



Maidenhead Civic Society NEWS



Issue 3/11

Aug 2011



At last! Some of Maidenhead's new office blocks are finding big-name occupants. See story, page 5

Visit our website: www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

Chairman's Foreword

STANDING AT THE CORNER

There has been a rash of critical correspondence in the paper in recent months about various aspects of the town centre. Times are still tough and in some respects likely to get worse before they get better – but is Maidenhead better placed than most to turn the corner?

Well, there was good news in the approval of the town centre “Masterplan”. With a few minor tweaks the Area Action Plan (AAP) was given government approval in June. The Society has played a significant role in its development over the last three years. Now we have a plan which meets the needs of residents, paves the way for new shopping opportunities, commercial and residential development, streets and spaces, and includes a demand for a “step-change in design quality” (a particular pleasure to me).

Of course none of this is going to happen tomorrow. Turning the AAP into reality could be a long haul. The plan has three phases, the last of which takes us to 2026. However, as well as providing a firm but flexible framework for development, the AAP is a clear signal to the market that Maidenhead is ready for change and, judging by the significant interest being shown by investors and developers already, it seems the message is being received and understood by some major players (see page 5).

So, as we stand at the corner, what can we do to help? Well, potentially, Maidenhead is poised for one of the most exciting periods of development in its history. We can't just watch and wait. In the same way that we influenced the Masterplan, we shall have to input into the development briefs that emerge, respond to consultations and scrutinise planning applications.

Whether or not you agree with what they say, those letter writers all demonstrate one thing – people still feel passionately about Maidenhead. But it would help if in being passionate, they were just a bit more positive. The Society itself is never slow to call people to task, particularly where it feels something better can be achieved. For example, we are currently lobbying for the revision and re-introduction of a shop fronts policy, something we helped introduce in the 1990s, to help improve the appearance of the town centre. We may criticise but we try always to be objective and constructive.

When major players are talking-up the town it doesn't help to have residents talking it down. Just now we're all in sales and marketing, trying to create a momentum for Maidenhead. Investors and developers read papers. And whingeing doesn't help.

Bob Dulson

Planning Matters

During the last quarter the Planning Group received approximately 45 applications selected by our “filtering” team of Renu Gujral and Rudi Sheldon. Hundreds of applications are processed by the Royal Borough’s planning department each month, many of which are reviewed by the relevant parish council. We examine in detail about 15 applications for Central Maidenhead and those wards which do not have a representative parish council. The “filtering” team meets each week to determine those applications which form the monthly review agenda for the Planning Group

This role, and indeed that of the Planning Group, is becoming more difficult as an increasing number of applications are made online. It is essential to have access to paper plans (A1 size) to fully interpret and analyse the architectural details. The scale available on a computer screen is unsatisfactory. Some hard copy plans are even submitted in A4 size, which is also very difficult to properly evaluate. We remain concerned at the poor standard of some of the planning drawings currently submitted.

In the last edition of the Newsletter we featured the proposals for the “over-development” of the East Berks College site, in Boyn Hill Avenue. We are pleased to report that the developers have had a rethink, and presented new proposals for consideration at the end of June. The Boyn Hill Residents’ Action Group believe the new scheme to be a vast improvement and that the outcome will be a high quality potentially award-winning scheme. There will be three individual closes off Boyn Hill Avenue, rather than an “estate”. The houses will have individual back-to-back gardens. The originally proposed five-storey apartment block has been replaced with a three (and a half!) storey terrace of Edwardian style town houses, offering 28 apartments (mainly affordable housing). The design of the houses fronting Boyn Hill Avenue is improved, with features more in keeping with the surrounding streetscape and the conservation area opposite. The total number of units is reduced from 70 to 64. It is understood that the new proposals will go to planning at the end of July.

In our last Newsletter, we also commented on the possible development of apartment blocks on Marlow Road/Craufurd Rise, following planning approval for 28 flats at Nos. 12-14 Craufurd Rise. A further application the opposite side of the road has since been submitted and withdrawn. We remain concerned at the potential risk of substantial properties being demolished Shoppenhangers-style.

The Town Moor Walkway/Escape Route being proposed as a consequence of the Badnell’s Pit re-development also featured in our last edition. Modified plans have been submitted by the developer, but we remain concerned that the scheme is a waste of money and our latest objection letter is printed below:

“Comments on Application 11/00226 – Town Moor Safe Escape Route From St Mary’s Park / Blackamoor Lane

We have previously commented on this proposal, and our concerns remain as stated. We note that this is an amendment to the original plans, which is a marginal improvement. However, the scheme still divides and detracts from the open space of Town Moor, still interferes with existing footpaths, will be partially submerged at times of maximum flood level and will be an obstruction to flood waters and collect debris.



The developer’s impression of the proposed elevated walkway

It is understood that the provision of this escape route is a condition of the successful appeal to develop the Badnells Pit / St Mary’s Park site. We believe that the structure is unnecessary and will prove ineffective in the event of a big flood. The majority of residents will evacuate by existing routes while at the peak of flooding the approach walkways will be underwater. In any case, the continued flood relief offered by the Jubilee River will hopefully make a flood event on the projected scale unlikely. We firmly believe that the developer should seek to be released from this unnecessary condition. The significant financial costs could be redirected to alternative infrastructure projects related directly or indirectly to the St Mary’s Park scheme.

Furthermore, there is still time for a more appropriate name. With St Mary’s Parish Church in the town centre, and St Mary’s Primary School on Cookham Road there is avoidable confusion caused by persisting with St Mary’s name in Blackamoor Lane.”

There are two noteworthy schemes that have been brought forward recently. A cultural/social centre is proposed for the site behind Maidenhead Mosque on

Holmanlease. It is on the site of the old Citizens' Advice Bureau, and will provide enhanced facilities for the wider Muslim community, including women and children. A major concern is the inadequate provision of parking spaces, and the potential traffic congestion. At the Development Control Panel meeting in early July the decision on the scheme was deferred in order to allow wider consultation to take place.

Another scheme of concern is in the Castle Hill Conservation Area. No. 2 Castle Hill Terrace is a substantial detached Victorian house, previously residential but now offices. It is proposed to be converted from offices back to residential apartments, which is probably more in keeping with the neighbourhood. However, in addition it is proposed to infill the back garden by constructing two detached houses. Consequently, with additional parking required for the apartments there will be no amenity space if the two new houses are built. The decision on this application is awaited, but the two additional houses represent over-development which detracts from the character of the surrounding conservation area.

MASTERPLAN HERALDS A WAVE OF INTEREST

PRoM's Masterplan for Maidenhead Town Centre has been given the seal of approval by a government planning inspector. Following its public examination earlier in the year, the Maidenhead Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) was declared 'sound' in June. Planning inspector David Hogger concluded that the plan would:

- deliver planned growth
- stimulate regeneration
- protect environmentally sensitive areas and
- provide a focus for the revitalisation of the town centre.

He rejected objections from developers who called for higher levels of development and more tall buildings in favour of a plan which, aiming to meet the needs of residents, insists on a greener town centre with improved streets and spaces, and a step-change in design quality. New tall buildings will only be allowed in two areas – at the station and along Bad Godesberg Way – although existing ones can be replaced.

As well as providing Maidenhead with an approved framework for its future until 2026 the AAP should also send a clear message to developers, investors and property agents that the town is ready, willing and able to take forward opportunities for rejuvenation.

While it's a long-term plan, there's been an encouraging level of interest in the town recently. Computer giant Adobe have just taken nearly 50,000 sq ft of office space next door to Sainsbury's. Just along the road in West Street, an application for a significant office and 122-bed hotel development has been submitted and down by the railway bridge, Tesla Motors, the American electric vehicle manufacturer, have chosen to locate their European HQ in Kings Chase.

Last month a major investment trust, British Land, announced its acquisition of the prestigious Grenfell Island site. They said it was Maidenhead's ability to attract major firms like Adobe, GlaxoSmithKline and Johnson & Johnson plus the plan for the Crossrail terminal that were major factors in their decision to invest here.



Kings Chase, opposite the station approach, is to be European HQ for Tesla Motors

On the planning front, ING are working up plans for an outline application for their £150m King's Triangle scheme, having signed a development agreement with the Town Hall. As we go to press, the Waterways Group are expected to submit their baseline plan for bringing a Thames-like feel to the town centre and there is serious developer interest in seizing that opportunity to inject new life into the area around Chapel Arches.

It may not feel like it but things could be looking up. A UK retail survey by Colliers International who monitor market trends suggested that while almost a quarter of towns were "failing" and another 11% still going downhill, Maidenhead was among just 3% said to be "improving".

OPTIONS CONSIDERED FOR FUTURE OF TAPLOW MILL

The Society has responded in detail to initial ideas put forward for the redevelopment of the former Taplow paper mill site, including Skindles.

A series of options, including a footbridge from Boulters to the Taplow bank, were presented at a public exhibition at the Mill in June with a view to the preparation of a Development Brief, an outline blueprint of what we can eventually expect to see on the site. The Brief is being prepared by local landowners and Barratt Homes who

have acquired a conditional interest in much of the land, working with a council planning officer.

The move follows the approval in February of South Bucks DC's Core Strategy, which classifies the site as an "opportunity area". Core Policy 15 in the Strategy describes it as a major developed site in the Green Belt and calls for specifically for its sensitive regeneration.

Like our colleagues in the Hitcham and Taplow Society, we believe that CP15 strikes the right balance between the need for regeneration and the protection and enhancement of the riverside environment and the Green Belt, though we felt more could have been made of the opportunities presented by the river for tourism and leisure. We were however encouraged by the Planning Inspector's additional comments when, noting that the site was adjacent to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead across the Thames, she said: "Policy CP15, to be followed in due course by a Development Brief, would provide a suitable framework for the conservation-led regeneration of this site which would take into account the important issues including those which cross boundaries."

In drawing up the Development Brief there are many issues to be considered, including flood risk, the scale and size of any replacement for Skindles, heritage concerns and the thorny question of access to, from and through the area. Perhaps the biggest will be the amount, scale and bulk of any new planned development. For example, the council has indicated that around 100 dwellings might be appropriate; Barratts on the other hand would like more than twice that.

The 23-hectare site holds many constraints to development but, using CP15 as the benchmark, the Civic Society's suggestions in response to the consultation were:

- Respect and rejuvenate the site's Green Belt status
- Ensure that any new development respects and enhances the character of the area
- The former Skindles is a priority for restoration and/or redevelopment as a hotel
- Total amount of building should not exceed existing footprint and preferably be smaller in scale
- Existing buildings of merit should be retained and brought back into use wherever possible.
- Existing building footprints or hard-standing not required for new development should be restored to Green Belt.
- Take advantage of the opportunities presented by the riverside location under a number of headings – commercial, residential, tourism, leisure and employment.
- Try to ensure that riverside businesses that are river-related
- Encourage mooring and boatyard facilities
- Enhance public access and views to both rivers
- Create new footpaths and a footbridge over the Thames

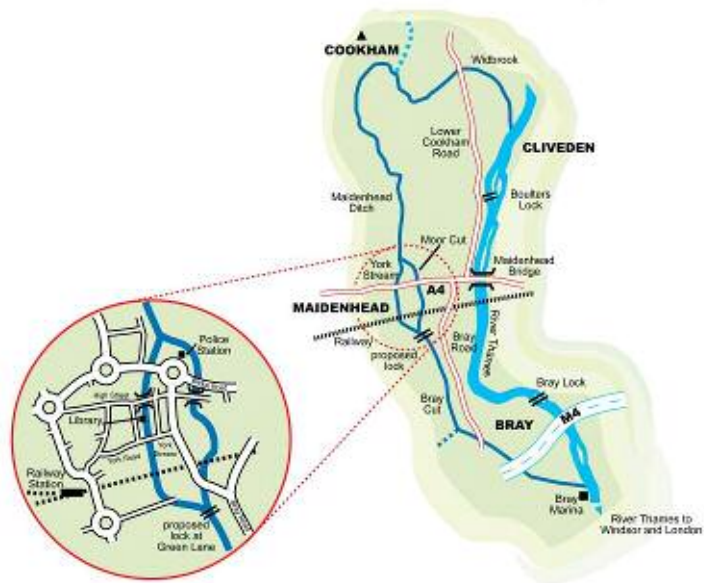
- Exercise caution over privatising the riverbank
- Maintain & enhance areas of natural woodland, and create new ones where possible
- The habitats of wildlife must be protected and enhanced
- Find an agreed solution to potentially dangerous and unwelcome traffic movements

Martin McNamee & Bob Dulson

MAIDENHEAD WATERWAYS PROJECT

The Maidenhead Waterways project is now at a crucial stage, as we head for Planning Permission of Phase 1. This article gives a brief summary of the proposals, the work done by Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group (MWRG) so far, and finally a not-too-serious look at the navigability of York Stream as it is today.

Phase 1, also known as the Baseline plan, aims to create a navigable ‘Ring’ and waterway around the town centre, centred on the cut out area of the map here. The Westerly half of the ‘Ring’ is York stream, a shallow, narrow stream that flows past some well-known Maidenhead landmarks such as the library and through Chapel Arches near the Bear Hotel. The Eastern half of the ring is the currently disused and mostly inaccessible Moor Cut, the old flood relief channel, which is currently ‘dry’.



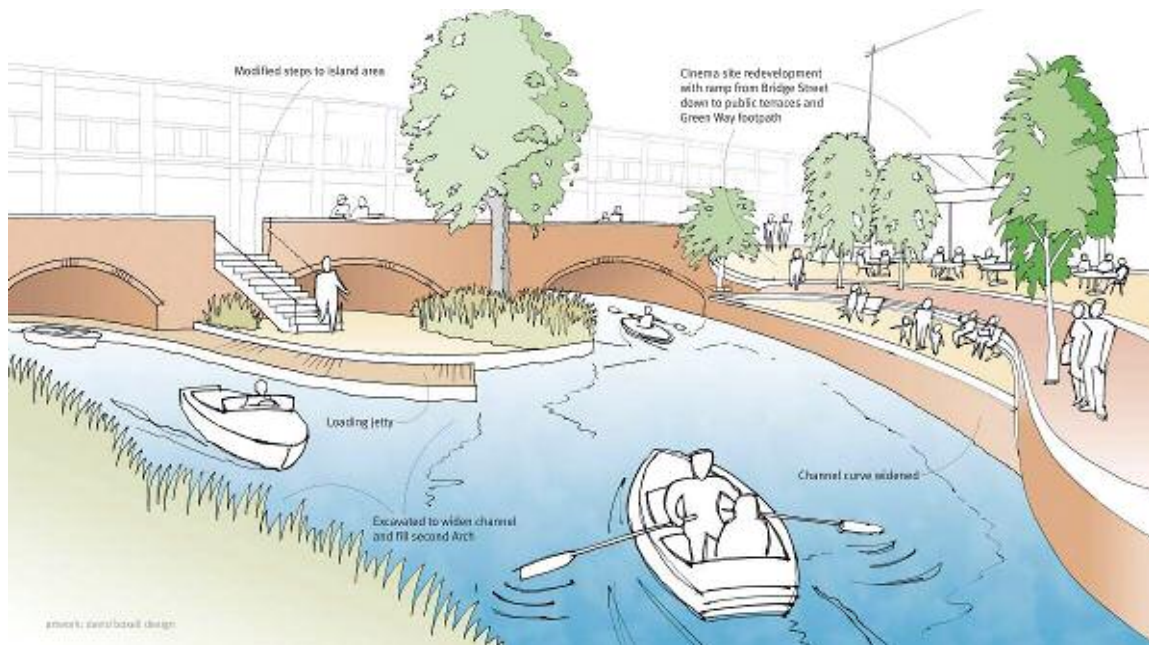
The Ring (Inset) and related local waterways

Probably the best known parts are the old Grace’s Yard (signage) next to the Police station and the balustraded Moorbridge Road bridge near Waitrose, part of the old A4 London to Bath Road coaching route.

York stream and Moor Cut are officially side-channels of the Thames, with an irrevocable right of public navigation – just hardly any water today..! They are fed from the main river just below Cookham and run in a southerly direction towards the town centre. There is a diffluence near Blackamoor lane on Town moor, where Moor Cut separates from the York Stream, and this is the most northerly point of the proposed ‘Ring’. To raise and hold water levels around the ‘Ring’, a lock and weir of about 1.3m drop will be built at Green Lane, next to the allotments and just downstream of the confluence where Moor Cut meets the York Stream again. The effect of this will be to create a ‘Ring’ of water at a fixed level around the town centre. At this point it is vital to state that the absolute priority has been ***not*** to increase the Flood risk, and extensive professional modelling work has been carried

out to ensure this is the case. All the engineering work has treated this as Rule Number 1, to which everything must conform. Having established the new water level, the channel bed will be lowered as required to achieve a consistent depth of 1.3m around the 'Ring', which due to the gradient of the site will require minimal excavation at the southern end, but progressively more going north. No changes to road bridges are included, so some shallower depths will remain at road bridges and through Brunel's tunnels under the railway embankment. The narrower parts of York Stream will be widened where feasible to establish a clear metres wide navigable channel, but the Phase 1 waterway will only be capable of use by small craft such as canoes, punts and open launches.

Running south from Green Lane the waterway becomes the Bray Cut, a beautiful and little-known waterway which is already navigable by small boats such as canoes. The waterway returns to the main river Thames next to Bray Marina. A later phase of work aims to deepen this channel, but the Phase 1(Baseline) plans seeking Planning Permission only impact the 'Ring' area, between Green lane and the difffluence at Town Moor. Likewise, Phase 1 does not require any work further north.



Impression of the proposed basin, looking north towards Chapel Arches

For Maidenhead town centre, one of the most promising opportunities is the area south of Chapel Arches, where the channel will be widened to create a small 'basin'. The drawing shows how it could look, with three of the large arches exposed and the outer two in water, the rightmost one being the navigable channel. There are rumoured to be two further small arches under the old cinema site, but they are outside the boundary of the current plans, and must remain a secret for the time being.

A full environmental impact assessment has been carried out by professional consultants Golder Associates which concludes that, taking into account agreed mitigations, the overall impact on the local landscape and its ecology will be

beneficial. This brief statement does not really do justice to the ca. 1,000-page document, which has been available in draft at the public consultations and is the result of a thorough investigation. Restoring and improving the old waterways into a major feature of the town centre is a key part of PRoM's Area Action Plan (AAP), itself recently endorsed as being 'sound' by a government inspector.

MWRG held three Public Consultation events where the plans have been on display: one at the Maidenhead Carnival, one evening session at St Mark's church hall, and an all-day Saturday event in Nicholson's centre. The public response has been overwhelmingly positive. Over 600 residents viewed the displays and talked to MWRG representatives and 303 left signed comments (almost universally supportive). A few expressed concerns about bigger boats (which Phase 1 does not support) and about funding, which can only start in earnest after planning permission is obtained. The funding challenge is true of all of the infrastructure improvements in the AAP, but needs to be seen in the context of inward investment expected in the town of some hundreds of millions of pounds over the coming years.

MWRG aims to submit the planning application imminently – the culmination of about four years of work. No doubt it will be duly reviewed by the Society's planning group and the MWRG awaits our verdict with great interest.

On a less serious note, to establish the navigability of York Stream as it is today, we launched a canoe containing myself, a willing friend, and my daughter at Ray Mill Road West – the aim being to see how far downstream we could get. The first part of the trip following the Green Way was easy, the only obstacles being floating wood and the inevitable shopping trolley. Easing our way through the rushes, we reached the first road bridges and the narrow channel by Hines' Meadow car park, remarkably clear and full of fish. Entering the culvert prior to Chapel Arches, we were relieved to see light at the other end, but went aground on something heavy. After some wading and heaving we were afloat again and appeared by the library, much to the surprise of onlookers.



Heading downstream under Saint Cloud Way

York Road bridge has an unexpected weir, which we went over rather inelegantly, onto the very pleasant stretch leading to the tunnels under the railway embankment. The tunnels currently only have enough depth to float an empty boat, but are passable on foot. From there we paddled through Stafferton Way bridge, but the last part down to Green Lane allotments could only honestly be described as dragging the boat. At Green lane we entered Bray Cut, with luxuriously deep water, and paddled

down to the Thames with only a brief interlude to saw through a fallen branch. Overall we were amazed at the variety of scenery and wildlife, and enjoyed seeing the town from a very different perspective, which we hope will be available to many others before long.

Ian Rose

Raising The Profile

The Society's stand at this year's Maidenhead Carnival attracted a healthy level of interest, more than last year. Fine weather and a better layout of the tented village of stalls were factors as dozens of people stopped by to ask about the work of the Society, many taking away membership forms.



This was only our second year with the Carnival in Kidwells Park and we still have to see how many will actually sign up as new members but, on this showing, it's unlikely to be our last.

With a display that reflected the Society's aims and achievements, our stand looked distinctive among the others. Thanks are due Shashi Dare, Ann, Ben and Brian Darracott, Angela Dulson, Mike Emmerson, Martin McNamee, Bronwen Renwick and Tina Sell for their help in setting up and manning it. Thanks too to those members who dropped by to give moral support.

Bob Dulson

Projects

MILLENNIUM WALK

The proposal to create a walk across country from Hurley to Maidenhead Riverside, that connects each end with the Thames Path, dates from 1997. As it's now 2011, we feel it's time for a leaflet describing the route as, although there are missing links, it can be walked for most of its length.

We have therefore applied for £2,000 from the Royal Borough's new Neighbourhood Budget to produce, with East Berks Ramblers, a leaflet containing a map and directions for this long-distance walk. If you have access to the internet, either at home or in the library we would be grateful if you would go online onto the RBWM website, click on Neighbourhood Budget on the home page and vote for our project. Voting closes on 30th July so I hope the Newsletter gets to you in time.

Missing Link – Prospect Hill to Temple Golf Club

As reported in the last newsletter there has been progress with this link. Berkshire College of Agriculture (BCA) have signed an agreement with East Berks Ramblers for a permitted path for a route from Prospect Hill to opposite the golf club.



Margaret Bowdery making notes for waymaking the permitted path across BCA land

To ensure safety the Ramblers have paid for fencing to close off access to the edge of the nearby chalk pit.



Putting in the fence at the edge of the chalk pit

In the meantime the Public Rights of Way department of the Royal Borough is organising the design of a crossing of the A4130 (see last Newsletter), which they hope will be implemented in late summer/early autumn. This Society will be contributing £750 towards the crossing.

If all goes to plan we would like to have an inaugural walk, from Pinkneys Green to Hurley, next spring, including a ceremonial opening of the crossing.

CAMPAIGN TO PRESERVE THE SETTING OF OCKWELLS MANOR

In the last newsletter we said that on 27th April the Lands Tribunal will find out whether the owners of the 22-acre field opposite Ockwells wish to proceed with their current attempt to have the covenants protecting the field lifted. What happened was that their lawyers came to the Tribunal and asked for time to file more papers. They were supposed to come back to the Tribunal in mid-June. It's now July. Presumably they can't delay it indefinitely.

Whatever happens, we will be campaigning to have the field re-designated as Green Belt when the local plan gets off the ground. However, we may not be able to comment on site allocations or the Core Strategy until 2012/13.

Taplow Visit

We have had a series of visits to places connected with Ockwells Manor to publicise the campaign. The most recent visit was to Taplow Court, at one time home of the Grenfell family and now owned by SGI-UK, where we were warmly welcomed and given a most interesting tour. The tour included a look inside the 19th century former Estate Office of William Henry Grenfell, Lord Desborough which used designs from the 15th century Ockwells Manor that Desborough owned until ca. 1893. We are very grateful to everyone at SGI-UK and especially the head gardener's wife who had just moved in to the Estate Office a few days before we arrived.



The group listening to our guide describing the history of Taplow Court

A Book Recommendation

Members who came on the March tour of *Almshouses of William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk* – the second visit to places associated with Ockwells Manor – might be interested in the book “*The English Friend*” by Susan Curran. This is a readable biography of William de la Pole, with many beautiful photos. It is described as “a story of friendship and treachery” and includes details of William de la Pole’s

connections with Ewelme (where we visited) and Wallingford. It is available now at the pre-publication price of £17.99. For further information and to order copies, visit www.theenglishfriend.com. It will be published by the Lasse Press in August, when the RRP will be £24.99. An e-book edition will be available at £3.99

St Laurence's Church, Upton

Members who visited this church last December, and those who missed the trip, have some other opportunities to see the remarkable church where many Bulstrodes (including Agnes Bulstrode, sister of John Norreys, Esquire, of Ockwells) and also the astronomer William Herschel are buried.

On Saturday 3rd September, from 10.30 to 4 pm they are holding their 28th Medieval Fayre: over 20 stalls set out as a medieval street market, with BBQ & refreshments, raffles and prizes, games and lots of preserves and cakes to buy! And then from September 9th to 11th St Laurence's are participating in the Heritage Open Days scheme. Check their website for times: www.saint-laurence.com.

Ann Darracott

LORD DESBOROUGH AND MAIDENHEAD UNITED

Readers might be interested in a connection between Lord Desborough and Maidenhead United Football Club, which this year is celebrating its 140th anniversary. The club ground, originally used for cricket, was much larger and was owned by William Henry Grenfell, as Lord Desborough was then. The Football Club acquired the freehold of the site in November 1920 for £1,450. The Club's Supporters' Association erected a "blue" plaque near the entrance to the ground a few years ago, and now the Club Historian, Mike Smith, has recently written a book setting out with illustrations the full history of the club. Copies cost £29.85 including postage and packing and can be obtained from Mike Smith at 5 Jacob Close, Windsor, Berkshire, SL4 5PT.



Events

FORTHCOMING TALKS

The talks take place in the Methodist Hall, King Street, Maidenhead, unless otherwise noted. They commence at 8:00pm, with a break for light refreshments. Guests are most welcome. There will be a small charge to members of £3.00, and non-members, £4.00, which includes refreshments. Please note that there will be no talk in October.

Lord Desborough of Taplow Court

Wednesday 21st September 2011

By Roger Bettridge, Buckinghamshire Count Archivist.

Roger works in the county archives and local studies library at the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Aylesbury. He also Hon. General Editor of the Buckinghamshire Record Society and was for 20 years Hon. Secretary of the Buckinghamshire Branch of the Historical Association.

The illustrated talk looks at the life and work of Lord Desborough, and draws in particular on Lord Desborough's archives that are held in the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, including his diaries.

Managing Norden Farm Arts Centre

Wednesday 16th November

By Jan Corry, Chief Executive and Artistic Director, Norden Farm

This will be from 8-8.45.00pm and the AGM will follow at 9.00pm. Further details in our next Newsletter. This talk is free to members but non-members will be charged the normal rate of £4.00.

OUTINGS, VISITS & SOCIALS

In June we had a private visit to Taplow Court (see report above) and then on July 10th we had a private tour of Eton College which benefited from the beautiful weather. Our guide was very well-versed in the history of the school and we were able to see many areas as the school had recently broken up for the summer. The Museum was particularly interesting as it traced the history over many decades.

As usual we will not be organising any visits over the winter period as most attractions are closed.

JAZZ BY THE RIVER

If you like fun and music, preferably in that order, then you'll enjoy our evening with the *Fabulous Shirtlifters* at Maidenhead Rowing Club.

This band of talented chaps from Cookham inject more than an element of humour into their performances. They offer an eclectic mix of music with the emphasis on

foot tapping trad jazz but when you know that they often call their concert gigs an Evening of Ineluctability, you'll realise there's a lot more going on!

There's no escaping the fact that this will be an entertaining event in a great location, overlooking the river by Maidenhead Bridge. Make the most of a jolly cabaret-style evening by bringing your own supper (but no drinks please, there is a full licensed bar). Chairs and tables will be provided.

Doors open at 7.30 and the evening begins at 7.45 with a final bow at 11.00 pm. The charge is just £12 per person. Any profits the band makes at the end of the year are shared among local charities, so it's a good cause to boot.

And if you're wondering how a jazz evening connects with the aims of the Society, well it's primarily social event, though there is a tenuous planning connection. Fronting the band, on clarinet and sax, is Cllr Richard Kellaway – the RBWM Cabinet member for Maidenhead. Other members who include a dentist, an accountant and a photographer are: pianist and 'titular head' Charles Benson, John Brooks, a vocalist extraordinaire, percussionist Geoff Palmer-Moore, Malcolm Wilkes on trombone, John Slater trumpet and banjo, Nick John guitar and Gerry Clark on bass.



A CONVERSATION WITH MICHAEL SHANLY AT THE ODNEY CLUB, COOKHAM

Our next Civic Society dining event looks set to be a memorable one. It's part of our regular series of Speakers Lunches but this one's got a twist – instead of a speech it's a conversation; and rather than lunch it's dinner.

The biggest surprise, however, is our guest, Michael Shanly. He's not been inclined to public appearances in the past. Indeed, a straw poll suggests that the last time he talked in public was a newspaper interview 20 years ago.

So this is the first opportunity, in this century at least, to hear first hand from the local businessman himself – in *A Conversation with Michael Shanly* on Friday 7th October. Such an event suggested a special setting and we're fortunate to be using the facilities at the Odney Club's recently-built, award-winning conference centre, giving guests a chance to glimpse the spectacular 120-acre grounds in this normally private corner of Cookham.

Talk about building or planning, particularly in Maidenhead, and it won't be long before the name Shanly crops up, often accompanied by a strong opinion. But what is Michael Shanly like really? Those who know him talk of a likeable, family man; modest, self-effacing and quite shy. How does this align with a man who, having built his first property in 1969, now owns the substantial and successful group of companies which make up the Shanly Group? In that time the group has completed more than 1,000 developments, many of them in Maidenhead.

Why does he feel such an affinity with Maidenhead and what would he like to see in a regenerated town centre? What makes him tick; what gets him going? What makes him happy, what sad? And how does he feel about criticism? These and other questions will be posed for us by Martin Trepte, editorial director of the Maidenhead Advertiser, in *A Conversation with Michael Shanly*.

Starting at 7.00 for 7.30 pm, the evening includes a three-course dinner with a carvery selection and a complimentary glass of wine. Full bar facilities will be available.

It's an opportunity that no-one with an interest in the future planning and development in Maidenhead can afford to miss. We expect a high level of interest, so book early to avoid disappointment using the enclosed form. There's a discount for Society members.

Announcements

A NEW TREASURER

Our Hon Treasurer Trevor Farnfield, who has been in the job since 1998 has now passed the books to his successor, Mike Emmerson. There will be a formal handover at the AGM in November, but in the meantime here's a short introduction to Mike. He's recently retired from business life, having spent all of his time in finance, starting in the profession and then moving into industry. He's lived with his family in Maidenhead for 27 years and has seen many changes to the town during this time. Mike and his wife have always been interested in the history of the area, and we welcome him aboard.



WAITROSE COMMUNITY GRANT

We are very grateful to Waitrose for giving us £150 from their Community Grant Scheme. This will contribute to the £750 we are giving the Royal Borough for the Millennium Walk A4130 crossing. Any many thanks, too, to all those who deposited their little green tokens into our slot!

NEWS FROM THE HERITAGE CENTRE

Grandma Flew Spitfires!, the Heritage Centre's permanent Air Transport Auxiliary exhibition and archive opened to the public in late July and is certainly worth a visit, especially for Civic Society members who enjoyed the visits to White Waltham Airfield. In a densely packed gallery, *Grandma Flew Spitfires* tells a true of courage, skill and sacrifice during World War II. As visitors will learn, the civilian men and women of ATA, from 25 different countries, kept the supply of aircraft flowing to front line airfields for Royal Air Force and Royal Navy pilots to fly into battle. Unarmed, without radios or navigation aids and at the mercy of the weather, they ferried 309,000 warplanes between factories and front line airfields – that is 140 aircraft for every day of the war.

On display: ATA uniforms, flying equipment, memorabilia and aircraft models. An interactive map will demonstrate the amazing of work in a typical ATA day and explain how amateur civilians managed to fly scores of different types, from bi-planes to bombers. Visitors will be able to discover how an aeroplane works; there are activities for children and as the *piece de résistance* adults will be able to step back 70 years and fly a Spitfire simulator, using the information available to those intrepid ATA pilots.

Volunteer gallery guides for *Grandma Flew Spitfires* are now being recruited; anybody interested is asked to phone 780555 for further information.

Grandma Flew Spitfires is open during normal Heritage Centre hours. There is an admission charge (concessions available) and there is a supplementary charge for flying the Spitfire simulator.

TALKS

Skindles Hotel: Thursday 11th August at 12.45

Talk by Kathryn Jackson

Morris in Maidenhead: Thursday September 8th at 12.45.

Lunchtime talk (see website for details)

River Thames Historical Cruise: Thursday 8th September

10am to 3.15pm. 5-hour cruise from Maidenhead to Marlow and return, with live commentary about the wildlife, buildings, navigation, people and gossip of this beautiful stretch of the Thames. To book please phone 01628-780555.

FREE EXHIBITIONS

The Romans in Maidenhead: Runs until Saturday August 27th

Morris dancing – Morris in the Maidenhead Area, A celebration of this colourful English Tradition: September 1st – September 17th

999 Emergency Services Then and Now: September 22nd – November 19th

Full details on the Heritage Centre website: www.maidenheadheritage.org.uk

Dates For Your Diary

Wednesday 21st September 2011
Talk by Roger Bettridge

“Lord Desborough of Taplow Court”
Methodist Church Hall, King Street, 8.00 pm

Friday 7th October 2011
Social Event

The Civic Society Dinner
“A Conversation with Michael Shanly”
The Odney Club, Cookham, 7.00 for 7.30pm

Saturday 22nd October 2011
Social Event

“Jazz by the Riverside” with the *Fabulous Shirtlifters*
Maidenhead Rowing Club, 7.30pm

Wednesday 16th November 2011
Talk by Jane Corry

“Managing Norden Farm Arts Centre”
Methodist Church Hall, King Street, 8.00 pm

CIVIC SOCIETY OFFICERS

President of the Trustees	John McIntosh, 26 Harvest Hill Road, SL6 2QQ	633259
Hon. Secretary	Vacancy	
Hon. Treasurer	Mike Emmerson, 15 Twynham Road, SL6 5AT	628006
Executive Chairman	Bob Dulson, Bryher, Islet Road, SL6 8HT	627130
Planning Group	Martin McNamee, 14 Lower Cookham Road, SL6 8JT	623203
Projects Group	Ann Darracott, 6 Medallion Place, SL6 1TF	620280
Communications Group	Brian Darracott, 6 Medallion Place, SL6 1TF	620280
Events Group	Tina Sell, Marlborough, River Road, Taplow, SL6 0BB	628675
Outings Sec.	Mike Copeland, 14 Laburnham Road, SL6 4DB	634181
Membership Sec.	Shashi Dare, Silvretta, Islet Road, SL6 8LD	629976
Newsletter Distribution	Sue Ross, Castle Hill Lodge, St Marks Road, SL6 6DG	626849

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2011

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

11th January, 8th February, 8th March, 11th May, 14th June, 12th July, 13th September, 8th November, 13th December

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETINGS FOR 2011

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

12th April, 11th October

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 16th November 2011 in the Wesley Hall at the Methodist Church at 8.00 pm.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 14th October 2011.**

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