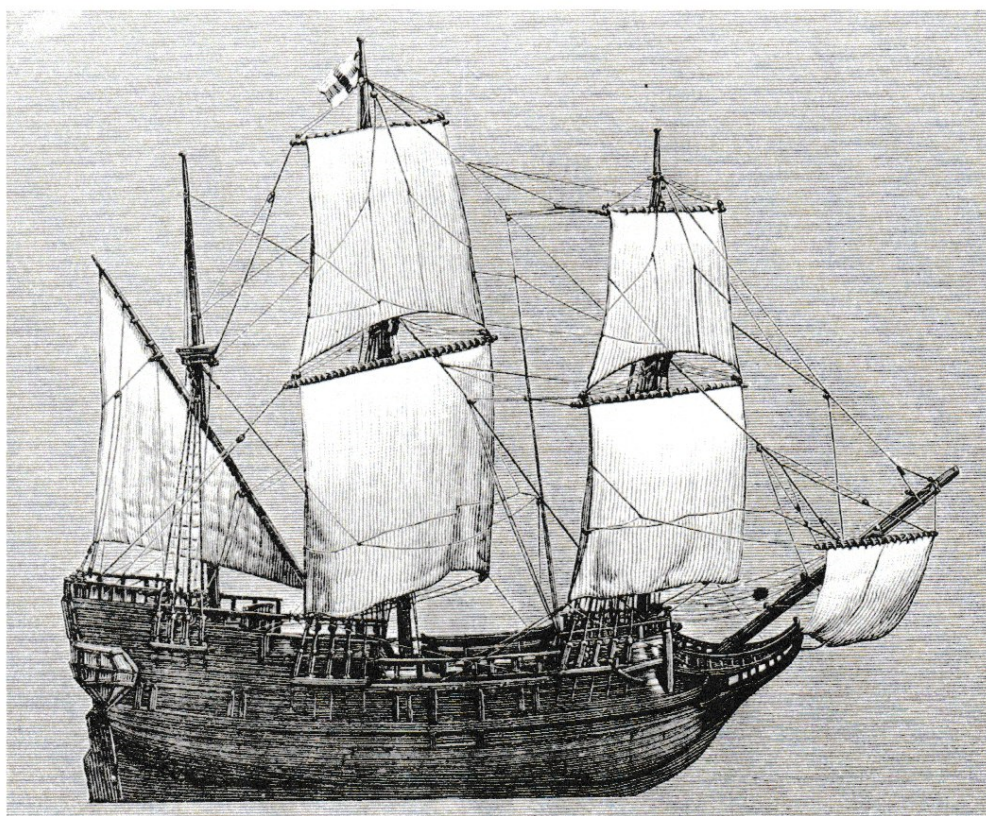


**BILLERICAY
SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER
No.204**



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Time steadily passes and still no resolution to the political chaos or the local planning decisions affecting Billericay.

The years of religious chaos in the 1600s AD resulted in the Pilgrim Fathers leaving England in 1620.

In Billericay the Pilgrim members met with a group of Dutch non-conformists from Leiden, Netherlands. They then travelled down to Rotherhithe, on the Thames, to sail in the Mayflower to America for greater religious freedom.

The Mayflower was a three-masted, fully-rigged ship of one hundred eighty tons. Ninety foot long on deck and twenty two feet wide. The ship carried one hundred and fifty two people on the voyage. One hundred and two were pilgrims. The captain was Christopher Jones

Unfortunately many of the Billericay contingent died in the first winter. Christopher Martin from Great Burstead supplied flour from his Billericay mill for the voyage and was the treasurer / Governor for the pilgrims. He died on 8th January 1621 during the first winter.

Our twinned town, just north of Boston, Billerica, in Massachusetts was formed from 1636. Incorporated as a town 1655, A.D. The territory initially included lands that would become parts of Bedford, Tewksbury, Wilmington and Carlisle.

It was very disconcerting when Sue and I visited the area to have sign posts to Chelmsford, Cambridge and other familiar Essex towns.

As Bob Reeves reports Billericay will be holding a number of events in the town to remember 1620. John Humphries will display a historic montage of the landing with the ship and my photographs of the reconstruction of the original Plymouth Plantation where the Pilgrim Fathers lived. If you have any artefacts, pictures or information about this event the Billericay Society would be pleased to display them.

You will have noticed that the rebuilding of Elizabeth Cottage continues steadily, with the rood struts now in place. Bob has talked to the developer who will be recreating the original façade of the building, with a date plaque.

The Town Walks continue this year. An appreciation of the June walk was posted on Facebook. The other walks are on 21st July; 25th August and 22nd September. The walks start from Billericay Station at 14:00 hrs or two o'clock.

On the 6th July Bob and I will be doing a High Street Walk indication where those soldiers who fell in the First World War lived in the High Street. The data has been compiled by Katie Wilkie from the Cater Museum.

Our president Ian Fuller continues our story of Billericay with an introduction to South Green.

SOUTH GREEN

Possibly a village green that ultimately gave its name to a former small community, South Green is now incorporated into Billericay. Its origin is unknown, but it could have been as an Anglo-Saxon woodland clearance. If it existed in 1285 then the: 'Statute of Merlin' that stated 'Lord of the Manor must leave sufficient common-land unfenced for the use of his free tenants' and it being used for archery practice may have helped its survival. It is first recorded a rectangular plot on Ralph Agas' survey map of 1593.

Its first significant changes came with the introduction of the Turnpike Trusts late in the seventeenth century. Maintaining and upgrading roads was transferred from local authorities to these Trusts, in exchange for a toll over a given section of road. The Wickford road was improved by diverting it diagonally across the Green, dividing it into two triangles. While Outwood Common Road was extended to join this diverted road. Enclosure Acts early in the nineteenth century resulted in the loss of the northern section and the size of the Green being reduced due to pressure from agriculture on unenclosed land. Fortunately towards the end of this century Acts were passed to ensure the preservation of village greens by enclosing them and declaring them as being for recreational use. It was at this time the Green as we know it today came into being.

Farmland still surrounded the Green early in the twentieth century, extending almost to its edge. They included fields named in Ralph Agas' survey as: *Dominical Vocat Ganels Pastura*, (Domain Called Ganels Pasture) and *Dominical Vocat Redinge*, (Red Meadow Pastures). They ultimately became part of Grange Farm while their names have come down to us as Ganels Road and The Redinge. In 1920, when this was Grange farm was owned by the Petre family, it was offered for sale in lots by G B Hilliards. These fields were deemed to be suitable for development and sold to Robert Leyland, a Billericay surveyor. He divided them into plots of up to an acre, leading to the beginning of the piecemeal development of most of this area south of the Green

The Duke of York originated as two cottages built in 1801 that were converted into a beer-house. It reverted to a private house and returned to being a beer-house again in 1871, used by Gray & Sons. They purchased the building in 1896 and have owned it ever since.

The doctor's surgery in Grange Road, facing the Green, was formally the Plough public house. When it became inadequate, temporary accommodation was provided by the former Hutton Plough dance hall by moving it to South Green. It was erected on the site of Bullstead farmhouse that was demolished following extensive damage by a flying bomb in 1945. This former dance hall was replaced in the 1950s by the recently demolished Burstead Plough public house. Southwold Court now occupies all the site of the Burstead Plough and its gardens that were formerly part of Bullstead Farm.



Bullstead Farm c1911

Easter Boughwood and her mother Fanny

The history of the King's Head dates from at least 1750 when it was known as the White Horse. It stands near the former Slysted tollgate, where it provided a convenient stopping point for travellers.

A village pump was situated in Hickstars Lane while the village forge was to the north of the Green. In the early 1930s a garage was opened to the front of the site of the forge. In the 1990s it was replaced by the current garage that occupies the whole of the site of the forge.

There have been three attempts to establish factories in South Green area. In 1920 Reginald Weatherell moved his motorcycle manufacturing business from the High Street to the corner of Outwood Common Road. His enterprise was short lived. Following initial good sales they declined resulting in him having to file for bankruptcy in 1921. AA Cullis & Co. set up a sheet metal works in the early 1930's where the Guildprime industrial area now stands. Their advertising claim was to make sheet steel into the finished product using local labour. Their factory was damaged by bombing in November 1940 and January 1941. A plastics factory was set up in Hickstars Lane during the last war, with a later extension also in the Guildprime area. The Hickstars Lane factory was closed and replaced by a housing development in 1989.

In 1921 Billericay Rural District Council built a row of seven terraces houses in Grange Road near the Green. They were built following a Government act designed to provide housing for the poor.

'VE Day' celebrations were held on the Green. At one of the events a group of South Green residents discussed how local people who died could be remembered. Following extensive discussions the idea of a social centre was established. This ultimately resulted in the building of South Green Memorial Hall as a lasting memorial to the South Green residents who lost their lives. It opened with a fete in July 1956.

To help solve a shortage of homes following the war estates of prefabricated houses, known as prefabs were built. They were produced in former war factories and transported to their sites complete with fitted kitchens. In 1945 Billericay Town Council purchased Oak Farm's two fields on the Southend Road and two cottages facing Outwood Common Road to provide access for a small estate of these prefabs and future housing. Beams Way, was laid for these prefabs of an American design and assembled on site with the aid of German prisoners of war. None have survived as they have been replaced by modern housing.

The farmhouse associated with Oak Farm stood close to the northern side of the Southend Road and was a prominent feature near the Green. But was lost to road improvements when the Southend Road was re-aligned in the 1960s. Part of the original road survives and has become a service road for South Green's parade of shops.

Once the northern section of the Green was lost part of it was incorporated into Grimshill Farm. While various properties were built along the Southend Road including a Baptist Chapel a newsagent and a typical village store. This store stood alongside the former Southend Road/Highfield Road junction, now closed to traffic. It was demolished in 1988 and replaced by a shop/small business premises. Also in 1988 all of the properties west of the new garage were acquired by a developer for the Allington Court retirement complex.

Since the War junior school has been built in Hickstars Lane and a Catholic school in Coxes Farm Road. The loss of the Baptist chapel has resulted in their services being held in Hickstars Lane Junior School.

Ian Fuller

Residence Parking

As many of you know there is a problem with parking in local roads. This is causing congestion and is due mainly to Commuters and factory workers trying to find a place to park before continuing to work.

In October 2018 a letter was sent to residence of Ian Road, Uplands Road, Pauline Gardens, St Helen's walk and surrounding roads regarding permit parking. In November 2018 letters were sent to residence confirming that notices were to be put up, which duly happened.

The notices came down and since then we have had no information regarding this matter.

I have tried on various occasions to get further information. Even the Town council have attempted to help. I did finally get a response from Chelmsford Council signed by a Technician of Sustainable Communities which is as follows.

'As there were objections to the proposal the matter has been referred to the South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) Sub Committee. All representations received (objections and supports) have been collated and will be discussed with the Lead Councillor and Lead Officer for parking matters for Basildon for a recommendation.

The recommendation will be put into a report to the SEPP Sub Committee. When the committee meet they will decide if the proposal is to proceed as published and bring the Order into effect, amend the proposal, or withdraw it in its entirety. Any person that has submitted a representation during the statutory period will be sent a copy of the committee report in advance of the meeting and invited to attend, where they will have the opportunity to speak to the committee members before a final decision is made on the proposal. **Contd**

There is no definite date currently for the meeting. As local elections have just taken place there needs to be confirmation of what councillors have been elected or re-elected and what posts and panels they will be part of. As soon as we have a date we will inform you.'

Now we will have to wait for more information. When received I will keep you informed.

Parking restrictions now going ahead in Perry Street

Doug Smith (Vice Chairman)

Billericay Historic Town Walk



On Sunday 16th of June David Bremner and myself started the first of the Billericay Town Walks a total of nine local people attended to enjoy a leisurely stroll around our town, David is very knowledgeable with regards to the history of our town, at the end of our tour the folks who attended said how much they had enjoyed it, so much so they emailed Billericay Town council to pass on their thanks.

MAYFLOWER 400 YEARS IN JULY 2020



Billericay is famous for the Pilgrim Fathers and our connection with the Mayflower, so in 2020 we will be celebrating their epic journey to the New World'400 years ago.

They left Billerica on the 15th July 1620 to join the Mayflower ship, on the 6th September they left Plymouth England with a 102 passengers and crew arriving in the America's on the 11th November founding their colony in Plymouth Massachusetts.

Billerica is twined with Massachusetts



Elizabeth Cottage

Work is slowly progressing with the dormer windows now taking shape, in the middle to the left of the telegraph pole you can just about see the skylight window, directly underneath is a space to put back the original plaque.

When finished the front will look just like the original building but with a more modern look.

Bob Reeves

Billerica Society Committee

President Ian Fuller 01277 655564
Chairman David Bremner 01277 626674
Vice Chairman Doug Smith 01277 623560
Membership Lesley & John Humphries 01277 656527
Secretary Lynne Beard 01277 624282
Treasurer Julie Smith 01277 623560
Social Secretary Marian Thilo 01277 624502
Newsletter Bob Reeves 01277 631726
Publicity/Reception Bob Reeves 01277 631726
Website Manager Mike Yates 01277 622454
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