



BASILDON AND BILLERICAY

u3a

NEWSLETTER No 361

DECEMBER 2023



A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR 2024



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Sandra Randall

As this is the last Newsletter of the year, it's time to reflect on the past year, and look forward to the year ahead.

I trust you have found the year past has been like all the years since joining u3a, full of visiting new and exciting places and meeting new and interesting people.

Endeavouring to please around 500 members can be a strange task on occasions, but with a few exceptions we seem to manage.

We look forward to seeing you in January with new challenges and inspirations.

I would like to wish you all a very happy festive season, and a healthy and happy new year.

An Announcement

As of January 2024 contact details will not be added to Newsletter entries.

This action has been taken in response to scams etc, and emails being hacked. Hopefully members will understand this.

If however you wish your contact details to appear, **please add them to your entry**, when sending to the Newsletter Editor.

Please note the Newsletter is intended for Members of Basildon & Billericay u3a only .

There is an on line version for public view which does not contain any names or contact details.

Editor's Note

Our **Group's Facilitator**, Andy Fletcher, has been unwell but insists "normal service will be resumed very shortly"!!

Get well soon Andy

MONTHLY MEETING

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL AFTERNOON

Friday December 15th

In the Emmanuel Hall, Laindon Road, Billericay

Starting at 1 pm – with Festive Refreshments

Entertainment by Ella Botton, a well-known local singer.

Free Raffle Christmas Quiz

Membership Cards to be shown at the door.



This event is strictly Basildon and Billericay u3a members only and must be booked in advance to allow for catering. Places will be limited. To book a place, please contact Stuart , our Membership Secretary.

All successful applications will be confirmed.

Next Month's Meeting

Friday, 26th January 2024

Speaker Tony Harris

" Henry VIII"

Our Audience with Henry VIII is not to be missed. You will get the inside story of our most notorious monarch and his six wives direct from the horse's mouth.

Actor/Historian Tony Harris brings Henry to life in a fabulous costume and thunder will reign around the throne for his visit

2023 December Report

The u3a golf report deadline for November was missed so this is a “bumper” report starting with our visit to Mardyke Golf Club on 19th October when only three golfers were available, so made for a relatively quick round.

The next week, October 26th, I’m pleased to say there were seven of us keen to visit Epping Golf Club which is proving quite popular after we “discovered” it back in June. We weren’t put off by the early drizzle and enjoyed a lovely sunny round with tea outside on the terrace to finish.

For November 2nd we got a rare booking at Top Meadow with breakfast included in the green fee, but unfortunately a storm warning was out and the early rain dissuaded six players from turning out. In the event the rain cleared by about noon so the weather was not as bad as feared. It was a round that “got away”.

Five members turned out at Stapleford Abbots on the 9th and claimed a loyalty card “free round” or a card stamp for a free round in December. The ground was becoming a bit muddy but there was sunshine overhead.



We booked Cranham for 16th because it is usually less muddy than other courses we play in the winter. The four players that week were quite happy with the surface of the course and greens, but three of us were distressed to find ourselves together in the greenside bunker at the

12th hole! There was some delight from those players at the 18th, whose drive carried the lake to hold on the green.

We went back to Mardyke on 23rd in lovely bright sun with a westerly breeze. The club required winter wheels on the power trolleys to help preserve the turf during the winter. The ground staff had set up extensive taped off areas to direct players away from areas vulnerable to churning up soft ground. Some of the diversions seemed unnecessary but we accepted they are trying to maintain the course in playable conditions.

Finally for this report and November we managed to book Belhus Park for 30th. Five members arrived to find the £18 green fee included a hot meat pie and drink which made an enjoyable way to finish the round.

We welcome u3a members any Thursday to join us on our “Essex golf tour” at a tee time around 10:30 and a finish about 3pm for tea and a chat.

Report by Stuart Allen

November visit to the Bata Estate



Most of us will have heard of Bata shoes, even though they are no longer sold in this country.

Entrepreneur, Tomáš Baťa, built the estate on the basis that happy workers would work more productively. Construction began in 1932 and the Essex factory employed 3,000 people at its peak in the 1960s and 70s.

There was a Bata supermarket, a Bata shoe shop and a Bata farm that supplied bacon, eggs and milk for guests' breakfasts at the Bata hotel. There were tennis and netball courts, a swimming pool and full-size football pitches provided for workers' leisure. Scooters and motorbikes lined up outside the espresso bar, opened in 1963, which was complete with a coffee machine and jukebox.

Bata closed the factory in 2005, moving most of its manufacturing to Malaysia.

East Tilbury library, tucked away round the back of the old hotel on the edge of the largely intact estate, doubles as the Bata Heritage Centre.

The whole Bata estate is a conservation area and there is talk of the houses being listed in line with the factory buildings.

We were shown around by a team of volunteers – former Bata workers or retirees whose parents once worked there. They all had very fond memories of their time at Bata and were full of nostalgia for their time there.

RAMBLING GROUP

Brian Parker



Our November walk had to be changed for safety reasons, so we hastily arranged another walk around Stock. The weather was great and walking conditions were good. There are numerous footpaths in Stock and twelve of us enjoyed our 4.5 mile walk. This included walking alongside Croydon Park golf course with its dated 24 hour security equipment. Some of us even sat outside the Bakers Arms for refreshment.



Rambling continued

Details for **the December 20th** walk were in last month's new letter, starting at London Bridge underground station Tooley Street exit.

Our January outing is walking part of the Thames Path along both the north and south banks. The walk starts at London Liverpool Street station at the end of Platform 15 near the escalator at 10.15. This takes place on **Wednesday January 17th**.

For those of you coming on the Greater Anglia line, we will be catching the 09.31 from Wickford, 09.37 from Billericay and 09.46 from Shenfield, travelling to Liverpool Street Station. An Off Peak return ticket with a senior rail card from Billericay to Liverpool Street is £14.05.

For those coming from Basildon and Laindon, the train times are at 09.35 and 09.38 respectively and travel to Fenchurch Street station where the rest of the group will meet you at the main front entrance at 10.30. Ticket price with a senior railcard is £5.75.

I will be at Billericay Station at 09.20 if anyone wants to meet me there.

From Fenchurch Street, John Cooper is leading the walk to the Liberty Bounds on Trinity Square for a quick refreshment stop before we walk down to Tower Hill and join the Thames Path to Blackfriars Bridge. Here we will cross the river and return along the South Bank and over Tower Bridge. So lots of amazing sites to see on this walk.

Please wear appropriate clothing and ensure you bring your u3a membership card.

All u3a members are welcome.

Newsletter Contributions

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

on Wednesday, 17th January 2024

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

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)