



# Maidenhead Civic Society NEWS

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Issue 2/04

April 2004

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*Vista of Cliveden and the White Brook on the Millennium Walk  
(See inside, page 5)*

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Ockwells Manor and the Mortimers – Ann Darracott

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Regular features on talks, outings, the Heritage Centre,  
Projects and Planning

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# PROGRESS SO FAR IN 2004

The appointment of Councillor Vicky Howes to liaise with the Society has had its first realisation when she attended the March meeting of the Society's Executive. This proved to be a very positive experience. We learned something of the many moves in areas of interest to the Society. In particular, steps in hand to deal with the eyesore of the Cinema site and the dereliction of Cresset Towers in the High St. were explained. The discussion of the proposals for the necessary upgrading of the Town Hall and its precincts showed that plans are strictly practical and financially sensible. We may look forward to developing this connection to mutual advantage.

It has become increasingly clear that the Society's pursuit through the coming years of improved amenity for the town needs a much longer-term approach than relates to the term of office of councils or indeed the frequency of local or national elections. Our Strategic Review has provided a long list of desirable improvements to the town's amenities. Some smaller ones are within the power of the Society to pursue on its own. Many more, and particularly the more ambitious, require the intervention of the Council and other public and private bodies and over a considerable period of years. This implies that at least the Council needs an agreed set of strategic objectives of its own for the town/borough. Equally this requires that the political parties have these in common although their means of attaining them may differ. There may be such a tacit agreement behind the scenes but if so there needs to be more transparency on the issue so that we can all see where the town is going. Local plan revisions are in preparation but past experience suggests that these do not lead to an objective specific attack on amenity needs.

The Planning Group's examination of applications has picked out a new area of concern in promoting amenity. This is the major move to demolish houses with large plots and to redevelop them often as blocks of flats. Government pressure requires the construction of much additional housing in the area and as far as possible on 'brownfield' sites so such redevelopment may tend to be driven by these considerations and certainly developers see an economic opportunity. This is not the place to argue the pros and cons of the situation but there are major impacts on amenity. First these redevelopments make increased demand on infrastructure such as roads, schools, services and expansion of these seems to come after the event and with little evidence of preplanning. Secondly there is a price paid by the environment in loss of open space and wildlife habitat. Aerial photographs of urban areas show that in areas of reasonably spaced houses their combined gardens provide linear 'parks' of considerable extent. It is a fact that for much wildlife these are becoming refuges in the face of loss of habitat in the countryside. The Council is certainly aware of many of these repercussions and has been reluctant to grant a number of the applications. Unfortunately all too often their decisions are overturned by subsequent appeals. The Society is working hard to make sure that these consequences are recognised and taken fully into account.

Our search for a new chairman for the Society has not yielded any results so far. However, the Executive has been strengthened by the cooption of June Jorge to the Committee, at the February meeting.

John McIntosh

# TALKS

**WEDNESDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> April 2004 – 8 p.m.**

**“ANGLO SAXON CHURCHES”**

An illustrated talk by Michael G. Hardy  
Lecturer on Cathedral and Church Architecture

**WEDNESDAY 19<sup>th</sup> May 2004 – 8 p.m.**

**“THE HISTORY OF OXFORD”**

An illustrated talk by Mrs Ruiz (Official Oxford Guide)

**WEDNESDAY 16<sup>th</sup> June 2004 – 8 p.m.**

**“THE WORK OF THE THAMES VALLEY  
& CHILTERN AIR AMBULANCE”**

Speaker to be confirmed

**WEDNESDAY 15<sup>th</sup> September 2004 – 8 p.m.**

**“RED KITES IN THE CHILTERNs”**

An illustrated talk by Brian Clewes

**WEDNESDAY 20<sup>th</sup> October 2004 – 8 p.m.**

**“GHOSTS & TRADITIONS OF MIDDLE THAMES”**

Speaker to be confirmed

# OUTINGS

Our latest trip was to Woburn Abbey and Safari Park on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> March. We had a very easy trip there and firstly visited the Safari Park in the safety of our coach. There were many animals to see and they all looked in very good health. We were particularly interested to see a large black Canadian bear asleep up a tree. After the one-hour drive through the enclosures we were able to visit the exploration area, which ranged from sea lions to wallabies. Upon re-boarding the coach we travelled through the 3000-acre grounds passing the resident deer population to the Abbey. The whole house was open including the private apartments and many of us rented a most excellent Walkman that described the house and contents in great detail. We were also able to visit the 60 antique shops located in the grounds.

Our next trip is on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June to Knole and Chartwell in Kent. Knole is the largest private House in England as is owned by the National Trust, but is home to the Sackville family. It is set in a 1000-acre deer park. Just a 20-minute drive away in Westerham is Chartwell, the family home of Sir Winston Churchill. Here we will see where he lived in beautiful surroundings and also see his political memorabilia. If you are a member of the National Trust you will make a big saving on this trip.

On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July we will be visiting Herefordshire to tour Eastnor Castle. The Castle is set in 5000 acres of the Malvern Hills and is a fine example of Norman and Gothic architecture. The interior contains many fine treasures and Pugin designed the drawing room.



*Eastnor Castle, Ledbury, Herefordshire (photo courtesy Eastnor Castle)*

One further date for your diary is Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October. We are planning a guided tour of the Houses of Parliament followed by a visit to the Cabinet War Rooms. The booking form will be in the next newsletter, but if you would like to put your name down then please call me or drop me a note.

We look forward to your support for our outings and will always welcome non-Members.

Mike Copeland

# PROJECTS

## **YORK STREAM**

I expect by the time this newsletter reaches you that flow in the town centre section of York Stream will have stopped. The Environment Agency (E.A.) have been clearing trees from the White Brook and chopping back trees adjacent to the stream since January. They have not completed the work but will have to finish it before they dredge in August. We will have to wait and see whether this has any significant effect on water flow. I suspect clearing Maidenhead Ditch of reeds will also be necessary but there are no plans to do this, as far as we know.

The Maidenhead Town Forum will be inviting the E.A. to send a representative to their next meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> May to talk about what their plans are regarding improving flow to the town centre. At present (1<sup>st</sup> April) they do not know whether anyone will come. If this happens we may learn more then.

An unexpected bonus of the E.A.'s work has been the creation of an attractive vista across to Cliveden. The vista will enhance this section of the Millennium Walk (see below).

## **MILLENNIUM WALK**

### **Path from Lower Cookham Road to Towpath**

Some progress has been made recently. We have always had close contact with East Berks Ramblers who tried to get a route across in 1977 as a Silver Jubilee Project. However, in the last few weeks other voluntary organisations, (the Cookham Society, Windsor & Maidenhead Conservation Volunteers, Windsor & Maidenhead Urban Wildlife Group, the Tree Wardens Group and Maidenhead Rotary Club) have written to the Council in support of the creation of this footpath link. The Environment Agency is also in favour. The Estates Department is at present awaiting a reply from RMC plc who own White Place Farm before making a recommendation to Cabinet regarding the acquisition of Quintain's land. This acquisition will allow the path to go ahead.

Keep your fingers crossed!

### **A404: Marlow to Malders Lane Link**

**Secretary of States orders Footpath 9 Bisham:** The Public Enquiry was held on 5 and 6 November and the orders were overwhelmingly supported by local people. The report is now with the Government Office of the South East who expect to publish it and their findings in May.

## **OCKWELLS PROJECT**

Some of you may remember a Civic Society trip to Great Malvern many years ago. Those of you who visited the Priory may also remember the 15<sup>th</sup> century tiles, most of which are on the altar screen and on the apse wall (the Priory was in effect rebuilt in the 15<sup>th</sup> century). One of those tiles bore the same coat as one of the armorial achievements at Ockwells Manor (see below). The coat on this tile is known to be that of Mortimer of Chirk. I had previously thought that the Ockwells achievement was for Richard, Duke of York (see Newsletter July 1999) but no longer! The Malvern tile is part of a scheme of 7 tiles, dated at the top 1453, and seems to be a record of the founders of the Priory (St Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror) and later benefactors.



*15<sup>th</sup> Century tiles on the apse wall, Great Malvern Priory*



*Mortimer of Chirk coat on tile at Gt. Malvern*



*Mortimer of Chirk coat at Ockwells Manor*

I think the Mortimer of Chirk tile probably represents Roger, Lord Mortimer of Chirk, who, together with his nephew (also Roger Mortimer), rebelled against Edward II and was put in the Tower of London. The latter escaped and later with Isabella, the estranged wife of Edward II, seized the throne and afterwards is said to have had something done to Edward II with a red-hot poker that I would prefer not to go into!

Roger Mortimer of Chirk died in the Tower in 1326, but had issue and I now believe that the Mortimer of Chirk coat at Ockwells is for his descendent, Sir Hugh Mortimer (d 1460) who held lands in Worcestershire and Herefordshire. The connection between Hugh Mortimer and John Norreys Esq., who built Ockwells, most likely came about via Norreys' second wife, Eleanor Clitherow, whose famous grandfather, Sir John Oldcastle was from Herefordshire. Sir John Falstaff in Shakespeare's plays was based on this man who started out as a friend of Henry V and ended up being hung drawn and quartered in 1417 for his religious views (he was a Lollard and their views are reflected in the later protestant movement). The character was even called Sir John Oldcastle in early copies of the play but the family objected so the name was changed!

Sir John's cousin Richard Oldcastle lived in Birtsmorton Court just south of Great Malvern. This wonderful house, that still has a moat, was sold to John Nanfan Esq in 1430, after the death of Richard's wife Elizabeth. Nanfan's armorial achievement also occurs at Ockwells.



*Birtsmorton Court, Worcestershire*

I am grateful to the Society for assistance in attending the National Mortimer Conference at Usk, Monmouthshire, in March when I was able to talk to Ian Mortimer and Charles Hopkinson about the history of the Mortimer family. I can recommend their books for those of you who are interested, though I'd take the story about Edward II leaving England and becoming a hermit with a pinch of salt:

Hopkinson C. and Speight M. 2002. *The Mortimers, Lords of the March*. Logaston Press.

Mortimer I. 2003. *The Greatest Traitor - the Life of Sir Roger Mortimer, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of March, Ruler of England, 1327-1330*. Jonathan Cape

I am full of admiration for the organisers of the conference - The Friends of Usk Castle - who use their lecture programme to raise money for the preservation of this privately owned castle that dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

As noted above the link between Sir Hugh and John Norreys Esq of Ockwells probably came via the latter's second wife Eleanor Clitherow. Sir Hugh supported the White Rose in the Wars of the Roses and may have been killed fighting for Richard, Duke of York, his kinsman, at the battle of Wakefield in 1460. The effigy in the Martley church has a Yorkist collar of suns and roses and must have been commissioned after Hugh's death. This collar was created for Edward IV who seized the throne in 1461.



*Effigy of Sir Hugh Mortimer (d. 1460) in St Peter's Church, Martley, Worcs.  
note: the head rests on a helm with a crest of feathers*

Hugh's son, Sir John Mortimer, would have known Sir William Norreys, John Norreys eldest son, well as John married Margaret, a daughter of John Neville, Marquess Montagu and Isabel Ingaldesthorp. Isabel married Sir William Norreys after Nevilles death and both William and John appear to have joined forces in rebelling against Richard III and helping Henry Tudor seize the throne in 1485.

Ann Darracott

# HERITAGE CENTRE NEWS

## 500 YEARS OF LOCAL HERITAGE

When you visit the Heritage Centre you are standing in one of 63 listed buildings in the town of Maidenhead – and our new exhibition *Maidenhead's Listed Buildings* runs until 15<sup>th</sup> May. This entirely new exhibition celebrates the buildings which help give Maidenhead its identity: but not all of them are actually buildings! They range from three bridges to a clock tower, a 1926 telephone kiosk and three tiny milestones. Familiar buildings such as All Saints' Church and the Art College in Marlow Road are listed, but how many of you know that a multi-storey stable, a hospital and a Thames-side boathouse are also listed? Historic buildings are a precious and finite asset and in the past the Civic Society has played a part in saving some of them for future generations. They play an influential part in our town's sense of identity and remind us of the work and way of life of earlier generations. Do visit the exhibition: and come prepared to be surprised as well as informed. And when you leave, you may even wish to suggest other buildings which should be added to the official lists. The exhibition is sponsored by Roger Preston & Partners, the Maidenhead-based Consulting Engineers, who have collaborated with Norman Foster on many of his best-known projects.

## HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

We are delighted that at least two fascinating buildings will be open to the public during the Heritage Open Days weekend on September 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. Norden Farm will be offering guided tours not only of the historic farmhouse and barns, but also of the backstage areas. The Bridge Clinic will be offering tours of their beautiful 1790 mansion, Oldfield Lodge. We are hoping to sign up additional buildings during the next month and full details will be announced in the summer.

## e-BAY

Do you ever log on to e-Bay, the Internet auction site? If so, please keep a look out for anything relevant to Maidenhead's heritage – and then let us know as soon as possible. We are interested in documents, photographs, pictures, anything relevant to local businesses, such as Skindles Hotel, or to Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA). If you see *anything* which you think *might* be of interest, please phone us immediately on 780555.

## FUTURE EVENTS

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May, at 2.30pm: Guided walk:** "Bridge Road History" – (free for friends £2.50 for guests and non friends).

**19th May – 12th June: Exhibition:** "Memories of D-Day" - The memories of Maidonians who served in Normandy in June 1944.

**Thurs 10<sup>th</sup> June, 10am – 3pm: River Thames Historical Cruise** (MHC Friends fare £15; non-Friends £18). Tickets available now! Book early to avoid disappointment. Group bookings accepted.

**16th June – 21st August: Exhibition:** "Maidenhead's Thames: summer on the river".

**Weds 30 June at 7.30pm: Illustrated talk:** "Victorian millionaires and their riverside mansions" (free for Friends £2.50 for guests or non-Friends). Advance booking essential.

Maidenhead Heritage Centre is open Tuesday – Saturdays  
90 Moorbridge Road, Maidenhead SL6 8BW, ☎ 01628 780555  
[www.maidenheadheritage.org.uk](http://www.maidenheadheritage.org.uk)

# PLANNING DIGEST

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Planning Group met in January, February and March to review the plans for the 34 applications that had been selected from the weekly listings for December, January and February. All the sites were visited and reviewed in detail. Comments were submitted to the planning department on 15 of the applications and the full text of these can be seen on the Society's website.

These included another two applications for blocks of flats in Shoppenhangers Road; a 'very sheltered' housing scheme in Bridge Avenue; and the change of use to a day support and advice centre in Grove Road, next to the car park; the replacement of some agricultural buildings with three detached houses at Sheephouse farm on the edge of the green belt; a block of flats at 84 Ray Mill Road West; and a new application for 242 flats and light industrial units in Oldfield Road on the former Lex/Nortel site. I also met and discussed the latter development with the planning consultant involved and his reaction was receptive to our comments. The other applications included restoration to the gardens and listed building at Woolley Hall plus three new office buildings on the site; proposals to redevelop the industrial site on Blackamoor Lane including an element in the Green Belt; and proposals for a major residential development of 83 dwellings on the Grasslands Research Institute site in Hurley.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

I have also written in response to the consultation exercise on car parking. This included comments on parking density, improvement to short term parking for shopping and at the station for local residents.

We have written in response to the consultation exercise on the Landscape Strategy Assessment for the Royal Borough. Although this covers Maidenhead, Cookham and Bray it does not include the urban areas. A successful meeting was also held with David Trigwell, the Head of Planning at RBWM to discuss his proposals to delegate more powers to planning officers. We were mainly concerned that any listed buildings in Maidenhead be excluded from these powers. We have also received notification from Councillor Vicky Howes of the plans to proceed with redeveloping the gardens in front of the Town Hall and the centralisation of Borough services there following the public consultation exercise.

Finally, I have spoken to the Council about the status of the planning application for the listed building at number 3 The High Street. It has been deferred subject to legal agreement. A 'section 106 contribution' is apparently required towards public open spaces and this is still being negotiated by the planning department.

Nigel Cockburn

## UPDATE ON STRATEGIC REVIEW

In the last Newsletter there was a summary based on John Ashton's formulation of the Strategic Review which gave the various objectives under a limited number of headings. Councillor Vicky Howes has agreed to meet us to discuss the thrust of the main targets. However, the current documents are much too complex to form a basis for a meaningful exchange. Work is therefore in hand to prepare a paper on which to hold a structured and effective discussion.

John McIntosh

## PLANNING APPLICATION AFFECTING NORTH TOWN MOOR

Our Planning Group has recently looked at an application by Little Farm Nurseries (adjacent to North Town Moor) to basically turn the nursery into a garden centre. The proposal is to create an additional road branching off from the private road that goes from Blackamoor Lane to North Town cricket club. A car park for 81 cars is also proposed. The suggested new road would run parallel and a short distance away from the footpath that links Blackamoor Lane with North Town Moor.

The Group will be opposing the development for the following reasons:-

- development contrary to Borough policy for development in Green Belt land (nurseries are acceptable, garden centres are not).
- not satisfied that prior use as a garden centre has been established as claimed in a separate application for a Certificate of Lawfulness as A1 usage.
- special circumstances required for any development in the green belt are not stated.
- this area is still subject to significant flooding despite the Flood Alleviation Scheme (see photo).
- if the garden centre were to be a success it would put an excessive amount of traffic on the local network.



*Flooding next to the nursery in 2003 after the flood bund was constructed (Photo courtesy Margaret Bowdery, East Berks Ramblers)*

North Town Moor to the west of the nursery is where the Green Way runs from north to south and there are other connecting public footpaths in this area. York Stream runs along the northern and eastern borders of the nursery and this stream and the adjacent gravel pit has been designated a wildlife heritage site. The draft Landscape Character Assessment report done for the Royal Borough (this will be made available to the public in due course) describes this area and says **“The absence of roads gives it a remote feel”**.

The Civic Society and other groups have put a lot of effort into improving this area over the years, ranging from digging out North Town Moor pond and creating the Green Way, to planting bulbs and litter picking. All that at present screens the Moor from the nursery is a hedge, part of which was cut down when a previous owner filled in the drainage ditch near to the nursery entrance. The proposed development would allow the North Town Moor access road to be closed off but at the price of yet another road which may then lead to future development applications for the area.

Ann Darracott

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2004  
**Talk** by Michael G Hardy

“Anglo Saxon Churches”  
 Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m.

Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2004  
**Talk** by Mrs Ruiz

“History of Oxford”  
 Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m.

Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2004  
**Outing**

Knole & Chartwell

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2004  
**Talk** (speaker to be advised)

“The Thames Valley & Chiltern Air Ambulance”  
 Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m.

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2004  
**Outing**

Eastnor Castle

Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2004  
**Talk** by Brian Clewes

“Red Kites in the Chilterns”  
 Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m.

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2004  
**Outing**

Houses of Parliament & Cabinet War Rooms

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2004  
**Talk** (speaker to be advised)

“Ghosts & Traditions of Middle Thames”  
 Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m.

## CIVIC SOCIETY OFFICERS

|                 |                                                             |        |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| President       | Richard Poad, Hollyhocks, The Common, Cookham Dean, SL6 9NZ | 484298 |
| Acting Chairman | John McIntosh, 26 Harvest Hill Road, SL6 2QQ                | 633259 |
| Vice-Chairman   | Vacancy                                                     |        |
| Secretary       | June Churchman, 20 Chiltern Road, SL6 1XA                   | 638546 |
| Asst. Secretary | Gillian Moore, 10 Langdale Close, SL6 1SY                   | 630130 |
| Treasurer       | Trevor Farnfield, Ditton Meads, Winter Hill Road, SL6 6NS   | 638142 |
| Membership Sec. | Shashi Dare, Silvretta, Islet Road, SL6 8LD                 | 629976 |
| Planning Group  | Nigel Cockburn, Willow House, Fishery Road, SL6 1UN         | 621084 |
| Outings Sec.    | Mike Copeland, 14 Laburnham Road, SL6 4DB                   | 681955 |
| Newsletter      |                                                             |        |
| Distributor     | Carol Innes, Contour, Briar Glen, Cookham Rise, SL6 9JP     | 532418 |

## COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2004

Parish Centre in St. Luke's Church, at 7.45 p.m.

14<sup>th</sup> January, 11<sup>th</sup> February, 10<sup>th</sup> March, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 14<sup>th</sup> July, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 13<sup>th</sup> October, 10<sup>th</sup> November, 8<sup>th</sup> December.

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2004 in the Wesley Hall at the Methodist Church at 8.00pm.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue  
 of the Newsletter is 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2004.**

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(Unless otherwise acknowledged, photographs taken by Ann & Brian Darracott using the Society's digital camera purchased with a grant from the Kidwell's Trust)

**News Editor**     **Brian Darracott**  
**6 Medallion Place, Maidenhead, SL6 1TF (01628 620280)**