



Newsletter

October 2013

Our photographic display at the Green Centre, Wat Tyler for the last few months has been based on the various villages of the Borough. Our next display we hope to have up by the beginning of November will depict Basildon Borough at War.

In the meantime we are still researching the Borough's First World War Heroes who never made it home. We are on target to produce our first Roll of Honour binder by the beginning of the New Year.

One of the other projects we will be working on is to improve our web site and make it more informative. We have already added details of the Borough's Sports and Leisure clubs that we were able to collect during Olympic year. If there are any we missed please let us know. We have also added Aerial videos of St Nicholas Church, Laindon and of Wat Tyler Country Park by Aaron Green.

We will also be adding to the site the World War One Roll of honour.

This Month's History Article

Was it a Lancaster or a Wellington?

Eric one of our researchers was perusing the Billericay Area War Diary 1939-1945 when he came across the following entry:

16 November 1942 – 19.25 (7.25pm) – One crashed British aircraft – Location, Staines Farm, Bowers Gifford Marshes. Map reference 206032. – Machine completely wrecked and burnt out. 5 mutilated bodies recovered.

Eric also had sight of two newspaper articles that reported two British aircraft crashing in the Basildon and Southend area, on this night. One, a Lancaster which appeared to have crashed in the Southend area the other a Wellington that crashed at Bowers Gifford. The confusion that subsequently arose was that both

had a crew member named Sergeant Jack Tritt – Pilot of the Lancaster – Navigator of the Wellington BJ894. The article gave the impression that both airmen were buried at Sutton Road Cemetery in Southend.

Both of these famous WW2 bombers were part of the Bomber Command of the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF).

To try and establish whether there was one or two Sergeants Jack Tritts Eric decided to see what Squadrons were operating in the area in 1942. Unfortunately very little information was given on the Lancaster. A trawl of the Squadrons of the RCAF Bomber Command revealed that no squadrons were equipped with Lancasters at this time, they mainly flew Wellington bombers.



A further search by Eric established that the Wellington BJ894 belonged to the RCAF 425 Squadron. He followed this up with a search of RCAF Bomber Command Virtual War Memorial site and established that it showed one Jack Tritt, a member of 425 Squadron. Also a further search of the Sutton Road cemetery established only details of one Jack Tritt, belonging to the 425 Squadron. This led Eric to conclude that there was only one Flight Sergeant Jack Tritt and he was killed in the Wellington bomber that crashed on the Bowers Gifford Marshes and not in the Lancaster that crashed in the Southend area. (*photograph is of Jack Tritt.*)

The next question that arose was, was the Wellington shot down by German (Luftwaffe) night fighter over the Thames Estuary or had it been involved in a training accident?

There is no doubt that it was on a training exercise but initially it was reported that it was attacked by a German night fighter, which was prowling over the Thames area. Further research clearly established that the Wellington Bomber was on a night exercise termed a 'bullseye'. This involved a cross country flight incorporating several different turning points that could be situated anywhere in the UK and was meant to give trainee crews experience that would bind them together into a cohesive unit. Along the route they would probably make a

dummy bombing attack on a specified town. The Wellington had taken off from its Yorkshire base at Disforth and the official report states that it was caught up in searchlights. The pilot took violent evasive manoeuvres, during which the aircraft's elevators lost their fabric covering and the pilot lost control. There was no mention of enemy action.

According to eye witnesses reports in November 1942 an aircraft on fire flew the length of Canvey 'with bits dropping off....' 'The plane cleared the old Canvey seawall and East Haven Creek towards Pitsea. It broke up over a pond.' Again there was no mention of enemy involvement.

The following crew were buried at Sutton Road cemetery, Southend:-

- Norman Andrews Ash – Flight Sergeant - Pilot
- Joseph Yves Camille Charles A. Laflamme – Flight Sergeant –Air bomber
- Joseph Adelard Frederic Patry – Flight Sergeant – Air Gunner
- Joseph Fernand Raymond Croteau – Flight Sergeant –W.Op./Air Gnr.
- Jack Tritt – Flight Sergeant – Navigator

The following body was returned to the Squadron and buried in Disforth cemetery.

- William George Laut – Flying Officer – Air Obs

This exercise proves how careful you have to be when sorting out the true facts. It is necessary to identify the wheat from the chaff of press reports.

Snippet – Billericay Canal

In the 1820s when England was in a frenzy of canal building as a cheap way of transporting goods around the country, it was intended that a canal should be built from Battlesbridge on the River Crouch to Purfleet with a branch canal to Billericay. Alexander Clark an engineer and J&H Clayton Surveyors drew up the plans in 1825. The branch canal would have to rise 181ft in 7.5 miles. It was proposed to enter the canal at sea level by an entrance lock and rise through 5 locks almost immediately. The next stretch would rise through 7 intermediate locks and the final stretch of 1.5 miles would require 16 locks before it reached the terminal basin at Billericay. It was decided that Billericay's trade could not justify the expense involved in constructing such a series of locks and nothing more was heard of the scheme

Events since May

- Display at Great Burstead church Fete – Photos of Billericay & South Green.
- Display at Barleylands County Show
- Display at Wat Tyler – Basildon Parishes
- Display at Wat Tyler – Fun Day
- Display at Green Centre, Wat Tyler in conjunction with the Essex Field Club.

These exhibitions were very successful and between them we had at least a thousand people spending time looking and talking to members of the Heritage group about their memories sparked by our archive of photographs of the various parishes of Borough.



(Photograph of the Barleylands Country Show)

BARLEYLANDS 14 - 9 - 13

DATE	NAME	ADDRESS	COMMENTS
	Billian Hodde	HARLOW ESSEX	LOVED THE 2 PHOTOS OF THE 3 SEAMTIES!
	K ELLIS	ELACTON ON SEA	MEMORIES
	S. CROWLEY	RAYLEIGH	I REMEMBER CATDEN - MY GRANDFATHER WORKED AT COBBY IN 1957
	J. Millal	Burl leet	Great to see old Craylands photos.
	A Appleton	Basildon	Not local person but interested as I "came with Newar"
	T. F. Stevens V. STEVENS @ IWHites	01245 320720 Retten 2011 Hullbridge	1922-1953 Farm Had moat House Basildon very nostalgic
	P. Hollow	TRIMMS GREEN SARBIDGE	VERY INTERESTING! LOVELY SEEING THE OLD PHOTOS - GREAT MEMORIES
	L. MORGAN	BASILDON	GREAT TO SEE OLD WANDON PHOTOS - Wonderful photographic archive - a real treasure!
	B SIMPSON JANET & MICHAEL HEWITT	BASILDON. 42 THE RISING, BILLECAY CM11 2HW ST. LAWRENCE BAY NR MALDEN	LOVELY PHOTOS
	C. NASH Stephanie flower 11.	71 WHITMORE WAY	NICE TO KEEP AND SHOW LOVELY PICTURES LOVELY HERITAGE TO KEEP Great to see newly interesting photos.
	Sharon Thomas Inene Aval.	75 Whitmore Way 39 Sticks Rd Billeringy.	GREAT COLLECTION. LOTS OF WORK GONE INTO IT - INTERESTING OLD PICTURES
	VAN ROCHE M. Hoyle	3 STONHILL ROAD ROZELLE. SARBIDGE	Really Good Fascinating how its all So quickly. GOOD TO SEE HOW IT WAS
	N. SMITH	HP8 4BT	
	J. Hodkerson	Sheep view ROSENHILL NEWTON	
	G. SACKSON	NEWTON	

Below is a page from our comments book:

Coming Events or displays for October

- 7th October -Talk at the Thurrock Masonic Fellowship (Ladies section) on Plotlands.
- 12th October – Wickford History Day (working with Wickford Community Archive)
- 13th October Talk to Wickford Breatheasy. – A walk around Wickford
- 19th October – History of Wickford Community Centre
- 25th October -Talk to the Women’s World Group on Plotlands
- Nov-Dec – Wat Tyler Green Centre – Basildon Borough at War

Photographs

If you would like photographs of Basildon district views you can purchase them from us at the Green Centre, Wat Tyler.

Local Books. (these are also available at the Green Centre.)

Germany POW 266 Langdon Hills by Ken Porter & Stephen Wynn.....	£9.99
Basildon Our Heritage by Francis Clamp.....	£2.00
This is Basildon by Michael Healy.....	£5.00
Langdon Hills to Corringham by Wally Gilbey.....	£2.00
The Story of Nevendon by Chris Harrold and John Simpson.....	£5.00
Secret Paths in South Essex by Sue Ranford.....	£4.00
Growing up in Vange by Jack Fisher	£3.50
The Story of Pitsea Mount by Chris Harrold.....	£5.00
Basildon Then & Now by Jim Reeve.....	£12.99

Future Newsletter

If you would like a copy of future newsletter by email please let us know by sending us an email via the website or speak to one of our volunteers.

We are also willing to include in our newsletters anything you think might be of interest, again contact us by email or drop in at the Green Centre.

Volunteers Still Wanted .We have had four new volunteers join us since the last newsletter Jean, Lou, Roger and Paul ,who have been a tremendous help in preparing our display boards. We are however, still seriously looking for more volunteers to help with our research, collating and recording the information we gather, helping out on our display days. No experience is necessary other than an interest in local history. We are also looking for somebody with I.T. and photographic experience.

If you would like to join us or find out more about our group please either email us and one of our researchers will contact you or better still why not drop in at the Green Centre, Wat Tyler Park and see what we get up to. Monday and Wednesday 10am to 12.30am. Saturdays 11am to 3.30pm

Web site: - www.basildonheritage.org.uk

Email: - Info@basildonheritage.org.uk

Basildon Borough Heritage Group.

October 2013.