



**BASILDON AND BILLERICAY**

**u3a**

**NEWSLETTER No 349**

**DECEMBER 2022**



## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

**Sandra Randall**

Well, we have come to the end of another year and are now making plans for next year.

Dates for your new 2023 Diary are:

April 1 <sup>st</sup>	Quiz evening with a Prize for winning team
June 23 <sup>rd</sup>	AGM with scones
August 25 <sup>th</sup>	Monthly Meeting      Picnic under the tree, weather obliging
December	Christmas Social

Plus, of course, a Speaker every month at the Monthly Meeting

Before all of that, the Committee would like to wish you all that you would wish yourselves for the coming Season and a happy and healthy New Year.

## **SECRETARY'S NEWS – "From under the stairs"**

**Andy Fletcher**

At this time of year I tend to try and "clear the decks" ready for Christmas and the New Year. Inevitably this means that I will come across lots of reminders of things that we have done, places we have visited and things we SHOULD have done, but never got round to for some reason. I read my Secretary's News from December 2021 and there are a couple of things I promised myself that I didn't find time for!! I think I may try again in 2023, wish me luck. I'm pretty sure quite a few of you will all have had similar experiences?

I hope you have enjoyed the past year of your membership of our excellent Basildon & Billericay u3a as much as Ann and I have. Although I was unable to attend the last Monthly Meeting as I was unwell, I understand that the number of members attending was very encouraging. Let's keep it up in 2023. We have a great programme of Speakers already planned, along with a Quiz Night in the Spring and another Summer Picnic. Keep your eyes out in the Newsletter and on our information boards at the Monthly Meetings for details. It would be great to see some of those of you that haven't attended a Monthly Meeting before, or for a long time, at the Canon Roche Hall on the FOURTH FRIDAY of each month. You will be sure of a warm welcome.

If you are coming to the Christmas Social on **Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December** at **THE EMMANUEL CENTRE**, I will see you there!

Have a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

## **GROUPS' FACILITATOR**

**Ann Fletcher**

### **GROUPS' REPORT**

Well we are almost at the end of a very busy year. People seemed to be cramming in all the experiences that they missed over the previous two years. As you know, we have been catching up on holidays abroad, although we still haven't flown anywhere yet!

Most of our interest groups have been very busy too. There have been changes of Co-ordinators and changes of venues. Some groups have closed and others are starting. One new group on the horizon is a Singing for Pleasure group. Its new Co-ordinator, Barbara, and I are arranging for it to meet on the first Tuesday of each month at the Community Church in Queens Park. We have a list of about ten potential members, but if you would like to join the group, please contact me and I will forward your information on to Barbara. She is keen to stress that this is not going to be a formal choir, but a chance for people to get together and sing just for fun!

Another group, the Patchwork and Quilting Group, is looking for some help. Its Co-ordinator of many years, Eva, has had to step down from the role and the group needs someone to take her place. The present members feel that they are keen to carry on with the group, but that they are not confident to run it themselves. If you are interested in joining the group, please let me know and I will let the current members know. They are prepared to help you improve your sewing skills too! In the past they have taken part in many projects, like making quilts for premature babies born in Basildon Hospital.

As the New Year starts we will also be thinking of other new groups that we can get started. If you have any ideas for a group, please let me know.

I hope that you have a very good Christmas and a happy New Year!

## **ACCESSIBILITY SECRETARY**

**Aileen Burgess**

Happy Christmas everybody.

I have had a couple enquiries from members who have had to stop driving and don't live on a bus route. It would be wonderful if we had a few members who would be prepared to pick up other members for the monthly meeting. Obviously we would try and get those nearby to do the honours. If anybody would be happy to be added to a list please let me know.

## **OUR LIBRARY**

**Linda Butcher**

Thanks to the committee we now have the library back, but **it will not be out** at the Christmas social, as that is being held at Emmanuel Hall. Please save your donations for the January meeting - I expect a bumper crop.

## OUR CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENT

**Friday December 16<sup>th</sup> 2022 at 2.30pm**

We will be holding our popular Christmas Social  
event again this year

in the **Emmanuel Hall, Laindon Road, Billericay**



### **Live entertainment by**

### **Heather Simmonds 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.

### **Free Raffle**

### **Christmas Quiz**

### **Festive refreshments**

This free event is open to members only – cards to be shown at the door.  
A restriction on numbers means that there will be 80 places available and those wanting a seat should email Sandra

## **2023 Monthly Meeting Topics**

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



Our good luck continues, as on the morning of 16th November the heavens opened, but 8 of us decided to brave the elements.

By 10.00 the clouds were breaking up and at 10.15 we saw the sun for our walk around Rettendon. By 11.00 it was time to take the coats off. It was a bit hilly in places but we had a good time. The photos show some interesting structures which the local farmer has made from mesh. The one in the tree is a monkey and the other a large dog. Some of us adjourned to Meadow Croft garden centre for a well-earned cuppa, even though they had a traditional German Christmas Market event going on.

Details for the December walk were published in last month's newsletter, and so we hope to see many of you for our Regents Canal walk on **21<sup>st</sup> December**. I promise not to mention the turkey. Meet at 10.30 at Baker Street Station by the Sherlock Holmes statue, if you are not meeting me at Billericay.

Our **Wednesday January 18<sup>th</sup>** walk is also in London, meeting at Liverpool street station (end of platform 15) or Tower Hill Underground Station near the Tower Hill Tram food wagon. For those coming from Billericay, you should get the 9.37am train to Liverpool Street. I will be at Billericay station at 9.20 if you want to travel with me. I suggest you buy return ticket to Liverpool Street which will cost £20.10 or £13.25 with a senior railcard. From Liverpool Street we walk for about 20 mins to Tower Hill to meet those who come in from Basildon and Laindon into Fenchurch Street station. From Basildon you should get the 9.35 train which will give you plenty of time to walk to Tower Hill.

Again, I suggest you a return ticket to Fenchurch Street station. The walk should start at **10.30** but we will wait a few minutes. Please ring me if you are running late.

## **RAMBLING continued**

The walk is a total of 5 miles walking by, or very close to, the River Thames to Canary Wharf passing St Katherine's Dock, Wapping and the infamous Prospect of Whitby. Then we move on to the Limehouse Basin, and we will finish at Canary Wharf. Here there are plenty of places to get refreshment before we get the DLR to Stratford or the Jubilee line to West Ham. Price is £1.60 for contactless payment.

Please contact me if you any questions. All the above is dependent on there being no strikes, so please check.

We are thinking about having a meeting early in the New Year to arrange some walks and get any ideas that you may have.

## **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 on flat ground, but it can be muddy. We always hope to finish with coffee (or lunch) and a 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 2nd January** Post Christmas lunch at the Running Mare, Galleywood CM2 8PN.  
Please contact me if you have not booked

**Monday 6th February** Crondon Park Golf Course. CM4 9DP.  
Meet in Stock Village Hall car park CM4 9LY



## **SINGING FOR PLEASURE**

**Barbara Pountney**

I am now able to start the Singing for Pleasure group. The first session will be on **Tuesday 7th February 2023 at 10.30 a.m. to 12.00 at the Queens Park Community Church, Billericay.** We will then meet on the 1st Tuesday of every month at 10.30. a.m.

Queens Park Community Church is at the end of Queens Park Avenue near the junction with Perry Street and Rosebay Avenue. There is plenty of free parking, with some at the church and the rest in the adjacent Co-op car park.

This is not a formal choir but is for anybody who likes singing, whether it is in the bath or round the house, and also enjoys a challenge.

If you are interested please contact me by email or by phone. Details above.

**November visit to The Queen's House, Greenwich**



On a rainy, windy November day a few of us braved the weather to travel to Greenwich to visit The Queens house. We had initially planned to look around the House and all the art work it contained, but we noticed there was a guided tour so we joined this.

The guide was extremely knowledgeable and gave



us an interesting insight into the history of the house, its background and how it had evolved through history. During the tour we looked closely at some of the art works and he shared the relevance and meaning of some of the objects portrayed in the art works.

As the tour lasted approximately an hour, and we had missed many of the paintings and objects displayed, we decided to take a short break then return to the house and have a good look round, which we did in our own time.

We had initially planned to visit the rest of Greenwich Park and surrounding places of interest, but as time was getting on decided we needed to return at a later date. We all agreed that the day had been both informative and a success!

Report by Jackie Thornton

## GOLF GROUP

Colin Perfect

### NOVEMBER REPORT

We are a friendly group, meeting every Thursday at a different Essex course. We leave the scoring to individual choice – some play Stableford, or “number of pars”, some are happy just to get round without losing too many balls! We would be pleased to see more golfers join us and enjoy the great outdoors in winter. If you are interested please contact our coordinator or any of the golf group members.

It was very windy, but no rain, on 10<sup>th</sup> November at Top Meadow where we enjoyed a full English breakfast, included in the £17.50 green fee. At the 120yard par 3 fifth hole, Caroline was delighted to score a very rare “birdie” 2 with her drive across the valley and a single putt!

On 17<sup>th</sup> November we went to Castle Point golf course on a windy day that threatened rain. We assume the weather deterred everyone else because there were only the u3a members on the course. We played in a five ball group and got round in four and a half hours before any rain came. It seems a long course when the last four holes are played straight into a westerly gale. (Maybe not quite a gale – but it felt like it!)

We went to Notley on 24<sup>th</sup>. Quite a drive for some but at £15 it is the cheapest course on our circuit. Several holes involve crossing the river Brain which was quite deep and flowing fast and clear, so fishing balls out was tricky. This delayed our second group who were keen to retrieve balls but finished the course an hour behind the first group. We were late for tea!

It was a delightful sunny start on 1st December for our visit to Maylands Golf Club where we were joined by Alan “trying us out” for the first time.

Photo of group at the obelisk, engraved “Maylands Golf Club Hole 1”

Chat at tea was of next week’s Christmas pub meal!



Report by Stuart Allen

## CHRISTMAS IN THE ROYAL NAVY

Andy Fletcher

Weeks before Christmas, the great tradition in Royal Navy Ships and Establishments that always took first place was the stirring of the Christmas pudding.

At sea this event would be undertaken by the Captain, Supply Officer and youngest serving matelot. The huge Christmas pudding mix, which features plenty of rum, is stirred and placed into smaller containers for each mess.



1.



2.



The pictures show the Christmas pudding mix being stirred aboard HMY Britannia by:-

1. Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II with my "Oppo", Chief Petty Officer Cook, Jeff Hughes.
2. Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal
3. Her Royal Highness Princess Diana

Food, of course, (not to mention drink) is a huge part of any Christmas aboard ship and had a very unique and special feel about it. But before the main course there was always one very special tradition that everybody (with the exception of the Captain maybe) looked forward to.

The youngest serving member of the ships company would be Captain for the day, and would undergo a complete role reversal with the Commanding Officer. This caused much envy and resulted in some strange decisions and pipes (*announcements over the ship's Tannoy system*) being made, but all taken in the right spirit.

Christmas day would start with 'gimpy gifts' in the mess, whereby everybody received a 'present' from their Oppo (*shipmate*). The gift would normally be an insult and would highlight any faults and inadequacies of the recipient!



A Boatswain's "Call"

On hearing the pipe "standby for Captain's rounds" (*daily inspection*) the mess would muster and await the youngest sailor in his newly empowered guise. Lagging behind him would be the real skipper, in the role of Bosun's mate, trying his best to blow the Bosun's call!

After a beer and best wishes they would proceed to conduct rounds in the rest of the mess decks, no doubt a bit bleary eyed by the end.  
Next up was Christmas dinner and another tradition, equally looked forward to, was that the officers served, waited upon and washed up after the Junior Rates.  
Christmas dinner was always a banquet and would consist of all the trimmings including the usual roast turkey/gammon/beef, plenty of vegetables, pigs in blankets etc. and all washed down by a glass (or 3) of wine, followed by that well stirred Christmas Pud!

## **Newsletter Contributions**

If you have any items please send them by **12.00 Noon**  
**on Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023**

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](mailto: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)

***A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A VERY HAPPY***

***NEW YEAR 2023***

