

The Museum in the Park Maldon



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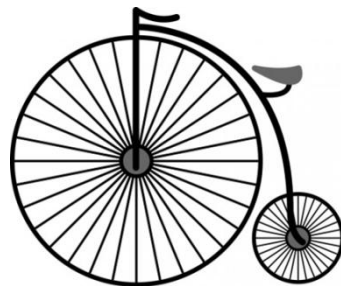
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Issue 87 November 2018

Chairs' Chat

The heading is not a typo - the Museum has two chairpersons, at least until the next AGM. Judy, our President, very nobly stepped into the breach to occupy the vacated chair but, this summer, because of concerns about both her own and her husband's health, she gave up her role as Chair, though we are happy to report that she stays on as President and as our tower of strength at the Museum.

We are facing a number of crucial issues over the next few months - changing our governance model to Incorporated Charitable Organisation status, applying to the Arts Council to become an Accredited Museum and overseeing the update in the fire safety precautions. Sharing the demands of chairing the Museum through this period seemed a sensible arrangement.

We can report a very good year. Visitor numbers were up despite closing a month earlier than usual. We hosted two Heritage Open Weekends, both of which attracted more visitors than we could sometimes count in! There were a number of group visits - from Kelvedon Women's Institute, which was a lovely evening of exchanging memories; from 80 young children from Tillingham School and Maldon 3rd Brownies and their Rainbows, numbering nearly 50 altogether! We particularly enjoyed hosting Brentwood Twinning Association and their delightful and appreciative German visitors.

Eight new volunteers joined the Museum Team and made a huge contribution to our successful opening, not only joining our stewarding rota, but offering their help in all sorts of other ways.

As the Museum looks to make progress in many directions over the coming year we would like to say 'Thank you' to everyone who has made the year so successful and happy. A Museum is only as good as its volunteers - at the Museum in the Park that is very good indeed.

Brigid van Bruggen Flo Shaughnessy

Museum Musing

Wow – what a season we've had at the Museum, both front of house and behind the scenes. You may remember that in her last Musing, Harriet talked about the acquisition of some 1950s items, and it was decided that we would have a pop-up display to show these items during August Bank Holiday and Heritage Open Weekends.

Named 'A Blast from the Past', it certainly took those of us old enough to remember those times, back to our youth. Aart Van Bruggen was 'persuaded' to supply some really cutting-edge technology so that a playlist of music from the 50s and 60s could provide a marvellous ambience for the display and this resulted in quite a bit of jigging from our visitors (especially when Twist and Shout was playing!).

On a slightly more serious note, we never know what treasures are going to be offered to us for the Museum collection. It can be something really exciting and sometimes not so exciting (I know a dozen polite ways of turning down old sewing machines, foot lasts and the contents of Dad's shed).

I was really thrilled to be contacted by the Leighton House Museum in London – they were clearing their collection of items which were not really within their remit – would we like a watercolour of Heybridge Basin by an artist called Arthur Briscoe RE, RI (1873-1943) a very well respected engraver and painter of marine scenes.

I accepted with alacrity, and Brigid kindly collected it for us and it is now on display at the Museum. It's a charming little painting – not the usual view of the lockside buildings, but of the yacht basin itself. We are delighted with it.

At about the same time, we had the offer of yet another painting – an oil this time portraying Drake and Raleigh. I was all set to turn this one down when the donor, who had purchased it from a jumble sale in Danbury, suggested that it had been painted by a patient at the St. Giles' Leper Hospital in Maldon.

As the hospital had been closed during the time of the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII, I thought this most unlikely, so did a bit of digging and came up with a more plausible explanation. It was more likely to have been painted by a patient from the St. Giles' Leper Hospital in Bicknacre, which was in existence well into this century. So, into the collection it came – not yet on display, but waiting for the right niche for it.

Some other items which we have been delighted to accept are three 1950s first editions of books by Margery Allingham, a collection of Maldon-related ephemera, including a framed citation from George VI given to schoolchildren in June 1946 and three medals from the Maldon District School Sports Association. Quite an eclectic selection, but of such is our collection comprised, and thus we are able to display the history of Maldon and district.

What are our plans for the closed season? We haven't decided on a new display for 2019 just yet. Depending on the maintenance work to be carried out in the building, we may have to content ourselves with smaller pop-up displays. Rest assured, there will always be something of interest to titivate the tastebuds of our visitors.

Meanwhile, we must carry out some conservation of those items that are not on display – checking the costume and linen collection to make sure the dreaded moths haven't come to live with us – checking our books, photographs and paper ephemera to ensure that mildew and mould haven't take hold, and so on and so on.

Never a dull moment at the Museum in the Park – we shall begin the big winter clean after Christmas. Do come and join us if you're dreading a long cold winter – we always welcome new volunteers.

Judy Betteridge

BBC Essex Quest showcases Maldon Museum

On Sunday 16th September, the Essex Quest radio show found presenters Liana Bridges and Barry Lewis making their way into Maldon, following clues to lead them to some of the more interesting locations in Essex.

Maldon came into the spotlight that morning with the presenters first finding themselves at The Maeldune Heritage Centre, where in order to find their next location they were presented with the cryptic clue: 'Look for a collection of Egyptian 'mummies' in Kensington Gardens'.

One smart listener managed to decipher this enigma with the logic that mummies are often exhibited in a museum and that Kensington Gardens is a park – hence The Museum in the Park! The presenters soon found themselves making their way to Maldon Museum.

The Quest Master then gave an extra hint to the presenters as to where to look for the next clue while inside Maldon Museum, stating they needed to look for items of food which were once in short supply. The presenters finally entered the Museum and met our friendly team, and then found the slip of paper they needed to find among our replica 1940s wartime living room, which featured food rations fitting the Quest Master's earlier hint.

Upon being asked about the best items at the Museum, regular Maldon Life contributor Harriet wasted no time in mentioning a mummified hand! She then went on to talk about the room at the Museum focusing on John Sadd & Sons, one of the main employers during the 20th century in Maldon. The presenters also took particular interest in some splachers on display and an authentic Victorian dress with an impossibly slim waist.

Among these exhibits, Maldon Museum also displays an original Victorian-era pumper fire engine, a broken human skull, and plenty of exhibits pertaining to Maldon Sea Salt, Maldon Swimming Club with Marine Lake, and the Maldon East and Heybridge Railway Station.

We also have a replica waistcoat of Edward Bright, the fat man at Maldon, to give an idea of the amount of people that could fit inside! The episode of *Essex Quest* featuring our Museum featured on was available on BBC iPlayer, but only until 16th October, under the episode name '*Embroidery, Steam and Rations*'.

Jonathan Cruikshank

New Plaque for Church House

In our previous two issues, Lynne Raymond described the lives of Edward Bright, the fat man at Maldon, and his son, Edward 'Ted' Bright.

She explained that, before recent detailed research, Church House next to St Peter's churchyard in the High Street had long been described as Edward's home, with a blue plaque to commemorate it.



In fact, it was Edward's son who built the house, 20 years after his father died. Edward senior lived in a house now occupied by 57 & 59 High Street.

The blue plaque on Church House has now been replaced with the correct information and a new plaque will be installed at 57 & 59 High Street when building work has been completed.



Photos

Margaret Day and Judy Lea of the Maldon Society with Lynne Raymond.

Mark Salisbury, the current owner of Church House

The Story of James Morrill — Part 2

In part one of James Morrill's story, he had arrived in Sydney, where on 24th February 1846, he shipped on board the Peruvian, captained by George Pitkethley, with a full complement of hands and passengers en route for China.

On the 25th they set sail, but the weather worsened daily and after a few days, the ship hit a rock and foundered. As it didn't sink immediately there was time to construct a raft, upon which 21 survivors were cast adrift upon the ocean.

There had been time to equip the raft with some provisions and water. One tablespoon of preserved meat a day was served out at noon and the water was measured in the neck of a glass bottle, four to each person, four times a day.

Twenty-two days passed and the current and the raft's small sail carried it about 40 miles a day. At first, a few small birds were caught. which were a great treat, their blood and raw flesh consumed with gusto, but as the raft neared land no more were caught. The weather was kind, with a light wind during daylight hours.

A few days later, the first man died (James Quarry) and his child survived him but a few hours. As soon as James died, he was stripped and thrown over, the sharks devouring him instantly. The day after, a fine rock cod was caught by baiting a line with small pieces of white linen, and the next day a smaller fish was also hooked.

By this time, mostly all the preserved meat had been consumed. It rained, and an attempt was made to collect it in the sail. However, this was so sodden with salt as to render the rainwater undrinkable. At about this time, several of the women and children died and were committed to the deep.

We next began to think how we should obtain food. The fishing line had been carried away, so the Captain devised a plan to snare a shark with a running bowling knot. We cut off the leg of one of the men that had died and lashed it at the end of the oar for bait and on the other end of the oar we put a snare so that the fish must pass through the snare to get at the bait, and eventually we caught a shark. We killed him with the carpenter's axe, cut off his head and flayed him.

The sailmaker stupidly put his hand in the shark's mouth and it gave him a severe bit. After that, he refused to eat any more of the shark, declaring that he had quite enough of his blood from sucking the wound and it had quite filled him. The rest of us made a fine meal, and three days later we caught another shark in the same manner.

Our numbers by this time were much reduced to just seven. We had reached the Barrier Reef and, on the 42nd day adrift, we managed to land on the southern point of Cape Cleveland. We were in desperate need of water and fortunately it came on to rain and filled up holes in the rocks on the shore. We made a fire by drying a piece of rag and, using a magnifying glass, set fire to it. We then boiled some of the dried shark from the raft and ate it with a drink of clear fresh water, which we enjoyed very much.

As the Captain was the strongest of us, he managed to collect some rock oysters, but we were so weak from lack of exercise on the raft that it was difficult to move around and Mr. Wilmot and Seaman Gooley were so exhausted they lay down by a water hole and died, nobody being equal to providing for more than themselves.

We discovered a native canoe with fishing lines and spears – evidence that natives had been there lately. The sailmaker Jack Millar decided he would go away in the canoe, hoping to find help – we eventually knew he was starved to death on the shores of the next bay, for the natives found his body and told us of him.

After we had been ashore for 14 days, we were discovered by some natives. They were as afraid of us as we were of them. Having felt us all over to satisfy themselves that we were indeed human beings, some male and one female, we were able to communicate by signs.

As they themselves were naked, they were anxious to relieve us of our clothing, but we managed to resist explaining to them that we were in grave danger from the sun. Some of them dressed themselves after a fashion in the clothes from the raft, and a more ludicrous scene could not be imagined – one with only a sleeve of a shirt on, another with a pair of trousers on upside down and back to front.

They also tore leaves from our books and fastened them to their hair and bodies. Shortly after this, we were taken to their camp and met with three men we supposed to be their chiefs. Fearing that we were about to be slaughtered and eaten, we shook with fear but they

warmed their hands at the fire and laid them on us to assure us that we had nothing to fear.

For about a period of two years after this, James, the boy and the Captain and his wife lived with different native tribes, but eventually James' three companions died, leaving him alone. He lived on with his tribe for a total of 17 years in the area between Townsville and Bowen when he was finally recovered by the settlers in 1863. He died at Bowen on 30 October 1865 and is buried in Bowen cemetery.

And finally from the 'Port Denison Times':

It is our mournful duty to record the death of the pioneer white man in the North, James Morrill. For some time, he had been suffering from the effects of a wound received in the knee during his sojourn among the aborigines, which had been attacked by rheumatism and ultimately brought on inflammation and fever, which resulted in his death.

Jemmy was devotedly attached to his wife and child and, during his last illness when his mind passed as in a dream through the scenes of misery and care of his exile, he always returned to his wife and child, and his only care seemed to be how they should in future be provided for.

Note: James married his wife Eliza in 1864 and his son James was born in 1865 – Eliza lived on for a further 60 years after James' death.

The report of his funeral concluded with the words, "During the reading of the solemn and beautiful service of the Church of England by the Rev E Griffiths, many an eye glistened with the unbidden tear as some act of kindness of the departed was recalled".

Judy Betteridge

School's out! Or is it back in? School days at the Museum in the Park

What with school years and the newest generations beginning their journeys into the educational and academic world, we at Maldon Museum ask; do you remember your time in school? At the Museum you can see how life may have been at school in the past. In our Children's Room (aka the School Room) you will see examples of school uniforms and toys of the past. You will also encounter the stern teacher at the head of the room.

For those wishing to trace their own history or if you're just fond of the history of education itself, the Museum holds photos of students who attended the local primary schools and also photos of classes and classrooms from Maldon Grammar School, which is now The Plume, Maldon's Community Academy, Farnbridge Road Campus.



These photos date from the 1920s to the 1950s and we also have photos of the famous school plays in the 1940s and 50s taken at the time by Wilf Berridge. All of these photos can be freely browsed by our visitors.

You can also discover the story of the Maldon Apple Book. This book is compiled of photos of students from Maldon County Primary School and contains a story which is yet another connection as to how Maldon, Essex and Maldon, Victoria in Australia are connected to each other.

In brief, the story starts in 1949, in response to a continuing shortage of fruit in Britain after the Second World War and with rationing still in effect, two hundred cases of fruit were sent to Maldon, Essex from the citizens of Maldon, Victoria. These were distributed among some 2700 school students at a ceremony held on 14th June 1949.

If you come down and find yourself in one of our photos and have a story to tell then let us know! The Museum as a hub of knowledge is always looking to discover and learn more about the local history of Maldon and, just as importantly, its people.

Steven Gridley

My Dearest Aunt Rose

We have recently taken into our Museum collection the following airmail letter, written by a Bombardier in the 522/4 Field Regiment, Royal Artillery who was serving in India at the time. It is dated 26th November, 1944 and was found by the donor in the attic of her house. It is such a charming letter, that I wanted to share it with you.

On an historical note, The Earl Wavell GCB, GCSI, CGIE, CMG, MC, KSt.J, PC, was born in Colchester and, after his retirement from a long and distinguished military career, was appointed High Steward of that town. Earl Wavell served in the second Boer War, the Bazar Valley Campaign, then in the Great War in which he was wounded at the second Battle of Ypres.

He then went on to serve with great distinction in the Second World War and was eventually appointed Governor General and Viceroy of India, during which time this letter was written.

My Dearest Aunt Rose,

Well my old chicken, how goes it? Me? I am in the best of health and spirits and having a marvellous time. I am on leave for 14 days at the house of Lord and Lady Wavell in New Delhi, and it's grand. I have had a week now and it's been really marvellous. I have and am still having a grand time here.

We get everything, and everything is here for us. It took us 8 days to get here from the Regiment, but it was worth it. Believe me, I sleep in a real bed with real sheets – up in the morning with a cup of tea and find myself already shaved whilst I was asleep. Get up and have a hot bath at any time of day. Good food and a man to wait on me and get whatever I want.

It's a lazy life, but, after foxholes, it's grand. Got own private cinema in the house, a private swimming pool in the grounds, golf, football, tennis, and billiards – all of them when we want. I have been to a party, on a picnic around the old ruins of Old Delhi – to pictures down in the city and cycle rides.

I have had a real grand time and, although I have spent a lot of money, it's been worth it. That is the one drawback – things in the

city are very dear sweetheart. I sent a parcel for Mum which cost me £2 and a small present for Irene's birthday which cost me another £1.10.0 – had three photos taken – another £1 (yes, for 3), so you see it soon goes, but I am not broke (yet) and I am having a swell time.

I don't think this will reach you before Christmas, but all the same I wish you now a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year, and I hope I will be a little nearer this time next year. Don't have too many will you. I could get sozzled every day here if I wanted to as we have our own bar, but this may surprise you I do not drink.

I am reformed from my old Blighty days Aunt and all through the great friendship of a grand girl I left behind. That will shake you as well won't it, but don't get ideas. She is already engaged to a lad out here so she is not for me or anyone for that matter, but she is a grand lass.

Her friendship during my last 2 months in England taught me more than I thought was possible and I have kept one promise I made to her and to Mum that I would not drink again and I have kept it.

Well I don't want to bore you with more and space is up, so I'll say Cheerio and God Bless you all at No. 78, and with all my love I'll remain ever yours. Keep smiling sweetheart.

I like to think that this young man survived the War and returned home safely to his family.

Judy Betteridge

Maldon District Heritage Winter Talks

These talks will take place at the Friends Meeting House, Butt Lane, Maldon, CM9 7HD. Doors open at 7pm for a 7.30pm start.

6th November 2018: Kevin Bruce – *Letters to the Admiralty*

During the Napoleonic Wars, 1785 – 1815, the Royal Navy was stationed ashore and in our estuaries in the Maldon District and Essex Coast. The officers wrote to the Lords of the Admiralty reporting on local matters concerning their operations giving us a fascinating insight into the people and events within our District during those worrying times with the threat of invasion.

4th December 2018: Janet Hall – *Steam Tug Brent & her 181 Sister Ships.*

Steam Tug Brent, moored at The Hythe, Maldon, is a fine example of a TID Tug. Built between 1943 and 1946, 182 TID class tugs were commissioned by the Admiralty to serve in ports and harbours in Britain and further afield, and to assist with the setting up of the Mulberry Harbours for the D-Day landings in Normandy. The talk details the innovative building method and follows the fate of some of these vessels including the four survivors, still with their steam machinery.

8th January 2019: Tim Howson – *Historic buildings in the Maldon District: an update of recent research and conservation*

In this talk, Tim will describe some of the most fascinating historic building projects he has been involved with in the past couple of years. Highlights include the dating of a 14th-century house, the discovery of an unaltered wallpapered interior of 1892, and the stunning results of paint analysis at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome. The talk will also showcase recent examples of skilful repair work, and some of the different approaches taken to adapting and extending historic houses in the district.

5th February 2019: Simon Marks – *Coalhouse Fort, East Tilbury*

Constructed between 1861 and 1874, Coalhouse Fort was built to defend the Thames from a potential invasion by France. It later served as a coastal defence battery during WW1 and WW2. This talk will focus on the history and on-going restoration works at this important site. Simon Marks is an architect with experience

advising on some of the most renowned buildings in this country including the restoration of Cupola House in Bury St Edmunds, the Saving of the Angels at the Petre Chapel and ongoing works at Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome.

5th March 2019: Tim Howson and John Smith– *Maldon's Swan Inn: a Thousand Years of History*

This talk reveals the results of recent documentary research and structural investigation of The Swan in Maldon High Street. It will discuss the significance of the building's ancient site, and describe changing fortunes and functions from a private house in prestigious ownership to an alehouse and inn playing a variety of roles in the town's economy and social life. It will also explain the fascinating design of what is one of the largest and best-preserved medieval timber-framed buildings in the Maldon District.

Maldon Society Talks

All talks take place in the Cygnet Room at the Swan Hotel and start at 7.45pm; doors open at 7.15pm.

November 1st - Michael Head, A long lost family & Churchill's secret army.

January 10th - David Newman, Commercial fishing of the Blackwater

February 7th - John Jolly, The story of Mangapps Railway Museum at Burnham-on-Crouch.

March 7th - Jean Smye, A broad history of bee-keeping,

April 4th - John Boyce, Beer and Brewing – the story of a local brewer.

Sketches in Parliament.



All who are interested in the sayings and the doings, the forms and the faces, the whims, the cranks, the hobbies, and the oddities of the Leading Men of parties of the 1895 Parliament, and who would like to hear a good natured and graphic account of their strong points and their weak ones, please to take notice that at the

CONGREGATIONAL LECTURE HALL

MARKET HILL, MALDON.

ON MONDAY, 3rd NOVEMBER, 1895;

AT 7-30 P.M.,

Mr. F. CARRUTHERS GOULD,

(The Illustrator of the Christmas Number of Truth, and the Political Cartoonist and Caricaturist of the Westminster Gazette, the Westminster Budget, &c., and Picture Politics), and Volume IX of the Chelmsford "Sette of Odde Volumes,"

Will give his popular and strictly non-party Lecture Entertainment, entitled

"PICTURES IN PARLIAMENT,"

Which will be Illustrated by the Oxy-hydrogen Lantern, with nearly a Hundred Sketches specially drawn and prepared by Mr. GOULD for this Entertainment. All are cordially invited (whatever may be their political views); and as the subject will be treated from a strictly non-partisan point of view, they need not fear that anything will be said or done which they cannot laugh at or enjoy.

ADMISSION, FREE TO MEMBERS of the Maldon Christian Association, on Show of Membership Card; NON-MEMBERS, 6d. each, which can be paid at the door, or Tickets can be obtained of Mr. Poole, Bookseller, Maldon.

Arrange a visit

The Museum is now closed for the season, but it's never too early to plan a visit. We welcome group visits to the Museum at times and dates that can be arranged to suit. For adults, the charge is £2 per head. For schools, the charge is £35 per class, which includes teachers and adult helpers.

We can also offer a school's outreach service when a member of the Museum will visit the school and take a number of artifacts for children to see and talk about. To book a visit, or for more information, please email enquiries@maldonmuseum.org.uk

Donations and grants

Our quest for funding continues. Don't forget that you can support the Museum with small donations whenever you shop online through the Easyfundraising scheme. You'll find details here <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/maldonmuseum/>

Become a Friend of the Museum

The Museum in the Park magazine is the official newsletter of the Maldon District Museum Association and is published three times a year.

For £10 annually, or a single lifetime fee of £90, you can become a Friend of Maldon Museum. You'll be entitled to free entry to the Museum during normal opening hours and will also receive a copy of the Museum in the Park magazine three times a year.

For more information, or to join, simply email enquiries@maldonmuseum.org.uk, call us on 01621 854298 or visit the Museum.

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

Maldon District Museum Association

The Museum in the Park

Registered Charity 301362

Patron – Rt Hon. John Whittingdale, OBE MP

The Museum Team

Judy Betteridge	President
Merle Pipe	Vice-President
Brigid Van Bruggen	Joint Chairperson & Volunteers Coordinator
Flo Shaughnessy	Joint Chairperson
Jenny Sjollema	Friends' Secretary
Keith Davis	Hon. Treasurer
Steven Gridley	Social Media & Website
Rosie Perry	Social Media
Jonathan Cruikshank	Publicity & Marketing
Ian Linton	Magazine Editor
Brian Hunter	Displays & Shop
Mike Bawden	Escape Network
Margaret Rollinson	Group Visits
Harriet Crawford-Condie	
David Ellis	

Would you like to be involved with the Museum?

We are always looking for new volunteers to help us run our Museum. You might like to be a Steward, or to be involved behind the scenes working on displays, conservation of our collection or carrying out maintenance work and cleaning during our closed period. Perhaps you may be interested in joining our management team.

To find out more please contact enquiries@maldonmuseum.org.uk

Come and visit us next year

We're closed now for winter but would love to see you when we re-open in April 2019

The Museum in the Park
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Maldon, Essex CM9 5HX

You'll find us by the main gates
of the Promenade Park.

Contacting the Museum

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Contributions for the newsletter

We welcome your contributions to this magazine and would be happy to receive articles, images, letters and comments. If you have something you would like to submit, however small, please email it to enquiries@maldonmuseum.org.uk