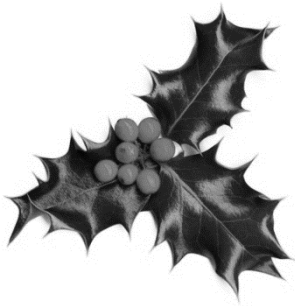


# **BILLERICAY SOCIETY**

## **NEWSLETTER**

### **No.201**



#### **2018 CHRISTMAS SOCIAL SUPPER**

Please note that this year the 2018 Christmas Supper will be held in the performance area at the Fold-72 Laindon Road. In order to keep the admission price at £10 the committee has decided –based on feedback: “That not all members want an alcoholic drink” to make this year’s supper-a **BRING YOUR OWN DRINKS &**

**GLASSES** Soft orange drinks will be provided.

There will be the usual deserts & quiz sheets. The committee hope that you will all attend & enjoy the annual festivities.

#### **SUBSCRIPTIONS 2019**

Would you also please bring your £5 / member to renew your annual subscription for 2019 Thank you?

#### **CHAIRMANS REPORT**



##### **CHAIRMAN’S WARNING**

The Billericay Society, for the last 83 years of its existence has campaigned to secure for the people of Billericay – a High Street of character with ancient & modern architecture. Green Belt & woodland spaces: Norsey Wood, Queen’s Park; Lake Meadow & Queen Elizabeth II Field that was Sun Corner. The Society has walked our local paths to ensure that they are maintained in good order & reported to the Public Rights of Way [PRoW] Officer on the Council where

there are problems. The Ramblers' insurance for doing these type of maintenance activities stops for members at the age of 80.

The present committee are now almost passed their high social-energy sell-by date. Others now need to take the reins to guard the countryside – or you could slip into continuous working 24 / 7 with no countryside.

As a consequence of the high cost of Rambler's insurance The Billericay Society Committee has decided to stop organising & publishing the fortnightly walk programme. We are ready to hand on the baton.

On our many walks in the interesting Essex countryside we have enjoyed looking at the different landscapes & their panoramic views over the Essex countryside, it is not flat or boring. Landscapes can have their own unique personality, often defined not just by their geology [glacial erosion & rock strata] & natural history [flora & fauna] but by local historical events that have taken place [Peasants Revolt 1381; Pilgrim Fathers 1620]; legends, buildings [architectural styles] & religious connections [types & style of churches. Even graveyards can be interesting for local personalities & remembering historical events – war graves are most poignant].

In my 15 years as chairman, I have led over 135 different walks within 15 miles of Billericay. John Humphries & Doug Smith as walk leaders have created many additional walks. Until recently the walkers were a social group of between twenty-five & thirty happy walkers. This year we are down to six. Tempus fugit!

As the modern generation spend their life absorbed in their digital display screens – receiving more irrelevant data than they will ever need, use or learn from - are they making way for the acceptance of robots & computers to take over their lives?

They need to be giving more attention to the countryside, green belt, woodlands & human social interaction around them. Without it there will be no escape for them from their displays / machines & they will have just a concrete environment to wander around in their spare time, of which there could be lots.

There could be no countryside left as a place for escape, relaxation & tranquillity away from the pressures of business life. If they are not careful they will find that the countryside has been concreted over & any remaining foot pathways are over-grown & impassable. Foot paths need regular maintenance to keep them clear for walking, thereby relaxing while enjoying the peace & quiet of the countryside. Or will they just succumb to another expensive computer-graphic video game?

The current population are already accepting higher density building development - meaning closer, smaller houses & gardens. Are we getting back to the Victorian back-to-back way of living situation?

It is reported - from a detailed study - that today, people consult their phones every 12 minutes, to monitor what is happening. What they could be missing is the countryside. Once the green belt & foot paths are lost to building developments the land cannot be

regained. It has come to the point where the news broadcasters are warning them to turn off their mobile phone at night!

The ubiquitous mobile phone, was initially designed to be used in cases of emergency by the police, ambulances, firemen & rescue personnel. It is now used to tweet what people are doing or to look at Facebook etc. The radio spectrum will soon become crammed & jammed with too many signals. If & when the space junk damages the communication satellites so that there is no way to transmit their messages, what will they do?

At the Marconi Research Centre we had wanted to develop a system where ambulances could have video contact with the local hospital, to help A & E better understand the patient's condition & make suitable preparation to safe guard patient's lives. Another proposal was a satellite video link to the antipodes so at night, an awake doctor in Australia could help a sleepy doctor in the UK & vice versa. But computer technology has gone the high profit route - with enhanced computer-graphic games & sport programmes taking priority. Are these really the best uses of our technology? The natural world around us should not be ignored.

**David Bremner**

## **Contributions from Members and the Committee**

**Vic Meecham**

**We have been informed that former Committee Member, Vic Meecham, died recently. He was a mechanical engineer at a Tilbury flour mill. Born in East London he had connections with Billericay since 1948. Prior to moving out of the district about 20 years ago, he was an active committee member of the society for 30 years. He held lectures on ceramics and was a founder member of the former Billericay Ceramic Circle. A local historian with a large collection of Essex postcards, he gave illustrated talks on Billericay.**

**In 1985, together with former local MP Harvey Proctor, they produced the book, '*Billericay in Old Picture Cards*'. He was involved with the society bulb planting exercise on the embankment of Billericay station and is included in a picture of this event. (See the 'Help' page of the Billericay Community Archive site.)**

**Ian Fuller**

## **The creation of the Royal Air Force**



Before the creation of the RAF on 1st April 1918 there were Government bodies responsible for flying military aircraft. So the RAF was formed by the amalgamation of the Royal Flying Corp (RFC) and under control of the British Army and the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) and controlled by the Admiralty

It was becoming obvious in late 1917 of WW1 that the air defence of Britain was fragmented and therefore not very efficient, this was the first war in which air power was making a significant impact. A prepared report - The Smuts Report for the Imperial War Cabinet recommended merging the RFC and the RNAS into the new service, The Royal Air Force and headed by Lord Trenchard (RFC)

To emphasize the merger of both military and naval aviation's in the new service, a number of the officer ranks were deliberately chosen to be of a Naval character, such as Flight LIEUTENANT, Wing COMMANDER, Group CAPTAIN and Air COMMODORE.

The newly created RAF was the most powerful air force in the world and had over 20,000 aircraft and over 300,000 personnel (including the Women's Royal Air force)

One WW 1 Aerodrome still exists at Stow Maries and its existing site and buildings are being maintained as a Heritage site (It's worth a visit) originally opened in 1916 as the home of 'B' Flight of No 37 Squadron a RFC station. It played a key role in the first raids and attacking German Zeppelins and Gotha bombers on London and the South East.

**By John Humphries (Ex Chief /Tech RAF)**

**The RAF celebrates 100 years, the photo was taken in Trafalgar square during the fly pass.**

**Bob Reeves Editor.**

### **End of the Billericay Society Walking Group**

It must be 20 years since we started walking every other Tuesday with the Walking group. It was a good crowd then, at least 20 – 25 people each time. Lunch afterwards was always a great event with lots of talking and laughter.



We walked a variety of different locations and it's difficult to remember the best. Each year, Norman Turner would lead a walk to Warley Place, which was very interesting. He also spent time explaining the garden to our Grandchildren, when they came with us.

Now time has taken its toll and gradually the number of people

attending has decreased. Mostly due to illness/getting older and/or unable to walk. Our grandchildren have now all grown up and may come once in a while if they are not working. Even we are unable to go due to Doug's need of a new hip.

For the past couple of months just a few people have turned up. So it is with regret that the walking club must come to an end. The insurance for the group is very expensive and no longer value for money.

It was noticed though that ex-walkers would sometimes meet us in the pubs for lunch. So we have decided to start up a lunch club instead.

Nothing decided yet but ex-walkers or even people who would like to join our lunch club should express an interest and register your name with one of the committee. It would also be necessary to let a committee member know if you will be attending before each walk date as the pub will need to be notified.

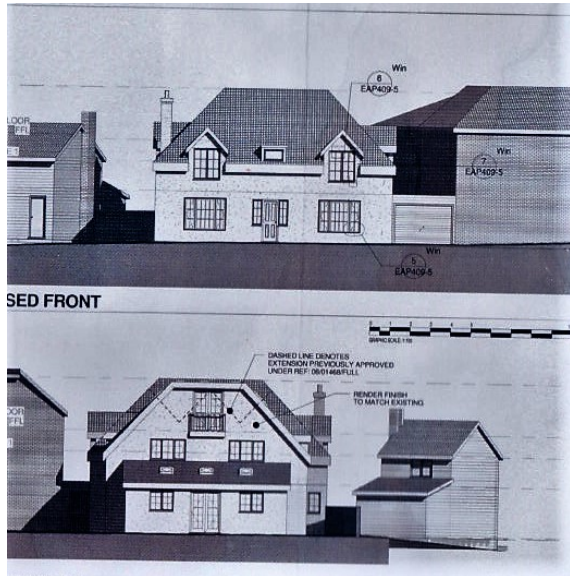
**Julie Smith (Treasurer)**

### **STOPPING THE FORTNIGHTLY WALKS PROGRAMME**

Due the high cost of the Ramblers insurance for walks- the Billericay Society is stopping its sponsoring & involvement with fortnightly walks programme's.

### **Elizabeth Cottage Update**

As you may have noticed work is ongoing to turn what was Elizabeth Cottage into seven flats; only the front wall remains.



The foundations have been laid ready for building. As you can see by the photo, which shows the front and back elevations, the front will look as it did before demolition. The central plaque will be restored and we hope showing the date 1903. As the Society did not have the money or the means to save Elizabeth Cottage this was the best compromise.

**Bob Reeves Editor**

## **Town Trail**

David Bremner has been promoting the wonders of our town this year with the Town Historic walks by taking groups of folks on a free tour to extol the wonders of our ancient town.

I have been trailing along to learn what I can so as to take a group of enlightened individuals around the town myself.

In the leaflet Billericay Town trail the houses and buildings of interest are numbered one to thirty three, two are missing due to development, the town council is going to replace numbers twenty four the White Hart (Pasha) and 25 the Rising Sun.

### **President Ian Fuller**

**David Bremner 626674**

**Chairman**

**Doug Smith 623560**

**Vice Chairman & Fire Marshall**

**Lesley & John Humphries 656527**

**Membership Secretaries**

**Marian Thilo 624502**

**Social Secretary**

**Lynne Beard 624282**

**Secretary**

**Bob Reeves 631726**

**Publicity**

**Julie Smith 623560**

**Treasurer**

**Bob Reeves 631726**

**Newsletter & Reception**

**Mike Yates 622454**

**Website Manager**

**Katie Wilkie 622023**

**Cater Museum**

### Speakers for Billericay Society 2019

Dates	Speakers	Topic
16 <sup>th</sup> January	Anita Marie Sackett	"Jamaica"
20 <sup>th</sup> February	Margaret Mills	Skeletons in the Cupboard 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Writers, Mary Braddon and Wilkie Collins
20 <sup>th</sup> March	Brian Darty	Ceremonies & Ghosts at the Tower.
17 <sup>th</sup> April	Ian Keeble	<b>AGM: 7.30pm</b> Charles Dickens Conjurer
15 <sup>th</sup> May	Pauline OBE-MBE Surname unknown	"The Hazards of Running a Charity Shop."
19 <sup>th</sup> June	Ann Howell	Living with Partial Vision.
17 <sup>th</sup> July	Jeff Page	"Oscar Wilde"
18 <sup>th</sup> September	Chris Huggins	Changes in Norsey Woods due to Heatwave
16 <sup>th</sup> October	Mike Brown	Christmas on the Home Front 1939/45
20 <sup>th</sup> November	Tony Curtis	Panamania Cruise Down Panama Canal
18 <sup>th</sup> December	Christmas Fish & Chip Supper Doreen Potter	Fish and Chip Supper Words and music