



Maidenhead
Civic Society
Estd. 1960

NEWS

Issue 3/20

August 2020



A sign of the times

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Registered Charity No. 272102

The Chairman's Page

The proposed £400m redevelopment of the Nicholsons Centre by Areli Real Estate is potentially the most significant transformation Maidenhead has ever seen. Not since the demolition of the old town hall or the clearance of Nicholson Brewery has anything had as much impact on the look, feel and behaviour of the town centre.

Areli declare an ambition for re-establishing a 'heart' to the town. Their exciting plans aspire to revitalise the centre with a rich mix of uses – new boutique shops, eateries and spaces for events, a new multi-storey car park, offices and flats. The indoor shopping mall would be replaced by a sequence of open-air streets and yards, reminiscent of Brighton's famous "lanes", which in a deft PR touch are given nostalgic Maidenhead names, like Desborough Way and Sir Nicholas Winton Square.

However, not immediately obvious from the atmospheric artist's impressions delivered to everyone's home last month is the proposed height of the development, which exceeds anything currently planned for Maidenhead, with one building rising to 25 storeys – almost twice the height of our current tallest building, Berkshire House.

So, in this edition we examine the proposals and consider their impact. A formal planning application comprising more than 150 documents was submitted at the end of May. But it comes at a time when the Borough Local Plan is still in draft, leaving the council with no policy to speak of on tall buildings – a point noted recently by the examining Inspector in 24 pages of questions – and, among other things, a set of parking standards not updated since 2004.

As planning group member Judith Littlewood says in her article on page 10: "Maidenhead is thus in uncharted territory. This could lead to an exciting new era or to a future of serious problems."

So when does a landmark become a liability? Well, the evidence suggests it's when tall buildings, which Judith explores, and the current propensity for flats, which Martin McNamee examines on page 8, are combined exclusively. If Areli truly aims to restore a "heart" to the town with a 25-storey building, it might be more acceptable if it included a go-to "venue", providing functions and facilities appropriate to a town centre, rather than just a load of flats. Apart from anything else, I'm sure that Maidenhead residents – and others – would welcome a chance to enjoy the view from the 20th floor in a hotel – or even a Council Chamber!

Bob Dulson

Planning Matters

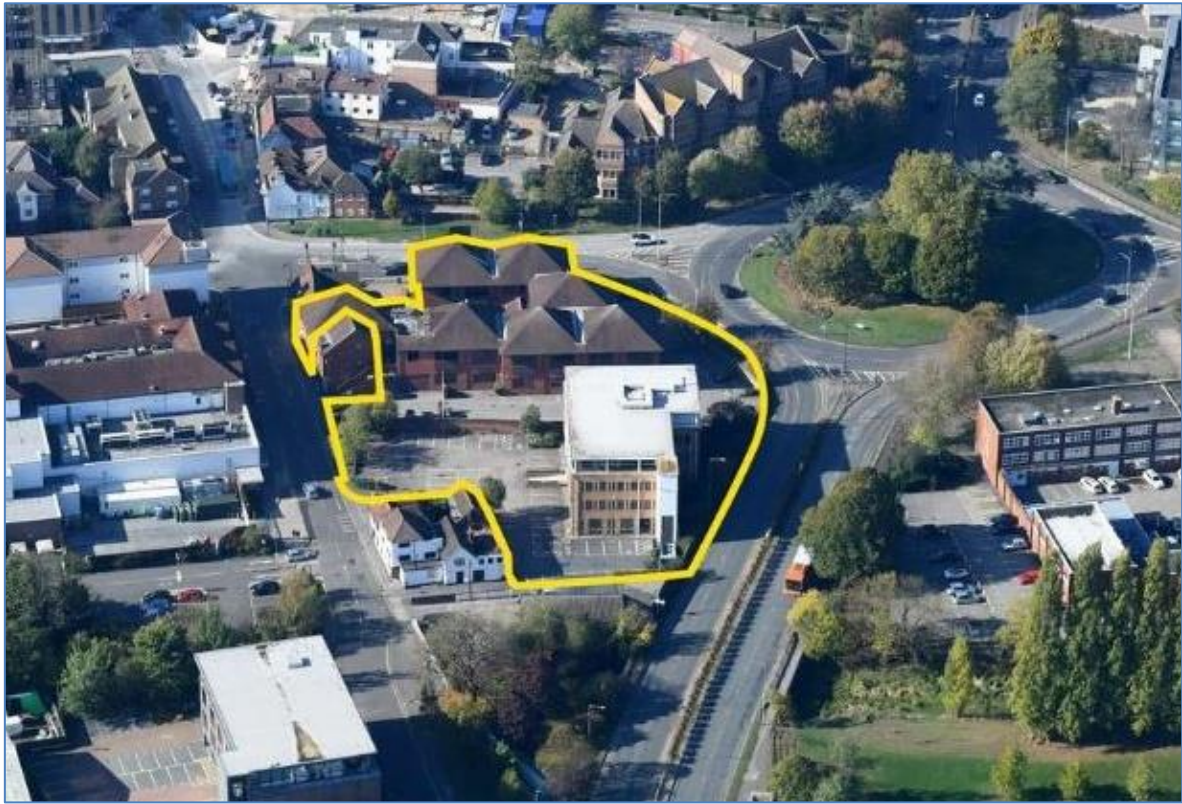
During the lockdown inflicted by the coronavirus the Planning Group has been unable to hold regular monthly meetings. Because of the volume and complexity of documentation associated with many planning applications it has not been possible to hold reviews online. Consequently, each week's list of planning applications has been reviewed on a rolling basis when published. Those applications warranting some review by the Planning Group are notified by email to the participants, and feedback requested within seven days.

The number of applications has been somewhat depressed by the pandemic, but nevertheless some major schemes have been put forward in recent weeks. Of course, the most significant has been the Areli proposals for the demolition of **Nicholsons Centre** and the redevelopment of that very important central area of Maidenhead. Concurrent with preparing this Newsletter the Civic Society's comments on the proposed scheme are being submitted to the town hall and are presented below. There is an assumption that doing away with a covered shopping centre is a good thing. The current difficulties surrounding the retail sector have been exacerbated by the impact of the coronavirus lockdown and indeed the high street will find life tough for a few years. Many major shopping centres and their owners are suffering from already vacant units, falling yields and more collapsing retail chains. Nevertheless, with the vagaries of the English weather shopping undercover will continue to have an appeal. Although, the future of Slough Observatory is under review, Bracknell has a relatively new shopping centre and Reading and High Wycombe have established covered malls. Windsor is struggling with a hybrid arrangement with adjacent schemes partly under cover. Maidenhead will be alone in forsaking any facility to shop sheltered from the elements. Please see below for our comments in full.

A modified application has been submitted for **St Cloud Gate** which would be a multi-storey office block on the north east quadrant of the Cookham Road roundabout. The number of floors has been reduced and the building height is 11 metres less than the application refused last year. More distance has been created between the new block and the listed buildings to the north of the site. However, the building will still be very dominant as it stands in isolation and will be significantly higher than the anticipated redevelopment of the Magnet Leisure centre site.

The other major application has been for the demolishing of **Moorbridge Court** and **Liberty House** which are the two office blocks on the north side of Moorbridge Road near Waitrose. These two buildings have current Permitted Development approval, which cannot be challenged, for change of use to form a total of 70 residential flats, many of which are below the recommended minimum size for residential dwellings. However, the developers have obviously decided that more money can be made by demolishing the two existing buildings and building anew. The footprint of the scheme has been increased by introducing five blocks ranging in height from three storeys (adjacent to the old Gardeners Arms) up to ten storeys. Parking provision is

significantly reduced – the original proposal for 70 flats had 90 spaces which is reduced to 66 spaces for the new proposal of a total of 130 flats. The introduction of a 10-storey block will be a dominant feature of the eastern gateway as the town is approached along the A4 Bridge Road. It represents the eastern movement of high buildings eastwards of Forlease Road.



The area covered by the proposed development (thanks to Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum for the diagram)



A view of the scheme looking southeast across the “police station” roundabout

This proposal adds 73 x 1-bed and 53 x 2-bed flats to the town centre building stock (see implications in the analysis of **RBWM Authority Monitoring Report** below). On a positive note, as new-build all the dwellings achieve the minimum space standards that the original proposal failed to deliver.

On the matter of Planning Appeals the lockdown has resulted in a slow down with the flat conversions of the **Riviera Hotel** appeal hearing postponed until the end of July. There has been no outcome on the written appeals against the refusal for flats at both **Zaman House** and **Land at 33A The Crescent**. There is now another major appeal hearing in the pipeline – **Claire's Court Schools'** proposal for a combined campus and other development at Ridgeway off Cannon Lane. The site lies within Cox Green Parish and is therefore technically beyond our geographical area, so we have not been drawn to comment. However, it causes great concern for residents of west Maidenhead and Cox Green who are primarily concerned about increased traffic levels and loss of Green Belt. On the other hand we can see the benefit of consolidating three school sites into one, which will reduce a great deal of across town traffic. The College Avenue and Ray Mill Road East sites will become available for residential development.

In consultation terms we have submitted feedback on the **Vision and Charter** for Maidenhead. We've been disappointed by what's emerged so far which was a nice-to-have wish-list of items. However, expecting all interested parties to sign up to a charter we feel is unrealistic when in reality only the Borough and respective developers have any influence. Questions on the **Borough Local Plan** have been raised by the Inspector and we have registered our desire to be represented at the resumed hearings, as and when. As anticipated in our last edition **Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum** has successfully held an online AGM and work continues to make progress in attempting to achieve designation by RBWM so that a Neighbourhood Plan can be delivered. It has been noted that of the 32 members of MNF who took part in the business of the AGM, no less than 14 are also members of Maidenhead Civic Society.

COMMENTS ON APPLICATION 20/01251 - site known as Nicholsons Quarter

This proposal is to demolish, reconfigure and replace the "heart" of Maidenhead. It is accepted that the retail sector is in some turmoil both nationally and locally, but it is critical that the right decisions are made for the town centre of Maidenhead to be revitalised. There may be a prevailing sentiment that covered shopping centres have had their day, but a windswept, wet and sunless streetscape is hardly the retail nirvana to satisfy the shopping needs of future Maidenhead.

The focus of the proposed regeneration is the residential development of 364 flats in blocks ranging from 10 storeys, through 15 to a so-called landmark tower of 25 storeys. On the positive side there is a reasonable mix of different sized dwellings – all of which achieve the Nationally Described Minimum Space Standard. Most have balconies as amenity space. On the negative side, as the final piece of the town centre planning jigsaw this development adds to the stockpile of 1- and 2-bed flats

that are already in the planning and completion pipeline. RBWM planning statistics show that in 2018/19 84% of completed new dwellings were 1- and 2-bed flats. In addition, 1,558 dwelling units were in the pipeline – permitted but not commenced. The proportion of flats can only be surmised. These figures are set against a Strategic Housing Market Analysis of a requirement for 35% 1- and 2-bed flats. This requirement is partially driven by the need for “affordable” housing – an element that is omitted from this proposal.

Instead, an interesting new concept has been introduced – “extra care” accommodation – of which there are 311 units proposed. These dwellings are assumed to be 1- and 2-bed dwellings, although this is not clear from the application, being outline only. The form of tenure, how they will be managed and by whom is therefore not included in the documentation, but with an aging population there could certainly be a potential demand. However, we believe the scale of 311 units is way beyond that which is customary for operators in this sector.



*A tall building too far? How the proposed Nicholsons scheme
(the darker blocks) may look*

The drive to deliver the volumes in the residential element of the scheme is obviously to fund the commercial, office, retail, restaurant, civic community and open space. Although the adjacent Landing site is approved to be at least 16 storeys high we are not convinced about the need for a landmark building of 25 storeys. Whatever the Tall Buildings Study may propose, the cumulative density and mass of high rise development in Maidenhead is out of character with a town of its size. High rise living is known to create social and psychological issues, especially for families. Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service may well be equipped to handle an incident at the

prevailing height in the town centre, but is such a towering edifice really necessary, however much it may be driven by architectural aspirations?

We welcome the network of shopping streets and the historical relevance of their proposed street names. The north-south and east-west permeability had been greatly improved and the offset facade along Broadway has improved the juxtaposition with the northern elevations of the Landing and will encourage pedestrian access from the south.

The introduction of a central open space in Nicholas Winton Square is also welcomed, although the area is too small. The eclectic proposed mix of retail offers, cafes and restaurants, bars and leisure at street level will introduce a vibrancy to the town. However, we feel there is still an opportunity for a “venue” to be met, a community or cultural space as a social focal point to give real heart to the town. There will be little sunlight with the prevailing height of the residential and office blocks above. There has to be a risk that there will be a wind canyon effect at ground level, and it difficult to see how this can be avoided. Some canopy or partial arcade cover would offer shelter on rainy days.

There appears to be the provision of only 0.4 parking spaces per dwelling for the 675 homes that form the residential element of the scheme. Although there is less detail around the intended office development, it appears that there will be under-provision of parking for employees. It is an established fact that office employee parking is an essential requirement for incoming businesses. The new multi-storey car park with 1,284 public spaces will have 75% more capacity than the current facility, and will be an enormous asset to the future prosperity of Maidenhead. However, it is important that its use is maintained for short-term visitor/consumer parking, and that it is not filled by long-term residential parking from the new flats or all day office parking. Provision of adequate Disabled Parking spaces will be essential with an aging population and the loss of such on-street parking elsewhere in the town.

With the adjacent development of The Landing and the demolishing and redevelopment of Nicholsons Centre there is going to be severe and unprecedented disruption to the centre of Maidenhead for the next four or five years. Permission should not be granted until a detailed schedule of implementation has been agreed with RBWM to mitigate the potential disruption to life in the town centre. If the town centre becomes a no go area for the next five years, there is risk that shopping and other behaviour will have changed irreversibly by the time this redevelopment is delivered.

In summary, we support some elements of the scheme but there are many reservations. We regret that the introduction of 675 high-density residential units is the price to pay to fund this rejuvenation of Maidenhead Centre.

As an interesting aside, Bob Dulson recalls: “Over the years I was lucky enough to work in a number of landmark buildings, among them Broadcasting House, Television Centre, Pebble Mill and the House of Commons.



The least impressive architecturally was this one (*left*), Henry Wood House, which stands on the site of the old Queen's Hall, the birthplace of The Proms, adjacent to All Soul's, Langham Place.

But could its mixed tenure be an example for the new Nicholson Quarter: ground floor retail; eight floors of offices; and six floors of hotel with panoramic views from the top floor dining room?"

PLANNING TRENDS AND OTHER ISSUES....

Every spring the Royal Borough publishes an **Annual Authority Monitoring Report** (available on the RBWM website). This summarises data on many issues and is especially interesting in highlighting planning statistics as a matter of fact not opinion. It also highlights issues where some trends might warrant some corrective planning focus. Our members are well aware that we continue to express concern at the ongoing oversupply of 1- and 2-bed flats, especially in the town centre. The Borough Local Plan includes a Strategic Housing Market Analysis (SHMA) for East Berks and South Bucks. This analysis suggests 15% of dwellings should be 1-bed flats, largely driven by the requirement for affordable homes. 2-bed flats should account for 30% of dwellings. So the figure to focus on for a balanced housing mix is 45% of properties to be 1- or 2-bed flats. For the last reported year to March 2019 the proportion of flats was84%!

Now there is a big focus on the flatted development of our town centre with Chapel Arches and three other Shanly Homes blocks on York Road; The Countryside/RBWM joint venture on St Ives Road and Park Street; The Landing on the Triangle site and the latest proposals for the redevelopment of Nicholsons by Areli. This is before attention switches to the West Street Opportunity Area and the St Cloud/Magnet site. All these schemes are encouraged by the absence of any Community Structure Levy – or rather a levy of nil. So there is no contribution to immediate or wider infrastructure requirements which will be generated by all the new flat dwellers. In spite of this financial incentive the provision of affordable dwellings remains well below target.

So how do the figures look? There is currently a housing target of 712 new dwellings per year across the Borough, although this increases to 850 in a few years' time. In the year to March 2019 we reached that target with a total of 705 new dwellings completed - of which 591 were flats - which is 84%. Only 114 houses were built – just 16% of the total. Five years previously 45% of dwellings were houses, although completions were averaging 500 units per year. In the area covered by Maidenhead Civic Society (the unparished wards) 368 dwellings were completed which is 52% of the total of 705. That is why our role (and that of Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum) is so important. The comparative new housing units within Parish Councils

are tiny by comparison – Bray: 4 new dwellings in 18/19; Cookham: 6 and Cox Green: 9 (all net).

Of course, there is a time lag in reporting these figures. There are an amazing 1,558 dwellings in the pipeline, where permissions have been granted but work is still in progress or is not yet underway. Again, the majority of these will be flats so the trend is continuing. These permitted applications represent more than 2 years of new housing at the target level of 712 per annum. We have requested from Borough that these pipeline permissions are broken down into housing type/mix in future years' reporting.

The trend towards the change of use from offices to residential flats continued with 216 dwelling units being completed – 30.6% of the total. These developments are usually under Permitted Development and are not subject to minimum living space standards and therefore offer substandard living conditions. With this continued oversupply of 1- and 2-bed flats it is anticipated that a time will come when market forces drive prices down and they become more affordable and less attractive to developers. In the meantime family homes will be in short supply and become more expensive. Young families may well have to move away from Maidenhead to find a family home with some outside garden amenity space. It will require a major change in emphasis to redress the imbalance in the type / mix of Maidenhead's housing stock.

With all these flats being delivered how are affordable dwellings doing? There are many definitions of affordable with different types of tenure but some kind of “subsidised” dwellings are necessary for key workers. A target of 30% is often quoted, but this applies to “qualifying” sites where more than 15 units are being delivered or the area is more than 0.5 of a hectare. In such locations a figure of 12.3% affordable housing was delivered in the year to March 2019. The best year for affordable homes was 2014/15 when the comparable figure was 26.1%. Of course, the percentage is much lower when you compare affordable homes against all new dwellings – only 7.2% in 18/19 compared with 23.3% in 13/14. Obviously developers are able to make the case that more affordable housing is not viable, even with the benefit of nil Infrastructure Levy.

The impact of the nil Infrastructure Levy in the town centre is evident in the report. At the peak in 2013/14 Section 106 contributions were £7.87 million. These have been partly phased out and in 2018/19 were down to £1.76 million. Community Infrastructure Levy has been introduced and generated £1.08 million in 2018/19. The combined contributions for the year were £2.84 million. 17 applications had been refused for development on the flood plain. Development on the Green Belt was down from 2017/18 when 140 dwellings were completed on the Green Belt (26.2% of the total); only 38 units (4.7%) in 2018/19 were on the Green Belt. Of course this will change if and when Maidenhead Golf Course is developed and it is to be hoped that this will give the opportunity to redress the balance and deliver much needed family homes.

Martin McNamee

TALL BUILDINGS



Until 2001 Judith Littlewood CBE was Chief Research Officer with what is now the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG). She is the joint author of *Families in Flats* (HMSO 1981) and was Chair of an OECD Working Group on *Integrating Distressed Urban Areas*, which reported in 1998. This is an edited version of an article she wrote for Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum (you can see the full version on their website) to whom these days she lends her considerable expertise, as well as being a member of our Planning Group.

Tall buildings - a personal perspective

England is a nation of house dwellers. In 2018 only a fifth of the population lived in flats of which only 1% was above the fifth floor and a further 1% was of 10 or more storeys. Most high rise is in London and the larger conurbations. Currently Maidenhead has only one residential block above six storeys, which is the MHCLG classification for 'high-rise'. This definition is accepted by RBWM in its *Tall Buildings Strategy*. Despite this, approval was given last year for four blocks of 14-16 storeys in The Landing scheme and now we're looking at the Nicholson's development with five blocks, one of 25 storeys.

Maidenhead is thus in uncharted territory. This could lead us to an exciting new era or to a future of serious problems. A main driver of the move to tall buildings in Maidenhead centre is the challenge of meeting national housing targets without encroaching on the Greenbelt. It is also suggested that intensified development will revitalise, regenerate and provide landmark buildings for the town centre. It is important that all the issues are weighed up carefully and objectively.

National planning targets cannot be met by building houses with gardens without using the Greenbelt. But high density can be achieved without building high rise. The *Tall Buildings Strategy* produced for RBWM by Urban Initiatives Studio (UIS) gives examples of how blocks of less than eight storeys can deliver higher residential densities than taller developments of up to 13 storeys.



Low-rise, High Density in Camden

The belief that tall buildings can play a role in regeneration by attracting investment through increasing the profile of the area and by raising densities to have more people living and working in the centre is also questionable.

There is also some evidence that social regeneration can be impeded by tall buildings. Studies have shown that occupants of higher rise development generally have less sense of connection in the community and within their own block.

Tall buildings as landmarks

Enhancing the skyline, marking gateways and waymarks are put forward as some of the potential benefits of building high. However, being easily recognised focal points or landmarks could become a two-edged sword if problems develop and they become stigmatised.

Whether the skyline is enhanced is very dependent on good design which is stressed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Historic England, in their advice, note that tall buildings should set “exemplary standards of design.” But who gets to make the decisions about what is good design and what teeth does the local authority have for rejecting what it considers to be detrimental design?

Design factors

The main challenges relate to residential amenity within the scheme and in the neighbourhood. The issues include overlooking and lack of privacy, reduced daylight, too little sunlight or too much. And since the Grenfell tower disaster, the spotlight will be on the stringency of the fire regulations and access for emergency services.

Tall buildings also have significant effect on the microclimate. UIS says that wind impact, overshadowing, light pollution and glare all need attention to determine whether the surrounding spaces are pleasant places to visit and linger.

Cost of building tall

Designing out these problems together with the inherent construction challenges, leads to tall buildings being more expensive to build than more conventional buildings.

- **Construction.** Tall offices can be 25-40% more expensive than low-rise buildings and residential buildings 30-40% more. These higher costs will be passed on to the end-user and/or the developer will seek to scale down the more high-standard features. The whole scheme must also be completed before the developers can cash in on their investment.

- **Maintenance.** In the past many of the problems with high-rise flats have been to do with poor maintenance of the dwellings, their fabric and outside areas; and these costs rise over time.

- **Environmental.** Tall buildings are more resource and carbon-intensive making them less sustainable to construct than medium-rise ones; and once built, they require more energy for lifts, servicing water, ventilation, cooling and lighting. A 2017 research project by University College London concluded that “much energy could be saved by discouraging tall buildings and encouraging low-rise in their place.”

Potential pitfalls



Professional couples beget young families

It is unlikely that the new high-rise flats in Maidenhead will be marketed at families with children. They will not be cheap or spacious and will incur service charges, so many of the well-documented problems associated with public sector housing should not arise, initially at least. However, young couples who start a family after moving in may find it difficult subsequently to sell the flat if there is an oversupply at a price which would enable them to buy a house with a garden. Another group of potential purchasers are buy-to-let landlords who may target housing benefit recipients; and hard pressed local authorities trying to meet their

statutory duties in neighbouring boroughs may welcome a new supply of housing. The result could be young children living in housing which is totally unsuitable for them. Where in the flats do you store prams and bikes and where will the children play where they can be overseen by their parents? ‘*Families in Flats*’ published by HMSO in 1981 showed that children who lived below the second floor play out more, have more friends, do better at school and are less likely to be killed falling from windows and balconies.

Conclusion

Maidenhead is at a crossroads. It must decide whether its future should be dictated by developers and architects or by the people who live and work here. Without doubt Maidenheadians seek a more attractive and vibrant town centre. There are ways of meeting our housing targets without irretrievably changing the character of the place or storing up future social and economic problems. And, mindful of its 2019 climate emergency declaration, is this the time for Maidenhead to be going ahead with resource intensive buildings which use more energy?

Judith Littlewood

Projects

Newly Discovered Ockwells Manor Archive

Many years ago I was told that Mr Peter William Cannon (now aged 85) had material from Ockwells that he kept in the loft. Mr Cannon had been Estate Manager for both Sidney Harold Barnett and Patrick Chung, who owned Ockwells in the 1950s (Barnett) and early 1960s (Chung). Barnett had bought the manor from Sir Edward Barry (d.1949), also purchasing most of Barry's armour & furniture collection. When Barnett left Ockwells he had given a box of material to Mr Cannon as he thought he might be interested in it.

Recently I phoned Mr Cannon again to find that he had cleared his loft and was happy for me to come and look at the material, which Brian and I did and photographed it. It is a mixture of photos, illustrations, newspaper articles and handwritten letters and articles. There is even a copy of the 1889 Sale Catalogue for Ockwells, a pair to one in the Berkshire Record Office though not in the same condition. Some of the photos and newspaper articles are a bit battered but all are of great interest. It even contained an empty file of Sir Edward Barry's from when he was fighting to stop the Maidenhead Bypass going too close to his manor house!

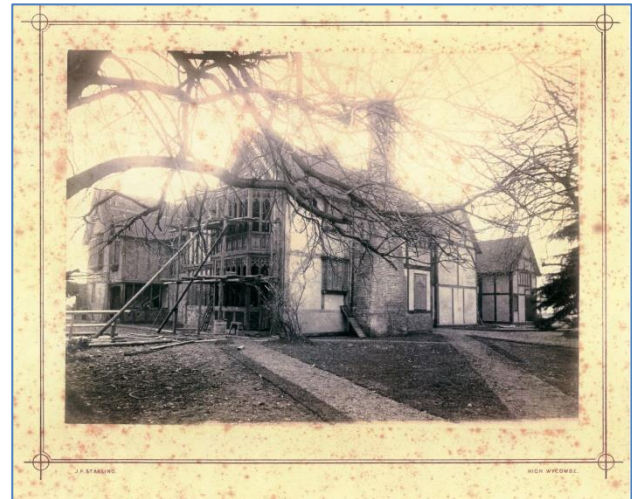
What seems to have happened is that Mr Barnett, when leaving Ockwells, had a really good clear out and in the box put material that must have been left in the house by previous owners and tenants.

To give you an example, when Stephen Leech (then a diplomat in Berlin) financed the restoration of the house at the end of the C19th, he evidently had photos of what he was paying for taken by J P Starling, a photographer from High Wycombe, active from 1877-1905. Leech must have given copies to Sir Edward Barry.

Two of Starlings photos I copied previously when I was able to access the archive of Sir Edward Barry's grandson, David Muspratt (an archive now lost). One of these photos, showing new windows being put into the famous east front, is on our website. Mr Cannon's archive had two further photos by Starling. One shows the Jacobean stair in the position to which Leech's architect moved it i.e. into the old kitchen after being removed from its original position in the courtyard. It was moved again by Barry to where it is today. The other shows the great hall with the armorial glass having been put back in. This had been stored for many years at Taplow Court and was returned to the restored house by William Henry Grenfell, Lord Desborough, who sold Barry a lot of the adjacent land. As far as I know neither Historic England nor the National Monuments Record have copies of these photos.

We discussed with Mr Cannon what would happen to the archive. I know from bitter experience that this sort of material often gets thrown away. He very kindly agreed to hand the material over to me for onward transmission, if they want it, to Berks Record Office (BRO) and the National Monuments Record. I have been in contact

with Mark Stevens of the BRO and have arranged to deliver material to him once the pandemic is over.



*Starling's photos taken ca. 1890-92 show new windows being put in;
the relocated stair; the great hall with armorial glass back in;
roof timbers exposed and new flooring*

In addition I have interviewed Mr Cannon twice and he has helped fill out information about Sidney Harold Barnett, a founder-director of a chain of ladies clothing shops, and Patrick Chung, a Jamaican millionaire who bought Ockwells sight unseen, also discovering some changes they made to the house.

Having once managed the land, Mr Cannon has some forthright views on the management of Thrift Wood Park, opened as an extension to Ockwells Park by the Royal Borough in 2017, but that's another story!

Maidenhead's Blue Waterway



A blue waterway: Chapel Arches Basin shortly after the dye was administered



Ian Caird of the Waterways group having fun tipping in the blue dye. (Photo courtesy of Richard Davenport)

You may have read in the *Advertiser* that the Waterways volunteers have begun weekly dosing of the waterway on a trial basis with a non-toxic blue food dye (Dyofix) said to inhibit blanket weed growth by restricting photosynthesis. I was asked to try to assess the impact on the aquatic fauna.

To explain: in May 2019 I was asked to help in identifying a mysterious weed that had begun colonising Chapel Arches Basin (water starwort) plus surveying what aquatic fauna was present. Two months later I was asked to repeat the survey, as by then the dreaded blanket weed (filamentous algae) had begun spreading over the surface of the waterway, much to the dismay of the nearby flat dwellers. The waterway was bright green at one point. Not only is too much blanket weed unsightly but at night could deoxygenate the water.

This means there is some data on what fauna were in the waterway when first created. There is also data on fauna in York Stream in the town centre (now the waterway) which was acquired because the former stream had a habit of drying out.

Last year volunteers manually removed large amounts of blanket weed and plan to do so again. The blue dye is an attempt to reduce the amount of weed prior to removal and five doses have been administered into York Stream at the Crown Lane steps, the last dose will be on 19th July. I will complete my survey a week later.

My main conclusions now, half way through the trial, are that there are a lot of fish of various sizes, mostly fairly small, in the waterway; that the water starwort seems to be unaffected and that the dye seems to be causing the blanket weed to degenerate. A brown mush of decayed weed is at present accumulating at the new weir at Green Lane. However small fish and mallards seem to like feeding on said mush.



12th July 2020 after four doses of dye: A brown mush of dead blanket weed (filamentous algae), topped with green lemna weed, accumulates at the boat lift

Currently the weed in the waterway seems to rise from the bottom in columns and there are some patches at the surface. We will have to wait and see what the final impact of the dye trial is.

Ann Darracott

Forthcoming Events

Sadly, due to the present situation regarding the coronavirus, it has been necessary to postpone most of the events organised for this year:

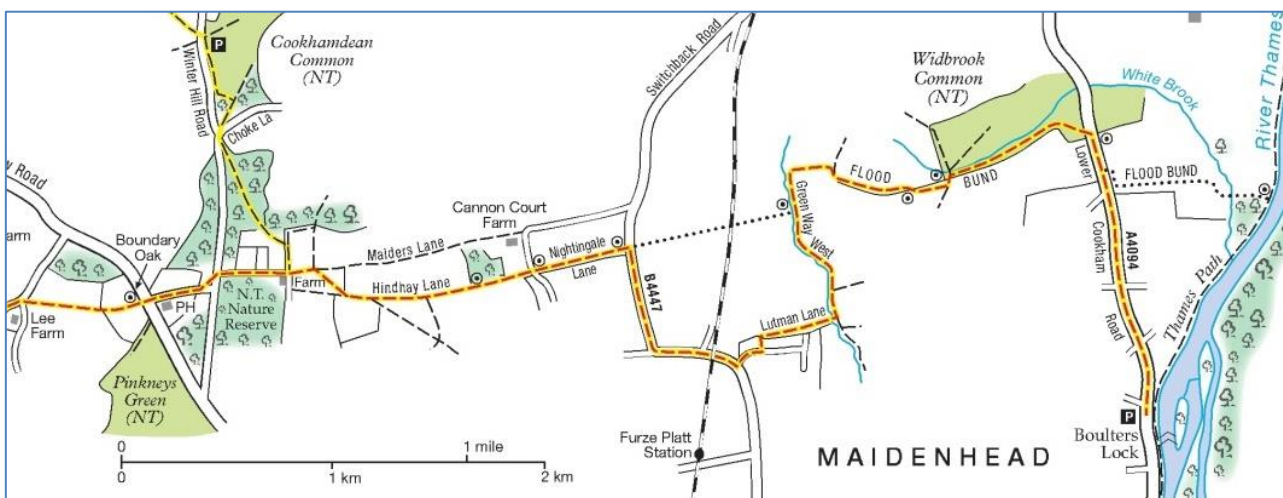
The proposed tour of Waltham Place garden, is now postponed until some time next year.

The Civic Society Dinner at Moor Hall, with guest speaker Ian Harvey of Civic Voice, has been postponed to **Friday 23rd October 2020**, though this date is still uncertain and will be confirmed once we know the situation nearer the time.

Millennium Walk – 20th Anniversary Walk - It's back on!

Sunday 20th September 2020; Start 2pm at the National Trust car park (opposite the Scout Hut) at Pinkneys Green

The Millennium Walk is a joint project of East Berks Ramblers and Maidenhead Civic Society. Postponed because of Covid, this walk, to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the inaugural walk in 2000, will cover half the route (from Pinkneys Green to the Thames Path at Maidenhead Riverside). The walk follows the 1934 Maidenhead boundary and includes crossing the causeway path on the East Field of the new Battlemead Common near the Thames with its spectacular views of Cliveden.



The walk will cover a distance of about 4 miles and will be organised and led by Ann Darracott (MCS) and Steve Gillions (EBR).

EBR and MCS have been strong advocates of the Causeway Route across Battlemead. We need as many people as possible to join in this walk to demonstrate that there is a great deal of support for it and that walkers will behave responsibly when crossing Battlemead and respect the wildlife.

We plan to register this walk for Heritage Open Days (HODS) as this year their topic is, unusually, *Hidden Nature* rather than heritage buildings. Their directory will go

live to the public at large on 11th August so please register as set out below as soon as you can to be sure of a place as numbers are limited to 50.

Where and when?

The start of the walk is at the junction of Marlow Road and Winter Hill Road in Pinkneys Green, grid reference SU 862 826, post code SL6 6NS. Parking will be available on the National Trust land, opposite the Scout Hut in Pinkneys Green. Walkers should assemble at **1.45pm for a 2.00pm** start from the National Trust land. En route we will point out the remaining missing link between Switchback Road and the Green Way and will update on the current position regarding the Causeway Path on Battlemead Common.

Practicalities

Covid 19

The Covid advice is ever-changing and we will of course work to the government advice as it stands at the time of the walk. Our current thoughts are as follows:

- Numbers on the walk will need to be limited to a maximum of 50. To book a place contact **Tina Sell** on tina.sell@talktalk.net or mobile 07989 332759.
- People should walk in 'bubbles' of up to five, maintaining appropriate social distancing within each group and between groups. We are intending to provide hand sanitiser at the start of the walk but you should take any other equipment such as masks with you.
- When booking a place give the names and contact details (phone number **and** email address) of all walkers. This allows us to monitor numbers and will facilitate contact tracing if this becomes necessary. The email address will allow us to let all walkers know if the event is cancelled at the last minute.
- If you or others in your group cannot take up the place please let Tina know so someone on the waiting list can join the walk.
- Marshals will guide walkers along the route.
- Dogs should not be brought as they are not allowed on the East Field.
- Any 'bubbles' wanting lunch before the start should either bring a picnic or book in at the nearby Golden Ball pub and restaurant (01628 670144).

Transport

- The walk is a point-to-point route, not a circular one. People should therefore consider car sharing. Within your bubble, two drivers (and any passengers) and their cars meet at Boulters Lock, parking one car and then driving to Pinkneys Green. At the end of the walk both drivers return to Pinkneys Green to retrieve the first car. Drivers and passengers should be in a bubble.
- Boulters Lock Car Park may be well-used on the day, especially if the weather is good. There is alternative parking at Riverside Gardens Car Park to the south and (limited) on road parking at the northern end of Sheephouse Road.

Interested? Here's what you need to do

- Organise a 'bubble' with two drivers.
- Contact **Tina** giving her names and phone numbers - see details above.
- And finally – put the date in your diary: **Sunday 20th September 1.45pm at Pinkneys Green for a 2pm start.**

Remember, 2020 is also the 60th Anniversary of the founding of our Society, so we hope to see you at this celebration event.

Wednesday 18th November 2020 – AGM with a speaker

We are still hoping that our AGM will be able to proceed normally. We'll have confirmation and more details in the next edition of the Newsletter which you should receive during the third week of October.

Maidenhead Archaeological & Historical Society (MAHS)

Due to the current uncertain situation, there are no meetings but two lectures are planned online for "Zoom":

Wednesday September 30th at 8pm: Graham Horn "Portsmouth and Southampton - a Maritime Contrast."

Wednesday October 28th at 8pm: Nicholas Henderson "Great Mysteries and Conspiracy Theories."

Non-members are welcome to enjoy both of these without any charge. Please email our Chairman, Paul Seddon, at paul@c21networks.co.uk for the link to join the Zoom lecture.

News from the Heritage Centre

Heritage Centre Reopens

Maidenhead Heritage Centre and its museum shop reopen after the long lockdown on Wednesday 29th July at 10am and our volunteers and staff can't wait to welcome you back. Opening hours will be times will be 10am to 4pm, Tuesday to Saturday.

The safety of all our volunteers, staff and visitors is a top priority. We want to reassure you that we will have a rigorous cleaning regime in place, and that social distancing screens will ensure adequate space between visitors. The Spitfire simulator will be open as usual, and what better way to spend an hour during the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. It is suitable for everybody aged between 9 and 90, so please call 01628 780555 to book a flight. We look forward to seeing you.

Unsurprisingly our exhibition programme has been disrupted. 'Summer on the River' is a colourful and topical subject for the first exhibition which will run into September – which is a lovely time to be on or stroll by the river. The following exhibition remains undecided for the moment, but will be announced on our website. During the lockdown we stepped up our online activity, with several online exhibitions, and started a series of online lectures, which is continuing. The lectures are attracting an audience from all over the world, but if you missed any of the following talks and would like to watch them, please email us on info@maidenheadheritage.org.uk and we will send you a link: 'The Dunkirk Little Ships', 'ATA in Europe', 'Three Men in a Boat', 'The Admiral, the Walrus and the Postergirl', 'Maidenhead and the Movies'. Further topics will be announced on our website: <https://maidenheadheritage.org.uk>.

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 20 th September 2020 20th Anniversary of Millennium Walk (MW)	A walk of half of the MW from Pinkneys Green to Maidenhead Riverside. Start 1.45 for 2pm at NT car park
Friday 23 rd October 2020 Annual Dinner (To be confirmed nearer the time)	Civic Society Annual Dinner, with talk by Ian Harvey 7.15 for 8.00pm at Moor Hall, Cookham
Wednesday 18 th November 2020 AGM	Civic Society AGM , preceded by a talk Venue to be advised. 7.45 for 8.00pm.

CIVIC SOCIETY – KEY CONTACTS

Executive Chairman	Bob Dulson, Bryher, Islet Road, SL6 8HT	627130
Hon. Secretary	Eileen Goford, 6 Laxton Green, SL6 3HW	638238
Hon. Treasurer	Peter Child, 34 College Road, SL6 6AT	632300
Planning Group	Martin McNamee, 14 Lower Cookham Road, SL6 8JT	623203
Projects	Ann Darracott, 6 Medallion Place, SL6 1TF	620280
Communications	Brian Darracott, 6 Medallion Place, SL6 1TF	620280
Events	Tina Sell, Marlborough, River Road, Taplow, SL6 0BB	628675
Outings Organiser	Mike Copeland, 14 Laburnham Road, SL6 4DB	634181
Membership Sec.	Joyce Delasalle, 7 Laxton Green, SL6 3HW	637342
Newsletter Distribution	Sue Ross, 3 The Chantry, 21 Boyn Hill Avenue, SL6 4EY	626849

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2020

At St Luke's Community Hall, Norfolk Road, Maidenhead

13th January, 11th February, 10th March, 14th April (cancelled), 12th May (cancelled), 9th June (cancelled), 14th July (by video), 11th August (by video), 8th September, 13th October, 10th November, 8th December

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 18th November 2019 at 8.00 pm, venue to be announced

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 9th October 2020**

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Printed by:	Denwal Press, Unit 1, Maidenhead Trade Park, Prior's Way, Maidenhead, SL6 2GQ www.denwalpress.co.uk