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JULY 2024 Newsletter 51

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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 12.30pm and all-day Saturday until 3.30pm. We are now also open on Sundays from 10am to 2pm on Sundays until September.

Below are some of the comments in our visitor's book since the last newsletter.

- Great Place - need a Basildon Museum
- Really interesting and great volunteers
- Love this place – please can Basildon have a museum
- A treasure trove
- Fantastic exhibition

Stars by Sue Ranford

**The sun slowly dips below the hills
And the last golden rays disappear,
The sleepy evening draws to a close
As night creeps ever near.**

**Dusk now fades the sunset's hue
And darkens the cloudless sky.
A thousand stars begin to shine
And sparkle from a high.**

**The ancients studied these starry shapes
And knew their patterns well,
They followed their journeys across the sky
And created stories to tell.**

**The bright Pole Star stands sentinel
Guardian of the stars,
Guiding weary travellers
Who had journeyed far.**

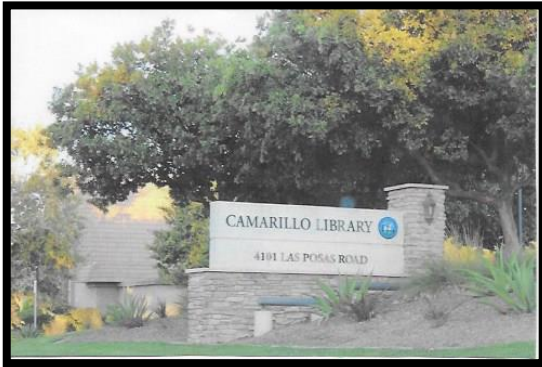
**So on the darkest, cloudless night
Cast your eyes up high.
And marvel at countless suns
That fill our endless sky.**

The King's Birthday Honour's

We congratulate Ros Connors, the founder and director of Gateway 97.8fm who has been awarded The British Empire Medal for her work on broadcasting.

Our Community Involvement.

Overseas Friends



We continue to work closely with our friends at the Ventura County Genealogical Society in California with weekly contact through Zoom meetings, supplying some of our power-point lectures, together with scripts or handouts and of course, in return, occasionally join them for their live lectures, bearing in mind the eight-hour time difference!

Our personal thanks, as always, for allowing us to 'paint the picture, of life, past and present in Basildon and its environs and to support their members who have ancestral links to this side of the pond!

Talks



Animals at War – Talk

On the 18th April one of our volunteers gave a talk on 'Animals at War' to twenty plus members of the Christchurch Wickford Social Group.

Visits to the Green Centre.

On Saturday 6th April we held an open day in partnership with Basildon Council, Creative Basildon who were also able to supply a local Artist. We had 56 visitors and although the time given was 10.30am to 12.30pm, we still had people looking at displays and newspapers when we closed at 4pm.



Open Day 6th April

Monday 29th April the Hutton U3A group (15 members) joined us at the Green Centre to view our displays. We gave a short talk on the history of the park followed by a walk round the park before finishing up with light refreshments at the Green Centre.



Hutton U3A on the walk

Monday 1st May we had a visit from five 6th form students and two teachers from Bromfords School, Wickford. It was part of their 'A' Level course whereby they will be writing a thesis on the early history of Basildon New Town. This is the fourth time students from the school have either visited us or we have been invited to the school. We are looking forward reading the end results of their work.

D-Day Commemoration

On the 6th June we partnered Basildon Twinning Association in commemorating the 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy.



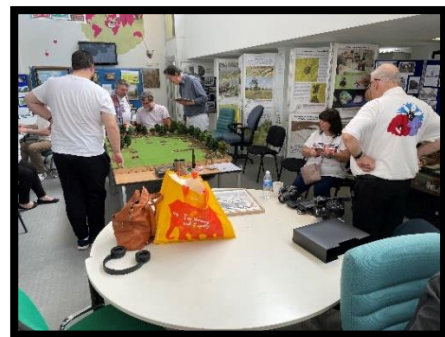
We assembled at 7.45 am in Howards Park, Pitsea Stephen Metcalfe read out the National Proclamation followed by two pupils from Briscoe Primary School who presented the poem 'Dear Veteran'. Reverend Simon Law then said a prayer.

At 11am that day Stephen Metcalfe attended Briscoe School to judge the pupils D-Day Poems.

Then at 2pm there was afternoon tea at Maydells Court, Pitsea with the choir, again from Briscoe School, performing songs from the forties. We put on a photographic display of Basildon at war that included those that lost their lives on the D-Day operation.



While all this was going on an enthusiastic model group were re-enacting the D-D Invasion in the Green Centre.



Finally, at 9pm we met with members of the public at the Beacon in Wat Tyler Country Park for a short ceremony. Stephen Metcalfe MP read out the International Tribute. Followed by young twins of the Twinning Association reading out the names of the fallen from the Borough. There were then words from Frank Mallett whose father took part in the D-Day invasion, Councillor Pat Reid and prayers from Reverend David Ibiayo and Simon Law.



Stephen Metcalfe then lit the Beacon at 9.15pm to coincide with Beacons across the Borough and the country being lit at the same time.

A very long day but very satisfying. This was followed up on Saturday 8th with Basildon Twinning organising a walk from Northlands Park to the Green Centre led by a piper Andrew MacGregor. We provided refreshments for them and one of our members had constructed a model of 'Pegasus Bridge'



Peasants' Revolt Walk

On Saturday 15th June a group of about thirty walkers from Purfleet "T100" (T standing for Thurrock) including a couple of our volunteers walked from Fobbing across the Vange Marsh a distance of just over five miles and ending up at the Green Centre where we provided light refreshments for them.

They walked down to the main Wat Tyler Centre and part of their group known as Thameside Mummers re-enacted a short play based on the Peasants life of the time.



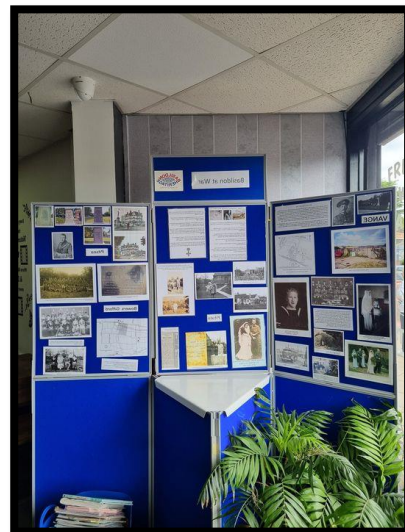
Volunteers explained the park was an old explosive site and then led them around part of the park pointing out some of the old explosive buildings and other interesting sites etc. On their return to the Wat Tyler Centre, the Thameside Mummers performed again before they eventually all left just before 5pm. It was very enjoyable experience.

Work Experience

This month we have had two requests from local schools asking for us to host two students for work experience in the archive office. One joined us this week and helped with general office duties and was shown how the archive was organized and the type of work that we do, e.g filing and research. She was a great asset and we are looking forward to our next student who will join us in September

Displays

We had a display at Vange Church D-Day Commemoration – 8th – 9th June 2024



We also had a D-Day Display at the Mother's Kitchen Café at Felmores.

Community Connection

Community Connection is a quarterly magazine issued by the Basildon, Billericay and Wickford CVS (Council for Voluntary Services). It is an independent charity to help promote, develop,

support and represent a thriving and effective voluntary and community sector in the borough.

We have for the past year or so being asked to supply historical articles on the Borough for the magazine.

The magazine can be found in Libraries, Community Centre's etc., or you can find the digital version on the 'BBW Volunteer Network' website

Our last few have covered:

- German P.O.W. Camp 266, Langdon Hills
- Basildon Glass Bell Tower
- Marion Wilberforce - Pioneering Aviator (2nd World War)
- Hannah Lake – A Founding Mother of America

However, the next magazine might only be an online version.



Day in History

- **15 February 1903** – On this day Morris and Rose Michtom introduced the first 'Teddy Bear' in the United States. He had asked President Theodore Roosevelt for permission to use the president's nickname.

- **16 February 1959** – Fidel Castro was sworn in as Prime Minister of Cuba.
- **19 February 1878** – Thomas Edison patented the phonograph on this day. He had developed the machine the previous year. The first phonograph used needles and tin cylinders, and the first song recorded on the device was "Mary had a little lamb."
- **21 February 1916** – The Battle of Verdun began on this day at 7.12am. Verdun would become the longest battle of the First World War

Booklets

Booklets produced since the last newsletter:

- Dandelions
- Basildon's First Ten Pin Bowling Alley
- A Good Death
- Chief Joseph Brant

Facts about June

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

Coming Events

- Tuesday 9th July – Unveiling of Blue Plaque in honour of Joan Rosaire at the "Fold", Laidon Road, Billericay – 10.30am– 11am.

- Talk at the George Hurd centre on Thursday 18th July at 11am – Basildon’s Famous People.
- Basildon Carnival, Saturday 27th July at Northlands Park.

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

As mention in our last newsletter, we are now on YouTube and our volunteers have been working very hard. The following are those videos that have been downloaded:

- Welcome to Basildon Heritage
- Basildon Heritage – A bit about us!
- Basildon Then & Now
- Billericay Then & Now
- Pitsea Then and Now
- Nevendon Then and Now
- Wickford Then & Now
- VE Day Basildon – 8th May 1945

There are also a few short clips

- Quick Tip on researching your family tree
- Canon Ball
- Musket Balls
- Mantrap
- Interesting WW! artefacts

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>

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 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)

We apply with all current regulations.

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.

Our Opening Times

We are opened on Monday and Wednesday – 9.30am – 12.30pm. Saturdays – 9.30am – 3.30pm and Sundays 10am – 3pm.

Founded March 2007 - Registered Charity No. 1176037

Adverts

Family Research

Have you ever wondered about family history? Are you curious to know where your ancestors lived and what they did for a living?

I provide a professional Family History Research Service to help you learn more about your ancestors. Please contact me for more information.

Sarah Smith

Tel: 07949 747131

Email: Mrs.Smith2012@hotmail.com