

THE PENNY FARTHING

The Maldon District Museum Association Newsletter



This butcher's van belonging to Maldon & Heybridge Co-operative Society was in service during the 1940s. Like many local businesses the Co-op's clothing, butchery, hardware and grocery departments used mobile shops for many years to serve outlying villages.

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

In the company of several committee members it was my pleasure to attend the launch of the "Essex and the Sea Touring Exhibition" at the National Motorboat Museum in Wat Tyler Country Park, Basildon recently. This Touring Exhibition has been assembled by the coming together of ten museums in Essex, including ourselves and our good friends from the Combined Military Services Museum, to produce a maritime exhibition telling the story of Essex and its coastline from seaside resorts to lifeboat rescue and natural history. The Exhibition will be touring the contributing museums ending its journey with us at the Promenade Lodge in a year's time.

The Museums in Essex Committee, that has co-ordinated this unprecedented project and hosted the associated meetings and study days at the Essex Records Office, has produced publicity for it which, in unforgettable cinematic terms features the phrase - "Coming soon to a museum near you!" It is pleasing to note that our museum's contribution was put together by our youngest volunteer, Julia Barnes. Thank you Julia for your work and computer expertise!

The dates of the Bentall Bicentenary celebrations at the Museum of Power with the reunion of Bentall family members and of Bentall employees are rapidly approaching, and may well have passed by the time you read this. We have passed on all the names that we know but if there is still time and you think that you, or any one you know, may have been missed please contact Terry Ruggles by email, thruiggles@hotmail.com, or David Parsons, Tel: 01621 892335. The exciting discovery of a second Bentall car that has been restored in Australia, destroys the notion that the Bentall tourer, that will be at Langford in September, is the sole remaining example of the make but it is satisfying to realise that had the Bicentenary not been proposed we may never have known of this marvellous yellow wizard of Oz! As far as Maldon Museum is concerned the desired outcome from the Bicentenary is that the permanent display that will follow on this year's special feature will better represent the importance of this local firm to our district.

Paddy Lacey

Our cover picture shows a butchery van belonging to Maldon Co-op (circa 1940)

Penny Farthing is dependent upon your contribution.

All articles, items, photos, comments and letters are welcome:

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Copy deadline for the Winter issue of *Penny Farthing* is 5 November

Happy Gerst Monath

No you haven't missed an important new celebration, we are only wishing you a happy September - assuming of course that you are reading this issue of *Penny Farthing* in September and understand the early Saxon language.

Prior to the Norman invasion of 1066, Maldon was inhabited by the Saxons who had their own culture, laws, religious beliefs and language. As befits a farming people, their names for the months were mostly descriptive terms for the times of the year when particular farming or weather conditions applied.

So, **January** was known either as Wolf monath; that time of year when wolves were most ravenous and roamed the countryside searching for prey - particularly unguarded sheep; or, in some parts of the country, Aefter Yale (after Yule) being the period directly following Christmas. Monath of course was the word for month.

February they called Sprout Kele monath. The time for gathering kelewurt a plant much used for making broth.

March, naturally enough, was called Illyd monath - the stormy month. Alternatively it was named after an early Goddess, Rhede monath.

Because the prevailing wind was from the east during **April** the month was called Oster monath.

May a time of feasting and rejoicing for the spring was when farmers could recommence milking the cows three times a day, so became known as Trimilki monath. Similarly, **June** was called Weyd monath because the cattle could once more feed in the meadows.

July was called either Hey or Hay monath because hay making could begin; or Lida Aefter because it was the second month after the sun began its descent.

August, the month after harvest was known as Arn monath and **September** was Gerst monath because it was the barley month, named from the liquor beerlegh made then.

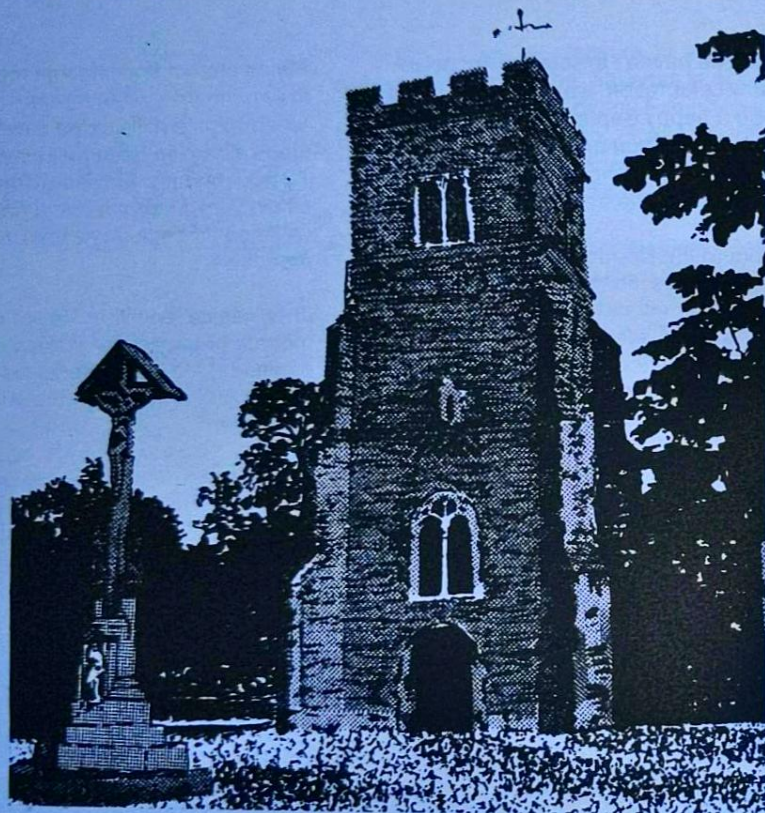
Col or Wyn monath was **October** when wine would be made and **November**, the beginning of winter storms, was Wint monath.

Originally **December**, a time of feasting in honour of the God Thor, was known as Aerra Geola monath, the time when the sun turns its glorious course. Later, with the spread of Christianity, it became known as Heilig monath - Holy month.

The above clearly shows the derivation of some words we still use today. So now you know some early Saxon this should be most useful when you next encounter one in Maldon High Street.

Maldon's Historic Churches

With due acknowledgement to Maldon District Council's leaflet "Historic Churches"



St Peter's, Goldhanger

This church stands in the centre of the old village of Goldhanger at the top of Fish Street, so called because it leads down to what was once the head of the creek where fishing smacks used to unload their catch. It is therefore appropriate that the church is dedicated to the patron saint of fishermen, St. Peter.

The present building dates from the 11th century although the massive tower and buttresses, which are constructed of stone, were not added until 300 years later.

The north wall, with two original 11th century windows, contains a good deal of flint rubble while the chancel wall has Roman brick quoins and pudding-stone in the lower walls. The south aisle was rebuilt late in the 14th century, and the south chapel became the burial place of the Higham (Heigham) family who lived from the early 15th to the middle of the 16th century. It also contains a tomb-chest with black cover plate and one remaining brass which is the monument to Thomas Heigham who died in 1531.

A History of Maldon Grammar Schools

(part vi - conclusion)

From notes by William John Petchey B.A.

Prior to 1768 the Bailiffs and Aldermen of Maldon had the right of appointing the masters of the school through the will of Ralph Breeder, however in that year the Corporation was dissolved after illegal elections so there were no longer any acting Bailiffs, Aldermen or Head Burgesses (Councillors). This situation lasted until 1810 when George III granted a new charter.

In 1769 the Rev. Robert Hay, the master of the Grammar School, died and because of the dissolution of the Corporation it was impossible for a new master to be properly appointed. Fortunately two of the charities which supported the school had been reorganised just before the Corporation's demise and the Grammar School was able to continue to function unofficially.

Although the Bailiffs and Aldermen had the right of appointment of masters the property used for their maintenance was entrusted to a group of feoffees (trustees to whom freehold estate is conveyed by formal transfer of possession). When these men who looked after the houses and farm comprising the trust died the last of them usually made the property over to a new group. Thus in 1679 Edmund Whitefoot was the last of the group to whom the property was entrusted in 1621 and he made it over to a group

of feoffees led by Sir William Wiseman. In 1753 yet another group of men received the property and they were able to use it in whatever manner they chose so long as its rents were paid annually as directed by Ralph Breeder's Trust. But in 1795 Jonas Malden the last of the 1753 feoffees died without having created a new trust and so his son (also Jonas Malden) inherited the Breeder Trust property along with his father's personal estate.

Until 1796 the property continued to be properly used, but its administration became muddled through the carelessness of the first Jonas Malden. When Hay died in 1769 the Rev. Joseph Shinglewood was unofficially appointed as master on being recommended to the Plume Trustees by the ex-town clerk.

Shinglewood received all the rents of the Breeder property and also taught the Plume Charity boys. In 1770 he received "Thirty Shillings for teaching six boys to Lady Day last". He was able to assert his position by being a relative of the wealthy Crosier family, corn merchants of London and Beeleigh Mill. He probably did not receive any money from the Wentworth Charity, for although new feoffees had been appointed in 1767, David Crozier of Beeleigh remarked (1777) "but 'twas generally allowed the donation was embezzled".

The Rev. Shinglewood himself used to collect the rents of the Breeder Trust property, and Jonas Malden completely neglected it. Hay had left his housekeeper, Mrs Bickmore, in possession of 66 High Street, and although she paid her rent, she sub-let it to Mr. Askew. When she died he remained in the house but was unaware of the obligations attached to the property, or even of its real owners. In 1796 Shinglewood retired whereupon Mr Askew refused to pay rent to the new master Mr Bugg.

Mr Eve of Pleyhill farm also refused to pay rent in 1797 and a family named Chippendale who had moved into 68 High Street believed themselves to own the house! As there were none of the feoffees alive and it was forty-four years since they had been appointed, no one in the town knew of the arrangement and it seems that the second Jonas Malden (who lived in Putney) was unaware that he was in charge of the property of the Breeder Charity. Neither was there anyone to appoint Mr Bugg even as unofficial master, and he only appears to have received money from the Plume Charity for teaching its boys.

In 1810 the position was curiously reversed. The new Aldermen and the Mayor (who

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replaced the Bailiffs under Maldon's new charter) appointed a master for the Grammar School, Mr Francis Waring. However there were no rents to maintain him and, as the Plume Trustees were still paying Mr Bugg, he did not teach at all.

During Waring's time there was also an attempt to completely replace the Grammar School, which had virtually become an elementary school under Hay and Shinglewood, with a specifically elementary establishment.

In 1817 a National School for teaching boys and girls "the three R's" and their proper stations in life was begun in the disused Grammar School room in St Peter's. Dr Plume's building was extended for this purpose and the governors of the new school obtained the Wentworth Charity money and even tried to divert the Plume Charity's educational fund for their own use.

Opposition against this diminution of the Grammar School was led by a Plume Trustee and former Mayor, Alderman John Payne. Preventing the National School from acquiring the right to teach the Charity boys he also persuaded Jonas Malden M.D. (grandson of the first Jonas) to prosecute Mr Eye of Pleyhill Farm for non-payment of rent. Before the case reached court, Mr Eye agreed to pay his rent in future plus the costs of the action.

Here at last was the beginning of the restoration of the Breeder Charity. (although Eye

never did pay costs). Then in 1817 Dr Jonas Malden restored to the Mayor, Aldermen and Head Burgesses of the town the farm at Pleyhill, to be used according to the direction of Ralph Breeder's will once more.

But it was not until 1834 that the two High Street houses were restored to the Charity trustees since their occupants were unaware of the real owners. The Chippendales had lived unchallenged at number 68 for many years and Mr Hearn had taken over number 66 from Mr Askew, so was thus at a third remove from the Rev Robert Hay who was the last proper tenant of the Breeder trustees. In 1834 the Chippendales were exempt of the payment of back rents since they were hardly to blame, whilst Mr Hearn similarly indemnified, became a tenant of the trustees as from Christmas 1833.

Only the Wentworth Charity remained lost to the schoolmaster; the Plume Charity was re-established as a part of the Grammar School's endowment by the Charity Commission in 1834, and in that year it had gained the full receipt of rents from the Breeder Charity. A new master, Charles Fanshawe, was appointed, and the Grammar School began again. But there was something different to the 1768 school - its school room had been lost to the National School.

The 19th century was one of continuous educational reform, witnessing the rapid multiplication of public schools and prosperous town

grammar schools, but Maldon was the victim of a society whose interests in river traffic, agriculture and farming machinery precluded any appreciation of the value of Latin grammar.

Few rich families would send their children to the Grammar School, tradesmen had no use for it, and there were only six foundation scholarships (Plume Charity) for eight-year old children of the artisans. Even then five guineas a year had to be paid for the training in mathematics, geography and history. There were no permanent premises and until the County Council built the present school in 1906-7, classes were held in various places around the town.

In 1834 a room was fitted out at 68 High Street; later the school met in the east end of the Plume Library where the panelling is carved with the boys' initials. Next a house called "Roma" in London Road was used for boarding pupils with the school being held in a shed at the rear. This was about the size of a garage and one of the masters, the Rev. T. L. Pearson, became crippled with rheumatism from its dampness.

By 1895, when the Rev. R. H. Ryland, its last clerical master was appointed, there were only five boys, and the school possessed nothing but this house which "contained a little dilapidated school furniture; but withal so poorly equipped that when artificial light was required the pupils had to bring a candle end and balance it upon their desks".

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Remembering those days, W. J. Samms who from 1895 to 1864 was taught at the east end of the Plume Library by "old Daddy Dunn" (Rev. Salisbury Dunn), he thought it a fine schoolroom "with its dark panelled walls and door opening into the ancient Library, but its fittings were just dreadful, the forms real back-achers. There was no lavatory or sanitary convenience, the Chequers Lane was our playground; it was a schoolroom and nothing more".

Without assistants the master taught Latin, English, Euclid Algebra and History, but the curriculum was not very extensive. Among other engagements the Master was Chaplain to the Union (workhouse) and used to enter up the Chaplain's report book in school hours and one of the boys had to take the book back to the Union. He was also Vicar or Curate of Mundon and now and again he had a funeral to conduct so the boys had a holiday.

In those days there were held a number of Plume's Lectures in All Saint's Church with the Master undertaking some of these. His pupils had to attend in a body, sitting on the cushion in front of the Altar Rail. The boys usually met in Chequers Lane and one of them kept watch for the Master, and after he had gone in they all followed. But first they had to stand in a row and show their hands. If they were dirty, which they usually were from playing marbles or spinning tops and nowhere to wash, they had to hold their hands out palm upwards to

receive two or three strokes from his ferrule - "a thing pliable, either steel or whalebone sown up in leather". School hours were very short, half past nine to twelve, half past two to four. There were five weeks holiday at Midsummer and Christmas, but breaking up days and prizes were non-existent.

Only a small number of schools in England could afford to meet the high costs of education from their fees and endowments and many were forced to accept grants to build and equip new laboratories and classrooms. Maldon Grammar School was unfortunate enough to be poverty stricken by the middle of the nineteenth century.

When in 1895 the Rev. Rylands brought new life to the school, increasing pupils from five to fifty two, appointing Assistant Masters and external examiners, a critical position was reached. He needed a school building and more money but the trustees of the Charities could not finance any costly schemes.

Alderman E. A. Fitch attempted to reorganise the school's resources. A new scheme was sanctioned to administer the endowment and to secure greater permanency. Five governors were to be elected by the Borough Council together with governors appointed by Essex County Council, Maldon Rural District Council, the Plume Charity Trustees and the Senate of London University.

The Charities were still unable to finance the school so the County Council had to take over. They planned to build a Maldon County High School with the Grammar School merged with it. There was an immediate outcry but it was necessary that the school be taken over by the County even at the expense of its long tradition.

New school buildings were built and opened in 1907, suitable for boys, girls and pupil teachers. Mr M. R. Mumford, previously the headmaster of the Grammar School had to apply for the appointment of Head of the new County School. When the establishment first opened for business no girls were admitted, except for 15 female pupil teachers, and it was not until 1919 that girls were accepted.

Even under new management there were difficulties. From 1913 to 1914 the school was closed and Mr Mumford resigned, starting a private school at "The Gables" in the High Street. His successor, Mr S. G. Deed can be credited with guiding the school to its present form.

In each century changes have come to the Grammar School yet it has adapted and retained its identity so that, although it is no longer called a grammar school, it is still the worthy successor to the mediaeval grammar schools of the borough. Ralph Breeder and Archdeacon Plume would surely be proud to see how their dreams for education have flourished.

— ★ —

The Butcher, the Baker and the Candlestick Maker

Adapted from ten leaflets produced by, and available from,
J A Vesey, 9 Littlefield Way, Fairlands, Guilford, Surrey GU3 3JE.



No 6

THE TAILORS

White's Directory of 1848 lists 13 tailors trading in Maldon - just over half of them in the High Street and Wantz Road. However, by 1882 this number had dropped to just four, although it did rise to five during the next 16 years.

James Ashley was born in Maldon in 1831 to James and Susannah (nee Phillips). He was first a tailor in Maldon but by 1881 he was lodging at the Star and Garter public house in Abbey Street, Bermondsey, though his wife, Mary Ann, still lived in Beeleigh Road, Maldon. James died in 1916.

Charles Boyes born in Weedon, Northamptonshire, in 1839, arrived in Maldon sometime before 1871. He lived with his wife Mary in Tenterfield Road and later Maldon High Street. Their only son, Frederick Charles, was a solicitors clerk and also an organist and choirmaster. Their daughter was a milliner. It is not known when Charles died but his wife Mary died in 1898.

Charles Stow Cater, born in 1840, married Harriet Tokley in 1865 at All Saints Church and by 1881 they were living in Tenterfield Road. Ten years later they moved to Wantz Road. A son, Charles, followed his father's trade to become a tailor.

Richard Charles Turner, born in 1824 in Piccadilly, London, had a tailor's shop in Market Hill, Maldon. The date of his death is unknown.

Frederick George Green was born in Little Totham in 1827. His wife, Hannah Maria, was born in Norwich. His premises were at 13 High Street, Maldon, where beside being a tailor he also traded as woollen draper, clothier and hatter.

Charles William Blanks Handley, born in Maldon in 1849, was the son of Job (the town's water bailiff) and Caroline (nee Blanks). He became a tailor in spite of being blind in one eye. He married Sarah Ann Selby (1838-1943) in 1881 in Maldon, although he was living and working in Hammersmith at the time. She was the daughter of James and Sarah Ann (nee Brewer). Charles died in 1927.

Charles Meadows born in Diss, Norfolk, in 1841 and married Eliza from Tolleshunt D'Arcy. They lived in Spital Road and later Gate Street.

Thomas Thorn was born in Ipswich, Suffolk, in 1818. He and his wife Catherine lived in Crown Lane. Thomas died in 1894. Their daughter was working as a maid in Porchester Terrace, London in 1881. A son, Thomas, became a timber merchant's clerk.

* ———

Other Maldon tailors include:

Amor, John
Amor, Kate (Miss)
Bales, Harry
Balls, Henry
Bateman, James
Binning, William
Brace, Thomas
Brown, John
Bulley, Richard
Chappell, George
Cox, James
Croft, Joseph (& outfitter)
Dennis, John William
Dennis, William
Farrow, George
Fleuty, James
Ford, Priscilla
French, John
Gentry, Jeannette
Halliday, William
Hatley, John
Holland, John
Huxter, John
Jefferies, Harry
Lawson, Francis
Ley, George
Ley, John (Snr & Jnr)
Martin, John
Matthews, James Henry (& glover)
Matthews, William
Miller, Sarah
Moses, Israel
Nicholls, David
Phipps, Albert
Phipps, Henry William
Pitcaim, David
Robinson, James
Sizer, Joseph
Titheridge, Herbert
Walliker, Richard
Woolley, William



Letters to the editor

Bentall v Warren Round 2

Being a reply to the hopeful Len Barrell and in full support of the editorial comment that Joseph Warren was an imitator in Issue 40 of the Penny Farthing.

Dear Editor,

When our exhibition on the Bentall Firm and Family was announced it was added that the museum was seeking a Goldhanger Plough. Within a week my next door neighbour from Purlough Hall knocked to say that he had parts of such a plough in his cellar, which he had discovered when he first came to the farm some 20 years previously. On examination part of the remaining metal portion of the plough bore the words, "Warren, Maldon Ironworks Goldhanger Plough". Very interesting but not what we were seeking.

The following week I was returning items borrowed from Mangapp's Railway at Burnham on Crouch when John Jolly, the proprietor and farmer, said "I have something that you may wish to borrow". This was a beautifully restored Goldhanger Plough but again by Warren of Maldon Ironworks.

The situation was becoming serious when I remembered that some years previously the museum had a visit from Norman Wasteney, who farms at Chignell Smealey and who was researching Bentall agricultural machinery. I contacted him and he was happy to loan the plough that

is currently in the courtyard outside the Museum. This is an example of an improved Goldhanger plough, patented by E. Hammond Bentall in 1841.

Judy Tullett, our Displays Officer, had also been offered the loan of a plough by a farming friend, John Wordley, of Orsett. This is the plough outside the front door of the museum and this is the true Bentall Goldhanger plough produced by William Bentall, the firm's founding father at some date before 1841. The quest had been successful!

William Bentall had the ability to design a piece of agricultural machinery that the farmers wanted that suited the heavy soils of Essex. It was the better mouse trap of legend and such was its success that it became known as the Essex or Goldhanger plough. It was not covered by any patent and consequently it was copied by Joseph Warren, originally of Broad Street Green later of Maldon Ironworks, and many other foundries. In his catalogue of 1850 William Bentall pointed out that his was the genuine one made from the original patterns. "Mr Bentall thinks that it necessary to be thus, explicit, as there are unprincipled makers who puts

'Goldhanger' on their castings, with a view to foisting them on the public as the original article".

Does this help?

Paddy Lacey

Dear Editor,

Further to your item on weights and measures (*Issue 41, Summer Penny Farthing*) I wonder if your readers remember the "ell" as a unit of measurement? It was a standard of measuring used in the woollen trade being approximately 45 inches length, although marked on the wall of a house in Dunkeld, Scotland, there is a gauge dating from around 1706 of an ell measuring only 37 inches.

The ell appears to have varied in length depending on the country in which it was used. For instance while the Geneva ell measured a generous 45 inches, the Berne ell was only 21 $\frac{1}{2}$, Bremen 22 $\frac{3}{4}$, Lucerne 24 $\frac{3}{4}$, Bavaria 32 $\frac{3}{4}$, Nuremberg 26, Hamburg 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ and Zurich 23 $\frac{1}{2}$.

An old continental wool winder measured in lengths of one ell with 65 rotations of the machine equalling one unit of measurement on its dial - but what the 'ell' (if you will forgive the pun) was a unit of measurement equalling 65 units?

D. M.



ST. CEDD'S CHATLINE

By Judy Betteridge

As I write this, it is high Summer and pouring with rain! Only a few days ago we were prostrate with the heat, and not very inclined to work ourselves into a "glow" in our very confined quarters at St. Cedds.

However, this week, to rekindle our enthusiasm, we have received, as the result of a bequest from the late Mrs. H.G. Tucker, whose maternal grandfather was the organist at All Saints Church for 40 years, a very fine watercolour by Basil Holmes, painted in 1899, of St. Giles Leper Hospital in Spital Road. This painting shows the hospital when it was incorporated into old barn buildings which have now disappeared. This is such a delightful picture that we hope to find a place for it on display at the Museum next season.

St. Giles, Patron Saint of leprosy, has about 150 churches dedicated to him in this country, indicating, it is thought, the prevalence of leprosy brought here by the Roman legions. By the 12th century there may have been as many as 10,000 sufferers. Our own St. Giles Hospital is believed to have been founded by Henry II in 1164 for the relief of leprosy victims in Maldon. September 1st is St. Giles' Saints Day. Born in Athens, into a wealthy family, he left Greece in about 683 and went to France where he lived as a hermit in a cave near Nimes. His history is quite fascinating, and the more computer literate amongst you may care to read all about it on the internet.

I'm fast running out of space in this Chatline - I was hoping to tell you all about our other exciting new acquisition - a map of Heybridge dated 1754 by one Timothy Skyenner. Too frail to be exhibited, it resides at the Essex Records Office, but we have a good copy, beautifully framed by Liz Willsher, and again we hope to be able to display it next year.

NOW, to finish, we have a bit of exciting news from our team at St. Cedds. Julia is getting married very soon, and we would like to wish her and Nick every happiness for the future (we are hoping to celebrate the event with very generous portions of cake - Julia please note!).

That's all for now folks - we'll talk more in the Winter.

Judy Betteridge.



SOMETHING'S BURNING



In 1566 Elizabeth Frances and Agnes Waterhouse from Hatfield Peverel became the first persons in England to be prosecuted for witchcraft. They were tried at Chelmsford Assizes and hanged. This unjust execution was the opening phase of almost one hundred years of persecution, terror and ultimately execution, visited on mostly elderly, defenceless women. From the mid 16th century until about 1650, the whole country, along with other non-Catholic countries in Europe and America became obsessed with witch mania.

This irrational behaviour was simply a manifestation of religious intolerance and an excuse to oppress those of a different faith, being most pronounced in those small communities where the numbers of Catholics and Protestants were fairly equal.

At times of Catholic supremacy, as under the reign of Mary Tudor, many Protestants were persecuted as heretics and if found guilty burnt at the stake. In 1555 Stephen Knight was executed by fire in Maldon, possibly in the High Street near All Saints Church, to set an example to the local populace and intimidate any non-Catholics. No Protestants were executed in Britain for witchcraft, although some may have been killed by accident.

On the other hand when the Protestants were in power they extracted their revenge by accusing Catholics of being witches - the punishment in England being death by hanging. For instance an accused witch called Smith or Smythe was hanged in Maldon during the 16th century. Contrary to popular belief it is a mistake to suppose that burning alive was the penalty for witches in England or America. In Scotland some supposed witches were burnt, although it was customary to strangle them first before consigning their bodies to the flames. In Germany, where the persecution of witches was very severe, thousands of people were burnt alive but not before they had endured all sorts of cruel tortures.

Essex, together with Lancashire, eventually became the main witch counties of England, helped in no small measure by Matthew Hopkins of Manningtree who, for 18 months from 1645-1646, operated as the infamous "Witchfinder General". He visited towns throughout East Anglia and for a fee, exposed witches. His victims were often elderly, vulnerable women without a protector or anyone to speak up for them. It was almost impossible to defend oneself from the charges because any wart or body mark could be taken as a "third teat" at which the Devil was believed to suckle. Furthermore Hopkins blackmailed people into denouncing their neighbours by threatening to accuse them of being witches too if they did not do so and few were brave enough to defy him.

Once Hopkins had extracted a "confession" the accused would be handed to the local Assizes for trial and invariably execution by hanging. Whether he really believed or cared that his victims were witches or whether his whole campaign was simply a profitable business venture is open to conjecture.

Although burning was not used as punishment for witches in England, there were several other crimes for which it was used. Under an Act passed during the reign of Henry VIII poisoning was treason and punishable by "deth by Boylynge" and a wife who murdered her husband was guilty of petty treason and subject to burning.

A Closer Look at an Exhibit ...

MTB 796

In the John Sadd Room, at the top of the stairs in Maldon Museum, there is a superb model of a Motor Torpedo Boat which was built at Fullbridge by Sadds in 1944.

Of all the sea battles fought in World War II, the closest-fought were those of the Coastal Forces. Able to move quickly - often silently, and to hunt virtually unseen, they could strike with deadly effect before escaping in the darkness.

The Admiralty were to use a whole variety of small vessels during the war but perhaps the most famous were the Motor Torpedo Boats (MTB's) with their ability to attack far larger ships and having the added advantage of being cheap and easy to produce in large numbers. Indeed so small and numerous were these craft that they did not even warrant individual names but were distinguished only by their pennant numbers.

The torpedo had been developed in the late 1870's and until the First World War, Britain was engaged in developing small boats able to deliver this deadly new weapon. During the Great War a Royal Naval small boat squadron was based at Osea Island from where several were sent to Finland in 1917 to take part in operations against the Russian Bolsheviks. Using torpedoes this little fleet was able to sink the Russian heavy cruiser "Oleg", for which Lieut. Agar

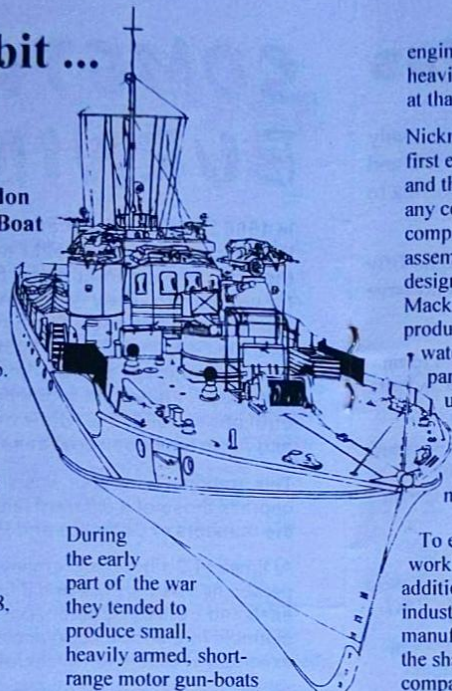
was awarded the VC, and later put two more battleships out of action besides sinking a supply ship.

In spite of the proven merits of MTB's, naval architects chose instead to concentrate on enlarging their small boat designs to create destroyers. Thus they lost the original purpose and advantages of these plucky little vessels. As a consequence, after 1918, the Royal Navy sold off or decommissioned most of its small motor boat fleet.

It was not until the mid-1930's, with war threatening once more, that the Admiralty resurrected the idea of MTBs and began contracting for new vessels.

By the outbreak of hostilities Britain had just a handful of purpose-built small boats ready for action. These new vessels had hard-chine hulls which allowed them to rise out of the water at speed, so reducing drag and greatly increasing performance.

Private shipbuilders quickly recognised the probable demand for these small, fast boats and began to develop their own designs each with its own characteristics. Main builders included the British Power Boat Company, Vosper, and Thornycroft,



During the early part of the war they tended to produce small, heavily armed, short-range motor gun-boats (MGB's), but their lack of torpedo armament meant they often missed the opportunity of inflicting telling damage on the foe.

This led to a demand for torpedo boats with the firepower to stand up to German E-Boats and for a rugged, longer-hulled vessel capable of operating further from its base and able to endure heavier weather. The solution was the creation of the combined MGB / MTB and two companies specialised in producing such craft: the Fairmile Marine Company and Camper Nicholson.

Fairmile built several variations of MTB's before the design evolved into the 115ft Fairmile "D" Motor Torpedo Boat. Built of plywood and powered by four supercharged

engines, this was the most heavily armed craft for its size at that period.

Nicknamed "dog boats", they first entered service in 1942 and the design was such that any competent woodworking company was able to assemble them. The craft, designed by Captain Noel Macklin, utilised mass produced, prefabricated water-proofed plywood panels, thereby using the untapped potential of "non-strategic" industries such as furniture and piano manufacturers.

To ease an increasing workload Fairmiles sought additional capacity from other industries. A linoleum manufacturer turned out all the shafting, a wire-netting company provided rudders and a bell foundry cast propellers. The main job of cutting the material for the hulls was carried out by a timber merchant in Brentford. Also at Brentford was the central stores where all the components were made up in kits and sent to the individual boatyards to be assembled.

The Fairmile Marine Company contracted thirty small yards around Britain, of which Sadds was one, to produce MTBs. Besides building two of the more famous "D" class MTB's Sadds also produced six of the earlier "B" class and two of the later "H" class boats, as well as a number of other small craft for the Admiralty, including a type of lifeboat suitable for being dropped from aircraft.

In spite of the prefabricated nature of construction there is considerable variation between MTB's of the various yards.

Maldon's MTB 796 was launched on 8 July 1944 by Mrs Charles E Bentall. After fitting out under the watchful eyes of Petty Officers Gordon (Lofty) Maycock and Alf Wallace, the boat was commissioned into service in October of that year and in December was assigned to the 67th MTB Flotilla based at Yarmouth. The flotilla consisted of nine MTB's under the command of Lt. Cdr J H Hodder RNVR.

With a crew of around 32 officers and men, MTB's were neither comfortable nor safe. The noise and vibration from the four US Packard engines was stunning, and when combined with the cold and being almost continually soaking wet, did not permit a pleasant voyage. Furthermore, in addition to the risk of destruction by enemy action, the crews had to get used to living with 5,000 gallons of highly volatile 100 octane fuel whose vapour when mixed with air could explode given a single spark from a faulty electrical system.

During three years of war "D" class MTB's were engaged in action on no less than 350 occasions (almost every three days), and sank or damaged a great many enemy ships. They took part in defending the British coast by attacking enemy shipping off the Dutch coast, minelaying in The Channel and taking part in the Normandy Landings. Five flotillas served in the

Mediterranean, from North Africa to Sicily, the Adriatic to the Aegean and all major landings in the Mediterranean. They also carried out clandestine special missions to Brittany and the Norwegian coasts, picking up or delivering agents and escaping RAF pilots.

Maldon's MTB 796's war service was less glamorous being limited to patrolling the waters around Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft and

continued page 14

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Dimensions

Length: 115ft

Beam: 20ft 10in

Draught: 4ft 9in

Displacement: 105 tons

Engines: four Packard 4M-2500 marine petrol

Horsepower: 5,000

Speed: 32knts

Fuel Capacity: 5,200 gallons (with the ability to carry an additional 3,000 gallons in temporary ferry tanks fitted to upper deck)

Range: 506 miles

Armament

One x Rocket Flare Launcher

Two x 6 Pounder Guns Mk IIa with autoloaders

Two x Twin 0.5ins Vickers Machine Guns Mk V

One X 22mm twin Oerliken Guns on Mk V Power Mountings

Two x Twin Vickers .303ins gas operated Machine Guns Mk I

Four x 21ins Mk VIII Torpedos

That Was The News That Was

I have recently been reading "The Sixties", a compilation of news items from the Daily Telegraph. As well as the famous events such as, President Kennedy's election and assassination, Yuri Gagarin the first man in space, the Profumo scandal etc. it is fascinating to be reminded of the lesser news items of that decade.

It is also interesting to compare how things have changed (or perhaps not) in less than fifty years. So here, in no particular order, are some of the events of the 1960's which you may have missed - how many do you remember?

The Football League limited professional footballers' maximum weekly wage to £20 - *Nov. 1960.*

Ekco (E.K. Cole) the Southend television manufacturers, laid off 800 staff due to a drop in sales caused by credit restrictions - *Sept. 1960.*

Ten skeletons were found in 3,800 year old graves near Stonehenge - *July 1960.*

You could buy a genuine Rolex Oyster Watch for £34. 10s. - *1960.*

20,000 family doctors were being asked to limit drugs they prescribed to one week's supply - *Feb. 1960.*

British rule in Cyprus ended - *Aug. 1960.*

Dr. Barbara Moore (56 yrs) completed her second John o'Groats to Land's End walk in 23 days - *Feb. 1960.*

The News Chronicle and the London Evening paper The Star ceased publication - *Oct. 1960.*

The Crazy Gang broke up having entertained audiences for nearly 30 years. Their ages ranged from 62 to 75 - *Sept. 1960.*

"Oliver Twist" the musical written by Lionel Bart, opened in London - *July. 1960.*

Bristol-Siddley announced end of production of the Armstrong Siddley car - *June 1960.*

The Ford Popular was launched as the cheapest car on the market at only £494 including purchase tax. - *June 1960.*

A clergyman's wife showed how she could feed her family of four on £4. 10s a week. - *Jan. 1960.*

Nevil Shute, author and aircraft designer, died age 60. He had worked on R100 airship with Barnes Wallis - *Jan. 1960.*

The last call up for National Service took place - *Nov. 1960.*

Angers, the £100,000 French favourite fell and broke his leg in the Derby and had to be destroyed - *June. 1960.*

Bumley won their second league Championship in 39 years by beating Manchester City 2 - 1. - *May. 1960.*

12 spectators died and 20 were hurt when a Ferrari driven by Wolfgang von Trips, crashed into the crowd during the Italian Grand Prix in Monza. Von Trips also died - *Sept. 1961.*

The Commons voted to retain the age for hanging at 18 years. - *April 1961.*

Tanks were guarding the streets of Paris against possible airborne attack from Algerian rebels. - *April 1961.*

Four new universities, including one at Colchester, were to be established. - *May 1961.*

You could buy a handwoven Harris Tweed jacket from Selfridges for £6. 16s. 6d. - *1960.*

W. H. Smith's announced the closure of their library service after 103 years. - *Feb. 1961.*

Sunday opening for 3,000 public houses in Wales was permitted for the first time in 80 years - *Nov. 1961.*

BBC Children's Hour was dropped after being a regular Home Service radio feature since 1922 - *Feb. 1961.*

Pirate radio broadcasts from a ship anchored off the coast of Holland were due to begin. - *Jan. 1961.*

A fully qualified secretary could expect to earn £9 - £10 per week in London. - *1961.*

Christmas Day postal deliveries were suspended - *Dec. 1961.*

Angela Mortimer beat Christine Truman at Wimbledon to become the first British winner of a singles title for 24 years. - *July 1961.*

USA launched over Canada four of the largest balloons ever made. Carrying monkeys and hamsters over 2,000 miles at a height of 128,000 ft. to determine effects of cosmic radiation. - *July 1962.*

Ian Fleming's novel "The Spy Who Loved Me" banned in Southern Rhodesia because the book contained "passages considered unsuitable for circulation in the Federation". - *April 1962.*

The first live TV broadcast from America to Europe was watched by 200 million viewers. Relayed by the Telstar satellite it was of a baseball match in Chicago. - *July 1962.*

Judge Elisabeth Lane QC became the first woman judge to sit in the High Court. - *Oct. 1962.*

Centigrade as well as Fahrenheit was introduced by the Meteorological Office when giving temperatures. - *Jan. 1962.*

28 people died from smog pollution in London in one day. - *Dec. 1962.*

A new police drama, "Z Cars", began. - *Jan. 1962.*

A midget computer, the size of small suitcase, was nearing final testing stage. It was expected to cost only £20,000. - *Feb. 1962.*

Vita Sackville West, poetess, novelist and gardener died age 70. - *June 1962*

The non politically correct music hall artist G H Elliott, billed as the "Chocolate-Coloured Coon", died age 79. In 60 years of performing he never altered his act or make-up because audiences resented any change. His famous songs included "Lily of Lagoon" and "Silvery Moon". - *Nov 1962.*

The 17 first-class cricketing counties abolished amateur status and in future all players were to be called "cricketers". - *Nov. 1962.*

A six-year old boy won £5,000, the Premium Bond top prize. He was given the bond as a birthday present four years before and had never had any pocket money. - *June 1963*

A £10 per week Southend Corporation cleaner succeeded to the title of the Earl of Buckingham. - *Jan. 1963.*

The volcano Agung, in Bali, erupted killing about 1,000 people and caused the evacuation of 250,000 others. - *1963.*

The much-publicised opening of BBC2 had to be postponed to another day because of power cuts. - *April 1964.*

The average wage was £16 14s 11d per week. - *Jan. 1964.*

A typhoid epidemic closed all schools in Aberdeen. There had been 136 confirmed cases, one death and 36 suspected cases. The outbreak was presumed to have been caused by a 13 year old tin of corned beef, part of a consignment purchased and released by the Ministry of Food. - *May 1964.*

A judge said a 14-year-old schoolboy who was given three strokes of the cane was properly punished for fighting in class and being rude to a teacher. The boy's father was ordered to pay the costs of the case. - *Jan. 1965.*

Prime Minister Harold Wilson imposed a limit of £50 on all expenses including hotels and travel, for persons travelling outside the Sterling area. - *July 1966.*

MTB 796

continued from page 12

Felixstowe, although she did take part in a combined action of destroyers, frigates and sister "dog boats" against the German 6th E Boat Flotilla off the Humber Estuary on 18/19 March 1945.

In 1946, after the war's end, MTB 796 was lent to the Sea Scouts before being finally sold in 1954. Likewise her sister ship MTB 742, which had been commissioned in April 1944 and served with 64th MTB Flotilla, was given to Parkeston Sea Cadets in 1946. The 64th Flotilla had served a combined role having been fitted for mine-laying.

As well as the model of MTB 796 made at Saddington by Aubrey Pettican, the museum also has the boat's original flag staff on display.

Approximately 220 "D" type MTB's served in both home waters and the Mediterranean during the war, of which 42 were lost to enemy action.

A. M.

RATIONING REVISITED

Following our article on wartime rationing in the autumn issue of *Penny Farthing*, further information has come to hand on how the government tried to ensure that everyone received their fair share of the limited goods and foodstuffs available, and made sure that scarce resources were not wasted.

As well as most foodstuffs, clothing and furniture was also rationed. "Utility" clothing, introduced by the government, was made from only a limited range of cloth and cut so that only the least possible amount of material was used. For instance men's trousers were made without turn-ups, socks could be no longer than nine-and-a-half inches and even the number of buttons and fancy details were strictly limited.

Each item was given a value on a "points" system in addition to its monetary cost. At the beginning of rationing each person was given 66 coupons or "points", later reduced to 48 points in 1942. These could be used on any clothing desired, assuming it was available and the price was affordable. This was not a generous allowance of points when one considers that a man's shirt used 5 coupons, a jacket 13 and a suit 26. A woman's coat used 18 coupons, a woollen dress 11 and a pair of knickers 2. Even a handkerchief cost one coupon. Men's shoes cost 7 coupons, women's 5 and children's 3. An extra allowance of coupons was made to manual workers and miners for working clothes.

New furniture could only be purchased by newly married couples, those expecting a child, or those who had lost their homes due to bombing. They were given special permits to buy "Utility" furniture up to the value of a certain number of units and each piece of furniture was given a price in units as well as money. The furniture was manufactured using the minimum possible amount of wood and cloth. Only three different designs and two qualities of each article were available, and manufacturers were only given a licence to produce furniture if they produced to "Utility" standards. This also applied to a variety of items such as saucepans, pencils, umbrellas etc. Even crockery was kept as simple as possible and usually plain white - cups were often made without handles.

Cosmetics, although very hard to obtain, were not rationed because the government believed that they helped to keep up women's spirits. As for stockings these were always in very short supply so many women used brown cream on their legs and drew a seam with black pencil to make it look as if they were wearing them. Others resorted to painting their legs with gravy powder and water but this tended to attract flies and soon fell out of favour.

Customers had to register with local shops making them use the same butcher, grocer or dairy every week, so there was no "shopping around" for the best offers. Shopkeepers were allowed a certain amount of non-rationed goods to sell but once sold, they could not order more but had to wait for the next allocation, therefore they invariably kept these non-rationed items "under the counter" for favourite customers.

Eating out helped to make rations last longer because food coupons were not necessary when eating in a restaurant - although meals were limited to a main course only, and were not to cost more than 5/-. However this rule did not apply to the better quality restaurants. There were also "British restaurants" run by local authorities (*was there one in Maldon does any reader know?*). These were self-service and sold cheap and un-rationed meals and were intended for workers who wanted a hot meal but could not afford to eat in a restaurant.

Surprisingly in spite of all these shortages and hardships the nation's health actually improved during the war and people were a lot more content in those days.

Against the Grain ...

In 1629 a Maldon housewife was tried and hanged for riot. In March of that year more than a hundred women and children from Maldon, Witham and the squatter's colonies on Totham Heath had boarded a ship that was taking on grain at the Hythe and forced the crew to fill their aprons and caps with rye.

They had been protesting about severe food shortages caused by poor harvests, which had been exacerbated by profiteers who were transferring scarce local grain to areas which would pay even higher prices.

On 22 May, two months after this first demonstration, Maldon witnessed one of the country's largest and most serious grain riots when a crowd of some 300, from Bocking, Braintree and Witham together with local women, descended on the town's port and looted from ships bound for Europe.

The scale of the uprising was exceptional, provoking great alarm and prompting a swift government response. Within days arrangements had been made for the trial of eight of the ringleaders. A week later four of them were executed, among them was Anne Carter, the wife of a Maldon butcher.

Well what do you know?

Edward Bright, "The Fat Man of Maldon", weighed 44 stone at the time of his death age 29 years in 1750. He was reputed to be the fattest man ever to have lived in England. However, there is another and heavier claimant to the title - Daniel Lambert who was born in 1770 is said to have weighed almost 9 stone more than Edward when he died aged 39.

Daniel was the son of the keeper of Leicester prison and in his youth was of normal weight until the early 1790s when he succeeded his father as keeper of the prison.

Despite an active and teetotal lifestyle he bulged to 32 stone by 1793 at which time he resigned from the prison service on an annuity of £50 per year.

Deciding to turn his immense size to some financial gain, he went

to London to exhibit himself to the public. Setting up in business at 53 Piccadilly in April 1806, he "received company" for a fee between the hours of 12 noon and 5pm.

The following year he began touring the English Shires and died on 21 July 1809 at the Wagon and Horses Inn, Stamford. At the time of his death Daniel Lambert weighed 52 stones.

STOP PRESS

Even this claim has now been overtaken by Cristopher McGarva of Lincolnshire who died in June 2005. He was 35 years old and at the time of his death weighed 65 stone.

He was buried in a coffin 6ft 6in long, 4ft wide and 2ft 6in deep. It had to be transported to the grave on the back of a trailer pulled by a Land Rover, then lowered into the grave by a crane.

Lest We Forget ...

On November 27th 1935 Maldon's Avenue of Remembrance was dedicated on the recreation ground by the Lord Lieutenant of Essex, Brigadier General Sir Richard Colvin K. C. B. It was planted in commemoration of the Silver Jubilee of King George V and in honour of the men of Maldon and Heybridge who gave their lives during the Great War 1914-1918.

The programme (right) includes not only the order of service and prayers but also the names of 179 men who sacrificed their lives during the war. Among them are the sons of many well known local families, including Petchey, De Crespigny, Bentall and Spurgeon.

In some cases the same name appears two or three times indicating that the loss was possibly even greater for some families.

The full list is as follows:

Tree No
1 Rayner P.J.
2 Ward E.J.
3 Finch R.C.
4 Barbrook E.B.
5 Moss T.A.
6 Wright A.G.
7 Wood E.E.
8 Pedley F.
9 De Crespigny C.N.C.
10 Finch H.
11 Eves A.J.
12 Pugh S.S.
13 Ruck W.
14 Anthony C.S.
15 Dines D.W.
16 Markham W.E.
17 Pudney G.

18 Hinton W.
19 Eves A.E.
20 Ley E.A.
21 Knightbridge A.W.
22 Mynard L.
23 Smith C.A.
24 Wire T.B.
25 Boutwell H.C.
26 Last C.
27 Pettitt T.C.G.
28 Barbrook A.C.
29 Howard S.
30 Pearson G.
31 Gatward A.
32 Taylor J.H.
33 Kemp A.F.E.
34 Halliday W.G.
35 Foster A.C.
36 Markham S.C.
37 Cobey J.A.
38 Tunner V.G.

39 Smith A.T.
40 Westmacott H.E.W.
41 Wilson V.F.
42 Joscelyne C.G.
43 Smith G.A.
44 Cockett C.P.
45 Keeble B.
46 Barbrook A.
47 Boreham R.L.
48 Eves A.
49 Wiggins C.
50 Hutchinson S.T.A.
51 Hinton E.F.
52 Tunner C.C.
53 Cudmer A.C.
54 Woodyard S.T.
55 Hitchen T.E.J.
56 Pitman T.J.
57 Lincoln E.W.
58 Mynard J.W.
59 Gridley G.A.

60 Grantham G.H.
61 Petchey W.H.
62 Fitch L.B.
63 Ives W.A.
64 Old C.W.
65 Harvey E.
66 Abbott F.
67 Austin H.
68 Boreham A.E.
69 Smith S.T.
70 Rushen W.
71 Brewer S.E.
72 Scott C.E.
73 Powell B.A.
74 Ward A.
75 Hatley E.
76 Wiggins S.
77 Stammers T.G.
78 Pennifer E.
79 Hurrell D.S.
80 Prior E.

81 Davis W.E.
82 Narvidge J.W.
83 Boutell H.E.
84 Flower A.
85 Kirby S.G.
86 South S.W.
87 Gozzetti A.
88 Hart C.
89 Quantrill C.W.
90 Frost C.H.
91 Kirby P.
92 Bentall E.H.
93 Kemp C.
94 Moss A.W.
95 Braybrook E.W.
96 Chapman H.G.
97 Grantham F.W.
98
99
100 Mead E.C.W.
101 Cross A.J.
102 Keeble A.
103 Seymour N.
104 Austin F.G.
105 Thomas R.
106 Boreham E.
107 Halls A.E.
108 Bright J.
109 Ward A.G.
110 Free M.
111 Gower E.F.
112 Alexander J.R.
113 Petchey E.J.
114 Bowles H.H.W.
115 Cross A.L.
116 Petchey W.A.
117 Harris A.J.
118 Clark F.R.
119 Taylor S.M.
120 Ley A.R.
121 Harvey E.H.
122 Mead W.H.
123 Scrivener W.
124 Woodcraft E.
125 Rayner A.C.
126 Wright A.W.
127 Humphries H.L.
128 Cracknell N.
129 Miller T.
130 Jenkins H.G.
131 Wood W.French
132 O.A.
133 Kemble H.E.
134 Finter J.W.
135 Smith H.J.
136 Bright C.D.
137 Moss C.F.
138 Read H.M.
139 Long C.S.
140 Bucklee F.
141 Prance G.

EVERYONE HAS A WAR STORY TO TELL

From the home front to the front line, everyone who lived through World War Two, or who had family who did, has been touched by the experience. Sixty years after the end of the conflict, the BBC has created a unique archive opportunity for our generation to share their stories with the rest of the nation and to provide a personal account of Britain at war.

The BBC WW2 People's War Archive will ensure that the experiences and memories of those who lived through those years are not lost, but can be preserved for future generations.

During this year, 2005, World War Two stories and memories are being collected at venues across Essex. They need your story to build the biggest picture to date of life in Britain during that period. And this means stories about life at home as well as life on the battlefields - were you a Land Girl? Did you fall in love to the sound of Glenn Miller? Perhaps you remember cooking with powdered eggs? Maybe you were evacuated. Whatever your story, share it with the BBC and the nation.

This is your opportunity to be part of Britain's history, so whatever your memories I would strongly urge you to record them as soon as possible. Unless you act now these stories, vital to our country's history, will be lost for ever once you have gone.

You can contribute your WW2 memories to the BBC online archive via any of the following:

- * directly onto the website - bbc.co.uk/ww2
- * by collecting a story form from any local library
- * Chelmsford Central Library - Sarah Dodsworth 01245 492 758
- * Maldon Library
- * Essex Society for Family History - Email info@esfh.orh.uk
- * or contact BBC Essex Action Desk 01245 616 081 for further information and story form.

P.S. While you are at it why not tell Penny Farthing your experiences, if you do have a story to tell please write and tell us so that it can be printed in a future issue. Remember anyone under 60 years of age has no real conception of what life was like in the 1940's so it is essential that these memories of Maldon at War are preserved now for future generations.

142 Parent J.
143 Lincoln W.J.
144 Manley A.L.
145 Askew J.
146 Askew G.W.
147 Locke S.C.
148 Rice G.G.
149 Askew O.
150 Boreham G.
151 Kemp C.H.
152 Bacon J.
153 Livermore W.E.
154 Spurgeon D.F.P.
155
156 Norman E.A.
157 Kirby H.
158 Baldwin W.G.
159 Payne E.
160 Crisp C.V.
161 Myall G.E.
162 Smith A.C.
163 Ford C.E.
164 Curtis P.A.W.
165 Mynall E.J.
166 Barker F.B.
167 Joslin T.J.
168 Howard G.W.
169 Finch E.A.
170 Jaggard F.
171 Basham S.
172 Ridgwell H.
173 Long E.J.
174 Last W.E.
175 Cobey G.E.A.
176 Petchey C.E.
177 Hitchen S.
178 Cocks W.B.
179 Barnard A.H.
180 Waterman J.
181 Brighton R.
182 Quilter H.

BENTALLS of HEYBRIDGE

CONCLUDING PART

Despite the failure of Bentalls' venture into car manufacture all was not lost. The experience in petrol engine design was turned to good account, and continued improvements in design in small petrol and paraffin engines found for them an ever-increasing number of customers. Indeed Bentalls produced the first horizontal petrol engine made in Britain which sold in many thousands. It was also the start of a large trade in valves for internal combustion engines, which from 1904, formed an important part of the output of the factory.

In 1904 Mr W G James, the son of the Maldon station master, had approached E E Bentall with a view to the firm making valves for his business. An agreement was entered into, and from that day Bentalls manufactured the valve requirements of W G James Ltd, an order which at its peak, ran into something over a million valves per year.

Bentalls became pioneers in valve manufacture, just as they were in agricultural implements. In 1924 they were the first company to produce valves by an electrical upsetting process, the S.I.M., the British rights in which were secured by Mr James. The firm also patented a new method for the production of armour-seated valves for high duty work.

E E Bentall was an innovator in other ways. He equipped the factory with its own generating station for electric power and kept up to date with the latest types of machine tools. Under him advantages were taken of the improved facilities of the railways too. Until Edmund Bentall took over control of the company it was still very much a self contained unit, all raw materials being brought to the site in the firm's own barges. Even the foundry coke was produced on the premises in an oven which was in use until the end of the 19th century. But Edmund changed all that. As well as the sea, he had the railways almost at his door, and coastal freight charges could not compete with rail transport. The Bentall barges soon disappeared and the railway carried the raw materials at a substantial saving in overheads.

Lorries began to replace horse-drawn traffic. When the Coronation celebrations of King George V were held at Maldon in 1911, Bentalls entered a lorry, liberally festooned with flags and flowers and bearing a root pulper, chaff cutter and a "Goldhanger" plough, for the decorated heavy carts competition. As the only lorry in the procession it had to be awarded a special prize in a class by itself, as the judges could not accept it as a trade cart.

By 1914 the firm was employing some six to seven hundred hands, and the Heybridge works covered an area of about fourteen acres. It had continued to prosper, in spite of the unhappy adventure into motor car production, and its output of agricultural machinery had shown a growing expansion each year. So firmly established was it, that it seemed that only a national calamity could arrest its steady growth.

But the national calamity was there, though its effect was not to be felt at Bentalls for another ten or more years. The firm took the transition from peace to war calmly enough, for its excellent equipment was easily adaptable to the new requirements which the First World War economy demanded. A large proportion of the company's output was switched from agricultural machinery to shell cases, of which Bentalls produced many millions during the four years of fighting.

The war also saw the widespread introduction of women workers into industry. Bentalls was the first firm in England to employ them as moulders and equipped the moulding shop with pneumatic hoists, so that the women should not have to lift heavy weights.

With the ending of the First World War, Edmund Bentall took a step which was to have a disastrous effect on the firm's prosperity. An association of engineering firms was formed under the name of Agricultural & General Engineers Ltd, and Edmund was persuaded to merge his firm into it. Bentall & Co. was the largest company in the association, and the whole of its share capital was turned over to the new group. Despite being the major financial contributor by far, Bentalls had only one vote on the board of the new company.

A.E.G. did well during the immediate post-war boom, though even at that time some of its more extravagant ideas of developing trade should have given warning of the future, and when the slump which followed the boom came, the amalgamation found itself in deep waters.

It was characteristic of A.E.G. that its response to countering shrinking trade was to launch into even more ambitious schemes, including the formation of new companies in the Dominions. The result was inevitable, A.E.G. was unable to weather the storm and the venture ended in total loss. Bentall's was hardest hit of all, for Edmund Bentall was the largest individual shareholder in A.E.G. His money, which might have put Bentalls on its feet again, was all lost.

There followed very lean times for Bentalls, for it meant starting almost all over again from the bottom. Sales fell away to an unprecedented level because the bankruptcy of A.E.G. had shaken

confidence in the ability of Bentalls to survive.

The Company reacted in the only way it knew how - it continued to turn out its goods to its accustomed high quality, almost forcing its customers to recognise that the firm was still in business.

By 1933 E. E. Bentall was in a position to purchase the ordinary shares of the Company from the Receiver of A.E.G. Ltd, and with the help of capital borrowed from friends, began the long uphill task of restoring his firm's fortunes.

A fourth generation of the family, Charles Bentall, became Managing Director, with his father, E.E., as Chairman. There followed some years of hard work and heavy sacrifice by both staff and directors who took only one half of their normal salaries. Year by year the position showed gradual improvement, till by 1938, the whole of the Company's debts were finally paid, the borrowed capital was repaid and the annual accounts showed a small profit.

The Second World War created an insatiable demand for the output of engineering companies and Bentalls was no exception. Their workshops were quickly switched to war production and they made small machine parts for Handley-Page aircraft and later complete assemblies such as tail fins, bomb doors, etc. for Halifax bombers.

As well as direct war supplies, there was an increased

demand for home-produced foodstuffs so that the Company had doubled its output of agricultural machinery before the war ended and were employing one thousand men and women.

In 1946 the company reached a turning-point in its history. The huge increase in personal taxation and the need for large scale re-equipment which industry faced, fell heavily on larger family firms such as Bentalls. No longer able to remain a family concern because the personal fortunes were unavailable to support it, the company was forced to take the inevitable step of becoming a public company with Charles Bentall as Chairman.

They continued to produce even greater quantities of agricultural machinery - chaff and root cutters, disc harrows, tool-bar frames, potato diggers, beet lifters, muck spreaders, the famous "Wizard" hammer drill, weighing machines etc. Older factory buildings were modernised and new buildings added with a complete new foundry being constructed, and in 1949 the manufacturing and selling rights of Tamkin Bros. and Co. Ltd, of Chelmsford were acquired.

For a time Bentalls seemed to be increasing its profitability and was producing valves for combustion engines and cable fastening attachments for the Admiralty. But increasingly, with the reduction of British farming in favour of imported foodstuffs, coupled with the

continued overleaf ...

Nor Any Drop To Drink

100,000 parts were found to contain

Chlorine	36.5650
Sulphuric Acid	6.4412
Nitric Acid	6.31629
Free Ammonia	0.68611
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.61191
Total Solids	119.12
Permanent Hardness	None
Temporary Hardness	5.6
Total Hardness	5.6

The following is a damning report of Maldon's water 13 September 1876

Dear Sir,

We humbly send you our report on the water the Maldon Water Works Company supplies. As you will see it is water of the most doubtful quality and we would strongly recommend to discontinue its use immediately.

The water was somewhat yellow and clear but contained some flocculent organic matter which was found on microscopic examination to consist of vegetable decaying fibres, wool, cotton, and innumerable infinitesimal animalcules in all stages of development and belonging to a very great variety of genera and families.

The residue obtained by evaporation turned quite black on ignition indicating the presence of a considerable quantity of carbonaceous organic matter. The residue exhibited a very strong alkaline reaction due to carbonate of Soda. It will be seen from the Analysis that this water contains excessive quantities of Chlorides of Sulphates the total amount of mineral matter being unusually high.

The proportions of free and Albuminous Ammonia are exceedingly large and coupling the fact with the presence of living infusorae we must consider this water as one highly polluted and dangerous to health. It is in fact quite unfit for consumption and of the worst possible quality. As the hardness is low there is no reason why the water should not be used for washing purposes.

Arthur Hill Hassall
Otto Helmer

Continued from page 20

dramatic downturn in the nation's traditional engineering, motoring and shipping industries, the company became yet another victim of Britain's industrial demise. Not long after celebrating its 150th anniversary Bentalls sadly ceased production. All that remains of its glory days in Heybridge is the name of a shopping centre, some workmen's cottages, a warehouse by the Wave Bridge, the Lodge House to Bentall's old home and the memories of those who once worked there.

* ——— *

This series of articles has been adapted from:
"The Bentall Story"
by Lt. Commander P.K. Kemp,
F.R. Hist. S., R.N.
Published circa 1955.

Penny Farthing would like to hear from any readers who worked for Bentalls in its later years to complete the picture of this once great company. Your anecdotes and experiences would be much appreciated.

Extracts from the Acquisitions, Accessions of Maldon Museum Minutes 1926

Date	Item	From
15.7.26	1 General Strike Newspapers British Gazette May 6, 12 & 13 British Worker May 6, 12 Daily Telegraph May 10, 11 & 12 Daily Express May 8 Daily Mirror May 8 The Times May 5	Rev. R. Tanner, Uxbridge
	2 Iron-studded door from "Cats Castle"	E G Salmon, High Street
	3 George III 1d piece in good preservation found on site of Jubilee Hall	Cllr. Tydeman
	4 Half-farthing found behind mantel-piece at Heybridge	
	5 Recruiting Poster (torn) of the Light Dragoons about 1760 found during the rebuilding of No 7 Market Hill	
	6 London and Hull Token	T.R. Swales
	7 One fossil from Rayne Gravel Pit 26ft down	Cllr Furlong
17.9.26	1 Specimen of Encrinital Limestone found on Constitution Hill	Frank Smith
	2 Rim of Grey Pot dredged from the "Doctor" shoal	Josh Wright
	3 Fragments of pottery from Ulling gravel pit	Mr Claydon
	4 2 nails found embedded in the trunk of a tree at Ulling	"
	5 Specimens of Tin and Wolfram ore and arsenic pyrites with samples of Tin and Wolfram found at South Croffy Mine, Cornwall	Hon. Sec.
	6 One coin or token	Mr Swales
15.10.26	1 Letter from Brit. Mus. Geol. Dept. (Vide last meeting) - "Encrinital Limestone which has become secondarily silicified, the cavities having formerly been filled by Crinoid stems. In some places the central canal of the stems remain as screw stones."	
	2 Letter from A.G. Wright, curator of Colchester Museum asking details of the find of pottery fragments (vide last meeting) which he says are fragments of a Neolithic Beaker, valuable because of their extreme rarity.	
	3 2 cases of stuffed birds	Mrs G. Cook, Spital Road
	4 1 case of coral	"
	5 1 travelling bootjack	"
	6 1 ancient tumbler	"
	7 2 pamphlets	"
	8 1 shell	"
	9 2 pictures of the "Merlin" and the "Albatross"	"
	10 Small coin	Cllr. Tydeman
9.12.26	1 Letter from A. Shalby Ltd. Oxford Circus offering two Saxon coins minted at Maldon	
	2 Copy of the Council's resolution forming this Committee is now pasted inside the cover of this book	

Maldon District Museum Association

Registered Charity 301362

President - Mr Derek Maldon Fitch

Vice President - Mr L. F. Barrell

Committee - to A. G. M. 2006

<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Paddy Lacey</i>	
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	<i>to be advised</i>	
<i>Hon. Secretary</i>	<i>Jenny Sjollema</i>	
<i>Hon. Treasurer</i>	<i>Betty Chittenden</i>	
<i>Membership Sec.</i>	<i>Colin Barrell</i>	
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Lynda Barrell</i>	
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Mike Bennett</i>	
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Judy Betteridge</i>	
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Ray Brewster</i>	
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Molly Middleton</i>	
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Tony Mandara</i> ..	

Curatorial Adviser *Nick Wickenden Esq*

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

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