



# BASILDON AND BILLERICAY

u3a

NEWSLETTER No 380

JULY 2025



**It's been quite hot this year!**

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

As we start our new u3a year we are reminded that there are still some things we can do to make our u3a the best it can be. We have in the past had Greeters or Welcomers at the Monthly meeting, to help new members on arrival. If you feel you can help with this role please contact our new Inclusion Secretary, who will be pleased to meet you.

We still need a Groups Facilitator to liaise with groups and Group Co ordinators. This is a very interesting and rewarding role. If you would like to know more about this role please contact me for further information.

The two new Committee members have fitted into the committee, and I hope they enjoy their time with us.

Don't be put off by the fact that you have never been on a committee before, you have a great deal to offer, even if you don't think you have.

## **PUBLICITY OFFICER**

I would like to introduce myself - I'm the newly appointed Publicity Officer for Basildon & Billericay u3a. I've been busy promoting the many benefits of u3a - dropping leaflets and posters off to libraries, council notice boards, information centres etc. I contacted community magazines regarding advertising space and "The Resident" invited me to write an article. I'm delighted to say that my first ever article has been published in their July edition.

**Editor's note.** Those Billericay members of this u3a who receive "The Resident" can see the item, on line or in their hand delivered copy. Unfortunately when copying the item, the print is too small to reproduce in this newsletter. There will be a copy of "The Resident" available for you to see on the noticeboard at the Monthly Meeting.

## MONTHLY MEETING

2.30pm on Friday, 25th July 2025  
at the Canon Roche Centre, Billericay

Speaker Chris Jeffries

"The Curry Story"



The story of "how we came to like curry" is about spices and how spiced food came to Britain.

This reflects the days of the Raj and retired officers coming home and wishing to re-create Indian dishes. It also includes immigrants who were brought to Britain and then disowned and abandoned by merchant ships owners, and more recently those who fled from the terrors of Idi Amin.

**NEXT MONTH**

**Friday, 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2025**

Speaker Alison Mees

"Living in Africa"

Alison will be sharing with you her story of living in Africa for just over 17 years. The talk has many photos of wildlife and community that she has taken, and with this will be her experiences and stories from the bush.

Please note There are **FIVE** Fridays in August. We always meet on the **FOURTH** Friday

## ESSEX DISCOVERY GROUP

### **VISIT TO EASTBURY MANOR.**

This is a National Trust property in Barking and is a little gem but only open on Thursday, Friday and Sunday. Because there is only Blue Badge parking there some of us travelled by train; Upney Station is only a 10 minute walk away from the House. This visit was recommended by one of our members.

The building is Tudor in origins, brick built in the 1570's for Clement Sisley, a wealthy merchant. It still contains fireplaces and roof timbers from that time. A sign of wealth is the large number of glazed windows and tall chimney stacks, all very impressive even today. There is an original tower staircase but also now a lift for less mobile visitors.



The Painted Chamber on the first floor is so named because of the wall paintings commissioned by Sir John Moore, Alderman, who lived here at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Sadly only two partial walls survive now but still very colourful.

We were fortunate to have Maurice, a local volunteer, guide us around the building. He was extremely knowledgeable and pointed out many features which we would have otherwise missed. Such as the remaining original Tudor doors in a couple of rooms and the decorative diaper brickwork outside intended to dazzle visitors.

Once the estate held land right down to the Thames but now there are only small but interesting gardens around the House.

We finished our visit by enjoying a delicious lunch in the Tea Room. We stayed indoors because it was a hot day but there is a very inviting courtyard with outdoor tables and chairs.



The group in the Great Hall

## GOLF GROUP

### 2025 JULY REPORT

Our u3a golfers have been enjoying excellent summer weather during recent visits to local courses. On Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June we were at Southend's Belfairs course through the woods, sharing the footpaths with dog walkers and making sure that the dogs don't start playing with our balls.

26<sup>th</sup> June at Risebridge was hot with the course in firm conditions.

At Stapleford Abbots on 3<sup>rd</sup> July we had 8 players turn out which is almost all the group and makes for a convivial outing. Photo of 7 of us at the first tee (plus photographer!)



10<sup>th</sup> July Hartswood was in excellent condition with the trees in full summer leaf providing challenging problems by blocking drives and shots.

Hopefully summer weather will continue and we look forward to many sunny Thursdays. We would be delighted for more golfers to join our group and enjoy the summer golf in prospect for several months. We will be teeing off most Thursdays at 10:30 at one of the dozen courses in our "circuit" and we hope you are able to join us.

## RAMBLING GROUP



16 of us had a great walk at Burnham on Crouch starting at the Parlour Cafe. We walked along the riverside path passing the large boat yard and then along through to centre of Burnham. We then circled back across fields passing the site of the old World War 1 airfield.



It was a great day for walking.

Our July walk at Little Wakering will have just taken place.

Our August walk will be at Waltham Abbey. Here we will see the Abbey, gun powder mills and the white water centre. More details will be forthcoming once I have checked the route out.

## **THEATRE GROUP.**

Over the last few months we have been busy and had several cinema and theatre outings. These have been enjoyed by our group and a little summary of each are below.

### **Girl on the Train**

A play based on the Paula Hawkins best-selling novel. The emotion, suspense and intrigue all blend beautifully together when a woman (Rachel) unsatisfied with her job and reeling from a recent break-up finds herself watching a couple from the train window on her daily commute. When the woman Rachel has been watching disappears she wonders if she has the key to find out.

### **Made in Dagenham**

An inspiring play, film and later a musical follows the lives and events of the Ford sewing machinists strike at the Dagenham plant. A heart warming story of the workers bravely fighting for equal pay and rights for women. It has an energetic score and keeps your feet tapping together showing courage, unity and justice.

### **Annie**

This brilliant performance at our local theatre was a sell out and well worth it. The story of orphan 'Annie' and her search for her parents in the 1930's and her life in the orphanage run by Miss Hannigan. Annie is forced to work hard day in day out until she gets chosen to spend a fairy tale Christmas with a famous billionaire, Oliver Warbucks. Miss Hannigan has other ideas and plots Annie's come down. A heart warming ending and many of the famous songs were performed by the excellent cast with an extra large age range.

### **Red Hot & Ready**

For lovers of the TV show 'Strictly' this was a must see performance by the 2023 and 2024 professional winners Vito and Dianne and choreographed by Jason Gilkison. The two dancers showed their talent in different styles and delivered a show-stopping performance together with a group of young multi-disciplined dancers and an excellent live band. Vito and Dianne told of their love of dance from a young age and how they've been able to reach the top and go on to other things like 'Masterchef' and 'Oscar' winners. This show had everything from heart pounding music to jaw dropping choreography and breath taking moves, not to mention fabulous costumes.

### **Revelations**

'Mr Nasty' from "Strictly", Craig Revel Horwood, had a one man show telling of his life and early struggles to get into show business. He is not only a judge on the live shows but is an accomplished dancer, choreographer, singer, story teller, director and you've guessed another excellent baker. He spends his time between doing all of the above and recently played Miss Hannigan in the London performance of Annie. This show had everything and more. Craig was accompanied by an excellent pianist and singer/songwriter who is his life- long friend. We were also treated to some of the outrageous costumes Craig has worn in his long career. He says dressing up is the best part of any show.

### **Billericay Choral Group**

They held a concert in the Methodist Church Billericay and sang a medley of songs from shows past and present. This was a great event and enjoyed by all that went. Refreshments were served which was appreciated as it was held on one of the hottest days of June.

## **WRITING FOR FUN**

### **A SUCCESS STORY!**

Our writing group has been going for many years and is still flourishing. We meet each month to share and discuss our writing in a friendly and supportive atmosphere.

One of our members has recently published a book which is available on Kindle. "The Little Reading Room" is an eclectic mix of short stories covering a range of human emotions. Themes of grief, memory, vulnerability and belonging are explored thoughtfully and tenderly. Each story deals with a transitional moment in someone's life, yet is short enough to be read while savouring a hot drink. If you haven't got a Kindle don't worry, as in September this work will be available in paperback.

Of course we are very proud of our new author and hope this is just the beginning of a successful career in writing.

There is space in our group for new members so do come and join us.



### **SOLO UNO SUNDAY**

The group visited Rye this month. We went on a coach which took the pressure off driving such a long way and arrived in Rye around 11.00 just in time for coffee and cake. Our group split into two and here is a picture of four of us sitting up at a viewing platform having walked the best part of the High Street, where there were lots of independent shops to browse around. After another walk along the narrow cobbled streets we visited a beautiful historic church (St. Mary the Virgin) and then proceeded to have another coffee before catching the coach home. The weather was perfect for our visit, but the heavens opened on the way home. Who cared, by then we were on the coach and hoping that our gardens were getting a good watering.



## RAILWAY JOURNEYS GROUP

### JULY VISIT TO THE CHELSEA PHYSIC GARDENS

It was forecast to be the hottest day of the year as we set out, armed with sun hats, umbrellas, fans and bottled water, to visit London's oldest botanic garden.

Tucked away beside the River Thames, the Chelsea Physic Garden was established in 1673 by the Worshipful Society of Apothecaries. It is home to a unique collection over 4,500 medicinal, edible, useful and historic plants as well as many notable trees and scrubs. Since 1673 the Garden has contributed to the city's biodiversity and provided a place for people to connect with nature, being the only botanic garden collection focused entirely on medicinal, herbal and useful plants.

Sir Hans Sloane gifted the land to the Apothecaries in 1718 on condition that it could never be sold and that a rent of £5 a year should be paid in perpetuity. What would the site be worth today in the middle of Chelsea?

Surrounded by high walls, the garden has its own microclimate and is always 3 degrees warmer than Kew Gardens so it supports many plants that could not survive the winter at Kew. These include a 129 year old fruiting pomegranate tree - the oldest in the UK.

It was a sweltering 35 degrees when our expert volunteer guide Chris walked us around the garden on our private tour, talking about the history and the features of the garden. He explained the various medicinal qualities of the many various plants and how they had, in many cases, been known to the ancient Egyptians and the Chinese over 3,500 years ago. It was amazing to see the plants which have become the basis of many drugs, including aspirin, and for the treatment of many conditions such as cancer, eye disorders, joints, malaria, and many others.



*Chris was a great guide but he was no photographer  
- he didn't get us all in the photo!*



*Wardian case*

We were shown a Wardian Case - a miniature greenhouse designed by Dr. Nathaniel Bagshaw in 1829 to protect growing plants in ships as they returned from the Far East.



*The Luma Tree*

Amongst the many interesting and amusing stories Chris told us was of the Luma tree that Walt Disney found in southern Chile. He decided that it was the perfect colour for Bambi's fur coat. He took some trees back to California so that his animators could match the colour perfectly. They assumed he would bring back just a handful of trees - but he actually imported several hundred!

Due to the extreme heat some of us returned to Liverpool Street by taxi. Others visited the greenhouses and then walked along the embankment alongside the Royal Chelsea Hospital, looking across the Thames to Battersea Park and Power Station. A really interesting, but very hot, day.

## **FOUR MILE MAX**

This month (July) we will visit the Hanningfield Reservoir Visitor Centre for the start of our walk. Please use post code CM11 1WT (Hawkswood Road) 10.30 in the car part on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> July. We will finish back at the Visitor Centre where those who want to can have some refreshment.

August's walk will be from the Rodney Pub at Little Baddow (CM3 4TQ). Also 10.30 in the pub car park 28<sup>th</sup> August. Please let me know if you want me to book you in for lunch at the end of the walk at The Rodney – the menu looks nice.

Any suggestions for the September walk would be appreciated.

# Newsletter Contributions

If you have any items please send them by **12.00 Noon**  
**on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2025**

**PLEASE NOTE There are FIVE Fridays in August, hence the early deadline**

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](mailto: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>

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(Editor)