



Maidenhead Civic Society NEWS



Issue 4/13

November 2013



Michael Bayley 1922 – 2013

A founder member of the Civic Society

A full appreciation appears on page 20

Visit our website: www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

The President's Foreword

The Strategic Review – What Progress ?

It is coming up to ten years since the publication of the Strategic Review of Amenity and it seems worthwhile to look and see what progress has or hasn't been made.

As far as the first objective - to create a comprehensive plan for the heart of the town - is concerned we now have the Area Action Plan (AAP) produced under PRoM which is being implemented in two major areas of the High Street.

In the plan for the eastern end the derelict cinema will go and there will be a substantial redevelopment including new shops, leisure space, offices and accommodation, all in line with the Strategic Review. That is a good beginning although initial plans for the west of the area have not been approved. Further, the objective of creating a navigable waterway to connect the town centre to the Thames is being realised in part by the Waterways Group's scheme for the York stream in the town centre. The Society has tried hard to ensure clean and substantial flows of water in the York Stream by encouraging the Environment Agency to clear congesting weeds and reeds from the streambed and this has given some improvement but the Waterways Group scheme will make a substantial difference.

It was an objective to see an improvement of access to the town centre and this remains a challenge. In truth access to the town centre is disordered and this is a consequence of history and two major actions. The first was when Brunel ran his railway line east to west past the town and the second was when the ring road was built. Between them they cut off the town centre leaving relatively restricted access on either side. The ring road was needed (I have vivid memories of riding down the High Street on my motorbike and sidecar in the 1950s on my way from Oxford to London), but as constituted it acts as a barrier to access from the Kidwells Park direction. It would have been much better, if more expensive to construct, had it been put underground. This would then have left much better access to the town centre. It is difficult to see what can be done to improve this situation, although in recent weeks a proposal has been made to open up the east end of Moorbridge Road to allow traffic to enter from the A4 which would help a little; and to improve the traffic management at the junction with Forlease Road which would help a lot!

Another of our objectives was the idea of creating a new town square near the Town Hall. This is reflected in the AAP and discussions are currently taking place about a detailed Development Brief for the York Road Opportunity Area which includes parts of St Ives Road, York Road and the Grove Road and Town Hall car parks. The town centre lacks a focus and this amenity would go far towards providing one.

The Society's Planning Group has examined many planning applications through the past years and have made its comments to the Council's Planning Department. These comments have reliably been taken into account in the final decision on applications. The Society has also played its part in the creation of new conservation areas. The Council continues to resolutely defend the Green Belt and they have had our strong support where its integrity has been threatened.

As regards standards of design, developments go on much as ever although there has probably been some improvement. The town has been under considerable pressure in the building of houses to meet government targets. Most of the building has been on 'brownfield' sites or by replacing houses by more intensive developments. Overall the mix in any particular area is little changed and in this regard the objectives of the Strategic Plan have not been met.

The town centre has diminished as a shopping centre through the years. Anyone who knew it in days gone by will remember the variety of shops. There were first class jewellers, butcher, fishmonger and pharmacist among others. The only major shops now are Marks & Spencer and Boots. This is to some degree balanced by the number of prospering shopping enclaves distributed through the town. While we may take some encouragement from the decision by councillors to reject the Kings Triangle development for not being good enough, all in all the ambitions of the Strategic Plan in regard to enhancing the build, appearance and function of the town are somewhat disappointing. However, we need to be hopeful of the impact of the developments from PRoM and first impressions from the proposals for the eastern end of High Street are very encouraging.

Although the Riverside Conservation Area was extended, little has been done to enhance the riverside facilities. However, the passage along the riverside is pleasant enough and Boulter's Island provides a very pleasing area with good facilities, an oasis of green. On the Bucks bank the redevelopment of Skindles and the semi-derelict houses further up the river, part of the former paper-mill site, is now in focus and will provide a welcome improvement in views across the river if and when it becomes a reality. In the town and its surroundings it is noticeable that green areas are well maintained and the Parks and Gardens Department also provides delightful baskets of flowers and shrubs along the main thoroughfares. They are to be congratulated on this.

The advent of Crossrail presents an immediate challenge to the area round the station. There is a great need to reorganise the area to provide car parking, taxi ranks, and facilities for a bus as well as an area for dropping off and collecting passengers. This was another of our Strategic Review objectives and it was captured in the AAP. A scheme for improving the public realm and enabling bus and taxi facilities has been drawn up but nothing has yet materialised. It is a matter of urgency.

Public transport is provided by a fleet of modern buses although the service leaves gaps in time of service and cover. Cyclists have become much more numerous but

dedicated cycle tracks are not too much in evidence. The town is quite well equipped with car parking but, apart from new office buildings, there has been little provision of integral and underground parking as recommended in the original Review.

As regards Culture and Leisure it is proposed to provide a complement to Norden Farm by refurbishing the Desborough Suite as suggested in the original Strategic Review. A major development in this field has been the creation of a Heritage Centre by the Heritage Trust thus fulfilling an opportunity to put on show Maidenhead's history past and present.

Maidenhead is in many respects a well-run town. This is well illustrated by the refuse collection service and particularly the recycling function. Well-designed containers and an efficient service are provided. Litter etc is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Shop-front design, however, leaves much to be desired with no overall standard and few good designs. The Society called for a revision of the Shop Fronts Policy, which it helped originally to devise, and a draft is currently being circulated to stakeholders for comment. Some individual shops do have excellent shop fronts but there is no cohesion of overall design and colour. Shopping enclaves throughout the town have varied colour and design aspects but because the number of shops in any one is small the disparities are less noticeable.

The overall picture of improvement against the targets of the Strategic Review is mixed as can be seen from this review. There can be little doubt that the AAP goes a long way in enshrining many of our objectives for the town centre as planning policy but there is much more to be done.

We are told to expect drafts of a new Borough Local Plan and a Neighbourhood Plan for Maidenhead in the coming months. Time perhaps for us to revisit our review and stage another public debate on the lines of the Great Debate of eight years ago to hear what the public thinks.

John McIntosh

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

With Guest Speaker Mike McGaughrin, RBWM's Managing Director
Wednesday 20th November, 8 pm

What's it like to be at the helm of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead? Mike McGaughrin is to be the guest speaker at our Annual General Meeting in November by which time he will have been managing director at RBWM for almost 12 months. Mike's presentation will be followed by a Q&A session. See Page 22 for more detail.

Refreshments will follow, prior to the formal business of the AGM at 8.45 (approx).

53rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

**To be held on Wednesday, 20th November 2013
at the Methodist Church Hall at 8.00 pm.**

AGENDA

1. Introduction by the President
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 52nd Annual General Meeting
3. Accounts for the year ended 31st May 2013
4. Chairman's Report for 2012/2013
5. Election of the Board of Trustees
To approve the appointment of members of the Board of Trustees. *See note below.*
6. Election of the Officers
To elect from the Trustees an Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer
7. Any other Business.

Election of Trustees

Under the terms of the Society's Constitution, one third of the twelve Trustees must retire each year and shall be eligible for re-election. Accordingly, Harold James, Martin McNamee and Tina Sell will retire. All offer themselves for re-election.

The Membership is invited to make nominations for the position of Trustees. The nominations, in writing, should be accompanied by a seconder and the consent of the nominee, and be with the Hon. Secretary prior to the AGM.

**MINUTES OF THE
52nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY**

Held on Wednesday 21st November 2012

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** There are no apologies for absence
- 2. Approval of Minutes of 51st AGM:** The minutes were approved. Proposed by Jill Powell; seconded Ann Darracott.
- 3. Accounts for the Year Ending 31st May 2012:** The accounts and report for the past year appear on pages 12 and 13 of the November 2012 Newsletter. Surplus of Income over Expenditure for the year is £1,456. The tax refund on Gift Aid related to tax years 2010/11 and 2011/12. General Expenditure was down largely because of a reduction in printing costs for the newsletter as a result of not including separate event booking forms. We received a grant of £500 towards the printing costs of the Millennium Walk leaflets. It was proposed by Martin McNamee and seconded by Brian Darracott that the accounts be accepted.
- 4. Chairman's Report:** The overall report appears in the November Newsletter and is taken as read. First to note Eileen Goford as Hon. Secretary of the Society. Also welcome to Martin Trepte as Trustee. It is hoped that the report accurately reflects the activities of the Society during the year and thanks to all those who have contributed including the Trustees. As a slogan we take 'Preserve the best; improve the rest'. An objective is to influence the policy makers while avoiding party politics. A good example is PRoM. We are now urging people to become involved in than on projects. Change is in the offing and Maidenhead is poised for an exciting future which will have to be put into plans. PRoM is part of this along with the new neighbourhood plan. Around us we have the Skindles/Mill Lane redevelopment and the Society has been liaising with the Taplow Society on these matters inasmuch as they affect the view from Maidenhead across the river. In planning, politics threatens to take away control of our environment through the new planning legislation. The report was approved. Proposed by Brian Darracott; seconded Rudi Sheldon.
- 5. Election to Board of Trustees:** Bob Dulson, Ann and Brian Darracott were re-elected. Joyce Delasalle was appointed a Trustee. Proposed by Margaret Bowdery seconded by Mike Emmerson
- 6. Election of Officers.** Eileen Goford was elected Hon Secretary and Mike Emmerson Hon. Treasurer
- 7. Any Other Business:** Brian Madge drew attention to four outings of the Heritage Centre on the last Wednesday of the coming months; Bob Dulson pointed out the use of KiT to keep in touch with other organisations. The meeting closed at 10.02p.m.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF THE YEAR

As Stanley Holloway might have put it: “There was no wrecks and nobody drowned – ‘fact nothing to laugh at all...” So, with one or two exceptions, “steady as she goes” perhaps best describes the Society’s performance over the last year.

We did achieve an ambition in encouraging the church of St John the Baptist at Shottesbrooke to open its doors as part of the national Heritage Open Day scheme in September, which was very successful. And with the help of our MP Theresa May, who is a Society trustee, we succeeded in getting Bisham Abbey to be more amenable to public access.

Planning

In planning, we sought to influence a number of important decisions, notably the refusal of the ING scheme for the Broadway triangle. While councillors voted it out by the narrowest margin, six to five, it was clear the revised plans were still a big disappointment for most people. As we went to press, ING were considering bids for their interests in the site.

It was pleasing to note, as at many meetings of the Development Control Panel, the Civic Society’s views being cited by councillors in their deliberations. In this respect we continue to meet the obligations placed upon our founding members to reflect informed public opinion on planning matters.

Most of the Society’s preferred options for the regeneration of Mill Lane Taplow were incorporated in the development brief adopted by South Bucks DC in the summer. These included the proposed footbridge across the Thames to Boulters and improved pedestrian access to the site. However we were disappointed at the absence of any firm indication of the number of expected dwellings and the lack of any specific ambition for tourism or leisure.

We also responded to a number of consultations locally and nationally on aspects of emerging planning policy.

In addition we are being involved as stakeholders in discussions for the preparation of a Development Brief for the York Road Opportunity Area which will determine the way forward for redevelopment to the south of the town hall, including parts of St Ives Road, York Road, Park Street and the Grove Road and town hall car parks.

Projects

We now have good links with Bisham Abbey, thanks to our MP Theresa May who raised the matter of public access to the Abbey with Culture Secretary, Maria Miller.

Consequently we were able to give conducted tours to two groups this year, the Flintshire Historical Society and the Oxford Heraldry Group, and a copy of *A Virtual Tour of Bisham Abbey* by Ann Darracott was given to the Abbey Manager.

The Grandisons - Their Built & Chivalric Legacy, produced by Ann and Brian Darracott, was published as a CD by the Society this year with grants from the Royal Borough and the Shell Employee Action Scheme. It chronicles the buildings associated with this family, one of whom, Katherine Grandison, married to William Montacute, Earl of Salisbury, lived at Bisham Abbey in the C14th. The buildings concerned include small chapels and churches in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, cathedrals at Exeter and Hereford, and castles in Wales and Switzerland. A summary of what's in this publication will be presented in the next Newsletter.

Following the good level of interest shown in Society-organised visits to St John the Baptist Church at Shottesbrooke over the last couple of years an agreement was reached with the church, the Landmark Trust and St Luke's Church in Maidenhead to open St John's for the Heritage Open Day in September. St Luke's has opened for HODs many times and their guides were trained up to show visitors round the Shottesbrooke Church. Ann produced a new publication *History Trail of St John the Baptist Church, Shottesbrooke* for the occasion which attracted 123 visitors.

Maidenhead Library is now selling copies of the *Millennium Walk* leaflet, which the Society helped to produce. However, no progress was made in completing any of the other missing links in the walk itself this year. We had hoped that government grant funding might facilitate permission for the Lower Cookham Road to Thames Path missing link across White Place Farm but it came to nought. It was not even possible to use the route for the Boundary Walk this year (this would have been the eighth time) because a large tree had fallen across the path and a safety survey was deemed necessary.

The Green Way, the streamside walk that runs from Cookham through Maidenhead to Bray, continues to be well used with some paths being given hard surfaces (not to universal approval). The stream flowed well throughout the year, thanks to dredging over several years by the Environment Agency and a wet winter. However, attempts to improve the amenity of the stream near the bridge on Town Moor by removing some of the obstructing reeds/sedges have proved fruitless. This is the precise area that will supply water for the "Ring" planned by the Waterways Scheme.

North Town Moor continues to improve thanks to the conservation group *Make Space for Life*. The community orchard planted by the group recently featured in the 3rd Annual Apple Fair held there. Our involvement is helping with working parties and we also obtained funding from the Baylis Trust to pay for hydrocarbon analysis of the pond sediment. The pond has been cleared of excess vegetation by volunteers but the Royal Borough unfortunately has no plans at present to dispose of the oil contaminated silt that has been accumulating since the Society had the pond dredged in 1987.

Membership

Our efforts at attracting new members brought qualified success again. Although 13 new members joined, the net increase was just three, once departing members were subtracted.

The membership year starts in June. So since June 2012 to date we have welcomed Mr & Mrs N Green, Doreen & Peter Hill, Anthony & Kate Johnson, Stuart & Judith Maconochie, Robin & Marilyn Oldman, Mr G Palethorpe, Mrs M Richardson and Ms Amanda Taylor. Membership numbers therefore stand as follows:

	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009
Memberships (i.e. Family, Honorary, Life, etc)	246	257	261	264	296
Total members (exc Corporate)	352	349	357	353	385
Life Members	101	96	97	98	68
Honorary	19	20	20	26	26
Corporate	2	2	3	3	7

The Society keeps abreast of amenity issues that affect Maidenhead and its inhabitants and tries to ensure that nothing of importance escapes its notice. We achieve this through our relationships with the council, personal contacts and representation on other bodies, including PRoM, Maidenhead Town Partnership, Maidenhead Regeneration Group, the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and three of its topic groups, Maidenhead Waterways, and the Green Way Working Group.

An increasing number of initiatives with expectations of public engagement are presenting something of a challenge. However, with your support and, hopefully, that of a new influx of members we can continue to use our considerable influence towards **preserving the best and improving the rest** of what Maidenhead has to offer.

In conclusion, I'd like to put on record the Society's thanks to our President, the Trustees, members of the Executive Committee, our Honorary Officers, distributors and volunteers for everything they do in the name of the Society. It's often a graft, I know, and I appreciate that.

Thank you.

Bob Dulson

MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY - Charity No. 272102		
Annual Accounts for Year ended 31st May 2013		
2011/2012		2012/2013
INCOME		
150	Donations/Grants/Bequests	1,000
2,909	Subscriptions Received During Year	2,581
71	Interest On Bank And Other Deposits	78
0	Surplus On Outings	0
395	Surplus On Social Events	0
1,341	Tax Refunds On Gift Aid	624
£4,866	Total	4,282
EXPENDITURE		
Administration		
1,654	General Expenses, Printing, Postage, Etc.	1,433
471	Hire Of Rooms, Speakers And Meeting Expenses	235
313	Subscriptions	301
272	Publicity	98
245	Insurance	245
	Donations	0
0	Various	85
0		0
0	Other Expenses	0
206	Ockwells And Associated Projects (Net Costs)	95
193	Millennium Walk. (Net Costs)	34
-24	Various Other Small Projects	126
0	Sediment Testing	500
0	Deficit On Social Events	59
9	Deficit On Outings	0
0	Presentations/Memorials	0
72	Website	101
£3,410	Total	3,311
1,456	EXCESS/(DEFICIT) OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	971
10,370	Balance Brought Forward	11,826
£11,826	Balance Carried Forward	12,797
FUNDS		
2,204	Bank (Lloyds TSB) and Cash	3,300
9,372	Charities Deposit General Fund (COIF)	9,451
1,996	Debtor/Insurance Payments In Advance	624
-1,746	Creditors/Commitments	-578
£11,826	BALANCE OF FUNDS	12,797
Mike Emmerson - Hon. Treasurer		

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Annual accounts for the year ended 31st May 2013 are reproduced opposite. The main highlights from these are as follows:

Overall there was a surplus of Income over Expenditure of £971 in 2012/13. This compared to a surplus of £1,456 in 2011/12.

Income

Subscriptions were down £326 due to slightly fewer life/ordinary members compared to the previous year.

We received a generous grant of £1,000 from the Louis Baylis Charitable Trust towards our funds. We used £500 of this to pay for sediment testing (see below).

Gift Aid receipt of £624 was for the current year. This compares to £1,341 received in the previous year which covered two years.

Expenditure

General Expenses were down by £221 due mainly to lower printing costs of the Newsletter.

Hire of rooms etc for speakers was lower by £236.

We paid £500 to RBWM for sediment testing of the North Town Moor stream.

Subscriptions included £245 to Civic Voice.

The Society accounts show a healthy balance of funds in hand of £12,751. The Committee is looking at ways to use some of these funds to improve the profile of the Society using social media and general advertising to attract more members.

Mike Emmerson
Treasurer

St Luke's Third Christmas Tree Festival

The Society is again sponsoring a Christmas tree at this event to be held from 13th to 15th December at St Luke's Church, Norfolk Road, Maidenhead. The event raises money for local charities. This is an opportunity for us to let local people know what we do, so our tree, decked out in the Society's blue and white colours, has baubles that detail our current activities; newsletters (and application forms!) will also be available. Apart from lots of trees to admire there will be stalls selling home-made produce and crafts, plus refreshments. Do come along and bring your friends, especially if they aren't members. The church will be open on Friday 13th and Saturday 14th from 10am to 5pm, and on Sunday 15th from 2-5pm.

From the Archives (46 years ago!)

Since this is the AGM edition of the Newsletter, I thought it might be interesting to see what sort of issues and battles the Society had to deal with in the past. These extracts from the Chairman's Report delivered at the 1967 AGM by then Chairman Gordon Slater will strike a familiar chord. Whether or not you think things have moved on for the better, there is no doubt that the Society can be proud of its efforts then and now.

"The development of the riverside area has continued to exercise the Society. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government's inspector gave full support to our strongly held view that an overall survey should be made to determine the nature of the future shaping of the area to preserve the amenities. A proposal for the development of the Guard's Club site has not been acceptable to the Borough Council and we hope this indicates a greater recognition of the principle of looking at the riverside as a whole and not dealing with each site in a piecemeal way. A report on the area conducted by the Borough Surveyor is expected to appear in the autumn and we shall study this with much interest."

"The Society has been shocked by the tentative proposal of the County Council to take over the Norden Farm site to erect yet another school in this area. Schools, of course, are needed but this involved the demolition of one of the few buildings scheduled as of architectural merit in the district and we expressed our views very strongly to the County Council. It seemed to be a classic example of a planning authority being unaware of the need to plan its own requirements until all suitable sites had been swallowed up for housing. The Borough Council joined the protest against the proposal and we have been assured by the County Council that we shall be informed should the proposal, or any variation of it, be proceeded with."

"British Railways has been co-operative in agreeing to improve the design and decoration of the main booking hall at Maidenhead Railway Station in response to comments made by the Society. The rather featureless railway approach for which the Society has tried over the years to secure improvement will remain so until the much more radical changes resulting from a new road structure are made. Approval for the new inner relief road on the north of the High Street has now been given and the Society will be concerned with the effect of this road on noise; in this case the High Street will benefit to the greater comfort of shoppers."

"Further afield we have been concerned that under the Commons Registration Act 1965 steps should be taken by the local authorities concerned to ensure that common lands should be registered as such so as to be certain that the title to them is not disputed in the future. National Trust lands and those belonging directly to a Council (e.g. the Town Moor) are not in question but in the country districts there are many strips of land whose ownership is not clear. Some difficulty has been experienced in finding out which of the several authorities, County District or Parish is initially concerned but we are now corresponding with the respective parish Councils."

Planning Matters

At the time of going to print for the last Newsletter, we had carried our comments on the proposal to build an enlarged **Oldfield Primary School** on a Green Belt / Flood Plain site just south of Charlbury Grove on Bray Road. In mid-September at a special Development and Control Panel meeting in the Town Hall's Desborough Suite about 250 people heard three hours of debate - which resulted in the decision being deferred for about two months. Around two thirds of the attendees were in support of the proposal and gave the head teacher a standing ovation following his presentation. At times the flavour of the meeting was addressing the pressure generated by the educational case for more primary school places - not just at Oldfield, but throughout the Royal Borough. Eventually planning issues prevailed, and because of numerous unresolved matters the decision to defer was taken. Regretfully, this has become one of the most contentious and divisive planning debates of recent years. After two years of two-form entry (60 children rather than 30) the admissions number for entry in September 2014 will probably revert to 30. It was always likely that the overambitious opening scheduled for September 2014 was not achievable. A copy of the statement made at the meeting on behalf of Maidenhead Civic Society is as follows:

“It is regrettable that the need to expand one of our most successful and oversubscribed primary schools has become such a divisive issue for the community. Any decision to build on Green Belt land (especially that which is liable to flooding) should be the absolute last resort and taken only after it is firmly demonstrated that there are no other options available. If this site was owned by a housing developer, it would be expected that any application would be refused without hesitation. However, this situation is largely hypothetical because no developer would consider such a “protected” site. But because it is owned by the Local Authority - desperate for more primary school places - we find ourselves in this predicament.

The Education Department of the Royal Borough made a grave misjudgement when doubling the standard entry number from 30 to 60 children two years ago. Such a decision should never have been made until a secure route had been established to deliver the additional capacity. All through this process there has been a presumption in favour of this disputed location, without proper evaluation of alternatives.

With thirty additional children in both the first two infant years it is hardly surprising that the school is already struggling for accommodation. Of course staff, governors and parents would like a brand new and larger building. And it would be very disruptive to build the required additional classroom capacity alongside a fully operational school. At some stage in history, there was deemed enough land area to sub-let to the Montessori pre-school. If there was enough will, the enlarged school could be accommodated on the Chiltern Road

site, using the land at Bray Road for playing fields and other recreational activity.

The Royal Borough have got into a proper dilemma - largely driven by the premature decision to double the intake. This has generated additional time pressure for a speedy resolution. If planning policies relating to the Green Belt and Flood Risk are properly applied, then this application must surely be refused. This could lead to the unusual situation where the Education Department of the Royal Borough take their case on appeal to the Planning Inspectorate against the decision made by their own Planning Authority. Nevertheless, on planning criteria alone this application should be refused. Regretfully, it will probably be approved - a case of gamekeeper turned poacher."

Our routine monthly meetings of the Planning Group continue to examine about 12 - 15 applications and submit comments on 3 or 4. The most significant recent application is for the refurbishment and conversion of our infamous **Berkshire House** on Queen Street. This application is for a makeover, with an ingenious architectural veil wrapped around the rectangular edifice. We would have preferred something more fundamental, but there are obvious cost/viability constraints. Our comments are:

"We are delighted to welcome any proposal to deal with the problem of Berkshire House - the tallest building in Maidenhead and a landmark which has blighted the townscape for decades. A full redevelopment of the site would have offered greater opportunity for inspiration. Regretfully, we are disappointed with the makeover as it is proposed.

Already standing at 11 storeys, we fail to see the need to add an additional two floors. The only increase in height should be to accommodate plant and equipment (and the arched veil) on the existing roof. In fact we would prefer to see the height reduced by two storeys - but appreciate that this would impact on the viability of the scheme. The number of apartments is too many, resulting in substandard sized dwellings on all floors between 3rd and 13th. The studios are tiny, while the 1 bed flats at 46 sq. m. are below the minimum London Standard of 50 sq. m. required for 1 bed flats. We do not believe that a residential development of this scale and profile should have living space below minimum standards. These floors should be reconfigured with only four units per level, resulting in eleven less apartments in total. It is only on the first and second floors that the living areas are adequate. Combined with the removal of the two additional floors (8 flats) this would result in a reduction of 19 in total - but higher rental yield per unit.

There does not appear to be adequate communal amenity space for the total of 68 apartments. Some amenity could be achieved on the second floor. The entrance on Queen Street is modest, presumably to retain the existing retail offer at street level. Parking spaces are limited at 26, and it is unclear how they will

be allocated to tenants when there is only one space per 2.6 residential units. There will be plenty of cycle spaces.

It is understood that all apartments will be for rent. However, it is important that these town centre dwellings are seen in the context of other major developments in the pipeline (viz. Chapel Arches). Therefore, there is a risk that inadequate sized apartments will generate poor demand and lower rental yields.”



Will this

.....become this?



[**Editor's Note:** Members (of long standing) may remember a poll conducted by the Society many years ago in the Library using an exhibition of photos of the buildings of Maidenhead. The poll asked visitors to vote on which building they would like to see demolished; guess which building won hands down! We got into trouble with the Council who accused us of being too negative!]

Recently approved applications include Shanly Group's scheme for **Chapel Arches** to be constructed alongside the rejuvenated Waterways project. In spite of widespread concern about the height reaching eight storeys on two of the residential

blocks the scheme was approved in full. Another approved Shanly development is at **7/8/9 Bridge Avenue**, where a five storey block of 23 apartments will be constructed. Just to the north of this site lies **3 to 6 Bridge Avenue**, which currently enjoys outline permission for two schemes - a six-storey 119-bed hotel or an office block. The owner/developer recently submitted a third outline application for 57 sheltered apartments, with inadequate parking and amenity space. We are pleased that this third option was refused and a resolution is being sought regarding detailed planning proposals for this site. Another refusal was an application to construct a Hindu Temple and Community Centre at **29 Lincoln Road**. The main reasons for refusal were related to inadequate parking provision and the volume of traffic generated. A decision is pending on the proposed Islamic Community Centre alongside the existing mosque at **Holmanleaze**. Additional parking has been provided and flood relief issues addressed when compared with the previous application. There remains concern regarding difficulty and levels of vehicular access.

Consultations are underway regarding the Stafferton Way/Southern Relief Road project. As part of this process a presentation was made to our Planning Group meeting by Ben Smith from RBWM highways planning, which was much appreciated. Individual residents are also encouraged to express their views. In our view the major positive aspects are as follows:

- The delivery of a circular route around the town.
- Reduction of traffic levels at and around Maidenhead Station - esp. viz. Crossrail.
- Traffic from Braywick heading for A4 eastwards can avoid the Grenfell Island/one way system.
- Traffic from Oldfield Road can turn right onto Bridge Road (A4).

However there are also some obvious concerns regarding the scheme:

- The poor width of the eastern section (Oldfield Road).
- The narrowness of the railway arches on Oldfield Road.
- The difficult junction with Chantry Road.
- The impact on residents - especially Green Lane.
- The difficult access to Forlease Road to the west of the Bray Road/Oldfield Road roundabout.
- Access to Bridge Road, Barclays and Lascelles Gardens from Oldfield Road roundabout.

It is believed that there should probably be a vehicle size restriction on the use of the Southern Link Road because of the Oldfield Road arches. However, at present HGV lorries do negotiate the single arch - but only occasionally. A constant flow of lorries in both directions is another matter.

Finally, on another traffic matter - it is felt that the proposal to open up Moorbridge Road to west bound traffic from the A4 Bridge Road will be a great improvement. This will alleviate pressure on the Forlease Road traffic lights controlling access to Waitrose and reduce overspill onto the Police Station roundabout.

Martin McNamee

Projects

Millennium Walk

As already reported in the Chairman's Report, no progress has been made with filling in missing links in the Walk this year and even the use of the path across White Place farm to the Thames Path during the annual Boundary Walk had to be aborted.



Malcolm Crossley, East Berks Ramblers (organiser of path clearing) & Graham Brunsden, Maidenhead Rotary Club(organiser of Boundary Walk)

The photo shows the tree that had fallen across our path; however, this was not the reason the path could not be used (RBWM's Principal Public Rights of Way Officer had offered to cut a chunk out to allow walkers through). As reported, the Land Agent of White Place Farm has said that a tree survey needs to be done and health & safety concerns precluded the use of our path. The trees near to where we walk must be about 100 years old. Waldorf Astor, who lived at Cliveden, had them planted to preserve his view when he sold the land to the south of the tree line. An alternative offered by the farmer, Caroline Edwards, involved walking through the cattle pen. It was decided the churned up surface could be a problem for walkers with unsuitable footwear.

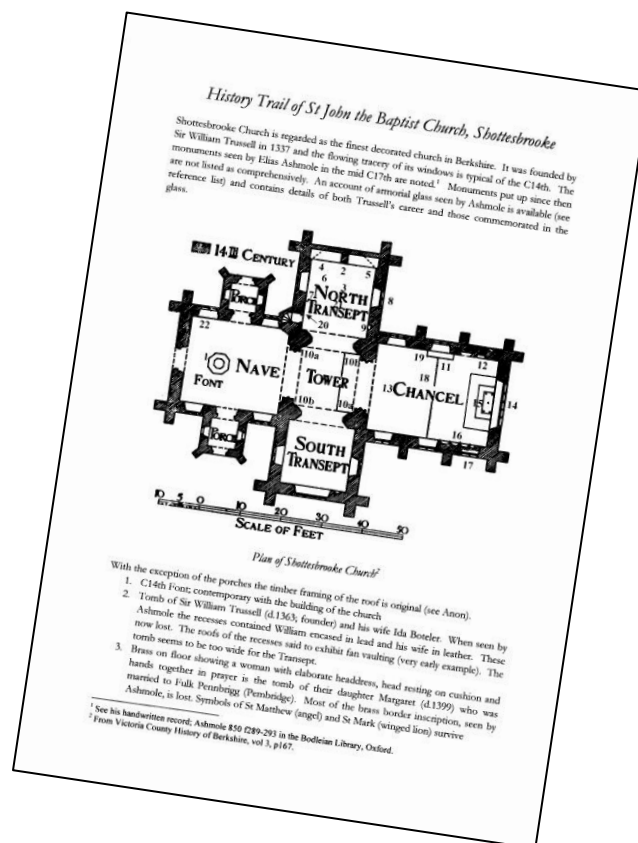
We very much hope that by next year the situation will have improved.

Shottesbrooke

Heritage Open Day (HODS)

This event, on Saturday 14th September, was a great success. This was the first time that St John the Baptist Church had been opened for HODS; we expected 40 visitors and got 123! A team of people acted as guides and served teas in the Garden Cottage next door. Many thanks to both members of the Civic Society and St Luke's Church for their help. Thanks also to the Civic Society members who tried out earlier versions of the *History Trail* leaflet during previous visits. The leaflets sold like hot cakes and more copies had to be printed off at lunchtime and rushed to Shottesbrooke.

The History Trail guides visitors to the various places of interest within the church



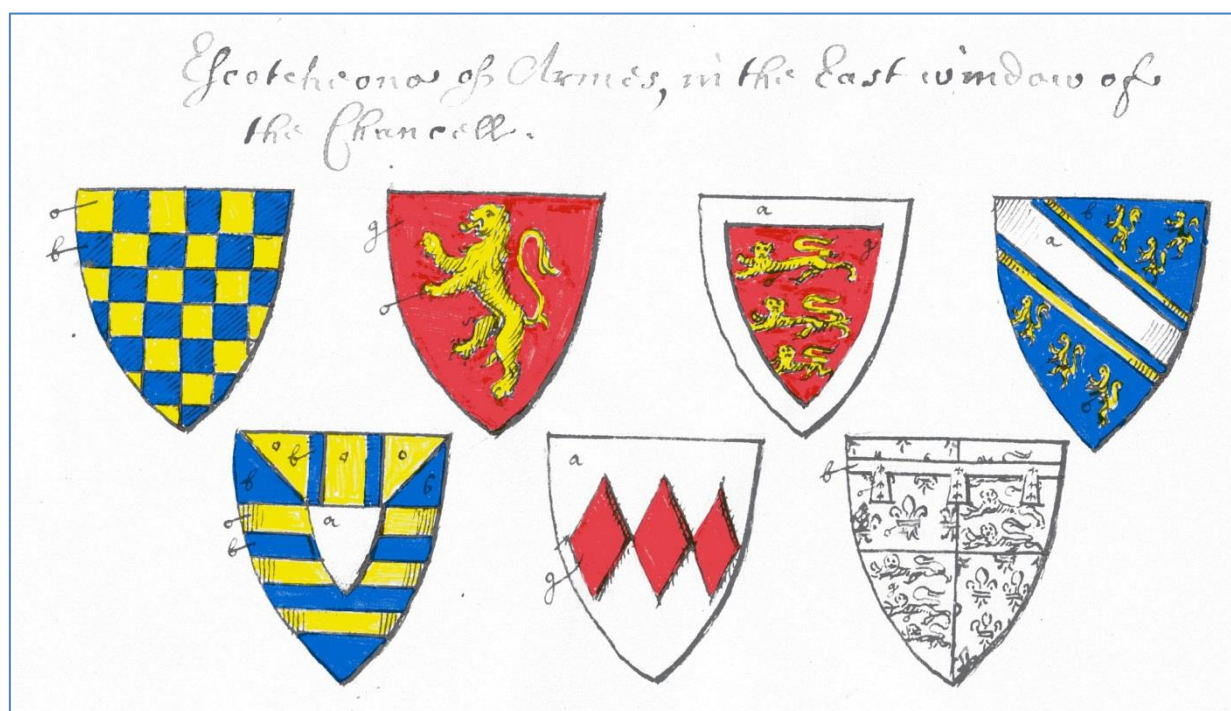
The Armorial Glass in Shottesbrooke Church in 1840

In 1840 E.J. Carlos described Shottesbrooke Church (*Gentleman's Magazine* 10 (1840) Pt 1 pp128-134) including the armorial glass still in the church. If you have access to the internet a transcript is available at:

<http://www.berkshirehistory.com/churches/shottesbrooke02.html>.

This account demonstrates that in 1840 almost all of the armorial glass in the east window seen by Elias Ashmole in the mid C17th was still there. It was evidently removed later in the C19th to make way for new glazing in memory of Captain Nicholas Vansittart (d.1859) - glazing still there today.

It may be that this old glass was not destroyed but perhaps put up in other buildings in the neighbourhood. I have therefore created a colour version of Ashmole's drawing, in the hope that anyone recognising these coats will get in touch with the Society. You can see the full colour version in the online edition of the Newsletter, but it's reproduced here for the record in black & white only.



Coloured drawings of coats

Top, L-R: Warrene : Fitzalan : Woodstock, (Earl of Kent) : Bohun
Bottom, L-R: Mortimer : Montacute : Royal Coat with 3 point label azure
 bearing fleur de lis or (last coat already lost by 1840)

Ann Darracott

Michael Bayley

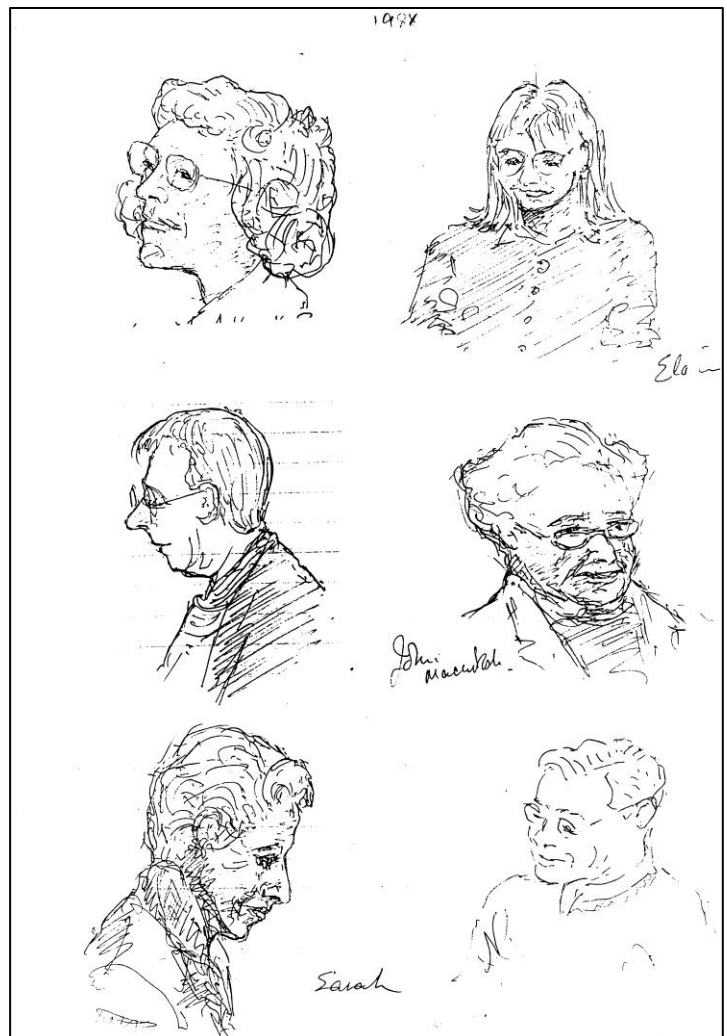
Members will have been saddened to hear of the death last month of Michael Bayley, one of the founding members of the Civic Society. He died peacefully at home on 4 October, just nine days short of his 91st birthday.

Michael was born in Slough in 1922. After distinguished war service, he trained as an architect in Oxford. He married his late wife, Pauline, in 1948 and came to Maidenhead where he worked for the council before setting up his own practice.

Michael was also a talented artist – fond of sketching colleagues round a meeting table – and a keen local historian. Regarded by many as a true gentleman, he was also feisty and funny. And he was always full of ideas. These he would disseminate in articulate, detailed letters – always in longhand and often illustrated by his own sketches, plans or drawings – to friends, colleagues, the council, people in positions of influence and regularly to the *Advertiser*.

One of his last was to advocate the provision of a punt hire business in the new Chapel Arches development. When it emerged at the time of the Great Debate, the Waterways regeneration scheme caught his imagination and he became an ardent supporter, producing historical data to support their case.

We have so much to be grateful for to Michael. His connections with the Society go back to its very roots. Our founding members were invested by the council with a responsibility to reflect informed public opinion on planning issues. Michael was involved in the initial discussions which led to the inaugural meeting of the Society in May 1960 and was elected to the executive committee where he served for many years. As a



An example of Michael's artistry – from a Society committee meeting in 1988

member and, for a period, chairman of the Planning Group he brought invaluable local knowledge and architectural insight, right up until last autumn when ill-health prevented his attendance.

His comments were often telling. He'd frequently criticise the pitch of a roof or the choice of materials and the omission from drawings of rainwater guttering or downspouts would lead him to say: "They're not expecting bad weather then, obviously." And studying the designs for a new build, he once declared: "It may look nice but it won't stand up!"

Latterly, these and other shortcomings would usually be blamed on the absence of any qualified architect in the borough's planning department. For Michael this was an unforgivable sin and his attempts at persuading the council to remedy the situation became something of a personal crusade.

Thankfully, Michael remained alert and active to the end but his passing is especially poignant for the Civic Society. Along with the many causes and organisations he supported in Maidenhead, we will miss him – and his letters to the *Maidenhead Advertiser*.

Bob Dulson

WHEN YOU COME TO CROSS THAT BRIDGE – DON'T SCRAP IT!

South Bucks District Council must promise to retain the footbridge across the Thames at Boulters as a priority in their plans for the redevelopment of Mill Lane, Taplow. The demand from Taplow resident, Nigel Smales was greeted by nods of approval from 30 guests at our Civic Society lunch last month. He said: "We want an assurance that when developers arrive and ask to be removed from that obligation, as they surely will, SBDC will insist that the footbridge is kept in the brief." The footbridge idea, first mooted by the Civic Society, has captured the imagination of residents and the support of councils on both sides of the river.

Mr Smales, a member of the Hitcham & Taplow Society (HTS), said Mill Lane had been home to a mill of one sort or another for 1,000 years and more should be done to reflect its heritage. He suggested a water-wheel generating electricity could be the feature of a small heritage centre to attract visitors.

SBDC principal planner, Jane Griffin, had just given a rundown of the guiding principles for the regeneration of the former paper mill land. These are now enshrined as planning policy in a Supplementary Planning Document, formally adopted by the council.

HTS have their own meeting with the planners on November 21st to discuss the document.

Events

Borough MD To Address Society AGM

The Royal Borough's first managing director Mike McGaughrin will share his experiences of life in the top job as our guest speaker at the Society's Annual General Meeting on 20th November.

Mike McGaughrin was appointed to the new post last December, following a senior management restructuring after the departure of former chief executive Ian Trenholm – changes which it was claimed would save the taxpayer £200,000 a year.

Mike had come to RBWM six months earlier as chief operating officer with the aim of improving public access to services and delivering better value for money. As



managing director his responsibilities include financial services, IT, HR, planning, property, policy and performance. He lives in Cookham.

Mike's background is in the private financial services sector. He has managed and developed large and diverse operational teams and led major business transformation programmes in a number of different organisations. He came to RBWM from the Tenet Group, the UK's largest independent financial services distribution company, where he was responsible for IT, HR, operations, customer services, compliance operations and change management. Prior to that he had been mortgage operations director with Bradford & Bingley.

Other Events

Thursday 16th January 2014 - A Virtual Tour of Ockwells Manor, Bray

Illustrated talk by Ann Darracott (of Maidenhead Civic Society!) on behalf of Marlow Archaeology (MAS).

According to Nikolaus Pevsner, this mid-C15 house “is the most refined and the most sophisticated timber-framed mansion in England”. This is a rare opportunity for a glimpse of a very important, local medieval house which is a private dwelling.

This talk will be held in the Garden Room, Liston Hall, Marlow, SL7 1DD. Entrance £3.50 Members £2.50. For all enquiries please contact Joy Blake on 01628 523896.

News from the Heritage Centre

The 2014 Maidenhead Calendar is now on sale at the Heritage Centre shop, with a great selection of photographs. Local prints, books and other gifts are also available, and every year tea towels, being light and cheap to post, wing their way around the world.

The programme of lunchtime lectures on the second Thursday of each month continues. The talk on November 14th will be by Civic Society member Rabbi Jonathan Romain who will speak about his latest book *Royal Jews* and the impact of Jews on local life in and around Maidenhead.

Until 30th November, “Maidenhead’s Listed Buildings” invites us all to open our eyes and see the surviving heritage which is all around us. There are over 70 listed buildings in Maidenhead, the oldest built in the 15th century and the youngest in 1973. The smallest is a milestone and the largest is Brunel’s railway bridge. Come and be surprised.

The first exhibition of 2014 will feature local maps and will run from 10 January until mid-March.

Civic Society members who have enjoyed visits to White Waltham airfield will be interested in the 6-week talks series on **Maidenhead’s Aviation History**, presented by Richard Poad on Tuesday evenings starting on January 14th 2014. There are 6 evening talks covering everything from visionary pioneers from the Victorian and Edwardian era to an international airport at Cookham, Fairey Aviation, ML Aviation and the huge Virgin airships which used to be based at White Waltham. Contact the Heritage Centre for full details on info@maidenheadheritage.org.uk.

... and of course you can follow in the wake of Theresa May MP and ‘fly’ the fabulous Spitfire simulator. Phone 01628 780555 to book a flight!

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 20th November 2013

**Talk by Mike McGaughrin
followed by the AGM**

“Twelve months in the Royal Borough’s top job”
Methodist Church Hall, King Street, 8.00pm

Friday 13th-Sunday 15th December 2013

Display

Christmas Tree Festival
St Luke’s Church, Norfolk Road

CIVIC SOCIETY OFFICERS

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2013

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

8th January, 12th February, 12th June, 9th July, 10th September, 12th November, 10th December

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETINGS FOR 2013

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

9th April, 8th October

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 20th November 2013 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 10 January 2014**

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