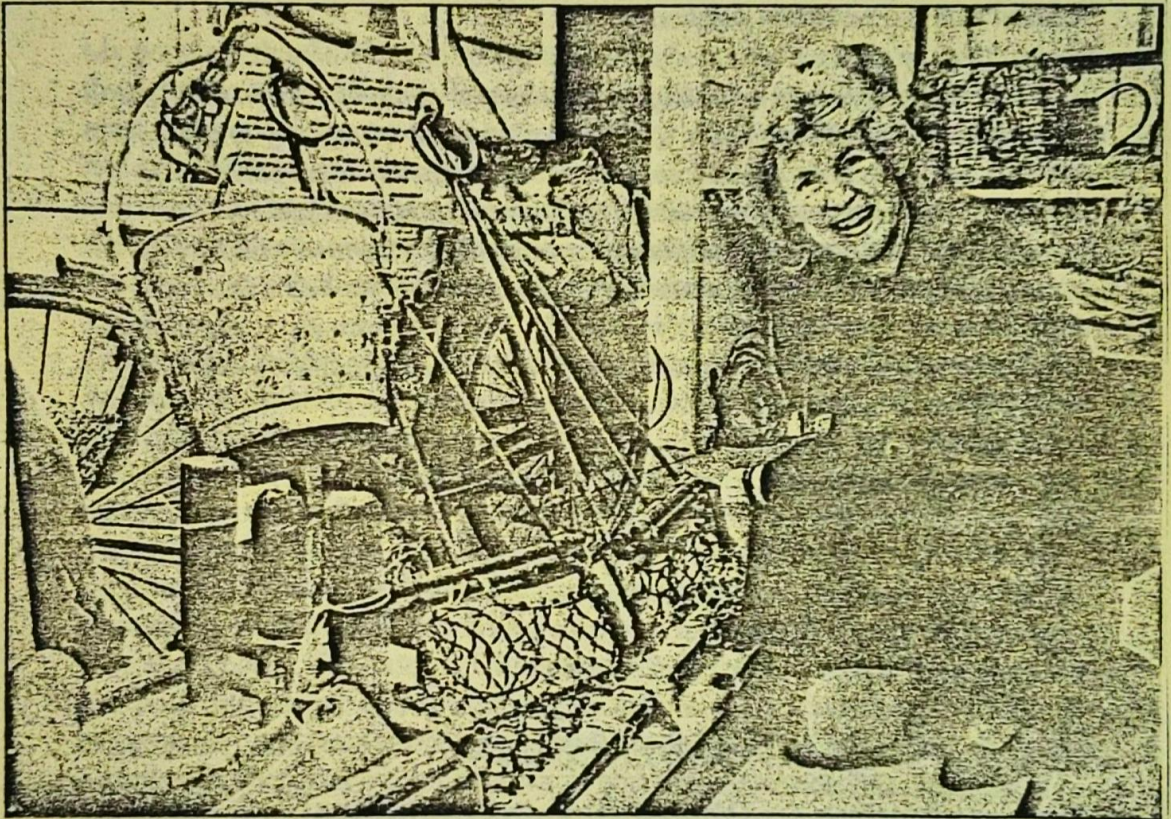


Issue 9

Summer 1997

THE PENNY FARTHING

The Magazine of Maldon District Museum Association



Cover Girl - dust checking!

Penny Cook of Maldon Museum has a last check over the exhibits before opening the museum for the first day.

STOP PRESS - Wireless listeners (BBC Essex 'Tea at Three') may have heard Paddy and Mike Bennett talking about the firm of John Sadd and Sons, the collection given by their successors and about the new museum generally. Well done both!

Ed's Ha'p'orth

Why have we enclosed a copy of *The Blackwater Matters, Issue 7?*.... If you turn to page 12 'A PAST WITH A FUTURE' is the story of our search for a home written by Robert Long in collaboration with our Committee and MDC's publishing team. Needless to say we are most grateful to them, and pleased with the resultant publicity.

We have been flexible in allowing for last-minute changes of plan and "she who must be obeyed" has made it clear that we have a long way to go, however well deserved the current plaudits! The answer to an early critic looking around the museum and asking "well, what is the Maldon connection?" will be found on the explanatory labels currently being prepared. Another visitor commented that he "thought we had a load of stuffed birds - not that I want to see them!". For those who do, a selection is in a room under preparation..... We want it to be everybody's museum.... naturally!

ANNOUNCEMENT

We are planning an Official Opening of the Museum on Saturday 30th August 1997 but because of the limited space available within the building invitations to this event will of necessity be limited. It is intended to have special Open Evenings in the Autumn on dates to be announced, to entertain our Sponsors, Stewards, and other Friends to thank them for their help in getting the Museum up and running.

Paddy Lacey

From the Chairman

The big news is that the partnership between the Museum Association and the District Council is at last bearing fruit, and ever since Saturday 5th July we have been open to the public at times which are listed elsewhere. Details of the opening and the travails that preceded it are also contained in this edition of the 1.1/4d, recording for posterity all that we have been through to reach our goal.

My personal thanks must go to all those members who worked so hard to meet the deadline of the 5th July. Everybody's contribution was appreciated but I must make special mention of Judy and Penny who spent many, many hours on site at 47 Mill Road, setting a high standard of display which will become the hall mark of the new museum. I do recommend that all members pay a visit at the earliest date to see for themselves what has been achieved, not forgetting of course to bring their membership cards with them to obtain free entry.

Our A.G.M. in May was a most stimulating and successful evening at which we were honoured by the presence of our President, Mr Arthur Simpson, and his wife. All present were encouraged by his good wishes to our venture. We said farewell to Terry Chapman and Ruth who, with their animals, were emigrating to New Zealand. Also leaving the committee were Merle Pipe, Judy Tullett, Sue Norrington, and Betty Chittenden. We were very grateful for all they have done for us whilst on the committee and hope that they will be able to continue to contribute as working members in whatever aspect of our work they may choose. The informal discussion which followed the official business was both informative and at times highly amusing and I feel that we could organise an occasional event to which all members would be invited, to include a similar exchange of views, comments, and reminiscences; but until this is arranged the committee, stewards, and I look forward to seeing you at the Prom Lodge, our new Museum.

Railway receipt just in

14573 Great Eastern Railway.
MALDON Station,
July 20th 1897
I beg to acknowledge receipt
your cheque for £1.2/0 with

You won't believe it !.....

but no finger is deliberately pointed at any one person although 'if the cap fits' then so be it. From these notes, written in retrospect with time to consider, it becomes apparent that about eighteen months passed as a series of endless problems, doubts, disbeliefs, and minor matters blown up out of all proportion due to a lack of communication and trust with those with whom we were dealing. Thankfully, with changes of staff and circumstances, coupled with much greater awareness, honesty, and consultation, we seem in recent months to have developed a refreshing atmosphere of mutual trust and cooperation.

The subject matter is of course 'The Lodge' and this would appear to be an appropriate time to record for posterity, as briefly as possible, the events and frustrations which have culminated in the completion of the new museum of which we all can now be justifiably proud, but not yet complacent, for there is still much to do before we can, if ever, say - 'finished'.

In 1994, following several meetings with Town Council representatives, our then Chairman Mrs Cath Backus repeatedly withheld a straight answer to the proposal that the museum association join forces with other organisations to take over the ex-library accommodation in the old St. Peter's hall under the Plume Library. She listed a number of objections and in hindsight was proved right on almost all counts. We could not get the hall to ourselves or we would almost certainly have accepted it, nor could we find a suitable alternative; our future in 'Spindles' which is where we were housed at that time was in no way assured as that depended on the rent being paid largely by grants which were not guaranteed and all we offer was hope.

Our 'Spindles' lease was due to expire on August 31st 1995 and a few weeks before this event the Maldon District Council invited us to a meeting in the Promenade Lodge, and with nowhere else in sight we were keen to take it over as our new premises. Our lease ran out and although under no pressure we moved most exhibits into a store provided by the District Council with a few larger items being moved temporarily into The Promenade Lodge. These included display cases and three large cases of birds. In view of what had been discussed we quite expected to be installed by April 1996, but the gentleman with whom we had been dealing moved on without warning us of the rules and regulations which would now come into play, and the considerable alterations which would of necessity have to be carried out if the place were to conform with Acts covering health and safety, fire, disabled persons, and

security. We learned the hard way, with a sad lack of communication coupled with a shortage of available funds.

Early in '96 a working party cleared the gardens front and rear, and in a burst of enthusiasm a forbidden hedge bordering the path to the side entrance was close-cropped and for this we were sternly rebuked. The Police later recommended the removal of all exterior screening by way of fences and hedges, and the offending hedge was removed almost overnight. This area is now tastefully covered with lush grass, in the middle of which sits the impressive gear wheel and crank shaft from the old water pumping station once situated off Wantz Road where 'Wantz Haven' now stands.

April '96 came and went and work on the interior began about July, the main house to be made ready first in order that we might open, whilst the wall through into the 'long hall' and ex-disabled toilet area would be opened up later when the museum had closed over the winter period. Meanwhile we were told to stay out, and did, having at that time no access keys. The main house was cleared of cabinets by MDC staff to the 'prom' nursery store and it was several weeks later when the items were returned to the Lodge that we discovered that the three cases of birds had not reappeared. They are still missing, neither we nor the Police having a clue as to their disappearance although members of MDC staff and some of our own committee recall the cases being in 'room 8'. It is possible that they were stolen at the same time as the break-in in July when an original iron fireplace and surround were torn from the wall in the front lounge, coupled with the disappearance of a tall free-standing iron fire basket which was stored in the same room.

Around this time the old disused toilet block situated in the rear corner of the Lodge back garden, and intended by us as a future store/workshop was 'torched' by vandals who caused damage to the roof, sufficient to prevent us making good use of it until repaired many weeks later.

The work on the front path was something of a surprise, as was the wall alongside it which was designed to hold back the strip of garden beneath the front railings. Was the cost of this the reason that there were insufficient funds to pay for decent interior security scrolled screens instead of blacking out the ground floor windows with heavy chipboard, unmanageable by most of the lady stewards and for that matter several of the men.

Much of the main interior work was completed by the end of November 1996. It included replacement of wooden doors by fire-resisting doors with closers,

removal of the bathroom furniture to leave only a kitchen sink and tea-making facilities; breaking through into the 'long hall' earlier than planned, and unexpectedly raising the floor level of the hall by something like eight inches, incorporating double doors to an external rear garden ramp with railings leading to an exit pathway to comply with the latest rules and regulations. So we were ready to think about moving in, but first came the Victorian Evenings of December 5th & 12th when we invited members and friends to inspect, and for this the place had to be thoroughly cleaned, which it was; where desirable, carpeting had to be laid, and was; and we decided that after Christmas was the time to move in; which it was. Meanwhile we ensured that the gas central heating was maintained and that the premises were secure, being visited by one or other of the committee every two or three days at least. But..... was the lagging left off the roof tank or piping or.....? Early in the New Year two of our number began the task of moving in exhibits, and loaded with marine exhibits ventured in through the side door, stopped, and listened to the unbelievable sound of running water as it poured through the ceiling into our spotlessly clean parlour from the room above, where the bright and shiny brand new unused carpet was about half an inch deep in water pouring through the upper ceiling from the roof area. Even the paper on the walls both up and down was sagging with the weight of water absorbed by it. Panic Stations !...but in no time flat the MDC had cut off the water and within days repaired the damage to the supply in the roof, which had apparently frozen solid despite the warm air rising from the storage tank beneath. Of course the icy cold wind was exceptional, but having escaped a freeze-up for the previous three or four years, there was no rational explanation for this catastrophe other than lack of lagging. To make matters worse, the flood had caused an electrical failure which in turn switched off the gas boiler, so it was many days before the central heating could be restored, then to be run flat out to dry out the rooms as no dehumidifier could be hired because of the demand from other properties.

Eventually we were dry, the interior decor was made good and again we cleaned up; then we learned that the exterior frontal area was to be renovated and some windows replaced. Almost immediately it was also suggested that work on the 'long hall' roof, the condition of which had been found to be serious, could be done at the same time "and both jobs will be finished by the end of April". With little sensible alternative, we agreed and both jobs were finished as promised, leaving only 'niggling' work such as a loose sink tap, sticking emergency doors and a faulty water heater, in addition to a few other minor jobs, to be reworked. Meanwhile a limited amount of unexpected electrical rewiring was carried out, this time with little or no mess to clear up.

However, it is, hopefully all finished now, and with any luck we will have no further cause for complaint, which could have been avoided had we known when and how each stage were to be carried out. We would then have been enabled to make our own forward plans with some confidence.

We have, as is now well known, opened quietly on July 5th with an official opening to follow when we are fully organised, and already it seems our luck has changed with our aim to specialise in local industry and matters of local interest taking root. By way of supporting this statement consider that in the course of a conversation with newish member Mike Bennett about John Sadd's marine models, once displayed in the local office, Mike suggested "why not contact Robert Shanks, ex-M.D. of John Sadd and Sons?".....and we did.....the result a room-full of exceptional John Sadd exhibits which might otherwise have been lost to a disinterested holding company. How many other artefacts of local interest might be available if we knew who to call? Think about it !

LFB..July 1997



OPEN!

by Judy Tullett

At Last! The Displays Organiser has something to report. Over the last year I have been planning layouts of our artefacts in my mind's eye and tracking down paint, floor covering, blinds and curtains etc.. Other Members of the Committee have been doing the hard work, particularly in relation to restoring, cleaning and marking the artefacts, and getting them into some sort of order in our store. A mammoth task! Now my turn has come, ably assisted by our Accessions Officer, Penny Cook, who also took on the not-so-nice job of getting our kitchen, and wc facilities into better condition, not to mention making us all endless cups of coffee. We set to!

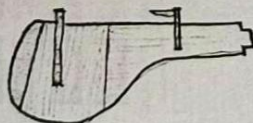
The lads too, Len, Bob, Pat, and Tony have been steadily working away, especially each morning for the past two weeks; and what we would have done without the help of friends including Mike Bennett ("have drill, will travel") and Malcolm Southgate I just don't know. Although Penny and I got quite experienced at shinning up step ladders and getting camouflage nets onto ceilings etc. we couldn't have managed without their help.

I have certainly enjoyed displaying the artefacts we have placed so far, but still have a long way to go yet. Tony, with Mike Emmett's help took over the maritime section so that was one less area for me to worry about. New friend of the museum Ann Day has done a sterling job with the display cabinet in the Victorian Room. Chairman's wife, Pam, wielded her paint brush most ably. My thanks to them all.

Having the John Sadd Collection coming to us at the last minute threw me a little as my first thought was to display it in our Long Hall which is still unfinished; but with the recent publicity I knew our visitors would be expecting to view this important collection at our opening on July 5th; so, with a bit of reshuffling upstairs, the collection now has a room of its own and I hope visitors will feel we have done it justice.

In conclusion, I hope we have managed to hold onto the charm of the previous museum, but have something new to offer with our themed areas where we have placed 'old favourites' in a new and different setting.

JUST IN AND ON DISPLAY -
RUDDER BY DAN WEBB c.1926



A Day to Remember

- from an Accessions Officer's point of view -

The day was Saturday July 5th 1997. It was the day that the people of Maldon saw their Museum reopened after an absence of nearly two years.

The weather was beautiful, an idyllic summer's day. Bob's red white and blue bunting was gently blowing in the breeze, heralding the beginning of a new era for the Maldon District Museum housed in its permanent new home.

Phew! At last we were ready to open. It had been a tight squeeze, having frantically put all the finishing touches to the exhibits only minutes before the deadline of 10 a.m.

An exhausted but elated small band of volunteers stood next to the reception desk eagerly awaiting the reaction of our first visitors. We were not disappointed; the response was wonderful and we were greatly encouraged by the praise and comments received.

Many thanks to all those friends of the museum who made this day possible by donating exhibits or decorating and other materials, or generously contributing precious time and expertise, especially in recent weeks - Mike Bennett.

A special thank you also to all who have worked so hard (some over a period of more than two years, generally shunning publicity), and without overlooking the hard labour of members of the Committee and friends, we must in particular mention Len Barrell and Bob Wallwork for recording, renovating, and repairing, and Judy Tullett for organising displays.

So, here's to the future, and long may the Maldon District Museum flourish.

Penny Cook.....July '97

GERMAN STEEL HELMETS

The German Steel Helmet was first issued in January 1916. By March 19th a frontal visor could be added for extra protection for sentries and machine-gunners.

* We have a frontal visor on display in the museum *



THE JOHN SADD & SONS' COLLECTION

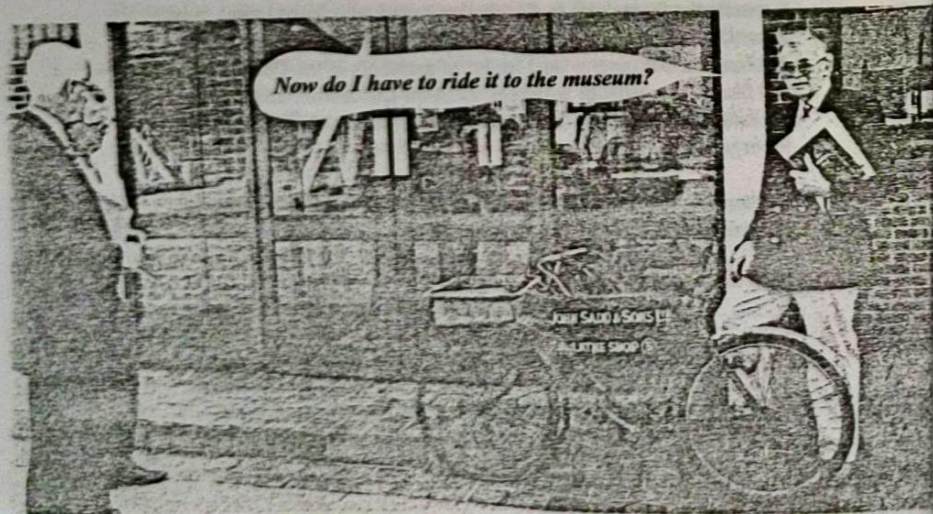
On the 10th June 1997 the Rugby Group presented a collection of John Sadd & Sons' memorabilia to Robert Shanks, previous Managing Director, acting on behalf of Maldon and District Museum Association, at the Boulton & Paul premises off the Causeway, Maldon.

John Sadd & Sons' history in the area dates back to the 18th century. In 1912 the Maldon factory generated enough electricity to heat and light the homes of people in Maldon and Heybridge almost a decade before electricity became commonplace in the home.

The collection includes a model of an airborne lifeboat built to Air Ministry design, a model of MTB 796 launched 1944, a model of MFV 282 launched 1945, a trade cycle from war days, trophies, cups, shields, and ledgers dating back to 1825; and an impressive barometer made for Finch, the jeweller, by Sadd and Sons.

The Museum Association was represented by the Chairman Paddy Lacey; Vice-Chairman Len Barrell, and Hon Sec Tony Froom; also in attendance were Mrs Pam Lacey, and Mike Bennett, a long serving member of the Sadd & Sons' companies, now retired.

The collection is now displayed on the first floor of the Museum where it already attracts considerable interest.



PLUME'S OTHER BUILDINGS

Everybody must know of Plume's contribution to scholarship - the building of the Plume Library - but how many are aware of his concern for Maldon's poor? His Will dated 2nd September 1704 contains the following clause:- "...and I give £200 and all the residue of my personal estate....for the purchasing and providing of tenements, and a stock for setting the poor of Maldon to work....."

And so Maldon got its first Workhouse. A two storey building was erected on Market Hill - on the lower part, then called Fullbridge Street - on the corner of Cromwell Lane - a building now known as Hillside. Like many of Maldon's streets this Lane has seen many name changes. Fitch describes it as "Union, now Cromwell, formerly Maypole, Lane".

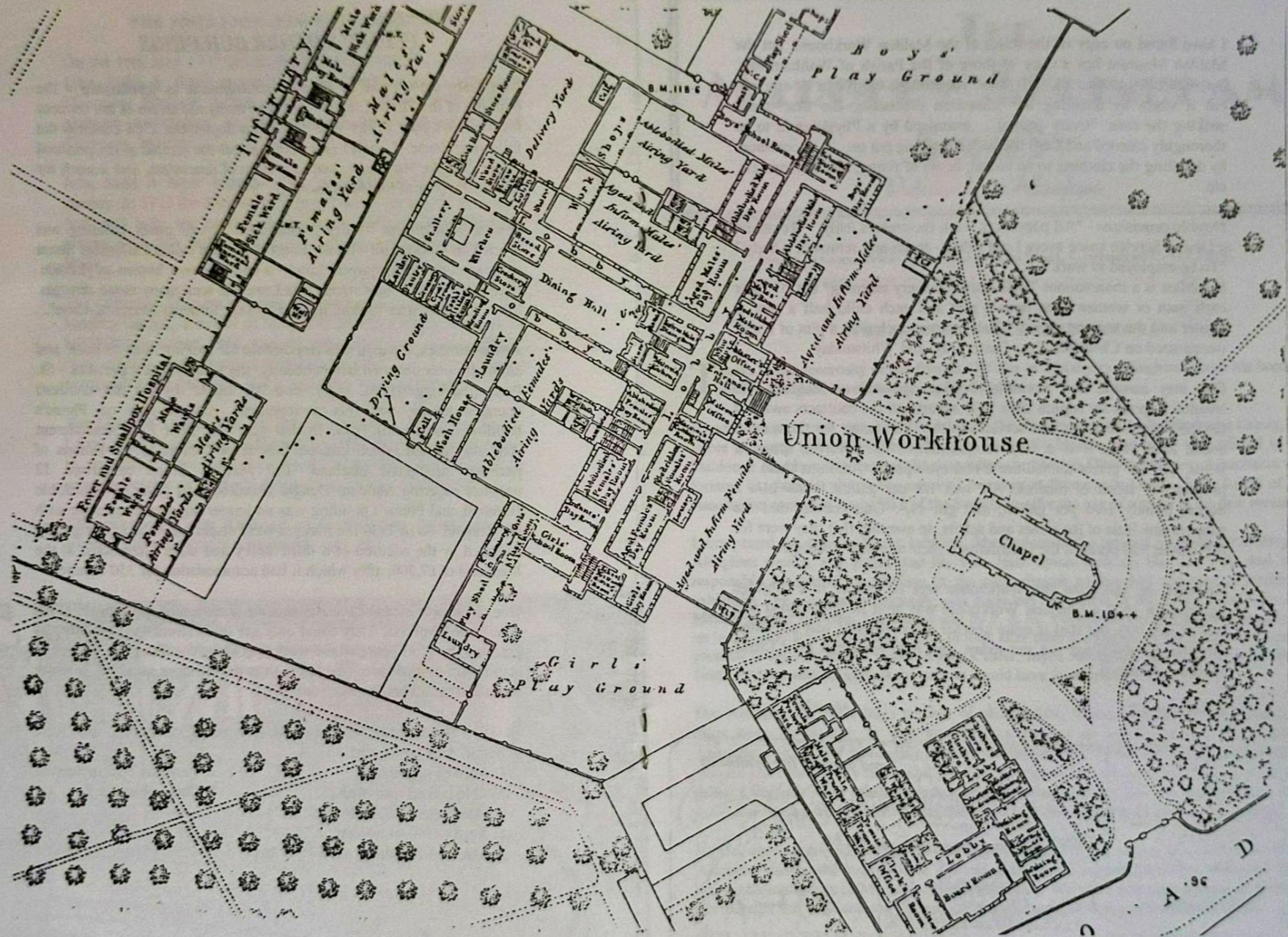
At that time each parish was responsible for looking after its poor, and although most operated independently, the three Maldon parishes - St. Peter (the biggest), St. Mary, and All Saints (by far the smallest) operated jointly, and this arrangement, centred now on Plume's building, lasted until 1834. In that year the "Poor Law Amendment Act" was passed which created Boards of Guardians for Unions of parishes throughout England. The Maldon Union comprised 32 parishes covering Maldon, Dengie Hundred, and parts of Thurstable Hundred, and Plume's building was no longer big enough to cope with the demand. So in 1836 the inmates were dispersed while it was greatly enlarged by the addition of a third storey and other alterations, at the huge cost of £7,200, after which it had accommodation for 350 inmates.

One of the provisions of the Act was the abolition of out-door relief for able-bodied workers. They could only get relief (from their poverty) by entering the Workhouse where work was found for them and where the standard of maintenance was lower than the out-door standard, in order to discourage all but the most needy.

In 1835 the inmates were divided into seven categories, and were generally kept segregated - viz -

1. Aged or infirm men.
2. Able-bodied men over 13.
3. Males aged 7-12 inclusive.
4. Aged or infirm women.
5. Able-bodied women aged 16 or over
6. Females 7-15 inclusive.
7. Children under 7.

.....cont'd



Boys' play Ground

Union Workhouse

Chapel

Girls' Play Ground

B.M. 104

A. 9c

D

I have found no copy of the Rules of the Maldon Workhouse, but the Maldon Museum has a copy of those of the Parish of Walthamstow, dated 24th September 1830. It is too voluminous to give in its entirety, but it starts by detailing the admission procedure, the first words striking the tone: "Every pauper.....examined by a Physician.... to be thoroughly cleaned and have the parish clothing put on....". It continues by detailing the clothing to be issued, hours of rising, meals, menu etc. etc.

Notable provisions - "All paupers to wash themselves daily:" "To attend a Divine Service twice every Lord's Day - to go and return in a body," "To be employed in work".

Breakfast is a monotonous "Milk porridge every morning" but "Of beer each man or woman is to have a pint and each child half a pint at dinner and the same at supper". Extra rations including a pint of Porter were issued on Christmas Day, Easter Day, and Whitsunday.

One may assume that a similar regime operated at Maldon. The Maldon Express for March 29th 1877 reports on the contracts awarded for the supply of goods and services to the Workhouse for the quarter ended June 30th. It is a very comprehensive list covering some 41 items, and the prices quoted are a real eye-opener. Amongst them are prominently items of alcohol. Ale was 1/8 per gallon; wine 14/6 a dozen; brandy 16/6 per gallon; and gin 11/-. One guesses that the paupers saw little of the wines and spirits, so assumes that they were for the Master and perhaps the Guardians at their monthly meetings!

However, by this time the Workhouse was no longer in Fullbridge Street as in 1873 a fine new Workhouse was built in Spital Road at a cost of £20,000, but that is quite another story. Hillside was converted into the six dwellings we see today, and it is protected as a Listed Building, Grade II.

W. Geo. Ginn. J.P.

May 1997



THE MARGERY ALLINGHAM

SOCIETY

Patron: Joyce Allingham

Roger Johnson, Mele End, 41 Sandford Road, Chelmsford CM2 6DE

THE MARGERY ALLINGHAM ROOM

Thanks to the generosity of our friends, the idea of a Margery Allingham Room has become reality. The gods have looked very kindly upon us.

Something over a year ago, to try to promote the Society in Margery's own home county, we wrote to pretty well all the newspapers in Essex. By chance, our letter was printed in the Maldon & Burnham Standard at the time when the Maldon District Museum Association was forming its plans for the newly acquired premises at Promenade Lodge. Judy Tullett of the Association contacted Barry Pike of the Society to offer the use of a room in the new museum.

Barry passed the offer to Roger Johnson, who had made the original proposal for a Margery Allingham Centre, and Roger and his wife Jean Upton took on the job. Both had been responsible for setting up displays in the past, though neither had mounted a permanent exhibition. The challenge, fortunately, was made less formidable by the generous help given by Maldon District Museum Association and by P. & M. Youngman Carter Ltd, the company set up by Margery and her husband Philip to look after their copyrights. It has been a very special pleasure to become friends with Margery's sister, Joyce Allingham, and her secretary, Gloria Greci, without whose kindness the project would have foundered.

The company has lent a huge number of photographs, books, magazines, manuscripts and other items for display, as well as giving us a grant to cover expenses. The Museum Association provided a thoroughly appropriate display case. Essex Police Museum has loaned criminal and constabulary relics (and given us the dummy that we have converted into our own Albert Campion). With careful planning, judicious use of computers and photocopiers, and a good deal of hard work we have compiled a unique exhibition to celebrate a unique writer.

Besides the comprehensive display of Margery's and Philip's books, the exhibits cover the Allingham family, the household at Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Margery the writer, Philip the artist, and media treatments of Margery Allingham's work. We hope that even the casual visitor to the museum will be stimulated to read - or reread - some of Margery's excellent novels.

TRIBUTE

by Ken Cook

Sadly we heard of the death of another good friend, Barrie Jenkinson, who died on 26th May this year.

Barrie will be best known by most people as the owner of "All Books" in Mill Road. Together with the manager Kevin he maintained the tradition of the shop after the death of Janet in September 1993, so that it remains one of the best shops for second hand books in Essex, or, as he would mutter under his breath, "East Anglia".

Barrie was a talented photographer and among his prize winning photographs were a number of enchanting prints of Maldon waterfront. He was a staunch member of the Maldon Camera Club for many years which is where I first met him.

He introduced me to the W.E.A. in 1984 and our friendship grew. The occasional drink in the Swan after Camera Club grew into a regular habit after a W.E.A. class, where Barrie would enlarge upon the material imparted to us during the evening. He had a wide range of interests and a fund of knowledge gathered through his natural curiosity, which prompted further reading when discussions on a subject had left unresolved questions.

His association with the W.E.A. goes back over twenty years and for much of this time he was a committee member and for a few years served as secretary.

Barrie will be missed by a lot of people in Maldon and our sympathy goes to those who will miss him most, his wife Rosemary and his children Amy and Theo.

~~~~ An English Spring Gun ~~~~

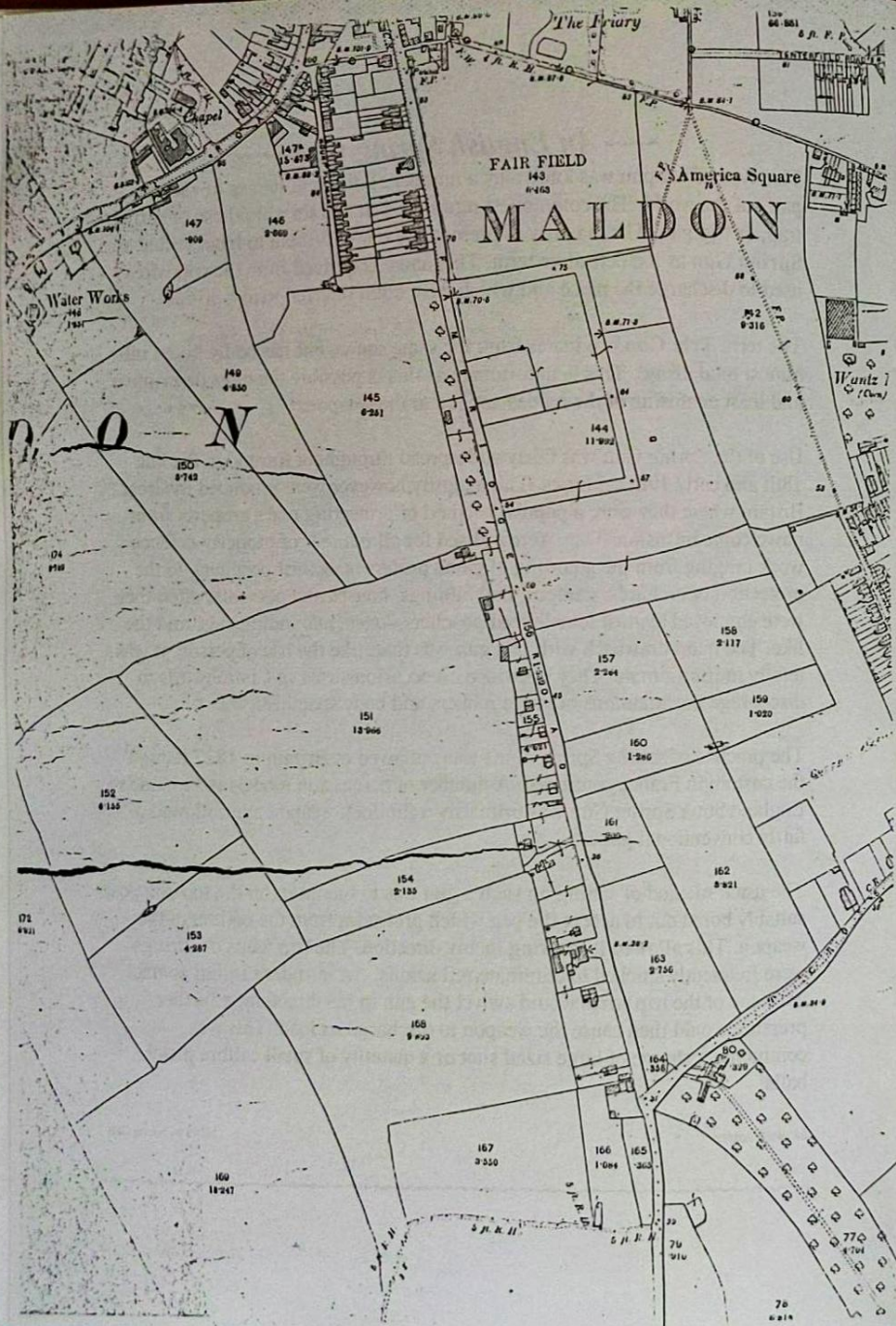
This type of weapon was known by a number of different names in various parts of the world. The commonest terms used in Britain were those of spring, trap, or trip gun. The majority of present day scholars seem to have settled on **Spring Gun** as the definitive term. This name is derived from the trip wires used to discharge the piece and which were often referred to as 'springs'.

The term **Trip Gun** originates from the same source but has oddly fallen into almost total disuse. This is unfortunate as this is possibly the most descriptive and least confusing of the names applied to the weapon.

Use of the Spring Gun was fairly widespread throughout Europe in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The majority however were produced in Great Britain where they were a popular method of protecting one's property from unwelcome intrusion. They were utilised for all manner of property defence work ranging from the guarding of game preserves against poachers, to the protection of orchards, gardens, outbuildings, houses and contents; often they were employed against four-legged poachers, foxes, marauding cats, and the like. The main drawback with this gun was that, like the use of poison, it was totally indiscriminate. They were also on occasions used in Churchyards to discourage the attentions of grave robbers and body snatchers.

The practice of setting Spring Guns was outlawed in Britain in 1827 though the custom in France continued. A number of percussion models were made in England but a Spring Gun was primarily a flintlock weapon and followed a fairly conventional pattern.

The usual method of setting up such a gun was to mount it on the top of a post suitably bored out to accept the peg which protrudes from the bottom of the weapon. This allowed it to swing in any direction. The trip wires or springs were frequently smoked to eliminate reflections. An intruder's initial contact with one of the trip wires would swivel the gun in his direction; a further pressure would then cause the weapon to discharge its load. This was commonly a charge of large sized shot or a quantity of small calibre pistol balls.



THE FAIR FIELD, MALDON

Maldon, as a Market Borough, was allotted two fairs per year - a May Fair and one in September. These were held in a large field adjacent to what is now the Upper Plume School, and accessed from Queen Street. There was a 'kissing gate' near the arched doorway leading to the Friary and two pathways diverged from this point, one leading to another kiss-gate and large padlocked gate at Queen Street, the other leading to a further gate giving access to two market gardens. Proper footpaths followed much later.

Eighty years ago children played here on what was then known for no particular reason as the 'Conservation', more recently the 'Conservatory' where one market garden was tilled by Herbert Stratford who lived in Tenterfield Road, grew his own vegetables and fruit and trundled a loaded hand cart from house to house, all beautifully fresh, possibly picked the same day; and the other market garden was worked by a Mr Pugh who had a shop in the High Street nearly opposite Bunting the butcher; here he sold his own greengrocery as well as dairy produce, himself having a milk round. This meant a churn on a hand cart with measuring ladles - 1 pint, 1/2 pint, and even a gill. A pathway surrounded these plots, both leading to Fambridge Road; the one from the Friary was 'The Lift' and the lower path through the gardens is now known as Park Road.

When the 1914 war broke out a Highland Regiment was billeted in Maldon and the 'Long Field' was dug up as trenches in case of air raids. This area eventually developed into allotments.

When the war was over, the fair had to move to what is now the Lower Plume School playing field, and the Fair Field together with part of Long Field was bought in the 1930's by E.E.C.. Later, two houses were built on the garden plots for school staff - groundsman and caretaker-. On the neighbouring plot was the School House, now converted and extended into sheltered flats.

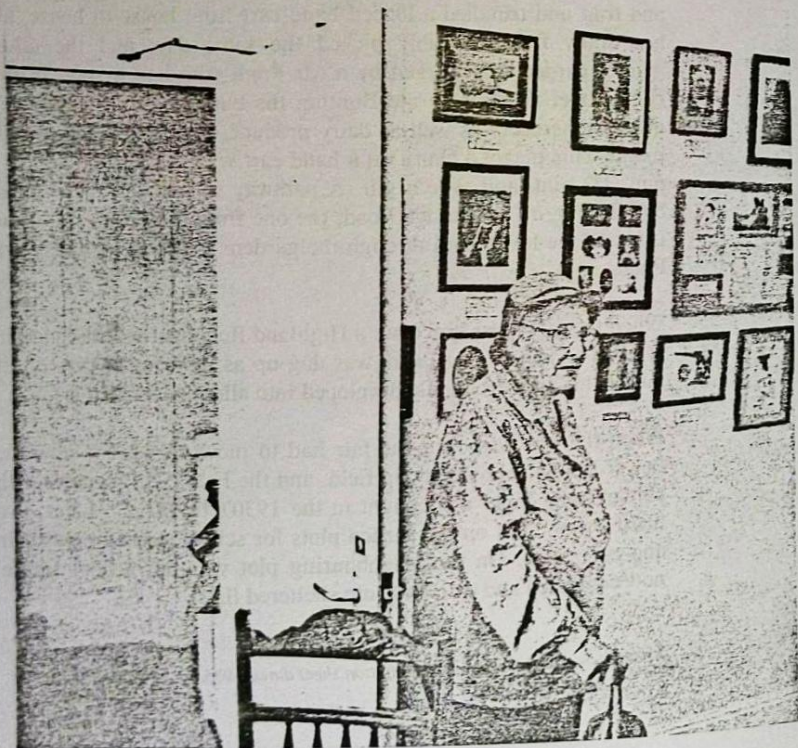
Updated from an anonymous information sheet dated 1985.

Additional info from Member W. Geo. Ginn J.P.....

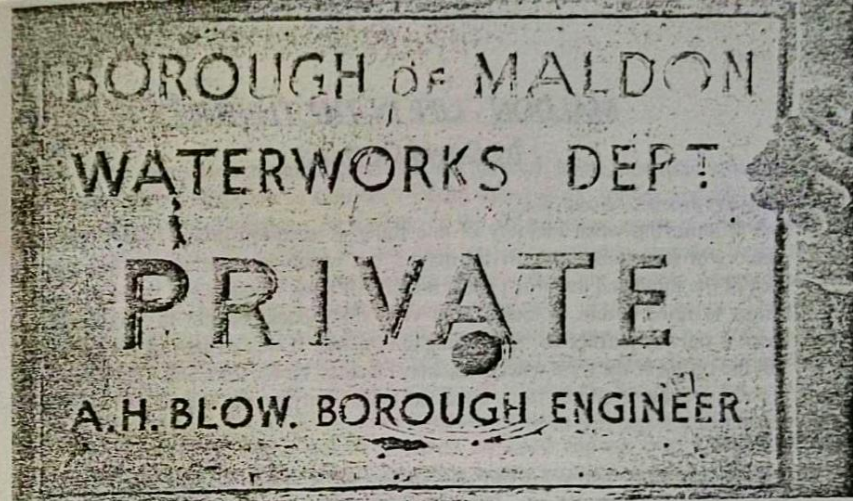
Long Field was left by Plume's will of 1704 as part of the endowment of the library. In 1952 it was rented by MBC as allotments. MBS paid a much higher rental than market value as a 'hidden' subsidy to the Trustees.

Some time in the 1960/70's ECC bought the lower half to bring the playing field area of the Grammar School up to the legal standard and MBC bought the rest as allotments still, but the fashion for these failed and it was turned into an open space. Charlie Tait had an allotment up to some time in the late 1980's.

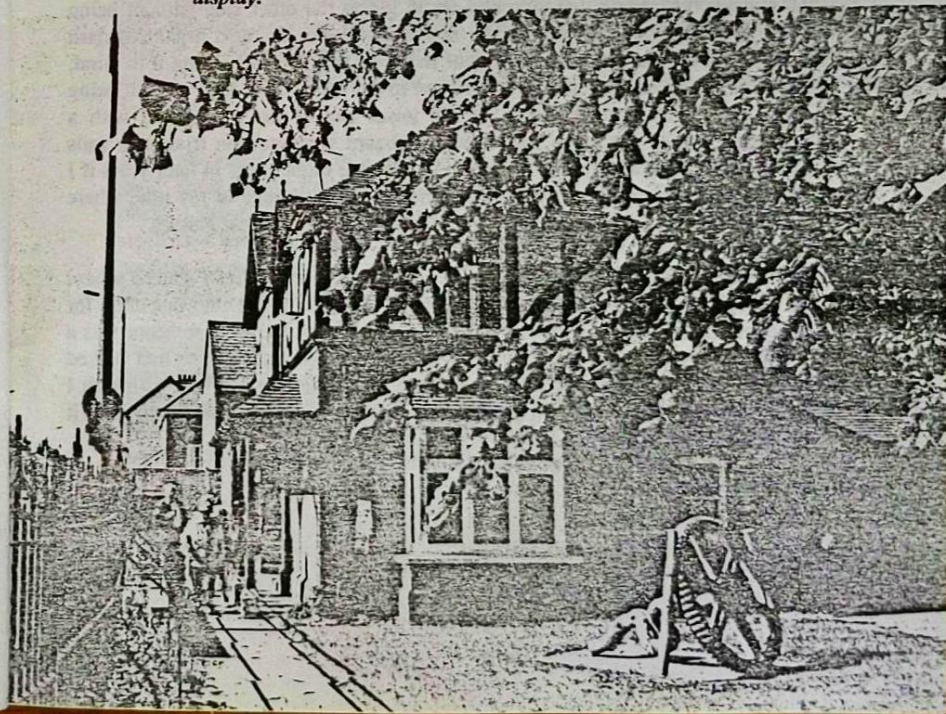
Since then it has shrunk in size by the building of the Long Field Practice and the 'temporary' annexation by MDC of the adjacent area for car parking.



Joyce Allingham visits the museum.



The museum's new front lawn has a large gear wheel and crank shaft from the old water pumping station off Wantz Road where now stand the retirement flats, and we also have the original Pumping Station sign on display.



MALDON - LIFE IN THE THIRTIES

by David Germain

continued from Penny Farthing No.8.....

Isn't it annoying when memory of one thing or occasion brings back a partial memory of something quite trivial maybe, but which nevertheless niggles at the back of the mind and just won't show itself?. All these recollections about journeys brings to mind a thin, colourful and very shiny book, bought in Woolworths, about a railway journey to 'Something'ton-on-Sea. It was written in verse which had the rhythm of the train wheels clackety clacking on the lines and I know that as a child I could recite it from cover to cover, but for the life of me I cannot remember a single line now.

I must have been five years old when I started at Queen Street School, or is it Dyers Road School?. Whether I was a good scholar I know not, but I remember that when I moved to my school in London I coped quite well. One of the clearest memories of my days there had little to do with lessons, but may well have been an organised event. It happened during a game of what I think was called British Bulldog in which one person stands in the middle of the playground and the others are spread along one side and try to get to the other side without being caught. If caught you join the person in the middle for the next organised dash across. I enjoyed the game but still wear the scars that regularly bring it to mind; someone was chasing me and I was so keen to get to the other side without being caught that I ran into the fence at the lower end of the playground with a resounding crash. The fence was of weatherboard supported on triangular rails and my nose collided with one of these rails. People often asked in later years if I wore glasses, because the scar that remained is on the bridge of my nose where glasses would rest. They no longer ask me as nowadays I do wear glasses.

Another occasion which made such a big impression soon after I started school was when a girl quite a bit older than the rest of us was put into our class for misbehaviour or some such reason. When the teacher left the room someone was a bit cheeky to her, so she stood on her seat, pulled down her knickers and flicked her skirt up in the air. I don't know why the recollection is so vivid, although I can't recall her face. I expect a psychiatrist could give me an explanation, but it may be best not to enquire.

Mum rarely took me to school or fetched me back home, and after school on one fine sunny afternoon in summer I joined some of my friends and their mothers, quite uninvited I believe, for a picnic by the old salt pans I spoke of earlier. What a fabulous place for a picnic, all that mud, and surrounded by stranded boats. It was one of those occasions I mentioned earlier when my parents reported me as missing to the police. I wandered home eventually, tired and happy. The police hadn't found me and I can't recall any occasion when they did. They don't seem to have got any better at it either. The only time that I came into close contact with a policeman was on a trip with my parents to Clacton-on-Sea. I had got separated from them, as was my wont, and I remember sitting on the shoulders of this very large policeman with a bag of sweets in my hand and my mouth full, while we walked along the street. I must have been highly visible because my parents soon spotted me on my perch and we were reunited.

There were several routes I could take to get to school, all with only the one road to cross, but if I had any money there was the sweet shop in Wantz Road near the junction of Cross Road which must be visited. Gobstoppers were five a penny in those days and changed colour all the time you were sucking them. I don't think I ever bothered with any other sweets. Gobstoppers were cheap and lasted a very long time, which was a very important consideration. They no longer seem to make the ones that change colour, but I still enjoy the occasional gobstopper when I can find them.

In an upstairs window of a house on the way to school I regularly used to see a small child having its hair examined closely and being combed with a very fine comb. I don't know whether I realised then why this was being done but I do recall that some years later I found a similar comb in our house in London., so perhaps I was occasionally infested too, although I don't remember it being used. Many things have improved since those days - but not the gobstoppers.

The other routes to school involved turning left by The Manse in Cross Road, and either turning right again into Queens Avenue or else passing the road and using the footpath behind the houses. The turning by The Manse was a rough unmade road then, but on my last trip I didn't notice if it had been improved. The route home could take me anywhere in Maldon that took my fancy.

....to be concluded in Issue No.10

*David Germain
Redditch
January 1996*

Our New Committee



Chairman.....Paddy Lacey..... [redacted]



Vice-Chairman ..Len Barrell..... [redacted]



Hon. Secretary...Tony Froom..... [redacted]



Hon. Treasurer...Tony Tullett..... [redacted]



Membership Sec:...Ray Brewster..... [redacted]



(Acting) Stewarding Sec:Len Barrell [redacted]



Accessions Officer...Penny Cook.... [redacted]



Patrick Preece;



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All views expressed are those of the contributors!

44-84 Productions, Fambridge Road, Maldon. July 1997

WANTED

Snippets and Stories of local interest for future

'Penny Farthings'

Perhaps there's a cartoonist out there?