



# Maidenhead Civic Society NEWS



---

Issue 1/15

February 2015

---



***The bridge that never was!***

***Read more on page 13***

*Visit our website: [www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk](http://www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk)*

# The Chairman's Foreword

The submission of a planning application for 293 homes on the former park & ride site off Stafferton Way, which is highlighted in this month's Planning Matters, is particularly significant in terms of Maidenhead's regeneration programme. It means that there is activity now in all six of the Opportunity Areas in the Town Centre Area Action Plan for the first time since the AAP was adopted three years ago.

The evidence is plain to see at Chapel Arches where the first phase of the exciting waterside scheme of homes, offices, shops and cafes has begun. The plans rely on the completion of stage one of the York Stream restoration, which is also underway, and will incorporate an amphitheatre on the banks of the stream.

Over in West Street work has started on a new hotel and office block and discussions are taking place about an ambitious plan to create a link with Kidwells Park as part of a mixed development further along the street. In the centre of town two major sites are changing hands. Grenfell Island, home to David Lloyd gym and the Odeon cinema, has been bought for £90m by Legal & General Property while the Nicholsons Shopping Centre is being sold by its pension fund landlord to a real estate developer. Someone who will be keen to meet the new owner, if he hasn't already, is Burchetts Green businessman Bill Higgins who acquired ING's assets in the Broadway Triangle just a year ago. He is poised imminently to submit plans by award-winning architects Studio Egret West for his new scheme, The Landing. The outline design, seen at a public consultation in October and featured in our last Newsletter, is an innovative development of shops, offices and apartments arranged round a central public space with lanes linking to Queen Street, King Street, Nicholsons and the station.

At the station work continues in readiness for Crossrail in 2019 and there are also talks taking place with landowners and Network Rail about further improvements to the area, including a new multi-storey car park. Back in St Ives Road, opposite the town hall, the demolition men are at work, removing two office blocks vacated last year by the council. The site will be used temporarily as a car park, pending the preparation of a development brief for the York Road opportunity area. This is being drawn up by a team of design and landscape architects, selected in a competition in November.

Meanwhile, there are around 30-40 other "live" planning applications in the town centre. Crossrail's arrival has stimulated the market and there's a trend at the moment for creating apartments above shops in the high street. The AAP envisaged a total of some 800 new homes in the town centre over the next 15 years. Latest

estimates, however, suggest that figure will be in excess of 2,000, which might take pressure off the Green Belt, as the council hope. One downside of this strategy is that, as yet, there's been no matching change in the council's parking policy, which is more than a decade old. So developers are required to provide parking for only half a car per bedroom or, in cases where a development is near to public transport, no parking at all.

So there's a lot going on - and more to come. Strange then, and disappointing that the powers that be at the council have decided now is a good time to save money by making the head of planning redundant!

The decision to delete the post apparently follows a review of the management structure in the planning and regeneration teams. The two senior jobs - head of planning and director of regeneration and economic development - are being merged into one.

With so much going on over the next few years it is essential that our Planning Department is properly resourced if the optimum outcomes we all desire are to be delivered.

*Bob Dulson*

## **D-Day Veteran Ted Bond**

We were saddened to hear of the death just before Christmas of former Civic Society member Ted Bond, aged 97.

A sergeant in the Royal Berkshire Regiment, Ted was one of the first British soldiers to land on the Normandy beaches in June 1944 at the start of the allied invasion.

With his late wife Maysie, he was a regular volunteer at Maidenhead Heritage Centre, where he would often tell his D-Day stories to interested visitors.

Ted had recently moved away from Maidenhead to be nearer his daughter. His funeral was held in All Saints Church on January 16th. Donations in his memory will benefit the Heritage Centre Trust and may be sent to Cooperative Funeralcare, 439 Cricklade Rd, Swindon SN2 1AQ.

## **Communication is Key!**

We are updating our database of email addresses. If you have changed your e-mail address or have not received one of our KiT (Keeping in Touch) bulletins in the last 12 months can you please let me know at [joyce@delasalle.me.uk](mailto:joyce@delasalle.me.uk). Many thanks.

*Joyce Delasalle - Membership Secretary*

# Planning Matters

The Planning Group continued the schedule of monthly meetings, reviewing nearly forty applications and commenting on twelve.

We were concerned at the proposed change of use of the former **Java Coffee Shop site** on the High Street (next to Lloyds Bank). This is an absolutely premium location and there was an application for a betting shop (Betfred). Other high streets have been blighted by a proliferation of similar establishments and we believe that this could be a worrying development. We are pleased to report that the application has been refused - although an appeal is probable.



The refusal of the application from Berkeley Homes for the redevelopment of **Mill Lane** in Taplow is by far the most significant issue since the last newsletter. This is the oft-discussed Skindles and Paper Mill site. The main scheme was refused unanimously for failing to reflect the SPD (Design Brief) and for the number, style and height of the residential development - especially the excessive height of the blocks of apartments. There was no specific decision on the proposed closure of Mill Lane to through traffic, although this idea is believed to have been inherited from the original Barrett's proposals. However, on the eve of the application being heard South Bucks Highways recommended refusal of the scheme.

The National Grid have withdrawn from the application. They have recently established a new company to develop redundant brownfield sites nationally with Berkeley Homes. As a statutory body they are apparently unable to challenge planning decisions. It is to be hoped that they will come back on board because the site needs to be developed as a whole rather than leaving the future of the National Grid land unresolved. As previously reported we have been liaising with the Taplow and Hitcham Society, The River Thames Society and other stakeholders to establish a common approach to achieve the most desirable outcome for the site. We hope to make representations to Berkeley Homes when they regroup and prepare a new application. The refusal was unexpectedly resolute and it is literally back to the drawing board.

Separate applications for the footbridge to Ray Mill Island (see front cover) and the redevelopment of Glen Island House were approved unanimously - but are irrelevant if there is no agreement on the grand scheme. Subsequently even the footbridge application was refused because of uncertainty about funding and dependency on the full scheme.

In the last Newsletter we referred to the continued efforts being made to resolve the missing link in the Thames Path. **Bridge View** is the location where walkers currently have to leave the river bank and cross Ray Mead Road for 50 yards before re-crossing to join the path.



*The four units at Bridge View with cars encroaching over what will be the new planned walkway*

A long-standing aspiration has been to continue the riverside path along the bank in front of the five properties which constitute Bridge View. Understandable residential opposition and escalating costs has resulted in alternative solutions being sought.

Nos 1, 2 and 3 Bridge View currently have two parking spaces each, while No. 4 has no parking and No. 5 already has an enclosed parking area. These spaces at 1 to 3 have become established by custom and practice, since they straddle a footpath which can no longer be used because of the parked cars. The latest proposal creates an inadequate 1.5 metre wide footpath along the eastern side of Ray Mead Road following the demolition of the garden wall of No 4. There is a resultant reduction in parking length available to Nos. 1 to 3. The proposal includes a dropped kerb to facilitate access to those parking spaces. However the available length of the remaining parking graduates from 2.3m to 3.6m. In reality only “Smart Cars” or similar can be accommodated. Any other vehicle will overhang and obstruct the new footpath - and cause pedestrians to venture onto the road. It is not a satisfactory outcome - but certainly the decision to save Bridge Gardens from car parking is to be applauded. However this is very much an unsatisfactory compromise - a footpath that could be dangerous to use with parking spaces that will be impractical to use. It is a real concern that the planning application from RBWM regards the vehicle parking issue as not applicable.

**Stafferton Park** is the redevelopment of the defunct Park & Ride site behind Land Rover and Lidl off Stafferton Way. We commented on these proposals after the pre-application consultation at the end of September. This location is identified in the Local Plan as previously developed Green Belt land earmarked for development. It is close to the railway station and Town Centre but also close to the Civic Amenity Site (Dump).



*Aerial view of the architects' model of the scheme*

The application is for mixed housing totalling 293 dwellings - which is a density of 75 dwellings per hectare. To achieve this there is one 6 to 7 storey high block, three 4 to 5 and two 3 to 4 high. The height of build decreases eastwards and there are a total of 39 houses offering 2, 3 or 4 bedrooms. About 30% of the total is “affordable” housing which we applaud - including a proportion of the smaller houses. Affordable housing is spread throughout the site, which is also a positive.



*Artist's impression of the 6 to 7 storey high block*

Improvements have been made since consultation to the provision of parking and amenity space. However, we believe that the density is too high, and there is inadequate parking and open amenity space. The improved amenity space, landscaping and so called focal points are all around the outer boundary of the site. The open spaces between residential blocks is dominated by hard parking, so much so that pergolas have been introduced to break up the vista of parked cars.

The number of dwellings should be reduced and the amount of parking increased. This could be achieved by creating undercroft parking on the ground floor of the higher blocks (five storeys plus) to replace planned apartments. This would also free up open space currently proposed for parking, to create a central landscaped amenity focal point. The blocks within Boulton's Meadow not only have underground car parking - but overlook a substantial open area of grass and landscaping.

Whilst we agree that this previously developed Green Belt is a candidate for residential development, it is important that the correct balance is achieved between

maximising the number of dwellings and creating a residential character that overcomes the marginal location adjacent to the Civic Amenity Site. It is to be hoped that the calculations relating to the so called “odour line” are correct - especially when the wind is from the south!

**111 to 129 Bridge Road** is the address of the “Parade” of shops alongside Barclays Bank on the A4 from Maidenhead Bridge into town. Behind the bank is a range of lock-up garages which is accessed by the sub-standard rear alley road from Ray Street behind the shops (see two lower photos, below).



*The Parade. The application is for two bungalows at the end of the access drive*

There is already a bungalow just to the north of the site and now there is a proposal to demolish the garages and construct a further pair of bungalows. Although classified as infilling, there will be a major problem with poor access for such residential development.

Finally, an update on a pending appeal. Back in the summer the Borough refused permission for the demolition and redevelopment of the First Church of Christ the Scientist at 2 to 4 Marlow Road. A substantial office block is proposed on the site - overshadowing the existing adjacent offices which sit on the northwest quadrant of Castle Hill roundabout. The decision has gone to appeal, which was eventually heard on 6th January. The outcome is anticipated towards the end of February.

*Martin McNamee*

# Projects

## Fishery Estate Boundary Marker, Chantry Road

As mentioned in the Newsletter of August 2013, a potential casualty of the construction of the Southern Relief Road is the boundary marker near to the junction of Chantry Road and Oldfield Road. This is, as far as we know, the only remaining boundary marker of the former Fishery Estate of Mrs Annie Smith and dates to 1890. Hence the initials 'A' and 'S' and the date in Roman numerals - MDCCCXC.



*The boundary marker at the corner of Chantry Road and Oldfield Road*

Local resident Mrs Gill Summons contacted us in September 2014 as she had been unable to get a clear idea from the Royal Borough concerning the fate of the marker and was afraid it would be swept away during road construction

We contacted both the planning and highways departments and also, for good measure, the senior conservation officer, as the marker constitutes a non-designated heritage asset of local importance. It's worth pointing out that the Royal Borough's consultants had not mentioned the marker, which makes you wonder how reliable such reports are.

The Highways department have sent us a plan showing a proposal to re-site the marker not too far from its current position. Apparently, we may be appointed the Overseeing Organisation!! We have offered to contribute to a plaque that explains what it is, and we hope that a stud will be placed in the marker's original location.



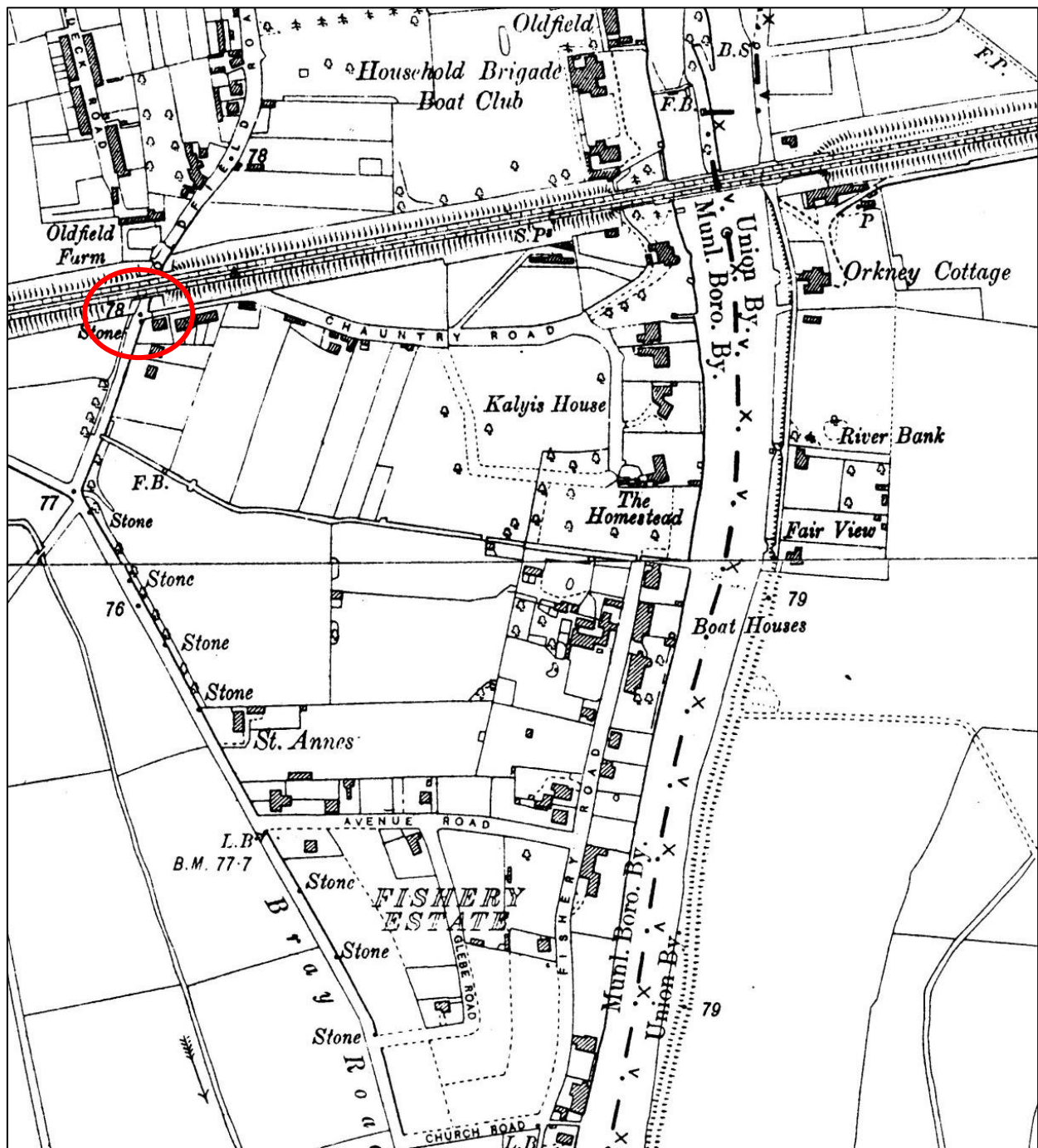
*The Society's Ann Darracott and Gill Summons at the current location*

Work by Balfour Beattie is supposed to start around the end of February/beginning of March and I plan to go along and take a photo of the marker being, very carefully, extracted. It will then be stored in a safe place until it can be repositioned.

The story of the Fishery Estate is itself rather interesting and amusing, and readers may be interested in this little bit of history taken from extracts from the late Tom Middleton's book about old Maidenhead - *Yesterday's Town*, published in 1980 by Barracuda Books; and from *The Royal Hundred of Bray*, by Luke Over and Chris Tyrrell, 1993, Cliveden Press:

The land between the railway and Bray Church is that now occupied by the Fisheries Estate which was built in 1890. Prior to the Enclosures of 1817 this land was known as *Oldfield* and was one of the common pastures of Bray Manor. In 1340 an inquest was held by the king to ascertain who had common rights throughout the year and was attended by Thomas de Foxle, John de Shobenhangre and Robert de Shyplake – all local names. In the days of Queen Elizabeth I archery meetings were held in the meadow and local men practiced there.

The plan below is reproduced from the 1913 edition of the 6-inch to 1 mile OS map for the area and shows the Fishery Estate boundary markers as they were then, at intervals along the eastern side of Bray Road; “our” marker stone is the little dot with in the red circle.



In 1887 the Rev Charles Raymond sold Old Field, recorded as 34 acres, to Mrs Annie Smith for £5,000.

A rich widow, Annie Smith, who was to become an integral part of the legal history of the town, had been living at her residence called *The Fishery* on Bray Reach, near the Sounding Arch, since 1870. It was her involvement with certain men of property which brought about the building of the Fishery Estate.

Annie Smith, good natured and vivacious except perhaps over fishing rights, became a riverside personality. She gave annual feasts, prepared by a Mr Spindler, for the poor. A Christmas party for 300 children was held under a banner bearing the earnest wish of all present and their parents “God Bless Annie Smith”. Not everyone was on the good-time band-wagon. Poverty stalked the back streets of Victorian Maidenhead.

When Mrs Smith moved in, *The Fishery* was the only building on Bray Reach, apart from a boathouse on the mud osier island. To the north of her property, between the house and the Sounding Arch – Brunel’s famous bridge – was a large aviary, which included a pond stocked with water fowl, among them Black Persian swans. She was looked upon as a bit of a Bohemian and was not averse to calling her gardener, her boat-engineer Alf Fitzgerald, her agent, her architect, or others to her bedroom to discuss the day’s arrangements.

Annie moved from the district after she had lost a rather expensive High Court action over the fishing rights in the Thames. Before leaving, though, in 1888 she sold the land for development (puzzling as the markers bear the 1890 date and her initials).

Building began on the estate in the 1890s opposite Orkney Cottage. Dorothy’s Bungalow, Dick Russells’ Nest, and Lady Scott’s cottage were among the first buildings. They were not regarded as architectural masterpieces. Two redeeming

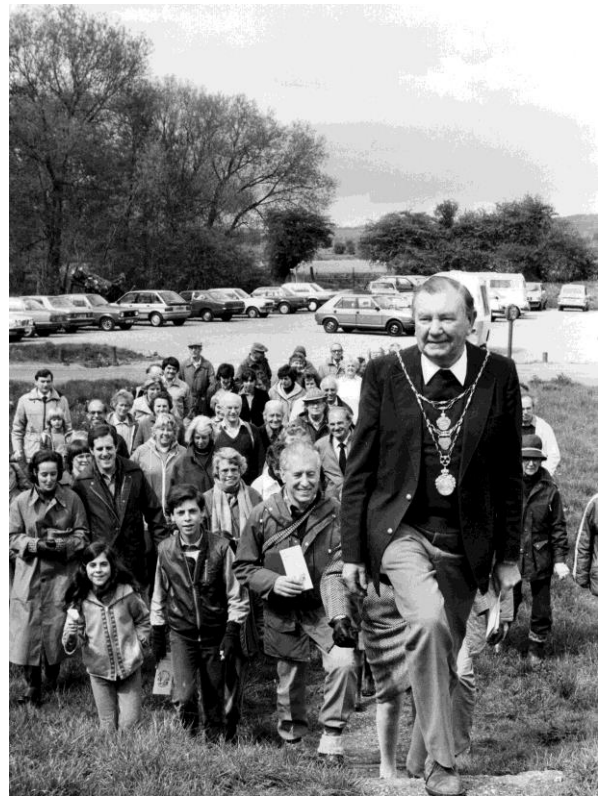


features of the new estate were West Court, built for the architect West Neve and no doubt designed by him, and Bray Lawn, which was built for the popular actress Mrs Russell Potter. West Neve went on to design Bray Village Hall. At the time the Fisheries Estate was developed a heron with a fish in its beak was used as a fisheries symbol. Polygonal pillars with terracotta herons, manufactured by local builder John Kinghorn Cooper, were to be seen at all entrances to the estate. At the extreme northern end of the current Fishery Road you can see four such pillars, two at each end of a small bridge. Two still have an intact heron on top. As far as we can tell, these are originals but whether they are still in their original position is not clear.

## The Green Way

2015 sees the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Green Way, a streamside route from Cookham through Maidenhead to Bray. This was a joint project of the Society and East Berks Ramblers. The inaugural walk began in Cookham in May 1985 and the first Green Way leaflet was published by the Society in the same year. It's now in its 4th edition.

*The Mayor, Frank Robinson, leads off the inaugural walk of the Green Way. The late Peter Nevell, then East Berks Ramblers chairman, is behind the mayor, as are several Civic Society stalwarts.*



There have been challenges over the years. The Green Way Working Group was established in 1989 because the stream had dried out in the town centre. It still meets twice a year, and yes, the stream has continued to dry out (in 2002 and in 2014).

By the end of this year we hope to learn what the impact of the Waterways and Chapel Arches schemes will be on this footpath. An early plan for the Waterways envisaged diverting the Green Way on Town Moor across to Blackamoor Lane. There is also the question of what method will be used to keep water off the Green Way where it runs under the A4 given that the water depth is supposed to rise.

In 1993 I compiled a history of the creation of the Green Way. Towards the end of the year I will update this history when hopefully we will have some answers.

*Ann Darracott*

# Events

There are no Society events planned for the coming quarter but Society members may be interested in the following talks organised by local history and archaeology groups:

## **Maidenhead Archaeological & Historical Society (MAHS)**

(Talks held the York Centre, 42 York Road, Maidenhead SL6 1SH; 7.30 for 8pm; visitors £2; contact 01628 630924)

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> February: *The Vikings* by Barbara Askew

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March: *Giants of Modern Architecture - Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and Frank Lloyd Wright* by Richard Poad. (This should be of particular interest to Civic Society members).

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April: AGM followed by a short talk by the Chairman on the historical aspect of a current topic.

## **Marlow Archaeology (MA)**

(Talks held at the Liston Hall, Marlow, SL7 1DD; £4 non-members; contact 01628 523896)

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February, 8pm (jointly with AiM): *New research on Roman rural settlements in southern Britain*, by Dr Alex Smith

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> March, 8pm: *Excavations at Heathrow's Terminal 5*; by Ken Walsh

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April, 8pm: (jointly with AiM): *Roman Jewellery*, by Justine Bayley

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May, 8pm: *The Middle Thames Valley in the late Iron Age*, by Peter Carver

## **Archaeology in Marlow (AiM)**

(Talks held at the Liston Hall, Marlow, SL7 1DD; £4 non-members; contact 01628 485961)

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February, 8pm: *Research on Rural Roman Settlement in Southern Britain*, by Dr Alex Smith

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March, 8pm: *Discovering Dorchester on Thames: the history and archaeology of a Thames-side Romano-British town*, by Edward Peveler

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April, 8pm: *Roman Brooches*, by Justine Bayley

# News from the Heritage Centre

## Great War Exhibition Continues

The “**Maidenhead in the Great War**” exhibition continues until 28 March. The exhibition described the impact that war had on life for ordinary people, as the golden summer season of 1914 was interrupted by the arrival of hundreds of troops, nurses, refugees, and even prisoners of war in Maidenhead. Last term 15 local schools visited the centre, most of them to visit the Great War exhibition, and more groups have made bookings for this term. Our Education Officer has also worked with two senior schools in Slough, while a number of pupils from Desborough College are helping to digitise the large amount of World War I material in the Heritage Centre collection.

A special Great War event will take place at the end of May (precise date to be announced). “**An evening with the War Poets**” will mark the centenary of the death in 1915 of Julian Grenfell, eldest son of Lord Desborough and Maidenhead's very own war poet. Watch the Heritage Centre website for more details.

## Down By the Riverside

Starting in early April, our summer exhibition will be “**Maidenhead's Thames - Cliveden to Bray**”. This will be a very colourful exhibition, but whether we can fit any boats into our gallery is not decided yet. We really do need a much bigger building!

In September there will be two **River Thames Historical Cruises**, on September 3rd and 8th. This 5-hour trip on the river is always popular and early booking is recommended. For details visit the Heritage Centre in Park Street or <http://www.maidenheadheritage.org.uk>.

## The Royal Yacht Britannia

**An illustrated talk** – Thurs 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015, 8pm at the Desborough Suite, Maidenhead Town Hall.

A fascinating insight into life on the Royal Yacht Britannia by Commodore Gerry Thwaites, who served as the yacht's senior engineer officer. His very amusing illustrated talk covers the yacht herself (she sailed a million miles as the Queen's floating palace), his job (how do you cope with a total generator failure 20 minutes before the Queen is due to come aboard?) and of course members of the royal family themselves (lunch with the Queen Mother is a wonderful story).

This is a fundraising event for Maidenhead Heritage Centre and tickets cost £8 and can be purchased via the Heritage Centre – pop in, call us on 01628 780 555 or visit <http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/royal-yacht-britannia-lecture-tickets-15273210584?aff=es2&rank=1>.

# Dates for your Diary

## CIVIC SOCIETY OFFICERS

President of the Trustees	John McIntosh, 26 Harvest Hill Road, SL6 2QQ	633259
Hon. Secretary	Eileen Goford, 6 Laxton Green, SL6 3HW	638238
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	Ann Darracott, 6 Medallion Place, SL6 1TF	620280
Communications	Brian Darracott, 6 Medallion Place, SL6 1TF	620280
Outings Organiser	Mike Copeland, 14 Laburnham Road, SL6 4DB	634181
Membership Sec.	Joyce Delasalle, 7 Laxton Green, SL6 3HW	637342
Newsletter Distribution	Sue Ross, Castle Hill Lodge, St Marks Road, SL6 6DG	626849

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2015

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

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

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETINGS FOR 2015

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

14<sup>th</sup> April, 13<sup>th</sup> October

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2015 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 17<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

---

**News Editor**     **Brian Darracott**  
**6 Medallion Place, Maidenhead, SL6 1TF (01628 620280)**  
**editor@maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk**

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