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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT By Paddy Lacey

Having this week spent 24 hours marooned by a snow storm in Purleigh, when it was considered wise for the very first time to cancel a museum work party, Spring still seems a long way away. It is difficult to realise that there are only eight weeks remaining until the museum doors open for the 2009 season on Saturday April 4th.

Regular work parties have taken place on Mondays, with cleaning sessions on most Wednesdays, since November. As in past years the proposed work schedule has been extended and activity has occurred at sites not originally planned to be up-graded this Winter. A decision had been taken to have a health theme this years based on returning to display our spinal carriage, which has received conservation and restoration by Colchester Museum before it starred in a display on disability at Colchester Castle during 2008. It seems that we have in this carriage a unique specimen, certainly in Eastern England! The carriage will be accompanied by a display of our other medical related items.

On a lighter note there will be a display of memories of Carnivals past and an upgrade of the cinema items which will be relocated downstairs. This move required the transfer of all John Sadd related objects into room 8, which in turn entailed unforeseen work at this site with the reduction in the number of wood-working tools, rehangng of pictures and improvement in labelling. There have been other smaller changes throughout the museum which members and stewards are challenged to spot after our Stewards' Meeting to be held on Thursday 2nd April at 2.00pm in the Octagon at St Mary's followed by a Private View of the 2009 displays. **Please note that this is a day later than that mentioned to Stewards in their new rota letters.** All existing and any potential new stewards are cordially invited to come along.

The Autumn end of season meeting, in November was much enjoyed by all when after a brief report and discussion of the 2008 season, Len Wilkinson in his alter ego of Marko the Magician, gave a chat on the history of the Magic Circle and demonstrated a range of mystifying happenings helped by his charming lady assistant. The end of season meeting will have to become a regular feature of the museum year.

This Winter, for the first time, there was considerable discussion over what new displays should be called in our publicity. It was finally decided that it should be along the lines of a slogan adopted by the Borough Council between the wars and I should like to incorporate it into a wish to pass on to all associated with the Museum : it is **'Health and Happiness in Maldon'** in 2009.

Penny Farthing is dependent upon your contribution.

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

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Copy deadline for the Summer Issue of *Penny Farthing* is 5 May 2009

THE WORKHOUSE



The poor are always with us, so the saying goes, but in the days before unemployment benefit, job seekers' allowance, disability benefit, homes for the elderly and sheltered housing, the unemployed, disabled, elderly and poor were left to beg in the streets at the risk of being imprisoned for vagrancy or had to apply to their parish workhouse for help.

We have all heard about the horrors of the workhouse as depicted in *Oliver Twist*, but what alternative did the poor and needy have? Prior to 1530 the only relief available was provided by the monasteries, which offered limited hospitality to travellers and often incorporated a chapel for the sick and poor. Our modern word 'hospital' derives from this hospitality. Sadly when Henry VIII dissolved the monasteries the needy were denied even this limited assistance.

Any charity which might be provided by a parish was jealously guarded and a person could only claim assistance from the parish in which they were born. In 1592 Maldon Court ordered that Agnes Wall, pregnant by Moses Manners, leave the town immediately and not to return until after her child was born, in order that it should not become a charge upon the town.

It was not until 1601, towards the end of Elizabeth I's reign, that any concerted effort was made to provide poor relief on a national basis, when the *Act for the Relief of the Poor* made parishes legally responsible for caring for their own paupers. This was to be funded by a poor-rate tax levied on local property owners. The Act made no mention of workhouses although it did allow for materials to be purchased to provide work

for the able-bodied unemployed - with the threat of prison if they refused. It also proposed the erection of housing for the "impotent poor" - the elderly, chronic sick, etc.

The first recorded use of the actual word 'workhouse' was in Exeter in 1652.

There were two types of workhouse - the Parish Workhouse (or Poorhouse) run by church wardens and the overseers of the parish, and after 1834 the Union Workhouses run by Boards of Guardians elected by the parishes.

The will of Dr Thomas Plume gave a bequest towards erecting a workhouse for the poor of Maldon, and a two storey building was erected on Market Hill in 1719 to serve this purpose. At some point during the next 100 years this was replaced by a new building.

The Market Hill workhouse was intended to take inmates from the three historic Maldon parishes of All Saints', St Peter's, and St Mary's. A problem soon arose because it began taking in sick paupers from outside Maldon and the Parish Vestry "resolved that no person whatsoever, young or old, having the small pox come on them or being reasonably judged to be in danger of the small pox or being sick of any distemper shall be admitted into the workhouse, other than the parish poor of the three parishes".

Poor relief was originally dispensed mostly through "out-relief" - grants of money, clothing, food, or fuel, to those living in their own homes. But *The Workhouse Test Act* of 1723 gave parishes the option of denying any outside relief and offering claimants only the workhouse.

At that time parish workhouse buildings were often just ordinary local houses, rented for the purpose.

In other cases the parish simply "farmed" their poor to a private contractor who undertook to look after the paupers for a fixed annual sum; the paupers' work providing a useful method of boosting the contractor's income.

The workhouse was not at that time, necessarily regarded as place of punishment or even privation. Indeed conditions could be pleasant enough to earn some institutions the nickname of "Pauper Palaces".

The Gilbert Act of 1782 simplified and standardised

the procedures for parishes to set up and run workhouses, either on their own, or by forming a group of parishes called a Gilbert Union.

Under this scheme, able-bodied adult paupers would not be admitted to the workhouse, but were to be maintained by their parish until work could be found for them. Although relatively few workhouses were set up under Gilbert's scheme, the practice of supplementing labourers wages out of the poor rate did become widely established. The best known example of this was the "Speenhamland System" which supplemented wages on a sliding scale linked to the price of bread and family size.

However, by the start of the 19th century the nationwide cost of out-relief was beginning to spiral. It was also believed that parish relief was an easy option for those who did not want to work.

In 1831 the Mayor of Abingdon reported that "wee have erected wthn our borough a workhouse to sett poore people to worke" and from then on "indoor-relief" became the norm. This was popular because workhouses saved the parish money and acted as a deterrent to the able-bodied who were required to undertake unpaid work, hence the name 'workhouse', in return for their board and lodging.

In 1834 the Poor Law Amendment Act was passed which was intended to end all out-relief for the able-bodied. The 15,000 or so parishes in England and Wales, each of which had been running their

own workhouse, there were 150 parish workhouses in Essex alone, were formed into Poor Law Unions, each with its own union workhouse replacing the earlier parish workhouses. Similar schemes applied in Scotland and Ireland.

Under the new Act, Maldon's Market Hill parish workhouse was acquired for use as a Union Workhouse, now to serve 32 parishes extending along the Blackwater.

To now accommodate as many as 350 inmates the Market Hill premises, which had been designed to accommodate 50 paupers (although some winters it had housed as many as 80), were enlarged by raising the roof to incorporate a third storey at a cost of £7,200. At the same time the accommodation for the sexes and the sick and infirm was separated to comply with the requirements of the Act and an additional building built to house the children.

During the 19th century Cromwell Lane became known as Union Lane because of the nearby Union Workhouse.

Each Poor Law Union was to be managed by a locally elected Board of Guardians and administered by a central Poor Law Commission. Hundreds of new union workhouse buildings were erected, but the Commission's original proposal to have separate establishments for each type of pauper (the old, the able-bodied, children etc.) was soon abandoned in favour of a single "general mixed workhouse.

Instead most of the new workhouses were built to a set design; a rectangular area surrounded by a high brick wall divided into four quadrangles by the four wings of the workhouse in the shape of a cross. The different sexes, children and the infirm, each had their own wing and separate quadrangle with no means of communication between them. In the centre of the building, linking the four wings stood a tower containing the offices and accommodation of the master.

The Union workhouses were intended to act as a deterrent and to be run on uniform lines. Poor relief would only be granted to those desperate enough to endure the dreadful conditions of the workhouse. If an able-bodied man applied for admittance to the workhouse his whole family had to enter with him - harsh punishment for his innocent wife and children whose only crime was that of being poor.

Life in a Union workhouse was intended to be as off-putting as possible. The buildings were deliberately grim and intimidating, designed to look like prisons. When admitted, people were stripped, searched, washed and had their hair cropped, then they were dressed in rough prison-style uniforms.

Men, women, children and the infirm were housed separately at all times and each group slept in communal dormitories. They were given only basic and monotonous food such as watery porridge called gruel, or bread and cheese. Super-

vised baths were given once a week.

Under such conditions it is hardly a surprise that Market Hill workhouse suffered at least two outbreaks of cholera.

The Workhouse Timetable

Rise at 5.45 am
Breakfast at 6.30 am - 7 am
Work 7 am till 12 noon
Lunch from 12 noon to 1 pm
Work from 1 pm - 6 pm
Supper and wash 6 pm - 6.30pm
Bed at 8 pm

The Workhouse Diet

There were six official diets all of which were described as a "slow process of starvation". A typical diet was;

Breakfast 6 oz of bread
Dinner 4 oz of bacon and 3 oz of bread or potatoes
Supper 6 oz of bread and 2 oz of cheese
(note 1 oz = 28.35 grams)

The official diet in HM Prisons was 292 ozs of food per week whereas the workhouse diet was between 137 and 182 ozs a week only.

Until 1842 all meals were taken in silence and no cutlery was provided, inmates had to use their fingers. All meals were kept dull, predictable and tasteless.

Work was deliberately tedious and meant solely to keep the inmates busy. Those able to do hard work were made to break stones or pick apart old ropes called oakum. One reason for workhouses often being called "The Spike" may derive from the spike used to separate the strands of oakum

- an alternative origin may have been from the spikes on the walls surrounding the workhouse.

Bones were crushed by hand to make fertiliser and this was considered a prize job by inmates who were so hungry they would pick any scraps of flesh off the bones to eat. Bone crushing was banned after 1845 - perhaps the authorities thought the inmates were getting fat?

The elderly or infirm sat in the day rooms or sick-wards with little opportunity for visitors. Parents and children were allowed only limited contact - usually just an hour or so a week on Sunday afternoons. At one workhouse a labourer gave notice to leave with his wife and children only to be told, "You cannot take your wife out. We buried her three weeks ago". Entering the workhouse was truly the ultimate in degradation.

By 1850's the majority of those forced into the workhouse were not the work-shy, but the old, infirm, orphaned, unmarried mothers and the physically or mentally ill.

In 1873 the Market Hill workhouse was replaced by St Peter's, Spital Road, and the old premises divided into work shops, tenements and a girls' school. Today the building exists as private houses.

Workhouses however, were never prisons. People could in principle leave whenever they so wished, for example when work became available locally. Some inmates, known as "ins and outs", entered and left quite

cont

frequently, treating the workhouse like a guest-house when times became hard, but sadly for many their stay in the Spike would be for the rest of their lives. In one instance a girl age 15 years died in the workhouse. Her records showed that she was born in the workhouse and had never been outside the place.

Union Workhouses became the largest and most significant buildings in most localities - St Peter's Hospital remains so in Maldon. The average workhouse population was about 400 while the largest workhouses often accommodated a thousand or more.

Eventually complaints began to grow about the conditions in many workhouses. Florence Nightingale, Louisa Twining and the medical journal *The Lancet*, were particularly critical of the insanitary conditions and most nursing care being provided by untrained and often illiterate female inmates.

In response Parliament passed the Metropolitan Poor Act which required workhouse hospitals to be separate from the workhouse proper. For inmates conditions changed very little apart from the abolition of uniforms and a little more freedom to come and go.

Workhouses also began to take itinerants and tramps for a night's accommodation. However, many men of the road preferred to stop at a "doss house" such as *The Castle*, a common beerhouse at the corner of Downes Road and North Street, because although both doss house and

workhouse charged the same, just pennies per night, they were not required to take a bath at the doss house.

Only towards the end of the 19th century did conditions gradually improve. Food became a little more varied and small luxuries such as books, newspapers and even occasional outings were allowed.

For instance, on George V's Coronation Day, 22 June 1911, inmates of St Peter's workhouse were allowed ham and eggs for breakfast, plus a pint of ale or mineral water mid-day, meat and potatoes with green peas for dinner, followed by rhubarb, jam tart or rice pudding. Every man received an ounce of tobacco and every woman two ounces of tea. In the afternoon the children were allowed to join with the town's school children to enjoy the day's festivities and the able-bodied adults had the opportunity of going out to see the town's decorations. This 'largesse' was considered to be so generous that it was marked as a red letter day in the workhouse! To experience their normal diet see previous page.

In the early 1900's children were increasingly housed away from the workhouse in special schools or in cottage homes which were often placed out in the countryside.

The workhouse era ended on 1st April 1930 and the 643 Boards of Guardians were abolished, their responsibilities passing to the local authorities. Some of the workhouses were demolished or became Public Assistance Institutions, to provide

accommodation for the aged, chronic sick, unmarried mothers and vagrants.

With the introduction of the National Health Service in 1948, many of the remaining workhouse buildings, such as St Peter's, were converted into hospitals. More recently the surviving buildings have increasingly been sold off for redevelopment, ironically, in some cases as luxury residential accommodation.

In 1773 the following parishes in the Maldon area had a workhouse or poorhouse;

Burnham, Goldhanger, Maldon, Purleigh, Southminster, Steeple, Stow Maries, Tillingham, Tolleshunt Major, Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Tollesbury, Great Totham, Little Totham and Woodham Ferrers

In 1834, after the Poor Law Amendment Act to form the Maldon Union, the following 32 parishes were grouped together. Before then each parish would have made its own arrangements to take care of the poor, sick or aged.

Althorne, Asheldham, Bradwell, Burnham, Cold Norton, Creeksea, Dengie, Goldhanger, Hazeleigh, Heybridge, Langford, Latchingdon, Maldon All Saints, Maldon St Mary's, Maldon St Peter's, Mayland, Mundon, North Fambridge, Purleigh, St Lawrence, Southminster, Steeple, Stow Maries, Tillingham, Tollesbury, Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Tolleshunt Knights, Tolleshunt Major, Great Totham, Little Totham, Woodham Mortimer and Woodham Walter.

Editors note:

The above article is based on numerous sources including "Essex Workhouses" by John Drury, published 2006 by Farthings Publications, "Maldon Workhouse" by Peggy Edmond, published 1999 and various web sites.



PEEL'S PEELERS KEEP THEIR EYES PEELED FOR PEEL

By Paddy Lacey

The Metropolitan Police, the country's first Force were formed in 1829 answerable to the then Home Secretary, Robert Peel, subsequently all police everywhere became known as 'peelers' or 'bobbies'.

I cannot personally recall ever hearing the police being referred to as 'peelers', but certainly my mother would speak affectionately of 'bobbies'. At school in the 1950's they were 'coppers' or 'rozzers', in the 1960's the 'fuzz' and during the miners' strikes the 'pigs' or worse.

The Maldon Borough Police Force was instituted by the local Watch Committee in January 1836, being the first in Essex by several months, and it can be safely assumed that at some stage between their formation and their eventual amalgamation into the Essex Constabulary in 1889 they were referred to as 'peelers', as well as other names, but this may not have anything to do with Robert Peel as under the Borough of Maldon Police Regulations, a copy of which has recently been passed to the Museum Association by Mick Berry of Essex Police, section ix. 18 states **'It will be the duty of every Constable to remove orange peel from the pavement'** adding that the 'foregoing Regulations apply as well to the Chief Constable as to other Constables'.

Mind how you go!

WELL WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

The patron saint of schoolboys is St Nicholas and during the Middle Ages on his feast day, 6 December, the custom of electing "Boy Bishops" was played out in many parts of Essex when a boy chorister would be chosen to play the part of 'bishop' until Holy Innocents Day, 28 December.

For that three week period the boy would be addressed as St Nicholas and treated with all due deference by clerics and laymen alike. The responsibilities of the 'boy bishop' included performing the duties of an adult prelate, singing Vespers and taking part in all the church services, except those which only an ordained priest could celebrate. He wore a cope and mitre and carried a crozier, and was supported by other boys acting as his lesser clergy. On his final day as 'bishop' he had to preach a sermon and take part in a procession where he would bless the people.

The custom was suppressed by Henry VIII in 1541, but Mary I revived it three years later before Elizabeth I abolished once more.

In 1899 Rev. H K Hudson reintroduced the custom in the village of Berden and the custom was revived in some other parts of East Anglia in the nineteenth century. In recent years the boy bishop ceremony has become popular again in some church schools in Essex



ST. CEDD'S CHATLINE

By Liz Willsher

As I write it is a beautiful, sunny, sharp, frosty morning, the kind of winter weather enjoyed by most people. There are even signs of Spring approaching. Thankfully this is in contrast to the snow, slush, then floods, which have prevented some of our team from meeting in the last two weeks.

At this time of year the St Cedd's team metamorphose into the display and maintenance hit-squad, joining up with our doughty handymen "the Chippendales", AKA Charlie and Graham, to transform the Museum with new and re-vamped displays and to return everything to a spotless and sparkling condition in preparation for the re-opening in April.

Judy Betteridge and I could not make the changes without the help of Betty Chittenden, patiently searching for and recording information to help with displays, Christine Steel and Margaret Simmonds, tirelessly polishing, buffing, washing and pressing, and backroom girl Julia Cottam providing the IT back-up. Chairman Paddy Lacey is of course always on hand with his extensive knowledge of local history and archival information, also doubling as a "Chippendales' mate" when necessary.

On the accessions front some items of interest have been received recently. Heybridge resident Yvonne Chetland has donated a most interesting collection of items, (formerly in her mother's possession), including games and toys, dolls, textiles and clothing, paper ephemera and photographs, all with good Maldon connections. Some of these items will be seen in the Museum for the new season.

Joe Grigsby, whose mother Beth Grigsby was long associated with the Blackwater Players drama group, has passed on to us a silver cup trophy presented to the group by the Maldon and Burnham Standard as winners of their prize for a carnival float entitled "Willow Pattern" in 1955. There is also a good collection of photographs of that event and of carnival floats from other years, which will go on display soon. Carnival floats in those days were so beautifully constructed and decorated, those involved must have taken such a pride in participating.

Whilst on this point I must mention long time Maldon resident and Museum Association member Elsie Foulston, whose late husband Stan was a stalwart member of Blackwater Players and can be seen in some of the photographs. She is also a friend of Judy Betteridge and former neighbour of Judy's parents.

Elsie is always an excellent source of local information, being in command of a good memory for names, and has many anecdotes to recount on past events in Maldon. For future generations verbal memories are invaluable, but all too often become blurred and confused with time as they get passed on.

We in the Museum, would always request that donations of any kind, but especially documents and photographs, come with as much identification and description of the occasion and persons involved as possible. In this way we can be sure of handing on a good record of what life was like in 20th and 21st century Maldon.

We hope to see many members and friends in the Museum during the forthcoming season and look forward to introducing our new female mannequin "Nurse Canning" recently acquired from Colchester Museums' service, with thanks to Ciara Canning after whom she is named!



George Washington and the Essex Regiment

We all know of Maldon's close ties to America's first President (his great-great-grandfather was once Rector of Purleigh Church), but were you aware of the very notable and close association between George Washington and the ancient 44th (East Essex) Regiment of Foot, now the 1st Battalion of the Essex Regiment?

In 1755 the 44th (known afterwards as The Gallant Little Fighting Fours), was serving in America against the French and their Indian allies. Their first engagement was the attack on Fort du Quesne, now Pittsburg, in 1755. This was not a successful engagement, but in the fighting the young George Washington, who had been attached as a volunteer officer to the regiment, distinguished himself.

Colonel Washington, as he then was, was Volunteer Aide-de-Camp to 60 year old General Braddock, an incredibly brave, but totally incompetent commander with no experience of Indian warfare, on his expedition against Fort du Quesne. Just prior to the battle Washington was seized with a fever and was forced to remain behind, relinquishing the covered waggon in which he had previously been travelling. Braddock's force was ambushed in the Monogahela forests and was completely routed.

Hearing of the battle, Washington, although much debilitated, left his sick bed and mounted his horse to ride twelve hours to rejoin the advanced division on the 8th July. The following day, he ably conducted the retreat from the disastrous battlefield. The battle which cost the lives of 700 British soldiers, had lasted two hours and twenty minutes, during which time the men had fired all the cartridges they could find - their own and those from dead and wounded. General Braddock had five horses shot from under him and sustained a musket ball through his right arm and lungs from which he died four days later. He was buried in the middle of the road with Washington conducting the burial service, after which the retreating waggons were driven over the grave so that the Indians could not find the body to take its prized scalp.

This was the first engagement for the 44th, which was one of the two regiments in General Braddock's command. Their colonel also fell in the action. Washington, who had two horses shot, often spoke in after years of the display of the British troops on the eventful morning of the 9th as being the most beautiful spectacle he had ever beheld.

The 44th later became the 1st Battalion Essex Regiment and twenty-one years after serving with Washington took part in the reduction of Fort Mifflin during the American War of Independence, and still later in 1814 they participated in the advance on Washington D.C. to attack General Winder's troops near the village of Bladensburg.

In spite of these later difficulties concerning places called Washington, the Regiment remained proud of once having had the great George Washington as a brave and distinguished comrade-in-arms in 1755.

My Mysterious Encounter with Walter Linnett

By Eric Willsher

This is my story of how I became interested in the life of Walter Linnett, a well-known local wildfowler, of whom I had never previously heard or read about, although his exploits had been well documented.

Between 1983 / 1998, I entered for the World/European Challenge 80 mile trail race, along the South Downs. Consequently this required consistent long distance training runs, which I mainly achieved by running between Maldon and Tollesbury, along the seawall pathway, gradually increasing my distance as the race loomed. Some of the training had to be done at night, and I would run without my head torch switched on, as the dim light from the night sky outlined the worn pathway which gave a white appearance against the surrounding grass.

One night I had quite a shock. I had reached the area opposite Bradwell Power Station, (on the Tollesbury side) when I saw a figure sitting on the edge of the sea wall looking out towards Bradwell. I experienced a feeling of sadness, backed up with sheer fright. Unfortunately pure instinct made me switch my head torch on, and the figure promptly disappeared - never to be seen again on any of my training runs!

I told my family and friends about the experience, mention-

ing the possibility that fatigue could have caused an hallucination, as I have never believed in ghostly forms etc. However several years later in 2007, I was doing some stewarding work in Maldon Museum and opened a book written by Stephen Nunn, "A Short History of Bradwell on Sea". To my amazement I had turned to a sketched picture of a man, identical to the figure I had seen on the sea wall, facial characteristics, hat and clothing all matched, the sketch enhancing his features as I remembered them. I read on and discovered the man to be a wildfowler from Bradwell named Walter Linnett.

Walter Linnett lived in a tiny single-storied cottage crouching at the foot of the Roman ruins (Othona) on the seaward side. Built well over 200 years ago to house a coastguard and his family (see *Penny Farthing Autumn 2007*), it was tenanted by the Linnetts for most of the time. Walter Linnett was the last to live there (he died in 1958, aged 81) and it was recorded that he looked like a Viking, lived by the gun and net, was shy and silent, a strong man without fear.

He shot more wild geese and duck than any other professional gunman on the coast. His punt (boat) carried a ten foot long punt gun, with the

barrel protruding from the bow of the punt. It was fired with Walter lying on his stomach at the bottom of the hull, keeping as low a profile as possible.

Although Walter appeared to lead a solitary life, his hunting area was a favourite destination for visiting "gentlemen shooters", which helped with his living standards.

Unfortunately some rare visiting birds were shot. Walter himself shot a flamingo, although he would not normally or purposely shoot rare birds, and was pleased when another person got fined for shooting a golden eagle. In a separate marsh area (Old Hall Marshes) Dr Salter, a well known local character, is said to have shot a visiting golden eagle, had it stuffed and presented it to Chelmsford Museum.

Volumes have been written about the punt gunners and their exploits, but I think it is a barbaric system of hunting. However I must limit my field and explain that Walter was regarded as a likeable and interesting character, particularly by a friend who used to visit as a young man. This friend was a poet / playwright named Roger Frith, who lived in his youth in Bradwell, and used to visit Walter to share the tranquility and beauty of his marshland domain.

Roger Frith wrote the following poem in his book "Immortality Farm" about an experience recounted to him by Walter:

The marshes are often described by many as bleak areas of solitude.

However, having spent some

time on my own in these surroundings one experiences nature in its perfect tranquil state. Roger Frith brings out the whole essence of these feelings in his poetry, and his friend Walter must have inspired him a great deal.

I was pleased to meet Walter (if only very briefly), he was my inspiration to learn more.

I must add that I have never had any interest in wildfowling, however most of the shooting was done in a different era, and was the accepted way of life. Time has moved on, and the realisation of humane treatment and preservation of wild life is fortunately upheld by most.

Special thanks must go to Martin Taylor of Bradwell, who knew Roger Frith and kindly lent me some of his signed books, and thanks to family and friends who encouraged my research.

Eric Willsher 2009



The air balloon sent off from the castle at Colchester, an Saturday se'night, was found on Monday last by Mr Cook, of Purleigh, in Hackman's Wood, where in falling it was caught by the boughs, rent, and had been trampled on by the hogs before found; but has since, we hear been repaired. As near as can be ascertained, it passed over Northey Island, or between that and Maldon, directing its course towards Mundon, when the wind changing easterly, sent it to the right of Purleigh, and on passing low over Kemp's Wood, the pigeons were observed to decamp suddenly, at the appearance of so unusual a visitor.

From the Essex Chronicle 9th January 1784

Once as I stood with Linnett

*Once as I stood with Linnett
in an estuary, he pointed Northwards
to Easthall Outfall and said:*

*"A man, 'e once come there;
I see 'im one mornin' near the Fall
Walk by the cottage down the wall
To where the shingle is;
And there I see 'im strip
Right down, wade into the sea;
'e swam an' swam right out
'e swam right out to sea,
I watched 'im for an hour it seemed
Not knowin' what to do
This bloke 'e sort o' hypnotized me,
But when 'e was out of sight
I sort o' panicked, ran like mad
To the nearest farm
To report 'is plight*

*"Not long after
the police came down
and I told 'em what I knew,
and they asked me to show 'em where 'e'd left
'is clothes, and I said 'I'm goin' to do;
so round the wall we went to where that stretch of shingle is,
and there we found the poor bloke's clothes
as a nearby policeman says:
'They picked 'im up five miles out to sea,
as dead as a stone 'e was -
except that 'e floated white and blue -
a pretty sight 'e looked says the crew -
and I don't doubt that 'e was.*

*"But what'd 'e want to go an' do
a thing like that fer?"
said Linnett in an estuary;
I shook my head
Before I said
"It certainly baffles me"
And since that day
I've often thought
Of that spot, and still peruse
A dark grey mental picture I have
Of that bloke's last glance at his shoes.*

The Essex Cheeses

By Pamela Spacey

Camden marvelled at their size, a grocer in Drury Lane sold them, and it is said they sailed to victory with Nelson at Trafalgar.

"They" were Essex cheeses, which were produced from ewes' milk, and noted over 300 years ago for their "extraordinary bigness" all over south-east Essex, sheep grazed on rich pastures.

"Between these bays (ie the Crouch and Blackwater estuaries) lies Dengy Hundred," wrote Elizabethan historian, Camden. "The grass here is excellent good, and well stocked, but the air none of the healthiest. The only trade that's drove here consists in cheese."

John Norden, in his survey of the county in 1594, also found that "this shire seemeth comparable to Palestine, that flowed with milk and honey," and remarked on the huge cheeses "wondered at for their massiveness and thickness."

Although the accounts of Ingatestone Hall in the early part of the sixteenth century indicate that the making of cheese from ewes' milk was practised further inland, it was the low marshlands of Rochford, Dengie, Tendring, Southminster, Foulness and Canvey that yielded "milk, butter and cheese in admirable abundance." Canvey alone had 4,000 sheep, and the

total production was high enough for cheese to be sold "not only into all parts of England, but into foreign nations as well".

The Complete Farmer, published in 1792 by the Society of Gentlemen, gives one reason. Salt. Being near the sea, the herbage was sprinkled with salt, of which sheep are very fond, and it was found that the ewes fed in these parts yielded more milk, and of a better taste. It was quite customary in some places to put in the sheep-house a bag of salt or a saline stone which "they all greedily lick, one after the other".

But although ideal for sheep, the climate did have some disadvantages. Not only was it common for a farmer in Rochford and Dengie Hundreds to have between six and fourteen wives in a lifetime, but as if that didn't bring enough harassment he still had to take his little three-legged stool and get on with the milking as well!

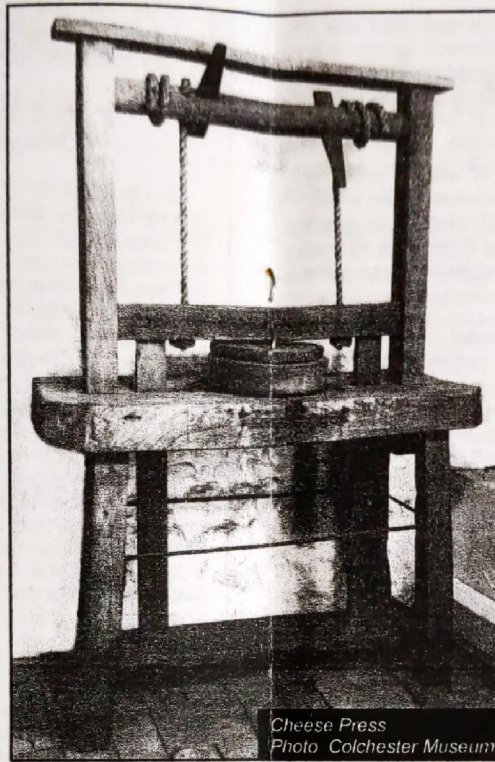
Apparently the farmers traditionally went to the "uplands" to find a wife, and these poor lasses, unused to the fogs and damps of the marshes, rapidly began to suffer from the "agues" after a year or so the farmer would return to the uplands to find another wife, but he always had to keep his hand in with

the milking as there were so few women around capable of doing it.

Perhaps he also had to lend a hand with the actual making of the cheese as well, which was done in the "wicks" or dairies built for the purpose. The milk was first slightly warmed in large copper pans, then curdled by adding rennet, which originally was a preparation extracted from the fourth stomach of a suckling calf. It would then be transferred to a tub, and when the curd had settled the whey was drawn off and after a short time the curd was

broken into small pieces and thoroughly squeezed to make it firm. It was then put into a cheese-mould lined with muslin. The moulds were then either put into a press in order to express any superfluous moisture, or left for the moisture to drain away.

The ripening of the cheese was an exact science and great care had to be taken. In 1787 Twamly described it thus: "When cheese goes from the press, let it be kept in as warm a state as you can till it has had a sweat, or is got pretty regularly dry and stiffish. It is warmth that makes



Cheese Press
Photo Colchester Museum

cheese ripe, improves the colour, and causes cheese to cut flakey, the surest sign of excellent quality." What are our cheese manufacturers doing wrong today one wonders?

It was considered detrimental to hardened cheese to keep it in the same room as new, moist cheese, so there was often a cheese loft, or storage room, in addition to the dairy. Providing that a notice was prominently displayed, this room was exempt from the Window Tax imposed by William III.

This was a useful saving as the utensils necessary to the business of cheese making represented quite a substantial investment. Cheese tubs, made of ash, cost 15 shillings each. The stands for these were 10 shillings each, and the cheese press 30 shillings. Then there were the cheese cloths, the copper pans, shelves for the cheeses and a cheese ladder for draining the milk.

All this meant a hefty outlay for the farmer, but the market was as solid as the cheeses themselves. Home sales boomed, and being located near the busy Thames, trade to the Continent was brisk. The cheeses were cheap and good for the "rusticall people, labourers and handicrafts men, to fill their bellies and feed upon." and feed their bellies they would too.

Essex cheeses, probably similar to Wensleydale, which was also made from ewes' milk at one time, were abnormally hard and very

economical. A lead, or 56 lb, of cheese was valued at 10 shillings in 1660, and the smaller cheeses, about 9 inches high and 7 inches in diameter, weighing about 11 lb, were valued at 2 shillings each.

But in time demand outstripped supply. London was soon consuming all that could be produced locally, and the cow, yielding ten times more than a ewe and easier to milk, took over. The last carrier with his load of Essex cheeses for the grocer in Drury Lane and elsewhere, left Steeple Bumpstead, where the last cheeses were made around 1900.

We may not see their like again, but we have a vivid description of them left to us in the words of John Skelton, a poet laureate in the reign of Henry VIII :-

*A cante of Essex cheese,
Was well a foote thick,
Full of maggots quicke.
It was huge and great,
And mighty strong meat,
For the devil to eat.
It was tart and punicate.*

Who knows? Maybe Nelson found Essex cheeses cheaper and more effective than cannon balls!

The above article was written by Pamela Spacey, first printed in the 'Essex Countryside' magazine in 1979 and the photograph supplied by Colchester Museum, to all of whom we give credit and make due acknowledgements.



Oh What Larks!

worry about today. We were free to leave home in the morning with a bottle of Tizer and a couple of biscuits and not return - grubby and hungry - until teatime.

Once away from home we had a whole host of games to play and we did not need anyone to organise us. Unlike one local authority which is currently employing a "Street Football Co-ordinator", presumably to show the kids how to use their coats for goal posts or chalk the goal onto the nearest brick wall. We were quite capable of working that out for ourselves thank you very much - we could also referee our own matches. In fact the quickest way of ruining a kids' game is for an adult to interfere and try to show them how it should be played.

All we needed for a great day's soccer was some sort of ball, any sort would do, football, beach ball, tennis ball, in fact anything that would bounce a bit - I've even played with my school cap - and enough players to make up two sides (a minimum of three per side, in which case only one set of goal posts would be needed). A football in those days was made of stitched leather patches and contained an inflated rubber inner ball and fastened with a leather lace. Extremely heavy, there was a danger of concussion when you tried to head the ball. The games were played in

all kinds of weather and only ever abandoned if the owner of the ball went off in a huff because he'd not been allowed to score or he had to go home hungry for tea.

Games tended to be seasonal; cricket in summer if we could rustle up a bat (usually home made) and a ball, conkers for a couple of weeks in Autumn and football at any time of the year. Among my friends we never played tennis because none of us was rich enough to own a racket.

The lack of motorised traffic meant that it was safe to play in the road, only stopping to let the occasional vehicle pass, so the streets were our playground.

Street games included British Bulldog, What time is it Mr Wolf?, Leap Frog, Knock Down Ginger, and Off-Ground-Catch among many.

Other pastimes included fishing for sticklebacks in the local stream (no rod or net needed - just wade up to your knees in the water and carefully lift up the stones to catch them by hand). We also used the same stream for playing Pooh-Sticks.

Swinging on the end of rope tied to the crosspiece at the top of an old fashioned lamp post or the limb of a tree made an excellent swing and could easily fill a couple of hours until some other game beckoned or the rope snapped.

We also built dens and tree houses, played Cowboys and Indians, Cops and Robbers, Pirates, or World War Two, although it was always difficult to get anyone to play the part of German soldiers.

Never having played with the girls (considered cissy and no self-respecting young lad would be seen dead doing so), I have no direct knowledge of the games they played other than that they appeared to be more sedate such as skipping, hop-scotch and pushing their dollies about in old prams.

We made go carts from any wooden box, a couple of bits of wood and four old pram wheels, then raced them down the middle of the street. If an old tyre could be found then we would take turns to sit in it while it was bowled down a hill or roadway. In winter we skated (without skates) on the local pond or tobogganed down the nearest slope on a tin tray or off-cut of wood and created death-defying slides on the icy pavements. All of which would give any modern health and safety officer a fit of the vapours!

If we were confined indoors because the weather was bad then board games, such as ludo, bagatelle or snakes and ladders were played. We also enjoyed blow-football and tiddly-winks. Cigarette cards and postage stamps were collected and swapped, or model aircraft made from balsa wood, which after hours of intense labour, always crashed with devastating results on their maiden flight. We also built things out of Meccano.

Manufactured entertainment was provided by the radio which broadcast special children's programmes such as *Toy Town* with Larry the Lamb and Mr Grouser the Mayor, *Dick Barton Special Agent*, *Journey into Space*, *Riders of the Range* and of course the much loved *Children's Hour* presented by Uncle Mac (Derek McCulloch).

Children read far more than they do today - we actually enjoyed reading! Books and comics were devoured avidly and the comics particularly, would be swapped time and time again. Often a comic would be swapped only to swap it back somewhat dog-eared, several months and many owners later.

Some of the comics we read were *Chips*, *Rainbow*, *Radio Fun*, *Film Fun*, *Beano*, *Dandy*, *Hotspur*, *Wizard* and *Rover*. These were usually very cheaply printed in two colours on pulp paper.

There was also a smattering of American comics, such as *Batman* and *Superman*, not usually available from local newsagents, but might be begged from American GIs, many of whom seemed to have imported them for their own consumption, and having read them, were happy to pass them on to us kids. These were considered a real boon as we did not have to waste our precious pocket money buying them.

We must not forget the *Children's Newspaper*, *Boys' Own* and of course the famous and wonderful *Eagle* in full colour!

Books most remembered inc-

lude *Coral Island*, *Wind in the Willows*, *Treasure Island*, *Winnie the Pooh*, *Just William* and the *Buffalo Bill Annual*, (a must Christmas present every year). There were also the *Scarlet Pimpernel* books and the *Greyfriars Stories* featuring that fat owl of the remove, Billy Bunter. Readers will no doubt have their own particular favourites.

Sadly, the proliferation of television, computer games and the strangle-hold of the health and safety industry is squeezing all the excitement, danger and adventure from our children's lives to the point that many no longer bother to play outdoors or even read for pleasure.

Is it not time to give the young back their childhood and let them enjoy the thrill of discovery for themselves?

Farewell Woolies

On Tuesday 6th January 2009 Woolworth's closed their doors for the final time after 75 years as a purpose-built store on Maldon's High Street.

In 1933 the magnificent four-storied house belonging to Dr Henry Reynolds Brown at 70 High Street was demolished and a multi-store bazaar was erected in its place, bearing all the evidence of Woolworth's individual architectural features. This site is now occupied by the WH Smith store.

In 1971 Woolworth's in their new house style, moved further up the High Street with the destruction of Nos. 44, 46 and 48; Gallants jewellers, Ifes chemists and Voltas confectioners respectively. Here Woolies became known to a younger generation of Maldonians as the outlet for records and tapes as well as the home of Pick'n Mix.

Maldon's Historic Churches



St. Peter's Church, Goldhanger

Like most ancient churches in the Maldon area, St. Peter's Church contains a quantity of Roman brickwork in its construction, particularly the quoins (corner stones) of the north wall. The church dates from before the Domesday Survey of 1086. The sunken floor is characteristic of Saxon buildings so the original appearance of St Peter's, Goldhanger, was possibly similar to St Peter's on the Wall at Bradwell which was built in 654AD.

Previously the manor of Goldhanger had been held by two Saxons, but following the Norman Conquest, Ranulf Peverel acquired extensive lands in the area including the manors of Goldhanger and Little Totham. He settled in Little Totham where he built a small church beside his house. The Domesday Book refers to the Manor of Goldhanger and a priest called Eldred, then in the 1100's, the two manors, together with their two churches, were merged under one rector, as the manor of Little Totham. It was about this time that Norman round-topped windows were installed which may still be seen in the north wall of St Peters.

The first locally recorded Rector of Goldhanger in 1285, was called "Nicholas" who had spent time in Newgate prison for killing a man.

Extensive work to St Peter's in the 14th century was undertaken when the height of the walls was raised, as is evident on the outside of the north wall. Caen stone facings from Normandy were used having been brought over as ballast in sailing barges then tipped overboard in the local creeks when no longer needed. Then during the 1400s the walls were raised for the second time and a tower added to the west end of the church, with the nave extended to meet it.

In 1348 Black Death halved the number of Essex clergy and the benefice was probably left vacant for some time.

The Revd Thomas Downing was removed from office during the Reformation, which also demanded the destruction of all shrines, pictures, paintings, monuments of miracles, glass windows, pilgrimages, idolatry and superstition.

In 1893 Frederick Gardner was appointed Rector and despite being confined to a wheelchair with motor neurone disease, organised several gold-hunting expeditions to Spitzbergen (see last issue of *Penny Farthing*). The Prince of Wales twice stayed as his guest at the Rectory during the 1920's.

In 1908 an Ellacombe Chimes mechanism was installed in the tower. Very few churches still have such chimes in working order. Even less in a tower with 8 bells so that tunes can be played. There is a repertoire of around 200 tunes.

In the churchyard are buried two Royal Flying Corps pilots who had been based at Goldhanger aerodrome during the First World War and killed in separate incidents.

Nikolaus Pevsner described St Peter's thus "The north side of the Church shows its 11th century origin ; one chancel window, the nave east angle and one nave window. Much re-use of Roman brick, 14th century south aisle mostly of flint, but also incorporating Roman bricks. The 15th century west tower with diagonal buttresses and some flint and stone decoration. The south arcade inside is of the 19th century. Stained glass: south chapel, south and east windows of 1858, typical of their date. Monument: Tomb-chest with black cover plate, one brass to a woman and indents of other brasses. The monument was to Thomas Heigham 1531."

There is a possible 12th century doorway in the north wall of the nave, much altered with a 15th century arch, and a late 15th century arch in the nave's south wall plus a 14th century doorway in the south aisle.

The roof of the nave is 15th century. The church contains an elaborate 16th century font on a cluster of pillars, some pews with doors, and an 18th century almsbox. There is a 15th century piscina (a stone basin for carrying away water used in rinsing church chalice etc.) and a carving of a man, an angel with ivy leaves possibly of the 14th century.

The above article has been compiled from material supplied by David Newman of Goldhanger to whom we express our gratitude.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR ALL STEWARDS

Please note that due to circumstances beyond our control the Annual Stewards' Meeting will now be held on **Thursday 2 April from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm**. The venue will be at **The Octagon, St Mary's Church** as usual.

Please make a note of the change and we do hope as many Stewards as possible will be able to attend - See you there.

Paddy Lacey



The Impact of Catastrophe

By Paul Rusiecki

There are thousands of books about the First World War, so one may wonder what possible need could there be for another one and what aspect could it cover that has not already been explored in great depth. Well here is a book about that terrible conflict which is different and certainly of great relevance to lovers of Essex and its history.

"The Impact of Catastrophe" tells the story of the people of Essex and their part in the First World War from 1914 - 1920. It shows with copious references to contemporary material, how the shadow of that Great War fell upon every aspect of life in the county.

Dr Paul Rusiecki brings to life the experience of those Essex people who sought to 'keep the home fires burning' in the face of shortages, blackouts and air raids. He also traces the growth of the movement to commemorate those citizens of Essex who fought and died for their country in the 'war to end all wars'.

The first chapter covers what the county was like prior

to hostilities; a population approaching one and a half million, half of whom were concentrated in less than ten per cent of its area; the impact of the agricultural depression and introduction of a comprehensive road and rail network; the decline of the fishing and agricultural industry with the consequent changes to employment and wages.

Following chapters deal with the outbreak and early days of the war; the disruption of a garden party as officers abandoned their teacups and departed within the hour; the rush to guard the coast and ports in fear of immediate invasion; the early capture of two German airmen who, due to mechanical failure, crashed into the North Sea; a reader of *The East Essex Advertiser* castigating "greedy, grasping tradesmen who, the moment there was a war cry raised their prices 50% to 100% and could not guarantee that the prices would not be raised further the same day".

Also covered is the attitude of the Churches and their exhortations to their congregations to 'do their bit' to

support our troops in this 'righteous war'.

A chapter on volunteers and conscripts is especially informative, giving breakdowns of their occupations and the numbers from many parishes. The pressures used to get men to enlist e.g. "waiters in every hotel should realise that if they could bayonet a German, it was not their duty to hand round greasy plates."

There is information about the returning heroes and their treatment. While other chapters deal with the defence of the county from air attack; how the civilians were sustained; farming and its problems; women and the part they played; spies, aliens and criminals.

The book concludes with the immediate post war years and an appendix of war memorials throughout Essex.

This is an excellent book worthy of its place on the bookshelf of any history enthusiast and lover of Essex. The author and Essex Records Office, who published the book in 2008, are to be commended for making it available.

MALDON'S SWING BRIDGE

Following a small item about Hall Bridge across The Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation which appeared in 'Times Past' in the last issue of Penny Farthing, we have received the following letter from reader Renate Simpson.

"Newly married in March 1945, just as Arthur's great desire to turn his attention to fish became a reality, with research vessels at last being safely taken out to sea with the end of WW2, so Lowestoft was equally ready to say goodbye to the naval personnel and could at last consider welcoming tourists again.

Meanwhile I sought and got a job as a housing officer at the Town Hall and was responsible for interviewing many hours a week for the various priorities there might be for applicants for one of the 250 prefabs that were to be made available. More than four times that figure might have begun to make some kind of impact on those homeless post-war families.

You may well ask what has all this got to do with Maldon? So I hasten to add that we lived in that much loved place for 25 years, but I did not know until today, when my favourite journal 'the Penny Farthing' came through our (by now) London letterbox, that there had been a swing bridge down in Heybridge.

It is probably true to say that Lowestoft's Swing Bridge was a good bit larger than Maldon's and probably made a greater impact on its population and certainly on me as a 21 year old. Working at the Town Hall in north Lowestoft, but living in its south, we were allowed to add 15 minutes to our lunch hour if we had experienced a 'Bridger' as it was known at the time. It certainly took every bit of fifteen minutes - especially if there was a queue of 2 or 3 boats to go through!

But there were compensations in that Lowestoft was then still a mighty fishing port and I can remember taking our very young children down there to accustom them to the wonderful world of fish. Herring was still important and the herring girls who followed them on their annual track down the East Coast had not yet become a thing of the past! Cleaning the herring and packing and weighing them in not the most hygienic circumstances and the girls were not considered high up the social ladder: tough and ready but they knew their jobs.

If at 85 years old I can remember the Swing Bridge of 60 years ago and the herring girls, I can't be the only one. Can we hear from others about the impact made by Maldon's swing bridge?

Meanwhile, best wishes to all our good friends in Maldon, including of course especially our wonderful Paddy who knows better than anyone how much the Museum means to our family!"

Renate Simpson.

Editor's Note: there can be no comparison between Lowestoft's and Maldon's swing bridges as the latter (Hall) bridge spanned the Chelmer Navigation which is only a canal about two barges wide. It is doubtful that there was ever much need for a bridge across the canal in the 18th century at that point and it ceased to exist sometime in the early 1800s. Any further information and history about Hall swing bridge at Heybridge would be of great interest and gratefully received by the editor.

TIMES PAST

Here are a few news items from fifty years ago which you may have missed the first time around.

1959

- Fidel Castro seized power in Cuba from President Batista.
- Queen Elizabeth II opened the St Lawrence Seaway between USA and Canada.
- De Gaulle was proclaimed President of Fifth Republic in France.
- Archbishop Makarios returned to Cyprus which became a republic.
- Hawaii became USA's 50th State.
- Bandaranaike, President of Ceylon, was assassinated.
- Brendan Behan wrote "The Hostage".
- Ian Fleming published "Goldfinger".
- Pope John XXIII called the first Ecumenical Council since 1870.
- Stanley Spencer, Alfred Munnings and Jacob Epstein died.
- The films "Anatomy of a Murder", "Our man in Havana", "Ben Hur", "Hiroshima, mon amour" and "La Dolce Vita" were released.
- Mario Lanza, film star and tenor, died.
- Richard Rogers' "The Sound of Music" was first performed.
- De Beers company manufactured a synthetic diamond.
- The first section of the M1 Motorway was opened.
- Swiss referendum rejected votes for women.
- European Court of Human Rights held its first meeting.
- Singer Buddy Holly killed in plane crash.
- Cod war between UK and Iceland.
- Rioting in the Belgian Congo.
- Cecil B de Mille, American film director died.
- Dalai Lama fled to India.
- USA two monkeys returned alive from a space trip.
- United Nations condemned apartheid and racism.
- Seven nations signed the European Free Trade Association pact.
- First television coverage of a British General Election.



HOW TO CATCH WINKLES ?

The following item appeared very much tongue in cheek, in the Maldon Advertiser. March 6, 1914



Notes by "Chelmer Angler"

How to angle for winkles is an exceedingly difficult problem to solve, and after numerous enquiries and references to angling works, I had almost given up hope of discovering the secret, when I happened to come across the following letter and the reply in "The Field".

If any local enthusiast cares to try the method, I shall be pleased to chronicle the results. It must however be borne in mind that angling is a contemplative man's recreation, and that winkle angling will be even more so, probably consisting of more "wait" than "see".

Angling for Winkles

A correspondent writes as follows: "Sir,- I have lately seen reference made in the papers to 'Angling for Winkles'. I have caught nearly every freshwater fish of the British Isles and a good many of the sea fish to be found round our coast, but I am profoundly ignorant about the above named sport.

A fresh thrill in sport is always agreeable, and I should be obliged if you would kindly tell me the best form of tackle to use. Do winkles ever rise to the fly, and if the water is discoloured would it be well to try a Devon minnow? Any hints would be gratefully received by yours piscatorially, E.G.R."

In a piscatorial (we had almost written Pickwickian!) spirit we will do our best to enlighten "E.G.R." on this abstruse matter, though we must confess to being guided by general principles rather than absolute experience.

Candidly, we do not think that the dry fly will be of much service, for there is no more resolute taylor than your winkle. So far as we know, he does not even permit himself to bulge and thus stimulate dry fly effort. We would not, however, express too decided an opinion on this point, in view of the occasional bulging tactics of his cousin the freshwater snail.

The Devon minnow may occasionally score with winkles if cast with precision and jerked along the rocks with complete disregard of expense. But at best this is a "chuck and

chance it" kind of fishing, scarcely worthy either of the sportsman or the winkle.

A better mode of fishing, more suited to the habits and character of the quarry, is also subaqueous, but more scientific. Nothing very elaborate in the way of tackle is needed, an ordinary tarpon or tuna rod and a Scarborough reel capable of holding enough line with a breaking strain of 60lb answering every requirement. A trace is unnecessary, for the winkle is not shy, and to the end of the line itself you may attach your chunk of old red sandstone, which serves as a lure. The cheerful colour probably aids success (for we cannot suppose that winkles are colour blind), but an authority whom we have consulted on the sport suggests that in very clear water a piece of hearthstone may be better.

The fishing itself is simple. You let down your stone, and wait till a winkle comes and sits on it. (This may be easily detected - no, we do not know how it may be easily detected.) Then you recover your line, remembering that *sauvter in modo* in this fishing is worth two

ANGLING FOR WINKLES

Continued from previous page

of fortiter in re. The authority mentioned has suggested that the stone fly may be more effective if dressed, not plain as described, but with ribbon weed hackles, bladder wrack wing, a topping of laver, anemone cheeks, and a tag of very small limpets. He adds that the chief run of winkles may be expected about the first Monday in August.

— * —

The above article was supplied by Judy Betteidge, who writes:

"I thought this amusing item might make a page for Penny Farthing. I found it very witty - what a shame that the standard of the Press these days doesn't reach these same dizzy heights.

Reading the item really made me laugh, recalling my father (a Blackwater fisherman), telling the tale of whilst selling winkles on what we used to call the "Bath Wall", a lady tripper said to him 'Tell me my good man, how do you catch these winkles?' Father replied, 'Why, with a rod and line of course, Madam'. Apparently, she went away, nodding sagely to her friend. I also remember, as a small child, enjoying my winkle tea on a Sunday, asking him 'What do winkles live on'. He

told me 'Dead donkeys, of course'. I never quite enjoyed them so much after that, until I was old enough to realise that the river wasn't littered with dead donkeys and my father wasn't quite the paragon of virtue that I had imagined, and not always as truthful as one would have expected from a parent".

PAST NEWS FROM MALDON'S NEIGHBOURS

Extract from the Chelmsford Chronicle
27th May 1991

We have pleasure to inform friends of the county-town of Essex, that by the generous subscriptions of the two Offices of Insurance, the Sun Fire and the Royal Exchange, together with what the inhabitants have contributed amongst themselves, it is intended to bring a much larger body of water into the town by inclosing more of the springs at the fountain head and re-building the conduit, now in a ruinous condition, upon a more elegant plan, to make it in some measure correspond with the magnificent New Shire House so near it.

Our Old Shire House being pulled down, the new one is now opened for inspection of the lovers of fine architecture, and exhibits a splendid object to all persons coming up the town; this elegant building, when completely finished, will not only do credit to the taste and spirit of the magistrates of this opulent county, and honour to the abilities of the architect, but will be of the greatest service and accommodation to every person frequenting the public meetings.

NEW WAY TO INCREASE OUR VISITOR NUMBERS?

People have been warned not to use the old phone number for Chelmsford Museum as it is now an adult chat line!

The warning comes after the council discovered that the number, which was changed two years ago, has recently been sold by the phone supplier to an erotic chat line company.

The correct number to call for the museum is 01245 605700.

Yellow Advertiser 20 November 2008.

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These advertisements appeared in the *All Saints' with St Peter's Parish Magazine*, December 1970.

Are any of these companies still in business?

Notice the advertisement for Spindles, once the home of Maldon Museum.

Maldon District Museum Association

Registered Charity 301362

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Vice Presidents - Mr L.F. Barrell
Mrs B Chittenden

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Museum Reception Telephone No. (01621) 842688

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E mail: enquiries@maldonmuseum.org.uk

Web site: www.maldonmuseum.org.uk.

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

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"The Museum in the Park"
47 Mill Road, Maldon, Essex. CM9 5HX

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