

Introduction

We do hope you all enjoyed the summer with its mix of weather. Our town was busy with shops offering their unique opportunity for supporting our independent shop owners with a variety of clothes, food, gifts and much more. Gardens and open spaces were ablaze with colour thanks to our volunteers who care for them.

The Prom was busy with events being organised throughout August for all ages. Our local gem has so much to offer residents and visitors. The wonderful riverside view, trips down the river, gardens, our Museum, food outlets and a range of activities for children and grandchildren to enjoy.

Maldon Society

Since Judy left her position as Chairman in the spring, the committee has continued to work hard – booking speakers for the coming year, staying in contact with important planning issues, looking after our archives and encouraging residents to offer some of their personal collections to be scanned and placed on our system. We have been carrying out secretarial work and publicity, updating our website and keeping the Society's accounts in order.

We have been sharing and discussing matters as they arise and holding monthly committee meetings to keep the Society's business in good order. John Came has been chairing our committee meetings with David Smye and Peter Holmes sharing front of house duties at our public meetings.

Although we are carrying on 'business as usual', we would welcome more committee members. If you know of anyone who would like to join us, please ask them to email maldonsociety@aol.com

Monthly public meetings

Our monthly public meetings continue to be very well attended and our programme of future talks has some interesting titles with experienced speakers so we do advise to continue to pre-register for our meetings to assist with seating arrangements.

New town map and archive notice

We have received compliments regarding our new town map (near the bus stop in front of All Saints Church). This has been designed and all the costs covered by the Maldon Society. The QR code is an important addition giving access to information about opening days and times for various local venues.

We would like to thank Point Graphics for their help in producing the map, John Guiver for providing photographs and Duncan Kilby for renovating the framework.



Our new archive sign in the Maeldune Heritage Centre is also directing visitors to our archive area, so giving the Society more prominence.

Planning issues – *David Smye*

Future developments:

In July, Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, set out his plans for housing delivery across England. Supporting the planning system was a key part of his speech which including the following important content regarding the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and development management:

“The government’s commitment to development and regeneration in and around existing town and city centres is also guiding its consideration of responses to the consultation on updating the NPPF.

The government wants to make it easier to progress such developments, and to that end is clear that:

- ***Development should proceed on sites that are adopted in a local plan*** with full input from the local community, unless there are strong reasons why it cannot.
- *Local councils should be open and pragmatic in agreeing changes to developments where conditions mean that the original plan may no longer be viable, rather than losing the development wholesale or seeing development mothballed.*
- ***Better use should be made of small pockets of brownfield land*** by being more permissive, so more homes can be built more quickly, where and how it makes sense, giving more confidence and certainty to SME builders.

Later in the year, the government will pass the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to put in place our reforms to the planning system that will create more beautiful and sustainable homes in the right places and publish updates to the National Planning Policy Framework.”

Here in Maldon, the proposal that would have a great effect upon the town, is the anticipated application to build 275 houses on land at Maldon Hall Farm. An opposition group has already been formed and we have contributed to their gathering of information. A further implication of any development would be that it would herald the opening up of this exceptional agricultural land west of the bypass to a further 600 or so houses, Care Home and research establishment/s. This land is not allocated for such uses in the present Local Development Plan and would have a profound effect upon the town’s present services, facilities, and transport infrastructure.

Unfortunately, national policies are weighted to encourage more house-building

Extracts from House of Commons Committee Report of 14 July 2023



“The Government’s national housing target is to deliver 300,000 net new homes per year by the mid-2020s and 1 million new homes over the course of this Parliament.

The Government’s reform proposals include making local housing targets advisory and removing the need for local authorities to continually demonstrate a deliverable 5-year housing land supply. We have heard evidence from many stakeholders that these measures will render the national housing target impossible to achieve.”

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Planning issues continued

“Over several decades, successive governments have failed to build enough new homes, which is an underlying cause of the current affordability crisis. The Government must now take urgent action to reverse this trend in short order, or else it will not achieve its national housing target of building 300,000 net new homes by the mid-2020s.”

Maldon’s Local Development Plan:

The government has made several differing proposals for national planning policy reform since 2019, which has resulted in uncertainty among local authorities. The Government’s December 2022 announcement of its intention to make changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, and the subsequent public consultation, has continued the trend of stop-start planning reform that has become the norm over several years.

This uncertainty has resulted in 58 local authorities stalling, delaying, or withdrawing their local plans to deliver housing - 28 of those since the December 2022 announcement. Contrary to the Government’s objective of facilitating local plan-making, the short-term effect of announcing the planning reform proposals has been to halt the progress of local plans in many areas. The situation in Maldon is the same – the timetable for progress has slipped and that leaves the authority open to challenges regarding housing supply – dangerous territory when they attempt to reject unsuitable housing developments in unsuitable locations.

Planning fees

Draft regulations to introduce a national fee increase of 35 percent for major applications and 25 percent for all other applications were laid before parliament in July. This is a significant amount, which should provide a greater income for the local planning authority.

A further amendment will introduce an annual rise in application fees linked to inflation (and capped at 10%) every April from 2025 onwards. Also, applicants submitting non-major applications (including householder developments) that the local authority have not come to a decision on, will be eligible to receive a refund of their fee that they paid on initial deposit of the proposals after 16 weeks.

These revisions now need to be voted on by both the House of Commons and the House of Lords before they can come into effect.

The Local Government Association, which represents councils, is urging the Government to urgently make Parliamentary time to introduce the fee uplift, following the return of MPs to Parliament. Planning fees currently do not cover the true cost of processing planning applications, with 305 out of 343 local authority planning departments operating in a deficit totalling £245.4 million in 2020/21 – money coming from our pockets.

Oral History – Wendy Howell

We continue to interview fascinating people in Maldon and have now completed 77 recordings. A few are ‘doubles’ where we have returned to do a second interview where it is obvious after the first session that there are more stories to be told.

Recently I interviewed three Maldonians whose families had owned fish shops in the High Street. The first was Lindsey Wright, Maldon Society Treasurer, whose Dad, Les, ran the wet fish shop at 72 High Street (now Grape Tree) then moved to 39 High Street which is where the current sports shop now is, next to the Moot Hall. The other two were sisters Chris Copsey and Judy Smith; their Dad, Douglas, owned ‘Douglas Ball Fishmonger’ lower down the High Street, opposite the junction with Wantz Road. Now it is “Woof” the dog shop, next door to Amy’s Nails.

Lindsey’s Dad was born on the Hythe into a fishing family. He worked in his Uncle’s fishmongers initially, then bought the business himself. He used to go to Billingsgate Market early on Monday mornings and occasionally Lindsey would go with him. Lindsey remembers that Dad, dealing with the fish, often had his hands in icy water, so the cuffs of his jumper would rot. Rather than replacing the whole jumper, Lindsey’s Mum Pam would knit new cuffs – a skill which Lindsey learned at a young age.

Les and the other fishmonger in the High Street, Douglas, used to get on well together; there was no rivalry. Both of them used to collect their winkles, cockles and shrimps, from Tollesbury, delivered by the Osbournes Bus every day. Les and Douglas used to run out to meet the bus to collect their bags of catch!

Chris and Judy have fond memories of helping in their Dad’s shop from the age of 9 or 10, greeting customers and later learning to weigh out the fish and deal with the money. Chris loved going out with her Dad in his van on the rounds in his van, an old Ford which had large headlamps at the front. Sometimes, she would be allowed to sit on the front of the van with her legs round the headlamps, while her Dad drove slowly from customer to customer in Great Totham.

Judy remembers being paid 10 shillings for working on a Saturday in the shop; when a little older she used to buy stockings with her earnings. There was a smoke house at the back of the shop, an old wooden structure which lasted for many years. As Douglas was getting towards retirement age, Judy’s husband Alan took over the running of the business.

The full interviews are really worth listening to, each one is full of many more details of the lives and happenings from 50 - 60 years ago. The collection of recordings demonstrates the wide variety of remarkable people in Maldon who we have had the privilege of recording. Subjects covered include barges, fishing in the Blackwater, local industries, home life, the High Street, jobs and war time. There are stories about boat building and sail making, childhoods with freedom to roam all day, wartime events, learning to swim in the Promenade lake and much more. They, and all the other recordings, are on our website www.maldonoralthistory.org

We are always grateful when we are given names and contact numbers of new possible interviewees – as long as they have agreed to the idea! So please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Wendy Howell - 01621 857054 or wendyinmaldon@gmail.com

The High Street & beyond Autumn 2023 – *Lindsey Wright*

- Dough & Co Pizzas has opened next to the Tap Room.
- Willow & Fox has a new owner.
- The former 'Just the Thing' in Edward's Walk has been replaced with 'Joyeux' but seems to be closed again.
- Cancer Research charity shop has closed down and remains empty.
- The Barclays building remains empty. There is a help desk in the MDC offices Wednesday & Thursday 9.30-12.30 & 1.00-4pm.
- The Halifax is maintaining a presence in the Town Hall on a Thursday morning 10.00-2.00.
- Former Cosmetology hairdressers at number 74, is now another mobile phone shop.
- Costa Coffee has had a refit.
- The Pie & Mash shop has closed and was quickly replaced with another Indian Restaurant.
- Next door, the clothes shop has closed down.
- The former Warwick Arms, more recently '185', has been renovated and is now 'Haus' restaurant.
- A short-lived beautician's near Victoria Road has been replaced by a delicatessen 'Hoskyn's Handmade Pies & Artesian Cheeses'. Open Tuesday to Sunday.
- The former tanning shop opposite the Dry Cleaners is now another tanning shop.
- 'Just the Gift' has opened opposite the Post Office, selling personalised goods.
- A CBO shop has opened opposite the top of Wantz Road.
- Former optician was renovated and converted into a cake shop: Annie's. Unfortunately, it soon closed and has not re-opened.
- The Emporium has a closing down sale.
- Wenlock Way: The Candle shop has moved into Dante's kitchen area and a new hairdresser, Collaboration & Co, has opened in its place.
- Terry in the market has retired.
- A new market is due to be launched on 12th October, this time by Suffolk Market Events.
- Luigi's on Market Hill has opened a second restaurant in the Griffin in Danbury.
- The Old Post Office, more recently a Morrison's Local, is being converted into a 'Salero Lounge'. (Apparently similar to Wetherspoons) It is yet to be discussed by the District Council's Planning Committee.
- Blue Boar: there's a rumour that it's been sold to the owner of Marsh Farm, James Sinclair, although maybe it's just a lease?
- The Brazilian restaurant is up for sale.
- The craft shop at the top of the High Street has been replaced by a Star Wars shop.
- The old Police Station has been renovated and is now an accountant's: Pocknells.

Touchscreen updates – *Peter Holmes*

I'm pleased to say that, following my appeal in the last newsletter, several volunteers have come forward to offer their assistance in editing the photo collections which we have on our new touchscreen system.

One of the advantages of the new system is that updates are relatively easy to carry out. An external hard drive, supplied with the screen, has a duplicate copy of the archive loaded on it.

Updates to the copy may be carried out using anyone's home computer and by simply connecting the hard drive to the computer in the Heritage Centre, it is possible to update the main display.



So that several volunteers can work on updates at the same time, I have purchased a number of USB memory sticks, onto which I have loaded one or two photo collections. Once complete, I can then copy the edited folders onto the external hard drive, ready to be loaded onto the touch screen computer.

I have to say that the editing is a fairly laborious and time-consuming work but thanks to the efforts of the volunteers, three collections are already complete and good progress is being made with the rest.

If you haven't tried the touchscreen yet, I would encourage you to have a look. It's very easy to use. The Heritage Centre has free to go in and is open 11am to 4pm Tuesday to Saturday.



Most of the collections donated or lent to the Society contain photographs covering many different subjects. Hence the current priority is to place all the photos in subject folders which relate to the touchscreen file structure. Once this is complete, the next step is to try and identify the 'who, what, where and when' of each photo so it may be given a meaningful title.

As you can imagine, this will be even more time consuming and will require volunteers with some knowledge of Maldon's people and history. If you think you have the time (and patience!) to help with this, please do get in touch maldonsociety@aol.com

Beeleigh Abbey Photographic Project – *Jane Senior*



We are aiming to update the Society's photographic archive collection of Beeleigh Abbey and Gardens. The gardens were not open during Covid lockdowns and, as this attraction will not be open during the 2024 season, this is a good opportunity to review our collection.

We are asking members if they would like to submit photographs taken during the 2022 and 2023 open season. Members were also welcomed to the garden for a talk in the summer of 2022 and photographs taken during that visit would also be of interest.

If you have photographs to submit, we would ask for:

- In the region of six photographs per member
- Images of architecture, landscape, crowds and ambiance
- Jpeg format
- No close-up images of specific flora
- No close-up images of people

Please submit your photographs to the following email address maldonsociety@aol.com

Maeldune Heritage Centre

The Maeldune Trustees organised a farewell party for the retiring Manager Lynda O'Brien, who has worked hard to develop the Centre. The new Manager, Joye Colbeck, is settling into the job and making herself familiar with volunteers and the organisation of the Centre.

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 Ian or Dorreen Linton on 01621 853428. Thank you.

5th October – David Fell - Climate Change: What does it mean for Maldon

2nd November - Joan Finch - Tiptree Heath - Its history and current conservation

December - no meeting

4th January- David Newman - The History of Beckingham Hall

1st February - Roger Smith - Stow Maries Great War Aerodrome

7th March - Nicholas Wickenden - Wilkins & Sons Farm, Factory and Family

4th April - Adrian Wright - The Shaking Planet: Earthquakes in Essex

Meet the committee

John Came - Vice Chairman & Talks Coordinator

Lindsey Wright - Treasurer

Virginia Playle - Minute Secretary

Peter Holmes - Archives Manager

David Smye - Planning Adviser

Dorreen Linton - Publicity & Heritage Manager

Jane Senior - Membership Secretary

James Reece-Ford - Technical Consultant

Janet Watson - Co-opted Member

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