



Maidenhead Civic Society NEWS



Issue 4/16

November 2016



Why I Love Maidenhead

See page 16 for the results of the “Maidenhead & Me” Competition

Visit our website: www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

The Chairman's Page

The Society has expressed its concern before about the number of houses being planned for Maidenhead. But in the light of the delay to the emerging Borough Local Plan it's worth saying again.

Since the very first settlement, Maidenhead's unique selling point has been its location and accessibility.

The first bridge was built to create a more direct route for the Great West Road to Bath and medieval Maidenhead sprang up alongside. Following that, as each new transport era came along – stagecoach, railway, motor car, air, and motorway – it brought new interest, investment and growth.

With Crossrail's arrival just a couple of years away, there's a real sense of history repeating itself.

What we're seeing now in the town centre is another chapter in the same story. But if Maidenhead's USP has been its location and accessibility, its primary appeal is as a place to live – the verdant riverside setting and quality homes in quality spaces, within easy reach of the capital.

In discussions about the Town Centre Area Action Plan and the Borough Local Plan, the Society was among the first to acknowledge a level of growth as desirable and necessary. But we have serious concerns about the effect on the town's character and infrastructure of the numbers and density of housing now being mooted.

The Council is seeking a joint venture partner to develop the sites in which it has a significant landholding in Maidenhead. Presumably, it sees this as useful alternative to the dwindling funding available from central government. We sincerely hope that in its desire to become a developer, enthusiastic to meet government housing targets, the Council is careful not to threaten the very thing that makes Maidenhead attractive.

Bob Dulson

56th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

**To be held on Wednesday, 16th November 2016
at Maidenhead Rowing Club, River Road, Taplow**

**At 8.00pm – an illustrated talk on the “Rise and Fall of Skindles”
by Nigel Smales (see page 21)**

To be followed by the AGM at 9.15 pm

AGENDA

1. Introduction by the Chairman of the Committee
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 55th Annual General Meeting
3. Accounts for the year ended 31st May 2016
4. Chairman’s Report for 2015/2016
5. To approve the election of Members of the Committee. *See note below.*
6. Election of the Officers
To elect from the Committee Members a Chairman, an Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer
7. Any other Business.

Election of Committee Members

There currently are nine Committee Members: Bob Dulson, Eileen Goford, Mike Emmerson, Martin McNamee, Ann Darracott, Brian Darracott, Martin Trepte, Joyce DeLaSalle and Tina Sell. Under the terms of the Society’s Constitution the Committee shall consist of eight to twelve Members. One third of the Committee Members must retire each year and shall be eligible for re-election and accordingly, Martin McNamee, Tina Sell and Bob Dulson will retire, all of whom offer themselves for re-election. There are also three additional vacancies.

The Membership is invited to make nominations for the position of Committee Members. 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 55th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

Held on Wednesday 18th November 2015

- 1. Apologies for Absence:** John McIntosh has stood down as President. We give him warm thanks. We will miss his wisdom and intelligence.
- 2. Approval of Minutes of 54th AGM:** The minutes were approved. Proposed by Tina Sell; seconded by Jill Powell.
- 3. Accounts for the Year Ending 31st May 2015:** The accounts and report for the past year appear on pages 9 and 10 of the November 2015 Newsletter. We made a loss of £662 because we purchased a new gazebo for £900 to replace the old one so that we can make friends in the rain! We had a donation of £1,000 from Louis Baylis which financed the Heritage Open Day. Income was up £1200 on previous year but subscriptions were down. We had no life memberships. We had a surplus of £638 on events. Expenditure was up by £2500. Civic Voice subscription was £300 but we did win an award from them! We sponsored the *Maidenhead and Me* art competition to the tune of £300. Funds are healthy. We have £12,900 in the bank. Membership is static - demographic is getting worse. Mike was thanked and the accounts were approved proposed by Mike Johnson and seconded by Joyce Delasalle.
- 4. Chairman's Report:** The Chairman's report is set out on pages 5 to 9 of the November 2015 Newsletter, and was introduced with his thanks to the Committee for all they do in our name. He identified the major challenge we are facing as parking and claimed some success for the Society in forcing the Borough to take another look at its strategy which has been in place since 2004. He talked about the replacement of S106 by the Infrastructure Levy which is very kind to the town centre residential who are zero-rated. He floated the idea of an Events group and invited those present to come forward with ideas. The report was accepted. Proposed by Ann Darracott; seconded by Rudi Sheldon.
- 5. Election to Board of Trustees:** Martin Trepte, Ann and Brian Darracott were elected. Proposed by Brian Madge and seconded by Mike Emmerson.
- 6. Election of Officers.** Eileen Goford as Honorary Secretary and Mike Emmerson as Treasurer were re-elected. Proposed by Ady Sheldon; seconded by Brian Darracott.
- 7. Any Other Business:** The Maidenhead Archaeological and Historical Society consults with other groups such as the National Trust, U3A and Friends of Stanley Spencer Gallery before organizing events. Brian Madge has a matrix of events and offered his service to us.

The business was concluded by 8:35pm and after a tea break was followed by an illustrated talk by Bob Dulson entitled "Transforming Maidenhead".

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF THE YEAR

In March this year we revised the Society's constitution, simply to make it less bureaucratic and cumbersome. We did not touch the Society's aims. They have remained unaltered since the Society was founded in 1960. They are: (i) To stimulate public interest in the area of benefit, i.e. Maidenhead; (ii) To promote high standards of planning and architecture; and (iii) To secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of features of historic or public interest.

In pursuit of these objectives, the Society also strives to:

- Reflect & promote the views of a wide range of people to influence decision makers in shaping our community
- Ensure the Society is perceived as objective and apolitical, upholding quality values and principles.
- Combat ugliness and mediocrity in our built and natural environment
- Encourage and reward best practice
- Maintain the financial reserves to ensure the continued viability of an active Society
- Increase and broaden membership to ensure the widest possible representation
- Improve our communication with members to encourage a sense of community

Looking back on the year, we can confidently tick most of the boxes, though it would be nice to see some bigger ticks in some places. But a particular highlight was Theresa May's acceptance of our invitation to become Patron of the Society, shortly before she became Prime Minister, and then to present the prizes to the winners of our art competition in September.

Planning

Over the year more than 180 applications were reviewed by the Planning Group, who meet monthly with their chairman, Martin McNamee, and they submitted comments on 55 of them. Colleagues were very sad when John McIntosh and Bronwen Renwick decided to stand down but thanked them both warmly for their contributions over the years. Their departure leaves two vacancies on the group.

The town centre regeneration programme continues. The Stafferton Way link is complete and progress on Chapel Arches and the Waterways looks promising. Over the last year the Council has been working towards seeking a joint venture partner to work with them on four sites where they have significant landholdings – West Street, York Road, Reform Road and the Magnet – and has now shortlisted five major developers. It has also recently emerged that the Council itself wants to rebuild the Broadway car park to provide appropriate facilities for Nicholsons and the new Landing development. This came to light during discussions on a new draft parking strategy which the Borough has eventually produced after the Civic Society and other stakeholder groups pushed it to the top of the agenda.

The Borough Local Plan (BLP), meanwhile, has hit a hurdle. Following a legal review the planned submission scheduled for September will not now take place

before April. We suspect this is due in part to a lack of public consultation which is something we criticised. Through our liaison with the council we also expressed concern about other aspects of the BLP, including building heights, infilling and the effect of accommodating such high housing numbers within the town's existing boundary, particularly in the town centre. It should also, in our view, set minimum standards for room sizes in new residential developments as well as parking.

Across the river, Berkeley Homes are cracking on with their Mill Lane and Skindles development and the vista changes almost daily. The Society raised concern at the loss of tree cover and vegetation, which has been far greater than expected (or indeed planned), and objected to the planned closure of Mill Lane. We are still hopeful, however, that the footbridge to Ray Mill Island, which we have long advocated, will come to fruition as part of the scheme: though this, together with the possible closure of two hotels in Maidenhead Riverside and the proposal for a community centre on Boulters Lock car park, underlines the need for a formal leisure strategy for the area, which we are calling for.

Projects

St Luke's Church Heritage Open Day: St Luke's was the first building we opened for HODS in 1997. We returned this year as the church is celebrating the 150th anniversary of its dedication by Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford. Remarkably, one visitor, aged 85, had come all the way from Oxford by public transport to see where her parents had been married. Her previous attempt had been unsuccessful as the church had been locked. This demonstrates the value of HODS.

Fishery Estate Boundary Stone: Mrs Annie Smith's last remaining stone was put in place near the new roundabout at the junction of Chantry and Oldfield Roads in January. In October we were still waiting for protective bollards to be installed.

Green Way: Sections of the Green Way through the town centre have been closed off at different times during the year as work on the waterway progresses. We have continued to monitor life in the diverted stream (still healthy) and also in North Town Moor pond; newt larvae, again this summer, as well as dragon fly and damsel fly nymphs have found a home here, evidence of an increasingly healthy pond. We continue to sit on the Green Way Working Group that comments on planning applications affecting this route and monitors the condition of both footpath and stream.

Millennium Walk: The inaugural walk of this route from Hurley to Maidenhead was made in 2000 when our MP, Theresa May, and her husband Philip, led the way. Completing the Walk is a priority of the RBWM Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2016-2026. A missing link, from the Lower Cookham Road to the Thames Path, lies adjacent to the old Steifel Laboratories site which is now planned for housing. The owner of the site has included our path in the planning application. We hope this will provide the breakthrough we've been waiting for. A path in this location became an objective of the Cookham District Plan in 1973!

Ockwells Manor: Research relating to Lillibrooke Manor (next to Ockwells Manor), which we visited in April, by chance led to the identification of the last remaining unidentified armorial achievement at Ockwells (see May newsletter). The re-identification of the eighteen achievements in the Great Hall at Ockwells is now part of a *History of Ockwells Manor*, which Ann Darracott is currently putting together.

Communications

The quarterly Civic Society News remains our main line of communication with our members and we're grateful to Brian Darracott who edits it. Occasionally we send out *Keeping in Touch* bulletins by email with news and events for members and there have been four of these in the last 12 months. When appropriate we try to attract coverage in the Advertiser for initiatives we feel are newsworthy and our views are often sought on planning issues. We are also making increased use of social media, like Facebook and Twitter, to promote the Society's activities and these media undoubtedly swelled the interest in *Maidenhead and Me* among the artistic community this year and boosted the Society's profile. And a report on the prize-giving was the main story in Civic Voice's national e-bulletin at the time. Meanwhile, preparatory work continues on a revamp of our website which needs improving.

Events

We're delighted that the Events Group has been re-formed this year with Tina Sell again in the chair and an enthusiastic team currently comprising Mike Copeland, Joyce Delasalle and Angela Dulson.

We began a busy year with the Society Dinner at Moor Hall where Richard Davenport updated us on the Waterways Project. Is it possible that we will be seeing boats in the town centre in just over a year's time?

In June we launched our third *Maidenhead and Me* art competition on Civic Day. We also gave our support to Friends of Maidenhead, a new initiative by Maidenhead Thames Rotary to encourage greater public engagement in the town centre regeneration programme. We had three successful outings organised by Mike and Ann. The first was to Lillibrooke Manor, where we heard about the plans for restoring this lovely Tudor gem and had a delicious afternoon tea. In July, we visited Freebody's Boatyard for a fascinating tour of the workshops where classic slipper launches are built and restored. The Poppy Factory at Richmond and nearby Ham House made a very good day out in August. We learned about the industry of producing the poppies and wreaths for Remembrance Day each year and immersed ourselves in 17th century fashion and power.

We took our branded gazebo to promote the Society's aims at the Cox Green Fayre in May, at the circus-themed Maidenhead Festival in Kidwells in July, where we dressed for the part, and in August at the Littlewick Show in Knowl Hill where our new Patron, Prime Minister Theresa May, dropped by to say hello. And she was on hand again in September for our *Maidenhead and Me* prize-giving (see page 16).



*Above: getting the Civic Society gazebo ready for the Festival,
and below: with the prime Minister at the Littlewick show*



In October we enjoyed a Speaker's Lunch at Fredericks where Mike Potter from Pickering Civic Society showed that where there's a community will, there's a way. And at the AGM in November Nigel Smales will give his popular talk on 'The Rise and Fall of Skindles'.

Tina and the Events Group are looking at visits to Frogmore House and Taplow Court in 2017, as well as 'Behind the Scenes' tours of the Royal Opera House and the Royal Albert Hall. But if you have a suggestion for a Civic Society outing or event, they'd love to hear it.

Membership

In the year to 31st May 2016 we were pleased to welcome the following new members:-

Damo & Mamatha Baliga, Ann & Robert Beauchamp, Linda Binsley, Pat & Rod Bird, Matthew Burdett, Stephan Helal, Michael Hockley, Patricia & Clive Lattimer, Mark Loader, Bridget Morris, Daniel Morrissey & Robert Jones, Jessica & Kenny O'Connor, Julian Scrace, Martin Trepte and Brian & Olive Webster.

We are maintaining membership numbers. While we lose some, mainly for personal reasons, we are managing to recruit new members.

| | <u>2012</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2014</u> | <u>2015</u> | <u>2016</u> |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Total Memberships | | | | | |
| (Family, Honorary, Life, etc) | 257 | 246 | 232 | 236 | 233 |
| Total Members (Excl. Corp) | 349 | 352 | 334 | 345 | 333 |
| Life Members | 96 | 101 | 101 | 99 | 94 |
| Honorary Members | 20 | 19 | 19 | 18 | 19 |
| Corporate Members | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

And in the current year (2016-17) to date we have gained 9 new memberships comprising 12 members.

The Society tries to keep abreast of any issue that affects Maidenhead and its inhabitants and tries to ensure that nothing of importance escapes its notice. We do 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, PRoM and latterly Friends of Maidenhead. 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, as ever, to our members for their support and to our Executive Committee and Honorary Officers, the Group Chairs and our distributors and volunteers for everything they do in the name of the Society.

Bob Dulson

**MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY - Charity No.
272102**

Annual Accounts for Year ended 31st May 2016

2014/2015

2015/2016

INCOME

| | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1,000 | Donations/Grants/Bequests | 350 |
| 2,324 | Subscriptions Received During Year | 2,395 |
| 41 | Interest On Bank And Other Deposits | 43 |
| 638 | Surplus On Outings | 40 |
| 631 | Tax Refunds On Gift Aid | 609 |
| £4,634 | Total | £3,437 |

EXPENDITURE

Administration

| | | |
|---------------|--|---------------|
| 514 | General Expenses, Printing, Postage, Etc. | 314 |
| 1,403 | Newsletter | 1,375 |
| 668 | Hire Of Rooms, Speakers And Meeting Expenses | 259 |
| 477 | Subscriptions | 412 |
| 245 | Insurance | 266 |
| 0 | Ockwells And Associated Projects (Net Costs) | 152 |
| 354 | Maidenhead & Me | 129 |
| 509 | Heritage Open Day | 307 |
| 37 | Grandison | 0 |
| -5 | Millennium Walk. (Net Costs) | 0 |
| 10 | Various Other Small Projects | 104 |
| 50 | Deficit On Social Events | 417 |
| 0 | Presentations/Memorials | 438 |
| 126 | Website | 126 |
| 907 | Purchase of Gazebo | 0 |
| £5,296 | Total | £4,297 |

| | | |
|-------------|--|-------------|
| -662 | EXCESS/(DEFICIT) OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE | -860 |
|-------------|--|-------------|

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 13,422 | Balance Brought Forward | 12,760 |
| £12,760 | Balance Carried Forward | £11,900 |

FUNDS

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| 3,393 | Bank (Lloyds TSB) and Cash | 2,665 |
| 9,532 | Charities Deposit General Fund (COIF) | 9,575 |
| 480 | Debtor/Insurance Payments In Advance | 340 |
| -645 | Creditors/Commitments | -680 |
| £12,760 | BALANCE OF FUNDS | £11,900 |

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Annual accounts for the year ended 31st May 2016 are enclosed with this report. The main highlights from these accounts are as follows:-

Overall there was a (deficit) of Income over Expenditure of £860 in 2015/16. This compared to a deficit of £662 in 2014/15.

Income

Receipts overall were down by £1,197 compared to last year due mainly to a reduction of £650 in Grants/Donations received and a reduction in the profit from outings of £598. Subscriptions were slightly up on last year at £2,395.

Expenditure

Expenditure overall was down by £999 compared to the previous year.

Our costs of room hire/meeting expenses were down by £409 compared to last year which did include £294 to attend the Civic Voice conference.

Other Expenses showed a reduction of £226 in the costs of organising the 'Maidenhead and Me' competition and a reduction of £202 in organising the Heritage Open Day event.

We did however incur a loss of £417 on social events mainly due to the Jazz evening.

We also contributed £438 towards the Fishery Estate boundary plaque.

The Society accounts show a balance of funds in hand of £12,240 compared to £12,925 in the previous year. The main reason for the reduction was the increase of expenditure over income during the current year as explained above.

Mike Emmerson
Treasurer

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

In addition to our quarterly news magazine we occasionally send out Keeping in Touch (KiT) bulletins by email with extra news updates and events. If you are not receiving these it means we do not have your email address, or the correct one.

Please don't miss out. Make sure you get them by dropping an email to me at joyce@delasalle.me.uk and I will update our list.

Planning Matters

In previous Newsletters we have referred to the proposed closure of Mill Lane Taplow, at the point where it crosses the Jubilee River in the middle of the new Berkeley Homes development, Taplow Riverside. We have consistently been opposed to this proposal, and responded to a recent consultation with a letter of objection, reproduced below. We hope that the decision is reversed. Now there is a further proposal, associated with the introduction of a new cycleway, which is out for consultation. This will run from the new Berkeley Homes roundabout, along the north side of the A4 Bath Road eastwards to Slough. It is a result of South Bucks adopting the Government's policy to provide cycle connectivity on key routes. The cycleway will be shared with pedestrians, which always provides an interesting interface. A real gem in the scheme is the introduction of a "No Right Turn" into Berry Hill for those travelling westwards towards Maidenhead. This will enable a traffic light phase to give priority to cyclists using the cycleway to cross Berry Hill. Motorists travelling west from Slough or Junction 7 who wish to access Taplow Village, Taplow House Hotel, Cliveden, Bourne End and beyond - must continue to the new Berkeley Homes roundabout and come back on themselves, or remember to take one of the right turns either side of the Bishop Centre. Access to Bourne End is especially important if you wish to avoid Cookham Bridge and its weight limit – e.g. HGVs. And if the proposed closure of Mill Lane goes through, then the eastern section of Mill Lane will be even more cut off. As a stakeholder we will be responding to this second consultation in due course.

In the Royal Borough the Council have come up with a proposal for a social/community centre on part of Boulters Lock Car Park. The Hindu Society of Maidenhead has been looking for a site for a community centre for several years without success. And the council, keen to help, identified this disused section of the car park and earlier this year initiated negotiations for a 125-year lease. Clearly they didn't anticipate the level of opposition they faced at a public consultation in September. Local residents, already frustrated by the level of on-street parking in the area, reacted angrily and the Hindu Society found themselves caught in the middle of an escalating dispute. Residents have now formed their own Community Interest Company with a view to buying the land themselves for use as allotments. So the matter will have to be resolved by the Development Control Panel. The Hindu Society's proposal is for a raised (flood issues) single storey building with cooking facilities and 13 parking spaces. The average number of attendees will be between 50 and 100 on a daily basis. On major occasions the number could increase to 200, although it is understood that it would not be used for worship or weddings. As a stakeholder organisation we are opposed to any development of the site. Measuring about 1100 sq.m, it is substandard in planning terms, being "landlocked" with no access except over the existing car park area. It is unsuitable for a building of any description. It would be detrimental to the leisure amenity offered by Maidenhead Riverside and out of keeping with a highly residential neighbourhood. It would also

impact adversely on the adjacent Maidenhead Riverside Conservation Area, which is to be protected and enhanced. The most appropriate use would be for additional parking. The Riverside area is already a popular visitor attraction and on summer weekends Boulton's Lock Car Park is overfull. Boulton's Inn was deprived by the council of much of its parking prior to its refurbishment and Berkeley Homes are providing inadequate parking for visitors on the Bucks side of the river. Higher parking capacity will be required in future with the construction of the new footbridge between Ray Mill Island and Taplow Riverside. Walking activity will increase significantly, and there will be a family picnic area by the footbridge on the Bucks bank.

Whilst on the subject of the Riverside, in our last Newsletter we referred to the potential redevelopment of the Thames Hotel site on Ray Mead Road. The situation is still unclear - but in the meantime the Riviera Hotel has embarked on a consultation regarding a two stage redevelopment into residential apartments. Firstly, the main Victorian hotel building will be demolished to make way for a purpose built block of flats. The second stage would see the modern bedroom block on the south side of the site converted into apartments. This all serves to highlight the wider risk to the Riverside amenities enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. We are renewing our efforts to persuade the Royal Borough to establish a comprehensive Leisure Strategy for Maidenhead Riverside - or will it be too late?

In our last Newsletter we reported on two applications for flatted developments that were in the pipeline. Now for an update: firstly, the proposal to demolish "Green Trees" in Widbrook Road has, we are pleased to report, been refused. This substantial detached property was to make way for twelve flats - Shoppenhangers style. Clearly this would have paved the way for similar applications to demolish other character buildings in the Riverside area. This locality is one of the character areas which are identified with Maidenhead, and the creation of numerous blocks of flats will erode that element. This threat is evident from the potential development of the Thames and Riviera Hotels, mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Also in our last edition we reported on plans for Middlehurst - a low-rise light industrial block in Boyn Valley Road. This site is identified for residential development in the Local Plan with a recommendation of 15 maisonettes on an area of 0.7 acres. This application is for a total of 45 flats, many of which are below minimum size national standards, which represents gross overdevelopment. Regretfully, the application was approved at the Development and Control Panel at the end of September. Although there is a provision for shared ownership, this decision represents poor implementation of planning policy. Such blocks create substandard, overcrowded accommodation which can cause potential social problems in the future. In the drive to achieve numerical housing targets, the Borough must be mindful of the risk in delivering poor quality housing stock. It is to be hoped that this does not set the standard for the character and density of other identified residential sites in the Local Plan.

Another recent approval was the proposal to relocate the Bowling Club from the current site on York Road to a site adjacent to the allotments in Green Lane. The new site is technically Green Belt land, but of low public visibility and poor quality. The decision has been long awaited - probably because Green Belt re-designation is involved. This permission is all part of the greater scheme of things. The freeing up of the existing site will enable the south side of York Road to be incorporated in the redevelopment of the York Road Opportunity Area.

Our routine Planning Group meetings have taken place over the past three months. We have reviewed nearly 50 applications of interest and passed comments on about 10 of them. The most significant application has been for a development of 34 detached houses on the land currently occupied by the disused Stiefel Laboratories (behind Hitachi) at Whitebrook Park on Lower Cookham Road. This is another site identified in the Local Plan for housing - with the suggestion of 36 dwellings on an area of 3.4 acres. Although only an outline application at this stage, it does appear that the proposed 34 dwellings are rather cramped on the site (although 2 less than in the Local Plan). We believe that there is the possibility to improve the layout of the proposed houses to achieve a more spacious setting.

Finally, you may be aware that the RBWM had published a further version of the Borough Local Plan. This was for information only before it moved on to the consultation stage. With the help of Society member John Ashford, Bob Dulson and myself scrutinised the draft and submitted a feedback document on behalf of the Society. We now hear that the public consultation has been postponed until next April, though we claim no credit for that!

Objection to proposed closure of Mill Lane Taplow, at Jubilee River bridge

“Maidenhead Civic Society is a neighbourhood amenity group with a supporter headcount of approximately 350. We have been concerned at the proposal to close Mill Lane to through traffic, ever since it was first included in the design brief given to Barratt Homes when they acquired the Taplow Paper Mill/Skindles site nearly ten years ago.

At every stage of consultation we have raised our concerns, most recently with Berkeley Homes at the pre-application stages. Berkeley Homes have always insisted that they had inherited the closure as a pre-condition and that it was not within their interests or remit to seek the withdrawal of the condition. Our comments on the formal planning application for the scheme also included our objections to the closure of Mill Lane. In short, we have objected to this proposal consistently and at every opportunity.

On completion, Taplow Riverside will be a development of around 300 dwellings and 1000 inhabitants. It is ludicrous that this large number of new Taplow residents will be cut off from their host village. Along with existing residents and businesses they will be denied access by the shortest route and

forced unnecessarily to swell the A4 traffic, which is already busy and heavily congested in peak hours.

Mill Lane also offers an alternative route to local traffic between Maidenhead Bridge and Taplow village. Yes, it has been something of a rat-run in peak periods but the advantages outweigh the disadvantages, particularly since its junction with the A4 has been significantly improved with construction of the new roundabout.

The closure of Mill Lane will deny ready access to/from Taplow village, Bourne End and Beaconsfield. It will inconvenience Taplow Riverside residents and businesses. It will impede access to the new visitor facilities – a riverside picnic area and a new footbridge – which are welcome additions as part of the Berkeley redevelopment. And it will increase pressure on the A4, the roundabout at Maidenhead Bridge and the A4094, to the detriment of existing road users and the wider local community - which our organisation represents.

Consequently, we believe that Mill lane should remain open to through traffic with size/weight/speed restrictions for environmental and safety reasons because of the narrowness of the existing thoroughfare.”

Leisure Strategy For Riverside?

The Civic Society has renewed its calls for a formal Leisure Strategy for Maidenhead Riverside amid mounting speculation that two hotels could close and be replaced by flats.

Owners of the Thames Riviera Hotel propose to convert their premises into 30 flats in plans to be submitted shortly and there are unconfirmed reports that the owners of the Thames Hotel are considering a redevelopment.

RBWM's own research shows that the River Thames and the Riverside are the main attraction for visitors to Maidenhead, as they have been for years. Clearly businesses want to get the best returns on their assets but are we doing enough to encourage investment in tourism or leisure in the area?

Skindles has gone, Chef Peking has gone and boating facilities are virtually non-existent. A formal leisure strategy would provide the framework for a coordinated approach to the maintenance and improvement of facilities for visitors. Meanwhile the Society hopes that planning policies governing change of use and the Conservation Area will be enough to ensure that the hotels remain.

Martin McNamee and Bob Dulson

Maidenhead & Me Artists Show

Why They Love Our Town

Prime Minister, Theresa May MP presented the prizes to the winners of our art competition, *Maidenhead and Me* in the Nicholsons Centre at the end of September.



Artists had been asked to portray “Why I love Maidenhead” in their own choice of medium. After viewing all the entries, Theresa May, who is Patron of the Society, said it was good to see so many different views and aspects of Maidenhead.

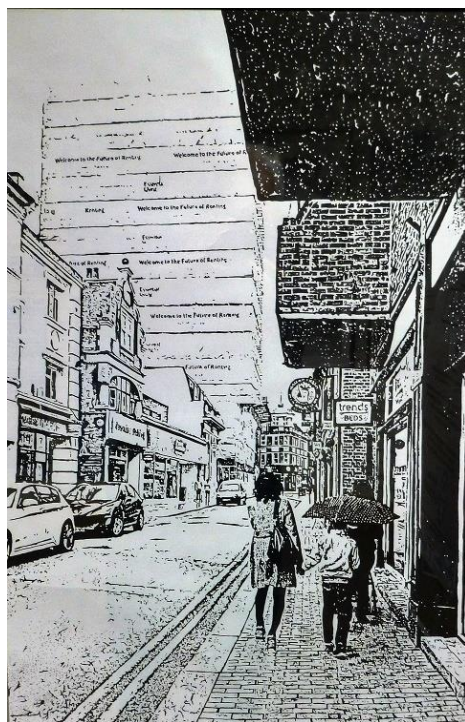
The competition, which the Civic Society first staged in 2014 to stimulate public interest and appreciation of the town, attracted 64 entries in two categories, adults and under-16s. There were photographs, drawings, collages and paintings featuring a wide range of subjects in a variety of styles, including a couple of sceptical interpretations of what regeneration might mean for the town centre.

Sarah Luton, an artist from Oaken Grove, took the cheque for £250 first prize with her oil painting of the High Street on market day, called *Busy, Busy*.



Second prize (£100) went to Irena Kirton from Whurley Way for *It's Always The River For Me* in gouache (left).

Third prize (£50) went to Laura Pavelova of Ellington Park for her pen & ink drawing, *First Day in Maidenhead*.



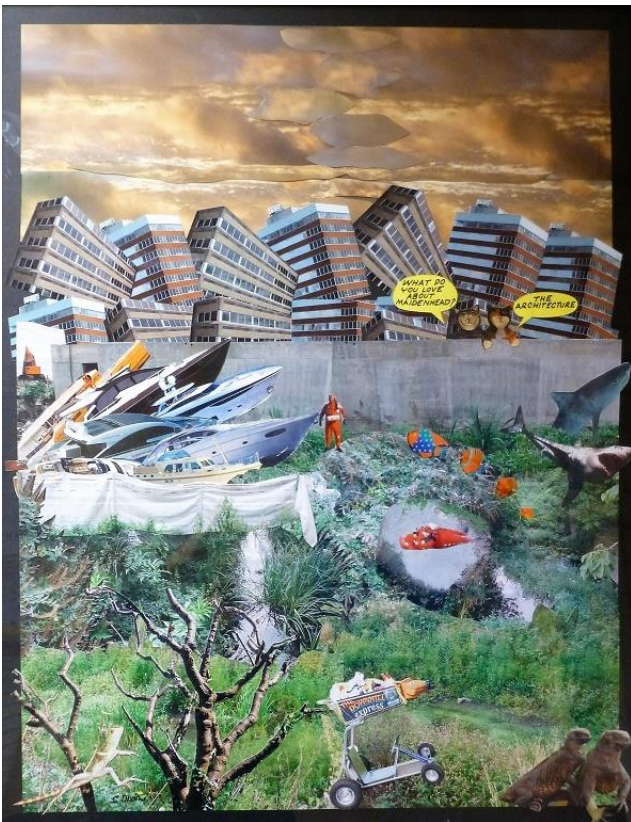
Four other adult entries were commended by the judges: Two photographs by Paul Morgan, one of the Flying Scotsman crossing the Brunel Bridge, the other of Maidenhead Rugby, a sporting action shot from Braywick; Sarah Dixon for her satirical take on the Chapel Arches redevelopment, called *Little Venice, MkII*; and Eloise Hunt for a pen portrait of Hugh Lofting, the Maidenhead-born creator of Dr Doolittle.



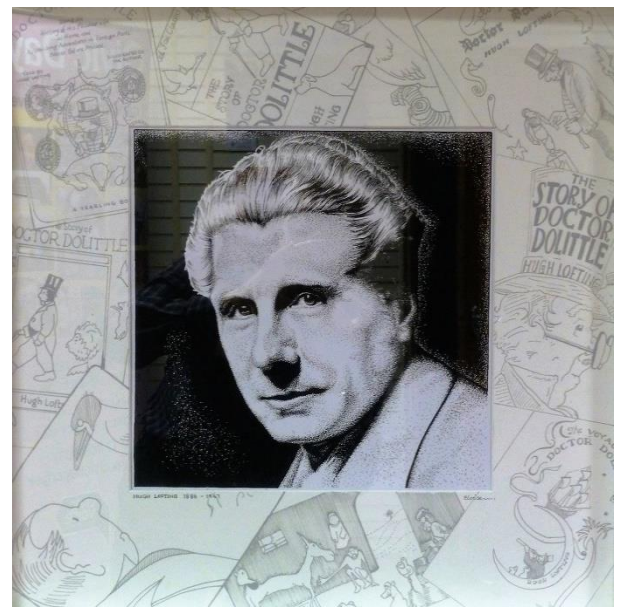
The Flying Scotsman



Maidenhead Rugby



Little Venice Mk II



Hugh Lofting

In the Under-16 category, *Through the Lens*, a photograph of Maidenhead Bridge, won £50 first prize for Rachel Jones of Auckland Close. A pastel drawing *My Home* by Dhrur Nair from Altwood Road took 2nd prize (£20), and Claires Court junior pupils Georgina Helmuth and Temiloluwa Odesanya were joint 3rd (£10) with their pictures of *My Favourite Park* and *Roller Disco*.



U16's 1st Prize



U16's 2nd Prize



U16's Joint 3rd Prize



U16's Joint 3rd Prize

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

The feedback from both artists and visitors was again very encouraging this year, although visitors to the exhibition were fewer. The competition launched in June on Civic Day as part of a Civic Voice initiative to encourage people to value where they live.

Projects

Brexit in 1450

Now the United Kingdom is poised to leave Europe, you may remember that something similar has happened before, though the reason behind it was different. By 1450 England had been thrown out of its French possessions, after many years of war, by the army of the French king with the help of the English king's father-in-law. At the time, England did retain control of Calais prompting some wag, in a recent edition of *The Times* newspaper, to say the solution to the current Calais problem was for the French to give it back to us.

So what has this got to do with the Civic Society, I hear you ask!

As you know, we have a longstanding project studying the history of Ockwells Manor and, in particular, re-identifying the famous armorial achievements depicted in the window glass in the Great Hall. I am confident that this is now complete and it is possible to describe the scheme that John Norreys, Esquire to the Body of Henry VI, put up.

The Scheme has four themes:

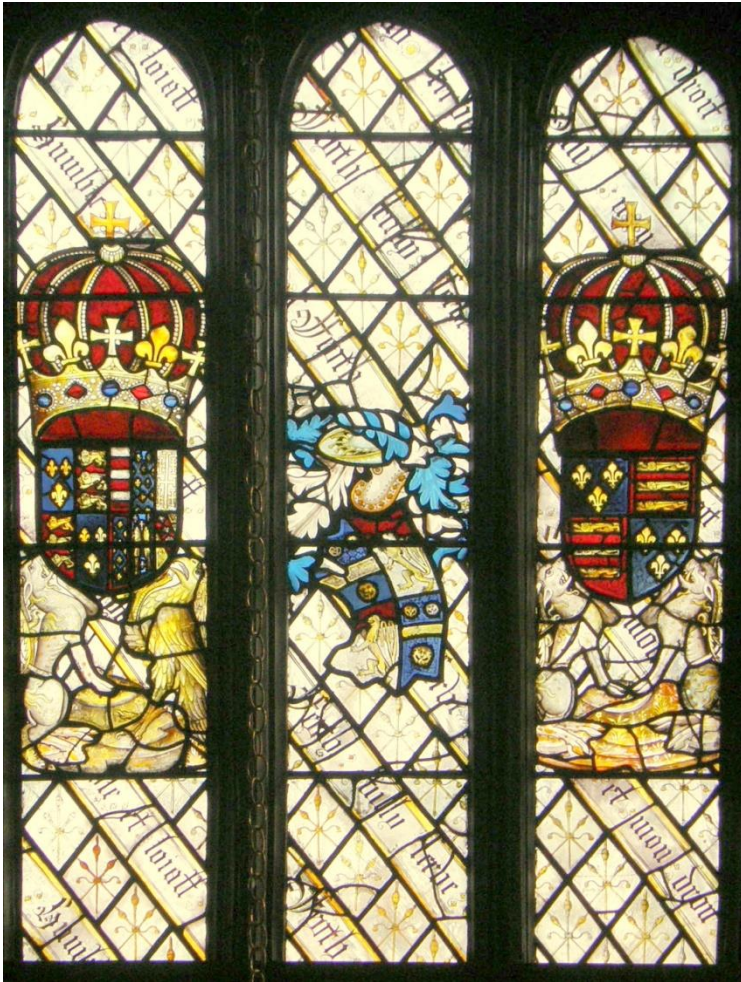
- 1) A commemoration of the marriage of Henry VI & Margaret of Anjou recording some of those:
 - who were involved in the negotiations which culminated in their betrothal (May 1444) and marriage (April 1445)
 - who helped escort Margaret to England in 1445.
- 2) A Beauchamp connection: members of the Beauchamp family, their relatives and retainers. John Norreys had dealings with Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick (d.1439) and his wife Isabel Despenser (d.1439).
- 3) An Abingdon connection: Norreys had dealings with the Abbey and St Helen's, Abingdon, also probably a Reading connection with the Abbey there.
- 4) Local Men from Berks and Bucks, including his brother-in-law, placed with the armorial of Norreys first wife; and men from Kent, Herefordshire & Worcs. placed with the armorial of his second wife.

It seems a part of the armorial scheme was to commemorate those involved in the diplomacy that in 1445 resulted in Henry VI, King of England, marrying Margaret of Anjou, niece of Charles VII, King of France – a marriage that was supposed to lead to a peace agreement and bring to an end the long running 100 Years' War between England and France.

The armorial glass was put up when Norreys was married to his second wife. As his first wife, Alice Merbrooke, was still alive in ca.1449 the glazing cannot date from earlier than 1450. Evidence indicates the glass was put up between 1450 and 1454, exactly the period when, peace negotiations having failed, England lost, with the exception of Calais, its French possessions, leading to unrest in England.

In May 1450 William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, the man who had arranged the marriage, was blamed for the loss of French possessions, and, while en route to exile, was captured in the English Channel and summarily tried and executed, his head being left on Dover Sands.

Norreys had a lot to do with Suffolk. Members may remember the Society visit to the Long Alley almshouse next to the St Helen's Church in Abingdon. In 1441 both men were founders of the Guild of the Holy Cross in St Helen's that maintained the bridges and road to Abingdon. The Guild founded the almshouse in 1446.



Armoial achievements of (l. to r.): Margaret of Anjou; William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk; and Henry VI

I think Norreys put up Suffolk's armorial achievement, between those of the king and queen, symbolising his role in negotiating the marriage, to act as a memorial to his dead friend and to a failed attempt at diplomacy.

The English thought that marrying Margaret of Anjou, the niece of the King of France, to their king would result in peace. Her father, Rene, and his brother, Charles of Maine, had signed a 20-year truce with England, that the English thought would keep Anjou and Maine neutral, thus protecting Normandy's border. Unfortunately, they thought wrong. In March 1448 the English relinquished control of Maine. In November 1449 Charles VII triumphantly entered Rouen with Rene on his right and Charles on his left, both dis-avowing the 20-year

truce they had made with England. Why? – Probably because Rene wanted Charles VII to help him regain his kingdom of Naples, which never happened.

So Brexit in the 15th Century meant we looked elsewhere in the world. Let's see what happens in the 21st Century.

Ann Darracott

Leaky Dams!



Little leaky dams like this could help protect the Thames Valley from flood risk, according to Yorkshireman Mike Potter.

A pioneering scheme using natural flood management to create upstream catchment areas had saved the museum and several houses from flooding in his home town of Pickering last Christmas.

Speaking to guests at a Maidenhead Civic Society luncheon on Wednesday 12th October, Mr Potter said long, low, leaky dams were installed which trapped debris and slowed the flow, preventing a surge from hitting the town. Pickering had previously suffered four serious floods in the last 10 years.

The upstream flood storage and associated land management measures had reduced the flow by 15 – 20%, according to a subsequent EA analysis.

“Similar measures on streams and tributaries in the Thames catchment area would certainly help reduce the risk,” said Mr Potter who, as chair of his local Civic Society, has spent 10 years bringing the scheme to reality.

His presentation vividly demonstrated how a community can come together and make things happen, even when the authorities didn’t think of the idea first.

Forthcoming Events

AGM – 16th November 2016

Nigel Smales will give his popular talk entitled ‘**The Rise and Fall of Skindles**’ prior to the AGM. Nigel will be bringing copies of his very readable and informative book ‘The History of Taplow’ for those who would like to purchase a signed volume. He is giving his presentation for free but his fee will be donated to the restoration of the roof of St Nicolas, Taplow.

The meeting will take place at Maidenhead Rowing Club, River Road, Taplow. The Bar will be open to purchase drinks at 7.30pm and the talk will commence at 8.00pm. There will be a break for tea and coffee at 8.45pm and the AGM will follow at 9.15pm.

CHRISTMAS OPENING AT STONOR PARK

In August last year, many members of the Society joined in the visit to Stonor Park, near Henley. For the first time, the house will be open to the public for special Christmas Openings.

25th to 27th November – “Country Homes & Interiors Christmas”

At this boutique-style shopping event, you’ll find creative and crafted festive gifts plus home, decorating and lifestyle products from favourite makers and brands. Located in the grounds of Stonor Park in beautifully styled marquees, you can browse more than 100 stands, and watch demonstrations from new and exciting country businesses. For the first time, Stonor Park Manor House will be opening its doors to the public at Christmas. Country Homes & Interiors is offering combined advance tickets including entry to the Manor House all decorated for Christmas. Tickets are from £10, but free for member of the RHS and English Heritage. See <http://www.stonor.com>.

28th November to 4th December – “Christmas at Stonor”

The house will be beautifully decorated for Christmas and there will be Christmas food and drinks available to buy at the Stonor Pantry. If you wish to know more contact enquiries@stonor.com, or visit <http://www.stonor.com/christmas-open-house>. Tickets start at £10.

ST LUKE’S SIXTH CHRISTMAS TREE FESTIVAL

The Society is again sponsoring a Christmas tree at this event 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 9th and Saturday 10th December from 10am to 7pm, and on Sunday 11th from 2pm to 6pm.

DINNER WITH A ROYAL FLAVOUR

Friday 20th January 2017

Hardly a day passes without the media spotlight falling on the Royal Family. In the past year we've seen the Queen's 90th birthday with celebrations in London, Windsor and across the land, the Cambridge's visits to India and Canada, Prince Harry taking the Invictus Games to Florida and Princess Charlotte's first birthday: and more.



So we're delighted that the guest speaker at our Civic Society Dinner on Friday 20th January is someone with a unique perspective on all this activity, the Director of Royal Communications, Sally Osman. She will share with us some of the delights and, no doubt, the challenges of communicating the role and relevance of the modern Monarchy.

Sally first joined the Royal household in June 2013 as Communications Secretary to The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall. But then in early 2014 she was asked to oversee the integration of all Royal Communications into one team, based in Buckingham Palace, and in her current role now oversees all the press office teams for members of the Royal Family. A former journalist and award-winning publisher and magazine editor, Sally moved into PR in the 1990s, initially with BSkyB, then on the launch of Channel 5 before becoming Director of Communications with the BBC in 2000-7 and latterly with Sony in Europe.

The Civic Society Dinner is a relaxed and fairly informal occasion with good food and wine. Moor Hall in Cookham is the venue and for £35 there's a choice of menu, a welcome drink and wine with the meal. The dinner is open to members and their guests, although numbers are limited. Do join us for what promises to be a fascinating evening by completing the form at the end, noting your menu preferences.

The Menu

Starters

- A) Pork, pistachio and white pudding terrine, Earl Grey infused pickled prunes, Sourdough toasts
- B) Gravadlax, compressed cucumber and dill salad, gin and tonic jelly, Irish wheaten bread
- C) Warm mushroom, chestnut, sprout top and stilton salad

Mains

- D) Whole Mackerel, Bombay potatoes, baby spinach & salsa verde
- E) Pumpkin and rainbow chard risotto with parmesan
- F) Braised blade of beef, bubble and squeak, shallot jam and seasonal greens
- G) Roast chicken breast, balsamic onions, tomato confit, polenta chips and béarnaise sauce

Dessert

- H) Blood orange crème caramel, citrus wafer
- I) Peanut butter and chocolate brownie, honeycomb ice cream
- J) A selection of local cheeses with chutney, seasonal fruit and biscuits

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 RVS Centre, 42 York Road, Maidenhead SL6 1SH; 7.30 for 8pm; visitors £2; contact 01628 630924 for talks, and 01628 629614 for outings)

Wednesday 30th November: Talk by Mr and Mrs Cooke “A Very British Brew - the life of tea planters”

Wednesday 14th December: Talk by Mr Howes “The story of Water in London”

Wednesday 25th January: Talk by Paul Whittle (check Maidenhead Arts website for details nearer time).

Marlow Archaeology (MAS)

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

Thursday 13th October, 8pm: *The Old Straight Track revisited and revised; understanding the dating patterns of mobility in prehistory*, by Prof. Martin Bell (a joint talk with AiM arranged by MAS)

Thursday 3rd November, 8pm: *Scaftesege – the lost Saxon fort at Cookham* by Colin Berks MCIfA (no entrance fee, all welcome – and enjoy a free glass of wine!)

Thursday 24th November, 8pm: *RICHARD III, Part 2 - Revealing Richard's burial place and the latest research on the King* by Mathew Morris (A joint talk with MAS arranged by AiM)

Thursday 19th January, 8pm: *A Causewayed Enclosure and other discoveries at Thame* by Ken Welsh – Regional Manager, Oxford Archaeology South

Thursday 9th March, 8pm: *My work as a Dendrochronologist* by Dr Martin Bridge – Institute of Archaeology

Archaeology in Marlow (AiM)

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

Thursday 24th November, 8pm: *Richard III Part 2 - Revealing Richard's burial place and the latest research on the King*, by Mathew Morris (joint talk with MAS)

Thursday 8th December, 8pm: AIM's annual Christmas Quiz. In the Garden Room (non-Members £1).

News from the Heritage Centre

Happy Birthday

December marks the 10th anniversary of Maidenhead Heritage Trust buying the former Cricketers Arms in Park Street, with the help of hundreds of individual donors, many corporate donors and the Louis Baylis (Maidenhead Advertiser) Trust. It then took another 18 months to get planning permission and convert the building to its present layout. We are also celebrating the opening 5 years ago of the *Grandma Flew Spitfires!* exhibition and archive, with its ever popular Spitfire simulator. It remains the world's only exhibition and archive dedicated exclusively to Air Transport Auxiliary and its intrepid male and female pilots and continues to attract visitors from all over the country and around the world. It also attracts 5-star ratings on the tourism website TripAdvisor.

Vision for the Future

Our Trustees are in discussion with the Royal Borough about the provision of a much larger Heritage Centre as part of the rejuvenated area around the Town Hall. With major historic themes including the River Thames, the Bath Road, Brunel and the Railway, 20th Century car and aviation industries and of course Air Transport Auxiliary, a state-of-the-art museum has the potential to entice a proportion of the thousands of visitors to Windsor to investigate the charms of other parts of the Royal Borough – not just visiting the Castle and then rushing off somewhere else, as happens at the moment!

Hammer Films and Bray Studios - New Exhibition

The developers of Bray Studios have donated a substantial number of objects to Maidenhead Heritage Centre, including projectors from the viewing room and a number of signs from around the site. Some of these will be on display in a new exhibition starting early in November.

2017 Anniversaries

Significant local anniversaries next year include the 70th anniversary of the disastrous 1947 flood, and the 60th anniversary of Stirling Moss becoming the first British driver to win the British Grand Prix driving a British car, which was of course a Vanwall from Maidenhead. November 2017 is also the 60th anniversary of Gerry Anderson's first puppet films for television (anybody remember Torchy the Battery Boy?) and the first flight of the ever-so-noisy Fairey Rotodyne, designed as the world's first vertical take-off airliner.

As always, full news and information about the Heritage Centre is available on our website www.maidenheadheritage.org.uk

Booking Form & Menu Choice

CIVIC SOCIETY DINNER at MOOR HALL

Friday 20th January 2017

Please detach and send this completed form, together with your cheque,
payable to "MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY", to reach
Mike Copeland, 14 Laburnham Road, Maidenhead, Berks, SL6 4DB

no later than 20th December 2016

NAME

ADDRESS

.....

.....POSTCODE

PHONE:EMAIL:

Please reserve ____ place(s) @ £35.00 each. I enclose a cheque for £_____

My party's names and menu choices are (continue on a separate sheet, if necessary):

| Name(s) USE BLOCK CAPITALS | Starter A - C | Main D - G | Dessert H - J |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
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Maidenhead Civic Society is a Registered Charity, No. 272102. Affiliated to Civic Voice.

Please treat any profit on this event as a Gift Aid Donation to the Society (tick) ☐

(You must pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax equal to the tax we reclaim on your donation)

**If you have any problems, or for last minute cancellations, please contact
Mike Copeland without delay on 01628 634181 or mobile 07770 421221.**

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 16th November 2016

Civic Society AGM, preceded by a talk “The Rise and Fall of Skindles, by Nigel Smales.
Maidenhead Rowing Club, River Road, Taplow. 8.00pm.

Friday 20th January 2017

Dinner &Talk

The Civic Society Dinner
including a talk by Sally Osman, Director of Royal Communications
Moor Hall, Cookham, 7.30 for 8.00 pm

CIVIC SOCIETY – KEY CONTACTS

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|--------|
| Executive Chairman | Bob Dulson, Bryher, Islet Road, SL6 8HT | 627130 |
| Hon. Secretary | Eileen Goford, 6 Laxton Green, SL6 3HW | 638238 |
| Hon. Treasurer | Mike Emmerson, 15 Twynham Road, SL6 5AT | 628006 |
| Planning Group | Martin McNamee, 14 Lower Cookham Road, SL6 8JT | 623203 |
| Projects | Ann Darracott, 6 Medallion Place, SL6 1TF | 620280 |
| Communications | Brian Darracott, 6 Medallion Place, SL6 1TF | 620280 |
| Events | Tina Sell, Marlborough, River Road, Taplow, SL6 0BB | 628675 |
| Outings Organiser | Mike Copeland, 14 Laburnham Road, SL6 4DB | 634181 |
| Membership Sec. | Joyce Delasalle, 7 Laxton Green, SL6 3HW | 637342 |
| Newsletter Distribution | Sue Ross, 3 The Chantry, 21 Boyn Hill Avenue, SL6 4EY | 626849 |

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2016

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

6th January, 9th February, 10th March, 12th April, 10th May, 14th June, 9th August, 13th September, 11th October, 8th November, 13th December

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 16th November 2016 at Maidenhead Rowing Club at 8.00 pm.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 20th January 2017**

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