

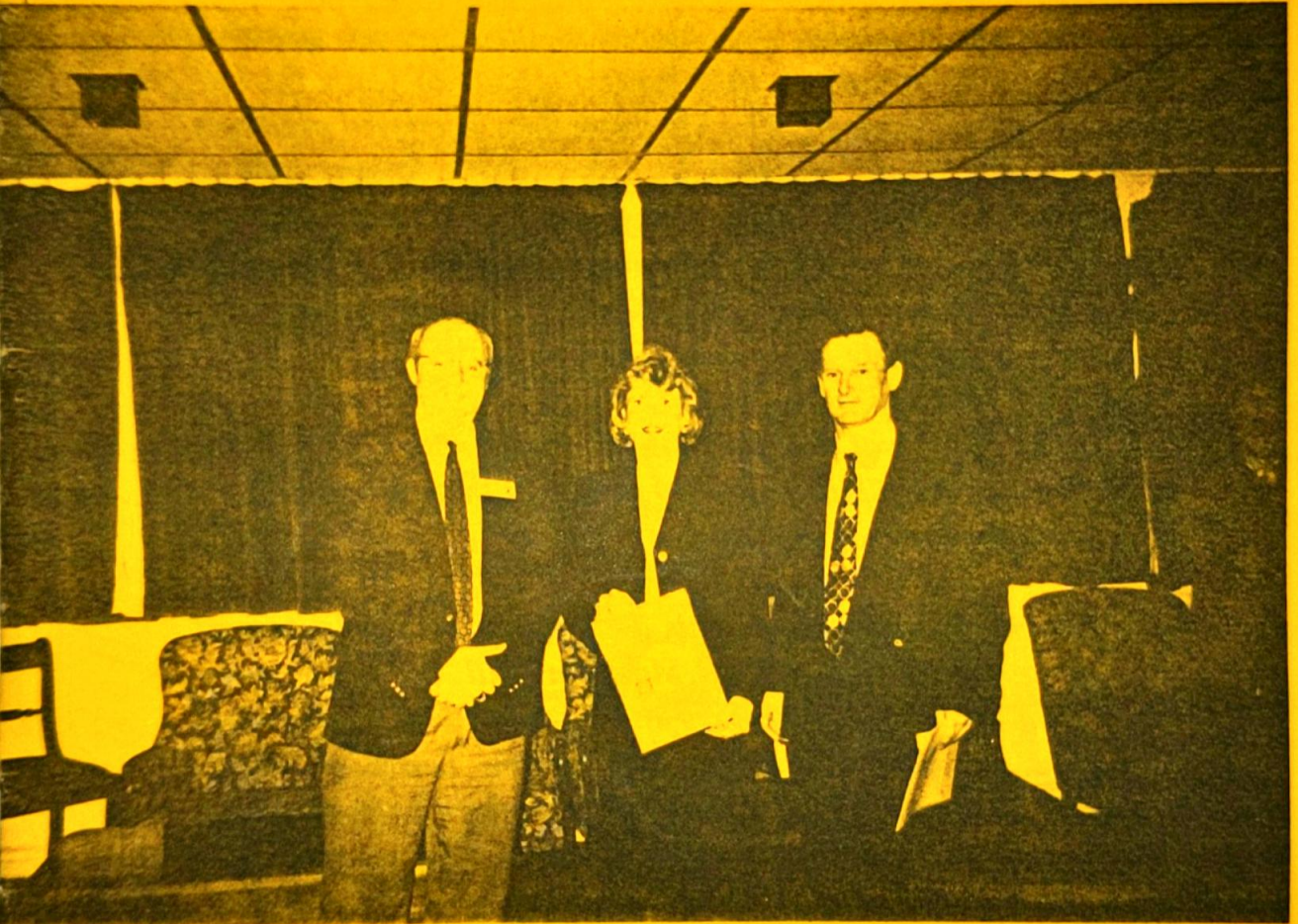
Issue 16

Early Spring 1999

# THE PENNY FARTHING

The Newsletter of Maldon District Museum Association

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*Mrs Penny Cook, our Accessions Officer, receives her 'Welcome Host' Tourist Board Certificate from M.D.C.'s Chief Executive, Mr Tony Plumridge (right) and Mr Russell Dawes, Tourism Development Officer.*

**-MALDON DISTRICT MUSEUM-**

The Museum opened at the Promenade Lodge in July 1996 having been in storage for the previous two years. The Museum was originally founded in 1922 by a group of Borough Councillors and occupied premises above the old Victorian Fire Station in London Road until this was demolished in 1938 to build a much larger Fire Facility.

The Museum Artefacts were stored at the Borough Council Offices until rescued in 1968 by the efforts of Cath Backus and Maisie Woodward. The Museum then occupied premises at Matthews (later Powells) in the High Street, and at 'Spindles' in Church Walk, always on an annual lease. In 1995 we were offered the Promenade Lodge on a five year renewable lease from the District Council, which has allowed us to greatly expand our display.

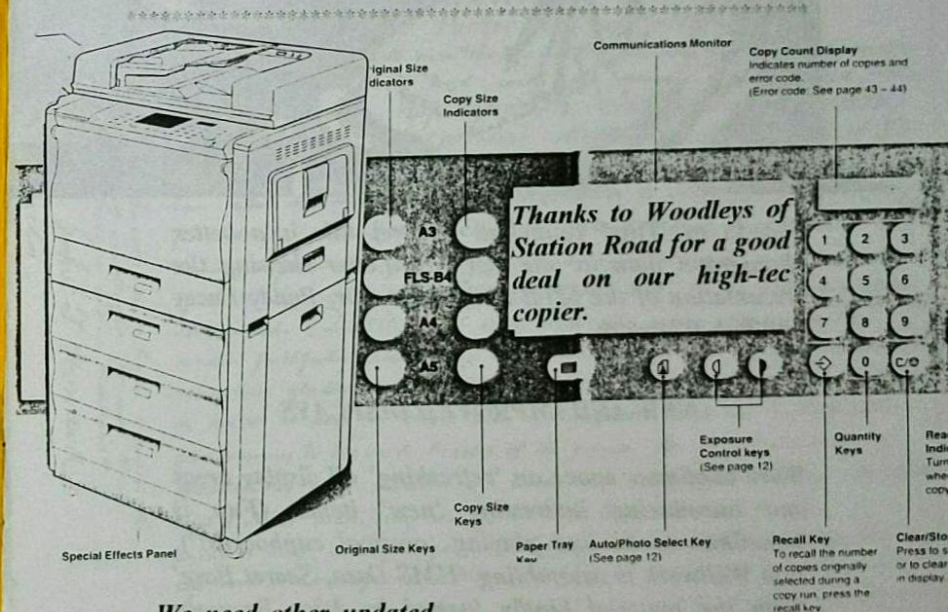
The core strength of the Museum is in artefacts of the Social History of Maldon between 1810 - 1950, although we do hold some archaeological and earlier material.

A small entry charge is made as a condition of the lease and for the coming season the Museum will be open every afternoon apart from Mondays and Tuesdays, with additional openings on Bank Holidays and during Carnival Week. Special openings are arranged for school and other parties. We have found that our visitors divide almost equally into local people and visitors from outside the town.

We are an entirely voluntary organisation and a registered charity with curatorial advice from Chelmsford and Essex Museum. We are in the process of obtaining registration with the Museums and Galleries Commission, which should provide a source of funding.

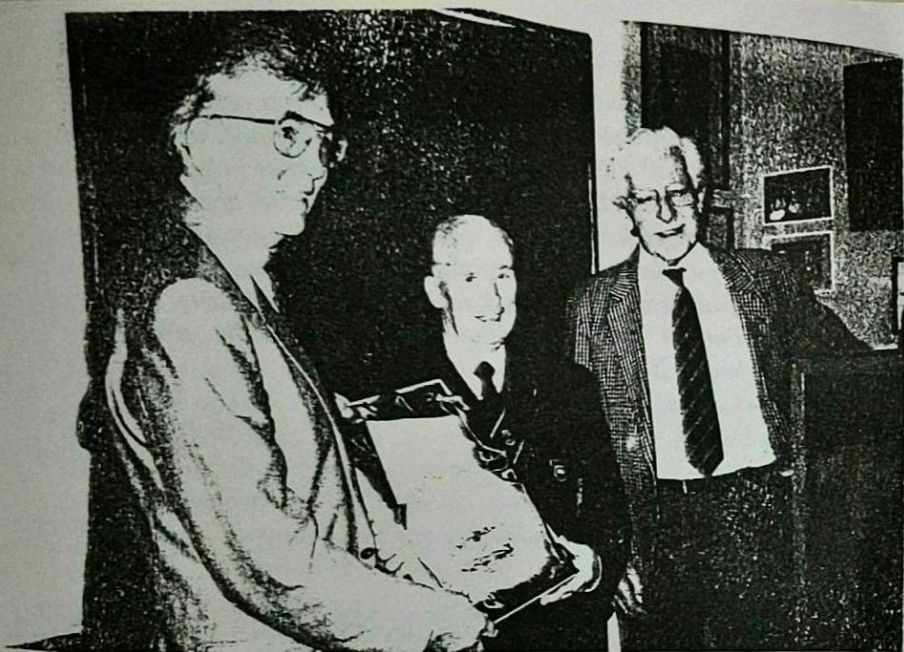
At present about half our running expenses are covered by entry fees and shop sales, a further quarter from membership subscriptions and donations, leaving a quarter to be raised by other fund-raising efforts. Consequently we have a very small budget for publicity and we are looking to the District Heritage Forum to make the best of what we do have and hopefully provide other sources for funding publicity, help in distribution of our literature, and generally assist in marketing the Museum.

P.J.L. February 1999



We need other updated equipment and fittings and seek sponsorship/grants, and advertising space is being made available on the back page of the NewsLetter. Please get in touch.

We are grateful to Maldon Town Council for their grant towards the replacement copier.



Thanks to 'Tiny' Ramshall (centre) this is a better photograph than in our last NewsLetter shewing the presentation of the MTB 796 plate to Dr. Paddy Lacey and Bob Wallwork.

**NEW AND IMPROVED DISPLAYS**

Work continues apace on 'refreshing' all display areas and introducing interesting 'new' items. (Fun is sometimes to be had playing 'musical cupboards!'). Bob Wallwork is assembling 'HMS Osea, Secret Base' from the material kindly loaned by Miss Bronwen Cook, first shewn at St. Lawrence Rural Discovery Church. Mike Bennett has regrouped the HMS Rockrose exhibits within a fine hardwood frame and secured the Coastal Forces Veterans Association presentation plate in its wall cabinet. Other members and friends are assisting Judy Tullett and Penny Cook in preparing their stunning displays.

**OOPS! A GENEALOGICAL INEXACTITUDE**

Apologies from the NewsLetter scribes of the last issue to Miss Beryl Claydon who has informed us that she is not related to the Charrington family but that her Grandfather was Adolphus Butcher Parker from Bradwell-on-Sea who later managed the barges at Bradwell. We are delighted that Beryl has passed to us the Indenture of her Grandfather as Apprentice to John Thomas Howard, Shipwright and Boat Builder, and this splendid document is framed and on display at the Museum (part reduced below).

**This Indenture Witnesseth.** that  
 Adolphus Butcher Parker son of John Parker of Bradwell near the Sea in the County of Essex, Barp-owner of his own free will and with the consent of his said father doth put himself Apprentice to John Thomas Howard of the parish of Saint Peter Maldon in the County of Essex Shipwright and Boat Builder to learn his art and with him after the manner of an Apprentice to serve from the twenty first day of March one thousand eight hundred and eighty to the twenty first day for during and unto the full end and term of seven years from thence next following to be fully complete and ended. During the said term the said Apprentice his master faithfully shall serve his secrets keep his lawful commands everywhere gladly do he shall do no damage to his said master or see to be done of others but to his power shall tell or forthwith give warning to his said Master of the same he shall not use the goods of his said master nor lend them unlawfully to any he shall not contract matrimony during the said term shall not play at cards or any unlawful games whereby his said master may have any loss with his own goods or others during the said term without licence

he shall not have

CHIEF OFFICER  
 8-2-80

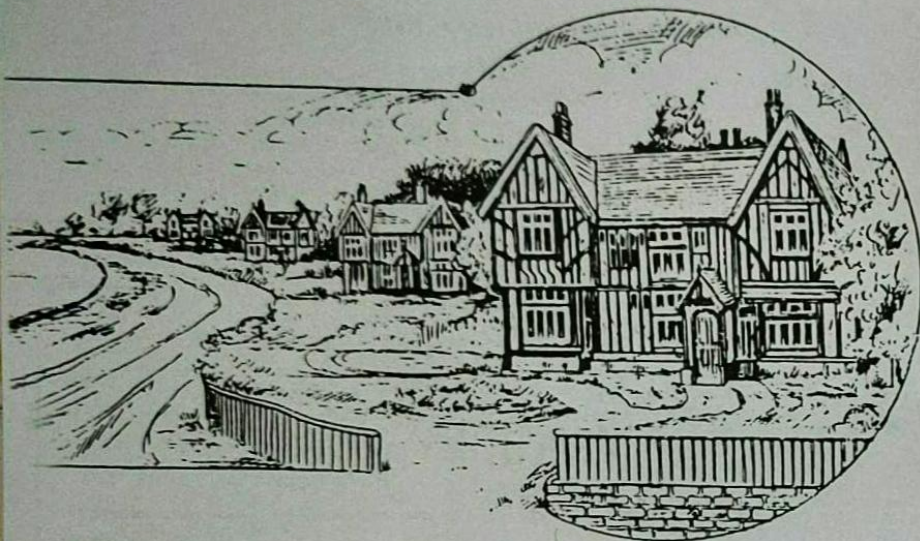
John Thomas Howard  
 Master

John T. Howard

of Bradwell

**ACCESS IN MIND**

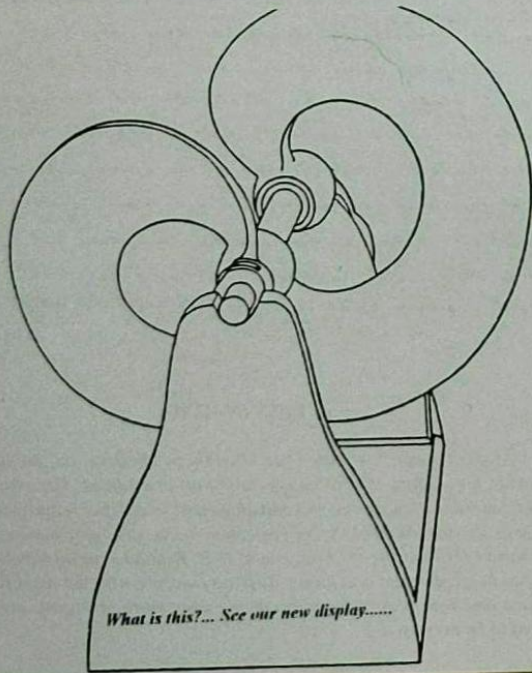
The Access Officer has visited the Museum to check on the facilities we provide for visitors and volunteer staff with disabilities. His report, not yet received, will make recommendations and state legal requirements; of course, we are not a counsel of perfection but he did enjoy naming all the unnamed birds in the wild-life room! (NB. Reminder to do labels!). Our expanding collection and larger displays compete with the need for clear space and with requirements becoming ever more stringent, minds will need to be exercised!



"OSEA ISLAND AS IT WILL BE."—*Weekly Dispatch*

Osea village development as envisaged by Mr. Charrington was begun but the project foundered before many houses had been erected.

(Ed - THANKFULLY!)



What is this?... See our new display.....

### One crowded hour.

Osea Island claims neither convenience of position nor a dramatic setting. To most people it is little more than a name on the map or a line of trees in the Blackwater estuary below Maldon. This patch of low-lying land appears no more exciting or intriguing than the other farms on the shores of the estuary but, for a brief spell at the beginning of this century, it commanded interest in the press and the secret corridors of Whitehall.

Osea's twenty years of fame opened in 1903 when Frederick Charrington, a member of the renowned brewing family, purchased it. Disturbed by the effect of alcohol, he decided to establish a settlement where some of its victims could recover and where others could enjoy a pleasant retreat, subject to the condition that no intoxicants were to be brought onto the island. He considered Osea ideal for the scheme and work was started.

Not surprisingly, the family wealth was not poured into the enterprise. Shortage of money, evasion of the restriction on alcohol and world events meant the demise of Charrington's idea and farming was once again the island's main activity when another unexpected group of visitors arrived.

Alcohol free zones and the Royal Navy are not usually spoken of in one breath, but the island's position, coupled with the facilities which Charrington had developed, commended it to the attention of officers of the Torpedo Branch who were seeking a site for a secret base. Thus began the phase of tremendous activity on the small island, which was to be connected with some of the most innovative and exciting missions of the First World War.

Research into this story at first appeared unpromising and it was feared that the exhibition proposed for 1998 would have very little substance. Fortunately this worry was unfounded. Local contacts and national archives produced a treasure-trove of documents and photographs and the display was so successful that it is to form part of the 1999 programme at the Maldon Museum and a publication is in the course of preparation. There is always more to be unearthed on any subject so we would be most grateful to hear from anyone who can add even a tiny fragment to our knowledge. It is hoped to include a biographical index to the book and thus we would be delighted if you can name former family members or friends who served in H.M.S. Osea. Similarly any items that you would be prepared to loan for the exhibition would be gladly received, carefully displayed and then returned at the end of the season.

Please get in touch with Bob Wallwork with items for display and Bronwen Cook with additional information. Both may be contacted via the Museum or Bronwen is at School House, St Lawrence, CM0 7NZ. Phone 01621 779 319 or E-mail

[bronwen@talk21.com](mailto:bronwen@talk21.com)

**H.M.S. OSEA.**

Permit Bearer to enter H.M. Naval  
Base at Osea Island

By the authorised approaches, viz. :  
The Pier on the South or the Causeway on  
the North-west side of the Island.

~~This Pass is not Transferable~~

Signature of Bearer.....*J. Bennett*.....

This Pass must be renewed on Jan. 1st 1919.

776

*J. Bennett*  
Commanding Officer

This pass must be returned if the  
holder leaves the district or ceases to  
work on the Island.

**More Volunteers.....**

Welcome to all new volunteers for Stewarding, whose names if not their faces are now known to us. Thanks to all these willing workers and in particular to B.A.D.F.A.S Members through Mrs Gwenda Wolstenholme who is invaluable in finding these stalwarts.

Also a welcome to those who assist behind the scenes during our closed season, unseen and unsung. One such, who will not expect to be mentioned, is Mr Geoff Albury, who arrived per the Volunteer Agency, set to work within minutes of arrival and is already proving his worth to both our 'Works Manager' Mike Bennett, and to Bob Wallwork in setting up the 'HMS Osea' exhibition.

We are in the final stages of arranging Steward Duties for the whole of 1999, albeit incomplete and to some extent provisional to allow for you, for example, to be included in our Stewarding Team if not already a member.

Len B is still expecting to receive more Stewarding calls having already announced on at least four occasions that he has resigned from that temporary post ! A bottle of best 'Home-Brew' for anyone volunteering to be Stewarding Secretary. DO come along to either our Stewards Day on 25th March OR our Members and Stewards Day on April 2nd, OR of course, both.....See centre-fold for details.

# MALDON DISTRICT MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

The Museum Telephone No. is - (01621) 842688

## WINTER PROGRAMME 1999

### An Evening with the Brewsters - a view of 17th Century Life

Ray Brewster, our popular Membership Secretary, and Chris, his wife have a long-standing interest in all aspects of 17th Century life experienced through their association with The Sealed Knot Society and have been persuaded to impart some of their knowledge and enthusiasm to members and friends of the Museum Association. This should be an evening to remember!

7.30 P.M. THURSDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 1999  
Room 20, ST. CEDDS, adjacent MDC Offices.

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### Outing to Valence House Museum, Becontree Avenue, Dagenham,

which is the home of Barking and Dagenham's local history museum and art gallery. The earliest parts of the house date from the 1400's. The history of the area from the stone age is covered, with special reference to the major fishing fleets which operated from Barking from the 14th century until Victorian times.....

THURSDAY 11TH MARCH 1999  
leaving our museum at 9.30 a.m.

Transport will be by Minibus or Car depending on numbers wishing to attend.

Please let Paddy Lacey know via the museum prior to February 17th if you wish to join the party.

The cost of this outing, which does not include any refreshment, is expected to be in the region of £7.50.

Return to Maldon by 5 p.m.

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### STEWARDS' DAY

THURSDAY 25TH MARCH

2.30 P.M. AT ST. CEDD'S, ROOM 20

(there is more room for a meeting than in the Museum)

Members of the Committee will talk about the new displays for 1999 at the Museum and explain any alterations to Stewards' duties, listen to comments, and attempt to eliminate any problems.

There will be an opportunity to examine some of the new accessions not yet on display.

This should be a most interesting afternoon.

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MUSEUM OPENS FOR MEMBERS AND STEWARDS ONLY

2 P.M. THURSDAY 1ST APRIL

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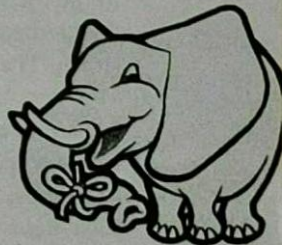
MUSEUM OPENS TO THE PUBLIC FOR THE NEW SEASON

2 P.M. FRIDAY 2ND APRIL

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FOR ALL MEMBERS -  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
7.30 P.M. TUESDAY 18TH MAY  
ROOM 20, ST. CEDD'S

\*\*\*\*\*



10...feb'99

***Did you know that.....***

...our collection of **stuffed birds** originated in July 1923 with 40 cases from Mr R.J.Pope of Spital Road ?

...our **skeleton of a porpoise**, minus head, was found on Northey Island in 1923 and donated by Mr. Boreham.

...our '**Penny-Farthing**' bicycle was given to the Museum in 1925 by Mr Norman Lott and was described then as an 'old-style bicycle'

...our **stuffed crocodile** was given by Mr Lott in 1925.

...the **skull of Wm Seymour**, who murdered Mr Wm. Belsham on 25th October 1814 in Maldon, is still in our possession.

...the **oil painting of the inquest on Wm Belsham** is in store and in dire need of expert preservation and renovation. A sponsor would be welcomed.

...the original '**Edward Bright's Waistcoat**', presented to the Museum in 1932 by Mr H. J. Thomas as beneficiary under the will of the late Mr Frank Wilding, was later stolen. The present exhibit is a copy, on loan.

...there is nothing to support the view that many of our **ethnographical items** originated from Sir Claude de Crespigny, who is given credit only for one book. Most such items appear to have been donated by Mr H. J. Thomas, as executor for Mr Frank Wilding in 1932.

*LFB...Oct.1998*

***MALDON DISTRICT MUSEUM ASSOCIATION***

***OPENING HOURS 1999***

***\*\*\*\*\****

***REOPENING SATURDAY APRIL 3rd  
UNTIL SUNDAY OCTOBER 31st.***

***WEDNESDAY 2 - 4 pm***

***THURSDAY 2 - 4 pm***

***FRIDAY 2 - 4 pm***

***SATURDAY 2 - 5 pm***

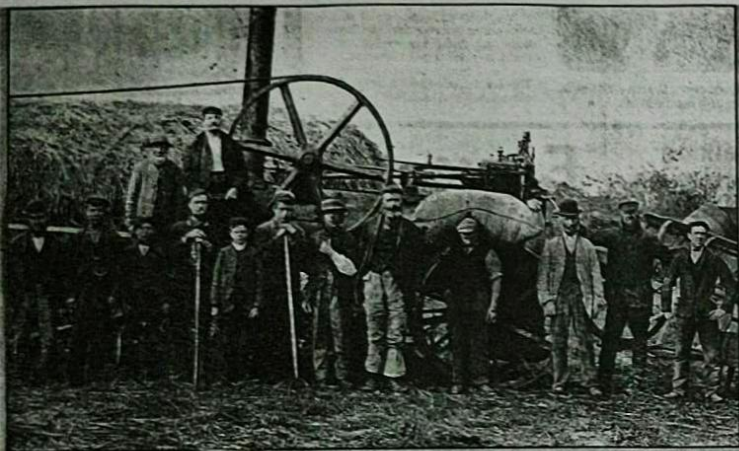
***SUNDAY 2 - 5 pm***

***most Bank Holidays 2 - 5 pm***

***School and other parties at other  
times by prior arrangement. -***

***Tel: 0621-842688(Answerphone)***

***Enquiries to: The Secretary  
Maldon District Museum Association  
47 Mill Road, Maldon, Essex. CM9 5HX.***



THIS picture of harvesting at Beckingham has prompted Joan Bloomfield to ask - who is the man with the beard?  
 Mrs Bloomfield, of Saffron Walden, who is researching her husband's family tree, says the man in the centre is the spitting image of her son Robin.  
 She believes it could be Enoch Bloomfield, a farm labourer and engine driver from Copford, who was born in 1841 and was her husband's grandfather.  
 The photograph which is on the front of Dr Paddy Lacey's The Archive Photographs of Maldon and Heybridge, was given to the Maldon museum in 1973. The book has raised almost £1,000 in royalties for the museum.  
 Dr Lacey says James and Jim Weger, have so far been identified from the original photograph thanks to Robert Weger, of Braintree.  
 If readers can identify the man with the beard or anyone else in the picture call The MBS 012621 852233.

*James B. 1877*  
**RIGHT OF WAY AT BELEIGH.**

*To the Editor of the Essex Weekly News.*

SIR,—Once more the public are called upon to assert their right to use the "foot and bridle way" situate between the site of Beleigh Mill and the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Company's Canal. It is true the only impediment offered to pedestrians, who repair thither for the purpose of recreation, or to feast on the picturesque scenery which surrounds this elysium, is that rotten planks have been placed over ditches or streams in lieu of substantial bridges, to the imminent danger of persons who venture to walk on them—a feat requiring almost the nerve of a Blondin to accomplish—the possibility of falling *cul par dessus tête* into the water below being very great. But the obstructions equestrians encounter are of a still more serious character. A horseman proceeding from Maldon to the green banks of the Navigation, for to Langford by this route, would find the way barred, inasmuch as additional posts have been attached with hinges to the gate-posts (near the flood gates), in order to prevent the gates being opened wide enough to allow mounted travellers a free passage. These posts are secured by means of a chain and padlock, so that unless the horseman happens to be furnished with a key of the padlock he will save time by retracing his steps as speedily as possible. This state of affairs may seem meet and right to the proprietor of the estate, but such is not the feeling of those Maldonians who are determined not to meekly allow their ancient rights and privileges to fall into desuetude.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,  
 Maldon, 4th June, 1877. PRO BONO PUBLICO.

## THE PENNY-FARTHING WHEEL

For well over sixty years the magnificent front wheel of a 'Penny-Farthing' bicycle was to be seen acting as a trade sign attached high up on No.21 Market Hill, the premises of the Bate Cycle Company Ltd.

Thomas S Bate had started making cycles in the late 1870's at his works in Spital Road and this was the retail outlet for his products. Riding was also taught by competent instructors here and a large stock of "reliable cycles kept to be let or hire", according to an early advertisement.

The Bate Cycle Company became in due course the Maldon Cycle Company and when the building was renovated in the late 1960's the wheel came into the possession of the Museum Association.

It has always been the intention of the Museum to place it back on a building and this will be achieved this Spring, when the wheel, renovated by Bob Wallwork and Mike Bennett, will be displayed on the front of the Museum premises in Mill Road, where we hope it will remain for at least another sixty years attracting people to 'The Museum in the Park', an appropriate sign for an organisation whose emblem is - a "Penny Farthing".

PJL...Feb '99.

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NOTICE  
 of the  
 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
 to be held on

TUESDAY 18TH MAY 1999 AT 7.30 P.M. IN ST. CEDD'S

(Adjacent Maldon District Council Offices)





D. W. CRACKNELL  
HILLCREST  
SUMMERHILL,  
ALTHORNE,  
ESSEX  
CM368Y.

Dear Sir, RE HMS ROCKOSE 2/2/99  
further to your request for info  
regarding HMS ROCKOSE (one word) the following may  
be of interest:-

BUILT BY C. HILLS OF BRISTOL, THE DESIGNERS  
OF THE FLOWER CLASS CORVETTES, A DESIGN BASED  
ON WHALING SHIP "SOUTHSEA PRIDE." 267 FLOWER CLASS  
SHIPS WERE BUILT AROUND THE WORLD & 25 WERE GIVEN  
TO THE USA UNDER A LEASE AGREEMENT (NOT  
AS WELL PUBLICISED AS USA LEASE TO UK OF OLD  
W.W.I DESTROYERS.)

LAUNCHED 26<sup>th</sup> JULY 1941

RENAMED NO 51.

TRANSFERRED TO SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY 1947

AND RENAMED "PROTEA"

TRANSFERRED TO MERCHANT SERVICE 1963

AND RENAMED "JUSTIN"

TWO OTHER WARSHIPS WITH LOCAL NAMES WERE  
HMS CHESTER & HMS BERGON HILL.

Yours faithfully  
D. W. Cracknell

~~~~~  
- SAILING BARGE PASSAGE MATCH -  
~~~~~

Sailing Barges have been seen on the London River  
and East Coast for over 150 years.

They carried all types of general cargoes and barge  
crews were paid by the freight. The first barge to  
arrive at the port got the cargo. This method of  
earning a living created a competitive spirit amongst  
the crews, and the saying goes "Sailing for a new  
hat".

Barge racing started on the Thames in 1863 and  
went on for a hundred years finishing in 1963.

In 1978 it was decided to start a passage match  
from Gravesend, Kent to the River Orwell, Suffolk a  
distance of approximately 63 nautical miles to  
recreate the passage of cargoes carried by these  
wonderful craft. Over the years the race has been  
won with times ranging between 8 1/2 to 26 hours  
depending on weather conditions on the day.

The barges seen today sadly no longer carry cargo  
(last cargo carried in 1970 by Sailing Barge  
"Cambria") they are all now privately owned, but the  
competitive spirit is still alive today as it was when in  
1863 it all started off Gravesend waterfront.

God speed the Sailing Barge  
May man long preserve her  
And when she unfurls her sails to  
catch that tide into the future  
may she still be sailing in the Twenty First century

~~~~~  
A. Farnham  
~~~~~

## "THE EMBASSY"

Many readers will no doubt still remember the 'Embassy' Cinema, some even the old 'Hippodrome' where we used to pay, was it a penny?, for the Saturday morning matinee and sometimes get an orange and packet of sweets on the way out. We would be very pleased to receive memorabilia of either place of entertainment (even a back-row seat).

How many remember Cecil ('Vic') Hammett, the organist at the Embassy?. Vic was organist in 1939 and had gone on tour to Europe, being interned in Germany on the outbreak of war spending, we believe, most of the war years there, marrying usherette 'Ivy' on his return.

Now this is how we remember him, without questioning his undoubted musical ability, and we would like to know more, to accompany our photo of Vic, and our few Embassy relics. So... if you can tell us some history, or find us more relics, thank you very much! Either 'phone or write and we will be in touch!

LFB...Feb'99

ps...Hon. Sec. reminds me that he picked up the photo of Vic and a framed Certificate from Walter's Workshop which was the source of many an interesting object until it's closure in the last few days. We wish Walter and Judith Blow a happy retirement on their boat.

## THE FRIARY WALLED GARDEN - MALDON -

### MALDON & HEYBRIDGE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

**WHERE IS THIS SECRET GARDEN?** The Friary Walled Garden is near the Friary Adult Education Centre and next to the Essex County Library. Access is from White Horse Lane (near car park) or from Chequer's Lane (next to Barclay's Bank, in the High Street)

**WHAT IS THE GARDEN LIKE?** The garden is small and laid out with gravel paths and box hedges surrounding small beds. The design suggests a Georgian origin but the site has been in cultivation far longer. Seven centuries ago there was a monastic community next to the site and the garden may have been used for collections of medicinal and other useful herbs. Since the early 19th century the Walled Garden was private, rented by the successive owners of the Friary to tenant gardeners who planted many fruit trees, some varieties now rare, vines and flowering plants. In the 1970s the garden was closed up and fell into a state of neglect. In 1987 the Horticultural Society became interested in its restoration. After years of neglect it was very overgrown and presented a very daunting appearance. A dense tangle of enormously vigorous brambles and other self-sown undergrowth prevented any clear view of the area and thoroughly barred the way along the main paths. Clearance work began and the old box hedges and gravel paths were revealed together with many long established and interesting plants. These all flourished as soon as the sunlight was let in.

**AN HISTORIC GARDEN FOR THE FUTURE** Work continues to make the garden into an interesting and peaceful haven in the centre of the town. It is hoped that the Friary Walled Garden will have something to offer anyone interested in gardens and garden history.

**WHEN CAN YOU SEE IT?** Regular working parties are arranged for the first Sunday of every month, 10.0 am - 4.0 pm and occasionally at other times. At these times the Garden is open to the public free of charge. Visits by parties, schools, or individuals can be arranged by appointment.

There is much work for young and old, with or without gardening expertise. Come and join in if you enjoy gardening! You are always welcome to come and have a look at the garden and see our progress.

Open the first Sunday every month (10 am to 4 pm) or by appointment

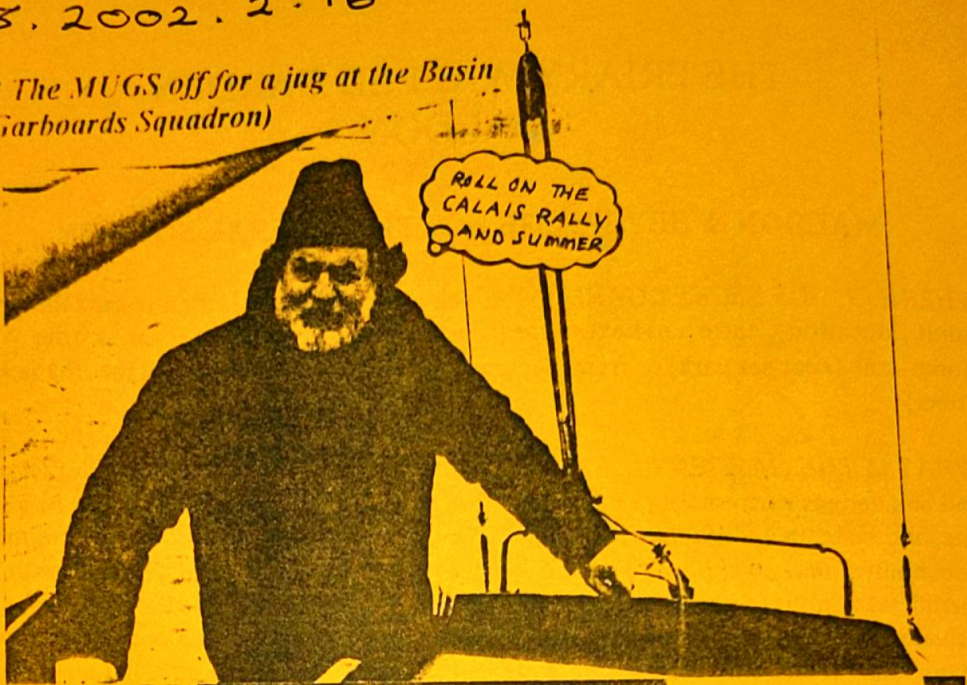
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

Arthur Cox, Tel: MALDON (01621) 741234

MALDON & HEYBRIDGE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

E258. 2002. 2. 16

Familiar fez? The MUGS off for a jug at the Basin  
(Mud Under Garboards Squadron)



*STOP PRESS*  
*We learn that the Trustees of the late Jane Benham have a further bequest for us.*



**Happy Easter from the Editorial Team**

*FortyFourEightyFour Productions  
Fambridge Road, Maldon  
February 1999*

*Views expressed are those of the individual contributors*