

A decorative border of holly leaves and red berries surrounds the central text. A larger holly sprig with three red berries is positioned in the top right corner.

u3a

BASILDON AND BILLERICAY

u3a

NEWSLETTER No 385

DECEMBER 2025



CHAIRMANS REPORT

I would like to wish you all a very happy Festive Season,
and I look forward to all the new and interesting experiences we will share in 2026.



MONTHLY MEETING

DECEMBER 2025

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL AFTERNOON

Friday December 12TH 2025.

This will have taken place by the time you get this Newsletter

NEW YEAR 2026

Please Note January 2026 has FIVE Fridays!

Next Month Friday, January 23rd 2026
2.30pm in the Canon Roche Centre, Laindon Road Billericay.

Speaker Sally Lawrence

“Continuity Capers”

Sally Lawrence, is a former Channel 4 and BBC continuity announcer and shares her experiences of broadcasting, live television and radio, the dramas that happen on and off screen in her talk, “Continuity Capers”. Just what happens in a sound booth? Who writes the scripts and how much does a stop watch really cost?

Yes, it's back!!!!

By popular demand, the two Peters will be running a fun (and possibly themed)

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE QUIZ,

Details are below.

Brighten up a dismal February evening and sharpen those little grey cells by taking part!

BASILDON AND BILLERICAY U3A

QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday, 28th February 2025

Emmanuel Church Hall, Laindon Road



Doors will open at 7.00pm for a PROMPT start at 7.30pm, closing at 10.00 pm

Maximum EIGHT people per table. At least ONE must be a u3a member

All tickets must be booked by a member on a first come first served basis, as tickets are limited. [Please do not start to apply before January 1st 2026](#)

Cash or cheque only please: Members: £3 Non Members: £5

Bring your own drinks and nibbles

Tickets will be available after January 1st at January and February monthly meetings, or by post from the Treasurer

RAILWAY GROUP

MUSEUM OF THE HOME



Our December visit was to the Museum of the Home, based in 300-year-old Alms-houses in East London. The Museum is unique in that it is the only museum in the world solely based upon the home. The Museum relies upon donations as it receives no other funding and the members of the group were pleased to make a contribution.

We started our day with a mandatory coffee and toilet stop before catching the 149 bus to the Museum of the Home. Whilst we had a Group booking we were allowed to tour the museum at our own pace as individuals. This involved walking through around 30 'rooms' each set for a different time period or aimed at objects that were domestic game changers. You know you are old when things you had as a child, or things your parents used in the home, are now museum exhibits!

Many of the rooms had been themed to Christmas time of the period. After a visit to the on-site shop of locally produced products, we caught the 149 bus back to The Crosse Keys pub for a late lunch.

After lunch a small group of 9 members caught the 15 bus from Monument to Aldwych/Drury Lane where we commenced our walk through the main Christmas Light areas of central London. Starting at Covent Garden, moving on to Leicester Square, then through the back streets to Carnaby Street and finally Regent Street and Oxford Street.

We walked the full length of New Oxford Street to Tottenham Court Road where we caught the 8 bus back to Liverpool Street.



GOLF GROUP

2025 DECEMBER REPORT

We made a rare visit to Belhus Park on 20th November, where our fourball enjoyed a relatively mud free round in chilly overcast conditions. As the autumn advanced to 27th November, the trollies picked up more mud at Risebridge where five u3a golfers turned up.

At Cranham on 4th December we actually had a wet day which has been quite rare for our regular Thursday outings. Seven golfers started out about 10:30 in very slight drizzle which dried up during our rounds until proper rain came in the afternoon.



Despite the rain, all three players of our leading group, Colin, David E and Dexter, managed to par the iconic par 3 island green at the 18th hole. A drive over land and then 100+ yards of water, requires accuracy for the ball to stay on the island green and then two putts for par. The u3a golfing group have played this course many times and but only occasionally made par on the 18th.

For various reasons we have never met all together at any time, however this was put to right, when all members of the Golf Group met for a private Social Night at The Raj, Billericay on the 9th December. An enjoyable social evening had by all.

On 11th of December we couldn't get a suitable tee time at Garons, so our 'fixer' opted for Hartswood which is easier to book. It was an idyllic day in the sunshine on a course in good condition but soft in places with wet slow greens.

The 18th December will be our last meeting of 2025. Some of the 8 players who have elected to play, will get a free round from their Stapleford Abbott's loyalty card which expires on 31st December and will not be available in 2026. We look forward to welcoming new members next year starting from January 8th.

ESSEX DISCOVERY

VISIT TO THE OLYMPIC VELOPARK



This month found us at the Olympic Park at Stratford with a guided “Behind the Scenes” tour of the Velodrome. We travelled by train, c2c and Jubilee Line or Greater Anglia, to Stratford and then took the bus to the Velodrome. Perhaps in the summer we might have walked through the Park but, as the Velodrome is at the furthest point from the station, we opted for the bus.

Liam, our guide, was very knowledgeable and told us about the construction of the building and the race track. After explaining how the spectator seating has been altered since 2012 he took us up to the ‘Sky Box’ where the official technology is housed to measure speeds, distance etc. and the finish line camera in case of a dead heat. He then took us down to the cyclist area where cycles are checked and cyclists can use warm-up bike stands, ready to access the track itself. On the way through we passed changing rooms, treatment rooms, equipment stores, repair facilities etc.



After that we went out to see the BMX track, and Liam showed us where the road track and mountain biking area are nearby. This makes the Lee Valley Velopark one of the few worldwide that has all four cycling disciplines in one area.

To finish our visit we were able to watch some cycle club racing which enabled us to see exactly how fast the bikes can race and how the ramps and levels are used to advantage.

Our group divided after returning to Stratford, some going home, some going for lunch and some succumbing to the bright lights and warmth of Westfield Shopping Mall

RAMBLING GROUP



Our November walk was well attended considering the weather early that morning.

Our walk started at Finsbury Park, and after a coffee stop, we set off on a disused railway line to Highgate, where we entered Highgate Woods. From there we re-joined the old railway line to Muswell Hill, then we stopped for lunch at a posh Wetherspoons. Our last part of the walk took us up to Alexandra Palace with its great views of North London, and where the BBC made its first broadcast in 1936. We then had a long downhill walk to the station.



By the time you read this our December walk will have just taken place.

RAMBLING continued

Our January walk is in North London. **We will meet at 10. 30am on 21st January by the barriers at Tottenham Hale station. This is on the Greater Anglia Train Line, going from Stratford to Tottenham Hale, and normally leaves from platform 11.**

From here we walk to Walthamstow Reservoir which is a 10-minute walk. The walk itself is 5 miles long. We will stop for refreshments at the start and end of the end of the walk.

For those travelling from Billericay, it is best to travel to Stratford and then transfer to the Greater Anglia line for 2 stops to Tottenham Hale. The ticket price with a senior rail card is £11.95. I will be at Billericay Station at 9.15 if you want to travel with me.

For those coming from Basildon or Laindon take the train to West Ham, then the Jubilee line to Stratford. Then cross to platform 11 for Tottenham Hale.

Please contact me if you have any questions, or if you require any more information.

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

As usual, please wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Boots help to protect your ankles.

Newsletter Contributions

If you have any items please send them by **12.00 Noon**
on Wednesday, 14th January 2026

This is an early date as there are 5 Fridays in January, and the
Monthly Meeting will be on Friday 23rd.

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.

(Editor)