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March 2024 Newsletter 50

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New Year by Sue Ranford

*A new year dawns, resolutions made,
A new beginning where plans are laid.*

*Time is a passing, strange unseen
That can change its pace like a vivid dream,
A minute can seem like eternity,
Yet the years go by so suddenly.*

*Years are not measured in weeks and days
But in many different ways.
Looking back as the years unwind*

Selected memories come to mind.

*Important events, the people we've met,
Decisions we've made we'll not regret.
So, make those memories at your leisure
And enjoy your life and all its pleasures.*

Who are we?

Just in case you do not know who we are - we are a group of like-minded volunteers who believe that our culture and heritage is central to a sustainable community. We aim to preserve our past for the enjoyment, interest, and benefit of future generations of Basildonians.

We do this by: -

Advancing the education of the public, in the history and heritage of Basildon Borough through the collection, preservation of records, photo's materials and artefacts of historical significance. By making these available through displays and talks at the society's location and around the Borough.

Our Location – Green Centre, Wat Tyler Country Park.

Why not pay us a visit, we are open Monday and Wednesday mornings until 12.30 and all-day Saturday until 3.30pm. It is also our intention of opening on Sundays after Easter until September.

Below are some of the comments in our visitor's book for February.

- *Excellent, will come back and see some more of the Newsletters.*
- *Wonderful Experience*
- *Excellent for information*
- *A gem - Will certainly be coming back to view the collections again.*
- *Great exhibition*
- *Lively little collection! – Very varied.*

New Years Honours

In the 2024 New Year's Honours, one of our trustees Richard Gregory of Lee Chapel North has

been awarded the BEM, for services to the community of Basildon.

In addition, the following people from the Basildon area also received New Years Awards: -

CBE – Gillian Millane, of Billericay, for services to charitable fundraising and tackling violence against women.

BEM – Moira Bock, of Basildon, for services to young people in Basildon.

BEM – Marc Grayston, of Basildon, for services to disadvantaged young people, and to the community of Basildon.

Honours Awards are presented twice a year – once at the new year and a second time at the King’s official birthday. The Honours are awarded based on merit or on exceptional or service and have been given out by monarchs since at least 1348.

In the 2013 New Years Honours, Danny Lawrence, trustee, Local Councillor and Director of Basildon Radio, Gateway FM was awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to Radio.

We congratulate them all.

Our Community Involvement



On Wednesday afternoon 28th February we joined Creative Basildon event at their hub, the old British Heart Foundation Store.

In addition to our exhibition there were several other displays by various artists and authors and

an interesting talk on the New Town Developments after the Second World War.

The event was entitled “Our Homes Towns – how do we want Basildon to be in the future.’

Talks

- 1) We partnered in February the Wickford Community Archive on two occasions when they give talks on Wickford. a) on the 14th February to Townswomen’s Guild on ‘A walk from Thomas Kemble to the Broadway’ b) and on the 16th February to Wick Probus on the ‘History of Wickford High Street.’ Both occasions were well attended.
- 2) On 29th February we gave a talk to the NHS Retirement Group on the ‘1953 Canvey Great Flood’, over 60 people attended. It was a most enjoyable afternoon with two people who had experience of being in the flood.

All talks included PowerPoint presentation

New Holland 60th Anniversary



The New Holland tractor plant based at Cranes Farm Road celebrates 60 years of continuous production this year. And as part of the commemoration, we are looking to collect any memories the local community has of the plant, its products and impact over the course of the

decades. We'd be delighted to hear from former employees, suppliers and farmers who have been impacted by the plant, whether in New Holland or as it was formerly known as Fords.

Please do reach out with memories – written, photographic or video. We'd love to hear from you on newhollandukroi@cnh.com

New Display at the Green Centre

Queen Elizabeth II Commemoration Book.



Unknown Laindon Artist – Alan Jagger



Alan was born in Laindon in June 1947 and lived in Basildon Drive Laindon. He went to Markham's Chase School (now Janet Duke), moved onto Laindon High Road Secondary School before graduating to Fryerns Grammar School.

In the late 1950s the family moved to Billericay. Then following his marriage to Christine Brodie, they first moved to Stock then onto Tollesbury.

Following retirement, he took up painting in water colour, a talent he picked up from his father.

Most of his paintings are of the countryside and villages of South Essex.



His vast collection of paintings, most of which are unframed, have been donated to us. If you are interested in seeing them, why not visit us at the Green Centre and if you are interested the family are willing for us to sell them.



Artifacts



We often have members of the public donate artifacts from bygone age., applicable to the Basildon area.

One of the latest is a vintage original 1950's Wesco Oil Can used for collecting paraffin from a local hardware shop.

Paraffin oil was required for heating, cooking and lighting for homes which did not have electricity or gas.

British Association for Local History (BALH).

Since our formation we have had Public, Employers Liability etc. through the BALH, and from them we get four times a year two Historical magazines. In their August 2023 'Local History News' magazine they reported on the unveiling of the Marion Wilberforce plaque.

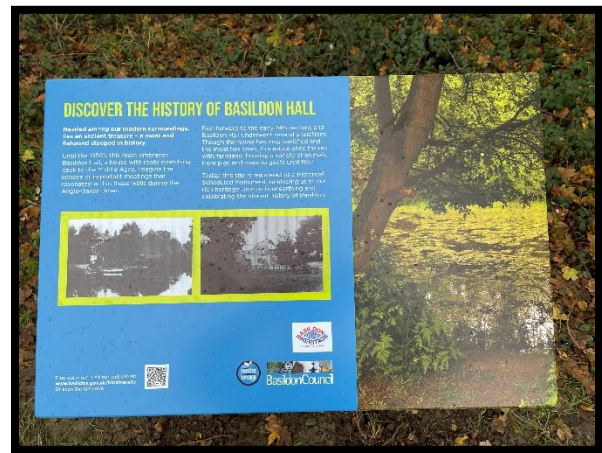


Interpretation Boards

In our December Newsletter 49 we reported that the Council had erected an Interpretation Board in Langdon Hills Recreation Ground. Since then, they have erected two more.

Basildon Hall

In early December, Basildon Council erected a new Signage at the historical Basildon Hall site, East Thorpe. Needless to say, we had some input.



It reads: - *“Nestled among our modern surroundings, lies an ancient treasure – a moat and fishpond steeped in history.*

Until the 1950's this moat embraced Basildon Hall, a house with roots stretching back to the Middle Ages. Imagine the echoes of important meetings that resonated within these walls during Anglo-Saxon times.

Fast forward to the early 19th century and Basildon Hall underwent several alterations. Though the house has long vanished and the moat has dried, this estate once thrived with farmland, housing a variety of animals, from pigs and cows to goats until 1937.

Today, this site is registered as a Historical Scheduled Monument, reminding us of our rich heritage...Join us in unearthing and celebrating the vibrant history of Basildon”.



Basildon Hall pre-1914

If you would like to read more of its history of Basildon Hall, we have small booklet on it at our offices.

St Nicholas Church-Conservation area

On this site three boards have been erected along with a couple of bug boxes.

The council have also tidied and coppiced the area. It is now a very pleasant area to walk round on the newly added paths. This area was part of the Laindon Hall Estate. Laindon Hall being behind St Nicholas Church before it was destroyed by fire in the 1960s.

The first board is situated by the path leading up from St Nicholas Lane, near to a new pond. If you continue to walk along this path and take the first right hand turning, this leads into the old plotland road Basildon Rise, that runs past the back of Laindon Park School, into Church Road.

Along this path you will come across the second Board – ‘Discover the history of our Plotlands’.

A famous Victorian Artist, Edgar Longstaffe lived in ‘Hill Rise’ one of the plotland bungalows here. (Basildon Rise) His son Ernest also lived there. He went on to become a famous B.B.C. Producer and Composer.

This board reads: - *In the early to mid-20th century, working class families found an escape from the city life through Plotlands. These were small plots of land where they built affordable holiday or weekend homes.*

Laindon Plotlands emerged in the early 1900s when the value of farmland was on the decline. The charm of these properties knew no bounds, with a variety of styles from cozy brick bungalows to rustic wooden structures.

During World War II some families made the plotlands their permanent home to escape the Blitz. After the war, our vibrant town of Basildon came to life, and it absorbed the plotlands into our history.

Today, the legacy of Laindon’s Plotlands lives on within Essex Wildlife Trust’s Langdon Nature reserve. Explore the Langdon Visitors Centre and Haven Plotlands Museum to delve into the rich tapestry of natural and social history that shaped this corner of our borough.

If you then take the path, just off Church Road by the school playing field this leads to Pound Lane, you will come across a third board.

Essex Field Club



If you make a visit to see our displays, you will also see display by the Essex Field Club. They have volunteers in on the first Saturdays of the month if you would like to discuss their displays with them. It is well worth a visit.

Overseas Friends

We continue to work with our friends in California, generally meeting by Zoom on a weekly basis both as group meetings and with individuals, helping with research into their family and social histories. Also, by sending copies of the various topic booklets and the borough community booklets of Basildon as well as copies of the lectures we have given here which also prove of great interest to them.



Santa Barbara – Court House



Ventura group waiting in the rain for their Family Library to open.

Basildon Creative People.

On Saturday 16th December Basildon Creative People held their big winter event in the Town Centre. Unfortunately, we could not be there in person but we did supply our banner and a display of photographs depicting Basildon.

We understand the event was very successful. Well, done Creative Basildon, keep up the good work. <https://creativebasildon.co.uk/community-voices/>

Day in History

10th February 1763

On this day in 1793, Spain, France, and Great Britain signed the Treaty of Paris and ended the Seven Year's War. France's defeat in this war led to their supporting the colonists against Britain during the American Revolution.

12th February 2002

On this day in 2002, former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic went on trial for genocide and other war crimes in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo-known as the "Butcher of the Balkans". He died in prison so the trial ended without a verdict.

13th February 1920

On this day in 1920, The League of Nations, the international peacekeeping organization recognized the perpetual neutrality of Switzerland.

14th February 1929

On this day in 1929, bacteriologist Sir Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin, one of the greatest medical discoveries of all time.

Booklets

Booklets produced since the last newsletter:

- Basildon Mecca
- Gloucester Park Swimming Pool
- River Crouch and its Connection to Basildon.
- 3RD Battalion Essex Home Guard-Pitsea & Vange
- Chief Joseph Brant.

Facts about June

- June is derived from the Roman goddess, Juno, the goddess of marriage.
- In Roman times, it was considered un lucky to be married in June. Now it is one of the most popular months to be married in!
- The Ango-Saxons called June "Sera-monath", meaning Dry Month!
- The full moon in June is called the strawberry Full Moon!
- Wimbledon starts in June! It was founded in 1877 and is the oldest Grand Slam tournament!
- June has 3 birthstones: Pearl, Moonstone, and Alexandrite!
- June's birth flowers are the Rose and Honeysuckle!
- The Summer Solstice happens at the end of June, marking the most sunlight hours in the Northern Hemisphere!

Social Media

- [WEB Site](#)

Why not check out our web site, we list all the parishes in the Borough and where their names come from, previous newsletters and links to other Heritage sites: - www.basildonheritage.org.uk.

Facebook

We are still putting on our Facebook page – ‘Basildon Heritage’ – interesting snippets most days so why not have a look and add your comments and memories. So far, we regularly get monthly between 30,000 and 50,000 followers and what is pleasing they are coming in from all over the world. In-fact in January we had two from Thailand.

You will also find us on ‘Basildon Memories’

YouTube

We are now on YouTube! Our first video went live on the 24th February 2024 and we hope to upload at least once a week. Our content will include a wide range of topics, such as facts on local history, old photos and footage as well as information on coming events.

Please show your support by heading along and subscribing to our channel and liking our videos. If you have any suggestions for content or you would like to share your own photos and memories please comment on our videos! We would love to hear from you.

<https://youtube.com/@BasildonHeritage?si=PDrhk6BBRTixUNwa>

Basildon Council Official Podcast.

On the 21st February we were interviewed by Ryan McGown on the council official podcast channel, episode 17 if you want to have a look.

Gateway 97.8fm

We have also appeared on the local radio for a chat with Danny Lawrence and will be back on Monday 20th May at 5pm.

Coming Events.

- Erection of Blue Plaques
- Visit to the Green Centre by a Purfleet walking group and Hutton U3A
- Basildon Carnival
- Wickford Carnival

- D-Day Commemoration (Lighting of the Wat Tyler Beacon)
- Talk to Women’s World group

Volunteers-Members

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers to help with our research, digitizing our photographs, typing up individual memories, sorting and presenting our displays, helping out at various events etc.; why not call in at our Heritage Office in the Green Centre, Wat Tyler Country Park to see what we do. Our opening times are Monday and Wednesday 9.30 am -12.30 and Saturdays 9.30am – 3.30pm.

Fund Raising

We are sure you will appreciate it but costs are still continuing to rise. You can help us to mitigate the increase at no cost to yourselves by nominating Basildon Borough Heritage Society as your charity of choice when you buy on-line through ‘Give as You Live’. A small percentage of what you spend will then be sent to us. Also, if you would like a direct donation please link onto our website where you will find a donation button – Thank you.

Future Newsletters

Future Newsletters - If you would like a copy of our newsletters by email, please let us know by sending in an email or speak to one of our volunteers.

If you know of anybody else who would like a newsletter by email, again please let us know. Previous newsletters are on our web site.

General Data Protection Regulations. (GDPR)

In accordance with the latest General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) we will not divulge any personal information to third parties without prior approval and you will be able to request at any time removal from our mailing list.

You can also become a member - £1 annual membership or £10 life membership.

Email Address

If you would like to contact us our email address is basildonheritage@outlook.com or contact us via the website and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

Founded March 2007 - Registered Charity No. 1176037

Stop Press

It is of great sadness to report the passing of our Mayor, Luke Mackenzie, our condolences to his family and friends. He was always very supportive of Basildon Heritage and attended many of our events. We will miss him.
