

THE PENNY FARTHING

THE MALDON DISTRICT MUSEUM ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Once again it is with regret that we are unable to send the usual copy of our Penny Farthing newsletter.

Despite everyone's efforts we have, so far, not found a replacement editor.

Nevertheless, there is a glimmer on the horizon and we sincerely hope that "normal service will be resumed" for the autumn issue/

We have retained the Chairman's Chat and the St Cedd's Chatline. There is also a report on the Annual General Meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S CHAT

As I commence my second year as Chairman of Maldon Museum Association, I am very gratified by the support and co-operation I have received during the past year. I feel, as we all do, that this museum is something to be proud of, and justifies the amount of hard work and effort that goes towards making it a success.

Our new audio/visual display, which is now in place, has proved to be very popular and well received. Many of our visitors have commented on the quality and found it most useful.

At our most recent Liaison meeting with Maldon District Council we were advised that, when our lease runs out at the end of the year, we could expect a new lease for 10 years. Which will be most helpful should we apply for any grants. However, the possibility of paying rent is still hanging over us, even though it will be negotiated to "what we can afford". However, I know that many councillors are of the opinion that we should not be charged a rent, so we will await and see.

We are very fortunate in retaining Cllr Stephen Nunn as the Town Council representative on our committee, particularly as he has been elected Deputy Mayor. Equally fortunate is the election of Peter Stilts as Town Mayor. I have known Peter personally for over 30 years, when we worked together in London Red Cross. We should gain a great deal from their support over the next year.

Although we are not opening the museum on Jubilee Day, we are showing our support by displaying bunting and a red, white and blue floral display. This is thanks to Liz Willsher, who has spent some time putting it all together. I am sure we would all wish the Queen a very happy Jubilee Day and our congratulations on a magnificent achievement.

As always, I close with my sincere thanks to all our members and stewards all of whom always work so hard to maintain the high standards of the museum. My personal thanks go to Mags Simmonds for undertaking the sometimes difficult task of maintaining the stewards rotas.

I hope this season proves to be the most successful yet.

Christine Steel

ST. CEDD'S CHATLINE

Phew! What a Winter we had. As usual, when planning new displays, we were lulled into a false sense of security, and thought we had plenty of time to complete them. This year, Liz and I were still putting the finishing touches to the "Maldon Through the Lens" display, the day before we opened for the new season.

Breathing a sigh of relief, we envisaged a quiet time ahead at St. Cedds. Wrong again! The past two months have seen us busier than ever. Amongst the 102 new items which we have accessioned into our Collection during the year, we have acquired a Maldon Regatta silver medal from 1927, a 1970s car alarm manufactured by the Selmar company on the Causeway, a complete WWII ATS uniform and, most recently, a leather bound Minute Book from the Maldon Rowing Club (1870 – 1935). What might be described as an eclectic selection, I think. The first three of these items are already on display and the Minute Book will be so shortly. Sad to report that Mrs. Bunn, the original owner of the ATS uniform which now graces our mannequin in the 1940s room, died just a few weeks ago and because of her very frail health, never got to know that her uniform now takes pride of place in one of our displays. We also have on loan an interesting piece of Maldon militaria – a belt buckle, also known as a "locket" dating from 1860 when the 23rd Maldon Rifle Volunteer Corps was formed. Thanks to Ian Hook, the Curator of the Essex Regiment Museum in Chelmsford, we now have a history of the Volunteer Corps, and it makes very interesting reading. Too long to put down here, but hopefully it can be recounted in the future when we have our Penny Farthing magazine back in commission. Suffice to say that on Ian's advice, we are not to polish this locket before it goes on display – sorry Christine, no Brasso on this one!

Meanwhile, we soldier on, if you'll forgive the pun. Our level of enquiries seems to have soared – the endless requests for help with family genealogy, the most interesting of which was a letter from a member of the Volta family. Maldonians will remember with affection the Volta bakery and restaurant in the High Street, and we have received very kind offers of items for our collection – in the past week one such was the offer of two iron gable ends from a house in Nounsley. I fear we must reject these on grounds of lack of storage space.

At St. Cedds, our accessions register, computer database and card index are up to date thanks to Betty's hard work. Our Memories box is just about ready for delivery to a local residential home, and Liz and I are bracing ourselves to disappear into the store again for more sort and tidy sessions (not for the faint hearted because of the heat and the strong whiff of mothballs). These sessions always result in the discovery of some very odd artefacts – for example, a shoe box full of stones and a pot of chocolate spread, complete with it's contents!! Don't ask!

Judy Betteridge
Accessions Team

Maldon District Museum Association

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Vice Presidents: Mrs B Chittenden
Mr L. Barrell

Committee to AGM 2013

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Vice-Chairman Paddy Lacey
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