



BASILDON AND BILLERICAY

u3a

NEWSLETTER No 354

MAY 2023



CORONATION DAY 6th May 2023

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Sandra Randall

Well, there is only one month to go before the AGM so there is still a chance to volunteer! Your u3a does not run all by itself, and without a Committee we cannot continue. If you always rely on someone else running things for you, that says a lot about you. So we all owe a big thank you to the current Committee for all their hard work in making our u3a the success that it is.

Don't forget to book your place for the June Monthly meeting and AGM. We need the numbers for catering purposes. There are details further in the newsletter (**Page 4**)

For anyone interested there are talks and events run by National Office and the Regional team, these can be found on line. This one may interest some of you.

TUESDAY 30th May 2023 10am

THE HISTORY OF US MILITARY AVIATION IN EAST ANGLIA by DON MOBLEY

Following on from the recent zoom presentations about the history of WW2 airfields in the East of England, please now join Don Mobley for a Zoom presentation on "The History of US Military Aviation in East Anglia".

Don is a member of Stowmarket u3a. The talk will last about an hour and will be followed by questions and discussion.

This is open to all members across the Region.

Book now to reserve your place as attendees are limited to 300.

To register please complete the booking form using this link:-

<https://forms.gle/gpcpRgpNcoZZZj566>

Should you have any difficulty in using the form or have any questions please contact eastofenglandregion.u3a@gmail.com

SECRETARY'S NEWS - "From under the stairs"

Andy Fletcher

Well, I THINK I kept the promise I made in my last Secretary's News not to sing during the Speaker's Talk on Gilbert & Sullivan at our last meeting in April. May I say sorry to anyone in the back rows that MAY have heard me mumbling them a bit though.

A lot happened since that 28th April Monthly Meeting. I trust those of you that were interested enjoyed the amazing, historic spectacle of the Coronation, and the Coronation Concert the following day? This country certainly excels at carrying out these special events don't you think?

Unfortunately, we were unable to join in any street parties or visit London, but we made up for it by travelling up to Edinburgh for my annual "pilgrimage" to the Royal Yacht Britannia for our Association of Royal Yachtsmen's Working Party. This is where upwards of 50 of us gather to carry out some of the smaller tasks that the regular Maintenance Team cannot get round to, and also to forget for a week that none of us are, or ever will be again, 25 years old!! It is amazing fun and it's great to catch up with old shipmates and welcome the newer members. There can't be many ex-

Naval personnel of our vintage who can still go back to their old ship and “play with our old toys”. The saying goes, “most of my homes are now razor blades”.

During this Working Party we had the pleasure of seeing that the world, post-Covid, is coming alive again. Visitors are pouring back to the UK, and Edinburgh in particular, from down under, Canada and the U.S., Asia and, of course, all over our own country.

The area where our little group of ex-Communicators was allocated to spruce up was Britannia’s Bridge and Flag Deck. We are, therefore, the first part of the Yacht that visitors get to see. On the Wednesday afternoon I noticed a group of about 40 coming across the gangway, and we had to make sure that the areas we were painting were well roped off. Of course, we are not only there to work but to chat to the visitors and bring Britannia a bit more to life and I noticed a very familiar lanyard and badge. The visitors were all u3a members from Mill Hill in London!! I think they had a wonderful time aboard, especially as they extended their stay aboard (by asking me to have a chat with their coach driver!) so that they could witness our evening Tot Ceremony when we toast the King and Absent Friends in the traditional way. I think some of them got a little taste from my mates too. I understand that they were on an extended visit to Scotland which would take them further north later in the week.



Can spot the u3a Lanyard?

Does that give any of you the idea to take slightly longer trips together as part of our u3a? I'm sure I'd be happy to welcome some of you aboard next May for a visit!

I have yet to receive any Nomination Forms, by e-mail or Royal Mail, for the vacant Committee posts that will be voted on and confirmed during the Annual General Meeting on 23rd June. It's not too late you know.

I hope to see you on Friday May 26th at the Monthly Meeting and, if you would like to have a chat with any of the Committee about joining us, please don't be backward in coming forward.

NOTICE OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BASILDON AND BILLERICAY U3A 2023

Notice is hereby given that the 33rd Annual General Meeting of the Basildon and Billericay U3A will be held in the Canon Roche Social Centre, 21 Laindon Road, Billericay on Friday 23rd June 2023, commencing at 2.30pm. Items for inclusion on the Agenda must be submitted to the Business Secretary by email or Royal Mail by Friday 26th May 2023.

Nomination forms for election of Officers and Committee Members should also be returned to the Business Secretary at the address below by Friday 26th May 2023 at the latest.

The Nomination form is being issued as a separate form (and attached in a separate file for those receiving their Newsletter by e-mail) as are the Minutes of our last AGM (June 24th 2022). You will need to keep these for reference at our AGM on 23rd June this year.

The U3A committee consists of the following posts:

Chairman – Sandra Randall - standing for re-election
Vice Chairman - vacant
Treasurer – Margaret Way -standing for re-election
Business Secretary – Andy Fletcher - standing for re-election
Members Secretary – Stuart King - standing for re-election
Speakers' Secretary – Linda Stewart (co-opted candidate for election)
Groups Facilitator – vacant
Newsletter Editor - vacant
Website/Beacon Manager – Debbie Wood - standing for re-election
Publicity Secretary - vacant
Accessibility Secretary – Aileen Burgess – standing for re-election

Further information about any of these posts can be obtained from the Business Secretary.

Any paid up member of the Basildon and Billericay U3A may stand for election to any of the posts on the committee.

Andy Fletcher
Secretary E-Mail:

DON'T FORGET

You must book your place at the AGM, to assist with catering. Numbers may be limited by the Hall capacity. Bookings will close on Sunday 11th June

To book, please contact Stuart King (Membership Secretary) by e mail only

Please bring your membership card to the AGM

GROUPS' REPORT

Following my report last month, I am ready to help two new groups get set up at the next monthly meeting on 26th May, at the Canon Roche Centre.

Those interested in joining either the Birdwatching Group or a Cribbage Group will be able to meet together at the end of the meeting. So, after the talk has finished, we can grab ourselves a tea or coffee and a biscuit and find a place in the hall to chat. I will remind people on the day too. If you would like to join either of these groups, but can't get to the meeting, let me know and I will pass your details on to the group.

Each group will have to decide on a person to be a Co-ordinator, who will be responsible for keeping the group informed about meeting dates and places, and will be a link through the Groups' Facilitator to the Committee. The Co-ordinator does not have to organise all the events, each member of the group can do that, so that one person does not have to do all the work!

One of the hardest things a new group has to do is to sort out the day in the month that they will meet. We all lead such busy lives these days! They will have to organise a meeting place too – the Birdwatching Group, I presume, will be making visits to different places and may only have one indoor meeting a year, for planning. The Cribbage group will need somewhere to play their games, so where you meet will also limit how many members that you can have in a group.

One of our existing groups, German Conversation, is looking for some new members. If you are interested in joining the group, get in touch with Bob, the Co-ordinator. He will let you know what level of German you will need to take full part in the Group's activities.

I only have one more report to write as Groups' Facilitator, as I will be stepping down at the A.G.M. after five years of volunteering in this role. Hopefully, someone can be found to take over this job. I have really enjoyed my work with the Co-ordinators and met some very lovely people. If you would like to take on a role on the Committee, please contact one of the present Committee members and they can tell you what it is like to be a member.

MONTHLY MEETING

**2.30pm on Friday, 26th May 2023
at the Cannon Roche Centre, Billericay**

Speaker : Liz Huxley

ESSEX DIARY (WILDLIFE OF ESSEX THROUGH THE YEAR)

Liz is a wildlife photographer in Essex. She grew up in a small Essex village and developed an interest in wildlife photography. She worked for Essex Wildlife Trust at Abberton Reservoir for 15 years and now leads guided walks to share her interest with others.



Next Month's Meeting **June 23rd 2023**

Please note : There are FIVE Fridays in June. We always meet on the 4th Friday

BASILDON AND BILLERICAY U3A ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THIS IS A MEMBERS ONLY MEETING AND PLACES MUST BE BOOKED.
See Page 4 for booking details

THE WRITING FOR FUN GROUP GO ON AN ADVENTURE.

On Saturday 22nd of April five of the Writing for Fun group went on a murder mystery adventure. We met at Wickford library where we were introduced to Syd Moore, a local writer who led the event. With about forty other would be detectives we were introduced to some strange individuals, including a major, a psychic and some birdwatchers. We then took the train to Burnham, having the last carriage entirely to ourselves. A hideous murder occurred, and we met several suspects. The victim died as a result of eating a poisoned biscuit.....all of us had eaten a biscuit on the journey! At Burnham library we were able to interrogate each suspect and then make a case for who we thought was the murderer. We had a great time; all those in role were convincing making it almost impossible for us to work out who done it. We decided to choose one of our group members as the murderer, and made up a complex back story that gave her motivation and opportunity. Our solution brought a lot of laughter and praise.

The event was a collaboration between Greater Anglia and the library service. We were able to have a look around Burnham and ended our trip with a visit to the pub.



COMBINED OUTING TO COLCHESTER

Two B&B u3a groups combined to form a joint outing to Colchester on Friday, 21st April. They were the Essex History II and the Archaeology II groups. There were eleven of us, in total.

The day started in a downpour, but “bucked up” remarkably, as the day went on. We met at the Colchester Park and Ride car park, then proceeded into the centre of Colchester.



First on our list was a visit to Colchester Castle. It was in pristine condition due to the visit of King Charles and his queen the previous week. Colchester Castle was built on the orders of William the Conqueror. It was built directly upon the foundations of the Temple of Claudius, which was built when Colchester was a Roman city. The building of the Castle commenced in the 1070's and was completed in 1120, during the reign of Henry I.

In 1214 it was captured by the French (Boo!). However, it was then re-captured by King John (Hurrah!)

Over the centuries it has been used for many things, including being used as a prison, a library, a garden feature and an air-raid shelter.

Our time there was well-spent and we learned many things. However, remembering them is quite another matter!

We then went off to discover both liquid refreshment and victuals.

Sufficiently replenished, we went in search of additional knowledge by visiting the Museum. Again, this was time well-spent, particularly in the room full of Grandfather clocks! The history of the house, built in 1719 and its' subsequent owners proved to be very interesting.



Afterwards, some of us visited the beautiful gardens in Castle Park. They were resplendent and, of course, it was the perfect time to view them, with a multitude of flowers and trees in full bloom.

So, an excellent outing which, I believe was enjoyed by one and all!

Report from Alan Taylor

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 5th June Little Burstead Laindon Common CM12 9TA. Park in public carpark at start of Laindon Common Road

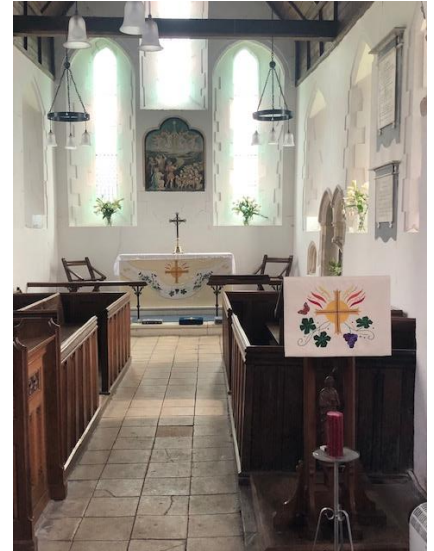
Monday 3rd July Galleywood Common Park in Heritage Centre car park, Margaretting Road, CM2 8TR
From Stock go over A12 roundabouts to top of hill and turn left at traffic lights

RAMBLING GROUP

Brian Parker



Rambling group photo outside Fairstead Church.



Inside the 11th century Fairstead church.

Ten of us made the journey to the lovely village of Terling for a circular walk. This took us out to Fairstead, with its wonderful 11th century church, and on to Fuller Street. Conditions were fairly good, apart from one area where they had been working on overhead power lines making it rather muddy. The 5.3 mile walk took exactly 2 hours and most of us finished up in a great little tea room on Owl's Hill in Terling.



Terling Ford



Terling Windmill, now converted to residential accommodation

Our next walk on 17th May starting in Fryerning takes place just before the May newsletter is issued.

Our June walk is a cross country walk starting from Little Easton, near Great Dunmow.

Meet at 10.15 on 21st June in the car park of **The Stag Pub, Duck Street, Little Easton CM 2JE**. This is a 40 min drive from Billericay. This is the pub's car park. From there we will walk along grassy footpaths and a concrete path on a circular walk. This walk is 5.9 miles long and relatively flat, and there are six stiles in reasonable condition. There are no facilities on this walk until we get back to the car park. When we tested this route in March we did see some deer. We walk past three lovely churches and an old WW2 Airfield and return via Great Easton.

Please bring your u3a membership card. There are refreshments available at The Stag.

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.

Where possible, please try to carshare

RAILWAY JOURNEYS GROUP

Margaret Mesnard

MAY VISIT TO THE BANK OF ENGLAND MUSEUM AND SKY GARDENS



As we were in a group, we arrived at the museum 15 minutes early as requested to allow time for security checks. We were then welcomed by Shona, who is the Education Officer, and she led us through to the cinema room and gave us a very informative presentation about the history of the Bank and the role it plays in our society.

As well as producing bank notes, the Bank of England oversees other payment systems, changes the interest rate and regulates U.K banks and other institutions. It also stores gold for the U.K Treasury and other governments and central banks around the world. Shona told us that she had been privileged to have had the opportunity to see the gold bars, worth billions of pounds, which are stored in nine underground vaults. These are stacked four bars high, on strong steel and wooden pallets. She then passed round four large sheets of polymer bank notes, one for each denomination, (thickly laminated for security) so that she could point out the advances in technology which has made them extremely difficult to counterfeit compared to the old paper notes. The polymer notes can be in circulation much longer and

The purity of gold

The purity of gold bars is described as a percentage. The bars in the Bank's vaults are at least 999 parts per thousand of pure gold (that's 99.9% pure).



Assay mark on gold bar Old style 18ct Hallmark New style 18ct Hallmark

Jewellers measure the purity of gold in carats. The word 'carat' comes from the Greek word for the carob tree, *keration*, whose seeds were used to weigh gold in ancient times.



Carob pods and seeds

Pure gold is very soft. Jewellers usually alloy it with other metals, like silver or copper, to make it harder.



24 carat gold is virtually pure gold.

18 carat gold is 75% pure (18 out of 24 parts).

14 carat gold is 58% pure (14 out of 24 parts).



eventually be shredded and melted into pellets, before being recycled into plastic items such as plant pots. There was the opportunity to ask any questions after which we had a look around the museum with its very interesting exhibits and historical information.

After a break for lunch most of us made the short walk for the optional afternoon visit to the Sky Garden, (the walkie-talkie building), just off Fenchurch Street. It is free to visit but tickets must be pre-booked online and are released three weeks beforehand. There are restaurants and bars set amongst three terraces of sub-tropical plants and trees and 360-degree panoramic views of London which made a nice end to our day



Views from the Sky Gardens
Pictures from Margaret Harrison

Newsletter Contributions

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

on Wednesday, 14th June 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 bbu3newsletter@gmail.com

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)