

Welcome – *Peter Holmes*

Welcome to our Spring newsletter. I expect, like me, you are pleased to see the back of the wet, dreary winter we've just experienced. As I write this, the daffodils are out and everything is looking so much brighter. Let's hope the good weather lasts for the summer.

Now that we have most committee roles covered, the past year has been one for moving forward towards achieving the Society's objectives. In the following pages, you will find reports from each committee member on their particular area of responsibility. I hope you find them interesting.

A major event this year was our decision to move to a new venue for our monthly open meetings. Our previous venue could only accommodate 70 people, which meant that we had to introduce a booking system to make sure we didn't exceed the number of seats. On occasions, there were also problems with getting the dates we need for our meeting.

The United Reform Church has space for around 140 and has the added advantage that we don't have to put out the chairs. We also have use of the URC's state-of-the-art projection and sound systems.

It's been a steep learning curve finding out how to use them but, with the assistance of the URC's technical experts, I think we're nearly there.

One limitation is that the microphone is fixed so it's important not to wander around when speaking. Not all our speakers find this easy but we are working on it!



Maldon Society AGM – 1st May

See page 5 for details of the AGM and the accompanying talk – 'War time in Maldon WW11' by local historian Stephen Nunn.

Supporting Maldon's heritage

We're proud members of the Maldon Heritage Working Group, helping to preserve and promote the Town's heritage.



Visit our website

It's easy to visit the Maldon Society website. Just scan the QR code on the right or visit www.maldonsoc.org



Touch screen updates – *Peter Holmes*

I mentioned in the last newsletter that a collection of five postcard albums had been donated to the Society by Tim Hammett, a relative of John Came, our past Vice Chairman. The albums contain an extensive collection of old postcards relating to Maldon, Heybridge and the surrounding villages.

Over the last six months, Membership Secretary Jane Senior and I have been going through the albums one-by-one to see what's there so we can select the most interesting postcards for display on the Heritage Centre touch screen. This has turned out to be a fascinating exercise as several of the postcards are quite rare and show images of the town in the early 1900s which are new to us and will be a valuable addition to our archive.

One such postcard is a photograph of a house known as 'The Trees' which stood on the corner of the High Street and Wantz Road, now the site of King George's Place. Jane has been carrying out some research into the history of this house and has discovered that the façade was 19th century but, behind this, was a 15th century timber-framed medieval house.

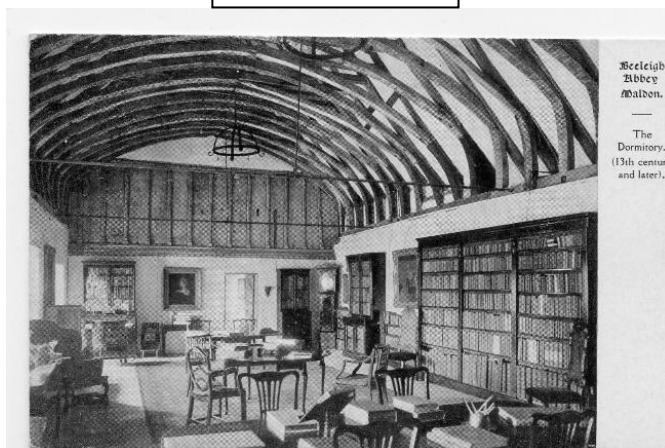
Originally owned by William Spencer, it was unsurprisingly known as 'Spencers' but the house went through a succession of wealthy owners, including Maldon mayor George May (1788 to 1871). At some point, the name changed to 'Holly Trees' and then just 'The Trees'. This lasted until 1935 when the historic house was ceremonially demolished to make way for the modern row of shops and the now long-gone Embassy cinema.

So far, we have selected postcards from three of the five albums and these include images of the town centre, Beeleigh Abbey, Promenade Park, Great Totham, Wickham Bishops, Langford and the Braxteds.

These are now available to see on the touch screen so please do pop into the Heritage Centre to have a look. Work is underway on the remaining two albums and we hope to add these to the archive soon.



The Trees



Beeleigh Abbey



Great Totham

Oral History – Wendy Howell

Every time I write an article, I say how lucky I am to be able to interview such a range of really interesting people. And how fortunate we are as a Society that so many Maldon residents are willing to share their stories and life histories with us.

At the end of last year, I did a recording of the reminiscences of Sarah and Richard Ford. Sarah is the ‘knot lady’ who sits on the Quay in summer months with her husband.

They make and sell bracelets, key fobs, pendants, hair slides, crosses and anything that a customer requires. They work hard at home in the winter, building up their stock, and then going down to the Quay from Easter onwards, or whenever the weather is warm enough.



Another Maldonian who did a recording recently is Andrew East who, as a child and young man, lived in Cherry Gardens. He has great memories of the freedom the children had in the school holidays when they would go off for the day and explore.

Mum used to call them in for tea; she must have had a loud voice because one day the local farmer came and asked her not to call out at that time, because his cows thought it was milking time! Andrew and his friends met the ‘old Mr Foyle’ who lived at Beeleigh Abbey; he often chatted to them and Andrew felt that he learned a lot from him.



Our April speaker is Colin Edmond. He did an interview in 2019 and recalled how he and his family moved into part of the old Workhouse which his parents were renovating.

He spoke about his later life working on boats, then being appointed Lock-Keeper at Heybridge Basin, and later being the Manager of the whole of the Chelmer & Blackwater Navigation, which included the Old Ship Inn.



Do listen to more details about these three, and many more, on our website www.maldonoralthistory.org

What’s new on the website – Ian Linton

If you’ve visited our website recently, you’ll notice a new Home page. We want to use this page to keep everyone up to date with the latest information on what’s happening in the Society – our talks, the expanding photo archives and our growing oral history collection.

We also want to make you aware of important events around the town – winter heritage talks, events run by our local heritage groups and news from the Town Council about special community awards or other community activities.



So please keep checking the Home page for the latest news. All our other pages will be regularly updated – Planning issues, What’s happening in the High Street, changes to our photo archives and a selection of the latest oral history recordings.

The High Street Spring 2025 – *Lindsey Wright*

A new hairdressers' next to Mitchell Plamplin solicitors: "Hair Lab".

Next door, major work is happening in the former Bairstow Eves.

Salty Dogs came and went in December in the former cobblers in Edwards Walk.

Joyeux in Edwards Walk has moved into the empty Salty Dogs unit next door.

Upstairs Downstairs in Edwards Walk is reducing its retail space for the relocation of Templeman's opticians.

The Healthfood shop in Edwards Walk is for sale.

Profound Barbers in Edwards Walk is 'to let'.

Work is being undertaken on the former Nat West Bank.

Intertek, next to Greggs, has been empty for years, but now, finally, has a 'to let' sign. Rumours that Mr Purdy has bought this block of 3 plus Nat West.

Greggs is closed for a re-fit.

Posters were in the old Barclays encouraging drivers to go via the bypass instead of using Market Hill.

Barclays is for sale, but still paying rent until 26/4/25, £68,500pa. Air conditioning removed and repairs to roof.

Iceland has a cash machine inside the store.

There is a planning application to build 4 residential properties between Salt Restaurant and Foulkes Electrical.

The former Serendipity café has finally opened as Benaz Café.

The original barber at number 114 has closed since major works undertaken in the building behind.

The bridal shop next to Sophie's Tea Room has closed and replaced by the Doggy Shop from Bright's Path.

The Waffle Bar is for sale by the landlord.

The House of Delight Chinese restaurant has had a facelift; new windows.

The fishing tackle shop at the lower end of the High Street is up for sale

The cannabis oil shop opposite the top of Wantz Road is empty and to let again.

Vintage Rose café in Quest's Place has won a national award.

The former Smith's butchers has re-opened as The Maldon Butchery.

The Emporium has applied for planning permission for houses at the rear.

Beauty Spa in Wenlock Way is rarely open.

Subway has been closed for a while and now has an enforcement notice on the door.

Boots Opticians is up for sale. It appears to be the landlord selling with a sitting tenant.

Poundstretchers is for sale by the landlord with Poundstretchers as tenants.

Shops at the end of Bright's Path: planning application to convert to residential.

The empty shop next to Coe's is now a Haven's Hospice charity shop.

Santander is on a list for closure, but no date yet.

The former florist's next to the Moot Hall is now 'Pink Mary', but seldom open.

The ladies' hairdresser next to Oakhouse is being transformed into the barbers from White Horse Lane.

Finale ladies fashion shop has closed and re-opened as the spa from Kings Head Centre.

The Indian restaurant in the former pie shop has moved to the former Brazilian restaurant.

Maldon Society Annual General Meeting

Thursday, 1st May 2025 at 7.00 pm

The meeting will be held in the United Reformed Church, Market Hill. This short but necessary meeting will publicly confirm our Officers and Committee Members for the year 2025/26. Our constitution allows for four Officers and up to ten other Committee Members as well as co-opted advisors. The nominations are:

Officers:

Chairman	Peter Holmes	Vice Chairman	Jane Senior
Treasurer	TBC	Secretary	Dorreen Linton

Committee:

Janet Watson	David Fell	John Rogers
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Extra support

The committee also receive considerable support from Wendy Howell, Ian Linton, James Reece-Ford and Judy Lea, for which we are extremely grateful.

New committee members are needed please

If you would like to nominate a new committee member (with their permission), or you would like to volunteer, please contact us by email maldonsociety@aol.com and we will send you a nomination form. Copies will also be available at our April public meeting or on our website. The completed form must be returned by Thursday, 17th April. The Committee meets once a month on the third Thursday at 4 pm at a local venue.

We also have a nomination form for Officers and Committee Members, for which we need a proposer and seconder.

AGM documents

AGM documents will be sent to members on Friday, 18th April.

Our AGM presentation

Stephen Nunn - 'War Time in Maldon WWII'

Stephen's illustrated talk is based on the book 'Maldon, Dengie & Battles in the Skies (1939-1945)' (published by the Maldon Archaeological & Historical Group in 2006).

The talk looks at preparations for war on the Home Front, the establishment of Civil Defence Forces, the impact on local people, the role of RAF Bradwell Bay, air incidents and local aircraft crashes. The material is supported by research and aviation archaeology and concludes with surviving evidence of the sacrifice made by Maldon people and VE Day celebrations.



Heritage, Cultural and Community – *Dorreen Linton*

2025 is going to be a very busy year for all our Heritage and Cultural groups.



Maldon Society monthly public meetings - The committee are extremely grateful to members who have volunteered to man our raffle table at our public meetings. We hope that more members will volunteer to cover one month so this important money raiser can be shared more widely, rather than the usual few. As some of you are aware, Lindsey will be resigning from our Committee at the AGM in May. Lindsey has overseen our raffle table, our accounts and the printing, laminating of our orange posters for 14 years, for which we are extremely grateful.

Maeldune Heritage Centre - Joye, our Centre Manager, has produced a year-long 'What's on and when' leaflet. This leaflet gives details of each art exhibition, artist and workshops. The first exhibition is Jan Bloomfield's 'Colour Scapes' which runs till 15th April. The workshops are organised by the Adult Community Learning Group. The first of these will be 'Lamplight of Peace' on Wednesday 9th and 16th April, followed by 'History Week' activities (24th – 31st May). Joye would be extremely grateful to any member volunteering a morning or afternoon session occasionally to assist in the shop and exhibition area or Visitor Information Centre. Please contact her: info@maelduneheritagecentre.co.uk

Maldon's History Week – 24th May to 31st May - Each of Maldon's heritage groups will be organising special events and the Town Council will be producing posters. The theme this year is 'Hidden Histories'. The Society will be selecting some of both our oral history and photographic archives at the Centre or on our designated website to highlight collections which fit this theme. Our 'news' poster at the Heritage centre will give details. Salt Water and Beer shanty singers and Maldon Morris Men will be holding sessions on the Quay during the week Monday to Thursday.

Maldon Town Council's Town Meeting and Annual Community Awards Meeting – Monday, 14th April at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall - Maldon's Mayor, Cllr. Andrew Lay, has invited Society members to this meeting to hear about your Town Council's activities during the last year and to learn what's going on in our community. The Town's Community Awards will be presented to local volunteers during the event. To find out more, you can contact: administration@maldontowncouncil.gov.uk

Maldon & Heybridge Heritage Harbour Association - This Association is one of the Society's partners and the Society aims to support the hard-working volunteers who are working to preserve the town's maritime heritage. A talk has been organised on 1st April in St Mary's Church in the Octagon Room starting at 7.30 p.m. The title is Northey Island – this will be a different talk to the one being given to our Maldon Society in June.

Saltmarsh Coast Walking Festival - A series of walks to be enjoyed from April will be available soon from Maldon District Council's Tourism group.

Beeleigh Abbey Gardens will be open on the following days: June 6th and 27th, July 4th, 18th and 25th, August 1st and 22nd, September 12th and 26th.

St Mary's Flower Festival will be held between 18th to 20th July. The Society usually joins other community groups to support St Mary's Church by creating a display. This year's theme is 'Children's Books'. Setting up day is Thursday, 17th. Would any member or members like to be involved in a display on behalf of the Society. Please contact: maldonsociety@aol.com.

Maldon Festival will be held at various events from 27th June to 12th July. Please visit Visitor Information Centre at Maeldune Heritage Centre for more information.

Steam Tug Brent Art Exhibition will be held at St Mary's Church on 16th August.

Maldon Art Trail will be held between Friday 12th – 14th September at various events.

Blue Plaque leaflet - The updated version is now available at either the Maeldune Heritage Centre, the library or from our website. It is an interesting walk around the conservation area of the town centre. It gives information relating to the seven blue plaques which relate to buildings or Maldon's residents to have gained this status.

Please remember to look at our website www.maldonsoc.org for the latest information on events around Maldon.

Planning Issues - *David Fell*

National Picture

In December the Government published its new National Planning Policy Framework for England. This is a long and technical document which “provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans can provide for housing and other development in a sustainable manner”. It will shape not only how Maldon District Council assesses all planning applications over the coming years but also how it – and we – put together the over-arching strategies for the development of our town. The main changes will concern housing, but there’s lots there too about sustainable development, communities and the environment.



The Government has also begun two processes that will affect planning in Maldon:

- **Devolution** – the Government has proposed that a **Mayoral Combined County Authority** is established covering Essex County Council, Southend on Sea City Council and Thurrock Council, to be known as the Greater Essex Combined County Authority. The new Authority would have money and powers specifically to deal with housing and regeneration; local economic growth; adult skills; and local transport. Essex County Council has voted to support the idea, and a consultation is underway. The ambition is to have the changes completed in time for elections in spring 2026.
- **Local government reform** – on a slightly longer timetable, the Government has invited district and county councils across England, including Essex, to ‘come forward’ with proposals for moving towards unitary authorities – that is, to merge county and district councils. It is very possible that within two or three years Maldon District Council as we know it will no longer exist.



So some big changes are coming!

Local News

The large-scale housing developments around the town continue, but perhaps the most striking local news was the decision by the relevant powers to postpone a decision on the future of St Peter’s Hospital. Whether this was because of the lobbying by those opposed to the closure, or because of the change in Government, or for other reasons, is not clear. Not clear, either, is when we can expect to find out what decision has been made, or what happens next either way.



Elsewhere, there has been a steady stream of planning applications that are a clear response to the climate crisis – photovoltaic cells on the Friends’ Meeting House, electric charging points at various places around the town, applications to replace air conditioning systems with heat pumps, and so on. There has even been an application for some new and sustainable self-build homes, which don’t even need a developer!

These are very exciting, and suggest that Maldon is continuing to be a place of innovation and optimism. Do come and talk to me about these and any other planning issues at one of the monthly meetings, or get in touch via the website.

Membership – *Jane Senior*

This Spring, and as we approach our 2025/26 year, membership stands at 107. We hope you have enjoyed the past season of talks and our involvement in town heritage and cultural events.

Thanks to all of you who have, so far, been able to attend the 2025 talks in our new venue, the United Reformed Church, Market Hill. We are sure it is a more comfortable experience all round.

There are new bright orange information flyers about joining the Society and explaining ‘who we are’, both at the Visitor Information Centre and our touch screen/listening station area in the Maeldune Heritage Centre.

We hope you will continue to support the Society and renew your membership from April. The subscription fee remains the same at £15 per person.

New members are welcome, some who may be new to the town and district or even long-time residents, so please spread the word about joining the Maldon Society.

The Maldon Society



We aim to promote and preserve the historical heritage of Maldon town and district by

- Encouraging civic pride and working with other Heritage organisations
- Encouraging high standards of planning and architecture by liaising with Councils
- Supporting Heritage and Cultural events and the installation of Blue Plaques
- Managing an interactive touchscreen photographic archive and an oral history archive with Listening Station at the Maeldune Heritage Centre, Market Hill.

Membership is available providing 10 monthly illustrated talks at the Maldon United Reformed Church and twice yearly newsletters. We welcome non-members to our talks.



More information can be found at: www.maldonsoc.org
www.maldonoralthistory.org or email: maldonsociety@aol.com

Maldon Society talks – *John Rogers*

Monthly meetings

Our monthly meetings are now held in the United Reformed Church, Market Hill, Maldon. As well as listening to speakers, you can find out local news on our notice boards and meet fellow members. Talks start at 7.00pm, with doors open at 6.30pm.

Future talks for 2025

1st May - AGM plus talk by Stephen Nunn ‘War Time in Maldon WWII’
5th June - Katherine Gilchrist - The Northey Island Project - National Trust
3rd July - TBC

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