



BASILDON AND BILLERICAY

u3a

NEWSLETTER No 351

FEBRUARY 2023



PANCAKE DAY ON SHROVE TUESDAY

February 21st 2023

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

Sandra Randall

Where do the months go? With the weather improving we start to venture out, and with thoughts of holidays and more time spent outside, we have a lot to look forward to in 2023. Does our u3a do all you want it to? If not, let us know and if possible we will add to our list of activities for this year. New groups or new adventures, let us have your thoughts!

The Quiz evening is back this year, **see Flyer for booking details on Page 6**

Thank you to those of you who have already been in touch. If you have not already let us know, please can you contact us 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.

Here are the Banking details:-

Account Name	Basildon and Billericay u3a
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.

SECRETARY'S NEWS - "From under the stairs"

Andy Fletcher

It was really great to see so many members at our last Monthly Meeting. I think, at last, it seems that the hangover effects of the pandemic years are starting to ease and, although we still have to be careful, we are all regaining the confidence to attend meetings, catching up with friends, and perhaps going further afield.

It was great to meet some new members and potential new members too. I have received some very nice comments which reflect what an excellent, friendly and welcoming u3a Basildon & Billericay is. I agree and this deserves a very big **THANK YOU** to everyone.

Please don't forget that there are/will be some vacant posts on the Committee after the AGM on 23rd June. Please consider becoming part of it. Our u3a is obviously something you all enjoy but it cannot run itself without willing volunteers. We have a membership nearing 500 so I'm pretty sure there are some of you that would be able to put themselves forward? We don't bite and a couple of hours a month isn't too arduous a task to ensure we continue to have fun over the coming years.

Following on from the poem in last month's Newsletter, I was reminded of something a friend of mine wrote a few years ago:-

Barely the day started and..... it's already six in the evening.
Barely arrived on Monday and it's already Friday.
... and the month is already over..... and the year is almost over.
... and already 40, 50 or 60 years of our lives have passed.
....and we realise it's too late to go back...
Let's keep looking for activities that we like...
Let's put some colour in our grey...
Let's smile at the little things in life that put joy in our hearts.
Let's try to eliminate the "afters..."
I'm doing it after..... I'll say it after.....I'll think about it after.....
Because:-
...afterwards, the coffee gets cold...
...afterwards, priorities change...
...afterwards, the charm is broken...
...afterwards, health passes...
...afterwards, the kids grow up...
...afterwards parents get old...
...afterwards, promises are forgotten..
...afterwards, the day becomes the night...
...afterwards life ends...
And then it's often too late....
So... Let's leave nothing for later...
Or we can lose the best moments,
the best experiences, best friends, the best family...
The day is today..... The moment is now.....
Let's not postpone what needs to be done right away.
So... let's see if you have time to read this message and then share it.

Or maybe you'll leave it for "LATER?"
UNLESS YOU ARE A MEMBER OF BASILDON & BILLERICAY u3a!

Ann and I will be away for the Meeting on 24th February but I'm sure you will enjoy yourselves. See you in March.

GROUPS' REPORT

One of the things that I have enjoyed the most about being a member of the Basildon & Billericay u3a are the outings. I really love exploring new places, or familiar places with new people to find out new information together. At one time we had a group called The Discovery Group, and with that group I visited places like the Sainsbury distribution centre at the other side of the Dartford Crossing and the Mini plant in Cowley, Oxford. These were places that I would never have visited on my own. The Mini plant was absolutely amazing, watching the different robots working away as if directed by some unseen conductor.

The other groups I belong to also instigate outings. With the Art Appreciation Group we visit different galleries and exhibitions, the Essex History Group has helped me discover places in a county that I have lived in for a long time and, even the Wine Appreciation Group has taken me to investigate some of our local vineyards.

I think that we are very lucky in our u3a to find people with similar interests who enjoy discovering places together. If your group lends itself to making visits, please do try to organise outings. It doesn't have to be too far away, we have some interesting places on our doorsteps. All you have to do is make sure that you complete a risk assessment for the visit, then catch a bus or take a train somewhere. If you have to drive, make sure that those members without access to a vehicle are allowed to share a car journey. You can share the costs of the fuel; we have a suggested amount to share between you, per mile.

It was an outing yesterday that gave me the idea for this article. For Christmas I was given a guided tour of the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. I went with my eldest daughter yesterday and we had an amazing experience. We saw both opera singers and principle ballet dancers rehearsing. We saw the costume store and where the costumes are made, or repaired. We saw the massive backstage area and learned about how they move the gigantic sets around. They have the second largest lift in the country; it will take a large lorry full of sets from the road up to the backstage area! I can really recommend a visit; they do lots of different tours which are not expensive. You don't have to travel to London for a tour; you can also visit their props and scenery store in Rainham. Perhaps get Father Christmas to give you a ticket next Christmas!

Oh, and they also have a very nice restaurant and bar area on the fifth floor that anyone can visit for a drink or something to eat!

By the way, do you know where the largest lift in the country is located?

Addresses and Gift Aid

As the majority of people are renewing their membership directly on line without the use of a membership form, it is essential that you inform the Membership Secretary (Stuart King) if you have changed your address during the year, as this will affect the receipt of your membership cards. Also, if you have previously ticked the Gift Aid box but are no longer a UK tax payer, this should also be reported to Stuart. Many thanks for your co-operation.

MONTHLY MEETING

**2.30pm on Friday, 24th February 2023
at the Cannon Roche Centre, Billericay**

“Richard III, Saint or Sinner”?

Speaker - Robert Dresner

Robert had a musical career before becoming
a 6th form teacher of English and Classics. His
talk will explore how history has treated Richard III

Next Month's Meeting is on March 24th

Christine Beedle

“The Essex Scrubber “

Christine gives humorous talks about her real life experiences – they are filled with fun, drama, passion and fascinating characters.

Christine was born in Cornwall, moved to Colchester when she married, and began a small cleaning business which grew to employ 850 staff. She was awarded an MBE for her services to industry, was President of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce and was voted East Anglia Businesswoman of the Year in 1992. She has written two books about her life.

BASILDON AND BILLERICAY U3A

QUIZ NIGHT

1ST APRIL 2023

7.00 PM TO 10.00 PM

Emmanuel Church Hall

Laindon Road, Billericay

Buy your tickets by cash or cheque: u3a Members: £2

Non Members: £4

Cheques to be made payable to Basildon and Billericay u3a

All tickets must be booked by a member on a first come, first served basis as tickets are limited. There will be 12 tables of 8.

Tickets will be available at February and March monthly meetings or by post from the treasurer:-

Margaret Way

The deadline for requesting tickets by post is 13th March. All successful applications will receive their tickets at the door on the night.

Bring your own drinks and nibbles

January Report

After the extensive mud encountered at Brentwood on 12th January we were hoping for better conditions at Castle Point Golf Course, which was booked and paid for Thursday January 19th. Unfortunately on the day, their website stated only 9 holes were available and clubs had to be carried. After some email discussions two u3a golfers went to Dunton Hills and enjoyed a round with frozen ground and lakes. Dave E enjoyed his approach shot at the 18th where his ball bounced across the ice covered lake, missed the standing geese, and finished on the green near the pin. Quite a finish in unusual conditions!

With Castle Point still not fully available on 26th we all decided that Dunton Hills would be unfrozen and not too muddy. This course is always available, golfers just take the conditions as they find them. There's no booking so we can turn up, pay and queue without the hassle of pre pay & book.

For the 2nd February our hard working fixture secretary had managed to book two tee times at Cranham, which is renowned for its almost mud free conditions. We all enjoyed a lovely sunny day with a light breeze on the fairly short course of just under 5000yards, which enabled our high handicappers to reach the green with fewer shots.

At last, to Castle Point on 9th February for our much postponed booking. The sun was out and there was no wind which made for very peaceful and enjoyable golf.



U3a golfers putting out on the 18th green at Castle Point Golf Course on 9th February

We would welcome new members of any golfing standard to join us. We meet every Thursday at a different Essex course, playing non-competitive golf where the scoring (or non) is left to individual choice.

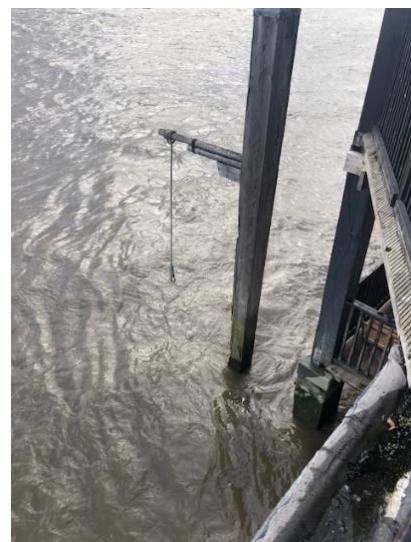
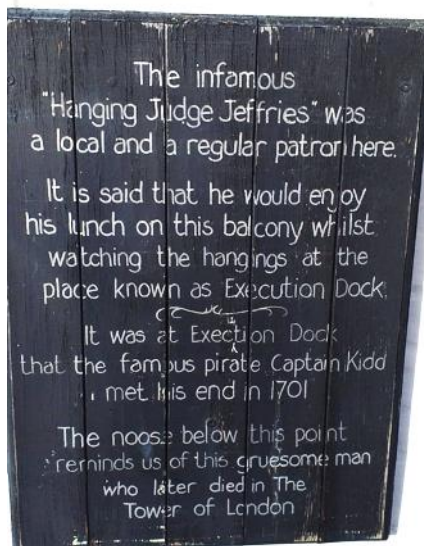
Report from Stuart Allen

RAMBLING GROUP

Brian Parker



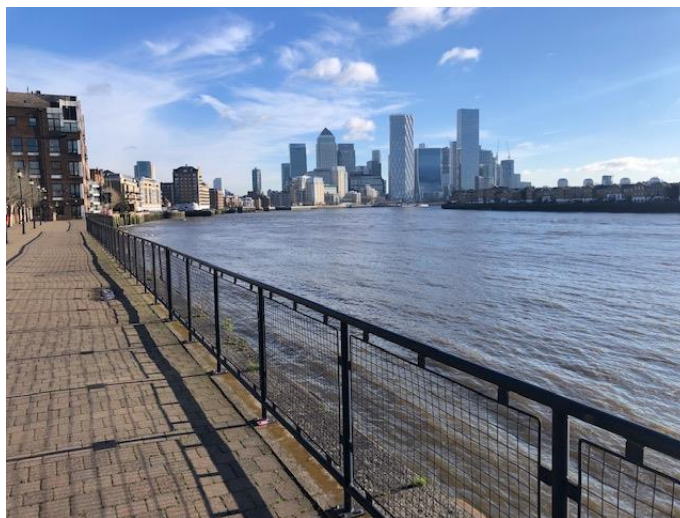
As you can see from this group photo taken near St Katherine's Dock, we were lucky again with the weather. On Jan 18th fourteen of us walked from Liverpool Street, via Tower Hill, to Canary Wharf using section 3 of Thames Path North Bank. Some of this involved walking along Wapping High Street, which is much changed from when I used to be a frequent visitor to the infamous "Prospect of Whitby". Fortunately that has retained its character, and dates back to the 15th Century. These photos show a sign in the pub and a mock-up of the Execution rope, where the high tide had to cover the guilty party three times before they were cut down.



There was a lot of filming going on in three locations in this area for a film called "Blitz", with a cast that includes Paul Weller and Kathy Burke. They had been filming in Waterloo in the previous week.

RAMBLING continued

Eventually we made it to our final destination, Canary Wharf, where we stumbled upon a very grand Wetherspoons before heading back to Stratford on the DLR, whilst the Laidon group went to West Ham. The biggest surprise was how quiet City of London and Wapping were.



Our February 15th walk along the coastal path from Benfleet to Chalkwell will have taken place by the time you read this.

Our March walk is again along a costal path. We will meet **at 10.15 on 15th March at Heybridge Basin Lock, CM9 4RS** by the Jolly Sailor Pub. There is a car park close by, but they now charge to park there, £2.00 for 3 hours. At this time of the year you can park on the road that you come in on, but please check the road markings and, if possible, you could car share. From there we will walk along the footpath round to the Osea Island slipway, and then come back along the same path. This walk is 5.5 miles long and relatively flat as we follow the river.

Please bring your u3a membership card. Refreshments are available at the Tiptree Tea rooms at both Goldhanger and Heybridge Basin.

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.

Walks for April and May have now been planned from Orsett 5.1 miles and Terling 5.5 miles, both with no stiles.

New
Group

ROVING LUNCH

Judith and I have started a new activity group which we have called Roving Lunch.

The idea is once a month to go to a different Restaurant or Pub for a light lunch, a drink, and a chat, perhaps about the issues of the day. The venue will be generally in Essex, but we can go out of County on occasion if agreed, and the venue will be chosen in turn by the members.

Because of booking tables, the number of members will be kept small probably 8 to 10 max.

The first lunch is on the Tuesday 21st of March at 12.30, venue The Old Windmill. Hanningfield. Future meetings on the third Tuesday of the Month.

If you would like to join us, please contact us by email or phone.

Stuart King

HELP NEEDED PLEASE

VISITING ESSEX CHURCHES

Our **Essex Churches Group** is in need of new members, but more importantly we need a co-ordinator for this group, following the death of Keith Banks last year. This group has been running for many years and everyone agrees it is very enjoyable. Members are very willing to organise the actual visit and currently each member has arranged one church visit a year. They send the co-ordinator all the information needed to enable him/her to send the details to group members.

So, for the co-ordinator there is very little work involved. If anyone is willing or would like more details, please contact Ian Howard .

Ann Fletcher, our Group Facilitator, will also be pleased to help with any queries.

SINGING FOR PLEASURE

Barbara Pountney

Our first meeting on Tuesday 7th February was held in the pleasant surroundings of the Queen's Park Community Church. It was attended by 15 enthusiastic singers. Our next session is on Tuesday 7th March at 10.30 a.m.

If you would like join us please contact me either by phone or email for all the details.

WRITING FOR FUN

Sue Braham

We are a small group of members who enjoy writing and sharing our work. We meet on the first Friday of each month in the afternoon. We have spaces if anyone would like to join us. No experience necessary. We write stories, anecdotes, true accounts and poems, all in different styles. All ideas are welcome. Please contact me if interested. We are very friendly and laugh a lot.

WELLBEING GROUP

Aileen Burgess

As it is a very cold time of year we used this month's meeting to have a workshop from a yoga teacher on the topic of meditation and mindfulness. We all enjoyed it and are going to try and use some of the techniques and report back next month. We are planning some daffodil and bluebell walks later in the year.

The group is now full but if anybody wanted to try running a group of their own it would be great. It is a great bunch of people and I am enjoying coordinating it.

Being a coordinator

I was a little concerned at the beginning as I had never done anything like this. However, it is not a huge responsibility. Everybody in the group is taking part in the planning. If you have an idea for a group I thoroughly recommend you give it a go.

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

3rd April Westley Heights Langdon Hills SS16 6HU. From Laindon Station follow High Road to the very top of hill, and the entrance to the car park is just after the Miller and Carter pub/steak house.

Newsletter Contributions

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

on Wednesday, 15th March 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)