Issue 48 Spring 2007 Price 75p

THE PENNY FARTHING

The Maldon District Museum Association Newsletter

Martyrs' Memorial

"Standing unarmed to their posts, they matched brutality with gallantry and met death with fortitude"

Memorial erected at Betio, Tarawa Island, where Alfred Sadd and twenty-one other British subjects were murdered

See story page 11 - 13

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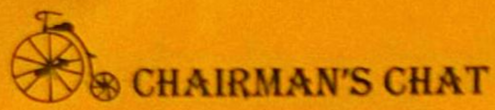


CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Happy New Year to everybody concerned with the museum. As I write it is just under ten weeks to opening date so I must report on progress at the Promenade Lodge.

There have been regular working parties at the Museum on Monday and Wednesday mornings ever since the end of November, together with the all-year-round gatherings at St Cedd's on Monday afternoons as detailed in the *Penny Farthing* by Judy Betteridge. At first we were involved in taking down the Essex and the Sea Display and then we embarked on a detailed stocktaking in parts of the Museum where there was no accurate record of what was on display, particularly in the shop and the 1940's room. When these areas were originally set up the display was added to from various members' private collections with great enthusiasm, but largely unrecorded. Following hard work by Pam Lacey, Margaret Simmonds and Christine Steel, this has been corrected and has provided much material for the Accession Team to regularise the situation. The displays are now being freshened up with additions and some subtractions, and made ready for opening. Judy Betteridge has attended to give advice on conservation and the recording of objects and Betty Chittenden has helped with planning and the change of display in the cases in the Victorian Room.

Charlie Middleton and Graham Reeve have been doing the heavy work reorganising the main display area including the railway exhibit, and tidying up the entrance area and kiosk. Before this they helped with 'behind the scenes' sites, room 7 and the workshop, so we are far more organised everywhere.

Tony Mandara has been preparing the material for the boards for our 2007 Exhibition entitled "Heroes of Maldon", which is going to highlight certain individuals associated with our town, who lived at various dates between 991 and 1945, not all military and not all male!

Lynda Barrell, who has organised and managed the Stewards Rota for the past 3 years, is having to relinquish the post due to work pressures. We must thank her for all that she has done for the Museum in this regard. Lynda has written to all past stewards asking for details of availability in 2007 and the rota will then be organised initially by the Committee. It is known that several past stewards will be retiring from duty and we are most anxious to recruit some new faces. There are several people who have already put their names forward, but more are needed. If you are interested please come along to the Stewards Gathering in the Octagon of St Mary's Church on Wednesday 28th March at 2.30pm. You will be most welcome and can be assured that training will be organised for all new stewards before they commence their duties.

I look forward to meeting you there.

Paddy Lacey

Penny Farthing is dependent upon your contribution.
All articles, items, photos, comments and letters are welcome:
Please send to Tony Mandara, 41 Abbotsmead, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex CM9 4PT.
Tel: (01621) 840056

Copy deadline for the Summer issue of *Penny Farthing* is 5 May

"An Occasion of Much Mirth ...

... and may be of some use to me, at least I shall get a little money by it for the time I have it". So wrote Samuel Pepys in his famous diary on the occasion of his being made 'captain' of the man-of-war 'Jersey' in 1669. The post was a nominal one given in order to elevate him to a suitable rank to allow him to sit on a court martial. It is doubtful that he ever set foot on board his vessel.

The 'Jersey' was built in 1654 in Maldon by the Starline Shipyard situated at the bottom of North Street. It was constructed by order of Oliver Cromwell and named in commemoration of the Parliamentarians' Channel Islands Victory. She was a ship of 556 tons and measured 132 ft long by 32 ft in the beam with an armament of 48 guns. Her war-time complement would have been 220 officers and men, so it was a substantial vessel for that time.

Although the Dutch Wars (1652-74) were already in progress before the 'Jersey' was commissioned, her first recorded action did not take place until 1663. By then King Charles II was on the throne and a vigorous commercial policy was being pursued by England. As part of this policy Captain Robert Holmes led a squadron of ships, which included the 'Jersey', to raid Dutch West African trading posts. The venture was successful and the Dutch slave trade was severely disrupted along the coast of Guinea.

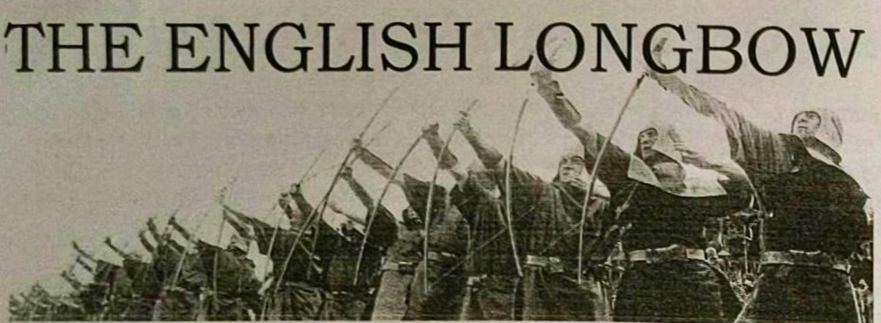
In 1666 'Jersey' was involved in the Four Days' Battle against the Dutch in the North Sea. Under the command of Albermarle, the English force was obliged to retire following the loss of twenty ships. De Ruyter, the Dutch commander, blockaded the Thames but speedy repair work enabled the home-based fleet to take on the Dutch once more and defeat them.

Early in the morning of 28 May 1672, while anchored off Solebay, Suffolk, the English fleet commanded by the Duke of York, was surprised by its old enemy De Ruyter, and in a battle where fortunes swayed back and forth, the 'Jersey' helped beat off the Dutch who finally withdrew.

The 'Jersey' continued her duty to the country for many years serving in the West Indies, Mediterranean and Home waters, until she was captured by the French to be used as a privateer. Privateers were armed vessels owned and officered by private individuals holding Letters of Marque, (a commission from their respective governments) authorising them to attack ships of hostile nations for a share of the prize money from a captured vessel or its cargo.

Eventually, in 1694, a squadron of English ships which included the Harwich-built 'Resolution', located the now renegade 'Jersey' and destroyed her.

THE ENGLISH LONGBOW



How many motorists who use the Maldon Butt Lane car park ever give a thought as to where its name came from and the role it once played in British history? England's greatest military victories in the Middle Ages were as a direct result of archery butts such as the one believed to have been located near Maldon's present day car park. To create a potential military force of the finest marksmen, Edward III ordered that every Englishman throughout the country was to practice with the longbow after church every Sunday and on all public holidays.

Of course bows and arrows have been used around the world since at least 50,000 BC but these were short bows of limited range and power. The longbow as we would recognise it did not make an appearance until Roman times, and even then it was the Welsh who almost six hundred years later, were the first to develop its tactical use into the deadliest weapon of its day. Several years before the Battle of Hastings, Welsh longbowmen were already wreaking havoc on the English. One account records that Welsh archers ambushed and slaughtered a band of Saxon horsemen, under the command of the Earl of Hereford. Their aim was so accurate that they apparently caused five hundred English casualties without a single loss to themselves.

When Henry I came to the English throne (1100 AD) he regarded the longbow to be of such importance that he introduced a law absolving any archer of a crime, should he kill another during practice. From that time on the longbow was to gain ascendancy on the battlefield, a position it would hold for the next five hundred years.

Early longbows were made from elm, but later the ideal bow was made from yew - Spanish or Italian yew being preferred to the native species - about six feet long, cut from a branch as thick as a man's thigh to be split into staves following the grain. From these staves the bow was fashioned, the creamy outer wood forming the back of the bow whilst the reddish-brown harder section made the belly.

It was once thought that it would have taken between 60 and 90 lbs force to pull back the drawstring, but modern research based on the bows discovered on the *Mary Rose,* has shown that it in fact took almost double that, to between 100 and 175 lbs of force, (when drawn 36 inches to the ear) giving the arrows far greater distance and penetration. Arrows could travel at 100 miles per hour and strike with the power of a sledgehammer, piercing armour or chain mail from more than 200 yards. When the bow was elevated arrows could be fired a distance of 350 yards, but with less accuracy.

Bowmen carried between one and two dozen arrows bound together in a sheaf and suspended from their belt. Each arrow was made of silver birch, ash or oak and was about three feet long. Heavy war arrows had a large flight to balance the triangular cast broad head and the fletching was made from goose or peacock feathers (much preferred to other feathers because they were stiffer), though feathers from other birds such as crane and swan were also used. Bow strings were made of hemp or silk and dressed with a waterproof glue or beeswax.

A good archer could fire up to a dozen well-aimed arrows in a minute, (as opposed to three bolts per minute from a crossbow) and although arrows might not penetrate armour at distances much beyond 200 yards, they could still bring down war-horses which carried less protection than their riders. Once unhorsed a fallen knight, dressed in heavy armour, was helpless as he could not regain his feet without assistance.

Because bowmen practised intensively they would have been much stronger than modern archers and would have developed massive arm, chest and shoulder muscles, giving them an almost deformed appearance.

If captured the enemy would often cut off the index and middle fingers of an archer's right hand to prevent him ever drawing a bowstring again. This led to the infamous English V sign - a taunt made by archers to show that they retained their fingers and were thus able to fight.

English bowmen were tough, well disciplined, practised, mobile and able to close ranks speedily. By aiming high to achieve maximum range (clout shooting), they were able to create an 'arrow storm' which brought terror and terrible destruction in the massed ranks of the enemy. They did this to great effect at the Battle of Crecy (1346) when an English army of 16,000, including 3,000 archers, slaughtered a 40,000-strong French army. In spite of the French making 16 charges, the English and Welsh archers held them off, reputedly inflicting 12,000 French casualties for the loss of just a few hundred men.

Ten years later, at the Battle of Poitiers, 10,000 English troops achieved an even greater victory against a larger French army of some 60,000 men. The French had developed a small cavalry unit specifically to deal with archers, but these were not only brought to a halt by the number of arrows that showered down upon them, they were routed. So intense was the rate of fire at one point that some archers ran out of arrows and had to run forward to collect arrows already imbedded in their victims' bodies.

Perhaps the most famous English victory with the longbow occurred in 1414. A French army of 25,000 men had trapped Henry V's army of less than 6,000 starving and sick men at Agincourt, where they expected a quick and easy victory. On 25 October, St Crispin's Day, the two sides prepared for battle but so confident of winning were the French that they would not be rushed and ate a leisurely breakfast. As no rations were available for the English troops they remained hungry - then to compound their misery, it started to rain, no doubt increasing their anger and making them determined to extract a savage revenge on anyone who got in their way.

English archers advanced to within 300 yards of the enemy and commenced firing, spurring the French cavalry to retaliate by charging. However the ground was now so wet that their heavy war-horses quickly bogged down, and combined with the storm of arrows raining down upon them, the knights became so unnerved that they retreated, straight into the path of their own advancing infantry. With the French cavalry and infantry now so inextricably linked they were soon in total disarray.

The field became a quagmire, churned up by the feet of thousands of heavily armoured knights and horses, with English and Welsh bowmen firing tens of thousands of arrows into the heaving mass. What followed was a bloodbath with English archers and foot soldiers rushing to dispatch the unfortunate un-horsed knights, who were as helpless as tortoises on their backs, by plunging knives or short swords through the visors or any other chink in their victims' armour. In a battle which

continued page 5

lasted less than half an hour, between 6,000 and 10,000 French troops died for the loss of a few hundred English.

With such outstanding victories it is curious that only the English were to recognise the longbow's potential and make full use of it. From at least 950 AD the French had been developing the crossbow, which although a far more powerful weapon than the longbow, had one major shortcoming - it was extremely slow and cumbersome to load putting it at a decided dis-advantage in combat.

To maintain the English archers' superiority, cross-bows were banned in this country while English ships were ordered to import the woods necessary to make bows and arrows whenever possible. The longbow continued to dominate the battlefield for over 500 years, until it was gradually replaced by the musket in the 17th century, even though bow and arrows were faster and more accurate than these new weapons - as many American settlers fighting against Indians discovered to their cost.

Not until the advent of repeating-rifles in the 1870's could guns truly be regarded as superior to the bow and arrow, although I have heard that some Commandos in the last World War were supposedly trained in their use because bows were silent and deadly.

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YOUR PENNY FARTHING NEEDS YOU

Due to illness we are seeking two unpaid volunteers to deliver a few copies of *Penny Farthing* in Maldon Town once every quarter. The areas to be covered are Cromwell Avenue to London Road and the Poets Estate, the by-pass end of Fambridge Road, Mill Road and Cross Road.

The work involves about two hours work per volunteer each time but would be of enormous help to Maldon Museum and its magazine - so if you are able to deliver our magazine just four times a year we would love to hear from you - please contact

Molly Middleton
01621 859914.

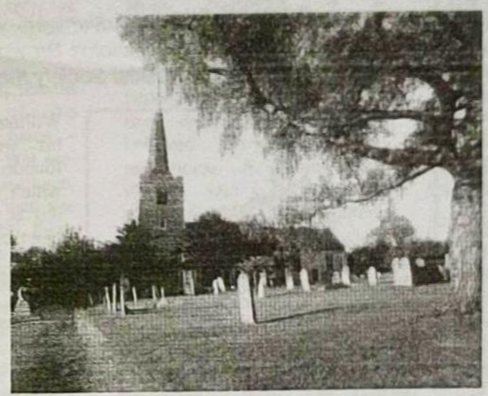
SAD SADD OMISSION?

Maldon Museum was visited last October by descendants of Charles Edwin Sadd, whose name they claimed should appear on the bottom line of the family tree which is displayed in the John Sadd room. Charles Edwin was born on 11.11.1911 and emigrated to Canada. The date of his death is not known. According to them he is the boy dressed in a sailor's suit on the right hand side of the group photograph of Sadd children.

Our Chairman does not think that we have made an error as they suggested. The names on the family tree are those who played a significant part in running Maldon's famous timber company. There are several sisters who are not mentioned on the tree either. It would be interesting to learn what Charles did in Canada. Our local families seem to have followed the trend in exporting younger sons to the Colonies, including the Bentalls and Fitches, although in some cases the young male family member left Maldon under a cloud.

Maldon's Historic Churches

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



St. John the Baptist - Danbury

Danbury is probably one of the most picturesque of mid Essex villages, its attractiveness enhanced by the beautiful church of St. John the Baptist, standing on a 111-metres high hilltop. There has been a church here since at least 1233 and it is located on the site of an Iron-Age fort which was probably a place of pagan worship long before Christianity.

The earliest part of the church is of stone flint, but the tower was not built until one hundred years later. The spire has been damaged or destroyed several times since and it is even claimed that the devil himself once destroyed the spire on Corpus Christi Day, 1402, during a violent storm. On another occasion 'Old Nick' is accused of stealing the fifth church bell, the one which was tolled to mark the passing of a soul. When the parishioners discovered the theft they set up a 'hue and cry' which caused the devil to drop his loot. According to the story the falling bell created such a large crater that the place became known as "Bell Hill Wood".

Sadly, during the Reformation many of St. John's treasures and ornaments were sold off to pay for repairs to the church's fabric - the nearby "Griffin" public house is supposed to house a 'Rood Screen' acquired at that time. In 1779 workmen working in the graveyard discovered a grave with a lead coffin containing the body of a young man perfectly preserved in a liquid tasting like mushroom ketchup! He was dressed in fine linen and lace and although there was no name on the coffin he is now popularly known as the "pickled knight".

During the Napoleonic Wars, soldiers based on the common nearby used the church tower to look for signs of invasion.

Although the interior is now mostly Victorian, deriving from Gilbert Scott's reordering in 1866, there is still much of interest to be seen inside, including the famous wooden effigies of three crusader knights of Danbury. Their armour dates back to about 1270 and they are believed to be of the St. Clere family. The unusual carved wooden creatures which adorn the pew ends are Victorian copies of three remaining 15th century pews just inside the church. There are also crests of some of the military regiments stationed in the area during the First World War.

During the Second World War the church was severely harmed by a bomb which landed only 20 feet away and blew out the stained glass windows, ruined the organ and caused structural damage.

MEDIAEVAL MALDON

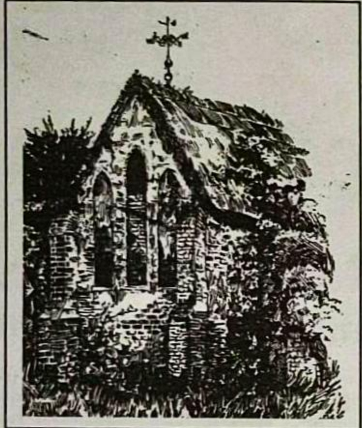
Part 3 Continued from our Winter Edition

The following article has been reprinted from the "Maldon Advertiser" of November 1911. It was the transcript of a lecture delivered by Dr. H Reynolds Brown M.D. at a public meeting in connection with the Maldon Literary and Musical Society that same year.

The chapel of St. Giles', now the Spital Barn, is the oldest building in Maldon - can nothing be done to save what remains of it? Parts of the walls go back to Roman times, though to what use they were put in their early days nobody knows. They were used to build a chapel as early as the XII century, for there are Norman capitals to two pillars, and the remains of a string course of cut stone round the chancel characteristic of that period. But early in the XIII century this was improved upon, and the Early English lancet windows which can still be seen were put into the South Transept, the best preserved part of the edifice.

At this time it was the chapel of the St Giles' Leper Hospital - but probably the Chapel alone was built of stone and the lepers themselves housed in huts of wood and mud. For anything was good enough for a leper in those days. They were fed on all "bread, beer, flesh and fish not fit to be eaten" that was seized in the Borough.

True leprosy certainly existed in England in the middle ages, but probably cases of tubercle of the skin or bones were included under the same name, and found their way to the Lazar house, there to die a lingering death.



St. Giles' Hospital

The churches were of course supported by Tithes, which were at first given as free-will offerings, but were soon enforced by law. In 1189 one Robert Mantell, whose statue you may see in one of the niches of All Saints' Church and who must have been the Lord of the Manors of Great and Little Maldon, handed over the tithes to Beeleigh Abbey which he had founded.

Of this Mantell we know nothing. He may have been a very pious person, who thought that a Monastery or rather a Canonry was a more deserving object than a parish Church. More probably he was a reprobate who felt that the prayers of the monks would be a good investment.

William the Conqueror and his wife, Matilda, each founded a great abbey, which you may see to this day at Caen in Normandy. Not that they were specially pious, but they were first cousins and had offended the Pope by getting married to each other without his leave - a quarrel with the Pope was a very serious matter in those days. So having got their own way they set about making up with him, and he told them to build an abbey. In order to do the thing handsomely they built not one, but two.

But whether from piety, repentance, or fear Mantell handed over the tithes of St. Peter's and All Saints' to Beeleigh, making the Abbey pay a pittance to the vicar in each church - so miserable a pittance that in 1306 the two parishes had to be united to provide something like a decent living for one priest.

This absorption of the tithes of livings, and of land itself by the monasteries was a great feature of the middle ages, so much so that before their abolition they are said to have owned one third of the country - not to mention the tithes.

What did they do in exchange for all this wealth? Let us try to get some sort of picture of Beeleigh Abbey in the days of its glory. Today you may still see the beautiful chapter house, where the monks held their meetings to discuss the business of the monastery; the refectory, or dining room, and the dormitory above it.

The vaulted roofs that remain give some idea of the architecture of the place - though some of what you see, all the brickwork for instance, is of no earlier date than the XV century. Besides these buildings there was in the first place a church, probably as large as All Saints', and a grassy courtyard, surrounded by cloisters, or a pillared arcade. Here the canons spent the greater part of their time, here they taught their schools, transacted business, pursued their studies or meditated.

A staircase from the cloisters went up to the dormitory, and they could pass under cover by the cloisters into the church. A necessary provision, as they had to rise up at midnight and betake themselves to the church for services, no matter what the weather.

Books were scarce before the days of printing, but every convent contained a scriptorium or writing room. There the skilled copyist made copies of such books as were required - writing on parchment, with a reed pen, in beautiful characters - and you may be sure enjoying thoroughly every opportunity of making a capital letter. For then his fancy was allowed to run riot, and he might relieve the monotony of his work by making a picture.

Apart from the fun of illuminating, as such picture work is called, the writing must have been a dull enough task. A monastery that I have visited in Switzerland is the proud possessor of a manuscript written by an Irish monk in the Middle Ages. In the margin are notes in Erse, which until recently had not been deciphered, and were believed to be pious reflections. A learned Irish visitor was shown the manuscript and was delighted to read such notes as these - "Praise be to the Saints, here's darkness come at last and I can stop this stupid writing." This at any rate is a solid debt that we owe to the monasteries - the multiplication and preservation of manuscripts, and the times which would otherwise be forgotten and hopelessly buried.

Most if not all of the teaching was done by the monks. Do not imagine that in the Middle Ages that few people could read and write. Almost every manor had its accounts made up once a year, and at the same time of year, to be presented by the bailiff, who cultivated the soil for his lord, bought the necessary stock and implements, hired labour and sold the produce.

These accounts are beautifully written out, which shows that there must have been a large army of skilful clerks to do the work. And more than that, in many cases the bailiff's own rough notes of expenditure and income have been preserved - so that at any rate, the bailiff himself could wield the pen. And all those who had learned reading and writing had learned from the monks.

The duty of hospitality was always observed by the monasteries. No wayfarer was turned away. They were the hotels of the Middle Ages. But though no bill was presented before he left, the guest was expected to contribute to the funds of the house. Yet the business of entertainment seems to have been carried on at a loss, and was a heavy source of expense.

Much work had to be done in the matter of administering their extensive estates, though the monks themselves did little manual labour beyond a little dilettante gardening. The home farm if there was one, was tilled by the villeins or by hired servants.

The day must have passed quickly enough for a monk - six services a day besides one at midnight, all of which had to be attended by the whole monastery. When added to the times for meals this left the day sadly cut up for other occupations. Indeed a monk's life was not as a rule one of idleness - the abbot had important administrative duties, managing not only the monastery but its estates, which might be extensive and widely scattered, and over which he was an almost absolute sovereign. The Prior was his Prime Minister, his chief assistant, his deputy during his absence.

The sacristan had charge of the Church and its services, the cellarer, not only of the drinks as is often imagined, but of the establishment's food and of the entertainment of its guests. The infirmarer was medical superintendent of the monastery.

But outsiders were also received. Those who did not hold special office were employed either in teaching, in writing, or in learning services by heart, or practising singing.

The monastery was a little world in itself. All that was required for its life was, as a rule, produced on its own estate - except for foreign wines, pepper and spices. Its own wheat was ground at its own mill (Beeleigh had a mill, probably a water mill, at any rate there was one in the time of Henry VIII). Its own meat was fattened on its own meadows. Its beer was home brewed. Its garments were made from the wool of its own sheep. And around the monastery there lived the blacksmith, carpenter, shoemaker, tailor etc.

But taken altogether the life of a monk was a selfish one, devoted to the interests of his monastery and not to the world outside. So in time the world learned to do without monasteries.

The secular clergy on the other hand - the Parish priests - on whom the monks looked down as an inferior order, lived in the world and according to their lights tried to make it a better place.

That many of them were ignorant, illiterate, lazy, selfish, and in short, sheep of every sort of blackness, I am quite prepared to admit. However a critic of the life of the XIV century, who never hesitated to describe men and things as he found them, has left us a picture of a parish priest of his day, of which no church need be ashamed.

"A good man was there of religoun
That was a poure persone of a town
But riche he was of holy thought and work.
Wide was his parish, and houses fer asonder
But he ne left nought for no rain ne thonder,
In sickenesse and in mischief to visite
The ferrest in his parish, moche and lite,
Upon his fete, and in his hand a staff -
This noble ensample to his shepe he gaf
That first he wrought and afterwards he taught."

This description however, refers to the end of the XI, not to the beginning of the XIII century. Between these dates England and Europe had seen one of the most remarkable revivals of religion known to history.

At the end of the XII century, though our parish system worked well enough among the scanty rural populations, it had broken down completely in the towns. Increase of trade and population had brought wealth to the guilds of traders, but entrenched behind their guild laws these few privileged ones kept the good things to themselves. Outside such trade unions were the unskilled, unorganised labourers - living in a slough of misery, famine, squalor and despair of which, even in our worst times, we are today fortunately ignorant.

There were no poor laws to mitigate the worst pinch of poverty. Throngs of beggars, outlaws and runaway villeins were simply left to themselves. The civil authorities took no heed of them - except to hang a few from time to time. The church took no heed of them. The monks were to busy with the salvation of their own souls or the building and enriching of their monasteries to care what became of them.

To be concluded in our next issue

PROFUSE APOLOGIES

It appears that I have been guilty of mis-spelling Liz Willsher's surname in the last two issues of the *Penny Farthing*. To compound my error I was corrected after the first mistake, only to repeat it in the next issue. I have been severely taken to task by Judy Betteridge (I do hope I've spelt her name right!), who has threatened me with dire consequences if I do it again!

I apologise most sincerely to Liz but in mitigation would claim that, being an editor of very little brain, when one of my brain cells starts to malfunction then I screw up big time!

I could of course have claimed that it was a deliberate mistake to see if anybody reads the magazine but I am sure no one would have believed me.

Sorry Liz, please regard me as having had a slapped wrist and I promise it won't happen again - until the next time at least.

The Public Catalogue Foundation

Oil Paintings in Public Collections in Essex

I was contacted in the early part of 2006 by Julia Abel Smith, the Essex Co-ordinator of the Public Catalogue Foundation, an organisation that I had not previously encountered. It is a registered charity based in the National Gallery, London.

Julia explained that the object of the Foundation was to record all oil paintings in Public Ownership, or those that were on long term loan to Public Collections, and publish an illustrated uniform catalogue for each county providing a volume that will do for oil paintings what the Pevsner Guides do for architecture.

Accompanied by a professional photographer, Julia came to Promenade Lodge and recorded the 13 oil paintings presently held in our collection, which now appear in the Essex Catalogue that was published in December 2006. These include not only paintings by Charles Grigg Tate, June Prime and Caroline Spong but also those from an earlier group of Maldon painters D H Parry, Joe H Prior, H Miller, Horatio R Hollingdale and J Fanner. Little is known of this latter group and if any reader can provide information it would be much appreciated.

It is hoped that as many of the paintings held by Maldon Museum as possible which are featured in the Catalogue will be on display during the 2007 season.

On a different tack it is pleasing that works by two of our Life Members, John Osborne and Charlie Middleton, are recorded as being in Public Collections namely those of Essex County Council, Southend and Chelmsford Museum Services. Congratulations must be given to these gentlemen and our pleasure shown that we do have examples of their work in our own collection but not, alas, oil paintings.

Soft covered copies of the Catalogue for Essex can be ordered through the Museum at £20 each. The Essex version reveals the rich and diverse cultural heritage of our county covering 59 public collections and their 2,135 oil paintings.

Paddy Lacey

Apropos of paintings, I have recently been trying to find a copy of a particular painting depicting the death of Admiral Horatio Nelson, in the course of which I asked the Museum's Accessions Officer Judy Betteridge if she could help. She quickly came back with several pictures all showing Admiral Nelson in his dying extremity but not the one I was looking for. It seems that there are dozens of paintings showing this famous scene, prompting Judy to comment "they must have had an awful lot of artists' easels on board the *Victory*!"

Editor

MALDON'S MARTYRED MISSIONARY

Following the item "They Also Served" in the Autumn edition of Penny Farthing, about the murder of Alfred Sadd by the Japanese during the Second World War, our Museum's indefatigable Accessions Officer, Judy Betteridge, has uncovered a file of priceless material about this remarkable man. It contains original letters of Alfred Sadd, eyewitness accounts of the murder, photographs etc. and I am grateful to Judy for the loan of this material from which the following item has been gleaned.

Alfred Sadd, Maldonian, Missionary, Martyr
1909 - 1942

Alfred Sadd was born on the 7th November 1909, the second son of Mr & Mrs Harry Sadd, members of the famous Maldon timber merchant family. The early death of Harry Sadd left his widow with eight young children to raise, a loss somewhat mitigated by the support of a large and wealthy family, together with the comfort afforded by a strong Christian faith. The senior members of the family held responsible offices in the work of the Congregational church and from his earliest days the young Alfred was accustomed to Sunday-school and the various church services.

The first school outside Maldon that Alfred and one of his brothers attended was at Ovingdean, near Brighton. If he wrestled here with spelling it was not very successful, for a more persistently "phonetic" speller, possibly never lived. Throughout his life this was to remain a blind spot in his education and no amount of rebukes by his tutors brought any amendment.

In spite of his deficiency in formal spelling and punctuation, Alfred passed to the Leys at Cambridge, and if he lacked distinction in scholarship he more than made up for it in personality.

His headmaster, Rev. Harry Bisseker, regreted his comparative failure in learning but added, "He's one of the greatest influences for good in this school". He never reached the VIth Form but was encouraged to try for Cambridge University and received special tutorial help at school. To the amazement of masters, family and friends he managed to become an undergraduate at Cheshunt College.

Cheshunt College had a great missionary tradition, and with his early foundation in the Christian faith, it is not surprising that he eagerly grasped the college's theological curriculum and began to train as a potential missionary. it was not solely religious studies that occupied Alfred's time - he was a noted, if somewhat eccentric cyclist, and a member of the Fitzwilliam Hall Rowing Club, winning his oar. Between terms he would invite college friends to accompany him sailing the Sadd family yacht, *Ripple*, on the Blackwater.

In 1933, having studied longer at Cambridge than most students, he eventually sat his final exams taking as a specialist subject physiology, in which he secured a first class degree. Alfred was now able to join the London Missionary Society and was sent to the remote outpost of the Gilbert Islands in the Pacific Ocean. This was a posting which would suit his love of sailing, as all travel between the islands relied upon small boats, and exploit his practical abilities because skilled labour of every kind was unobtainable.

The islands to which Alfred Sadd was appointed are set in

the mid-Pacific and are among the loneliest islands in the world. Until the discovery of rich beds of phosphates in the group they were of little interest to anyone except missionaries who first began their ministry in 1870. The islands were semi-barren coral atolls and the home of about 35,000 inhabitants, mostly Polynesian.

For contact with the outside world the Gilbert Islands relied upon an occasional phosphate cargo boat or a Government vessel plus the missionary schooner *John Williams*, which three times a year brought food, books, letters, papers and some of life's amenities to the islands.

On his outward journey Alfred was accompanied by the two senior missionaries to the islands who were returning after leave in Europe. Their friendship and experienced advice were invaluable. He also began to learn the language and customs of his sphere of missionary duties.

Alfred's new life was to be one of interest and activity. From the moment he arrived at the mission station at Rongorongo he was involved in house building and repair, boat repairing, the wireless receiving and transmitting equipment, work in the dispensary, scouting, school-teaching, theology lecturing and translation, and even some unprofessional surgery (he had taken his degree in physiology).

All of his adventures and experiences he reported to his friends and family at home by way of circular letters sent via the infrequent missionary vessel, although his typewriter could still not be taught to spell and punctuate properly. One colleague wrote of him "... his writing is illegible, his spelling original and his punctuation erratic; but he is of the salt of the earth."

He made many friends among his colleagues and the Islanders and was very highly regarded by all who met him. In 1938 he made a six-month furlough back to England to visit family and friends in Maldon, a visit made almost sacred by the tragic events which were to happen in the following years.

Soon after his return to the Gilberts consideration had to be given to the position of the missionaries and European citizens in the event of war. It was hoped that the islands would be beyond the main theatre of any fighting but the attack on Pearl Harbour demonstrated that there would be no peace in the Pacific. European women and children were ordered out, then the men. The London Missionary Society left the decision to remain or leave to the male missionaries and after much discussion and prayer it was agreed that they would accept the British Government's recommendation and leave whilst it was still possible.

Alfred agreed with this decision but in view of his own freedom from family responsibility determined to stay behind to guard and continue, as far as he was able, the work of the church and the institutions of the islanders. He wrote to his brother in February 1942, "Personally I have no intention of leaving the Gilberts unless the Board of the London Missionary Society tell me to go, or the Japs come and take me by force". He later wrote to a friend "I have a feeling that God has something bigger than this He intends me to do. I hope and pray I shall be found faithful".

The first sign of the war which was to come to the Gilbert Islands was the arrival of a lifeboat's crew from a torpedoed American ship at Beru who were "all in" from the effect of thirty-one days at sea, surviving on two "Cabin" biscuits and twelve ounces of water per man per day.

At the end of February 1942 war came first-hand, when in the description given by Alfred "Three weeks ago we had no end of excitement ... There was the rattle of a falling bomb and a good crash. I thought that as that was obviously one on Rongorongo, I'd better get up. Presently a boy came rushing up and panted out 'The Jubilee Church is all blown to pieces!' I replied, 'I'm sorry, but I can't put it together,' and continued reading Tropical Nutrition for my weekly lecture on physiology. However the boy was not so easily silenced and proceeded : 'It looks as if it is going to bomb your house' ... I admitted this did alter the situation and I speedily retired to a nearby banana pit ...

continued page 13

The Jap aimed his other bomb at the church tower, but fortunately it was not a good shot. It did no damage. As it seemed natural to suppose that they would not tire of their sport ... we spent the next week sandbagging all the buildings ... We also arranged to have Easter Services outside bombing hours."

Through April, May and June Alfred quietly and steadily carried on his work. One of his last letters bears the date of June 1942, but it did not reach England until August 1944, after news of his death had already been received.

In August 1942 the Japanese came to the islands - this time to stay. A description of what happened was recorded by Pastor Itaia (later translated by Alfred Sadd's former colleague, Miss E. M. Pateman). He said:

"The Japs came to Rongorongo and all the people were gathered together on the west of the Jubilee Church. The Japs created fear, for when anyone stood up they frightened them with the point of the bayonet. Then Mr Sadd came hurrying along on his bicycle and two soldiers went to meet him and Mr Sadd dismounted. The Japs had spread out a Union Jack on the ground right in his path. Mr Sadd saluted - perhaps to the Union Jack, but he did not tread on it, he walked round it to visit the officer. He talked with the officer, and later he went to Tablei in Beru (Government Station), escorted by two Japanese soldiers to be tried by the commander.

"He went without fear, he was not troubled or heavy-hearted. The two soldiers were very angry, because Mr Sadd walked very quickly. They shouted at him, but Mr Sadd went on the same until people told him that the Japs were angry because he was going so fast; and then he went more slowly. [Can't you just see Mr Sadd loping along and the two little men toddling along behind trying to keep up with him! *Miss Pateman*].

"When they reached Tabulei in Beru the Union jack was again spread out in his path so that he would tread upon it. But when he advanced towards the commander, on reaching the flag, he stooped down, took up the flag in his hands, gathered it in his arms and kissed it and carried it and presented it to the officer who was sitting beside the commander. The Japs marvelled at him and stared at him as he stood before the commander. Perhaps they were amazed that he did not walk on the Union Jack.

"The decision was made that he should go to Tarawa, and he was sent back to Rongorongo to get his clothes. He said good-bye to the people ... and when he saw me he said "Itaia, Ti a leabo!" (Good-bye, we shall meet again.)

"He was taken to Tarawa, where with other prisoners he was made to work like a criminal. Then one day an Australian man o' war came to Tarawa and sank several Japanese ships and a big Japanese man o' war was sunk by an aeroplane. The next morning the Japanese officers had a meeting and decided that all the Europeans should be killed. They were very heavy-hearted, but Mr Sadd cheered them before their death.

"They stood in a line, Mr Sadd in the middle, and presently Mr Sadd went out and stood in front of them and spoke words of cheer to them. When he had finished he went back and stood a little in front of them so that he would be the first to die. Then came a Jap and struck him with his sword, and all the Europeans clapped their hands and were happy when they saw the courage of Mr Sadd. And so they did to each one of their friends."

A tribute from one of his colleagues may fittingly conclude this brief story of his life:

"Our dear lad has gone, with his eager enthusiasm, his infectious laugh and his happy heart ... He is irreplaceable, we shall miss him, not only for what he did, but for what he was ... There was no streak of malice in his make-up. His reactions were truly Christian ... I can see him on his journeys round the Group, dashing about on canoes, on boats, on a bicycle, going from village to village, performing miracles of physical endurance ... It was heroic of him to stay in the Gilberts, courageous of him to take such risks, and he has paid the price. Who can measure the influence and inspiration of his steadfast determination not to desert the people in their hour of danger?".

Alfred Sadd was 33 years old when he was murdered on the 15th October 1942. With him were twenty-one other British and New Zealand civilians who met their fate with gallantry and fortitude. A monument was later erected on the site to their memory.

This article is taken from a small booklet published in 1944 by the Livingstone Press

ST. CEDD's CHATLINE

By Judy Betteridge

Well here we are again, another New Year under way, accompanied as always in our house by the obligatory diet, following the excesses of the festive season. A diet, which I'm afraid is thwarted at St. Cedds, as our Chairman very kindly gave us a large box of Ferrero Rocher for Christmas, since when I have found a dozen reasons to pop into the office and pop a few F.R.s whilst doing so!

Madly exciting news received a few weeks ago, we had been allocated an extra room at St. Cedds - great jubilation that at last on Monday afternoons we could have room to work together, without overspilling into the corridor - deep depression followed when we read the last paragraph of the letter, which pointed out that we may only use the room until the end of March, when the situation will be reviewed. We soldier on against all odds!

2007 sees another crop of Anniversaries - the Scouting movement celebrates its 100th birthday - its founder Lord Robert Baden-Powell was born 150 years ago in 1875, thus he was already fifty years old when the first experimental scout camp was held on Brownsea Island, Poole, and proved a tremendous success. Another 150th anniversary this year, is that of the Victoria Cross, and this event has considerable relevance to our Museum, as we are planning a new display for the 2007 season, which we have called "Heroes of Maldon", seven of which have been selected (not all VC holders of course - Byrhtnoth was a bit early for that honour, but he has been "decorated" in a rather more disrespectful way recently).

So we are all very busy at the moment, researching information and items to be displayed, and it is fortunate in a way that we have received few new items to be accessed, but as a result of an end-of-season "Wombling" session at the Museum, quite a few items previously un-accessed, have surfaced and been dealt with.

Can't end with my customary New Year message of "talk to you later in the year when it gets warmer", as it hasn't really got cold yet. (This global warming is confusing my woolly winter warmers, as they haven't come out of their summer hibernation in the airing cupboard yet - too much information I hear you shriek!)

Take care - talk to you later in the year, when it gets even hotter perhaps.

Judy Betteridge
Accessions Officer

A WARTIME CHILDHOOD

PART TWO CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS EDITION

In 1946 my Grandmother, with whom I had lived in the Midlands throughout the war, died and my mother who I hardly knew because she had been nursing in London, together with my new stepfather took me to live in the London suburbs.

When we first arrived in London Dad still had a year to serve in the army, so my mother and I became lodgers in a private house in Crouch End and later in Barnet. On the evening we went to view the room in Barnet, while terms were being discussed, I went to explore the back garden and managed to fall in the fish pond. I don't know how the fish felt about this but I found the experience most disagreeable.

When Dad was finally de-mobbed my parents purchased a house in Enfield where I eventually attended Junior School. My teacher, Miss Mason, was a stern, straight-backed elderly spinster who punished the slightest misdemeanour with a vicious slapping to the back of the legs, often with a wooden ruler. Discipline in those days was strictly maintained and pupils stretched to their utmost potential. Even the dimmest pupil was taught to read, write and do simple arithmetic (we learned all of our times tables by rote) - Miss Mason would never have countenanced anyone not being able to do so.

Dyslexia had not been heard of then and even if it had, Miss Mason would never have accepted that as an excuse for not learning to read or write - she would have beaten literacy into us! I remember once having to write on the blackboard one hundred and fifty times the word 'because' just 'cause I spelled it wrongly.

The school itself was an old Victorian brick building surrounded by a number of wooden huts used as temporary classrooms. There was no central heating, but at the front of each classroom was a large coke-fired stove which gave out very little heat but plenty of the most noxious fumes. Around the stove was a wire fireguard which, on wet days, would be covered in wet coats, gloves and scarves adding a gentle steam to the fug of the coke fuel. On cold days we had the choice of sitting well away from the stove and be freezing cold, even though wrapped in our overcoats, or close to it to be warm but choking.

The lavatories, which were situated in the playground, consisted of two brick toilet blocks, one for girls the other for boys. I don't know about the girls' toilets, but the boys' one stank and being open to the elements (there was no roof to the buildings), was particularly unpleasant in bad weather.

To everyone's surprise, not least my own, I passed the "eleven plus" examination to win a place at the local grammar school. Masters there wore black gowns, which when they moved fast down the corridors, billowed out behind making them look like enormous black birds of prey, striking terror into the hearts of the more timid boys. They always looked fierce and I cannot remember them ever smiling.

Corporal punishment was common and although the cane was reserved for use by the headmaster, the staff were permitted to use other methods of physical discipline. Most of our teachers, having served in the armed forces during the recent war, seemed to regard their pupils as soldiers rather than young boys. Striking around the head with open-handed blows that made the ears ring, or dragging us from our desks by the hair, or punching, were frequent abuses. Others would spank us with a rubber soled gym shoe or a cricket stump.

There was little point in complaining to our parents about such beatings because they would usually support the teacher and give us another spanking for getting into trouble in the first place!

Apart from school I had a very happy boyhood and although the immediate post-war years were still a time of many shortages, I never felt deprived in any way. Like most children in those days, I received only a modest amount of pocket money, about one shilling a week (5p decimal), but it was enough to buy a comic and a few boiled sweets, or perhaps a visit to the pictures. Sweets were still on ration until the early 1950's when it became possible to buy them without coupons, however there was a sweet shop / tobacconist close to my school which sold two boiled sweets for a penny (half p decimal) without coupons, though the shopkeeper faced prosecution if caught.

To supplement my pocket money I did as most of my mates did; collecting empty lemonade bottles for the penny deposit; begging money for the guy during the week prior to "Guy Fawkes" night, running errands for neighbours etc. and I am ashamed to say, sometimes we would stuff a handkerchief up the return coin slot in the local telephone box to prevent users from receiving their change - then return an hour or two later to collect the trapped coins - usually only four or five pence, but a fortune to us.

The highlight of my week was Saturday morning pictures. In the days before many people owned television sets, almost everyone went to the cinema at least once a week. There were seven cinemas within a three-mile radius of my home. Some were very grand and ornately decorated, boasting massive electric organs that rose from the orchestra pit during the interval between films. The organist would play a medley of popular songs, the words of which would be displayed on the screen for the audience to sing along with.

But the favourite cinema among local kids was the "Premier", known affectionately by one and all as the "bug hutch", a reference to its dingy appearance and the insect life rumoured to live within its furnishings. The film "The Smallest Show on Earth" was surely based on the "Premier". When first constructed, in the early 1900's during the infancy of the silent cinema, it had been considered a splendid edifice. But its grandeur was long gone - the seats were torn and devoid of much of their stuffing, the carpets worn and dirty, and the dust laden curtains hung limp and forlorn. The screen itself had a large stain in the corner where someone had once thrown an overripe tomato at it during a particularly boring film. The very air was a combination of dust, stale orange peel, cigarette smoke and lavatory cleaner.

Despite this deterioration the "Premier" still managed to retain a splendidly uniformed and be-medalled commissionaire who looked like a Brigadier General at the very least. Dressed in a long crimson coat covered in gold braid, epaulettes and an ornate corded lanyard, complete with a smart peaked cap, his job was to stand on the steps of the decrepit building to control the queues which never materialised. I was lost in admiration of this majestic presence and longed to have a job like his.

The only time that the "bug hutch" managed to draw an audience of more than a few dozen was Saturday mornings when a couple of hundred noisy youngsters would pay sixpence to watch a programme of children's films. This audience was almost exclusively boys, for the environment was not one conducive to attracting delicate little girls. It was a brave tom-boy indeed who would dare to face the danger of being made a target for our paper aeroplanes and pigtail pulling.

The programme usually consisted of a western or adventure film starring the likes of the singing cowboys Gene Autrey, Roy Rogers or my particular favourite Johnny McBrown, but even our heroes would be booed and hooted loudly when they began romancing the heroine. It was considered OK to sing to his horse but singing to a girl was definitely cissy. In addition to the western there would be a comedy starring Laurel and Hardy, the Three Stooges or the Bowery Boys; then a cartoon, usually Mickey Mouse, Goofey or Donald Duck.

continued page 17 ....

The entertainment always ended with a serial about Flash Gordon and his arch-enemy Ming the Merciless, or the Flying Cadets, or Jungle Girl - it always stopped just when the hero was in dire peril with no possible way of escape, in order to lure us back the following week. This was always a cop-out as "with one mighty bound" the hero was free! There would also be trailers for the following week's films, Pathe News plus Pearl and Dean advertisements. During the interval an arthritic usherette would sell ice creams, Kia-Ora orange drink or ice lollies (there was no popcorn in those days).

Situated either side of the screen were the lavatories where one of the staff kept his bicycle. It was quite usual, in the most dramatic part of a film, to be disturbed by the clicking of the fixed wheel as he pushed his bikedown the central aisle to padlock it in the gents' toilets.

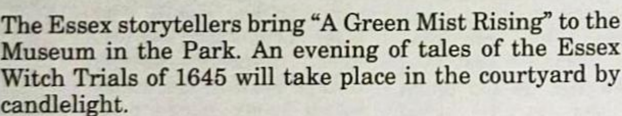
At the end of the programme all cinemas always played the National Anthem, the first notes of which were the signal to make a dive for the exits before one was embarrassed into standing to attention until it finished. Once through the exit doors we would all charge out into the street, and with our coats tied around our necks by their sleeves to make capes, indulge in imaginary sword fights or shoot Red Indians and bandits by the score - there was none of this politically correct nonsense of talking the villain to death nstead of shooting him!

Eventually competition was to force the Premier to close as a cinema. For a while it became a bingo hall, but even this incarnation was short lived as it could not offer the glitz of the MECCAs of this world. The last time I saw the old picture palace was in the early 1960's - by then it was boarded-up and awaiting demolition.

The Premier was a magic place, and despite its decrepit appearance, full of excitement and laughter. I look back fondly upon many childish hours spent within its walls, and if I could have preserved only one thing as a permanent reminder of my childhood, it would have to been the "bug hutch".

to be continued.

THE MAGIC OF ESSEX



The Essex storytellers bring "A Green Mist Rising" to the Museum in the Park. An evening of tales of the Essex Witch Trials of 1645 will take place in the courtyard by candlelight.

Wednesday 23 May 2007
7.15 for 7.30pm start, approximate finish 9.30
Maldon Museum Courtyard
Price £5.00 per person

Although some seating will be provided, please bring a rug with you to sit on if possible, and why not bring a picnic to complete your evening.

Places are limited due to the size of the courtyard, so please book early to avoid disappointment!

Contact Jenny on 07903 347782, or email jenny.sjollema@btinternet.com or send a cheque for the number of tickets required, payable to "Maldon and District Museum" to 16 Rydal Drive, Maldon, Essex CM9 5LG.

A Closer Look at an Exhibit...

AN UNSUNG HERO

Opposite the War-time Kitchen display in our Museum is a plaque dedicated to Benjamin George Cobey and a framed print entitled "Saving the Guns at Le Cateau", by the well known artist Terence Cuneo. This picture depicts an incident during the First World War when four British artillerymen successfully retrieved a captured field-gun under heavy fire. For this exploit three of the men received the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest award for valour, while the fourth, Driver Cobey, was killed and received nothing.

Benjamin Cobey was a Maldon man, born in a house opposite St Mary's Church in 1895, and it seems extremely unjust that his courage and supreme sacrifice was never properly recognised.

Following the Battle of Mons in August 1914, the British II Corps retreated closely followed by the German 1st Army. It was clear that the disorganised and fatigued units faced annihilation if the withdrawal was forced to continue, so Commander Horace Smith-Dorrien order-ed the Corps to stand and fight just west of the small town of Le Cateau. On the morning of 26 August the field artillery held overwhelming numbers of the enemy at bay, and firing air-busting shrapnel rounds, inflicted severe losses upon the German troops.

Fighting was so close that many of the guns were fired at point-blank range, only being withdrawn just as the enemy closed in. Others guns teams, not so fortunate, were overrun by German infantry - among them being two guns belonging to the 37th Battery, Royal Field Artillery.

Captain Douglas Reynolds immediately called for volunteers to help him save his Battery's guns and three men stepped forward, drivers Frederick Luke, Job Drain and Benjamin Cobey. Although this was an almost suicidal mission as the enemy was only 100 yards away, the four took two teams of horses and, under intense fire managed to limber up two of the guns. In the mad gallop back to their own lines one gun was lost and sadly Benjamin Cobey was killed.

For his courage, Reynolds was awarded the VC and promoted to Major. He died of septicaemia on 23 February 1916 after being gassed at Le Touquet and is buried in Etaples. Frederick Luke was promoted to Sergeant, received his VC, and went on to serve with the Royal Air Force Regiment during the Second World War. He died in Glasgow on 12 March 1983. Job Henry Charles Drain was an Essex lad born in Barking on 15 October 1895 and died on 26 July 1975 and is buried in Barking. Both he and Luke were 18 years old when they won their VCs.

For some unknown reason Cobey's sacrifice was ignored and he did not even warrant a mention on Maldon's War Memorial or in the Avenue of Remembrance, although two other men named Cobey were (possibly relatives). It was only thanks to The Essex Branch of the Western Front Association who in 2000, provided the plaque and picture and presented them to Maldon Museum, that Benjamin Cobey has some small memorial today. He was just 19 years old when he was killed.

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The Hairy-Toed Hobbits of Maldon

The famous trilogy *"The Lord of the Rings"* by JRR Tolkien was inspired by The Battle of Maldon, according to Professor Sarah Keefer of Trent University, Canada, who now conducts an undergraduate course on the subject.

Professor Keefer argues that Tolkien, a leading Oxford scholar and expert on Anglo-Saxon literature, made a particular study of the early 11th century epic poem *"The Battle of Maldon"* concerning the fight between the Vikings and the Earldorman of Essex, Byrhtnoth, in 991AD. (note there are many different spellings of Byrhtnoth's name. ed.). Indeed she claims that it was this poem that most inspired him and provided the inspiration for all of his fictional writings.

The poem, believed to have been written soon after the event, concerns the Viking raid on Northey Island and the subsequent battle in which the Saxons were defeated and their leader, Byrhtnoth was killed. This was one of the largest ever Viking raids on Britain and the resulting combat was well worthy of an epic poem. Unfortunately at some time in the distant past, the poem was damaged and both beginning and end of the original text were destroyed.

When Tolkien came to study the remaining text he was curious as to how the story might have dealt with these missing events, he therefore wrote his own section entitled *"The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth, Brythelm's Son"* in the form of a conversation between two of Byrhtnoth's soldiers. He portrayed one of the soldiers as an old battle-weary cynic and the other a young poet, filled with ideas of the romance of battle. This same device was later repeated in *"The Lord of the Rings"* in exchanges between Merry and Pippin and the Ents, who are initially sceptical about opposing the wizard Saraman.

In a lecture to the British Academy in 1936 on the subject of Beowulf, Tolkien made repeated reference to two lines of poetry, not from Beowulf as one might have expected, but from his own translation of *"The Battle of Maldon."* "The spirit shall be more inflexible, the heart more bold, the courage greater, as our strength grows less."

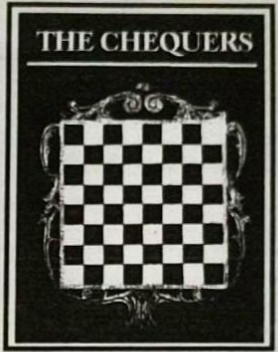
That Tolkien's whole life was influenced by *"The Battle of Maldon"* and his own *"Lord of the Rings"* to the point of an obsession may be judged by the comments and writings of his friend, CS Lewis, author of *"The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe"*, who on one occasion while listening to Tolkien reading some of his work, exploded "Not another ******* elf". Lewis later based his own hero Dr Ransom in his Cosmic Trilogy, on Tolkien and in one scene describes his hero as shouting lines from *"The Battle of Maldon"*.

There are other similarities between *"The Battle of Maldon"* and Tolkien's trilogy. Both deal with the threat of overwhelming hordes of ferocious and merciless enemies, the apparent hopelessness of resistance and the courage of those prepared to defy, and if necessary die, opposing the invaders.

Professor Keefer's theory is an interesting one, but is *"The Lord of the Rings"* really based on The Battle of Maldon? I leave you to be the judge - all I can say is, I have yet to meet any hairy-toed Hobbits in Maldon, although come to think of it, I am sure I've seen one or two Gollums in TESCO's lately!

The above item is based on an article by Tom Parkes which appeared in the Maldon and Burnham Standard in February 2003.

Based on information contained in the Rev Keith Lovell's books on the subject and we are most grateful for his kind permission to use his research.



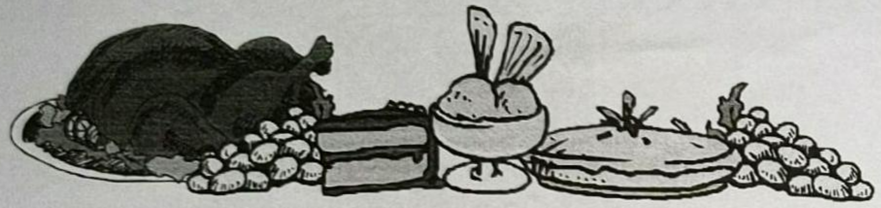
"The Chequers" public house stood in Maldon High Street from at least 1624. It took its name from a popular board game called 'Chequers' which in all probability was played in the pub. The game is still known by that name In America, but we in England now know it as 'Draughts'.

Board games have been devised and played in almost every part of the world since ancient times - the only early civilisations where they have not been found are those of the Eskimos and the Australian Aborigines. Chequers was invented around 1000 AD probably in France, but it derived from earlier games originating in the Middle East. It is a form of standardised warfare, with two equal and opposed armies struggling for supremacy, and uses the same board as is used for Chess. Each player's twelve pieces were known as 'fers', the name of the queen in French Mediaeval Chess, and the game became known as 'Fierges'. When chess queens became known as 'dames' the game became known as 'Jeu de Dames' - and is still called that in France today.

Originally there was no compulsion to capture an opponent's pieces but in about 1535AD a rule was introduced to make capture compulsory, failure to do so forcing 'huffing' (removal) of the piece belonging to the attacker. Because of this rule change, the game came to be known as 'Jeu Force' and as such the British settlers took it to America.

Although there are still "Chequers" public houses in Wickham Bishops and Goldhanger, if you fancy a pint of good ale and a friendly game of chequers in Maldon, there is no longer any point in looking for 'The Chequers' - it was demolished in 1987 and Barclays Bank now occupies the site. During the second half of the 19th century there had been a long running dispute between the proprietors of 'The Chequers' and the Town Council, over the dunghill at the rear of the inn.

FANCY A SNACK?



Having just recovered from last Christmas season's excess of food I thought readers might be interested in this item I came across as regards what a real feast was like in the 15th century.

Henry VI's coronation banquet took place on 6 November 1429 when he was eight years old, some seven years after he had officially become king at just nine months old! (They started them young in those days). After his coronation at Westminster, he and his court sat down to the following light snack:-

First Course: Frumenty (hulled wheat boiled in milk seasoned with cinnamon, sugar, etc.) with venison. Meat royal planted with lozenges of gold. Boars' heads in castles armed with gold. Beef, mutton, cygnet, stewed capon, heron and great pike. A red leach of sliced meats, eggs, fruits and spices, with lions carved therein in white. Custard royal with a leopard of gold sitting therein. Fritter like the sun, with a fleur-de-lis therein.

Second Course: Meat blanched barred with gold. Jelly divided by the musical notation *Te deum Laudamus*. Pig gindit. White leach with an antelope of red carved therein, a crown about his neck with a chain of gold. Fritters. A leopard's head with two ostrich feathers.

Third Course: Bland surry powdered with gilt quadrafoils. Roasted venison, egrets, curlew, pox, plovers, quails, snipe, grape-birds, carp, crab and leach of three colours. A cold baked meat like a shield, quarterly red and white set with lozenges of gilt and flowers of borage. Fritter crisps.

What no coffee and After Eight mints, or perhaps an Alka Seltzer to help digest all that gold?

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The following is taken from an undated advertising feature published in the late 1800's or early 1900's.

Maldon Crystal Salt Company. Mr T. E. Bland, Manager.

The Maldon Crystal Salt Company is a very old-established concern, and during the last few years has come very prominently into notice. This result is in a large measure due to Mr T. E. Bland, the present acting-manager, who spares no effort to maintain the highest standard of excellence in the salt supplied, and which is acknowledged to be the only pure table salt before the public. The following testimonials and quotations will give a clear idea of the importance of the business under notice :-

From "The Lancet" January 5th, 1884

"MALDON CRYSTAL SALT. This Table Salt obtained from Maldon, in Essex, is sold in white and well-defined crystals. It appears to be almost perfectly pure chloride of sodium. The traces of sulphates and magnesium salts in it are so minute that it is non-delinquescent and free from the bitter after-taste commonly noticed in the salt used for culinary purposes. We have no hesitation in recommending it for household use, for it is pure as well as attractive."

Results of the Analysis of the Maldon Crystal Salt Company's Pure Table Salt by ARTHUR HILL HASSALL, M.D. This preparation was found to contain the following constituents in 100 parts by weight :-

Chloride of Sodium	99.617
Chloride of Magnesium	0.198
Sulphate of Magnesium	0.067
Sulphate of Lime	0.118
	100.000

The sample was well crystallised and perfectly clean. From these results it is evident that the Salt is of *unusual purity*, and very carefully prepared.

From "Chelmsford Chronicle" January 11th, 1884.

"THE MALDON CRYSTAL SALT was comparatively quiet in the market until a year or two ago, when somewhat enlargements and alterations were made, machinery increased and much improved, and patent cardboard boxes for small quantities of the salt have been pressed into the service for its distribution, etc. The Company are now exporting in considerable quantities to the South African Colonies, the West Indies, and are doing a daily increasing business in the United Kingdom. Bakers are taking up the article, and where it is used an analysis of the bread cannot show the presence of lime. Picklers, too, prefer it as a pure brine maker, as in using it they are troubled with neither scum nor sediment.

Maldon District Museum Association

Registered Charity 301362

President - Mr Derek Maldon Fitch
Vice President - Mr L. F. Barrell

Committee - to A. G. M. 2007

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Committee (co-opted)	*Christine Steel*

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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