



First World War Convalescent Home at Fullbridge

Looking towards the bridge at Fullbridge, the large house in the foreground of this early 1900's photograph was called "*Rivercourt*". It was commandeered to be used by the Red Cross for wounded troops during the 1st World War. Actually a much older building than it looks, it had been re-fronted during the eighteenth century. In 1912 it was occupied by a Miss Henderson, but after the war was taken over by Miss Short who took boarders from the Grammar School.

The building on the extreme left of the photograph in the far distance is the *Welcome Sailor*. It was kept by Alfred Crabbe and next door, with a large lamp outside, was the *White Hart* which was kept in 1912 by George Sewell. An earthenware dealer, Arthur Dykes, occupied the house on the other side of the *White Hart*.

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT By Paddy Lacey

It has been a most rewarding start to the season that opened on Easter Saturday with blizzard conditions, snow covered Promenade Park and the attendance of one intrepid visitor. Ever since then there has been an excellent response to the publicity ably organised by our publicity officer, Molly Middleton, with a pleasing number of visitors coming to view the new display and to take advantage of the new shop arrangements.

These developments have produced a wow factor in those who have previously visited the Museum and are much appreciated by those visiting for the first time. We have Liz Willsher, Judy Betteridge, Margaret Simmonds, Christine Steel and Daphne Swanson to thank for these developments and for the freshening up of the whole Museum. Behind the scenes Charlie Middleton and Graham Reeve have exercised their many skills in preparing the basic framework for the new exhibition and enhancing the existing displays.

Apart from the new developments we have some forthcoming events to savour with a Maldon based entertainment by the MAC Theatre Group in the courtyard in early September and the Museum taking part for the first time in the Heritage Open Days when there will be free admission and the building itself will be on display. We hope to have by then investigated the origins of the Plume Lodge, long the home of the Park Superintendent and the story of the bequest by Mr T.J.D. Cramphorn, which made the building possible in 1915, and feature this information on the Open Days. If any member can contribute any memories or details it would be most welcome. Sadly the Conservation Department of the District Council has no records of the early days of the building to offer. Finally in October the Museum will play a part in the newly organised Maldon Art Trail. It is the committee's hope that by increasing the number of visitors coming into the Museum the shop sales will grow!

Incidentally another feature of the shop is a second-hand book area featuring local and regional books together with those covering topics relating to the museum collection. Liz Willsher or any of the Committee would be pleased to receive any similar books that are surplus to your requirements for resale with proceeds going towards Museum Funds.

There is a lot going on in the world of Maldon Museum, but as always more help with any aspect would be received with open arms. There are for example two vacancies remaining on the Committee but the big news is that since the AGM we now have a new Treasurer in Ann Hamilton allowing Betty Chittenden to retire, after a year during which as acting Treasurer she has provided beautifully neat monthly figures of our finances and coped with all the Treasurer's duties despite having health problems. I am most pleased that Betty is continuing her association with the Museum by being one of our two Vice-Presidents and I am delighted to report she is instigating a collection of records, photographs and other items relating to the Museum itself to be saved in archival quality form for the information of future generations - a marvellous and very worthwhile project. Thank you Betty!

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 Autumn Issue of *Penny Farthing* is 5 August

An Exotic Venue for the Discerning Holidaymaker



Mill Beach during in the 1930s & 1940s

Booked your holidays yet - if not may we suggest a truly unique and exotic resort, Mill Beach, Heybridge? Laugh if you must, but only 50 years ago holiday-makers from all over Essex and the east-end of London came in their thousands to sample the delights of this Blackwater backwater - and so delighted were they with the experience many returned year after year.

In the austerity of the post Second World War years, when people could ill afford the luxury of going abroad, Mill Beach provided a haven of tranquility in beautiful countryside away from bomb-damaged London. Within easy reach of the City it was ideally suitable for short breaks, and was far less expensive than other more-established resorts. Many visitors so fell in love with the area that they

acquired caravans for holiday or long-weekend use, while others purchased bungalows and eventually retired to Mill Beach.

Of course the area was not always a holiday resort. From the middle ages, this remote and desolate place was known as Barrow Marsh and in the 13th century, a sea wall was constructed along the River Blackwater which provided grazing for thousands of sheep.

Few people lived there. The only employment, other than tending sheep, being fishing, becoming a sailor, working at the salt pans or at the windmill grinding corn to be taken by barge to London. In June 1831 the mill was destroyed by a tremendous gale. It was rebuilt the same year and continued working until the 1880's before being finally demolished in 1892.

The two windmills employed in salt production, which were much smaller than the traditional corn mill, also ceased production in the 1800's probably due to the advent of steam pumps and the availability of cheaper rock salt.

In 1856 the sea wall collapsed because labourers had been digging gravel from the sea shore to use as ballast for ships. The wall had to be rebuilt and was realigned around the flooded area, hence the name the "Ballast Hole". This would later provide an ideal boating lake for visiting holiday makers.

No doubt Mill Beach would have continued as an isolated outpost had it not been for the arrival of the railway to Maldon. In 1848 Maldon East

railway line was opened from Maldon to Witham where it connected to the London line.

This newfangled mode of transport was to have a dramatic impact on the fortunes of the area, opening it up to visitors from across the county and the City. Soon Maldon became known as the Pearl of the Blackwater, with neighbouring communities sharing in the town's increased prosperity.

Soon a newspaper delivery agent, Major Williams from Holloway Road, recognised a business opportunity to be had from the new visitors. Using the donkey cart with which he collected the papers from Maldon railway station, he began carrying a few more intrepid tourists to this out of the way spot.

Realising that there was little to do once they arrived and that there was no place of refreshment, he next persuaded Emma Springett, who lived at Barrow Marsh Mill, to provide some non-alcoholic drinks. Being a smart entrepreneur, she purchased bottles of lemonade from Markhams of Maldon for 8d a dozen bottles. These were then sold for sixpence a glass to the visitors, making a very handsome profit in the process.

Few in those days could afford to go abroad for their holidays and Mill Beach quickly changed from simply being just a place for a day trip into a weekend or annual holiday resort. A hotel was built and

cafes and caravan parks were established.

Except for the durations of the First and Second World Wars, Mill Beach continued to prosper and after 1945 the resort reached its heyday. More caravan sites were opened with Mill Beach holiday camp becoming extremely popular. Another caravan site was started at Osea Road where a plot would cost £7 p.a. - by the 1990s that same plot would set you back £700 p.a. Other caravan sites included Barrow Marsh and Happy Days, each camp providing its own entertainment facilities, usually with a bar and sailing club.

After the Second World War, Arthur Butcher a local businessman purchased the navy-surplus wooden buildings from Osea Island and reassembled them along Goldhanger, Basin and Wharf Roads and at Mill Beach. Many of these are still being used as dwellings.

Social life centred around the Mill Beach Hotel where the nearby boating lake provided a safe environment for rowing and paddleboats. A shellfish stall next to the lake did a roaring trade, with visitors sitting in the hotel gardens on a summer's evening consuming cockles, shrimps and jellied eels, washed down with the odd glass of lemonade or something stronger.

In those days there were no lager louts, kiss-me-quick hats or rowdy hen and stag parties.

It was a family resort offering simple pleasures in a tranquil location. What more could one want than to sit on a beach watching the passing river traffic, while the kids swim in the sea, then have a quite pint and a plateful of cockles?

Today, with our new, improved, have-it-all lifestyle, most people would turn up their noses at the thought of a week's holiday in England, let alone Mill Beach, but are they any happier than in those not so far off days? They prefer to holiday at the Cost a Fortune to get sun-burnt, eat disgusting fast food and all-day greasy "English breakfasts" and mix with the drunken louts staggering around the town at night.

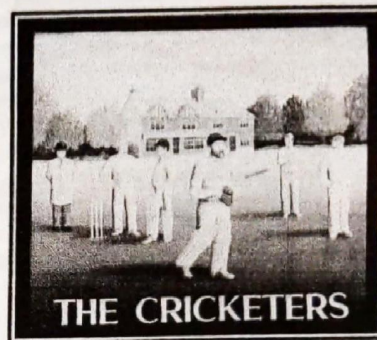
Personally I know where I would prefer to spend my time - how about you? Costa Blackwater anyone?

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1618 Heybridge was importing large quantities of coal without payment of import duties, to the severe financial detriment of Maldon. To suppress this abuse, bailiffs erected a timber bar across the channel preventing the passage of any ship which had not paid the correct duties and customs. In return Heybridge tried to sue Maldon Borough Council, but lost their case. The barrier was later moved to the edge of Heybridge Hall Marsh (Borough Marsh) by Colliers Reach.

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.



Cricket being England's national game it is not surprising that many pubs, particularly those beside a regularly used pitch, were named after this popular pastime. 'The Cricketers Arms' at Danbury Common is one such pub. Originally a private house, when it became a pub, sometime before 1830 an association with the local cricket pitch was the natural choice for its name.

By 1882 the pub had a large club room, bar, parlour, tap rooms and two cellars (one for wine). Over the bar there is still a small glass panel etched with the scene of a cricket match in play.

At Heybridge regular cricket matches were played at Potman Marsh, from 1750 to 1840 and in 1786 the gentlemen of Maldon "associated into a cricket club" according to the diary of John Crozier.

Maldon's moment of cricketing glory occurred in 1873 when the town played against the England national team at Fairfield, Maldon - and won by an innings and four runs! However the home side had been allowed to field 18 players and two professionals.

The origins of cricket are obscure, but the name may derive from the Anglo-Saxon 'cricce' - a staff used by shepherds guarding the wicket gate of the sheepfold. Alternatively it may have come from the Flemish 'krickstoel' which was a low stool similar to the long low wickets of the early game.

For all its calm and soporific tendencies, the game could sometimes inflame passions to murder. In June 1809 two officers from the 11th Regiment based in Maldon, quarrelled over a cricket match and fought a duel at Woodham Mortimer Common. In the exchange of shots Assistant Surgeon Lewis O'Hara was killed by Ensign Mahon, who although taken into custody later escaped.

Cricket bats were originally single pieces of wood, unrestricted as to weight and width until 1771. Manufactured balls of hide date from 1658. Scores were recorded by notches, not runs, marked on a piece of wood.

Bowling was underarm along the ground until over-arm action was introduced in the 1860's. The pitch at 22 yards has remained unchanged since 1744, but creases once cut in the turf, have only been painted since 1880. 17th century wickets had just two stumps until a third one was made compulsory about 1785 when a second bail replaced the single bail used previously.

Rules of the game were first formalised in the mid-18th century, a few years before the formation of the game's governing body the MCC in 1787. Championship cricket began in 1873.

ESSEX POSTBOYS OF YESTERYEAR

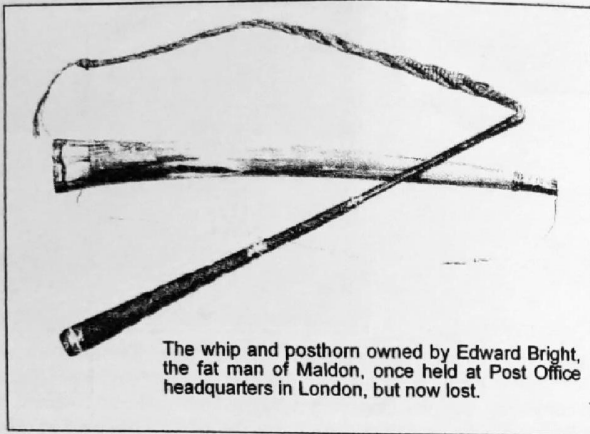
By F Z Claro first printed in Essex Countryside magazine 1965

The early Essex post service was established for carrying Crown letters and documents between the coast and the court, hence the term "Royal Mail." The riders who carried the mail were called postboys, though they could be of any age just so long as they were good horsemen. Whatever the weather or hazards encountered on the lonely roads of the period, which were little more than farm tracks, the mail had to be delivered.

Essex postboys 300 years ago had one of the most difficult rides in the country from Harwich to the City of London. Some idea of the conditions in the reign of Charles II is given in a letter from Silas Taylor, the naval storekeeper at Harwich at the time.

"9th March 1667. Mr Carr the post master is in trouble. His postboy was thrown from his horse and was afraid to report it. It is hoped that the next postboy will be more suitable. But the snow is deep enough to bury horse and rider too."

Speed was an essential duty of these horsemen. One of Colonel Roger Whitley's letters when he was Postmaster General in 1675 mentions this:



The whip and posthorn owned by Edward Bright, the fat man of Maldon, once held at Post Office headquarters in London, but now lost.

"The Postmaster, White-chapel. March 1st. The maile was from 6 to 11 of ye clock betwixt Runford and this office. The postboy stayed an hour there and took four hours on the road. It is his duty to ride five miles an hour, which must be observed for the future."

At the foot of the waybills was a notice: "The postboy carrying this mail if he loiters on the road can be sent to a house of correction."

Although postmasters who were inn-keepers were issued with a warrant by the Post Office to protect them against billeting troops and cavalry on the march from station to station, postboys had to serve in the militia if their names came up in the ballot of the parish.

Thomas Witherings, who died in 1651, lists a by post (presumably a sub post office. Ed) from Witham to Maldon during his period as Postmaster General. Later Colonel Roger Whitley in the reign of Charles II wrote to the Chelmsford postmaster:

"I pray consider ye letter office at Maldon and find a fit person for it. I will allow (sic) him as I do at Bocking, which is a sixth part of ye letters besides two gazettes weekly. Also protection against quartering of soldiers. Advise with Mr Hebden about it and loose (sic) noe tyme."

This resulted in a three-day post a week for the port until 1795, when Maldon was made a post office to include all the correspondence for the Dengie hundred.

An Act of Queen Elizabeth I mentions that postboys are "to have a horn to blow as oft as he meets company or four times a mile". In the General Post Office archives in London were the original post horn and whip used by a famous Essex postboy in the reign of George II.

A faded label stated "Used by the celebrated Edward Bright, the fat man of Maldon, who used as a lad to ride post between Maldon and Chelmsford".

A photograph (left) of these famous relics of Essex posting days was specially taken for historical record by the Post Office at headquarters. The posthorn was natural cow horn straightened out and eighteen inches long with a metal mouth-piece. This was engraved "Pro bono publico." The whip was a beautiful specimen of craftsmanship, eighteen inches in length with an embossed silver handle and two silver bands interlaced with basket work. Sadly, it appears that both these items were later lost.

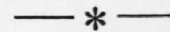
Edward Bright would have been eleven years of age when he was the Maldon postboy. According to the burial registers of All Saints', he was twenty nine years of age when he was buried in the church in November 1750. His grandson Edward is mentioned as

one of the principal citizens and stewards at a public dinner held at the Blue Boar, Maldon, to celebrate peace on July 6, 1814. He became an alderman in 1848.

The Maldon by post from Chelmsford is frequently mentioned in Post Office records. In 1792 the postboy between Maldon and Bradwell applied for a uniform. Sir Francis Freeling, Secretary to the Post Office, stated that only the guards on the Royal Mail coaches were supplied with

uniforms, but if he continued to carry out the duties carefully and at the usual price the Post Office had no objection to his wearing a uniform if he paid for it himself.

In 1793 there was trouble over the constant delay of the Maldon letters at Chelmsford. On inquiry it was discovered that the postboy's horse had died and he was carrying the letters on foot from Chelmsford.



Maldon's Postal History

1682 Mr Brown appointed the first recorded postmaster for Maldon at a salary of £2 per annum. For this princely sum he had to collect and deliver the mail between Maldon and Chelmsford.

1732 Edward Bright made postboy for Maldon at 11 years of age.

1793 Maldon postboy's horse died and he had to walk to and from Chelmsford to collect mail.

1795 Maldon was made a Post Town instead of just a sub-Post Office of Chelmsford.

1812 Maldon's Penny Post established between outlying villages. A mail cart ran from Maldon to Burnham. Post to Goldhanger and Tolleshunt D'Arcy was carried by foot.

1840 Rowland Hill established a national penny post and Maldon's penny post was abolished

1905 The Post Office opened Maldon's first telephone exchange.

1908 The Post Office building in the High Street was erected.

1912 No. 2 Mill Road, Maldon, became a sub-Post Office. It had previously been a pork butchers. In the late 1960s or early 1970s it was closed after the postmaster hung himself. It later became "All Books" which recently ceased trading.

2006 Maldon's High Street Post Office was closed and the business transferred into Budgens' supermarket opposite.

2008 Budgens closed and the Post Office transferred over the road.



'Pict'ure That

The fourth century military writer Vegtius describes Pictish ships as being camouflaged scout-boats with sails, ropes and 20 oarsmen.

Pictish metalworkers occupied the Iron Age settlement of Mine Howe on Orkney from about 300AD to 500AD.

There were two separate Pictish power bases, Fortrenn and the Inverness area, where Pictish stones can still be seen. It was the missions of St. Columba and his followers up the Great Glen to preach among the Picts in the late sixth century, that recorded the first sighting of the Loch Ness Monster.

The first recorded mention of the 'Picts', a collective term for the Celts of Caledonia, appears in 297AD. Southern Picts, from Fortrenn - the area between the Forth and the Grampians - were Brythonic Celts, their language related to Welsh, Cornish and Breton.

We sh continued to be spoken in the neighbouring British kingdom of Strathclyde until about 1200 and the 'Aber' prefix, which is common in Wales and means 'river mouth', also appears in the lands of the Picts, Aberdeen being a prime example.

They called themselves *Cruithni*, meaning 'pictured' or 'figured' - a description of their custom of decorating their bodies with representations of animals or birds using woad.

The Picts were proud of their ability to damage Roman Britain by land or sea, and played a huge part in the Barbarian Conspiracy of 367AD, in which the Roman province was assailed on all sides by the Picts, the Scots (originally from Ireland) and the Saxons.

You Read It Here First!

The Daily Mail of May 10, 2008, published a two page feature about the extraordinary exploits of 29 year old naval lieutenant, Augustus 'Gus' Agar VC. Regular readers of *Penny Farthing* may recall that we ran a similar story about Lieutenant Agar in our Spring issue 2006 - it does feel good to have "scooped" one of the national newspapers.

Lieutenant Agar, who was originally based at Osea Island, won his VC in 1919 during the Bolshevik Revolution when he sank the Russian heavy cruiser, *Oleg*, in Kronstadt harbour in the Baltic. He and his crews had been operating in two "skimmers" (light, shallow draft motor torpedo boats each with a crew of just three men) from Terrioki in Finland.

The whole operation was of doubtful legality as Britain was not officially at war with the Bolsheviks. Agar had been sent by the Government to assist in helping a British spy escape from Russia, but he interpreted his orders somewhat loosely to give more practical support to the Czarist cause.

Although the British Government approved of his action, because of its dubious lawfulness they could not officially recognise his sensational deed. Instead they awarded him the Victoria Cross, but kept his name a secret for many years. As a result he was known in the press as the 'mystery VC', while the Russians placed a £5,000 reward on his head.

A new book 'Operation Kronstadt' by Harry Ferguson has just been published by Hutchinson, price £18.99.

SAVE THE OLD MAN'S SHIRT

While we frequently complain about how difficult it is becoming to make ends meet, perhaps now is the time for a salutary reminder as to what austerity really entailed. The following article has been taken from the "Daily Express War Time Needlework Booklet" published during the 1940's," price 1/-.

Men's shirts, when too worn at certain spots for further use, often contain a great deal of still-good material. Don't waste this in war-time, but save and convert the old shirts.

Do you want some useful pinafores to keep you clean while working about the house? Unpick from an old shirt its complete back including the yoke, and reshape a little at the sides, if required, to form a big apron as in the photograph. If liked, stitch down the loose centre pleat to the waistline, and bind the pinafore entirely round with gay bias binding. From the sleeves cut long straps to go over the shoulders, cross at the back, and button to the pinafore on each hip; also a patch pocket. Bind these similarly.



From the front of the same shirt, below the opening (if it is not a coat-shaped one), you should be able to get a short, bib-less apron; cut top bands and ties for this also from the sleeves, to tie round the waist.

Babies at the crawling stage make their rompers so dirty that it's a pity to use new stuff for these. Instead, cut them from old shirts, and they'll be very hardwearing. Make them gay and pretty with bright bindings. Or contrive your little boy's shirts and overalls from his father's discarded shirts.

The smaller pieces left from cut-up shirts make up well into soiled linen bags, "shoulders" to cover dresses on coat-hangers, shoe bags and dusters. They are also useful for mending the tails of still usable shirts.

The wives of orchestra players or waiters may have dress shirts of fine white material to cut up profitably. Here are some of their many uses: aprons for any member of the family in domestic service; white squares for A.R.P. First Aid headdresses; little girls knickers, or wear under summer frocks; traycloths. One young mother, finding having a baby an expensive business in war-time, cut up her husband's dress shirts into excellent little pillow-slips for the child's cradle.

(Editors note; A word of caution, make sure the old man has been removed from his shirt before you commence cutting. The above instructions should involve only six or seven hours sewing, although you may need to make time for a visit to your nearest bondage / fetish shop for the gay binding.)

TIMELY REMINDER

The world currently faces a massive food crisis. In Britain we are already seeing huge increases in the cost of basic foodstuffs with more rises to come, so it is worth reminding ourselves of how we confronted and overcame a similar emergency during the Second World War. Before the war we had become heavily dependant on the import of cheap foodstuffs from America and our colonies to the detriment of our own farming industry. As now, it became uneconomic for our

farmer to produce grain or livestock and over 3 million acres of land went out of cultivation. By the time the war came we had ceased as a nation to be able to feed ourselves, yet could no longer rely on produce from overseas without great cost in lives and money due to the U-boat attacks on our merchant fleet.

Ralph Tisdler of Burnham on Crouch wrote the following letter (*somewhat abbreviated. Ed.*) to the *Essex Country-side* in the 1970's which describes how our farmers responded magnificently to our desperate needs and helped save this country from starvation.

"The 1500 acres of Mundon Hall was typical of many thousands of acres of Essex. Decades of neglect had produced a growth of thorn and brambles which in some cases was impenetrable. Such land was officially described as grass.

During the first year of the war an attempt was made to plough ten per cent of existing grassland for direct arable cropping. To the farmers on the lighter land, who already had some arable, this was easy; but in the case of heavy, undrained land, such as Mundon Hall, with little equipment and virtually no labour, it was impossible, no matter how willing the occupier.

By the second year of the war it was realised that unless every acre pulled its weight we were in grave danger of starvation. A competent local farmer was appointed by the committee (Essex War Agricultural Committee. Ed.) to ensure, in collaboration with every farmer in his parish, that each field was fully used. The appointed farmers worked hard and farmers generally responded well; existing equipment was fully used and much new tackle was imported from America, the distribution of which was regulated by the Ministry of Agriculture. It was a joy and a privilege to work in the industry and to have a hand in the transformation of the countryside.

Problems there were of course, certainly one of the greatest was that of personal relations. Farmers who were doing their best sometimes resented the expressed opinion of a neighbour, that their best wasn't good enough, however true this might have been. There were some, who having power and authority for the first time in their lives, abused the position.

Conflict arose, but they were very rare; the committee had a huge army of willing helpers who commanded the respect of the industry, which in four short years transformed dereliction into near full production. We owe them all our thanks."

Once again, successive governments have all but killed off our great fishing industry and agriculture is barely surviving. No longer is it economic for most farmers to grow crops or raise livestock. They are unable to compete against cheap, and often inferior, foodstuffs from abroad. We must wake up to the fact, while there is still time, it is imperative to support our own farmers and if necessary be prepared to pay a little extra for their produce to keep them in business. If not they will cease to farm, their lands will again become desolate and Britain will be held to ransom by foreign suppliers, whose only motivation is to sell to the highest bidder from more wealthy nations. We have been warned.

Accessions to Maldon Museum 2007 - 2008

During the past year (2007 - 2008) Maldon Museum accessed into its collection a total of 205 items, a slight decrease on last year.

This year's items include the following :-

Two model sailing barges, made by the late Geoff Albury and kindly donated by his family. The larger of the barges is now on display on the Greens Flour Mill exhibit, also made by Geoff, and the smaller one is displayed in the kiosk. Our model of Maldon East Railway Station, again made by Geoff, has been permanently donated to Maldon Museum.

We were given what appeared to be a pair of children's overshoes. Northampton Shoe Museum were kind enough to identify them as pattens, probably dating from the 18th / 19th century, which were worn over shoes to protect the wearer's feet from wet weather conditions. These pattens are now on display in the Childhood Room. (See also the article on pages 11 & 12 of this issue of *Penny Farthing*).

A model Hay Cart - made at Maldon Ironworks in the 1930's - probably for show purposes. At present this model is lurking under the fire engine in the Long Room until we can find a more suitable location for it.

A copy of the Daily Mirror, dated 1916.

An original carbon copy of Wilf Berridge's translation of the Battle of Maldon poem, and related correspondence with the Essex Record Office in 1977, proving provenance.

As a result of a visit to the URC chapel in Maldon, we now have photographs of the Alfred Sadd Memorial Plaque and the memorial chapel on Tarawa where Alfred was murdered by the Japanese during World War II, the oil painting of Joseph Billio and a very good photograph of the 6th Maldon Congregational Scout Troop in 1945.

Following a visit to Mr Doug Pitt we have now received many photographs of the Maldon Sea Scouts Troop in the 1930's. We are particularly pleased to

have these items, as we have very little scout-related memorabilia in our collection. Mr Pitt was also kind enough to provide us with an account of, and letters relating to, an event during World War II when his father and brother rescued the crew of a Boston III aircraft of 418 Squadron, based at Bradwell Bay, which had crashed onto the mud flats of the Blackwater

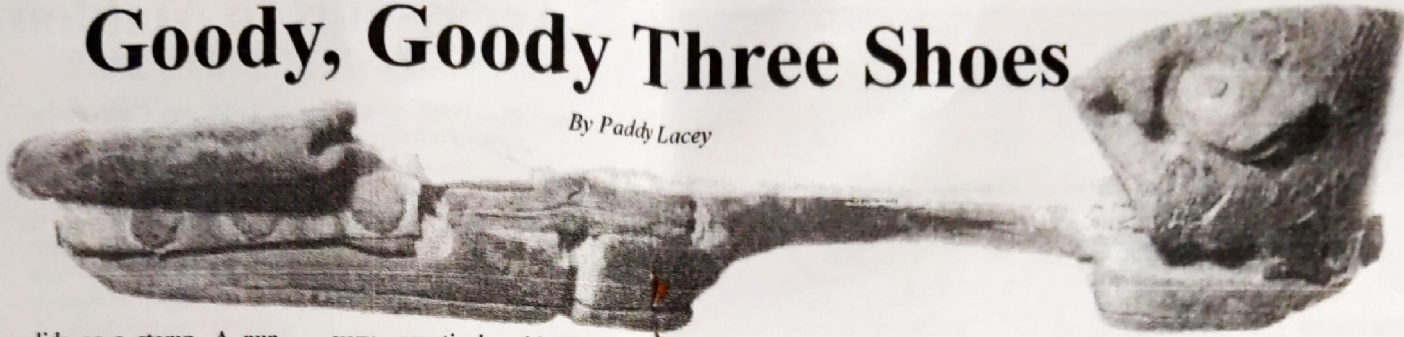
Generally it has been a very busy year indeed. The Accessions Team activities included :-

For each new item accessed, completing the card index record system and the computer database. Both these record systems have proved to be absolutely invaluable when needing to research our collection.

Answering the many enquiries arising from our website. Often these enquiries result in lengthy research for our team and expenditure for the Museum, to such an extent that in future we are considering imposing research fees and copy charges, as donations are rarely forthcoming

Goody, Goody Three Shoes

By Paddy Lacey



In June 2007 Maldon Museum received a pair of wooden shoes with leather straps that appear to have metal pastry cutters attached to their soles. These were photographed and the images sent to Northampton Museum, which is the leading museum for footwear in the country. The shoes were identified as being pattens dating from 1800 - 1820/30.

We received a most informative letter from Rebecca Shawcross, the Assistant Shoe Resources Officer for Northampton Museum, in which she says;

"Pattens are basically a very practical way of keeping your feet out of the dirt and wet. The wearer would wear their normal shoes and then place the pattens on as well. The iron would then raise the wearer a couple of inches off the muddy wet ground. They are quite cumbersome and no doubt require a certain way of walking, either a

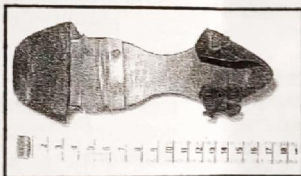
glide or a stomp. A nun remembers wearing very similar footwear when she first joined her convent in Ireland in the 1940's / 1950's. She says that cloth was wrapped round iron rings and the nuns who wore them could polish the Convent's floor at the same time!

The use of wooden pattens can be traced back 600 years with first mention of pattens being worn was in 1390, and pattens with iron rings were popular from the early 17th century onwards. Various fastenings were used including buckles, straps and latches (thongs). The easiest and cheapest method was to tie them on with a leather lace or string, so you often find quite simple flat wooden footbeds. A popular wood to use was aspen as it was lightweight and easy to work, though other woods were used depending on local availability.

As mentioned pattens were

very practical, although they did have their problems. They would have been worn during poor weather conditions so when removed would be wet and muddy. If they were not cleaned for some time the wood would start to rot and the iron ring would rust. Iron nails used to attach ring, latches and toe caps would also be prone to rust, become loose and eventually the ring would come away from the footbed.

Workers in country areas would have worn their pattens every day during winter. Servants often kept their pair by the back door to slip on when they had to go out. Pattens were eventually replaced by boots, particularly the leather Wellington that in its turn was overtaken by the rubber Wellington or over-shoe.



Maldon Museum's example are quite plain, having simple leather latches, which would have been strapped over the wearer's shoes. It appears that one of them has had its latches replaced at some point, as they do not appear to match. One appears to have a line of decorative tooling on it. Sometimes pattens can also have a leather toecap for increased protection and to reduce the foot slipping.

Men, women and children all wore pattens. A country person is most likely to have worn them and there is a very similar pair in the Northampton collection and so we would date them to the first quarter of the 19th century. Although quite plain they are rather nice examples."

Soon after we acquired this pair of pattens, Pam and I received a further shoe

from a family friend, now living in Norway. This is again a child's shoe to be worn over soft slippers but with a hinged wooden sole. It had been a family curio coming originally from the east of England. Our friend had visited Maldon Museum and thought we might like to add it to our collection.

The shoe was taken by Dot Beddenham, who is in charge of costume at Chelmsford Museum. It was identified as being a wooden clog showing hinge and studding on the sole dating from 1830-1860, a very similar shoe was illustrated in the reference book "Put Your Foot Down" by Florence Ledger.

So in the space of a month the museum has acquired three historic shoes that are presently on display in the Childhood Room, but may eventually be moved to the cobbler's shop area.

Not directly connected to

these donations but of local interest, was that as relatively recently as 20 January 1915, at a meeting of the Board of Guardians of the Maldon Union it was resolved to buy twenty pairs of clogs for children from the marsh districts surrounding Maldon, as they would be stronger and warmer than cheap leather boots.

The Rev. O. Geves asked whether the children would be tired walking 2 to 3 miles to school in clogs - no obesity problems then! Mr Haydock replied 'Not so tired as if they were wearing boots'. The Rev. Ansty concluded the discussion by declaring that clogs would be ten times better than boots!

This raises the point as to whether any of our members can remember seeing or hearing that clogs were worn locally in the 20th Century.



Accessions to Maldon Museum

Continued from page 10

Setting up and overseeing Work Experience for a local school pupil.

Visiting Colchester Castle Museum to view Maldon Museum's spinal carriage which had been loaned for a disability display. Apparently the carriage has generated great interest from the public. It will be returned to us later this month.

Pursuing a grant application for the setting up of our new shop area.

Activities for the coming year will include :-

Supplying ideas for and providing assistance in setting up new displays for next season.

Using special archival quality storage media, acquired as the result of a conservation grant, to improve the storage of our photographic slide and negative collection.

Accessions Team :-

Betty Chittenden
Liz Willsher
Julia Cottam
Judy Betteridge
Margaret Simmonds

The canvas war



Bucket making at Burnham for the 1914-1918 war effort

OLD PHOTOGRAPHS discovered in Burnham-on-Crouch recall the days when the town used its skills to help the national war effort during the First World War.

Sail makers T.T. Nethercoat had a small business in the town before World War I, operating from what is now the site of the Royal Corinthian Yacht Club. When war came, troops needed shelter and water and Nethercoats soon had Government contracts to make tents, sleeping bags and canvas buckets for the armed forces.

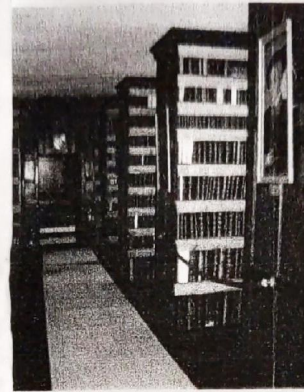
As the fighting increased, so did the work and Mr Nethercoat soon needed more working space, more machines and more capital to cope with the ever increasing orders. Two well-known yachtsmen who frequently visited the town, Warwick Brooks and Captain R Tyrell, became his partners. New workshops were erected and the undertaking mushroomed, the number of employees rocketing from an initial 12 or so to 400.

Extra work was carried out by townspeople in their own homes. With husbands and older sons away on active service, this homework provided a very welcome extra income for many housewives. The work called for a good deal of rope splicing and with so many watermen - all experts in the art - to call upon, it could not have been given to a more fitting town. Fifty were engaged on this task alone, producing among other things bucket handles by the thousand. Others worked in the cutting and despatching departments. The workforce included 200 female sewing-machinists.

Local haulier J W Cooke was given the contract to transport raw materials from the railway station to the factory, and to take the finished goods back again. He had two or three men, each with a horse-drawn trolley, regularly employed.

This article first appeared in Essex Countryside in November 1985 to whom all due acknowledgement is made.

Photograph by Derek Argent from original by courtesy of Tom Nethercoat Junior.



The Plume Library

Isn't it always the same? - you wait months for a contribution to this magazine and then two come along at once, both about the same subject!

Fortunately, in this case, the items cover different aspects of Plume Library and so compliment each other that it is well worth while printing both.

My thanks to the authors, Colin Pryke and Charles Middleton.

Thomas Plume's Other Benefaction

By Colin Pryke

An article in the Winter 2007 issue of *Penny Farthing* recorded Thomas Plume's endowment of the Plumian Chair of Astronomy at Cambridge University. Another great benefaction, much more relevant to his birth place, Maldon, was the Plume Library. This important collection of some 9,000 books and pamphlets consists principally of his personal library which he wished to preserve for the benefit of future scholars and clergymen.

His father was a wealthy alderman of Maldon. Thomas was born in the town in 1630, educated at King Edward VI Grammar School, Chelmsford, then graduated from Christ's College, Cambridge. He was appointed Vicar of Greenwich in 1658 and Archdeacon of Rochester in 1679, probably under the patronage of his friend and mentor Dr John Hackett, Bishop of Lincoln.

Thus Thomas Plume was a highly educated and successful Anglican cleric. We know from his diaries that he impressed both Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn with his sermons. However he was a self-effacing personality, never publishing any of his own writing. Even his tombstone in Longfield, Kent, recording his death in 1704, at his express wish, does not record his name, nor did he wish his portrait to be displayed in the Library. But his charitable legacies ensure that he is not forgotten.

How did he amass this major asset? He probably founded his collection during his years of academic study, inherited some from his father, Alderman Thomas Plume, and subsequently expanded by purchase, mainly second-hand, from the London booksellers in Fleet Street and St Paul's Churchyard, and auctioneers in the Lloyds coffee-houses. He had first become involved as a collector when acting as agent for Dr Hackett, visiting London to buy new second hand on his behalf. Over his lifetime he built up his own catholic collection, a personal wikipedia reflecting mainly his own interests - religion, natural philosophy, English and European history, chemistry, medicine, physics, mathematics, practical mechanics and of course astronomy. No Shakespeare or Marlow, but Chaucer, and Greek and Latin classics.

Preserving the Past

By Charles Middleton

Later in his life, he formed the idea of creating a permanent home for his growing library in the derelict remains of St Peters church at the top of Market Hill, Maldon. He personally paid for the conservation of the tower and rebuilt the nave very much as it is today. Maldon Grammar School occupied the ground floor, with his library on the upper floor. Today the library remains housed as it was 300 years ago with the same access via the narrow spiral staircase.

Thomas Plume died in 1704, and by his will bequeathed the contents of his library, together with an endowment, used initially to purchase a farm at Iltny, Mundon, for the benefit of the town of Maldon. After his death the whole of the library contents were packed into barrels at his home in Greenwich, transported by sea from there to Maldon Hythe, and then carted up the High Street to be unpacked and shelved more or less as they are today.

The terms of the will trust are very detailed. The Librarian was to be "a Scholar that knows books", at least a Master of Arts and a clerk in holy orders. He was to be paid a salary of £40 pa in addition to his salary as Master of the Grammar School, and be provided with a rent-free house, but he was required "to give two hundred pounds bond at least not to embezzle my books, nor lend them out without sufficient pawn to buy the same again". The library was to be open four hours every weekday, all borrowed books to be returned "uncorrupted", but only £1 per annum was allocated for buying new books!

The original bequest of some 7,400 books and pamphlets has been added to by the acquisition and purchase of 2,000 books mainly during the 18th century when it was a working daily library. Additions to the library are still being made, financed mostly by the Friends of Thomas Plume's Library, mainly with the intention of replacing volumes lost from the original collection over the years.

Today the library is in the care of the Trustees of Thomas Plume's Library. The original will trust was reconstituted in 1950 and the trustees now are:- ex officio the Rector of St Mary's, Maldon, the Vicar of All Saints, Maldon and the Head of Plume School; and six others appointed variously by the surrounding parishes of Heybridge, Mundon, Purleigh and Woodham Walter, plus Maldon Town Council and Essex County Council. They have the responsibility of ensuring that the collection is appropriately stored, conserved, catalogued and available to the public.

The Library is open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons 2-4pm and Saturday mornings 10-12am. The endowment funds are sufficient to finance the employment of a part-time librarian and support staff, but leaves little surplus for extensive conservation or acquisition. Following a special fund raising effort, the computerisation of the catalogue is well under way, so that it can be made available on the Web. In addition The Friends of Thomas Plume's Library organise various events during the year, with the aim of raising funds for the support of the work of the Library. Maldon District Council and the Town Councils also assist the Library.

All those associated with the Library are conscious of a rare and valuable inheritance, housed in Maldon for the use and benefit of current and future generations.

about three years ago, as a member of the Blackwater Decorative and Fine Art Society, I was one of a group who volunteered to dress the leather volumes housed at the Plume Library.

We were taught how to do this by the then Librarian. Unfortunately there were some problems that I believe involved training and insurance and so we were unable to continue as a group. However I was accepted by the Plume Library as a volunteer and became a "Friend".

As many of you are aware the books were the property of Dr Thomas Plume. He was born and baptised in Maldon in 1630 and was educated at King Edwards Grammar School in Chelmsford and at Christ's College, Cambridge. He was the vicar of Greenwich and later Archdeacon of Rochester.

When he died in 1704 he left his collection of books to the town of Maldon. It is said that when the books arrived at the quay they were packed in barrels and, when unpacked, they were put on shelves according to size rather than subject matter and have remained in their same places to this day.

It was a lending library for scholars right up until 1930 and during that time some of the books went missing and replacements have been sought by the friends. However, researchers and scholars are still welcome to research many of the books.

Dr Plume mostly purchased second-hand books, so much of the collection dates from the 16th and early 17th century with some as early as the 15th.

The present-day library consists of over 7,000 books. Many of these are theological but, as he was a scholar of some note, there are also books on philosophy, medicine, physics, mathematics and chemistry. As he founded the Chair of Astronomy at Cambridge many books on this subject are included.

The early books of this era consisted of paper sections that purchasers would have bound together according to their needs and taste. As virtually all books were bound in leather with some in vellum, over the years they dry out and the leather binding needs to be dressed in oil to preserve them. At the Plume use is made of a dressing which is a mixture of beeswax, lanolin and neetsfoot and this is applied sparingly to the binding with a lint-free cloth, taking care not to get it on the end papers or the pages. The dressing is produced locally at Layer Marney and is used by many of the major libraries.

So far I have managed to dress the volumes on one side of the library and have started on the opposite side. The question remains as to whether I will complete the task before age and the steps up to the library get the better of me?



Where do they all come from ...?

The visitors to the Maldon Museum, I mean. Committee Member, Judy Betteridge recently carried out a review of our patrons during one month last year. Whilst this brief survey should not be regarded as a definitive guide, it does throw up some interesting statistics and gives a good indication as to where they originate from.

In the month of August 2007 Maldon Museum received a total of 101 visitors. Of these only 22 came from Maldon and Heybridge, while 56 were from the rest of Essex and the remaining 23 as follows:

One each from Nairobi, Manchester, Holland, Canada, Glasgow, Cheshire, Leeds, Wiltshire, Lincolnshire, Scotland, Sussex, Belgium. With two each from Wales and Kent and three each from Suffolk and the USA.

Roughly speaking these figures mean that only a quarter of our visitors came from our own town - a somewhat depressing state of affairs. How do we encourage our friends and neighbours to support their local museum? I know for a fact many long-time residents of the town have never bothered to come and see what we have to offer, so how can we persuade them to learn about their local history?

Of course the above survey did not include those visitors who turn away once they find out there is a small charge to enter, or those who previously wanted to use our loo and got quite miffed when they were informed it was for staff and paying patrons only! I once had a lady with six grubby kids in tow all of whom expected to use our facilities before they went home after playing in the park. They had no intention of looking around our museum. Thank goodness for the new toilet block in the car park opposite to which we can now direct them with a clear conscience.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Thursday 4 September and Friday 5 September
Performance in Maldon Museum Courtyard
details from Jenny Sjollema, Maldon 853849.

Saturday 13 September and Sunday 14 September
Heritage Open Days
details from Maldon Tourist Information Centre.

October 4 to October 12
Maldon Art Trail
details from Rosie Sandler 01261 859263.

THE MUSEUM SHOP

By Liz Willsher

Following a visit to West Mersea Museum by Judy, Betty, Margaret and myself last summer, the seeds of a plan to install a new and larger shop area in our museum were sown. The success of their venture encouraged us to press ahead with the idea and make it happen in Maldon.

Much discussion followed on the relocation of our shop and some tough decisions had to be made - for example :- could we remove some of the pub area and strip the wall of the claret embossed wallpaper? ... So fondly remembered by our Chairman! Should we expect our busy carpenters, Charlie Middleton and Graham Reeves (known locally as the "Chippendales"), to erect shelving which we could possibly obtain from a local newsagent who was retiring? This particular idea had soon to be discarded as the shelving was not available. We then revisited the information passed to us by the helpful team at West Mersea and contacted the contractor Tom Colchester, who built their custom-made shop area.

Then down to the nitty gritty ... how much would it cost? By this time it was late November and we had a visit from the gentleman from Colchester to measure up and provide an estimate. We held our breath and the answer came ... around £500. The Committee agreed in principle to finance the provision of the shelving from Museum funds and the decision was made to proceed.

Now we had a stroke of luck! Judy Betteridge contacted an organisation called AIM (Association of Independent Museums) and on further investigation found that they might be a source of a useful grant to set up the shop. She swiftly organised membership for our Museum and set about applying for a grant to cover our costs. We were thrilled to hear soon after that we had received our grant and more besides, as the organisation thought we should receive £1,500! This has enabled us to cover our set-up costs and purchase a good amount of new stock for the season ahead. One proviso from AIM is that they will receive a progress report from us in July and we will arrange to use the services of a retail consultant some time during the season. We are indebted to Judy for her hard work in arranging the grant which means that Museum funds remain largely untouched by the changes to the shop.

The installation was completed in January and I set about ordering new stock and rediscovering our existing supplies of souvenirs and books. During the last few weeks in March the items gradually arrived and the shop display was completed for Easter.

Expenditure to the end of the financial year 2007/08 on the shop equipment and its new stock totals £1,260. That includes a substantial outlay on mugs and teatowels, made especially for us and therefore requiring a large quantity to be purchased. To date sales total £411.55 for the period from the Easter opening to 10 May.

It has been a journey into the unknown, particularly the choice of new stock and its saleability. I have had worries about the purchase of 24 wobbly rubber crabs and hope the majority of them will be re-homed by the end of the season. If that doesn't happen some of my family will be receiving unusual Christmas presents this year!

So far the new shop seems to be a success - time will tell. It has been an interesting experience and I have learned a bit about pricing and display, mostly by trial and error. The visit from the retail consultant will be eagerly awaited.



Local Folk Law

All Saints' Church at Tolleshunt Knights claims an interesting if rather gruesome piece of folk law. Reputed to be buried within the wall of the church is a watchman who had his heart torn from his body by the Devil.

The story is that while digging a moat for a house in Devil's Wood a watchman was left on duty after the first day's work, though why anyone would be thought likely to steal a hole is not explained. During the night the Devil came and asked "Who is there?" The reply was "God and myself," and the Devil went away thwarted.

For three nights the Devil returned to ask the same question and he received the same reply, but on the fourth night the unfortunate watchman replied "Myself and God". The Devil immediately struck out with his claws and ripped out the poor man's heart for daring to place himself before God.

The Devil then threw a beam of light up the hill and said "Where this beam shall fall, there shall you build Barn Hall." (Which brave person had remained behind to hear his words is not clear). He then added that he would have the watchman's soul whether he was buried in church or churchyard, so his friends and neighbours had him buried in the church wall to cheat the Devil of his prize.

FRIENDS RE-UNITED



Following the articles in *Penny Farthing* (Spring 2006 and Winter 2007) regarding Maldon's Secret Army during the Second World War and about William Broom the only surviving member of that group, we received a phonecall regarding an old friend of his from before the war.

Mr Cliff Mayes, who now lives in Woodham Mortimer, once worked with William in the 1930's at one of the farms owned by Stanley Ratcliffe, and was anxious to contact his friend again after so many years. They have now been put in touch with each other and are hoping to meet soon to renew old memories from over 70 years' ago.

The Secret Army was created in the summer of 1940 when Britain was threatened with invasion. It comprised of volunteers who were intended to be our last line of defence and wage a guerilla war in the rear of German forces should they gain a foothold on our shores. This was essentially a suicide force with members having a life expectancy of two to three weeks, so volunteers can truly be described as potential heroes.

TIMES PAST



Following our item in the last issue of *Penny Farthing* highlighting events which happened fifty years ago this year, I thought readers might like to be reminded about events from 100 years ago, which you certainly missed the first time around.

1908

Steam power saw-mill at Sadd's timber yard, Heybridge, destroyed by fire.

London hosted the Olympic Games.

Herbert Asquith became Prime Minister of Britain with David Lloyd George as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

King Carlos I of Portugal and the crown prince were assassinated in Lisbon.

Union of South Africa established.

An earthquake in southern Calabria, Italy, killed 150,000.

Ford produced its first Model "T" motor car - 15 million were eventually sold.

Aeronaut Wilbur Wright managed to fly 30 miles in 40 minutes.

Leopold II transferred the Congo (his private possession since 1885) to Belgium.

Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame was published.

The Tiller Girls dance troupe appeared on stage for the first time.

Monet painted "The Ducal Palace, Venice".

Jacob Epstein's "Figures" for the British Medical Association Building in the Strand caused outrage.

Elgar composed his Symphony No 1 in A-flat, Op.55.

Bakelite (a forerunner of plastic) was invented by L H Baekeland in USA.

Jack Johnson became the first black world heavyweight boxing champion.

Fountain pens became popular.

Matisse coined the term "Cubism".

The external appearance of "The Swan Hotel" in Maldon High Street was extensively altered.

Maldon High Street Post Office (now closed) was built on a site previously destroyed by fire in 1892.

Maldon's oldest bank, the London & County Joint Stock Bank changed its name to London & County & Westminster Bank Ltd. (now NatWest).



IN MEMORIUM

Mrs Iris Harris

A life member of Maldon Museum, Mrs Harris died in New York on 11 March 2008 at the age of around 96 years. Mrs Harris had lived in New York for the past 60 years but had not taken up American Citizenship and for many years visited the UK for up to six months at a time each year. She was a close friend of Tony Tullet and about 11 years ago she asked Tony to pass on some money for a local charity. Tony suggested the Museum Association so Mrs Harris became a Life Member and the Museum benefited from a donation in excess of £1,000 at a time when funds were urgently needed. Mrs Harris never visited the Museum in the Park, but she very much enjoyed receiving her copy of *Penny Farthing* and learning of the latest developments.

George Ginn

In March 2008 George, a very senior member of the Museum Association, died at the age of 91. He had been a Borough Councillor for several years in the 1950's and was Mayor of the Borough of Maldon from 1959-60. He was also a Magistrate on the local bench from 1964 until 1986.

A local historian of note, he published privately studies of the local waterways and of Maldon High Street. He was a keen supporter of the museum and contributed articles to the *Penny Farthing*. His wisdom, experience of the administration and knowledge of the history of the town of Maldon will be sadly missed.

Miss Monica Bayley

Monica died on 28 September 2007, aged 86. She was born in Thaxted and became a teacher, holding a number of posts in Essex, including the headship of Mildmay School in Chelmsford, where she took a particular interest in children with impaired hearing.

However her interests went much wider than education and she devoted much of her time before and after retirement in researching the history of Thaxted and Maldon, which became her home. She wrote many articles for the *Friends of Chelmsford Museums* and for *Penny Farthing*. She also had a very keen interest in military history, particularly the First World War, and following her retirement became a volunteer at the Essex Regiment Museum for over 15 years. In addition she became a member of the Essex Branch of the Western Front Association and later its Chairman - she always insisted on being called *Chairman*. She played a leading part in ensuring that Driver Benjamin George Cobey, Royal Field Artillery, the forgotten hero of the action at Le Cateau was remembered in his home town, and due to her efforts, a plaque to his memory was unveiled in Maldon Museum in 2001.

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This advert appeared in the Essex Countryside magazine in 1964. Notice the price of these three-bedroomed properties - today it would not even cover the stamp duty.

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. 2009

| | | |
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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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