



**BASILDON AND BILLERICAY**

**u3a**

**NEWSLETTER No 347**

**OCTOBER 2022**



## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**Sandra Randall**

It was great to see so many of you at our monthly meeting in September to enjoy our excellent speaker from Copped Hall. This was followed by some familiar faces at their open day on the 9<sup>th</sup>. Please see a more detailed report from the Solo Uno group on page 7.

We now welcome a new Speakers Secretary, Linda Stewart, who I am sure will have some new ideas for you. Don't forget if you hear a good speaker at another of your many outings please get the details and let Linda know. A list of speakers for the rest of 2022 and topics for early 2023 is below.

All the members at the last monthly meeting would like to thank Susan and Peter for volunteering to make tea and coffee for us; without them it would have been a dry meeting.

We have all enjoyed the record breaking summer and are now heading for cooler climes! So time for some indoor events. We will be looking forward to the ever popular Quiz, and thanks go to Peter who has volunteered once more. Watch this space for further details. Now put your thinking caps on for more events.

## **SPEAKERS' SECRETARY**

**Linda Stewart**

The remaining speakers for 2022 are as follows:

**28 October:** Sara Backhouse Wood, "Medical Detection Dogs."

Sara is the Regional Volunteer and Fundraising Coordinator (East of England) for Medical Detection Dogs. (See more overleaf)

**25 November:** Victor Knope "Boadicea, warrior queen in history and legend"

**16 December:** Christmas Special

Heather Simmons and The Daisy Bowlers. The Daisy Bowlers are a quirky and fun vintage band performing songs from the Charleston to Jive with 3 part harmony.

## **Topics for Monthly Meetings in 2023**

More details in later newsletters

27th January	Tales from the Smithy
24 <sup>th</sup> February	Richard III – saint or sinner?
24 <sup>th</sup> March	The Essex Scrubber - humorous real life experiences
28 <sup>th</sup> April	Gilbert & Sullivan
26 <sup>th</sup> May	Essex Diary (wildlife of Essex through the year)
23 <sup>rd</sup> June	AGM

## MONTHLY MEETING

**2.30pm on Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> October  
at the Cannon Roche Centre, Billericay**

**Speaker    Sara Backhouse-Wood**



Sara is the Regional Volunteer and Fundraising Coordinator, and will be giving a talk on the life-saving work of Medical Detection Dogs. Come and hear about their Bio Detection Dogs, who are able to detect the odour of diseases such as Cancer, Parkinson's and malaria, and their Medical Alert Assistance Dogs, who use their amazing sense of smell to support people with life-threatening health conditions.

It is hoped that one of the volunteers who has a young dog can come, but there are no promises.

Yes we are away in Ruby the Campervan AGAIN!

We have been on our travels since the beginning of October so, on the Secretarial side of things, I haven't got much to report to be honest. However, I'm sure Sandra and Ann may have some information for you!

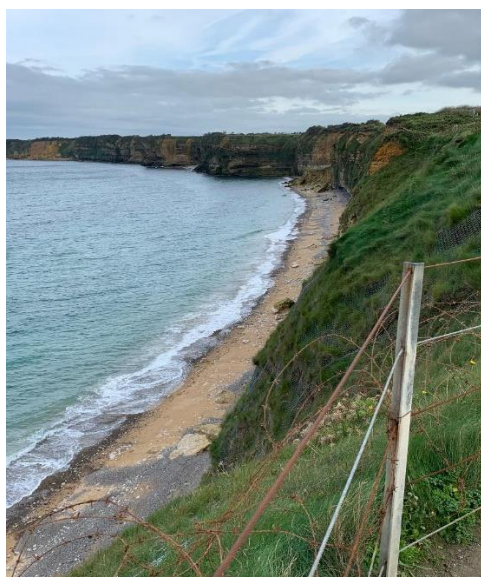
Our trip to France has brought us to the beautiful town of Bayeux, which we last came to about 40 years ago. The surrounding area holds many memories of one of our first family holidays abroad; it's rather lovely to look at a map with the names of places visited and wonder what they are like now. SO, we are trying to answer those questions.

We can't drive Ruby all over the countryside so we have hired a car for three days. Yesterday we visited the area of the D Day Landings, the Omaha Beach memorials and Pointe du Hoc. This is where truly heroic feats of determination laid the base for the very hard fought success which was the liberation of Europe at the end of WWII in 1945.

Since we were previously here things have changed and maybe due to films such as Saving Private Ryan etc. there has been a massive proliferation of Museums along the coast. These seem to exhibit nothing but burnt out military vehicles and weapons!!

We are off today to try and find the farmhouse we stayed in all those years ago, in a tiny hamlet called La Folie. The farmer was the Mayor and also produced the BEST farm Calvados I have ever tasted!! I'm betting he MAY not be with us anymore but I wonder if one of his sons has carried on the tradition.....? Ann may have something to say about me trying to find out!

See you at the next Monthly Meeting on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October



The inspiration for the film Saving Private Ryan

Pointe du Hoc

In my last report I wrote about it never being too late to learn and that the members of the u3a are very keen to stick to that point of view. This time I am going to write about something that crossed my mind yesterday about young people learning about the past.

As Andy said, we are off in our Campervan exploring the north of Normandy, taking the opportunity to visit places to learn more about the D-day landings. Yesterday we went to a vast American War Cemetery, near to Omaha Beach. It is a beautiful place, lots of gardens and water features, overlooking the sandy beach below. It is also a very sad place with thousands of graves of young men, and a few young women, who were killed very close to where they are buried. The white crosses stretch into the distance, in very straight rows. They are etched with the name of the casualty, his rank and unit, the state he came from and the day he died. The ones we saw all died within days of each other, from 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 to the end of July. I felt very moved by their sacrifices and I wondered about the families that they had left behind. There is a centre where you can find out about the men, where a voice is heard reading out all their names.

What struck me was the number of school parties that we saw there. These young French people, teenagers, were probably not much younger than those that had been buried there. I was so impressed that these children were learning about the past in such a way. I don't know what they thought about being there, but I hope that it taught them something about how senseless war is. I know that some of our secondary schools take groups to France and Belgium to investigate the history of the First and Second World Wars, my youngest nephew remembers going to see the ceremony they hold every evening under the Menin Gate, in Ypres. I think that it is so important that future generations do not forget the sacrifices that people made.

If you do get a chance to visit this area, I would recommend it. It's not only all about the recent past. Don't forget that Bayeux has a museum that shows off its famous tapestry (embroidery) and some very historic buildings. The Cathedral was started by the brother of William the Conqueror, Bishop Odo, and William actually attended the consecration of the building. The food here is amazing too, as you would expect, with lots of seafood especially.



## **RAMBLING GROUP**

**Brian Parker**



Our October walk was a little nearer to home this month, as we walked from Stock down Seaman's Lane on the St Peters Way. It was a very windy day but it stayed dry and we enjoyed the scenery.

All future walks will now take place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month.

Our November Walk will be on **16<sup>th</sup> November** starting at 10.15 from Rettendon Village, starting from the Village Memorial Car Park. The Post Code is CM3 8DP. This is right by the pedestrian crossing. It may be fairly busy, and if so, I suggest you park in Meadow Road. This is on the right hand side before you get to the hall if coming from Rettendon Turnpike. Car sharing may be a good idea for this walk. This is a 5.5 mile walk with 3 easy stiles, and a couple of hills, as we are walking north to Rettendon Common.

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.

All u3a members are welcome to turn up on the day.

For our December and January walks, we will switch to pavement paths as we did last year.

On 21<sup>st</sup> December we will probably do a walk in London starting at Baker Street underground station walking through Regents Park, Primrose Hill and Camden Town. So there will be plenty of refreshment places on this walk.

## **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.

**7th November**      Wickford Memorial Park SS11 8JS. From Wickford Centre take Southend Road 1.4miles. Turn left into Highcliffe Road then Seven Acres Park in Car Park or in Road

**5th December**      Hockley Woods SS5 4RN Main Road B1013 Park in Bull Pub car park

**2nd January 2023**      Post Christmas Lunch 12.15pm at The Running Mare, Galleywood CM2 8PN  
Extensive Menu (see on line) £18.95 Deposit needed.

## **SOLO UNO SUNDAY**

**Margaret Way**



After hearing such a fascinating talk by Phil McKinder at the last u3a meeting about Copped Hall in Epping, we decided to have our Solo Uno Sunday day out there. They were also having an open day, which just happened to fall right for us.

Copped Hall was vast and it took us quite a while to go through all 3 floors which included a basement that was a maze of tunnels, and a bit spooky. There was a brass band playing for most of the day which was excellent; there were various stalls selling their wares and the grounds were vast and beautiful. Coffee and homemade cakes went down a treat. Flowers were still in bloom in the walled garden and there were also plants for sale.

And to add to all that, the weather was great. We all agreed it was a lovely day out.

## **ESSEX HISTORY 2**

**Jacky Hathaway**

### **SUMMER VISITS**

In August this group visited Galleywood. We ate lunch at the Horse and Groom, followed by a walk around the Common and the old Race Track. This walk was ably led by Alan Taylor. I had tested positive for Covid the previous day and so could not join the group.

The September visit was to Mersea Island to explore the Roman Burial Barrow, and then the town Museum. This was a fascinating visit where we were made most welcome by the local volunteers at both venues.

The Barrow is rarely open to the public, so this visit had been especially arranged. Sue Howlett, who wrote the booklet "The Secrets of the Mound", talked to us about how it was first opened in 1912, what was found and further research that has been carried out. They now know that the buried bones belonged to a Roman Officer of high standing who died in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> Century. He was wealthy enough to be cremated with frankincense, which was a rare and expensive commodity. His likely origins are from the Trier region of Germany. We were allowed to walk into the Barrow to see the site of the tomb which contained the burial urn. This glass urn and the bones are now exhibited in the Mersea Museum. It was an amazing experience.

We next drove to the Museum where we were welcomed with light refreshments. This was a private visit prior to the Museum, being opened to the public for the afternoon. As well as the funeral urn there is such a variety of exhibits. We were so fascinated that we only left just in time to order a very late lunch at the White Hart opposite.

## **ESSEX VILLAGES GROUP**

**Debbie Wood**

The Essex villages group have made visits to both Great Waltham and Coggleshall in the past two months.

In Great Waltham we had a very knowledgeable talk by Peter Wells, a local historian, who has recently written a book about the village. We were told the many ghost tales that are associated with different houses as well as interesting information about present and past occupants.

In Coggleshall, after a welcome coffee, we started our tour with a visit to the museum which included many items that stirred up memories. We were also able to listen to a specially commissioned, individual audio system that played stories from the past. The picture below shows the group at the barn, with its unusual roof. This is owned by the National Trust and often open to the public.

Both visits finished with the opportunity for us to sample lunch at one of the local village pubs.



## **DISCUSSION AND LUNCH GROUP 1**

**Edward Fortune**

Our pub Discussion and Lunch Group would like a few new members to join it. We now meet on the third Monday of the month, currently at The Old Kings Head, Stock Road. If you like to discuss any topic; controversial, informative or otherwise, you will enjoy our lunch time get together.

Please contact: Edward Fortune, by email, for further details



**Visit to Stowmarket 4<sup>th</sup> October**



Fortunately our October visit to Stowmarket was scheduled for the day before a rail strike! From the attractive grade 2 listed railway station we set off for the short walk to the Food Museum. We were welcomed by Darren who providing an interesting and amusing talk about the history of the site and why it has recently been rebranded from the Museum of Rural Life to the Food Museum.

The museum comprises 17 assorted building spread over 75 acres which is more than most of us could cover in one visit. The buildings range from a 13<sup>th</sup> Century tithe barn, an 18<sup>th</sup> century water mill, a 19<sup>th</sup> century woodworking factory and wartime huts to a modern exhibition building where we were able to sample foraged food including haw jam and mint and nettle tea. Around the site we found the large collection of rural craft workshops and historic farm machinery to be very interesting. We also enjoyed seeing assorted domestic life and retail settings which reminded many of us of our childhood! The 18<sup>th</sup> century Abbots Hall, which was the original manor house, contained a number of exhibitions. Some of the group explored more of the 75 acres visiting the water mill and wind pump, and were able to meet the resident farm animals.

The onsite café provided a number of options for a very pleasant lunch mid- way through our visit.

## **Newsletter Contributions**

If you have any items please send them by **12.00 Noon**  
**on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> November 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 [bbu3newsletter@gmail.com](mailto:bbu3newsletter@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.

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Janis Horsley (Editor)