

Chairman's Introduction — *Judy Lea*

As I write, there has recently been some simply glorious late summer weather to lift the spirits and embrace the coming autumn.

Since the last full newsletter in April we trust that we've kept you well up to speed with almost monthly member updates. Now we have been able to restart our public meetings (at last!) we hope you'll be able to come along to hear things first hand, but if you can't, thanks to Ian Linton, there's always our well-kept website maldonsoc.org.

A list of intended future talks organised by John Came is included on page 6 of this issue - we're very pleased these cover certain issues that members wanted from their survey returns and more will continue to be addressed looking forward.

We do liaise with the Swan to ensure as safe and comfortable an environment as possible. Even with its high ceiling, we want to ensure good external ventilation of the room, so do please choose your seat with this in mind and bring layers of suitable clothing depending on the weather. We will re-emphasise the need to wear masks when standing and continue to provide masks and gel for those who forget. We've also been able to procure a card machine so if you wish to pay for the raffle or guests by this means you now can. Because we never know how many members of the public will turn up and seats are more limited now, you are still advised to register by phone or email before each meeting as we calculate public entry accordingly - email maldonsociety@aol.com or phone 01621 851142

Once Covid restrictions were lifted, released from her secretarial duties and now a well deserving life member, Wendy Howell got straight into conducting more oral history interviews, with plenty of interesting tales by local people now harvested forever and destined in their entirety for the Essex Record Office. This is a really worthwhile project that we undertake as a Society. These will appear in future listening station extracts and as longer versions in our May meeting next year. We are however still on the hunt for someone to minute our committee meetings and would be really grateful if someone steps forward (or nudges someone suitable to do so!) Please see page 3 for more details.

As you will see from Dorreen Linton's item, in September we were able to fully contribute to the Heritage Open Days at the Maeldune Heritage Centre, and through David Smye we were involved with the District's Design and Conservation Awards, as well as continuing to keep a beady eye on some extraordinary current planning issues and decisions.

Lindsey Wright highlights the many changes on the High Street and re-emphasises how you can get money back on parking and take advantage of local online deliveries. The local economy as a whole is utterly dependant on your business. A vibrant local economy is more necessary than ever to help abate the effect of current national delivery and labour issues and minimise environmental harm.

Finally, we've already been advised we can have a small Christmas tree at All Saints 9th-12th December - anyone fancy a go at decorating?

Oral History — *Wendy Howell*

Eel Babbing

This is one of the extracts that were set up on our Listening Station at the Maeldune Heritage Centre for Heritage Open Days 2021 Edible theme weekend, which both Wendy and James produced. Please pop into the Maeldune Heritage Centre to hear others from this latest collection.

Ted Claydon was born in a cottage on the Hythe in 1936. He has done two Oral History interviews this summer, describing his childhood which was centred on boats and fishing. His father was a fisherman, one of three brothers sharing a boat, from which they caught flat fish, oysters and winkles.

One of Ted's regular activities was to go 'eel babbing' – a skill learnt from his father when he was around 10 years old. This is a method of catching eels in the Blackwater which Ted thinks was unique to his family at that time. He cannot remember anyone else catching eels in this way.

Ted would row across to Northey Island which was the only place he could dig a good quantity of lugworms, which could be found by their worm casts in the sandy mud. Having a good bagful of lugworms, he would row slowly up river, with the tide, to just beyond Fullbridge and up towards Beeleigh.

He needed a minimum of 18 inches of water to begin. He had a stiff pole with a long piece of string wound round it; a lead weight was attached to the end of the string and the bag of worms tied to the weight. The line was carefully dropped down into the shallow water until he could feel the weight touching the bottom, then it was lifted up a little so that the bag of worms was not in the mud.

This, says Ted, was a skill learnt over time and resulted in the eels going for the worm bag which he could feel by a slight wriggle on the line. The line was slowly lifted out and the eels knocked off into the boat. The string was gradually lengthened as the tide came in.

On a good day, with several people together in the boat, they might catch 50 – 100 eels, some of which they sold and the rest were taken home so that his Mum could make an eel stew. It needed 20-30 eels to make a good stew which was often the Sunday meal.

Then eels had to be skinned first and all the family got involved. It was a "mucky job" getting the skin off in one pull!

The whole 'eel babbing' process says Ted was a skill handed down in his family and needed the experience gained in judging the tide, water depth and eel movements.

He continued 'eel babbing' throughout his teenage years until he went into the RAF for his National Service.

National Heritage Open Days 2021 — *Dorreen Linton*

The Society prepared a varied collection for members, residents and visitors to enjoy watch, hear and look through in our area at the end of the corridor in the Maeldune Heritage Centre during 'National Heritage Open Days 2021' in September. These will all be available for visitors for the next few months.

Wendy's collection of fifteen oral history recordings relate to this year's National Heritage theme 'edible'. Residents tell of their childhood memories of milk being delivered by horse and cart, Collins the grocers shop, the Pitt family who made a living from their fish catch and many more.

Our digital archives include the Maldon Crystal Salt Company's video telling the history of salt production throughout the centuries as well as the unique pen and ink drawings and photographs by Charles Tait and Gordon Harris showing our many familiar historic buildings in and around our High Street.

Research into Maldon 'food' related businesses shows there are more than sixty businesses in and around our High Street. There is a good mixture of both individually owned and well-known national names. Many food-related businesses have been serving our community for a very long time and have adapted to the needs of modern day residents and visitors.

A folder detailing the history behind the 'edible' motifs in the Millennium Embroidery panels relates many of Maldon and Heybridge's connections with the food industry such as Ansell's, Maldon Salt, Thames sailing barges, Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation, mills and hotels.

There is also a folder about one of Maldon's earlier family businesses - the Markham family mineral water business. This family business, which dates back to the 1880s, lasted for about 70 years and was run by three generations of Markhams.

Please visit the Heritage Centre to listen and look at these collections.

We need a minute secretary

As you are all aware, the committee are hoping to find someone who would be willing to join our team of eight people as minute secretary.

We meet at a local venue ten times a year on the third Thursday of the month, currently at 4.30 pm. The meetings usually last about one and a half hours. The only essential skill needed is basic use of a computer for emails and drafting agendas and minutes. Every help will be given by the chairman and others.

If you would like to know more, please contact: maldonsociety@aol.com. Or ring Judy on 01621 858875

The High Street update — *Lindsey Wright*

Lots of changes in the High Street over the past year, including a new 20 mph speed limit, which also includes Market Hill. The limit was signposted in June 2020, but unbelievably was only enforceable from July 2021!

Not confined to the High Street, **ClickitLocal** is a group of businesses in Maldon and the surrounding area that will deliver. Many have special offers on at certain times.
www.clickitlocal.co.uk/maldon

Fiverfest will start again on 9th October. This is where numerous High Street shops offer special deals for £5.

Another High Street initiative is the **parking rebate scheme**. On a minimum spend, the participating shops will give back 50p on your parking fee. The shops currently taking part are:

Aesthetics Hair	Maldon Books	The Card Company
Bluebell	Maldon Coffee	The Foot Clinic
Bobby's Girl	Maldon Gadgets	The Maldon Barbers
Borough Carpets	Mitchells Jewellers	The Vintage Rose
Bra Consultancy	No1 Boutique	The Waffle Bar
Bridal Reloved	Ruby & Rose	Two Become One
Crystal Shack	Sark	Upstairs Downstairs
Dantes Restaurant	Scarlett's Hair & Nails	Village Cobbler
Dawn Interiors	Serendipity	Wenlocks
Emporium	SILO	White Horse
Jewellery Design Workshop	Simply the Best	Willow & Fox
Just the Thing	Supernatural	Woof & Co
Key Station	Talking Flowers	Yours in Sport
Luxe Avenue	Templeman's Optician	

The **Christmas Festival** this year will be on just one evening - 25th November. It will be a much smaller event, limiting visiting stalls to 30, giving more space for the High Street shops to expand into the pavement.

Summary of changes in the High Street

- The old Police Station has had its application for conversion into flats turned down.
- A new craft shop at number one, Heart of Craft, opened in August, currently stocking yarns, embroidery silks, paints and various other items. She hopes to add to the variety as and when requested.
- Two Become One, who moved into the High Street from Bright's Path, are on the move again to number 1a High Street, re-naming themselves Cal & Co.
- The former Thomas Cook building near All Saints' Church is now Maldon Books and another estate agent, Temme English.
- The Blue Boar is now cashless. Due to the closure of HSBC they are unable to pay in their cash receipts.

- Talking Flowers, our only High Street florist, has a new owner and he has completely changed its character. It's hard to recognise that it is still a florist.
- The Gnome Café has finally opened in the former Art Café near the Moot Hall after a long makeover.
- Away from the public gaze, the Old Post Office (more recently Morrison's Local) is having a major facelift. Let's hope someone is interested in taking it on. It's a big building to fill.
- Aesthetics of Essex beauticians is open in the old Dorothy Perkins shop, with a balloon shop open at the rear.
- Pook Insurance has closed permanently.
- As always, Coes menswear has another enticing window display.
- The Maeldune Heritage Centre is open as usual 11.00-4.00 Tuesday-Saturday. As well as the embroidery, there are lots of wonderful locally made gifts.
- Mrs Salisbury's has changed. The original house is now the main café, with outside seating on either side. Sadly, the wonderful garden at the back is to be lost to 4 new houses!
- In Bright's Path there is a new business helping clients with both ear wax problems and chiropody.
- The slot vacated by Silo in Bright's Path is now Harry Green's barbers. He's been in several locations over the past few years.
- Prezzo's has closed down permanently. It closed several times during lockdown, obviously, but did re-open with some improvements. However, the premises are now empty. Another big premise to fill.
- The café in Wenlock Way, Driftwood, has moved its kitchen into the former chocolate shop opposite creating more space inside the café itself. There's loads of seating outside too, which is very popular post-Covid.
- The Emporium has had rumours of closing down for a very long time. However, it managed to remain open all during lockdown using its dog food as the life-line.
- A new greengrocer has opened behind the Emporium. It has developed very well, using lots of local produce. During lockdown it provided an excellent delivery service which continues, ring 07494 938801.
- The former Mogul Indian restaurant on the corner of Butt Lane is now Maldon Spice. Jhual Hafiz formerly of Maldon Tandoori is the new owner.
- Another new sweet shop is opposite the Post Office: Maldon Candy Shop.
- Keystation has moved into number 179 vacated by Borough Carpets. I hadn't realised we needed yet another key cutting service!
- The Warwick public house which had an awful reputation has been redecorated and rebranded Bar 185 hoping to attract families.
- Borough Carpets was a small shop at number 179; he has moved across the road into the former fireplace shop.
- Two new dress shops have opened either side of the Pie and Mash Shop: Danielle's Styles and Her Manikin catering for the younger market.
- Intimo Italian restaurant closed and has been refurbished as an impressive Indian restaurant: Chutney House.
- TDR Computers has a new owner.
- The Discount Store that has been empty for so long is seeking permission for conversion to a pizza takeaway. The Town Council have approved, waiting for District decision.
- Sark and Cocktail Bar has opened in the former Shoezone premise. It's had a remarkable facelift and is extremely popular. It has moved from its much smaller former home at the top of the High Street.
- A new charity shop benefitting RSPCA has opened opposite Poundstretchers.

- HSBC has sadly closed its doors in Maldon. This is affecting many businesses in the town that are now unable to bank their cheques and cash.
- The former TUI holiday shop has just received planning consent for conversion into a cocktail bar.
- Lloyds' bank has substantially reduced its opening hours to just two days a week. They are sharing staff with the Witham branch. Let's hope that it doesn't also close completely.
- Silo, which was previously in Bright's Path has moved into the High Street next to M&Co, formerly the Best Wishes card shop.
- Although there is a To Let board on M&Co, they insist they are not going anywhere.
- Luna Blue Interiors has opened in the Kings Head Centre selling various items to accessorise one's house.
- There is a new sweet shop in the Kings Head Centre: Little Shop of Sweets & Treats.
- Kings Head Centre now has a Staycation office in the main building. Meanwhile, in one of the rear shops is a Maldon Events office.
- Willow & Fox has moved from Quest Place into the front of Edwards Walk - a much more prominent position.
- In Edwards Walk, we now have Crystal Shack selling a variety of gifts. The Bra Consultancy has also opened.
- Also in Edwards Walk is a private GP and a chiropodists sharing premises, Blackwater Podiatry and GP Services.
- Supernatural has been taken over by Jane, formerly of Talking Flowers. With the two new shops opposite I hope customers will visit all three boutiques.

Maldon Society talks

Our series of illustrated talks on topics of local interest continue. We meet in the Cygnet Room, behind the Swan Hotel in Maldon High Street. Talks start at 7.00 and doors open 6.30.

4th November - John Lowe & Debbie Thomas – 'Where Now? A Future for the Museum of Power'. Updating the previous talk to the Society, this presentation will look to the Museum of Power's future. Should it say 'yes' to a National Lottery Fund offer of almost £1 million or continue its award-winning development without it? This is your chance for insights into one of the town's major assets.

6th January – John Rayment - Celebrating 100 years of the sailing barge 'Pudge'.

3rd February - Allison Gray, shop owner and Chairman of Maldon Business Board will give a first-hand account of business in our High Street.

3rd March – John Frankland – 100 Years of Motor Racing in Essex.

7th April – To be confirmed

5th May – Maldon Society AGM

Planning matters —*David Smye*

Review of planning committees

At a full council meeting on 2 September Maldon District Council (MDC) came to the decision not to change the present system of three area planning committees to one district-wide monthly planning committee. The proposal would have seen the current three area planning committees (central, north western and south eastern) removed and the formation of one single monthly committee.

One planning committee would have allowed legal representation to be present at every meeting, improving the legal basis of decisions. Often members do not always have the benefit of considered legal responses to their queries regarding proposals in front of them and even with a qualified legal representative at every district-wide meeting there would have been a saving of over £40,000 a year.

Councillors considered that, although the present system needed to be improved, that the input of ward councillors would be lessened if they were not a member of the single monthly planning committee, so the present system will continue.

Additional conservation area?

The Strategy and Resources Committee met on 16th September and agreed to the proposal put forward by Tim Howson, MDC's Conservation and Heritage specialist, to consult the public on designating Woodfield Cottages in Heybridge, a conservation area. Further, the Council can also enter into a conservation area partnership agreement with Historic England, which would make it eligible for grant funding to enhance the area. The longer term aim is to introduce a Local Listed Building Consent Order (LLBCO) to the site, which would grant homeowners automatic planning consent for selected types of specified alterations and additions.



The suggested site covers 116-156 Woodfield Cottages, Heybridge.

Three terraces of 41 single-storey cottages - which were developed by the industrialist E H Bentall in 1873 as homes for the staff of the Bentall Agricultural Works.

Photograph by Tim Howson

Woodfield Cottages is a special example of a Victorian planned industrial housing community. The houses have national architectural interest as an early, rare and substantially intact development of mass concrete houses originally with flat roofs. The settlement retains a distinct character defined by modestly scaled cottages arranged in three impressively long rows. They were classified as Grade II listed buildings in 1971.

The cottages are also of national architectural interest due to their pioneering use of mass-concrete construction, but this interest has been 'eroded' by many of the later alterations to the homes. Woodfield Cottages Conservation Area would "ensure that the local planning authority and local residents make considered decisions which preserve and enhance the special character of the benefit of present and future generations".

Review of Local Development Plan

All councils must prepare a Local Development Plan (LDP) and this document along with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is used in the determination of planning decisions. It sets out how an area can meet its growth needs for things such as new housing and employment development and was adopted by MDC in 2017.

However, the evidence base, which supports the LDP, is now becoming out of date and the District, you may be surprised to know, does not have a 5-year supply of housing land. National policies have also been amended since the LDP was approved and there are some aspects which are no longer in conformity with it, which reduces its effectiveness in managing development in the District. Further, in February 2021, the Council declared a Climate Emergency and many of the policies in the LDP do not provide the best foundation from which to help manage and mitigate the effects of climate change on the District.

Maldon District Council has therefore considered this is an appropriate time for a review of the document. The reviewed LDP will start to carry some weight as it progresses through the plan-making stages and on adoption will carry full legal weight and fully supersede the current LDP.

Proposed timetable

Consult on issues and options	Autumn 2021
Consult on the preferred strategy LDP	Summer 2022
Publish draft LDP	Early Spring 2023
Submit to the Secretary of State for Examination	Late Spring 2023
Adoption	Late Autumn 2023

Conservation and Design Awards 2021 run by Maldon District Council

The winners of the annual Conservation and Design Awards have been determined.



The extensive renovations at Creeksea Place, Burnham-on-Crouch won the **Building Conservation** category with 3 Black Lion Cottages, Althorne being Highly Commended.

A new sustainable dwelling in the grounds of Woodham Mortimer Place - Goose House - won the **Design** Award with the Organ Loft at St. Mary's Church, Maldon being Highly Commended.





The new stained-glass window at St. Peter's, Wickham Bishops was commended for **Artistic Craftmanship**.

Lauriston Community Farm at Goldhanger won the **Nature Conservation** category.



The nominations were considered by a judging panel consisting of representatives from Maldon District Council, local amenity societies (*including The Maldon Society*), a parish council, and professional bodies associated with design and construction.

Government esoteric changes

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has announced that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) will be changed to the **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities** as part of his commitment to level up across the UK. (*That rolls easily off the tongue doesn't it and please don't ask me to explain what the devil it means*).

As part of the change, the government has appointed former Bank of England chief economist Andy Haldane to head the Levelling Up Taskforce, which has been jointly established by Johnson and new Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove.

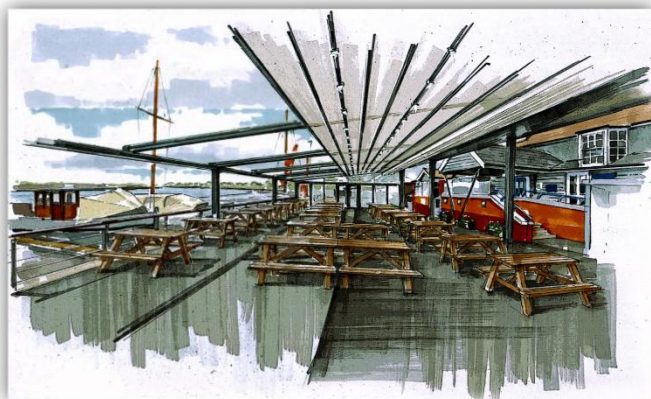
Johnson said that his government is committed to uniting and levelling up every part of the UK and he is determined that, as we build back better from the pandemic, we are geared up with the teams and expertise to deliver on that promise.

Appointed last week in Johnson's cabinet reshuffle, replacing Robert Jenrick, Gove's role will involve driving "*cross-Whitehall efforts to deliver a programme of tangible improvements in every part of the UK*" as it recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic.

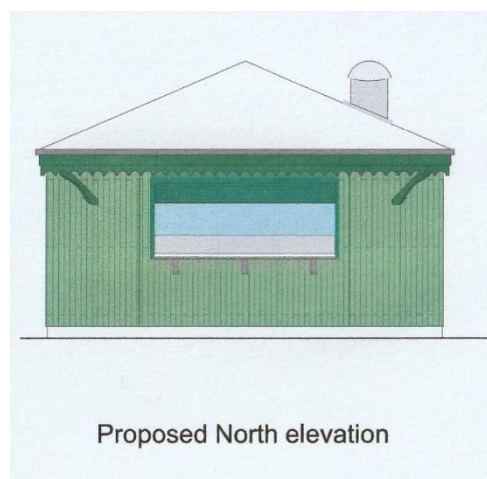
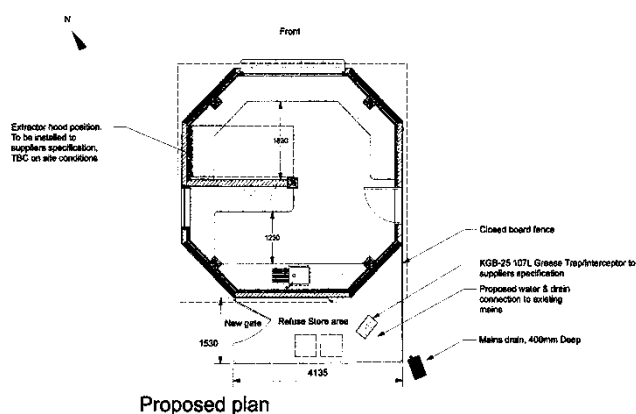
On a more down-to-earth note, there are always changes afoot in our town – some small, some major, and we aim to keep you abreast of what is going through the Council's planning system. Not too much at the moment, but here are a couple that reflect how the food and drink businesses are looking to provide choice and comfort for visitors.

The Hythe/Promenade Park changes

The Queens Head - Partly glazed retractable awning structure to the rear terrace.



Public seating shelter next to the Pétanque pitch involves the renovation and conversion of the existing structure into a food serving kiosk.



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