

THE PENNY FARTHING

The Newsletter of Maldon District Museum Association



The Silver Cradle

report from the 'Essex Weekly News' of 2nd November 1888

It is described as a "cradle sugar basket", richly chased, of solid silver with gilt inside. It is 7.1/2" long, is fixed on a swing stand, also of silver, and weighs 32 ozs. The Borough Arms are engraved upon it, and also an inscription. It is enclosed in a removable case, and forms a handsome ornament and a valuable heirloom. It was supplied by Mr. Charles Eve, silversmith of Maldon.

The Chairman reports...

The open season is now in full swing and I think it would be fair to say that the Museum has never looked better. The tall tree outside our main door has been topped and is no longer the favoured home of the local rooks, for which many thanks! The area of grass around the tree has grown well and this, together with the plants outside our window, placed there by Judy Tullett, has greatly enhanced the appearance of the Prom Lodge. It would be much appreciated if, in a quiet moment, one of the Stewards on duty could throw some water in the direction of the flower bed.

Inside, the new exhibitions have been well appreciated by our visitors, the 1930's Joiner' shop reducing one visitor to tears with its authenticity, and the Swimming Club exhibits bringing many locals into the Museum for the first time. Superb work from our Displays Team!

Many of you will by now have seen the Silver Cradle presented to the Museum by Derek Maldon Fitch; it has been displayed on special occasion this year but will feature next season in a special exhibition relating to Derek's grandfather, Edward Arthur Fitch, many times Mayor of Maldon and author of the definitive book on the area, *Maldon and the River Blackwater*. I am delighted that Derek has agreed to become our President.

Sincerely,

Paddy Lacey

Chairman

*p.s..... 'The Essex Countryside'
A major article about our Museum appears in the June edition of 'The Essex Countryside'; copies available from our own kiosk for the benefit of the Museum.... Price £1.70p. ea.*

MEET THE MEMBERS.....

*On the 5th April we held a well-attended Stewards' Meeting when Stewards could meet others socially.
On the 2nd SEPTEMBER ALL MEMBERS are invited to the Museum from 11.30 am. to 1.30 pm. for 'sips & snacks', and to meet other Members socially.*

THE CRADLE

Already seen and admired by a number of members and friends at other meetings, including the Maldon Society and our own Stewards assembly, the formal presentation was intended to be at our A.G.M. on the 22nd May, but instead of making a formal speech Derek Maldon Fitch had painstakingly written it out and a copy was available for each member present. We feel we can do no better than to copy it here for posterity. (The original is handwritten very clearly but if reduced in size for the magazine would be difficult to read...hence.....

Handing over of silver cradle to the Borough of Maldon

Maldonians..

In the winter edition of the Penny Farthing it was speculated as to whether Maldonians might one day be permitted to see the silver cradle once again.. Well, here it is! After nigh on half a century the cradle and I have returned to our old home town. Myself to the retirement complex of Baker Mews at the bottom of the High Street, and the cradle is now destined for the Museum in the Park for perpetuity.

I am handing over the cradle and accompanying illuminated address to the Borough of Maldon in memory of two very special people who gave up a lot of time carrying out duties in various spheres for the common good, but particularly in the field of local government. They are of course the late County Alderman Edward Arthur Fitch and the late County Councillor Maldon Fitch. During my father's lifetime when we were living at Garlands Farm, Mundon, the silver cradle was, as it is this evening, always centre stage in the middle of a large sideboard with the address hanging from the picture rail above it. My father was very proud of it and having been born a Maldonian - he was born in Brick House (now demolished for building purposes) on the 16th June 1888, and died in Mundon in April 1931. He was very proud of his christian name Maldon by which he was known and also signed himself, and as a matter of interest he at one time played football for Maldon and his father was President of Maldon Football Club. The cradle was originally presented to my grandfather, the late Alderman E.A.Fitch at a unique ceremony at a specially convened council meeting in the autumn of 1888 to commemorate the birth of a son to my grandparents during my grandfather's year of mayoralty. The son was my father and was named Thomas Maldon.

A word as to the cradle. It is described as a cradle sugar basket, richly chased, of solid silver with gilt inside. It is 7.1/2 inches long, is fixed on a swivel stand also of silver and weighs 32 ounces. The borough arms are engraved upon it, also an inscription. It was supplied by Mr Charles Eve, silversmith of Maldon.

An address explanatory of the occasion is quite a work of art. The text being beautifully inscribed and enclosed within a neatly executed border. On the left hand corner at the top is a representation of the Borough arms, and on the right hand the old Admiralty seal of the borough. The two lower corners are ornamented with the obverse and reverse sides of the borough seal. The text is surmounted by my grandfather's armorial bearings. The address was designed and executed by Mr Alan Stewart, surveyor to the Maldon Rural Sanitary authority. The names of the subscribers are in autograph.

*D. Maldon Fitch
22 May 2001*

STEWARDS & MEMBERS MEET

ON THE 5TH APRIL, IN ST. MARY'S 'OCTAGON', 36 STEWARDS & MEMBERS (MAINLY STEWARDS) MET, TO BE BRIEFED ON THE CHANGES FOR 2001 IN THE MUSEUM, PRIOR TO WALKING ACROSS TO 'SEE FOR THEMSELVES'. SUBSEQUENT COMMENTS WERE VERY COMPLIMENTARY, MANY BEING QUITE IMPRESSED BY THE IMPROVEMENTS FOR WHICH JUDY TULLETT, MIKE BENNETT, AND GEOFF ALBURY HAD BEEN LARGELY RESPONSIBLE. THE EVENT WAS CONSIDERED TO BE 'WELL WORTHWHILE'.

A.G.M. REPORT (IN BRIEF)

The Annual General Meeting held on the 22nd May was again well attended, nearly thirty members being present. It followed the accepted pattern - apologies; adoption of year 2000 minutes; matters arising; all quickly disposed of by the Chairman. Reports by our various officers followed, all as per agenda, and included the Chairman's thanks to all who had been involved in the year's activities and our appreciation of the cooperation of the MDC, Cllr. Julia Peel in particular. Other reports included that our lease on the premises had been extended for a further ten years, and that our relationship with the MDC is now one of cooperation. The suggestion of an extension to the premises may well receive favourable support when submitted. Financially, a satisfactory year despite donations being considerably reduced. Subject to several subscriptions still to be renewed, total membership including life members is now one hundred and eighteen. It has been a good year for accessions and the assistance given to Penny following her health problem was more than appreciated. Visits by members of the MDC had been arranged, and school visits well managed, with scope for more. Subscriptions are unchanged at £1 adults; 25p children. Following the demise of Joyce Allingham, Derek Maldon Fitch was elected as President; Len Barrell will continue as Vice-President. There being no new nomination for Chairman, Paddy agreed to stand for another year, with all other Officers and Committee as on the outside back page. Daphne and John Daniel are welcomed as new Committee Members, Daphne to be Hon. Secretary. Len B would like to assist a new Editor for the Penny-Farthing, and find a replacement for the Stewarding Secretary, from which Colin Barbrook resigned last year owing to other pressures.

Not all Members have been, nor indeed are able, to visit the 2001 Exhibitions in their Museum. This copy of the '3-fold' guide handed to all visitors gives a 'canned' summary of what can nowadays be found in 'The Museum in the Park'.....

WELCOME to the Maldon District Museum Booking Office with its modest collection of railway memorabilia and reminders of the axed Maldon/Witham/Wickford lines.

(To avoid any risk of damage please leave your hand luggage at the desk. Thank you.)

Turn right from Reception into the Long Hall with its wall displays depicting the story of Maldon throughout its long history, and tools of trade as used by local craftsmen. The 'snug' contains a cask rack and well-used items from local pubs, and the replica shop front contains exhibits from local sources & High Street shops now sadly closed. This area is completed by the 1877 "Pumper" Fire Engine, well preserved over the years, and at last again in its rightful home, with pictures of the old Fire Brigade. Nearby is the old 'Penny-Farthing' and the 1928 Rudge & Whitworth 3-wheeler.

Retrace your path into the Special exhibition "From the Grain to the Table" where we depict the history of 'Bread Making in Maldon' viz:- Follow the story from the grain arriving in the barge at the flour mill, to the baker's shop, and the boy delivering the bread to your home. (Other grain is brought in locally by road.)

Through the open doorway into the replica of a typical '39/45 cottage living room..... with the waiting wife and her domestic items around her. Note the cupboard beneath the stairs, containing further wartime memorabilia.

Check the wall as you move on to ...

The Margery Allingham Collection of artefacts, books and photographs displayed under the watchful eye of Albert Campion.

Into the front hall to foot of the stairs.....

On the wall a display of Pitsaws used by woodmen in forestry work, and by shipwrights as portrayed by Constable. See the models illustrating the use of these saws

Stay on the ground floor and pass into room 3 by the foot of the stairs, the Cath Backus Room. Here is a Victorian Pram, period clothes, and many other items familiar to 'Great-Grandma', with a Victorian Spinal Trolley from St. Peter's Hospital.

Climb the stairs and go round to the left, en route noting the various wall exhibits including early rifles and weaponry, and notably the replica waistcoat of Edward Bright of local fame. Also a descriptive layout of the Carmelite Priory, and a large picture of the 'famous' Maldon view.

Turn right into room 8, to memorabilia of **John Sadd & Sons Ltd.**, to whom, per the Rugby Group, we are indebted for the fine display of **scale models of ships** made by JS&S during 1939-45, including the well-known MTB 796, and other related exhibits. See a Joiners' Shop from the last century, with bench and tools of the trade.

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Cross the landing to room 9, containing

a Special Exhibition showing the History of **Maldon Swimming Club** from 1906 to 1966 with Cups, Photographs, Artefacts and a model.

See too, the history of the Market Hill 'Workhouse' (the 'Spike'), and a small display of the history of **Osea Island**. Here also are artefacts depicting the history of the 'Hippodrome' and 'Embassy' Cinemas and exhibits showing the history of **Maldon Schools**.

Here also find the **Coin and Medal** collection.

(Further Osea information can be seen, by request, in a folder held in the Kiosk)

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Out of room 9 and look across the stair well to the small landing where, (be careful on the stairs) on the left find the **Natural History Room** with its mixed collection of **birds, fish, and animals**, each with a local connection of some description - even the **stuffed alligator!**

See also exhibits about the **Oyster Fishing Industry**.

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**Please retrace your steps carefully down the stairs.**

(022020)

Thank you for signing the Visitors' Book if you have already done so, or for doing so when you do!



**ALL STEWARDS PLEASE NOTE !**

AT LAST WE NO LONGER NEED TO CHECK EVERY ROOM FOR EVERY LIGHT SWITCH BECAUSE...

ALL ELECTRICS ARE NOW ON ONE SWITCH WHICH YOU WILL FIND ON YOUR LEFT AS YOU ENTER THE KIOSK.

ON ARRIVAL, FIRST TURN OFF THE SECURITY SWITCH, THEN TURN ON THE ELECTRICS IN THE KIOSK. WHEN LEAVING, TURN OFF THE ELECTRICS IN THE KIOSK, THEN TURN ON THE SECURITY SWITCH. UNLOCKING/ LOCKING OF ALL ROOMS IS AS BEFORE.

**The Late Joyce Allingham 1913 - 2001**

(Sister of Margery Allingham and our elected President)

*A Tribute by Barry Pike, a Founder Member of the Margery Allingham Society, as related at Joyce's Funeral Service at Tolleshunt D'Arcy on 9th April 2001.....*

"I was privileged to know Joyce Allingham for the last fifteen or so years of her life, during which we established a warm friendship, securely founded on our shared enthusiasm for her sister's work. I met Joyce in the early 1980's as a result of an initial approach by letter, made by me. In her reply she confirmed that she regarded herself as 'the keeper of the flame' of her sister's reputation and would be happy to assist with any questions I might have about Margery Allingham's work. Before long, I was delighted to be invited to Tolleshunt D'Arcy and Joyce came from Kelvedon to collect me from the station. (She was still driving perfectly safely then, though we had some hairy moments on later occasions before she abandoned the driving seat).

I suspect that each of us was rather nervous of the other at first. Joyce knew that I liked the Albert Campion books but otherwise had no idea of what she was letting herself in for. I was rather in awe of her as Margery Allingham's sister, with a substantial measure of reflected glory. As it turned out, she came to trust and in some matters to rely on me, and I came to learn that, despite a certain natural dignity and reserve, Joyce was not at all awesome. Nor - notwithstanding that reflected glory - was she in any way a substitute for Margery. On the contrary, she was a decided character in her own right, contained and contemplative, with a busy, multifarious life, and much to occupy her mind. She was very conscious of her responsibilities and I fear they weighed heavily on her at times. She had a tenacious need to get things right and she worried over plans and strategies to the point of anxiety.

In a relaxed mood, however, she was excellent company, with a robust sense of humour and a delight in the absurdities and oddities of life. Her mind teemed with ideas and inspirations. The game was always afoot with Joyce - she always had something under consideration and something else coming nicely to the boil. She had great fun setting up Mr Campion's wood in this village. She invested money in West End shows, partly for the fun of the gamble, but also from a conscientious desire to support new ventures in the theatre. She had a strong social conscience and did much for many people, always through instinctive warmth and goodness and never with any hint of self-regarding piety. I remember in particular that she devoted much thought to a scheme whereby isolated old people would receive a friendly 'phone call each day. The logistics defeated her and it came to nothing; but there was no doubting the genuineness of her impulse. (It also amused me that she spoke of the elderly folk who were to benefit by her scheme as if they were of a different order of being from herself - and this when she was well into her eighties).

Joyce was particularly happy with the Margery Allingham Society, founded by Pat Watt in 1987. I'm sure she was apprehensive at first and feared for her privacy and having to do things she would rather not have done. But despite her doubts she gave us her blessing and became our patron, never failing to support us in any way she could. She was delighted by the plaque to Margery arranged for D'Arcy House and by the permanent exhibition of her sister's and brother-in-law's work at the Museum in Maldon. The plaque day was especially memorable, not only for the village party at the unveiling ceremony, but also for the speech that Joyce made to the assembled company. She did not naturally relish the limelight and it must have cost her something to address publicly so large a gathering. Nevertheless, she did it and she did it well. That day was for her a personal triumph.

In her last years she was reluctant to visit London, but despite this, she did from time to time go up to 'the Smoke' to support the Allingham Society. Most memorably, she came to Mr. Champion's 100th birthday party last year, charming everyone who met her and contributing greatly to the success of the occasion. I also treasure the memory of an earlier time when she was recovering in a Colchester hospital from a fall that had fractured a wrist on one side and an ankle of the other. On the afternoon I visited her she was in great form, holding court like a grande dame in a salon, marvellously assured, at ease with everyone and clearly the life and soul of the party.

I had the idea that she was indestructible and would probably make it to her century, as her grandmother almost did. Sadly, that was not to be: when I saw her last, in a different Colchester hospital, she seemed to be slipping away - as, indeed, in the end, she was. I am proud to have known her and I shall miss her very much.

B. A. Pike

*A Traditional English Gentleman*  
**PHILLIP WOLSTENHOLME OBE**

*We regret the passing, on the 26th April last, of a most respected Steward and friend. Phillip Wolstenholme of Goldhanger was a very modest and unassuming eighty-six years of age and until the end of our 2000 season had, with his wife Gwenda, regularly attended the Museum as a Steward.*

*Phillip and Gwenda were members of BDFAS by whom they were introduced to us as Stewards and became Members of our Museum Association. In fact, Gwenda had earlier been the BDFAS/MDMA co-ordinator. (now succeeded by Ian Valentine) Phillip had been a Civil Servant and was a founder member of the Civil Service Fellowship. He was the Secretary of the Civil Service Benevolent Fund, amongst his other interests.*

*To Gwenda we offer our thoughts and sympathy at this time.*

**A TRUE MALDONIAN - DR 'BILL' PETCHEY Ph.D.**

'Bill' Petchey was not a Member of MDMA but would nevertheless have been most welcome at all our meetings and events, if only on account of his superior knowledge of historical matters Maldon. That fact more than justifies inclusion of this article in our magazine.

Bill was born in 1936 in London Road, where his father was a Fire Officer, and, with the exception of his years away at Universities and Ripon Grammar, where he taught and was later a Housemaster, he returned during holidays to live at number 22 and later lived alone following the deaths of his parents, until his own unexpected death on the 16th May. His funeral was on 25th May; interment followed at Maldon Cemetery.

It is not intended to elaborate on his life as that has been well documented in other reports. Suffice it to record that Bill was educated at the nearby All Saints' School followed by Maldon Grammar School, then University where he gained his Ph.D. An active member of All Saints' Church he was keen on most Church matters and events and his unassuming, modest manner earned him many friends.

When Bill retired from Ripon Grammar in 1996 he came back to live in Maldon, and among his several interests became President of the Maldon Archaeological and Historical Group, and a member of the Maldon Society, more recently Librarian of the Plume Library above St. Peter's Church.

Dr 'Bill' Petchey will indeed be missed by Maldon.



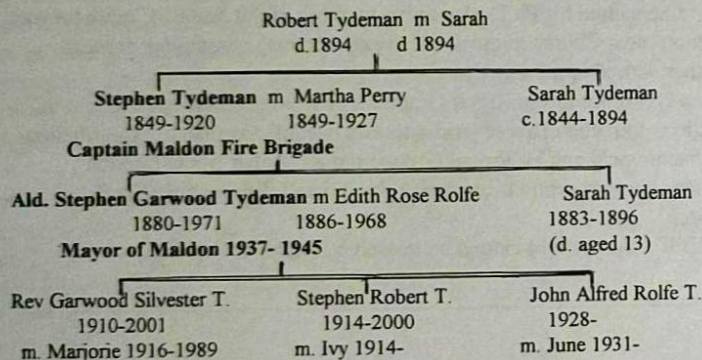
Maldon Boys' Brigade 'Club Swinging Team' in 1914  
Eighty-six years later is any member still alive?

### MALDON BORN AND BRED

In the 'Long Room' in the Museum is a photo of our firemen of around 100 years ago. It is displayed near our vintage fire engine, and the fire chief, complete with impressive beard, stands 'centre-stage'. He is Stephen Tydeman, son of Robert, father of Stephen Garwood, all of whom lived in or in the vicinity of 44 Farnbridge Road.

Stephen Garwood himself had three sons at this address and the point of this report is to advise that the Maldon connection after all these years is now discontinued, with the death last August 16th of Stephen Robert ('Bob'), who lived nearby; and that of the Rev. Stephen Garwood ('Gar') on 4th May of this year. The surviving son John, still known in Maldon, actually lives in Fingringhoe.

The following Family Tree will be of interest and a reminder to many -



(All three sons had children and grandchildren, still living.)

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE - DIARY DATES

(UNLESS OTHERWISE ADVISED)

ROOM 20 - ST. CEDDS - BOOKED FOR 7.30 PM  
ON TUESDAYS....

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| APRIL 10 2001 | JUNE 12 2001 |
| JULY 10 2001  | AUG 14 2001  |
| SEPT 11 2001  | OCT 9 2001   |
| NOV 13 2001   | DEC 11 2001  |
| JAN 8 2002    | FEB 12 2002  |
| MAR 12 2002   | APR 9 2002   |

### MALDON IRON WORKS

*The histories of both Sadds and Bentalls have been fully described by Commander Kemp, but nobody appears to have thought it worthwhile to tell the story of Maldon Ironworks. The Museum has some 19th century ledgers - massive volumes written in an impeccable hand - but apart from one or two catalogues, and entries in Kelly's Directories, that appears to be about all that is available in Maldon.*

*Fitch states brusquely that the building still standing at Fullbridge was erected in 1875, but an ironworks was on the site before that. Kelly, in 1859, has "Joseph Warren, ironfounder & agricultural & machine manufacturer, Fullbridge" and Richard Poole notes that Warren had moved there from Broad Street Green. His private address in 1866 is given as "Fullbridge" with another Warren - Alfred - presumably his son, living in London Road.*

*The domiciles of Joseph and Alfred get a little confused until 1874, when it is clear that a climacteric has been passed. Joseph disappears, Alfred is at "Fullbridge House" (itself a puzzle) but most of all we get, for the first time "Maldon Ironworks Ltd. (J.C.Float manager) manufacturers, iron & brass founder, Fullbridge", and "John Charles Float, private address Fullbridge" - which is identical to the address of Alfred. One year later the present building was in existence*

*Control of the ironworks now becomes rather confused. By 1878 Alfred, now both a Borough Councillor and a Borough Magistrate, has gone back to London Road (Hill House) and it seems that J.C.Float is in supreme control though his title is not known, whether Manager, Executive Director, or Chairman of the Board. By 1890 Alfred too disappears. By 1894 a "C.R.Gowers" appears on an envelope addressed Maldon Iron Works, and which is in the possession of Len Barrell, and it is assumed that he is at least Acting General Manager. His address in 1902 was "Foundry House, Fullbridge". He is still there in 1937. However, in the 1891*

Census J.C.Float's address is "23, Fullbridge", his age is 52 and his profession is given as "Manager of Ironworks". There is no doubt about his dominant position as the 1898 Product Price List has the amazing (for a Limited Liability Company) instruction to customers that "Cheques and Post Office Orders to be made payable to J.C.Float and crossed 'Sparrow & Co'." Sparrow and Co were Bankers with offices at No.41 High Street; they became Barclays Bank, still in Maldon High Street.

It seems that J.C.Float too, had entered local politics. The first we hear of him as a Councillor is in 1878, becoming Mayor in 1892, and again in 1896 and 1899. But by 1902 all references to him cease, and one assumes either that he had died at the age of perhaps 60, or moved away - perhaps to the town of his birth - Westminster, Middlesex.

So far we have not said much about the Ironwork's manufacturing activities. However, I have a copy of their 40-odd page Price List & Catalogue, published in June 1898, illustrating what appears to be their complete 'stock' range, and Len B has a selection of 1941 catalogues, and comparison shews a high degree of similarity embracing all kinds of agricultural implements, so similar that it is obvious that the same printing blocks have been used to illustrate both. Prices though have changed - the Goldhanger Plough, which cost £2.7s.6d. in 1898 cost £7.5s.0d. in 1941. Incidentally, why is the Ironworks offering this implement which I thought was a Bentall product?

We know very little more, and quote from the ironically titled "The Continuing Years" history of Sadds. "In 1954 a satisfactory offer was made to the shareholders of the adjoining Maldon Ironworks Ltd. to acquire the business as a wholly owned subsidiary. Part of the premises was adapted for the production of wireless and television cabinets, and later an enlarged flush-door factory was set up on the site.

If anybody can add to this brief outline "PennyFarthing" would be glad to hear it!

- 1898 -

# MALDON IRON WORKS COMPANY, LIMITED, MALDON, ESSEX, ENGLAND.

WE have pleasure in presenting our Customers and Friends with our new Catalogue of Agricultural Machinery manufactured at our Works at Maldon. We invite attention to the various Implements and Machines described therein, and especially to the improvements we have recently made in our celebrated "Long-Looked-For" Chaff Cutters, by means of which they can now be fitted to cut a greater variety of lengths of Chaff, and are rendered more suitable for export. To Merchants and Shippers we would especially recommend these Machines, also our well-known Horse and Pony Gears, Thrashing Machines, Corn Crushing Machines, &c. Large numbers of these have already been exported to the Colonies, and have given general satisfaction. Packing, if required, is priced as low as possible, both material and labour being charged at net cost.

A traveller attends the following home Markets weekly:— Bishop's Stortford, Braintree, Chelmsford, Colchester, Rochford, Romford. Our goods can also be obtained through Implement Dealers in all parts of the Country.

The prices stated include Free Delivery to any Railway Station in England, to the principal seaports of Ireland and Scotland, or to any of the London Docks, when the order amounts to £2 in value. Iron Hurdles and Fencing are only delivered free to such places as may be agreed upon at the time of purchase.

All Goods should be carefully examined before receiving them from the Railway Company, and if damaged in transit or deficient, must be signed for accordingly. Broken Goods should be at once returned to us, labelled "Free—Broken in transit."

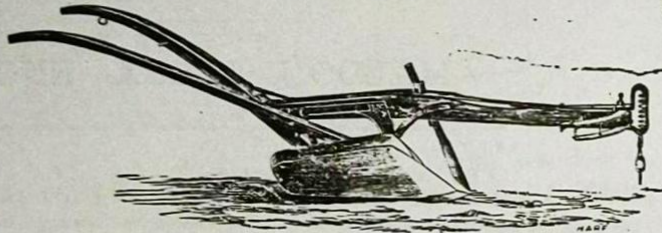
Cheques and Post Office Orders to be made payable to J. C. FLOAT, and crossed "Sparrow & Co."

All orders and other communications should be addressed—

The MANAGER,  
Maldon Iron Works,  
MALDON, Essex.

Address for Telegrams:—IRON WORKS, MALDON.

## PLOUGHS.



Warren's "Goldhanger" Plough.

Price £2 7s. 6d.

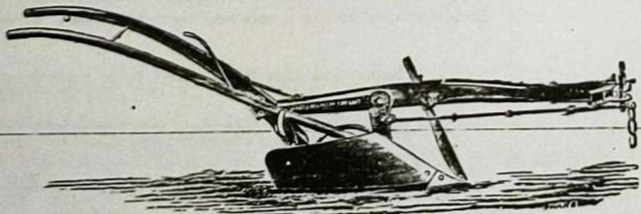
Staff, 3/-, Hammer, 2/6, Coulter, 3/-, Gallas, 3/-, Spud, 2/6, Top Plate, 2/6, Near Side Plate, 2/6, Large Near Side Plate, 3/6, Skim Coulter and Fixing, 5/-, Wheel and Fixing, 5/-, Two Wheels and Fixings, 16/6, Foot and Fixing, 5/-, Skeith or Wheel Coulter (steel), 10/6 extra; Socket Coulter (instead of ordinary Coulter if desired), 3/6, Extra Blades for ditto (cast iron), 6d. each. Shares for light land, 7/- per dozen. Shares for heavy land, 7/6 per dozen.



Warren's "East Essex" Plough.

Price £2 7s. 6d. Extras, same prices as for "Goldhanger" Plough.

Shares for light land, 7/- per dozen. Shares for heavy land, 7/6 per dozen.



Warren's Patent "Royal" Plough.

Price £2 7s. 6d. Extras, same prices as for "Goldhanger" Plough.

Shares for light land, 7/- per dozen. Shares for heavy land, 7/6 per dozen.

## THE MALDON WONDER APPLE

*In Penny-Farthing 24 we asked whether anyone had ever tasted a 'Maldon Wonder', the pride of Allen Galba Sampson, once of Queens Avenue. We have received a deafening silence on that point, but Mrs Mary Eaton, of Queens Avenue, has offered information which will be of interest; a copy of her note is below:-*

*"With reference to the Maldon Wonder Apple cultivated by Allen Galba Sampson, the Grandmother of my nieces Judy Smith and Chris Copsey, namely Mrs Bertha Collin, owned the orchard off Cross Road/Fambridge Road, where now stands the Longfield Nursing Home.*

*In the orchard was in fact a Maldon Wonder Apple tree, but whether the tree was already there when the orchard was bought is unknown. Mrs Collin knew the origin of it, being cultivated from a Newton Wonder and a Cox. This information was passed on to my nieces but they cannot remember the taste/flavour of the Maldon Wonder. It was a long time ago!"*

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Thank you Mary! Perhaps other members may be able to add to this?
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*.....and from No.6 "The Newcomer" - 1d - November 1925, the Newspaper of the Maldon Divisional Labour Party.....*

**Councillor Alan Sampson** - We regret to hear of the continued indisposition of Councillor Alan Sampson, who, it is understood, is not seeking re-election in November on that account. His failing health was not improved by the shock occasioned by the fire which nearly destroyed his bungalow a few months back. Alan Sampson is not of our party, but justice compels us to pay tribute to his valuable work, both inside and outside the Council Chamber, in connection with Maldon's Museum. Unobtrusive so far as speech-making and publicity were concerned, as the propogandist of the Museum project in quiet conversation among the people of Maldon, he was largely responsible for its initiation. Then as a sort of unofficial curator, he put in a tremendous lot of work in arranging the Museum itself. He would be the first to admit that the Museum is capable of much improvement. But it is a great thing to have started it, and for that Maldon has largely to thank Councillor Alan Sampson. We sincerely hope that in the quiet atmosphere of his pleasant garden orchard he will gradually win back health.





Houses damaged by a flying-bomb, Fambridge Road, Maldon (September 20, 1944)

Did you know?- that a glass-bottomed tankard is usually a pewter tankard with a glass bottom?.

Why a glass bottom?

Well, it's like this!.....In the late 18th century, and in the time of solid-bottomed tankards, the leader of a 'Press Gang' was named Andrew (for no particular reason) and if he offered and you accepted the "King's Shilling" you had agreed to join the Navy. If not exactly willing, but turned your back whilst drinking in the local, Andrew could drop the shiny coin into your beer and you would be blissfully unaware until your tankard was empty that you had accepted the King's Shilling which was when Andrew pounced. You 'were in!'.

So someone had the bright idea of a 'see-through' bottom which ensured that you or your mates could see the coin as you drank, then down with the tankard and scarpers....fast!

"Old sweats" in the Navy still refer to service in the Navy as being "in the Andrew".

## "GOODBYE TO BOB CRATCHETT"

~George Ginn continues to reminisce~

In issue No.19 I commented on the old "Oliver" typewriter in the Museum store, and 'Miss Jones', its threatened operator. Now we consider another machine there - "The Walther Comptess". This is a manually operated adding machine, really only a marginal improvement on the abacus (still used in China, I believe), in that instead of a series of beads on a wire it has a series of rows of keys marked 1 - 9 with automatic 'carry-over'. However, without going into too great a detail, although the machine will only add, the trained Miss Joneses who operated it could perform the four arithmetical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. If one thinks for a moment, multiplication is only repeated addition, and division only repeated subtraction. Moreover, subtraction is only the addition of a "reciprocal number" which is also carried on the keys. For example, the reciprocal of '1' is '999' (as many 9s as necessary). Thus, to subtract '1' from '7' one adds '999' = 1006, the '1000' falling off the end, leaving the correct answer '6'. Moreover, a trained operator can not only 'square' a number, but also extract square roots, though I shan't bore you with the details - quite apart from the fact that I have forgotten how to do it.

Seeing this machine brought to mind my first acquaintance with a similar machine, - a 'Comptometer' - ideal in form and function but of a different make. After the war I had employment with the Hoffman Manufacturing Company in Chelmsford in their Wages Office, where they had two such machines. And that starts me off on another reminiscing tack - this time not of communications but of calculations.....

The Wages Office of that time was responsible for calculating the gross and nett wages of some 6,000 employees, and to do it we had some twenty clerks, two Comptometer operators - and ready reckoners and tax tables. Today it seems incredible that every step, from hours worked times hourly rate (in shillings and pence) plus bonus, less deductions (National Health, Unemployment Stamps, Tax

etc.) had to be carried out manually (and mentally). The only mechanical assistance was given by the Comptometer operators (girls, of course) who were limited to totalling the columns of entries on the manually compiled Payrolls.

Later I transferred to the Cost Office, and there became the Supervisor of some fifteen young women Comptometer operators doing more varied work in addition to the more straightforward addition and subtraction functions. The male clerks however, I found, were using slide rules for their calculations, and so we continued until well into the 1950s. Then we were given the luxury of manually driven rotary calculators - we turned a handle to effect our results. Soon afterwards I was involved in the installation of something called a multi-totalling cross-footing accounting machine which carried out adding and subtracting operations governed by a pre-set control bar, but which still required manual input. All the same, it marked some improvement in both Payroll compilation and in keeping Customer Accounts.

Slowly over the years we came further into the 20th century. First of all, we had "Hollerith" punched cards, where the factors were entered on cards by girls operating machines which punched holes with positional significance in cards, and which were then fed into machines for calculations, and finally into another for printing - all purely mechanically operated although electrically driven.

The next step was the electronic calculator - note, NOT a computer, although it was the first step along this road. It was a very large piece of equipment, probably some 20 feet long by 8 wide, and perhaps 7 feet tall, and it functioned with the aid of some hundreds of valves which were prone to failure so that it was a miracle it was ever fully functional. All it did was to sense the value of fields A and B, to multiply them, and to punch the answer into field C of the Hollerith card upon which it operated. This card was then passed through the Hollerith machine for printing and totalling as before. Unfortunately the electronic calculator was prone to chew up the cards which then had to be painstakingly recovered, reconstructed and recreated. In retrospect it was horribly inefficient - but it was a

step along the road to computerisation as we today know it, and Hoffmann's was progressive-looking and seeking to keep abreast of developments.

Finally we got a true electronic computer, but by today's standards it was very primitive. Input was still by punching holes - now in rolls of paper tape - though it did have an electronic memory for static data which it used in conjunction with its (variable) input. Its memory was still terribly small - some 64K of 'bits'! ('K' = Kilo or 1,000, but in computer language it is 1024 in denary terms, or 1000000000 in binary notation). All of which sounds an awful lot but was in fact woefully small, and magnetic tapes were required to record results, themselves requiring to be fed through other machines for printing.

However this was only the beginning. As with the typewriter the computer developed - in huge bounds - . Things called MODEM (Modulator/Demolulator) appeared, and suddenly the various establishments of Ransome-Hoffmann-Pollard (as Hoffmanns had become) scattered as they were throughout the country, were able to communicate data to each other over telephone lines. Next we had remote viewing (V.D.U.s) followed by remote input, and the great electronic revolution was picking up pace. That pace, as everybody today knows, has accelerated, and from the safety of my retirement I can confess that it has left me so far behind that I have given up trying to understand it - still less to use it !

But I can still claim to have been in at the beginning of the complete transition from the clerical drudgery of the Bob Cratchetts of Dickens' day to the electronic wizardry of today, which in its progress has swept away both the ready reckoners and the comptometers, and the Mr and Miss Joneses who operated them.....and I wonder whether, after all, are we better off for it ?

## MUSICAL MEMORIES

How many remember at a very early age, a Sunday afternoon's walk and the old Bandstand which, from 1895, stood half way along the 'Marine Parade'?.....We were reminded of it by the MDC Fact Sheet which contains some quite interesting information & details of the Prom and its environment (*yet although mentioning it, regrettably makes little of the development of the Museum since 1996*).

However the old Bandstand stood for several years after being replaced (as a Bandstand that is) in about 1930, by a showpiece overlooking the lake, seemingly ready at any time, given a good heave-ho, to slide down the grassy bank into the water, but it was very appropriate and attracted much attention. The bands which used it were pretty good too, but it did not last. It was subsequently replaced yet again, this time in the centre of the 'events area' adjacent to the Coach Park, where it was surrounded by fencing thereby providing a seating enclosure and area suitable for the occasional dance, not forgetting its use as the centrepiece for the various M.C.'s of events, complete with microphones and deafening noise. That bandstand, or what was left of it, was dismantled (guessing) around 1968 and has not been replaced.

There would be little point in replacing it, to be vandalised within weeks, and in any event there are very few bands left to perform; cost alone would be prohibitive, and Maldon now has no Town Band, although we are still pleased to hear the excellent Salvation Army Band from time to time.

Which brings us back to the Maldon Town Band instruments which appear to have vanished into thin air since WWII. Our earlier appeals for any information on them appear to have fallen on deaf ears as there has been no response whatsoever; surely someone knows something about them.....or are they still sitting in store somewhere as were many of the Museum artefacts until Cath Backus and friends rescued them from most unsuitable conditions. If you know a man who knew a man.....? 842688 or any Committee Member.

~~~~~#b100101

Late News...The Captain Johnson's Company of 'The Sealed Knot' will stage a Living History Display over the week-end of 16th/17th June from about 10am to 4pm. Ray, Chris, and Rose Brewster will be in attendance at the Crossing Temple. — see you there?

Maldon Swimming Club

I was a previous member of the Maldon Swimming Club, which for a number of years (during my membership) was organised by Bob and Elsie Firmin with the help of a few staunch members, in particular Jim Keeble, who was a very strong and regular forward in the water polo team.

Maldon Lake attracted a large number of people and was always a hive of activity in the summer season, which in turn drew more people to it. The diving board and water chute were popular and "jack knives", swallow dives, "honey pots", belly flops (if unlucky) and many other antics were well received by the spectators.

Although Maldon Swimming Club was a stepping-stone to enter Amateur Swimming Association (A.S.A) events none of the local swimmers had tuition and most just competed using brute force to get through the water, although one or two had natural abilities. All of our swimming was done in the summer months as indoor baths had not been built in our area, this of course gave great advantage to the London teams and competition was hardest at the beginning of the season. Particularly hard hit was the water polo team and we rarely won a match until the end of the season. However, the events were enjoyable and we had the chance to meet other great teams, for example Starfish S.C and Plaistow S.C at away matches.

Maldon Swimming Club members, and many people using the lake seemed to have natural competitiveness, not particularly against each other, but a great desire for self-improvement resulting in a good deal of distance swimming using the two rafts (set 110 yards apart) as a measure of achievement. In theory 16 lengths would make a mile but I am sure the true distance was greater as there were no marked lanes (as in indoor pools) and we undoubtedly swam off course. I believe our swimming style was altered to accommodate the necessity to look up now and again to check our direction.

Plaistow Swimming Club, and later Maldon Swimming Club, held an annual open event in the Blackwater consisting of a three mile race from opposite MillBeach to the saltings just behind Maldon lake bathing huts, and this proved to be a test of our training, particularly when the race was late to start and we had to battle against an outward going tide. I myself was badly stung in the face by a jellyfish whilst on this race on one occasion and had difficulty riding home on my motorbike after the race due to swollen eyes.

Water polo matches were frequently held on Sundays during the summer. Some were friendly matches between local members of the swimming club and from time to time visiting teams played against us. These matches were very popular and drew in a good number of spectators to witness the entertainment, sometimes caused by our home made goal nets sinking mid match. The water polo teams were all male, which was fortunate because a number of fouls were frequently committed, for example ankle grabbing and sinking.

All events in those days were amateur and strict rules on this status were believed to apply. I happened to have earned some money swimming out to sea for a film being shot in Aberdovey, North Wales, whilst I was doing National Service in the army. On returning home after completing the last part of my army training I was advised not to mention this fact, as I would no longer be classed as an amateur. However petty this may sound, it was the result of standards set in those days (early 1950s). Apart from these rules I believe most of us got a kick out of being amateur swimmers belonging to a good club and the amount of people using the lake, members and other swimmers, was phenomenal.

Apart from the activities in the water the lake became a focus of social gathering as we spent many hours sunbathing, reading etc. after swimming.

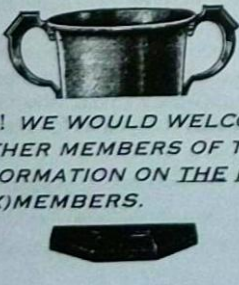
I have great regrets that the lake has become so restrictive and unchallenging with diving boards, water chute and rafts removed and deeper water out of bounds, resulting in no length swimming or diving, in fact deprivation of enjoyment for anyone who wishes to swim, except the very young – what a great loss! I, of course understand this is done as a precaution against litigation in the event of an accident.

My thoughts go back to the people who ran Maldon Swimming Club, maybe things would be different if they had been able to influence the drastic decisions made recently to alter the use of the lake. Unfortunately the Club disbanded long before these events took place.

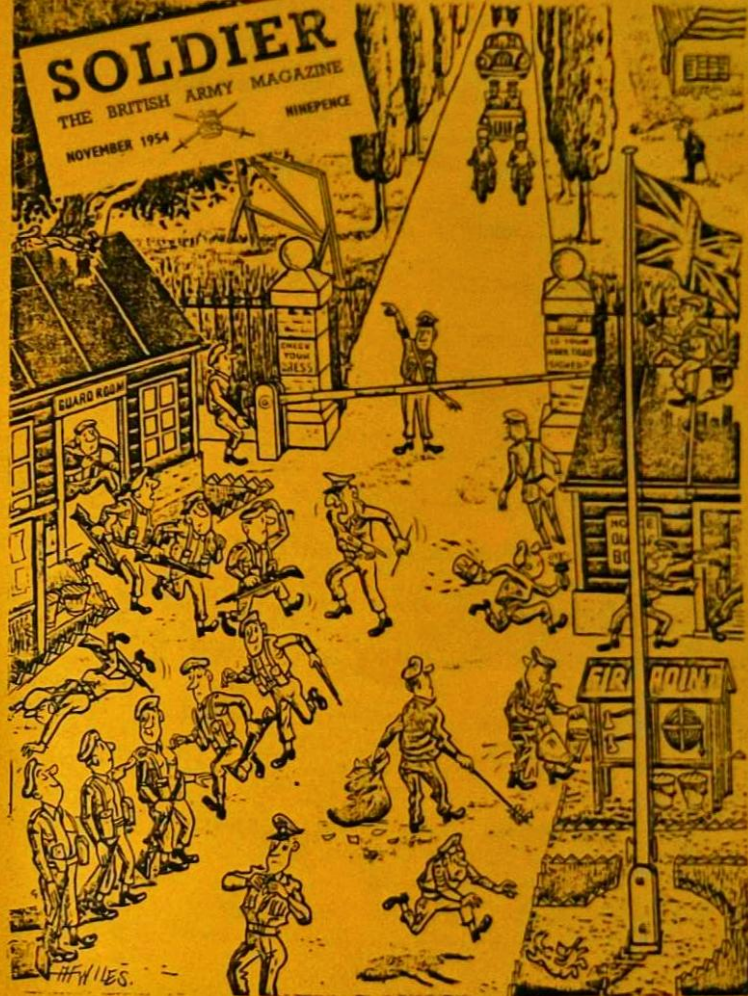
When the water polo team ceased to exist, for some reason I became custodian of the team hats. My youngest daughter Erica took a fancy to the red satin goalkeeper's hat when she was very young and sometimes wore it at bedtime! Many years later when she emigrated to Australia her elder sister Clare packed it secretly in her luggage. On reading about the forthcoming exhibition at the museum I requested its return and she was able to bring it with her when visiting England with her husband at Christmas 2000. I was glad it had been treasured so carefully and speculated on its influence in her interest in swimming. We witnessed her doing a very impressive ocean swim as part of a 'Half Iron Man' triathlon event in Australia last summer.

I am pleased to be able to donate a set of water polo hats for the exhibition.

Eric Willsher
Member of Maldon Swimming Club – early 1950s



THANK YOU ERIC! WE WOULD WELCOME FURTHER COMMENT FROM OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SWIMMING CLUB AND LIKEWISE, INFORMATION ON THE ROWING CLUB AND ANY SURVIVING (EX)MEMBERS.



**WE INVITE MEMORIES OF
HOME GUARD EVENTS,
SERIOUS OR AMUSING,
FROM EX-MEMBERS.**

WANTED

VOLUNTEER CARETAKER TO LOCK/UNLOCK ON MOST (BUT NOT EVERY) OPEN DAY. SEVERAL STEWARDS 'DO IT THEMSELVES'.

MALDON ROWING CLUB HISTORY, CUPS & RECORDS.
VOLUNTEER CORRESPONDENT WELCOMED!

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