



Maidenhead Civic Society NEWS

Issue 1/07

January 2007

Towards 2006: Society proposes town square as Council seeks views on Maidenhead centre

See page 7

**Maidenhead Town Centre:
Towards 2026**

Working in partnership to make a good town even better

Your opportunity to have your say on how Maidenhead town centre should change and develop in the future.

Maidenhead town centre has seen many changes over the last century, with the last 20 years bringing major developments and new health. Today it is a mixture of attractive offices and buildings and thriving businesses – but, as everyone knows, there are still some vacant, dated or under-used public spaces.

Everyone who lives and works in Maidenhead has an interest in making our good town even better and this is a further opportunity for you to have your say on how our town should be in 20 years' time.

The consultation booklet gives you a summary of a new (proposed) document that brings together not only the council's ideas for Maidenhead town centre but also those of local organisations, such as Maidenhead and District Chamber of Commerce and Maidenhead Civic Society. It also takes on board the views expressed through The Great Debate, run by the Maidenhead Advertiser last year.

At a time when the Council is preparing its new Local Development Framework, we have an opportunity to plan for positive action in the town centre itself as well as the Great West and Oak Street.

Now it's back to you. How do you think Maidenhead should develop – to benefit you, your family, your business or working life and how do you want to spend your leisure time?

The Royal Borough is anxious to be a partnering approach with our citizens, businesses, occupiers, special interest groups and the public, working together to plan the future of the town centre.

Please use the questionnaire in the booklet to give us your views.

Come to our public drop-in session on Saturday 27th January 2007 11-3pm at Maidenhead Town Hall



In this issue

Cllr. Vicky Howes on Maidenhead Town Centre;

Society proposals for a town square

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

Visit our website! : www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Christmas has come and gone and we are into a new year almost before we realise it. I hope that members had an enjoyable festive season. Inevitably January comes as a bit of an anticlimax and not helped by the almost unremittingly gloomy skies. However, that will pass and lets hope that all the rain has been sufficient to banish the hosepipe ban and all threats thereof.

The Society is still digesting the rash of activities it was engaged in last year: the Great Debate, the Crossrail petition and appearing before the Select Committee; the Herculean efforts to complete the definition of the Millennium Path; the Society's involvement in the Local Development Framework process culminating in the Council's issuing the Core Strategy Plan document. In addition to these highlights there have been all the ongoing tasks associated with Events, Projects and just getting out minutes and notes of meetings. The advent of e-mail has made these activities at once easier and more difficult. Easier because a whole raft of people can be accessed by creating a single message which can then be sent to an unlimited number of recipients in one action; more difficult because so many messages from so many points can arrive in quick succession. There is no closed season! We also want to exploit this modern method of communication to improve contacts with our members. To that end we would appreciate having as many of members' e-mail addresses as possible. We are also planning to make our website more informative and useful.

The outcomes of all our efforts are now coming in. The Council's mammoth task with the Local Development Framework has now reached the stage of a document, The Core Strategy, where the ordinary citizen can gain some insight into the pattern into which it is proposed to guide development. It seems clear that such inputs as the Great Debate, along with the Society's contributions through comments on the Council's various documents and through meetings have played their parts in creating the final picture. There is an enormous amount still to be done but in the very immediate future the Council is to unveil its thoughts on what is to be done to revitalise the town centre and how it is to be done. We shall see!

Our efforts on Crossrail along with those of the other petitioners also seem to have yielded some result. The full outcome will not be known until the Select Committee delivers its report and until the Third Reading of the Bill is over. At the moment we have been told that Guards Club Park will not be used and that the supplies needed for work on the Brunel bridge will be carried by barge to Guards Club Island. The need for a contribution towards a transport hub at the station has also been conceded. So far so good but as ever the devil is in the detail and the Council will have much to do to cope with all the upheaval and to make sure that the town really benefits from it.

The Millennium Path has had to negotiate more legalistic hurdles to complete its definition than there are stiles and five-bar gates along the whole Pennine Way. It is largely a result of the multiplicity of land-ownership and related rights along the line of the route. Ann Darracott has patiently dealt with each problem as it has arisen and bids fair to see an end to the process during the year-but I wouldn't bet on it!

We are rapidly moving towards embracing all our social type activities under the heading 'Events' instead of Talks, Outings etc. Importantly we are now well on the way to setting out a whole year's programme of the various 'events' as you will see in this Newsletter and I would draw your attention particularly to the planned Reception at Hall Place in March. The purpose of these is not just to provide pleasant occasions for our members but to encourage them to bring non-members with them, who hopefully learn something of the Society's work and interests and become involved in helping with the Society's activities. For most events, Non-members don't even have to be introduced by a member they can just come!!!!

As I indicated in the last Newsletter we have revised the Society's Constitution partly because new legislation requires it and partly because we need to improve our ways of operating. The logic of the new structure is not difficult but although adopted in principle there is still a deal of careful consideration to be made as to how it will work in practice. As with all organisational plans it is how well it suits those who operate it that is most important. Consequently each has to feel that they are comfortable in it and in a position to do their bit. The new structure with its upper Trustee Board dealing with the long-term issues and the focussed Groups dealing with the more immediate should provide a much more effective attainment of the Society's aims. The three Groups already in action show this to be true but in the end all depends on those who come forward to work in them. One of the benefits of the new organisation is that people with appropriate skills and knowledge can more easily be co-opted to work in a group without becoming an elected member of the Society's executive. The final ratification of the new Constitution will require a Special General Meeting and on present timing this is likely to be towards the end of June. We expect to share full details with members in the April Newsletter.

I end this message on an upbeat note. We have achieved much and with more members involving themselves can do more in the coming year.

John McIntosh – Chairman

NOTE ON THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The format for the AGM held recently on 15th November was slightly altered this year in as much as the customary Talk was moved to the start of the procedure rather than having it after the formal business of the meeting. Whether as a result of this or not, there was a larger than usual attendance. The meeting was chaired by Harold James, a vice-President of the Society and also a former Chairman, in the absence of our President, Richard Poad. The reports of activities from the various Groups were given in full in the last Newsletter, and what follows is a summary of the more important observations and decisions made on the night.

The Society's Hon Treasurer, Trevor Farnfield, commented on the published accounts noting that they are in a healthy state and allowing reasonable scope for expenditure on the Society's aims. He particularly noted the beneficial impact of Gift Aid.

The Society still needs someone to take over as chairman from John McIntosh who wishes to step down after several years in the post. There is also no vice-chairman as a ready-made candidate. The recent retirement of the Society's very effective Hon. Secretary, June Churchman, who has moved away from the area, left another gap, though later in the meeting June Jorge was proposed as and elected to take over this position. The re-election of the present officers and members of the Executive Committee followed, there being no new members proposed.

Councillor Vicky Howes used the opportunity to thank the Society for its input to the LDF process and to emphasise the cross-party nature of that exercise. She went on to comment on the need for positive interaction between the Society and the Council and the need for it to have a balanced membership.

MAIDENHEAD TOWN CENTRE: TOWARDS 2026

A Plan for Partnership Action

Shoppers will soon be seeing some positive improvements in Maidenhead town centre. The Sainsburys redevelopment is nearing completion, Waitrose are extending their popular store and additional shops will be opening in the newly extended Nicholsons Centre. But a town centre isn't just about retailing - housing, offices, transport, parking, leisure activities and public open space all contribute to the vibrancy of our town.

The review of the existing Local Plan through the Local Development Framework presents us with an opportunity to review current needs and perceptions and to create a holistic plan for Maidenhead in the 21st Century.

The council's latest document 'Maidenhead Town Centre Towards 2026' has been produced to bring together not only the council's ideas for Maidenhead town centre, but also those of local groups and organisations. It incorporates many of the views expressed through the Civic Society's 'Great Debate' run by the Maidenhead Advertiser last year.



Ideas for debate

The document is a broad based discussion paper rather than a blueprint for development. Key areas for debate include:

- three possible areas for more shops at West Street, Broadway and the east end of High Street linking to today's main shopping areas

- two places pivotal to the daily life and image of the town centre – improving the station area with more parking and a better transport interchange and upgrading the approaches to Maidenhead Bridge to create a tree-lined boulevard and potential for a new hotel or houses
- opportunities around York Road and St Ives Road to enable these central areas to be used more effectively, with car parking, new homes and offices and more public spaces linking to the Green Way

John McIntosh, Bob Dulson and Nigel Cockburn were among those who attended the launch of the consultation at the Town Hall on 15 January. It was encouraging to hear the buzz of conversation during the workshop session and the summary given by the spokesperson from each table at the end of the session confirmed that there had been a lively exchange of ideas and suggestions.

In planning the future of the town centre the council aims to work in partnership with land owners, businesses, occupiers, special interest groups and the public, so that we can reach a consensus on the way forward. The council is not a big landowner, nor does it have the capital to fund development, but it can act as a conduit between the relevant parties to manage the forecast growth, improve and enhance the town and ensure environmental sustainability.

I am sure that as a group the Civic Society will input their usual considered and knowledgeable comments into the consultation, but may I also encourage you all to make your own individual comments because everyone's views are equally important.

Copies of the document and questionnaire are being distributed via the Maidenhead Advertiser and will also be available in council offices and libraries. The questionnaire can also be filled in on-line at www.rbwm.gov.uk (follow the link from the home page). The consultation is open until 26 February 2007.

Vicky Howes

Town Centre Consultation “most encouraging”, says Society

Outline designs for a new town square are being submitted by the Civic Society in response to the Council's consultation on the future of Maidenhead Town Centre.

The idea for creating an attractive, open-space meeting place, a focal point at the heart of the civic centre, was first set out in the Society's 'Strategic Review' in 2004, following a survey of members' views.

Since then it has been one of our top three priorities for change as part of the need for town centre regeneration, along with an integrated transport hub and a policy for protecting the Thames riverside which are both now enshrined in the council's Core Strategy.

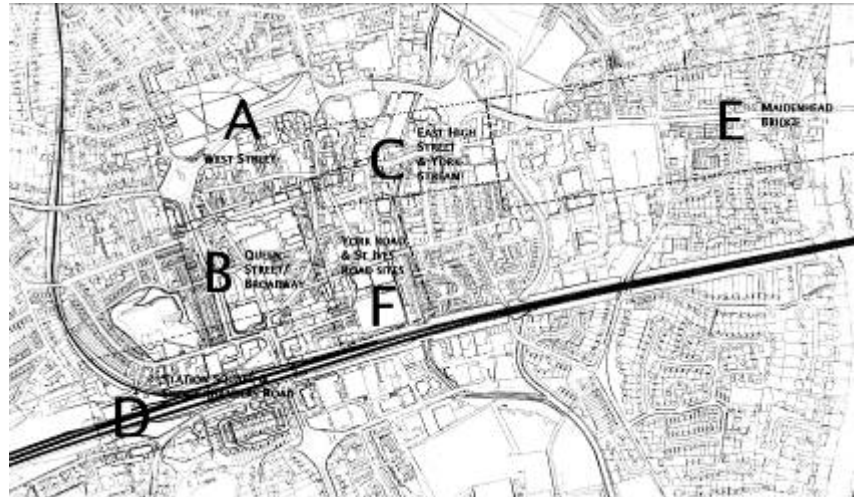
The town square plan (outlined below) will form part of the Society's detailed response to the council's document 'Maidenhead Town Centre Towards 2026' which was launched at the Town Hall at the first of a series of discussion workshops to be held with stakeholders.

As the RBWM Cabinet member for Planning, Cllr Vicky Howes, explains in her article, the document is not a development plan - it is designed to stimulate discussion.

To that end, it worked well on the night. Civic Society planning group chairman, Nigel Cockburn, said: “It was good to see the council at last taking the lead in addressing the much needed regeneration of the town centre. What they’ve set out in the document are options rather than firm proposals but nevertheless they are thoughts that confirm what we’ve been saying for the last three years. We’ve rattled their cage more than a few times recently for not listening properly to public opinion; so this was most encouraging.”

The document says six areas centred on the following could become the subject of Town Centre development briefs:

- West Street
- Queen Street & Broadway
- East High Street & York Stream
- The area around the Station
- The eastern gateway at Maidenhead Bridge
- York Road & St Ives Road



As the council set out its stall, many of the ideas appeared to be similar to those that have been put forward by the Society – either from the Strategic Review, the ‘Great Debate’ survey or others that we’d lobbied for in response to the Local Development Framework or through the planning process.

In reality, of course, this should have come as no surprise. Said Nigel: “Maidenhead’s problems and opportunities are fairly obvious to anyone with the inclination to study them. But we were particularly pleased that the council has contracted an independent urban design and regeneration specialist, at least for the discussion document and consultation exercise.”

He added: “It is encouraging to see Councillors acknowledging the issues. The challenge will be turning the results into a consensus and the consensus into reality – but we look forward to playing our part in that.”

Focal Point For Town Centre Regeneration

The Society’s Planning Group has already produced outline proposals to provide the town centre with a major “destination” focal point.

In pursuit of one of the main aims of the Strategic Review, the group had embarked on a recommendation for the re-development of the area around York Road, one of the key areas featured in the council’s latest document, before the consultation was announced.

They took the initiative recognising that the area was vulnerable to inappropriate development. “Our objective was to produce ideas that could be presented to the Council to initiate a debate about the future of this area and in due course to produce a development brief that would govern future development,” said Nigel. To this end the group sought the help of Andrew Plumridge, Chairman of the Berkshire Society of Architects and a qualified urban planner.

The key features of the Society’s proposals are as follows:

1. A new tree-lined Town Square of atmosphere and character, with underground parking beneath it, would replace the existing Council car park. The south elevation of the town hall would be remodelled to take advantage of the new amenity.
2. To the south of the new square, we envisage a landmark building of architectural distinctiveness. Presenting an impressive front to the square, its use would encourage visitors to this part of the town. Suggestions have included a hotel/conference centre, multifunctional market space or concert hall/arts centre. This would displace the bowling club, football ground, King George VI Club and St. John's Ambulance, which would be relocated. To the east of the building the ground would slope down to the banks of a widened York Stream and have terraces for cafés and restaurants.



Our Town Square plan will be shared with the Council

3. At the far south of the site, adjacent to the railway line, the plan is for a “science park” or hi-tech business development which could be accessed along Bell Street or from the south-west

corner of the square. Access to Bell Street from the south would be improved by adjusting the island on Braywick Road.

4. The plan would also create other new open spaces and vistas, as well as the square, which might provide sites for sculptural art, e.g. at the east end of Bell Street where a new pedestrian bridge would cross the York stream.
5. New residential housing could be erected on the west side of Park Street, on part of the Grove Road car park and the south side of York Road, all angled to face the new square. The Civic office buildings on the east side of St Ives Road could also be redeveloped and remodelled to face a landscaped York Stream.
6. Pedestrianisation of the area round the new square is an ambition, provided traffic flows can be successfully diverted.

“Clearly we all have views on what we might like to see in the area and I would be pleased to hear members’ thoughts on what we propose. Nevertheless the purpose in putting our plan forward to the Council is to provide a stimulus for ideas so that the Council can develop detailed plans and take the lead in promoting them,” said Nigel.

The Society called for a town centre Action Plan in its response to the RBWM’s Core Strategy published in November. For a full report on this see next page.

PLANNING MATTERS

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

During the last three months the Planning group reviewed 25 applications in detail and commented to the Council on 9 of them. Despite our objections over the size and density, Miller Homes were successful with their appeal for 242 dwellings and industrial floorspace on the Bridge Road/Oldfield Road site and we wait with trepidation to see what impact the new development will have on the surrounding area. On a more positive note the scaffolding on Cressett Towers has been removed after some remedial work much to the improvement of the High Street scene. We also understand that a planning application may soon be submitted for the old cinema site.

The Council has launched a consultation on the Town Centre as this Newsletter went to press. This is something we called for in our comments on the Core Strategy and we look forward to seeing a detailed plan adopted to improve the town centre and a real commitment from everybody to its delivery. It will be important on the political front that it has cross party support.

Comments on some of the more significant applications were as follows:

Land at 58-70 Queen Street, and behind (Demolish existing and replace with 52 flats)

We continue to support the principle of building residential accommodation on appropriate land in the town centre, and we recognise the need to improve the overall quality of property in Queen Street. We have serious reservations though about the access to the block B, which can only be approached through the narrow Cullerns Passage. We note that no parking is provided, and appreciate that potential residents will realise that limitation. But there remains a need for many service vehicles to be given access to the 28 dwellings proposed. Bins need to be emptied, there will be a succession of deliveries of bulky items, contractors will need to work there from time to time, and we might expect quite regular taxi visits to help with shopping. This is before there is any emergency call for ambulance or fire access. We very much doubt whether this narrow lane can cope with the demands of so many dwellings and, while imagination is being shown in trying to utilise the site, there is too much development being requested to allow for this very severe

limitation.

29a Broadway (Construction of a new five storey block with medical use at ground floor and residential above)

The height and square shape of the building together with its roofline is unsympathetic with the restored listed buildings to the West. It would be better if the roof next to the single storey building sloped towards it and the tower for the lift repositioned. We are concerned about the lack of parking and access to the ground floor which is to be used for medical purposes. We ask that the lack of car parking spaces be considered in the context of similar developments as there is a cumulative effect from such developments which results in a need for additional car parks in the town centre.

Land fronting Blackamoor Lane (Advertisement)

We object to the use of the name “St. Mary’s Village” as it will cause confusion. There is already a St. Mary’s School and a St. Mary’s Church elsewhere in Maidenhead.

The Council’s restrictions on residential development building seem to have slowed the avalanche of planning applications although this may be only one of a number of factors and there are a number of major developments in the pipeline. There is Queen Street above and the Michael Shanly Group is proposing St. Mary’s Village, a major development of over 400 homes on the Badnell’s Pit site. We await the completion of all the previously approved developments to see what impact they have on the town centre. For example, the Sainsbury’s development contains a large number of new flats including some much-needed affordable homes.

On the Local Development Framework our comments on the Council’s final Core Strategy document ran to 6 pages and will be considered through an independent public examination and a précis of the points we made follows.

Nigel Cockburn

THE ROYAL BOROUGH’S CORE STRATEGY DOCUMENT – SOCIETY’S OPINION

The Civic Society has delivered a tough critique to Government Inspectors of the Royal Borough’s Core Strategy.

Published in November, the Core Strategy is central to the borough’s new Local Development Framework (LDF), which replaces the Local Plan, and dictates the policies that will shape the future for the next 20 years.

But the Society says the document falls short of meeting its obligations.

“It contains a list of worthy aims and many commendable policies but we need real commitments,” said Nigel Cockburn, chairman of the planning group who drafted our response. “It does not, for example, define the uniqueness of Maidenhead or represent a vision for the town in 2026, which we think it should as part of the Regional Spatial Strategy.”

In particular, the Society is calling for firm commitments to improving the town centre and the management of new development.

In a detailed response, the Society acknowledges the “tremendous amount of work” involved in the preparation of the Core Strategy and applauds its accessibility as “a significant improvement” on earlier documents in the LDF process.

Town centre action plan

We claim a few successes too. The Society’s submission says: “We were particularly pleased to see

policies included which the Society has campaigned for, namely: a proposal for a transport hub, a policy for the Thames and a move towards regeneration of the town centre; although we do not think this goes far enough.”

The Society would prefer – and has been lobbying for – “a Policy to ensure that an Area Action Plan for Maidenhead town centre will be drawn up, in consultation with stakeholders and the local community, to define the centre and the desired level of regenerative development.”

The Advertiser’s “Great Debate” survey last year and a poll of the Society’s own members recently showed the strength of feeling about the need for more improvement, particularly in the town centre.

The Society says: “LDF documentation talks repeatedly about preserving and enhancing the character of our town centres. Windsor’s character is plain to see: an historic, royal, tourist centre with many attractions. But Maidenhead, after years of ambivalence and piecemeal planning, has too few distinguishing features. There is a need to define what kind of town we want Maidenhead to be. That the two towns are distinctly different needs to be recognised.”

The response points out that the town is also “significantly short of open space, according to government guidelines. We have proposed a new town square and the Maidenhead Waterways Group has been set up to restore the York Stream.

“More conservation areas need to be established in the area and existing ones such as by Boulton Lock and along the River Thames expanded.

Character, density & infrastructure

“Positively, there is a real opportunity to enable Maidenhead to rediscover its character and revive its personality.”

On housing provision the Society says there is growth planned in housing and jobs that are not justified as being sustainable and questions whether the necessary infrastructure has been planned or evaluated. Policies are also needed to cover not just the quality and density of new development but appropriateness too to protect the environment.

In its submission, the Society says the Council’s policy for a “plan, monitor and manage approach” may not be effective as most development occurs on windfall sites.

It suggests it should be strengthened, in line with government guidelines, to include a policy proposing “area character assessments, undertaken in consultation with local people, to determine the type and density of development appropriate to different areas”.

“Over the last few years, in our experience, the local environment has been detrimentally affected by over-development and, while various other policies are being set to improve the environment, the cumulative effect makes the proposed level of growth increasingly difficult to accommodate.”

The Core Strategy includes a housing allocation of 5,620 additional dwellings and an increase of 4,192 jobs between 2006 and 2026, half of which can be expected to be in Maidenhead – raising bigger questions about adequate infrastructure.

The Society declares that it should be made a requirement for development to be allowed *only* where it preserves and enhances the character of the area. And that a comprehensive evaluation of the infrastructure needs is undertaken.

Bob Dulson

EVENTS

As was announced at the recent AGM, an Events Group has been formed to set up a coherent programme of events including talks, outings and social activities, which it is hoped will engage members and stimulate interest in the Society's work and achievements. These events would include possibly four or five talks whose topics would be of local or national interest; four outings, and a number of social occasions. For the next few months we have:

TALKS

RECYCLING IN THE ROYAL BOROUGH - Wednesday 21st February 2007

by Ankit Rao

Waste Awareness Officer to the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead



*What happens
to all our
waste?*



Ankit Rao has been employed by the Borough for eighteen months and was previously employed by Thames Water. He is responsible for education in Waste Awareness. This entails visiting schools and community groups and discussing ways to deal with rubbish in an environmentally responsible way. On leaving university, he worked in New Zealand on a number of projects related to sustainability issues and was very involved in a development which was similar to the Outlook Centre in Bracknell. This is an educational project where children can participate in activities which encourage an awareness of conservation issues through hands-on experiences. He will be talking to us about the collection of waste materials and their disposal with particular emphasis on the management of rubbish this Borough.

THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR – THEIR RISE & FALL- Wednesday 21st March 2007 by Malcom Barber

Professor Emeritus of Medieval History at University of Reading

Those of you who attended the talk on Bisham Abbey in July will remember having tea in the great hall at Bisham built by the Knights Templar in the 13th century. The Order of the Temple had been founded in Jerusalem after the first crusade in 1096-99 when that city was recaptured from the Moslems. The role of the knights was to protect the city and the pilgrims visiting it and soon the Order became wealthy as donations from the kings and nobles of Europe and the Pope aimed at protecting the Kingdom of Jerusalem accumulated. The Templars soon developed a role as bankers to the nobility.

Malcolm Barber has written extensively on the history of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, particularly on the Templars and the Cathars. His most recent book is a second edition of *The Trial of the Templars* (Cambridge University Press, 2006). He will be giving an account of what happened after the Europeans were finally ejected from the kingdom in 1291 when Acre fell (at which fall, Sir Otho Grandison, uncle of Katherine Countess of Salisbury, who later lived at Bisham Abbey, fought alongside the Templars).

2007 is the 700th anniversary of what followed, when in 1307 the French king, seized the Templars and tortured them to persuade them to admit unholy practices, thus enabling him to seize their assets and get himself out of a financial black hole. By then in England the weak Edward II was on the throne. His seizure of their assets is itemised in an inventory, including that for the Bisham preceptory, which can be seen in the National Archive at Kew. The talk will illuminate a period of history which is perhaps increasingly of interest now considering the various conflicts in the Middle East.



Left: The King of France oversees the burning of the Templars.

Below: The Templar inventory at the National Archives



If you wish to purchase a copy of *The Trial of the Templars* by Malcolm Barber, ISBN 0-521-67236-8, paperback £14.99, Waterstone's in Maidenhead have agreed to sell this book at a discount of 10% to Maidenhead Civic Society Members, on production of this Newsletter. Malcolm Barber will be happy to sign any copies of his books which might be brought to the talk.

OUTINGS

There have not been any trips since the last newsletter as the run up to Christmas is notoriously poorly supported. Unfortunately that also included January and we had to cancel our planned visit to Brooklands as we did not have enough support.

MAPLEDURHAM HOUSE & WATERMILL BY BOAT – Sunday 29 April 2007

The next planned trip is to Mapledurham House and Watermill on the Thames. We will travel there by boat from Caversham, which will take about 45 minutes along a very scenic stretch of the Thames. As this is so close to Maidenhead we are asking you to make your own way to Caversham Bridge where there is free parking close to the jetty. However, please note that the boat leaves the landing stage promptly at 2 pm, so please arrange to be in good time!



Mapledurham House

CIVIC SOCIETY RECEPTION - Friday March 23rd 2007

Don't forget that we will be holding a reception at Hall Place, which is in the Berkshire College of Agriculture in Burchett's Green, on Friday March 23rd between 7.30 and 9.30pm. The purpose is to inform members and non-members about the activities of your Society, to raise our profile and to encourage new members to join us. We will be serving wine and light refreshments and we have arranged for some light music to be played in this delightful setting. We are also hoping to attract some local community representation. Please come and bring along a guest or two who may be interested in joining the society.

To reserve a place at the event please complete and return the green booking form that was inside the October Newsletter, or call Mike Copeland on 01628 681955.

We do hope that you can join us and that you can encourage new members to attend: there's no charge! We will be running a presentation that illustrates the many and varied activities that your Society engages in.

PROJECTS

GREEN WAY/YORK STREAM

Town centre

As expected there is now water in abundance in the town centre. This has highlighted the design problems of the barriers next to the stream where the Green Way passes under the A4 and under the car exit from Hines Meadow car park. The barrier seals along the base of the handrails have failed in both places and the footway has been flooded since November.

At the end of January there will be a Green Way Working Group meeting when we hope to hear what the contractors propose to do about it. In the same area, financed by the Sainsbury's development, there are plans to dig out York Stream as it runs alongside the Hines Meadow car park to create a meandering streambed through the hard core dumped there when it was built. Initial survey work for this was done in August. And, yes, we have suggested, repeatedly, that some of this dumped material be removed, but no luck so far.



The flooded path under the A4

MILLENNIUM WALK – missing links

The original proposal for this project was written with the help of Margaret Bowdery of East Berks Ramblers in January 2006. As ten years have passed we feel it is time to assess when the outstanding missing links in the walk are likely to be completed. It is in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for 2005-2015 and we plan to discuss with the Royal Borough what can be done to expedite the completion of the project. In a nutshell, without the cooperation of the Highways Department some links will not be completed. In the meantime there has been progress (see below).

Lower Cookham Road to Towpath

A recent achievement in relation to this missing link has been that the Environment Agency have agreed to reserve a 2 metre wide path along the northern edge of some flood bund land that they hope to sell shortly. Those of you who walked this link during the Boundary Walk in October may remember the very verdant land to the east of the flood bund which is the land for sale. We think this will make it easier to finalise this link.

Ann Darracott

HERITAGE CENTRE NEWS

Just before Christmas Maidenhead Heritage Centre became the proud owners of the redundant pub “The Cricketers Arms” in Park Street. After conversion and fitting out works, probably taking 6-7 months and requiring another fund-raising campaign, the building will reopen as the town’s permanent Heritage Centre and Museum, preserving and celebrating the past for the future. The Heritage Centre is immensely grateful to all those Civic Society members who contributed to the appeal last summer, and to the Society itself which made a generous contribution.



The former Cricketers Arms in Park Street – our new home

You can see the architect’s proposals for 18 Park Street at the present Heritage Centre in King Street, near the Methodist Church, where the following exhibitions will take place between now and Easter:

Maidenhead’s Listed Buildings: until 24th February

Surprise yourself! There is more surviving heritage in Maidenhead that people would have us believe!

Flood!: 27th February to 24th March

An exhibition to mark the 60th anniversary of the great flood of March 1947.

Maidenhead in Music: 27th March to 28th April

A new exhibition curated by Peter Tyler. Professional musicians in our history include Thomas Arne (“Rule Britannia”), Edward Elgar, Ivor Novello and Marion Montgomery. We have our own symphony orchestra and any number of other extremely talented musicians. This exhibition will celebrate them all, with music to match.

Maidenhead Heritage Centre is open from 10am to 4pm, Tuesdays to Saturdays
3 Kingsway, King Street, Maidenhead SL6 1EE, ☎01628 780555.
Website: www.maidenheadheritage.org.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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| Wednesday 21 st February 2007 Talk by Ankit Rao | “Recycling in the Royal Borough” Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m. |
| Wednesday 21 st March 2007 Talk by Malcolm Barber | “The Knights Templar – Their Rise and Fall” Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m. |
| Friday 23 rd March 2007 Reception - Social Evening | Berkshire College of Agriculture, Burchetts Green 7.30 – 9.30 p.m. |
| Sunday 29 th April 2007 Outing | Mapledurham House & Watermill by Boat |
| Wednesday 16 th May 2007 Talk | TBA Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m. |
| Wednesday 19 th September 2007 Talk by Peter Bennet | “Crime Prevention” Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m. |
| Wednesday 17 th October 2007 Visit and Talk by David Lunn | Civic Matters Town Hall, 8 p.m. |
| Wednesday 21st November 2007 | 47th Annual General Meeting Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m. |

CIVIC SOCIETY OFFICERS

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--------|
| President | Richard Poad, Hollyhocks, The Common, Cookham Dean, SL6 9NZ | 484298 |
| Chairman | John McIntosh, 26 Harvest Hill Road, SL6 2QQ | 633259 |
| Vice-Chairman | Vacancy | |
| Secretary | June Jorge, 134 Beverley Gardens, SL6 6ST | 626616 |
| Asst. Secretary | Gillian Moore, 10 Langdale Close, SL6 1SY | 630130 |
| Treasurer | Trevor Farnfield, Ditton Meads, Winter Hill Road, SL6 6NS | 638142 |
| Membership Sec. | Shashi Dare, Silvretta, Islet Road, SL6 8LD | 629976 |
| Planning Group | Nigel Cockburn, Willow House, Fishery Road, SL6 1UN | 621084 |
| Outings Sec. | Mike Copeland, 14 Laburnham Road, SL6 4DB | 681955 |
| Publicity | Bob Dulson, Bryher, Islet Road, SL6 8HT | 627130 |
| Co-ordinator | | |
| Newsletter | | |
| Distributor | Carol Innes, Contour, Briar Glen, Cookham Rise, SL6 9JP | 532418 |

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2007

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

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

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 21st November 2007 in the Wesley Hall at the Methodist Church at 8.00pm.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 13th April 2007.**

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