



Maidenhead Civic Society NEWS



Issue 4/15

November 2015



My Maidenhead

See page 17 for the results of the “Maidenhead & Me” Competition

Visit our website: www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

The Chairman's Page

Keeping an eye on the past while looking to the future is one of the Civic Society's strengths. History and heritage inform our thinking. It's enshrined in our motto: Preserve the best, improve the rest.

Someone who has epitomised that principle and informed it with his unique insight is our esteemed colleague **John McIntosh**. So it is with much regret that I relate that John has decided to stand down as President of the Society.

John has been a member of the Society for 30 years and a member of the Planning Group for most of them. In 1999 he agreed to stand in, temporarily, as Society Chairman while another candidate was found but the shoes fitted and he stayed in post for nine busy years. Subsequently, with the introduction of a new constitution, he became President in 2008, succeeding Richard Poad.

A meteorologist during the war, John went on to a career as a scientist in industrial research and development with major UK multinationals and he brought the same analytical thinking to his work with the Society.

His achievements with the Society are many. Two of the most notable were his role in the creation of the Heritage Centre, for which he prepared the groundwork, and his initiative with the Society's Strategic Review of Maidenhead in 2004 which led directly to the formation of PRoM and latterly to the town centre regeneration that we see taking place today.

With all that to look back on, it's no wonder he now wants to relax his level of commitments a little and do his own thing.

John will continue as a member of the Society and, I hope, will still share with us his informed perspective of what matters to Maidenhead.

In conclusion, I'd like to thank him, personally, for his support, advice and encouragement as well as for his unremitting faith and loyalty to the Society and his belief that if you keep plugging away you will get the result. We're with you on that, John. Thank you.

Bob Dulson

55th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

**To be held on Wednesday, 18th November 2014
at the Parish Centre, St Luke's Church, Norfolk Road at 8.15 pm**

**To be followed by a talk on the
"Regeneration of Maidenhead"
By Bob Dulson**

AGENDA

1. Introduction by the Chairman of the Executive Committee
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 54th Annual General Meeting
3. Accounts for the year ended 31st May 2015
4. Chairman's Report for 2014/2015
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, Martin Trepte, Brian and Ann Darracott will retire. John McIntosh is not standing for re-election though the others offer themselves for re-election.

Theresa May MP has kindly agreed to assume the role of Patron of the Society and together with the retirement of John McIntosh, this means that there will be two additional vacancies for the position of Trustee.

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
54th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY**

Held on Wednesday 19th November 2014

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** There are no apologies for absence
- 2. Approval of Minutes of 53rd AGM:** The minutes were approved. Proposed by Ann Darracott; seconded Michael Johnson.
- 3. Accounts for the Year Ending 31st May 2014:** The accounts and report for the past year appear on pages 9 and 10 of the November 2014 Newsletter. Net income was £625 which compares to a surplus of £971 the previous year. Subscriptions were up slightly by £55 even though membership was a little down. There was a profit of £156 on social events compared to £nil the previous year. Gift aid receipts were £555. Expenditure was down by £549 and overall the accounts show a healthy balance of £14,120. The accounts were approved: proposed by Brian Darracott and seconded by Martin McNamee.
- 4. Chairman's Report:** The Chairman's report is set out on pages 5 to 9 of the November Newsletter, and was introduced with his thanks to all involved in any way in keeping the Society afloat. He highlighted that this year the Society was represented, by Tina Sell and Ann Darracott, at the Annual Convention of Civic Voice in Canterbury, where we were presented with an award for our *Maidenhead & Me* competition. A brief update was given on the major developments within the town centre, which led to some lively discussion.

The report was approved. Proposed by Brian Madge; seconded by Margaret Bowdery.
- 5. Election to Board of Trustees:** John McIntosh, Mike Emmerson and Eileen Goford were re-elected; there were no other nominations. Proposed by Brian Darracott, seconded by Martin McNamee.
- 6. Election of Officers.** Eileen Goford was re-elected Hon Secretary and Mike Emmerson re-elected as Hon. Treasurer. Proposed by Tina Sell, seconded by Joyce Delasalle.
- 7. Any Other Business:** Brian Madge thanked the Society for publicising the events of Maidenhead Archaeological & Historical Society. 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 of the Society's role and aims.

Planning matters continue to be the cornerstone of our purpose and in the past year there has been ample evidence that our voice has been heeded. Our comments on planning applications are appreciated in the town hall and, latterly, we've also been encouraged to learn that the town's parking strategy – unchanged since 2004 – is being updated following our lobbying.

We were pleased to be able once again to arrange public access to the local historic gem Bisham Abbey with a Heritage Open Day in September which achieved high appreciation, as did a private visit we organised to Stonor.

Encouraged by the success of our art competition *Maidenhead & Me* in 2014, which won an award from Civic Voice for improving the image of the civic movement, we ran it again this year and were thrilled at the quality of the entries. Entrants were asked to portray what Maidenhead meant to them in the medium of their choice. The feedback from both artists and visitors confirmed that the competition is an attractive way of meeting our objective for encouraging an interest and appreciation of what Maidenhead has to offer.

Planning

The redevelopment of the town centre is well underway. Phase One of the waterways has begun and the development on the old cinema site at No 1 Bridge Avenue rises daily. On the other side of York Stream the extension and refurbishment of Copthall House is progressing and the shape of the amphitheatre is now clear to see. To the south of the Library, the council offices of St Ives House and York Stream House have been demolished to prepare for the much anticipated redevelopment in the York Road Opportunity Area. It is hoped that this will eventually deliver an impressive and attractive civic and cultural quarter with more public open space and less building height than originally proposed.

That favourite eyesore, Berkshire House, is at last being addressed, undergoing conversion and refurbishment into residential accommodation with improved window design and stone clad elevations. The Landing has been through the planning process, and was given outline approval in September. Due for completion in 2019, this will be the largest individual project contributing to the regeneration of Maidenhead Town Centre. To the south of the railway line, planning has been granted for Stafferton Park - a substantial residential development of 293 homes, centred on the disused Olympic Park and Ride site.

Beyond our Borough boundaries, Berkeley Homes' revised scheme for Mill Lane and Skindles has been approved. We would have preferred to see a boutique hotel and public river access on the former Skindles site but the improvement of the setting of

Maidenhead Bridge is to be welcomed. Some of our suggestions for improved leisure use were heeded and the footbridge between Ray Mill Island and the Bucks bank, which we have long advocated, will come to fruition as part of the scheme.

Through our liaison with the council we continue to express concern at the effect of accommodating such high housing numbers within the town's existing boundary, particularly in the town centre. The Green Belt remains under pressure and, we believe, there's a debate still to be had. For example, the future of Braywick Park is under review. Currently designated as Green Belt, it is threatened by an application to dramatically enlarge the SportsAble facility, and possibly a scheme to relocate the Magnet Leisure Centre (to free up the existing site for residential development). Even as recreational facilities these will be large structures with acres of car parking area required.

One major infrastructure project currently in hand is the Stafferton Southern Link Road. This scheme which has been on the stocks for decades is at last being undertaken and the latest anticipated completion is just before Christmas.

Over the year about 160 applications were reviewed by the Planning Group, who meet monthly with their chairman, Martin McNamee, and they submitted comments on just under 50 proposals.

Projects

Bisham Abbey Heritage Open Day: A good crowd, including the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Sayonara Luxton, attended our second Heritage Open Day (HODS) in September. This event was a sizeable undertaking by Ann Darracott and her team of guides-for-a-day. The Bisham open day was preceded by an exclusive private visit for Society members and friends to the home of Lord and Lady Camoys at Stonor that houses the Bisham Collection (see page 23).

Fishery Estate Boundary Stone: The Executive decided to erect a plaque to commemorate the last of eleven boundary stones that used to mark the perimeter of the Fishery Estate. The stone is being relocated because of the construction of the Southern Relief Road (see page 21).

The Green Way: The Society, which is represented on the Green Way Working Group, has been monitoring aquatic life near to the temporary dam (constructed to enable works on the Waterways) and in the flood ditch on Town Moor and found it to be surprisingly healthy. Recent tests for faunal diversity in North Town Moor Pond also showed a positive improvement, following the introduction of pondweed by the amenity societies in 2014.

Millennium Walk: This Walk from Hurley across country to Maidenhead Riverside was initially conceived by the Society with the East Berks Ramblers. However, another year has passed without any progress on the missing link between Widbrook Common and the Thames towpath. The Society responded in detail to a council consultation to ensure that the route remains a priority in the Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan 2016-2026. The final plan will be submitted to the Rights of Way and Highways Licensing Panel in December. However, history shows that the inclusion of a route in the plan is no guarantee of delivery. The Royal

Borough has the power to issue a path creation order but so far has been unwilling to do so.

Communications

The decision last year to introduce colour illustrations in our quarterly Civic Society News has been a great success and welcomed by members. We are now turning our attention to the look and feel of our website which needs improving. We are also beginning to come to terms with social media. Our first attempts at Twitter proved useful recently in promoting our art competition, *Maidenhead & Me*. In addition, half a dozen items posted on our Facebook page in the last six months have boosted the number of appreciations we've received. (If you haven't yet visited our page, please do and click on "like".) An item posted about the competition prize-giving and exhibition reached over four thousand users and attracted 138 readers. So, while the Newsletter is always likely to remain our main channel of communication with members, social media is an effective way of spreading the word and raising our profile.

Events

The Society staged or took part in a number of events during the year, in addition to the Bisham HODs and Stonor visit mentioned above.

In January, guests at our Society dinner at Moor Hall in Cookham heard Bill Higgins outline his plans for The Landing in Maidenhead. In June, on Civic Day, with Theresa May's help, we launched *Maidenhead & Me* in Nicholsons, alongside three architects' models showing the changing face of Maidenhead; and in September Theresa returned to hand out the prizes and open an exhibition of all the entries which ran for two weeks. We rounded off the day with a splendid evening of *Jazz by the Riverside* at Maidenhead Rowing Club which. England's game against Wales in the Rugby World Cup on the same evening meant there was plenty of room on the dance floor at the Society's Jazz on the Riverside at Maidenhead Rowing Club in September. But though numbers were down and we incurred a loss, those who came left feeling much happier than the England fans at Twickenham!



With our new branded gazebo we were present at the town's Christmas lights switch-on last November, visited the revived Cox Green Fayre in May (left), had a stall in the High Street on the day of Maidenhead Festival in July and made our first appearance at the Littlewick Show on a very wet August bank holiday. One clear advantage of a decent gazebo in inclement weather – you make friends!



Membership

Although we lost a few members during the year 2014-2015, we managed to attract a number of newcomers, giving us a net increase in total membership.

In the year to May 2015 we were pleased to welcome the following new members:- Mary Adams, John & Carolyn Beale, Robin Bootle, Michael Broberg, Sally & Chris Campbell, Lynne & Colin Chisholm, Joselyn & Tony Hardy, Mary-Lou & Richard Kellaway, Mary & Graham Pennington, Janet and Steven Rose, David Stanbury and John Stevens.

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total Memberships					
(i.e. Family, Honorary, Life, Etc)	261	257	246	232	236
Total members (excl Corporate)	357	349	352	334	345
Life Members	97	96	101	101	99
Honorary Members	20	20	19	19	18
Corporate Members	3	2	2	1	1

So far in this current year (2015-2016) we have already gained 10 new memberships comprising 16 members.

In conclusion, it's worth reminding ourselves that 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.

With our members support and participation we strive to use our influence to preserve the best and improve the rest of what Maidenhead has to offer.

Finally, I'd like to record the Society's thanks to our outgoing President, the Trustees, Group Chairs and 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 and I are extremely grateful.

Bob Dulson

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Annual accounts for the year ended 31st May 2015 are enclosed with this report. The main highlights from these accounts are as follows:-

Overall there was a deficit of Income over Expenditure of £663 in 2014/15. This compared to a surplus of £625 in 2013/14.

Income

Receipts overall were up by £1,247 compared to last year due mainly to the £1,000 grant received from the Louis Baylis Charitable Trust which was towards our Heritage Open day in September 2014. Subscriptions were down by £313 compared to the previous year at £2,323. We made a profit on social events of £638 compared to £Nil in the previous year. £434 of this was from our very popular trip to the studios of the BBC. Gift Aid receipts were £631 for the current year compared to £555 received in the previous year.

Expenditure

Expenditure overall was up by £2,534 compared to the previous year. £907 of this was for the purchase of a new gazebo for use at local events and to help advertise the Society. We also attended the Civic Voice Conference at a cost of £294. Other Expenses included £418 towards sponsoring the 'Maidenhead & Me' competition. Also, we spent £445 for the Heritage Open Day; however, this was covered by our grant from the Louis Baylis Trust. General Expenses were up by £211 due mainly to the extra printing costs of membership leaflets. Subscriptions include our membership of Civic Voice at a cost of £350.

The Society accounts show a healthy balance of funds in hand of £12,925 compared to £14,120 in the previous year. The main reason for the reduction was to purchase the gazebo. In conclusion, with the membership numbers remaining more or less static year on year and the demographics increasing, we need to see how we can use our funds to improve the profile of the Society and attract new members.

Mike Emmerson
Treasurer

MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY - Charity No. 272102		
Annual Accounts for Year ended 31st May 2015		
2013/2014		2014/2015
INCOME		
0	Donations/Grants/Bequests	1,000
2,636	Subscriptions Received During Year	2,324
40	Interest On Bank And Other Deposits	41
0	Surplus On Outings	638
156	Surplus On Social Events	0
555	Tax Refunds On Gift Aid	631
£3,388	Total	4,634
EXPENDITURE		
Administration		
303	General Expenses, Printing, Postage, Etc.	514
1,276	Newsletter	1,403
303	Hire Of Rooms, Speakers And Meeting Expenses	668
418	Subscriptions	477
0	Publicity	0
245	Insurance	245
Donations		
0	Various	0
Other Expenses		
-17	Ockwells And Associated Projects (Net Costs)	0
0	Maidenhead & Me	418
0	Heritage Open Day	445
0	Grandison	37
-14	Millennium Walk. (Net Costs)	-5
137	Various Other Small Projects	10
0	Deficit On Social Events	50
0	Deficit On Outings	0
0	Presentations/Memorials	0
113	Website	126
0	Purchase of Gazebo	907
2,763	Total	5,296
625	EXCESS/(DEFICIT) OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	-662
12,797	Balance Brought Forward	13,422
£13,422	Balance Carried Forward	12,760
FUNDS		
4,630	Bank (Lloyds TSB) and Cash	3,393
9,490	Charities Deposit General Fund (COIF)	9,532
1,535	Debtor/Insurance Payments In Advance	480
-2,234	Creditors/Commitments	-645
£13,422	BALANCE OF FUNDS	12,760
Mike Emmerson - Hon. Treasurer		

Planning Matters

Although the monthly meetings of the Planning Group reviewed the normal number of planning applications (nearly forty), we only submitted comments on six proposals during the three months since the last Newsletter. The two most substantial residential schemes were for the construction of blocks of apartments following the demolition of an existing building. The now closed curry house known as Diwa is located at 2 Norfolk Road – and more traditionally was known as The Norfolk Arms. This is a relatively small corner site on which it is proposed to construct nine apartments. We believe that this represents overdevelopment of the site – with inadequate parking provision to the rear, and no amenity space. The existing building line is right on the pavement of both Norfolk Road and Cookham Road. This is replicated with the proposed scheme, resulting in the ground floor apartments having little privacy from passing pedestrians. The site at 23 Braywick Road is significantly larger and is proposed to accommodate the same number of apartments – nine. Here we believe that the number of apartments may be suitable for the site, but that there is still inadequate provision of parking and leisure amenity space. In addition to access from Braywick Road, there will be rear access through Greenfield, which is already congested with on street parking. This is the second development to use Greenfields for access. The permitted Brayfields development, currently under construction on the Braywick Road/Stafferton Way roundabout is accessed solely from the rear via Greenfields.

One non-residential application relates to the relocation of the Bowling Club from York Way to a new site on a triangle of land off Green Lane. This site is technically Green Belt, the use of which is being justified because of “exceptional circumstances”. It is not a piece of land with high visual awareness, but the move is being proposed to free up the existing York Road location, which can then be developed as part of the York Road Opportunity Area. There is little open green space at the new site, which is largely taken up by poorly landscaped car parking and a utilitarian club house and indoor bowling area.

Two major schemes have now been approved. In spite of the imperfections, the Berkeley Homes development of Mill Lane, Taplow, including Skindles has been approved by South Bucks. In Maidenhead Town Centre the Landing scheme for the King Street/Broadway/Queen Street triangle has been passed by the Royal Borough. Concerns remained to the end about the height of the offices and inadequate provision of parking. Nevertheless, it is very positive news that such an important landmark scheme will be contributing to the long term prosperity of Maidenhead. A brownfield site identified for residential development has been approved. Velmead Works at 33/35 Lower Cookham Road has enjoyed a colourful history. Riverside Car Wash is the current occupier of the main workshop to the rear, whilst the small detached house at No.35 used to be a members’ drinking club back in the 1970s or earlier. The site has long been out of character with the residential surroundings, including the Riverside Conservation Area opposite. A scheme for one semi-

detached pair and a terrace of three houses to the rear has been approved. In addition there will be one residential apartment over a garage/parking block.

Decisions are still awaited on three applications reported in previous Newsletters. The demolition of 55/57 Lower Cookham Road to generate eight new houses is still under consideration. There has been a slightly revised scheme submitted for four houses following the demolition of 3 Westmoreland Road. The ambitious expansion proposals for Sportsable at Braywick appear to be on ice. This is presumably whilst the future wider use of Braywick Park is under review - including the potential relocation of the Magnet Leisure Centre. As with the Bowling Club, the wider recreational development of Braywick Park will involve the erosion and/or reclassification of its current Green Belt status.

One of the Conservation Officers from the Royal Borough attended a Planning Group meeting to invite our input to the re-appraisal of Maidenhead High Street Conservation Area. To retain any protection associated with Conservation Area status, it is necessary to review the locality on a regular basis. Maidenhead High Street was last reviewed in 1995, so twenty years is probably stretching the definition of regularity. Many locals may scoff at the concept of protecting our High Street because of the apparent run down state – especially at the western end. Much of that decline is down to regrettable shop closures, an overabundance of estate agent boards and the poor standard of many shop fronts and facias. However, architecturally many of the buildings are of great merit especially the facades at first floor level and above.



A good example of the sympathetic treatment of all levels

The Civic Society believes that more should be done to enhance the architectural interest of the High Street, with a more strictly enforced fascia policy and greater encouragement to bring out the characteristic features of many buildings. Regrettably, many shop owners and landlords are only interested in the ground floor trading level and do not consider the appearance of the upper floors and roof architecture.



Look up and you'll often see some interesting architectural features

We are also suggesting that the current area could be extended slightly - it already includes the northern end of Queen Street. Of course, there are a few buildings that are an embarrassment, but there are many worth protecting and conserving. Some such as Cresset Towers are currently the subject of major renovation and enhancement. In the long term, the much talked about perceived decline of our High Street will be arrested by taking a more positive approach to visually upgrading the entire environment rather than allowing any further deterioration.

Mill Site & Skindles Get Go-Ahead

The long-awaited improvement of Skindles and the former paper mill buildings looks set to begin, following approval of Berkeley Homes' plans by South Bucks District Council.

Berkeley branded hoardings appeared on the site's Bath Road boundary within days of the decision and it's thought work could begin before the end of the year.

The Skindles site will house a new riverside restaurant and a row of town houses. In all, Berkeley plan to build 141 new homes and 40 retirement apartments across the 45 acre site. Former historic residences – Glen Island House, Mill House and Dunloe Lodge – will all be refurbished to provide luxury housing, as will a former stable block and power house on the old mill site.



*Architect's impressions
of the Skindles site and
the apartment blocks*



Where the mill buildings stood, alongside the Jubilee River, Berkeley plan to erect two apartment blocks modelled on wharf-style warehouses and two short rows of terraced and mews-style houses. More homes could come in a later phase on the site of the former gasholder. Mill Lane itself will be re-routed at its southern end to join the A4 at a roundabout east of the Windrush garage. The existing access to Mill Lane will be restricted to vehicles approaching over Maidenhead Bridge. The Society would have preferred to see the Skindles site retained for hotel use. Residential use privatises the riverbank and prevents public access to the river at this key location. Elsewhere, however, Berkeley's revised plans do include more leisure use and the picnic area and pedestrian footbridge to Ray Mill Island is particularly welcome.

(Ed: Local historian Nigel Smales will give a talk about the Rise and Fall of Skindles at Maidenhead Library on 19th November. See page 26 for more details).

The Southern Relief Road

This major piece of road engineering is advancing steadily, albeit a bit behind schedule. We understand that the latest estimate for its completion is mid-December, with some minor works that will carry over in to the New Year. Members who live in the area will be well used to the disruption of traffic and the lengthy delays due to

all the temporary traffic lights. For those who don't travel down this way much here's some recent views of the works.



The junction of Oldfield Road and the A4 Bath Road, looking north



The junction of Oldfield Road and Forlease Road, looking west towards where the bridge over York Stream will link up the road with Stafferton Way

The eastern arch of the railway bridge in Oldfield Road has now been opened up. There will be a mini-roundabout at the junction with Chauntry Road



Martin McNamee and Bob Dulson

Every Picture Told a Story!

Delight, affection, humour and scepticism – all were portrayed in the 54 stunning entries received for the Society's art competition *Maidenhead and Me* this year.

We wanted artists to show us and the community what Maidenhead means to them as the town embarks on the biggest regeneration programme in its history – and they didn't disappoint. The range of interpretations and styles was amazing and the quality overall was much improved on last year.



Well over 400 visitors attended our two-week exhibition of all the entries, which opened in Nicholson's following the prize-giving by Civic Society trustee, Rt Hon Theresa May MP, at the end of September.

A painting on silk by local artist Stephanie Gay (right) won first prize. Called 'Duck & Bollard' it's a light-hearted, affectionate comment on the regeneration plans, depicting plastic ducks floating along a town centre river and casting a quizzical eye over an Anthony Gormley bollard near the clock tower (see also the front cover of the Newsletter).



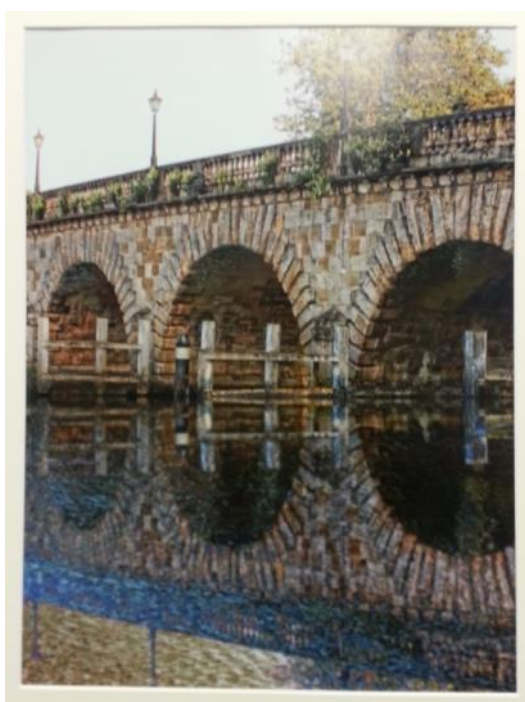
Second place (left) went to amateur photographer Paul Morgan who captured a pedestrian passing a town centre mural in a moment he's called 'Art on the Street'.

Lu Willis took third with her watercolour portrayal of a group of children, entitled 'Boyne Hill Playtime, the Next Generation' (right).



The number of entries in the Under-16s category was disappointing but those we did receive were charming and the judges decided to award consolation prizes to all four entrants.

Here's a selection of some of the other wonderful pictures that were submitted – it was a difficult choice to make:





Last year the competition won an award from Civic Voice for promoting civic pride in the community. This year, the feedback from both artists and visitors was again very encouraging, including dozens of positive comments left in our visitors' book. The competition launched in June on National Civic Day. Civic Day is a chance for communities across the nation to say "we value where we live". It is organised by Civic Voice, the national charity for the civic movement, to which Maidenhead Civic Society is affiliated.

The Civic Society was helped again in staging the event by Bovilles Art Shop, Enjoy Maidenhead, The Nicholsons Centre, Maidenhead Advertiser and the Louis Baylis Charitable Trust whose help and support was freely given and warmly appreciated.

Projects

The Green Way

This streamside footpath that connects Cookham, through Maidenhead to Bray, currently has the town centre section of stream and path closed due to the construction of the waterway.



The stream has been diverted down the old flood ditch by damming the stream on Town Moor (see August Newsletter p9). Silt in the now nearly-dry stream bed is being dug out and pilings installed (see below). Hopefully both path and stream will eventually be restored. In the meantime aquatic life near to the dam and in the flood ditch on Town Moor is being monitored. It has not been possible to monitor life further down the flood ditch as access is difficult.

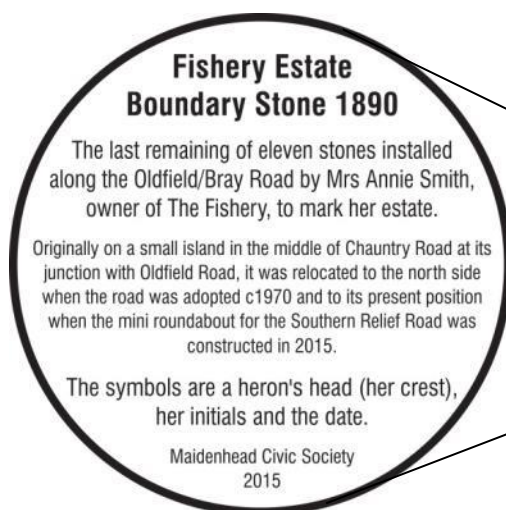




The Chapel Arches Basin taking shape

Fishery Estate Boundary Stone

This boundary stone at the junction of Oldfield and Chauntry Roads has had to be relocated because of the construction of the Southern Relief Road (see Newsletters of Feb & May 2015). It is to be relocated once work is complete. The Society is paying for a plaque to be placed nearby on the railway bridge abutment, though we're not quite sure when this will be installed.



Ann Darracott

Events

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

Heritage Open Day (HODS), organised by Ann Darracott was again held at Bisham on 10th September and attended by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Sayonara Luxton who visited both Abbey and All Saints Church. Fewer people attended this year which made for a more relaxed event.



The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Sayonara Luxton, centre, with l. to r.: Steve Rose, Eileen Goford, Ann Darracott and Joyce DeLasalle

We would like to thank everyone who helped make the day a success – especially guides/runners Ann Darracott, Lynn Chisholm, Joyce and Ray Delasalle, Mike & Janet Emmerson, Eileen Goford, Fran Hornby, Jill Norman, Sally Somerville, Rhidian Jones, Catherine Randall and Steve Rose. We would also like to thank Patricia Burstall who singlehandedly manned the church and Claire Broomby, Business Development Manager at the Abbey.

Allowing us free access to all the main rooms in the ancient building means that these rooms cannot then be hired out: as it was the lecture to the football academy students,

usually held in the Vansittart Room, had to be relocated. We are therefore grateful to Serco for again allowing Heritage Open Day to be held at the Abbey.

The Bisham Collection at Stonor

The event at Bisham was preceded by a very enjoyable private visit to the home of Lord and Lady Camoys at Stonor, which houses the Bisham Collection (see below). Stonor, home of Thomas, 7th Baron Camoys, is a manor house owned by the same family for 850 years. The present Lord Camoys is a former banker who served as Lord Chamberlain of the United Kingdom from 1998 to 2000; a member of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England from 1985 to 1987; and the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts from 1987 to 1994. He is now handing over the house to his son.



Stonor visit: One of two groups of Society members and friends who enjoyed a private tour of the house.

The Bisham Collection comprises portraits, furniture and porcelain that used to be in Bisham Abbey when owned by the Vansittarts. If I understood Lord Camoys correctly, the story goes that when his father died in 1976 the house was to be sold together with its contents. He managed to buy back the house but not all the contents. Then one day, apparently, a knock came to the door and there was Margaret Dickinson, the last Vansittart descendent, offering to lend objects that had been in Bisham Abbey! These include portraits that had been left in the Abbey when the last Hoby descendent sold to George Vansittart in 1760.

We saw portraits of Sir Edward Hoby aged eighteen, dated 1578, and his sisters Anne and Elizabeth Hoby, both of whom died young (these portraits may be posthumous), all children of Sir Thomas and Lady Elizabeth Hoby. The two girls, Elizabeth aged 9 and Anne aged 7, are buried under a floor slab in front of their mother's tomb in All Saints Church, Bisham.

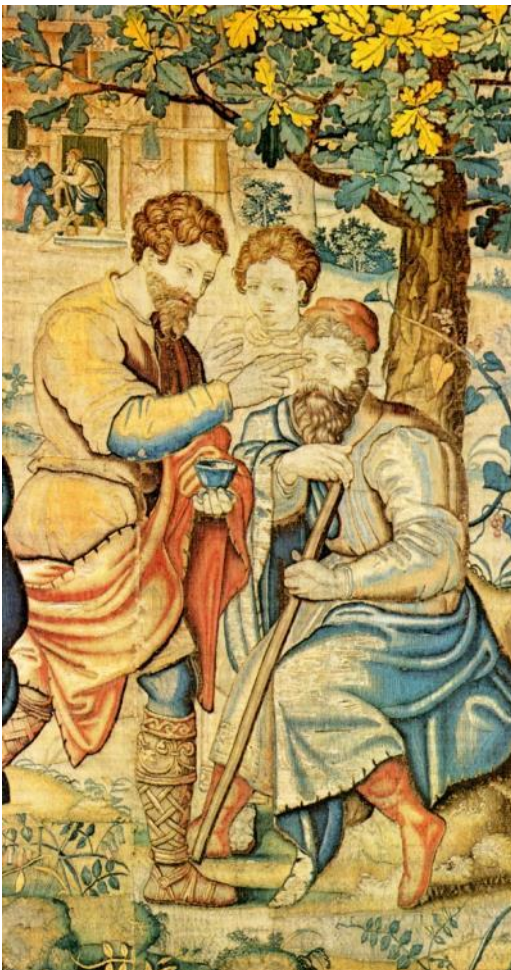


Anne Hoby



Elizabeth Hoby

We were also able to view a “pattern” piece of the *Tobias and the Angel* tapestry presumably given to Sir Philip Hoby prior to him commissioning four tapestries that told this story and that were designed to hang in the great hall at Bisham.



Above: tapestries hanging in the great hall, as seen in the early 20th century when the Vansittarts lived at Bisham Abbey (from Country Life, 19th April 1941).

Left: the Hoby Tapestry – pattern piece of “Tobias and the Angel” (from Stonor guidebook)

Sir Philip Hoby (d.1558), who acquired Bisham Abbey from Anne of Cleves in 1552, was married to Elizabeth Stonor (d.1560). Sir Philip accompanied Hans Holbein to the continent so that the artist could make drawings of prospective brides for Henry VIII and is also credited with buying tapestries for that king.



Photo of drawing by Hans Holbein of Sir Philip Hoby

The tapestries at Bisham were acquired by the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR), the predecessor of Sport England, when the Council bought the Abbey in 1963. The CCPR sold them in 1967 to an Irish peer who planned to hang them in Bunratty Castle co Limerick. Their present location is unknown. Look out for them if you visit this castle and let us know if they are there!

Other items from the Bisham Collection include chairs with the Vansittart crest and early C18th Chinese (Canton) vases from when the Vansittarts were governors of Bengal and Madras in the C19th.

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; 7.30 for 8pm; visitors £2; contact 01628 630924 for more details)

Wednesday 25th November: *Vanished London* by Tony King

Marlow Archaeology (MAS)

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

Thursday 26th November 2015, 8pm: *Members' presentations on local archaeology & history* (informal social evening with light refreshments – visitors welcome).

Archaeology in Marlow (AiM)

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

Thursday 5th November, 8pm: *The Thames Discovery Programme and the Archaeology of the Thames Foreshore*, by Elliott Wragg of Museum of London Archaeology

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Monday 16th November 2015, 7.30pm, at Maidenhead Library: *The Rise and Fall of Skindles*, a talk by Nigel Smales (Hitcham & Taplow Society). This talk is part of RBWM's Thames Valley History Festival. The cost is £5 or £4 with an Advantage Card. Booking is essential, via Maidenhead Library or phone 01628 796969.

Finally, don't forget:

FREE National Trust passes!

Don't miss out on your opportunity to receive a FREE National Trust Pass! Maidenhead Civic Society is registered with Civic Voice, so our members are eligible to receive one of these passes. Simply send a stamped addressed envelope to 60 Duke Street, L1 5AA.



News from the Heritage Centre

EXHIBITION

Maidenhead From The Air - runs until 20 February 2016

Come and take a look at our series of fascinating aerial photographs of Maidenhead and the surrounding area, dating from the 1920's to the present day. Some of the photographs were taken by Fairey Air Surveys, based at White Waltham for 20 years, while others have been taken by modern drones. You might even be able to spot your house!

LUNCHTIME TALKS

Our popular monthly lunchtime talks start at 12.45 pm and last approximately 40 minutes.

A £1 donation is requested.

Thurs 12 November – **Maidenhead's Victoria Cross Heroes**

Thurs 10 December – **Fairey Air Surveys**: a talk by Chairman Richard Poad

SPECIAL LECTURE

WHITE WALTHAM 1935-2015: 80 years of amazing aviation history by Richard Poad. Friday 30 October, 8pm

Tickets available from the Heritage Centre: £10 (£8 to members)

Come and visit our Heritage Centre shop for Christmas gifts with a local flavour, especially The Maidenhead Calendar which is now in stock priced at only £5.99!

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

St Luke's Fifth Christmas Tree Festival

The Society is again sponsoring a Christmas tree at this event to be held from Friday 11th to Sunday 13th December at St Luke's Church, Norfolk Road, Maidenhead. The event raises money for local charities – this year the proceeds will go to the Thames Valley Hospice. 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 11th and Saturday 12th December from 10am to 7pm, and on Sunday 13th from 2pm to 6pm.

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 18th November 2014

Civic Society AGM, followed by a talk “The Regeneration of Maidenhead” by Bob Dulson
Parish Centre, St Luke’s Church, Norfolk Road, 8.15pm

CIVIC SOCIETY OFFICERS

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EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2015

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

13th January, 10th February, 10th March, 12th May, 9th June, 7th July, 1st September, 10th November, 8th December

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETINGS FOR 2015

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

14th April, 13th October

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 18th November 2015 in the Parish Centre, St Luke’s Church, Norfolk Road at 8.15 pm.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 15th January 2016**

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