

# THE PENNY FARTHING

The Newsletter of Maldon District Museum Association

*'Compressed' extract from  
MGC letter re Registration*



## THE MUSEUM REGISTRATION SCHEME

Administered on behalf of

Re:source: The Council for Museums, Archives & Libraries by

23 August 2002

Mr PJ Lacey  
Maldon Museum  
47 Mill Road  
Maldon  
Essex CM9 8AR

MUSE  
5 Honey Hill  
Bury St Edmunds  
IP33 1RT

Dear Paddy

### **MUSEUM REGISTRATION: Maldon District Museum RD 778**

Thank you for the additional information that you submitted regarding the above, which was considered by a Registration Panel appointed by Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries on 15 August. The Panel agreed to award the status of

#### **Full Registration**

I would like to congratulate the Museum on the hard work that this award recognises. Registration demonstrates the Museum's long-term commitment to good practice in its work, and is recognised as an indicator of responsible management by many funding bodies, including the Heritage Lottery Fund and Area Museum Councils.

The Panel recommended that continuing the programme of improvements to care of collections, together with increasing access to the displays should be priorities for the Museum's governing body. MuSE would be pleased to offer advice and support towards these projects.

Please note that the Museum is now responsible for maintaining the Registration standard and for reporting any changes likely to impact on its Registration status to Resource via MuSE.

Yours sincerely

Simon Davies  
Registration Assessor

From your Chairman

The saddest news from the Museum's perspective is the removal of Penny and Ken Cook at the end of July from their Maldon house in Victoria Road to a new home in Suffolk; but the good news is that as Life Members they will no doubt retain their interest in our Museum Association.

Penny has been our Accessions Officer since our move to the Promenade Lodge in 1996 and has had the unenviable task of keeping track of the whereabouts of all our artefacts as well as receiving new items, whilst at all times juggling with the restraints resulting from our shortage of suitable storage. This she has done with great charm and diplomacy; for example, it is not easy to refuse somebody who is trying to present a much-prized sewing machine to the Museum when she (Penny) knows that there are already three in store with little prospect of them all going on display. Equally, dealing with the donor of an item expected to be displayed by his/her next visit can likewise be difficult.

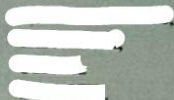
Penny has mastered the documentation that is required when accepting items and has established systems for recording them. The Museum is well on the way to receiving full registration by the Museums and Galleries Commission and if this is achieved it will be largely due to Penny's hard work in this field. It is good to learn that the team of Judy Betteridge, Betty Chittenden and 'Liz Willsher will carry of the good work, with Penny on the end of a 'phone acting as a consultant.

Ken, too, has done much for the Museum, especially in the matters of display such as the remounting and updating of the linear History of Maldon boards in the long hall and also by contributing in many ways with his photographic and IT skills. This includes much work on a Website for the Museum to be launched in the near future with Ken as our Webmaster!

To mark their departure the Committee, on your behalf, commissioned a painting of the Promenade Lodge by our local artist, David Lloyd. This was presented to Ken and Penny with every good wish for their move and for their future happiness in their new home.

*Paddy Lacey*

Dr. P Lacey,

  
11<sup>th</sup> August 2002

Dear Paddy & Committee Members,

I am writing to thank everyone, friends and colleagues, for the lovely water colour painted by David Lloyd. I am absolutely delighted with your gift and think the painter has caught the character of the building extremely well. The gift will also serve as a fitting reminder of all the happy hours spent in the service of Maldon Museum, thank you all very much.

As you know, it was a real wrench to leave both Maldon and the Museum, but I believe that Liz, Judy and Betty will make a wonderful team and serve the Maldon Museum very well indeed. I have told the "girls" that I will do anything that I possibly can to help fill the "gap" and I will of course, stay in contact with the accessions team as long as necessary.

We are slowly getting ourselves sorted out here in sunny Suffolk, although I do believe that as fast as we manage to empty and house items from cardboard boxes, another half dozen boxes appear to materialise to take their place! I think it may take a little longer than expected to get shipshape. The house also seems to have dramatically shrunk since our previous purchasing visits!

Thank you all again for the lovely gift and also for all the many cards and good wishes sent here to us from Maldon. We would be pleased to receive anyone to our new home if you should venture this far into Suffolk, so I do hope we may look forward to a visit from some Essex adventurers!

All take great care of yourselves,

love from

*Ken & Liz*

**"Ken and Pen"**  
**The Cooks will be surely missed.**

*After all these years, both being involved in local, largely historical affairs, it is difficult to imagine why the Cook partnership should 'up anchor' and sail away to Halesworth, but Halesworth must have something going for it as Maldon lost and Suffolk gained two invaluable members as July ended.*

*Ken and Penny have both been actively involved for much of their time, in at least one, sometimes all, of the three main historical charities - The Maldon Society, Archaeological Group, and of course, our Maldon Museum. Of these the Museum will in particular be sad to lose Penny as its Accessories Officer, but pleased to receive 'Li' Willsher as at least a temporary replacement. Ken too has from time to time been of service to the museum.*

*Penny has been involved since 'Spindles', Church Walk days and in addition to accessions, the records of which have been meticulously kept, she has been a most dependable and cooperative steward, accompanied when needed, by Ken. She has, from time to time, been able to return the favour when one of Ken's interests has needed that extra hand.*

*To say much more would be to embarrass them both, so for now we wish them all the very best and look forward to their future visits to us.*

~~~~~  
10.310702  
~~~~~

### Stewards 2003

As a voluntary organisation, when compared to others, we find that we are exceptionally fortunate in having so many reliable stewards and they really are appreciated because without them we fail to operate.

Unfortunately we all become less able with age and that fact alone is steadily robbing some of our more experienced members. Others, to our regret, move too far away and leave serious gaps in the schedules.

If you can join our stewarding band - no drums or trumpets required - do please contact Lynda, and the sooner the better as she's not keen on writing 'help me' letters.

### THE ROYAL AIR FORCE IN ESSEX

--An insight into its activity in the Maldon and surrounding district--  
....'Borrowed' from a display in the Museum in 1979....

The earliest air activity in the area was based at the Noel Pemberton Billing flying field at South Farnbridge but no flying took place from there.

Flying proper did not take place in the area until the advent of German Zeppelin raids in 1916, when public opinion forced the Royal Flying Corps to set up home defence squadrons. One of these was No.37 Squadron which was formed on 15 September 1916 with headquarters at Woodham Mortimer and flights at Goldhanger, Rochford and Stow Maries. There was also an advanced landing ground at Burnham-on-Crouch. On the night of 16/17 June 1917 Lt. L P Watkins, flying a BE12 from Goldhanger, shot down a Zeppelin L48. During this period a Zeppelin dropped bombs on Maldon.

With the end of the first world war the Royal Air Force started to contract in size and the various airfields were closed down, the last one being Stow Maries, from which No.37 Squadron moved to Biggin Hill on 17th April 1919. After this, the only aircraft to be seen in the area were R.A.F. aircraft from Hornchurch or North Weald, joy-flying aircraft or airliners.

In 1936-37 the R.A.F. built a bombing range on the Dengie Flats. This brought numbers of R.A.F. aircraft into the area. The aircraft using the range started with the bi-plane era of 1930, continued through the World War II aircraft and on to the post-war Meteor Jet. In 1952-53 the United States Air Force started to use the range. This use continued through the F86 Sabre and on to the F100 Super Sabre which were using the range when it was closed in 1963. The constant use of this range for nearly thirty years has resulted in Army and Royal Navy Bomb Disposal Teams making numerous visits to the area.

With the outbreak of war, increasing numbers of R.A.F. aircraft were to be seen and with the start of the Battle of Britain large numbers of German aircraft on their way to bomb London passed through the area. This inevitably resulted in a number of crashed aircraft, many resulting from the dog-fights which took place.

.....cont'd

Work started on 25th January 1941 on a Night Fighter station with three tarmac runways at Bradwell Bay. This station opened on 28th November 1941 whilst still under construction. Flying did not commence until April 1942 with the arrival of No.418 Squadron Royal Canadian Air Force, flying Boston III aircraft. This squadron carried out the first operational patrol from Bradwell on 16th April 1942 when Plt. Off. Stabb and his crew carried out a bombing mission, and No.418 squadron was the first of 27 squadrons to be based at Bradwell, made up of one each from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Poland, three from Czechoslovakia and the remainder British. All these squadrons formed part of the R.A.F. and operated within the Fighter, Night Fighter, Intruder and Air Sea Rescue rules.

The Bradwell airfield was used by large numbers of R.A.F. Fighter Command Spitfires as a forward refuelling base for operations over enemy-occupied Europe. With the increase in allied air activity over occupied Europe the airfield was used as a diversional base for damaged aircraft and for bad weather diversions. In these roles it was visited by nearly every type of operational aircraft used by the R.A.F. and the United States Air Force.

An unexpected visitor arrived 02.30 hours on 18th April 1944 in the form of a Junkers JU88 Night Fighter which belly-landed believing he was in France. Another German visitor was of a more sinister type being a V2 Rocket which landed on the North-West/South-East runway making a crater of 25 yards. This incident occurred at 15.34 hours on 30th January 1945.

On 9th May 1945 six Mosquitos of No.151 Squadron R.A.F. and six of No.456 Squadron Royal Australian Air Force were the first aircraft to fly off the liberated Channel Islands at 16.00 hours.

On 18th July 1945 the Station became No.2 Armament Practice Station and continued in this role until it was placed on care and maintenance on 30th November 1945. One of the last aircraft to land before the station was closed was a USAAF C47 Dakota with General John Lee, Eisenhower's deputy on board. This aircraft landed by using FIDO, being thereby the only airfield open within 150 miles at the time due to fog.

During the building of Bradwell Power Station the main contractor landed aircraft on the airfield.

.....cont'd

With the coming of peace air activity in the area decreased but numbers of R.A.F. Meteors and also 'planes from the two Royal Auxiliary Air Force Squadrons based at North Weald continued to use the Dengie Flat ranges, These squadrons were disbanded in 1958.

Large numbers of civil airliners and light aircraft operating particularly from Southend airport pass over the area, but comparatively few service aircraft. The U.S. Air Force base at Wethersfield was the only service airfield left in Essex, although there was military flying by the Army Air Corps Helicopter Squadron at Colchester.

*The Museum exhibition in 1979 was aimed at highlighting some of the aviation activities in Maldon and the surrounding district in the previous 63 years, and thanks were recorded to The Maldon & Burnham Standard, Mr D. Swindale and others for their help in providing and displaying exhibits.*



*Passed to MDMA by a WW2 Ex-RAF  
Air Gunner who wished to be unnamed.*

### REQUIEM FOR A GUNNER

My brief sweet life is over  
My eyes no longer see,  
No summer walks,  
No Christmas trees,  
No pretty girls for me.  
I've got the chop,  
I've been shot down,  
My nightly ops are over,  
Yet in a hundred years  
I still will be eighteen.

*Anon.*

## 'A Valuable Find'

Thanks to the Maldon & Burnham Standard for publishing in 'Postbag' of June 6th a letter from Mr & Mrs Colin & Jackie Hamilton of Heybridge, which reads...

"We felt we just had to write to let everyone know how good the Maldon Museum is at the entrance of Promenade Park (if they didn't know already).

We visited (almost reluctantly) during the last bank holiday weekend, feeling we were being 'supportive' and expected to find a few dusty books and some pictures of old Maldon.

Well, nothing could be further from the truth - we were completely taken aback. They have collected lots of genuine quality artefacts given to them by local shopkeepers etc, and all displayed so well - there's a small bakery with an original oven, a taxi waiting room complete with customers, a 1940's sitting room, some interesting information on local families such as the Bentalls and the Sadds and lots more.

Did you know about the lady novelist from D'Arcy? - we didn't - it's fascinating. So many rooms with a different theme to each one.

The people who work there have a good knowledge of Maldon and its history and are happy to fill you in with any details you may be interested in, or leave you to browse. It was a real 'find' - and all for £1!"

.....and a big 'thank you' to the Hamiltons. Nice to receive unforced appreciation.....

### ROYAL GUNPOWDER MILLS VISIT

Tuesday Oct 8th 2002 time 2.00pm to 4.30pm  
Royal Gunpowder Mills, Waltham Abbey, Essex  
Cost £4.50 includes Tea or Coffee

This half day site visit will include a tour of the museum, archive and library at the Royal Gunpowder Mills. You will get a chance to meet the staff and here about their current projects. This event is organised by Hertfordshire museums, but Essex museums are welcome to attend.

Please contact Sue Davies to book if you are interested telephone 01992556649 or email [sue.davies@hertsc.gov.uk](mailto:sue.davies@hertsc.gov.uk)

Name..... Organisation.....

Address.....

Email..... Phone number.....

### 1st Maldon Cub Pack (1940?)

We are indebted to the Maldon & Burnham Standard for printing this picture on May 19th 1983, and to Member Frank Collings for his permission to reproduce it. Several of the pack are still resident, a few have sadly passed on, others are untraced, and we shall be grateful for any information relating to Derek Kiddman, David Martin, ?? Richardson, Tony Bentley, Tony Edwards, ?? Rushbrook, T. Harrington, and the name Twoler should of course read Towler.



HERE'S a photograph that will doubtless bring the childhood memories flooding back for many a man.

Pictured in what looks like someone's back garden are the boys of the 1st Maldon Cub Pack, with their leaders Lennie Seville (left) and Fred Everard.

The photograph was discovered in the back of a drawer by Mr Frank Col-

lings, of Dorset Road, Maldon, and he believes it was taken in the early 1940s.

His brother Bob is now 51 and he is pictured in the pack at the age of about ten.

The boys used to meet in the old parish hall, which is now rebuilt as the town's Post Office.

Pictured back row, left to right, as far

as Mr Collings knows are: Bob Collings, Derek Kiddman, Jimmy Simmons, Don Barrell, Dick Filby, David Martin, Richardson, Lawrence Hedgecock and Tony Bentley.

Front row, left to right: Tony Edwards, Don Hedgecock, Rushbrook, Terence Hedgecock, T. Harrington, Irwin Blowers and Weston Twoler.

# Arthur Simpson

21<sup>st</sup> November 1916 - 20<sup>th</sup> January 2002

Scientist, community activist,  
nature lover, comrade and friend



## The Late ARTHUR SIMPSON Ex President

Our late President Arthur Simpson died on the 20th January, as reported in Newsletter No.29. Since then, his wife Renata and family have compiled a comprehensive publication of Arthur's life. It covers thirty two pages which, you will agree, is too much to include in an issue, or indeed a series of issues of the 'Penny Farthing'. It will, instead, be available on loan to members who put their names and addresses and 'phone numbers on cards or envelopes marked clearly *Arthur Simpson* and post them in the Museum door. The Accessions Officer will then reissue it in the order in which the requests are received.

### Really?....I don't believe it!

This narrative is as told me, more or less verbatim, and takes us back to school days in the probable year 1940/41, and approaching end of term exams. About half a dozen of us, mixed male and female in varying ratios gathered to study (quite seriously despite sniggers) sometimes on 'The Extension', sometimes by the swimming pool, on 'The Wick', Beeleigh, or even in Wood Corner, which was then quite a popular public walk which, like so many other areas, has become overgrown due to lack of use.

Anyway, on this occasion we had settled down on a grassy bank and were, as stated, quite seriously studying, and had been for some time, when some of us became conscious of a gentleman, dressed in Edwardian style clothes, plus-fours, tweeds and all, who walked towards us alongside a newish fence, stepped over the nearby stile, and disappeared, dog and all. How many of us had actually seen this cannot now be remembered, but the alarming fact was that he had made no noise, had ignored us completely, as had his dog.

We had previously heard of unusual occurrences in Wood Corner, embellished by the suicide which had taken place in the pond at the Spital Road end of the wood, but none of us knew of any 'proof' yet here it was; ...or was it? Does anyone else recall any such event in Maldon, or even this actual sighting?..... and if anyone has any doubt whatsoever, it may still be possible to contact other members of this school team!

## THE ENDURING HIGH STREET

W.Geo.Ginn Esq., J.P.

### Part 3.....

In this the last article of the series we endeavour to show how, in spite of everything, the High Street survives, and in doing so shall inevitably have to refer to buildings already dealt with in previous articles, but perhaps the reader will forgive us for that.

We proceed from the 'top' end of the High Street to the 'bottom' - that is from the highest point to the lowest, commenting as we go. First we look at the section to Coach Lane.....

Here on the North or 'odd' side we have an unbroken facade of buildings some dating from the 14th Century and all Protected Buildings except No.5 which probably should be. On the south side the story is very much the same, all being Grade II except Nos. 16 & 18. The oldest is Nos. 4 & 6 which is really one building dating from the 15th century. On the whole this stretch has suffered little from demolition and it may be that Nos. 16 & 18 are younger because they stand on the site of the old "Saracen's Head", a 15th century inn demolished, it is thought, in the 18th century. Altogether this section still retains much of its old-time air.

From here to Market Hill we are unquestionably in the commercial professional and historical part of the town, dominated by All Saints' and the Moot Hall, the Blue Boar and the Kings Head. The oldest structure by far is the church. It is not known exactly how long it has stood here but the latest possible date for its construction is estimated at 1170 and probably much earlier. It is certainly contemporaneous with Maldon's first Charter of 1171.

In the stretch to the Post Office (ex Parish Hall) and King's Head there are only two buildings not listed - Nos. 17 & 41 - but neither detracts from the general appearance. This is an area well worth lingering over - always keeping attention on the upper stories and roof-lines. If you can succeed in blotting out the garish ground floors and the obtrusive traffic it is possible to think oneself back to an earlier age. Early morning is the best time to do this, especially on a Sunday.

Unfortunately, as we have previously commented, between King's Head and Chequers Lane much has been lost by fire on one side of the road, and commercial development on the other. However, excepting Woolworths and Barclays Bank on the south side, all the buildings are listed and still worth more than a fleeting glance.

Moving down the High Street on the north side we have St. Peter's and the Church House, and then a gap in the Listed Buildings until we come to Nos. 69 - 73. The intervening shops are mostly in sympathy with their neighbours, and it is a shame that Powell's old shop, a most impressive three-gabled mid-sixteenth century building should be so garish; otherwise it makes a perfect complement to the fifteenth century adjoining Swan with its gabled cross-wings and balcony.

Drawing a veil over the 'modern development' on the south side we come to No. 84, a Listed Building of 17th century construction and all that remains of the original row of three timber-framed dwellings. It initiates a group of small dwelling houses stretching to and including No. 94, all mostly of 16th century construction and all timber-framed.

Beyond them lie Nos. 106 to 110, comprising a group of 17th century timber-framed cottages; and then skipping No. 112 we have the "Gables", a three storey building of comparatively late construction (19th century) flanked by two two-storey buildings one of which is co-eval with "Gables" and the other antedating it by a hundred years.

On this side there are just two more groups worthy of a second glance though they are not thought worthy of Listing. Nos. 118 and 120 were a pair of semi-detached private residences until well into the present century with front gardens and a low wall to the street. That role is now completely obscured by the ground floor additions of the present day Paper Shop etc. Next to them the group 122 - 126 which have a long history and which was once known as "Nottingham" were so damaged by fire in 1910 that the rebuilding makes them virtually contemporary.

On the other side of the road from the "Crusty Loaf" to the Rose and Crown we have an imposing group well worth a second look. 101 and 103 together form a single building of 16th century origin, fully timbered. No 105, "Hazeldean", next, is a most imposing 19th century double-fronted town house. The adjoining "Maldon and Burnham Standard" offices, likewise double-fronted (although I suspect the central doorway to be a late addition) dates from the 18th century and is of brick construction. But what can be said of the Rose & Crown that is not obvious from first glance? Well - two things perhaps. One, it is a fully-timbered 16th century building; and two, it has a facade which has been much altered over the last three hundred years but still manages to look authentic.

Adjacent to the Rose & Crown on the 'lower' side of Butt Lane we have a group of buildings from No. 111 to 125, not very impressive but in character with this part of the High Street and authentic with the old inn. All are Listed (except Nos. 113 & 115) the earliest (No. 111) being 16th century, the others dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. We have to go to Nos. 177 and 179 - now a single shop - to find the only other Listed Buildings on this side of the road, and they date from the 16th century.

On the opposite (or 'even') side we have a large group of 16th century houses (Nos. 140 - 144) all Listed and timber-framed with cross-wings. Interesting is the cart entrance situated in the middle.

A little further down we have a group of recently restored houses presenting a good appearance, namely Nos. 160 - 166. The first three are late 16th century or early 17th and are timber framed and plastered. No. 166 dates earlier - from the 15th century, and is described as a small L-shaped hall house with a cross-wing, timber framed and plastered. It is worth going to the rear and looking at the roof line of them all - this way one can appreciate the L-shape of No. 166.

If we now add the Ship & Anchor (17th. century) to the list we shall have mentioned all of note in this part of the High Street 'below' Wantz Road. There is much other 'old' property too still left but not of a quality to make it worth while drawing attention to them, and we leave the High Street on a rather subdued note.

One last observation. When walking along this (or any) High Street raise your eyes. Look up! and see what remains of Maldon's architectural heritage. And then Look out! to see that we don't lose any more. The whole High Street is a Conservation Area, much of it, as we have seen, additionally protected by Listing and all subject to Planning control. The Maldon Society has over 150 members all interested to see that unsuitable development does not ruin what is left. It is registered with the Civic Trust and as such ranks alongside Parish Councils as a Statutory Consultee and receives details of all planning applications, inspects them, and where thought desirable makes its views known to the District Council, which they are bound to take into consideration when determining the application. More power to its elbow!!!

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**STOP PRESS - The Table Sale , Bank Holiday Monday 26th August, realised a fantastic £246. Our sincere thanks to all who contributed in any way, but in particular to members Mike & Madeline Bennett who contribute far beyond our expectations.**

## Local History in Book Form

W. Geo. Ginn Esq. J.P.

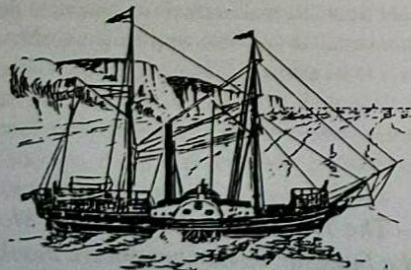
A valuable asset to our recent intake of accessions is a collection of books, prepared, typed and bound by our member W.G.Ginn, now proud to proclaim his age as eighty six years, thereby numbered amongst our older members and actually accepted by the majority of true Maldonians, after his fifty years of service to the district, as 'one of them'.

The list, in date of completion order...

1988	Rivers Blackwater and Brain (2 Copies)
1988	The May Family of Maldon
1992	Fitch's Maldon (100 years on)
1997	The Maldon Ring Road
1997	Maldon. East of Jacob's Cross
1999	Maldon. West Square to Jacob's Cross

They are not, at this moment in time, freely available for examination, but this can be arranged for members who make application to the new Accessions Officer, when appointed and 'settled in'.

16180702



The First P. & O. Steamship, the William Fawcett, 1829

## The First Lightning Rod

*Those who understand such things believe that Franklin was the inventor and constructor of the first lightning rod, but in this particular everybody is mistaken. The first lightning 'catcher' was not invented by the great philosopher, but by a poor monk of Scuttenberg, Bohemia, who put up the first rod on the palace of the curator of Preditz, Moravia, on June 15th 1754. The name of the inventive monk was Prohop Dilwisch. The apparatus was composed of a pole surmounted by an iron rod, supporting twelve curved branches, and terminating in as many metallic boxes filled with iron ore, and enclosed by a wooden box-like cover, traversed by twenty-seven iron pointed rods, the bases of which found a resting place in the iron box. The entire system of wires was united to the earth by a huge chain. The enemies of Dilwisch, jealous of his success, excited peasants of the locality against him, and, under the pretext that his lightning rod was the cause of the excessive dry weather, had the rod taken down and the inventor imprisoned. Years afterwards M. Melsen used the multiple pointed rod as an invention of his own.*

## The INTRODUCTION of ENVELOPES -

*Before Sir Rowland Hill introduced the Penny Post, envelopes were little used, as a double charge was made for a paper inclosed in another, however thin each might be: even the smallest clipping from a newspaper necessitated an extra fee. The use of envelopes became common after May 6, 1840, when stamped and adhesive envelopes were introduced. The first envelope-making machine was invented by Edwin Hill, brother of Rowland Hill; and De La Rue's machine for folding envelopes was patented March 17, 1845. The invention of envelopes has been attributed to A. K. Brewer, a bookseller and stationer of Brighton, about 1830. He had some small sheets of paper on which it was difficult to write the address; he invented for these a small envelope, and had metal plates made for cutting them to the required shape and size.*

New York Telegram



## WHY SIXTIES ?.....

*So why is an hour divided into sixty minutes, each minute into sixty seconds, and so on.....? Simply and solely because in Babylonia there existed, by the side of the decimal system of notation, another system, the sexagesimal, which counted by sixties. Why that number should have been chosen is clear enough, and it speaks well for the practical sense of those ancient Babylonian merchants. - There is no number which has so many divisors as sixty. The Babylonians divided the sun's daily journey into twenty four parasangs, or 720 stadia. Each parasang or hour was sub-divided into sixty minutes.*

*A parasang is about a German mile, and Babylonian astronomers compared the progress made by the sun during one hour at the time of the equinox to the progress made by a good walker during the same time, both accomplishing one parasang. The whole course of the sun during the twenty-four equinoctial hours was fixed at twenty-four parasangs, or 720 stadia, or 360 degrees.*

*The system was handed on to the Greeks, and Hipparchus, the great philosopher, who lived about 150 B.C. introduced the Babylonian hour into Europe. Ptolemy, who wrote about 150 B.C. and whose name still lives in that of the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, gave still wider currency to the Babylonian way of reckoning time. It was carried along on the quiet stream of traditional knowledge through the Middle Ages, and, strange to say, it sailed down safely over the Niagara of the French Revolution. For the French, when revolutionising weights, measures, coins, and dates, and subjecting all to the decimal system of reckoning, were induced by some unexplained motive to respect our clocks and watches, and allowed our dials to remain sexagesimal, that is, Babylonian, each hour consisting of sixty minutes. Here we see again the wonderful coherence of the world, and how what we call knowledge is the result of an unbroken tradition of a teaching descending from father to son.*

Max Muller 1890

## PAREING THE FINGER NAILS -

*An old formula, allegedly from Saxon times, reads.....*

*Cut them on Monday, cut them for health.*

*Cut them on Tuesday, cut them for wealth.*

*Cut them on Wednesday, cut for a letter.*

*Cut them on Thursday, for something better.*

*Cut them on Friday, you cut for a wife.*

*Cut them on Saturday, cut for long life.*

*Cut them on Sunday, you cut them for evil.*

*For all of that week, you'll be ruled by the devil.*

Dun Lamon 1890

## "Brown Bess"

(The Army Musket from 1700 - 1815)

*We may have included this in an earlier edition, but if so, make no apology for including it again, being not only colourful, but typically English*

*In the days of lace ruffles, perukes and brocade  
Brown Bess was a partner whom none could despise -  
An out-spoken, flinty-lipped, brazen-faced jade,  
With a habit of looking men straight in the eyes -  
At Blenheim and Ramillies fops would confess  
They were pierced to the heart by the charm of Brown Bess.*

*Though her sight was not long and her weight was not small  
Yet her actions were winning, her language was clear:  
And everyone bowed as she opened the ball  
On the arm of some high-gaitered, grim grenadier..  
Half Europe admitted the striking success  
Of the dance and routs that were gifts of Brown Bess.*

*When ruffles were turned into stiff leather stocks,  
And people wore pigtailed instead of perukes,  
Brown Bess never altered her iron-grey locks.  
She knew she was valued for more than her looks.  
"Oh, powder and patches was always my dress,  
And I think I am killing enough" said Brown Bess.*

*So she followed her red-coats, whatever they did,  
From the heights of Quebec to the plains of Assaye,  
From Gibraltar to Acre, Cape Town and Madrid,  
And nothing about her was changed on the way:  
(But most of the Empire which then we possessed  
Was won through those years by old-fashioned Brown Bess).*

*In stubborn retreat or in steady advance,  
From the Portugal coast to the cork-woods of Spain,  
She had puzzled some excellent Marshalls of France  
Till none of them wanted to meet her again:  
But later, near Brussels, Napoleon no less  
Arranged for a Waterloo ball with Brown Bess.*

*She had danced till the days of that mighty day -  
She danced till the dusk of more terrible night,  
And before her linked squares his battalion gave way  
And her long fierce Quadrilles put his lancers to flight:  
And when his gilt carriage drove off in the press,  
"I have danced my last dance for the world" said Brown Bess.*

*If you go to Museums - there's one in Whitehall -  
Where old weapons are shown with their names writ beneath,  
You will find her, upstanding, her back to the wall,  
As stiff as a ram-rod, the flint in her teeth,  
And if ever we English had reason to bless  
Any arm save our mothers: that arm is Brown Bess.*

## Remember?.....

How many remember when Maldon was Maldon; - modest, slightly feudal, unpretentious, largely undeveloped, and a place many of us liked to live in, regardless of conditions, hardships, our parents' money problems and how best to amuse ourselves ?

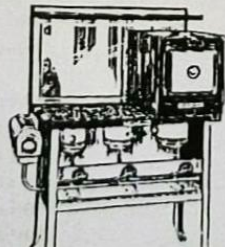
We've been listening to some of our 'over-70s', and if we were all now to be relocated to those days between the wars, most of our younger members would be flabbergasted, but we who actually lived in those days knew little else and were perfectly content with our lot. We would still be; after all, we knew nothing else.

Imagine life as it was (say) pre-1930 -

What! - all those houses with no flush toilets? in many local and rural areas the night-soil wagon used to change the toilet buckets every few days; then came the day when the handlers even sprinkled around Jeyes Fluid or similar to disinfect the toilet, often to be found in an out-house at the bottom of the garden, if we had a garden. Much joy and amazement when contractors eventually dug channels for sewer pipes behind each house and actually fitted flush toilets. We rapidly began to feel middle-class. Roads such as our High Street, and even Farnbridge Road, it seems, were first to be equipped with this latest modern marvel, but others, as for example in King Street, had soil pipes with open access to a conveniently situated hole in the seat above. There seems to be a singular lack of knowledge on these matters, so if anyone can provide interesting details on what went on, and when, in areas of, and around the town, we shall be grateful. It all goes into our records for posterity.

Then what about water? - early on, many went to pumps and drew their own; then, broadly within the borough boundary each house was fitted with running water and one tap from which all water used was drawn. More detail forthcoming? No bathrooms in the average house, but a zinc bath in the scullery or kitchen; even in front of the kitchen grate when that was no longer required for the day's cooking. Imagine what was involved in carting in the bath, a long one if affordable; otherwise a 'slipper' (?) bath to sit in with legs out, or perhaps the same bath as mother used for her washing.

Then came the water, run from the tap and carried, a bucketful at a time to the



bath, meanwhile heating hot water in another bucket atop the kitchen range or on a gas ring if we had one. The childrens' bath night over, mother and/or father took over, children off to bed and, if useable, the same water was topped up with hot, and emptied when finished with, by which time it was near cold and could be emptied onto the garden vegetables, any soap contained in the water discouraging garden pests, without the expense of modern sprays with their integral dangers.

It seems we all remember gas lighting and cooking. Earlier, we remember paraffin oil lamps, and paraffin oil ovens, some quite smart and efficient. These were gradually replaced by, perhaps, two gas lights downstairs, one gas point for a gas ring or oven, and nothing upstairs where most used candles or paraffin lamps. Then along came that modern miracle known as electricity, and the local electricity company fitted perhaps two lights downstairs free of charge, and any others to be paid for, (which few could afford anyway) plus a single socket for electrical accessories. Many added to the supply and fitted their own wiring and points with the inevitable status symbol, the electric clock; some fittings were made with drastic results in the light of absolute inexperience; but we learned fast!

Then came the wireless, in different stages according to one's knowledge and ability to afford. The lucky ones already had a crystal wireless set by about 1930 and, to quote one member - "Father brought home a borrowed set complete with crystal, coils, aerial and headphones. We thought it was magic and my brother and I almost came to blows as we both of course wanted first go. Father immediately clamped down and mother went first, after the aerial had been strung out the length of the garden, using the linen line to increase the length. This was followed by a simple battery set which needed a regular change of accumulator, and less often, a high-tension battery, all putting an extra strain on the family finances, so no-one was permitted to use the set willy-nilly."

The town was still recovering from the after-effects of the first world war and maimed and disabled ex-soldiers were quite common-place. In Cross Road, one gentleman had his face badly disfigured, and children looked at him in horror, but it was a lesson we none of us forgot once we were old enough to understand. Another, from Woodham Mortimer direction, shell-shocked, could often be seen herding imaginary prisoners-of-war, shouting and swearing at them, whilst others could be seen as tramps, going from door to door begging for food or money with which to buy food. Some of these were too proud to go to the local 'spike' for



assistance and perhaps a bed for the night, preferring to sleep rough on a park bench or 'down the chase' and risk being 'pinched' by the police.

On the subject of Police, and with some respect, how many remember old 'Painey?' It was said that only the people of Maldon had saved him after he was discovered by his Serjeant asleep in Smith's bakehouse off the High Street at about midnight. Possibly the most popular policeman this town has enjoyed....and we've had several of Painey's ilk.

Many of us remember old 'Nooger' the milkman and his early cart on which he carried a milk churn and measures which he pushed around the town. Also Jimmy Keeble, from Wintersleet who was quite a popular figure and could often be seen, not with his pony and cart, but his old bicycle.

Nooger too, progressed from his hand-cart to a pony and trap. And what about 'Rayner' and his green-groceries trundled round on a 'barrow boy's barrer'? There were too, the fishermen who used to come to the doors, usually at the week-end, to sell their overnight catches, or perhaps to sell from their smacks on the foreshore.

It's all finished, and who is to say that we're any better for it. Healthier? Perhaps! Wealthier? Doubtful! Wiser? Certainly not! But it all fell away before the second world war, and is unlikely to ever come back. There'll never be shrimps as tasty as those straight off the smack, caught overnight and cooked aboard.

There were other subjects which could have been added to this narrative, but space forbids. Given sufficient subject matter, with detail received from members, it would be interesting to follow up with 'non-domestic' reminders such as Parish Hall plays and concert parties, with the Minstrels on the Prom, and of course Carnivals and dances. All contributions of interest will be welcomed by the "PennyFarthing" and published in due course.

16190702

**ALAN BINGHAM**  
**MAKER**  
**THE FRIARY MALDON**

### Maldon and the Death of Queen Victoria

The Queen died, aged 81 years, at 6.30 pm on 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 1901. Fifteen minutes later Albert Edward, the Prince of Wales, telegraphed the Lord Mayor of London.

*My beloved mother, the Queen, has just passed away surrounded by her children and her grandchildren.*

The Essex Chronicle of 25<sup>th</sup> January appeared with black edging, a sign of national mourning. It contained this report.

*Many were moved to tears at Maldon, where signs of mourning are everywhere visible. Several engagements were at once postponed - a theatrical company gave up their booking and the Volunteers put off a route march.*

A letter from Mr Harcourt of 56 Farnbridge Road in the correspondence columns of the same edition struck a sour note.

*A committee of the Maldon Corporation [he believes the Water Committee] met and transacted business on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> of January under the chairmanship of the Mayor, Alderman Sadler, without regard for the Queen's death. Was there anywhere else where such an act of disloyalty would have been sanctioned?*

The editor felt that this was a matter requiring comment.

*There was a difference between an open and a closed meeting - a view, which may not be shared. The annual Hilary term dinner at Gray's Inn was held on the same evening and the 'Health of the King' was drunk.*

The following Friday's Chronicle reported in a column, headed 'Making amends', that the Mayor, Alderman Sadler, had made the following announcement on 25<sup>th</sup> January at the Moot Hall.

*We the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors of the Borough of Maldon in special meeting assembled on behalf of the Burgesses of the Borough respectfully beg to tender to your Majesty and all other members of the royal Family our sincere and heartfelt sympathy in the bereavement that you have sustained.*

The Mayor continued.

*During her late Majesty's long and beneficent reign progress, improvement and liberty had marked every step. With all the royal dignity that she had maintained, she had shown the tenderness of a womanly heart, a motherly love, not only for her own family but for her people at large. She had been a wise ruler and in her court she had set an example of goodness worthy of imitation by all her subjects. It was with pleasure that they could recall the memory of*

*such a life, and they felt that although the earthly crown and sceptre had been laid on one side the immortal life and the never failing crown were hers now to enjoy. He was sure that they all read with profound thankfulness the words uttered by her son on his accession to the throne that it was his desire to follow in the footsteps of his illustrious mother.*

Alderman Clear seconded this proposal.

*He spoke of the fitness of the close of Her Majesty's beautiful life, a very short illness and a comparatively painless death.*

Alderman Bentall spoke briefly.

*He joined all the sentiments expressed.*

The resolution was then carried in silence the members standing.

Some weeks later the council met again and one agenda item was this.

*A letter received from the Lord Mayor of London asking for money to provide a suitable memorial to Queen Victoria.*

The Mayor, Alderman Joseph Sadler opened the discussion.

*He would like Maldon, one of the oldest Boroughs to show its loyalty in this way.*

Councillor Anderson disagreed.

*Instead of a memorial some charity would be better. There are many hospitals languishing for support with cots and wards empty for lack of money. I would be prepared to give a sovereign to an institution but not to a stone statue!*

The Deputy Mayor, E.A.Fitch added.

*As the money is to be sent to London we shall not have much voice in the matter.*

Councillor Bunting concluded the discussion.

*I do not think that one should collect money in a working neighbourhood such as Maldon.*

The matter was left in abeyance.

— Research by Paddy Lacey at the Local History section of Chelmsford Library. —

Carol Young of 'The Archers of Ambridge'  
and  
The Cullen Family of 'The Elms', Ulting  
(as recalled by Derek Maldon Fitch in his  
Fourth contribution to the Penny-Farthing)

Thomas Cullen of The Elms, popular farmer and member of the Witham firm of seed merchants, lived here from 1919 to 1939. Farming was mixed arable and they had six horses, one milking cow, pigs and store cattle.

Tom fell in love with Violet Grout (looking after aged parents) from the adjacent farm of Stock Hall. Knowing that Violet's parents would resent the marriage each secretly left home one morning and Tom aged forty six and Violet thirty four, tied the knot at Maldon Registry office at 8.30 a.m. Violet's mother threw a fit, but her father commented "There is a bottle of champagne in the cupboard". Thomas told his father who arranged delivery by horse and cart, of a brass bedstead.

With all this drama it is perhaps not surprising that their eldest child of three (Anne, Walter, and Margaret) took up acting. For thirty years Anne played the part of Carol Gray (Grenville/Tregorran) in 'The Archers'.

At the end of a lane beyond Doe's Corner and The Elms is Stock Hall Farm. Here lived Walter and Sophia Grout with their exceptionally large family of 21 children. Fourth youngest was Violet. Fortunately the house was large, for 15 to 20 sat down to Sunday lunch. Sophia had married at eighteen and after the birth of each child the family doctor would bring her a keg of oysters and send her to the seaside for a holiday. The little Grouts attended Ulting school.

At twelve, Violet made bread for all the family. Later, her mother sent her to Bourne and Hollingsworth in London to learn the 'rag-trade', paying one shilling a week for her apprenticeship and keep. In the first World War she joined the 'V.A.D.' returning afterwards to care for her parents. Three brothers lived to their nineties, two sisters to be 101 and 102, but sadly her own husband Tom died in 1939.

In 1997, shortly after taking part in a television discussion, this grand old lady, Violet Cullen, died aged 108. It was the passing of my oldest friend, since the writer has known the family all his life. Violet was a very old friend of my mother who in her earlier days had lived not far from them at Heybridge Hall.

Anne has been married three times -

Firstly to Neil Tuson who was the producer of 'Dick Barton, Special Agent', a radio drama in which Anne had a part; they lived at Witham.

Secondly to Monte Crick (Dan Archer) who died of cancer in the Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. They lived in the Cotswolds at Aynho.

Thirdly to Roland Offord who has since passed away.

Just two years ago I was staying with my cousin, Canon John Fitch, who lives at Gt. Yeldham, and it was on the last day of my stay when he took me on a drive round North Essex passing through Sible Hedingham, over the river Stour and stopping outside the church of Long Melford. As we entered the church there were three ladies at the bookstall: my cousin appeared to know two of them and at that point the other lady stepped forward from the shadows and looking at me said "I know you; it is Derek". Was then that I realised it was Anne. "But you should be in Bury St. Edmunds" I said, "and certainly was not expecting to meet anyone I knew in Long Melford church".

Anne had lived in Bury St. Edmunds with Roland, but after his death had moved to Long Melford where she now lives.

Some older readers may remember Anne, since she was educated at the Chelmsford County High School for Girls.



## Railway Memories back on Town track ~ by Tom Parkes, Maldon & Burnham Standard ~

It might come as a shock to young –and not-so-young– people in Maldon that the town once boasted not one but two railway stations.

But a pair of dedicated historians have been hard at work in a bid to make sure our lost railway heritage is not forgotten for ever.

Geoff Albury and Mike Bennett are hoping youngsters will take advantage of their holiday leisure time to come and take a look at a recently set up attraction in Maldon District Museum.

As well as a faithfully recreated buffet bar, platform and ticket office, the new display features a true-to-life scale model of Maldon East Station as it was before the axe closed by the Dr. Beeching cuts in 1964.

The town's other terminus is remembered only in the name of an industrial estate –West Station Yard– and all that remains of its opposite number are two engine sheds, now the home of timber merchant Brown Brothers.

But for Mr Bennett the job of mapping the long-gone track and platforms was not as hard as it might seem. In the days when the Tesco roundabout at the bottom of market hill was a level crossing and the station itself occupied the next junction, the museum curator was a young apprentice joiner living in Station Road.

His uncle was a signalman and Mr Bennett was able to hop on the footplate and ride down the rails to Witham whenever he felt like it.

Remembering the layout of the area was an easy task - but for the modelling itself, the services of Mr Albury were required.

With a string of accomplished scaled-down versions of local landmarks - including the Promenade Park's Marine Lake in bygone days - already gracing the museum's other displays, he turned his attention to the painstaking work of recreating fine details of engines, carriages, and the station building.

Mr Bennett said the station deserved to be remembered; "When it was shut, all the local machinery from Bentalls, and timber - tonnes and tonnes of it - went up to London and all over the place" he said. "It should never have been closed".

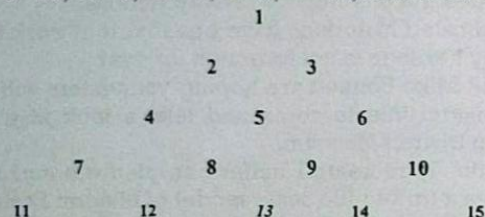
If you are interested in sharing the memories, you can visit the Museum next to Promenade Park on Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays between 2 pm and 4 pm and on Saturdays and Sundays from 2 pm to 5 pm.

### Opening Hours

*We're all aware, (aren't we?) that the Museum is open on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 2 pm until 4 pm, then Saturdays & Sundays from 2 pm until 5 pm. These hours would appear to be ideal for Maldon BUT Thursday is not well supported, and we would be grateful for any thoughts, suggestions, and comments on the matter. A note to the Stewarding*

### THAT OLD PYRAMID PUZZLE

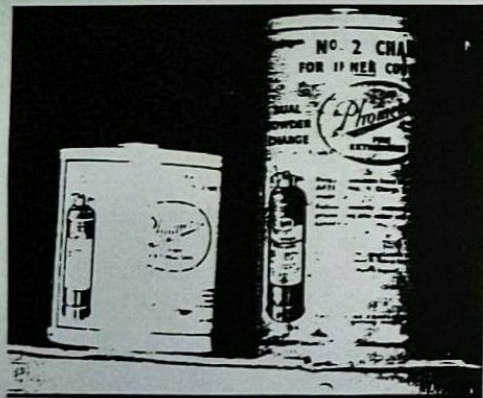
Have you ever done it or couldn't find the solution? Here it is, f.o.c.!  
Take fourteen marbles, place one in each hole, except No. 13., then move  
6 to 13; 2 - 9; 12 - 5; 15 - 6; 7 - 2; 1 - 4; 14 - 12; 11 - 13;  
3 - 10; 13 - 6; 10 - 3; 3 - 8; 4 - 13; that should clear it.



#### On Approval?.....

What to a collector like himself would be a most interesting discovery was recently made by member Robert Orth who came across it in his garage shed, still in the original cardboard container, which had never been opened.

Two "Phomene" fire extinguisher refill tins which arrived via Maldon East Station at least fifty years ago were revealed. The smaller of the two is in gold, the larger in a sky blue, both of which reproduce in black and white. Being old, they have long since been replaced by more modern units, but they did serve to remind us that our own fire extinguishers were again due for service, which has been arranged.



#### Benjamin Disraeli and the Trousers

A railway navvy working on the new line between Maldon and Woodham Ferris gave his name to the Court as Benjamin Disraeli. He was charged with stealing a pair of trousers value 5s., the property of another navvy, named Bamforth. After evidence had been taken, the prisoner in reply to the charge, said: I did n't take them with no felonious intent, gentlemen; I was in drink at the time, and we were together, and I only took them for a lark. The Chairman stated that as the prisoner had been in custody nearly three weeks the bench would only sentence him to one day's imprisonment, but would urge him to give up the drink. Prisoner: I'll try, gentlemen.

### The Tollesbury Skull

Amongst our many mysterious objects in store is a skull, apparently placed on 'permanent loan' to the Museum by the Rev. Keith Lovell, Vicar of Tollesbury, in January 1987. When displayed it was accompanied by the narrative as below. We have attempted to contact Mr Wayne without success but the Vicar we have spoken to personally, as there must surely be some doubt as to the age of the skull - 1600 years - and the question of the skull surviving for that long in tidal conditions.

This skull is on permanent loan from Tollesbury Parish Church, to whom it was given by Mr. Terry Wayne of Tollesbury who, with his son found it in the mud on the saltings in the parish, in May 1986. It is thought to date from 400AD, and is the skull of a Roman woman. The upright position in which it was found suggests that she was presumed to have been a witch. She was probably tied to a stake and left until drowned by the incoming tide.

#### An Improvement Grant, and our grateful thanks.....

On the 15th August 2002 we attended an interesting meeting of representatives of voluntary organisations from throughout the district, held in the Maldon District Council's Training Room, to receive from the Chairman, Cllr Mrs.P.A. Channer, grants made from the Council's own Community Scheme. She was assisted by Cllr Mrs M.J. Peel, Chairman of the Community Services Committee and Community Services Manager John Hughes.

Our grant of £250 was accepted with thanks as a contribution towards the cost of replacing our unpredictable photocopier, bought second hand about six years ago, and now past its sell-by date. The local press took notes and photos which could prove to be amusing considering the difficulty in compressing the assembly into a small enough area.

# Maldon District Museum Association

Registered Charity 301362

President - Mr. Derek Maldon Fitch

Vice President - Mr L.F.Barrell

## Committee - to A.G.M. 2003

Chairman.....Paddy Lacey.....

Vice-Chairman .....Tony Tullett.....

Hon. Secretary..... to be advised

Hon. Treasurer.....Tony Tullett.....

Membership Sec:.....Colin Barrell.....

Committee.....Lynda Barrell.....

Committee.....Mike Bennett.....

Committee.....Ray Brewster.....

Committee.....Penny Cook.....

Committee.....Molly Middleton.....

Committee.....Judy Tullett.....

Committee.....Elizabeth Willsher.....

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Curatorial Adviser...Nick Wickenden Esq.

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Museum Reception Telephone No..(01621) 842688  
(Answerphone when museum unattended)

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Please note that opinions expressed are those of the individual contributors, and not necessarily agreed by the Association  
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