining in a rousing if somewhat off-key rendition of *Oh Come All Ye Faithful*. With a great and obvious sigh the

Vicar brought the performance to a close with a final prayer which was clearly straight from the heart. He invites the host to a post-production celebration of mulled wine and hot minced pies, "Ribena for the children". A mad unseemly stampede towards the vestry follows with a photo finish between the second shepherd and our heroine. By now her halo has slipped to rest on her shoulders and her National Health glasses with band-aid nose repair accessory are wildly askew. The lady verger who had welcomed us at the start had apparently beaten the refreshment queue and had been conducting her own quality control test of the mulled wine. She was now in her element regaling all and sundry upon the subject of her time in the Women's Land Army.

As we filter reverently at last from the church there is a soft powdery fall of snow in the air and we once again rejoice as in previous years with our family chorus: "Now Christmas has started."

Vyse



BUNTINGFORD TOWN FC

www.buntingfordtownfc.com

It seems like a lot has happened since my last column a month(ish) ago, or should I say that not a lot has happened! The last column saw all four teams starting to gain some momentum after a somewhat disrupted pre-season, but the imposition of Lockdown 2 has meant that only a handful of fixtures took place before grassroots football across the country came to a grinding halt once again. At least this time there is a sense of certainty to the enforced pause in the beautiful game but, even so, losing four weekends out of a packed schedule is going to make an already congested fixture list even busier as we approach the end of the season – and that's without taking into account any games lost to bad weather!

So what happened before Lockdown 2?

All four teams came into this period on the back of an unbeaten weekend, the first in living memory at The Club, and so the question was could we do it again?

The Firsts hosted Bushey Rangers on the 24th October and started the ball rolling with a 1-0 victory. In all honesty it could have been a bigger win, but with four strikers out through injury it fell to Charlie Owen to score from a set piece and secure all three points, whilst the defensive unit claimed another clean sheet!

The Reserves were in action at the same time, away to Harpenden Rovers, their sixth away fixture of the season. Their nomadic lifestyle seems to suit them at present and three points were secured with a brilliant 4-1 victory against a very competent opposition – goals from Parkins, Lovegrove, Jackson and Willis.

The pressure was now on The Vets and The Ladies, as it was the weekend before. The Vets were up first hosting local rivals Barkway Vets, a game that is always competitive, and a tough game saw the spoils being shared as both sides claimed a moral victory from a 1-1 draw.

The Ladies then stepped up to the plate, making the short trip across to Stevenage to face Bedwell Rangers and they did not let anyone down. Six goals from Georgia, Hollie, Becky (x2), Kate and Kiran put Bedwell's two into the shade and ensured that, for a second weekend in a row, The Club went unbeaten!

The last weekend before Lockdown 2 was played out with rumours of the impending restrictions flying about and everyone was very aware that this could be the last football

for some time. Saturday 31st October saw the First Team travel to fellow mid-table team Hertford Heath who were full of confidence after a 4-1 win the previous weekend. Despite playing well in difficult conditions, we could only come away with the draw, two goals from Matty Inman and Harry Watson cancelling out two for the opposition.

The Reserves, meanwhile, were on the road again making the short trip to 2nd placed Stevenage Borough Community where they had to compete with the kind of weather that made me grateful that I couldn't go to watch! A solidly determined performance saw the lads record a 2-2 draw with goals from Chas Bailey and Sid Arnold – it could have been more had the Referee not waved away a penalty shout in the last five minutes.

On Sunday both The Vets and The Ladies hit the road as 1st November should have been our Annual Fireworks Display, which for obvious reasons didn't go ahead this year. The Vets played Allenbury's Vets in Ware in the Divisional Shield, with some having half an eye already on the semi-finals of that competition. Unfortunately it wasn't to be as a 2-2 draw after extra time (yes THAT scoreline again) saw the game decided on penalties. We'll spare the blushes of some, but suffice to say that one or two seemed to forget that the target was between the posts! Allenbury's progressed scoring 3 pens to our 1.

The Ladies also came out on the wrong end of the scoreline. Their trip to Oakland Wolves Ladies, who sit top of the league table, saw the opposition take all three points with a single goal and the referee taking all the attention!

League Tables and Progress!

As we take stock before (hopefully) resuming action on 5/6th December, The Firsts and Reserves both sit in 9th place in their respective Divisions of the Herts Senior County League. The Firsts have played 8, won 3 and drawn 1, and The Reserves have played 7, won 2 and drawn 2. Both sides are starting to put together useful little unbeaten runs, improving from week to week, and we hope this will continue after our mid-season break.

The Ladies have been a real revelation this year and currently, after four games, sit third in Division 3 of the Beds and Herts Women's Football League. They have racked up an impressive 13 goals and played some genuinely attractive football. The Vets have played only 3 League games this season. They've won one and not lost any, and now sit third in the Premier Division of The East Herts Vets League

Co-op Local Cause!

One piece of good news that occurred during Lockdown 2 is that Buntingford Town FC have been chosen as one of the Local Causes for this year's Co-op Local Community Fund which runs until 23rd October 2021. The Co-op supports projects across the UK that their members care about. Every time a member buys selected Co-op branded products and services, the Co-op give local causes 2p for every pound spent, and all money raised from shopping bag sales goes to local causes. For a club like ours, with limited resources, this is a real boost so if you are a Co-op member may I encourage you to log into your account at www.coop.co.uk/membership and select us as your chosen cause – then the more you spend at The Co-op, the more funds we get to support Buntingford Town.

Players, Sponsors and Volunteers wanted!!!

As I have mentioned previously, we very much want to attract more volunteers – whether as players, sponsors or helpers – to enable us achieve our vision for the Club of offering high quality, exciting football at a higher level. If you would like to join us on the next stage of our adventure, please contact me on chair@buntingfordtownfc.com or 07976 869 532. Or if you can't be a volunteer, why not come along as a spectator? We would love your support – 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

Calling All Young Photographers!

Snap! An exciting new competition has been launched for young photographers in our area. The Royston Rotary Club is inviting local youngsters to take part in a national contest with a view to developing talent and skills for a whole new generation.

Rotarian Graeme Dargie, who is in charge of the Youth Activities for Rotary in Royston, explains: "The theme is 'Wild Nature' and contestants are encouraged to use either traditional cameras or up-to-date digital technology. The judges will be looking for those entries which best demonstrate imagination and technical expertise."

The competition is open to children and young people from all schools and colleges, those that are home educated, and children from any other young peoples' community organisations. There will be three age categories: **Juniors**, 7 to 10 years old; **Intermediate**, 11 to 13 years old; and **Seniors**, 14 to 17 years old

Royston Rotary has a tradition of sponsoring successful events for youngsters, including 'Youth Makes Music' and the 'Technology Challenge'. Graeme adds: "This is a new one for us, and we're really looking forward to seeing how it catches the imagination."

So, if you would like to take part, or you know a youngster who does, go to the Royston Rotary Club website at www.roystonrotary.com/youngphotographer.htm for more and an application form. Entries must be submitted by 31st January 2021.



Rotary  **Club of Royston**



Do you know a person, or organisation, in Royston or the local area who needs a helping hand? If so, the Rotary Club might well have the answer.

The club is open for applications to The Deards Royston Rotary Trust, which was founded by a well-known Roystonian more than 20 years ago. Alfie Deards made a generous legacy to the club – among other bequests to organisations Royston – with no strict stipulations as to how the money should be spent.

The club's treasurer, David Smyth, jokes: "We could have blown the lot on a party! More seriously, though, our legal team did not think that was perhaps the correct way of dealing with this so we duly formed The Deards Royston Rotary Trust."

Since then, the trust has been in a position to help those in need as a result of local, national or international disaster; to support children's education; to give a hand to local charities; and to donate otherwise as the club sees fit.

David Smyth: "Over the past 22 years we have made a variety of grants to individuals and organisations totalling nearly £16,000. And despite all those grants, we still have a healthy reserve available. We receive requests from a variety of sources but the Trustees are always looking for more."

David remembers Alfie well. "He was a good, old-fashioned gentleman," he says. "He was President of Royston Rotary Club in the mid-Seventies and also captain of Royston Golf Club."

If you would like to make an application for help from the Trust, or if you would like to recommend another applicant, please contact deardstrust@roystonrotary.com