

# THE BALDOCK SOCIETY

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Http://www.baldocksociety.org.uk



## newsletter

*Season's Greetings  
from the CHAIRMAN*

### THE EVER CHANGING FACE OF BALDOCK

First of all, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a **Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.**

I would also like to thank you for your support this year, we have had very good attendances at our Monthly Meetings and the feedback has been very encouraging.

Another year has nearly passed, and another awaits. What do we face for 2008? **Possible Town Centre Enhancement Works** - let's hope all goes to plan and the works start in April as scheduled.

**Uncertainty about the Town Hall** - Still nothing is decided and the future of the Town Hall hangs in the balance.

**Expansion of Baldock up to the bypass** - Plans have already been made to fill in the gaps with housing, we need to keep a close eye on this to make sure it is suitable and that the town can deal with the increase in population.

**Numerous planning applications** - Our day-to-day work! We review the planning applications every month and comment on those the Committee feel will have an effect on the town. For example, there are plans in for Tranters Yard and Womack Yard, both for extensive redevelopment.

**Possible loss of the Rentokil Building** - *This is at RISK!!* There have already been several developers approaching NHDC with plans to demolish the buildings and develop the site, again, we are keeping close to

this and monitoring any applications made to the planners. We are working with the History Society to build a picture of the past for this site and have been loaned some "deeds" from one of our members to assist with this.

**Development of the Convent Site** - Plans have been submitted and rejected for this site. But, as sure as eggs are eggs, the developers will be back with other applications, remember what happened at the McCarthy and Stone site! It all started with a modest application that was rejected by NHDC, but turned into wall to wall development of the site, and the NHDC had to pay McCarthy and Stones legal Costs for the planning appeal.

**Development of the Snooker Club site** - Plans are in place and this may become residential.

**Redevelopment of the George and Dragon** - A well known Hotelier in Baldock has taken this site and put plans forward to open it as a good quality restaurant, not a Public House. This must be very good news for the town and the local residents who have had to put up with years of problems with noise and antisocial behaviour. As a restaurant, it will attract the diner, not the drinker, so it will, in our opinion, enhance Baldock's town centre.

**Redevelopment of the Goldcrest** - Now up for sale with Planning permission for conversion back to housing.

**Trying to save St. Marys** - The main landmark building of the town, visible from most approaches to the town is in need of considerable work to save it from decline. The "Friends of St. Marys" are doing a brilliant job in fund raising, but it is up to all of us to help out, it is our church, it is our responsibility. Do what you can - offer your time or your money, if you raise funds in any way, consider the Church as a recipient, if every person

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does one thing, that is all that can be asked and it will make a difference. If you are in any doubt about the importance of the building, pop into St. Marys and look at the "Friends of St. Marys" brochure that shows the town centre without the church tower, quite sobering.

**Numerous shops opening, moving and closing** - The ever changing face of Baldock and the most significant factor in the way the town centre looks, Shop Front Design. With shops opening, new shop fronts appear, some fit into the historic street scene, some definitely do not. What is your view? We have been trying for years to influence the shop front designs, one area we feel we have not done as well as we would have liked. The NHDC seem powerless and there is little good advice out there. It is an area of increasing concern and we



want your views.

Well, some good news, some not so good, but one thing is for certain, it is business as usual for the Baldock Society. We face many challenges and our work is as relevant now as it was when the society was founded in the early 1970's.

We still have several vacancies on the committee, so if you feel strongly about your town, want to express your views and do something positive to help protect Baldock, join us.

*Help us help Baldock.*

Chris Gomm.  
CHAIRMAN

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY FOR 2008

January 17 <sup>th</sup>	AGM (see notes on page 3)
February 21 <sup>st</sup>	To be confirmed
March 20 <sup>th</sup>	John Matthews - Essex Air Ambulance
April 17 <sup>th</sup>	Sherry Martin - Starting Family History
May 15 <sup>th</sup>	Chris Gomm - 1953 Coronation Celebrations in Baldock
June 19 <sup>th</sup>	Richard Thomas - The River Lea -Luton to Leyton
July 17 <sup>th</sup>	Martin Copping - The City of London
August 21 <sup>st</sup>	An Evening with the Councillors
September 18 <sup>th</sup>	An Evening with David Garner
October 16 <sup>th</sup>	Rory O'Brien - New Zealand & the Art Deco Weekend
November 21 <sup>st</sup>	John Hale -RNLI and Lifeboats
December 20 <sup>th</sup>	No meeting

## Member Subscriptions 2008

The new year is starting and Membership Subscriptions are due on 1 January 2008. Unfortunately, we have had to increase our subscription rates to £6.00 family and £4.00 single, and trust

that this will be acceptable to you. It is the first time we have increased the Membership Subscription in many years and it still remains exceptional value.

The renewal form is on the back page of this newsletter.

**The 25<sup>th</sup> Baldock Festival** – How good is that? 25 years of fun and festivities, well done to everyone involved, you are doing a great job. Let's all try to make the 25th Baldock Festival the best ever.

## Baldock Mail 30 Years old in 2008

Well done to the team at the Baldock Mail, 30 years of publication, keeping us all up to date with local news and events, as well as much loved regular features. Support your local newspaper and make sure you always buy a copy of the Baldock Mail when it is on sale around the town.

## Baldock Town Partnership

The town partnership is gathering momentum and starting to organise itself to promote Baldock and to help organise additional events for the town. This year, it raised several thousand pounds from local business towards to the Christmas lights mainly due to the efforts of John in Baldock Hardware, Whitehorse Street, well done John.

They are hoping to secure additional markets for the town, such as French, Italian, Farmers etc., as well as consulting on the Town Centre Enhancements and other important issues facing Baldock's future.

As you may know I am also involved with the Committee there as well, so if you have anything to say to them, let me know and I will pass it on.

## Baldock Area Police Neighbourhood Panel

I am also now Chairman of this group, that reviews the issues facing Baldock, and then sets priorities for the Police to tackle. If you have any issues within the town, let me know and I will discuss them with the Police to see what can be done.

**GOING GREEN!** *If you would like to receive your Baldock Society Newsletter via email, then send your email address to:*

**Info@baldocksociety.org.uk**  
*We promise not to forward your details to any third party.*

## 2008 Baldock Calendar

We are very fortunate to again have a wonderful Baldock Calendar, showing original water colours from *Shirley Smith* of *BYGONE BALDOCK* with this year's proceeds going to the Town Twinning Association. They make a wonderful gift or just buy one for your own use. Available from the usual outlets including the Community Centre, Chapmans and some public houses. Get yours now before they sell out.



For those who have access to the internet. The web address is:

[www.baldocksociety.org.uk](http://www.baldocksociety.org.uk)



**AGM with Buffet, wine, quizzes, raffle and refreshments, Thursday 17 January 2008 at 8.00 pm in the large Hall in the Community Centre.**

We are reverting to a January AGM as a trial to see if it suits everyone better, we clash with so many other events in December. Last year, the AGM was almost a sell out, we had a great night and the feedback from those attending was brilliant, it seems everyone had a good night. If you were unable to attend, you missed a good evening, but don't despair, you can make up for it by attending the next one! Again, we are making the AGM a ticket only event so we can judge the numbers for catering purposes (this worked very well last time). Members can obtain their ticket, **FREE OF CHARGE**, by sending back the slip on the back page of this newsletter. Tickets will be available up to Monday before the meeting. We will be having our AGM (approximately 30 minutes) followed by the Buffet (a good mix of cold foods, cheese and various snacks), red or white wine (for the over 18's) as well as the quiz and raffle. It is always a night full of fun, challenges and social interaction, please make the effort to attend. We almost have a full set of speakers booked for next year. This year we have had some excellent nights, our speakers have excelled themselves. If you know of any suitable speakers, please let us know so we can build a data base for future years.



**The Baldock Celebrations for the Coronation 1953 ~**

In May 2008 we are showing some photographs of the 1953 Coronation celebrations in Baldock, organised by the then Baldock Urban District Council.

The slide show will be based around the "Official" programme (which will also be part of the slide show) and covers Women's Football, Hockey, Tennis, Bowls, Gymnastics display, Best Dressed Tramp, Pipe Smoking Competition, Band Concert, Carnival, Carnival Queen, Soap Box Derby, Coronation Tea, Swimming Gala, Old Time Ball and Open Air Dancing.

Were you there? Can you give any commentary on the events?

If you were there, why not come along, any anecdotes that would bring the pictures to life will add to the experience of the evening. There are pictures of most events and the talk will be very much enhanced if you can add your stories to them.

As it will be during the 25<sup>th</sup> Baldock Festival, we are making it a ticket only event, 75% of the tickets will firstly be offered to our members, and then to go on sale to everyone else. If you would like to reserve tickets (a

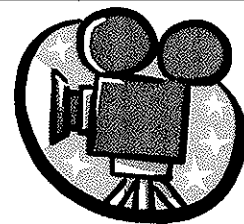


maximum of 2 per application) then complete the slip on the back of this newsletter and return it to us. There will be a small charge, even for members, as it is a Festival event. Anyone who was there in 1953 and can add a story to the pictures will be admitted free of charge.

**WORLD PREMIERE IN BALDOCK**

We were privileged to see the first public showing of a new presentation by David Garner (The Bird Man) at the September meeting. Entitled "The North Yorkshire Moors", it was a delight to see the wonderful scenery (in good weather!) of North Yorkshire as well as some of the birds of the area. We were also able to step into the past and see moorland crosses, old churches and old castles and also become acquainted with old customs which still exist in this area. The area is made popular by the North York Moors Railway – steam engines pulling the trains through beautiful countryside and we saw the newly-restored engine Class A4 Pacific 60007 Sir Nigel Gresley which is now running on the Line.

Devotees of the television series "Heartbeat" recognised many of the locations used for filming, including the village of Goathland, which becomes Aidensfield, the centre of the series. Later, there was the opportunity to see "Heartbeat" actually being filmed with the familiar faces of the actors and actresses



playing their parts in the village. The shop and business names and window displays were changed to fit in with the TV village of the past. The second shorter presentation was much nearer to home and showed Cambridgeshire villages and their customs as well as the local wildlife. The Members who attended all said how much they enjoyed the evening and those who weren't there missed a treat!!

David Garner will return next year and is expecting to bring another new presentation – I know the area featured in this new presentation – but if you want to know where it is, you will just have to turn up next year!!

JANET HAMMOND

**PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN TO THE ADDRESS BELOW:**



**THE BALDOCK SOCIETY**  
c/o 1 Norton Road, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5AP  
www.baldocksociety.org.uk  
email: info@baldocksociety.org.uk

Name(s): .....

Address: .....

..... Postcode: .....

Telephone No: .....

Email Address: .....

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM – YEAR 2008**

Family Membership: £6.00 / Single Membership: £4.00

Tick Box

**YES**, I would like to continue my membership and enclose my cheque payable to “Baldock Society” for £.....

I would like my Membership Card to be posted  / I will collect at the AGM or a future meeting

**NO**, I would like to have my name removed from the list of members

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**BALDOCK SOCIETY AGM – THURSDAY, 17 JANUARY 2008**

To be held at 8:00pm at the Baldock Community Centre

Tickets are free to Members or £2.00 for Non-Members

I would like ..... tickets please, and enclose my cheque payable to “Baldock Society” for £..... (if Non-Members)

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**BALDOCK SOCIETY (FESTIVAL) MEETING – THURSDAY, 15 MAY 2008**

To be held at 8:00pm at the Baldock Community Centre

Baldock’s 1953 Coronation Celebrations – A Slide Show

Tickets are £1.00 per person

I would like ..... tickets please (maximum of 2 per application), and enclose my cheque payable to “Baldock Society” for £.....