

Take tea on *the Quay*

In the run up to Easter why not take a stroll down to Maldon's picturesque Hythe Quay and step on board a traditional Thames barge for a memorable tearoom experience at the Barge Tearooms?



During the summer, the barges are busy taking people down the river, but between October and Easter the central heating goes on and the Hydrogen (built 1906) and Thistle (built 1895) take it in turns to open to the public for breakfasts, light lunches and afternoon teas.

When we visited the tearooms a few weeks ago, the delicious aroma of baking cakes and flapjacks emanating from the cosy below-decks area told us



we were on the right barge!

Not only are all the delicious cakes cooked on board daily, but the team also produces scones, mini quiches and hearty soups, with fresh ingredients supplied from Maldon High Street including Buntings Butchers, Greens and Crusty Loaf.

On sunny days visitors can sit on deck and enjoy watching the winter birds feeding on the mud or forming huge flocks over the saltmarshes. Dogs are welcome on deck.

Readers of The Village Emporium will probably remember a previous review of the tearooms a couple of years ago. We are including them again here, not just for the cakes(!), but also because the barges have no access

to lottery funding or grants, the income from the pop-up winter tearoom is vital in contributing to the very expensive maintenance needed to support this part of our nation's maritime heritage.

The company has now purchased the very last Thames barge ever built, the Resourceful, and the hope is to open her this summer as a permanent tearoom, visitor hub and small arts venue. With an upper deck looking out over the river and a large saloon with portholes, she will make a wonderful all weather tearoom. A separate cabin will be available as a private room for small functions.

The Barge Tearooms, The Hythe, Maldon, Essex CM9 5HN.
Tel 01621 857567. Open Thursday to Sunday, 10am-5pm
www.bargetearooms.co.uk
Parking is limited in the immediate vicinity of the quay but there are car parks in the adjacent Promenade Park or off the High Street, just a few minutes walk away. Due to the nature of the vessel, access could be difficult for the less mobile.