



Newsletter 57– June 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, SS16 4UH

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 guide you around our displays if required.

Visitors Comments

The following is a few examples of visitors Comments:

- First time visitor, absolutely fabulous- love local history-great find.

- Lovely space with great staff & fabulous history
- Very educational, really good place to visit-staff are excellent.
- Very interesting and well laid out displays – will be back.

Our Community Involvement

Talks/Events/Etc.

Visit – Gibberd Gallery, Harlow



Five volunteers of the Heritage Group had a day out on the 4th February at the Gibberd Gallery in Harlow. To view the Alan Jagger paintings that we have loaned them.

Alan Jagger is the brother of one of our volunteers and his paintings have been deposited with the Basildon Borough Heritage Society but unfortunately, we only have a small area to display so we are very grateful to the Harlow Arts Association for displaying them and selling them for us. Proceeds will go back to the family. We were also very thankful for Harlow's hospitality

'Alan Jagger was born in Laindon on 19th June 1947 and lived at 18 Basildon Drive, Laindon. He went to Markham's Chase School (now Janet Duke), moved on to Laindon High Road Secondary School before graduating to Fryerns Grammar School.

He then went to Esher Teachers Training College, Thames Ditton, Surrey. Eventually becoming a Metal and Woodwork (CDT) teacher at Sheffield High School.

In the late 1950s the family moved to Billericay. Then following his marriage to Christine Brodies they moved to Stock, later to Tollesbury, Essex.

On retirement he concentrated on Art, a talent he had picked up from his father.'



St Nicholas Church -Laindon

Visitors to the Heritage Centre at the Green Centre, Wat Tyler Park, Pitsea are more than welcome to view the many paintings we have, which in the main are of views north of Billericay, but there are also a few local district ones.

British Legion Hall, Hockley

Monday 2nd February – We gave a talk to Hockley and Hawkwell U3A at the British Legion Hall in Hockley on the 'Changing Face of Basildon' over the last 150 years.



There were approximately 20 attendees. Many of them were from the Basildon area, so it was not surprising that there were many interesting questions.

Radio

On Monday 9th February we appeared on Gateway 97.8 Fm for our regular six weekly report on our current and future events.

Thorpe Bay Golf Club

On Monday 2nd March – We gave a talk to the Thorpe Bay & Shoeburyness Luncheon club at Thorpe Bay Golf Club on 'Basildon's Famous People' and 'Blue Plaques' we have erected in the Borough. It was a very pleasant visit with lunch thrown in. Approximately 25 attendees who had plenty of questions to ask.

St Andrews Church, Wickford

On Friday 13th March-we supported the Wickford Community Archive Group with a talk on a walk along Nevendon Road from Cranes Farm Road to Halls Corner, Wickford. Telling the history and tales of the buildings that lined the route. Those that have been demolished and those that have been updated or repurposed. We dug deep into our photographic collection and managed to find photos that many visitors had not seen before. The photo is of the original Jolly Cricketers which stood near the junction of Rectory Road, now Cranes Farm Road.

Green Centre

On the 19th March – We gave a talk at the Green Centre on the Suffragettes Movement to those persons from Bowers Gifford who could not attend the unveiling of Elsie Lagsding Plaque at the Benbow Club in early December. Three of Elsie's descendants attended and after the talk and refreshments we took them to Bowers Gifford to see

where Elsie lived in Clarence Road and also her brother William's house, the La Retreat, in Pound Lane. This house is still there but no longer has the house name on show. We then went to visit North Benfleet Church where Elsie's mother is buried.

A few days later another request came in from a great, great nephew of Elsie. So, we sent off photos of the unveiling of the Blue Plaque by the Lord Lieutenant of Essex. (Refer to newsletter 56)

Wat Tyler Park



On the 24th April - We had a visit from the Hockley and Hawkwell U3A History/walking group. After a short talk and light refreshments, we guided them around the park giving them the brief history of the park when it was an explosive factory and pointing out other interesting aspects of the park.

School Visit

On the 20th April – We had a visit from five Year 12 students and two teachers from Bromford School Wickford. Part of their year-end project was to compare two towns and they had chosen Basildon and Torquay. Our talk covered the growth of the Basildon area from the 1880s to the formation of the new town. And as you can imagine there were several searching questions.

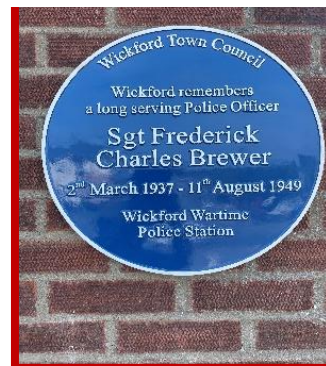
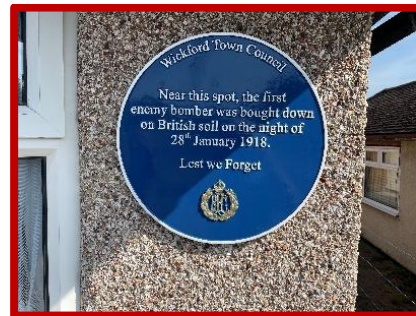
Vange Library

On Saturday 2nd May and 30th May we were back at the library where one of our volunteers/researchers gave two interesting talks – 'London Prisons'. (2nd May) – 'Postal service WWI' (30th May).

Blue Plaques

On the 9th May we attended the unveiling of two plaques in Wickford, organized by the Wickford Town Council.

- The Night the Bomber Fell – 53 Elizabeth Drive.
- Wickford's War time Police Sergeant.



Wickford Town Women's Guild



On the 13th May we visited the Wickford Towns Women's Guild at Christ Church Hall

and gave our favourite talk on 'The Changing Face of Basildon'. A talk that covers the period from the agricultural problems of the 1870/80's through the Plotland Era up to the formation of the New Town in 1949. It was well attended, which as usual sparked many questions.

History Walk

On the 17th May a group from the society undertook an 'expedition', in the form of a guided walk, to learn (or be reminded of) the history of part of the West Fryerns area of Basildon. (entitled – Murder, Mystery & Mayhem).



The 'expedition guide is known within the Basildon Heritage Group as 'Ray the Map' and therefore there was little chance of 'getting lost'! Ray had also spent most of his childhood living in the area covered on the walk and therefore had a wealth of local knowledge and memories to pass on. The 3-mile route of the guided walk included parts of Honeypot Lane and Church Road which still exists today and parts of both Rectory Road and Springfield Road which now no longer exist.

The walk was given the title 'Basildon Heritage, History, Murder, and Mystery'. The route covered the locations of more than twenty interesting/historical sites or incidents. Oral explanations of these

locations were supported by various photographs, newspaper reports and maps.

It is the societies intention to organize more in the future and if possible, to include Interested members of the public.

Fairhouse School

We had our annual visit to Fairhouse School on Wednesday 20th May and gave short talk on the Plotland era followed by a talk on the two world wars. We also took along some archive items, such as Military helmets etc for the students to try on.

Laindon Library

On Thursday 21st May we met at Laindon Library and gave a talk to a small enthusiastic gathering, on 'Laindon's Golden Years – 1900-1949.

Library Display

From March for six weeks the Vange Library will be displaying photographs of the Vange and Pitsea area. With this in mind please note we are always on the lookout for photos of the Borough.

Lectures/Talks at the Green Centre

One of our researchers has been given a series of talks on Saturday mornings on Genealogy/Family History.

March 14th - Starting out with Genealogy

April 11th - Brick walls and Rabbit Warrens

May 9th - Genealogy and Social History

May 16th - A Walk across the Thames

Overseas Friends

California.

Meeting up with our friends from three societies in California on a weekly basis, helping expand their knowledge of the Borough of Basildon and Essex generally, as

well as enabling them to understand and trace some of their ancestors through us being able to suggest ideas, particularly the social history of their forebears.

To this, as mentioned in our previous Newsletters, we are also giving 'Topic' lectures through the Zoom medium, to their individual societies, the most recent being on Monday 13 April when we presented 'Evacuation' (Operation Pied Piper) to South Orange County Society.

We may question the link between Genealogy and our social history topics, but our delivery programme includes lectures of Workhouses, London Prisons, Forces research and other topics directly linked to migration over the past four hundred years.

We have already presented the Workhouses lecture and London Prisons to Ventura County earlier in the year and the 'word of mouth' has expanded to a national organization 'The Augustan Society' for whom we are booked starting in September 2026.

Germany

We continue our 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 and the feedback always seems so positive.

Heritage Quiz

- What date did the Peasants Revolt begin on.
- Where in Essex did the Peasant Revolt erupt.
- What date did Operation Dynamo (Dunkirk evacuation) begin.

- WW2-What date did the Allied Invasion (D-DAY) begin.

Public Requests/Contacts

We get several requests from the public for information. In early February we received a letter from a gentleman currently living in Spain, asking whether we were aware of his Uncle Cecil Hewett who was born in Laindon. The answer is yes; Cecil was a well-known Archaeologist who revolutionised the dating of timber-framed buildings. We regard him as one of Basildon Famous people and his story is in our book on 'Basildon Famous People'. To prove his point, he often built a model of the timber building he was investigating, one such model was of Laindon's St Nicholas Church bell tower, which is currently in storage at the Science Museum storage depot at Swindon.

He went to Markham's Chase Primary School (now Janet Duke) then onto Laindon High Road School before gaining a scholarship to Chelmsford Art College.

He died in 1998 at the age of 72 and at the time he was living in Kelvedon. A year before he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Technology from Anglia Polytechnic University.

Coming Events

- **1st June, visit to Fairhouse school to give a talk on D-Day to the 2nd and 6th year children.**
- **22nd June-Gateway 97.8, radio slot 4pm.**
- **4th July as part of New Hollands (Tractor Plant) open day we have a display including photographs entitled 'Industry of Basildon and the town that grew up around it.'**

- Throughout the school Summer holidays we will have display at the Green Centre entitled 'Made in Basildon.'
- 25th July we will be at Northlands Park with displays as part of the annual carnival day.
- 12th September – Saturday Fun Walk around Wat Tyler Park 10.30am

Basildon Heritage Saturday Lectures.

Future lectures at the Green Centre 10.30am – approximately 2-hour duration, light refreshments available – you may just turn up but, if possible, we would like you to book via website, to give us an idea of how many to expect.

- 6th June – Evolution of Social History from Henry VIII onwards.
- 13th June – Kynochtown -
- 4th July – History of Genealogy – Saxon to Industrial Revolution
- 11th July – Postal Service in WWI
- 25th July – The Kings Shilling – Military overview
- 1st August – London Prisons.

Poem for June June

As nighttime slips away,
Dewdrops sparkling in the Sun
to greet a brand-new-day,
Fireflies lighting dusky skies
And strolls beneath the moon –
What could be more perfect
Than the lovely
Month of June

Happy Summer

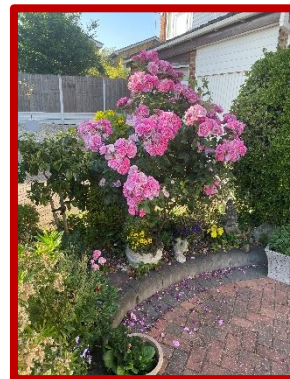
Facts about June

- June is the sixth month of the Gregorian calendar and marks the official start of summer in the Northern Hemisphere.
- The name June comes from Juno, the ancient Roman goddess of marriage and childbirth.
- June is unique because it shares three birthstones: - the Pearl, the Moonstone, and the colour-changing alexandrite.
- June 21st is Father's Day
- June birth flowers are the classic rose and the honeysuckle.

The Language of Flowers

The rose is one of the oldest flowers known to man, and still one of the most popular. It is considered the flower of love and crown the Queen of the Flowers. They are highly scented, will happily grow in any soil conditions and are very healthy.

Queen Elizabeth I, known as the Virgin Queen, took the Tudor Rose as her emblem. The following picture is from the front garden of one of the society's volunteers – beautiful.



Day in History

- 26th May 1907- John Wayne, American actor is born.
- 26th May 1896 – The last Tsar of Russia, Nicholas II is crowned.
- 27th May 1940- Operation Dynamo – the evacuation of British Troops from Dunkirk.
- 27th May 1941– The German battleship Bismarck was sunk.
- 28th May 1842- The first public library was opened, in Salford.
- 29th May 1660- Charles II entered London to be restored as King of England.
- 29th May 1953- Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay became the first two climbers to reach the summit of Everest.
- 30th May 1431 – 19-year-old Joan of Arc is burnt at the stake.
- 31st May 1984 – Viv Richards hits 189 not out (170 balls) v England – ODI cricket record.

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
- Tony Dow -The life and Times of a Basildon New Town Pioneer - £8

Answers to the Heritage Quiz

1. 30th May 1381
2. Fobbing
3. 27th May 1940
4. 6th June 1944

Introducing the Basildon Heritage Time Travel Terminal

Now available to visitors to the Green Centre, you can travel back in time to the 1950's onwards via our digitized local newspaper collection.



You can look up your school, workplace, street, church, football club etc. Capture the memory with your smartphone from our large high-resolution monitor.

Fund Raising

We are sure you will appreciate that 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 to 'basildonheritage@outlook.com' 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.

General 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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