



Newsletter 56– January 2026

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, photos, 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 Saturday until 3.30pm. There is always somebody available to escort you around our displays if required

We hope you all had a Happy Christmas and we wish you all a very pleasant New Year.

We are late with this latest newsletter, mainly due to a very heavy workload during November and December, also to events we attended and talks given. The increase in number of requests we receive that need attention, not only on the history of the Borough but also on Genealogical questions and of course we are more than willing to help, that's one of the reasons we are here.

Our Community Involvement

Talks/Events/Etc.

Saturday 1st November – We gave a talk to the Rayleigh U3A at the Green Centre on the 'Changing Face of Basildon over the last 150 years' There was approximately 30 attendees. Light refreshments followed.

Monday 10th November – We gave a talk to Fairhouse Community Primary School at their assembly on the meaning of Remembrance Day.

Thursday 15th January 2026, we gave a talk to the Thursday Club King Edward's Community Hall in Laindon on the history of Laindon from 1900. Considering the bad weather we still had approximately 25 attendees. As in previous talks, plenty of questions asked. Light refreshments as usual followed.



Throughout November we had a display of local photographs of the Wickford Rhode Island USA area at St Andrew's Church, Wickford.



Saturday 6th November we were at the Benbow Club, Bowers Gifford for their open day again with a display of photographs of the Bowers Gifford area.



Thursday 20th November, we had our annual display of photographs of the Bowers Gifford area at St Margarets Church.



Blue Plaques

Since our last Newsletter in September two more Blue Plaques have been unveiled in the Borough.

Stan Hollands – The plaque was unveiled by Rod Cole (Environmentalist) on Wednesday 3rd December 2025 at the 'Essex Wildlife' site just off the Dunton Road.

Stan was born in Langdon Hills. He was a man brought up in a Christian tradition which generated a strong moral conviction, and a powerful sense of loyalty – to his churches (Langdon Hills Methodist and Dry Street Memorial), his friends, his cricket club (Westley) and, not least, to his Langdon Hills and Laindon origins.



Elsie Lagsding– This plaque was unveiled by the Lord Lieutenant of Essex, Jennifer Tolhurst on the 6th December with the Mayor of Basildon and other dignitaries in attendance at the Benbow Club Bowers Gifford.



Elsie was an unsung heroine in the fight for votes for women. She lived in Clarence Road, Bowers Gifford. Our thanks go to the Benbow Staff for helping to organize the event.

Annual Fund Walk



Not sure how many years we have been taking part in the Fun Walk first established by John Baron CBE

in 2002. The last few years we have done the walk round Wat Tyler Park and this year with the Bonus Pot we raised £804. We thank those that donated, and the Fun Walk Trust for organizing it, this year we aim to raise £1,000.

Overseas Friends

As we continue to work with a number of overseas Genealogical Societies perhaps you would not be surprised that we get even more “word of mouth” enquiries for help in tracing ancestors that link to Britain in general, and occasionally from our Borough as with the most recent enquiry from the Parish of Venray in the Limburg Region of the Netherlands.

They, similar to (SLO) Stichting Luchtoorlog Onderzoek, Drenthe, a Dutch foundation for air war research in Drenthe province during World War II, regularly maintain, with photographs and special occasions, including Christmas, with candles at the headstones of those Royal Air Force Crews who lost their lives, in combat during the Second World War, over the Limburg region.



Venray Cemetery

Norman Roland Kenneford, buried in Venray Cemetery. The picture found by our Facebook efforts. At one time, his wife and child lived in Norsey Road Billericay.



It is so important, we acknowledge their care of all the brave people who gave their lives for the belief of freedom.

Germany

We continue our friendship and dialogue with Herr Lehniger (Schulleiter – Head Teacher) of GSG (Geschwister Schol Gymnasium) in Aachen by including him in the recipients of our research booklets and power point presentations which he then passes to his English Language class tutors.

Also, I should mention of the links built up by the Basildon Twinning Association with whom we are directly involved, and visiting programme, both ways, continue with Heiligenhaus with whom, of course, Basildon is formally twinned.

California

We have expanded our links with a third county in California, already well established with Santa Barbara and Ventura, now South Orange County have linked up with us, to a point we have planned weekly ‘Zoom’ meetings to cover both individual family and social research as well as presenting lectures through the same medium.

The Current Programme includes:

For South Orange County on Monday 12 January 2026, a lecture given on the Workhouses of England and that talk will be repeated for Ventura County on 11 February and they have also requested other lectures including London Prisons (which of course includes people (convicts?) who were transported to the Americas (John Harvard of University fame being one such).

We are currently working with seven individual members from the three California societies and are never ceased to be amazed at the historic and social links generated with their research. Most definitely something they can 'dine out on'.

Australia

We regularly exchange Newsletters with the Redland Genealogical Society in Cleveland Queensland Australia and of course have occasional requests for help from their members. We have in the recent past had some of their members visit us here at the Green Centre.

Coming Events

- Monday 2nd February talk at the British Legion Hall, Hockley to the Hockley & Hawkwell U3A on Changing Face of Basildon (Plotlands)
- Monday 9th February at 4pm on Gateway 97.8. for our short six weekly update. Gateway is our local radio station and has been serving the community since 2007.
- Thursday 19th March talk to the history group at the Benbow Club,
- Basildon Carnival – Northlands Park, 25th July 2026

Lectures

We have planned for Saturday mornings at the Green Centre 10.30 -12.30 a series of Family History and Genealogy lectures, including on-line access to various source systems. The Public are welcome.

Lecture No. 1 - Starting out with Family History- Saturday 14 March 2026.

Lecture No. 2 – Brickwalls -Saturday 11 April 2026.

Lecture No. 3 - Live Case Study-Saturday 9th May 2026.

Lecture No. 4 – Evolution-Saturday 6th June 2026

Lecture No. 5 – History- Saturday 4th July 2026.

Lecture No. 6 - The Kings Shilling -Saturday 25 July 2026.

In addition to these, we have included some 'Topic' lectures that hopefully will interest another stream of visitors.

Saturday 25 April 2026 1030-1200-Workhouses.

Saturday 16 May 2026 1030-1200 - A Walk across the Thames.

Saturday 13 June 2026 1030-1200 -Kynochtown.

Saturday 11 July 2026 1030-1200 - Postal Service in the First World War.

Saturday 1 August 2026 1030-1200 - London Prisons.

We have met with John Smith who has started a U3A Group on Family History for Canvey Island (an initial project booking at the War Memorial Hall on Canvey) and have attended one of their meetings with offers of inclusion on our planned programme above. He will circulate our programme and has indicated that he, and possibly others in his group, may attend here at the Green Centre.

In similar vein, Emma Hale, Volunteering and Skills Coordinator for Tilbury on Thames Trust has contacted us about the project in Tilbury to restore the Grade II* listed Riverside Station. They are engaging volunteers as community researchers and are collaborating with the National Archives and Essex Record Office and providing training by the Oral History Society.

We have, of course, volunteers who have practical knowledge of that environment, including both the social, wartime, rail and embarkation structures, and I will reply to invite her to come and meet us to establish how such collaboration can help.

Heritage Quiz

1. Which Creature – one of the UK's most critically endangered mammals, could make a return from extinction in England.
2. Main Language in Quebec, "Canada-English" or French
3. Language in Canada, English or French
4. When was Basildon Officially designated a new Town.
5. What was the first Industrial Building to be Built in the New Town Industrial site.

Day in History

- 10th October 1903 – Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst formed the Women's Social and Political Union to fight for female emancipation in Britain.
- 12th January 1948-The London Co-op opened the first supermarket in Britain at Manor Park
- 13th January 1893-The Independent British Labour Party was formed by Keir Hardie.
- 15th January 1559 -Queen Elizabeth I was crowned.
- 16th January 1909-The Magnetic South Pole was reached by Ernest Shackleton.
- 18th November 1910 – There were more than 100 arrests when suffragettes tried to storm the house of Commons.

Poem-January

January brings the first of the year,
A time to start fresh, with hope so clear:
The first of twelve months we'll embrace,
A new beginning, a steady pace.

The first step is often the hardest to take,
But January reminds us, dreams are at stake.
With goals in mind and hearts aglow,
This month, we plant seeds for growth to show.

The first of everything is a chance to grow,
A time to reflect and let our dreams flow.
So, take this moment, make it your own,
In January, new paths are sown.

By Poet: Catherine Pulsifer

Social Media

Basildon Heritage are actively using various social media channels, namely, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Facebook is our most active channel with close to 14,000 Followers and a twice daily posting regime by members.

Instagram and YouTube are more recent ventures and are building Followers and Subscriptions at a steady rate.

Our website, www.basildonheritage.org.uk is the backbone for the society and receives steady updates and improvements. We are trialing an on-line shop linked to the website called Kofi.

Our digitisation department continues its work on bound newspapers, press and donated photos and more recently, specialised maps and plans related to the Borough.

Educational Resources (website section) continues to develop with a potentially valuable resource for local schools and teachers.

The society continues to protect its digital assets with more robust on-premise storage and Cloud storage via the Google ecosystem.

Thanks to a grant by the Basildon Area Committees, we now have a high-performance server with dual screens to assist with our administration, communications and on-site storage, this should be operational this month.

We also have, as a result of the grant, a public facing computer which will be used to store our digital newspapers and photo archives and allow on site viewing for visitors.

A second large screen computer and two photo scanners (one large flatbed and one auto feed) is also up and running for volunteers to continue the digitisation work.

The society are custodians for a large collection of water colour paintings by Alan Jagger. Our future plans are to display his works (which are for sale) on our website or a similar platform. Part of this collection is currently on show at our sister New Town of Harlow at the Gibberd Gallery.

As Spring approaches, we will start to re-engage on a project called Basildon Now. This project is recording the town in all aspects over the period 2025/6 by way of drive-through videos, (on our YouTube channel), drone videos, and buildings of the era by our volunteers.

This will time stamp our recordings for future generations.

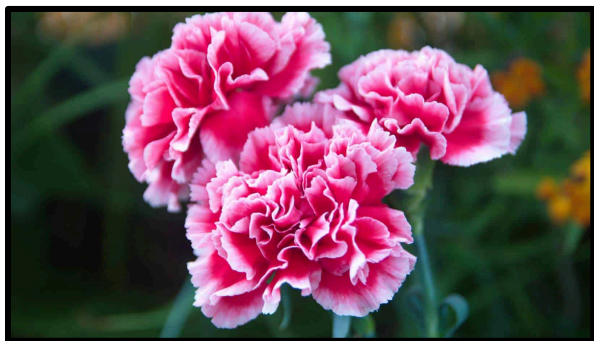
Volunteer education in various IT skills continues, Adobe Acrobat, Google eco system, scanning, IT security and efficient use of our assets and software are either in play or planned. This is an important part of making our valuable volunteers both efficient and to create value in the role for them.

Facts about January

- First month of the Gregorian Calendar is named after Roman God, Janus.
- Normally the coldest of the month of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and warmest in the Southern.
- First full moon of January is traditional known as the wolf moon.
- "Anglo Saxons" called January Wulf-Monath because hungry wolves would enter villages during this cold month.
- January birthstone is the Garnet.
- January birth flower is the carnation.

The Language of Flowers

One of January birth flowers is the carnation, representing love, fascination, and hope. Carnations, known for their ruffled, colourful petals and long-lasting blooms, symbolize deep love and admiration. Snowdrops are delicate, white flowers that emerge in late winter, representing purity, new beginnings, and resilience.



Booklets/Pamphlets

- Stan Hollands – Environmentalist
- The Unicorn & Joan Rosaire
- Marion Wilberforce-World War Hero
- Nathaniel Woodward-Educationalist

For further information check the website.

Answers to the Heritage Quiz

1. Wildcats (Scottish Highlands)
2. French approximately 85% followed by English but the majority of the population can speak English
3. English – 87% of the population speak English. While Canada is bilingual, English is the dominant Language for the majority outside Quebec.
4. 4th January 1949.
5. South East Essex Wholesale Dairies in 1951 – Nevendon Industrial Estate.

Fund Raising

We are sure you will appreciate it but cost 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.

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

Please contact me for more information.

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