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Aladdin's Cave of Railway Memorabilia

Councillor Henry Bass, Chairman of Maldon District Council, travelled to one of the jewels in the District's crown, Mangapps Railway & Museum in Burnham-on-Crouch.



Cllr. Bass met John and June Jolly who, with their son James, own and manage the Railway and Mick Northfield, one of their volunteer helpers, to discuss Mangapps' vast collection and history. The Mangapps Museum started in 1987, when they bought their first locomotive from a man who was saving it from being scrapped; thus, says John Jolly, the seed was sown! The Chairman learned and saw that the museum had one of the largest collections of railway memorabilia in Britain. The collection includes signs, lamps, posters, carriages, wagons and locomotives- and much more. Cllr. Bass was surprised to learn that Mangapps has even helped to make movie magic: one of the carriages was used in the making of the recent film "The Darkest Hour", as the setting for the scene where Churchill rides the London Underground and talks to some passengers, which helped Gary Oldman win the Oscar for Best Actor earlier this year. Another carriage from the Mangapps collection, a 1929 LNER Restaurant Car, featured in a scene in the classic horror film "Woman in Black", starring Daniel Radcliffe, who spent a day at Mangapps for the filming.

Whilst learning about the history, the Chairman noticed the nameplate from the LNER locomotive "Champion Lodge", which hauled trains from Liverpool Street to East Anglia. It was the only locomotive named after a place in the Maldon District and the house's owner, Sir Claude Champion de Crespigny, was a notable resident of the district in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

After working his way through the Aladdin's cave of fascinating objects, Cllr. Bass boarded an engine, sounded the horn and rode down the track, through the beautiful scenery that surrounds the railway.

Mangapps Railway & Museum is open every weekend and Bank Holiday until October and every day in August. Trains operate on all open days.