



Newsletter 58–September 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

- **Fantastic, keep up the good work!**
- **Really enjoyed looking at the displays**
- **Lovely place, great team here, will be back!**
- **Great Centre, Great Artifacts, Wonderful staff.**
- **Wonderful exhibition.**

Our Community Involvement

Talks/Events/Etc.

Displays

On Saturday 4th July we visited the Tractor Plant Family Day event for Tractor employees. We had at least 300 people visit our display which was based on Industry in the New Town area.



On Saturday 25th July we were at Northlands Park as part of the Basildon Carnival. Again, we had plenty of visitors who show considerable interest, and we know that several have been down to the Green Centre since to visit our displays.



St Nicholas Church



On the 8th August St Nicholas Church, Laindon held a history day on the 800-year history of the Church. We went along and displayed photos of Weddings held at the Church, the oldest being from around the 1920s. In addition, was a display of old Laindon photos. This was followed with a pleasant afternoon tea.

Vange Church

As part of their annual display, we provided a display of photos of Vange and Pitsea over the weekend of the 5th and 6th September at All Saints Church, Vange.

Picnic in the Park-6th September

The annual picnic in the park was held as usual at Westgate Park, Bowers Gifford. The weather held for us though a little windy at times but as usual it turned out to be very successful day, with plenty of people visiting our stall.



Talks

During July and August, we held the following Saturday morning talks at the Green Centre, Wat Tyler Park.

4th July – History Genealogy

11th July - Postal service in WW1

1st August - London Prisons

Work Experience

During the month of July, we had two young students one from Bromford School and one from Beauchamps School for a week on work experience. They did very well and we wish them well in the future.

Essex Record Office (ERO)

On the Tuesday 9th July at the request of the ERO we attended a meeting with a number of various Heritage Groups to discuss the possibility of the ERO with our help to organise a display conference in 2027.

Radio

On Monday 20th July we were back at the local radio station – Gateway 97.8 Fm for our regular six weekly report on our current and future events.

BBC Essex

On the 6th August we appeared on BBC Essex radio at the Towngate Theatre to discuss the History and Culture of Basildon. Basildon has been short listed as a finalist for the inaugural UK Town of Culture 2028 Competition for a £3 million prize to host a landmark year-long cultured celebration and arts programme.

It is competing in the large Town category against Grimsby, Rotherham and Birkenhead.

Gibberd Gallery – Harl



The exhibition of the Jagger Art Collection at the Gibberd Gallery in Harlow this year was a success. Harlow Art Trust has now entered in an agreement with us to permanently exhibit and sell watercolour originals of the local artist Alan Jagger. - This project started in August 2026



Green Centre Display – Made in Basildon

We decided that the theme of our Summer School Holiday display this year would be 'Made in Basildon' and it would showcase the numerous industries which have produced products in the Basildon Borough area throughout the years. The display was scheduled to run for the whole of August and September, it's still running.

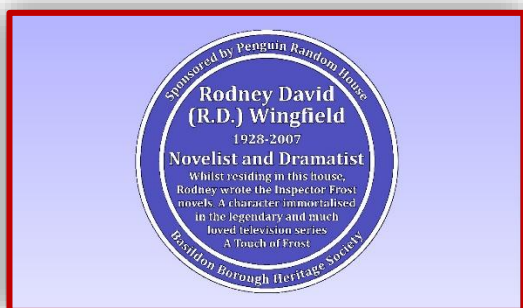
We had already received a number donations of such products in the past and this would be an opportunity for these donations to be put on display for the interest of all our visitors. These donations included products from Yardley, Spong, Gilbarco, Costa Coffee, Keil Kraft and many others from both large and small Manufacturers in the Basildon Borough.

Our wall-mounted TV screens continuously displayed a number of videos playing on a loop detailing the locations of the industrial sites in the Borough, images of the various factories etc over the years and the in-depth history of ten of the biggest manufacturers in the area.

The display also included dozens of photographs from the Basildon Heritage archive of various people, products, and places highlighted in the display. It is always heartening to realise that visitors, who are viewing the photographs, are enjoying the memories that are evoked from seeing them.

Blue Plaques

As probably gathered from previous newsletters, one of our major projects over the past few years is arranging the erecting and unveiling of Blue Plaques for famous individuals who were either born or lived in the Borough.



On the 19th August we arranged the unveiling of our sixth plaque this being in recondition of Rodney Wingfield the author of the detective Frost books. Later

brought to television audiences by David Jason in *A Touch of Frost*. He had lived in Long Riding where he wrote the majority of his books. Some of the books were also written at a house in Honeypot Lane. There was a crowd of 45 people and Philip his son did the honours. We sincerely thank publisher Penguin Random House who financed the plaque.

Rodney known as R.D. in addition to his Frost Novels was a prolific writer of radio crime plays and comedy scripts.

Basildon Heritage is part of a Blue Plaque Scheme steering group, which includes Basildon Council Officers, Graham Watts writer, producer and director and member of the Essex Women's Commemoration Project.

Blue plaques are permanent markers installed on buildings and in public places to commemorate a person, place or event of historical or cultural significance. They help celebrate links between notable figures and places where they lived or worked, raised awareness of local history and boost civic pride. Basildon has a rich cultural story, and the Blue Plaque Scheme is a brilliant way of bring that history to the fore.

In addition to the six Blue Plaques we have been actively involved in, we have provide help with two others, Wickford Town Council have erected and unveiled two and we are aware of two private ones that have been erected and we must not forget the Joan Sims plaque that was unveiled at Laindon Railway Station many years ago by a member of her family. That means thirteen Blue Plaques have been erected in the Borough and we have only just started.

If you want to find out more about the blue plaques and locations please visit, Basildon Heritage web site or Basildon Borough Council, Blue Plaque Scheme.

Our International Friends

We continue to link with overseas genealogical societies and with their individual member requests on family and social history on a weekly basis.

In recent weeks we have given our "Have I got news for you" talk to the Ventura Society, in support of their debrief when they had a lecturer present "Newspapers 2 to their society, which we attended by Zoom!

On Saturday 5th September, having been previously invited by the Augustan Society of America, we were invited to present a talk on Essex Witches and they kindly offered an honorarium, which although personally declined, was sent, in our name to the

WEAVE Charity in California, which promotes support of survivors, of sexual and domestic violence.

We then gave a presentation on 14 September with our topic "Canals" (Liverpool to Manchester) given to South Orange County California Genealogical Society.

The next planned presentation will be on 12 October to the same society with the topic "The impact of Railways".

We are now linking with the Northwest Suburban Genealogical Society (North of Chicago Illinois) and they have shown interest both in how we function and the topics we can offer for future presentation.

Basildon History Quiz

1. When did the Radion Cinema in Laindon Close, and where were the seats reused?
2. The German prisoner of war camp in Langdon Hills, where was it?
3. James Hornsby was the last schoolmaster of 48 years at the former Puckle's School, where was it?
4. What was the first factory to be built in Basildon called?
5. Who officially opened Basildon Town first road, Southernhay, and Gloucester Park open space on 26th June 1957?
6. What was the name of the road the first New Town tenants moved into?

Poem of the month - September

The goldenrod 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 by the brookside
Make asters in the brook:

From dewy lanes at morning
The grapes' sweet od'ors rise:
At noon the road's all flutter
With yellow butterflies-

By all these lovely tokens
September days are here,

With summer's best of weather
And autumn's best of cheer.

By Helen Hunt Jackson

The Language of Flowers

September has two birth flowers, the Aster and Morning Glory, because having a pair captures the shifting mood of the month, as September sits on the edge of two season. Aster comes from the Greek word for 'Star' according to the Greek myth, Asters grew from the tears of the goddess Astraea when she cried over the lack of stars in the sky.



The second flower is Morning Glory. It has been cultivated for centuries for their beautiful flowers. They symbolize love, affection, and the fleeting nature of life. Their brief blooming period, with flowers opening in the morning and closing in the afternoon, serves as a reminder to appreciate and enjoy the beauty of each day.



Up Coming Events

With the lead up to Christmas, we only have a couple of events away from the Green Centre.

7th November - We will be at the Benbow Club, Pound Lane, Bowers Gifford for their annual Christmas

event. Our display will be of photographs displaying the Bowers Gifford and North Benfleet area.

Friday 4th December at 7pm we will be giving a talk at St Andrew's Wickford on those who travelled from the area to America in the sixteen hundreds.

Facts about July

- July is named after Julius Caesar.
- July is the seventh month of the year in the Gregorian Calendar. Traditionally being the hottest month of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.
- Birth Flower is the Larkspur and Water lily, standing for love, positivity and purity of heart.
- People born in the month fall under the Zodiac signs of Cancer (June 21/July 22) and Leo (July 23/Aug 22)

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
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Answers to Basildon Quiz

1. Closed 3rd February 1969. Seats went the Langwood Equestrian Centre in Dry Street, with some going to the original Basildon Arts Centre.
2. Top of Dry Street. The field is now known as the Beacon Field.
3. James Hornsby taught pupils in the annexe of St Nicholas Church, Laindon. It is known as the Priest House.
4. South-East Essex Wholesale Dairies Ltd, open in Cranes Farm Road in 1951.
5. Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.
6. Redgrave Road, Vange in 1951.

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.

Societies Policies

We are currently updating and adding, where necessary, all Policies that may be required for our future Heritage status.

These will shortly appear on our website.

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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