

THE PENNY



FARTHING

The Maldon District Museum Association Newsletter



BULLY FOR US

Bull Nose Morris visit Maldon Museum.
Story page 6

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

Sustainability is the buzz word of the moment and was the objective of the Grant obtained earlier this year from the Association of Independent Museums; the money going towards improvement of our Museum Shop. Whilst it is too early to produce exact figures the impression is that it has been very successful in increasing the income week by week and hence our sustainability. Certainly it has been much appreciated by young families going on to visit the Park who have joyfully purchased bubble blowing sets and rubber crabs to enhance their visit!

Older visitors have enjoyed choosing from the increased range of local books now on show. An innovation is the provision of two shelves of carefully selected second-hand books on local and regional topics, or on subjects related to the collection in some way.

This has proved popular and goes some way to replacing the late departed 'All Books' of Mill Road. A continuing supply of suitable books is needed to stock our shelves so if you have any surplus to requirements on your book shelf please let us know.

This summer the Museum has had visits from various groups including schools from South Woodham Ferrers and Epping, but perhaps the most exciting was the visit by the Essex and Hertfordshire group of the Bullnose Morris Club on Sunday 27 July when 14 vintage cars were on display on the drive outside arousing much interest for all Park visitors. This visit was organised by David and Dinah McMorland, who are both owners of a 1920s Bullnose Morris and Museum stewards. The Club very much enjoyed their visit and were particularly impressed by the special welcome display board which had been made by Liz Willsher.

It occurred to me that because of the limited amount of time to put this event together few members, other than some of our committee, knew of its happening. In the future it might be possible to produce an electronic News Letter to be sent to those members, who are interested and possess email facilities, giving notice of any such future visits. If you would like to receive such details please send a message to paddylacey@tiscali.co.uk and I shall see what can be done.

Best wishes for a splendid late Summer and Autumn! Do not forget our planned Autumn Events, including a performance in the Courtyard on 4th and 5th September, the Museum's participation for the first time in the Heritage Open Days on September 13th and 14th and in the Maldon Arts Trail between October 5th and 12th.

Penny Farthing is dependent upon your contribution.

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

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MALDON AND THE BOER WAR

By Stephen P Nunn



Almost every parish church in this country has some kind of memorial to local people who made the ultimate sacrifice during two World Wars. Twelfth century St. Mary's, overlooking Maldon's historic Hythe Quay, is no exception and contains a particularly fine, painted glass window by Pearce and Cutler, along with a brass, wall-mounted 'Roll of Honour' listing the men from the parish who died during the 1914-18 conflict. Just to the west of this is another similar brass plaque that commemorates a solitary soldier of an earlier campaign. Private Frederic John Soffe was killed in 1900 during the South African, or Boer War, as it has now come to be known.

War broke out between Great Britain and the South African Republic of the Transvaal, aided by the Orange Free State, in

October 1899, when Boer forces invaded Natal. The events of the war were recorded by a local Doctor, John Henry Salter, of Tolle-shunt D'Arcy, in his daily diary and the entries make fascinating reading. On the 8th January 1900, for instance, he wrote; "Met Colvin and officers of Suffolk Yeomanry talking of going to South Africa next week", and on the 1st March 1900 he simply stated; "Ladysmith relieved".

Britain suffered very heavy losses during the first six months of the war, but with the appointment of Lord Roberts as Commander-in-Chief and Lord Kitchener as Chief of Staff the tide turned. There was however, a desperate need to recruit more troops.

Sir Claude de Crespigny, landowner / sportsman of Champion Lodge, Great

Totham, had three sons serving in South Africa. His eldest, Lieutenant Claude de Crespigny, was at the front with the 2nd Life Guards, saw action at Kleinfontein, was severely wounded in the engagement at Poplar Grove and hospitalised at Blomfontein. Paul de Crespigny was with the 3rd Grenadier Guards and Vierville with the Imperial Yeomanry, under Colonel Paget.

Sir Claude and Lady de Crespigny even visited the battlefields themselves and their adventures are recorded in Sir Claude's fascinating autobiography 'Forty Years of a Sportsman's Life'. In the book he states that General Sir Evelyn Wood, VC GOB, visited Maldon and gave a speech to the 2nd Volunteer Battalion, Essex

Regiment and made a strong plea for recruits. A Lance-Corporal in that particular unit of volunteers was none other than Frederic Soffe, the soldier commemorated at St. Mary's.

Born in 1879, Frederic was the second son of John Robert and Annie Soffe of 5 London Road, Maldon. His father was the town's Clerk of the Peace, a Sidesman at St. Mary's and Superintendent of the Sunday School. Frederic also attended the church, helped at the Sunday School and was a member of the choir. He was in the St. John's Ambulance Brigade as well as being actively involved in the Temperance Movement.

Following Sir Evelyn's speech, he enlisted as a Private in the City of London Imperial Volunteers, or C.I.V., and was soon on active service in South Africa, primarily engaged in "Ambulance work". He must have cut quite a dash in the olive green uniform, grey-green slouch hat turned up on the left, brown leather equipment with tan strap over the left shoulder and black boots.

Eighteen other men from the 2nd Volunteer Battalion, natives of Maldon, Heybridge, Witham and Hatfield Peverel, also enlisted. These included the Commanding Officer - Captain Laurie, Lance-Sergt. Bate, Sergt. Everard and the unit's

Corporal - Robert J Soffe, Frederic's brother. Ten were gazetted to the Special Service Company, Essex Regiment, and the remainder joined Frederic in the Imperial Volunteers. The C.I.V. Contingent consisted of two companies of mounted infantry, an infantry battalion and a four-gun battery. Its original strength was 1,300 officers and men. Most Essex troops fought under Brigadier-General Stephenson and their performance in battle was described as "second to none".

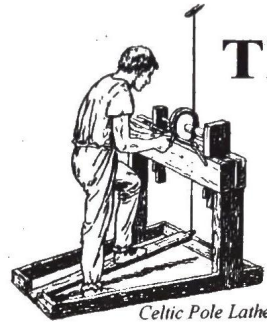
The war reached something of a crescendo during the opening months of 1900. On the 6th January the Boers attacked Ladysmith, Major-General French's cavalry division relieved Kimberley on the 15th February and Buller finally relieved Ladysmith thirteen days later on the 28th.

Victory was, however, costly and a staggering 24,000 men died during the struggle, 13,000 from enteric fever (typhoid) and other diseases. Amongst the fallen was Private Soffe. He died at Blomfentein, a station on the River Modder, captured by Lord Roberts and used as British Army Headquarters. A hospital was located there, the same hospital where Lieutenant de Crespigny was taken after Poplar Grove, and it could be that

Frederic Soffe died whilst being treated for disease or of wounds incurred at an earlier incident, as his death certainly did not coincide with the date of a major offensive. He entered into his rest on the 21st May 1900, ironically enough a public holiday in England to mark the Relief of Mafeking. Five months later the C.I.V. left South Africa and on the 29th October they paraded through London, battle weary and much fewer in numbers.

In Maldon, news of the death of this "widely known and popular" local lad "cast quite a gloom over the town". Parishioners at St Mary's and friends of Frederic Soffe erected a plaque to his memory and the choir presented a chair, dedicated to their colleague. Quite uniquely, he is also commemorated in the town's other church, All Saints. A further monument was erected there by the C.I.V. at the expense of the Regimental Fund. The elegant bronze tablet, bedecked in victory flags and crests, is headed with the Latin inscription "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" - ("There is no greater honour than to die for one's country"). A further fitting memorial to Maldon's Boer War hero, a brave soldier still remembered in his home town some 108 years after his death in a foreign land.

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Celtic Pole Lathe

We don't really know where the lathe came from or when, but turned wood has formed an important part of Maldon's heritage, not least as within our maritime ship-building industry. For centuries man has made things from wood and perhaps the lathe alone has been responsible for more beautiful things in both the home and places of worship than any other single tool.

The earliest illustration we have is from the tomb of Petosiris dating around 300 BC taken from a stone wall relief. Turned artefacts from as early as the 7th century BC have also been found in tombs. In England several turned objects were found during excavations of an Iron Age village at Glastonbury and it is known that they were able to turn sizable artefacts as well as hubs and wheel spokes.

The Romans were also familiar with the woodturning lathe and were adept at

TIME FOR TURNING

By Charles Middleton

making sophisticated furniture and lidded boxes and containers from boxwood.

Excavations at York produced evidence that woodturning played a significant part in everyday life which included the provision of domestic items and bowls. Part of a tool rest gives some indication what these lathes looked like. An early depiction of a pole lathe appears in a 13th century stained glass window in Chartres Cathedral.

In a Book of Trades published 1568 in Nuremberg there is a woodcut of a turner at work showing some items of his wares and him turning a bowling ball. The text translates as :- "The turner makes little jewel boxes of boxwood, cases, pulpits, bedposts, hammer handles, bowling pins, and mallets". Also shown in his shop are dishes, furniture legs, a flute and drinking flasks.

There is evidence of the lathe form being used in Asia over many centuries. The same basic principle was always used - which was the piece to be turned held between two spikes or nails which were placed into two posts.

In India one of the earliest forms of lathes can still be found which consists of two logs with spikes in them being placed on the ground, with the work in between them. An assistant would turn the work for the turner using either a strap or a bow to create a to and fro action.

A 1635 etching of a Dutch turner shows him using a pole lathe, whilst an illustration of one of the Buckinghamshire chair bodgers shows a turner using the same model of lathe in 1908. In fact the pole lathe is enjoying a renaissance and there is a Pole Lathe Turners Association which boasts several hundred members.

When the *Mary Rose* was discovered they found that most of the drinking vessels and plates were of turned wood and there is currently one professional pole lathe turner who is still reproducing them.

The first continuous drive lathe appeared in about 1500 and Leonardo da Vinci illustrated one he probably invented which was driven by a treadle connected to a crankshaft and flywheel. With the coming of the Industrial

cont ▶

Revolution lathes in factories were probably belt driven using whatever power, e.g. water wheel or steam. However the small independent turners continued to use a treadle-lathe and these were still in use less than a hundred years ago.

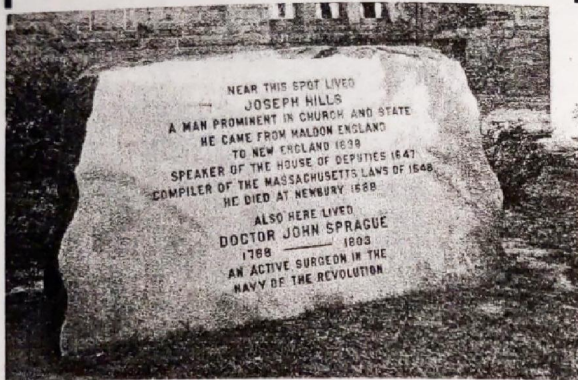
Demise of the Turner

Bakelite, plastic and other modern synthetic materials replaced ivory, bone, antler and wood, and changes in fashion and modern machinery which could mass produce items, ended the careers of most turners. A few remained, mainly involved in restoration work, but the skill has been revived in recent years by the amateur turners, more often like myself who retired with a reasonable pension and the expectation of many more years of active life.

As a hobby it is not only enjoyable but can pay for itself and I for one often get asked to turn bits for restoration, bowls, lace bobbins, pole ends for quilter's wall hangings and stage props. I once made a pipe for Old King Cole so I feel that warrants a "by Royal Appointment".

Woodturning has now become more of an art form and many turners are making Gallery pieces or, "That's nice, but what's it for?" items.

Local Boy Made Good



Joseph Hills was born in Great Bursted in 1602 where he married Rose Clark in 1624. He became a woollen-draper and moved with his family of four children, to Maldon around 1632. The family left the town in 1638 to seek their fortune overseas. Like many other emigrants from Essex he journeyed to America to settle in Massachusetts, then still a British colony, and became one of the first settlers of a new community known as Mystic Side after the nearby Mystic River, founded in 1640.

The craft still exists in Maldon with local turners such as Tony Page and Dennis Fisher whose work can be seen at the jam factory shops in both Heybridge and Tiptree. (Also of course our author Charles Middleton is a highly regarded turner. *Ed.*)

Definition

Turnery Shaping wood or ivory by means of a lathe.

Lathe Machine for shaping wood etc. By means of a rotating drive which turns the piece being worked against hand cutting tools.

Joseph prospered and became prominent in both the Church and the State. By 1645 he had become a deputy for Charlestown, near Boston, and two years later the speaker of the Massachusetts House of Deputies (1647), codifying the Laws of Massachusetts in 1648. He also made his influence felt in matters of defence.

Due to his distinguished service, when Mystic Side became incorporated in 1649 its name was changed to Malden in Joseph Hills honour.

He died at Newbury, Massachusetts, in 1688.

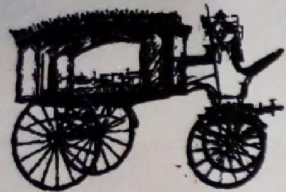
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Maldon Museum received a visit from the Essex Area branch of the Bull Nose Morris Club on Sunday 27 July. The visit was arranged by David McMorland who is both a member of the Club and a volunteer steward at our Museum on the Park.

On a beautiful sunny afternoon, fourteen cars dating from the 1920's to the early 1930's, were drawn up inside the park gates in front of our museum to be admired by the passing holiday makers and drew a number of additional visitors to the museum, making it a most successful day for us. The cars consisting of both Morris Cowleys and Oxfords ranged from the earliest vehicle, a 1924 two seater saloon, to a Doctor's Coupe.

To see so many vintage cars all together was a real spectacle and we thank all those who made it possible, particularly the Bull Nose Morris Club, their drivers, David MacMorland and the park rangers for their co-operation in putting this event together.



One Way Ticket

graves so that many churchyards actually contain the remains of more deceased than there is obvious space for. For instance the churchyard of St. Martin in the Fields is only 200 square feet, yet in the early 1840's it was estimated to contain the remains of between sixty and seventy thousand persons.

In an age when the problems of urban sanitation and public health were becoming a major concern, overcrowded burial grounds were seen as a serious threat. A pressure group, the National Society for the Abolition of Burial in Towns, was established in 1845 and in 1850 Parliament ordered the closure of the more crowded graveyards in London, and commissioned a search for new sites of sufficient size and splendour to serve the burial needs of the Metropolis for at least 500 years.

As a result a number of commercial cemeteries were authorised on the suburban fringes of London, including Kensal Green, West Norwood and Highgate. However even these were not enough to accommodate the demand and new sites had to be found.

The solution was the Brook-

wood Cemetery in Surrey which was created by the London Necropolis & Mausoleum Company. After incorporation by Royal Act of Parliament in 1852, the company acquired more than 2,000 acres of land from the Earl of Onslow, just 25 miles from the centre of London at Woking.

The spot chosen was an ideal one and it is hard to realise that central London is no more than 30 minutes by train.

Perhaps as a reaction to the crowded and unsightly burial grounds of London, every effort was made to ensure that Brookwood was beautiful, spacious and tranquil, and with typical extravagance some 500 acres of Surrey countryside was carefully landscaped, and a wealth of exotic trees and shrubs planted under the guidance of the leading gardeners from Kew. The area's natural charm has now been enhanced by those early plantings reaching full maturity, and there is perhaps no more restful cemetery in the world.

Of course the distance of 25 miles from London did constitute a problem as to how the deceased and the funeral parties were to be

transported to the new cemetery, and perhaps Brookwood would never have been considered had it not been for that marvel of the Victorian age - the railway!

Brookwood became the "cemetery railway" with special trains taking the deceased and mourners direct to the Cemetery. The service began from the very first day of Brookwood's opening on 13 November 1854. It ran on the railway company's main line from a private station adjacent to Waterloo Station, down to Surrey and on arrival at Brookwood the trains were reversed into the Cemetery grounds to either of two stations, one for the Non-conformist sections, the other for the Anglican areas.

To encourage the use of cemeteries outside London and other urban areas, the Railway Clearing House established a standard charge of one shilling per mile for the conveyance of corpses in 1859, and the Necropolis Company engaged the London & South Western Railway, (later the Southern Railway) for this purpose.

At first the funeral trains ran daily, but the Sunday service ceased in October 1900 and thereafter the service operated largely on an "as required" basis. The

service only stopped completely after the private London terminus was bombed in April 1941 and the track inside the Cemetery was removed in 1947.

It is from this Necropolis Special that the expression "one way ticket" is said to derive as the deceased would not need a return.

Brookwood Cemetery was consecrated by the Bishop of Winchester on 7 November 1854 and opened its doors to the public a week later.

Plots were reserved for use by parishes (eg: St Alban's Holborn) or by various guilds and organisations (eg: the Oddfellows' Society). The Cemetery also incorporates a Military Section which is run under the supervision of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, with each nation having its own special area which can be identified by their national monuments.

Perhaps the most impressive monument is the Brookwood memorial, unveiled by Queen Elizabeth II in 1958 in memory of the Allied war dead who have no known grave.

The Royal Chelsea Hospital for old soldiers had a special arrangement with the Necropolis Company to bury in-pensioners in a special area at a standard rate of £6 each.

The Cemetery is still in regular use and since 1854 over 235,000 people have been buried there. Among the more famous are Charles Bradlaugh (the first atheist Member of Parliament); Dr Charles Knox (one of the body snatchers Burke and Hare's best customers); the artist John Singer Sargent; and the writer Dame Rebecca West.

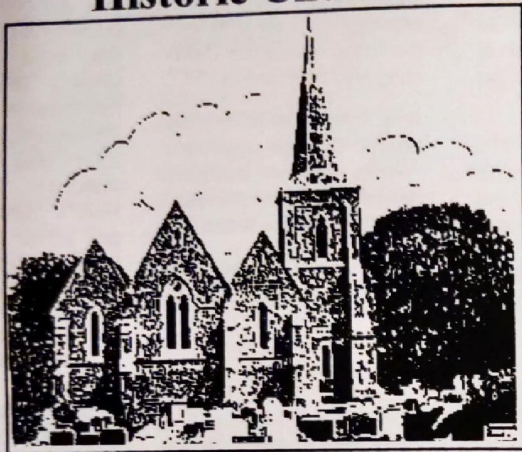
Among more recent burials is that of Dodi Fayed who was interred in a magnificent mausoleum but removed soon after because his resting place became a tourist attraction to the detriment of the serenity of the Cemetery.

Almost every nationality and religious denomination (or none) are buried at Brookwood and even the present owners are a Jewish and Muslim married couple. As the wife indicated on the television programme, "Everyone buried here gets on together. Why can't the rest of the world get on so well?"

As to Maldon's tenuous link with the Brookwood Cemetery? - Well *Penny Farthing's* editor's great grandfather, a trooper in the 10th Hussars and later a Chelsea Pensioner, was buried there in 1920 and there he rests to this day in his £6 grave.

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Historic Churches



St Mary the Virgin, Foulness Island

Although St Mary's is not a Maldon church it is one of the most interesting religious buildings in Essex due to its inaccessibility on Foulness Island, with very few people ever being allowed to go there. Foulness is owned by the Ministry of Defence and visitors can only enter the island with the MOD's prior permission.

The church is the only religious building on the island and stands on the site of earlier churches. Originally Foulness was divided among various mainland parishes and the island inhabitants attended their respective parish church on the mainland, but with the changing tides, no bridge and the use of the Broomway (causeway) being exceedingly dangerous, this was very difficult to do.

In the late 14th century Lady Joan de Bohun, Countess of Essex, obtained a licence from the Bishop of London to found a Chantry for a Chaplain to take services on Foulness. She also secured payment of church dues towards the upkeep of the chapel, which probably stood on the site of the present church.

In 1546 during the reign of Henry VIII the chantry was dissolved and the chapel and all its possessions, land and revenue were transferred to the Crown. Within three years Foulness became a separate ecclesiastical parish, the old chapel demolished, and a new timber framed church erected, dedicated to St Mary. By the early 1800's the timber-framed church was in a poor state of repair and in 1848 the parishioners pulled it down.

The present building was erected in 1850 with the parishioners funding 40% of the cost, aided by Trinity House on condition that the spire was large enough to be seen to be an aid to navigation. The population of the island at that time was about 640. The church was built in the early English style with a nave, two aisles, a chancel and of course, a spire of sufficient height to be of value to shipping. The organ was purchased from North Ockendon and installed in 1866. The church itself was consecrated in 1853. Inside it is quite plain with one small stained glass window in the north wall near the altar and a similar one in the south wall behind the choir stalls.

In 2000 the church needed considerable repair work with a lot of problems caused by rising damp. The one bell could no longer be rung because of the precarious state of the spire. Other bells had been sold to pay for the sea walls after flooding. In spite of these problems and only 200 parishioners on the island there were still regular services in the church with the vicar of Great Wakering then the Priest in Charge of Foulness.

From original research by members of Maldon U3A Local History Group (Autumn 2000) to whom due acknowledgement is made.

When I Was a Child

a long time ago now and many changes have taken place

The following article is taken from the notes for a talk given in 1985 by an unknown Maldonian

To begin with, there were two Railway Stations, both with good connections to London and Southend. Not only that a bus (albeit horse-drawn) met every train - carried passengers, luggage, newspapers, mail and parcels up Market Hill. This bus was owned by the Kings Head Hotel.

Market Hill was much more dangerous in those days as the angle of the bend was more acute, there being a little shop and a house right on the bend where the path is now. Felled trees for Sadd's wharf were chained to trailers, and until steam traction engines came into use, were hauled by horses. Shoe-shaped wedges were placed under trailer wheels to prevent the weight of the trees over-running the horses. Many times these trailers jack-knifed and many accidents occurred. Later when I attended school in Colchester the bus constantly got stuck on the bend of the hill and everyone had to get out and walk.

We children used to save our pocket money sometimes and walked to Beeleigh (it was safe to do so then). Over the humped-backed bridge by the Golf Course was a field where we picked marguerites, scabias, maidenhair fern and occasionally purple orchids to take home to Mother. This field was ploughed during the war and the flowers lost forever. At Langford we boarded the train to Maldon for a penny.

Maldon was a market town. It had a cattle market, incidentally the cattle pens at East Station were demolished by the first bomb to fall on Maldon in the 1914 War. As a market town, Maldon was allotted two Fairs, one in May and the other in September, also a Circus.

When the Circus came, schoolchildren's dinner-hour was halved so that they were allowed to leave school early to attend the special performance. You must remember there was very little entertainment then and the fairs and Circus were highlights.

A further highlight of the year was the Sunday School Treat. I speak of All Saints' as that was the one I knew. The Millers of the town loaned their flour wagons and lovely old shire horses to carry the children to Baddow Rodney for the day. We took sandwiches etc and there was a little kiosk there where we could buy ginger pop and lemonade.

After cricket, rounders, races and so on we were given buns and tea before our homeward journey. Although very tired we managed to sing all along the lanes. Do you know, I cannot remember a wet day!

Both my parents attended All Saints' School and in those days parents had to pay fourpence (2p) a week for each child. This could prove quite expensive for large families.

Scripture was high on the curriculum and examinations held and prizes awarded. We were taught to be observant and every day's page had to be headed with the date, temperature and wind direction. This was not as difficult as you might imagine - there was a very large thermometer on the wall of the Moot Hall and a weather vane on the Fire Station in London Road.

The Fire Station doors were level with the pavement and Maldon Museum was above. When the old fire engine was replaced it was found that the new engine would not go into the station. (Typical Maldon job). A new station had to be built way back where you see it today. (*since demolished and replaced by the new station on Wycke Hill. ed.*)

I have often wondered what happened to the exhibits from the Museum? I remember we schoolchildren being buttoned into fat Mr Bright's waistcoat but cannot now remember with accuracy how many.

With so many horses of course there were forges. The one in London Road was where the house 'The Forge' is now, and on our way to school we often stood watching the farrier shoeing a horse. Another forge was where Walter Blow's workshop is now; one opposite Bunting the butcher's in the High Street and a further forge at the corner of Mill Road / Mundon Road.

To be continued

The Battles of Mundon

By James Wentworth Day

A nostalgic look back at the area just 30 years ago.

This article first appeared in Essex Countryside magazine in 1976 to whom all due acknowledgements are made

South of the Blackwater Estuary with the North Sea bounding it on the east and the sea reaches of the Crouch to the south, lies one of the loneliest and least known areas of England, south of the Wash. It is the Dengie Hundred, "the isle of the Danes." true Viking country.

When Saxon kings sat on the throne of England this lonely land, much of it overflowed by the sea at high tides, was ruled by the jarls (chiefs) and thanes of Denmark and Norway. Their long ships, shield-hung with banked oars thrashing, sailed up the estuaries and creeks, the battle flags of Odin fluttering from their mast heads. They landed up all the coast from Benfleet to Maldon, Mersea Island and beyond, plundered, burned, raped and slaughtered. They left their marks indelible. You may see to this day the tall bony frames, the fresh complexions and golden hair of the Danes with, here and there, the high cheek bones and black hair of the Jutes.

After them came seamen from Brittany and Huguenots with Dutchmen and men of Belgic blood. Their names endure - Wymark, Thurgood, Wakelin, Kettle, Cant, D'Wit, Mussett (originally de Musset), Bohannon (originally de Bohun), Bouchier (both pure Norman), and Whybrow.

The Dutch drainer, Nicholas van Croyenborough, reclaimed most of this coast by building immense sea walls and cutting deep inland dykes. Families were scattered and lonely, forever at war with the cruel sea. They lived hard on the brink of drowning and starvation. Hence the farm names of Small-gains, Starveall, Hungry Hall and the like with Newlands and Freshfields to denote the later reclamations from the saltings. You may put what interpretation you like on those names of fantasy - Bitchhunters (probably witch-hunters for this was the land of witches, wizards and wise men), Old Shriil and New Shriil, Marks, Pakards, East Ware.

It was and still is, a land of big yeoman farmers, men of corn and cattle, of sheep and duck decoys. It was ideal smugglers' country - and still is here and there on a small scale. If you take an ordnance map, motor car and an inquiring mind with a pair of feet capable of walking many rough miles you can discover visions of lonely beauty. There are few or no public access roads from the inland villages of Tillingham, Dengie and Asheldham to the sea wall. Most of the roads are farm roads and therefore private. You must get out and walk. That is why

this lonely coast from Burnham-on-Crouch to Bradwell juxta Mare is still unspoiled, undeveloped and almost manless. It is a rare heritage.

This land of wide beauty, of corn and curlews, is dotted with Gray pubs which sell Abbot ale which makes a long walk worthwhile. Make your calling points the Huntsman and the Hounds on the Burnham road from Maldon, the Round Bush at Mundon, the Sun and Anchor at Steeple, the Royal Oak on the Fambridge road out in the fields beyond Maldon, the Three Horseshoes at Althorne, the Railway Hotel, large and Victorian in High Street, Southminster, the Victoria at Burnham on Crouch, the Queen's Head in Providence Road in Burnham on Crouch, the New Welcome Sailor in Burnham and The Fox and Hounds in the enchanting Square at Tillingham. There you have a galaxy of welcome and beer worth drinking. They are the keys to the countryside beyond, the land of mystery and autumn mists.

Let us start from Maldon, call in at the Royal Oak on the road to Fambridge, it sells beer from the barrel and has a bright cosmopolitan air. A lively place which attracts customers of all ages and classes, a pub which sits between country town and

open country. Then go on to the Round Bush which bears a medieval name, has a bright garden, an air of quiet welcome and is very much a country pub. It is on the road to the village of Mundon, old and unspoilt. Mundon I have known and loved for forty years. It has changed little. So far the sluttish fingers of the "developer" have left it more or less untouched. All this countryside is steeped in history. On the fields between the Round Bush and the Blackwater estuary the Vikings and Saxons fought on the first bloody day of the three-day battle of Maldon which settled the fate of England, before William the Conqueror swept over the land with fire and steel.

Mundon was a Saxon village with a Saxon name which means "the fortified mount". Before that it was an ancient British settlement probably as old as Stonehenge or Avebury, with, almost undoubtedly a Druidic grove of oaks and an altar facing the sun on which sacrifices of man and animals were made.

This grove lies behind Mundon Hall and Church. It can be seen from the little churchyard. Go no further. Five bulls roam that ancient field - one of them saw me off in a hurry.

Today the Mundon Hall estate of some 1,500 acres belongs to the Rowsell family who came up from Somerset just before the last world war and bought the place when it was in utter desolation. The grass marshes were flooded. The upland fields were rank and uncultivated. Ditches were choked. Rabbits swarmed. Mundon Hall, a tall white house of Tudor origin was neglected and mournful. New Hall, another farmhouse on the estate, clap-boarded and white painted was falling into ruin under the sea wall. Further along the rough marsh road, half-flooded stood the Red Brick House, built three centuries ago by the Dutch drainers. The crow-stepped gables are their trademark throughout East Anglia.

I had the shooting on the estate in those far off days of the 1930's, when I could ride all day on a 16 hand hunter Master Robert II and saw no living man but the shepherd. Thorn bushes grew so high on Seafields that even on a tall horse one could not see over the top of them. Horse and rider were swallowed in a jungle like the African bush.

That estate which had been owned and farmed by the Solly family for generations

was going begging on the market - a farmer's nightmare. No Essex farmer would touch it. Then along came the Rowsells whose ancestors had owned a big estate near Yeovil for centuries. They also farm in Sussex near Pulborough.

William and Edwin Rowsell, twin brothers, tall, broad-shouldered, burnt brown by sun and seawind with merry eyes, quiet voices and lion hearts. Both served in the Royal Navy during World War One and had their baptism of fire and blood.

When World War Two loomed like a thunder cloud, they decided to buy the worst farm in England and by sheer hard labour and hand and brain make it produce food to help feed this nation which, quite clearly would soon be on the verge of starvation.

They bought the ramshackle estate for a few pounds an acre. Then they set to work. Trees and bushes were uprooted. Ditches dug out, flood water run off. They worked day and night transforming the place.

I first met Edwin when I landed from my gunning punt and came over the sea wall with duck gun in hand. To my utter surprise a tractor was hard at work.

Cont page 13

As dusk came on it switched on a searchlight and went on working. I went across and introduced myself and told him that I had been shooting on the place for many years but if he was the new owner I had better keep off. He gave a slow smile, held out a brawny hand and said; "If you've been coming here all those years keep on coming. We shall get on together I can tell that." thus began a warm friendship which lasted to his death in 1975. He was a great gentleman, a true yeoman, an Englishman of oaken heart. And that goes for his brother William.

Soon after war broke out, I went off to France with the RAF and later transferred to minesweepers. I came back poisoned, crippled and partly paralysed. I decided that the back of a horse, Essex sea air and Gray's beer would be the best medicine. So I set off on a thousand mile ride through the eastern counties. The stopping points in Essex included the paternal village inns under the wing of Gray.

Then the Essex War Agricultural Executive Committee, which like other county committees, had almost absolute authority to evict bad farmers, take over their farms and put in whom they wished as tenants, cast greedy eyes on the 1,500 acres of Mundon Hall. After all the newcomers were "foreigners" from Sussex. They had no Essex roots, no inter-tribal relations which in rural areas strike deep and mean much. Moreover they had already done the hard and dirty work at Mundon.

The thorn and scrub had vanished, flood waters were shrinking and fields which had not grown corn for years were sown. Much remained to be done but there would be limitless public funds to finance any new tenant or tenants the committee might nominate, whether they were friends, relations or useful men to know in business. The Rowsells were told to get out.

Fortunately as an outcome of that thousand mile horse-backed survey of war time farming conditions, I had seen the endless petty feuds, nepotism, family favouritism, and a greed and extravagance which was flourishing in too many counties under the WAEC system. It cried out for public exposure. So in the *Daily Mail*, under the heading of "Little Hitlers on the Farm," I exposed it. The effect was electric.

Letters poured in to the editor by the sackful. The Minister of Agriculture asked for a withdrawal of the charges made. We refused.

Then came the threat to turn out the Rowsells. William Rowsell promptly dug a grave outside Mundon Hall where he erected a gallows and wrote to the Minister telling him that the first official who invaded the farms would be shot or hanged!

Edwin Rowsell and I went to the House of Commons and thrashed it all out with friends who were Members of Parliament. The Mundon Rebellion was in full swing.

The temper of the people was up. We held meetings with other farmers in the Round Bush, the Queens head at Tolleshunt D'Arcy and other Gray houses. Once again the village inns as in the days of the Peasants' Revolt, Wat Tyler and Joseph Arch, Victorian champion of the farm labourer, were the forums of local opinion and red-hot politics. Many a Gray house in those troubled times played a part in the revolution which we brought about within weeks.

I held a mass meeting at Colchester packed with farmers and others. Lord Beaverbrook who had given me my first job in journalism and was a close friend, rang and promised the full support of his newspapers. That weekend the Beaverbrook press went to town in a big way. The Ministry of Agriculture and its County Committee system were blasted, blistered and crucified. The proposed evictions at Mundon Hall and Brick House Farm were highlighted. The "fighting Rowsells" had given a lead to the rest of England.

Within 48 hours the minister, whom I knew, descended on Essex to hold a secret meeting in a country pub at Peldon - and panic measures were taken. The chief instigator of the evictions was quietly removed. In no time Land Tribunes were set up as Courts of Appeal - and it all started at Mundon. The Round Bush played its quiet part.

Now when you go to that cosy unassuming little pub which has heard its fair share of smuggling exploits, reflect not only on these things but on the great moats which surround the pre-historic site of the original Mundon village. It is one of those dim mysteries in which the English countryside is quietly rich.

There is a moat round most of the present hall and farm buildings. Another moat which bounds the Herons' Wood to the south is 150 yards long and about 20 feet wide, but it does not connect with a main eastern moat. Westward in that park-like pasture of old oaks lie other shallow depressions which seem to suggest that once upon a time here also was a moat. So altogether you have an area of something like 14% acres all of which was at one time wholly or partly enclosed by moats. Inside that moated area lies the house and the church, and that says the Royal Commission, is part 14th century with a font which was made in about 1200AD and a bit of a coffin lid that is about as old. But these are mere children in age compared to the moats.

Who then lived within these wide moats, and who for that matter planted those ancient trees, so old and so twisted, hollow and gnarled, that they belong to Hans Andersen, to the days of the Druids? And, indeed, this may be the remains of a Druidic wood, for does it not

★ FORTHCOMING EVENTS

There will be performances in Maldon Museum Courtyard on the evenings of 4th and 5th September at 6.30pm by the MAC Theatre Group entitled "Elimination of Drudgery!" tickets £5 available from the Tourist Information Centre.

★
Heritage Open Days - The Museum will be open to all on September 13th and 14th.

★
The Maldon Art Trail from October 5th to October 12th. The Museum will be displaying works by John Osborne, who is a professional artist living in North Farnbridge and who is a Life Member of the MDMA.

★
Stewards' End of Season Gathering at the Octagon, St Mary's Church. Wednesday 12th November 2pm - 5pm

lie to the east, towards which at the rising of the sun, the arch Druids lifted their skinny arms and poured out their sacrifices of blood on altars of stone beneath the leaves of oak and mistletoe.

Was there not a Saxon village, perhaps a far earlier one, of Ancient Britain within this great moated site? Lieutenant-Colonel AR Solly, no mean archaeologist, believes there was. He believes that in far-off days Mundon Wash, now a mere brook running through low fields, was a tidal creek; Mundon Creek was all salt water and deep marsh; and Mundon Fleet, that great freshwater lagoon within the sea wall which they have drained only in the last few years, was also a tidal creek.

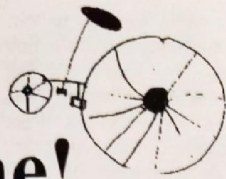
Then indeed says Lieut-Col Solly, this moated village of Mundon may well have been a strong defensive point to which the skin-clad villagers of that peninsula could retire when raiders sailed up the creek.

It is a most likely theory, a fascinating thought and like all history up this Essex coast full of tantalising possibilities.

Mundon has had its two rounding battles - the Vikings won the first, the Rowsells won the second. Since then the Mundon Estate has won the Blue Ribbon Award for top quality wheat when samples competed for the Toronto Cup in Canada



Awesome!



Awesome (sic). That is the verdict on Maldon Museum by one of the pupils from All Saints' School who visited us earlier this year. After their visit we received 49 letters of thanks and appreciation, all adorned with drawings of the exhibits they enjoyed most. Naturally the "Fat Man of Maldon's" waistcoat created the most interest closely followed by the fire engine and the Penny Farthing bicycle. The more ghoulish children enjoyed seeing the mummified hand although one said it was disgusting.

Many of the children commented on the Victorian Room and the old school room, particularly the pictures and old desk from All Saints' School. One pupil liked the railway layout while another was most interested in the model of Green's Mill because his father used to work there.

The comments in the letters were all very appreciative even if the spelling is sometimes erratic and it is obvious that All Saints' pupils really enjoyed themselves, and for our part it was a pleasure having them. We hope the school will choose to visit us again next year.

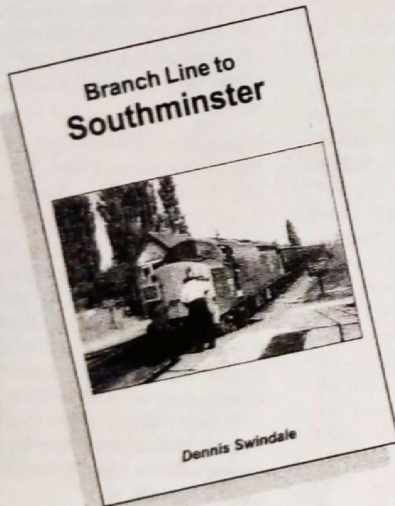
Branch Line to Southminster

by Dennis Swindale

A third edition of this popular companion volume to *Branch Lines to Maldon* has recently been published by EARM Publications. This brings the history of the line, which unlike the Maldon line, still operates with through trains to Liverpool Street at peak times, up to December 2007.

It contains many new photographs including several in colour. The booklet is available from the Maldon Museum Shop priced at a very reasonable £4.95p.

The photograph on the cover is of a Class 37 diesel locomotive, then numbered 6729 on a Southminster to Mile End gravel train. The crew are about to exchange tokens with the signalman at Farnbridge on 9th September 1971. (Photo by G.R. Mortimer).



TIMES PAST



Here are a few local and world-wide news items from a hundred and fifty years ago, which you may have missed the first time around!

1858

Fifteen people (six from the same family) died at Heybridge from eating contaminated shellfish

Felice Orsini attempted to assassinate Napoleon III

Minnesota became a US state

The Conservative Lord Derby became Prime Minister

The site formally occupied by three shops in front of All Saints' Church, Maldon High Street, was given to the church

The Virgin Mary was reputed to have appeared to Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes

Lionel Rothschild became the first Jewish Member of Parliament

William Frith painted his famous "Derby Day" picture

Russia began developing its Far Eastern territories and founded Vladivostok

Lake Tanganyika and Lake Victoria discovered by Richard Burton and John Speke

Joseph Lister studied the coagulation of blood

"The Chelmer Brig" public house at Heybridge Basin was partly demolished and the remainder is now a private house

British Crown took control of India from East India Company following the Indian Mutiny

In London the first meeting of the General Medical Council took place

London was estimated to have 80,000 prostitutes (one in every 16 women in the capital)

Ottawa became the capital of Canada

The S.S. "Great Eastern", the largest ship of her time displacing 27,000 tons, was launched



A CENTURY NOT OUT

E. Barritt who was also the President of the Club. He said bowls was a game which specially appealed to those who were too old for cricket, tennis and other similar pastimes. The report went on to add that the "club owes its inception to the good offices of Dr Frank Rowntree who took the initiative in starting it".

The new green was situated in London Road at the rear of number 17 and adjoined the garden of the County Court House.

The earliest surviving club minutes are dated 12 May 1915 and, reflecting the mood of support for "our boys" in the Great War, included a proposition allowing Territorial soldiers to join the club for a reduced subscription of 5/- or 6d per day.

By 1927 the club was leasing out part of its ground near the green to Maldon School for a school garden.

One well known member of the club throughout the 1920's to 1940's was James Herbert (Bert) Gower who,

when he was just 14, had lost an arm working at Bentalls. This disability did not prevent him enjoying several sports, playing football for Heybridge and even managing a regular game of cricket.

Maldon Bowls Club continued to grow and in 1948 the Council agreed to build a new bowling green on its present site in Promenade Park. However, due to protracted discussions regarding the Council's desire to create a public bowling green with the Club being only allowed to rent three rinks at certain times of the week, the move was not made until May 1952.

The new green consisted of six rinks, but it was not until 1959 that the first pavilion was erected on site. This was a very basic structure without toilets, changing rooms, doors or windows and the Club members had to raise the necessary finances and provide the labour to gradually expand and improve the facilities. In spite of their paying for these improvements the Council continued to raise the Club's rent

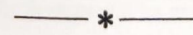
and this caused some friction as they were almost the sole source of income from the site, yet only had part use of the rinks.

The Council had wanted a public bowling green, yet was able to raise only a fraction of its maintenance costs from the public, expecting the Bowls Club to provide the rest. Being reminded that many of the Club members were pensioners cut little ice with the Council, one member remarking tartly that they were perhaps "retired oil men or something"!

In spite of these difficulties the Club has continued to raise money for the improvement of the club house facilities up to the present day.

In 1958 the Club made a specific effort to recruit more lady members to enable the Ladies to be affiliated to the Essex County Women's Bowls Association which they achieved two years later. Yet by 1966 Club membership stood at 51 men and only 6 ladies and approximately half the males were of pensionable age.

After a century the Maldon Bowls Club continues to prosper - here's to their next one hundred years



Golly, Goss Maldon immortalised in porcelain

In recent years enthusiasts have been eagerly scouring antique shops, bric-a-brac stalls and boot fairs for small pieces of crested porcelain. What were once cheap holiday souvenirs have become highly collectable among hobbyists with the most desirable pieces being produced by W. H. Goss. Many homes still have some of these items stuck at the back of the china cupboard without realising their potential worth to a collector.

When people began to be able to take holidays in the late 1880's, a demand arose for inexpensive souvenirs to remind them of their vacation or as gifts for friends and relatives. They felt it was important to bring back a memento or as proof of their visit, but they wanted something more permanent than a stick of rock or a box of fudge. The Goss company of Stoke on Trent recognised this potential market and began producing small porcelain items such as pots, jugs, buildings, famous figurines etc., each embellished with the coat of arms of the locality where it was to be sold.

Although there were other manufacturers of such keepsakes, Goss is the most collectable because of its superior quality and its range of subjects. In spite of cheaper competition they refused to lower standards and would not allow any imperfect piece to leave their premises. This attention to detail and their sober, classical designs appealed to the middle class Victorian. By clever marketing Goss established agencies in almost every town in Britain and gained permission from the relevant local authorities to reproduce their coat of arms on its china - there were over 1,000 such agencies by 1906.

Transfers of the coat of arms could be applied to any of the hundreds of the porcelain designs that a local agent felt he could sell. The same porcelain item, suitably re-crested, could be sold in any town across the country. However, as each crested item was only obtainable in the area for which it was produced, collectors had to travel from town to town to enlarge their collection.

During the First World War, Goss like other companies brought out a range of military items including shells, tanks, machine guns, motor cyclists etc and these are very collectable. One of the more unusual and rare "war" items is the Maldon Incendiary Bomb bearing the town's coat of arms, to commemorate the Zeppelin attack on the town in 1915. This porcelain piece is shaped like the unexploded bomb discovered after the raid and it would be wonderful to acquire one of these for the museum - so please have a look in the back of your china cabinet, who knows you may be lucky!

A Maldon Mother's Letter to her Children - 1822

The following letter of advice and instruction, now preserved at the Essex Records Office, was written by Mary Bentall to her children, Edward, Mary, Lydia, Susannah, and Rebecca, on 21 October. A later postscript notes that "this was written previous to my confinement which occurred on November 27 1822 of a boy - William Rufus Bentall".
Spelling and punctuation as per the original.

Likely my Dear Boy before you see these lines the mind that directs will have done with earthly concerns. and your Mother will be laid in the cold and silent tomb. I am perswaded you would be very sorry if it were the case, and at your early period of life (now eight years old) my heart Bleeds. at the thought on your and Dear Sisters account. but if it should be the will of providence. nature cannot help feeling most poignantly for you my Dear Children my mind revolts at the many Troubles and Sorrows you will have to encounter. God alone can provide for your Body and Souls. the Soul which is of inestimable value which will live when the Body is long ago mouldered to Dust. O my Children: Edward, Mary, Lydia, Susannah and Rebecca I hope the almighty will impress upon your mind the importance of Religion. Read the word of God with Seriousness and pray for a Blessing upon what you Read.

Never upon a Sabbath day suffer yourselves to enter a place of worship but with fear and reverence knowing that God always sees you. I charge you all to honour and obey your Father. mitigate his

trouble and sorrow all you can. your father and me have had a Sea of Trouble to weather through; God only knows how sincerely I have endeavoured to promote his and Family Interest. it grieves and pains me much the thought of parting with you My Dear Children at your Tender years. the Oldest eight the youngest 1½ years. I charge you all to behave with respect to all your relatives. even if they are unkind to you. I leave it as the greatest injunction I can upon you all. never upon any consideration whatever do enter into a connection with a mixed family. I found by experience a Shipwreck it has been to me. I therefore warn you all of it and beg you will take heed. O my Dear Edward be truly kind and affectionate to your Dear and lovely Sisters. without a mother only think what a trying case. They, like you, know nothing of the many Temptations they are and will be exposed too in this wicked world a trying heart rending scene awaits you all may God have Mercy upon you all and take you under his Special care. Put your whole trust in God. he alone can support and Bless you. pray in and through the Blood of

Jesus Christ. Put trust in no one. trust only in God for Salvation and help in time of need. my journey the Life has been a Trying one my Father Died when I was four years old. but thank God I had a good Mother. I lost your two Brothers very young which was a great trial to me ...

now my Dear Children all that I have in this World I leave to you equally. endeavour to gain useful knowledge keep above the vanity of this Life appice (?) by the strictest Honesty and Industry even hard Labour to gain an honest lively hood help one another all you can for your property (even if you have your right) must (?) be very circumscribed therefore in all your Dealings and ways be very circumspect and acknowledge God as to the giver of all Good. O that you may be learnt my Dear Children by the Spirit of the ever Blessed Jesus. to shun the Walks of Sin and Wickedness which leads to that place of misery where hope never comes. Pray for an interest in the (*page possibly missing here*) Precious Blood of our once Dying. but now exalted Lord.

Your affectionate Mother through Life and in Death Mary Bentall



ST. CEDD'S CHATLINE

By Liz Willsher

When I set about writing this Chatline I had to double-check the last *Penny Farthing* to convince myself that this was, in fact, for the Autumn edition. I couldn't recall experiencing the summer except for the last week in July when temperatures suddenly soared to a more seasonal level.

During the last few months the St Cedd's team have met regularly on a Monday afternoon for routine tasks and to plan displays for next season ... yes, already! We have also received some interesting donations, some of which went on immediate display. These include a Maldon Grammar school cap which has twice crossed the Atlantic with its previous owner Ian Haste who emigrated to Canada with his wife Josephine in the early 1960's. It is now on display in our museum's Maldon childhood room. Whilst looking round the display in that room, a keen eye may spot a beer bottle poking out of the schoolboy's blazer pocket. A "micro-brewery" at the rear of the Blue Boar hotel has brewed a special beer for the 400 years of the Maldon Grammar / Plume celebrations. To save the schoolboy trouble from an adult the St Cedd's team had to devour the contents of the bottle ... and very nice it was too!

On a topical note, as the Carnival week has just ended and we are planning a new display which will include memories of past carnivals, some most interesting photographs have just come into our hands. Mrs Zoe Saffill (nee Thorogood), who spent her childhood in St Mary's Lane in Maldon, has donated a group of excellent photographs showing some of the carnival celebrations from the 1930's to 1950's, and some football team line-ups, including a very glamorous ladies team. Mrs Saffill's husband Dennis was the captain of the Maldon Town team who were the winners of the Essex Junior cup in 1947/48. Interestingly, Mrs Saffill's childhood friend was the daughter of Mr Waldock, who at the time was the park keeper and lived with his family in Prom Lodge, now the home of our Museum.

Finally to complete our snapshot of local life and events, we have received hairdressing equipment from our vice president Betty Chittenden's hairdresser and also some carnival programmes from herself. A clothes brush bearing the John Sadd & Sons name on its wooden handle has come our way via the Colchester Museum service.

It is always very satisfying to receive items with a strong local connection and spanning several generations as it sets us off on a quest to remember names and events - good for the grey matter. If possible, when donating photographs, it is really helpful if details of the subjects shown can be identified on the back or on a separate list. All too often family groups and even wedding couples have to remain anonymous in our files.

We are always pleased to receive offers of donations (monetary or material!) to the Museum but have to be rather choosy due to lack of storage space. Fortunately most of the items we have seen lately have good display potential and will fit very nicely in future exhibitions. We hope that you can share some of them with us on your next visit to the museum, in the current year or next season. Remember members can visit the museum as many times as they wish, but please bring a friend along as well.

Unfortunately Autumn will soon become a reality, but here's hoping that the last 3 months of the season will be as successful and rewarding as the preceding ones.

Stop Press News from the Past

Chelmsford Chronicle of 10 September 1779

A correspondent informs us that a few days since a large smuggling vessel passed through Burnham river to Hullbridge, where she unloaded her cargo; she mounted six carriage guns and 18 men, had on board 1,700 halves, and a large quantity of dry goods; since then carts and horses have frequently been seen passing through Danbury, Chelmsford, &c., &c., loaded with goods. The Maldon custom house officers had a skirmish with some of the smugglers, but they proved too strong for them. - We hear one of the smugglers is since dead from a wound he received in the skirmish.

A PINCH OF SALT

The following letter appeared in the *Essex Countryside* in 1977

An article which appeared in the *Essex Countryside* by Dr Peter Tooley (September 1975) stated that "The Maldon Crystal Salt works was set up by Mr T Bland in 1882 on the site of the dwindling business founded by Heybridge salt maker, Robert Worraker some 50 years previous."

Records which I have indicate that the history of the Maldon Salt Works goes back considerably farther than stated by Dr Tooley. Records show that the Maldon Salt Works was founded by my direct ancestor, Robert Worraker who came from Northey Island in 1777 and founded the salt works in Maldon (Ref. *Essex Directory of 1793*).

Robert died in 1826 and left his estate to his son Robert. Our next records show T Worraker, proprietor of Maldon Salt Works, Butt Lane (Ref. *Kelly's Directory, 1848*). This is followed by William and Frederick Worraker as proprietors (Ref. *Kelly's Directory, 1874*).

Readers may be interested in knowing that the undersigned, Richard W Worraker is the only grandson of the late William Worraker who together with his brother Frederick were the last of the Worraker family to own the Maldon Salt Works.

My grandfather William died at an early age and his brother, Frederick, later sold the business due to ill-health, presumably to Mr Bland in 1882 as mentioned by Dr Tooley. Frederick left no male descendants. As I have no male heir it would appear that the direct line of the Worraker family who created the salt works in 1777 will terminate with my demise.

My late father had a very special place in his heart for Maldon and I recall many of his stories about his life as a young lad, during the years when his grandfather and later his father and uncle operated the salt works.

Richard W Worraker
Canada. 1977

HOW WELL WE KNOW THE FEELING

An article in the West Somerset Free Press about the reopening of a museum states:

"Winter has enabled us to get on with a lot of the tasks that can't be done in the winter," said chairman Stephen Clark.

Advertisements from the 1970's

How many of the Maldon advertisers below do you remember. They appeared in the *All Saints' With St Peter's Parish* magazine published in December of 1970.

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Registered Charity 301362

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Mrs B Chittenden

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<i>Committee</i>	<i>Liz Willsher</i>	

Curatorial Adviser *Nick Wickenden Esq*

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

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