



Maidenhead Civic Society NEWS

Issue 4/05

Oct 2005



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Eyesores of Maidenhead Status

In this issue

AGM Agenda and Reports

Maidenhead's Great Debate, and updates on Crossrail

Regular features on talks, outings, the Heritage Centre,
Projects and Planning

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I always find it hard to know what to put into the Newsletter this October quarter as everything I might say is shadowed in the report to the AGM.

I would like, however just to let you know that the seat which we set up at Cookham in memory of Bob Sandys is shortly to be the focus of a small dedication ceremony by our President, Richard Poad. For those who would like to know exactly where it is located just walk across the main entrance of Cookham Church follow the path on beyond and you will come into Bellrope Meadows. The seat is one of three immediately ahead. Quite apart from anything else it sits on what is a stunningly beautiful stretch of the river.

It was a great pleasure to see the new Footpath 9 route under the A404(M) formally opened by our MP Theresa May last July. It was a joint celebration for us with the Ramblers Association and I must pay tribute to the persistence of Ann Darracott's contribution to this effort. The whole issue was almost ridiculously simple: which arch under the motorway to use to carry the footpath? One stood out as sensible and practical but it has taken in all eight years to carry the matter to the present reasonable and sensible conclusion. It could be an interesting future exercise to discover under the Freedom of Information Act just how much public money was spent on this exercise! To celebrate the opening a group of about thirty or so from the Society and the Ramblers walked from Marlow station to Lydia Parker's home at Pinkneys Green via the new arch. As it happened to be the hottest day of the year and the walk includes a steep and somewhat lengthy climb up the intervening escarpment the refreshments provided in Lydia's garden were very welcome. Our thanks to Lydia, Sarah Copeland and June Churchman who poured cool drinks for the weary walkers.

Now let me urge you as members to come along to the AGM on Wednesday 16th November in the Methodist Church Hall at 8 pm. There is an interesting talk after the conclusion of the business of the AGM. I hope to see you there.

John McIntosh – Acting Chairman

EYESORES OF MAIDENHEAD – REVISITED

In their annual review of activities, both John McIntosh and Nigel Cockburn make reference to the now infamous "Eyesores" of Maidenhead and the lack of progress in removing these blots on the landscape. Readers will recall that we featured these Eyesores in the July issue of last year, highlighting seven for particular mention. Well, **of those seven only one has been put right** – the Boy and Boat statue. Could this be because it's the only one that doesn't involve the local planning authorities and/or the Environment Agency?

Editor

TALKS

WEDNESDAY 16th November 2005 – 8 p.m.

**“GREY’S COURT – NATIONAL TRUST PROPERTY
Recent Archaeological Investigations ”**

An illustrated talk by Mr Gary Marshall
Regional Archaeologist for National Trust

Shashi Dare

OUTINGS

On Sunday 9th October we took a group of members to two Castles in Kent. We firstly visited Hever Castle near Edenbridge. Everyone was very impressed by this delightful building with its own moat and drawbridge. It had been extensively remodelled in the early 20th Century, but was in beautiful condition and set in extensive grounds with two mazes.

From Hever we travelled the short distance to Chiddingstone Castle which is a turreted house holding an amazing collection of far-eastern and Egyptian artefacts. We had the house to ourselves as it had been opened up just for our visit.

The day was particularly enjoyable as the sun was shining on the lovely Kent countryside.

As most of the country houses close over the winter period we will be arranging our next visit for early spring. Details will be included in the next Newsletter.

Mike Copeland

**45th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY**

**To be held on Wednesday, 16th November 2004
at the Methodist Church Hall at 8.00 pm.**

AGENDA

1. Introduction by the President
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 44th Annual General Meeting.
3. Accounts for the year ended 31st May 2005
4. Reports for 2004/2005

5. Election Of Officers

Nominations

(a) President	R. Poad
(b) Vice Presidents	M. Bayley, H. James, J. McIntosh
(c) Patron	The Mayor
(d) Chairman	Vacant
(e) Vice Chairman	Vacant
(f) Hon. Secretary	Mrs J. Churchman
(g) Hon. Asst. Secretary	Mrs G. Moore
(h) Hon. Treasurer	T. Farnfield
(i) Chairman, Planning Group	N. Cockburn
(j) Hon. Membership Secretary	Mrs S. Dare
(k) Trustees	Mrs A. Child, H. James, R. Poad

5. Election Of Committee

The Committee consists of the officers plus not more than 18 members. The present committee is:

Elected 2002

Dr Daphne Line

Elected 2003

Mr Michael Copeland
Mrs Lydia Parker
Mrs Angela Howorth

Elected 2004

Mrs Ann Darracott
Mr Gerald Ashton
Mrs June Jorge
Mrs Lilia Baillie-Hamilton

There are a total of 12 vacancies to be filled.

Dr Daphne Line offers herself for re-election, and Mrs Tina Sell and Mr Robert Dulson offer themselves for formal election.

7. Any other Business.

**MINUTES OF THE
44th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY**

Held on Wednesday, 17th November 2004

The President, Richard Poad, chaired the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Harold James, Mike Copeland, Gerald Ashton, Daphne Line, and Sheila Holmes.

1. The President welcomed Councillor Vicky Howes, Lead Member of the Council for the Environment and Town Centre. The President congratulated John McIntosh on his achievement during the year as Acting Chairman and for the work he did on the Strategic Review which had good media coverage, thanks to Bob Dulson. It is necessary now to stimulate and widen the debate.

The Planning Group remains the core of the Society's activities and has a first class Chairman in Nigel Cockburn. It has been strengthened by the recent advent of Bob Dulson and Rudi Sheldon.

The Outings programme under Mike Copeland has been a great success with visits to the Houses of Parliament, the War Cabinet Rooms, Knole Park and Chartwell particularly appreciated, among others during the year. The surplus generated plus Gift Aid provides useful funds to help keep subscriptions down.

Thanks must also go to Brian Darracott for producing an excellent Newsletter and to Tim Goldingham for managing the website.

The Minutes of the last meeting held on the 19th November 2003 were proposed by Angela Howorth and seconded by Sue Scrimgeour.

2. **Accounts**

The Treasurer introduced the published accounts for year ended 31st May 2004 and commented on the cost of the hire of rooms and the Public Liability Insurance. The matter had become onerous with the growth of the compensation culture and previous insurers had raised the premiums to an unacceptable level. Fortunately, the Civic Trust had stepped in with arrangements to provide the required insurance at an acceptable cost. Amongst other items to note was that the Baylis Trust, along with the Society, had helped towards funding the repair of the "Boy with the Boat" statue.

Adoption of the Accounts were proposed by Michael Hayward and seconded by Bernard Dembo.

3. **Reports**

The reports from the officers have been given in the October Newsletter. These were taken as read and the President invited questions from members to amplify any aspects of these.

The Planning Group remains, as before, the core of the Society's success dealing with the continual flow of applications and not least the pressure to replace houses with blocks of flats.

Mr Hayward queried the level of charges for Outings. It was explained that we had maintained the policy of aiming for a modest profit. The Society's past experience of

aiming to break even had usually resulted in a deficit over the year on Outings. With the advent of Gift Aid any profit meant that the Society was gaining money from the Treasury. The sums resulting from this - in the order for £1000 - helped markedly to keep pressure off the need to raise subscriptions periodically. It was accepted that the levels of the charges for outings were higher than some might wish but it was felt better to aim for profit and Gift Aid rather than the situation of having to pick up a deficit in the Society's funds.

Cllr. Vicky Howes strongly refuted an implication in the planning review that the Green Belt boundary might be changed. She said that they were looking for proposals for economic development along the western corridor. All parties concerned came to the same view that the Green Belt be kept sacrosanct. Val Mason commented that it appeared that central government will seek another 50% of new houses to be built in Berkshire. However, Cllr. Vicky Howes stated that detailed examination showed that the future housing policy on numbers in Maidenhead and Windsor indicated a very much smaller increase.

Mr Brian Madge, commenting on Talks, suggested that more emphasis should be made on topics dealing with architecture, planning etc.

4. Election of Officers

Richard Poad was proposed as President by Rudi Sheldon and seconded by Ben Rae. The officers were elected en bloc as follows:

Chairman and Vice Chairman	– There were no nominations for these posts.
Hon Secretary	June Churchman
Asst. Secretary	Gillian Moore
Hon Treasurer	Trevor Farnfield
Hon Membership Secretary	Shashi Dare
Chairman, Planning Group	Nigel Cockburn
Trustees	Ann Child, Harold James, Richard Poad

Proposed by Sue Scrimgeour and seconded by Tim Goldingham.

5. Election of Committee

Ann Darracott and Gerald Ashton, retiring members, offered themselves for re-election.

June Jorge and Lilia Baillie-Hamilton, who had been co-opted to the Committee during the year, stood for formal election to the Committee.

Proposed by Richard Poad and seconded by Trevor Farnfield.

6. Any other Business

The repair to the Boy with the Boat statue is ready for formal unveiling by the Mayor. Someone from the Baylis Trust will also be invited as the Trust had donated substantially to the repair.

Consideration was being given as to whether the Society would undertake the repair of the Victorian steps in Bridge Gardens.

The land owned by Quintain near the river and towpath off the Cookham Road, was being pursued with the hope that the Council would take it over.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Society has gone on for the past year in a somewhat more hectic manner than that of the previous year as can be seen below. The Executive Committee has been strengthened by the election to it, at the last AGM, of **Mrs June Jorge** and **Mrs Lilia Baillie-Hamilton**. However, as reported last year still no one has come forward to take on the Chairmanship or vice-Chairmanship. In addition, **Mrs Christina Sell** was co-opted on to the Committee and will stand for election at the forthcoming AGM.

I reported last year on the successful launch of the Society's Strategic Review of Amenity and particular on the successful publicity for it. For a long time there has been concern that the Society did not make enough of its activities with too much hit and miss as to whether these were reported in the local press or local radio. The launch of the Strategic Review was quite an eye-opener as to what could and should be achieved. Like most things nowadays, publicity has become a professional discipline. In the past the Society has been quite successful in publicising specific items largely due to one or two individuals with a flair for gaining press interest. We now want to take a major step forward and are appointing **Bob Dulson**, who is a professional in this field, and who joins the Executive Committee as the **Society's Publicity Co-ordinator**. With the help of other Committee members he will endeavour to ensure that the Society, its activities and views gain appropriate exposure in the local media.

The Strategic Review has formed a launch pad for a range of activities. Its publication was followed up by a whole series of face-to-face meetings with individual Councillors and Council Officers. These included the leaders of the main political parties on the Council and the Council's Chief Executive. In addition there have been quarterly meetings with Councillor Vicky Howes and senior officers involved in planning and control. These meetings have been useful in giving an insight into the Council's thinking. What they have not done as yet is to give an effective input of our ideas, as set out in the Strategic Review, for inclusion in the Council's programmes. This may not be too surprising for when two groups have differing agendas, albeit directed at the same overall ultimate objectives, bringing them together harmoniously and effectively is not an instant result. The analogy of turning the super-tanker round springs to mind!

A further offshoot has been **The Great Debate**, which is currently running under the aegis of the Maidenhead Advertiser. It was sparked off by the Strategic Review coupled with the interest of the Editor of the Advertiser, Martin Trepte. Although the Strategic Review had had an encouraging welcome on its publication it was clear from the outset that to keep it and its objectives in full public view more was required. It was not possible to launch **The Great Debate** as soon as we would have liked because of the advent of the General Election. It is aimed at encouraging a wider cross section of the public to say what they want Maidenhead to provide for its citizens by way of facilities, quality of life and housing. It also forms an important part of the public's potential input to the content of the Local Development Framework, currently being shaped, supposed to take account of the public's views and which is designed to fix housing policies over the next 20 years. The Council had already carried out an exercise aimed at individual households to find out what people thought and want but it had only a limited response and certainly, in our opinion, not enough to give a reasonable cross section view.

The Planning Group has had another outstanding year and thanks are due to **Nigel Cockburn** for his highly focussed chairmanship. Last year I highlighted the particular contribution made to the group by **Janice Crewe** and **John Ashford** and they have continued this service. This year the group has again had to deal with an unending flood of applications where developers have acquired houses with large plots of land demolishing and replacing them with blocks of flats. As was said last year the flats are in general expensive and secondly they do not supply the type of housing really needed i.e. affordable housing. In addition they are generally appearing in areas which have

some quality and character and which carry much green space by having large gardens. Such areas provide linear 'parks' which are inhabited by a wide variety of wildlife. Much of this is being lost in such redevelopment particularly when account is taken of the amount of additional car-parking required when flats replace a single dwelling. A notable example of these effects is to be seen in Shoppenhangers Road. On top of this, Maidenhead is already well in advance of the housing build required of it by central government policy. To its credit the Council has adopted a 'policy of restraint' aimed at controlling a runaway situation.

Members will have seen the 'eyesores' displayed in an earlier Newsletter. One has been remedied with the restoration of the 'Boy with the Boat' statue. The Society is particularly pursuing two others viz. Cresset Towers in the High Street and the semi-derelict would-be cinema. Progress has been made with direct representations being made to the owners of the former both written and by direct contact with the owner's legal representative. However, it is unacceptable that buildings in the middle of the town should be allowed to descend into such a sad state as has happened with these two. Then again there is 'Skindles' but that is in Bucks. Here all we have been able to do at the moment is to send a letter to the Maidenhead Express.

The announcement that Maidenhead would be the western terminal for **Crossrail** has opened up a completely new area of activity for the Society. The published Bill showed that there would be a number of impacts on Maidenhead, not all of them welcome. In particular there would be the impact of electrification on Brunel's famous bridge, a compulsory take over of Guard's Club Park to facilitate this work, and a major revamp of Maidenhead station. Meetings with Crossrail officials did not satisfy the Society's queries. Consequently the Society prepared and lodged a petition with the Bills Officer at Westminster. Much is owed in the preparation of the highly formalised document to the efforts of **Tina Sell** and **Bob Dulson**. We now wait to see if we will be called before the Parliamentary Select Committee.

This report would not be complete without a mention of the unremitting efforts of **Ann Darracott** in fields as diverse as the Millennium Walk completion, the York Stream saga and a geophysical survey at Bisham Abbey. All three are ongoing and one despairs of the Environment Agency and its so far ineffective efforts to achieve a permanent and adequate flow of water in the central section of the York Stream. There are more hopes of the other two but it all takes time and unremitting pressure. However, there has been one success which is the opening of the route under the A404 Marlow by-pass on which Ann has worked untiringly with the Ramblers Association.

There have been many other activities needed to keep the Society in health and effective and many individuals who supply the voluntary effort needed. The core is still the Planning Group which, in addition to those already mentioned above includes **Jill Powell, Bridget King, Michael Johnson, Rudi Sheldon, Michael Bayley and Bob Dulson**. Thanks are due to all for their unstinting efforts. **Outings** are a continuing success and, with the odd exception, have a satisfactory take-up. **Mike Copeland** is to be thanked for his organisation and for the effort he puts into finding interesting and novel targets. **Shashi Dare** continues in double harness as **Talks Organiser** as well as **Membership Secretary**. She has nonetheless managed both effectively and has introduced a succession of interesting lecturers. Thanks are due to **Lilia Baillie-Hamilton** and **June Jorge** for assisting with the task of getting out publicity for the individual talks. Thanks to **Brian Darracott**, the **Newsletter** continues to excel in its presentation and, as far as input is available, its content. I would encourage members who want to make a point to send it by e-mail or letter to Brian. Every little helps! The **website** has developed slowly and is as yet under-exploited. Given the skill and speed with which **Tim Goldingham** manages and updates it we need to make greater use of this powerful tool; our thanks to him. At Xmas last year we gave concrete form to our appreciation of the vital service of **Carol Innes** and all the **Newsletter Distributors** by way of a buffet lunch. This year again the smooth distribution of the **Newsletter** is due to their efforts – many thanks. Last but by no means least we are lucky to have the continuing work and support of **Trevor Farnfield** as

Treasurer, June Churchman as Secretary and Gillian Moore as Minutes Secretary. Without the basic and essential functions they supply the Society could not operate; thanks to all of them.

It remains for me to close this report with my standard appeal for more members for the Society. Numbers mean influence. Despite the recent accessions to the Executive there is still a need on it for more people who want to get things done for the benefit of the town. Think about it and contact any member of the Executive. Try it out by attending some of the Committee Meetings. Just ring the Secretary and let her know you want to attend. They are on the second Wednesday each month except August.

OUTINGS REVIEW

During the last 12 months we have visited a variety of locations in the South East. In April we took a trip on the Bluebell Railway and then went on to South Hill Manor. This was very well supported and we had a full coach. In July we went to Portsmouth to celebrate the International Festival of the Sea. We had marvellous weather and despite the crowds we had a great, if exhausting, day. Our last trip was to Hever and Chiddingstone Castles in Kent.

One hundred and sixteen people came on our three outings and we hope that in the year ahead we will get even more support.

PLANNING GROUP REVIEW

The Planning Group has continued to review the large number of planning applications for Maidenhead. There are many developments of large houses being replaced by blocks of flats which are changing the character of the town and the Council has finally recognised that the numbers of new dwellings being built significantly exceeds its targets. There is also currently a plethora of applications for telephone masts.

Work on the Sainsbury's new development is well under way and Miller Homes are seeking planning permission for a development of 250 dwellings including large tower blocks on the old Nortel site and petrol station on Bridge Road. Many of the developments for blocks of flats have densities in terms of the number of dwellings per hectare which are way in excess of government guidelines - which we consider excessive in the first place. What Maidenhead needs is affordable homes for key workers and more open space not less of it. The cumulative effect of all this developments is to put additional pressure on the local infrastructure of transport, schools, hospitals and other services.

One means of dealing with the many issues affecting Maidenhead is through the local plan, or the Local Development Framework (LDF) as it is now known, which the Council is currently developing and consulting upon. In spite of regular meetings with the Council and its officers and written submissions as part of the LDF process there is little sign so far of the Council listening to the representations being made. This is disappointing especially after all the work the Civic Society has undertaken particularly on producing the Strategic Review of Amenity to make Maidenhead a better place that was submitted to the Council last year. Let's hope they participate in and take on board the outcome of our latest initiative, the Great Debate.

Another area where progress is slow is on the Town's eyesores- the York Stream, Cresset Towers and the old Cinema site. These are all in the High Street and are a disgrace. We have met with representatives of the owners of Cresset Towers and are considering further action to insist something be done to renovate the building.

Nigel Cockburn

PROJECTS REVIEW

GREEN WAY/YORK STREAM

Town centre

During the year both Harold James and myself attended meetings of the Green Way Working Group now chaired by Anthony Hurst, Principal Rights of Way Officer. The lack of water in York Stream is one of the issues discussed at these meetings.

Hopefully by the time you read this newsletter York Stream in the town centre will have water in it. Dredging to clear away silt and reeds in the stream system to the north of Maidenhead has meant that the stream only retreated as far the hippo at North Town Moor this year instead of drying out further north, above the flood control gate. We were hoping that the Strande Lane Feasibility Study to be produced, due at the end of October would resolve the matter, as, according to Ian Tomes, Flood Defence Manager SE Region, its findings will determine whether the Environment Agency (EA) reapply to the Royal Borough to have works on Maidenhead Ditch deleted from the planning approval for the MWE flood alleviation scheme (now the Jubilee River). But guess what: the EA now say that the feasibility study will do no such thing and that they are doing another study of water flow and groundwater levels which will take several years to complete!

You do not have to be a brain surgeon to realise that reeds and silt in the Ditch are impeding flow. They have cleared out the White Brook and increased flow, so why not the Ditch. Your Executive has already decided to oppose any attempt to have works on Maidenhead Ditch deleted from the planning approval and will be lobbying the Royal Borough planners to enforce this planning condition as it is our opinion that without work on Maidenhead Ditch, the stream in the town centre will again dry out next spring.

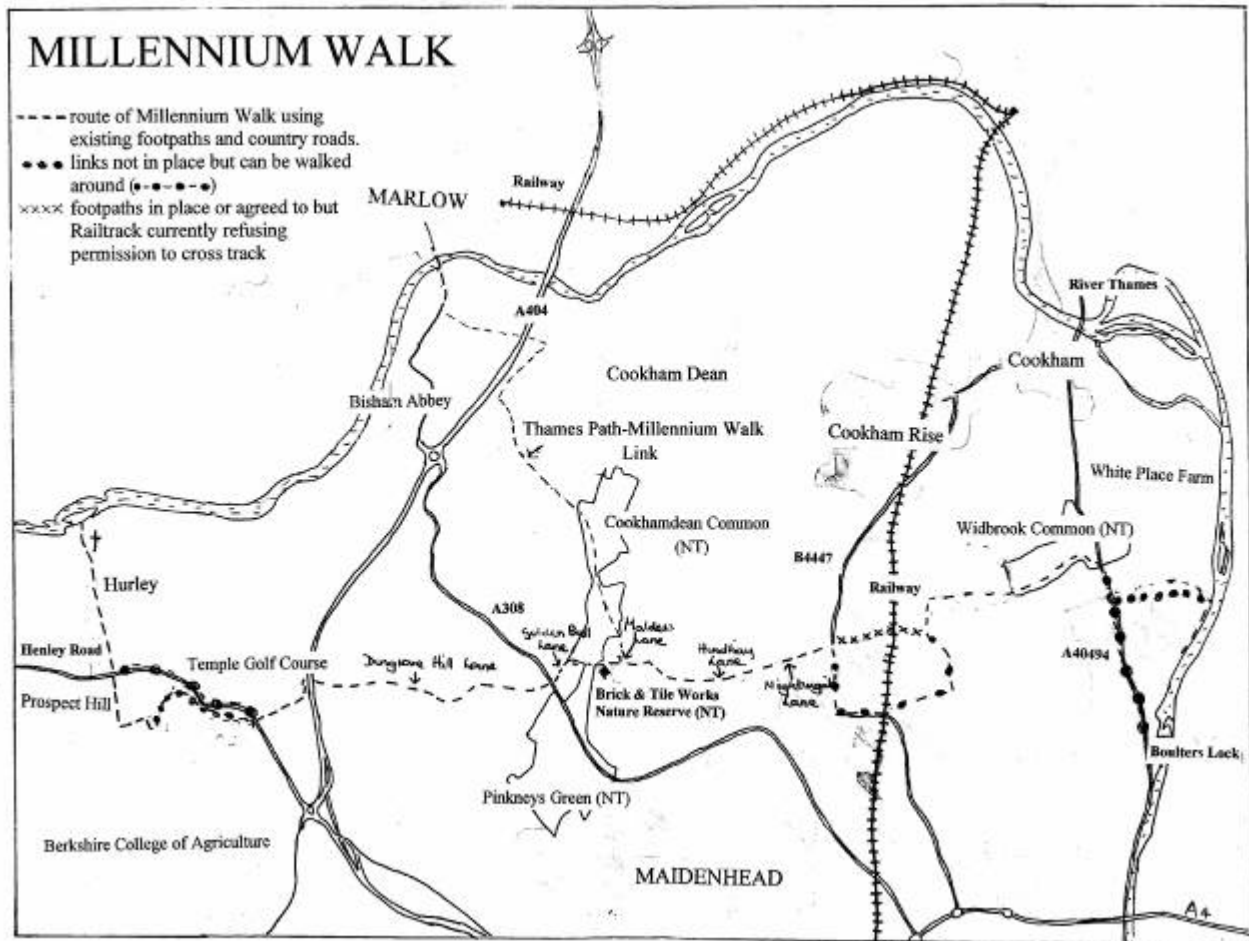
MILLENNIUM WALK

There has been some progress on this project this year. The Millennium Walk has been included in the Royal Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2005-2015 and a presentation on the project was given to the Local Access Forum who oversaw the improvement plan on 27 September. The Forum has offered to support us in completing the Walk, which still has some missing links (see map). It is possible that new ways of rewarding farmers for "environmental improvements" including providing permissive paths may help us in this regard.

Thames Path-Millennium Walk Link

A major achievement has been the opening a link that connects the Thames Path with the Millennium Walk. This was formally opened by our MP Theresa May on 17 June with the inaugural walk being held the following day. It is obvious from the "desire line" that the route is well used.

The link was created by diverting Footpath 9 Bisham under one of the flood arches of the A404 and the whole exercise is an example of how not to handle a development project. Hopefully, nowadays the existence of regulations requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment prior to permission being given for development (developers wishing to put a marina next to the library please note) will prevent situations such as pertained at Bisham where the Department of Transport built a new road onto the old Marlow Bypass to connect two motorways but left three public rights of way in place on said bypass.



We would again like to thank everyone who helped to create the new route, our MP for asking questions in parliament, the Woodland Trust for allowing a bridge into Bisham Woods, the Royal Borough for building the bridge but most of all we thank Margaret Bowdery the East Berks Ramblers footpaths secretary without whose energy it wouldn't have happened. The Millennium Walk is a joint project with the Ramblers.

Lower Cookham Road to Towpath

Little progress has been made on this link.

The Rotary Club were hoping to use our proposed route for this year's Boundary Walk. However, we advised against this as the EA said they planned to dredge the White Brook in the area in September and we could not take the risk of walkers having to negotiate a thick bank of silt. Annoyingly, the walk was last Sunday (2 Oct) and the EA still have not done this dredging.

During the year an engineering survey of the existing bridge across to Quintain's land was done. This showed that the bridge was suitable for use as a footbridge. The Windsor & Maidenhead Urban Wildlife Group also carried out a further survey of Quintain's land (our potential riverside nature reserve) in the spring to complement that done in October 2002.

We are hopeful that progress will be made on this link in the coming year once the flood bund land is handed back to the new owner of White Place farm, Mr John Edwards, who farms there, and the future ownership of Quintain's land is resolved.

OCKWELLS PROJECT

Ockwells Manor

At the request of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings I wrote an article on the armorial glass in the Great Hall at Ockwells for their magazine *Cornerstone* (vol 25 no 4 Dec 2004). This gives a broad outline of who I think is represented in the glass. Also this year, the website has been used to make available to the public the patent which set up the religious guild in 1451: the guild was a forerunner of the council. John Norys Esq who built Ockwells Manor was a founder member of the guild, responsible for maintaining the bridge over the Thames.

Great Malvern Priory Study

This was completed during the year, its main purpose being to help identify the Mortimer of Chirk armorial achievement at Ockwells Manor. The production of the study also provided a learning curve for the publishing of a limited run of high quality printing which will be useful for other projects. The paper version is currently being sold by the Friends of Great Malvern Priory and we hope to produce a CD version shortly.

Bisham Abbey

The Society has been helping in an attempt to locate the foundations of Bisham Priory Church built by William Montacute, Earl of Salisbury c 1337. A geophysical survey using resistivity techniques was carried out but was unsuccessful. Dr Jill Eyers, of Chiltern Archaeology, together with the Marlow Archaeological Society, hopes to complete a survey using ground probing radar in October. Again, results will be reported via the Newsletter.

In the meantime we have been gathering information on the early history of Bisham. Possible connections between the Knights Templar (who built a preceptory at Bisham), the Grandison and Montacute families (who also built there), the 1270 crusade to the Holy Land by Edward Prince of Wales (who became Edward I in 1272), Welsh castle building and the founding of the Order of the Garter, will be detailed at a future date.

Ann Darracott

MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

Welcome to new members: Maureen Cooper, Michael and Inge Du Pre, Tina Sell Mr and Mrs Derek Smith and also new life members: Mr and Mrs Sawyers, Mrs Catherine Lancaster and Mr and Mrs D G Holliday. This year the entities have dropped from 299 last year to 297 (entities include household member, honorary and corporate members). Overall there are: 106 single household members, 106 double members per household, 6 corporate members, 58 life members (households) and 21 honorary members. In addition to the sending in of membership fees, the Society would like to thank the following people for their kind generosity in sending in donations: Sir Nicholas Winton, Mr and Mrs Derek Smith, Tina Sell, Mr and Mrs D G Holliday.

The Society extends its condolences to the families and friends of Mr Pillinger, Mrs Dodsworth and Mrs S G Cooper.

Thank you to Carol Innes our chief of distributors for the civic society magazine and her supporter distributors who volunteer their time to such a valuable cause. Please note that any queries regarding non-receipt of the Newsletter should be directed to Carol on 01628 532418, and who will be pleased to help.

Shashi Dare

TREASURERS REPORT

During the last two or three years a concerted effort has been made to strengthen the financial position of the Society such that a foundation is made to allow further projects to be undertaken. The last year has seen our financial position stabilise.

The Annual Accounts are enclosed with this report and I would like to highlight or explain the following points:

- A donation of £350 was received under the Community Action Fund scheme from Shell UK Limited. This was for specific use in connection with the Ockwells project (see below).
- Subscription income has reduced this year relative to 2004. This is primarily due to the high take up of life memberships in 2004 rather than a reflection of a major drop in membership.
- Good profits have been made on most outings thanks to a generally high take up of coach seats.
- The tax refunds noted under the 2004/2005 relate to Gift Aid donations for membership subscriptions in 2003/2004.
- During 2003/2004 no payments were made to the Civic Trust for membership subscriptions or insurance. During 2004/2005 these have been paid.
- The donation of £500 towards reinstatement of the Boy and Boat Statue constitutes the Civic Society contribution, to which the Baylis Trust added £1650, the balance being paid by the RBWM.
- Expenditure on the Ockwells Project has increased this year. The 'net cost' takes into account money raised as a result of a guided tour provided to the Historic Houses Association. Funding raised by Ann Darracott from Shell (£350 this year and a balance of £200 from previous donations) substantially offsets the identified net costs. Sale of the Great Malvern study by the Friends of Great Malvern Priory has recouped further costs during the current financial year and hopefully this will continue.
- The balance of funds from last year included a donation of £1,000 from Stiefel, received in 2002/2003, for use towards a potential new footpath bridge. A proportion of this money has been used to undertake a survey of the footbridge over White Brook.
- During the year a memorial bench was placed in Cookham to recognise the contribution Bob Sandys provided to the Society over many years.
- Income from raffles and coffee/teas at talks, whilst not specifically highlighted, has helped to offset some of the speakers' costs.

The Civic Society accounts are clearly still in very good health and I encourage the Committee to consider further ways of using some of the available funds in projects that will raise the profile of the Society.

Trevor Farnfield

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

Annual Accounts for Year ended 31st May 2005

2003/2004

2004/2005

INCOME

0	Donations/Grants	350
3 536	Subscriptions Received During Year	2 555
422	Interest On Bank And Other Deposits	717
657	Surplus/Loss On Outings And Social Events	991
0	Tax Refunds On Deeds Of Covenants / Gift Aid	902
£4 615	Total	£5 515

EXPENDITURE

Administration		
2 523	General Expenses, Printing, Postage, Etc.	2 757
545	Hire Of Rooms And Meeting Expenses	597
50	Subscriptions	364
0	Insurance	230
Donations		
0	Boy and Boat Statue	500
Other Expenses		
282	Ockwells And Associated Projects (Net Costs)	686
18	Millennium Walk (Net Costs)	273
0	Various Other Small Projects	51
87	Website	142
34	Presentations/Memorials	685
£3 539	Total	£6 285

1 076 EXCESS/DEFICIT OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE -770

12 908	Balance Brought Forward	13 984
£13 984	Balance Carried Forward	£13 214

FUNDS

2 430	Bank (Lloyds TSB) and Cash	828
12 639	Charities Deposit General Fund (COIF)	13 355
0	Debtor/Insurance Payments In Advance	314
(1 085)	Creditors/Commitments	(1 283)
£13 984	BALANCE OF FUNDS	£13 214

Trevor Farnfield - Hon. Treasurer

25.09.05

HERITAGE CENTRE NEWS

Maidenhead Heritage Centre has settled well into its new home near the Methodist Church, even though its collection of historic artefacts has had to be stored in 4 different locations between Reading and Slough. The exhibition space is much smaller, and so it has been decided to put on more modest exhibitions, and to change the contents of the display cases very frequently, so that there is always something new to see.

A new film about modern Maidenhead '**A Portrait of Maidenhead**' has just been released by the Heritage Centre. Made by the young people of the Fast Forward Film Making Group (based at Norden Farm) with the support of the Prince Philip Trust Fund, this colourful film includes scenes shot at Maidenhead Carnival and at the riverside. You will recognise Guards Club Park, Boulton's Lock and other landmarks, and there are sections about Norden Farm, Taplow Court and Cliveden. There is even an interview with Alain Roux at The Waterside in Bray, with mouth-watering food in the background!

'A Portrait of Maidenhead' is available on video or DVD from the Heritage Centre, which is hoping you will all buy a copy for Christmas; already copies are on their way to New Zealand and Australia. Also available this year are 'Maidenhead' plum puddings, made in Cumbria to a traditional (yummy) recipe, with Maidenhead Bridge on the label.

Exhibitions and events planned for 2006 include an **Antiques Valuation Day** (February 3rd), and exhibitions about **Cliveden Hospital**, **The Coming of the Railway** (it is the bicentenary of Brunel's birth) and **Hammer Horror Films**. Details will be given in the Maidenhead Advertiser or on the Heritage Centre's website.

Would you like to do voluntary work for the Heritage Centre? Administrator Fran Edwards is always looking for more front-of-house stewards as well as people to help with historical research, etc. Please contact her on the number below.

Maidenhead Heritage Centre is open Tuesday – Saturdays
90 Moorbridge Road, Maidenhead SL6 8BW, ☎ 01628 780555
www.maidenheadheritage.org.uk

PLANNING DIGEST

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Planning Group met in August, September and October to review the plans for a number of applications that had been selected from the weekly listings for July, August and September. All the sites were visited and reviewed in detail. Comments were submitted to the Planning Department on 24 of the applications and the full text of these can be seen on the Society's website.

These included the usual mix of applications for telephone masts (often with too little notice) and blocks of flats - including one involving the demolition of the Chef Peking restaurant in Ray Mead Road, and another with yet more changes to the proposed development at the Bridge Road/Oldfield Road corner site. This latter development is one of the larger schemes seeking approval and in view of its importance as a "gateway site", we repeat here our concerns:

Bridge Road and Oldfield Road

(217 flats (88 affordable) and 33 houses together with 4200 m² light industrial floor space, associated landscaping, access and parking)

We welcome the residential nature of this application and particularly the amount of affordable housing. We like the mix of residential development with light industrial units. We recognize and appreciate the changes that have been made to this application but on most of the major issues our objections remain. We are especially concerned about the massive size of the development and the associated consequences for local traffic.

We acknowledge the reduction in height of block C opposite the Almshouses. Nevertheless the height and layout of the rest of the residential blocks make the development look like a barracks and the buildings along Bridge Road will overshadow the street and the parade of shops opposite. In any event five or six floors are too high and the building should not be more than three floors as set out in the inspector's report on a previous application. The density of the development is too great for the size of the site and the roads and the buildings do not need to be so high and monolithic.

This is a major site on one of the main roads that enter the town and it is important that the development is sympathetic with the town's character. Such a large concentrated set of buildings will affect the scale of the town and require significantly more local infrastructure. The number of dwellings on this site is too many and the proposed density of 125 dwellings per hectare (dph) significantly exceeds the government's recommended guidelines of 30 to 50 dph.

We are very concerned about the additional traffic on Bridge Road, Oldfield Road and Bray Road from the development, especially at peak times, which will bring traffic on these already busy roads to a stand still. The design and management of the road junction on Bridge Road has still not been addressed and this will be critical to the flow of traffic in the area. As the Inspector noted previously this should be resolved before any work starts. In addition there is only one entry and exit to the residential site off Oldfield Road. This will make emergency access to the site difficult and a second road entrance to the residential part of the site from Reform Road should be insisted upon.

We also believe the present pedestrian crossing of Bridge Road should be retained, upgraded to a toucan crossing and its position reviewed. There should also be a pedestrian crossing of Waldeck Road as this is on the route to the High Street and children will use this to reach one of the play areas.

CROSSRAIL PETITION

The Society is waiting to hear whether it will be called to appear before the Crossrail Select Committee after lodging a formal objection to the Crossrail plans for their potentially damaging impact on the town and its Brunel Bridge.

The Society's Petition against the Crossrail Bill, drawn up by Tina Sell, was formally delivered to the Parliamentary Bills Office by John McIntosh and Bob Dulson (despite semi-tropical rainstorms in Whitehall and lengthy queues at the Bills Office!). It was one of 153 entered by the September 16th deadline.

The decision to Petition against aspects of the Bill came in the wake of two useful meetings with Crossrail representatives in the summer and was endorsed by the Executive Committee in September.

"We don't object to the scheme in principle, we just want to make sure that if it happens it brings benefits to the people of Maidenhead, not problems," said John.

The Society's Petition questions the choice of Maidenhead as the west terminal. It says there have been no convincing reasons given for its selection. If, however, Maidenhead is the final choice, it demands that central funding is found to meet the huge infrastructure associated with creating a terminus here.

The Petition insists that alternative methods for overhead electrification are explored to avoid defacing the elegant, listed Brunel viaduct. It rejects the use of Guards Club Park and nearby residential roads by contractors and calls instead for alternative sites for storage, and use of the river for the delivery of equipment for work on the bridge.

The Society also objects that as plans stand, Crossrail threatens to deliver a slower service than is currently available.

John McIntosh added: "We fear that without major funding for infrastructure, particularly a much-needed integrated transport hub, the town of Maidenhead will be ill-placed to cope with such a huge development and we have major concerns over parking and traffic congestion if Maidenhead is the chosen terminal."

OTHER ACTIVITIES

We have commented on the Transport Plan, the Enforcement Policy Statement and the LDF River Thames policy. Also, John Ashford has been nominated to be the Society representative on the RBWM Cycle Forum.

Nigel Cockburn

VISIT TO BAD GODESBERG

29th APRIL – 1st MAY 2006

A visit to the Rhine Valley as guests of the Bad Godesberg Heritage Society is planned for the end of April, and is warmly recommended by members who have made such exchange visits in the past. Our German friends are wonderfully hospitable and knowledge of the language, while useful, is not essential!

The town stands just south of Bonn, the birthplace of Beethoven, on the left bank of the Rhine opposite the famous Seven Hills and the volcanic peak Drachenfels. The romantic Rhine gorge ends here, while to the west lies the lovely countryside of the Eifel, with picturesque villages full of half timbered houses tucked into the hills.

Bad Godesberg is an elegant spa town, with avenues of handsome villas running down to the Rhine. Until recently, many of these houses were embassies, as this was the diplomatic quarter of Bonn. A hugely expensive tunnel now carries through traffic under the town centre, which is dominated by the ruins of the Godesburg castle.

The Redoute at Bad Godesberg - built in 1793 and used as casino and for state receptions. The young Beethoven played here



Flight timings will allow almost three full days in Germany. Sightseeing will include a visit to the compact but handsome city of Bonn, with its University, Minster and Baroque town hall. On the Sunday there will be a joint excursion, possibly including a mini-cruise on the Rhine, with members of the Bad Godesberg Heritage Society. Monday is May Day, celebrated in traditional style (maypoles, etc), and our evening flight home will allow us all plenty of time in Bad Godesberg itself. Perhaps we will also cross the river to take the funicular railway to the summit of Drachenfels, from where the views are breathtaking.

In the evenings, we usually have one dinner with German families and the other as guests of the Bad Godesberg Society.

The exact cost of the weekend has yet to be finalised, but is estimated at £250 per person (sharing a room) or slightly more for a single room. This includes flights, bed and breakfast for two nights in a comfortable hotel, transport and sightseeing. So the only extra spending money required should be for two lunches and whatever shopping you might wish to do.

If you are interested in this visit, please contact Richard Poad (01628 484298) or June Churchman (01628 638546) as soon as possible. A £25 deposit per person will be payable by mid November.

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Blast from the past:

Civic Society members with some of their German hosts during the visit to Bad Godesberg in 1989:



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 16th November 2005

Talk by Mr Gary Marshall

45th Annual General Meeting

Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m. and

“Grey’s Court – Recent Archaeological Investigations”

CIVIC SOCIETY OFFICERS

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2005

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

12th January, 9th February, 9th March, 13th April, 11th May, 8th June, 13th July, 14th September, 12th October, 9th November, 14th December.

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 16th November 2005 in the Wesley Hall at the Methodist Church at 8.00pm.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 13th January 2006.**

(Unless otherwise acknowledged, photographs taken by Ann & Brian Darracott using the Society’s digital camera purchased with a grant from the Kidwell’s Trust)

News Editor **Brian Darracott**
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