Maldon Museum in the Park



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The Penny Farthing

Issue 93 December 2022

Chair's Chat

2022 has been an extremely busy year, so I thought it would be a good opportunity to tell you what we have done this year.

Review of framed pictures and photographs.

All framed pictures and photographs were removed from our store room and, over the closure period, were sorted, reviewed and a detailed inventory completed. A few were deemed not relevant to the Museum's aim of preserving Maldon's history and are now awaiting recycling. This project took 4 times as long as anticipated and involved our Collection Officers, Steven and Jonathan, devoting many of their weekends to the task. We now have an excellent archive of these items.

Museum Cleaning

This annual task was undertaken by Jennifer, our Collection Care manager. Had she known the extent of the task, she might not have volunteered. She found every museum pest imaginable, with the exception of mice. The weeks were occupied with heat treatment for woodworm; freezer treatment for moths, mould and other bugs; chemical treatments and a great deal of dust removal.

We are grateful for the generous help and advice provided by Robyn at Chelmsford Museum and Claire at Southend Museum. Thanks to the collections team, the Museum's collection is beginning to reach the high standard we need to re-gain Accreditation. Measures are now in place to monitor constantly and ensure we maintain the best possible environment

Loan from Horniman Museum

Shortly after our opening we received a loan of two fantastic ammonites to display in the Victorian Parlour, which was given a "Fossil Hunters" theme for the duration. This exhibition attracted a lot of interests and drew in some new visitors. The fossil theme continued in the courtyard where the children's fossil-hunt tray proved so popular that we ran out of shark's teeth 'rewards', and in Room 9 where children's activities were offered.

Thanks to Carly for liaising with Horniman who provide a most generous and efficient loan system to small museums; and to Jennifer and her daughter for fossil-related activities. The popular fossil hunts at Creaksea continued over the Summer and provide both interest and funds. Thanks again to Jennifer for organising these. The final display of the year, curated by Steven and Jonathan, is focussed on the Thames Barges and their importance to Maldon.

Visitors

Visitor numbers have been very rewarding this year, with an average of 200 adults each month, more with special events such as Heritage Weekends. Both oral and written feedback is always complimentary. The three Secret Shopper reports came in with high marks in almost every category and with 'rave reviews' for our front-of-house stewards. Thank you to all of you who make our visitors feel so welcome and who contribute so much to the special atmosphere of Maldon Museum.

Grant - Funding

Thanks to Carly, this has been our best fund-raising year I think ever. We have had grants for the new notice board at the front of the building, which had clearly attracted passers-by. Many thanks to Colin Rollinson who made and erected this for us. Another government grant paid for the expensive woodworm treatment and a community grant for the sand tray and work in the courtyard. The mentors at Heritage Compass have been most helpful and generous with their time.

Volunteers

Over this year we have welcomed 5 new volunteers, all of whom bravely put their heads over the parapet and immediately found themselves involved in one ongoing project or another.

Courses

Several Committee members have attended on-line courses on a range of museum-related topics and have represented the museum at conferences, heritage days and meetings. So, we are acquiring professional skills and embedding ourselves in the local heritage community.

Closure Activities

Over this year's closure we are undertaking two big projects. The first, funded by Cambridge University and facilitated by Dr. Rachel Hooper, is to re-think our labelling in three of our downstairs 'rooms' so that they tell a story rather than just imparting information, and which we hope will send our visitors away to think, question and talk about us. Six volunteers are already at work researching, writing and arguing. Hopefully all will be revealed when we open next Easter.

The second project is to review our costume collection and again to make a detailed inventory, with photographs and then repackage those not on display in appropriate archival storage. This is made possible by funding from SHARE. It is being led by Leanne Campbell from Ipswich Museum and a group of enthusiasts working with Fenella Barnes, one of our new volunteers.

Finally, my thanks to all the committee who work so hard to make the museum the success it is. To our past and present treasurers, Aart and Keith; to our media gurus, Steven and Jonathan; to our shop manager Sue, our Fire Officer Phil, and our indefatigable gardeners, Chris, Susan and Flo. Thanks also due to Flo, Keith, Lucy and Mike for chairing meetings or compiling minutes, sometimes both!

To those who are stepping down or away this year I would also like to thank you for all the years of help and support. We wish you well.

I will end with a comment from a visitor - "Excellent! Interesting!" she wrote and added verbally to us, "This must be the best small museum locally". To which I can only say, 'Yes, we agree'.

Brigid van Bruggen

Happy 100th birthday

A bright sunny day for the Museum's 100th birthday celebration. Councillor Andrew Lay, Mayor of Maldon, cut the cake.













Photos – Steven Gridley, Ian Linton

A passion for postcards

My photography career has given me an appreciation of the vintage postcard. Forty-five years ago, a local friend asked me to copy some photographs, including early postcards of Southminster. I'd an interest in printed matter, as my first employer, Maurice Rickards, was the founder of The Ephemera Society.

Then began my Southminster collection. Elderly residents were happy to lend me cards and photographs. Included were pre-1930s football and cricket teams — in those days, many were issued as postcards. Names were provided too, even those standing in the street in commercially produced cards. My local collection expanded by buying at collectors' fairs and borrowing more to copy. The copied cars were eventually replaced with originals.

As the collection grew, I was invited to hold an exhibition, and again 10 years later, as the collection expanded even further. I've given talks on the subject as well. As the digital age approached, I began a wider collection. Costs went up too; a recent purchase of a Southminster scene cost £65 - a missing link of a shop destroyed in WW2. Some collectors will pay hundreds of pounds for the right card, but not me!

My vast collection now embraces The Dengie, Maldon, Chelmsford, Colchester, Southend and many villages across Essex. A nationwide collection is growing too.

Deltiology (postcard collecting) teaches social history, conservation and a respect for the past, with messages often more interesting than the image. With five daily deliveries, as there were in pre-war London, people could write home locally from work to say what time they would be home if they posted before mid-day. I have a locally delivered card postmarked 7.30pm Christmas Day saying 'I won't be coming over tomorrow afternoon, Boxing Day'.

Collecting postcards is a great pastime and one I would highly recommend. Although they are published in many books, there's nothing like having the original in your hand. Every aspect of life from 1900 onwards can be found on the humble postcard.

David I ambert

History of Maldon's 'Museum in the Park'

As we celebrate 100 years of Maldon's historic museum, I have been asked to write the history of this incredible repository of our local past. Our Chairman, Brigid, approached me for this work after seeing my written work on St. Giles 'Church, Langford, and a history of the village of Langford itself, and I was delighted, but extremely humbled, to accept this commission.

However, I must, at this point, pay great tribute to Steven Gridley who, when furloughed during lockdown, spent many hours trawling through the museum's paperwork and making notes of its history, including benefactors and contributors.

I will be making full use of Steven's hard work, so this will be a joint venture, incorporating as it will, his knowledge and expertise and that of so many members of staff involved in accessions, costumes and other artefacts – I will merely be pulling all this together into one volume.

Maldon has such an incredible past, and although many people do not value history, or understand the need to preserve what has gone, as my old History teacher told us, "You don't know where you're going until you know where you've been," and quite honestly, we in Maldon have come a long way, and have so much to show for it.

The museum has had many venues, and a great many amazing people have fought to keep it and the history of this town and its inhabitants alive and relevant, and we should all be very proud of this.

Over the winter months, members of the museum will be working hard to upgrade the display rooms and their artefacts, and we hope that you will come along and share in the incredible story that is Maldon, its people and its history.

Irene Allen

Three Maldon Artists

Here are three spotlights to shine on notable artists who have lived in the Maldon area, of which there are a good number.

Catharni Stern

Born on the 22nd August 1925 in Hampshire, Catharni Stern was educated in Chelmsford and taught art in Bournemouth, London and Southend. As an adult she moved to Maldon and in her free time she worked on her sculptures from her little studio behind Market Hill, creating works that sold at auction and were on display internationally.

She made a bronze sculpture of Edward Bright's coat with 7 men inside, capturing the moment in the December after his death that the famous wager took place to see how many men could fit inside Bright's coat. Supposedly, the wager was on whether 500 men could fit inside the coat, but as the 7 men who did fit inside were from the Dengie Hundred, the coat therefore held 700 men. This is the idea Catharni was known to explain with her sculpture.

Catharni made a bronze relief of the wager in 2000 which is visible at the King's Head Centre in Maldon. She also made a panel featuring the wager and a maquette of the wager, each of them owned by Maldon Museum in the Park, giving a wonderful visual demonstration of a well-known moment in Maldon's history. She also made a sculpture of St. Francis, visible at St. Giles Church in Langford.

Catharni had a retrospective of her work at Chelmsford Museum in 2006. Her work had also been featured at the Ransom Gallery and at the John Whibley Gallery in London.

Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo

When people think of Art Noveau they usually think of Paris, Brussels or Barcelona, but it may be a pleasant surprise to many that the artist credited for starting the style off was someone who settled down in the Maldon District. This was Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo.

Born in Middlesex in 1851, Mackmurdo was educated at Felsted School in Essex, then went on to study Renaissance architecture in Italy, where he had travelled to with John Ruskin. Under the influence of Ruskin's ideas on architecture and nature, Mackmurdo was also influenced by his other friend William Morris, chief theorist of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The movement set out to design goods and houses in an artistic and affordable way, raising the standard of living for workers and craft-making to that of the fine arts. There was also a heavy emphasis on nature within this movement. In 1882, Mackmurdo created the Century Guild, a cooperative association of designers and craft-makers working on interior design and following Morris's teachings.

It was during this year that Mackmurdo designed the fretwork-backed chair, the back panel of which featured flowing plant-like forms waving about as though in motion. This chair is regarded by many as a precursor or perhaps as the first work of Art Nouveau, which took off around a decade later. This chair was followed in 1883 by the front cover illustration he made for a book he had written titled *Wren's City Churches*. Featuring long birds and tulips, waving similarly to the fretwork-back chair, this work gained Mackmurdo popularity on the continent, which really took to these flowing forms and went on later to became the main centre of the production of Art Nouveau design.

After moving to Wickham Bishops, in 1904 Mackmurdo built an Italianate styled house in nearby Great Totham with the hope of establishing a home for artists working in the Arts and Crafts style. Like van Gogh's yellow house in Arles, this house never ended up being used as a home for artists. Mackmurdo died in Wickham Bishops on the 15th March 1942.

Art Nouveau is understood to have come out of the Arts and Crafts Movement, heavily taking in its naturalistic themes and creating ornate items to improve people's lives and bring them up to the status of fine art. In his fretwork-back chair and cover illustration for *Wren's City Churches*, Mackmurdo appears to have been the bridge between the two movements.

Frederick Hans Haagensen

Born in Grimsby on September 23rd 1877, Frederick Hans Haagensen was regularly taken on trips to Norway from Grimsby on his sailing merchant father's ships. Having been trained to paint in Florence, Haagensen came to work on etchings whilst living in Chelsea. He etched many works featuring ships and sea life, managing to convey what would be brightly lit settings and intricate detail to rocks and water whilst using only black and white colours.

His work has been exhibited at the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, The British Museum, the Beecroft Art Gallery, and, due to his Norwegian heritage, the Munch Museum in Oslo.

Haagensen moved to Bradwell-Juxta-Maine with his wife, Audrey, who presented the Haagensen Gallery in Maldon. In 1968, Audrey Haagensen, along with Cath Backus, Harry Bacon and Maisie Woodward, founded a Museum Association to bring Maldon's collection of historical items back into public view, continuing the journey of Maldon Museum in the Park.

Jonathan Cruikshank

Election of new trustees

At the first AGM of Maldon Museum in the Park, two new trustees were elected to serve on the board for the next 3 years - Liz Jeary and David Patient, both long-term Maldon residents and good friends of the museum. This brings the number of trustees to 6.

Flo Shaughnessy stood down as chair of trustees having served her term in office and was thanked by the members present.

Blue Plaque commemorates a famous Maldon-born suffragette

Monday 14th November 2022 saw the unveiling of a Blue Plaque to commemorate Maldon-born women's rights campaigner and suffragette, Myra Sadd.

Organised by the Maldon Society, the ceremony was attended by a large number of people, including Myra's granddaughter, Diana Dollery, her great grandchildren and other members of the Sadd family, His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Essex Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst, Maldon Town Mayor Andrew Ley and Chairman of Maldon District Council Robert Boyce.

The plaque unveiled outside the former Sadd family home In West Chase, Maldon.



Born in 1872, Myra was one of eleven children born to John Granger Sadd whose family was a major employer in the building and timber trade, starting with a small business at Fullbridge in 1729. Myra was a stoic campaigner for women's rights to vote. As part of Emily Pankhurst's East London Federation of Suffragettes,

Myra hosted busloads of women from the East End in her house in Maldon. Myra went on to become a leading figure in the international women's suffragette movement. Hers is such an interesting and awe-inspiring story and indeed worthy of the Essex Heritage Trust Blue Plaque.



The Museum in the Park has its very own tribute to the Sadd family with some very interesting artifacts - please visit us soon!

Susan Mason

First World War medals restored

Oxley Gordon Askew was born on 30th March 1898. He was one of nine siblings born to Lizzie and Abraham Askew, eight of whom survived infancy. Abraham had a variety of jobs; on Oxley's birth certificate he is described as a 'timber porter'. In 1905, the Essex County Council Education Committee awarded Oxley a copy of a book called 'The Lost Dog' as a prize for 'Perseverance'. At some point, he worked as a delivery boy. Lizzie died in 1914; Abraham remarried and lived until 1932.

At Easter 1914, aged 16, Oxley joined the Essex Yeomanry. The regiment went to France in the autumn of that year. On 15th May 1915 they took part in the Battle of Frezenberg. Oxley was killed in the battle aged just 17 years old, one of many men from the regiment whose bodies were never found. His name is on the Menin Gate in Ypres.

George, Oxley's older brother by three years, also served in the Great War. He was posted to Ireland in 1916 where sadly he killed himself on 27th May - a year and a few days after the first anniversary of Oxley's death. A copy of The Maldon Advertiser containing Oxley's name on the Roll of Honour was found beside George's body.

Their remaining younger brother, Arthur Askew, was killed in the Second World War. He served in North Africa and was crossing the Mediterranean on the SS Yoma for the Sicily landings when his ship was torpedoed on 17th June 1943. His body was never found.

Oxley's medals have now been beautifully restored and framed by May Berkouwer Textile Conservation and will be back on display in the museum when it reopens for the 2023 season.

Jenny Chittenden is Arthur Askew's granddaughter



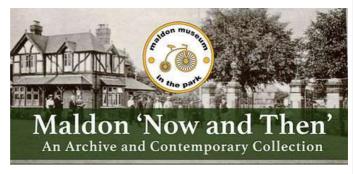
A bright new identity for the Museum

We're sure you've noticed the attractive new logo that appears on many different items from the Museum. The person behind the new logo is Ashlei Ellis, a talented graphic designer, artworker and photo editor. Ashlei designed the logo and then applied it to our posters, publications and products. We're really pleased with the new identity and would like to say a big thank you to Ashlie. You can see more of



Ashlie's work here at https://www.aecreativedesign.com









Summer of mystery

Over this hot and humid summer, Maldon Museum in the Park has been involved in the Share Museums East Mystery Shopping Scheme, and what an interesting and fun project it has proved to be. Share Museums East of England offer development opportunities for museums in the East of England, and one aspect of this is their mystery shopping survey.

Many regional museums in the area signed up to the Mystery Shopping Scheme this year covering museums throughout Essex and Suffolk. With each participating museum being allocated three museums to review and in return to be subject to review itself. This is a great way for staff from museums to visit and learn from other museums in the Eastern region, and, in reciprocation, for the museums to gain valuable feedback about their organisation.

Our lead shopper was able to visit all three of our museums under review as well as other museums scattered across the district, some of which are old favourites, but others completely new, and dare I say even unheard of before.

We are fortunate to have many fascinating museums in our region and many hidden gems were discovered during the summer's review. Our shopper was inspired by many of the innovative and engaging displays, audiovisual, interactive exhibits and familyfriendly activities, which may well influence Maldon Museum's future exhibitions.

This was the first time Maldon Museum in the Park had taken part in the scheme as being a museum to be surveyed. Although we were all on tenterhooks about the feedback from our own survey, it was overall very positive, with particular emphasis on our helpful and friendly volunteer stewards. Hopefully, the museums we have surveyed will find their feedback equally useful.

Carly Nicholls

Farewell to two good friends, Keith Davis and Charlie Middleton

"In the end, it's not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years"

I came across the above saying recently and it struck me at once just how applicable it is to both Keith and Charlie. I had the very great pleasure and honour of working at our Museum with them both over several years.

During that time, despite the most serious health issues, particularly for Keith, neither of these guys ever lost their enthusiasm for the Museum and worked continuously to ensure that it continued as a most important and valuable asset to Maldon.

Keith took on the role of Treasurer and never once let us down, even when suffering greatly from the many bouts of treatment which his condition demanded. He also retained his sense of humour even when taunted by me on his choice of a holiday destination — Guatemala. He assured me that it was wonderfully interesting, but I have remained somewhat unconvinced.

Charlie, on the other hand, was ever the practical handyman, always ready to wield a paintbrush or fix up a display when required. I well remember the fumes of his magic mix which would restore old woodwork to pristine condition, goodness only knows just what it contained, but it certainly did the trick and made your eyes water.

So, it's a personal farewell from me to two good friends – I shall miss you both and the world is a poorer place for your passing, but there will certainly be a lot more chocolate digestives to go round now. I think of you both every time I reach for the packet!

Judy Betteridge

Object in Focus

Maldon Museum in the Park has had the great pleasure recently of hosting a temporary exhibition, via the Arts Council funded *Object in Focus* project. Working closely with the Horniman Museum and Gardens London, the museum was able to showcase an object from the Horniman's wonderful collection.

The decision was made to choose the large and very beautiful Ammonites as our object in their stunning display case, and although there were some nerves watching the exhibit arrive by lorry to be professionally installed in one of our rooms, once in-situ it looked amazing, and we could breathe a sigh of relief, welcoming the ammonites *Parkinsonia dorsetensis* and *Titanites* of the Walter Hellyer Bennett Collection to Maldon.

We were very fortunate to start the Object in Focus loan by offering a great Zoom talk by Dr Emma Nicholls, Deputy Keeper of Natural History at the Horniman Museum, entitled 'The Amazing World of Ammonites' - such an interesting lecture which both children and adults could enjoy.

As the exhibition was housed in our Victorian room, we thought this would be interesting and very apt to theme our exhibition space around the famous fossil collector Mary Anning and the craze for the collection of curios.

Visitors were also able to see some of our own geological/fossil collection that was recently kindly donated to the museum as well as a poster of locally collected Eocene fossils. Children were able to book onto fossil-themed crafts and digging for fossils in our sand tray with the chance of getting a fossil shark tooth prize! The exhibition was also running alongside our fabulous summer Creeksea Fossil Tours, so all in all it was a very fossilly summer for the museum!

We were sad to see the fossils return to their home back at the Horniman Museum, but it was a great project to be involved with and hopefully many visitors enjoyed the fossils' little summer holiday in Maldon.

Carly Nicholls

Nomads of Maldon: 100 Years of Maldon's Museum

Home is where the heart is and the Museum has had a nomadic life over the last century. Our origins began in a room above the old station of the Maldon Volunteer Fire Brigade on London Road. Although the Museum opened in 1922, the



first rumblings of Maldon gaining such an institution started in 1921.

The earliest recorded items collected by the Museum include:

4/3/22 "Specimens of strata from Spital Road well" donated by E H Bentall & Co Ltd.

4/3/22 "Bound book Maldon Election Petition 1853" donated by George Finch, Wantz Road

4/3/22 "Specimens of varieties of wood" donated by Cllr Sampson

As you read further through the early registers of accessioned items, it's amazing some of the artefacts that passed through the doors of the Maldon Borough Museum as it was then. You can read through transcribed copies that are available to read in Penny Farthing Issues 37-47 which can be found on our website.

| Formula | Process | Proc

Items that take your eye include an entry dated 22/9/27 regarding the donation of Edward

Bright's waistcoat via a Mr Wilding which has since been lost. That same date also noted "portion of Zeppelin brought down near Wigborough, Sept 1916." This Zeppelin was L33.

In 1938, when the Fire Station was built, the Museum's Collection was moved briefly to a location on the High Street into buildings owned by the Borough Council. In 1939, at the outbreak of the Second World War, the collection was put into storage in sheds next to the Maldon Borough Council offices on Market Hill (now the Hill House development.) Many items were lost or damaged beyond repair such as the original Bright's waistcoat, and the Collection wasn't seen by the public again until 1968.

And so, the Museum remained dormant until Market Hill resident Catherine Backus, originally from Canada, came to the collection's rescue. Unfortunately, many of the original collection had become lost over the years, either due to damage from the move or deterioration from being in storage for so long. One such item that has disappeared is



the original Waistcoat of Edward Bright. The waistcoat on display today is a replica.

Ms Backus, along with Maisie Woodward, artist Audrey Haagenson (wife of Bradwell artist F.H Haagenson) and Harry Bacon formed a new association to lead the Museum into the second half of the twentieth century, but they had to find a new home.

Eventually Maldon's Museum had a new home, in premises above Matthews, a local store in the town at the time, which is now the home of Paparazzi. There the Museum was situated, right in the heart of town all the way up until 1990 when it moved to the Spindles (with the help of



Merle Pipe), a row of buildings behind what is now the Oakhouse bar opposite All Saints' Church.

The Museum had many wonderful years on the High Street with a space that allowed us to showcase many wonderful and varied exhibitions over the years, even if there were always fears for the Association's long-term future. Eventually though, the Museum did have to move away from the High Street, firstly into the Spindles, but then, in 1995, the Museum was thrown a life line!

In 1994, the Museum published its first issue of the Penny Farthing Magazine. The Penny Farthing was not only a newsletter giving subscribing members an update on the running of the Museum and news about it and its committee, it was also a new platform to publish stories and articles relating to the town's history. You can check out these magazines as they are available to read in our Reading Corner and on our website. In 1995, after confirmation from Maldon District Council that the Park Keeper's Lodge would be our new home, the hard work began. Converting the old lodge, which hadn't seen used for a number of years was a long and at times expensive process in order to make it a venue worthy of being a museum. Partition walls were removed or added, windows boarded up, even old toilet cubicles removed and plumbing diverted and electrics upgraded, but finally, after a year of toil, Maldon Museum was ready to reopen once again!



Sadly in 1998, two years after the opening of the Museum at the Lodge, Mrs Backus died. She had stood down from the Committee for several years prior to the time of her passing, but she did live to see her dream of the Museum having a home to call its own and its future seemingly secure after fighting for so long to keep it alive in the town.

The Museum as it is today would not be where we are without her efforts and desire for local heritage. She is honoured in memory today at the Museum with a room dedicated in her name with a portrait adorning the wall above the doorway as you enter.

Moving to the Lodge has afforded the Museum the opportunity to house larger exhibit items, both temporarily and permanently. None more so than our splendid (and a favourite among our volunteers!) 1877 Merryweather Manual Machine used by the Maldon Volunteer Fire Brigade when they were based in their original fire brigade building on London Road, the very same building that was the Museum's first home.



Steven Gridley

Maldon Museum in the Park

Registered Charity 1185095

Patron – Rt Hon. Sir John Whittingdale, OBE MP

Management committee

Chair Brigid van Bruggen

Secretary TBC

Treasurer Keith Jeary
Fundraising Carly Nicholls
Curator/Social Media Steven Gridley

Accessions Officer/Media Jonathan Cruickshank Collection Care Manager Jennifer Donnelly

Volunteer Coordinators Chris Dalton & Susan Mason

Committee member Mike Bowden Rosy Perry

Committee member Flo Shaughnessy

Newsletter Editor Ian Linton

Would you like to be involved with the Museum?

We are always looking for new trustees and 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 or becoming a trustee.

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

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

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

We re-open on Good Friday 7th April 2023

Wednesdays 1– 4pm Friday, Saturday, Sunday 1—4pm

We are happy to open at other times for private, family or group visits – just let us know. Entry is free, but donations are welcome

Contacting the Museum

By phone By email Website 01621 842688

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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