



BASILDON AND BILLERICAY u3a

NEWSLETTER No 368

JULY 2024



2024 OLYMPIC GAMES IN PARIS

The logo for Paris 2024 combines three separate symbols – the gold medal (symbolising achievement), the flame (symbolising the energy we share) and Marianne, the personification of the French Republic (symbolising France).

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

AGM June 2024

First and foremost I would like to thank all the current committee members without whom our u3a would not exist. You are fortunate to have a dedicated and hard working group of people who, although they could, do not claim expenses for the extra distances travelled for u3a, and are always willing to go the extra mile for members.

I would like to thank all the Group Co ordinators, who are a dedicated and hard working group of people working on your behalf.

This year our Committee is losing S.K. who has done an excellent job as Membership Secretary and has been a pleasure to work with. We will miss his sense of humour as he comes to the end of his five years as a Committee member.

We will also miss A. and A. Fletcher who have supported our u3a as Secretary and as Groups Facilitator for five years plus.

Of our continuing members, D.W. continues to keep our website looking polished and professional, and has now spent many hours dragging us all into the future with Beacon.

M.W. as Treasurer is another member who puts in many unseen hours keeping our accounts up to date and legal.

L.S. has provided us with some very informative and extremely interesting Speakers.

L.A. joined us last year as Business Secretary, and is very much part of the team, becoming knowledgeable on all things u3a.

A.B., our Accessibility Officer, is the friendly face greets you at the door at our Monthly Meetings.

I am sure you will all want to join me in saying welcome to the two new members joining the committee this year. D.H. will be our new Groups Facilitator, and J.C. joins as Membership Secretary.

In our volunteer roles, we owe a big thank you to J.H., who does an excellent job of editing our newsletter and keeping us up to date with our u3a news.

L.B. manages the Book Table at Monthly Meetings. She single handedly sets up a display of books for you all to choose from and enjoy. Her knowledge of books is phenomenal.

Also welcome to S.D. and a team of volunteers, who have agreed to take on the organising of the Catering at Monthly Meetings.

Thank you from all our members

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The football is over and we can now look forward to the Olympics and our 2nd Coffee Morning! The first event was well attended and there were many comments from members about how nice it was to get together. Each month we will be meeting at the Emmanuel Church Hall, Laindon Rd, Billericay.

BBu3a coffee mornings

2nd meeting Thursday 1st August

10.30-12.30 50p per person Ample Parking

A great opportunity to meet other members and have a chat.

At the Emmanuel Hall, Laindon Rd, Billericay

Almost opposite the Canon Roche Centre.

YOUR 2024-2025 u3a COMMITTEE

<u>POST</u>	<u>NAME</u>
CHAIRMAN	S.R.
VICE-CHAIR	VACANT
TREASURER	M.W.
BUSINESS SECRETARY	L.A.
ACCESSIBILITY SECRETARY	A.B.
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY	J.C.
WEBSITE MANAGER	D.W.
GROUPS' FACILITATOR	D.H.
SPEAKERS' SECRETARY	L.S.
PUBLICITY SECRETARY	VACANT

VOLUNTEER ROLES

NEWSLETTER EDITOR	J.H.
REFRESHMENTS CO-ORDINATOR	S.D.
BOOK TABLE	L.B.

MONTHLY MEETING

2.30pm on Friday, 26th July 2024
at the Cannon Roche Centre, Billericay

Speaker Doreen Sim

The Guide Dogs Association



Doreen has been volunteering for Guide Dogs for over 25 years, covering many roles within the organisation from puppy raising to a speaker.\

Her talk will cover the history of Guide Dogs, breeding of dogs etc, puppy raising, training and their other services.

AUGUST MONTHLY MEETING - SUMMER PICNIC

FRIDAY 23rd AUGUST - 2.30 pm



We hope you will all enjoy another picnic under the tree in the field next to the Emmanuel Centre. Bring your own picnic food and chair or picnic blanket. Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be available as usual. Of course, we are all aware that this is Britain and if it rains we will use the Emmanuel Hall in good old British fashion!! No booking is necessary, just turn up and have a nice afternoon in the sun!! (Hopefully!!)
Emmanuel Centre, 66-68 Laindon Rd, Billericay CM12 9LD

GROUPS' FACILITATOR

NEW GROUPS MEETING

10:30 to 12:30 Friday 6th September

Mayflower/Pilgrim rooms at Emmanuel Church, Landon Road, Billericay

We have requests for new groups for Spanish, Four Mile Max Rambling and Chess.

Eric Harris will have a proposal for a new social group.

If you are interested in any of these or have any ideas for other new groups, please join us at this meeting and we will help get you started.

GOLF GROUP

2024 JULY REPORT

On June 20th we played Stapleford Abbots, one of our favourite courses, and collected another stamp towards a free game.

On June 27th at Dunton Hills we enjoyed a lovely game; the fairways were good, greens poorly maintained but the weather was nice with a breeze. Norman and Colin walked off with scores that will reduce their handicaps. Apart from a very cheap round of golf, Colin picked up 12 Srixon's (his favourite) and gave away a load of others. Mick C equally thought that Christmas had arrived early with the number of balls he found. Norman, Mick and Colin all hit the green on the 13th 202 yard par 3 from the tee. All the 1st putts were within 4ft of the hole and then all walked off with bogeys. However Norman did leave the course with a hatful of pars and Colin walked off with 7 pars to match the 2 birdies and 4 pars from last week. How we all love the summer bounce! 242 yards off the tee on the 11th.

On July 4th we had a lovely day in the sunshine at Hartswood. The course was in excellent condition with the excellent greens being true and fast, and as with last week we all enjoyed the summer bounce and had some flattering results.

On July 11th six members met at Risebridge golf club on another beautiful summer's day. As usual we drew lots to make two teams of three and agreed which team would start. The pace round the course was good and completed in four hours. (It's not a race, but we like to have unhindered progress around the course!) We had our teas sitting out on the terrace, which is one of the joys of summer.

We would be pleased to see new members join us on Thursdays to enjoy summer golf on dry fairways while the weather holds good for us.

Editor's note For the non-golfers, a Srixon is a brand of golf ball.
I had to look it up!

GREENFINGERS



The Greenfingers garden group now has spaces for a few new members.

We are gardeners, both experienced and not so, with a wide variety of different gardens. We meet monthly, either in our own gardens or in other open gardens and garden centres. We try and share ideas and sometimes plants or cuttings with each other.

You don't have to be a gardening expert to join our friendly group and all are welcome.

For more details please contact our coordinator Jo.

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 5th August - Watt Tyler Country Park, Pitsea Hall Lane SS16 4UH. Park in the second car park near to Cafe Building.

Monday 2nd September - Westleigh Heights, Langdon Hills SS16 6HU. From Laindon Station follow the High Street to the very top of hill. The entrance to the car park is just after the Miller and Carter pub/steak house

Monday 7th October - Two Tree Island, Leigh SS9 2GB. From the A13 take Thames Drive to Leigh Station. Follow the road behind Leigh Station over Creek Bridge. Park at the end of slipway facing Canvey Island

ESSEX DISCOVERY

VISIT TO BATA VILLAGE

Bata shoes are no longer made in Essex but the Village built for the factory workers is still there in East Tilbury and made an interesting visit for our group.

Tomas Bata was born, in 1886, into a shoe making family in Zlin, now a town in the Czech Republic. He was a forward-thinking man and realised that the old way of one man making a pair of shoes by hand could be modernised by reducing the tasks to those that could be mechanised and worked on a conveyor belt system. This led to factories being set up worldwide, including East Tilbury in the UK.



The first factory was built in 1932 and a basic accommodation block was provided. As production expanded, more factories and more workers were needed. Family homes and support facilities such as a school, doctor surgery, library, cinema, and social club were also built. Up to 4000 people were employed.

The buildings were designed by Czech architects using Czech construction methods. The factory used different materials including rubber and plastic and were able to recycle these materials.

Sadly, the factory ceased production in 2005 as manufacturing moved to Africa and India.

On arrival we were given a very informative and well-illustrated talk and time to look at their large collection of artefacts and memorabilia before we were taken on a guided walk around the area. The enthusiastic volunteers made this a fascinating visit.

FYI the Heritage Centre are holding an Open Day on Saturday 12th October

We finished with an excellent lunch at The Ship further along Princess Margaret Road

RAILWAY JOURNEYS GROUP

JULY VISIT TO THE OLD BAILEY & JACK THE RIPPER WALK



Our July trip was on a Saturday rather than our normal first Tuesday of the month so that we could visit the Central Criminal Court, known as the Old Bailey, for a 90-minute guided tour. Built on the site of the old Newgate Prison, this was the scene of hangings, floggings and many forms of human misery. These could attract thousands of spectators. One of its most famous prisoners was Jack Sheppard, who managed four amazing escapes and was eventually hanged at Tyburn at the age of 22. When it was demolished in 1902, this made way for the current building which was opened in 1907 by Edward VII.

Our tour was booked for 12pm but first we went through security and then upstairs to meet our guides, Rosemary and Jay, who told us that we would be going into sensitive areas. The use of mobile phones, video equipment and photography is strictly forbidden in these areas. When the courts are in session during the week, these would have to be left at a local travel agency for safekeeping for a small charge.





We were taken into the Lower Hall with its magnificent marble columns and alcoves which house some gruesome artefacts dating back to the history of hangings and executions. Marble stairs lead up from the Lower Hall to the Grand Hall and Royal Entrance which make a spectacular entrance for guests. This is adjacent to Court No 1, probably the most famous courtroom in the world and one of 18 in the Old Bailey. This court is reserved for the most serious and high-profile cases.

Between them, Rosemary and Jay gave us a very informative talk about who sits where and how a trial would proceed. This Court is often seen in films and on the television, but no filming is ever allowed so what you see on screen is a replica. In this court and in the dock, is where defendants such as Ruth Ellis, Peter Sutcliffe, the Kray Twins, John Stonehouse, Ian Huntley, and Wayne Couzens to name but a few, would have faced trial. Behind the dock are benches where the Press would be seated. The jury box is represented by two rows, close to the witness box. The judge and defendant face each other and are raised above the other participants. We also saw Courts 2 and 5, each with a slightly different layout to Court No 1, and then we went downstairs to see the cells. Prisoners are brought in early in the morning and held in a cell to await their turn to face trial. Category One prisoners would have three guards to escort them while category two would only need one. There are 70 prisoner cells which are simple with just a bench, which is screwed down. 'You always have be prepared for every eventuality' we were told. At the end of the proceedings for that day they are returned to prison, such as Belmarsh. Because of Covid, there is a massive backlog of about 4,000 remand cases waiting to be brought to court. We ended our tour in the judge's dining room, where they are served a simple meal with water so that they keep alert for the afternoon proceedings.

In the afternoon some of the group started their journey home while a few others took part in a guided tour of the Whitechapel and Spitalfields area where Jack the Ripper carried out his gruesome murders. The guide said that the only certainty was that five women died at his hands and the level of mutilation got worse with each victim. There were pictures of buildings at that time, some of which had long gone but others are still standing.



Wilkes Street, in Spitalfields, a favourite haunt of Jack the Ripper

RAMBLING GROUP



Fifteen of us enjoyed blue skies on our June Ramble from Mountnessing. Parking was a problem at the village hall car park because another u3a group were having a meeting there. For the first time, we offered members the option of walking 5 or 6.7 miles and it seemed to work ok. Most of the walk was across farmland with views of Ingatestone Hall in the distance.



Our August walk is a cross country walk starting from the car park almost opposite the Cricketers pub in Fryerning. **We will meet at 10.15 on 21st August** in the car park just past the Cricketers pub. Post code:- **CM4 0RH, Mill Green Road Fryerning**. This is a 15 minute drive from Billericay. From there, we will walk across the road and then take a series of footpaths to Fryerning church and Beggar Hill.

This is a 5.2 miles walk across fields and footpaths with 5 stiles. For those who prefer not to cross the stiles, we can walk a further 300 yards to avoid them. This is a reasonably flat walk. When we tested this walk in early July, the walking conditions were good, apart from one small area.

There are refreshments available at the pub after the walk, but no toilets are available on the walk. As usual, please wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Boots help to protect your ankles. Where possible, please try to car share.

All u3a members are welcome to turn up on the day. Please bring your u3a membership card.

DISCOVERING ESSEX VILLAGES

VISIT TO WIVENHOE



On our recent trip to Wivenhoe our very informative guide Peter, who is a local historian, told us that in 1108 the Domesday Book recorded a community of less than 30 adults. This number has now increased to approximately 7600 at the last census.

In the Middle Ages the land passed to various grandees, and in the early 15th century it was acquired by the Earls of Oxford. Many past aristocrats are buried in the Saxon Church of St Mary. Wivenhoe commenced boat-building in 1575, and for the next four centuries this was an integral part of its economy.

In the 18th century there were just four pubs in the village which were part of the social hub. These still exist today, but at one time there were twenty one pubs, all vying for business, and the local beer was brewed at Maltings Yard.

Wivenhoe developed further as a port, and until the late 19th century it was a port for Colchester, approximately 3 miles further on. Large ships were unable to navigate any further up the River Colne, which widens here into its estuary. It had two prosperous shipyards, plus commerce and fishing industries. Greater prosperity for the town came with the arrival of the railway in 1863.

KNITTING AND SEWING GROUP

Our Knitting and Sewing Group meets once a month on a Friday morning and we chat, have coffee, do some knitting or sewing, exchange ideas and learn from one another. It is a friendly small group. If you want to join please contact the Co-ordinator for details (via the Groups' Facilitator on the website).

We have been knitting twiddle muffs. These are muffs for dementia or elderly patients to put on and there are things to twiddle on inside. The texture and pattern of the knitting is interesting to touch and colourful, and they are also warm for hands that are inactive.

Ali Massey, a representative from United in Kind, came to our meeting to collect the twiddle muffs, and was most grateful for them. She has contacts she can give them to, as well as contacts for knitted premature baby hats. She also told us about United in Kind, which is an organisation to help reduce loneliness. It is a project that supports people to build community resilience across Essex to tackle social isolation and loneliness. To find out more about United in Kind visit www.essexcc.org.uk www.essexwellbeingsservice.co.uk.

We were given much more information if anyone is interested.

THEATRE VISITS GROUP

The Theatre Group was formed in 2018 and had several exciting years visiting theatres and cinemas plus many backstage tours. As Covid struck we kept going by using zoom meetings and watching ballets, plays and operas on the internet. These were all free to view and we were able to discuss them later.

Since returning to having monthly group meetings late last year we have had numerous visits to our favourite venues to watch many fantastic shows/plays/live screenings/films. Our meetings take place on the second Tuesday of the month at 1pm in the Hapa (Billericay) Theatre in Radford Way. There we discuss what's on offer and what shows and events we're interested in. All ideas are researched and then booked once dates/times agreed upon.

Here are a few of the recent visits we've made locally and in London -

Carmen - a modern take on the opera

Backstairs Billy - The life of the Queen Mothers valet and confidant

View from the Bridge - A play set in 1950's New York

American in Paris - A romantic comedy set in Paris about jazz influenced 1928

Coppelia - A modern adaptation of the early Ballet about beauty and social media

Oliver - A fun song and dance production of Dicken's Oliver Twist

Moulin Rouge - Beauty, love and passion with modern and classic music

In the pipeline we have -

Jesus Christ Superstar - local theatre

Grease the Musical - local theatre

Andre Reiu - a live screening of his performance in Maastricht at Cineworld

Witness for the Prosecution at County Hall London

We are a friendly group and you are welcome to join us at our next meetings which will be held on 13th August and 10th September at 1pm in the Hapa Theatre Radford Way Billericay

PLEASE NOTE THERE ARE FIVE FRIDAYS IN AUGUST!

Newsletter Contributions

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

on Wednesday, 14th August 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)