



Maidenhead Civic Society NEWS



Issue 4/14

November 2014



The Talk of the Town

The latest proposals for the “Triangle” site

Read more on page 13

Visit our website: www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

The Chairman's Foreword

At the start of the year I predicted that 2014 could well prove to be the turning point for the regeneration of Maidenhead town centre. And it's looking that way.

As well as diggers and cranes, the town has been attracting a level of interest it's never experienced before as plans to transform the area take shape. The combined effect of Crossrail's arrival in 2019 and the efforts of those engaged in promoting the town's rejuvenation have accelerated the market, drawing interest from investors and developers.

Construction has begun on the new hotel in West Street, on the first phase of Chapel Arches and the waterways, on the conversion of Berkshire House into apartments, and on alterations at the station.

Alongside all this, council planners are in talks with developers about further redevelopment in West Street and in Stafferton Way. Meanwhile, an architectural competition has been launched to find an appropriate scheme for a civic and cultural quarter in the area centred on York Road and St Ives Road, adjacent to the town hall. The council was inspired to go down this route by the success of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) competition for the Triangle site which enticed more than 30 top class international architects.

Burchetts Green businessman Bill Higgins lost no time, having acquired ING's interests in January, to set up the competition with RIBA and push on with a new scheme. The exciting results drew predominantly positive reactions at a public consultation last month and an outline planning application should be submitted before the end of the year. If you'd like to know more about the project or the man behind it, then make a note of the Civic Society Dinner on January 23rd where Bill has agreed to be our guest speaker (see page 18 for details).

The guest speaker at our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 19th November will be the Mayor, Councillor Richard Kellaway (see page 18). Richard will be half way through his term at that point and he'll be sharing his perceptions – and perhaps some of the secrets – of being the first citizen in the Royal Borough.

I do hope you'll try and join us for both these events.

Bob Dulson

54th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

**To be held on Wednesday, 19th November 2014
at the Methodist Church Hall at 8.00 pm.**

With Guest Speaker Cllr Richard Kellaway
Mayor, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Refreshments will follow the talk, prior to the formal business of the AGM at about 8.45 pm.

AGENDA

1. Introduction by the President
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 53rd Annual General Meeting
3. Accounts for the year ended 31st May 2014
4. Chairman's Report for 2013/2014
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, John McIntosh, Mike Emmerson and Eileen Goford 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
53rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY**

Held on Wednesday 20th November 2013

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** There are no apologies for absence
- 2. Approval of Minutes of 52nd AGM:** The minutes were approved. Proposed by Jill Powell; seconded Rudi Sheldon.
- 3. Accounts for the Year Ending 31st May 2013:** The accounts and report for the past year appear on pages 10 and 11 of the November 2013 Newsletter. Income has been boosted by a generous grant of £1,000 from the Louis Baylis Trust, of which £500 was used for sediment testing at North Town pond. Costs of the Newsletter production were down. The biggest subscription is £245 to Civic Voice. The balance of funds is £12,797. There is a need to find appropriate ways of spending some of this money in future years. Ann Darracott said that there would be a grant from the Kidwells Trust in the following year. Bob Dulson noted the number of members swapping from annual to life memberships. The accounts were approved: proposed by Michael Johnson and seconded by Margaret Bowdery.
- 4. Chairman's Report:** The Chairman welcomed Michelle LeTissier to the meeting. She had been helping with advice on promoting the Society. He also noted that founder member Michael Bayley has recently passed away. Michael was a wonderful source of contacts and information on the background of the Society. The principle followed by the Society is "localism". Its major activity is planning. The Chairman pointed out how the Local Plan could be upset by other issues such as planning directives. Localism leads to the multiplication of such factors and in trying to respond to them volunteers can suffer over-commitment. But there is a real interest in keeping in touch with local affairs. The draft Borough Plan is due for publication followed by consultation in June. The local plan should represent the views of the public. The report was approved. Proposed by Brian Madge; seconded Ady Sheldon.
- 5. Election to Board of Trustees:** Harold James, Martin McNamee and Tina Sell were re-elected. There were no other nominations. Proposed by Brian Darracott, seconded by Jill Powell.
- 6. Election of Officers.** Eileen Goford was elected Hon Secretary and Mike Emmerson Hon. Treasurer. Proposed by Ann Darracott, seconded by Joyce Delasalle.
- 7. Any Other Business:** Michael Johnson expressed the thanks of the meeting to Bob Dulson for chairing the meeting. The meeting closed at 9.30p.m.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF THE YEAR

The Society can look back on the past year with some satisfaction. It has been a good one, particularly in terms of raising awareness and the Society's role.

Our persistence in achieving public access to the local historic gem Bisham Abbey paid off handsomely when a Heritage Open Day and talk we organised attracted some 400 appreciative folk in September. A significant event for the Society.

In the spring, our art competition *Maidenhead & Me* also ticked the boxes. Entrants were asked to portray what Maidenhead meant to them in the medium of their choice. The level of appreciation from both artists and visitors led us to think this should be an annual event.

Planning

In addition to the 150-or-so planning applications considered during the year, the Planning Group's attention was drawn by a number of major projects including new plans for the Broadway Triangle, the former mill site in Mill Lane Taplow, Berkshire House and the new Oldfield School.

With colleagues in the Hitcham and Taplow Society, the River Thames Society and others we've been keeping a weather eye on the proposals for the redevelopment of Mill Lane, Taplow. Plans have reached their second iteration and are now the subject of a formal planning application.

We made headlines when we compared the fencing round a proposed temporary car park in St Ives Road to Guantanamo Bay and the council soon scaled back its "hastily submitted" application. Before and after the disastrous floods we were drawn to comment on the need for tighter controls on development in the flood plain but the level of building appears to continue unabated.

In response to the Borough's draft Local Plan we expressed concern about the number of homes being proposed for Maidenhead and the adequacy of supporting infrastructure.

On a positive note, we continue to play a role in PRoM which in the past year enjoyed significant success with an influential marketing event at the Palace of Westminster in December, the Triangle deal and RIBA competition in the spring, and took "Town of The Year" in the inaugural Thames Valley Property Awards for its regeneration programme in May.

Projects

Ockwells Manor: The Society has been campaigning since 2009 to have the field opposite Ockwells Manor re-designated as Green Belt. The land is protected by covenants laid down by Sir Edward Barry. Several attempts to have the covenants set

aside to enable development have been resisted, the latest by the National Trust in 2012. However, it may happen again, hence the re-designation of the field.

As almost none of the councillors or planning officers concerned, or members of the National Trust, had ever seen the manor house, Ann Darracott, with the cooperation of the owner Brian Stein, escorted two groups round the manor house in February and also gave a talk “*A Virtual Tour of Ockwells Manor*” in the town hall prior to the visit. The Council voted to re-designate the 22.4 acre field as Green Belt in the draft Local Plan. We expect it to be in the final plan.



Visitors admire the Great Hall at Ockwells Manor

Bisham Abbey: Apart from the successful HOD event mentioned above, this year saw the publication of Ann Darracott’s work “*The Grandisons - their Built & Chivalric Legacy*” – a comprehensive account impact the Grandison family of Savoy on the history of Britain and the Continent. This is now available for purchase as a printed book as well as the earlier DVD version. It includes a chapter on Bisham Abbey.

The Green Way: This streamside walk has had ups and downs this year. Located next to the Green Way, North Town Moor pond has been deepened by the Royal Borough and its faunal diversity has been improved by the amenity societies. However, urbanisation continues with car parks being created next to the path at North Town Moor Cricket Club. Whilst the stream flooded in January, by July it had dried out in the town centre, yet again. Ann Darracott, Harold James and Jane Gifford represent the Society on the Green Way Working Group (GWWG), which monitors both path and stream.

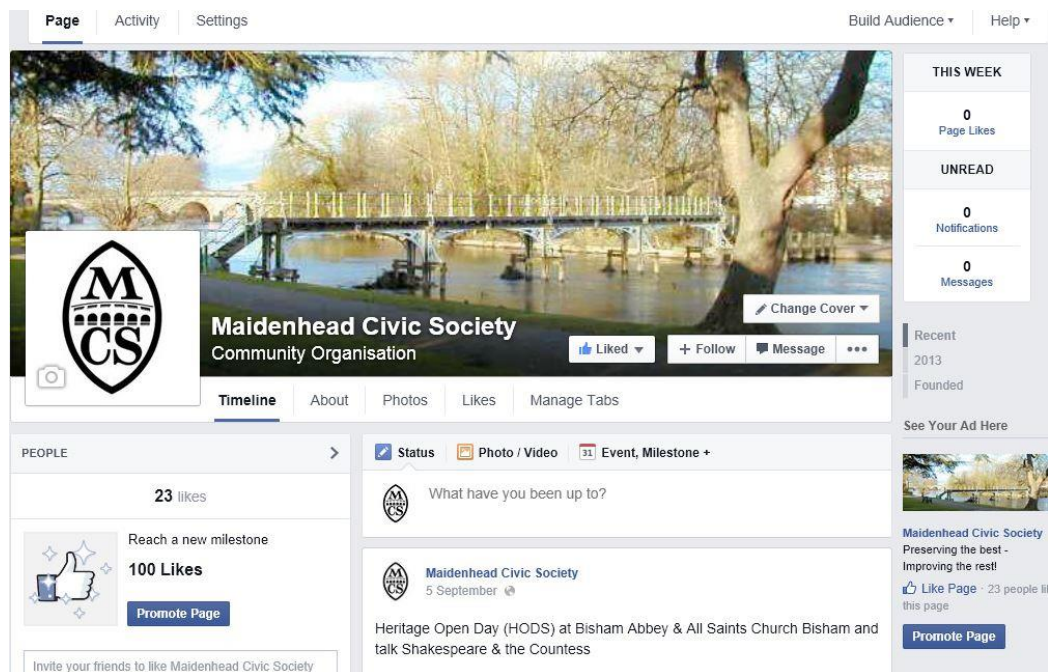
Millennium Walk: There has been no progress on completing this project to create a walk from Hurley across country to Maidenhead riverside. The missing link between Widbrook Common and the Thames Path, which was temporarily opened to us for a number of Boundary Walks, was not available in 2014 for the second year. It wasn’t walked in 2013 because of fears about the state of the trees and in 2014 those fears

proved justified when most were blown over, right across our path, and the floods wrecked the trestle bridge over the White Brook.

The completion of the Millennium Walk was given high priority by the Local Access Forum but their Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan expires in 2015, so it doesn't look hopeful.

Communications & Events

In May the Society's quarterly News magazine turned its back on 50 shades of grey and converted to full-colour illustrations. The cost-effectiveness of digital printing allowed us to do this and it does bring the pages alive. The Society is still coming to terms with communications technology. We do have a Facebook page, launched in November last year, which we invite you to "Like" but we have yet to become "Tweeters". Our website continues to reflect our activities well, although advances in technological presentation have left it looking a little staid and due for a makeover.



Visit our Facebook page and "Like" us!

An art competition *Maidenhead & Me* in May and June caught the imagination and helped to raise the Society's profile. The quality of the entries was outstanding. Theresa May MP presented the prizes and formally opened an exhibition of all 62 entries in the Nicholsons Centre. The only disappointment was the dearth of interest from schools but we hope to address that by giving longer notice next time. The Society was indebted to the support and sponsorship received from the Advertiser, Bovilles Arts Shop, Louis Baylis Trust, Nicholsons and RBWM. The competition culminated on Civic Day on June 21 which aimed to give communities across the nation a chance to say "we value where we live".

Also in June a full coach of 50 members and guests paid a visit to the new Broadcasting House in London for a look at the BBC Newsroom and a chance to see

how programmes were made. Some Civic Society talent emerged as actors in a radio drama, weather presenters and newsreaders!



We acquired a smart new gazebo (left) carrying the Society's logo and motto in time for Maidenhead Festival in the summer. It was used to good effect in the High Street and in Kidwells Park and helped attract attention and some new members. With this new asset, we plan to visit more events, including the Christmas lights switch-on on November 22nd.

Membership

Our efforts at attracting new members again brought qualified success. We have attracted 27 new members in 16 membership applications.

Since the start of the membership year in June 2013 we were delighted to welcome: Mary Adams, Carolyn & John Beale, Michael Broberg, Sally & Chris Campbell, Hanako & Jasper Credland, Jocelyn & Tony Hardy, Doreen & Peter Hill, Kate & Anthony Johnson, Mary Lou & Richard Kellaway, Stuart Maconochie, Marilyn & Robin Oldman, Mary & Graham Pennington, Janet & Stephen Rose, David J Stanbury, John Stevens and Amanda Taylor.

However, the number of cancelled memberships 21 (26 headcount) resulted in a net reduction of 14 (18). The majority of this loss is the result of members moving away from the area to live closer to relatives as well as some long-serving members who have sadly passed away.

	<i>2014</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2010</i>
Memberships (i.e. Family, Honorary, Life, etc)	232	246	257	261	264
Total members (exc Corporate)	334	352	349	357	353
Life Members	101	101	96	97	98
Honorary	19	19	20	20	26
Corporate	1	2	2	3	3

The Society keeps abreast of 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 the Green Way Working Group, the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Maidenhead Regeneration Group, Maidenhead Town Partnership, Maidenhead Waterways and PRoM.

The increasing number of initiatives with expectations of public engagement presents something of a challenge. However, with our members support and participation we strive to use our 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 a considerable commitment for which the Society is extremely grateful.

Bob Dulson

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Annual accounts for the year ended 31st May 2014 are set out overleaf.

The main highlights from these accounts are as follows:-

Overall there was a surplus of Income over Expenditure of £625 in 2013/14. This compared to a surplus of £971 in 2012/13.

Income

Receipts overall were down by £894 compared to last year due mainly to the £1,000 grant received from the Louis Baylis Charitable Trust in the previous year.

Subscriptions were up slightly by £55 compared to the previous year.

We made a profit on social events of £156 compared to £Nil in previous year.

Gift Aid receipts were £555 for the current year compared to £624 received in the previous year.

Expenditure

Payments overall were down by £549 compared to the previous year.

Last year however included a £500 payment to RBWM for sediment testing which did not occur this year.

General Expenses were up by £146 due mainly to higher printing costs of the newsletter which is now in colour.

Subscriptions increased by £117 due to higher payments to Civic Voice.

The Society accounts show a healthy balance of funds in hand of £14,120 compared to £12,751 in the previous year.

Mike Emmerson
Treasurer

MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY - Charity No. 272102		
Annual Accounts for Year ended 31st May 2014		
2012/2013		2013/2014
INCOME		
1,000	Donations/Grants/Bequests	0
2,581	Subscriptions Received During Year	2,636
78	Interest On Bank And Other Deposits	40
0	Surplus On Outings	
0	Surplus On Social Events	156
624	Tax Refunds On Gift Aid	555
4,282	Total	3,388
EXPENDITURE		
Administration		
1,433	General Expenses, Printing, Postage, Etc.	1,579
235	Hire Of Rooms, Speakers And Meeting Expenses	303
301	Subscriptions	418
98	Publicity	0
245	Insurance	245
Donations		
85	Various	0
0		
0		
Other Expenses		
95	Ockwells And Associated Projects (Net Costs)	-17
34	Millennium Walk. (Net Costs)	-14
126	Various Other Small Projects	136
500	Sediment Testing	0
59	Deficit On Social Events	0
0	Deficit On Outings	0
0	Presentations/Memorials	0
101	Website	113
3,311	Total	2,762
971	EXCESS/(DEFICIT) OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	625
11,826	Balance Brought Forward	12,797
£12,797	Balance Carried Forward	13,422
FUNDS		
3,300	Bank (Lloyds TSB) and Cash	4,630
9,451	Charities Deposit General Fund (COIF)	9,490
624	Debtor/Insurance Payments In Advance	1,535
-578	Creditors/Commitments	-2,234
£12,797	BALANCE OF FUNDS	13,422
Mike Emmerson - Hon. Treasurer		

From the Archives

This little article appeared 25 years ago in the November 1989 edition of the Newsletter. It was written by Wally Halliday who was chairman of the Society's Planning group from 1960 until 1984, when he handed over the reins to Elaine Mordaunt.

The Early Days of "Planning" by the Civic Society

In 1960 when the Civic Society was formed, the Chairman (Clifford Armitage) asked me if I would inspect the Register of Planning Applications for the Borough and report any significant ones the Society might be interested in. Michael Bayley was to do likewise for the Cookham RDC.



I would visit the Town Hall once a week at the Borough Surveyor's Department where the Register was kept and note the applications which I would report to the Executive Committee. It must be remembered that public participation was in its infancy in those days and was rather frowned upon by some of the officials. Fortunately for me, one of the planning assistants was an old friend of mine, who was able to enlighten me on more details than were shown in the Register: he would also show me the plans although he was not really authorised to do so because one should obtain permission from the architect. This was a lengthy process, for very often by the time we had that permission the application would invariably have been determined. Very often I would ask Michael Bayley to meet me at the Town Hall to inspect certain plans together and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee.

This procedure was time-consuming both for me and the planning assistant and I suggested to him that a list of planning applications be issued to us and other interested parties if this were possible. In time this was done, and so the Civic Society can claim that it was instrumental in bringing this about.

As planning applications increased, the Borough Council made a separate department for these and it was transferred to the old Cookham RDC offices at 1 Bath Road. After a while, I was able to "borrow" certain plans and drawings to show to the sub-committee who met frequently to decide what action, if any, should be taken.



This speeded things up considerably and letters could be sent to the Council in time for the next planning meeting. This procedure is still carried out today by Elaine Mordaunt.

The sketches of Wally and Elaine were done by Michael Bayley in 1988.

Planning Matters

Firstly, an update on topics covered in the last Newsletter. The proposals for the redevelopment of The First Church of Christ the Scientist into a substantial office block, which in our opinion were rightly refused by the Borough, have gone to appeal. The decision is awaited.

The “de-forestation” of railway embankments to accommodate Crossrail electrification was believed to be imminent during the summer. To date we are unaware of any activity to clear vegetation as anticipated in the Maidenhead area - but we can be sure our turn will come. Only time will reveal the impact of these works on the visual and sound screening of the railway.

There has been no progress in resolving the outcome of the “missing link” in the Thames Path at Bridge View on Ray Mead Road. However, it is understood that a sudden and unexpected decision was made in cabinet to drop the contentious proposal to make the northwest corner of Bridge Gardens into a car park for Bridge View residents. One of the properties involved is currently on the market - and the estate agents had the presumption to offer two car parking spaces with the property!



*Walkers trying follow the Thames Path on the busy
Ray Mead Road by the Bridge View Cottages*

The Thames Pilgrim Way is a new pilgrimage route from Radcot to Wraysbury, all within the diocese of Oxford, that was recently launched by the outgoing Bishop of Oxford, John Pritchard. The Bishop initiated it by walking along the route, using the Thames Path, from 18th to 28th September, a total of 104 miles. The only section he did not walk was from Boulters Lock to Maidenhead Bridge. Evidently, the problem with this section has got as far as the *dreaming spires*. Will the Council grasp the nettle and deal with this missing link? – we’re not hopeful.

There have been two pre-application consultations in recent weeks. Firstly, the Berkeley Homes proposals for Mill Lane Taplow (Paper Mill and Skindles). These were covered in some depth in our last edition. Formal planning permission has now been applied for - with little improvement or modification following previous consultation. The deadline for comments has been extended until 19th November. We are still working within the Taplow Reach Interest Group to present a co-ordinated response to the total scheme to South Bucks planners. However, one aspect of the plans is relevant to Maidenhead's planning department: the footbridge linking the Taplow bank with Ray Mill Island. The Civic Society have long been supportive of the concept of providing a footbridge to offer access from the Boulters Lock area to the Bucks bank, thus completing a circular walk down both sides of the river to Maidenhead Bridge. Regretfully, the proposed bridge design is unimaginative and industrial - with a heavy utilitarian superstructure. We will be urging South Bucks to seek something more streamlined by offering alternative existing designs that fulfil the height and reach requirements of the location. We hope that the Royal Borough will join us in our efforts to secure a more sympathetic design. The western landfall of the bridge is on their land and our planners have to approve the relevant application!

The second pre-application consultation related to "The Landing". There has been much publicity about the new proposals from London and Aberdeen for The Landing - the redevelopment of the King Street/Broadway/Queen Street triangle.



An architect's impression of the The Landing

We believe these proposals are a great improvement on all that has gone before. We welcome the reduction of retail space to 50,000 square feet to include many bars and restaurants as well as traditional retail. The mixed use development includes 200,000 square feet residential (208 apartments) and 330,000 square feet of offices. We do have reservations about the thirteen-storey height of the office blocks on the western end of Broadway. There will be an innovative pedestrian crossing between the railway station and the south west corner entrance to the site - although sadly no overhead link. The development will be much more permeable in access terms with a total of eight walkway entrances into a central open forum labelled "The Lantern". The walkway link to the Nicholsons Centre seems too narrow for the weight of pedestrian flow, as this will presumably be the primary through route to the High Street. The Lantern will be a focal gathering point open to summer sunlight. Underground parking is provided for 150 residential vehicles, and 200 office parking spaces will be provided by adding two storeys to the existing Nicholsons car park. This will be the subject of a subsequent joint planning application with the owners of Nicholsons Centre. We also approve of the manner in which the Queen Street frontage has been set back to give a more spacious feel to Queen Street itself. There are many refinements to be determined but we do believe the proposals are moving in the right direction. Most importantly the development must expand and enhance the total retail offer - and not detract from the High Street or Nicholsons Centre.

Finally, a subsidiary of Redrow called Harrow Homes is proposing to construct 300 "quality homes" on the land behind Lidl and Lok'n'Store off Stafferton Way. This land is previously developed Green Belt and ripe for redevelopment as identified in the Borough Local Plan. It occupies the previous Park and Ride facility used for London (Dorney) Olympics 2012. It is of course adjoining the civic amenity site which lies to the south. Have you ever wondered if the road to our rubbish dump actually has a name? Well, according to Harrow Homes it does - Tip Lane. That might need changing. The plans also include an "odour limit line" along the southern boundary of the site. This is presumably in calm conditions. Beware southerly gales! We are unsure of the area of the site but as far as density is concerned it is estimated that it would be twice the density of Boulters Meadow/Badnells Pit. They do propose an unspecified element of affordable/key worker homes - presumably in a six-storey block on the northwest corner of the site. The remainder of the blocks are three or four storeys high. Parking for residents and visitors is inadequate and all on street, although it is close to town and the station. Amenity space for more than 700 potential occupants is severely limited. The proposed density and challenging location of the site make the delivery of "quality homes" an impossibility. Surely the long term future of the civic amenity site needs to be resolved - does it really need to be so close to the town centre?

Our routine monthly meetings of the Planning Group have continued with about forty applications reviewed in detail - although our August meeting was shambolic and frustrating because of a major glitch on the RBWM planning site. About ten applications were commented on - the most noteworthy of which was for the development of 52 dwellings on the site of Shoppenhangers Manor on Manor Lane.

Outline permission has been granted on appeal for a slightly reduced number of houses including an element of affordable homes. Although a fait accompli in terms of approval for development, we have submitted comments on so called reserved matters (appearance, landscape, layout and scale). The streetscape on Manor Lane should reflect the character of existing properties opposite. Parking for residents and visitors is inadequate. There is no amenity space for the occupants of a block of eight affordable apartments - with all such accommodation being concentrated in one corner of the site. Some properties are up to three storeys high and set on elevated ground which could dominate the landscape. Concerns remain regarding the additional traffic movement generated by the development especially access to the junction between Manor Lane and Harvest Hill Road.

Finally, to a wider planning matter - The Green Belt. You will be aware that for nearly two years the new planning guidelines from Government have discriminated in favour of sustainable development even on designated Green Belt land. Throughout the country mainly rural communities are objecting to the never ending erosion of their landscape. Representations have been made to local MPs and it appears that the Government are having a change of heart. Mr Eric Pickles MP has announced that new guidelines are being drawn up to give protection to Green Belt - and that the Planning Inspectorate (responsible for appeals) would be instructed accordingly. The inspectors must be confused! Now, greater priority and focus should be directed onto the development of brownfield sites within towns and cities - which the Government estimates at supporting the provision of 1,500,000 homes - about seven years' worth at 200,000 per annum. Of course, wherever development occurs there will be pressure on infrastructure - education, health, etc. But development within existing towns and cities will not require the transport infrastructure and vehicle use associated with more dispersed residential development. Of course, developers often prefer greenfield sites because remedial works and other constraints associated with brownfield sites makes the latter more difficult and costly to deliver.

Martin McNamee

St Luke's Fourth Christmas Tree Festival

The Society is again sponsoring a Christmas tree at this event to be held from Friday 12th to Sunday 14th 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 12th and Saturday 13th December from 10am to 5pm, and on Sunday 14th from 2-5pm.

Projects

The Green Way

This project of the Society, carried out in collaboration with East Berks Ramblers, really began in 1985 when we published the first Green Way map. The aim was to create a streamside walk running from Cookham through Maidenhead to Bray. The critical word here is “*streamside*”.

In 1988 the stream dried out in the town centre, leading to the setting up of the Green Way Working Group in 1989. The stream dried in 2002 and this year, in July, it dried again necessitating the rescue of 40,000, mainly juvenile fish, by the Environment Agency (EA). Luckily, unlike in the past, it didn't retreat as far and wasn't dry for long but this has highlighted again the problem with water flow into the town centre during the summer months.



Green Way alongside York Stream in July 2014

Before the creation of the Jubilee River and the construction of the North Maidenhead Flood Bund, the EA were responsible for maintaining flow in the streams as they constituted main river drainage and good flow was necessary for flood prevention. Now such clearance (removing obstructions such as fallen trees, removing reeds silt by dredging) is now less needed for flood control and the EA have said they don't have funds for clearing for amenity purposes.

The Management & Maintenance Plan (MMP) for the Waterways project (whose volunteers helped to get flow in the White Brook started again) needs to include

clearance in the feeder streams north of Maidenhead. We have commented on the draft MMP to that effect and also that the plan needs to spell out who is going to be responsible.

And – yes, just in case you are wondering – when commenting on planning applications concerned with the stream, I have pointed out the problem with water flow *ad nauseum* in the past.

North Town Moor Pond

Since the last Newsletter, in conjunction with East Berks Ramblers, we decided to try and improve the oxygen levels in the pond by introducing pond weed, an aquatic plant. This was done in July and by September the faunal diversity had doubled and included for the first time diving beetle larvae. In October the weed was associated with a mat of filamentous algae so a further survey was undertaken. The algae doesn't seem to have had any bad effect on the fauna as it was found to include may fly larvae as well as diving beetle larvae – normally indicators of good environmental conditions. The pond is still home to gnat and midge larvae but they are not as dominant as before.



Left: weed in North Town pond in July

Above: filamentous algae & pond weed, October

The *Make Space for Life Group*, headed by the Royal Borough's Landscape Officer, Jonathan Howe, who have been undertaking conservation work in North Town Moor, are willing to keep an eye on the pond. If necessary, weed will be removed.

Ann Darracott

Events

The Mayor to address the Society's AGM



The Mayor of the Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead, Cllr Richard Kellaway, will be the guest speaker at our Annual General meeting to be held at the Methodist Hall, Maidenhead at 8.00pm. Richard will be half way through his term at that point and he'll be sharing his perceptions – and perhaps some of the secrets – of being the first citizen in the Royal Borough. He has represented Bisham and Cookham Ward in the Royal Borough since 2007, and is currently a member of Maidenhead Town Partnership and PRoM. He also represents the Borough on the Local Enterprise Partnership and is a former Chairman of the Conservative Group.

Richard was educated at Presentation College, Reading and Pembroke College, Cambridge, and retired in 2008 after a career in international oil storage. He is married with three grown-up children and lives in Cookham with his wife, Mary-Lou.

The Annual Civic Society Dinner

Moor Hall, Friday 23rd January 2015, 7 for 7.30pm

Members are welcome to join us for our annual dinner which will be at Moor Hall, Cookham, as usual. Our guest speaker will be Bill Higgins, the man behind the latest scheme to redevelop the infamous "Triangle".

Bill has lived in Burchetts Green for more than 30 years and was a vocal critic of the ING Red proposals for the Broadway Triangle in Maidenhead. He is chairman of London & Aberdeen Group who with Norwegian firm Smedvig Eiendom acquired ING's subsidiary company in January and formed Ryger Maidenhead Ltd. With RIBA they organised an architectural competition and are now working with the winners, Studio Egret West, to submit an outline planning application for a new £250m scheme *The Landing* before the end of the year.



Details are still to be finalised but the cost will be of the order of £35 per person, inclusive of a three-course set meal and wines. Please contact Mike Copeland on 01628 634181 for further details or to reserve your place.

Heritage Open Day (HODS) at Bisham Abbey & All Saints' Church Bisham

This was held on Thursday 11th September and was a great success. 394 visitors came to the Abbey and 310 to All Saints' Church. From the feedback forms 72% of visitors gave the event the highest rating of very enjoyable; 22% enjoyable, and 6% acceptable. Visitors found the guides very helpful and the *History Trail* useful.



The queue to visit the Abbey built up early in the morning

We had printed 100 copies of the *History Trail* and these sold out early in the day. We did take orders and nine further copies were sent off after reprinting. We also sold a couple of DVDs of the *Grandison Legacy* book and even some Millennium Walk leaflets.

This was a major undertaking for the Civic Society and I would like to thank everyone who helped make the day a success, especially the guides/runners: Eileen Goford, Joyce Delasalle, Val Herbert, Mary Pennington, Fran Hornby, Jill Norman, Gill Curry, Sally Somerville, Catherine Randall, Steve Rose, Tina Sell & Jeff Griffiths (who came from Wales to help); and especially to Patricia Burstall, who manned the church.

Thanks are also due to our MP Theresa May who arranged for the then Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport, Maria Miller, to write to Sport England, which owns the Abbey, on our behalf. This has led to improved access to this historic site. Thanks are due to the Serco staff who provided tea and cake and also managed the

large number of cars that turned up. Steve Nelson, Serco's general manager at the Abbey, seems keen to do it again next year. And a final thank you to the Louis Baylis Trust for a grant that covered the printing of *History Trails* for the event and expenses to do with the talk the evening before.

Dr Chris Laoutaris was also present at the Abbey, as was the Mayor, Cllr Richard Kellaway, who visited both places.

The Open Day was preceded the evening before by an illustrated talk by Dr Chris Laoutaris enjoyed by nearly 50 attendees. Drawing from his new book, *Shakespeare & the Countess*, Chris talked about the life of Lady Elizabeth Hoby (aka Dowager Countess Lady Elizabeth Hoby Russell) of Bisham Abbey; her connections with the Cecil family (both Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley, who helped run the country for Elizabeth I, and his son Robert who ran it for James I); her disputes not only with Shakespeare over plans to build a theatre next to her house in Blackfriars but also disputes with the Lovelace family of Hurley. She was obviously a formidable lady and the talk brought her to life.



Dr Chris Laoutaris talking about Lady Elizabeth Hoby in the Warwick Room at Bisham Abbey where she once lived

The talk also attracted historians from Badsey (near Evesham) who live in a house formerly owned by Sir Philip Hoby. Badsey Church houses a rather battered monument for Richard Hoby, brother of Sir Thomas Hoby who married Lady Elizabeth. Sir Philip Hoby was their half-brother but had no children so, just as Thomas inherited Bisham from Philip, so Richard inherited Badsey. Philip in both

places seemed to have acquired former religious buildings that he set about remodelling.



*Badsey Church, near Evesham,
and, right, Richard Hoby's tomb*

The Friends of the Church of All Saints' Bisham

Those who visited All Saints' Church, Bisham, during the HODS event will have been struck by the charm of the place and may be interested to know that it is possible to support the Church and its upkeep through a Friends scheme. The objectives of the Friends Scheme are: to promote friendship within both the local and wider communities of All Saints' Bisham (ASB); and to promote the architecture, monuments and tranquillity of ASB's Thames-side setting.

Friends receive a half-yearly newsletter with news of the health of the church and the churchyard as well as details of any special events which may be of particular interest to Friends. The annual subscription is £10 person or £15 for a family group, and all funds donated or raised by Friends are used solely for the purpose of maintaining, conserving and developing the Church, its churchyard and associated buildings as a community resource, and promoting knowledge of the same.

For further information and/or a membership application form please contact the Treasurer of the Friends, on 01628 471409, or email FoBC@marlowanglican.org.

Ann Darracott

Other Events

Society members may be interested in the following talks organised by local history and archaeology groups:

Maidenhead Archaeological & Historical Society (MAHS)

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

Wednesday 26th November, 8pm: *Hatch, Spatch and Thatch - a History of Thatching*, by Sheila Viner

Wednesday 10th December, 8pm: “*The Fight for Cookham Commons*”, by Keith Parry

Marlow Archaeology (MA)

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

Thursday 27th November 2014, 8pm: *Historical Light Bites* – some glimpses of local history & archaeology in short presentations.

Thursday 15th January 2015, 8pm: *Vanished Windsor*, by Elias Kupfermann

Thursday 19th February 2015, 8pm (jointly with AiM): *New research on Roman rural settlements in southern Britain*, by Dr Alex Smith

Thursday 12th March 2015, 8pm: *Excavations at Heathrow's Terminal 5*; by Ken Walsh

Thursday 30th April 2015, 8pm: (jointly with AiM): *Roman Jewellery*, by Justine Bayley

Thursday 14th May 2015, 8pm: *The Middle Thames Valley in the late Iron Age*, by Peter Carver

Archaeology in Marlow (AiM)

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

Thursday 20th November 2014, 8pm: *Henley River & Rowing Museum's Local Collection*, by Eloise Chapman, Curator

Thursday 22nd January 2015, 8pm: *People in the Pottery*, by Lisa Brown

The Victorian Society

Victorian Society has created an excellent photographic exhibition for their jubilee, featuring wonderful buildings they had saved. It's called ‘*Saving a Century*’ and tours round the country. It will be at Slough Library until Friday November 1st (free entry during normal opening hours).

News from the Heritage Centre

‘Maidenhead in the Great War’ is the theme of the Autumn/Winter exhibition, which will run until the end of March 2015, in order to encourage as many local schools as possible to visit.

The exhibition looks at the effect of World War I on Maidenhead and the surrounding villages. So as well as Belgian refugees, accompanied by nasty remarks about alien invaders, we find troops convalescing at Cliveden and at the Lambert Nursing Home at Moor Hall, Cookham. As well as an armament factory in King Street, we find food prices going through the roof and rationing being introduced. You can discover the sad story of Tom Ayres, the first Maidenhead casualty, in a letter written to his sister by one of his mates, and admire the craftsmanship of a Cookham cabinet maker who made a special case for the ‘death medal’ of Henry Easden, who signed up for the Navy and ended up on the western front.

In January and February next year, the 80th anniversary of White Waltham airfield is being marked with a series of six talks on Tuesday evenings, starting on 20 January and ending on 24 February. The talks are given by Richard Poad and held at West London Aero Club at White Waltham; they will cover the history of the airfield from 1935 to the present day, using masses of archive photographs, newsreels and film. Full details from the Heritage Centre or on its website. Early birds booking before November 30th will be rewarded with a £10 discount on the price of the talks series.

Christmas gifts with a local flavour: come and visit our Heritage Centre shop!

<http://www.maidenheadheritage.org.uk>

Civic Society Website – can you help?

The Society’s website (www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk) was designed and implemented nearly six years ago. This is a long time in the online world! Our website needs a major re-design in terms of its purpose and content and in particular needs to be made fully compliant for use with today’s tablets such as the iPad etc. To optimise its potential it also needs to be integrated with social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Before we begin a search for a cost-effective designer, I wonder if any Society member has the required web-design skills or knows of any friend or family member who has, and who could help and/or offer guidance. If so, please let me know.

Brian Darracott (News and website editor)

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 19th November 2014
Talk by Mayor Richard Kellaway
followed by the AGM

“Life as the First Citizen of the Royal Borough”
 Methodist Church Hall, King Street, 8.00pm

Saturday 22nd November 2014
Public Event

Maidenhead Christmas Lights Switch-on & Market
 Town Centre

Friday 12th-Sunday 14th December 2014
Display

Christmas Tree Festival
 St Luke’s Church, Norfolk Road

Friday 23rd January 2015
Dinner & Talk by Bill Higgins

Civic Society Dinner
 Moor Hall, Cookham; 7 for 7.30pm

CIVIC SOCIETY OFFICERS

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2014

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

14th January, 11th February, 11th March, 6th May, 10th June, 8th July, 9th September, 11th November, 9th December

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETINGS FOR 2014

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

8th April, 14th October

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 19th November 2014 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 16th January 2015**

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