

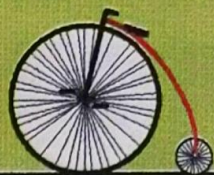
Issue 5

Spring 1996

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The Penny-Farthing

The Magazine of Maldon District Museum Association



HE'S OFF!



**YOUR CHAIRMAN IS OFF TO SUNNIER CLIMES
- READ ALL ABOUT IT INSIDE!**

AGM Issue:

Nomination Papers Enclosed.

Features include:

- Visit To Vestry House Museum
- Maldon Water Quality
- Part 2 of Monica Bailey's Maldon Story
- Topkapi Palace Museum

From The Chairman



**Chairman Terry,
thinly disguised as
Sultan Murat IV**

It is sad to be going when so much is happening to the Museum, but Ruth and I are off to her native New Zealand; where the winters are mild and the light is pure, where kiwi fruit are almost free, where sirloin steak is £1 a lb, and the cows are sane. Where the people are not crowded together and land is cheap, and for every man, woman, and child there are twenty sheep - and quite a few possums!

We are going to buy ten or twenty acres, somewhere to the north of Auckland, create a large lake for trout fishing, and build a house on the shore. Eventually there should be a craft shop and cafe as well. Our Border Collie, Ash will love it, because I am going to get him a small flock of sheep so he can practice rounding them up! I think we might have to build a visitors wing - we already have a list of about twenty friends who want to come and visit us!

Now I want to thank the committee for the hours and hours and hours of work they have been doing for the museum over the past year, but they've only given me one page. So firstly, thank you everyone. Special thanks as well to: Len, for coming out of retirement to become a full time secretary! Also for the lengthy, tiring and mind-boggling task of sorting out the acquisition lists. Thank you Penny for spending day after day in the store cataloguing the collection. Thank

you Judy for planning and organizing displays, both in Spindles and for what will be in the Prom Lodge. Thank you Tony Tullett for being Treasurer. Thank you Tony Froom for taking hours of minutes, for donating cabinets, doors, and artefacts and for organizing the new Wildlife display. Thank you Merl Pipe for organizing stewards, always stewarding when no others could be found, and for being a tolerant landlady. Thank you Sue for being membership secretary, Paddy for being Vice Chairman, and thanks to Cath, Robert, and Ruth.

The current workload, number of activities, and active people has caused our monthly committee meetings to get overburdened with agenda items and reports. At the last committee meeting it was decided to split the everyday running of the museum into four areas each performed by a subcommittee:

Displays and Exhibitions, led by the Displays Organizer

Acquisition and Registration, led by the Accessions Officer,

Admin & Finance, led by the Treasurer, (including stewarding and membership.)

Museum Shop, led by the Shop Manager (new post).

The subcommittees may have helpers who are not on the committee.

The full committee will meet every other month, with summary reports from each of the subcommittees, and have overall responsibility for the running of the museum.

Maldon District Museum Association is a charitable trust, that is it is both a trust and a charity, and is therefore governed by the laws that apply to each of these. Membership is open to all who support the object and aims of the Association as stated in the constitution, which is basically to maintain **Maldon District Museum**.

The rights of the members are stated by the constitution, and include the right to elect, at the AGM, the Association Committee, who are the trustees, responsible for the trust. On matters that affect the trust, they must act in the interest of the trust and not in their own or that of another body. They cannot pass on their responsibility, and therefore cannot directly appoint other trustees. As stated in the constitution, the committee has the right to co-opt people on to the committee, or subcommittees but such additional people, whether they be members of the association, are not considered to have been appointed by the Association, and are therefore not trustees, and therefore do not have formal voting rights on the committee.

By invitation of the committee the following people were co-opted by for the year 1995-96:
Mrs. Merl Pipe (Being the landlady of Spindles, and our Chief Steward),
Mrs. Margaret Hurley (Maldon Town Council councillor, representing Maldon Town Council).

Mrs Shirley Millidge (representing Maldon District Council), has a standing invitation, but is not coopted. Additionally, Mrs. Millidge has agreed to be our appointed Conservation Advisor. Double thanks!

We hope the Museum will reopen sometime in August. The first three months will be free as usual, after that non-members will have to pay 50P. It is intended to have a formal opening, and additionally a Quiz Night for members and friends of the museum.

OUR FUTURE ADDRESS...

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

RETIRING COMMITTEE...INCLUDING CO-OPTIONS...

Chairman.....	Mr.T.C.Chapman	01621 772103
Vice-Chairman...	Dr. P. Lacey	828001
Hon. Secretary..	Mr.L.F.Barrell	852749
Hon.Treasurer...	Mr.A.F.Tullett	858690
Committee Members...		
	Miss K.Buckley	01245 224613
	Mrs P. Cook - Artefacts Officer	01621 852511
	Mr A.J.Froom - Minute Secretary	854184
	Ms. R. Knight	772103
	Mr Rbt.Long - P.R.Consultant	817762
	Mrs S.Norrington - Membership Sec'y	858736
	Mrs M.Pipe - Senior Steward	858333
	Mrs J. Tullett- Displays Organiser	858690
	Mrs E. Vale	859059
	Cllr M.Hurley (for M.T.C.)	856784
	Cllr B.Mead (for M.D.C.)	852882
	Mrs S. Millidge attends as advisor for M.D.C.	

ALL OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OFFER THEMSELVES FOR RE-ELECTION AT THE A.G.M.
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF.....

Miss K. Buckley (Working away)	Mr.T.C.Chapman (Leaving area)
Ms Ruth Knight (Leaving area)	Mrs S.Norrington (Commitments)
Mrs E.Vale (Other commitments)	

Attendance and Apology Record of Officers and Committee:

Of Thirteen possible meetings to 28th February 1996.....

Initials.Attendance.Apologies.	Initials.Attendance.Apologies.
T.C.C. 10 2	R.K. 9 2
P.L. 13 -	R.L. ^ 2 2
L.F.B. 13 -	S.N. 7 5
A.F.T. 10 3	M.P. 11 2
K.B. 11 1	J.T. 10 3
P.C. # 7 4	E.V. ^ 3 2
A.J.F. 13 -	

[# of a possible 11]

[^ = Councillor]

Note: Council meetings sometimes coincide with our own.

REGISTRATION NEWS

Refer back to Issue No. 4 of 'Penny-Farthing' where you will find 'canned' information on the more important conditions relative to becoming registered under the terms of 'The Museums & Galleries Commission'.

We have already reported that Mr. Arthur Wright of Southend Central Museum has confirmed that he is willing to continue as our CURATORIAL ADVISER.

We are now pleased to add that Mrs Shirley Millidge of Maldon District Council, profiled in issue No.4, has agreed to act as our appointed CONSERVATION ADVISER.

The Documentation Plan is in hand but target dates cannot be set with any confidence until such time as our comprehensive 'stock check' has been completed using the existing recording procedure. We shall then use the latest available manual paperwork for all artefacts recently received and not already recorded; we shall actually 'make a fresh start' using the recommended procedures including numbering. In due course we shall no doubt have our own computer in the new museum office and record our artefacts on that (the computer, that is!), but unless a fairy godmother or for that matter a fairy godfather waves a magic wand, it is unlikely that we shall have one in the immediate future.

Having applied for Support Grant Assistance from the South Eastern Museums Service (SEMS) we received notification of a grant for £100.00 towards the cost of our new documentation, which will total approx £150.00 + VAT. We have now received all we ordered, and are 'ready to go'. With any luck we shall begin to use the new Register, with a new set of entry numbers before we move into The Lodge.

' BRANCH LINES TO MALDON '

The new edition of this popular book by (the late) Dennis Swindale is now available. It will be on sale at the Museum Shop when it opens, but in the meantime if you wish to receive an early copy please write to: Paddy Lacey, c/o The Promenade Lodge, 47 Mill Rd. Maldon, CM9 5HX, enclosing a cheque or postal order for £3.95p, payable to Maldon District Museum Association.

A VISIT REPORT

Have you ever been to Vestry House Museum? It is well worth a visit. I recently had a day out with our Langford WEA Class, and as the William Morris Museum had been vandalised by some mindless morons we had a change of plan and went to Church End, Walthamstow where, barely 6.1/2 miles from the City of London we found rural atmosphere and Vestry House.

Vestry House was built in 1730 in brown stock brick, a work-house costing £343. 12s. 3d. A simple eight-roomed symmetrical building with one room downstairs used for Vestry Meetings; the rest occupied by 'the paupers'. Now, the rooms are used for archives, local history library, and museum.

There is a panelled room, the panels having been brought from Essex Hall, one of the old manor houses of Walthamstow, built in 1596. A carved fireplace too was rescued.

In workhouse days the loft was a dormitory and until 1933 only had a ladder for access; it is now a study room for students. I particularly liked the room reconstructed as a Victorian Parlour, and also the inscribed stone plaque, still in it's place at the entrance to the building -

This house erected
An. Dom. MDCCXXX
If any would not work
neither should he eat

Our next stop was The Tate Gallery. One word to describe this place - Wonderful! Mind you, should you decide to go do take sandwiches for lunch; you could waste a lot of time waiting at the restaurant or searching for the snack bar! We opted for a hot-dog from the van outside, and it was delicious! His ice creams were good too.

We then moved on to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Leighton House. This was the home of Frederic, Lord Leighton (1830-1896), the classical painter and President of the Royal Academy. George Aitchison designed the house and it is the expression of Leighton's vision of a private palace devoted to art. The Arab Hall is the centrepiece with a fountain in it's centre, a dazzling quilt mosaic frieze and Isnik tiles. It is quite stunning. The whole house is full of Victorian art, Leighton's studio has a gilded dome, and the opulent fantasy extends throughout.

As you can see, we had a great day out. Our next WEA trip is quite different; we are spending the day on a Thames Barge!

M.P.

ANOTHER REQUEST - MUSEUM INFORMATION

We have a considerable number of photographs of Maldon and the surrounding district and these, particularly if added to the Maldon Society collection, would give a good pictorial history of the last century to which our collection of related documents could be applied.

What we do NOT appear to have is a bulky file on THE HISTORY OF MALDON MUSEUM from it's inception in 1922 (London Road ?) to it's departure from Spindles on 31st August 1995. We feel that our slender 'Museum' file of newspaper cuttings etc could be improved upon.

If therefore you have any information, verbal or written, newspaper or photograph, anything which will help to piece together a complete history, then please contact the Secretary or any member of the committee. Thank you.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Essex County - Eastern Area
(Maldon Borough, Burnham U.D., Maldon R.D.)

The following are the recorded figures for the
European War 1939-1945

Alerts 1174
Incidents 777

Bombs

High Explosive	1,628	Mines	83
Incendiary	24,844	Parachute Bombs	3
Phosphorous I.B.	39	Dil I.B.	43

Other Missiles

Flying Bomb V.1.	83	Rocket V.2.	54
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Casualties

Killed	25	Injured	191
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TOTAL MISSILES 26,778

T.J.HOWSON RUSSELL,
A.R.P. Sub-Controller,
A.R.P. Officer.

WE ARE GRATEFUL...

- > to MEMBERS and OTHERS who have in any way helped to update our records.
- > to MEMBERS and OTHERS who have donated additional artefacts.
- > to Mrs Hiner for a copy of 'Penny-Farthing' No.1 as appealed for in the last issue; and of course to those we were later able to decline.

A notice, almost exactly 100 years old, probably displayed in the porchway to St. Andrew's Church, Heybridge, now in the possession of a member...

NOTICE

The Proprietors of the
4th,5th,6th,7th,8th,& 9th Public Drains
and the 1st, 2nd, & 3rd
Public Embankments
are requested to attend at the
Reading Room, Heybridge Street
on Wednesday the 17th Day of
June next, at 1/2 past 10 o'clock
in the morning, to appoint a
Marsh Bailiff for the
ensuing year.

E. H. Bentall
Marsh Bailiff

June 8th 1895

!!!!!! WANTED !!!!!!!

A sight of any KELLY'S DIRECTORIES and/or PIGOT'S DIRECTORIES wanted by our member George Ginn, who, as you no doubt know, spends much of his time digging into the history of specific areas of the town and needs such as these to assist his investigations. Tel: 01621 853543 (or our Hon. Sec.)

-THE WAVERLEY CHILDRENS' DICTIONARY, VOLUME 1 ONLY. DATE OF ORIGIN c.1935?-
Needed to complete a set in good condition recently received by the museum.

NOTICE
of the
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
to be held on

TUESDAY 14TH MAY 1996 at 7.30 P.M., ST. CEDD'S
(Adjacent the Maldon District Council Offices)

THE MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS WHO HAVE RECEIVED COPIES OF THIS
NOTIFICATION. PLEASE BRING THIS WITH YOU TO SHOW AT THE DOOR AS
PROOF OF MEMBERSHIP.

(as it is unlikely that the 'doorkeeper' will recognise each and every one)

RENEWAL SUBS will be accepted at the meeting, and acknowledged afterwards.

NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS will be accepted before the AGM but not
registered as members until the next committee meeting, which may be
after the AGM. [i.e.-They will not be entitled to attend this AGM unless in
receipt of this notice.]

NOMINATIONS for President, Officers and Members of Committee, with
seconders, should be made on the nomination form supplied, or any suitable
alternative sheet, sealed in an envelope marked 'NOMINATIONS', c/o The Hon.
Secretary, 44 Farnbridge Road, Maldon, CM9 6AF, to arrive NOT LATER THAN
12.00 NOON on MONDAY 13TH MAY 1996.

- ‡ Prior permission of the nominee must of course be obtained.
- ‡ Any member nominated as an Officer but not elected as such will automatically be presumed to be nominated as an ordinary member of committee.
- ‡ Only in the total absence of a nomination for any post will names be accepted on the night.
- ‡ At the time of this notice any retiring officer or committee member not standing for re-election is named on page 2 (under details of the retiring committee)

Prior study of the final approved copy of the amended Constitution as
separately enclosed would be most helpful and would save time. If you wish
any matter to be raised, or question answered, it would assist if you could
notify The Secretary or any committee member in advance.

*** **

AGENDA

1. Chairman's welcome and opening remarks.
2. Apologies for absence.
3. Minutes of last A.G.M (March 1995)
4. Matters arising.
5. Chairman's report on year to 31st March 1996.
6. Secretary's report.
7. Treasurer's report, and adoption of accounts.
8. Membership Secretary's report.
9. Display Organiser's report.
10. Subscriptions for year ended 31st March 1997.
11. Adoption of amended Constitution, as approved by Charity Commissioners.
12. Election of President for year ended 31st March 1997 OR (optionally) for duration only of Election of officers and committee.

*** **

ELECTION of OFFICERS & COMMITTEE for YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 1997
(Retiring Chairman to give way to President)

14. Election of Chairman.
15. Election of Vice-Chairman
16. Election of Secretary.
17. Election of Treasurer.
18. Election of Membership Secretary.
19. Election of FIVE Committee members.** [In addition both the District and Town Councils appoint their own (co-opted) representatives]
20. Appointment of Hon. Auditor.
22. Chairman's closing remarks.

23. Provision for period of Informal Discussion

REPORT ON A SAMPLE OF WATER FROM THE MALDON WATER WORKS COMPANY

(The spelling is copied exactly)

100,000 parts were found to contain	
Chlorin	36.5650
Sulphuric Acid	6.4412
Nitric Acid	0.31629
Free Ammonia	0.08611
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.01191
Total Solids	119.12
Permanent Hardness	None
Temporary Hardness	5.6
Total Hardness	5.6

The Water was somewhat yellow and clear but contained some flacculent organic matter which was found on microscopical examination to consist of vegetable decaying fibres, wool, cotton, and of innumerable infusorial animalcules in cell 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 Albuminoid Ammonia are exceedingly large and coupling this fact with the presence of living infusories 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 Hehner.

Copy of letter to E. P. Butteridge

Dear Sir,

We herewith send you our report on the Water. The Maldon Water Works Company supplies as you will see water of the most wretched quality & we would strongly recommend to discontinue its use immediately.

Yours truly,

Arthur Hill Hassall
Otto Hehner

BUT...No cause for concern as the date of this was the 13th Sept 1876

Monica Bayley's 'MUSEUM BUG' has driven her to research and record not only personal recollections of a lifetime, but events in which she has fostered a personal interest. In this issue we continue her narrative with which a number of our older members in particular have already been able to relate-

THE MALDON CONNECTION

In Issue 3 of the Penny Farthing I wrote about my connection with Maldon and why I decided to retire here. Now I would like to move a little further on and pick up the story in Witham, when my grandfather was the manager of Crickmore's shop in Witham High Street.

At that date the shop was a saddlery, making and repairing harness and working with leather in many ways. Many a good tale my grandfather had to tell too of life in Witham at the time. There was that day just before an election when he noticed that too much attention was being given to the front of the shop which had been tastefully decorated in bright blue, indicating Fred's brand of politics -my grandfather was known to all comers as Fred-. However, something appeared to be going a little wrong. People were standing in the street looking upwards and showing signs of great amusement. The crowd appeared to be growing so Fred decided to take a turn outside to see which of his friends was pulling his leg. Following the general upward stares he saw to his horror that the shop, his territory, was still a lovely Conservative blue but the upper stories, the preserve of his wife Nell, were lavishly adorned with vibrant yellow. Nell was a confirmed Liberal and did not care who knew it. After the election matters were not mended by the advent of a postcard sent by 'A Friend' in which the successful candidate had been photographed in triumph, sitting in front of the Union Jack. Alas!, no one had noticed that the flag was upside down and was therefore flying the Distress signal.

My mother was 18 months old when the family came to Witham. Next door was then the International Stores, as near as is possible to say, where Fads is now, virtually on the corner of the Maldon Road. My mother made friends with the assistants in the International and used to toddle in and out with an empty vinegar bottle seeking a refill. Such was the homeliness of Witham High Street at the turn of the century.

However, there was a back entrance to those properties at the time; this opened into the Maldon Road nearly opposite some cottages known then, I believe, as Trafalgar Square, long since pulled down. The inhabitants of Trafalgar Square were said to be more than a little rough and my mother was a little fearful about using this exit. Not only this, but at the end of the road were fields in which cows were pastured and on occasions were driven up the road to somewhere in the town where they were milked. Mother was terrified of cows.

cont'd...

At the end of Maldon Road was a little stream which ran under a bridge (it is still there today) and here the local children played in the summer. They called it 'The Knicky-Knocks' and the delights of the Knicky-Knocks had to be weighed against the fear of the cows. It seems that the lure of the Knicky-Knocks proved too much, and usually won.

Life for a craftsman such as was Fred, looked quite good at the turn of the century. Hard work was the lot of most people and was not resented; trade was good for a competent saddler especially where there were wealthy families in the vicinity - and there were several such around Witham - and although the motor car had been invented few people foresaw that it would render the horse obsolete.

The 'private residents' of the High Street, Newlands Street, Chipping Hill and The Avenue all had their horses and besides these there were prosperous farmers in the district who relied on horses for heavy farm work, for transport, and for pleasure and, as Fred soon found out, most of these families had sons, lively young bloods of the Edwardian era, many of whom had money, and little to do with work.

They found their way to Crickmore's shop for repairs, new harness and a gossip. They liked Nell too, and when finding the hour too late to return home after celebrations at the local hostelry, repaired to 'Fred's' and knocked up him and 'his missus' who got up, let them in, and cooked sausage and mash for them at one o'clock in the morning, then let them finish the night on the upstairs sofa. They made a great fuss of my mother.

On high days and holidays a favourite outing was to saddle up the pony or take the train to 'Maldon-on-the-mud' as Fred disrespectfully called a favourite Sunday outing. On arrival they took a breath of healthy sea air from the deck of 'The Annie' as she sped towards Osea Island. All these memories, related to me in early childhood, helped to create the impression that the Maldon district was a delightful place in which to live.

In 1906 my grandparents moved back to Thaxted and for a few years the Maldon connection seemed to be in abeyance. It was the heyday of the railways but there was no direct link between Maldon and Thaxted. The unique 'Thaxted Flyer' had yet to be built. It arrived in 1913...and in 1913 the prosperous England which had begun in the days of 'King Teddy, the Peacemaker' seemed likely to go on for ever.

The young bloods of the Witham days were now replaced, in Thaxted, by a large farming community, yeoman stock, born and bred to the land whether owner, tenant, or farm labourer.

What never varied was the involvement and universal use of the horse. As she grew up, my mother found herself the centre of an energetic social life and able to take her pick of the attractive and eligible young men of the district, and one of those was Martin Free of Richmonds Farm, perhaps two or three miles to the south of the town.

From the fields of Richmonds Farm a clear sight of Thaxted Church was possible. Martin's father, David Free, had eleven men working for him and eleven men took some looking after, even in those days. The Reaper Binder had arrived as had the Traction Engine which could plough the fields by steam power, but 'hedging and ditching' and most other tasks were undertaken by manpower, supplemented by horse power. Consequently, everyone at Richmonds was a horseman. This fact had a decisive effect on Martin's life as will later be seen. George, Martin's older brother, also worked with his father and their only sister Laura took the traditional role of housekeeper and cook, helping her mother maintain the house and feed the men, and at busy times such as harvest, when the men were in the fields all the daylight hours, this was no light task. Her housewifely skills learnt at Richmonds also affected her future life, but of this, at the time, the whole family was ignorant.

Martin went to Thaxted School, where his name appears to this day in the school Log Book. A visitor came to the school and lectured the older boys on 'the dangers of drink'. Afterwards the visitor offered a prize to the winner of an essay to be written on this interesting subject, so typical of the thinking of the era. The first prize was won by one Spencer Stone, the son of the local baker and a friend of the Frees. Please remember Spencer's name. It comes into the story of the Free family at a later stage.

But for now, every day David Free started his morning's work with a tankard of home-brewed beer in the farm kitchen, saddled up, mounted, and rode round the farm looking into everything with an eagle eye. Richmonds changed little in the following eighty years. When I last visited, ducks and chickens still roamed at will, the cherry tree under which little Lally Archer sat in its shade and drank the glass of milk and ate the slice of cherry cake that Laura baked for visitors, was still there; by the back door were the stables and the mounting block that all the men used...and above this huge stone, carved into the brick wall were (perhaps still are) three initials...M.D.F.. I knew whose hand had carved them for the 'M' was unmistakably individual - the hand that scratched them as a small boy was the hand that sent my mother his signed Christmas cards as a man - Martin David Free. In a previous article I mentioned how George Free courted and married Ethel Lily in Thaxted Church; how they danced home and later moved to Jacob's Farm, Heybridge. Laura and Martin remained at Richmonds, but some time later Martin began to go over to Heybridge to help his brother. He was missed for he was a lively and attractive young man and all the Thaxted girls, and later the Heybridge girls had an eye on him. Martin, however, never married.

Winter activities in Thaxted centred around the Liberal Club and its upper room and, whatever Martin did in the spring and summer it seems it seems he took a prominent part in the dancing season.

In order to cater for all tastes and all ages the evening began with a whist drive through which the young people sat politely but somewhat impatiently. This was not their scene. Refreshments followed and with the refreshments an influx of young men, eager for both the food and the fray, and after a decent interval the room was cleared and the Fray began. The pianist took her place at the piano, a curtsy and a bow, and they were off. One Steps; Two Steps; Waltzes; The Gay Gordons; Cotillions; and the Lancers. This started off discreetly with the partners facing each other and crossing the set. It rapidly warmed up however, and finished with a ring of linked hands and a mad pace. The object of every man there was to swing his partner off the floor, and of course the girls knew it, looked forward to it and pretended to resist, perhaps not too seriously. My mother was swung off her feet frequently and often by Martin Free - amongst others-

And Laura Free...! How was life treating her...? Quite nicely it seemed. Spencer Stone was 'sweet' on her and had mentioned the fact. Laura was not quite sure of herself yet, but Spencer was an up and coming partner in the family bakery business and had a reputation as a very clever pastry cook who iced a wedding cake like nobody's business...and he was fond of Laura. It really looked as if all was right in the best of worlds for the Frees. Changes came... slowly at first so that few people noticed them. Spencer joined the Territorials and ignored the quip 'Weekend Soldiers'. He was a superb marksman and won prizes and cups galore. He went off to camp in the summer, and to Braintree Mechanics' Institute for competitions in which the Thaxted F Company shone and brought glory on 1/5th Essex Regiment. No weekend soldier was Spencer!... He was now a Sergeant! During the summer of 1914 a great Flower Show was planned at Easton Lodge, the home of Lady Warwick. Crowds came from far and near, for 'The Countess' was famous...for her love of animals; her beautiful gardens; her peacocks which ran in front of her; and for her friendship with the late King Edward!. It was the last big Flower Show at Easton Lodge for many a year. The harvest was in full swing, Martin was at Jacob's Farm, Spencer was in camp near Dovercourt, a baking hot summer was at it's height... and suddenly the storm broke, not with thunder and lightning but with worse - England was at war with Germany.

Leighton Information

Leighton's Paintings - Royal Academy...until 21st April '96
Leighton's Frescoes - Victoria & Albert until 8th Sept. '96

Visit To Topkapi Palace Museum

By Terry Chapman



Istanbul Sunset

When Ruth and I lived in London we would go often to *The Sultan Ahmet* Turkish restaurant to enjoy the house speciality, *Special Bursa*, a platter of doner kebab lamb heavily laced with tomato puree, sitting on pitta bread and topped with creamy Turkish yoghurt. Easter Sunday was Ruth's birthday. "Fancy a meal at the Sultan Ahmet?", I said.

When you are tired of London you are tired of smog, pollution, and heavy traffic; so we flew to Turkey instead. The *real* Sultan Ahmet is the area around the Sultan Ahmet Mosque in Istanbul, also known as the Blue Mosque because the inside is lined with blue mosaic tiles; it is amazing, with There is nothing like it except the Hagia Sophia mosque a few hundred yards away! Its main dome is vaster than St Paul's, and a thousand years older. Originally a Christian Church built by Emperor Constantine, after the fall of Constantinople it was turned into a mosque and the minarets were added. To stand between these two buildings is awe inspiring, especially at night when they are lit and incredibly beautiful. I saw them one dawn, at 5.00 am as the faithful were called to prayer. It was a misty morning, the powerful flood lights making the air glow, where the seagulls were wheeling around the tops of the minarets. When the call to prayer finished the city was silent except for a dog barking in the echoing quiet between the two mosques. As I walked back through the old quarter the smell of bread was coming from the bakers at the top of the street that led down to the shore. At the bottom was the clear green Marmara and the smell of the Sea. Across the water, busy with the container ships sailing into port, was Asia. Istanbul is the only city in the world that straddles two continents. Forget Paris and the Eiffel Tower, forget London and Tower Bridge, go to Istanbul now. Don't forget to take a ferry boat and try a real *Bursa* on the Asian side.

If you stand still too long in Istanbul someone will sell you a Turkish Carpet. So we kept walking. We walked around the Grand Bazaar (4000 shops - all trying to overcharge). We walked around the Egyptian Bazaar, where the Turkish delight and the spices are piled high, where the goods have price tags, and the locals shop; and we walked around the Topkapi Palace Museum.

The Topkapi Palace was the home of the Emperors and later of the Sultans, it is a small town in its own right. In the grounds is the Archaeological Museum with Alexander's Tomb, and marble statues from Rome, Greece, and Troy. It took us three hours to walk round at a fast pace. The vast halls are of marble. In high Summer it is probably described as *cool*; in a not-too-warm Spring it is *cold*. The stewards sat huddled over little electric heaters.

The palace itself is vast. There are rooms of Ching plates and Ming vases, holy relics (beard of the Prophet, footprint of the Prophet etc.), a room of emerald objects, a room of ancient clocks, rooms of gold objects including a pair of candle sticks that would be worth £35 000 000 if melted down (if you threw away the diamonds) and the Spoonmaker's diamond, as big as a goose egg, glittering in the spotlight as it slowly rocks back and forth in its black velvet case. There are daggers, and cups, beautiful manuscripts in cursive old Arabic script, suits of armour, portraits, and Summer Houses lined with mosaic tiles. There are delicate glass vases, and massive bronze cook pots. There are costumes and vast caffans that belonged to obviously vast sultans. There are earrings and guns.

Visit To Topkapi Palace Museum



There are swords, and armour, and jewels, lots of jewels: rubies, and emeralds, and diamonds and lapis lazuli, and more rubies, and more diamonds, added in their hundreds to objects that really don't need them, but amongst the tawdry and many items from the School of Ostentation and Bad Taste are the beautiful and the exquisite. Allow at least five hours to jog round. Go early if you also want to see the inside of the harem, another 250 rooms. It cost £2.60 to go in, extra for the harem and archaeological museum. I do hope we can offer good value for 50P when we open.

Not in the best possible taste:

A gold *matara*, encrusted with rubies and emeralds in gold settings.

Opulent:

The Topkapi Dagger (1741) 35 cm long. This dagger, the symbol of the Topkapi Palace, was made for Mahmud I as a present for the Shah of Persia, it was returned to the palace when unrest broke out in Persia. The pommel contains three emeralds about 1½" across.



**The beautiful:
Ming bowl (16th century)**