



Issue 4

December 1995

The Penny-Farthing

The Magazine of Maldon District Museum Association



**MEMBERSHIP
RENEWALS DUE**

Form enclosed
in this issue.



*The Museum's New Home
Help needed for clearing the garden and courtyard!*

Features on:

Registration

Constitution

Prom Lodge

Maldon Priory Display



Merry Xmas



From The Chairman

Happy Christmas to all our readers!

Firstly, some dates for your diary:

Thursdays December 7th and 14th:

Victorian evenings of course - please come to Spindles, buy some charity Christmas cards, on the ground floor, and then come up stairs to see the display about our new home at the Lodge.

Sunday January 7th 1996:

This has been set as Museum Garden ing Party Day - we are going to tidy up the undergrowth around the Prom Lodge - please phone Penny Cook on 852511 to say what hours you can spare on that day.

I would like to arrange some more group visits to other museums in Essex: when you fill in your renewal form can you please tick those visits you would be interested in; Also it would be good to have one or two social evenings where the members can get to meet and talk - perhaps a cheese and wine evening or a wine tasting and quiz night. - Again tick on your renewal form -- and let's have your ideas.



All the best for Christmas
and the New Year,
Terry Chapman



OUR FUTURE ADDRESS...

'THE PROMENADE LODGE', 47 MILL ROAD, MALDON, ESSEX, CM9 5HX.

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Your COMMITTEE...

Chairman.....Mr.T.C.Chapman	01621 852749
Vice-Chairman...Dr. P. Lacey	828001
Hon. Secretary..Mr.L.F.Barrell	852749
Hon.Treasurer...Mr.A.F.Tullett	858690
Members...(Duties & 'Phone numbers all as Issue 3)	
Miss K.Buckley; Mrs.P.Cook; Mr.A.J.Froom; Ms.R.Knight;	
Mr.Rbt Long; Mrs.S.Norrington; Mrs.M.Pipe; Mrs.J.Tullett;	
Mrs.E.Vale.	
Council Members Co-opted...	
Cllr.Brian Mead for MDC; Cllr.Mrs Mgt Hurley for MTC.	
Mrs.S.Millidge attends as advisor for MDC (see below)	

Mrs Hurley was recently appointed as the Town Council representative and was welcomed to her first meeting with us on September 19th. Cllr Brian Mead, well versed in museum matters in recent years had, pending Mrs Hurley's appointment, been filling both Town and District roles.

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PROFILE - SHIRLEY MILLIDGE

Shirley is a comparative newcomer to our museum scene and comes with an interesting portfolio of qualifications, all of which should prove to be of value in her dealings with associations such as our own. She is married, has two children, and lives in Tollesbury.

From 1980 to '84 Shirley was at Edinburgh University where she gained an M.A. with Honours in Fine Art and Conservation Studies; from 1984 to '86 she was at Gateshead as a Post-Graduate in Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art on Paper, with Museum and Business Studies.

1986 found her at the University of Ontario in Ottawa, Canada, as a summer intern studying Photographic Conservation, followed by a couple of years in private employ. In 1989 Shirley was in Copenhagen at an International Conference plus summer school on Historic Photographs and Conservation, after which she became a freelance author for MacMillan Publishers.

All of which appears to have stood her in good stead for her present occupation, for in July of this year she joined the Maldon District Council (Mr.Lynn's team) as Development Officer for Museums and the Arts, available for advice on matters on which she is obviously well qualified to speak.

The 'Big Move' was of course the inevitable conclusion of our relatively short stay of three years in 'Spindles', the period being determined by the availability of the next year's rent. An eventful three years which would undoubtedly have been more relaxed had we been assured either of the rent or a secure stable home such as we are now promised in the Promenade Lodge.

For quite a long time we were hopeful of occupying the old Library (in St. Peter's under the Flume Library) which we could have comfortably filled with all the items we have available for display, not all to everybody's taste of course but certainly something for everybody. In the event and at the time of writing the old Library looks like becoming a pawn in the Heritage Centre deliberations and if eventually it becomes a display centre we shall be pleased to contribute from time to time if so requested.

We began our move quietly on the 25th August with a member, his brother and modest hatchback. On the 26th we were still open to the Public most of whom seemed to be aware of the impending move and showed interest in the future. On Sunday 27th at one time there were nine of us busy packing, marking, and conveying to our store. How useful were those who already had knowledge of the handling of (eg) ancient pottery; their experience and assistance was invaluable. On the 28th at one time we had five, and again on the 29th and by then almost all the tedious work was done, and even the birds in their cases were largely cleared by midday Wednesday. On Thursday we relaxed and on Friday the larger and heavier display cases and exhibits were in the main cleared thanks to the assistance of the District Council, whilst five or so members cleared the bulkier books and drawers of papers. Some were left over to the Monday with the blessing of our landlady, and probably a sigh of relief that it was all achieved without damage to the building.

Somewhere in the middle of all this Chairman Terry wheeled the penny-farthing 'cycle through the town to the store and swears he didn't actually ride it. We had considered the possibility of putting the stuffed crocodile on wheels behind him but it might have been misconstrued as being about to attack him from the rear.

As with almost all such 'best laid plans...' well, Monday came and went and so did several more days due to transport problems, but eventually the last few display cabinets, empty of course, were cleared to the Prom Lodge, and we breathed our exhausted farewells to 'Spindles'.

.....
"Experience without learning is better than learning without experience"
.....

...to all those MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS who willingly helped in any way to ensure that our exit from 'Spindles' went smoothly.

...to those whose offers of help we were unable to accept, some because they were not free when needed, whilst others were unable to carry out the sometimes heavy lifting, but are still available for light work. We shall keep these names and 'phone numbers for future reference.

...to the Maldon District Council for making available additional storage and for assistance with our move.

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Extract from - 'ESSEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONGRESS'
Newsletter No. 55

'The Council for British Archaeology has published a survey, commissioned by English Heritage, on Metal Detecting and Archaeology in England, which concentrates on the good and bad points of the 'hobby'.....etc. In Essex the County Archaeological Section and the Essex Curators Group are pursuing a joint initiative to promote responsible recordings of finds and the proper reporting of them to local museums in the wider public interest.'

Essex Congress Local History Symposium
Saturday 20th April 1996 At Christ Church, Chelmsford.
BOOK EARLY TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT !

.....

EXTRACT FROM M.M.A. MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 28TH MARCH 1985

'The Chairman drew attention to the departure of Arthur Simpson from Maldon. He had served on the Committee for several years and had done much valuable work on the Accession book and recording the items the Museum held. It was agreed that a formal letter of thanks be sent from the Association to Mr. Simpson for his work.'

Ten years later Arthur lives in London, is still a very active member, has studied the history of the Friary, and has visited us to discuss his plan of a new descriptive wall chart, for it's educational value.

.....
'He that by the plough would thrive, himself must either hold or drive'
.....

It is to be most sincerely hoped that this, the second obituary in two consecutive news letters is not continued into a third, as the Association can ill afford to lose long-standing members like Bill Chittenden, of whose sad death the majority will already be aware.

Bill was born and bred in Folkestone, and was evacuated for the war years to South Wales, returning to Kent at the age of sixteen. He gained experience in the power industry for several years all over the country, then came from Kent to the early days of Bradwell Power Station where in 1959 he met Secretary Betty Askew. They were married a year later and lived in Maldon.

In 1971 Bill and Betty visited the reopened Museum and bought tickets in a raffle for engraved tumblers, which they won. The engraving commemorated the 800th Charter Anniversary, and was the year Queen Elizabeth II came to Maldon. The win prompted the Chittendens to join the Museum Association and they have been members ever since, but meanwhile they had moved to Latchingdon where both of them were closely yet quietly involved with several charitable organisations, both preferring to avoid the spotlight, although Bill was in fact Church Warden at Latchingdon Church for about nine years.

He was quite proud of his association with the Dengie Activity Group for whom he drove for about ten years, and was still driving for the group when he became ill.

Locally, Bill also enjoyed his long association with The Maldon Society, being Membership Secretary for four years; a Charter Member of Maldon Lions with whom in his fifteen years he filled most official posts; and more recently he became a member of the Maldon Archaeological Group. He usually supported Betty when she acted as Steward in the Museum.

About twelve months ago Bill and Betty did what they had always planned to do, and moved back into Maldon, little realising what was in store. Three months later Bill was suddenly taken ill, and the events of the ensuing weeks are already well known to his old friends and acquaintances. He passed away on the 2nd September 1995; we were represented at All Saints' Church on the 8th.

In Issue 3 of the 'Penny-Farthing' we presented in all detail the amended constitution as sent to the Charity Commissioners for their approval. There is little point in reporting their reply verbatim as the following amendments are in line with that reply....

SO....PLEASE REFER TO YOUR COPY OF 'PENNY-FARTHING' No.3 AND AMEND YOUR COPY OF THE CONSTITUTION AS SUBMITTED, TO READ AS FOLLOWS. NOTE THAT ANY ALTERATIONS OR ADDITIONS ARE IN BOLD TYPE.-

2. Object:

The object of the Association, a Charitable Trust registered with the Charity Commissioners as Charity number 301362, shall be to advance the education of the public by the provision of a museum.

11. Expenses:

Any member may reclaim reasonable out-of-pocket expenses at the discretion of the Committee of the Association.

18. Alterations to the Constitution:

Subject to the following provisions of this clause the Constitution may be altered by a resolution passed by not less than two thirds of the members present and voting at a general meeting provided that the motion to do so is carried by at least half the paid-up membership, whichever is the smaller. The notice of the general meeting must include notice of the resolution, setting out the terms of the alteration proposed.

18a.No amendment may be made to clause 1; clause 2; clause 10; clause 14; or this clause without the prior consent in writing of the Commissioners.

18b.No amendment may be made which would have the effect of making the Charity cease to be a charity at law.

18c.The Executive Committee should promptly send to the Commissioners a copy of any amendment made under this clause.

COPIES OF THE FULL 'APPROVED' UPDATED CONSTITUTION WILL BE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST AT THE A.G.M., OR EARLIER IF REQUIRED.

*****finis*****

'He who rouses a sleeping tiger exposes himself to danger'

REGISTRATION

In Issue No.1 of 'The Penny-Farthing' we outlined the benefits of becoming a Registered museum under the auspices of 'The Museums & Galleries Commission' ('MGC') and interested members may feel it time that we reported on the latest situation in our efforts to become registered.

We studied, learned, considered, discussed, produced, discussed, amended, corresponded, presented, and finally...bingo!...our proposed Acquisition and Disposal Policy was approved by the South Eastern Museums Service (SEMS for short) who preview such items for the MGC. It is dated as from 1st January 1996 for a period of five years which takes us to the 31st December 2000, but a review of it will be considered in the light of practical experience once we have resettled in the Lodge; and on reflection that could take a year or two.

Next requirement is the formal appointment of a Curatorial Advisor. Mr Arthur Wright has for many years been respected and highly regarded as just that, but there appears to be nothing documented even though there probably is, so we wrote to him and his reply will be reported elsewhere.

Equally important is the required Documentation Plan which states what we are going to do, how, and by when. This is being seriously pursued following the 'Documentation for Registration' session on 31st October, a tutorial taken by Kevin Gosling of SEMS who instructs full-time on such matters throughout the Eastern Area. We were well represented including five committee members (see elsewhere for report).

The Acquisition Register follows closely in the wake of the Documentation Plan and here we are hopefully prepared for whatever may come. During the move from 'Spindles' we separated all the accessions records which came to hand. There are some excellent card records, reasonably up-to-date in many respects, with older registers which when taken together give a fairly comprehensive record of stocks, about five hundred items already having been individually renumbered and (presumably) re-labelled. However, all available (ie.traced) records have been 'computerised' with all available reference numbers, so we now have the basis of a system from which an approved Register can be compiled. The computerised records can be grouped into eighteen selections.

It is not suggested at this stage that the computer record is 100% accurate as there are several known instances of items being in store which have not been found on paper, and vice versa. A 100% physical stock check could no doubt resolve those problems, if it were ever possible to find enough willing hands to carry it out.

(cont'd)...

At this point in time we have about five hundred recorded items known to exist but not renumbered, whilst a very large number of pre-war artefacts, not found in store when C.B. revived the museum, have deliberately been omitted from our latest record. Remember, the Museum was in store for about thirty years from early war days until C.B. dared to sort it out again, but if anyone knows the whereabouts of (e.g.) 1914/18 War memorabilia including a German Machine Gun, Shrapnel Helmet, Cartridges, Grenades, Bayonets, and such items we would be most interested. Nor do we expect to find the 'Sovereign Scales' with weights, recorded in 1923, nor the next entry 'Jeweller's Scales' with scruple weights...and etc. Who knows...?

Relabelling is another requirement which will of necessity be carried out when we are able to sort and regroup. Altogether much work to be done, but much of it interesting, and satisfying once completed. Volunteers?.

When we can show that all this is at least in hand, then we can with some justification apply for the next stage of Registration.

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ARTEFACTS OFFICER

Kath Buckley is hopeful of finding work outside the area and feels that she should no longer carry this title, which may call for more free time than what is available to her. Kath therefore resigned the post at the committee meeting on November 21st but continues as a member of the committee and will assist her successor in any way she can. Thank you anyway, Kath !.

Penny Cook's name was mentioned as a possible successor, and met with general approval but Penny was 'on sick leave'. A telephone call to her the following day was met with a cheerful and positive response so, subject to confirmation at the next committee meeting, Penny is the new Artefacts Officer who will be able to call on most of us for backing when required, and if we are lucky, husband Ken won't be too far away either.

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'IT'S NO USE GETTING OLD.....if you don't get artful' (a short story)

Our elderly neighbour was bent over in her deck chair, moving awkwardly forward every few moments as she trimmed the edge of her path with a small pair of grass shears. Whilst she and I talked Robert, her other neighbour, having watched amused from over the hedge at the other side of her garden came round to join us. "Mary" I said "you will never get the trimming done sitting in a chair like that". "Oh Yes I will" she said nudging along; I knew I could be of no help. Impatient of watching her, Robert finally got down on his hands and knees... "Here, give me those clippers", and he started trimming, stopping only when the job was done. "See.." said the neighbour,..told you I'd get it done sitting in this chair".

It might easily have been made boring by some speakers, but Kevin Gosling, Regional Outreach Manager for the East, who is very experienced in such matters made the whole session quite interesting, occasionally amusing, and most of us left the Essex Libraries HQ in Chelmsford feeling more confident than when we arrived; which, on reflection, was what it was all about.

To enlarge a little on that, six of us - Terry Chapman, Penny and Ken Cook, Kath Buckley, Tony Froom and Len Barrell joined about eight others on Tues 31st Oct at 1.30 pm. We would have been joined by Shirley Millidge (MDC) but she was unfortunately out of action for a few days, whilst others found the timing to be most difficult.

However, without more ado, we covered:-

The importance of sensible documentation -and most it is common-sense, particularly to anyone who has even limited experience of book-keeping. The Museum and Galleries Commission Registration Scheme and 'Spectrum', (the UK Museum Documentation Standard).

Entry Records - ie. recording items received.

Accession Records and data security - ie. stock records and copies.

Labelling & Marking - viz. safely without damage.

Indexing, for speedy reference.

Movement Records -ie. where it should be and where it's gone to.

Exit Records -ie. what we did with an item sold, destroyed, donated etc.

Loan Records -viz. received for and lent for display.

Tackling backlogs - How to do what we have already started...

(SEE SEPARATE ARTICLE ON 'REGISTRATION')

We left Chelmsford to go our own ways about 5.00 p.m.

'ONE OF OUR PENNY-FARTHINGS IS MISSING!'

No!...Not one such as Terry pushed (minus stuffed croc), but Issue No.1 of this little magazine. We have numbers two and three, and will make sure of number four, but in our haste to satisfy initial demand we overlooked our own archives, and they should surely be complete if anywhere should....? So please, if you can spare a copy of 'Penny-Farthing' No.1, simply drop it through the door of No.44 Farnbridge Road (Hon.Sec), or hand it to any member of the committee, and ...thank you very much !.

Tony and Judy Tullett attended a one day training course on 'Caring for your Collections' organised by Museums in Essex. The Course was held on Saturday 18th November 1995 at the Burnham-On-Crouch Museum and was presented by Deborah Boden. Other delegates at the course included -

Henry Potten, Curator of the Burnham Museum, which mainly specialises in social history, and archaeology.

Mr & Mrs Weaver from Saffron Walden Museum, including the Fry Art Gallery, with a framed collection from the Bardfield School of Artists and a collection formed from Bawden's work - mainly prints and watercolours.

Mrs Margaret Stone from Brightlingsea Museum; this museum specialising in local maritime and people, and housing the Wakeling collection.

The morning was spent investigating the cause of damage from high humidity and light. We were shown how to colate Relative Humidity with various pieces of equipment including a Whirling Hygrometer, and were instructed in their use. Ideally artefacts of all types should be displayed and stored in areas where Relative Humidity is controlled.

Light levels came next, with information on materials which were either sensitive or non-sensitive to light. Ceramics, glass, stone and metal are all examples of non-sensitive materials. It seems that darkness is the secret for keeping artefacts in good condition, with tungsten lighting being the least damaging form of illumination. There are of course various devices for measuring light strength and also the amount of ultra-violet light which objects may be absorbing.

The afternoon session of the course centred on how to clean exhibits and keep them in good condition, without risking too much damage when moving, packing or storing items. An interesting video from the National Trust was shown in relation to these subjects.

In conclusion, we realised the extent to which museums have now moved on in the care and conservation department and how much we need to catch up in this area. Certainly a worthwhile exercise, especially as we are in the process of setting up a new museum, and hopefully some of the information gained from attending this course may be put into practice in the relocation of the Maldon District Museum.

Whilst every other body seems reluctant to leave this 50th anniversary of VE day the thought occurred to us, for no particular reason, that with the formation of the museum having been approved in 1921, 1925 might produce an interesting picture 70 years later, so we searched out the Minute Book and it is recorded that on December 10th 1925 the Committee met, with Mayor Clarke in the Chair; and present - Cllrs Furlong and Tanner (only).

The usual formalities and routine matters were of little interest, then we came to 'Acquisitions' - most meetings seemed to record donations under this heading - December 10th revealed a truly mixed bag.....

- a) Portion of rim of a pot dredged from Southey Spit, Northey Island.
- b) Fragment of a pot (?) Romano-Celtic from the North Doubles.
-- both presented by Mr Josh Wright --
- c) 11 Fragments of pottery found in a trench at Goldhanger,
-- presented by Cllr Furlong --
- d) A Turkish hand grenade, Bean and Pod from Portugese E. Africa.
- e) A Turkish stiletto, and piece of rope from a mystery ship
-- presented by Mr George Davis, 62, Spital Road --
- f) A Tooth from a female skeleton found in a sarcophagus under the floor of the Chapter House at Beeleigh Abbey.
-- lent by Miss Dedman --
- g) 3 Rosettes, made for and worn at the Wedding festivities of the late Queen Alexandra March 10th 1863.
--presented by Miss Gower --

Several of these items are still to be found in the museum, albeit with difficulty at this time when many artefacts are wrapped and/or boxed for storage, to be displayed again when the Prom Lodge can be occupied.

WE ARE NEVERTHELESS ABLE AND VERY PLEASED TO ACCEPT SUITABLE ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF LOCAL AND HISTORICAL INTEREST...CALL THE CHAIRMAN ON 772103 OR HON. SEC. ON 852749, OR ANY MEMBER OF COMMITTEE, ALL DETAILED IN 'PENNY-FARTHING' NO.3.

AND WHAT ABOUT COLLECTIONS ???...

WHILST ON 'WANTS' we would be happy to open up a page or two for members who do not wish to give but to receive. Say you, as a collector of (e.g.) teapots, cannot find one which plays a tune when you pour, then tell us and we will include that in the next issue, absolutely no charge. If conversely you have one for disposal, same service offered.

and for those to whom the title immediately suggests that the Curate has been up to some hanky-panky we hasten to assure you that it refers, in a few words, to the 'Care and Management of the Museum Collection'.

To quote from the M.& G.C. Guidelines - 'In the case of a small museum which does not have the services of a professionally trained and/or experienced curator, the museum's governing body should make arrangements to receive advice from a Curatorial Adviser on a regular basis...etc...'

We are pleased that Mr. Arthur Wright, Curator of the Central Museum, Southend-on-Sea, our Curatorial Adviser for many years, has confirmed that he will continue and '...would be very happy to act in that capacity..etc'.

Meanwhile we continue to attend meetings of the Essex Curators' Group, and were represented in recent months by Terry Chapman, Kath Buckley, Len Barrell, and twice by Shirley Millidge (once alone and once with Terry). The Group selects a different venue each month, by mutual agreement.

and A REMINDER....

a) ...that the next issue of 'Penny-Farthing' will probably be in March/April and will be the last before the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING in MAY (see amended Constitution). You may wish meanwhile to consider any matters you feel should be included for discussion, and of which notice should be given in the magazine. Please advise the Hon. Sec. or member of committee in good time.

b) ...that Annual Subscriptions will be due for most of us before the 31st March, and a suitably convenient renewal form is enclosed. Despite the appearance of 'all quiet on the museum front', when we do get mobile again there will be plenty to do, much of it of considerable local interest. So if your neighbour or friend is interested, enrol him/her/both now; the annual subs are important but the individuals are indispensable.

c) ...that in the very near future we shall be looking for assistance to 'stock check' in an endeavour to complete the excellent records begun by previous committees. The Accessions Officer will be pleased to receive names of volunteers; alternatively advise the Hon. Sec. who will pass you on.

THE VICTORIAN EVENINGS...

ARE THIS YEAR ON DECEMBER 7TH AND 14TH, and we will NOT as hoped, be displaying in the Promenade Lodge. INSTEAD, Merle has made available one of our old rooms in 'SPINDLES', for which we are most grateful as we had nearly run out of possible alternatives. To be fair, we would almost certainly have accepted an alternative offer had 'Spindles' not been available with it's additional attractions between now and Christmas, although time may prevent us from carrying out our original intentions.

YOU WILL FIND US ON THE 1ST FLOOR OF 'SPINDLES' ON THE VICTORIAN EVENINGS

On the Ground Floor and already widely known, is a CHARITY CHRISTMAS CARD SHOP selling 'CARDS FOR GOOD CAUSES', which last year returned to the Charities, (who have to pay for the cards from the proceeds) a minimum of 82p in every £1. i.e. direct operating costs were only 18p in the £.

Also on offer will be SELECTED SECOND HAND CLOTHING, on sale from now until Christmas at very favourable prices.

'SPINDLES' WILL BE OPEN FOR BUSINESS SIX DAYS A WEEK (NOT SUNDAYS) FROM 10.00 A.M. UNTIL 4.00 P.M. PLUS THE 'VICTORIAN EVENINGS', AND ANY DISPLAY WILL BE OPEN FOR VIEWING ON AND BETWEEN BOTH EVENINGS, POSSIBLY FOR LONGER.

'MUSEUM GARDENING PARTY'

If only we could repeat the tented event of yesteryear when we were able to invite the Maldon Society and the Archaeological Group to join us 'on the lawn' for a couple of very pleasant hours. A repeat in 1996 did someone suggest ?...A trifle optimistic perhaps, but not out of the question.

First of all we have to prepare our garden; not a mighty challenge nor one which needs a gang of experts at this stage, but the ground to be cleared needs willing clearers; it has been suggested thus - (and we quote)...

'How about working off a few Christmas calories ?'

Join our New Year Gardening Party.

Sunday Morning January 7th

If you can spare an hour or so and would like to help please contact

Penny Cook on (0621) 852511

Refreshments served between 10 a.m. & 2.00 p.m.

It could be fun !



Sponsorship Needed!



The new museum site needs a lot of work and money spent on it to - in addition to the £10 000 or so that the MDC is spending on the structure of the building we need to fit out the inside with new displays (e.g. a shop front and a period room), create new signs etc, and generally create a top class museum for Maldon. It is hoped to turn the rear garden / courtyard into a display area for some agricultural instruments and other bulky items that could be made to withstand the weather (anyone got a cannon?), but again this means a lot of time and money spent on things such as paving blocks, and I think it has been suggested, a flag pole. Now the dedicated hardcore of members are always willing to put in a lot (or indeed in some cases, most), of their spare time, but we need sponsors willing to donate things in return for acknowledgement and publicity for their company or whatever.

If you know someone with company connections who could supply things such as:

- decorating materials,
- paving blocks,
- flag pole,
- PC computer system,
- display cabinets,
- etc, etc, etc, then we would like to talk to them!



Please contact Terry Chapman (772103),

Len Barrell (852749),

or Tony Tullett (858690).



SNOW IN THE SUBURBS



Every branch big with it,
 Bent every twig with it;
 Every fork like a white web-foot;
 Every street and pavement mute;
 Some flakes have lost their way, and grope back upward, when
 Meeting those meandering down they turn and descend again.
 The palings are glued together like a wall,
 And there is no waft of wind with the fleecy fall.

A sparrow enters a tree,
 Whereon immediately
 A snow-lump thrice his own slight size
 Descends on him and showers his head and eyes,
 And overturns him,
 And near inurns him,
 And lights on a nether twig, when its brush
 Starts off a volley of other logging lumps with a rush.

The steps are a blanched slope,
 Up which, with feeble hope,
 A black cat comes, wide-eyed and thin;
 And we take him in.

THOMAS HARDY

