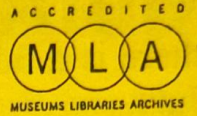


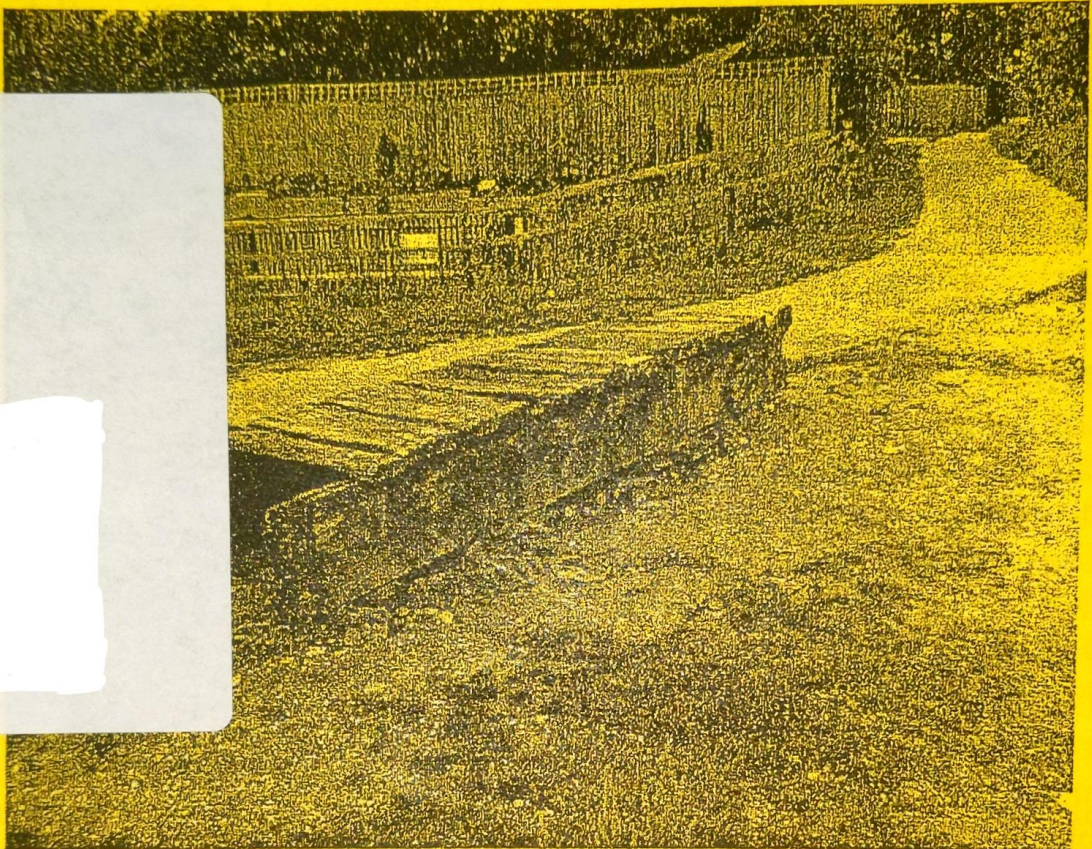
THE PENNY



FARTHING



The Maldon District Museum Association Newsletter



In search of the Heybridge chunker - see page 7

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CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

We have found that although our visitor figures hold up well month by month, there is a falling away in the summer months, usually June but this year in July.

This was addressed last year by the introduction of a new leaflet giving details of the Museum with its opening times and contact details to be produced with a coloured image on the first sheet. The design was performed in-house by Liz Willsher. The leaflet was then distributed to local museums, businesses, hotels and guest houses.

It appeared to produce good results with an increased attendance in August. It is to be hoped that this will be repeated this season. Stewards and members paying a visit will have noticed that a leaflet holder has been placed close to the entry door so that even when closed visitors to the Museum can obtain full details.

After many years of organising the distribution of our publicity material, such as this newsletter, as well as liaising with the media, Molly Middleton will be retiring from the post of publicity officer at the end of this season. During this time Molly has fashioned her own job description that we are now anxious to pass on to another volunteer.

Can you assist us in this important and interesting work with view to taking over the post of publicising our 2011 season? I do hope that one or more members will come forward to assist as in this time of national financial problems successful marketing and publicity becomes of even greater importance.

We are looking forward to taking an active part in the Heritage Open Weekend, Saturday and Sunday September 11 and 12. This is an ideal opportunity for anyone, who is doubtful about museums, to pay a taster visit and see what it is all about and then return at a more peaceful time. Please publicise this to your friends and neighbours, who will be made most welcome.

Paddy Lacey

Penny Farthing is dependent upon your contribution.

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

Please send to: Kelvin Brown, 22 Granger Avenue, Maldon CM9 6AN.

Tel: 01621 856528 or e-mail: kelvinbrown@tinyworld.co.uk

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When elections in Maldon meant fraud and corruption

Before the Reform Act of 1832 enfranchised the middle classes, Maldon's two Members of Parliament were elected by the freemen of the town. That might have seemed a fair way to do it at the time, but it was anything but.

In the 1761 election, the enrolment of additional freemen on the eve of the poll by the dominant party is recorded as having taken place both at Maldon and at Colchester.

The *Ipswich Journal* reported on January 31, 1761: "On Thursday the 22nd inst, this town was much alarmed by the bailiffs, aldermen and common council being convened at 9 o'clock at night, to mak a large body of honorary freemen to support the election of two candidates who had met with no favourable reception in their canvass; and at midnight a resolution was taken to make 270 freemen."

In the 1826 election the electorate comprised 2,527 freemen who lived 'in the town and country' and 586 in London! If the 1832 legislation was meant to ensure fair elections, it didn't work! The *Suffolk Chronicle* reported on December 30, 1848: "From 1832 to 1847 every election in the town of Maldon has seen a contest. All have been in character the same - corrupt from first to last.

"In '32 the contest was only comparatively pure. In '35 the cost was much increased. In '37 the place was quite corrupt. In '41 'twas very much so. In '47 nothing could be worse...a month before the election they commenced their active canvass. In the midst of it the tap, as usual, was let loose. It always had been before, and why not therefore now? "Supper parties became fashionable; at several of these the candidates attended.

Wine, punch, brandy, anything you pleased, was the order of the day. "The punch was mixed in mighty bowls, the brandy-grog in tubs. No small measures satisfied the folks of Maldon.... "For three full weeks one shocking scene of drunkenness prevailed in Maldon and its adjacent hamlets. One man died from the effects of drink. Another was run over by a waggon as he went home drunk at night, and killed. Verdict: 'Accidental death'."

Things were no better in the 1880 election, when George Courtauld beat Sir William Abdy by just 18 votes. Tolleshunt D'Arcy GP Dr John Salter recorded in his diary that Maldon was "one of the most corrupt places in the country." *(There will be more on that election in the next Penny Farthing)*

Kelvin Brown

Happy memories of those days of steam

Charles Middleton, who spent 5 years driving steam locomotives in a 25-year career driving engines, remembers the J15 class 0-6-0 tender locomotive



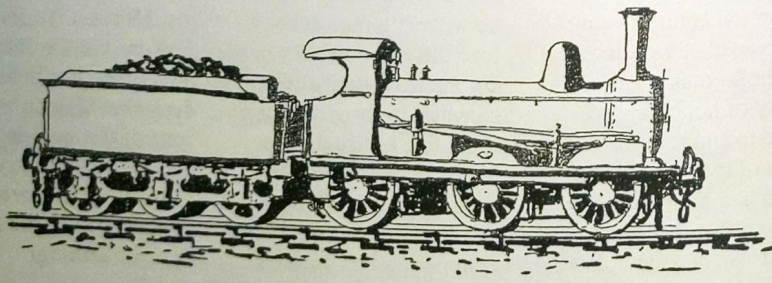
On the front cover of Dennis Swindale's book *'Branch Lines to Maldon'* is a picture of a J15 0-6-0 tender locomotive pulling coaches over the trestle bridge at Wickham Bishops on the Maldon-Witham branch line.

These engines were a regular feature on the line for many years, but few people are aware of their history or the fact that this class of locomotive still holds a world record.

When in 1882 it was realised that the Great Eastern Railway was in need of heavy mineral locomotives, Worsdell, the Superintendent at that time, built the first of this class in 1883 at Stratford as a Y14 class. Building continued with only very slight modifications up until 1913, making a total build of 289 locomotives of this class.

In 1936 the London and North Eastern Railway took over and classified these engines as J15s and they worked all over their vast system. Many of these locomotives worked until the very end of steam in 1962 and one is still in regular service on the North Norfolk line. They were a simplistic engine which, because of their tender, had both water and coal capacity to stay out for long periods on isolated branch lines and they could handle both goods and passenger trains.

I remember in the 1950s when engines were in short supply a J15 was the only motive power available to me to work a passenger train from Liverpool Street to Southend Victoria. A surprised passenger came up to the engine when we arrived at Rochford and asked the age of the engine. I referred him to the plate on the tender which to his amazement said 1884.



However, the tender may well have been older than the engine. On another occasion I was shunting a goods train at Shenfield when the engine of the London-bound Hook of Holland broke down. Off the passengers went to London headed by my J15 complete with continental headboard. I wished I could have been at Liverpool Street to see the surprised faces of the staff and passengers.

So what of the world record?

In 1888 a locomotive was constructed at Crewe from start to finish and was in service in 25 hours 30 minutes.

Of course, the Americans had to challenge the record and later that year the time was reduced to 16 hours 15 minutes at their Altoona works.

However, in December 1891 a team of 137 men gathered at Stratford works and built a Y14 from scratch and had it painted, and in steam in 9 hours 47 minutes. It went straight into service and was eventually scrapped in 1935 after 44 years of service.

This world record stands to this day and with the demise of steam it is unlikely to ever be broken.

When one compares these engines to the lifetime of the modern car there can be no comparison. As one old driver once said to me: "These old engines don't owe anybody anything" I hope those who visit and work at the museum enjoy the late Geoff Albury's model of Maldon Railway Station and, by the way, the model "driver" on display is wearing my original old railway overalls.

'Branch Lines to Maldon' is on sale in the Museum shop.

Maldon High Street a century ago



A PECULIAR RELIGION

Tillingham has an interesting religious history: King Ethelbert ceded the Manor of Tillingham to Bishop Mellitus of St Paul's Cathedral in 610AD, making it the oldest manor owned by St Paul's.

Its lovely old 12th century St Nicholas' Church has been added to over the centuries, including a 13th century chancel, 14th century west tower, 19th century south porch and a clock installed to commemorate Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1887.

But Tillingham saw the rise of another religion in the 19th century, when the Peculiar People built a chapel there.

They were a religious sect formed in the 1830s by Rochford farm worker's son James Banyard, whose life changed after listening to a Wesleyan Methodist preacher.

He and William Bridges turned an old workhouse in Rochford into a chapel and named themselves The Peculiar People, taken from a number of Biblical references, including a line in The Book Of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament, and meaning 'separate' or 'apart

By Kelvin Brown

Within a few years there were 30 Peculiar chapels, including Tillingham, which was opened in 1867, Maldon, Little Totham and Steeple.

The Peculiar People were far more than simply just non-conformist; they were very principled people who were puritanical in the extreme, preaching a religion that appealed to a great many people living a hard and fairly solitary life around the remote Essex marshes.

One of their fundamental beliefs was in divine healing, which meant they would not accept orthodox medicine for themselves or their families, instead accepting only a laying on of hands by the pastor or leaders of their chapel. Inevitably, it led to deaths which they accepted as God's will, but led to conflict with those outside their community.

The devout Peculiar People were expected to lead exemplary lives; they were teetotal and both men and women wore plain and sombre clothing.

They were expected to attend chapel every Sunday, in all weathers and

whatever their health.

In some chapels, if not all, the service lasted all day, with a break for lunch. The day was dominated by prayer, and hymns were sung without music.

Tillingham was one of the congregations affected by an internal disagreement when some members joined the breakaway Original Peculiar People, opening a second chapel in the village in 1897.

The schism was healed in 1913 when the two groups came together again and the second chapel was closed.

Although able to attract 1,300 people to its harvest supper in Chelmsford in 1920, the popularity of the religion declined in the 20th century, with many chapels closed or merged with other non-conformist churches.

The now-disused Tillingham chapel became part of the Union of Evangelical Churches but the chapel at Steeple was last used for worship in the 1950s, and today is a house.

The former Peculiar People's chapel beside the Farleigh shop in Maldon is now a business premises.

In search of the strangely named Heybridge chunker

On the track of the Heybridge chunker I went first to the Daisy Meadow Car Park at Heybridge Basin and climbed on to the tow path walking towards the lock. I found a pile of assorted old timber with handmade nails. The timber appeared to be oak hewn with an adze.

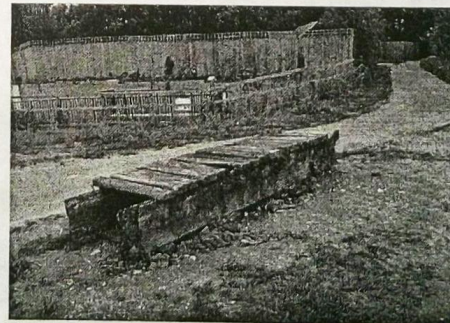
It was raining steadily so I decided not to photograph the wood pile but continued on to the Wilkins Riverside Tea Room for a restorative filter coffee, scone and a preserve. Some time later I retraced my foot steps past the pile pausing at the canal trip ticket office to ask if that was the Heybridge chunker that I had seen. The ticket man said it was but there was a better piece close to the Black Bridge in Heybridge.

I then drove to park outside the MCVS office in Heybridge and walked along the canal bank towards Chelmsford; about 200 metres from the bridge is the chunk of the chunker that appears in the photograph below. It lies opposite its modern equivalent which is a device to prevent Heybridge flooding. If this was the *raison d'etre* for the original it obviously did not work too well as there is a history of regular inundation of Heybridge.

This said, it is a remarkable piece of 18th century technology. It measures 4 metres by 1 metres and must be immensely heavy.

There is no way that we would wish to display it in its entirety and it was completely correct to offer to have a section through it providing that transport, conservation and most importantly interpretation be provided for us. My personal feeling is that an industrial archaeologist should survey all parts of the chunker and that the parts of it photographed should remain where they are as part of a Canal Trail, together with an interpretation board and the remainder disposed of as thought fit. If all rescued parts are to be saved then the Museum of Power might provide a suitable home for this interesting local artefact..

Paddy Lacey



Known as the Heybridge chunker or Elms Farm chunker, this box culvert dating from the 1790s, carried Langford Ditch under the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. It stood the test of time for more than 200 years before a collapse posed a potential flooding risk, and so it had to be replaced by a modern culvert.

Maldon's famous Carmelites

Two Priors and a curious play

By **Stephen P. Nunn**

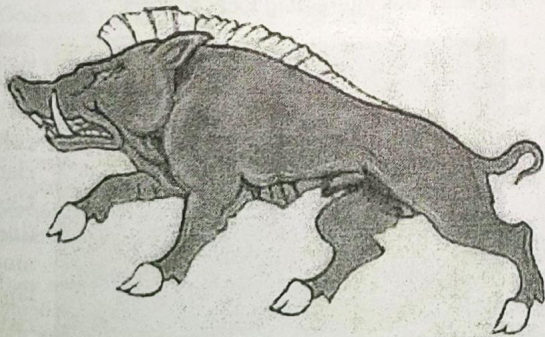
Visit Thomas Plume's Library (founded in 1704) and amongst the many fascinating tomes in the collection there you will find a copy of John Weever's 'Ancient Funerall Monuments', published in 1631 (STC25223).

Don't let the morbid title put you off, have a look at it for it is packed with fascinating clues to our local past. On page 608 you will find an entry about Maldon. Weever tells us that "...here in this towne sometime stood a religious house of Carmelites or White Friars...".

He was, of course, quite right, for the Maldon Carmelite Friary was founded in 1292 by the then Bishop of London, Richard de Gravesend (d.1303) and the Clerk to the Friars and one time Vicar of South Hanningfield, Richard de Islesham. It originally stood on the site of Maldon's present-day public library and car park. Maldon's Carmelites were well thought of servants of

God who worked very closely with the town's people, caring for the sick and the poor. They generated little income for themselves so relied heavily on bequests from locals for their survival – not least in wills like that of William Howell who left them, in 1491, a "supply of beef to be delivered to the Maldon Carmelites every quarter for the year following my death...". So the picture we have is of a medieval mendicant order who were in the centre of town looking after both the physical and spiritual needs

of the local population – but there was an awful lot more to them than that. Weever even names some of them and refers to them as "great schollers" including Robert de Colchester, William de Horkesley, Thomas de Hatfield and Thomas de Maldon. What is fascinating about this group of friars is that they all carry locative by-names, denoting that they were literally from those places. The individual who is of most interest to us, therefore, is the last named Thomas (of Maldon). Weever (1576-1632)



goes on to give us an outline of Thomas's life – he was apparently born in Maldon, brought up by the town's Carmelites, studied at Cambridge (where he "profited in all kinds of learning") and eventually returned to his native town to become Prior no less – a real local boy made good.

We think his birth was sometime around 1334 and he may have been orphaned as a result of his parents becoming victims of the Black Death. (About 400 Maldonians perished in that epidemic). There is evidence that he showed early promise as a scholar and he was sent to London to study before then going on to Cambridge where he became a leading theologian of his time.

He was described as "outstanding among the Cambridge Doctors" and "most expert in theological studies and the doctrines of philosophers" and wrote many dissertations and sermons. We know the titles of some of his works thanks to his early biographer – yet another Maldon Friar and equally fascinating character, John Bale.

Weever also writes about Bale and his (unfinished) history of the Carmelite Order – 'Anglorum Helia-des' (MS Harley 3838). Another great scholar, writer, playwright and preacher, Bale was born at Cove, near Southwold, in 1495 and educated at Norwich and Cambridge (where he obtained a BD).

He was, however, altogether different to his predecessor, Thomas Maldon. Bale also became Maldon Prior, but for just a very brief period during the years 1529/1530. His time in Maldon was nevertheless a controversial one, especially as he became a champion of the new Protestant cause. (His conversion to Protestantism probably began at Cambridge).

I first published my research into Maldon's Carmelites back in January 1985 (MAG Ecclesiastical Report number 7), before Arthur Simpson wrote his booklet 'The Carmelite Friary at Maldon' (MAG 1986). However, just a couple of years ago I had cause to correspond with someone at the Laurentian University in Canada about Prior Bale. The picture which emerged



as a result of that recent exchange is a really fascinating one. Maldon has a long tradition of town plays, beginning with pre-Reformation religious dramas, like the one that took place in Heybridge "on the Sunday before Whytensundaye in the yere of our Lorde 1532". We know that these occurred on more or less a three-year cycle, but the production on Relic Sunday in July 1540 was apparently "hijacked" as a vehicle to promote Protestant ideas. It was by all accounts a particularly spectacular event and was staged in the ruins of the dissolved Friary, closed on 10 December, 1538.

Continued P10

Maldon's famous Carmelites - from P9

There are contemporary records of the costumes and props used on that occasion and the purchase of some 1,500 "liveries". These were paper badges marked with some kind of insignia and then sold to the audience. None survive and so we have no clear account of what they actually looked like. The "producer" of the event was a London draper called Thomas Felsted (d.1545) of Wigborough and the playwright was none other than the former prior himself, (Dr.) John Bale. He had written (by 1536) a trilogy – 'God's Promises', 'John Baptistes Preachnge' and 'the Temptation of Our Lord'. In the Baptism play there is a very curious reference to a "liverye token", directly reflecting the later sale of those liveries at the Maldon play. In the play, baptism itself metaphorically becomes such a token and Christ

announces his affinity with the audience by noting he has their "liverye token". Such references echo the martyr William Tynedale's (and later Protestants') explanations of the sacrament of baptism. But it would appear that Christ's "livery" in this case might also reflect the selling of liveries at the Maldon play. So whose livery was it. The clue is in the commissioner of Bale's work – one John de Vere (1490-1539), the 15th Earl of Oxford of Castle Hedingham fame. The de Veres had an estate in Maldon (called 'Earls') and this was managed for them by John Church (d.1554), a local lawyer and one-time owner (from 1539) of the Moot Hall. Church was awarded the de Vere insignia of a blue boar with a golden hoof, tusks and bristles, for display on his badge of office and on his property – today we know it as the 'Blue Boar' hotel. Given that John de Vere had only recently died and that the play was dedicated to him, it is highly likely, therefore, that the liveries at the 1540 play were small

images of the de Vere boar. So we may well have solved one mystery, but what happened to the ex-Prior-cum-closet-Protestant playwright? In 1533 John Bale went on to become the last Prior of Ipswich and then moved to another friary at Doncaster. Whilst there a heretic confessed that Bale had taught him that "Christ would dwell in no church made of lime and stone by man's hands". The confession directly mirrors some lines in one of Bale's plays; "not yet, as they call it, a temple of lime and stone - but a lavish building, grounded in faith alone" (cf. *Petchey*). Amazingly Bale survived that incident, but then left the Carmelite order, got married and renounced



John Bale

his (Catholic) vows completely to become Bishop of Ossory, in Ireland, in 1552. An incredibly lucky escape given that just a few years later in Maldon, on 28 March, 1555, a butcher, Stephen Knight, was burned at the stake for his Protestant faith. (Not near the Ironworks building where the plaque is located but in the market square outside All Saints' church). And what of Bale's predecessor? Thomas Maldon had ended his days loyal to the then established faith and in the place where he was born and named after – Maldon. His passing occurred in 1404, at the age of about 70, and he



Maldon Library in on part of the Friary site

was buried in his beloved Friary church. Returning to Weever, we discover that on Thomas's grave was written (in Latin) this epitaph; "here lies Thomas, pride of the Carmelite Order, kindly leader... (of) beauty,

character and (of)... eloquent tongue..." His grave is lost to us now although, in 1990, excavations in advance of the construction of the public library revealed part of the old Friary cloister and, most importantly, the traces of some burials. Were the remains the last resting place of Maldon's famous son? We will probably never know, but spare him a thought when you visit Maldon Library or, indeed, when you next have a pint in the Blue Boar; remember his controversial Protestant successor and the curious badges sold at the town play all those years ago.

Some disadvantages of town life 1748-49

Public nuisances were common in Essex towns in the eighteenth century, as entries from the Borough Sessions Book in April 1748 show: Joseph Pattison upset his neighbours by laying dung in the highway in the back lane behind the Blue Boar garden. 'The inhabitants of the parish of St Peter' were

in trouble for a post lying or hanging across the road between Pound Mead and Pinchgut Hall, which was on the west side of Fambridge Road. Edward Hawker failed to clean out his ditch leading from the town dung hill to Pinchgut Hall. 'The inhabitants of the parishes of St Mary and

St Peter' failed to repair Ram Alley Lane, the old name for North Street. Among entries in October 1749, James Pattison was once again in trouble for laying dung in the highway and Morris Frisby let his cows damage the footpath in the lane behind the Blue Boar.

Remembering happy days - with hide and seek on Osea Island and 2d cornets on the Prom

Born in Promenade Cottages in 1917 into one of Maldon's oldest fishing families, the Pitts, Elsie Foulston looks back today on a happy childhood.

They were days of catching butterflies in the churchyard – then letting them go, of course – of playing on the Prom with whip and top and of catching newts in the bowling green pond.

But they were also days when families had to watch every penny and Elsie remembers collecting glass jars to sell for a few coppers to buy sweets.

"We were happy, but I know there were many families that weren't – times were tough," she recalls.

She was one of eight children of fisherman Arthur 'Tablo' Pitt, who kept his family well supplied with what came out of the Blackwater and, courtesy of his beloved punt gun, with some of the ducks and

geese that were unfortunate enough to land on the river.

"One of the highlights of my childhood was going on my dad's boat on a Sunday morning, and he would drop us off on Osea Island where we would play hide and seek and have a marvellous time."



Elsie Foulston

During each year's summer holidays her father would row young Elsie across the river to Paddle Dock from where she would walk around the sea wall to Heybridge Basin to

spend the holidays with a family there.

She helped put the family's ducks out in the morning and got them in again in the evening, and remembers that in those days there was only one water pump in the village, so people would collect their water in buckets suspended from a yoke.

She also remembers playing on the timber boats and getting a ride on a horse-drawn lighter taking the timber up to Chelmsford along the canal. "We used to get a ride on the wood boats with Mr Crisp as far as Beeleigh, and walk back."

Regatta day was a memorable occasion for Elsie and her young friends. "Maldon Town Band would come with buckets of sweets, there was a greasy pole and my dad would sail in the smack races," she remembers.

"Sunday night was a family night. Most of the fishermen used to take

their wives along the Bath Wall, and our treat was a twopenny cornet."

Elsie went to St Mary's Sunday school and went to church in the morning, afternoon and evening. One of her Sunday tasks was to fetch her Sunday school teacher from the Middleton home for the blind in Wantz Road. "People there used to save their farthings for us and it was magic to us then because you could buy something for a farthing. We had Sunday school outings to Southend. My mum would give me twopence for the day and I would have to buy my dinner out, which would be a saveloy and a roll."

Her father used to fish with his brothers and later three of Elsie's brothers. She remembers him being broken-hearted when he had to sell his punt gun, and also remembers how he stored the gunpowder for it in a cupboard by the fire!

The nearest shops in those days were Mrs Mills' bakery in North Street, Mrs Waskett's sweet shop and Markham's rock shop;

at the top of Church Street was a large barn where Mr Boreham had his rag and bone business and where young Elsie would take empty jars and rabbit skins to earn a few coppers to spend with Mrs Waskett. During the 1920s there used to be a lot of tramps around in the summer. "They used to sit on the grassy bank outside the church; they would give an empty cocoa tin and mum would put water and cake in. They never caused any trouble," says Elsie.

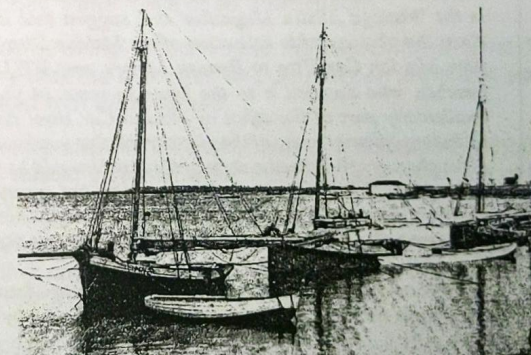
Mondays were special in the Pitt household. Young Elsie looked forward to corned beef with mashed potato and Daddies sauce, followed by her mum's special rice pudding.



Arthur 'Tablo' Pitt in a portrait by Maldon artist Barry Pearce

In many ways it was an idyllic childhood - it was certainly a very happy one - and it didn't end until Elsie got her first job at age 14, as a nursemaid to a family in Cross Road for 4/- a week.

Kelvin Brown



Fishing smacks along the Bath Wall

Maldon Car Hire & Taxi Fleet



The above period photograph was kindly sent in by John Blizzard who spotted it in the 'Maldon and the Dengie Hundred' edition of 'Images of England' by Tempus Publishing. The vehicles featured from left to right are a large Buick saloon of about 1930/31, a large (20/4 or 6?) Austin with what John believes may be a Gordon landaulet body also of 1929/30, and two Morrises, an Isis or Morris Major, and a Morris 10/4. The photograph passed from Maldon Car Hire to Bennett Motors just after World War 2, and it was Mike Bennett, a family member who donated it to the museum some 14 years ago. Permission to publish was very kindly given by Maldon District Museum who now own the photograph. - The following letter being received by them on the subject:-

Dear Mr Stringer,

I can see no objection to the photograph of Maldon Car Hire and Taxi fleet being published in the 'Vintage Austin Magazine' and suggest that it is accompanied with the byeline - 'From the photographic collection of the Maldon District Museum'. The photograph passed from Maldon Car Hire to Bennett Motors post WWII and it was Mike Bennett, a family member, who donated it to the Museum some 14 years ago, sadly Mike has since died. Incidentally part of the office of Maldon Car Hire/ Bennett Motors is currently on display including a framed copy of the photograph that you have described.

If the photograph is used a copy of the article would be much appreciated for our records.

I wondered if Runs for the vintage Austins are organised. We had a visit from the local Bullnose Marris Register, which was very enjoyable and we should be most happy to welcome sufficient Austins at some stage to replicate the photo, less the Buick of course!

Best regards!

Paddy Lacey, Chairman, Maldon District Museum Association and compiler of 'Maldon and the Dengie Hundred' in the Images of England series by Tempus Publishing.

The photograph was taken at the junction of Mill Road and Park Drive - very close to the Museum. Part of the brick gateposts of the Prom gates can just be seen behind the car on the far right of the picture

Maldon's Historic Churches



All Saints', Ulting

The lovely little church of All Saints' at Ulting is in an idyllic position, on the north bank of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation upstream from Hoe Mill, where a church has stood since about 1150 AD.

The church's interesting and informative guidebook says that its siting next to the river and not near Ulting Hall, suggests that the site may have been an early Christian meeting place in Saxon times.

The earliest records show that, in 1299, Robert Fizwalter, Lord of the Manor of Ulting, gave the church to Beeleigh Abbey, three miles or so downstream.

A chapel dedicated to 'Our Lady of Ulting' stood next to the church for at least 100 years from the mid-14th century until the mid-15th, and became an important place of pilgrimage, said to have ranked with Walsingham.

All Saints' underwent a major restoration in 1873 after part of it collapsed; although the interior was remodelled on classic Victorian lines, there is much evidence of the early fabric on the building, including 13th century windows and font.

Its single bell was cast in 1636 by Miles Graye at Colchester - and the date would suggest that it was Miles the father rather than Miles the son: between them they cast hundreds of bells over at least half a century.

Sadly, the church's remote location down a country lane, means it has to be kept locked, and All Saints' greatest treasure, an Elizabethan chalice and paten from 1571, have to be kept in a bank vault, but fortunately it is used on special occasions.

Memories of the Prom Tea Rooms in the 50s and 60s

When I was 11 years old, two changes happened in my life. The first was when I started at Maldon Grammar School, the second the re-opening of the Promenade Tea Rooms in Maldon under the joint ownership of my mother Mrs Agnes Lavender and my soon-to-be stepfather Mr C. Last. The cafe had previously belonged to Mr and



Ann Puttock's mother and stepfather

By Ann Puttock

Mrs Last senior and was a wooden structure on the same site selling not only food but local postcards and Goss china ornaments. Outside there was annually a marquee where concerts and talent shows took place.

Then from 1939 to 1945 it became the British Restaurant run by my stepfather. The building by that time needed structural repair, so my mother, having been widowed during the war, and looking for secure investment, decided to invest in the new brick building.

The format began as before, with white tablecloths (washed on site, pressed in a mangle and dried on a linen line), silver cruets and individual flowers in vases,



Ann Puttock

chintz curtains, waitresses in black and mother and stepfather in starched white coats. They made their own ice cream in a unit used since the old café; it was soft and delicious (I still have the cornet dispenser). They did roasts and delightful fish and chips as well as various dishes all hand-made on site (you needed muscles to work the hand potato chipper). The prices make interesting

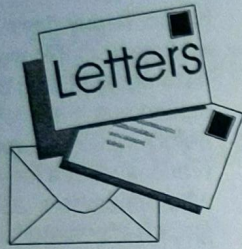
reading, and my son, local historian Stephen Nunn, has copies of menus and takings in his archive. The raw ingredients were mostly locally supplied. The cakes and bread were from Taylors bakers of Fullbridge, the meat from Pipes the butcher in the High Street, the fish from Douglas Balls, the potatoes from a Mr Moody and the lemonade and ginger beer from R. Whites.

The business was very successful in the 50s and 60s as people's expectations were not as sophisticated as today. The season was from March till October when as well as daily trade we accommodated working men's clubs, Sunday schools, hospitals ie Runwell and Severalls, and nurses' evening outings (fish suppers combined with river trips). I can remember carrying trays of tea and biscuits across to the

newly-formed bowls club (before they had their own facilities). The first London taxi children's outings to Maldon used the cafe and I can remember one driver standing on a table after the meal asking who was the best driver and hearing the children call his name, Barney. These outings finished with the issuing of tickets for the valley amusements owned by Peter Williams (Winkle).

We also had the Nicholls family in for meals who owned the fair that came for Carnival, and on Carnival day we closed for an hour so that staff could watch the procession, standing just outside the gates where the museum is now. We closed for the evening fireworks, saying our oohs and arrhs before the deluge descended for fish and chip suppers. I worked for my parents after school and later with a small baby Stephen. They were

hectic, happy days and many nights we finished by putting our aching feet in the lake before walking home. I recently met a lady who remembers, as a girl, disappearing with me on a school cross country run around the Prom, for a secret ice cream, catching up with the others on their way back. As a part-time steward at the museum with my husband it feels like coming home. Mr Ridgewell the park keeper, who lived in the building, often walked across to the tearoom for coffee and a chat with my stepfather, and seeing the coaches across in the car park reminds me of the Cooks tours from Southend and I can still hear my stepfather ringing his brass handbell to let the school trips know their food was ready, and children appearing from all parts of the Prom. Let's hope that future generations will love the Prom as I have.



to the editor...

Letters are part of the essential lifeblood of any publication; they help us communicate those thoughts and opinions we feel we ought to share with everyone, and sometimes they help us let off a little steam....so please get writing, we want to hear from every one of you

Congratulations on 'delightful' Museum

I paid a very brief visit to your museum early in the summer, and felt I had to pen a brief line or two to say how much I enjoyed it.

I have visited many local museums and always delight in learning about the history of the town or area.

I had been to Maldon a few times previously, and have always had something of a soft spot for such an historic town, but did not even know there was a museum in Maldon until a friend suggested I pay it a visit.

I particularly liked the Any Old Iron dis-

play, and was fascinated by the model of the old plough. As a steam railway enthusiast, I found the model of the old Maldon railway station a delight - just one of a great number of stations around the country that have sadly disappeared or fallen into disuse.

The whole museum was delightful, and just what a local museum should be - not only recording history but giving visitors a real learning experience. So congratulations to everyone involved, and long may you continue.

R. Franks, Chesham, Bucks

200 years on, we are still eating D'Arcy Spice

It's D'Arcy Spice time again; this spicy late-season dessert apple, traditionally picked on Guy Fawkes Day, was discovered at Tollehurst D'Arcy Hall in the late 1700s.

It has never enjoyed great commercial success, despite a richly aromatic flavour and the ability to 'keep' for six months.

Apparently the D'Arcy Spice lives up to its name particularly after a very hot summer brings out the full spicy, nutmeg flavour of this russet variety.

Among other Essex apples is Maldon Wonder, first raised in Heybridge by a Mr Mynard at the end of the 19th century. It is a crisp, early autumn dessert apple picked in mid-September and described as sweet, juicy and slightly aromatic.

Perhaps surprisingly, it is still possible to buy fledgeling Maldon Wonder trees from the Eastern England Apples and Orchards Project, which can also supply D'Arcy Spice and many other old Essex trees.

A hard life on the land

Life for the farm labourer has never been particularly easy, as the Rev Herbert Brown remembered when writing in the early years of the last century about events around his parish of St Lawrence.

"Many of the older inhabitants remember going to work at the age of six....the wage to start was four pence a day, even that was a rise upon what their parents had had when children were employed at three pence a day," he wrote. "The child labourer was for rook scaring, or leading the plough team, or sorting potatoes; one woman claims to have done as much on four pence a day with the teams as now a man with a wage of 30 shillings a week will do.

"One old body who rests from her labours, having a large family, would rise before daybreak to pick winkles on the beach and then put in a full day's labour; on the Saturday night she would tramp to Rochford to see her daughter and return on the Sunday." He continued: "Wages were nine shillings a

week for an able-bodied man, and the man who was known to drink would take something of that before the family was thought of; perhaps as late as Thursday five or six shillings would be parted with for the family needs.

"St Lawrence had no inn, but neighbouring inns were visited, these mostly had bowling alleys, where after a quarrel much blood was shed and in the bars at such times beer would be flung about until the floor was flooded to the depth of the soles of men's boots.

"A vendetta sometimes rages between villages and regularly at the end of each week a free fight would take place on the borders.

"Compared with those days the social conditions of today are infinitely better; in conduct, in dress, in food, in rational employment, in knowledge of the outside world, the villages have awakened to new life."

He continued: "As the years of the century passed, wages increased to 11/-, 12/-,

15/- . The stockmen and horsemen lived rent free, and a ton of coals was added each year. Where a dairy was kept, the cowmen received a certain quantity of milk daily for the needs of their families."

In *'English History from Essex Sources 1750 to 1900'* published by the Essex Record Office, R.F. Brown wrote:

"Essex agricultural workers received about six or seven shillings a week in 1750. Their wives and children harvested, gleaned and spun wool. "In normal years when prices were low, a family could buy enough food. Housing and clothing were poor."

However, after 1750 prices rose but earnings from spinning declined and finally ceased altogether.

"During the Napoleonic Wars prices so far outstripped wages that Essex Vestries were obliged to pay 'Speenhamland' allowances to labourers with large families."

These allowances were finally ended in 1834 with the passing of the new Poor Law.

TIMES PAST

Queen Victoria had been on the throne for 23 years in 1860, and she was to reign for another 41. It was a time of rapid social and economic change and of great advances in education and democracy....



1860

It was the year Wild West legends Billy the Kid and crackshot Annie Oakley were born and inventor Charles Goodyear - whose name is synonymous with the rubber tyre - died.

The Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, became the first British royal to visit the USA. He also visited Canada which then only reached as far west as the Great Lakes.

Britain's first tram system opened at Birkenhead, Merseyside, using horse-drawn trams. It was introduced by American George Francis Train, upon whom Jules Verne based the character Phileas Fogg in *Around the World in 80 Days*. Although Train actually did the trip in 67 days in 1880, it is thought the idea for the book came from Train's first trip around the world in 1870. There are over 460 light rail and tramway systems worldwide today - 76 of them opened from 1980.

Britain's first sea-going iron-clad warship, HMS Warrior, was launched. Powered by steam and sail, and the pride of Queen Victoria's fleet, she was the largest, fastest and most powerful ship of her day but, although in her day the ultimate deterrent, she was obsolete within a few years. Warrior has been restored as closely as possible to her 1860 condition, and can be viewed and toured at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

The British passenger liner SS Great Eastern arrived at New York from Liverpool on her first transatlantic crossing. Designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the 680-foot, 22,500-ton iron paddle steamer made the voyage in 11 days. But she proved too costly to operate and her owners scrapped her in 1877.

The USA was being opened up in 1860, with the first Pony Express service between St Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California - a 10-day ride - and the first railroad reaching Kansas from the east.

It was an important year for sport, with the first British Open golf championship played at Prestwick, where Willie Park shot 164 to win, and the first inter-club football match, between Hallam FC and Sheffield FC.



ST. CEDD'S CHATLINE

By Liz Willsher

When the editor reminded me that my contribution was due for the next Penny Farthing, I realised that June and July had passed by so swiftly that I had hardly noticed the approach of Autumn.

I am pleased to start with the good news that a small grant for the purchase of storage boxes for hats and textiles had been awarded by the "Share" scheme, administered by the Colchester & Ipswich museums service, and thanks to Judy Betteridge for all the research and form filling.

The continuing transfer of costume and delicate items from a motley collection of cardboard boxes and bags to acid-free boxes is an essential part of our plans to rearrange the store at St Cedds, and to keep everything in good condition for future generations.

A second grant application has been submitted for help with marketing and publicity. If successful, we shall use the cash to purchase a further supply of leaflets to promote the Museum.

During the last three months a steady flow of donated items has been added to our collection.

Amongst those were medals, documents and letters relating to local man Percy Pratt and his record in WW1. These items were given by his son John Pratt, a "neighbour" in the St Cedds building as he is a volunteer with the Viking Community Transport scheme.

A friend of Museum volunteer Mags Simmonds has donated a very interesting collection of optical aids in the form of spectacles, lorgnettes, monocle etc., all of top quality and in original cases. It is hoped that they can be incorporated into a display before too long.

A current member of the much photographed Sadd family has recently donated some portraits of his predecessors for our collection. One particularly interesting item is an oil painting of John Harvey Sadd, 1798-1851, an early founder of the well known local timber, joinery, and shipbuilding company.

In the Sadd family the elder son was always named "John", a situation which could cause a bit of a headache to later biographers, having to distinguish different generations by their second names. The portrait will shortly be re-framed for display.

Members and visitors may remember the terracotta statuette of "The Wager" by local sculptor Cathami Stern, depicting the seven "hundred" men in Edward Bright's waistcoat. The original has been returned to the owner, after a loan of several years, for which the Museum was grateful. However, a smaller version, part of a limited edition of nine, has been purchased at an auction by accessions officer Judy Betteridge. It's good to know that the famous seven will be back, albeit in a smaller form.

Back to news of St Cedds' volunteers...new volunteer Marion Townsend has been busy entering data into the computer from the accessions register to catch up on a backlog. Unfortunately, Julia, who previously carried out the same task, has not been able to continue, due to health problems. We all wish you well, Julia.

We are grateful to Marion for stepping into the breach, especially as she fits it in between her part-time duties at Broomfield Hospital.

Betty Chittenden continues with her very important role as scribe for the accessions register and record cards. Her beautiful and very readable handwriting makes our jobs easier.

In between routine tasks we have been gathering, sorting and pricing a wide variety of items for the bric-a-brac sale on August bank holiday Monday, under the direction of Mags and Judy. Pricing is always a bit of a dilemma but we have found that the "pile'em high and sell 'em cheap" strategy seems to work.

Incidentally, we now check all £20 notes, to ensure we avoid the losses we suffered at the last bank holiday in May.

We hope you have all had a good summer, and will try to fit in a visit to the Museum with friends and relatives before the end of the season.



Can anyone supply more information about Maldon's lady footballers of the 1950s and 60s. This photograph, loaned by Malcolm Willis, and taken half a century ago, is of:

Back row, left to right: Pat Mead, Ivy Stillborn, Gert Marjoram, Rosemary Cook, ??, Jean Cook. Front row: Jean Monk, ??, Marion Morton, Ann Gladas and Dot Kelly

TAILPIECE BY THE EDITOR

Ann Puttock, whose memories feature elsewhere in this issue, has another memory that is something of a mystery. Just after the Second World War, she remembers a very good artist who showed off his work outside the

old Hippodrome cinema in Maldon High Street - where Peacocks is today. The mystery is who the man was, and how he got to his pitch outside the cinema every day, because he had lost both legs - pre-

sumably in the war - and had no visible means of transport. "He was a wonderful artist, and I would love to know more about him, and what eventually happened to him," said Ann, an accomplished artist herself.

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

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