

Introduction – Peter Holmes

Welcome to our Autumn newsletter. It seems impossible that it's already six months since the last one! As usual, we will try to let you have an update on what's been going on and the changes that have taken place within the Society. As I mentioned at recent meetings, it's been a difficult period for the committee as we were down to four committee members at one point and I think it's true to say that things did begin to get on top of us. I'm pleased to say that, with three new members who have all got up to speed very quickly, things are running much more smoothly. Just to let you know who does what, here is a brief run-down on the new committee:

Chairman & Archive Manager - Peter Holmes

In addition to the normal responsibilities of Chairman, I also manage our photographic archive and the touchscreen system on which the photos are displayed.

Vice-Chairman and Membership Secretary - Jane Senior

In addition to supporting the Chairman, Jane handles membership enquiries and deals with incoming emails received via our website and email address. Jane uses her artistic skills to produce posters for special events.

Secretary & Heritage Coordinator - Dorreen Linton

Dorreen is in charge of correspondence and the Society documentation. Dorreen is also responsible for liaising with other affiliated Heritage groups in and around Maldon.

Minute Secretary - Janet Watson

Janet prepares the committee meeting minutes and books the venues for the monthly open meeting and committee meetings

Treasurer - Lindsey Wright

In addition to managing the finances and keeping an eye on High Street changes, Lindsey also looks after publicity and issues the orange meeting posters each month. Until recently, Lindsey also ran the monthly meeting raffle. Lindsey will be retiring as Treasurer at the AGM after 14 years with the Society,

Planning Officer - David Fell

The Society receives a weekly list of planning applications from the District Council and David checks to see if any are of particular interest or likely to be controversial. With a background in planning, David will then circulate details to the committee for comment and, when important, to all Society members. Our views on the application will then be fed back to the Council.

Speaker Organiser - John Rogers

As a long-standing resident of Maldon, John has many contacts in and around the town so is in a good position to find interesting speakers to come and talk at our monthly meetings. In fact, he has already provisionally booked speakers for the first half of next year!

Although not on the committee, we also have three others who do sterling work behind the scenes:

Wendy Howell, who looks after our Oral History recordings with now over 80 separate reminiscences of local people available to hear on our Listening Station in the Heritage Centre or on our website.

Ian Linton, who manages and keeps up to date our two websites.

James Reece-Ford, who provides technical support to Wendy, editing the voice recordings and producing CDs for the people giving the recordings.

All-in-all, we now have a strong committee whose members all have a clear role, but who operate as a team when there is a particular task to be done. Long may it continue!

Planning issues – *David Fell*

The sharp-eyed among you may notice that I joined the Committee of the Maldon Society just in time to make a brief appearance in the last newsletter. I am delighted, in this newsletter, to provide a little bit of news about what's going on in the world of planning.

National picture

The big change at national level is, obviously, that there is a new government. It is the first time the Labour Party has won an election since 2005. The Government is still very new – the election was less than three months ago – but some important shifts, affecting planning, have already taken place. The part of government with responsibility for planning is now called the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. The Secretary of State is Rt Hon Angela Rayner, who is also the Deputy Prime Minister. She has indicated that tackling the country's housing crisis is one of her top priorities, and she has already launched a new Bill, the Renters' Rights Bill, to help tackle problems in the private rental market. Her Ministry has also held a major consultation on proposals to reform the National Planning Policy Framework in England. The proposed changes will affect housing, infrastructure, the cost of planning applications, and much else besides. It will probably not be until early in 2025 that the results from the consultation are made public, but they are likely to mean changes for every part of the country, including Maldon. The Committee will monitor the situation closely and let you know as soon as are in a position to assess what it might mean for our town.

Local news

The last few months have been fairly quiet at the local level – possibly because people have been waiting to see what the new Government might do, but possibly also because of more general economic uncertainties. Maldon District Council turned down the application to redevelop the Friary East into flats; and the developers who looked as if they might submit plans for the field near Maldon Hall Farm have not brought anything forward.



The developers Crest Nicholson, responsible for the Wycke Place development, were in merger talks with Bellway Homes, but talks collapsed in August. It remains to be seen what effect this has on the pace of development at the site. It is also interesting to note that the developers of the huge scheme between Broad Street Green and Maypole Road ('up to 1,138 dwellings') applied in July 2024 to have some of the terms of their s106 agreement eased.

Perhaps most importantly for Maldonians, a meeting to consider the results from the consultation on the future of St Peter's Hospital is scheduled for 30th September. The future of healthcare provision in the town may well be known by the time of our next meeting on 3rd October.



Air quality

Maldon District Council have recently introduced a 'Clean Air Route' on Market Hill. The non-charging 'Clean Air Route' is a voluntary scheme whereby vehicle drivers are asked to use the bypass to access the town centre rather than using Market Hill. If the number of vehicles using the Hill could be reduced by 20%, modelling suggests that the air quality would reach the required standard. The Maldon Society of course supports the ambition to improve air quality on Market Hill, and we encourage you to look at all the details on the Maldon District Council website, here

https://www.maldon.gov.uk/info/20099/pollution/9148/air_quality/3 (or you can just search by typing 'Maldon District Council' and 'Air quality'). Air quality is just one of the transport challenges facing Maldon as we all try to move around - improving safety, taking advantage of the new opportunities provided by electric vehicles, ensuring accessibility and promoting 'active travel' such as walking, wheeling and cycling are all part of the mix. I will be looking at these issues over the coming months, and we shall keep you posted on how it goes.

The High Street & beyond Autumn 2024 – Lindsey Wright

- The Town maps in various places, produced by an advertising agency, have been updated.
- Parking charges have increased. The free short-stay parking places in White Horse car park have been removed. Although they have been removed from White Horse car park, there are 9 in Butt Lane car park and another 7 in Edward Bright Close. In both car parks, these spaces are hidden in the far corner.
- Parking on the Quay: New 'Permit Holders Only' signs have been installed. Cars are being ticketed.
- Dough & Co for rent after being closed for a while.
- The new art gallery at no 14 next to Supernatural has finally opened.
- Media Vita, tech company, has closed.
- A children's hairdressers has opened opposite Ansell's.
- A tattoo parlour opened next to White Horse where Salty Dogs opened and closed after its annual pop-ups.
- Cobblers in Edwards Walk has closed down.
- The Nat West Bank has closed.
- Deli & Fizz in Kings Head Centre has extended into neighbouring premise as a lounge.
- Barclay's walk-in centre is now in the library Thursday & Friday. 9.30-12.30 & 1.00-4.00. No longer in MDC offices.
- There seems to have been interest in the Barclays building and it no longer is showing on Rightmove.
- The card shop near WH Smith has closed.
- Costa's has fully re-opened after several weeks of 'take-away' only due to broken toilets.
- Serendipity café opposite the butcher's has closed.
- The former Danielle Styles at number 134 is yet another beautician's. During the alterations, a previous sign 'Sid Kiki' was visible. Brought back memories of the betting shop.
- Il Camino restaurant is for sale.
- Corner of North St & High St, former offices is a Children's activity centre for 0-10 year olds.
- A blossom tree at the junction of North Street & Church Street has been felled.
- An obsolete waste bin at the top of Church Street has been planted with flowers by Maldon-in-Bloom.
- Haus restaurant closed for refit?
- Former Hoskyn's Deli re-opened as another beauticians. The previous beauticians lasted just a few weeks.
- Bobby's Girl by the entrance to the lower car park has closed.
- The former gift shop opposite the Post Office is another Barber's shop.
- The Rotary Club have kindly replaced a seat opposite the top of Wantz Road.
- Marshall & Scott, kitchen fitters, is having a closing down sale, despite not having been open for months.
- Smith's Butchers is closed for refurbishment with new owners.
- Subway next to Wenlocks for rent.
- An art shop has opened in Wenlock Way, offering art classes.
- The Rotary Club have also replaced the notice board opposite Iceland.
- Halifax pop-up desk continues in Town Hall on Tuesdays.
- Santander cash machines inside and outside, constantly out of cash. It can't keep up with demand.
- Aesthetics of Essex is offering services of a GP as well as beauty treatments.
- New gift shop in former florist's next to the Moot Hall: Pink Mary is preparing to open.
- Hairdressers next to Oakhouse are retiring in November.
- Maldon Books has extended into next door, now selling records.
- Jewellery Workshop, next to Café Brazilian has closed.
- Café Brazilian has closed with just a week's notice – Is this a coincidence, in the same building?
- The Smoke House in Cromwell Lane is to have new owners: Queen Vic's James.



Oral History – Wendy Howell

Judy and I have been working on the Maldon Society Oral History project for many years! We cautiously began our recordings at the end of 2016, and now, over 80 interviews later, we are continuing to look out for more potential interviewees. Progress may be slower than in the first few super-enthusiastic years, but it is on-going.

So, I make my usual plea: please do contact me if you know of anyone who might be willing to be interviewed. It might be a good idea to ask them first, but do give reassurance that we will be gentle and relaxed. I believe that the majority of participants find the experience very rewarding, and having a CD of the recording afterwards benefits family and friends.

As you all know, all the full recordings are on the website www.maldonoralthistory.org If you have a spare few minutes anytime, try listening to one; there are introductions to each interview with the interviewee's date of birth, the date of the recording and a few lines describing the subject matter.

The range of subjects covered varies hugely. We have listened to wonderful memories of childhoods in Maldon, working on the Maldon Millennium Embroidery, boat and barge building, sail-making, fishing, shops and businesses in the High Street, war time memories, Heybridge stories, local farming, local schools, and even meeting the late Queen. There are so many really interesting tales and hopefully more to come. When I started, I could not have possibly imagined how fascinating and intriguing the lives of Maldon people could be. I have learned such a lot.



We are wondering if there is anyone who would like to come and join our small team. We are looking for someone with an interest in people and Maldon's recent history, who would come with us to interviews to observe and learn how we go about things, and then perhaps start, slowly, to be involved with other admin jobs. All the difficult technical work is done by the invaluable James Rees-Ford. There will be no pressure to take on anything you are not comfortable with and any computer work is very basic (believe me, my computer knowledge is less than basic!)

Do come and have a chat – I am at most of the monthly meetings – or ring me on 01621 857054. Thank you.

Membership – Jane Senior

At the start of the second half of 2024, we enjoy a membership of 104. Thank you for your continued support and volunteering to help the Committee with 'ad hoc' tasks.

Our September talk 'Development of the Thames Barges' had a 'back from holidays' feel about it as we had not met since June due to venue availability and the summer break. Again, your cooperation to pre-book is a great help so we can fit everybody in.

We continue to have almost a 'full house' at our talks and welcome a good number of guests each time. Guests often means 'new members'. New membership forms are available on the Society's website www.maldonsoc.org; at the Maeldune Heritage Centre (underneath the Photo Archive Touchscreen) and we always have a few available at the monthly Talks, should you know anyone who wants to know 'How to Join'.

Touchscreen updates – *Peter Holmes*

Our touchscreen display in the Maeldune Heritage Centre continues to perform well and proved to be really popular with visitors to the Centre during the recent National Heritage week. With over 5000 photos and videos now available to see, adults and children alike enjoyed scanning through the various subject folders to see if they could find people or places they remembered from times past.



Recent additions to the collection are some photos of ‘Lost Maldon’ donated by Elaine Clements. These relate to the Chequers pub which used to be on the site of the empty Barclays Bank building and of the motor dealers, Houlding’s, Bates, Does and Quests, now all long gone. Another photo, donated by Bev Wilkin, is of the very first Maldon mud race in 1974; a simple race from the Queen’s Head to the island and back – very different to the commercialised event it is today!

We were recently contacted by Tim Hammett, a relative of John Came, our late Vice Chairman. Tim is the step-son of Peter Came, John’s brother. Apparently, Peter was a great collector of old Maldon postcards and, when he died, he left his collection to Tim. As he lives in Brighton, Tim has no particular connection with Maldon and contacted us to see if the Society would like them. Naturally, we were delighted and I met up with Tim in Maldon for the handover.

I had walked up to the town to meet Tim but when I saw what he’d brought I wish I had brought the car! The collection comprises five large A3 size albums, each full of old postcards showing views of Maldon and the surrounding villages. I estimate there to be over 1000 postcards.

My aim is to scan the cards and add the digital images to our photo collection but, as the cards have to be scanned individually, this is going to take some time. In the meantime, we are hoping to display one or more of the albums for people to see but we need to find somewhere secure as some of the cards are rare and quite valuable. Just to whet your appetite, here are a couple:



Heritage and Community – *Dorreen Linton*

Maldon Society members have been busy taking part in local events.



Maldon Society monthly public meetings

The committee are extremely grateful to members volunteering to man our raffle table at our public meetings. We have now been able to cover September, October and November meetings. I am sure Lindsey really appreciates the chance to meet and chat rather than be on duty as she has for the last 13 years. Thank you. Can we have some volunteers for 2025 public meetings please?

St Mary's Flower Festival – July

The Society joined other community groups to support St Mary's Church by creating a display in the church. The result was a wonderful creative and colourful display of flowers and artefacts. The theme this year was 'Heritage' and this was reflected in displays depicting many of our local heritage buildings and other associated groups. The result was three days in which the church received visitors to enjoy this wonderful display of local groups coming together for a common cause.



30th Anniversary of National Heritage Open Days

These are held throughout the country during early September and the Maeldune Heritage Centre was manned by some committee members and members who chatted to visitors of all ages throughout the week with weekends being particularly busy. Visitors could enjoy listening to some of our oral history recordings and see selections of our visual archives which related to this year's national theme "Routes, Networks and Connections". Jane Senior had created informative posters which directed visitors to specific recordings and photographs. There was a four-way link for visitors to the centre – a map making activity with stickers (identify 12 historic sites depicted in the panels of our stunning Maldon embroidery), photography competition and the Society's two archive collections.

Maeldune Heritage Centre

Joye, Manager at the Maeldune Heritage Centre & Visitor Information Centre has been in the post for a year now and has introduced many changes within the centre for visitors to enjoy. She has created a happy working environment opening up avenues to work with everyone in our Maldon community.

Maldon Society volunteers at Maeldune Heritage Centre

Jill, Chairman of the Maeldune Trustees and Joye expressed their thanks to members for volunteering to assist with the extra activities for Heritage days. By giving an hour of their time over both weekends and during the week, it gave us the opportunity to promote our oral history recordings and photographic archives as well as supporting staff and volunteers at the centre. If anyone would like to volunteer some of their time for future activity days at the centre, please contact: info@maelduneheritagecentre.co.uk

Proposed improved facilities for the Plume Building

The committee has also sent a letter of support to improve the appearance of the interior by the removal of the 'Acrow props' with properly designed architectural pillars. The provision of a modern self-closing entrance door system will improve access as well as providing a more comfortable working environment. It is hoped that funding will be found for this important work to be carried out during the centre's closed season.

Maldon & Heybridge Heritage Harbour Association

The committee has also sent a letter of support to the above group for their plans to apply for charitable status. The main aim of the Society is to preserve the heritage of the town and promote the maritime activities of the town as this will enable the Association to raise funds necessary for their work.

Maldon Society talks – *John Rogers*

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.

Talks for 2024/2025

Thursday, 3rd October - John Rogers - The Blackwater, from sea to Beeleigh Falls.

Thursday, 7th November - David Fell - Who are the Maldonians?

Thursday, 9th January - Patrick Chaplin – A Maldon Journal, an alternative view of Maldon’s recent history 1987 – 1994.

Thursday, 6th February – Julian Harrap – Maldon’s role in the saving of Smithfield Market from demolition and its transition to the new Museum of London.

Thursday 6th March – Dominic Poston – The value of trees in our environment and planning considerations.

Thursday, 3rd April – Colin Edmund – A director’s view of the history and importance of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation.

Pre-registration

We are glad so many of you are enjoying our monthly talks. They’re proving extremely popular and the Cygnet Room is regularly filled to capacity. So, we would strongly recommend our members to book early. Members are in the privileged position of having information in our newsletters on all the upcoming talks. So, please book ahead. You can reserve your seat by emailing maldonsociety@aol.com or calling 01621 853428.

Local events

Saltmarsh Coast Walking Festival - 27th September to 6th October. Guided and self-guided walks to enjoy our beautiful coast. These have been organised by Maldon District Tourism Group and are free. For more information and to book your place, visit www.saltmarshcoastwalkingfestival.co.uk

The Town’s Christmas Fayre will take place on Thursday, 28th November 4 pm till 9 pm with the switching on of Maldon’s Christmas lights at 6 pm.

The Maeldune Heritage Centre’s Christmas Fayre begins on Wednesday, 13th November and runs right up until 21st December 2024. Open from 11 am till 4 pm Tuesday to Saturday. On Thursday, 28th November there will be some carols, a warm drink and a festive treat.

Essex Historical Association talks

Talks start at 2.30 p.m. at Trinity Methodist Church, Rainsford Road, Chelmsford CM1 2XB, very close to the city's rail and bus stations.

Saturday, September 24th - Mike Dodsworth will talk on The Witch Trials of Chelmsford.

Saturday, October 12th - Jef Page will talk on Essex Agricultural Protest: The Captain Swing Riots 1830-1; 'Men of Bad Character'.

Saturday, December 7th – A debate led by branch members on Causes of the American Civil War: Bleeding Kansas, whose side are you on, Butternuts?

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