

Chairman's Introduction - *Judy Lea*

This will be the last time I give the introduction as after over ten years on the Committee and over five as Chairman I shall be stepping down from the committee as health and family issues are now making it too difficult to do a decent job.

In my earlier business life and professional training, we'd be taught various theories about how committees work best, and I can now genuinely say I've actually seen the best in action. Each of the other committee members and backroom helpers brings not only their own commitment to Maldon, their personal energy and very different skills, but also a respect for each other in working well as a genuine team. I can't thank them enough for their support and help during this time.



Together, we've seen and addressed huge changes in Maldon itself which we've been duly vocal and active about. We've also brought about changes to the Society itself: we've embraced new technology, changed venues, increased membership despite the inevitable losses from age and Covid, and much else besides.

We've provided public talks in all but the worst weather and the very start of lockdown. And, of course, our lasting legacies are the pictorial archives which have continued to grow under Peter's capable management and the priceless oral histories initiated and managed by Wendy.

It's been deeply satisfying to do some of the recordings myself and I hope to continue with these. I shall also look forward to cataloguing some of the photos for our new interactive screen at the Maeldune Heritage Centre.

Most of all, I shall remain wedded to the simple idea that anyone living in Maldon (whether newly arrived or born here) really can appreciate its unique heritage of both history and architecture, and help it evolve through the very difficult pressures ahead without losing its special historic and maritime identity and its active sense of community.

Thank you so much for being a member of the Society and showing that you share that idea too. I know there will be much to enjoy in the year ahead.

Planning issues – *David Smye*

National news

Since the Society's autumn newsletter, there have been some movements in government circles, of which we have yet to feel the consequences. Liz Truss has gone, Rishi Sunak is in, Michael Gove (as Secretary of State for Levelling Up) was out then back in; the reform of the planning system has taken on several forms and the latest consultation ended on 2nd March, so we will have to wait a little longer to see if there will be any earth-shattering changes. As you would expect, there are advocates of 'build more houses' and supporters of 'enough is enough'.



One of the changes proposed is the intention to replace the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), (which Maldon Council never implemented), Section 106 agreements and affordable housing contributions with a single, flat-rate levy based on the final sale values of a development. This new Infrastructure Levy should benefit our town in being able to provide much needed facilities for a growing population.

Local issues

The timetable for the review of the Local Development Plan by Maldon District Council has not been achieved, but very many councils around the country have also suspended work on their plans due to the lack of consistent guidance from central government.



Although we had been assured that planning applications would be submitted in the new year, we have yet to see these for Friary East and Primrose Meadow. We had objected to the building of homes in the garden of Friary East, but a preview of their latest layout and designs, following the dismissing of their appeal, does show that they have addressed the concerns raised and it should be a more attractive and sensitive scheme.



We attended and gave supporting evidence at the appeal against the council's refusal of the redevelopment of Hasler's Mill at Fullbridge and are awaiting the Planning Inspectors decision with interest. The owner has just applied for consent to demolish the derelict asbestos clad silo.

It is noted with alarm that there are plans afoot to build 350 houses on the farmland west of the bypass – this being just a portion of a huge tract of farmland that the district council has identified as 'suitable for development' in their Call for Sites exercise.

No formal planning application has yet been submitted, but we shall scrutinize this proposal most carefully when it is. A proposal along similar lines was refused in 2015 and the reasons for that refusal are still pertinent today.



Oral History – Wendy Howell

The good news is that now ALL the Oral History interviews, in full, are on a new website for everyone to access. If any of the clips you have listened to on our own website, or on the Listening Station, have interested you and you'd like to hear the complete recording, then please go to www.maldonorallhistory.org

We thank Ian Linton for all his hard work in setting up this website on our behalf.

A few years ago, I interviewed Linda Keyes who had worked at the Blue Boar Hotel in the early 1960s starting when she was just sixteen. It was a good insight into the running of that 'posh' hotel. Here is some of what she said in her own words:

"I started work at the Blue Boar in Silver Street in 1962; I was 16. My managers at that time were Mr & Mrs Barker. I worked in reception for most of the time".

What was the hotel like? "Oh, it was very posh; it was a Trust House Forte hotel and they had very high-class hotels throughout England. We had some very good customers there; we had Wilfred Pickles staying in the hotel with Mabel, while rehearsing 'Workers' Playtime'. I did meet him but I was very shy and so I let my manager's son register them in".

What were the rooms like? "The bedrooms were very big. We had 3 ensuite rooms and they were new; they'd only just been done. It was very unusual to have ensuite bedrooms and we had 3 of them! There were other single and twin rooms with shared bathrooms and toilets. Even the Manager and his wife lived in an ordinary bedroom and shared a toilet and bathroom with the other guests".

What were your working hours? "I worked shifts from 8am to 2pm then 6pm to 10pm. I usually finished at 10 to catch the last bus back to Great Totham".

Your duties were? Mainly reception but I worked in every part of the hotel, apart from the kitchen, when they were short of staff. So, I worked in the bar, the restaurant and did chamber-maiding".

Did you enjoy your time there? "Oh yes, very much. The staff were wonderful, a lot of them were foreign, a diverse group. The restaurant was very good, very well known, and people came from London regularly on a Saturday night for a meal".

Were you allowed to have food there? "Yes, before service started, I could get a meal. It was a luxury because I could choose dishes I'd never had before, especially chicken curry. When I worked in the bar, I remember that a pint of mild cost 11pence. The Harness Room, probably called the public bar now, was the main drinking place for the Maldon Fire Brigade, which at the age of 16/17 was wonderful for me with all those lovely firemen".

Did the Manager's accommodation change later on? "Yes. There was a dress shop attached at the end of the hotel which I understand is now another part of the bar, and they knocked through above it and made a very nice flat with a bedroom, lounge, bathroom and small kitchen. The dress shop underneath was popular; I bought several nice dresses in there, spending my wages.

The other dress shop nearby was Grace Hunts, where the Art Café now is. It was a very posh shop, beautiful. I did really enjoy working in the hotel very much. It was good for a young girl being there. I learned a lot and it made me more confident to go out for a meal, which people didn't do very often in those days, and more confident to order wine and not be frightened of waiters!"

The High Street & beyond - Spring 2023 – *Lindsey Wright*

- The former Yessam's convenience store at the top of the High St is to be a pizza place: Dough & Co.
- Supernatural was closed for a refit. As well as the usual clothes and gifts, it now sells posh chocolates too.
- Salty Dogs opened for its annual Christmas store. This time between White Horse and Reed Hair.
- The White Horse pub has a new tenant and has been refurbished.
- "Just the Thing" in Edward's Walk has closed down.
- The Continental Café has spread across to include the former Dante's restaurant.
- One of the empty units in the Kings Head Centre is soon to be an estate agent.
- The former Silo shop next to QD is now a phone shop.
- The Barclays building remains empty.
- Papa John's Pizzas opened 20/2/23 in the former Lloyds Bank building.
- "Salt" restaurant in the former ice cream parlour opened in November.
- Sophie's Tea Room on the corner of Wantz Road is up for sale.
- Younger ladies' clothes shop, "No1 Boutique" in King George's Place has closed.
- The Post Office has replaced broken windows and painted.
- The former Warwick Arms, more recently "185", is empty and being decorated.
- Just past the lower car park is a solar panel shop in a former beautician's.
- Marshall Scott kitchen shop is closing down.
- The small empty optician, next door, has been purchased and had a facelift.
- A modern but dilapidated phone box outside the betting shop has been removed.
- Driftwood kitchen unit in Wenlock Way is soon to be a softplay area for under 3-year-olds.
- Paparazzi opened in October in the former Prezzo's after a major refit.
- Blue Boar: there's a rumour that it's been sold.
- Cal & Co at the top of High St is reducing their opening hours in order that the owner can have a second job to supplement the shop.
- A permanent 20mph sign has been installed near the old Police Station.
- In London Road, the former All Saints' Parish Hall, more recently Tai Chi Hall, has been purchased by the Plymouth Brethren. A new fence installed around the car park enclosing the front door area too.

Myra Sadd's Blue Plaque – *Peter Holmes*

In the last newsletter, I mentioned that the Society had been approached by Jennifer Tolhurst, Lord Lieutenant of Essex and asked to try and locate a suitable location for a Blue Plaque to commemorate Myra Sadd, the famous suffragette and campaigner for women's rights. Myra grew up in Maldon and was the daughter of John Granger Sadd, director of the famous Maldon timber merchants.

After much research, it was decided that the best location for the plaque was the Sadd family home, 'Mount View' in West Chase.



With the assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Walker, owners of Mount View, the plaque was installed on the new entrance wall and was unveiled on the 14th November 2022 by the Lord Lieutenant. Also present were Maldon's Mayor, Andrew Lay, Chairman of the District Council, Bob Boyce and many members of the Sadd family.

Several of those present gave a short speech and Diana Dollery, Myra's grand-daughter, outlined Myra's achievements:

'My grandmother was sent to prison for throwing a brick through the window of the War Office during a demonstration. She was sentenced to two months hard labour in prison during which she sewed uniforms and mailbags. Holloway prison was more or less full of suffragettes at that time including Sylvia Pankhurst. The prison was in absolute uproar after the demonstration and some of the inmates didn't get to their cells until the following morning.



My grandmother was a mature woman of about 40 at the time and she had 4 children. I know she was force fed in prison. My grandfather was extremely supportive and wrote to the Home Secretary to complain. My grandmother came from a non-conformist Essex family of free thinkers. She was interested in bicycling which was a great liberator for middle class girls because she did not need a chaperone.

Grandmother got permission for my mother, who was 12 at the time to visit her in prison because she felt she should witness what things were like. My mother talked about smuggling writing paper into and out of the cells in the hem of a skirt. The letters are now in the Women's Library. Some people have forgotten how much energy went into the campaign for women's votes: the people selling the newspaper for the suffrage movement, for example, were not allowed to stand on the pavement because that was obstruction; they had to stand in the gutter. It was a long struggle. People don't realise quite what a fight it was!

After World War I, the Representation of the People Act 1918 was passed awarding the vote to women householders, or the wives of householders aged 30 years or over'.

New touchscreen video and photographic archive is live

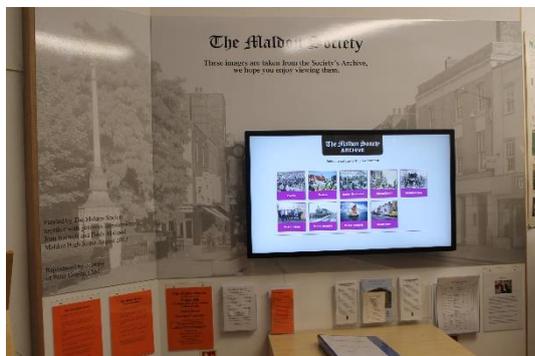
In the last newsletter, I mentioned that we were planning to upgrade the system we use to display our large collection of archive photographs and drawings. Until recently, the system was based on a digital media centre and a wide screen colour monitor.

This has worked well for many years but did have its limitations as visitors needed to ask a Heritage Centre volunteer to change the slide show if they wanted to see a specific photograph or collection.

I'm pleased to say that, with generous donations from Maldon Rotary Club, Essex Community Fund and Society members we have been able to purchase a new, state-of-the-art touchscreen system. This has now been installed in the Maeldune Heritage Centre and

comprises a specialist computer and a 43" high-definition colour screen. By simply touching the screen, people may now select any of the 8000 photographs, drawings and videos they would like to see. These are arranged in subject folders such as 'Maldon Town', 'Events', 'Heritage', 'People' and 'Businesses'. Touching one of these headings takes you to the folder contents and by touching again, to the individual images.

The system has been specifically designed to meet our requirements and we are really pleased with the final result. Work now starts on editing some of the photo collections as the photos need to be moved to the appropriate subject folder and have titles and dates added. If you think you would be able to assist with this work, please do get in touch. maldonsociety@aol.com



AGM – 4th May 2023

Our AGM will take place in the Cygnet room on Thursday 4th May. It is necessary but thankfully usually very brief and painless, and will be followed by selections made by Wendy and Peter from our own pictorial and oral archives, which are always enjoyable.

New nominations for the committee would be much appreciated to help share out tasks and broaden our outlook. These can be made by emailing maldonsociety@aol.com or by phoning 01621 851142. Members' comments or suggestions about the Society are of course also always welcome.

The committee nominations for next year are currently:

Vacant – Chairman

John Came – Vice Chairman and Talks Organiser

Lindsey Wright – Treasurer

Vacant - Admin secretary

Peter Holmes – Archives Manager

Dorreen Linton – Heritage and Publicity Manager

David Smye – Planning Adviser

Jane Senior – Membership Secretary

James Reece-Ford – Technical Consultant

Virginia Playle - Minute Secretary

The committee also receive considerable additional help from Wendy Howell our Oral History manager, and Ian Linton our Website Designer.

Inevitably, given the current price rises, at the AGM we will be asking to raise the subscriptions in April 2024 (next year) to cover the talks in particular. In accordance with the principle agreed at last year's AGM, the fee will become a single per person rate. Please feel free to make an extra donation. The cost for the hire of the Cygnet Room is kept down thanks to members' help with stacking the chairs at the end of each meeting, which is much appreciated.

Membership subscriptions

Membership renewals are due in April each year. For 2023/24 the subscriptions are £12 for singles and £20 for joint membership. Please hand in at a meeting or send to the Membership Secretary at 48 Mariners Way, Maldon CM9 6YW **together with your subscription** either as a cheque made payable to *The Maldon Society* or alternatively by bank transfer direct to The Maldon Society a/c no. 02659214 sort code 30-91-85.

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.

Future talks for 2023

6th April - Victoria George - Project 600 The Moot Hall at the centre of Maldon Life

4th May - Maldon Society AGM and Oral history and digital archives presentation

1st June - John Buchanan - Wildlife of Maldon

6th July - Adrian Wright - The 1953 Storm and Flood

August - No meeting

7th September - Ernest Doe and Sons, the First 125 Years in Business

Local history events – *Dorreen Linton*

Local History Week is currently due to be held 27th May to 3rd June. At the moment the weekend of 27th and 28th coincides with the international women's elite cycle race on the Saturday and Ride London on the Sunday. You'll remember road closures happened last year in connection with both these events although precise details are yet to be announced.

National Heritage Weekend events here will take place during the period 8th - 17th September with a theme on creativity. Most of the local heritage sites participate for at least one weekend. A re-enactment group is booked for the 9th and 10th September and St Mary's flower festival will take place from 8th-12th September.

Listen to all of our oral history recordings

Full recordings of all our Oral History interviews are available on our new website. The recordings demonstrate 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. To listen to all the recordings, visit www.maldonoralthistoty.org

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

Oral history website: www.maldonoralthistoty.org