



Maidenhead Civic Society NEWS



Issue 4/19

November 2019



The Chapel Arches development continues apace – recent architect's image from Shanly Homes compared to the old Colonnade

Visit our website: www.maidenheadcivicsoc.org.uk

The Chairman's Page

Details are emerging about the long-awaited visioning exercise for the town centre. Following a launch for invited stakeholders on November 4th, a community planning day is scheduled for November 23rd.

With four major regeneration schemes already under way and at least three more in the offing, it may seem a bit late in the day to start talking about a “vision” for Maidenhead town centre.

But the focus until now has been on individual sites. So this will be the first opportunity we’ve had, certainly since the preparation of the Area Action Plan (AAP) in 2010, to take a holistic view of the community’s expectations and aspirations for the town centre.

What’s planned is a “Vision and Charter” which will describe and illustrate the kind of place that residents and stakeholders want to create. This will aim to promote, guide and direct future development and change, and inform investors and developers. But it is also likely to identify and inspire further areas of work, e.g. a transport strategy, arts policy or public space framework, and is expected to inform a new addition to the revised Local Plan in the form of a supplementary planning document on Town Centre Placemaking.

A similar vision and charter exercise several years ago in Scarborough apparently led to £220m investment, 1,500 jobs, new industry, a new 4-star hotel and an 8% increase in the visitor economy.

RBWM have commissioned JTP, who are also working on the Nicholsons Centre redevelopment, to do the work. At a recent exhibition of their plans for Nicholsons (see page 14), JTP came in for some criticism about a perceived bias in their questionnaire and raised more than a few eyebrows with the proposed heights of some of their buildings. But with over 20 years’ experience they’re acknowledged leaders in the field of community planning.

RBWM is expected to adopt the new Vision and Charter formally in March.

Bob Dulson

[Editor: it may appear than we’re giving somewhat excessive coverage to JTP in this issue, but given that they could probably be the biggest single influencer on the future shape of the town centre, we think members will be keen to be kept abreast of their activities. We’re trying to keep everyone on their toes!]

59th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

**To be held on Wednesday, 20th November 2019
in The Bromley Room, Methodist Church, King Street, Maidenhead**

**At 8.00pm – a presentation by Charles Campion RIBA, Partner at JTP
(the new developers of Nicholsons Centre) who will speak about
‘Participatory Planning’**

To be followed by refreshments, and the AGM at 9.15 pm

AGENDA

1. Introduction by the Chairman of the Committee
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 58th Annual General Meeting
3. Accounts for the year ended 31st May 2019 (see page 10)
4. Chairman’s Report for 2018/2019
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 eleven Committee Members: Bob Dulson, Eileen Goford, Peter Child, Martin McNamee, Ann Darracott, Brian Darracott, Jodie Humphries, Joyce Delasalle, Roger Panton, Ian Rose, and Tina Sell. Under the terms of the Society’s Constitution the Committee shall consist of eight to twelve Members including the Officers. One third of the Committee Members who are not Officers must retire each year and shall be eligible for re-election. Accordingly, Martin McNamee, Bob Dulson, and Jodie Humphries will retire, of whom Martin McNamee and Bob Dulson offer themselves for re-election. There are thus two 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 at least 14 days prior to the AGM.

MINUTES OF THE 58th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

Held on Wednesday 21st November 2018 at the Methodist High Street Church

33 persons in attendance.

1. **Apologies for Absence:** David Fuller, Jodie Humphries, Roger Panton, John Steward, Derek Wilson.
2. **Approval of Minutes of 57th AGM:** Date amended to 2017. The minutes were approved. Proposed by Michael Johnson seconded by Tina Sell.
3. **Accounts for the Year Ending 31st May 2018:** Our income was stable: we are in a healthy position. We made a small loss because *Maidenhead & Me* made a small loss and there was a reduction in Gift Aid. Question for the future is how much we should charge for membership. Accounts accepted. Proposed by Brian Darracott and seconded by Stefan Stefan.
4. **Chairman's Report:** After drawing our attention to his report in the newsletter, Bob highlighted two issues: our relationship with the Council and our aging membership. We need new energy. We were formed in 1960 at the behest of the Council who felt Maidenhead should have a Civic Society. Planning is the essence. PRoM has met since 2007. It is now no more. Something new is emerging. We have to get in earlier to be heard. Decisions about parking and the relocation of the Magnet Leisure Centre were made without consultation or community engagement. Conservation is at last up to speed. Heritage listing is now a goer. We have a list and will contact those who expressed an interest. Council is sympathetic to the Riverside strategy and want to maintain the river as a destination. We need policies to guarantee riverside. Our housing mix and dwelling size offering is inadequate. There are far too many flats and too often size is below that recommended nationally. Ann will publish a history of Ockwells Manor. There is an opportunity to access land near Lower Cookham Road to the towpath. We will take responsibility for painting the Guards Club Bridge. *Maidenhead & Me* entries were down 40% perhaps because the theme was difficult. Your committee will discuss whether we should keep it going and how. With Nicholsons coming down, car parking continues to be a grave concern. Where are shoppers going to park? Vicus Way is intended for commuters but it is too far away. Where are the disabled spaces? Car parking needs infrastructure around it. We were urged to buy tickets for the Annual Dinner 25 January 2019. He appealed for us to use our councillors.
5. **Election to Committee:** Ann Darracott, Brian Darracott and Tina Sell resigned en bloc and were re-elected. Proposed Peter Child, Seconded by Bridget Morris
6. **Election of Officers:** Bob Dulson as Chairman, Eileen Goford as Honorary Secretary and Peter Child as Treasurer were re-elected. Proposed by Matthew Burdett, seconded by Ann Darracott.
7. **Any Other Business:** We record votes of thanks to Martin McNamee, Bob Dulson and Martin Trepte. Thank you to Brian Darracott for doing such a professional job on the newsletter and for advertising Maidenhead Archaeological and Historical Society events therein. Meeting concluded at 9.55 pm.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF THE YEAR

The pace of change in Maidenhead is quickening, social attitudes are shifting and technology transforms communication. For a Society that tries to keep abreast of any issues that affect our quality of life, with a view to preserving the best and improving the rest for Maidenhead, these factors, combined with some extraordinary situations in the town hall, have made the last 12 months pretty challenging.

In the face of this, we have managed not only to keep our heads above water but to maintain the Society's reputation as an innovative and respected voice, thanks to some sterling efforts by members of our Committee.

However, looking ahead to our 60th birthday next year, it's plain that some changes to the look and feel of the Society – and perhaps in direction – are going to be required if we are to be as effective and influential in the next 60 years.

Planning

In recent weeks we've heard that the Council is at last to commission a **town centre vision** in a community planning exercise. Since well before the demise of PRoM (Partnership for the Rejuvenation of Maidenhead) we've been calling for a holistic town centre vision – depicting the effect of all the proposed development, how it all fits together and showing what Maidenhead town centre will look and feel like in 15 years' time. A placemaking masterplan would do this and capture the expectations and aspirations of the community for the future. The first public consultation event is scheduled for November 23rd.

In similar collaborative vein, the Borough has set up a **Developer Forum**, which we suggested, where representatives of all the companies involved in town centre developments meet regularly to compare notes.

Over the year the monthly meeting of our Planning Group has considered about 180 applications and submitted **planning comments** on 50 of them. We remain concerned at the overprovision of flats which accounted for 80% of planning approvals in 2018, the reduction in living space with an increasing number of undersized dwellings, especially in office conversions, and the under-provision of affordable housing with only 4.5% of completions in 2018 – against a target of 30%.

However, we were pleased to see that RBWM has produced a comprehensive and well-written **Design Guide** that includes minimum standards for living and amenity space. Although it's not a policy document, therefore advisory rather than obligatory, it's welcome nevertheless.

Following a setback earlier in the year, the Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum has been reconstituted, involving a number of Civic Society members, and work is progressing on the production of a **Neighbourhood Plan** for the seven unparished

wards of Maidenhead. It seems likely this this might incorporate our desired strategy for Riverside.

The Society is indebted to Martin McNamee for his continuing service as Planning Group chairman. Our thanks to him and his Group colleagues Renu Gujral, Roger Panton, Ian Rose and Rudi Sheldon.

Projects

During the year, the Society made representations in the following forums and for this we are hugely grateful to Ann Darracott for her tireless effort and commitment.

Cookham, Maidenhead and Bray Catchment Group, Community Workshop, February. The aim was to develop a shared understanding of the rivers around Cookham, Maidenhead and Bray, its stakeholders and current, future and proposed developments. They hope to generate key actions and priorities that will facilitate joint working and collaboration.

Green Way Working Group (GWWG), April & October. This group monitors the condition of both footpath and waterways and any planning applications affecting same.

Green and Blue Infrastructure Workshop, June, organised by RBWM to: Provide an overview of the current baseline of green and blue infrastructure (GI) in RBWM, including its strengths and weaknesses, and explore the key components of a GI vision for the future, identifying key opportunities and barriers.

Friends of Battlemead Common (FOBC): Several meetings including the inaugural one in June, when Ann gave a presentation about the missing link of the Millennium Walk that we hope will cross the new common; as well as a White Brook sub-group and the Biodiversity sub-group in October. A site visit is scheduled in November prior to the next full Friends meeting on 9th December.

Natural Flood Management (NFM) Scenarios Workshop, South Chilterns, 23rd September. To find out what NFM measures people want to see in the landscape they live and/or work in and know well.

Arts & Heritage Network event, in June in Windsor Guildhall, to facilitate exchange of information.

In addition, Ann continues to collect data on the aquatic fauna in **North Town Moor Pond** on a monthly basis. Apart from a slight set back when most of the oxygenating plants disappeared from the water in July, the fauna is healthy with newt larvae again present. Analysis of the pond by Thames Water has not identified a reason for the die back. Further work to improve the pond is planned through the GWWG.

Other activities have included arranging a visit to Bisham Abbey & All Saints Bisham in April by the Archivists from St Georges Chapel, Windsor who were interested in the Knight of the Garter connections of both places; and contributing to two major reports compiled by Dr Sarah Rutherford for the Royal Borough: "*Ockwells Manor, Berkshire - Historic Setting Analysis*" and "*Battlemead Common - an Historic Analysis*".

Events

The **AGM 2018** was very well attended and we had a fascinating presentation from local architect Martin Knight, whose team designed the new footbridge across the Thames at Boulters Lock.

Our **Annual Dinner** in January was greatly enjoyed by 65 members and their guests, who had the pleasure of hearing from Theresa May, our Patron, the then Prime Minister. Taking a break from Brexit, she was at her best, talking about her local work in the constituency.

A new venture in 2019 was our '**Theme Tea**' – an opportunity for members to voice their thoughts on topics of concern in the Borough, whilst enjoying a splendid afternoon tea with fellow members. Parking in Maidenhead was the first subject, well debated in March, followed in June by a presentation by Barbara Richardson MD of RBWM Property Company on town centre regeneration. In October we discussed 'Waste and Recycling' with guest speaker Kathryn Best, Marketing Manager of Recycling and Waste Strategy and Commissioning for RBWM (photo below).



Future themes are set to include: the Leisure Offering in Maidenhead; Building Standards and Blue and Green Infrastructure.

Inspired by the new footbridge and the new Taplow Riverside development, Ann Darracott and Tina Sell led a circular **riverside walk** on a warm, sunny day in May, pointing out landmarks on both sides of the Thames and sharing a brief history of past buildings and residents in this newly revamped landscape.

A lively evening of musical entertainment from local band, the Fabulous Shirtlifters, at Maidenhead Rowing Club was our most recent event, **Jazz by the Riverside**. It was a wonderful social occasion, attended by 94 people who were treated to an eclectic range of music from New Orleans jazz to the Lancashire ukulele sound of George Formby.

In an effort to raise our profile and inform the community of the society's activities, volunteers have taken our stand to a number of local events including **Cox Green Fair**, the **Littlewick Show** and **Maidenhead Festival**.

Looking ahead, we have decided to move the **Annual Dinner** next year to Friday 15th May, as we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Society's foundation in May 1960. Ian Harvey, Executive Director of Civic Voice UK, will be our guest speaker.

We plan to revive our Art Competition '*Maidenhead & Me*' in 2020 too, perhaps making it biennial, and on Tuesday 2nd June we are planning a guided visit to a local biodynamic garden, Waltham Place.

The Events Group tries always to develop an attractive forward programme of events. Considerable thought goes into what kind of things we should do and comments or suggestions from members are always welcome. Our thanks to Group Chair, Tina Sell, and members Mike Copeland, Joyce Delasalle, Angela Dulson and Bridget Morris.

Communications

Whereas we once used to have routine meetings with the head of planning and lead member for planning, quarterly planning stakeholders meetings and regular meetings of PRoM, changes at the town hall have put an end to all that and with it the opportunity for raising, formally or informally, issues of concern, except by email. The exception is the newly-formed steering group associated with the forthcoming town centre visioning exercise on which we've been fortunate to get a seat.

Members look forward to receiving the quarterly **Civic Society News** which continues to be the main vehicle for sharing news and views; and our thanks go to Brian Darracott who edits it and Sue Ross and the team who distribute it. We send out **Keeping in Touch** bulletins by email with information for members when appropriate and we make occasional use of social media, like Facebook, to promote our activities. In the new media world we need to raise our game and promote ourselves and our aims much more often than we do.

Membership

In the year to 31st May 2019 we were pleased to welcome the following new members: Mr Geoffrey & Mrs Christine Jones, Suzy Kirkwood and Satish Sinhal, Mrs Christine Harrington, Mrs Valerie Patterson, Dr Nicola Stingelin, Mr Keith & Mrs Susan Trower, Mr Harry Manley – Countryside, Mr Mac Kenny, Mr Brian Ball, Mr Roger & Mrs Sue Williams, Mr & Mrs David de Bromhead.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Membership					
(Family, Honorary, Life, etc)	236	233	232	227	223
Total Members (Excl. Corp)	345	344	340	329	322
Life Members	99	94	91	86	82
Honorary Members	18	19	18	17	14
Corporate Members	1	1	1	1	2

The current year (2019-20) has seen 1 new membership comprising 1 member and while we lost a few last year for various reasons, we broadly managed to maintain our numbers. Joyce Delasalle manages our membership, and much more besides, for which the Society is extremely grateful. She would welcome any suggestions members might have for potential new members.

Our Hon. Treasurer Peter Child maintains a weather eye on our finances with super efficiency. Thanks go to him in generous measure. And thanks too to Eileen Goford as Hon. Secretary for her minute-taking (and her occasional interjections!).

Finally, on a personal note, my thanks to you, our members, for your loyal support for the Society, and to our Committee and volunteers for everything they do in its name.

I signed off last year's annual report by saying that I felt the Society faces challenges that would be better met with the new energy, ideas and enthusiasm of a new chairman. If you know of anyone who would be willing and appropriate to be a chair-elect, please get in touch.

Bob Dulson

TREASURER'S REPORT

The annual accounts for the year ended 31st May 2019 are included in this Newsletter. The main points are as follows:

Overall there was a deficit for the year of expenditure over Income of £284 in 2018/19. This is £499 lower than the deficit of expenditure over income of £783 in 2017/18.

Income

Total income has increased by £364. Subscription income (which includes top up donations) and gift aid declined by £163. However, donations increased by over £500, thanks principally to a generous grant from Shell UK Limited.

Expenditure

Expenditure overall has decreased by £135 on the previous year. The most significant reductions have been on the newsletter which, with a smaller number of pages on some editions, cost £241 less together with no expenditure on GDPR (the legislation for the way in which organisations hold personal data) compared with £178 last year. Small reductions have also been made in other categories but £421 more was spent on social events, mainly the annual dinner.

Balance of Funds

The Society accounts show bank funds in hand at the balance sheet date of £10,622 compared to £11,458 in the previous year.

Peter Child

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

Annual Accounts for Year ended 31st May 2019

<u>2017-2018</u>		<u>2018/2019</u>
INCOME		
55	Donations/Grants/Bequests	559
2,646	Subscriptions Received During Year	2,489
23	Interest On Bank And Other Deposits	46
523	Tax Refunds On Gift Aid	517
3,247	Total	3,611
EXPENDITURE		
Administration		
244	General Expenses, Printing, Postage, Etc.	228
1,619	Newsletter	1,378
301	Hire Of Rooms, Speakers And Meeting Expenses	270
388	Subscriptions	394
287	Insurance	231
189	Ockwells And Associated Projects (Net Costs)	173
297	Maidenhead & Me	232
0	Various Other Small Projects	0
266	Deficit On Social Events	687
178	GDPR expenses (last year one off)	0
261	Website	302
4,030	Total	3,895
(783)	(DEFICIT) of Expenditure over Income	(284)
12,362	Balance Brought Forward	11,579
11,579	Balance Carried Forward	11,295
FUNDS		
1,823	Bank (Lloyds TSB)	941
9,635	Charities Deposit General Fund (COIF)	9,681
600	Subscriptions & Insurance Payments In Advance	849
(479)	Member subscriptions in advance and expenses paid in June	(176)
11,579	BALANCE OF FUNDS	£11,295

Peter Child - Hon. Treasurer - 2 October 2019

Planning Matters

There is work afoot to come up with a vision for Maidenhead, and this is referred to by Bob Dulson in his Chairman's Comments. Many may feel that it is late in the day and much "damage" has already been done. However, it is important that the various elements of our Town Centre redevelopment are co-ordinated and linked largely through the plans for the Nicholsons Centre site. The consultative and participatory approach by architects JTP is to be welcomed and it is hoped that the speaker at our AGM – Charles Campion, a senior partner with JTP – will enlighten us on what can be achieved. The interface between the various Town Centre developers – Countryside, Shanly, The Hub and the new Nicholson owners Areli – can only be mutually beneficial. There is a grave danger that the Town Centre will become seriously overdeveloped with all four schemes seeking to maximise the number of residential units and the maximum height of the Nicholsons project exceeding the Landing.

In terms of planning applications in the pipeline, there has been a lull in the number and size of applications in recent months. On a positive note the listed building known as **Brocket** on Boyn Hill Avenue has a proposal for conversion into 5 flats by the owners RBWM. The building used to house a pupil referral unit for the Borough's Education Service.



The building is set in substantial grounds and two dwellings are planned to the rear, with access from the return on Boyndon Road. The fate of the main building has

been of ongoing concern, and it is good news that the external, distinctive appearance will be preserved, even if some internal features are to be lost.

We have commented in previous newsletters about the proposed demolition of **Zaman House** on Church Road in The Fisheries. After much delay the application to construct a block of 8 flats on the site is to be decided at the October meeting of the Planning Panel. It is to be hoped that the application is refused, not only because of the unsuitability of the development, but because the initial proposal was for two blocks of 8 flats, with an adjacent property in the same ownership to be demolished as well as Zaman House.

Since the last newsletter there have been two planning decisions of note. Firstly, permission has been granted for the demolishing of the terrace of houses known as “Death Row” at **23 to 31 York Road**, together with the adjacent Anchor pub on the corner of York Road and Park Street.

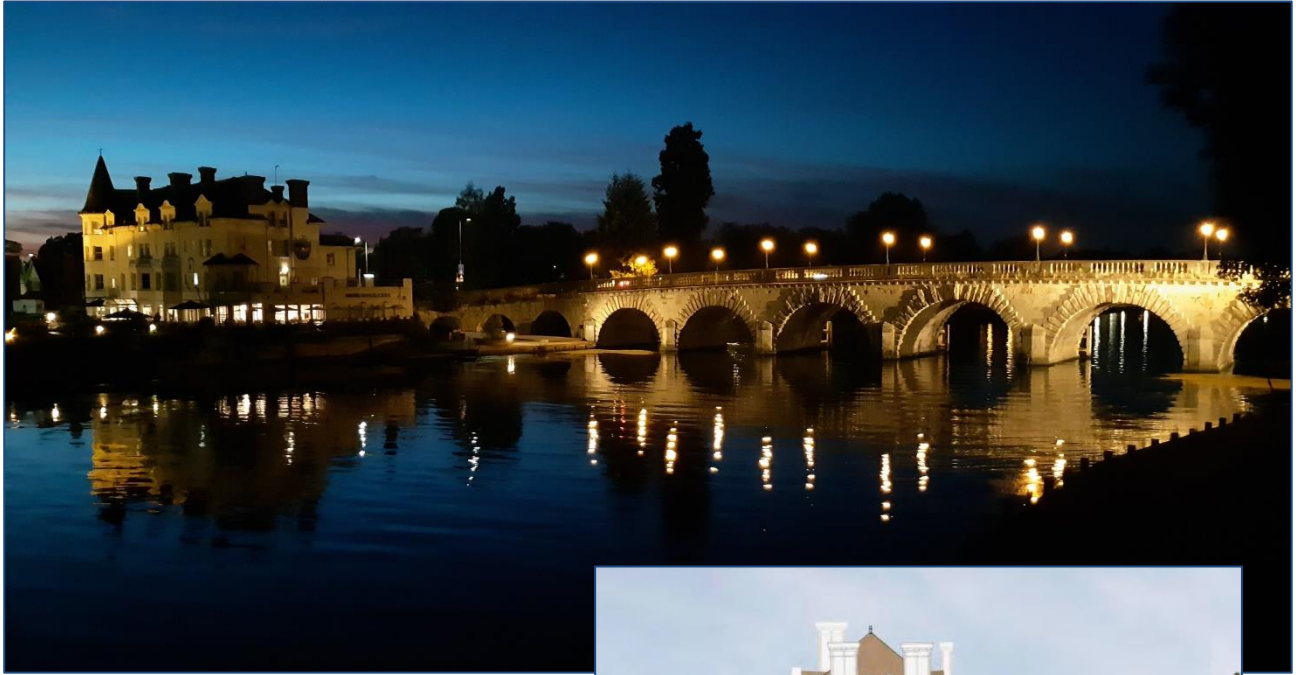


The infamous “death row” block of properties in York Road

They will be replaced by a residential block of apartments, regrettably with inadequate parking provision.

Conversely, the proposal to develop a combined campus for **Claire's Court School**, alongside a residential development by Berkeley Homes and a sports pavilion and playing pitches for Maidenhead Hockey Club was refused. Related applications to

convert current school sites at College Avenue and Ray Mill Road East into residential developments were also refused.



The iconic view of the Riviera Hotel and Maidenhead Bridge (above)

Let's hope it doesn't get lost by conversion into flats (right)



Back in 2016 we reported the proposal to redevelop the landmark site of the **Thames Riviera Hotel** which overlooks the Thames alongside Maidenhead Bridge. The scheme primarily involved significant changes to the elevations of the main hotel building and conversion into flats, combined with the demolition of the more modern bedroom block to the south which would be replaced by a purpose built apartment block. A total of 28 dwellings would be created. The loss of such an iconic riverside facility would be most regrettable, and remove a public amenity from the leisure options for the enjoyment of our Thameside setting. We already have an overprovision of flats in Maidenhead and there was widespread opposition to the scheme at the time. We were delighted when the application was refused. However, after a lull in activity of nearly three years, the application has gone to appeal and the outcome is pending. It will be a serious blow if the appeal is upheld.

Work is progressing with Maidenhead Neighbourhood Forum drawing up a Neighbourhood Plan for the seven unparished wards of Maidenhead. More members have come on board, five topic working groups have been established, and you will be hearing of opportunities for consultation in the coming months. A formal application for the recognition of MNF and the agreed designation of the relevant area has been submitted to RBWM.

Nicholsons Redevelopment – Did You Have Your Say?

Local MP Theresa May and her husband Philip were among almost 1,000 people to take the opportunity of viewing the emerging plans for the redevelopment of the Nicholsons Centre in October.



Society Patron Theresa and Philip are pictured here with Rob Tinknell of Areli, the developer (L), and Marcus Woods from Architects JTP (R)

A team of consultants and designers were on hand to explain the plans, drawn up following the earlier consultation in March, and a 22-point questionnaire sought visitors' reactions to the proposals. As outlined, the scheme would replace the existing Nicholsons building with a series of new lanes, streets and spaces to provide premises for a mix of predominantly independent outlets at ground level. The Broadway car park would be moved eastward to be sited behind the shops on Queen Street.

Looking upwards, buildings would soar to 17 and 25 stories providing residential and office accommodation, though the numbers and mix are yet to be determined.

We sense there'll be a generational difference of opinion on building heights with youngsters being in favour of something modern and metropolitan and oldies favouring a traditional market-town scale. Another key element is the connectivity with other sites, notably The Landing. In this respect the forthcoming work on a holistic town centre masterplan will be crucial.

Find out more at: www.jtp.co.uk/projects/maidenhead.

Martin McNamee and Bob Dulson

Projects

BATTLEMEAD COMMON

You will remember that 110 acres of White Place farm was purchased by the Royal Borough to provide public open space and the missing link in the Millennium Walk (a path from Hurley to Maidenhead Riverside following the 1934 boundary of Maidenhead). Less than half of the acreage is currently open (the west and north fields), the east field being fenced off to await the results of a further overwintering bird survey. The survey was regarded as necessary because of the “wetland” that developed last winter and attracted wildfowl. The “wetland”, as a result of poaching by cattle of the banks of the White Brook (Mr Peter Prior’s bull got stuck in the silt two years ago and the fire brigade had to haul him out!) together with silt accumulation, developed blanket weed in June and then gradually dried out. By 20th September it consisted mostly of dead blanket weed. Luckily it rained four days later in time for the Boundary Walk.



View of Cliveden from the causeway on 20th Sept with white residue of dead blanket weed in the foreground



View of Cliveden on 24th September once the rain returned.

Boundary Walk

As a concession the missing link was opened for walking on 6th October during the annual Boundary Walk organised by Rotary. The Society and East Berks Ramblers, together with Rotarians, managed the marshalling. We were blessed with good weather and 215 walkers crossed the causeway route on the east field to reach the Thames Path.



The gate to the East Field is opened for the Boundary Walk



First across!

Walker with dogs on leads crossing the causeway route





Boundary Walkers crossing the causeway



The beautiful view of Cliveden from the causeway

We hope to arrange to use the missing link again on Sunday 17th May in a joint walk with East Berks Ramblers (EBRA) from Pinkneys Green to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Millennium Walk, the 60th anniversary of the Civic Society and the 50th anniversary of EBRA. We are working closely with EBRA in the hope that via the Friends of Battlemead Common (FOBC) committee, access of more than one day a year can be agreed and that the new Common will, in the words of EBRA's Footpath Secretary, Steve Gillions, be *a place that works for wildlife and people*.

The White Brook on Battlemead Common

The Royal Borough is now the riparian owner of the brook on the common with responsibilities to remove obstructions to flow. A White Brook on Battlemead Common sub-group has been set up to advise the Royal Borough. The White Brook is the major contributor to water flowing towards Maidenhead, and feeds the new town centre waterways development. When there was a problem with flow, as has happened in the past, the stream dried out in the town centre. This led in 1989 to the founding of what is now the Green Way Working Group that still meets twice a year.

The Current Situation:

In 1988 lack of water in the town centre was linked to low ground water levels, as was the accumulation of silt and reeds. Unfortunately, history seems to be repeating itself. Groundwater levels as evidenced by the Summerleaze Sailing Lake dropped so much this summer that sailing had to be discontinued in August. In the past, riparian owners would be fined for not keeping their waterways and ditches clear of obstructions but apparently not today!

Currently, it is only the Waterways volunteers who are removing obstructions from the waterways north of Maidenhead on a regular basis and their activities seem to be about to be constrained by the Environment Agency in an attempt to stop work on the brook draining away the newly created wetland on Battlemead Common (that developed blanket weed in June and then began drying out). If flow into the town centre cannot be safeguarded, the regeneration of Maidenhead, heavily dependent on the success of the new waterway, will be put at risk. This will especially be so once the new basin, currently under construction north of the bridge, is filled. The existing Chapel Arches basin has been green for months due initially to blanket weed (filamentous algae), removed by Waterways volunteers, and now Lemna Weed. **It needs better flow into the town centre.**

In 2018, a workshop involving South East Water (who abstract water supply from the ground north of Maidenhead) came up with this preferred option to improve flow in the waterway: *“Targeted desilting on the White Brook, Maidenhead Ditch and Marsh Meadow Ditch. Maintenance through regular targeted vegetation and debris clearance of these water bodies plus Fleet Ditch and Strand Water, together with short term raising the water level of the Thames at Boulton Lock under agreed operational conditions.”* Let's hope this happens in 2020, though biodiversity officials of the Environment Agency seem to disapprove.

OCKWELLS

Thrift Wood Park, the new name for the extension to Ockwells Park, was purchased by the Royal Borough as public open space in 2017. This park is immediately south of Ockwells Manor House so is an essential part of the setting of the house. The Royal Borough commissioned Dr Sarah Rutherford to undertake a study of the area which I helped with. The report entitled “*Ockwells Manor, Berkshire - Historic Setting Analysis*” was submitted to the Royal Borough in August and hopefully will inform future development of the landscape.

A worrying fact that came out of the study is that the construction of the M4 and A404M has served to impede water flow across this area causing water logging in Ockwells Park and Thrift Wood. It is worrying because the foundation of Ockwells is a timber frame which will rot in wet conditions, as apparently do the roots of oak trees, found on Thrift Wood Park. The manor house is still on the market for £10 million (see August 2019 newsletter).

Norreys Armorial Glass in Mallow Castle, Cork, Ireland

In the summer of 2019, staying with our friends the Childs in Ireland (Anne, past Treasurer, Peter, current Treasurer of the Society), we set off to visit Mallow Castle. I had found out it was built by Sir Thomas Norreys, one of the sons of Sir Henry Norreys whose father, also Henry, was executed by Henry VIII for supposed adultery with Anne Boleyn. This makes Sir Thomas the great great-great-grandson of John Norreys Esq who built Ockwells manor house. He had an elder brother Sir John who died in the castle in 1597. Both were Lord Presidents of Munster.



Left: Mallow Castle built by Sir Thomas Norreys in the C16th. Right: the second Mallow “Castle” a C19th baronial mansion with C17th parts

Sir Thomas’s C16th castle is now ruinous but next door there was another later “castle” built by his descendants. We had a wander round, observing that this building seemed to be undergoing restoration. Then, to my amazement (and from the outside), I recognised familiar armorial glass in one of the ground floor windows of this second Mallow “Castle” as the armorial achievements of John Norreys Esq and his first wife, Alice Merbrooke and that of Norris of Speke quartering Norreys of

Ockwells. With the help of Daniel Noonan, a consultant working for Cork County Council on the restoration, I obtained a photo of the glass from the inside.



*Norreys armorial glass in the second Mallow Castle built in the C19th
L. Norris of Speke quartering Norreys of Ockwells R. Norreys impaling Merbrooke
(photo Daniel Noonan, courtesy of Cork County Council)*

This is why I think the glass is there: Sir Thomas Norreys, builder of the original Mallow Castle, had a daughter Elizabeth who married a Jephson. Their descendent, Denham Jephson, in July 1838 was created a baronet of Mallow in County Cork and later that month assumed by royal licence the additional surname of Norreys, becoming Sir (Charles) Denham Orlando Jephson-Norreys, 1st Baronet. He continued to represent Mallow in Parliament until 1859 and died in 1888. I think he put up the armorial glass to celebrate his ancestors, specifically John Norreys Esq and Alice Merbrooke. I originally thought Sir Charles might have visited Ockwells, but ca.1838 it was in use as a farmhouse and tenanted. I now believe he had the achievement copied from the illustration in Lysons' *Magna Britannia for Berkshire* published in 1813. The give-aways are: the ferrety face of the beaver supporters; plumage shown in the bird crest, and red mantling whilst now at Ockwells it is blue. This change to the colour of the mantling in the original glass probably occurred when the glass was taken out by Charles Pascoe Grenfell by 1849 and stored at Taplow Court.

Other features of the Ockwells armorial, the Norreys badge of three golden distaffs and his motto, *feythfully serve*, are replicated.



Left: The armorial achievement of John Norreys Esq and his first wife, Alice Merbrooke at Ockwells. Right: The illustration of the same achievement in Lysons' Magna Britannia for Berkshire (1813)

The other achievement at Mallow stems from a C16th College of Arms pedigree that claims the Norreys of Ockwells were descendants of the Norris family of Speke (!*!).

Cork County Council's masterplan for Mallow Castle, has already seen works undertaken to improve access to the Castle and its gardens and parklands. Future work will include new paths, a deer viewing platform (the white deer are from the pair Elizabeth I gave Sir Thomas to celebrate his daughter Elizabeth's baptism) and other facilities with the aim of creating "a long-life local heritage, amenity, recreational and tourism asset for Mallow and the surrounding area". The legacy of the Norreys family makes a major contribution to this aim, a legacy that also is of interest to Berkshire historians.

Ann Darracott

Forthcoming Events

AGM with a speaker

Wednesday 20th November 2019

The guest speaker at our AGM is Charles Campion. He is Partner-in-Charge of collaborative design processes at award-winning architects JTP, who were recently described as the “Rolls Royce of participatory planning and placemaking”.



In March this year, Charles led the Nicholson's Community Planning Weekend to create a new Vision for the regeneration of the shopping centre at the heart of the town. In September, he and JTP were appointed by RBWM to work with the local community to co-create a Placemaking Masterplan & Manifesto for the whole town centre over the coming months. The first consultative event in this process is scheduled for November 23rd.

Charles has been leading and participating in co-design processes in the UK and worldwide for more than 20 years. These have included residential and heritage-led schemes, urban renaissance and environmental projects. For the last five years he has also been advising our umbrella body, Civic Voice, on the merits and methods of community collaboration in placemaking. He is also an Academician at the Academy of Urbanism; a Built Environment Expert for Design Council and recently published a book “20/20 Visions: Collaborative Planning & Placemaking” (RIBA Publishing, 2018).

Charles's talk will kick-off our evening in the Bromley Room at the Methodist Church, High Street at 8pm.

ST LUKE'S EIGHTH 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 6th and Saturday 7th December from 10am to 7pm, and on Sunday 8th from 2pm to 6pm.

(n.b. Undecorated trees are available after the festival from the church for a minimum donation of £10).

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 Maidenhead Community Centre (formerly RVS Centre), 42 York Road, Maidenhead SL6 1SH; 7.45 for 8pm; visitors £3; contact 01628 630924 for talks, and 01628 629614 for outings)

Wednesday 27th November: Speaker from the John Lewis heritage Centre “Partnership – the History of John Lewis”

Wednesday 11th December: Talk by Keith Parry (local historian) “Mapping Old Towns”

News from the Heritage Centre

SUNDAY OPENING

From 20th October the Heritage Centre will be open every Sunday from 12 noon to 4pm. Given that weekends are the time that families do things together, Sunday opening has been on our agenda for a while. Now we have sufficient willing volunteers to cover the extra day. From Tuesdays to Saturdays opening hours remain 10am to 4pm.

TRIBUTE TO THE WVS

This new exhibition opens early in November and pays overdue tribute to the women of the local WVS, WRVS and RVS. 8 decades after WVS was founded the legacy of Maidenhead WVS lives on in the Community Centre in York Road and in the memories of those who helped during the floods and the great fire at Windsor Castle. If you have stories to tell, or memorabilia to loan, please contact us on 01628 780555.

CHANGE OF LEGAL STATUS

We are in the process of setting up a new Associated Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), as required by Arts Council England.

LOOKING AHEAD

An internal Options Paper is being prepared by the council to recommend options for improving the Desborough Theatre and finding new premises for the Community Centre and the Heritage Centre. The Heritage Centre is looking for floorspace of at least 600 sq m in a prominent position with high pedestrian traffic and level access for both visitors and goods, including the 18th century Bray Fire Engine and at least one vintage GWK car built in Maidenhead before World War I. Is it too much to hope that a formal offer will be made to the three parties early in 2020?

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

Dates for your Diary

Wednesday 20th November 2019

Civic Society AGM, preceded by a talk by Charles Campion. Bromley Room, Methodist Church, High Street. 7.45 for 8.00pm.

Friday 15th May 2020

Civic Society Annual Dinner, with a talk by Ian Harvey, Executive Director, Civic Voice. Moor Hall, Cookham

Sunday 17th May 2020

Commemorative walk of part of the Millennium Walk

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	Peter Child, 34 College Road, SL6 6AT	632300
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Events	Tina Sell, Marlborough, River Road, Taplow, SL6 0BB	628675
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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 2019

At St Luke's Community Hall, Norfolk Road, Maidenhead

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

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 20th November 2019 at 8.00 pm, in the Bromley Room, the Methodist Church, High Street, Maidenhead.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 17th January 2020**

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