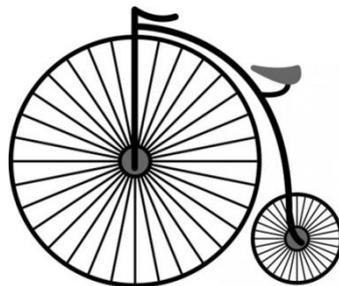


The Museum in the Park Maldon



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The Penny Farthing
Issue 85 April 2018

Chairman's Chat

Hello to you all, I hope you all had a 'happy winter period'. We must be in the beginning of the spring period because of all the snow that we have had lately. Despite what is outside, within the Museum there has been constant activity inside.

As well as some display adjustments there has been some escaping going on! No, not the display mannequins, but teams that have to solve clues within a set time to win the game by finding the 'key'.

We also had a group of Brownies and a group of Scouts who visited the Museum during the winter close down. The reason for this is that it makes the young persons' safety requirements easier to comply with.



Before the end of last year's season, we had a group from a local care home to have a special visit. This allows such groups to look round our displays at their own pace. If you know of any groups who would like to visit the Museum during an evening or on a day that we are usually closed, then please ask them get in contact via email on enquires@maldonmuseum.org.uk or leave a message on the Museum phone 01621 842688.

Because we had several stewards feel that they needed a rest from stewarding we are looking for additional people to fill the gaps. This could be entirely new ones to the Museum or previous steward who wouldn't mind helping out on the odd days. If you know of anyone, please encourage them to contact me. It is amazing, when you mention it, how many say, "I never thought of stewarding before".

Regards to you all, Peter Stilts, Chairperson

Bright opening on a dull day

The Museum reopened on a very wet Good Friday, with a special event to mark the occasion. Centre of attention was a display by guest of honour Lynne Raymond who spoke about her recent research into the life of Edward Bright senior, the 'fat man at Maldon'.



Lynne's detailed research has dispelled many of the myths surrounding one of Maldon's famous characters, as you can read in this issue.

A new permanent display in the Museum illustrates many aspects of Bright's life. At the opening, Lynne showed many of the historical documents and artefacts that have supported her detective work into this fascinating life. And, to add further interest, Richard Bright, a descendant of Edward, was present to hear the story.



Easter is the traditional reopening of the Museum and, to mark the event, Lynne and the Town Mayor, Cllr Jeanette Stilts, cut the ceremonial ribbon.

Lynne also took the opportunity to praise the work of current and past volunteers who had worked hard over many years to bring our Museum up to its very high standard.



This season opens with a number of fresh exhibits and new events at the Museum, which Harriet describes in 'Museum Musings'.

Museum Musing

And we're back! Hello and welcome to another season at the Maldon Museum. We've had quite a time over winter closing - so many things to talk about, where to start?

We've had a few new accessions in over winter closing donated by our wonderful volunteers as our wonderful public hasn't be able to get to us of course!



Two of our new items are very Maldon specific, the first being a water trough that was designed to be tapped into the main water supply and used by one animal at a time. This was produced by Bentalls and it still has its mains water connector attached to it.

At the museum, we have quite a lot of Bentalls' products dotted about the place. Due to the sheer range of the Bentalls catalogue, we'd probably be able to find something of theirs to go in each of our rooms.

The second Maldon-related item is a photograph of two Bates Motorcars. From the look of the setting of the photo and the men standing by the cars, they are on display at some sort of show.

Whether it was a car show or just a general industry fair we don't know but, from the way the men are dressed and the style of the cars, it was probably taken around 1910.

It's a lovely look into the history of cars and how amazingly glad I am that a roof is now a standard for cars these days. Not that I go in for coiffured hair, but I think even my somewhat lacklustre style wouldn't have survived exclusively open top rides.

Our final new item is really only a loan and has come from our brilliant displays officer, Brian Hunter, who by the way is responsible for sprucing up our timeline which was in dire need of updating (come in and check it out!).

Brian is the lucky owner of two embroidered post cards. Embroidered post cards were bought as souvenirs by soldiers who were serving in France on the Western Front during the First World War and either sent back with messages for loved ones or kept as personal mementos.

These are gorgeous; I'm very fond of them as an idea in that such beautiful card designs were created, largely for the British and Americans, not so long after the idea of giving patterned and mass produced cards kicked off during the Victorian era.

If you don't know what Victorian card designs were like, especially Christmas cards, look it up - seriously they were crazy. Of course, as I guess you've worked out, they are on loan to correspond with the centenary of the end of the war which is why there are just on loan for the year, so come in and see them while we've got them.

All of these things can be seen in a new feature at the Museum - we are now displaying all our new acquisitions in the front-of-house room at the Museum. We felt it was such a shame that we sometimes got in such lovely new items that didn't immediately have a place to go on display, so we created one. That's the kind of power I wield folks!

On the subject of new features at the Museum, there are a few more that have been added over the winter break. They're most exciting and therefore what I'm going to write about in this piece is that we've started running a couple of games at the Museum.

I'm not sure when this comes out but I know it'll be after the Easter weekend so a lot of you already know about the 'Odd One Out' game we ran for children, which I'm certain will be a roaring success (I'm writing this in mid March).

For those who don't know, we hid items around the Museum that fit with the theme of the room it was in but was out of its right time. Hopefully, we'll run it again at a later date, with different hidden items of course.

The other game we're now running is a team effort with the Escape Network. It's an escape game created exclusively for the Museum called 'The Park Keepers Child'. Team members solve puzzles and untangle riddles to get the key and escape the Museum before the time runs out! I've played it; it's amazing fun and I highly recommend that anyone give it a go.

Well that's all from me except to say that, if you like reading my article in this newsletter, I'm now also writing a piece for Maldon Life called 'Object of the Month'.

In the articles, I rummage through the Museum's archive to find something interesting to write about. It's a cricket bat (in the March edition) with a rather famous owner. There's a teaser for you for the rest of the story so you'll have to find me in Maldon Life.

Until next time, as always, I've been, Harriet Crawford-Condle

Help the Museum with Easyfundraising

Did you know that whenever you buy anything online - from your weekly shop to your annual holiday - you could be raising a free donation for Maldon District Museum Association? The latest total that this scheme has raised for the Museum is £82.97 at no cost to our members.

The process is straightforward:

1. Join. Visit

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/maldonmuseum/> and sign up for free.

2. Shop. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first, pick the retailer you want and start shopping. Amazon is part of the scheme.

3. Contribute. After you've checked out, that retailer will make a donation to the Museum for no extra cost whatsoever.

There are no catches or hidden charges and Maldon District Museum Association will be really grateful for your donations.

Support the Museum with the Essex Lottery

By purchasing tickets for the Essex Lottery, you will be helping the Museum and have the chance to win a top prize of over £300 or nine other weekly prizes of around £15.

The more people who buy tickets on our behalf, the more chance the Museum has of benefiting from funding. Please remember, when you log in to sign up for your tickets, indicate that it is our Museum that you are supporting. Otherwise, your payment will just be logged as a community fund supporter.

You can find more information and details of how to buy tickets at <https://www.essexlottery.co.uk/>

The 'fat man at Maldon' Myth and reality

The summer 2007 edition of 'The Penny Farthing' featured an interesting article about the Museum's Edward Bright exhibits.



Like many accounts before and after the opening of the exhibit, the article contained a number of popular facts that had been accepted, but never challenged.

Now, the reality is emerging thanks to detailed research carried out by Lynne Raymond. As Lynne explained, it wasn't until John Smith carried out research for his book *The Borough of Maldon 1688-1800: a Golden Age* (2013) that evidence came to light to doubt the story.

Lynne added that John has been extremely helpful and given her access to his research notes; she has just continued and extended the research.



At the opening of the Museum this year, visitors were able to view many of the documents and illustration that Lynne has used in her 'detective work'. She has also helped put together a new, up-to-date Edward Bright exhibit, which you can see at the top of the stairs. And, a leaflet about Bright's life is available at the enquiry desk.

We hope that Lynne will be able to contribute a more detailed article in a future issue of our newsletter. In the meantime, here is a summary of some of the myths and realities about the 'fat man at Maldon'. Thanks to Lynne for allowing us to publish these findings.



His birthplace – Most accounts claim he was born in Maldon. In fact, his birthplace was Great Waltham. And, his father William Bright had married Mary Davey. Not Jane Desborough.

Edward the post-boy – There is a popular story that he was the town post-boy, collecting mail from Chelmsford on horseback every day. No documentary evidence has been found to support this story. The evidence shows he came to Maldon from Great Waltham aged 12 ½ as an apprentice grocer to Joseph Patisson.

His home – Church House next to St Peter's churchyard in the High Street has long been described as Edward's home, with a blue plaque to commemorate it. In fact, it was Edward's son, known as 'Ted' Bright who built the house, 20 years after his father died. Edward lived in a house now occupied by 57 & 59 High Street.

His death – Various accounts of his death put his age at 29 in 1750 or 30 in 1756 and the cause of death as typhus or 'military fever'. He died in November 1750 aged 29 of a military fever.

The wagers – According to popular stories, following his death a wager took place at the Black Bull to see if seven hundred men (Dengie Hundred) could fit into his waistcoat.

The evidence indicates that the wager was to see if five men, aged 21 and resident in Maldon, could be buttoned into his waistcoat. Not only five but seven were fitted in.



A second wager took place at the Kings Head on 28 January 1751. This time nine men were fitted into his waistcoat.

New book about the history of Heybridge Swifts football club

Do you have memories to share?

A new book chronicling the history of Heybridge football since 1880 is due out this November. It is being written by former Maldon Mayor David Scott and Heybridge Swifts secretary Chris Daines.

David is a former sports editor and later deputy editor of the Maldon and Burnham Standard. He was a councillor for Heybridge and Maldon Mayor 1979/80 before moving away.

Although he never played for the Swifts, David made a few appearances for Maldon Town Reserves and one first team game.

As part of his research for the book, he has been collecting some great stories, including one about the Heybridge player who died a few hours after heading the ball in a local cup final.

David feels strongly that these stories need to be told before the people who know about them pass away. The book is also a social history of Heybridge and that should give it added value.

David has been travelling back and forth to interview people and collect material, making the 650-mile round trip from Torquay. All profits will go to the club, as David feels it gives him the chance to put something back to an area which treated me so well.



This won't be a book just for football fans. It will be as much a history of the district and the Heybridge families who have been the backbone of that community.

From Fred Perry, Norman Lott and Bertie Powell to the four Gill brothers who played in the same side; from 'Stumpy' Moss and Bert Gibson to Dennis Fenn; from 'Quaf' Gill and Mick Gibson to Joe Sullivan and Garry Hill it is a story spanning three centuries of the people who have played key roles in a club that refused to die in the 1960s when evicted from their Bentalls ground.

And while it is also a record of championships and memorable matches, above all it is a book about some wonderful people. It is about the volunteers who have faithfully served, and will continue to do so, week after week, season after season.

There would be chaos – and no club – if they did not show up, often in freezing weather to monitor the car park, man the turnstiles and serve the hot drinks when they must be tempted to stay home in the warmth of their living rooms. Through thick and thin they have always given a warm welcome to any visiting teams and officials.

Heybridge Swifts are not unique, but there were times when their story was a moving one – literally! It is one David and Chris felt needed telling.

They are particularly keen to hear from anyone who had a relative play for Heybridge between 1880 and 1939 in order to check Christian names.

David can be contacted at DScottTorq@aol.com

On the heritage trail

September sees the return of the popular Heritage Open Days, when many of Maldon's historic buildings and venues will again be open to the public. To help visitors, two guides are in preparation outlining heritage walks around the town and along the riverside.

Our Museum is a great place to find out about the town's history, but why not take a walk and see many of the sites for yourself – some of them you might not even be aware of! Here's just a brief selection.



On Market Hill, you'll find Maldon's workhouse, the Old Custom House, Hill House, home of the Sadd Family and a memorial to some of the Sadd family behind United Reformed Church.

In London Road, look out for cottages occupied by a famous market gardener, Maldon's former courthouse, town sign and house of correction.

Along the riverside, you can see The Brent, a belvedere on the Jolly Sailor, Trinity House buoy and the home of John Howard.

Maldon Society talks

From January 2018, talks will be held in the Cygnet Room, behind The Swan. Talks start at 7.45pm – Doors open 7.15pm

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| 3rd May | AGM and Malcolm Brown, Photographer and Member of the Guild of Essex Craftsmen, Story of the Guild and Their Work |
| The 7th June | Clive Potter, The Home Front during the Great War: Some Local Reflections |
| 5th July | 'Memories of Maldon' - The High Street from the 1930s onwards |
| August | No meeting |
| 6th September | Paul Mardon, The Essex Place Names Project: What's in a Name? |
| 4th October | David Smart, Managing a Hidden Essex Gem: Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Through the Seasons |
| 1st November | Michael Head, A Long-Lost Family and Churchill's Secret Army |

News roundup

Arrange a visit

The Museum is now open for the season, and 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

Would you like to be involved with the Museum?

Join us as a Museum Steward

This can be a very rewarding role as it requires meeting and talking with visitors to the Museum. It involves taking the entrance money and ensuring the safety of visitors.

The basic requirement is one 3-hour session per month, although, if you are able to offer more sessions, we should be very grateful. We open Wednesday, Friday and Saturday afternoons from 2-5pm, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays from 11-5pm.

Full training will be given and no steward is permitted to work on their own.

If you are interested in becoming a steward, please contact us to find out more - enquiries@maldonmuseum.org.uk

**Maldon District Museum Association
Registered Charity 301362**

Patron – Rt Hon. John Whittingdale, OBE MP
President - Cllr. David Williams

Committee to AGM 2018

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Vice-Chairperson	Cllr. Flo Shaughnessy
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Hon. Treasurer	Karl Davies
Committee Members	Brigid Van Bruggen Mike Bawden Stephen Watson Steven Gridley Steve Gallant
Accessions Officer	Harriett Crawford-Condle
Curatorial Adviser	Position vacant
Newsletter Editor	Ian Linton

The Museum in the Park Magazine is the official newsletter of the Maldon District Museum Association and is published three times a year. For just £10 annually, or a single lifetime fee of £90, you can become a Friend of Maldon Museum in the Park. 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, contact the Friends' Secretary 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.

Come and visit us

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

Contacting the Museum

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Website www.maldonmuseum.org.uk

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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