

Chairman's Introduction - *Judy Lea*

According to a reputable survey in 2018, some 31 percent of the British population claim to have seen or met Queen Elizabeth II in real life, and we were fortunate that Maldon was included in her busy schedule more than once. A truly outstanding individual, and a wonderful example. We now wish King Charles III all the best in forging his own reign and helping the UK adjust to its changing position in the world and the long-term issues likely to affect us all.

These royal events make one think more than usual about the importance of handing on our heritage. As this is so central to our Society, it should give us all renewed belief in the value of what we do. Can you perhaps now step forward to help with a portion of the secretarial duties? Do you have a friend or family member who would like an opportunity to help? The rest of the committee are a friendly and diligent bunch - the photo shows our meal together in August.



As I see it, Maldon has two crucial populations in terms of the passing on of local heritage: One is the hundreds of new people moving to Maldon who need to be given opportunities to understand and appreciate the heritage all around them in order to feel rooted and make their own contribution to the community here. Along with other heritage groups, we can be proud we certainly do our part in that. Our public talks on local topics, our active displays in the Maeldune Heritage Centre, and our blue plaques around the town being just some examples. In his item, Peter is asking for both practical and financial help in improving the way our pictorial archives are presented at the Maeldune Centre. Can you help him identify photos or contribute towards the new equipment we need? Also, Wendy is always keen to have new names suggested for oral history recordings - do you know of someone local with a tale to tell who's not yet been interviewed?

The second is of course our young people. When I volunteer at the Heritage Centre it is genuinely thrilling to see young people using our equipment and getting something from it - even if it's amazement that people didn't have bathrooms or fridges, but did skin rabbits; at least they're learning lives were lived differently and are evolving. After the successful Migration event at the Plume Academy this year, we are talking to the school about further potential liaison, such as exhibiting their own archives and using youthful energy in loading our new equipment (when it comes.!) So, bags of potential to pass on our mutual heritage there.

Our September talk from the owner of Silo generated another full house, and gave a timely reminder, if one was needed, just how fragile our local economy is, relying on the commitment and enthusiasm of the individual owners, and of course our preparedness to purchase from them rather than elsewhere. It was stressed that local businesses welcome feedback on what they provide in order to offer what people want -and of course Silo's ethos is very much in tune with the former Prince's environmental concerns too!

All the best to each of you in these historic times, Judy Lea

Planning issues – *David Smye*

National politics

The new Prime Minister, Liz Truss, has named Simon Clarke, the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland MP, as her new Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). At 37, he is currently the youngest member of Truss's Cabinet. He becomes the sixth person to fill the role since 2018. He is a qualified solicitor and has previously served as a junior minister at the Ministry of Housing in 2020.

His appointment has been generally welcomed by the housebuilding fraternity, but many have wondered if it could herald yet more changes and amendments to the Levelling Up & Regeneration Bill currently before parliament. Commenting on the Bill, Liz Truss has said *"It is too easy for local councils to be overruled by the Planning Inspectorate and that is certainly an issue that I expect my Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (Simon Clarke) to look at"*.

This commitment appears at odds with elements of planning reform proposed by former housing secretary Michael Gove earlier this year – which were described by critics as an attempt to *"radically centralise planning decision-making"* and *"would allow the housing secretary to grant permission for contentious developments and bypass the planning system entirely with no right for the public to be consulted as part of this process"*.

So, it is not yet clear whether Truss and Clarke will look to pass the bill in its current form. If the government did review and change its proposed planning reforms, it would be the second time since then-housing secretary Robert Jenrick unveiled the original white paper on planning in August 2020.

Local news

Very little happening locally. Only minor applications for planning consent recently, although you will see in the High Street report that the local economy, with some new and relocated businesses, seems to be as vibrant as ever, although it will always depend upon your local support for its continued survival.

One of the very pleasant tasks that befalls the Maldon Society is to be on the judging panel for the annual Conservation & Design Awards and this year there were again several projects nominated that demonstrated good design and conservation, and pride in a 'job well done'. The panel has met and drawn up a shortlist of sites to visit in October to get a more detailed picture of those schemes that look like potential winners, and we shall report the outcomes at a later date.

Oral History – Wendy Howell

As many of you may be aware, we have recently uploaded 15 new clips on to the Listening Station in the Maeldune Heritage Centre; thanks to James for doing the technical work. Some of the voices on there are new ones - people we have recorded in the last few months. And some are voices you may have heard before but this time we are using different parts of their interviews – so ‘old voice but new story’. All are really worth listening to and give an interesting insight into times gone by.

One of our earlier participants, Christopher Foyle, was interviewed by Judy in 2018. Very sadly, Christopher died recently. To remind us of his great achievements in restoring Beeleigh Abbey, I have put together some quotes from his interview about the work that he organised and funded in the Abbey.

“Oh yes, and then the building work -there was an awful lot of work to be done to the building. Both repair and structural work which needed to be done but also what we thought would be improvements, in keeping, hopefully, with the house. And, to that end, we got David Andrews round, and he got English Heritage round, and a chief guy to do with antiquities, and the local Council. So, by the time we did the work, we had them all on side.”

“We had to do some very basic urgent things, for example an enormous crack had appeared in the masonry of the side wall of the Chapter House. So, we got Bakers of Danbury to strap that all together, with steel straps, then filling in all the gaps where the cracks had occurred – so that was necessary.”

“The roof was in a terrible state and was leaking so we got in another specialist roofing firm and they removed all the tiles and built an enormous monstrous oblong white plastic covering which could be seen for miles around. I was getting queries from Maldon Town Council: ‘What’s going on at Beeleigh Abbey?’ ‘Don’t worry, we’re turning it into a Holiday Inn!’ So anyway, we re-covered the roof, partly with the old tiles and partly with new tiles that looked like the old ones, and that sorted that out.”

“We did many things, for example the floor in this room is an oak floor that we put in. It was a horrible pine floor before. All the floors on the first and second floors had pretty awful pine floors. We replaced all those with wooden oak floors which are stained to make them look reasonably ancient. Now they are solid.”

“The ground floor and the Library floors were just cement. If you look at a drawing of the Library in about 1815, the floor appears to be an earth floor. If you look at a drawing of the Calefactory (a monastery room, warmed and used as a sitting room) in about 1850 it looks as if the floor is covered in tiles. Then obviously at some stage it was concreted over. We thought that was very inappropriate. By the way, after my Aunt died, we had to remove all the rugs and burn the whole lot; full of moths.”

“We thought it would be rather nice to have old limestone slabs put on the floor and English Heritage seemed to go along with that so we bought a load of limestone slabs, removed from old houses in France, and they were shipped across. A most wonderful chap, a craftsman, laid those slabs throughout the Chapter House, the Calefactory and the Kitchen area. And that’s what we have today”.

(Christopher was given the RICS National Award for Conservation in 2005)

The High Street Autumn 2022 – *Lindsey Wright*

- Work has started on converting the Old Police Station into offices.
- Optimism that the Blue Boar was to be taken over by James from Queen Vic has fallen through. It is now for sale at £2,500,000! It will need a lot more money to bring it back to its former glory.
- The former Salty Dogs at the bottom of Bull Lane is now a high-class florist, Dilly's.
- The former Prezzo continues to be converted into a fine dining "Paparazzi" restaurant.
- Chic Petit, Wenlock Way has closed and replaced by Silo, moving from the High Street.
- Also in Wenlock Way, Dante's has moved there and taken over Driftwood café. They are keeping the café as it was for the time being then opening their restaurant in the evening when the kitchen is refurbished.
- Stuart in Buntings Butchers has closed and is now Smith's Butchers with some of the original staff.
- Video game shop opposite Wantz Road has closed.
- Next door, more recently a furniture shop, is being made ready for yet another nail bar!
- Maldon Candy sweet shop has closed
- A new home-made card shop has opened in the dormant "Bath Shop" on the corner of the small lower carpark, specialising in personalised cards.
- Work continues on the former Gelato and shop next door. Apparently going to be a restaurant "Salt" Bar, Pizza, Grill, Wine & Cocktail Bar, run by the owner of the ice-cream parlour.
- On 25th August, Grape Tree opened in the former HSBC selling nuts, pulses, dried fruits etc. On a personal note, that's where my father's fish shop was until the mid-1960s.
- Barclays Bank has closed and remains empty. Although there is an estate agents board outside, it has yet to appear on their website; there are several other Barclays Banks advertised in Essex. Supposedly there is help for their customers available in the MDC offices on a Wednesday & Thursday 10.00-4.30
- The former Silo is soon to be a Phone Shop.
- M&Co has been transformed into QD; a discount store competing with Poundstretchers.
- The empty shops at the rear of Kings Head Centre have been filled with various second-hand stuff.
- The Wimpy Bar closed for refurbishment and re-opened as The Diner with a similar menu.
- Upstairs Downstairs in Edwards Walk closed due to retirement. It has been taken over by the owners of Templeman's Optician's. After a refurbishment it has re-opened maintaining the original name.
- Vegan store next to White Horse has closed.
- Yessam's convenience store has closed after a short life and remains empty.
- Not in the High Street, there's a new barber shop opening on Cups Corner.
- Also not on the High Street, the Barge Tea Rooms on the Prom is closing down. That will be sadly missed.

Proposed new Archive display system – *Peter Holmes*

When photographs or drawings are donated or lent to the Society, the images are scanned using a high-quality photographic scanner and stored on a computer. This way the images are held securely and can be shared with others, displayed in various ways or used in documents and posters.

You may remember that the Society used to have two laptop computers in the Maeldune Heritage Centre where visitors could view a selection of archive photos. In 2013 it was decided to replace the laptops with a wall-mounted 42" colour display, connected to a Western Digital media centre. Some 4500 images are now stored on the media centre. From the menu, any one of 44 different folders may be selected so that the images in the folder may be viewed as a slide show.



This system has worked well for nearly ten years but it does have a limitation, in that visitors need to obtain the assistance of a Heritage Centre volunteer if they wish to view a different folder. In addition, the equipment is no longer supported by the manufacturer so would need to be replaced should a fault occur. We have therefore been looking for an alternative system which would overcome these problems.

A number of options are available but the one that we feel would work best is a touch screen system which allows users to choose a folder themselves from a pictorial menu. I'm sure you will have seen these in museums around the country. Not only will this encourage more people to explore our extensive archive but will relieve the Centre volunteers from having to break off from assisting other visitors.

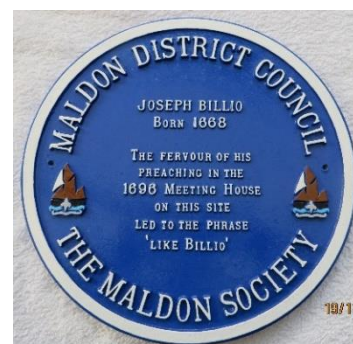
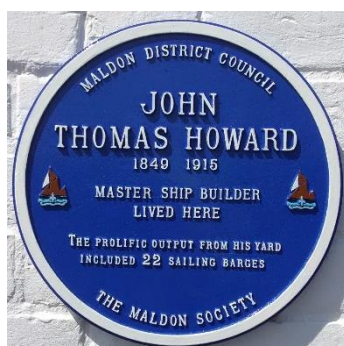
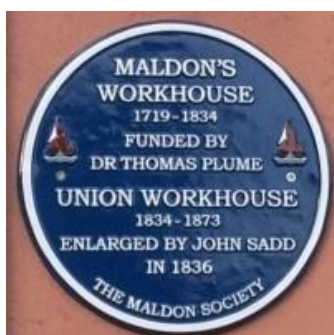
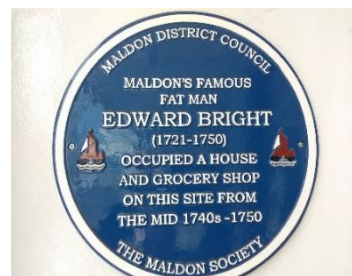
Unfortunately, these systems are not cheap! Before we can proceed with this project, we need to raise the necessary funds and a small team is already working on this. If you feel able to make a donation, however small, we would love to hear from you.

As part of the transition process, we intend to re-structure the archive so that it will be easier for everyone to find the images they want. At present, some of the folders are listed under the name of the photographer and the plan is to create new folders based on the subject matter. This will entail quite a lot of work; identifying and labelling each image and moving it into the appropriate subject folder. We are hoping to set up a small team of volunteers to carry out this work. If you feel you would be able to help with this, please do get in touch by contacting maldonsociety@aol.com

Blue Plaque project – *Peter Holmes*

As you may know, The Maldon Society (in conjunction with the District and Town Councils) has, for many years, been responsible for the installation and maintenance of the Blue Plaques fixed to buildings around the town. These plaques commemorate famous people who have been part of Maldon life and buildings of historical significance.

A couple of years ago we replaced the plaque for Edward Bright, the ‘Fat man of Maldon’, as research by Lynne Raymond showed that the previous plaque was on the wrong building! We also replaced the one on the old workhouse in Market Hill as it had become almost illegible and re-furbished the plaques for John Howard in North Street and Reverend Joseph Billio on the United Reformed Church.



In last year's Spring newsletter, I mentioned that the Society had been approached by Jennifer Tolhurst, the Lord Lieutenant of Essex to assist with the erection of a plaque in commemoration of Myra Sadd, the famous suffragette and campaigner for women's rights.

At the time, we were unsure as to where in Maldon Myra lived. Since then, we have made contact with Myra's grand-daughter, Lady Diana Dollery. With Diana's assistance we have established that the Myra spent her earliest years living, with her family, in Hill House, Market Hill.

We think this was while the new family home, 'Mount View', was being built in 'The Chase' (now West Chase), London Road. The family then moved to Mount View and Myra lived there until her marriage to Ernest Brown in 1896. As a result of this research, it has been agreed that Mount View is the logical location for the plaque.

An order will be placed soon and, once the plaque has been mounted on the entrance of Mount View, we plan to arrange a simple unveiling ceremony. I hope to report on this in our next newsletter.

Heritage Weekend – *Dorreen Linton*

National Heritage Open Days are held throughout the country during early September and it was a really busy weekend in Maldon. Our area within the Maeldune Heritage Centre was manned by some committee members who chatted to visitors of all ages from toddlers to older age. They were able to hear some of our oral history recordings and see selections of our visual archives which related to this year's national theme 'Industry, Invention and Innovation.' Here are some photographs of visitors to our area.



Maldon Society talks – *John Came*

Our monthly public meetings are held at the Cygnet Room, Swan Hotel, High Street, Maldon. The doors open at 6.30 pm with the meeting starting at 7 pm. Visitors will be requested to give a donation.

Please pre-register your intention to come to our talks. It certainly does help to be able to monitor the numbers likely to attend. Please email maldonsociety@aol.com or ring Dorreen 01621 853428. Thank you.

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| 6 th October | Adrian Wright - By Train to the Seaside Ending at Maldon East Station |
| 3 rd November | Patrick Ellum & Simon Wood - Chelmer Blackwater Reserve, a Community Interest Company |
| 5 th January | Paul Chaplin - Beeleigh Mill: Steam & Water, Past, Present & Future |
| 2 nd February | David Newman - Goldhanger Goldrush |

St Mary's Flower Festival– *Virginia Playle*



We took part in St Mary's Flower Festival in August with a display arranged by Virginia.

Keep in contact with The Maldon Society

Does the Society have your email address?

It would help us to get in touch with you about future events and news.

Please contact us via the website to give us your details. Thank you.

Email: maldonsociety@aol.com Website: www.maldonsoc.org