



Proudly supported by Basildon Council

December 2021 Newsletter No. 42

Sir David Amess

There is no doubt that Sir David was dedicated to his constituency and sacrificed everything to put his constituency first. First in Basildon and then Southend. God bless you David and we will remember you in our prayers along with our thoughts and condolences to your wife Julia and all his children he leaves behind – Our love to you all.

Sometime in the new year we will be planting a tree in Sir David's honour at the gates of Wat Tyler Country Park



Contents in this issue

Update – What we have been up to.

J.K. Payne article

Laindon's Frith Wood

King Edwards I Travels in Essex

Thames Estuary Path

New Releases

Interesting Snippets

Day in History

Coming events

Christmas Holiday

Fun Raising

Booklets

Future newsletters

Website

Facebook

General Data Regulations

Volunteers-Members

Who we are?

Email address

News Flash

Update – What have we been up to since the last Newsletter:

Schools.

We were invited to attend Fairhouse School on Wednesday 29 September and gave a talk on the First and Second World Wars to Sixty children in groups of thirty from year six. It involved a power

point presentation, displays of photographs and war artifacts

Each session last about hour and fifteen minutes which included many questions from the children. Our feedback is that they enjoyed the session plus the dressing up in uniforms and putting on the helmets we had taken along.

A few days later their teacher visited us at the Green Centre and presented us with two scrap books the children had produced.



On the 18 October we had a visit here at the Green Centre of thirty children of year four from St Teresa's, and gave a talk on local history and

showed them around our displays. Again, there were plenty of questions. They walked from St Teresa to the Green Centre and then back again to the school...that's the way to keep fit.



Radion Project

On Saturday 9 October we held "talk and a walk" around Wat Tyler Park at the Green Centre. Over twenty people attended some from as far a field as Southend on Sea and Hackney. It was a very successful event with several of our volunteers on hand to explain the role the group plays locally in preserving the Borough's history. The talks included how the heritage group came into being, Plotland era, Explosive Factory and its role in the six years 'Forget Never' project.

The photograph outside the Green Centre pointing out the Empty Chair part of the 'Forget Never' project just before the walk around the park.



Santa Barbara County Genealogical Society – Ventura Genealogical Society.

As mentioned in previous Newsletters, we are in touch weekly via Zoom with the above Genealogical Societies and one of our Volunteers has to date given the following presentations – “The Notes and Pitfalls of British Ancestral Research”, “Animals that served in the First World War”. “Film Propaganda in the First World War”. We had previously sent over a Power Point, Script and Handout so they could manage the show to all their members and beyond.

This has been followed with a request for more presentation. The next will be “Zeppelins” on 7th December.

Bake Off

With the support of Basildon Heritage, Basildon Twinning held their second “Bake Off” Competition at the Green Centre on 30 October 2021 with a Halloween theme. Eighteen cake exhibits were on display, from individual cakes to a selection of small cakes. The afternoon was enjoyed by all, the judges had a difficult task but eventually decided the winner was Gwen and Rosie Ball.



Coffee Mornings

Following the easing of Covid restrictions we have held two monthly coffee mornings. The first was on 2nd October and though as expected there were only a few who turned up, although it was a pleasant morning relaxing over a chat with a cup of Tea or Coffee.

The second was held on the 6th November and was very successful with well over 30 attending. Some came with old friends, some met old friends and many made more friends. One cup of tea led to another and some stayed all morning. There were lots to see and we were given documents and photos to copy or keep for the archive. Many spent a considerable time looking at our displays.

Unfortunately, we will not be able to hold the December Coffee morning as we will be involved in an event at the Benbow Club, Bowers Gifford with a display. So, our next coffee morning will be on 2nd February 2020

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

We held our delayed AGM on Wednesday 20th October and we were more than pleased with the numbers that turnout.

We are pleased to have increased our trustees from three to five. The two new trustees being Councillor Danny Lawrence and Geraldine Evans J.P. whilst Ken Porter and Jo Cullen were voted back into to their current position with Alan Cox being voted in as Vice-Chairman.

We will be holding an EGM in March 2022 with AGM in March 2023 as long as there is not a Covid backlash. In order we can put the formal AGM back onto its yearly timescale.

Remembrance Services

On Wednesday 10th November at 11am we held a small remembrance service at the Empty Chair, Green Centre, Wat Tyler Park, where we read out the names of Basildon Borough personnel and those from our twin towns in Heiligenhaus Germany and Meaux, France who lost their lives at

the Battle of the Somme, Plus, our Volunteers family members ancestors who also lost their lives in the war.



Then on the Sunday we attended the 11am remembrance service in the Town Centre and laid our wreaths.

9th Basildon Cubs

We attended the 9th Basildon Cubs on Monday 15th and gave a talk on the First and Second World Wars to twenty cubs.

WENT THROUGH HOME TO BEAT THE BOUNDS

By J.K. Payne

(Jessie Payne historian who wrote for the local paper in the 1960s lived at Vange Farm now swallowed up by Basildon Golf Course)

From about 1600 the Spitty family were connected with Bowers Gifford. The Spitty's came from Spitty Yotwith in Cardiganshire and were originally cattle drovers who became large landowners.

Thomas Spitty, who was the first member of the family to live in Bowers Hall, was the great-grandfather of the late Major Spitty who was, until recently, remembered by old inhabitants. Thomas died in 1779 and his widow married the Bowers Rector, Rev. Robert Powley, but her son Thomas still lived at the hall. He was a churchwarden and built Sadler's Farm. Eventually he went to live at

Hurlocks, High Street, Billericay, a sixteenth century house, where he died in 1824.

There is an amusing story told of how Thomas Spitty had Blue House Farm (Pitsea) restored, in fact almost rebuilt, as a surprise for his bride. It was originally built of timber and noggin (filling between the posts, etc. of a timber house) as evidence of this was found when work was being done in recent years. On his bride's first viewing she asked: 'Where is the kitchen?', only to find that this small item had been omitted from the plans. Consequently, the kitchen had to be added, and it was built on the Pitsea side of the house while the rest of the house is in Bowers Gifford.

When the 'bounds' were beaten, the company went in at Blue House front door and out by the kitchen on the Pitsea side. The last member of the family to hold the manor was Major Thomas Jenner Spitty. He was born in 1812. He built the cottages next to Blue House as a shooting box. He died in 1898 and the property passed in trust to his widow and afterwards to his niece, Mrs Reade of Bath.

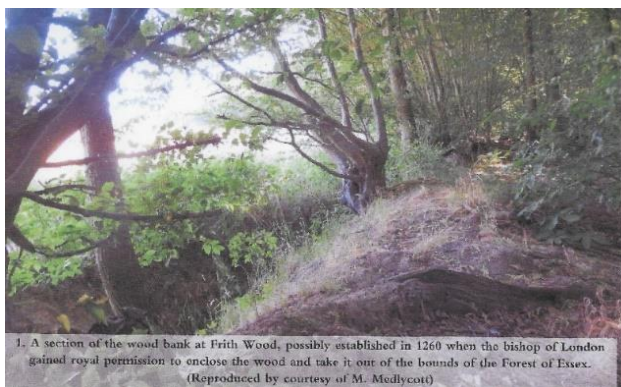
Laindon's Frith Wood

I wonder how many of you realize that the ancient Frith Wood and Laindon Common to that matter were part of the historic Laindon parish. In the modern landscape, Frith Wood and Laindon Common Wood lie just to the west of the A176 (Laindon Road) which links Laindon to Billericay via Noak Hill. This area of south Essex comprises mostly fertile London Clay soils, but Laindon Common and Frith Wood stand on a small area of undifferentiated deposited head comprising pebbly sandy clay.

Nearby at Little Burstead and Noak Hill are other similar areas of gravelly head with pebbles in clayey matrix. These tracts of poorer land are suitable for lowland heath and woodland.

Frith Wood first emerged into documented history in 1260 when it was enclosed from the Forest of Essex by the Bishop of London. In 2020 Frith Wood was among 52,217 sites registered by Natural England as Ancient Woodland, defined as an area

that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD.



The main part of Laindon's ancient parish lay some distance to the south, with Laindon Manor (destroyed by fire in the 1960s) and St Nicholas Church centrally positioned within a roughly square block of land. A thin tongue of Laindon land then ran northwards, crossing the River Crouch and passing between Little Burstead (west) and Great Burstead (east) It ultimately stretched as far as Laindon Common and Frith Wood, with the land being surrounded on three sides (west, north, and east) by Great Burstead. Such a remarkable arrangement was undoubtedly contrived to give Laindon's inhabitants a share of the northern wood-pastures and is likely to be of pre-Conquest origin.

For further reading see Essex Journal – Autumn 2020 – Vol.55 No.2

King Edward I travels in Essex.

Edward I reigned from 1272 to 1307. He was one of our most remarkable Kings, arguably the greatest of the Middle Ages – a man recognized in his own time as a formidable military commander; a ruler under whose auspices key legal process and forms of government and administration were modernized, regularized and expanded; and a man of strong and determined character.

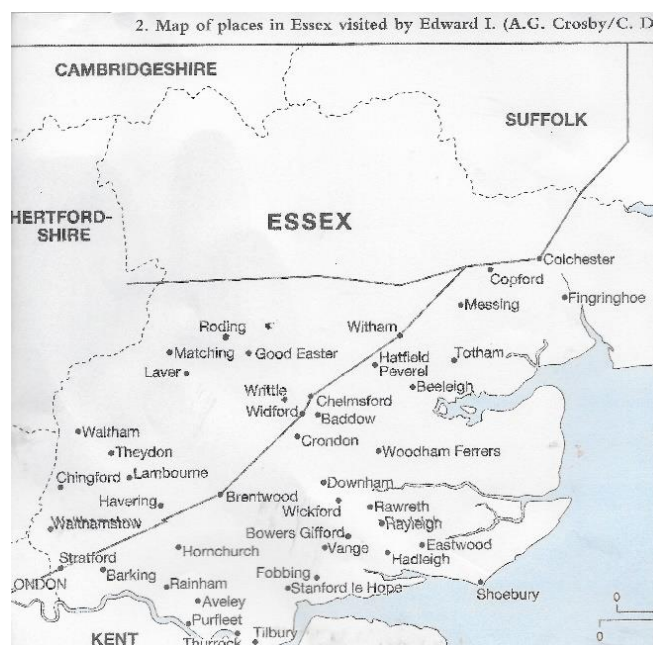
Edward summoned the biggest armies and the largest parliaments seen in Britain during the Middle Ages; he built the greatest chain of castles

in Europe; conquered the Welsh and very nearly succeeded in conquering Scots'.

He was also a fascinating person, an inveterate traveller, a devoted and loving husband, a pious visitor to holy shrines. He travelled constantly throughout England, Wales, Scotland and overseas. Essex was one of his frequent destinations with the southern parts of Essex holding a special place in the affections of the King.

From the map you will see the places that he visited in Essex and in particular he spent one night in Bowers Gifford and Wickford and two nights in Vange.

The question is where did he stay?



For further reading Essex Journal – Autumn 2020 – Vol.55 No.2

Thames Estuary Path – Tilbury Town to Southend

For the walkers amongst you I suggest you give the Thames Estuary path ago.

There has been a long-term ambition to create a path from Central London, through East London and Essex, to Southend for some time. Over the

years numerous parts of the path have been achieved but many gaps remain.

In 2008, the cycling and transport charity Sustrans carried out a complete survey of the path for the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG) and this is on the CLG website if you search under "Thames Estuary Path".

The Thames Estuary Path through Essex is an amazing path taking you past Thameside Forts, ancient Churches, through Thames Marshes and along the sea wall over-looking internationally important marshes and mudflats. From Tilbury to Southend it is approximately 30 miles, but the route has the advantage of being shadowed by C2C railway line with stations at Tilbury Town, East Tilbury, Stanford-le-Hope, Pitsea, Benfleet, Leigh, Chalkwell and Southend-on-Sea. This enables the walker or cyclist to do "short sections" and returning on the train. The beauty of this route is you can choose to start at one station and walk for as much as you like and then get the train back. The stations are generally 3 to 4 miles or 6 to 8 kms apart.

For more information suggest you visit the one of the following sites:

<http://www.thamesestuarypath.co.uk/> -
<http://www.visitessex.com/what-to-do/thames-estuary-path.aspx>.

These websites also give a little history on areas of interest as you pass by. For example, this is what they have to say about St Margaret's Church, Bowers Gifford.

A stone church was built by Sir John Giffard in the early fourteenth century and traces of this building still remain in the South Wall (circa 1320) and West Doorway. The church was a gift of the Lords of the manor, the Giffards, who eventually gave their name to the small village of Bowers Gifford. Sir John fought in the Battle of Crecy and there is an incomplete brass of him in full armour in the Sanctuary.

The church is built mainly of Kentish ragstone with a tower and wooden spire which was added in

Tudor times. In the bell tower however, which is reached by twenty-five steeply winding steps, three bells are housed, all of which are original 14th Century. The bells are amongst the oldest in the County and are still rung regularly.

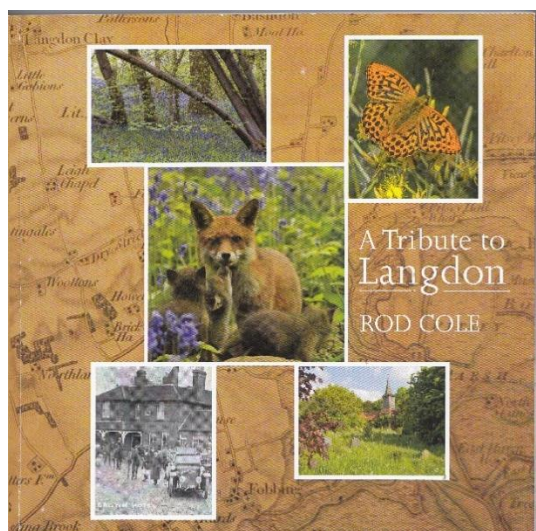
Further information can be found at: www.st-margarets-church.co.uk

New Releases

A Tribute to Langdon by Rod Cole

The Langdon Ridge is one of the landscape gems of South Essex. Long famed for its beauty, it commands splendid views over much of surrounding countryside and harbours time honoured woodlands, waysides and meadows that are astonishingly rich in wildlife.

Tribute to Langdon celebrates both the landscape beauty and the fascinating biodiversity of the region, drawing attention to the rarity of some of that local wildlife. Its publication is timely, given the intensifying public and housing pressures upon the wider landscape, and a case can clearly be made for a regional strategy that aims to preserve and maintain what is left of Langdon's rich inheritance.



Written by a native of the ridge, the book draws upon the records and experience of the Basildon Natural History Society, together with that of Essex Wildlife Trust and the Langdon Hills Country Park

(as well as the recall of earlier observers). Together with other organisations and individuals united by the Langdon Living Landscape, these bodies strive to maintain and enhance the ridge's rich biodiversity, much of which has lately been recognized through the designation of the Langdon Ridge SSSI in 2019.

Interesting Snippets

I wonder how many of you know that the word 'Salary' was derived from the Latin 'Salarium' from the time when Roman soldiers were paid in salt for their services. Salt was a highly-prized and sought-after commodity due to its ability to preserve food and was, in part, also responsible for the development of civilization.

Day in History

11th January 2001 – The Federal Communications Commission gave its approval for a multibillion-dollar merger between Internet giant America Online and entertainment and media behemoth Time Warner.

12th January 1932 – Voters in Arkansas elected Ophelia Caraway, a Democrat, to the U.S. Senate. It was the first time a female had been elected to the Senate. Caraway, born near Bakerville, Tennessee, had been appointed two months earlier to fill the seat left vacant by her husband, Thaddeus Horatio Caraway, when he died. Although Caraway was the first women elected to the Senate, Jeannette Rankin, a pacifist from Montana, was the first women elected to Congress, winning a seat in the House of Representatives in 1917.

13th January 1807 – Union General Napoleon Bonaparte Buford was born. When the U.S. Civil War broke out, the West Point graduate raised his own regiment, the 27th Illinois. Attached to the command of General Ulysses S. Grant. Buford fought gallantly on November 7, 1861, during the Battle of Belmont, Missouri. Grant's army drove the rebels from the battlefield, but the rebels returned after Grant's men began plundering then

area. Buford rallied his men and fought off the Confederate counterattack, saving the day.

14th January 1954 – Marilyn Monroe, film star, aged twenty-eight married baseball legend Joe DiMaggio. Their marriage lasted only nine months. In 1961 Monroe died of drug over-dose – possibly suicide. DiMaggio sent flowers to her grave every day until his death in 1999.

Coming Events

Saturday 27th November we will be at the Benbow Club, Bowers Gifford with an event from 10am to 2pm. The office at the Green Centre will therefore be closed.

Then on Saturday 4th December we will be at the Heart of Pitsea event from 11am until 4pm. Again, the office will be closed at the Green Centre.

The major project we will be involved in over the next few years, will be a Blue Plaque project with the backing of the council, to commemorate a link between that location and famous person, event or former building on the site, serving as historical marker.

Christmas Holiday

We will be closed from 15th December 2021 until 5th January 2021. In the meantime, we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Fun Raising

Next year we will need to replace one of our laptops. You can help 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. If you buy through Amazon, use their charity site Amazon Smile. A small percentage of what you spend will then be sent to us.

Booklets

Since the last newsletters we have produced the following booklets:

Entertainment in World War two
The Sloper Story – Laindon Milk Men

Winston Churchill – 1874 -1940
Major Thomas Jenner Spitty (1812-1898)
Workhouses of Essex
Talbot House – Poperinghe Flanders
Anti-Semitism 1066-2015
Essex Witches

Future Newsletters

Future Newsletters - If you would like a copy of our future 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, please let us know. Previous newsletters are on our web site.

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.

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.

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 out displays, helping out at various events etc; why not call in at our Heritage Office in the Green Centre, Wat Tyler Park to see what we get up to. Our opening times are Monday

and Wednesday 9.30am -12.30pm and Saturdays 10am – 3.30pm.

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

Who we are?

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

***Founded March 2007-Registered Charity
No. 1176037***

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.

News Flash

For you family historians out there the 1921 Census will be published on 'Findmypast' on the 6 January 2022



