



BASILDON AND BILLERICAY

u3a

NEWSLETTER No 346

SEPTEMBER 2022



1926-2022

The end of an era

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Sandra Randall

Last month we tried something new for the Monthly meeting. We had a picnic, which went down very well with our usual excellent tea and coffee provided by Mary. The spot chosen had a very convenient tree which afforded us with ample shade, for a very great deal of excellent conversation. We also had outdoor games, which proved a hit with the more energetic. Many of those who attended express a wish to repeat the event next year, so if you missed it this time there may be another chance.

For most of our members this has been a month of remembering and reminiscing our recollections of a Queen, met or seen at events spanning our lifetime.

Yes like some of you, I remember watching the Coronation on a 9 inch screen. The next Coronation will be far bigger and in colour!

Whatever our memories, the Queen never stopped learning, so would have made a very good u3a member.

.....

Could we please have some volunteers to make tea coffee at the monthly meeting on 23rd September.

It's quite simple; no volunteers equals no tea!!!

Sandra Randall

MONTHLY MEETING

**2.30pm on Friday, 23rd September
at the Cannon Roche Centre, Billericay**

The History and Restoration of Copped Hall.



The speaker for September is **Phil McKinder**, a volunteer with responsibilities as trustee, tour guide and speaker. He will speak about the history of the earlier houses on the site and the restoration of the current Copped Hall, a mid-18th-century English country house close to Epping, following a catastrophic fire in 1917.

PICTURES FROM THE PICNIC

AUGUST 26th 2022



OUR RATHER PARCHED PICNIC SITE



GIANT JENGA



WEARING OUR PICNIC HATS



MORE HATS!



OUR CHAIRMAN



GROUPS REPORT

One of the mottos of the u3a could be that you are never too old to learn. When I think back to my grandparents, lovely though they were, when they retired they seemed old and did things that old people did then. My Grandad just pottered in the garden and went to watch his favourite football team, Swindon Town, and my Grandmother looked after the house and knitted in her spare time. I look at pictures of them then, when they were probably younger than I am now, and they do look old. My parents were a bit more adventurous when they retired. They both took up new hobbies; painting and archaeology, and my Mum was a keen member of the Mother's Union. They went on holidays abroad and enjoyed trying new things.

I wonder what my Grandparents would have thought of the way most retired people live now. Would they have been amazed at the range of sporting activities that the over 65s do now? In our u3a alone we have people playing table tennis, golf and Petanque, or going on rambles. In other groups I see that they have formed walking cricket teams and cycling groups. We don't think anything of trying new activities. We don't even consider ourselves old now, except for the odd aches and pains. I think that we live a much more interesting lifestyle now, with much more personal fulfilment.

I wonder what the next generation will be like when they retire – probably not until the age of seventy. I think that they will continue to be active and, hopefully, the u3a will be there to help them to channel their interests.

I must add that I am very proud of my two daughters. They both hated doing PE at school and didn't keep up with any sports when they went out into the wide world. As they got older, though, they both started running to keep fit. Both have taken part in 5k and 10k runs and Laura, the youngest, has done a couple of half-marathons for charity. This weekend though, our elder daughter, Kirsty, has made us very proud by taking part in the Three Peaks Challenge. This, for those who don't know, is a challenge to climb Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon within twenty-four hours. She attempted all three mountains, not quite reaching the tops because of time constraints, but managed to raise nearly £2000 for her charity, one which builds gardens in hospices. Now, that is definitely not something that I would ever have dreamed of doing – and still won't!



SECRETARY'S NEWS - "From under the stairs"

Andy Fletcher

What can one say? Since the last Newsletter in August a great deal has been happening to say the least.

Wonderful weather greeted our "Picnic in the Park" which took the place of our traditional type of Monthly Meeting. It was great fun, although it would have been nice to see a few more of our members there. It was, however, very nice to welcome a new member, who came along for the very first time.

Thanks must go to Aileen for bringing the garden games, and to Mary for making sure that everyone was kept topped up with teas and coffees. I'm not sure if we read the rules correctly but we attempted to play a strange game called "The King's Game" which, I gather, is quite an ancient and tactical form of Skittles. I have a feeling, from the enthusiasm shown by members of the Petanque Group, that they may just be thinking of playing it again. I found out that I am VERY bad at playing Giant Connect 4. I did win Giant Jenga though.

Of course I cannot overlook the most important events of the past few days (I am writing this on 12th September). I'm certain that the loss of Her Majesty the Queen has been, for us all, a sad and very moving experience. Personally, I am proud to have served Her Majesty during my time in the Royal Navy and, for the last two and a half years of my RN career 1976 to 1978, as Leading Radio Operator aboard Her Majesty's Yacht Britannia. I am now the Secretary of The Association of Royal Yachtsmen of which the Queen was our Patron.

And so we now pass from Elizabeth II's Elizabethan era into the 3rd Carolean era of Charles III. May we all wish him a long and happy reign with Camilla, the Queen Consort, at his side?

GOD SAVE THE KING!!

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

HALF RAMBLE

Joan Lee

We meet on the first Monday of every month at 10.30am. Walks are open to all u3a members, just turn up on the day. We walk for about one hour at a leisurely pace, mainly flat ground but it can be muddy. We always hope to finish with coffee (or lunch) and lively chat to round off the day.

The aim of our group is that individual members will take a turn in choosing, planning and leading a walk on an occasional basis.

Monday 3rd October - Hanningfield Reservoir. Park at visitors Centre, Hawkswood Road, Downham CM11 1WT

Monday 7th November - Memorial Park, Wickford SS11 8JS. From Wickford Centre take Southend Road 1.4 miles
Turn left into Highcliffe Road then Seven Acres. Park in car park or in road

Railway Travel Group trip to Walton



On the same day that Liz Truss was being appointed as Prime Minister, more importantly, the Railway Travel Group was making a trip to Walton on the Naze. We walked from the Railway Station across the town to the landmark Tower on the Naze. Remarkably we managed this without stopping for a coffee, an ice cream or a visit to the toilets. Despite the fact that the beach was accessible and the weather was pleasantly warm, though with some threat of a possible thundering downpour, no paddling took place during this visit and no visit to a Wetherspoons occurred. There was a choice of three places to have lunch by the Tower.

There was a lot to view in Walton. The pier (second or third longest in the country), the Round Garden, a Martello Tower, the statue of Private Herbert Columbine VC, the Queen Victoria Jubilee Fountain, the Bath House pub, the Prince's Esplanade, the East Terrace dating back to the 1830s, the Old Lifeboat Station, the Foundry, the Backwaters, Felixstowe and, of course, the Naze Tower. Out at sea we saw huge container ships, the Gunfleet Sands off shore wind farm and, in the distance, the Principality of Sealand.

Report by Maurice Wakeham

RAMBLING GROUP

Brian Parker



Our September walk started at Little Waltham and we walked to Great Waltham where we spent some time at a large country house called Langleys. Samuel Tuffnell bought the estate in 1711. He paid £5498 and it is now valued around £11 million. It has been described as the Blenheim Palace of Essex and the county's only great house, but I beg to differ. The estate is still owned by the descendants of Samuel Tuffnell. Thanks to Mark for all the information he gave us. Access to the house is not allowed and thus I was unable to get a decent photo of it, but you can see its four Gate Houses, one of which is being renovated. Unusually, you can see the pet cemetery from the public footpath.



Gate House



Another house on the estate

Our October walk is nearer to home, starting in Stock and we will meet at 10.15 on 5th October. Please meet in the car park of Stock Village Hall in Common Road opposite the Bakers Arms CM4 9NF. We will be walking along part of St Peters Way towards the reservoir. Please bring refreshments with you as there are no facilities on the route.

As usual, please wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Boots help to protect your ankles. The walk is 5.1 miles and there are 2 easy stiles, but otherwise it is fairly flat for the next walk. All u3a members are welcome to turn up on the day.

By popular demand, from November, we will be changing our walking day to the 3rd Wednesday of the month and so it will be on 16th November.

September 2022 Report

We are a friendly non-competitive group with handicaps 15-28 who would be pleased to see more golfers join us before winter sets in and the courses get very muddy. If you are interested please contact our co-ordinator or any of the golf group members.

The lovely sunny weather continued through 18th August for our breakfast visit to Top Meadow where the modest green fee included a full English breakfast. Dave B surprised us with a rare birdie at the challenging uphill par 3 over a valley between tee and green.

Holidays had reduced our numbers for the visit to Dunton Hills on 25th, where the few players experienced a wet Thursday for the first time since the brief hailstorm on Canvey back on 24th February.

There was only 3 of us available for the return to Canvey on 1st September, when an easterly wind helped us over the last 4 holes.

On 8th we were a fourball playing two rounds of the nine hole Rivenhall course. Whilst having tea in the club house the TV on the wall told us of the events surrounding the declining health of the Queen at Balmoral.

Report from Stuart Allen

u3a golfers completing the second round of nine holes at Rivenhall Golf Course Witham



WHAT I DID AT THE WEEKEND

Andy Fletcher

By now most of you will be aware of my having served in the Royal Navy. It is something I am very proud of and it has shaped much of my life ever since. My service aboard HMY Britannia was the highlight, of course. As Secretary and member of The Association of Royal Yachtsmen, I have been privileged, along with Ann, to attend special events over the years and I thought you may be interested in the latest “adventure” that I took part in.

The Dunkirk “Little Ships” of 1940 are probably well known to everyone both from the Newsreels, newspapers, documentaries and factual and fictional films about Operation Dynamo. Every year The Association of Dunkirk Little Ships (ADLS) hold a Veteran’s Cruise on the River Thames and this year it was held on the weekend of 3 and 4 September. I was lucky enough to be invited to attend this event and joined 8 of my old Royal Yacht colleagues (Oppos we call each other in the RN) at Penton Lock Yacht Club near Chertsey.



The ADLS Veterans Cruise is a longstanding event in the ADLS annual calendar and was borne from an event first started in 1991 by Rev. John Richards. He organised an event to take members of the Dunkirk Veterans Association for a trip on the river. Indeed, three Veterans from the beaches were able to attend this year. One was 106, one 104 and an 89 year old lady. I understand the lady was only 7 years old at the time and the only civilian to be taken off the beaches as it was forbidden to embark civilians for some reason. It was heartening to learn that one of the Centenarians was attending with his 96 year old lady friend!

In more recent years, the Veterans Cruise has been expanded to include Veterans of more recent conflicts such as Falklands, the Gulf and other Armed Forces Associations and service related organisations such as War Widows and serving members of the Royal Navy. This year Capt. Catherine Jordan and a contingent of trainee ratings from HMS Collingwood, the Maritime Warfare School, were in attendance and a trainee was also allocated to each of the Little Ships.

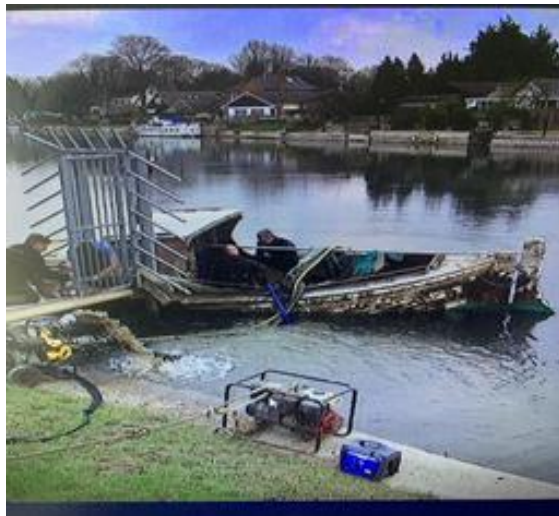


Some 20 Little Ships took part this year and when we arrived we were introduced to our “Skipper” for the day. Three of us were assigned to the lovely, tiny, Lady of Mann, owned by Matt & Becky Cain. Matt’s Grandfather was taken off the Dunkirk beaches and his son, Matt’s Dad, was with us on the day.

Traditionally, when invited to these events, you are expected to present your Skipper with “something nice” to drink during the cruise. Of course, being Navy men, Rum was the order of the day!!

Following a brief service of dedication and remembrance at the Yacht Club, we embarked and sailed to Chertsey Lock then turned and braved a really soaking downpour during the trip up to and through Penton Hook Lock, through Staines and back to the Yacht Club. Matt let me take her helm for most of the day!

On our return there were drinks on the terrace overlooking the river, a very smartly carried out Ceremonial Sunset lowering of ensigns and a meal in the Penton Hook Yacht Club. (See picture right)



Lady of Mann's story is absolutely amazing!!

I thoroughly recommend you to read her history. It is too long really, to transcribe here, but here is a link to her story to cut and paste: <https://www.adls.org.uk/lady-of-mann>.

The bare bones of her story are: The present owner found her unloved and rotting in a mud berth in Maldon. She was the No.8 Lifeboat of 10 aboard The Isle of Man Steam Packet

Company ship "Lady of Mann". During Operation Dynamo, she was used to ferry troops from the beaches as she was one of the only boats with an inboard engine. She was also used at the little spoken of, or remembered, Operations Aerial and Cycle following Dynamo AND she was at D-Day in 1944 too. A very BRAVE little lady!!

Newsletter Contributions

If you have any items please send them by **12.00 Noon**
on Wednesday, 19th October 2022

I am always happy to receive your report or comments at any time before the cut-off date.
Please send all items in **editable format** to bbu3anewsletter@gmail.com

Please do not send any items in pdf format. I do not have the software to convert these items into Word for the newsletter.

If you are sending photos please send them separately in JPG format.

Only send photos that you have taken yourself. We cannot use photos or pictures that have been downloaded from the internet, unless copyright free.

All contributions will be acknowledged.

Current and past newsletters can be viewed on our website <https://u3asites.org.uk/bb>

Please note that, in the interests of security, all personal details of individuals (address, email or phone number) have been redacted from the on-line versions.

Janis Horsley (Editor)