



BASILDON AND BILLERICAY

u3a

NEWSLETTER No 364

MARCH 2024



Spring is finally here and we celebrate St. David's Day on March 1st, Mother's Day on March 10th, St. Patrick's Day on March 17th and at the end of the month British Summer Time begins on March 31st

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

As the days get longer the garden starts to spring into life, the clocks jump forward and we can start to think about new ventures.

With that in mind, we hope to introduce a monthly coffee morning, which is something we have not done before. This will be a chance to meet up with friends, and a good way of getting to know other fellow members within the u3a.

Details will be available shortly

COFFEE MORNING



We are also organising another coach trip for those of you who may enjoy art, caves, shells, shopping, funfairs, coffee, or beach walks. These varied interests may be catered for by a visit to Margate or Broadstairs. Terrific value at only £10 per person.

Please see details **on Page 4** of this Newsletter and book via the Treasurer



MONTHLY MEETING

2.30pm on Friday, 22nd March 2024
at the Cannon Roche Centre, Billericay

Speaker Susan Spiers

“The Southminster Hall Mystery – What Lies Beneath?”

A talk about the archaeology undertaken by the Burnham u3a Group. The massive foundations of a rare building believed to date back to the 11th and 13th centuries were uncovered at Southminster Hall by Burnham u3a Archaeological Group.



The picture shows the Group at the end of their dig.

.....

Next Month’s Meeting

April 26th 2024

Speaker Frances Sparrow

“The Black Death”

Frances Sparrow is a Colchester based speaker since 2014, speaking on a range of historical subjects. This talk is about the first pandemic to hit this country; the Black Death of the 14th century.

COACH TRIP TO MARGATE OR BROADSTAIRS

WE ARE ARRANGING A COACH TRIP TO MARGATE OR BROADSTAIRS
(TAKE YOUR PICK)

THIS WILL BE ON THURSDAY 6th JUNE

PRICE £10 PER PERSON

THE DAY WILL BE AT YOUR LEISURE, TO DO AS YOU PLEASE.

A NICE LUNCH WITH A SEA VIEW, A VISIT TO A MUSEUM, A STROLL
ALONG THE SEA FRONT, WHATEVER YOU LIKE.

WHEN BOOKING PLEASE ADVISE WHICH DESTINATION YOU ARE
PLANNING TO VISIT AND YOUR PICK UP POINT

PICK UP POINTS AND TIMES ARE AS FOLLOWS

<u>Outward Pick Up</u>	<u>Return Pick Up</u>
• 9.00 a.m. Stock Village Hall (outside Pub)	• 4.15 p.m. Broadstairs
• 9.15 a.m. Billericay Train Station	• 4.45 p.m. Margate
• 9.30 a.m. Basildon (opposite the Bus Station)	

PLEASE NOTE:
THESE ARE THE DEPARTURE TIMES, SO PLEASE ARRIVE IN GOOD
TIME

If you would like to enjoy this day out please make your payment of £10 to our u3a bank account (Where you paid your membership fee) and use the reference either 'Margate' or 'Broadstairs'.

Cheques to the Treasurer and write the destination on the back of your cheque please.

RAMBLING GROUP



The weather for our February walk at Hampstead Heath forecasted heavy rain and strong winds, but nine brave members decided they were still going. As it turned out, the rain was only a drizzle and wind was light. We all met up at Hampstead underground station and, after a coffee stop in a delightful Burgh House, we set off. We walked past an odd looking building which was the family home of Erno Goldfinger in 1937. Ian Fleming (creator of James Bond) who lived nearby objected to it. Goldfinger's wishes prevailed, and so Fleming took his revenge by naming his main villain after the architect.

After passing the view at Parliament Hill Fields and several large ponds we reached Kenwood House.

We had to make a large unplanned detour, caused by locked gates but we made it to Jack Straws Castle and back to our starting point.

Thanks to all who turned up, especially Colin for finding the lost ear-ring!



Rambling continued

Details of our next walk at Little Burstead on 20th March were in the February special newsletter.

Our walk on 17th April at 10.15 starts in Orchard Lane, Pilgrims Hatch CM15 9RD. This is just off the A128 road that goes from Brentwood towards Ongar at a mini roundabout. It is just past the Black Horse pub and is about a 20 minute drive from Billericay. This is a 5 1/2 mile walk and hilly in a couple of places with 3 good stiles. Most of the walk is in the Weald Country Park. There are toilets in the park about half way on the walk. This walk was tested on 13th February and was muddy, but should be better in late April.

If possible, please car share as parking is on a road with houses on both sides.

Please bring your u3a membership card with you. As usual, please wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Boots help to protect your ankles.

PRACTICAL ART



The Practical Art group meets monthly in the Canon Roche Small Hall on the second Tuesday of the month. We are lucky to have Carole, a retired art teacher, in our group and she is helping us with us all he basics. We pay £1 a session that you attend to help towards the cost of renting the room.

We started about a year and a half ago and began with drawing, and are now painting with water colours. We bring our own materials, but Carole will give advice on what to get. We had one day out in the summer painting at Blackmore.

There are two vacancies and if there is anyone interested in joining the class please contact the co-ordinator by email

RAILWAY JOURNEYS GROUP

March 2024 Visit to Somerset House and Two Temple Place



20 of us met at St. Paul's underground station and after a stop for refreshments we joined our blue badge guide at Seamans Hall for our Historical Highlights tour of Somerset House. We were given lots of facts and details, including that the building was originally built in 1547 in renaissance style for Edward Seymour the Duke of Somerset at a cost of £10,000. Apparently, he had angered a lot of local people as he had to demolish their homes and some churches, to enable the construction. It was lived in by many different members of the royal family including Edward VI, Mary I and also Elizabeth 1st. However, in 1775 the building had fallen into disrepair and was demolished, rebuilt and finally finished in 1801 to become the home of The Royal Academy of Arts.



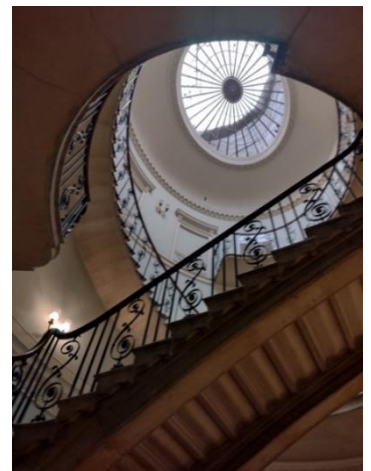


We were taken down to basement level to see some secret gravestones dating back to the 1600's, where we could also see the remains of the original walls. This was a sinister but interesting area that is sometimes rented out for photo shoots and filming.

On returning to ground level, we were shown where the original entrance to Somerset House was. This was before the great stink in 1858 when the Thames was pushed back and a new entrance was created. We were also shown a fascinating staircase that had once led down to the Stamp Office, and later merged with Births Deaths and Marriages which has since been digitalised and moved to Kew Gardens.

We followed this by a very brief visit to Two Temple Place which is a neo gothic building that was built in 1891 for William Wardorf Astor, who at the time was the richest man in the world, and we could see that no expense had been spared.

Finally, we took the tube to Tower Hill and went to the Liberty Bounds for some lunch.



READING GROUP

We are a friendly, lively group with a shared love of books and reading who meet once a month to discuss a book that we have chosen together and agreed to read in advance.

We usually include at least one non-fiction and one "classic" each year. Books that we read in 2023 included:

Educated by Tara Westover
Shuggie Bain by Douglas Stuart
A Jack Reacher novel (free choice)
Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus
A Rising Man by Abir Mukherjee

While focusing on our chosen book, the themes that it presents then lead on to a more general, animated discussion which may include other books written by the same author, books with similar themes or our own personal response to issues raised.

We all learn from each other as we share our knowledge and experiences.

We welcome new members who share our love of reading.

Our meetings are 10.30 -12.30 in Billericay on the second Monday of each month

GOLF GROUP

2024 March Report

Top Meadow Golf Club at Ockenden was our venue on 15th February, with breakfast included in the green fee price. It was a delightful sunny day with not much mud. Quite an improvement on the previous Thursday where we were rained off at Stapleford Abbots.

Rain returned on 22nd Feb when three u3a golfers sought refuge in the golf simulator at the Heron Golf & Country Club. The simulator is housed in a windowless studio, so as we “played” the Pebble Beach Golf Links in California we were untroubled by England’s February weather!



Alan playing off the Californian beach to the green “somewhere over the top”!



Stuart facing deep rough to the green beyond

We reached the 8th green before our simulator time expired. Thanks Mike for the photos.

Adverse weather again on Feb 29th sent members to more simulated golf, this time at Stock Brook golf club. Three courses were “played” for 9 holes at Pebble Beach, Wentworth and The Grove. It is enjoyable but we prefer the “great outdoors”

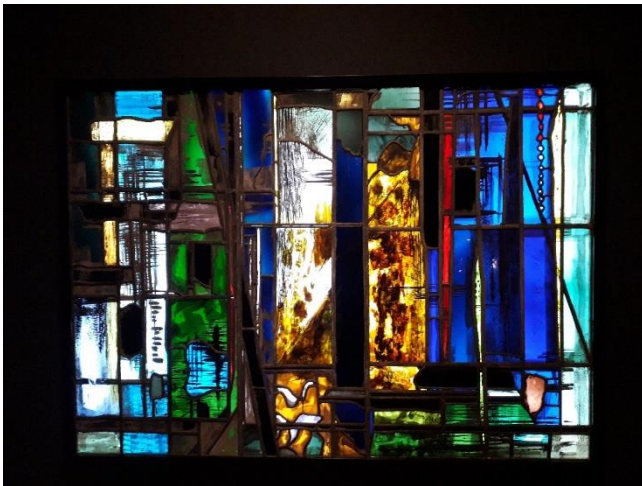
On March 7th we started on the Stapleford Abbots loyalty cards (six rounds for the price of 5) in fairly heavy mud. The sticky mud on the 18th fairway was particularly challenging for approach shots and so was cleaning boots afterwards!

We look forward to some better conditions as summer gets nearer. If you would like to join us on a sunny Thursday, we’ll be pleased to see you at a tee time around 10:30 and a finish about 3pm for tea and a chat.

ART APPRECIATION GROUP

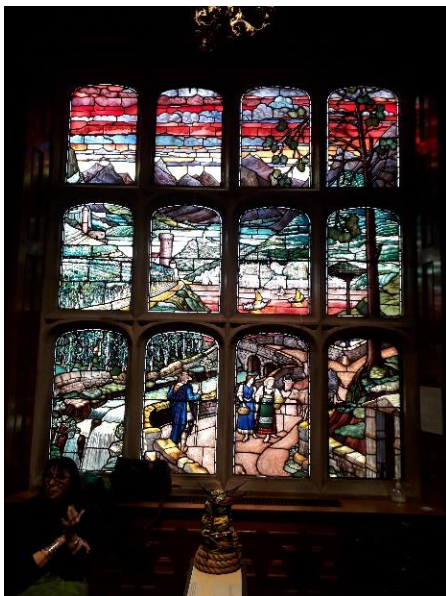
Last month nine members of the Art Appreciation group met in the cafe of 2, Temple Place for coffee before our visit to "The Glass Heart" exhibition. This exhibition was sub-titled "Art, Industry & Collaboration" and featured glass artworks covering the period from the Great Exhibition (1851) to the modern day. The majority of the pieces were from three museums, The Stained Glass Museum (Ely), the Stourbridge Glass Museum and the National Glass Centre (Sunderland).

Some of the main highlights on the ground floor were "Battery – Matters of the Heart" (2004) by Peter Layton, "Spanish Galleon" (1980s) by Mayflower Glass Limited, "Abstract Panel" (1965-6) by John Piper and Patrick Reyntiens and "Musician Angel (playing aulos)" (1865) by Edward Burne-Jones .



Highlights on the first floor were "Untitled" (1986-7) by Harvey Littleton, (see opposite) "Chair from Half-Life" (2017) by Elliot Walker, "Judge and Jury" (2023) by Chris Day and "Sunrise" and "Sunset" (1895) by Clayton & Bell(see below).

The last are a matching pair of stained-glass windows which are part of the fabric of the building.



2, Temple Place is a fascinating building to visit. It was built in 1895 as the London office and home of William Waldorf Astor, and is now owned by the Bulldog Trust. After the visit we strolled up to The Strand for a well-deserved lunch at The Old Bank of England pub.

KNITTING AND SEWING GROUP



We meet once a month on a Friday morning, working on a date to suit everyone. At the moment the group is small and we meet in my home to enjoy one another's company while knitting or sewing. We learn from each other and get new ideas. Some time ago we were making twiddle muffs for dementia patients. Our next meeting is on Friday, March 15th. If you would like to join the group please email the coordinator.

HALF RAMBLE

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 1st April - Possible Walk Two Tree Island, Leigh SS9 2GB. From the A13 take Thames Drive down to Leigh Station. Follow road behind Leigh Station over the Creek Bridge. Park at the end of the slipway facing Canvey Island.

As this is Easter Monday, a lot of people cannot come, and as it is a longer journey than usual we are considering whether to postpone this walk. I suggest those who would like to come get in touch with the coordinator by e-mail so that I can confirm.

Monday 6th May - Stock Village - Meet in Stock Village Hall Car park CM4 9LY

Newsletter Contributions

If you have any items please send them by **12.00 Noon on Wednesday, 17th April 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 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.

Editor