

THE PENNY



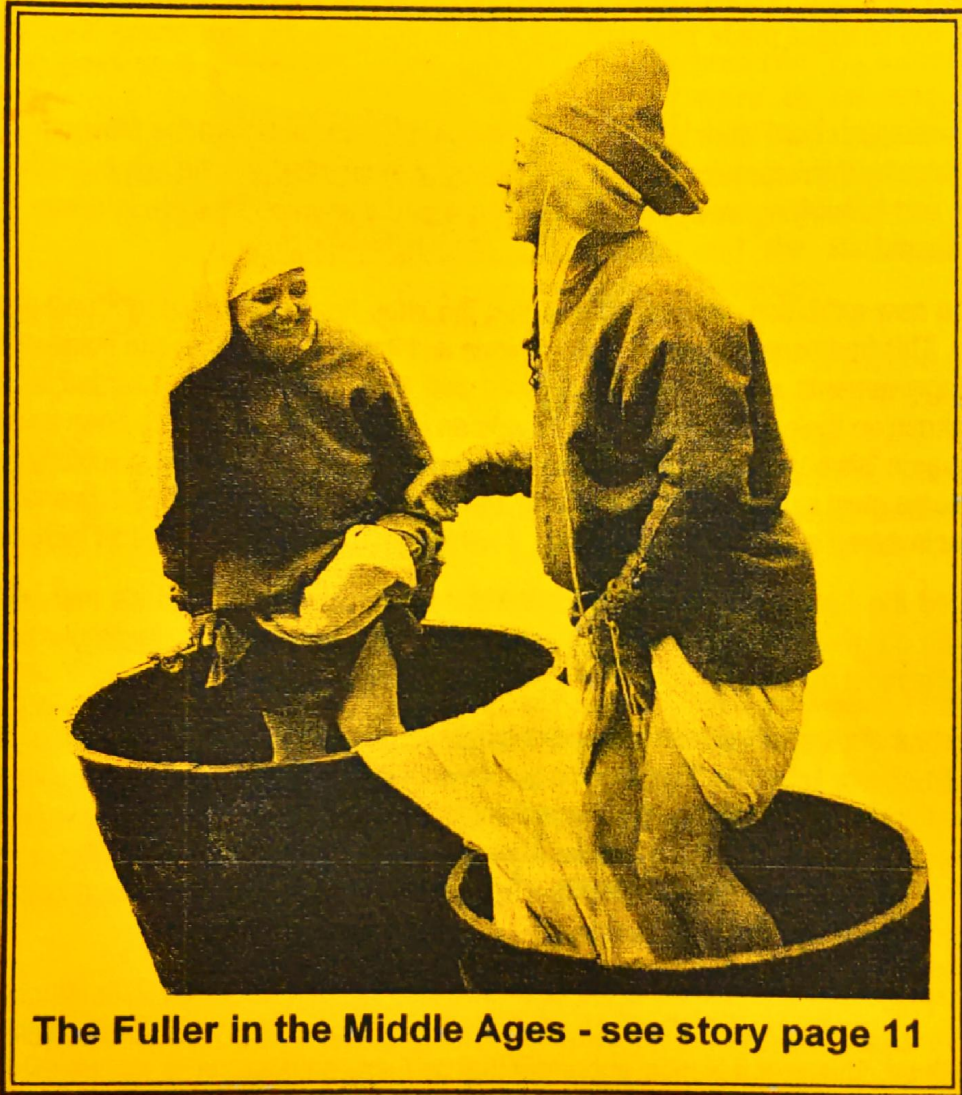
FARTHING

ACCREDITED



MUSEUMS LIBRARIES ARCHIVES

The Maldon District Museum Association Newsletter



The Fuller in the Middle Ages - see story page 11

In this issue

Chairman's Chat	1	Three Bags' Full	11 - 13
Motherhood's Benefactors	2 - 5	Ebb and Flow of Maldon Swimming Club	14 & 15
Help	5	Times Past	16
Well What do You Know?	5	As We Were	17 & 19
The Royal Oak, Maldon	6	What Do We Really Know?	18
Pillar to Post	7	Stop Press	19
Worth More Than a Penny Farthing	8	St Cedd's Chatline	20
Heybridge Salt Mill	9	Letters to the Editor	21
St. Nicholas Church, Tillingham	10		



CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

With Easter being almost as early as it can be it, seems only a matter of days before the Museum opens its doors to the public for the 2008 season. Behind the scenes a great deal of hard work has been done by Charlie Middleton and Graham Reeves, achieving marvels at very low cost and everyone visiting will be struck by the changes made in providing the basis on which the new season's exhibition can be staged.

There has been much hard work in setting up the exhibition to showcase the Museum's collection of domestic articles by the Accessions Team, headed by Judy Betteridge, who has burnt the midnight oil in identifying and beautifying many interesting objects and then showing them in a way that will have great visual impact.

Alongside the new exhibition, visitors will see that the shop has been re-thought and presented in a different way. This had been discussed in Committee and it was agreed to spend some of our precious capital on improvements when it was discovered that grants were being awarded to independent museums to improve their sustainability. Judy made an application and we have been awarded a grant of £1,500 towards this objective. Basically with the great increase in the cost of electricity and the other utilities museums must increase their revenue to survive. I am certain that with the talented artistic eye of Liz Willsher involved in the shop organisation, it will look most attractive as well as increasing takings.

We only joined the Association of Independent Museums in September and it's marvellous to have benefitted from our membership at such an early stage. The organisation reflects our thinking on so many levels it is most refreshing.

The Museum has also benefited from a round of small grants being awarded £200 for the conservation materials by Museums in Essex. These items are very costly but necessary if we are going to continue to reach the standards required by the Accreditation authorities. An additional sum has also been allotted for the purchase of storage boxes for photographic materials, including slides and plate glass negatives. This will be in the region of £250. These grants are most welcome and certainly give us encouragement to continue our efforts.

The most important date to announce is the Steward's Day which is Thursday 27th March, once again in the Octagon at St Mary's at 2.30pm. All present stewards, and any would-be stewards, are most welcome to attend. This year it is most important that as many as possible should be there as various points of administration are being changed and some training in these is going to be needed by everybody. Despite the dreaded "training" word stewarding will still be stimulating, and most importantly, fun. I look forward to seeing 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

Last Date for copy for Summer Issue 5 May

Motherhood's Benefactors

Millions of women today have cause to be deeply grateful to a family of 16th and 17th century surgeons from Maldon, the designers and pioneers of the use of midwifery forceps, who once lived in Woodham Mortimer Hall.



Dr Peter Chamberlen the elder, inventor of midwifery forceps

Their story is one of secrecy, prison, royal patronage, opportunism and hidden treasure, which began during the Huguenot and Catholic troubles in France in the middle of the 16th century.

In 1569 Dr William Chamberlen, a Protestant Huguenot, his wife Genevieve, and their children Peter, Simon and Jane, fled to England where three weeks after their arrival a third son, called Jacques was born.

In August 1572 a fourth son was born and oddly called Peter like his older brother.

Dr William Chamberlen proceeded to practice as a doctor in Southampton, at the same time as teaching his sons the profession. When he later moved to London he left the older Peter to carry on the practice in Southampton. Peter

The Chamberlen brothers rejected the orthodox rules of the day, and ignoring such petty restrictions, continued to prescribe. As a result they were in constant dispute with the physicians and were soon in trouble with both the Royal College and the Barber Surgeons' Company.

In spite of several warnings the elder Peter transgressed so often that he was arrested in 1612 and imprisoned in Newgate for "malpraxis".

Fortunately he was already treating a number of rich and powerful persons and through their influence had obtained entry to court circles. There he had gained the patronage of Queen Anne and she enlisted the help of the Archbishop of Canterbury to arrange his release. She also paid his fines and even gave him an expensive diamond ring.

Relationships with the Royal College did not improve although Peter continued as court physician and later attended Henrietta Maria, Charles I's Queen.

rejoined the family in London after his father's death 1596.

In the meantime the younger Peter and his brother Simon had become members of the Barber Surgeons' Company, which entitled them to display the striped barber's pole and basin.

This was in an age when surgeons ranked below physicians. Their activities were considered menial and they only took the jobs the physicians considered beneath their dignity. They were unable to prescribe; only members of the Royal College of Physicians were qualified to do that, and the Chamberlen family were barred from membership because they lacked the necessary doctorate from either Oxford or Cambridge.

It is Peter Chamberlen the elder who is credited with being the actual inventor of the Chamberlen forceps, a secret which he shared only with other members of the family. When he died, his nephew, the son of Peter younger, took over the court appointment and was in all probability present at the birth of Charles II.

Meanwhile the younger Peter was himself fortunate to escape punishment after he was summoned before the Royal College of Physicians for daring to change the prescription of one of their members.

He again quarrelled with the College when they objected to him, a mere surgeon, practising midwifery. This was in an age when childbirth was influenced by magic and superstition.

They claimed that he was "using iron instruments", the very first mention of the invention of forceps.

Today it would be inconceivable that a new instrument or life-saving drug would, or could, be kept a secret, but in the 17th century and particularly within the Chamberlen family, they had other ideas. They chose to keep their invention as a lucrative family secret, and the means

of saving the lives of countless mothers and babies remained unpublished.

The younger Peter was also the first person to suggest the training and licensing of midwives in England. The Royal College turned his idea down. Frustrated by his own lowly position he decided that his son, Peter III, born 1601, should obtain his doctorate and so achieve the professional recognition denied to himself.

At fourteen years of age Peter III went up to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, before furthering his studies at Heidelberg and Padua, to become a doctor of medicine at the age of only eighteen. On his return to England he took additional doctorates at both Oxford and Cambridge. Thus he held three doctorates in medicine - all before he was aged twenty.

He lost no time in applying for membership of the Royal College of Physicians, but his age went against him and he was refused. Five years later his qualifications could no longer be ignored and he was elected, but the coveted diploma was temporarily denied. Instead he received a warning against the dangers of frivolity. It was

not until 1628 that he was at last made a fellow.

Despite his triple doctorate his relationship with the Royal College was never cordial, primarily because his ideas were too advanced for easy acceptance. Also the fact that he revived his father's plan for the organisation of midwives, which would have given his family a virtual and very lucrative monopoly, did not help. Indeed at one time he tried to browbeat local midwives into attending instruction at his house, threatening to blacklist any who refused to attend.

For some unknown reason he then chose to visit the Netherlands so missing the obligatory lectures at the Royal College. They wasted no time in using the opportunity to dismiss him from the College. As a result he left London to settle in Woodham Mortimer Hall, with his wife and three sons, John, Paul and Hugh.

It is probable that he continued his practice there, but he also found time for his numerous religious and anabaptistical writings.

Sadly, when Peter Chamberlen III died in 1683, he was completely mad. He had been married twice and sired eighteen children. He

is buried in the churchyard close to to the house in which he once lived.

Prior to his death he had told the secret of the forceps to three of his sons; Paul, who was something of a quack; John, of whom nothing much is known; and Hugh, a brilliant doctor and midwife who now took over his father's role in the history of midwifery. Hugh had been born in 1630 and in 1681 became a fellow of the Royal Society, but true to family form, was prosecuted in 1688 for practising without qualifications.

In 1670 Louis XIV, King of France, appointed an "accoucheur", a male midwife, to attend to his mistress the Marquise de Montespan. At the time male midwives had to be blindfolded or work under the cover of a blanket or with the bedsheet tied around their necks to prevent them seeing what they were doing, in order to protect the mother's modesty.

Hugh at once travelled to Paris to offer the new "accoucheur" his secret forceps, but only at a price - 10,000 crowns. The sale did not go ahead as planned, however another French doctor, Francis Moriceau, did offer to let Hugh demonstrate the use of his forceps at the hospital, Hotel Dieu.

Whether deliberately or not, Moriceau gave Hugh a hopeless case upon which to demonstrate his skills. The exhibition was a disaster, for although Hugh managed to get the forceps around the baby's head, he was unable to deliver it and both mother and child died. Moriceau blamed Hugh's failure on clumsiness and the forceps failed to find a market.

Hugh left Paris under a cloud, but in spite of this failure, he continued to maintain a successful medical practice in England, while fiercely protecting the secrecy of his father's invention. He also obtained his revenge on Moriceau, for when he had left Paris he had taken with him a copy of Moriceau's book "*Diseases of Women with Child*" which he translated into English and made thousands of pounds from.

He also envisaged a type of national health scheme to be paid for from taxes; a union between England and Scotland; and was concerned with hygiene standards for food, drink and sanitation. But not content with just plans and ideas he also started a national land bank that soon turned into a gross swindle and in 1699 he was forced to flee to Amsterdam to escape his creditors.

Hugh Chamberlen was now nearly seventy and it is unlikely that he set up in practice again. In order to survive he sold the secret of the forceps, although not the original instruments themselves, to the surgeon Roger van Roonhuysen who promptly made it known to five other doctors, who in turn made good money by selling it to their colleagues.

On his death his son, also called Hugh, took over his father's role as physician and midwife, the last of the male line. He died in 1728.

In 1813 the new owners of Woodham Mortimer Hall discovered a secret hiding place in the floor of the attic in which they found a box containing books, old letters, pieces of jewellery, some coins and several tong-shaped instruments which were later identified as early obstetrical forceps. One pair was roughly made while the others were improvements on the original.

It was established from the coins and letters that the box had lain hidden for over 100 years and that the forceps had once belonged to Peter Chamberlen III whose widow had hidden them with her treasures including his last tooth!

HELP!

I recently received a phone message from a reporter on the staff of the Maldon Standard asking if the Museum had any information concerning Maldon chimney sweeps in the Victorian era. Unfortunately I could not recall having anything on chimney sweeps of any era.

I should be most grateful for any memories or information that any of our members may have on this topic although I realise that this is unlikely to extend quite so far back!

Subsequently it was learned that the reporter involved was Lauren Hockney, who appeared during the Victorian evenings before Christmas as a glamorous if slightly sooty sweep. Any information you may have can be sent to me, Paddy Lacey, or direct to Lauren at the Standard, 01245 493444, or E.mail: lauren.hockney@nqe.com, or write to Standard P.O. Box 9198, Chelmsford, CM1 9GE.

Continued from previous page

The Chamberlens were opportunists with original ideas and an aptitude for innovation. They could adapt themselves to circumstances and had a strong family unity. Many of them were brilliant. The qualities of character developed by persecution shone out time and time again - endurance, determination and above all opposition. These, plus their lucrative secret opened all doors to them.

This article is based on articles by Julia Hurst and Marjorie Hennis which appeared in Essex Countryside, 1964 and 1967, to whom due acknowledgement is made.

WELL WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

At the outset of World War II there was great fear of gas attacks by the enemy on the civilian population. In an attempt to provide early warning of such attacks in order that people could don their gas masks in time, an order was given to paint the tops of pillar boxes with a special film which reacted when any toxic gas was present.

The tops of the pillar boxes received a coat of a yellowish green chemical containing several reagents developed by the Chemical Warfare Service. The presence of chloropicrin would turn the top a slightly reddish colour; other gases such as cyanide or mustard gas would turn it dark blue-purple or a black-brown stain with a reddish edge.

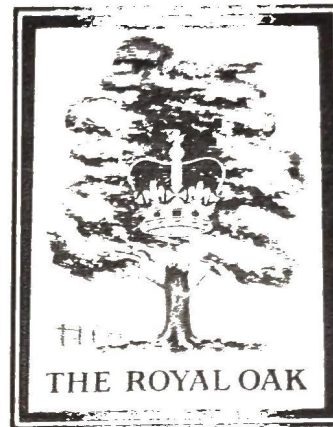
Chloropicrin vapour is a highly toxic lung irritant, tear and vomiting gas. In World War I it was called PS by the British, Aquinite by the French and Klop by the Germans. Today it is widely used for organic synthesis, in fumigants, fungicides and insecticides, and to kill rats.

War-time pillar-boxes were also painted with alternate bands of black and white paint to aid visibility during the blackout.

Letters page Daily Mail 27 June 2007

MALDON PUBS - PAST AND PRESENT

Based in part on "Essex Public House Signs" by Rev Keith Lovell and we are grateful for his permission to use his research.



Following the rout by Cromwell's 'Roundheads' at the Battle of Worcester (3 September 1651), Charles II fled northwards through the only gate he still held in the city. Slipping free from his remaining soldiers, a companion guided him to the home of the Penderell family, Boscobel House in Shropshire. Sheltering there overnight, but fearing the house would be searched, he spent the following day in pouring rain hidden in the nearby woods.

An abortive effort that night to go west and cross the River Severn meant a return to Boscobel. He left again the following morning with another Royalist refugee, Major Careless, taking bread, cheese and beer to a large oak tree where Charles slept soundly on his friend's arm in the upper branches. Fearful that Charles would fall out of the tree, he woke the King and together they watched the activities of their pursuers. At nightfall Charles set off on the first stage of a journey that would take him to Europe and nine years of exile, which only ended when he was returned to the throne in 1660. His sojourn in the oak is marked by the name of many pubs and commemorated annually on 29 May - Oak Apple Day.

The Royal Oak in Farnbridge Road is first recorded in 1803 and in the 1841 census the entry of the occupant reads "beer shop keeper", but by 1861 it was certainly a pub.

In 1937 George Trowles was resident at the pub and 50 years on stories were being told of days when bitter was 2p a pint and whippet racing was organised in a nearby field. This particular Royal Oak is known to have had at least three names - the Oak, the Hazeleigh Oak and the Royal Oak.

Additional information from Maldon Standard January 2008

Pillar to Post

Like double-decker buses, cricket and warm beer, pillar boxes are a symbol of Britain. But did you know we took the idea from France, where they have used them since the 1600's? It was in 1852 that the Victorian novelist Anthony Trollope, who was then working for the Post Office, had the idea of using them here.

Maldon had its own Penny Post, established in 1812, allowing letters to be conveyed to and from outlying villages. But it was the introduction of the Penny Black stamp in 1840 that changed the way mail was sent nationwide. Instead of getting letters weighed and then stamped, you could just buy and use your own stamps. Unfortunately to send it you still had to take it to a post office branch, often miles away. Postboxes were the solution.

The first boxes were introduced in November 1852 in St Helier, Jersey. As they were a success, the following year the first box appeared on the mainland, in Carlisle.

Initially, different regions developed their own boxes. London's box (stubby and rectangular) was replaced because people complained it was ugly. Another designed by the Department of Sciences and Arts looked great, but had the slot on the top - so the mail got ruined when it rained.

The first National Standard box was unveiled in 1859, painted green so as to be unobtrusive. Too unobtrusive, as it turned out - people kept walking into them. Red became the standard colour in 1874.

In the meantime, the number of boxes rose sharply. There were 25,082 by 1878. There survives a very interesting Victorian pillar box at the foot of Market Hill, Maldon, which is still in current use.

And in 1879, a new standard was introduced, the Type A; cylindrical, bearing the Royal cipher, with a wide brim. This design has remained largely unchanged.

Their spread fuelled a social revolution and not just in letter-writing (2.6 billion a year by 1900). There was a crime wave as people sought a way to steal from boxes (treacle inside the slit to catch falling letters was one way) and they also improved house prices, with property adverts boasting of a 'pillar-letter box nearby'.

So when you next pass a post-box just think: it's not merely a piece of street furniture, it's the Che Guevara of Acacia Avenue - the red revolutionary that shaped the way we live now.

Post Office booklet

WORTH MORE THAN A PENNY FARTHING

Readers will be aware that Maldon Museum's emblem, and the name of this magazine, is "The Penny Farthing". Due no doubt to the fact we have such a bicycle on display in the museum.

Recently a visitor to our museum became quite excited about this particular exhibit and was able to identify it as a D. F. H. F. Centaur.

Now, I was not even aware that there was more than one type of penny farthing, I thought they were all the same, but he assured us that our particular bicycle was not just any old penny farthing, but a prize medal roadster!

He has since kindly sent the leaflet opposite to provide details about it.

I particularly noticed the price - cheap enough by today's standards but worth almost a month's wages for a working man when it was first sold.

THE D.F.H.F. CENTAUR PRIZE MEDAL ROADSTER.



"It is admitted on every hand that the introduction of a hollow, in lieu of a solid fork for a bicycle, is a gain as regards rigidity, strength, and the saving of weight. Messrs. Hillman and Herbert, however, having in view, no doubt, the great additional strength given to ball iron by the ball or bead at its edge, introduced the double hollow fork, which to a certain extent carries out this theory of strength. The "CENTAUR" COMPANY, of Coventry, have now introduced what we may perhaps call a "connected double hollow fork." That is, while the bead for strengthening is obtained, as will be seen by the section here given, the fork is practically in one piece.



"This section, which the Company call the hollow fluted or girder section fork, is so rolled that the pressure on any part is counteracted. Thus the thrust upon the crown of the arch A is resisted by the crown of the arch B, and vice-versa. This, it will be seen, obviates the springing of the forks and cross-winding of the bearings, when great pressure is applied to the handles and pedals."—*Bicycling Times*, April 5rd, 1879.

"This is without doubt the finest machine yet introduced for all purposes being very fast and light enough for racing, and at the same time possessing unequalled rigidity and strength, thus eminently fitting it for road work and touring purposes; it is elegant in the extreme."—*The Indispensable*, 1879.

Price, 50-in. £15 15s.,

Including Ball Bearings, Patent Detachable Cranks,

AND OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.

HEYBRIDGE SALT MILL

There was once a thriving salt mill at Heybridge which was established long before 1779, for on the death of John Coe in May of that year, when his Heybridge salt business was put up for let, it was described as an *"ancient, convenient and well established salt office producing great and small salt"*.

In August 1779 the saltern of about 6 acres was taken over by John Payne. He formed a partnership with a Boreham man, John Bloss, to also trade in coal, cinder and deal as well as flag and grinding stones.

No map evidence has been found to link this business with either that of the Essex Salt Works on the 1844 O.S. Map, or with the 1825 salt pans in Great and Little Totham. However as the Tothams are close by and they did have wind pumps, it is possible there is a connection, especially as it is reputed that an ancient barrow in that locality was levelled during the preparation of sun-drying pans annexed by Heybridge Salt Works.

Windmill pumps were often employed in sea salt production. They were much smaller than corn mills, and the Heybridge works were operating two in 1825 when most of the premises were put up for auction, the intention being to retain only a small section for the continuation of salt production:

Maldon Salt Works and Chemical Manufactory ... Auction on the premises, Heybridge ... Wednesday June 15th 1825 ... several wrought iron steam boilers and pans by Horton ... compact modern steam engine, of six horse power, on Bolton and Watts principle, with wrought iron boiler, nearly new, large wood brine pump, two excellent windmill pumps, used for the purpose of pumping sea-water to the pans, and admirably adapted for the draining of land, the lever being upon an improved principle, eight other pumps ...

This statement indicates that the windmills pumped sea water to the pans, presumably a little above tide level. A similar system at that period in Hampshire, shows that the mills were intermediate between the evaporating pans and storage cisterns and therefore pumped the brine.

The elimination of the windmills at Heybridge may have been coupled with a number of adverse factors, not least the failure of the salterns due to the boilers' need for large tonnages of coal, which was subject to very heavy duty. Steam pumps, and the availability of cheaper rock salt added to Heybridge Salt Mill's problems and its eventual demise.

Maldon's Historic Churches



St. Nicholas, Tillingham

Tillingham's name is derived from the Saxon, meaning "the settlement of Tilla's people", and is located in one of the more remote corners of the Essex Marshes. Sometime between 604 AD and 616 AD King Ethelbert of Kent granted the parish to Mellitus, Bishop of London. Money from that grant financed his monastery of St Paul and for the last fourteen centuries Tillingham has remained in the ownership of the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's - the longest single land holding in Britain's history.

The existence of a church on this site dates from the 11th century and the present St Nicholas uses many earlier Roman bricks. Outside, the North doorway, constructed in the 11th century can still be seen. The West Tower, with walls 6 feet thick, consists of some of the stones from the original Norman church. The oldest bell in the tower dates from the 15th century. The bells were re-hung in 1889 during a period of extensive restoration when the South aisle was rebuilt, a vestry added, an organ installed and the roof repaired. The roof was stripped and retiled again in 2005.

The interior of the church is somewhat dark but contains many fine features. On the wall by the tower, is a list of the vicars including one, who in 1378 was found to spend more time in the tavern than the church, and that of John Donne, son of the famous poet-Dean of St Paul's Cathedral.

The walls of the church would once have been decorated with religious paintings, but were plastered over in the 19th century.

The chancel which combines early medieval and Victorian architecture, is of unusual length (43 feet) indicating its original Early English structure. Below a 14th century arch there is a Victorian wooden rood screen with Christ flanked by his mother Mary and St John.

The stained glass in the Chancel was added in the 19th century. The narrow windows in the North and South show St. Nicholas, to whom the church is dedicated, and the English saints Augustine, Alban and Cedd. A fine East window commemorates Canon Henry Lidden of St. Paul's.

To the right of the altar are the sedilia and piscina of the Early English period where the clergy once sat during services, and in the recess, washed the sacred vessels. At the West end of the South aisle stands the font, a splendid example of Norman stonework still in a very good state of preservation. Unusually the bowl is noticeably tilted though nobody knows why, unless it was altered to suit a past incumbent.

There is a War Memorial inside the church which is echoed by a similar memorial on the boundary wall outside. More unusually there is a plaque on the gate post in memory of the men of the 4/7th Battalion of the Warwickshire Regiment, billeted in the village before embarking for France during 1914 to 1917.

Three Bags Full

Woollen Manufacture in the Middle Ages



The Weaver

To look at the bright yellow oil seed rape which fill the fields around Maldon these these summers, it is hard to believe that these same fields were once lush meadows filled with grazing sheep. Sadly I cannot remember when I last saw a flock of sheep in this part of Essex, yet for hundreds of years wool and sheep cheese were among the district's most important merchandise.

As early as pre-1300 wool was being exported from Burnham and in 1339 a merchant from Zealand is known to have been exporting dairy products from Maldon to Europe and importing salt to the town!

Sir Robert D'Arcy, Sheriff of Essex and Maldon's MP in 1422, made part of his fortune from the export of wool.

But it was not just the production of wool and cheese

that was so important to the local economy - people needed clothing and the only source of material, other than animal skins, from which to make garments was wool.

Before the industrial age all textile manufacture was conducted on an individual or contracted-out basis, the work being undertaken in the home or a small workshop nearby.

Wool buyers travelled the country, either with long trains of pack horses or by waggon, to purchase wool direct from the farmers or at the fairs and wool marts held in towns. The wool was then handed over to sorters who divided the wool into short or long staple (fibres), assessed the fineness, texture, colour and crimp (natural waviness).

A good fleece could contain as many as 12 grades of wool which had to be separated, cleaned or scoured to remove dirt and impurities and grease.

Scouring usually meant either dipping the wool in stale urine or, if the fleece was still whole, coating it with dung which was subsequently beaten off when dry.

In the Middle Ages, to ease the weaving process the natural grease was usually left in the wool. However, the resulting cloth was extremely coarse. So a fuller (see picture front cover) was employed to "full" or pound off the grease.

A vat was filled with gallons of stale urine which all had to be collected from the fuller's neighbours and he or she would then stand in the tub and stamp up and down for seven or eight hours.

Not only was the job revolting, the stench was overpowering, but it was very tedious.

It was at this stage that the production of wool textiles diverged. Woollens used short staple wool and worsted used long staple.

While woollen cloth was manufactured nationwide, worsted was originally concentrated in those areas which produced sheep with the longest and finest wool, suitable for making the highest quality cloth.

Such wool was highly prized and while it is usual to think of smuggling in terms of luxury goods arriving from France, this British luxury was so desired that it was frequently smuggled to France. Smuggling of this nature certainly occurred in the Maldon district.

One, somewhat dubious, civic dignitary involved in smuggling wool was Thomas Furnes who moved to Maldon in 1572. He became a freeman of the town and from 1576-1585 was head burgess, then Alderman and three times the borough bailiff.

He became involved with another bailiff and native Maldonian clothier, Thomas Clark and they were both accused of smuggling wool

to the Low Countries. Furnes was tenant of the "Blue Boar" where he appointed a manager to run the inn while he traded as a bona fide wool factor to cover their smuggling activities.

In the manufacture of woollen textiles, the raw wool was carded to lay the tangled fibres into roughly parallel strands so that they could more easily be drawn out for spinning.

Wool used for worsted cloth required more thorough treatment for, not only had the fibres to be laid out parallel, but unwanted short staple wool had to be removed. This process was called combing. It was an apprenticeship trade, a seven year apprenticeship being the norm in the mid-18th century, and an apprenticeship started at about the age of 12 or 13.

The comb was like a short-handled rake having several rows of long teeth - originally made of wood, later of metal. These were



The Dyer

heated in a charcoal fuelled comb-pot as heated combs softened the lanolin (the wool's natural oil) which made the process easier.

Combers would take a tress of wool, sprinkle it with extra oil and massage this well into the wool. They would then attach the heated comb to a post or wooden framework, with the teeth pointing upwards, throw the wool over the teeth and draw it through repeatedly, leaving a few strands of wool upon the comb each time.

When the comb had collected all the wool it would be placed back in the comb-pot with the wool hanging down the outside to keep it warm. A second hank of wool was then treated in the same way.

When both combs were full of the heated wool

cont ▶

(about four ounces), the comber would sit on a low stool with a comb in each hand and comb one tress of wool into the other by inserting the teeth of one comb into the wool stuck in the other, repeating the process until the fibres were laid parallel.

The object was to achieve something resembling a tress of hair and great skill was needed to ensure that the fibres were not broken. The final stage was a repeat combing at a lower temperature. To complete the process the combed wool was formed into slivers, several slivers making a top, which weighed exactly a pound.

The short fibres left after combing which were unsuitable for the worsted trade were sold to manufacturers of baize or coarse cloth.

The combed wool was then spun into thread before the weavers produced finished material. Worsteds cloths such as russells (worsted damask, hot pressed or calendered to give the lustrous appearance of satin), and serges (a twilled weave), were then passed to the dyer.

The dyer would immerse the finished cloth into tubs of dyes made from berries, roots or other natural pigments.

Once the cloth reached the required depth of colour (there was no quality control to ensure always meeting a specific hue), the material was drained and placed on "tenters".

These were sharp hooks on which the cloth was stretched to dry evenly in the sun. Tenterfield Road in Maldon indicates that this cloth drying process was once carried on there, just as Dyers Road refers to the dyeing of cloth being undertaken in the vicinity.

"Tenters" is also the origin of the expression "being on Tenter (or tender) hooks".

So important did the wool trade become to the English economy that extraordinary and somewhat absurd measures were taken to protect and expand it.

In the 1560's it became punishable not to wear a woollen hat made in England! And in 1678 the "Burial in Wool Act" was introduced by Parliament which stated that everyone, except plague victims, must be buried in a wool shroud.

A fine of £5 was imposed on the family of the deceased if this was not done. As an informer was given half the fine, some families who had reason to believe that an undertaker or vicar was about to give

them away, would quickly inform on themselves and thus receive half the fine back!

Over the years great strides were made in the processing of fleeces and in the spinning of wool but it was not until the late 1780's that a machine was invented for spinning worsted. Many attempts were made to produce a woolcombing machine, but the woolcombers, thinking that their occupation was in danger, presented Parliament with a petition against such contraptions. A bill was presented in 1794 to protect woolcombers from any disadvantage accruing from mechanisation. The bill was rejected.

Combing was the last part of the wool textile industry to be mechanised, hand-combing still being operational until 1850.

If your surname is any of the following, then it is possible that one of your ancestors was once involved in the wool industry;

Fuller - the person who degreased the wool in a vat of stale urine.

Dyer - someone who dyed the finished cloth.

Weaver - wove the cloth into usable material.

Card, Combs or Comber - prepared the wool for weaving

Scorer or Scourer - someone who treated a fleece with urine or dung.

THE EBB AND FLOW OF MALDON SWIMMING CLUB



Following a meeting at the Moot Hall on 13 June 1906, at which the Mayor, H A Krohn, plus various councillors and other civic dignitaries were present, it was agreed that a swimming club be formed.

So began the history of Maldon and Heybridge Swimming Club. Among the club's earliest members were such well-known local family names including; Beale, Lance, Bell, Hurrell, Pitt, Gower, Thomas, Brewer, Brammall, French, Mead, Bacon, Osborne and many more.

By the time of the first AGM in March 1907 the membership totalled 71 - 63 in the Men's section and 8 in the Ladies'. Annual Subscription was five shillings (25p). The names of Sir Claude Champion de Crespigny and B E Bland were added to those of E E Bentall, E A Fitch, Dr H Brown, A Ashley, T E Bland, F H Bright and F W Moss as Vice-Presidents for 1907.

The club became affiliated to the Southern Counties Amateur Swimming Association and the Royal Life

Saving Society. By 1913, membership had grown to 96 members and H A Krohn had donated the first cup, a "Coronation Cup" in March 1911.

At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, membership had increased to 148 (the Ladies' section now numbered 52), and one might reasonably expect to find references to members leaving for the front, but not a word appears in the club's minutes until 5 March 1915 when, "it was resolved that all members serving in HM Forces who had not paid their subscriptions for 1914 be made Honorary Members for the current year".

That resolution was repeated at the AGM in May 1915 when only nine members were present, and in May 1916 "it was decided to allow the working of the club to remain in abeyance until the conclusion of the war".

In April 1919 the club reformed with an attempt to remuster the earlier members, and the 'Leonard

Fitch Memorial Challenge Cup' was received. It took time to regain its pre-war strength, and although several new members now appeared on the scene, including E T Baker, Crittall, Dines etc., it was not until 1924 that membership had grown to 111.

For no recorded reason, two years later the membership had fallen to 93 and the following year, 1927, to only 57 which left a dearth of active members. In April 1930 the situation was so grave that several officials resigned and there was talk of dissolving the club.

The club had excellent facilities and achieved many successes, to give pleasure to thousands of visitors to the Promenade Park Lake with their various displays and competitions. Nevertheless, in spite of being probably the oldest swimming club in Essex, it appeared that it had exhausted itself. A number of stalwarts with the support of several vice-presidents tried to carry on by restricting some of the club's activities. This met

with success for a while, bringing the numbers back to 114 by the end of the year.

In 1932 Sir Claude de Crespigny presented a 'Ladies Challenge Cup' and Alfred Bunting a 'Long Distance Championship Cup', then in 1935 Playle of Maldon presented one for '¼ Mile Championship'. There is mention of several other cups and any further information about these would be most welcome.

At the start of the Second World War membership fell to 52 and an extract from the 35th AGM states that, "owing to the outbreak of war the Essex Long Distance Championship was postponed ... so few members were available to compete ... it would be encouraging to see members adopt a more sporting attitude in this respect". By June 1940 it was decided that the Club Cups should be called in to be deposited in Barclays Bank. There were no further club minutes recorded until 1946.

The war was ended, but somewhere along the way the words "and Heybridge" were lost as the minutes from then on only referred to the Maldon Swimming Club.

In 1946 a meeting was held

at the Moot hall at which it was proposed that the club should amalgamate with the Maldon Town Athletic and Social Club, and on 12 December with Baden Saville in the chair, this was effected and the club renamed the Maldon Town Swimming Club, retaining its own committee and secretary. There were eleven cups on record at that time.

From May 1947 until May 1952 no minutes appear in the minute book. So in May 1952 a meeting was held with regard to reforming the club but attendance was so poor that the meeting was rearranged for 10 June in the hope of better attendance. In the event only 17 members attended.

The next few years suggest a lack of interest, common to many local projects over the post-war years had now taken a firm grip on the club. At the most only 47 people attended the AGMs and sometimes only half that number up to 1960 and there appears to be no record of total numbers from year to year.

Surprisingly despite of this apparent lack of enthusiasm, in 1954 the 'B T Keeble Shield' was presented, the only such trophy to be recorded. Other cups also appeared;

in 1954 the A Plastow & D Newell 'Points Championship Cup'; 1958 the Bunting Cup 'Girls Points Championship'; the Firmin Cup 'Girls Diving'; the Harris 'Diving Cup for Boys' and in 1959 the D Newell & A Plastow 'Junior Championship'.

Furthermore the club finances appear to have been in a healthy state throughout these years, while many of the earlier members and supporters were still active. In 1961 membership was reported as 119 Junior and 60 Senior.

But the slow decline had begun and in 1964 Club Gala had to be cancelled owing to insufficient numbers of entrants. Reading between the lines there would appear to be no lack of enthusiasm by the committee and no mention of possible water pollution as the reason for lack of members, yet that coupled with the increased popularity of television and canned entertainments may just have spelled the end.

The last minuted entry dated 15 November 1966 is quite unexceptional but it saw the demise of Maldon and Heybridge's once great swimming club after 60 years' existence.

*Based on a 1995 article,
author unknown.*

TIMES PAST



This being the first issue of *Penny Farthing* for 2008 perhaps it is a good time to remind readers of some of the major events from fifty years ago, which you may have missed the first time around.

1958

The European Common Market came into being.
Egypt and Syria joined to form the United Arab Republic, President Nasser as its head.
Khrushchev succeeded Bulganin as Chairman of USSR.
Fidel Castro began "total war" against the Batista government in Cuba.
De Gaulle became President of France.
Alaska became the 49th state of the U.S.A.
Tension in Southern United States as desegregation of schools was attempted.
Boris Pasternak, author of *Doctor Zhivago*, won the Nobel Prize for Literature.
Harold Pinter wrote "The Birthday Party".
Pope Pius XII died and Cardinal Roncalli was elected Pope John XXIII.
Cyril N. Parkinson published his "Parkinson's Law", a satirical exposition of the growth of bureaucracy.
Henry Moore carved "Reclining Figure" for the UNESCO Building in Paris.
Major film releases included "Mon Oncle" starring Jacques Tati, "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" starring Elizabeth Taylor, and "Gigi" which won the Academy Award.
New York's Guggenheim Museum was opened.
Ralph Vaughan Williams died.
The Cha Cha Cha dance became all the rage.
Popular songs included "Chanson d'Amour", "Chipmunk Song", "The Purple People Eater", "Volare", "Catch a Falling Star" and "A Certain Smile".
The US nuclear submarine "Nautilus" passed under the icecap at the North Pole.
Stereophonic recordings came into use.
The US established NASA for the scientific exploration of space.
Van Allen radiation belts around the earth are discovered.
First parking meters appear in London.
The "Beatnik" movement spreads throughout U.S.A. and Europe.
Prince Charles was created Prince of Wales.
Last debutantes presented at Court.
Arnold Palmer wins his first Masters' golf tournament.
Sugar Ray Robinson regains his middleweight boxing championship for fifth time.
Harold Macmillan was Prime Minister (1957-1963).



As we were ...

Our Museum's new display for 2008 features 100 Years of the Ideal Home so we thought that now would be an appropriate opportunity to republish the following advice to wives from a 1950's Home Economics Book. This is bound to get our lady readers' blood boiling and extract an ironic laugh from any male chauvinists among us, but is worth printing if only to show how attitudes have changed during the last fifty years.

How to Greet Your Husband After His Day at Work.

Get your work done
Plan your tasks with an eye on the clock. Finish or interrupt them an hour before he is expected. Your anguished cry "are you home already" is not exactly a warm welcome.

Have dinner ready
Plan ahead, even the night before, to have a delicious meal - on time. This is a way of letting him know that you have been thinking about him and are concerned about his needs. Most men are hungry when they come home and the prospects of a good meal are part of the warm welcome needed.

Prepare yourself
Take 15 minutes to rest so you will be refreshed when he arrives. Touch up your make up, put a ribbon in your hair and be fresh looking. He has just been with a lot of work-weary people. Be a little gay and a little more interesting. His boring day may need a lift.

Clear away the clutter
Make one last trip through the main part of the house just before your husband arrives, gathering up school books, toys, paper etc. Then run a dust-cloth over the tables. Your husband will feel he has reached a haven of rest and order and it will give you a lift too.

Prepare the children
Take just a few minutes to wash the children's hands and faces (if they are small), comb their hair, and if necessary change their clothes. They are little treasures and he would like to see them playing the part.

Minimise all noise
At the time of his arrival eliminate noise of washer, dryer, dishwasher or vacuum. Encourage the children to be quiet.

Be happy to see him
Greet him with a warm smile and be pleased to see him.

Some don'ts
Don't greet him with problems or complaints. Don't complain if he is late for dinner. Count this as minor compared with what he might have gone through that day.

Make him comfortable
Have him lean back into a comfortable chair or lie down in the bedroom. Have a cool or warm drink ready for him. Arrange his pillow and offer to massage his neck and shoulders, and take off his shoes.

Cont page 19 ➤



We all know the expression "going at it like billy-o" and most Maldonians believe that they know where it originates from. They will tell you in no uncertain terms that the phrase is derived from the 17th century Joseph Billio, a true "Hellfire and damnation" Puritan preacher who built a reputation for his enthusiastic and emotionally charged sermons from the pulpit at the First Meeting House on Market Hill (now the site of United Reform Church) around 1695. Why we even have a blue plaque to prove it!

Regrettably our claim is subject to some doubt as there are several other claimants to the origins of "billy-o". For instance some believe it was derived from the name of one of Garibaldi's lieutenants, Nino Biglio, who would lead his men into battle shouting "Follow me and fight like Biglio". If you don't like that explanation, how about George Stephenson's railway engine 'Puffing Billy' which introduced the words "puffing like Billy-o".

An even earlier suggestion is that when William the Conqueror was harrying in the north of England his troops got lost in a fearsome snowstorm and wear swearing in the foulest language so the phrase "swearing like Billy the Norman" was coined.

Too far fetched? Perhaps, but we do know that the phrase did not come into common usage until long after Joseph Billio's passing. The earliest printed record of the phrase appears in the *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette* of March 1882 (some 150 years after his death) which reads:

"He lay on his side for about two hours, roaring like billy-hoo with the pain".

Around the same time a piece of nonsense (possibly some obscure reference to President Grant) appeared in the North Dakota *Bismark Tribune*, September 1883:

"You say Ol Grant was 'yar with the gang and the capital's one hoo-doo and the people cheered him like billy-be-dang Why, pardner it cant be true!"

This appears to be a version of 'Billy-be-damned' which had been recorded in 1849 in the *Gold Rush Diary*.

Both of these citations have the ring of minced oaths, i.e. phrases which endeavour to avoid speaking the name of the Devil who has long been portrayed as a monster in a male goat's form - a billy goat in fact.

So you takes your pick as to where "Billy-o" comes from. Personally I'm sticking with Joseph Billio, I'd hate to lose a piece of Maldon folklore - even if it is wrong! Anyway what would we do with a redundant blue plaque?

1950's Advice for wives

Continued from page 17

Speak in a soft, soothing, pleasant voice. Allow him to relax - to unwind.

Listen to him

You may have a dozen things to tell him but the moment of his arrival is not the time. Let him talk first.

Make the evening his

Never complain if he does not take you out to dinner or other places of entertainment. Instead, try to understand his world of strain and pressure, his need to be home and relax.

The goal

Try to make your home a place of peace and order where your husband can renew himself in body and spirit.

How times have changed or was it never like this? I'm sure that we could all add our own appropriate comments on this nonsense, but if any of our readers have copies of similar advice for how husbands should treat their wives, Penny Farthing would be delighted to hear from you.

Maldon Museum

On the Park



SPECIAL EXHIBIT FOR 2008
**100 Years
of the
IDEAL HOME**

Will open for the 2008 season on
Easter Saturday March 22
and close on Sunday 26 October

Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays
& Sundays, 2pm - 5pm
(Bank Holidays 11am - 4pm)

Admission £1 Adults;
50p accompanied Children
(Parties by prior arrangement)

We regret wheelchair access to ground
floor only

STOP PRESS

Maldon Museum has been successful in two recent grant applications receiving £1,500 from the AIM Sustainability Scheme, funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, and £470 from the Museums in Essex Small Grants Conservation Awards.

Farewell to the All Books Shop

On Sunday 20th January the doors of the Mill Road book shop were closed for the last time due to increasingly difficult business conditions. Kevin Peggs, the owner, has been a good friend of the Museum in the past ten years and his help with holding the Museum keys will be sorely missed.

The closure of the book shop is a sad loss to Maldon, but Kevin will continue to sell books on line concentrating on marine subjects and Essex matters from his home in South Woodham Ferrers.

His email address is www.allbooks.demon.co.uk

Thank You and Good Luck Kevin



ST. CEDD'S CHATLINE

By Liz Willsher

With Christmas now behind us, Spring surely must be approaching, although on a chilly day in early February I think it must be taking a detour.

Spring means many things to different people, but to the St. Cedd's and display teams and all the helpers associated with them, it signifies some frenetic activity, reaching a crescendo in late March, when the new Museum season begins.

Significant changes have been taking place at the Museum, including the installation of custom built shelving to display a greater selection of souvenir items and books for sale. Also a new display is taking shape to commemorate one hundred years of the Ideal Home Exhibition. We at St Cedd's are searching out and sprucing up all kinds of domestic items to illustrate the changes during these years, which will I believe, create a new and exciting exhibit.

As many of you will realise, the Museum runs on a very tight budget and the award of grants is vital to our survival and progress. Recently we joined The Association of Independent Museums (AIM) and applied for a £500 grant to cover the new shelving and installation. We were extremely pleased to receive £1,500 which will pay for stock and advice from a retail specialist, and help us throughout the season.

In addition a grant of £450 has been received from the Small Grants Fund (administered by the Essex Record Office) to enable us at St. Cedd's to improve our conservation and storage of paper items and photographic material to the required accreditation standards. Without the hard work put in by my colleagues, these grants would not have been obtained and the Museum would struggle to make the necessary changes and improvements.

On a lighter note, visitors to the Museum in the forthcoming season (particularly the gentlemen) should look out for a bit of glamour May we introduce "Dermelza" a 1950's housewife, complete with rubber gloves and Hoover, adding a sparkle to the domestic scene. Even better, she never utters a word of reprimand at the sight of a muddy footprint or a dropped crumb!

Now to return to the polishing ... Best wishes to all the members and we look forward to seeing many visitors in the new season, beginning on Saturday 22nd March 2008.



to the editor

Dear Editor,
Secret Army Re-visited

I much enjoyed this article but feel that it contains an error which could become an urban myth. This is that the cobbler's shop on Market Hill was the site where weapons and ammunition belonging to the secret army were stored. The cobbler's shop was previously a photographic studio which it had been since the end of the nineteenth century. In the 1930's the photographer was W Hazeltime Frost. The premises are small and there are no out-buildings. Movement in or out of these premises could easily be observed by neighbours.

A butcher's shop with a range of cold stores and abattoir behind, where the public would never have been welcomed is a far more likely site. Such a shop was John Thomas Smith's at 29 Market Hill where Sergeant J A Smith's father had been a butcher until just before WWII commenced. I am certain that this was the building that was the actual location of the weaponry.

Regards, Paddy Lacey

Dear Editor,

Concerning Issue 51 of *Penny Farthing* I really cannot accept that a pub in Fullbridge would be named the Victoria Inn five years before the good lady ascended to the throne. This would be the equivalent of naming the latest gastropub in Maldon, the William V, or perhaps in view of England's past history of monarchs, the Henry IX. It would be treason! I believe that a researcher has read a 7 as a 2.

Yours a Loyal Subject of the Queen

P.S. I have ignored the Charles III as I do not feel that this would pull in the punters!

Dear Editor,

Further to the article "Secret Army Revisited" which appeared in the last issue (No. 51) of *Penny Farthing*, I have consulted my cousin who lived on Market Hill, and she confirms that there was another butcher's shop on Market Hill on the right hand side going up, and this shop was owned by Jack Smith. She was able to contact Tony Smith, Jack's son, who provided the following information.

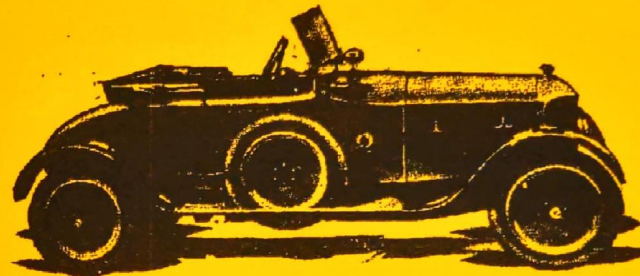
Jack Smith was the leader of the secret army group and in turn a member of the Home Guard. A secret bunker was constructed underground at Beeleigh mill by Canadians. When they returned home after the war, no-one seemed to know the whereabouts of these bunkers. The HQ of the so-called Secret Army was in Oxfordshire, near Wantage. Their weaponry for this area was stored at the Smith's butchery shop, which was closed for business at the beginning of the war, and Jack Smith went to Bentalls as Catering Manager. I believe his wife was Librarian at Maldon Library, which was then located underneath the Plume Library at the top of Market Hill.

I hope this sorts things out for a bit,

Judy Betteridge

An Advertisement from the early 1920's

GIRLINGS Ltd.



TEL. No. 49.

Send us your enquiries for
New & Second-hand CARS,
Electric Light Plants,
Castings,
Machinery and Repairs.

Electricity Works - Maldon.

Maldon District Museum Association

Registered Charity 301362

President - Mrs Julia Peel
Vice Presidents - Mr L.F. Barrell
Mrs B Chittenden

Committee - to A. G. M. 2008

<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Paddy Lacey</i>	
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	<i>Margaret Simmonds</i>	
<i>Hon. Secretary</i>	<i>Jenny Sjollema</i>	
<i>Hon.Treasurer(acting)</i> ...	<i>Betty Chittenden</i>	
<i>Membership Sec.</i>	<i>Christine Steel</i>	
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Judy Betteridge</i>	
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Molly Middleton</i>	
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Tony Mandara</i>	
<i>Committee</i>	<i>Daphne Swanson</i>	

Curatorial Adviser *Nick Wickenden Esq*

Museum Reception Telephone No. (01621) 842688
(Answerphone when museum unattended)
www.maldonmuseum.org.uk
E mail: enquiries@maldonmuseum.org.uk
Web site: www.maldonmuseum.org.uk.

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

Correspondence to:
Maldon District Museum Association
"The Museum in the Park"
47 Mill Road, Maldon, Essex. CM9 5HX

Articles, items or letters for inclusion in Penny Farthing should be sent to:
41 Abbotsmead, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex CM9 4PT