



Newsletter 55 – September 2025

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, and by making these available through displays and talks at the society's base 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 from 9.30am until 12.30pm and Saturday from 9.30am until 3.30pm.

Web Site

Basildon Heritage website - www.basildonheritage.org.uk - has received some streamlining and amendments and is fully operational now although Educational Resources is a developing section and work in progress. This is aimed at educators and will be suitable for all school and college ages with an emphasis on local history.

IT - the society is building a cloud-based storage facility using Google which will protect our media assets. Additionally, we hope to have our fibre broadband internet working soon - Basildon Council are managing this.

As part of our IT upgrades, we will also have two Windows 11 PCs for admin, volunteer and research purposes installed soon. Funding for these came via the Basildon Borough Area Committee groups.

Alongside this we are working with Basildon Council to provide a static public PC research station in the heritage area. This will allow safe access to our digital record and ancestry.com and findmypast.com.

We are also looking for grant funding for a large scanner and an auto-fed photo scanner to boost our productivity.

Social media - Our YouTube, Instagram and Facebook channels continue to grow with now over 13,000 followers. Engagement is

very high therefore fulfilling its purpose according to our aims.

We are trialing ETSY on-line shop to sell digital copies of the Jagger Watercolour Collection. Early days but interest and sales have started. This may move to a website linked Google Drive in due course as time and budgets allow.

Our local (digital) newspaper collection is building into a valuable on-line collection and future asset for BBHS.

Experiments with Oral Histories (Basildon Memories) have started to make these available online whilst being GDPR compliant.

Heritage Quiz

1. Name the two Grade I buildings in the Borough.
2. Name the Grade II building in the Town Centre.
3. Who was James Hornsby?
4. What Old Farm Building does St Lukes Hospice now occupy?
5. What is Wat Tyler Park famous for?
6. Name the famous Snooker Player who lives in Bowers Gifford?
7. Previous name of Cromwell Manor.

Answers on page 6.

Our Community Involvement

Talks/Walks

On the 17th June we gave a talk to the Community Cuppa group on the history of Laindon at King Edwards Community Hall.

Bowers Gifford Walking Fete – 13.07.2025

We had a stall tucked away in Highcliffe Road and although our stall was quiet, we walked the walk and chatted to other stall holders about their memories of Bower Gifford and Basildon, and were promised copies of deeds and photos to add to the Archive. So, a successful day.



Basildon Carnival – 26.07.2025

As usual we had our stall at Northlands Park. The park was packed with other stall holders and we made some very useful contacts.



Bowers Gifford – Picnic in the Park – 3.08.2025

We had our usual display stall at the annual event in Westgate Park.



Picnic in the park

Greg Smith – Blue Plaque – 14.08.2025



The Basildon Mayor unveiled a Blue Plaque in honour of Greg Smith, famous producer at the Laindon Community Centre. Which was followed by light refreshments. Greg Smith went to Laindon High Road School, join the community centre youth club and first performed there in a play 'Sailor beware'. He went on to produce a number of films and shows, his great success being the Buddy show in London for thirteen years, before it toured the World. We thank Community Centre and the Council for allowing us to erect the plaque and Sanctuary housing developers for financing it.

80th VJ Day Commemorations – 15.08.2025

Similar to our VE day Commemorations back in May we Commemorated the surrender of Japan and the end of the World War II, with a photographic display at the Green Centre and in conjunction with Basildon Twinning and support from Basildon Council, we lit the beacon in the evening.

The beacon-lighting ceremony included statements from the Mayor Allan Davies, Richard Rackman, Ian Hampshire, Eric Gogoase, Frank Mallett, Ken Porter and a prayer from Rev. David Ibiayo (St Chads, Vange). After the sounding of the Last Post and Reveille, either side of a minute's silence. The Mayor kindly lit the beacon.



1. Brilliant Exhibition
2. Excellent, could have spent more time looking – Thank you.
3. Very good display for VJ day. Thank you.
4. Very informative display. Kids loved it.
5. Nice to see history of our own and the people who lived here.

St Mary's Church Langdon Hills

Every Saturday throughout August we had a display of photographs in the church from 10am to 12 noon, along with light refreshments, and we thank the church PCC for manning the exhibition, which we understand was a great success. The photographs mainly covered the Langdon Hills and Laindon area.



Overseas Friends

It is becoming a feature of the audience joining from all parts of America in weekly and monthly lectures arranged by Ventura County Genealogical Society in California that we are almost expected to be present, to support either member questions or lecturer presentations especially when linked to the British Isles. I would mention that Pacific time is eight hours behind us, so we do endure some very late nights!



Fishing at Ventura Pier

On 13th August we were invited to give a lecture on the Evolution of Genealogy in Britain which was very well received and equally very well attended. Our extensive topic research and resultant papers are also sent to the Headteacher of Geschwister School Gymnasium (GSG) in Aachen Germany, whom we have known for many years in support of his English curriculum.

We also ensure that our Newsletters continue to be sent and compliment those received from Drenth in the Netherlands and Redland in Australia.

Coming Events:

- Saturday 1st November talk at the Green Centre to the Rayleigh U3A – Changing Face of Basildon (Plotlands).
- In October photographic display at St Andrews Church, Wickford on Wickford Rhode Island
- Saturday 8th November photographic display at the Benbow Club, Bowers Gifford, Annual Xmas Fayre (10am to 2pm). Refreshments available.
- Unveiling of a Blue Plaque in honour of Elsie Lagsding – Saffragette, who lived in Bowers Gifford. Date to be confirmed.

Day in History

1st September 1951 – Britain's first supermarket opened, the Premier in Earl's Court.

2nd September 1666 – The great Fire of London began in Pudding Lane.

3rd September 1783 – Britain finally recognized the United States of America, ending the American War of Independence.

8th September 1664 – The Dutch settlement of New Amsterdam was seized by the English and re-named New York, in honour of James. Duke of York, the future King James II

8th September 1888 – The first English Football League matches were played.

11th September 1297 – Scottish Hero William Wallace defeated the English at Stirling Bridge.

12th September 1440 – Eton College was founded by Henry VI for 25 poor and needy scholars.

15th September 1916 – Tanks went into battle for the first time for the British on the Somme at Flers-Courcelette.

22nd September – Sir Robert Walpole became the first Prime Minister to move into 10 Downing Street.

Booklets/Pamphlets

- Elsie Lagsding – Bowers Gifford Suffragette.
- June Haimoff- Environmentalist
- Geraldine Gahan – Life before the Bars.

Members Publications

- The rise and fall of Laindon High Road - £10
- How Basildon was Built - £15
- Basildon's Famous People - £8
- Basildon Famous People Volume two - £8.00
- German P.O.W. Camp 266 Langdon Hills - £7
- Laindon in the Great War - £8
- Castle Point in the Great War - £8
- Clacton in the Great War - £10
- Joan Rosaire, Lady of the Circus - £8
- Poems and Brief History of Laindon and Surrounding District - £7

Further information check the website.

Miniature train at Wat Tyler Park



Passengers waiting for the train at David Harrison Junction.

The Language of Flowers

Following on from the last newsletter our third flower is the Bluebell.



BlueBells are one of our hardiest wild flowers, faithfully returning year after year. They cover our gardens, woods with blue carpets each May but dislike being picked and once gathered, the nodding bells soon droop.

Facts about September

- The name September comes from the Latin word “Septem,” meaning “Seven”.
- The month was the seventh month on the ancient Roman calendar.
- When the calendar was expanded to 12 months, September kept its name, even though it became the ninth month.
- September's birth stone is the Sapphire-symbolizes honesty, trust, purity and loyalty.
- September's birth flower is the Aster and Morning Glory, symbolizing positivity, love, achievement and faith.
- September marks the transition of summer to autumn in the Northern Hemisphere and spring in the Southern Hemisphere.
- September is known as Harvest Month.

Poem

September

The golden-rod is yellow;
The corn is turning brown;
The trees in apple orchards
With fruit are bending down.

The gentian's bluest fringes
Are curling in the sun;
In dusty pods the milkweed
Its hidden silk has spun.

The sedges flaunt their harvest,
In every meadow nook;
And asters in the brook.

From dewy lanes at morning
The grapes sweet odors rise;
At noon the roads all flutter
With yellow butterflies.

By all these lovely tokens
September days are here,
With summer's best cheer.
But none of all this beauty
Which floods the earth and air
Is unto me the secret
Which makes September fair.

'T is a thing which I remember;
To name it thrills me yet:
One day of one September
I never can forget.

By Helen Hunt Jackson

Social Media

You Tube's Videos

- Basildon Now & Then
- Old Footage of Basildon 1961
- Pitsea A13 Construction 1969
Documentary
- Dash Cam Footage | Laindon High
Road North to Great Burstead
- Dash Cam Footage | Watermill to
Wat Tyler

- Blue Plaque Unveiling | Greg Smith |
Producer
- Dash Cam Footage | Whitmore Way
- Dash Cam Footage | Barley lands
Road to Summerhill Garden Centre
- Basildon Our Town | Old
Documentary
- Dash Cam Footage | Miles Gray
Road | Basildon | Essex.

We currently have approximately 300 subscribers but there are plenty more to come, if interested please keep an eye on our Web Site or Facebook

Facebook

We are still putting on our Facebook page – 'Basildon Heritage' – interesting snippets and photographs most days, so why not have a look and add your comments and memories. In the past month our 'hits' have continued to around 2 million and our followers have increased to over 13 thousand. What is pleasing is many are from all over the world.

Answers to the Heritage Quiz

1. St Nicholas Church, Laindon and St Mary Magdalene, Great Burstead.
2. Brook House.
3. The Last School teacher at St Nicholas Church, Laindon.
4. Fobbing Farm.
5. Explosive Factory.
6. Stuart Bingham.
7. Pitsea Hall.

Fund Raising

We are sure you will appreciate costs continue to rise. You can help us to mitigate the increase for us 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 to make a direct donation please link onto our website where you can find a donation button – Thank you.

Future Newsletters

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

If you know of anybody who would like one by email, again please let us know.

Previous newsletters are on our web site.

Generals Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

We conform to all current regulations.

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.

learn more about your ancestors. The first hour of research is completely free, with no obligation to continue.

Please contact me for more information.

Sarah Smith

Sarah@dsheritage.co.uk

www.dsheritage.co.uk

30th September 2025

Advert



Have you ever wondered about your 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