**Basildon Highlife, Wednesday 1st March 2017**

10 walkers, 11 miles – leader Ron Williamson

Another dry day greeted the walkers as we set out to explore the heights of Basildon. Entering woodland adjacent to Laindon station the first of many hills was soon defeated and in no time we were enjoying the open space surrounding Westley Heights.

An aborted refreshment stop due to refurbishment of The Crown, only increased the resolve of the expedition party who embarked on a 3 mile diversion to visit Dunton Plotlands. The 'Plotlands' consisted of 183 small plots of land sold at auction in the first half of the 20th century to people who built weekend cottages, holiday bungalows or smallholdings there. Many of the purchasers building weekend cottages came from London and evacuated here during the 2nd World War. The creation of Basildon New Town resulted in their compulsory purchase although the majority of the land was never developed and is now part of a nature reserve where one of the original bungalows has been restored and opened as a museum.

After a break at the visitor centre we reclimbed the hill to near The Crown and continued via. Hall Wood, Coombe Wood and Oakwood to One Tree Hill (all part of Langdon Hills Country Park).

Following our nose we negotiated a way across Basildon Golf course and then headed North through more greenery to finally reach tarmac a few 100yds from our destination Basildon station or the local Wetherspoons.

It is a credit to the Town Planners that we could complete 11 miles all within 3 miles of the Town centre with  half a mile on tarmac and only 8 roads to cross.

A worthwhile exploration with not too many hills.

Photographs by Chris Williamson