



BASILDON AND BILLERICAY

u3a

NEWSLETTER No 350

JANUARY 2023



CHAIR REPORT

Sandra Randall

Happy New Year to all our members

I hope you all have had a pleasant and peaceful Christmas break; we must now think of moving forward with renewed enthusiasm to a new year.

Please remember if you have a subject you would like discussed by the Committee, the Committee Meetings are held on the first Monday of the month (except when a Bank Holiday)

I came across this quote by **Emily Wing Smith**;

“Being soaked alone is cold. Being soaked with your best friend is an adventure”

It reminded me of outings with fellow u3a members, enjoying a visit and not minding what the weather was like. Like you, I look forward to many more adventures with u3a.

Can you please let me know if you have been a member of Basildon & Billericay u3a for 25 years or more, and the approximate year of joining.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Stuart King

Membership Renewal

Just a gentle reminder to everybody that the renewal of membership will become due on the 1st of March 2023. There is a new system being used now and we ask that, if possible, you would please pay by Bank Transfer giving your membership number as a reference. The fee is £15.

PLEASE DON'T FORGET YOUR REFERENCE.

Do not put anything else in the reference box other than your number, as the box is very small, so just up to 4 digits please in the box.

Here are the Banking details:-

Account Name
Sort Code
Account No.

If you are paying this way, and if the information we hold is correct, there is no need to send a form.

If however, you are still using cheques it is much safer if you enclose a renewal form with your cheque. You can download a form from the website.

Note All u3a websites were unavailable before Christmas and some links have not yet been restored. Please email me for a form if the link does not work.

Please also note that if you have not renewed by April the system will automatically retire you.

You will need to submit a new form to re-apply, and you will automatically be issued with a new number. You will not be able to keep your old number.

Thank you

Well, that was 2022. Bye, bye!! I have always wondered just WHEN you stop saying "Happy New Year"? When I was working, I seemed to be saying it to people right up until Easter!! So, I'm just going to say to all of you, I trust 2023 will be great for everyone!!

We certainly have some excellent speakers arranged for our Monthly Meetings and there will be another Picnic and an evening Quiz for us to enjoy. Keep your eye out for information in the Newsletter, by e-mail and at the Meetings.

Being members of the u3a, I'm sure you will agree, helps to keep us active and interested (and hopefully, interesting to others?) and long may it last.

I thought I might adapt a great Poem, by an unknown Author, which I think may illustrate how a lot of us feel.

NOT MY AGE

That's not my age; it's just not true.
My heart is young; the time just flew.

I'm staring at this strange old(er) face (*I'm actually not TOO unhappy with it*),
And someone else is in my place!

My body's not in disrepair.
I've not much grey in my brown (fair) hair. (*WRONG!!!*)
I sometimes feel a little tired (*true, especially after the 4 lovely grandkids come to stay!!*)
But go for jogs when I'm inspired (*Well, a walk actually*).

This old age thing is not for me.
Concessions given, prescriptions free. (*NOT a problem!*)
I'll just pretend I'm in my prime.
To age too fast would be a crime.

I'm just not 60 (*71*) in my head.
It's still so long till I am dead,
So please don't see me in that way.
I'm staying young, if that's OK!?

And to finish, here are a few things I have picked up recently:-

1. *Regular naps will prevent old age, especially if taken whilst driving.*
2. *If it's your birthday today, you should congratulate yourself. Especially if you're still able to remember it.*
3. *When I was young I did stupid things because I didn't know any better. Now I know better I still do stupid things but I can't help it.*
4. *As I get older and remember all the people I've lost along the way, I think to myself maybe a career as a tour guide wasn't the right one for me.*
5. *The skill of the diplomat is the ability to tell someone to go to Hell in such a way that they'll look forward to the trip.*
6. *When I was a boy the Dead Sea was only sick (by George Burns).*

See you at the Monthly Meeting on Friday 27th January!!

GROUP'S REPORT

Happy New Year to everybody! I hope that you had a good Christmas and New Year and are now looking forward to an interesting year ahead.

At this time of the year people start thinking about their well-being, joining gyms and going on diets. These things tend not to last for too long. Boredom sets in and the gym membership lapses and the diet goes out of the window! But you can look again at our interest groups and find something to help you on a regular basis throughout the year.

Do you like walking in the outdoors, but don't have anyone to walk with. We have two very successful walking groups. The Rambling Group tends to go on longer walks and find some interesting places to walk throughout the county and, sometimes, London. If you are not too keen on a long walk, then the Half-Ramble group is for you. They walk in some interesting places locally; I joined them one time in a very enjoyable walk around Wat Tyler Park in Pitsea. If you think you would like to join either group on a walk, look in the newsletter where they advertise their next walk, or get in touch with the Co-ordinators.

If you would like to try something a bit sportier, then there are three groups with spaces that might interest you; both the Table Tennis and Petanque groups meet in Billericay and the Golf Group meets in different local golf courses on a regular basis.

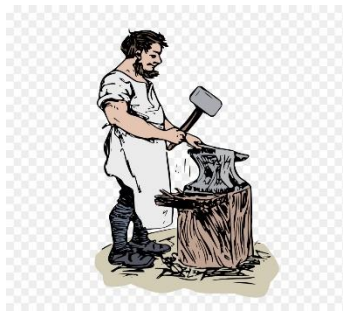
I am surprised that we don't have a Birdwatching group. In this area we are spoiled with lots of places to watch our feathered friends. There are several RSPB reserves, Essex Wildlife reserves and Country Parks all a short drive away. They all have bird hides, or great places to look out for rare species. If anyone is interested in joining a Birdwatching Group, even if you don't know the difference between a blackbird and a blue tit, it is fun learning together, so get in touch and I will see what I can do to get a group started.

Oh, and if you want to think more about your well-being, but don't want to do anything too strenuous, then what about our Mindfulness and Well-being group?

MONTHLY MEETING

**2.30pm on Friday, 27th January 2023
at the Cannon Roche Centre, Billericay**

“Tales from the Smithy”



Speaker - Roger Dorking

Roger has lived in Essex all his life and was brought up in rural ways, as his father was a Smithy all his working life. Roger's humorous talk is based on this subject, plus some stories of his life.

Next Month's Meeting is on February 24th

Speaker Robert Dresner

Richard III – saint or sinner?

An exploration of how history has treated Richard III

THE CHRISTMAS SOCIAL, HELD AT THE EMMANUEL CHURCH HALL ON DECEMBER 16TH 2022

We had a good attendance of around 80 or so, just a little down from the expected numbers, which was probably due to the weather and the various bugs which were circulating at the time.

Members were seated at the round tables which were spaced around the hall. We were entertained by the band for about an hour after which time the refreshments, comprising sandwiches, sausage rolls, crisps, biscuits and cake, were served to the tables. Our grateful thanks go to Refreshment Coordinator Mary and her assistant for all their hard work in organizing and providing these goodies.

The seasonally themed table quiz kept members occupied through the afternoon and was once again provided by quiz supremo Peter Cubley. Our appreciation and thanks go to him.



The Daisy Bowlers – comprising Heather on acoustic bass, husband Dave on piano and guitar and Debbie on Ukulele – all three on harmonising vocals.

The Bowlers, all very competent musicians, have previously entertained us during Christmas 2018. They played a compilation of well known standards and seasonal Christmas songs, some of which included their own quirky renditions. One of these was an amusing ditty about the hazards of having a back seat driver. Their delight in performing was very evident and I'm sure we will invite them for a repeat appearance in the future.

The afternoon concluded with a final session from the Bowlers plus the results of the quiz and the award of the raffle prizes. Sincere thanks must go to all the Committee members for all the hard work involved in organizing this event.

Report from Alan Wood

NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

RAILWAY JOURNEYS GROUP

Margaret Mesnard

DECEMBER VISIT TO LONDON BY DIFFERENT MODES OF TRANSPORT

Our original plan was to start with a ride on the cable car but unfortunately it was closed for maintenance. So from Stratford we travelled to North Greenwich on the Jubilee Line, firstly to have a look around the O2 complex, and then walk to the Uber Boat pier to take us to Battersea Power Station. The journey took just over an hour with a few stops to drop off and pick up other passengers. The weather was in our favour, so we had a clear view of the redevelopment taking place on the river.

The famous Grade 2 listed landmark at Battersea has recently been reopened after 40 years. It is now a high-end shopping and leisure complex and has over 400 stylish apartments. The recently opened Lift 109, described as being futuristic and space age, travels up the north-west chimney to a glass viewing platform for a 360 degree view of London. The building and surrounding area have been totally transformed, and when you are inside it is difficult to imagine that it was once a power station.

It was late afternoon when we travelled back on the Uber boat to London Bridge, by which time many buildings, landmarks, bridges and waterside areas were beautifully illuminated.

We then switched from boat to bus heading towards Liverpool Street station to continue our journey home.



December 2022 Report

Our meeting on December 8th was at Stapleford Abbots on a sunny day with frozen ground, and was followed by the much anticipated Christmas Lunch at the Alma Arms about a mile away.



There were six for lunch, with John our hard working fixture secretary almost hiding at the back.

We would welcome new members of any golfing standard who have previously played on a golf course to join us, and extend a warm welcome to Brian Hyam who will be joining our Group for the first time on 19 January. We meet every Thursday at a different Essex course, playing non-competitive golf where the scoring (or non) is left to individual choice.

The arrival of snow in Essex on Sunday 11th, which stayed for several days, thwarted our planned visit to Risebridge on Thursday 15th December.

We then took a Christmas break until the first new year Thursday, 5th January, with a long awaited visit to Cranham, usually relatively mud free. Whilst playing the back nine as a fourball the challenging lake at the 18th claimed all our balls!

In the drizzle at Brentwood on 12th January, the mud underfoot made walking and playing golf hard going and messy for several of our members. We probably won't be returning until the spring!

Report from Stuart Allen

RAMBLING GROUP

Brian Parker

On December 21st twelve of us met up at Baker Street Station for what turned out to be a very enjoyable day. We soon saw the queue for 221B Baker Street on our way into Regents Park. We did a circular route around the park observing 4 herons. Mark got extremely close to one which did eventually move, as some thought it was plastic. We then soon stopped for refreshments.



Floating Chinese Restaurant on Regents Canal

The Heron



The Group on Primrose Hill



From Regents Park we made our way via Regents Canal to Primrose Hill, just as the clouds came over. We then returned to the canal taking the towpath to Camden Lock, which was really busy.

We opted for Weatherspoon's rather than the vast array of street food, before walking the last 1 ¼ miles to the Coal Yard at the back of Kings Cross.

We did see African Wild Dogs in the Zoo and there was some debate about there being Monkeys in the in the Grade11* listed Snowdon Aviary but, if they were there, they must have been hiding.

All photos by Mark Elliot



RAMBLING continued

Subsequently, I have read that since the summer of 2022 the Snowdon Aviary is the home for Black and White Colobus monkeys. I did take a couple of photos on the day, and on looking closely, I now believe this is one of the monkeys.



Our **January walk** will have taken place by the time this newsletter has been sent out and a report will in the February newsletter.

Our February Walk is a little nearer to home. We will meet **at 10.15 on 15th February** in the **FREE** carpark in **Richmond Avenue, South Benfleet SS7 5HE**. Please make sure you go in the **free** car park, and not the one nearest the High Road. From there, we will cross the playing fields to Benfleet Station where we pick up the coastal path to Leigh on Sea and Chalkwell. From there we will catch a train back to Benfleet and then walk back to our cars. This walk is 6 miles long and relatively flat as we follow the railway line.

Anyone coming from Laindon or Basildon may choose to come by train and meet us at Benfleet Station but please let me know that you are doing that.

Please bring your u3a membership card and refreshments with you as there are no facilities on the route apart from the High Street at Leigh.

As usual, please wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Boots help to protect your ankles.

There are 4 trains per hour from Chalkwell and, with a senior railcard, the ticket price is £2.15.

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.

6th February - Crondon Park Golf Course, Stock CM4 9DP. Meet in Stock Village Hall car park

6th March - Battlesbridge River walk. Park in front of Barge Inn, SS11 7RE

SCRABBLE FOR FUN

Carol Kersch

We are a small group of members who meet once a month to play scrabble. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month at the Canon Roche Hall in Laindon Road, Billericay for two hours from 10am to 12. Beginners are most welcome too.

We usually play two games with a coffee break in the middle. We play for fun so there is no pressure and you are allowed to use a dictionary to help check spelling or meaning of a particular word. This is a great way to meet people and keep your brain cells working.

If you are interested in joining our scrabble group please contact me by email or by telephone.

Newsletter Contributions

If you have any items please send them by **12.00 Noon**

on Wednesday, 15th February 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

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)