



BASILDON AND BILLERICAY

u3a

NEWSLETTER No 389

APRIL 2026



The 46th London Marathon takes place on April 26th 2026

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Our u3a runs as smoothly as it does, because we have a dedicated team of Committee members who put in the effort to achieve this. This is rewarding and enjoyable; choose your role. Some of our current Committee Members can and are standing for re-election, but some have served the maximum allowed of five years or are unable to stand again for personal reasons. Voting for next year's Committee will take place at the AGM in June.

The following posts will become **vacant in June this year**:-

Groups Facilitator

A post to get involved in many aspects of our u3a life.
Duties include contacting and supporting Group Coordinators, updating group lists.
(There is always help and support available)

Publicity

An interesting role for any member. No specific skills required, just an interest in supporting an enthusiastic team of our members and promoting our u3a.
(There is always help and support available)

Vice Chairman Observation and supportive role.

IT Support

This post does require some IT knowledge but if you have the basic knowledge, you will be able to do this role with support from the committee and Beacon
(there is always help and support available)

Welcome and Accessibility

An interesting role for any member who has an interest in meeting people, The main skill needed for this role is to be able to talk to people.
This post could also be filled by more than one member
(There is always help and support available)

General Committee Member

This is a supportive role. No definitive tasks, but still a valued member of the team.

All the above roles will mean you are part of the team that keeps our u3a the best it can be.
Interested in any of the above roles? Have a chat without being committed.

We look forward to hearing from you

BUSINESS SECRETARY

Why not help run your u3a?

If you have ideas, skills and a bit of time that we can put to good use, please get in touch with a current committee member for a chat, or nominate yourself via the included form, **overleaf on Page 4**. If you're a new member, do consider joining the committee. It doesn't matter when you joined us; it's never too soon to meet new people and lend a hand in the running of our u3a. *None of the roles would take up a lot of your time, but each one is important to keep our u3a functioning.* Any paid-up member of Basildon and Billericay u3a may stand for election or nominate or propose another member. Spouses or partners of the nominee may not propose or second, nor may committee members.

The form must be completed and returned to the Business Secretary by email, or by Royal Mail, or handed in at the monthly meeting by **no later than 22nd May**.

MONTHLY MEETING

April 24th 2026

2.30pm in the Canon Roche Centre, Laindon Road Billericay.

Please note the change of speaker

Unfortunately Martyn Harrison can't make the 24th with his 'Harry Secombe' talk, so has nominated a lady called Debbie Spice to take his place. She does a similar thing, and covers 60s music and musicals. She may do a musical singalong/quiz as well.

NOTE There are **FIVE** Fridays in May. We always meet on the **FOURTH** Friday

Next Month

Friday, May 22nd 2026

Speaker

Kev Remmington

The Men's Shed, Billericay

A great new community asset for Billericay, currently open three mornings a week but growing .

u3a Basildon and Billericay

Committee Nomination Form

Elections will be held at the **AGM on Friday 26th June 2026 2.30pm**

I wish to nominate

NAME(in capitals please)

Address.....

.....

In the role of.....

U3A Membership number.....

Proposer

Name.....

Proposer signature.....

Date....., U3A Membership number.....

Seconder

Name.....

Seconder's signature.....

Date..... U3A membership number.....

I am willing to stand at the forthcoming election.

Signature of Nominee.....

Date.....

RAILWAY GROUP

24 of us met at Basildon station on a surprisingly warm and sunny April morning, excited for our day on the Thames. We travelled to Barking Riverside via C2C to Barking, and then the Suffragette line to the Riverside Station. This was followed by a short walk to the pier where we were meeting the 25th member of our group.

And then came the stomach dropping moment when we learned that the Uber boats were not running from Barking until after 12.45 due to scheduled maintenance on the Thames Barrier! Frantic googling by three of us on our phones eventually resulted in an alternative plan, and we all set back off towards the station. Suffragette line to Barking, C2C to West Ham and then Jubilee Line to North Greenwich to catch the Uber Boat. By this time we were all in desperate need of refreshments so we decided to take 1/2hr break to eat, drink and make use of the facilities.

We eventually boarded the Uber Boat at the Greenwich pier at about 1pm, two hours later than planned, for the hour long journey to Battersea Power Station. What a great way to travel though. The views from the boat of the London highlights on each side of the Thames are unparalleled and we all massively enjoyed the sights.

On arrival at Battersea we split into two groups. One group opted to stay in Battersea to explore the Power Station and have lunch, while the rest boarded a return boat to London Bridge, where they had lunch at The Sun Wharf Wetherspoon.

The travel gremlin was not yet done with us though!

The Battersea group attempted to get the 15.36 boat back to Barking but it never arrived and the pier staff seemed completely uninformed as to what was happening. We boarded the boat we were directed to at about 4pm and after checking with the crew that the boat was definitely heading to Barking we settled down to enjoy the journey. All was good, with the exception of a hot tea spilling accident, until we were approaching Greenwich. A tannoy message advised us that the boat we were on was terminating there. On questioning the crew, they told us that the boat was running so late that they had been instructed to offload everyone at Greenwich, but they assured us that there would be another boat within 5 minutes.

We left the boat, walked along the pier as directed to join an existing queue, where lo and behold we came across the London Bridge contingent of our group, who it transpired had also been offloaded from their boat at Greenwich!

We were very quickly on board a final boat and at last on our way to Barking Riverside. One of our group attempted to leave the boat one stop early on the wrong side of the river, but luckily was alerted in time. C2C then tested our patience even further by cancelling the 18.03 train which resulted in a very cramped, standing room only journey back to Basildon. We all made it through with lots of good humour and were rewarded on the bus back home by a stunning sunset. Despite the best the travel gremlin had to throw at us, we had all had a good day.



RAMBLING GROUP

This was the first walk of 2026 with new 'management', having waved off Brian with appreciation for his efforts leading and running the group for more than 5 years.

Having decided as a group that members will plan their own walks in 2026, with Debbie and Gill managing the admin (regular emails and a new WhatsApp group); our first monthly Wednesday walk on March 18th started well with the sun shining. Most of us met at Billericay station for the planned 9.37am train. Despite a delay we met a further two members as planned at Liverpool Street station who had travelled on the other line, and had a cuppa and/or breakfast at 'Hamilton Hall' Wetherspoons before starting our ramble. Our March walk was entitled '**The City's Best Green Spaces**' led by Debbie and Gill and incorporated 13 little known places in the City of London.

These included a burial ground dating from the 1660's where famous people like John Bunyan are buried; fragments of the roman London Wall still standing, Postman's Park where there are plaques commemorating ordinary people who died whilst saving the lives of others and last but not least the 'Garden at 120', a rooftop vantage point on the 15th floor overlooking all of London's landmarks like Tower Bridge and the Thames. Somewhere in the middle of our interesting tour we had rest and refreshments at The 'Sir John Hawkshaw' Wetherspoons at Cannon St Station.



The Salter's Gardens at London Wall Place



The Barbican Lake



St Dunstan's in the East



Noble Street

We had feedback from several members that the walk was interesting and enjoyable. They especially appreciated the handout which was useful to refer to at each place of interest, and that the pace was just right for the 5-6 miles we covered. Members also had unexpected nostalgia of life as a student in the city many years ago which brought back many happy memories.

By the time the newsletter is published we will have already completed our April walk around Coalhouse Fort East Tilbury, led by Colin and Olivia.

Both John and Annabel are looking forward to hosting the **May Ramble on May 20th** around Thornton Country Park. We will be meeting **at 10 15hrs at The Green Man in Herongate** - address: Cricketers Lane, Herongate, CM13 3PZ - roughly a 15 minutes' drive from the centre of Billericay. There is plenty of parking immediately opposite (the signs saying parking for cottages are not formal, so okay to park there), also along the rest of Cricketers Lane and along the lane opposite the pub leading back to the main road - there is also another lane just past the pub on the left. As always we would suggest car sharing wherever possible.

There are no "comfort" stops available at the start, but we will be stopping at the Thornton County Park Centre halfway round, and the Green Man will be open by the time we return for "comfort" stops, refreshments, lunch etc.

Our Ramble starts by crossing the A128 from The Green Man (good viewing of traffic both ways at this point) and continuing through a gate into the Park. There are no stiles, but some hilly bits, by and large all the paths are fairly even and when we walked this it was extremely dry. About 2/3rds of the way round we cross the A128 again towards St. Nicholas Church, but again easy viewing of traffic both ways). The paths for the remainder of the walk are alongside fields and although fairly even, care will need to be taken when walking across any tractor tracks. We finish back at the Green Man which offers a wide range of food, from snacks and sandwiches to plated food. There is a very large garden to the side and tables at the front overlooking the green and of course tables inside if you prefer. The walk is just under 6 miles in total.

As always we recommend wearing appropriate clothing and footwear - walking boots help to protect your ankles, and waterproofs because it is England!!

All u3A members are welcome to turn up on the day. Please bring your u3A membership card and if you have any questions please direct them through Debbie to us.

ESSEX DISCOVERY

VISIT TO THE FIRE MUSEUM AT GRAYS

This was a very enjoyable visit following on from the recent talk at the Monthly Meeting. Eight of us made the trip



Our guide remembered that he gave the talk on the History of Fire Fighting and so offered us a talk on Fire Fighting in WW1 instead. This was full of fascinating information and well-illustrated with many photographs of historic equipment and lone gone Firemen. Some disasters that occurred during WW1 were described too.

There was the opportunity for a couple of us to model Fire Fighters uniforms. Linda donned the war time garments and Andy was kitted out in the modern equivalents.

As fires became more complicated, then materials have developed to maximise the safety of the firefighters.

As the demands of war impacted on the Service the equipment had to be adapted to ensure a good service could still be provided.

The Fire Service was not listed as a protected employment in WW1 so many personnel were called up to fight, which led to women being used, not as fire fighters but as support staff.

After this we had time to view the many fascinating artefacts and historic equipment held at this Museum, all well explained and demonstrated by the knowledgeable volunteers. Some of us saw the Safety Rooms which are set up to educate school children on how to avoid hazards in the home. We were happy that we were aware of these but it prompted discussion anyway.

Lunch at the Kings Arms in Stifford Clays rounded off a very good day.

GOLF GROUP

2026 APRIL REPORT

By the 19th March we had hopefully left winter conditions behind us in a sunny and mud free visit to Stapleford Golf Course! Six u3a golfers took advantage of the sunshine at one of our favourite summer courses, offering a bacon sandwich with a reasonable green fee.

There were only four players the next week, 26th March at Cranham Golf Course with a strong westerly breeze to contend with. The fairways were dry and we went home with clean shoes straight off the course and not much effort required to clean the clubs.

Belhus Park Golf course can be difficult to book because staff are often not near the phone. This time they answered at first ring so booking for 2nd April was easy! The weather was overcast and breezy over a dry course and the u3a fourball became confident that summer, with its dry courses, has arrived for 2026.

Hartswood on 9th April confirmed we can now expect summer golf conditions with a lovely sunny, breezy day and some bounce on the fairways. Finally we have goodbye to the winter mud and looking forward to a summer of Golf.

Report from S. A.

Newsletter Contributions

If you have any items please send them by **12.00 Noon**
on Wednesday, 13th May 2026

Please note this early date as there are FIVE Fridays in May

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)