



Maidenhead Civic Society

Estd. 1960

NEWS

Issue 1/24

February 2024



The latest impression of the proposed development for the Maidenhead Golf Club site. See more details on page 3.

Visit our website: www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

Editorial

Membership Secretary

After nearly twelve years in the role, Joyce Delasalle has decided it is time to stand down and so the Society is looking for a new Membership Secretary.

The postholder plays a key part in managing annual subscriptions and maintaining the membership database. **Without this, the Society would have difficulty functioning properly.**

It's an important job at the heart of the Society and would suit someone who obviously has an interest in what we do and is comfortable using a computer.

Joyce will be on hand to share her knowledge and expertise in handling tasks like membership applications, payment reminders, as well as the maintenance of Gift Aid records and preparation of lists for the distribution of the quarterly Civic Society Newsletter.

Anyone interested and prepared to support the Society in this way should contact the Newsletter Editor – Brian Darracott – at info@maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk or on 07796 834542 in the first instance.

Planning Matters

As we go to print the biggest planning hot potato is the outline application for **Maidenhead Golf Course**. In principle, it is accepted that this area which is designated for residential development in the Borough Local Plan will be lost as green open space. However, it is has never been public green space as a Golf Club, although it is intersected by a number of footpaths. Opinion is obviously divided on the issue, but challenging housing targets will not be achieved without a significant scheme such as that proposed for the Elizabeth Quarter.

The positive news is that the total number of dwellings has been reduced from 2,000 to 1,500, there is a significant element of affordable housing, two new schools and a GP practice are proposed and a significant area of green space has been retained. On the negative side, there are too many flats within the scheme, the density is very high especially in the northern section and there are insufficient family houses. The main concern is the impact of traffic generated by around 4,000 residents plus the pupils and staff of the two schools, which is seriously underestimated in the supporting documentation. The development is divided into two, with no through traffic (other than buses) between the north and south sections. The northern entry/exit point will be at the existing golf club entrance. It will provide a pedestrian route to the station and town centre and a vehicular route for the residents of the northern flatted section. The mass of vehicular traffic from the south of the site (including the schools) will be via a newly constructed roundabout towards the eastern end of Harvest Hill Road. There will be a secondary entrance further west on Harvest Hill Road. The increase in traffic movement on Harvest Hill Road will be dramatic and there does not appear to be any proposal for a significant upgrade – although reference is made to pedestrian and cyclist segregation. How this will be achieved without footpaths is not clear. It should also be remembered that there are hundreds of further additional homes within the substantial housing developments on new build sites to the south of Harvest Hill Road.

There is a so called “green spine” which runs north/south though the site, although it is unclear how this name was derived. It is also noted that there is a commitment to “net zero” during construction and subsequent occupation. Is this realistic and how will it be achieved? A visual aerial impression of the site is included in the application (and reproduced here). To the west of this “spine” lies what appears to be another spine of blocks of flats – rising from three storeys in the south to six storeys in the north. It is only in the south and east of the site that family houses appear. The two schools take up a significant area of the total site. It is to be hoped that the decision to provide these educational facilities is robust. Many more houses could be provided and the overall density reduced if the designated education land was freed up for residential use. Other facilities will include a local centre in addition to the GP surgery.

As this is an outline application the focus is on the overall layout of the scheme and the potential traffic and access issues relating to the proposed development. Total numbers are given by dwelling size and tenure together with an indication of building height, but the real analysis of the housing stock provided will not be possible until the detailed planning application is submitted. However, it is a fact that because of the desire to retain open space and to accommodate the two schools the density of the built environment is higher than desirable – with too many flats and not enough family houses. At this stage the key issue is the volume of traffic generated by the scheme and the inadequacy of the surrounding road infrastructure.

There have been two applications of interest relating to the ongoing development of The Landing – now known as **One Maidenhead**. The landmark office block on the apex of Queen Street and King Street is to be six storeys in height and constructed in timber and glass. The impression *below* shows how it might look from the station forecourt. The innovative Scandinavian construction will be a first for a building of this size in the UK.



The ground floor spaces will be dining/retail, with offices above accessed from a central service core. At roof level there will be an open terrace to be accessed by office staff. There have also been details submitted for the provision of parking to serve the residential and office/retail elements of One Maidenhead. A total of 185 spaces will be provided: 91 on the Ground Floor and 94 on the Mezzanine. Ground Floor spaces are to serve office and retail, while Mezzanine spaces are for residents

(450 flats!) About 10% of spaces will have EV charging points, although this figure has not been increased since the original plans were submitted around 4 years ago. 11% of spaces will be for Blue Badge holders. It is interesting to note that the original parking proposal at the time of the planning application included an “off-site” requirement for between 51 and 60 spaces in the Nicholson’s MSCP – currently under demolition. Unless these spaces are made available in any subsequent MSCP then there is a shortfall in the planned parking provision for the scheme.

There has been a follow up application for the construction of two blocks of “affordable” housing at **Highway House** on Norreys Drive. The proposal referred to in the last Newsletter for a six-storey care home with 68 rooms is still awaiting a decision. The new application is for 2 x 7-storey blocks comprising 76 x 1- and 2-bed apartments. It is proposed that 30% of the dwellings will be affordable/social housing, which is a positive despite the flats being located away from the town centre. The application states that the 70% balance of the dwellings will be built to an “affordable model”, but it is unclear what this implies. In view of the disappointing under-delivery of affordable housing to date, such a scheme should be welcomed in principle. All flats meet Minimum Space Standards and have balconies – although ground level amenity space is limited. There are 67 parking spaces in total including some with EV charging. However, we understand this application has now been delayed because a Fire Statement has not been submitted and is now required for buildings of 7 storeys or more.

Two other applications from the last Newsletter have been refused. A site to the south of **Stafferton Way** was put forward for a residential block of 43 flats over 6 storeys. Reasons for refusal were numerous: height; bulk and mass; lack of parking and amenity space; overlarge for the plot; encroachment on the waterway; damage to ecology; and more. It is to be hoped that the robustness of the refusal deters any subsequent appeal. A smaller scheme at **51 St Marks Road** has also been refused. The eight dwellings were too tight for the awkward shaped site with inadequate parking and amenity space. A resubmission has reconfigured the accommodation and improved the parking provision but persists with eight dwellings with poor provision of amenity space.

There has been an ongoing trend in recent years for the permitted change of use from office space to residential use. Many blocks have been converted and there is concern about the potential loss of employment opportunity in the town. Mark Harris has prepared a note for this Newsletter which looks at some of the current highlights in the commercial market in Maidenhead. Interestingly, the site of Highways House, previously referred to above, was originally planned and permitted as an office block which has never been constructed. Even smaller office buildings are seeking change of use. **Persimmon House** is a two-storey block on Vanwall Estate with proposals to create eight flats. At least it can be reported that the living areas of all the dwellings meet the Minimum Space Standard.

Look out for the upcoming date for your diary which is the Public Inquiry relating the **Spencers Farm** appeal against the refusal by the RBWM councillors of the Planning Panel of the application for 330 homes and a primary school. The date has not yet been determined, but it will be a landmark case which will determine the voracity of such development sites earmarked in the Borough Local Plan.

MAIDENHEAD COMMERCIAL PROPERTY UPDATE

The health of the town's commercial property sector has a direct impact on other developments. This can be through influencing and/or constraining other developments and also through providing local jobs to generate the wealth to sustain the town's prosperity. Although the Society takes a keen interest in such developments at the initial planning stages, it should also be of interest as to how these schemes fare subsequently. Here, Mark Harris gives an update on the progress of some of the major schemes. Mark is the Maidenhead Chamber of Commerce's representative on our Executive Committee and we benefit from his "inside knowledge".

Retail & Leisure

- **Waterside Quarter** – Only one unit remains available with all other units let or under offer. The developer is Sorbon Estates – part of the Shanly group.

- **One Maidenhead** – Six new units are under construction with completion due in Spring 2024. There is strong interest from national occupiers. The developer is GetLiving.

Sustainability is Key

There is now a positive momentum with regard to energy efficiency & sustainability across all properties. Energy Performance Certificates set targets and benchmarks on how energy efficient new and existing buildings need to be. All property owners need to update themselves if they want sell or let their assets in the future. Furthermore, banks are also focussing on this as well – possibly only lending money on appropriately energy efficient properties. Commercial property occupiers should also have regard to what their clients sustainability aspirations are when negotiating contracts. If you don't tick the box, they might not be able to give you the business.

Office Property

"Back to the office" is starting to happen. About 150,000 sq ft in six offices properties are currently under offer around the town's Elizabeth Line station; fingers crossed! That's potentially 1,500 office workers coming to the town centre, and is great for retailers. That does not include Stanley Black & Decker who have recently signed at **Tempo** for approximately 30,000 sq ft. Tempo is the large re-development of the offices near the railway station forecourt at the junction of Queen Street that formerly were occupied by telecoms firm "3". The covers are gradually coming

down and it will be interesting to see how closely the final building resembles the rather impressive architect's impressions, *below*.



Industrial Sites

Maidenhead has approximately ten local clusters of industrial properties but is not known for any industrial critical mass compared to High Wycombe and Slough, for example; there is high demand but limited supply.

CONVERTING OFFICES TO FLATS

The August 2023 edition of our Newsletter carried an editorial expressing our concern at the loss of office buildings and some industrial stock due to conversion to residential developments, and what is needed to be done. We also highlighted the

now almost infamous case of Mattel House in Vanwall Business Park (*below*) where the developer has the green light to turn former office building into 91 flats. Much damage has already been done with the conversion of offices to residential.



However, the Royal Borough has recently announced a consultation exercise on proposed measures to prevent business premises being converted into housing on key employment sites without full planning permission. The announcement reads:

“Currently developers have national permitted development rights for change from commercial, business or service use – including offices – into residential use via a fast-track check-list procedure known as the prior approval process. This limits councils’ abilities to resist inappropriate conversions – even on sites protected under local planning policy.

The proposed measures, known as an Article 4 Direction, would better protect 31 locations considered most important for supporting jobs and the local economy. It would remove the national rights at those sites, but not prevent conversions where appropriate. This would mean that developers will have to apply for planning permission for change of use, so plans can be fully considered in line with planning policy.

RBWM are taking a proportionate site-specific approach, rather than a blanket borough-wide approach, so the usual rights would still apply elsewhere in the borough, including our town centres which are growth areas, covering a large area, where we want to encourage a diverse range of uses.

Why is this being proposed?

We need new housing, but we also need to keep enough space for jobs in the right locations, especially at our most important industrial and business parks. In recent years, the borough has lost a significant amount of much-needed business premises, particularly offices, through national permitted development.

The Borough Local Plan states that uncontrolled losses of highly accessible office sites cannot be sustained long term and warns that further losses would likely result in allocation of new, greenfield sites to replace them when the BLP is next reviewed.

Share your views

Our consultation opens today and runs for six weeks until **11.59pm 12 March 2024**. We'd like to hear from anyone with views on the proposal – residents, parish councils, landlords, developers, commercial property agents and others.

To take part, please visit the council's Article 4 Direction web page at <https://bit.ly/49mNOK7>, where you can view the non-immediate Article 4 Direction document and supporting documents and complete the representation form which can be returned by email or post. Paper copies of consultation documents can be viewed at Maidenhead Library, with response forms available upon request. Completed forms can be emailed to planning.consultation@rbwm.gov.uk or posted to Planning Policy, The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1RF. Consultation responses will be considered by Cabinet, and if confirmed in spring 2024, the measures would take effect in January 2025."

The Society will be responding and we'll give more details in the next edition of the Newsletter.

WHAT NEXT FOR NICHOLSONS?

It is four years since councillors approved the complete redevelopment of Nicholsons shopping centre, including a 25-storey block of flats. Since then, uncertainty about its future has been ongoing.

In the interim, Broadway car park was condemned, Covid changed work patterns, building costs spiralled and property market trends were transformed. In addition, the Nicholsons developers, Areli, had to contend with a number of objections from occupiers to proposed Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs).

Those CPOs are now settled, clearing the way, in theory, for development to begin; and the CPO confirmations sent out recently by RBWM envisage a start date of 2025.

Areli are now in regular meetings at the town hall where, we understand, amendments to the approved scheme are being discussed. Prior to its approval, the Civic Society made a number of comments and suggestions about the scheme, in particular about the height (too tall) and mix of uses (too few) for such a significant development at the heart of our town centre.

It seems unlikely, but if the council and the developers can see eye to eye and are exceedingly expeditious, the hoped-for start date may be feasible – providing the funding is available. Otherwise, we're likely to see it back on the market.

BROADWAY CLOSURES TO ALLOW SAFE DEMOLITION OF CAR PARK

The Council has announced dates when Broadway will be closed to enable the safe demolition of the closed Broadway multi-storey car park.

Work began on Monday 29 January and is expected to take around 12 weeks – quicker than originally envisaged. Demolition is being carried out from east to west, with the spiral ramp and staircase tower being the last part to be removed. This will require, firstly, a partial closure of Broadway, and then a full closure to demolish these parts of the car park.

Between 11 and 28 March the spiral ramp will be demolished. A lane closure will be in place on Broadway to ensure a safe distance between the works and passing traffic and pedestrians. The right-hand lane along Broadway will remain open to enable traffic to continue to access the town centre. A full road closure on Broadway will then be required – on weekdays from 17 to 26 April, between 9am to 3pm – in order to enable the safe demolition of the staircase tower. A diversion will be in place via A4 Frascati Way, A4 Bad Godesberg Way, A4 St Clouds Way, Forlease Road, Bridge Road and High Street.

PROTECTING OUR ASSETS

As part of their work on a Neighbourhood Plan our colleagues in the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum (MNF) are drawing up a Local Heritage List and have been calling for nominations.

A Local List affords protection to treasured buildings, places and spaces by alerting planners and developers to their existence. It is a way for local communities to identify and celebrate assets which enrich and enliven their area.

Highlighting local assets on a Local List ensures that they are given due consideration in planning terms when change is being proposed. The Civic Society is supporting this initiative, and our past chairman Bob Dulson is a member of the selection panel, along with Clare Price, head of casework at Twentieth Century Society, retired architect Peter Knott, Paul Seddon from Maidenhead Archaeological and Historical Society, Emma Barnett from the Maidenhead History Facebook group, and a member of the Maidenhead Heritage Centre. You can find out more on MNF's website: <https://mnf.org.uk>.

Martin McNamee, Bob Dulson & Mark Harris

Projects

MILLENNIUM WALK

With the aid of a grant from the Louis Baylis Trust we are now able to proceed in waymarking the Marlow Link of the Millennium Walk. Long-standing members of the Society will remember participating in the inaugural walk of this route in 2005, nearly twenty years ago!!



From our July 2005 Newsletter



Our MP Theresa May (now our patron) cut the ribbon at the Bowdery Arch (one of the flood arches of the A404M) to formally open the new path which took one of the three public rights of way (PROW) off the A404M. You may remember that the Department of Transport used the Bisham Bypass (with its 3 PROWs) to join the M4 with the new M40 without dealing with the footpaths. Margaret Bowdery of East Berks Ramblers (facing Theresa), did much to make the link a reality – as did three questions in Parliament from our MP and a public enquiry.

This spring, our “waymarking team” will commence putting up the specially designed signage (*above*), led by Committee member Tim Burt.

Do you remember the photo of the team putting up the first waymark in the last newsletter (November 2023), taken by our team member Bridget Morris? That same photo has since been published by the *Maidenhead Advertiser*, the *Open Spaces Society* and, thanks to Steve Gillions of East Berks Ramblers (EBRA), it was on the front cover of the *South East Walker*, published by the Ramblers Association. Apparently, this caused chagrin in a local walking group (not EBRA) that had been trying to get an article in it!!

SOUTH EAST No. 124 December 2023

walker

Signing the Maidenhead Millennium Walk

Since spring this year, East Berks Ramblers and the Maidenhead Civic Society have been hard at work waymarking the eight-mile Harley to Maidenhead Millennium Walk.

The route runs between Harley and Maidenhead Riverside, connecting at each end with the Thames Path National Trail. The route was devised by Margaret Bowdery, the East Berks Footpath Secretary, and Ann Darracott, Maidenhead Civic Society's Projects Coordinator, to celebrate the Millennium. It is a mostly unclassified public rights of way, together with some permissive paths crossing land owned by the Berkshire College of Agriculture, National Trust and Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.

The route does include some stretches of road walking and we Millennium Walk. A spur route from Pinkneys Green to the Thames Path at Marlow has also been added.

The route is very popular and we wanted to waymark it so that people could walk all or part of it without having to rely solely on the leaflet. The project was approved by the Windsor and Maidenhead Access Forum and Maidenhead Civic Society and East Berks Ramblers set up a small committee to plan and carry out the work. Each contributed £500 towards the costs and help was also forthcoming from the council's parish paths scheme and Rotary Bridge. The council's footpaths team were very helpful when it came to selecting suppliers.

We first surveyed the route to ensure it was in good order and to plan where waymarker discs and finger pointers were needed.

Left to right: Ann Darracott and Tim Burt of Maidenhead Civic Society, Steve Gibbons of East Berks Ramblers and Maureen Bell of Maidenhead Civic Society.

Photo: Roger Morris



ANOTHER MAIDENHEAD BOROUGH BOUNDARY STONE FOUND

In the February 2023 Newsletter Neil Savin, who has been doing a sterling job looking for lost boundary stones, wrote an article about some he had found. So, in this Newsletter, I can confirm that whilst Neil reported one built into a step, another boundary stone-seeker, Chris Bristow, has found one built into a patio!



The patio is in the grounds of Hasker House, in Cherry Tree Lane, home of the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), evidently put there before the Trust inherited the house.

The "Boundary Stone Seekers"

Chris Bristow, on the left, with Society members Neil Savin and Eddie Piekut near to where we hope the Boundary Stone can be re-sited.

Together with Eddie Piekut of Rotary Bridge, who is involved in organising the annual Boundary Walk, we have been in discussion with Andrew Inkley, Head of the

Commercial Estate for the Trust, who has kindly agreed to put our proposal to relocate the stone to the Trustees of Hasker House.



Hasker House, the offices of BBOWT, with the patio in the foreground.

In 1934 the Borough of Maidenhead ordered 48 stones and so far only 31 have been located. The reason for the effort to find lost stones, which is continuing, is that this year is the 90th anniversary of the 1934 Maidenhead Borough boundary stones being put in place, and the plan is to mark the anniversary in some way during the 2024 Boundary Walk in October.

MAKE SPACE FOR LIFE

North Town Moor is on the Green Way – a walking route the Civic Society helped establish in the mid-1980s. It also has a pond which was restored by the Society around the same time. We have regularly monitored the health of the water in the pond, and over the years have been involved in various degrees of maintenance and remedial work in collaboration with members of local conservation volunteer group *Make Space for Life (MSFL)*, and in return have been happy to support this group through assistance with purchase of tools and related work equipment.

Here, **Nina Morrow** describes what their work entails:

We at *MSFL* are a group of volunteers who meet on the first Saturday of every month to carry out conservation work at North Town Moor, which is an area of common land in Maidenhead running from Ray Mill Road West to the boundary with the Cricket Club. The site is owned by the National Trust and managed by RBWM, with the *MSFL* group providing, through their monthly conservation sessions, a wealth of experience gained over many years.



The volunteers take a mid-morning break during work on the Green Way, near North Town Pond. l to r: John Francis, Fiona Brown, Mark Osbourn, Catherine Blackburn, Michael Andrew (NT), Nina Morrow, Rob Fudge, Ann Darracott (MCS) and Keith Clifford.

The group has been running since 2010, and now has a loyal core band of volunteers, some of whom have been with the project since the beginning, and who've seen the many improvements made to the area, making it a much safer and more pleasant place to be in, from when we first took it on. Back then it was an overgrown and neglected space, completely covered with brambles and nettle.

Projects over the years have included aiming to restore the Pond to health with regular clear-ups and pruning back of overhanging vegetation, as well as uprooting some of the many reeds which have delightedly taken up residence. We also monitor the pond's health on a regular basis, as it is fed from local storm drains, and report these findings to RBWM. And each year we're always thrilled to see a new clutch of fluffy, baby moorhens investigating their new world under the watchful eyes of their parents!

We've also planted a Community Orchard (of mainly apple trees but also containing quince, mulberry, medlar and some crab apple trees), and a Wildlife Hedge, with the trees having been variously donated by Copella, The Woodland Trust, the National Trust and even by our own volunteers! Each year, we prune the orchard's fruit trees and eagerly await the resulting abundance of apples – we've not been disappointed so far!

In addition, over the years we've planted a Nuttery, lots of spring bulbs, some flowering cherry trees, rowan trees and an oak. With everything we plant, we aim to enhance the species diversity within the area, and to provide food and habitat for the resident wildlife. It's wonderful for us to know the work we do adds to the biodiversity of the area and helps those who depend upon its offerings. Indeed, in 2012, we were delighted to win the Dorothy Morley Conservation Award, which reflected the hard work and dedication of the volunteers, under the guidance of the National Trust, as well as recognising the area as a good example of how to bring a run-down and neglected space back to health and safety, with the many and varied benefits that offers not only to the wildlife, but also to us as volunteers.

And finally, our aims for the future are to continue to maintain and improve the Pond, Orchard, Wildlife Hedge and all areas in between with our regular clearing, pruning, litter picking and habitat creation sessions, which will all nurture the flora and fauna within its boundaries, and leave a much needed haven in our ever-increasing built-up environment.

No experience is necessary and tools and training are provided, so do come and join us for as little or as long as you wish. You'll always be welcomed with warmth, a smile and a chocolate mini-roll at breaktime! SL6 7JR, 10am to 1pm.

Maidenhead – by H G Wells

The famous author H G Wells was so charmed by his mistress, Margaret Sanger, that he based his novel *The Secret Places of the Heart* on his time with her. Originally published in 1922 by the Macmillan Company, New York, it is a thinly-veiled autobiography, depicting an English gentleman, Sir Richmond Hardy, who is attempting to sort out his marital problems while he travels the English countryside in the company of a psychiatrist. *The Secret Places of the Heart* was, in many ways, a love letter from Wells to Sanger.

Here's a sample, from Chapter 4, of what he had to say about **Maidenhead**; readers can decide if it's fair!

The day was full of sunshine and the river had a Maytime animation. Pink geraniums, vivid green lawns, gay awnings, bright glass, white paint and shining metal set the tone of Maidenhead life. After lunch and coffee he rowed the doctor up the river towards Cliveden.

“I know my Maidenhead fairly well,” said Sir Richmond. “Aquatic activities, such as rowing, punting, messing about with a boat-hook, tying up, buzzing about in motor launches, fouling other people's boats, are merely the stage business of the drama. The ruling interests of this place are love – largely illicit – and persistent drinking ... Don't you think the bridge charming from here?”

“I shouldn't have thought – drinking,” said Dr Martineau, after he had done justice to the bridge over his shoulder.

“Yes, the place has a floating population of quiet industrious soakers. The incurable river man and the river girl end at that.” This place has beauty and charm; these piled-up woods behind which my Lords Astor and Desborough keep their state, this shining mirror of the water, brown and green and sky blue, this fringe of reeds and scented rushes and forget-me-not and lilies, and these perpetually posing white swans: they make a picture. A little artificial it is true; one feels the presence of a Conservancy Board, planting the rushes and industriously nicking the swans; but none the less delightful. And this setting has appealed to a number of people as an invitation, as, in a way, a promise. They come here, responsive to that promise of beauty and happiness. They conceive of themselves here, rowing swiftly and gracefully, punting beautifully, brandishing boat-hooks with ease and charm. They look to meet, under pleasant or romantic circumstances, other possessors and worshippers of grace and beauty here. There will be glowing evenings, warm moonlight, distant voices singing....

“There is your desire, doctor, the desire you say is the driving force of life. But reality mocks it. Boats bump and lead to coarse ungracious quarrels; rowing can be curiously fatiguing; punting involves dreadful indignities. The romance here tarnishes very quickly. Romantic encounters fail to occur; in our impatience we resort to – accosting. Chilly mists arise from the water and the magic of distant singing is provided, even excessively, by boatloads of cads – with collecting dishes. When the weather keeps warm there presently arises an extraordinary multitude of gnats, and when it does not there is a need for stimulants. That is why the dreamers who come here first for a light delicious brush with love, come down at last to the Thames-side barmaid with her array of spirits and cordials as the quintessence of all desire.”

“The real force of life, the rage of life, isn’t here,” he said. “It’s down underneath, sulking and smouldering. Every now and then it strains and cracks the surface. This stretch of the Thames, this pleasure stretch, has in fact a curiously quarrelsome atmosphere. People scold and insult one another for the most trivial things, for passing too close, for taking the wrong side, for tying up or floating loose. Most of these notice boards on the bank show a thoroughly nasty spirit. People on the banks jeer at anyone in the boats. You hear people quarrelling in boats, in the hotels, as they walk along the towing path. There is remarkably little happy laughter here. The RAGE, you see, is hostile to this place, the Rage breaks through. . . .

The people who drift from one pub to another, drinking, the people who fuddle in the riverside hotels, are the last fugitives of pleasure, trying to forget the rage ...”



H G Wells in 1920

(by George Charles Beresford, public domain via Wikimedia Commons)

Events

Private Visit and Tour of Dorney Court

We have arranged a private tour with a guide of Dorney Court in Buckinghamshire for Wednesday 10th April 2024 at 2pm. The Estate has been the home of the Palmer family for nearly half a millennium. This is a Grade 1 listed building with architectural and historical interest. As the house is only open to the public in June this is an opportunity to see the house without the crowds and also with a private tour guide. The tour will be followed by a cream tea in the Crocus Garden Centre at 3.30pm.



The cost of the private tour followed by a cream tea is £20.00 for members and £22.00 for non members.

To book your place please telephone Joyce Delasalle on 07917 876145 or email to joyce.delasalle@btinternet.com by **25th March 2024**.

Payment can be made by cheque made payable to Maidenhead Civic Society and posted to Joyce Delasalle, Maidenhead Civic Society, 7 Laxton Green, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 3HW.

or by bank transfer to Maidenhead Civic Society, Sort Code: 30-95-36; A/c: 00277876, quoting ref "Dorney Court".

Dorney Court is in Court Ln, Dorney, Windsor SL4 6QP, and there is plenty of free parking on site.

News from the Heritage Centre

Stars of the Show

The historic 1737 Bray Fire Pump is a fascinating addition to our gallery, though getting it through the door was an interesting exercise! Made almost entirely of wood and painted fire engine red (though much faded), it could pump 170 gallons per minute in a continuous jet reaching over 40 yards. Do come admire what was a step forward in fire-fighting technology.



Our 1921 GWK car, hand-built on the Cordwallis estate, also grabs the attention of small boys as well as adults. The unique friction drive transmission system can be inspected – and explained if you are not a car enthusiast.

Exhibitions and Talks (provisional dates)

Tuesday March 5, via zoom: first of four weekly talks about Air Transport Auxiliary, whose HQ was at White Waltham during World War II. Full details and booking on our www.maidenheadheritage.org.uk

May 2 - 18: Cookham at Maidenhead Heritage Centre – to coincide with the Cookham Festival, a display of some of the many Cookham objects in our collection. Venue to be confirmed.

May 24 - June 19: Memories of D-Day, based on an existing exhibition for which 20 D-Day veterans from Maidenhead were interviewed.

June 4 via zoom: “Memories of D-Day” a special talk based on some of those memories.

July 5 - August 9: Maidenhead and the Olympics.

July 20 & 21: See the GWK car at Maidenhead Festival in Kidwells Park.

September 3: River Thames Cruise. Our ever-popular 5-hr cruise starts and ends in Maidenhead and covers the river between Bray and Bisham. Details on the website before Easter.

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 10th April 2024
Visit and Tea

Visit to Dorney Court
2 pm.

CIVIC SOCIETY – KEY CONTACTS

Interim Chairman	Derek Wilson	01628 621176
Hon. Secretary	Eileen Goford	01628 638238
Hon. Treasurer	Peter Child	01628 632300
Planning Group	Martin McNamee	01628 623203
Projects	Ann Darracott	01628 620280
Newsletter & Website	Brian Darracott	01628 620280
Events		
Membership Sec.	Joyce Delasalle	01628 637342
Newsletter Distribution	Sue Ross	01628 626849

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2024

All meetings are now at the Cox Green Community Centre, 6.30pm until further notice.

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

The 64th AGM will be held on Wednesday 20th November 2024 at 7.45 for 8.00 pm.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 19th April 2024**

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