

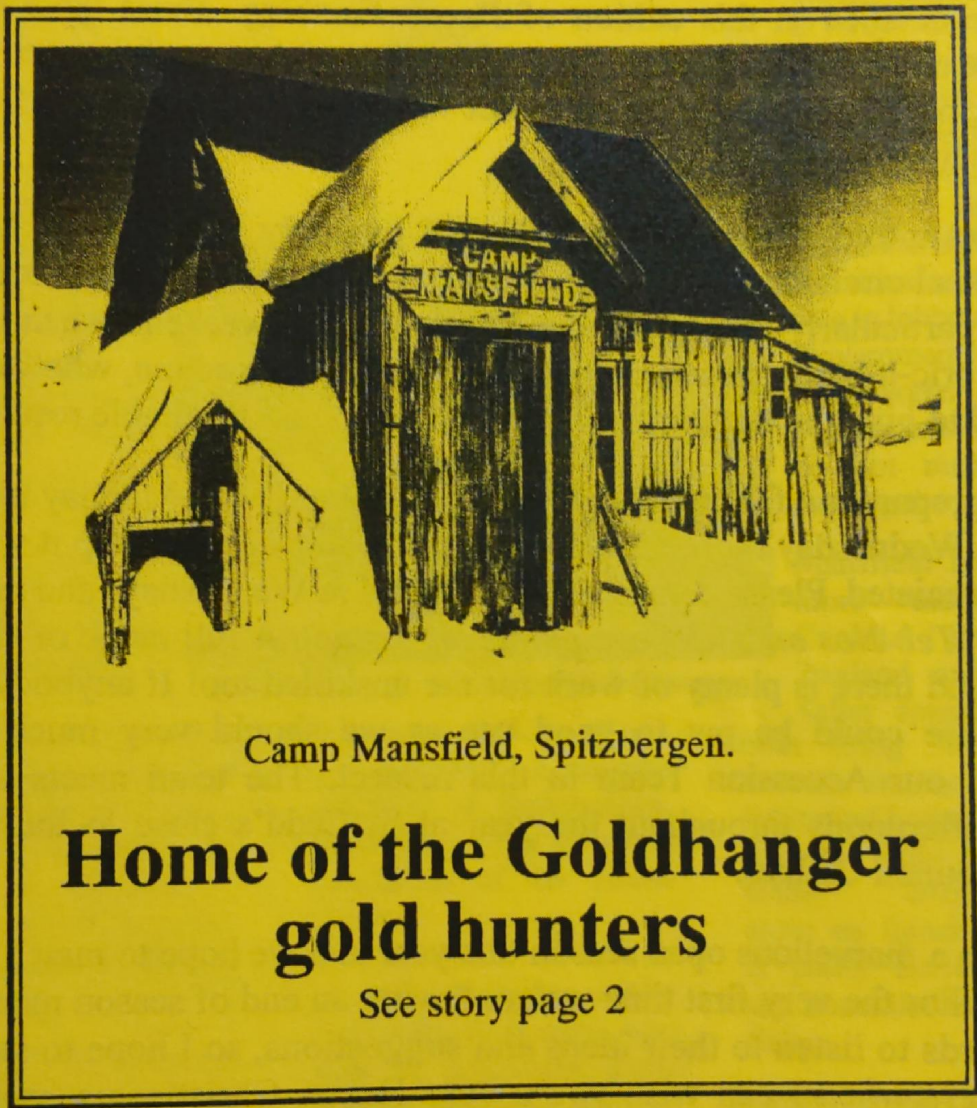
THE PENNY



FARTHING



The Maldon District Museum Association Newsletter



Camp Mansfield, Spitzbergen.

Home of the Goldhanger gold hunters

See story page 2

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

We certainly have had a busy Autumn with three extra events at the Museum which are detailed in this edition of *Penny Farthing*. These have kept all committee members very busy at one or another of them and the stewards on their toes, never knowing what to expect when they came in for duty. A big thank you to all concerned.

Each event introduced people, who would probably not visit the Museum under normal circumstances, and they all appeared to enjoy what they found. This was particularly true of the wonderful Heritage weekend when the very attractive bric-a-brac stall tempted people over in our direction, who were then persuaded to give the Museum a try with pleasing and profitable results.

Now the preparation for 2009 begins with work parties on Monday mornings and some Wednesday mornings. If you are able to offer any help it would be much appreciated. Please contact Christine Steel re Wednesdays and myself re Mondays (*Tel. Nos on back page of this magazine*). A full range of skills are required and there is plenty of work for the unskilled too! If anybody has IT talents these could be put to good use as we should very much like to strengthen our Accession Team in this respect. The team meets on most Monday afternoons throughout the year at St Cedd's close to the Maldon District Council Offices.

It has been a marvellous open season this year and we hope to match it again next year. For the very first time we are having an end of season meeting for our stewards to listen to their ideas and suggestions, so I hope to see many of you there when I can wish you a very Happy Christmas season and a successful 2009 in person, but I must now send them to all our members and supporters without whom we could not continue.

Thank you everybody!

Paddy Lacey

Penny Farthing is dependent upon your contribution.

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

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Last Date for copy for Spring Issue 14 February

The Gold Hunters of Goldhanger

From information provided by David Newman

In the 1900's an unlikely group of Goldhanger residents decided to become prospectors and head for the frozen north in search of gold. Amid their adventures they created a million pounds' fortune, played a part in Marconi's very early radio communications network, met Ernest Shackleton, experienced shipwreck, and became involved in covert espionage.



Charles Mann seated 2nd left at Spitzbergen

The three most improbable moving spirits entangled in these extraordinary events, which are as full of romance as Stevenson's "Treasure Island", were the local parson, the doctor and a musician!

Previously the greatest excitements experienced by the leader of the group, the Rev. Frederick Gardner, had consisted of wedding, Christening and burial services. The Rev. Gardener was Rector of Goldhanger and Little Totham, who despite suffering from motor neurone disease, decided

To explore and exploit a newly discovered goldfield at Spitzbergen, an Island in the far north desolation of the Arctic Circle.

Probably funded in part by his brother Humphrey, who held an important position in Barclays Bank at that time, the Rev. Gardner assembled a group of like-minded adventurers, principal among whom were Dr Salter, the General Practitioner for Tolleshunt D'Arcy and Ernest Mansfield, a musician, "professional miner and prospector" who lived for a

while in both Goldhanger and Tolleshunt D'Arcy. Dr Salter is particularly noted for his famous diaries which were later published, in which he described in detail Rev. Gardner and Mansfield's activities and his own role in lobbying the UK Government to claim Spitzbergen as a UK colony, although they do not mention him making the journey.

Mansfield had been a mine manager in Canada and New Zealand and he and Salter appear to have both being Master Freemasons in the Kelvedon Easterford Lodge. Mansfield was to write two books while "over-wintering" alone on Spitzbergen. One is partly autobiographical and has a dedication to Dr. Salter.

Other members of the group included Charles Mann, the Goldhanger wheelwright, builder and undertaker and later landlord of the Chequers Inn, who was sent out as the party's builder and carpenter. He was accompanied by George Alexander, a familiar name

in Goldhanger whose family were associated with both the Wesleyan Chapel and the Bird-in-Hand ale-house.

John Buckingham was the Rev. Gardner's gardener and the first Goldhanger bell tower captain. His role in the expedition was that of general handyman and Rev. Gardner's attendant.

Another member of the party was John Ellis from Heybridge Basin, a sailor who became shipwrecked near Spitzbergen in his yacht "The White Fox", which had probably been commissioned for the trip by the Rev. Gardner. He afterwards became the lock-keeper at Heybridge Basin.

And finally Poppy Gardner, the wife of the Rector who accompanied him on at least two trips to the Arctic.

Spitzbergen, the largest island in the Svalbard archipelago, was largely uninhabited or explored at that time. It offered a bleak, dark landscape for most of the day during the long winter months, with deep snow and sub zero temperatures, often below 30° centigrade. Indeed Dr Salter described it as "no-man's land" and although Norway later claimed ownership, at that time it appears to have had no claimants, hence the lobbying to make it a UK colony.

The new company, calling

themselves the Northern Exploration Company, began prospecting in 1904. They definitely found gold in small quantities, but there is no evidence that it was ever mined commercially by them.

They did however, mine marble and coal commercially for three years employing some 40 Scottish miners who they had shipped over especially for the task.

The marble, although very colourful, was of poor quality and crumbled too easily and it was uneconomical to ship the coal to the UK at the time. Today coal from that same field is being shipped to Russia.

The company's annual reports were published in *The Times* and in 1911 an article about their activities appeared in the *New York Times*. A reporter who told the story, described it as "a tale of men who are living a lonely, wild life in the frozen north, where no other human being sets foot and where only the polar bears roam in the solitude".

The Rev. Gardner made several trips to Spitzbergen, but it is unlikely that he, Alexander, Buckingham or Ellis remained there for long periods. It is known that Mansfield, as the mining engineer, did stay for some time to

oversee the works because he wrote two books there one winter.

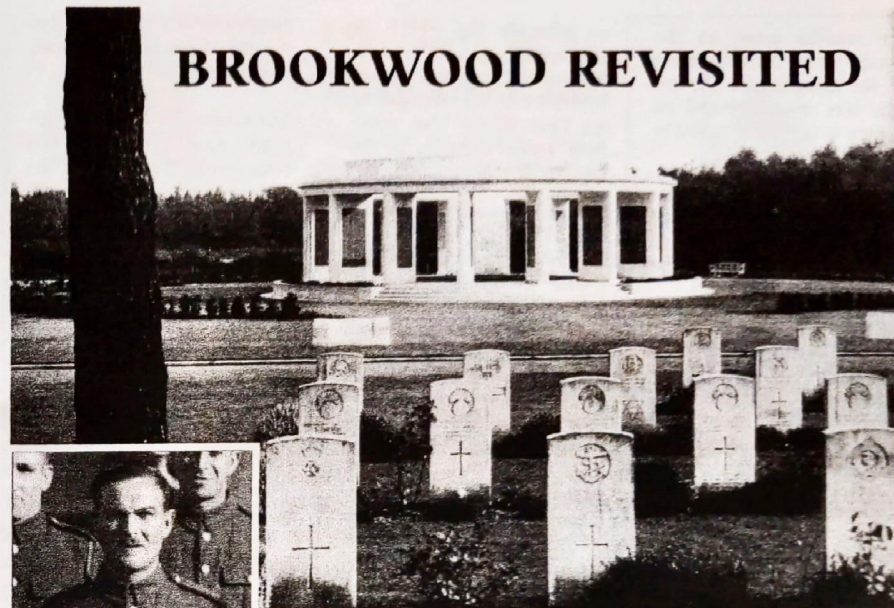
The company's activities were curtailed by World War I, but during hostilities an "undercover military enterprise" involving the company was undertaken, instigated by Major Bill Hopwood, a serving army officer who lived at the Old Rectory, Goldhanger. Intriguingly nothing more is known about this event other than Ernest Shackleton was involved.

After the war the company was valued at £1 million and had accommodation for at least 500 men. The island was equipped with three Marconi radio stations and in 1920 the company purchased its own seaplane.

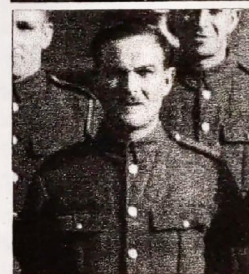
Disputes about ownership of the island were resolved in 1920 when it was acquired by the Norwegian government. In 1932 the Northern Exploration Company was taken over by a Norwegian mining group. Evidence the Goldhanger groups' activities remain on Spitzbergen to this day. Much of the machinery and rail tracks remain and several of the miners' huts built by Charles Mann still stand, now preserved as a museum, complete with a "Camp Mansfield" name plate over the door.

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BROOKWOOD REVISITED



Above: the War Memorial for those with no known grave at Brookwood Cemetery in Surrey.



Left: Arthur Abraham Askew, a Maldon man whose name is recorded on the above memorial.

Following our article "One Way Ticket" in the last issue of *Penny Farthing* regarding Brookwood Cemetery, in which only a very tenuous link with Maldon could be drawn (your Editor's great grandfather is buried there) a far more substantial link has now been established.

Betty Chittenden, the Museum's former Treasurer & Vice-President informs me that her father, a Maldon man born and bred, is mentioned on the cemetery's War Memorial to the Missing 1939-1945.

Arthur Abraham Askew was born in Maldon in 1906, the son of Abraham and Lizzie Askew. His two older brothers both died tragically; Oxley who served with the Essex Yeomanry was just 17 years old when he was killed during the First World War on 14 May 1915 at Frezenberg Ridge. He has no known grave but is mentioned on the Menin Gate. The other brother died in tragic circumstances while serving in Ireland during the Rebellion.

Arthur, who was an exceptionally tall man (over 6ft 5ins), married Edith and worked for Sadd's during the 1930's.

When war clouds again began to gather, employees of military age were offered a 1/- (5p) a week extra pay if they agreed to enlist in the event war was declared. Motivated by patriotism and the added inducement of having a little extra money to provide for his young family, he readily signed up.

Just before war broke out Arthur, together with several other Sadd's employees, joined the Royal Engineers and after basic training was sent to France, arriving on 1st September 1939, two days before war was actually declared!

cont ➤

Some months later, as the Germans swept British forces from the mainland of Europe, Arthur was evacuated and on his return to the UK was sent to Scotland.

In October 1942 he was transferred to North Africa - the day he left being his daughter Betty's ninth birthday, she never saw him again.

As a member of 994 Docks Operating Company Arthur was one of a team responsible for preparing and repairing dockyards to receive troops and supplies, and in this role he was on his way to prepare for the invasion of Sicily when he was killed.

He was travelling on the SS *Yoma* (Glasgow) which was serving in the Mediterranean as an auxiliary transport in convoy with four other vessels en route from Egypt to Sfax, Tunisia, when she was torpedoed and sunk by U-boat 81 near Derna in the straits of Benghazi off Libya.

On board were 1,670 troops, of which 451 were lost, including Arthur Askew. The captain and 32 crew members also perished. The SS *Yoma* was the only ship in the convoy to be sunk and Arthur was the only Maldon man of his Company killed in this disaster.

The U-81, which had been commissioned on 26 April 1941, sank 23 ships before she herself was sunk on 9 January 1944 by US bombs.

BROOKWOOD

Brookwood Cemetery, Surrey, was opened in 1854 to relieve the pressure on London cemeteries and graveyards. In 1917

an area in the north of the cemetery was set apart for the burial of men of Commonwealth forces who died during the First World War, many from battle wounds, in the London district.

The Brookwood Memorial to the Missing, which was officially opened by the Queen in 1958, bears the names of 3,555 men and women of the land forces of the British Commonwealth and Empire who died during World War II in many lands or at sea, and have no known grave. The circumstances of their deaths were such that their names could not appropriately be assigned to any campaign memorials in the

theatres of war and who have therefore been denied a known and honoured grave.

The memorial building, designed by Ralph Hobday, is a rotunda of Portland stone surrounding a grassed court open to the sky. It bears the inscription "Memorial to the Missing 1939-1945".

The names of those commemorated are carved on panels of green slate. Men and women from the UK, Newfoundland, Canada, Australia, South Africa, India, East and West Africa, the West Indies, Burma and Southern Rhodesia are recorded there.

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Maldon Art Trail

4th - 12th October

A new venture for Maldon conceived and managed by Rosie Sandler of Langford was enjoyed by many local art enthusiasts who were able to view works by 50 artists at 40 venues throughout Maldon and the neighbouring district.

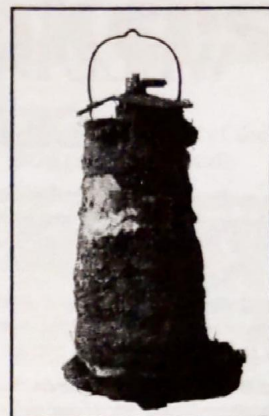
The Museum played its part by hosting an exhibition of John Osborne's oil paintings, which was one of the largest displays on offer, and was much enjoyed by the 'Art Trailers'. It was appropriately housed as John is a Life member of our Association and the paintings were most professionally hung by him helped by his wife Connie. The exhibition in the museum continued to the end of the season.



The Goss model of the incendiary bomb dropped on Maldon in 1915

Oh Goss he's talking about me!

Having read the article 'Golly Goss - Maldon immortalised in porcelain' (*Autumn Penny Farthing*) I ventured into my loft and there in a cardboard box, labelled 'crested china' beautifully wrapped was this 2½ inch high piece of Goss. It is labelled on the base 'W. H. Goss, model of incendiary bomb dropped at Maldon, 16 April 1915 from a German Zeppelin'.



The actual incendiary bomb dropped on Maldon, April 16 1915

The top of the piece seems to show evidence that there was once a handle, which may have been of metal, but this was broken off long before I purchased it some thirty years ago. I believe that this Goss production was unusual in that it commemorated a specific dated non-royal event.

The museum also has in its collection a postcard of the actual incendiary bomb, weight about 16lbs dropped on Maldon during the raid. The real handle was presumably clutched and then released by a German crew member of the sinister Zeppelin. The incendiary bomb and some high explosives all fell within a square mile of St Peter's Hospital, where British troops were based, although there is doubt whether the Germans knew that they were there!

It is my intention to present this most interesting and historic china item to the Museum and it should be on display next year.

Paddy Lacey

DOMESTIC BLISS or the ELIMINATION of DRUDGERY

On Thursday 4th September and again on Friday 5th September, Barrie Jaimeson and Nicola Esson of Maldon Actors Company (MAC) gave an entertaining performance in the courtyard at the Museum. The very professional production was written by them based on our current exhibition "100 years of the Ideal Home". In it they took the audience on a musical, dramatic and informative pleasure ride through the history of domestic invention in the twentieth century. The audience found it thoroughly entertaining despite a couple of heavy downpours on the Friday and complimentary remarks were received in the Tourist Information Centre afterwards.

The production was organised on behalf of the Museum by our Secretary, Jenny Sjollema, who also organised the sale of refreshments in the interval. The publicity drive for it was master-minded by Molly Middleton, and Liz Willsher acted as usher on both evenings.

Our thanks to all involved.

WELL DONE! FANTASTIC! CELEBRATIONS!

Late on Sunday 14 September Judy Betteridge wrote :- I am not sure if it is appropriate for me to thank everyone - but I am going to do so anyway. For those that joined me in the baptism of fire, otherwise known as Heritage Open Days thank you so much for all your efforts. We couldn't have managed without you. I don't know the final figures but I do know that we took almost £200 on the stall alone.

Special thanks to Mags and Jenny for stepping in at the last minute today when we were very short-handed. It was just grand to see so many visitors enjoying our Museum - about 80 yesterday and far more today. A lot of friends popped by, including Tim Howson, the organiser of the weekend.

It was also great to see Doreen and Tony Mandara looking very well and enjoying a family outing. Mrs Foulston, probably one of our oldest members at a very young 92, came by to tell us that she is drumming up some items for the carnival display in the Museum next year. It was also an opportunity to turn down an offer of an early toaster from a charming gentleman who admitted that he had three sheds full of similar items.

I was slightly worried as to whether it was a good idea or not for us to take part in Heritage Weekend but thanks to your efforts it has proved to be a wonderfully successful venture - many glowing reports for our displays and, best of all, so many people visiting the museum for the first time. This can only be a big plus for us and hopefully they will spread the word that we are well worth a visit. It was particularly warming to receive a visit from a young family on Saturday who returned on the Sunday bearing boxes of toys for our stall.

*AND THE WEATHER - Wow - it did us proud didn't it?
The Prom looked lovely and everyone looked relaxed and happy.
P.S. Let's hope that the Art Trail next month is a bit more sedate!*

A superb letter which reflected accurately the weekend but did not add that the vast majority of the work in organising the very profitable stall, pricing the items, setting up the tables and then manning the stall was done by Judy herself aided by Betty Chittenden and Liz and Eric Willsher. Special thanks to them but especially Judy who also produced elegantly labelled pots of Plum Jam for sale. My big disappointment was after reaching the head of the queue at the kiosk, following a stint with Pam relieving the stall holders, to be advised by Christine Steel that the last pot had just been sold.

I did rather better on Sunday having delivered some books for the stall to be sold a pot by Christine whom I suspect had spent the night on duty! Had Judy returned home on Saturday to more 'bubble, bubble, toil and trouble' jam-making - again I suspect 'yes'!!

Annie, our Treasurer, after burning the midnight oil, produced the figures for the weekend for us -

Attendance figures for Saturday 13th	77 adults and 6 children
Sunday 14th	155 adults and 21 children
Takings from Donation Box	£ 54.22p
Takings from Bric-aBrac stall	£192.00p
Sales from Shop Saturday	£ 32.90p
Takings from Shop Sunday	£ 51.60p
Total takings	£330.72p

So both a wonderful and profitable weekend - well done everybody - fantastic job Judy!

Paddy

Barge-Breakers

A. S. Shore

Go down North Street in Maldon and at the far end on the left just before you go down the hill to the river stands a large house which at one time was the "CASTLE" public house. It had long since ceased to function as a pub by the late 1930's but still gave service to the locality as a shop. In the rear yard coal, logs and paraffin were sold, scrap iron, jam-jars and rabbit-skins could be traded for cash.

The road carries on down the hill to the river where a 'free hard' still exists to this day. At one time each of the town's parishes had their own 'free hard' and right of access to the river which would have been important to the common people of that time. The existing access used to be a shingle beach but now mud and marsh are gradually taking over. This was all part of the lower Downs and a small road nearby used to be known as Dagger Lane, and as late as 1945 the name Dagger Laner applied if you lived there - no doubt many of the older locals can remember that.

At the end of World War II great changes were just around the corner, new

highways were being mapped out all over the country which would outpace steam trains and coastal sailing barges for a more efficient movement of freight. Barges were left to rot on marshes and up mud creeks, some lucky owners managed to sell for barge / yacht conversion and some were picked up very cheaply as scrap from owners wanting the last penny from their workhorses.

From time to time a Barge was floated on to the 'free hard' for breaking up and it was a man from the 'Castle', who was business minded enough to buy and undertake such a task. There was always a local on hand who never had a regular job and was only too willing to work in the yard or help break up a Barge when required.

Daily a flat stout timbered trolley was taken down to the 'free hard' with the tools for the job, crowbars, various wood saws some of a length that they required two men to operate, sledge hammers and an axe all coupled to the energy and stamina of two men who daily would break up a vessel of some eighty feet in length, a beam of about

20 feet (widest part of deck from port to starboard).

The 'keelson' at least two feet square and running internally from stem to stern post was the backbone of a Barge's construction. Leeboards to port starboard were 8 feet in length by 8 feet tapering to 2 feet 6 inches and made up of 3 inch timber and iron strapping. They could be lowered or hoisted depending on the spread of sail, wind conditions and depth of water; they acted as the Barge's keel. The hull was generally of 3 inch oak or elm.

Various iron winches along with the windlass and mast-case had to be got ashore before the timber structure could be broken down.

Every night the trolley loaded with as much timber and iron as two men could move was pulled up the hill to the 'Castle' yard and the work went on for weeks on end until not a piece of wood or iron was left on the beach. Recycling is nothing new, only the methods have changed. Looking back it seemed an impossible task for two men, but it happened - I know, I was a 'Dagger Laner'.

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Historic Churches



St Andrew's Church, Heybridge

St Andrew's Church's origins go back to around 930AD when a stone cathedral was built on the site. This cathedral was replaced by the present St Andrew's during the 12th century and is of mainly Norman architecture, much of which still survives although there have been constant restorations throughout the years.

The walls are made of flint rubble, boulder clay and pudding stone, with the windows being of Norman and Early English lancet, one of the former containing many Roman tiles. The walls of the nave are also Norman with original north and south doorways showing the characteristic rounded arch. A priest's door which is now blocked has a thirteenth century coffin lid set into it.

In one of the north windows are the remains of old stained glass and the eight steps to the roof loft are also visible on this north side.

In 1470 the church tower collapsed due to flooding and the ruins were simply re-roofed in 1482 which accounts for its somewhat stunted appearance. Just inside the door, one of the seventeen bells, taken from the belfry when it was under repair, may still be seen.

When I Was a Child (Part II) 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

At the corner of London Road / Spital Road and attached to Wentworth House was a small shop - Orth's. This was the start of Orth's Garage. You can just see signs of this. Opposite on the site of Doe's Garage was an antique / second-hand shop (Burns) the windows of which came to the edge of the present pavement. You can imagine how narrow was the road then. It's bad enough now!

I am sure you all know there was a row of shops in front of All Saint's Church where the War Memorial stands and I cannot pass over the fact that Mr Volta owned one, which was very well-known locally and by visitors. The grandfather of the two Volta brothers we know introduced ice-cream to Maldon, quite unknown here before - and what ice-cream it was!

My uncle then farmed South House Farm (scene of the Battle of Maldon) and I have seen large baskets of new-laid eggs (and have gathered some sometimes) and bowls of cream which were delivered to Mr Volta each day for his ice-cream. No powdered stuff in those days.

Milk was delivered door-to-door twice a day after each milking - carried on a cart in a churn and measured into customer's jugs. I always admired the beautifully laundered and starched covers on these churns and the brass-work bright and shiny.

Fish, freshly caught in the river were also delivered door-to-door. Sprats in season, plaice, dabs and shrimps. My mother kept a small enamel bucket specially for this purpose and it would be filled for a shilling. Visitors bought fish direct from the boatmen on the 'Prom' - often flounders which Maldonians scorned. The fish were threaded on a wire ring and carried away like that.

The river in those days sported a dredger which kept it navigable right up to Fullbridge. Large ships from Holland, Germany and Sweden sailed up to the three millers, Greens, Eves and Bakers, also to Sadd's Wharf with timber. On the Downs was of course the Salt Works and a lime kiln which has completely disappeared.

With these ships coming to Maldon there had to be a Customs Office on Market Hill (now a private residence). It was a colourful site when the foreign Captains and crew ventured into the town for provisions for their ships. The Captains sported uniforms with a great deal of gold braid and the sailors were quite unlike our own with their colourful jerseys and 'stocking shape' headgear. The Customs Officer acted as interpreter and their trade was greatly welcomed.

This next statement I cannot verify but it was told to me by someone who had a great

interest in the river. Apparently Maldon Council demanded an extra farthing per ton for the gravel dredged from the river, but the London firm refused and removed their dredger from the river. This has caused the river to silt up - more's the pity!

The foreshore of the river used to be free of mud. Boatmen hired out rowing boats and could always be seen at low tide wielding long poles on the end of which were open-ended boxes (is how best I can describe them). These were filled from the river and washed over the shingle which kept the foreshore clean.

The Southern Counties Swimming and Diving Championships were held annually in the Marine Lake and attracted enormous crowds from long distances. I can only liken it to the crowds at the Carnival fireworks.

Families came to Maldon for holidays when we had railways and the houses in Victoria Road and Mill Road advertised accommodation. Where in Maldon could families stay now? Hotels are too pricey!

There were more attractions of course. A resident Concert Party (Billy Taylor & Co.) gave performances in the Band Stand daily and always a band played there on Sunday afternoons.

Continued page 21

400th Anniversary of Plume School

1608 - 2008

When Alderman Ralph Breeder, a haberdasher and linen draper of Maldon died aged 56, in March 1608, he left a fortune of more than £2,600 (in excess of £5 million today). In his will he bequeathed the sum of £300 for the "mayntenance of a schoole-master to teach a grammar school within the town".

Little is known about Ralph Breeder other than that he was a successful businessman and active in local politics, being one of the two Borough Bailiffs, and the richest and most astute of the freemen of the borough, as well as being a farmer and owning farmlands and houses locally. Even his name is uncertain - the first reference to him by the Town Clerk called him "Ralph Breeder alias Browninge" indicating that his mother may have married a man called Browning on the death of his father. Certainly he left a legacy to his "brother Richard Browning".

The only personal record remaining of Ralph Breeder is his will - all other private papers having long since vanished. However his bequest established a monument to his life which has lasted for 400 years.

It has been suggested that Maldon Grammar School may have been founded as early as 1379, but there is little direct proof of this.

Although there were three quite distinct medieval schools in the town it is a mistake to suppose that these were the forerunners of Maldon Grammar School or had anything to do with Ralph Breeder's bequest. We may safely assume that the Plume School celebrates its 400th anniversary this year having been founded in 1608.

In 1621, thirteen years after the bequest was made, John Soan from Maldon, one of the five executors, completed the first part of Breeder's task. He purchased several properties in and around Maldon High Street, the rents from which were still providing a part of the schoolmaster's income at the end of the nineteenth century. So for the first time since 1548 a schoolmaster was assured of a regular income and an assurance that despite any low numbers of pupils he would still be maintained by an annual sum of money.

The master could still take fees and his salary was

only intended to be a basic minimum. It is no coincidence that in 1621, the Bailiffs in the Court of Petitions should rule that "Mr John Daynes, scholmr of the Grammar schole ... And the succeeding Scholemasters from Christ-mas thenceforth shall take yerely for teaching and instructing of the son of any townsman or inhabitant being a Freeman and able to pay, XXs by the yere and not above; for that in any man's memory no more hath been paid within this town."

A royal letter of 1628 described St Peter's Church as "having the ruynes thereof (by consent of the Bishop) converted into a publike schoole". So although the Maldon Grammar School was a new foundation its building was the same one previously used by earlier schools and some of the first boys to be taught there had probably previously been pupils of an independent schoolmaster in exactly the same place.

The first schoolmaster of the new Grammar School was the Rev. John Danes, curate of Mundon in 1611 and of Boreham in 1612.

Under Danes' mastership

the new school prospered for eighteen years. There is enough evidence to describe it as a Puritan establishment and its good fortune was due to him and the Puritan atmosphere of the town.

During John Danes's eighteen years in the Grammar School more scholars were sent from there to the universities than at any other time until the twentieth century. Such was the school's reputation that pupils came from all over Essex, London and even Hampshire, and some of these students became staunch members of the Presbyterian Church and later prominent leaders in the Nonconformist movement.

Danes died in 1639 and there is no record of another master at the school for the next eleven years.

The reason for this gap is not clear but the flow of pupils to Cambridge ceased after 1638 and Thomas Plume chose to send his son to Chelmsford School probably because there was no master living in Maldon.

The salary should have attracted candidates for the mastership. In 1649 at least £8 in rents were paid for the

master's maintenance from two Breeder Trust houses in Maldon High Street. To this was added the rent of £23 a year from Pleyhill Farm at Hatfield Peverel.

This was more than the average salary for a schoolmaster, but from 1634 even more could be added. In that year Annastacy Wentworth, another beneficiary of Ralph Breeder's will, bequeathed the sum of sixty shillings a year for the education of three poor boys of All Saints' Parish. It must be remembered that this was the schoolmaster's assured income, in addition he also received fees for some of his pupils.

The second headmaster, Robert Gouge, was appointed in 1650. He was an Independent Minister and preacher in Maldon and remained in post for about five years.

After he left Maldon there came a long succession of headmasters of the Grammar School starting with John Hutt.

It was during Hutt's mastership that calamity befell the school when the tower of St Peter's collapsed upon it. Sometime about 1664 - 65 the crumbling upper stages

of the fifteenth century tower cracked and slid down, destroying the ancient church beneath.

St Peter's had long ceased to be used for worship so the town was lucky to find a generous benefactor, Dr Thomas Plume of Greenwich, the son of Thomas Plume of Maldon.

It is probable that he did not begin the rebuilding of the church tower and school until quite late in the century, since he planned that the upper storey should hold his fine library which he had only begun to collect in 1664.

By 1699 the tower was completely rebuilt and possibly the building which partly supports it. The school and library are now larger than when first built for two more bays were added in 1817, but they are of exactly the same materials and to the same scale.

John Hutt remained master until 1693 when, being 75 years of age resigned and delivered up all his rights, title and interest in Maldon Grammar School to William Scarrow who became the next headmaster.

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When Thomas Plume died in 1704, among many bequests he left his extensive library to the town of Maldon plus a farm in Mundon, the rents from which were to be used to keep in good repair the school and library for ever.

He also ordered the trustees of his will to provide six poor boys from Maldon or Mundon the sum of 40 shillings each per annum for their schooling. Each was to be provided plain grey or green coats, breeches, stockings and shoes "as far as it may go with a Monmouth cap or hat". The remaining rents from the farm to be used to augment the number of such children to ten, or put some of them out as apprentices.

Normally a charity boy in England was provided with only one shirt and one pair of shoes and stockings, value about fifteen shillings, so the Plume Charity boys were well cared for, though clearly distinguished from their fee-paying classmates as they alone wore the uniform prescribed by Dr Plume.

At first the uniform was grey colour but later changed to green resulting in the boys being nicknamed "Grasshoppers".

When a National School was begun in 1817 it was argued that Dr Plume had really intended to establish a separate Charity School in

the town. Ten boys however, was the largest number he had stipulated and this was not enough to form a new free school, so the Grammar School continued to receive his bequest.

The presence of these "Charity" boys with the additional provision for their apprenticeship created a situation which Dr Plume did not foresee. He had left Christ's College £100 "on condition they allow an annual exhibition of £6 towards the maintenance of one scholar educated at Maldon", but only one boy could claim it.

However few applied for the scholarship and when in 1773 Samuel Meachem was admitted from Maldon School he was not one of the Charity Boys.

The lack of other graduates indicates that reading, writing, arithmetic and Holy Scripture were taking the place of classics. This may be no fault of the masters but reflects the want of ambition in their pupils, who preferred to accept an apprenticeship rather than the uncertainty of a career after a more advanced education.

In 1817 a National School for teaching boys and girls the three R's plus their proper stations in life was

begun. It was housed in a newly-extended Plume building, forcing the Grammar School into a succession of temporary premises around the town. At one time they were housed at 68 High Street, then in the 1850's they returned to the Plume, this time upstairs in the 1817 extension of the library, where panelling carved with the boys' initials, may still be seen.

Next a house called "Roma" in London Road was used for boarding pupils with the school being held in a shed at the rear. By 1861 only six boys were in attendance and they were educated in English and the Classics.

The school possessed nothing but the house which "contained a little dilapidated school furniture; but withal so poorly equipped that when artificial light was required the pupils had to bring their own candle end and balance it on their desks".

Without assistants the Master taught Latin, English, Euclid Algebra and History, but the curriculum was not very extensive. Among other engagements the master was Chaplain to the workhouse and used to enter up his report book in school hours and one of the boys had to take it back to the workhouse.

He was also the Vicar of Mundon and now and again had to conduct a funeral whereupon the boys had a holiday.

In those days a number of Plume Lectures were held in All Saints' Church with the Master undertaking some of these. His pupils had to attend in a body, sitting on the cushion in front of the Altar Rail, but first they had to show their hands before they entered the church. If they were dirty, which being boys they usually were, they received two or three strokes from his ferrule on the palms of their hands.

By the middle of the nineteenth century the Grammar School was poverty stricken, and when the Rev. R.H. Ryland was appointed its last clerical master in 1895 there were only five pupils. However he was to bring new life to the failing school and increased the number of pupils to fifty-two. He appointed assistant masters and external examiners.

Rev. Ryland quickly needed a new school building, but the trustees were unable to finance any costly proposals. A new scheme was to administer the original endowments and to secure greater permanency and five governors were to be elected by the Borough

Council together with others appointed by Essex C. C., Maldon R. D. C., the Plume Charity trustees and the Senate of London University.

However, a new school could still not be financed and the County Council had to take charge. Their proposal to merge the Grammar School with a new County High School was met with an immediate outcry, but it was imperative that the school be taken over by the County Council even at the expense of its long tradition.

A new school building was built in 1907, suitable for both boys and girls and the previous headmaster of the Grammar School, Mr. M. R. Mumford, had to apply for the Headship of the new County School. When the new building was opened on the Fairfield land girls were not admitted, except for pupil teachers, and it was not until 1919 that girls were accepted.

Even under the new management there were difficulties and from 1913 to 1914 the school was closed. Mr. Mumford retired to open a private school in the High Street. His successor, Mr. S. G. Deed can be credited with guiding the school to its present form.

During both the First and Second World Wars many pupils from the Plume School gave their lives for their country.

By the 1920's there were some 250 pupils (girls slightly outnumbering boys), with 13 full and part-time staff housed in seven classrooms. A hall and gym were added in 1932 and the school began to develop a keen sporting tradition for football, cricket, tennis and sailing.

A new extension was built in 1956-1958 and a Science block added in 1959.

The 1970's saw the amalgamation of the Grammar School with Maldon County Secondary School to form a new "comprehensive" school. Henceforth the school operated on two sites with the Lower School at Mill Road and the Upper School in Farnbridge Road. The school population now reached nearly 2,100 students and it obtained Grant Maintained status in 1992.

In each century changes have come to the Grammar School yet it has adapted and retained its identity and is a worthy successor to that early school of 1608. Ralph Breder and Archdeacon Plume would surely be proud to see how their dreams for education have flourished in Maldon.

Appeasement and Bribery

Danegeld is well known as being the tax first levied on the English by their King, Ethelred II to bribe the Scandinavian invaders to go away when they began their systematic raids on Britain in the last decade of the 10th century.

What is probably not so well-known is that although its origins go back further into Anglo-Saxon history than the late 10th century, Danegeld was in fact the first regular and permanent land tax known in the West in the Middle Ages; that it later became a tax to *hire* Scandinavians to fight for the English as mercenaries; and that its effect on the coinage of this country was significant.

Danegeld must not be confused with Danelaw, that area of Danish settlement established in the second half of the 9th century covering much of the old kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia and East Anglia.

One of the counties most badly affected by Viking raids was Essex, evidenced by the Battle of Maldon in 991AD, after which it was first decided to buy off the enemy. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records: Anno 991: "In this year Ipswich was ravaged, and very soon afterwards Earl Dorman

Brynoth was killed at Maldon. And in that year it was determined that tribute should first be paid to the Danish men because of the great terror they were causing along the coast".

As a result of this defeat the English Government concluded an uneasy peace with the invaders, agreeing to pay £22,000 in gold and silver.

The bribe appears to have had little effect for just two years later the Vikings raided Yorkshire and the following year, 994AD, Olaf of Norway and Swein of Denmark attacked London with 94 ships and 2,000 fighting men, again to do "the greatest damage that ever an army could do, by burning, ravaging and slaying everywhere along the coast, in Essex, Kent, Sussex and Hampshire". Once more payments of Danegeld were negotiated and this time £16,000 was handed over.

In 1007 Ethelred II paid £30,000 to the Danes to obtain two years freedom from attack, but in 1009 they again raided Kent, afterwards taking winter quarters on the Thames and living off Essex and surrounding areas. By the year 1012 over £150,000 had been paid in bribes so it is little wonder

that the Vikings returned time and again - blackmailers usually do.

After 1012 Danegeld was not levied as such, but was replaced by a regular tax known as Heregeld (army tax), for buying the services of certain Scandinavian mercenaries to defend England. This tax was later abolished by Edward the Confessor (1042 - 1066), but was revived by the Anglo-Norman kings.

On Ethelred's death in 1016, Edmund was chosen as king, but almost immediately found himself having to fight the Viking raiders. The campaign culminated with Edmund chasing the invaders into Essex, where he overtook them at Ashingdon to join battle. Unfortunately for him he was defeated by Cnut (*also called Knut or Canute*) who destroyed most of the nobility of England and forced Ethelred to flee to Normandy.

The vast sums paid to the raiders would appear to have been made in silver pennies. This would account for the huge amount of currency produced during Ethelred's reign. It is estimated that Danegeld alone would have necessitated the striking of nearly 40 million pennies.

Where then did all these coins originate and where did they go? The answer lies in the steady accumulation of wealth in England during the 10th century and also in the minting system of this country.

The mints as they existed at the time of the Scandinavian raids developed out of the reforms of King Athelstan (925-939). His coinage law enacted at Grately in 928AD, laid down that there should be one single current coinage, and named certain mint-towns and the number of moneyers that should be assigned to them. At this time Maldon was one of the boroughs privileged to coin money.

The administration for producing coins continued to develop during the following century and the number of mints increased. Ethelred had therefore inherited a superb money producing machine which responded to his need to expand it further. It seems fairly certain that Colchester mint was one of those set up as a direct result of the necessity to produce coins more quickly to pay tribute money.

Most of the coins of Ethelred that we now know of come from the enormous hoards of coin in Scandinavia and northern

Europe. In 1881 more than 4,300 varieties of Ethelred's coins had been found in Sweden.

The designs of these coins were apparently changed on a regular basis, probably every six years, following the practice established earlier in the 10th century. Of the seven main "types", or designs, of this reign, Colchester is known to have struck those called Crux, Long Cross, Helmet, and Last Small Cross. Maldon struck all these plus the earlier First Hand and Second Hand designs.

The workmanship fell to a level of adequate but spiritless efficiency, the designs being carefully but heavily engraved. When seventy or more mints were working on an almost production line scale, it is not surprising that the individual coins lacked artistry.

Bearing in mind the conditions that must have pertained at mints like Maldon and Colchester in those turbulent years, when moneyers were working with extremely primitive equipment under the constant threat of harassment, it is surprising that coins of any quality at all were produced.

The county of Essex was intimately involved in the Danish raids of this period

and in the payment of Danegeld. We might even claim that Danegeld began and ended in Essex: the defeat of Byrhtnoth at Maldon led to the first payment of Danegeld, and the defeat of Edmund Ironside at Ashingdon put Cnut effectively on the English throne.

Perhaps it was to the disadvantage of Essex at this time that it had such a long coastline and that it was situated at the estuary of the Thames, the gateway to England's richest city - London.

Based on an article by John Sydney which appeared in Essex Countryside in 1977, to whom all acknowledgements are made.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1786 "The weather cock and shingling of the steeple of All Saints Church, Maldon, being out of repair the wise men had committees. At length a drawing of a weather cock, big enough for Salisbury Cathedral was agreeable and fixed upon. Other consultations were held about the colour of the steeple; some would have it all stone colour, others white, and others lead colour. But however as they hoped to please everyone, they would paint it about three quarters lead colour, and the rest white, which was the absurdest thing on earth; for the lead colour, at a considerable distance you could not see the top at all, and it appeared like a man in the night with his night cap on".

Crazier

A Brief History of Osea Island

By Daphne Swanson and Eunice Legerton of Maldon U3A Local History Group

In the middle of the River Blackwater lies Osea Island which has been known to man since Roman times who made a mile long winding causeway joining the island to the mainland. They called the island Uvesia and used it as a major pottery centre. Many important archaeological finds having been made there.

The existence of a number of 'red hills' - believed to be the remnants of early salt-making facilities discovered on the nearby mainland and on the island itself, provide further evidence of Roman occupation.

After the Romans left, there is no more information about Osea until the Battle of Maldon in 991AD. This battle took place off Northey Island, and contemporary documents claim that some of Ealdorman Byrhtnoth's men who had been killed by the Viking invaders were buried on Osea Island.

After the Norman invasion William the Conqueror claimed the island for himself, then passed it to his nephew, and it became a prosperous agricultural centre and the Domesday Book 1086 records Osea as having a well stocked fishery and pasture for sheep.

The island was then owned by various noble families including

the Earl of Essex. By the eighteenth century the island was becoming well known particularly for the wildfowl and people travelled from afar for the pleasure of shooting it.

In Victorian times Mr F N Charrington (of the brewery family) founded a home for inebriates on the island in hopes of curing their habit, but this was not successful because local boat owners from the mainland smuggled in consignments of alcohol at high-tide during darkness. He also tried to take their minds off 'drink' by starting up a small zoo on the island containing cockatoos, emus, kangaroos and seals. The seal pool still remains and is used as a swimming pool.

During the First World War the Admiralty took over the island and used it as a secret base, designated HMS Osea, for the construction and testing of coastal motor torpedo boats designed by Sir John Thornycroft. They were very fast boats, able to skim over some obstacles and were designed to move rapidly on their targets, fire torpedoes and retire before being detected. They did not see active service during the war but were used successfully in Russia in 1919 when they destroyed warships in Kronstadt harbour.

There was a railway and a long jetty to receive large vessels connected with this development. Some rails and remains of the jetty can be seen on the beach.

Approximately 1,000 naval personnel were living on Osea while the boats were being constructed, with several large workshops, factory buildings and accommodation blocks.

At the end of the Second World War there was talk of turning the island into a holiday camp, but nothing came of it. A holiday home for under privileged children from London was founded on the island. This was sponsored by Charrington, but no longer exists.

About 1968 Mr and Mrs Cole bought the island, but in the 1970's Cambridge University used the island for experimental farming and the breeding of rare sheep.

Osea is now a rather forlorn place. The fields are overgrown and hundreds of rabbits, and English Nature are now involved with the island.

The village consists of about 24 houses - the oldest being built in the 1600's - mostly used only at weekends or holiday times. **Cont page 21** ➤

TIMES PAST



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

1808

The Essex Militia Cavalry was stationed in Maldon until 1833 to be prepared in case of a French invasion. The East Essex Militia, the Rifle Regiment, the 1st Battalion Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, the 4th Regiment of Dragoons and the 88th Regiment of Foot were also stationed here at the same time.

Until this date Hall Bridge across the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation at Heybridge was a swing bridge.

Poachers carried out their last major raid on the oyster beds at Burnham when 60 smacks from the River Colne attacked the beds.

George III was king (1760 -1820) and the Duke of Portland was Prime Minister of Britain (from 1807 to 1809).

The United States prohibited the importation of slaves from Africa although slavery remained legal there until 1865.

The French invaded Spain and Joseph Bonaparte became king of Spain, but was forced to flee shortly afterwards due to a rebellion in Madrid. Napoleon retook the city later in the same year.

Napoleon abolished the Inquisition in Spain and Italy.

Goya painted the "Execution of the Citizens of Madrid".

Beethoven composed his Symphonies No. 5 Op. 67, and No. 6 ("Pastoral"), Op. 68.

Iron anchor chains were patented by Captain S Brown R.N.

The source of the River Ganges was discovered.

Extensive excavations were begun at Pompeii.

The fashion for men's pigtails disappeared.

UNDER THE FLOORBOARDS

Maldon January - 1877
Received of Ellen Ferris (late Ellen Corder) and
Henry Horsnail, trustees under the will of my
late sister Elizabeth Merriman, the sum of
Twenty three pounds 6/3 being the half year
dividend of £1554. 1s. 6d. invested according
to the said will on my behalf and that of
my wife and due January 5th 1877.
£23. 6. 3

If you live in an old property you may never know what lies hidden beneath the floor or up in the attic. In 1976, while doing some repair works, one of our Museum Stewards found the above letter under the floorboards of their home in Wantz Road, Maldon. It was enclosed in an envelope, complete with a Penny Red stamp, which had been posted from Bristol dated January 1877 and addressed to a Mrs Corder. The Corders are an old established Maldon family with many of them being buried in the Society of Friends Churchyard in Butt Lane.

The letter appears to be a receipt for money received from Ellen Ferris (late Ellen Corder) and Henry Horsnail (?), the trustees of the late Elizabeth (*indecipherable*), for the sum of £23. 6s. 3d. This money was the half year's dividend of £1554. 1s. 6d. invested according to the said will on behalf of the sender and his wife. Unfortunately the person who sent the letter omitted to sign it, nor is there any address, so it is impossible to say who it was from. The sum of £23 may not appear a large amount, but that same sum today would be worth in excess of £10,500.

Although the letter appears to have no real financial value it is an interesting curio and one wonders how it came to be under the floorboards. We do hope Mrs Corder is not still looking for it.



ST. CEDD'S CHATLINE

By Liz Willsher

The museum has now pulled down its shutters for the winter and we are well and truly autumnal, with darkness before teatime.

However, the activity at St Cedd's actually increases as our thoughts turn to the changes planned to the displays for the next season and choosing items from the store to put on show. By coincidence, we have chosen the subject of Maldon carnival for a new display and were delighted to receive two recent donations of some excellent photographs of that very subject, one batch from steward helper Margaret Mirza, featuring herself and family in a variety of fancy dress costumes. Another fascinating collection of photographs and other memorabilia was donated by local resident Joy Cole (nee Trenfield), whose family ran a greengrocery business in the High Street. The items belonged to long-standing employee and friend Joan Mynard and were in Joy's possession. All the photographs show what a grand event the carnival was for Maldon and how the whole town became involved in the week-long celebrations, culminating in a magnificent procession and fireworks display. Hopefully the display will bring back some memories of those wonderful carnivals to our visitors next season.

In complete contrast to the local interest photographs and paper ephemera, which we always welcome, a large item came into our hands (quite literally for me and my husband), in the shape of a large metal sign formerly displayed on the wall of the yard in front of the sail lofts owned by Taylors the sail makers, and kindly donated by the current owners. Due to the perceived proximity of the location to the Museum, we decided to carry it and convey it by foot to the Museum much to the amusement of diners and drinkers outside the pubs on Hythe Quay! It will soon be displayed in the yard at the side of the Museum for all to see.

Back in the warmer days of late August the St Cedd's team and some helpers decided to turn their hands to the hard sell and held a table-top sale outside the Museum on Bank Holiday Monday. This proved so popular and lucrative that the process was repeated at Heritage Open Days weekend with a final fling in my back yard in early October. Of course, most of us will remember the very successful sales run by Mike Bennett and his team at the bank holiday markets for several years, and what good fund-raisers they were.

We (the "A Team"), as we have recently been called, would always welcome any offers of help with the variety of activities we carry out here at the St Cedd's building. These mainly consist of keeping records up-to-date by hand and computer, maintaining and storing the collection in good order, according to recognised standards, and sourcing items for new displays. Although we usually meet on a Monday afternoon it is understood that another day might be more convenient for some volunteers. This can easily be arranged as the offices are open and available to us at all working times.

We have had a busy summer and hopefully the Museum continues to prosper and provide enjoyment to all its visitors. On behalf of the St Cedd's team may I thank everyone who has donated such a variety of interesting and varied items this year.

We hope to welcome you all to the Museum in 2009 and to wish you Seasonal Greetings for the end of 2008.

WHEN I WAS A CHILD

Continued from page 10

It took quite a lot of courage to walk along the Promenade near the Band Stand on a Sunday. Deckchairs lined the roadway and round the Lake and these were usually filled to capacity, passers by being thoroughly criticised no doubt.

The standard of living has vastly improved. Houses are smarter, have water on tap, baths and indoor toilets. Previously it meant a walk to the bottom of the garden in all weathers.

A case in point is North Street, now an attractive place, but was then known as 'Dagger Lane' and even policemen patrolled in twos. Being near the docks I suppose this was often the case.

There was a cinema, the Hippodrome situated opposite Wenlocks. A resident pianist played suitable music to stir us when the heroine was chained to the railway and an express train approaching, and quieter music for serious episodes.

Dances were chiefly Military. They were held in the Drill Hall in Tenterfield Road (afterwards the Telephone Exchange); also some dances were held at Heybridge Headquarters with the Essex Regimental Band playing.

Children had far better facilities for play in those days. Butchers of the town owned meadows where they kept the animals they bought at market until such time as they were ready for slaughter - this they did themselves. When the fields were unoccupied, children were allowed to play there.

Home life was much more disciplined then and Mother was always at home. Church and Sunday School was a 'must' and I well remember getting into trouble from my grandmother when she caught me sewing buttons on my glove on a Sunday. I was told that I should have done this on Saturday, "But it only came off today" said I. "It must have been loose on Saturday" she replied.

In 1911, I think it was, there was an epidemic of scarlet fever in Maldon. The Isolation Hospital in Broad Street Green, Heybridge, was over-full. Tents were erected in the grounds which in turn also became full.

There being no electricity or gas lighting, lamps were used and in one case a lamp was overturned and set fire to the tent. All the patients were evacuated and tragedy was avoided.

When patients were out of quarantine a horse-drawn ambulance returned them to their homes. Sometimes, if only one patient was due home, the Matron drove a dog cart (small horse-drawn cart) to Maldon to deliver the patient home.

In the procession to mark the Coronation of Edward VII was the first motor car I had ever seen. This belonged to Mr Bates who had previously ridden three-wheeled bicycles. He was the founder of Bates Motors.

I have endeavoured to paint a picture of Maldon as I remember it years ago. I hope I have not bored you.

* ———

A Brief History of Osea Island

Continued from Page 17

There are no made-up hard roads and in 2001 the grass around the village was being kept short. There was still a daily postal service "according to the tides". There are only four hours between tides when the island is accessible so it would not be convenient for the majority of families to live there permanently.

The island has drinking water and mains electricity via underground cable from the mainland. It is privately owned and is inhabited by only a few brown sheep, possibly passed down from the Cambridge experiment.

YOU READ IT HERE FIRST

The article about Maldon Bowls Club which appeared in the Autumn issue of *Penny Farthing* was reprinted in its entirety in the "Maldon and Burnham Standard" in October. Fame at last.

On the strength of this renown your Editor asked our Chairman if he could have a raise and Paddy generously agreed - he has given me two bricks to stand on!

Ads from the past

The advertisement below appeared in the Maldon Town Fete programme of June 1954.

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