



Maidenhead Civic Society NEWS

Issue 4/07

October 2007



David Lunn explains how the Council works: See page 9.

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AGM Agenda and Reports

Maidenhead's New Waterway – Teamwork made it happen!

Regular features on Talks, Outings, the Heritage Centre,
Projects and Planning

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

I have just re-read what I said for the corresponding issue last year. The strategic view I gave then remains as true as ever. Few of the problems I highlighted have gone away and there remains much to be done. However, a lot of progress has been made in the Society and the Group structure we have been developing is leading to results.

The big news in the last quarter is that the Council has to go back to the drawing board with its Core Strategy. As Nigel Cockburn indicates in his report, this was not really a surprise but it will mean more time and work and a considerable delay before the central document in the Local Development Framework is in place. The good news is that in spite or because of a change in administration at the Town Hall, it appears that plans for the regeneration of the town centre are to be a priority. This is something the Society has been trying to get onto the agenda since the Strategic Review, so we will be watching and worrying this one.

Within the Society new initiatives are becoming readily evident from the new groups formed as part of the emerging new constitution. The smaller numbers in each group lead readily to more and freer discussion. New ideas pop up and are quickly taken on board or are stored for a later use.

One such initiative was the reception at Hall Place and it is intended to build on that. In the past we had exhibitions across the Society's field of interest, usually in the Library with drinks and canapés. These entailed a great deal of effort in preparing artwork and applying it to display boards. At Hall Place we offered a corresponding display but it was staged using digital technology to project photographs, diagrams and text onto a screen, controlled by a computer. Technology gives us much more flexibility and is much less time-consuming - given that someone has the skills! I use this example to illustrate how ever-developing technology can be brought to bear to the advantage of the Society. It should be thought of not as supplanting the previous method but as supplementing it.

There are many such new technologies and new methods appearing and the Society needs to use them effectively. This is one of the advantages of the new structure and a new chairman. The Society will inevitably look at a new range of aims and opportunities. With the new structure and Constitution it should be better placed to identify them and bring them into action.

I will now close this message and relinquish the reins of chairman by sending my best wishes to all members; and more power to the members of the new Board of Trustees, the Executive and the Groups. I look forward to working with you in another guise in the new order.

John McIntosh – Chairman

JOHN McINTOSH - AN APPRECIATION

John McIntosh is standing down as Chairman of the Society this year having unsuccessfully tried to stand down in 2002! John has made a major contribution to the activities of the Society in many different ways. When the Society decided to establish a Heritage Centre in the town, John played a leading part in the creation of the first centre at 13 Bridge Street and he was for many years Chairman of the Heritage Group. The activities of the group led in 1995 to the creation of the Heritage Centre Trust as a separate entity. The Trust still operates the Heritage Centre in Maidenhead.



Handing over the reins to Richard Poad he returned to the Society executive committee and in 1998 was elected Chairman. Since then he has been a mainstay of the Society always being there to keep the show on the road. In particular he promoted the establishment of a website, the creation of a Strategic Review of Amenity and has most recently been involved in the modernisation of the constitution of the Society aimed at improving how we operate. He has been a terrific spokesman always able to deliver pertinent comment whether in his Chairman's reports in the newsletter or speaking at events such as the Hall Place reception in March this year. I remember in particular, in the early stages of developing the Millennium Walk project, walking the route with him over two sessions.

His willingness to get involved and his ability to get the best out of people has made him an outstanding chairman. He is stepping down from the chair but has said he will continue to serve in the reorganised society, an offer the Society executive is very grateful for.

Ann Darracott

**47th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY**

**To be held on Wednesday, 21st November 2006
at the Methodist Church Hall at 7.45 pm.**

AGENDA

1. Introduction by the Chairman
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 46th Annual General Meeting
3. Accounts for the year ended 31st May 2007
4. Reports for 2006/2007
5. Election of the Board of Trustees
To approve the appointment of the new Board of Trustees. *See note below.*
6. Election of the Officers
To elect from the Trustees an Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer
7. Any other Business.

Note:

The AGM is when the membership would normally elect officers and members of the Executive. The current Executive Committee was fulfilling two roles - **governance** and **executive** - which now need to be separated, in line with best practice. In future, the Board of Trustees would fulfil the Society's legal obligations - responsible for oversight and guidance in a governance role, establishing purpose and protecting ethos and values; and the new Executive Committee, consisting primarily of Group chairs and reporting to the Trustees, will carry out the bulk of the Society's work.

Under the new constitution, approved by the membership at the Special General Meeting in June, the task now is to elect members to the new 12-strong Board of Trustees. However, because there are more members of the current Executive (15) than are provided for on the new Board, a phased transition is regarded as desirable in order to manage the change with minimum disruption to the Society and the individuals involved. **It is thus proposed that the membership approve the election of all current Executive Committee members *en bloc* to the new Board of Trustees;** the Board would become effective from the first meeting after the AGM. There would then be a transition period during which the numbers would be expected to reduce by "natural wastage", and the normal pattern of retiring members, nominations and elections to the Board would resume at the 2008 AGM.

Please note the earlier start time of 7.45 pm

**MINUTES OF THE
46th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF
THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY**

Held on Wednesday, 15th November 2006

In the absence of the President, Mr. Harold James chaired the meeting.

1. Harold James passed on the President's best wishes who sent his apologies for being unable to chair the meeting. He then went on to review the Society's activities during the year. The society had had another successful year but with a number of problems to be solved. The present chairman, John McIntosh wished to retire having served in that post for some nine years. The Society's very efficient Hon Secretary, June Churchman had had to relinquish that post on moving away from the area. A replacement was urgently needed.

Harold James reminded the meeting that planning is still at the heart of the Society's activities as it has been since he joined in the '60s and continues so under Nigel Cockburn. The town planning analysis by the Council under central government's direction had led Nigel being deeply involved for the Society in its role as a stakeholder. There are improvements to the situation on so-called 'eyesores' notably Cresset Towers where Council action has resulted in some improvement. The incomplete cinema site remains to be dealt with while Skindles, in South Bucks continues as an 'eyesore' as viewed from the Maidenhead bank of the river. It is a pleasure to record that there had been success over the Crossrail project where Guard's Club Park had largely been removed from the impact of the proposed works on the Brunel Bridge.

The Society has supported the new Maidenhead Waterways Restoration Group and is represented on its controlling group by Michael Johnson. Ann Darracott, through the Society's seat on the Greenway Committee, has continued her work to ensure a regular flow of water to the York Stream. She has also taken a part in the efforts currently in hand to learn more about the historical buildings of Bisham Abbey. The new Publicity and Communications Group under Bob Dulson's chairmanship has led to a marked improvement in these areas while the Newsletter continues at a professional standard with Brian Darracott as editor.

2. The Minutes of last meeting held on the 16th November 2005 were proposed for approval by Michael Johnson and seconded by Ann Darracott.

3. Accounts.

The detailed Annual Accounts are set out in the October 2006 Newsletter, together with the Treasurer's Report where further details are available on specific points. The Treasurer highlighted some of the items and the adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Ben Rade and seconded by Gerald Ashton.

4. Reports.

The detailed reports on the Society's year appear in the October 2006 issue of the Newsletter along with the Chairman's report.

On opening the meeting for discussion of the reports, Councillor Vicky Howes, Cabinet Member for Planning and the Council's official contact with the Society, made a number of comments.

She thanked the Society for its input to the Local Development Framework currently under development and the help received in setting up the public questionnaire required in the process. The LDF involved a tremendous amount of work and would shape the Borough for the next 20 years. She further stressed that in keeping with the Society's non-political stance all relevant documents in the process are seen by cross party groups.

Responding to criticism about the use of what is called Section 106 money (developers mandatory contributions towards infrastructure), she said there had been some confusion and she offered to organise a presentation to clarify this matter.

Finally, she was critical herself about what she saw as the Society's negative portrayal of Maidenhead. This was triggered by a report on the town's "eyesores" in the July Newsletter. She was concerned that although we had had a meeting of minds our view was too negative. The Civic Society and its aims needed to give a more positive view, otherwise members would be drawn from a too restricted reservoir and there was a risk of the Society becoming 'exclusive' and perhaps 'cliquish' as a result. She added that a 'working partnership' with the Council was essential.

5. Election of Officers.

June Jorge was proposed as Hon. Secretary by Bob Dulson seconded by Trevor Farnfield and was duly elected.

The election of all the other officers was carried out en bloc as follows viz.

Chairman	John McIntosh
Hon. Treasurer	Trevor Farnfield
Asst. Secretary	Gillian Moore
Hon Membership Secretary	Shashi Dare
Chairman Planning Group	Nigel Cockburn
Trustees	Ann Child, Harold James, Richard Poad

These were proposed by Michael Johnston and seconded by Gerald Ashton and were duly elected.

6. Election of Committee.

The following Committee members retire by rotation and offer themselves for re-election viz: Angela Howorth, Lydia Parker and Mike Copeland. These were proposed by Ann Darracott and seconded by Brian Sanderson and were duly re-elected.

7. Any Other Business.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.43 p.m.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Much of the Society's year has again been involved in monitoring and contributing to continuing developments reported on last year. Principal amongst these is the progress of the Local Development Framework through its seemingly interminable, jargon-laden phases. Having said that in rather pejorative terms it will result in, nonetheless, a collection of definitive documents which will set the scene for the future form, character and size of Maidenhead over the next twenty years. The process has now reached the stage where it has become clear that if the town is to continue to prosper then a major revitalisation of the town centre is required. In turn this will probably mean a major redevelopment. The Society, represented principally by **Nigel Cockburn**, has succeeded in having many of its ideas and views incorporated in the overall vision.

Other ongoing fields of interest have been the consequences of the sale of the St. Regis site on the South Bucks side of the river, which could greatly affect the environment of the Maidenhead bank, and where **Bob Dulson** has continued his strenuous efforts on behalf of the Society to find out what is going on and to make sure that Maidenhead's interests are at least not overlooked; and **Crossrail** where **Tina Sell** has continued her watching brief (see page 19 for the latest on this). The vexed question of the 'Eyesores' has been somewhat ameliorated by the completion of the refurbishment of Cresset Tower and full occupation of its shops. However, it still has a slightly run down air out of keeping with what should be a prestige building. The 'Cinema' eyesore seems much as it was and although we've been told often enough that a resolution was "just around the corner", hopes of early progress in creating a worthy use of the site seem to be stuck for the moment.

As ever the **Planning Group's** work has been at the centre of the Society's work. The regular consideration of a selection of the planning applications has continued unabated. There has been some reduction in the number of applications to demolish viable properties and replace them with a greater density of housing but central government policies *inter alia* are leading to a revival of such applications. The Group has had a number of changes recently. Principal of these has been a change in Chairman. **Nigel Cockburn**, after four years of sterling service, has passed the baton to **Martin McNamee**. We expect that Nigel will continue in a new function continuing his valued input to the Society's affairs as well as within the Group. In addition, **Janice Winterton** and **John Ashford** who, for many years, made the fortnightly selection of planning applications for consideration by the Group have both retired and we thank them for their services. We are fortunate in having **Renu Gujral** and **Rudi Sheldon** take on this crucial task. In addition, the Group has been joined by **Bronwen Renwick**.

The Society continues to support the work of the Waterways Restoration Group and has been represented on it through the year by **Michael Johnson**.

Ann Darracott's area of endeavour has been highlighted as the **Projects Group** in line with the structure indicated under the new constitution. Her efforts, finally to define the route of the Millennium Walk are being pursued with persistence. The main problems now centre on agreeing the legal status of the route through a multiplicity of properties at the Cookham Road end and of achieving a defined safe crossing over the A4130 near the Temple Golf Course. The latter is much conditioned by the Highways Department's agreement as to what is a safe crossing point. On the former there seems to be a deal of good will and hope of an early and final resolution. Ann has also kept the York Stream situation under constant review. Pressure on the Environment Agency to have dredging done on the feed to the York Stream plus a wet summer have ensured a continual supply of water through the town centre.

The **Communications Group** has given strong impetus for the Society to bring its activities into the public view. Maintaining our profile requires a flow of continuing solid results in our chosen fields of activity.

The **Events Group** has developed attractive forward programmes of Talks, Outings and other social events. The aim has been to offer an extended view out to six months ahead. In all this sterling endeavour, it has to be recorded that the take up of places on Outings has sometimes been weak and equally attendance at Talks modest. All these are carefully researched for suitability; breadth of interest etc. in what we believe is a group reasonably representative of members and their interests. Appeals to the membership to let the Society know why the take up for an event is low have so far yielded little insight into the problem.

The Society's Group structure indicated in last year's report has now been in operation through the year. These are currently **Planning, Events, Projects, Communications** (including Publicity) and, soon to be instituted, **Strategy & Policy** and **Membership**. This has allowed a sharper approach to the Society's work and has also allowed the easier introduction to the group of individuals with skills and knowledge needed to supplement the team without the formality of co-option or election to the Executive Committee. These arrangements fit naturally into the new two-tier organisation with the roles of a Board of Trustees and Executive Committee clearly split. The former looks after the general guidance, objectives and strategy of the Society; the latter organises and manages the activities of the Groups. The Board of Trustees will be brought into being at the Annual General Meeting when its members are voted into office. At the same time the new Executive will begin to function as set out in the new Constitution. There will inevitably be a period of transition.

It takes the efforts of many volunteers to keep the Society going and there are never enough of them for all the aims the Society can identify by way of improving the amenities in Maidenhead. It is worthwhile identifying clearly who is who:

Our **Hon. Treasurer Trevor Farnfield** has maintained our financial records for many years efficiently and without fuss. Thanks go to him in generous measure.

Our new **Hon. Secretary June Jorge** is due thanks for maintaining records of the Society, its activities and public documents and for organising venues for meetings talks etc. At the same time many thanks and best wishes are recorded for her predecessor June Churchman who has moved from the area.

During the year the following have **taken part in the work of the Planning Group**: Chairman: **Martin McNamee, Nigel Cockburn, Rudi Sheldon, Renu Gujral, Bronwen Renwick, Michael Johnson, Bridget King, Jill Powell, Bob Dulson, Tina Sell, Michael Bayley and John McIntosh**. They cannot be sufficiently thanked for their deliberations and dedication to the group's work

The **Communications Group** includes **Brian Darracott (Newsletter Editor)** and **Tim Goldingham (Webmaster)** who are both non-Executive Committee. Their membership of the Communications Group is an example of the value of the new Group structure. Thanks are due to all for bringing new life to this vital sector of the Society's work.

The **Events Group** is chaired by **Tina Sell** and includes **Mike Copeland (Outings), June Jorge, Shashi Dare, Lydia Parker** and **Lilia Baillie-Hamilton**. Thanks go to all and particularly to Tina for making the arrangements for **Talks**, and a wide variety of other actions notably a watching brief on developments in Crossrail. **Mike** has energetically researched, reconnoitred and run an attractive series of **Outings** and the Society is grateful. The other Group members have all contributed much from their own particular skills not forgetting those like **Angela Howorth** and **Gillian Moore** who organise refreshments for Talks. Thanks to all.

The **Projects Group** for the time being has only **Ann Darracott** as a member but we hope to develop this in due course. **Ann** has given unremitting attention to two major projects viz. the Millennium Walk and the York Stream. But she has also found time to involve herself in other

projects notably investigations into Bisham Abbey in particular the lay-out of some of its old buildings. The Society's thanks are due for all her long-term effort.

In this electronic age the Society's main vehicle of communication is the **Newsletter**. Sincere thanks are due to **Brian Darracott** for his imaginative editorship and to **Carol Innes** and the **Distributors**, who without fuss or miss delivers the Newsletter to our members.

It now only remains for me to sign myself off as **Chairman**. It has been a privilege to have held the post-for ten years I believe. Thanks to the many who have helped me during my time in office. I now hand over to the capable hands of **Bob Dulson** who will bring a new and stimulating view to the work of the Society.

John McIntosh

EVENTS GROUP REVIEW

The Events Group has met regularly over the last year to pool ideas and attempt to put together a stimulating programme for members. We have many thoughts and suggestions on what events *we* think would be crowd pullers but the difficult part is predicting what the membership would consider worthwhile activities- in other words "what the members want!"

The talks have, on the whole, been well attended and usually given us food for thought. Ankit Rao, Waste Awareness Officer, began the year by educating us on the management of rubbish in the Royal Borough. It is clear that some aspects of waste are being dealt with efficiently but there is still a way to go. In March, we welcomed Malcolm Barber, a well-respected authority on the Knights Templar. He left us with the feeling that real events can be far more fascinating than fiction. June brought us a visit from Crossrail management in the person of Simon Bennett, who is Consultations and Petitions Manager for Cross London Rail Links. He explained the development of the "Crossrail Dream" most coherently but did not manage to allay local fears of an inferior service for commuters. Peter Bennett (no relation), Crime Reduction Adviser for Windsor and Maidenhead, gave good advice on the protection of our property. He reminded us that the harder we make it to enter our homes the less likelihood of our being burgled. Don't make it easy for the casual thief! Our final talk in November 2007 will be given by Paul Jefferies, an Emergency Nurse Practitioner.

We had a successful visit to the Town Hall in October. David Lunn, the (soon to be retired) Chief Executive of the Royal Borough, showed us around the recently refurbished building, took us into the Mayor's Parlour and talked to us in the Council Chamber about the history of the Town Hall, his role and the services provided by the Council. We feel honoured to have been the first such group to receive this tailor-made tour and value the reference, made by David, to the Civic Society's positive engagement with the borough. He expressed a genuine desire for responses to council plans, particularly when they take the form of constructive suggestions, and emphasised the importance of working together with the council, as a number of local groups do, in order to engender a cohesive, structured approach in the efforts to move the town centre forward. The event ended on a social note with members and their guests enjoying a glass of wine and canapés in the Council Chamber, while taking the opportunity to meet with the Committee and fellow members.

The Reception held in March at Hall Place was a great success. It was well attended and we were delighted to welcome Theresa May MP for the evening. We plan to hold a similar event in 2008.

During this year we have had to cancel two outings due to lack of support. We were not able to visit Brooklands or the Kent vineyards, both of which would have been most interesting. We did, however, have a very pleasant river trip to Mapledurham, a well-attended reception at the Berkshire

College of Agriculture and the visit to Kent to see Down House and Lullingstone Castle. We will resume our trips in the spring time, but I would ask all members to give us more support, as researching and organising these outings is quite time consuming and a good take-up does benefit your Society.

Tina Sell & Mike Copeland

PLANNING GROUP REVIEW

We continued to meet with the Council on a quarterly basis, as we have for the last four years, and finally there appeared to be some recognition that Maidenhead centre needs regeneration. We were pleased to be invited to join a Partnership Forum to consider plans for the town centre, just prior to the Council elections in May. The change in administration that followed might have threatened the initiative. However, we have been encouraged by our initial meetings with Cllr Derek Wilson (planning) and Cllr David Burbage (Council Leader) who indicate they are keen to involve us in progressing it. Also Tim Slaney has joined the Council's Officers from Newbury as the manager of the Planning Department.

In June we spent most of three weeks on the Local Development Framework at the Examination by a government planning inspector of the Core Strategy document. At this late stage, after all the comments we had made during the long series of consultations, RBWM finally took up a large number of the suggestions we had been making. However, in a number of areas where we considered that the document was deficient, the Inspector appears to have agreed with us and we understand that he has rejected 6 of the 26 policies that were put forward. We have not seen the final version with the Inspector's revisions because, as this Newsletter goes to press, the Inspector still has to confirm certain facts with the Town Hall but, according to the Council, the Inspector's view is that the council's policies on housing and employment development:

- don't take opportunities for using the Green Belt into account;
- depend too much on the uncertain supply of windfall sites;
- don't identify actual locations or areas for housing and employment growth and
- set too high thresholds for affordable housing.

While it may be tempting to say "we told them so", this is a major setback. The whole document now has to be withdrawn and more work and consultation undertaken before it can be re-submitted. We are particularly concerned about any encroachment of the Green Belt, though we were impressed at the examination that Cllr Wilson and the Mayor, Cllr Leo Walters, came to the session on the Green Belt to speak in support of their officers.

It was also disappointing to hear recently that the government has increased the housing allocation for the Borough. This makes it even more important that there are sound sustainable policies about where all the development will take place – something the Society has been calling for since its Strategic Review in 2004.

Finally, with Martin McNamee who has recently taken over the Chairmanship of the Planning Group, I would like to thank all the members of the Group for their hard work and support throughout the year.

Nigel Cockburn

PROJECTS REVIEW

Millennium Walk

This project, devised for the Millennium (!) is now 10 years old. A major development this year has been the decision of the Local Access Forum to include the completion of the Walk as an aim in the 2006/7 Annual Report. The Walk is one of the objectives in the Royal Borough's Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2005-2015, produced by the Forum, that is dedicated to improving access to the countryside. A PowerPoint presentation about the Walk was given to the Forum in 2005. An updated version concentrating on the missing links in the Millennium Walk was given to the Forum on 18th September and an annotated version of it is now with its Secretary. The cooperation of the Highways Department is being sought as suitable signage will make the Walk safer. The missing link across White Place Farm and adjacent land was cleared again this year by the amenity societies and walked on 7th October for the 2007 Boundary Walk. The land owned by the Environment Agency has not yet been sold but they have promised that when it is, a 2m wide path along its northern border will be part of the sale.

Green Way

Harold James and I have attended meetings of the Green Way Working Group this year. The group monitors the condition of both the Green Way path and the stream system and publishes the Green Way leaflet. The Society made a grant to the Council for the printing of a new edition of the leaflet, now in its fourth incarnation. The following relate to some of the topics discussed at the GWWG:

York Stream

We have seen with relief that the improvement in flow into the town centre has continued this year. This has been due to dredging of the White Brook by the Environment Agency every year since 2003, some treatment of reeds in the area near North Town Moor plus this year's wet weather. To check on the health of the stream, aquatic surveys were carried out in the stream next to the library in April and August this year. Although accurately reflecting the fact that a lot of organic matter is present on the bed of the stream, both demonstrated the presence of biological indicators of good quality water. The two surveys are available on the Society website under Projects-York Stream. Now that the stream seems to be functioning again we would like the Green Way to become again a streamside walk. To achieve this objective we have been involved in putting together a proposal called "Windows" aimed at opening up views of the stream (see later in this Newsletter).

Sainsbury's York Stream Improvement Scheme

A meandering stream was created alongside the Hines Meadow car park this year with suitable planting (see a full report in the July Newsletter). The work included the repair of the barrier that is supposed to stop the Green Way path under the A4 from flooding. We will have to wait and see but the signs are not good. Heavy rain in mid October flooded the path both under the A4 and near to Crown Lane steps for 24 hours.

Maidenhead Ditch

In last year's Annual Report, reference was made to the application made by the Environment Agency to delete work on Maidenhead Ditch planned as part of the MWEFA scheme, an application that hadn't been resolved as the Royal Borough needed more information. Since then consultants have been employed to advise the Royal Borough but as far as I know their report has not yet come before a panel. A related matter is the EA's Strande Lane Flood Prevention scheme (that aims at preventing flood water affecting houses in that area because of ponding behind the North Maidenhead Flood Bund). The scheme has not yet had a public hearing, apparently delayed because of the flooding in Maidenhead in July! We await the outcome of both of these with interest. We are sure that local people realise that eventually there will be another flood and that water will accumulate north of the North Maidenhead Flood bund. We would suggest that any scheme that relies on placing bunds outside houses to keep the water away but then doesn't make

sure that the streams carrying the flood water are kept clear of trees and obstructing reed growth is asking for trouble.

Maidenhead Moor

We responded in July to a questionnaire from the Council regarding the improvement of Maidenhead Moor. Not surprisingly improvement to the watercourse featured prominently in our response. We suggested the sort of methods to be used to create “windows” onto York Stream further north could be used here i.e. cutting back bankside weeds and getting rid of some of the obstructing reeds, not forgetting removing the odd fallen tree or two. We also gave priority to more regular litter collection, preferably before the lawn mowers get there and divide the litter into lots of little pieces. The Royal Borough is known to have a shortage of public open space and we repeated the Planning Group’s wish that if a road is put across the Moor it should be temporary. The results of the consultation are now being processed and it is hoped that by the spring of next year improvements to the Moor will be decided on. Maidenhead Moor is a unique amenity that we only have because this area of Maidenhead flooded. Hopefully this consultation will enhance and preserve it for future generations to enjoy.

Ockwells Project

The Ockwells Project proper again took a back seat this year to studies related to Bisham Abbey. The results of an incomplete geophysical survey done using ground probing radar by Dr Tim Austin of Reading University and referred to in last year’s Annual Report have still unfortunately not been made available to us.

Ann Darracott

COMMUNICATIONS GROUP REVIEW

The Society is privileged that all aspects of its communications continue to be underpinned by a respect for its objectives, whether as a campaigner, pressure group or watchdog.

Bolstered by the vote of confidence expressed through last year’s members’ survey, the last 12 months have been dominated by PR activity in support of our aims for the Local Development Framework and the regeneration of the town centre. This has helped to open doors, too late perhaps in respect of the Core Strategy which goes back to the drawing board (see Planning Report p 10) but it does seem to have ensured that the Society will have a key role to play in the future of the town.

In February the Society put forward a proposal for a town square and associated development adjacent to the town hall. This formed part of our response to the council’s discussion document on the future of the town centre. The Society endorsed most of the observations and ideas contained in this document. Many of them had been put forward by the Society itself and had their origins in the Strategic Review and the ensuing Great Debate.

The Communications Group has initiated a project to revamp the Society’s website to make it more effective and easier to navigate. With the redesign we hope to be able to offer a comprehensive source of information about the Society, including an archive of Newsletters and a photo gallery (see News). It becomes ever more pressing to make effective use of this mode of communication both for outgoing information but also for input from both members and non-members.

After years of modest discretion, the Planning Group agreed that its decisions could be publicised when appropriate, giving the Society an important PR tool which has still to be used to full advantage. However, not a month has passed without reference to the Society in the local press. The Society’s position and views have been reasonably well reflected, though our profile was not as high as in the previous year, nor as we would wish. We were proactive on a number of issues,

including Badnells Pit, our talks & events programme, York Stream, the Boundary Walk, the eastern gateway and inappropriate speculative development.

Bob Dulson

MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

The current situation with membership is as follows: there are 284 Individual (standard) Members registered with the Maidenhead Civic Society; 91 Life Members; 4 Corporate Members and 22 Honorary Members.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to new Members: Mr C T Denniford, Mr G J Hutton, Mr Anthony Parker, Mr & Mrs J C Lewis, Mrs H R Hyman and Mr George Bell; and new Life Members: Mr Paul Lion and Mrs C M L Stevens. Mr Derek and Mrs Nuala Smith, and Sir Nicholas Winton have now become Life members.

A few members have left the Society as they have relocated to other areas - thank you for their support to date. We also offer heartfelt condolences from the Civic Society to family and friends of Maisie Bond, Mrs Sheila Hedges, Dr Daphne Line, Mr Richard Lawson, Mrs J M Lawson, Mrs J E Ward & Mrs R S Scrimgeour.

As I emphasised last year, we are depending upon everybody to continue the good work of the society by encouraging increase in membership so that we can together stand for a better Maidenhead now and secure the status of "Jewel of the Thames" for the future.

Shashi Dare

TREASURER'S REPORT

At last years AGM it was reported that a concerted effort had been made to strengthen the financial position of the Society such that potentially larger projects could be undertaken to lift the profile of the Society. During the last financial year the Committee has, as a consequence, been able to sanction expenditure on a number of projects and to purchase some key items of equipment.

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

- Good profits have been made on most outings (£1,063) thanks to a generally high take up of coach seats for visits undertaken. A proportion of these profits were used to finance the social event for members and guests held at the Berkshire College of Agriculture.
- The tax refunds noted under the 2006/2007 relate to Gift Aid donations for membership subscriptions in 2005/2006. This still remains a good 'boost' to our funds.
- During 2005/2006 no payments were made to the Civic Trust for insurance. However, these have now been paid.
- The Society purchased a digital projector and laptop computer to enable higher quality presentations to be made.
- Donations during the year were made to the Heritage Trust and towards the printing of the new Greenway leaflet.
- The Committee has yet to propose a suitable use for the generous donation of £500 received from a member during the last financial year. It is intended that this should be used in some way associated with the River Thames.
- All website costs were met by a direct donation from a member.

Trevor Farnfield

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

Annual Accounts for Year ended 31st May 2007

2005/2006		2006/2007
INCOME		
500	Donations/Grants	75
2,685	Subscriptions Received During Year	2,610
536	Interest on Bank and Other Deposits	641
1,293	Surplus on Outings and Social Events	473
981	Tax Refunds on Deeds of Covenants / Gift Aid	825
£5,995	Total	£4,624
EXPENDITURE		
Administration		
2,246	General Expenses, Printing, Postage, Etc.	2,580
446	Hire of Rooms, Speakers and Meeting Expenses	512
220	Subscriptions	52
0	Insurance	180
Donations		
300	Various	1,750
Other Expenses		
110	Ockwells and Associated Projects (Net Costs)	145
132	Millennium Walk (Net Costs)	28
0	Various Other Small Projects	8
50	Website	0
38	Presentations/Memorials	0
0	Town Planning Project	898
0	Equipment	1,449
£3,542	Total	£7,602
2,453	EXCESS/DEFICIT OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	-2,978
13,214	Balance Brought Forward	15,667
£15,667	Balance Carried Forward	£12,689
FUNDS		
1,778	Bank (Lloyds TSB) and Cash	639
13,889	Charities Deposit General Fund (COIF)	12,530
0	Debtor/Insurance Payments in Advance	190
0	Creditors/Commitments	-670
£15,667	BALANCE OF FUNDS	£12,689

Trevor Farnfield - Hon. Treasurer

16-Sep-07

PLANNING MATTERS

CHANGE OF PLAN

After four remarkable years as chairman of the Planning Group, Nigel Cockburn has decided to stand down. Nigel will be a hard act to follow. He was not only an excellent Group chairman, with his terrier-like tenacity and his gift for finding the devil in the detail he was also a force to be reckoned with in the Society's dealings with the Council, particularly in the preparation of the Local Development Framework. We have much to thank him for and I'm sure the Society will, therefore, welcome the news that Nigel wants to play an active role in other aspects of our work as well as continuing to be a member of the Planning Group.

We are delighted to welcome Martin McNamee as Nigel's successor in a line of chairmen who have given sterling service to the Society in what is in many ways the core job for the Society. Many members will know Martin from his other roles in the Maidenhead community.

Martin was a West London boy, educated at Ealing School and Trinity College, Dublin, who arrived eventually on the shores of Maidenhead in 1976. His career was in retail and he was latterly a Director of the Burton Group when he retired. Since then he has kept active and involved *inter alia* as a member of the Carnival Committee chairing it for three years. For ten years he has served as a governor of St. Mary's Catholic Primary School of which he is currently Chairman. He lives with wife Angela in Lower Cookham Road. It is good to have him with us and we wish him "many happy planning applications" in his latest role!

John McIntosh

WANTED: SOMETHING MORE APPROPRIATE FOR TOWN'S EASTERN GATEWAY

Plans to redevelop two major sites on the eastern entrance to Maidenhead were labelled "a let down" by the Civic Society.

The Texaco filling station by Maidenhead Bridge and the former Stapletons site in Moorbridge Road were both the subject of planning applications in August. Civic Society planning group chairman, Martin McNamee said: "At a time when the council is looking to regenerate Maidenhead town centre these two applications, as they stood, would have done little to improve the eastern gateway to the town." He added: "Obviously the Council can only consider the applications it receives but if these two had been approved without alteration it would have been a let down for Maidenhead. The developers should be encouraged to give us something more appropriate."

The filling station site stands in a Conservation Area and in the Setting of the Thames as well as the flood plain. As such it is subject to strict policies governing its redevelopment.

In its submission to the Council in September, the Civic Society said, while improvements had been made to earlier plans, they were still not sympathetic enough to the landmark location. "As a gateway site to the town we believe that the visual impact should be improved. We should like to see more imagination in the design and landscaping of the redevelopment."

The Society was also concerned about flood risk, possible pollution and aggravated traffic congestion (see Planning Applications below).

Plans for 72 - 80 Moorbridge Road would see the demolition of a mock-half-timbered Victorian building, erected in the 1880s as offices for a local builder. On the front, a stone panel recorded the level of the flood which badly affected the town in 1894. The Society and the Heritage Trust

believe this datum marker should be retained and incorporated in any new development. The Society agrees that the site needs redeveloping but said: “This will be a prominent, highly visible building. We would like to see an improvement in the design, the layout and the materials used.”



Demolition at the former Stapleton’s site in Moorbridge Road now underway

Both applications have since been withdrawn, although work is now continuing in Moorbridge Road under an approval granted on appeal in 2002.

OTHER PLANNING APPLICATIONS

During the last three months the Planning group reviewed 33 applications in detail and commented to the Council on 18 of them. At the time of going to press, the first three applications below had been withdrawn or refused, although it is understood that the Moorbridge Road Development is continuing under a previously granted permission. We will continue to monitor future developments.

We also objected to the further extension of opening hours for The Roof, in Queen Street. In the long term, we feel, the residential amenity of Maidenhead town centre is not compatible with such early morning licensing hours. Comments on some of the more significant applications were as follows:

Land off Sheephouse Farm, Sheephouse Road (Provision of new tennis facility including club house, car parking and 4 tennis courts (2 floodlit) also incorporating replacement fisherman’s club facility at first floor)

The site is in the Green Belt and we are not convinced that this application is an acceptable use of the Green Belt and complies with the exceptions to the Green Belt policy. We are aware that this part of Sheephouse Road has flooded in the past and the tennis courts and parking could give rise to additional run off. The porosity of the courts will be critical. The clubhouse may require raised floor levels. We understand there is a need for additional tennis facilities in the Maidenhead area but this is for indoor facilities as there are a number of locations with outside courts in addition to Maidenhead Tennis Club. We object to the proposal to floodlight two of the courts as this will disturb the neighbouring properties. It is unnecessary and out of character with the rural nature of the location. In addition neighbours will be disturbed by any noise from the facilities given the proximity of the site to the road.

Texaco, 143 Bridge Road (Redevelopment of site)

We welcome the fact the redevelopment is primarily to increase retail space on only one storey and that brick/tile effects have been incorporated. However, as a gateway site to the town we believe that the visual impact should be improved. We should like the grass verges retained and see more imagination in the design and landscaping of the redevelopment. The site is subject to flooding and climate change should be taken into account. The significantly larger footprint of the shop and forecourt will increase run off. We are also concerned about the existing contamination of the site in the floodplain which must risk polluting the river nearby.

Our main concern is the access/egress from the forecourt. The proposal to remove the second exit onto Bridge Road will result in a significant increase in the number of vehicles exiting onto Ray Mead Road - especially to turn right towards the A4. With queuing traffic there are already problems for traffic leaving the site. The extra exit should be retained, the exit onto Ray Mead Road should be widened to permit easier two-way traffic and consideration should be given to 'Keep Clear' road markings for traffic which is backed up on the approach to the roundabout on the A4.

72-80 Moorbridge Road (4-storey office block, demolition of existing buildings)

Outline permission has been granted on appeal but this proposal is completely lacking in architectural merit. This will be a prominent, high visibility building on the Eastern approaches to the town centre. It will be built right on the street frontage with car parking and minimal landscaping to the rear. Whilst agreeing that the site needs redeveloping we would like to see some attempt at improving the architecture and materials used. It should be set back with parking and landscaping surrounding the building. Part of the demolition involves a mock half-timbered Victorian building on which a stone marker reads 'Flood Level 1894'. It would be a nice feature if the marker was retained and incorporated into the frontage of the new site.

The Roof 80-84 Queen Street (Extension of opening hours to 12.30 am Sunday to Wednesday, to 01.00 am Thursday to 03.30 am Friday Saturday and New Year's Eve. Plus extra 30 minutes during British Summer Time)

In particular, the Summer Time proposal appears excessive -until 4 am Friday and Saturday for half the year. Whilst we support the police in any stance they take on the extension of licensing hours, we are very concerned at the impact of a late night drinking culture in our Town Centre. We do not believe that such activity is compatible with increasing and encouraging more residential development in the middle of Maidenhead.

Harvest Hill Road (Demolition of Joydean, White House & Dormy Corner - construction of 4 x 5-bed detached houses and 10 x 2-bed apartments to the rear)

This application appears to be a complete over development of the site. Three substantial detached properties are to be demolished. The building line of the four replacement detached houses has been brought forward (presumably to create space for the apartments to the rear). The four proposed houses are closely positioned with a minimum separation of only 2 metres; this is not in keeping with the spacious layout and character of the surrounding individual properties.

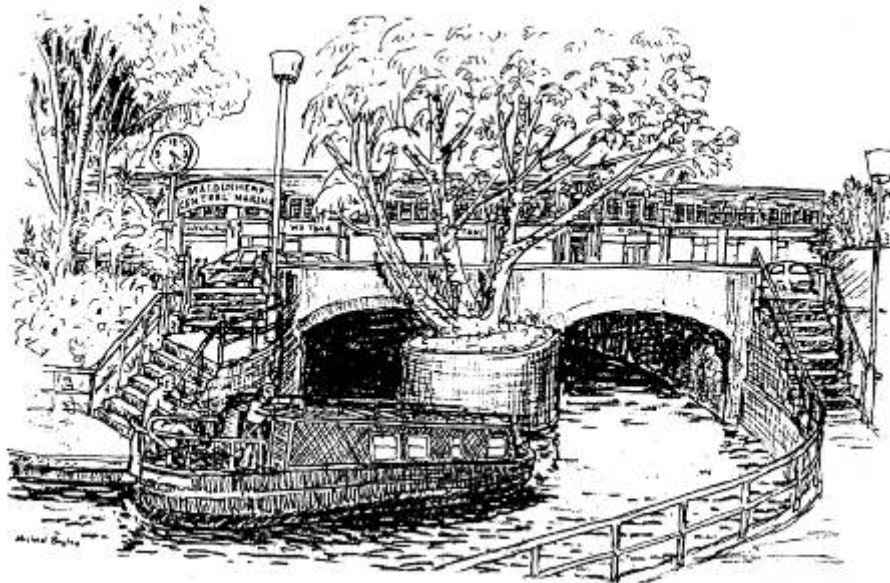
To the south of the site an access road is proposed to service an overbearing and unsightly block of 10 two-bedroomed flats. This block is too high, with an additional third storey, which is out of keeping with the properties around and which in particular will overlook the newly constructed detached houses to the front. Although similar apartment blocks have been built on Shoppenhangars Road, this block is surrounded by individual detached properties and is of an inferior design. It will fundamentally change the character of the immediate neighbourhood. Detailed landscaping proposals should be submitted as part of the application for consideration.

Martin McNamee & Nigel Cockburn

MAIDENHEAD'S NEW WATERWAY

The Civic Society has a representative on the Management team of the Waterways Restoration Group. The Society has also made good use of their own contacts with the Borough and with other interest groups to support the work of the Waterways Trustees, and the generosity of Peter Prior and his Summerleaze Company in funding their early technical research. Let's look ahead...

It is lunchtime in summer. The sun sparkles on the running water of the York Stream behind the library. The little park beside it is full of people from the shops, the offices and the Town Hall enjoying their sandwiches. Some have spilled over onto the opposite bank to sit on the neatly trimmed sloping grass, a far cry from the nettles and overgrown trees which used to grow beside this stretch. A flotilla of ducks patrol the water below them, seeking a few throw away crusts. The picture of summertime relaxation is strengthened as a punt stoops under the York Road bridge, bearing a group of young people from a local office enjoying their lunch on the water. One of them even wears a boater, reminiscent of the riverside Maidenhead of the sepia photographs. They progress gently upstream to return the punt to the firm near to Chapel Arches which hires them out.



“They gently progress upstream.....”

Sound carries well on water, and the noise of laughter and clinking cups and glasses is borne down stream from the cafes and waterside restaurants which have sprung up there. There is a clean public toilet not far away, and families are able to share the pleasure of this attractive part of town which has become a social centre for Maidenhead. Indeed there is talk of some of the establishments in other parts of the town centre, which have been more noted for alcohol and noise, having to look again at their contribution to the town. Residents, who remember that for twenty or so years a mouldy slug of a building which should have been a cinema has monopolised this site, take particular delight in the transformation that has been achieved.

It was a team effort. The Environment Agency diligently cleared channels in the White Brook and Strande Water to bring water down from Cookham. The Borough Council got behind the project with money from the Section 106 budget to fund part of it, and they encouraged imaginative planning applications. Waterside developers were creative in their schemes, recognising the significant increase in property values which would result from their good fortune in having land overlooking the water. Indeed there is serious thought being given to transforming some of the offices in that position to residential accommodation, so that residents of the town centre can share in the pleasures such a site can give.

The area around the Town Hall benefits from its close proximity to the York Stream. There is legitimate pride taken by councillors who have merged their political differences in the interest of creating a more attractive Maidenhead, recognising that large-scale projects are likely to spread over more than one colour of administration.

Further down stream work is continuing on the lock near Green Lane which should enable larger boats, perhaps even canal narrow boats, to penetrate into the centre of town. Further downstream again the Environment Agency are at work clearing the Cut of fallen trees and dense weeds so that, as the risk of flooding in the town increases with Climate Change, the stream can do what it was designed to do and carry off surplus water quickly. It really is a team effort!

Michael Johnson

CROSSRAIL GETS THE GREEN SIGNAL

No-one can have failed to hear the news that the Crossrail project has now been given the go-ahead by the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown.

He said” This is a great day for London, for Crossrail and the British economy. I believe we have come up with a workable, robust and cost-effective business plan.” Some days earlier, the City Corporation voted to contribute £350m towards the project. So together with pledges from Canary Wharf and from BAA, the airports operator, Ministers appear to be satisfied with the amount of private sector funding. The project was officially costed at £10 billion four years ago, but could cost as much as £16 billion before rail receipts make the scheme pay for itself.

The third Reading of the Bill will probably take place in mid December 2007. It will then go to the House of Lords at the end of the year and if approved will be given Royal Assent in the middle of 2008. Construction is expected to start in 2010 with the first services in 2017 and a phased opening throughout the following year. It all seems a very long time away and getting further: the original starting date was to have been 2008 and completion in 2013.

Tina Sell

ANOTHER TACK FOR TAPLOW MILL SITE

Agents are trying a different approach after failing to find an outright buyer or buyers for Skindles and the rest of the 48-acre Taplow Mill site.

In our last Newsletter we reported that the site had been put up for sale just 12 months after being bought from St Regis. Despite vigorous marketing and a good level of interest, agents King Sturge found no preferred purchaser. So instead, they said, they were now discussing a potential joint venture with a developer. The local authority, South Bucks District Council, however, said recently that they'd received no approach or application.

Although the site has tremendous potential with its half-mile stretch of Thames river frontage, it presents would-be developers with serious problems to overcome. Much of it lies in the Green Belt, half is in the newly extended Taplow Conservation Area and virtually all of it is in a flood zone.

On top of that, the former mill site itself is designated “employment land” under current planning policy.

At a meeting with South Bucks District Council at the end of August, Civic Society representatives stressed the importance of including water-related businesses, e.g. a marina, in future strategy plans. We understand the local authority might also favour a hotel and some residential development, although changing existing policy to achieve that would be difficult.

Local residents’ concerns about the continued use of the paper-recycling site as a waste-recycling depot were highlighted recently when two of the giant lorries that trundle continually past their homes in Mill Lane got wedged in the narrow road causing an articulated tail-back onto the A4 Bath Road.

Bob Dulson

NEW LOOK PLANNED FOR SOCIETY WEBSITE

Plans are in hand for a re-vamp of the Society’s website. The aim is to give it broader appeal, serving the needs of members and visitors and hopefully attracting new members too. More than three-quarters of adults in the UK use a computer at home and over 60% use the Internet. With this in mind, members of the Communications Group felt our website was in need of a makeover; it has remained much the same since it was last revamped in 2001.

The Group thought the simplicity of the current site was appealing but the style and content were in desperate need of revision; in particular we felt the website should be more inviting and quick and easy to navigate. It should be a source of information about the Society, a reference point and a newspaper, as well as a publicity agent. Furthermore, we’re looking for a fresh, timeless design that will bring cohesion and consistency. After looking at the work of a number of designers the group has chosen Georgina Lloyd Parry of Bvoxy Ltd in Sutton Road.

The new site will carry news and updates on all Society business including planning, projects and events. It will also contain an archive of past Newsletters and a photo gallery. However, it will not replace the quarterly Civic Society Newsletter. This is another example of how technology can be used to our advantage, as John McIntosh says in his introduction to this edition, to “supplement not supplant” existing operations.

With so many organisations competing for people’s attention the new website will be an important way of maintaining our profile. If you would like to assist in bringing the work of the Society to a wider audience by contributing to the cost of the re-design, Brian Darracott or Bob Dulson would be delighted to hear from you.

Bob Dulson

EVENTS

The Events Group has been busy putting together a programme for the remainder of this year and into 2008 and for the next few months we have:

TALKS

TAKING HEALTHCARE TO THE PATIENTS: A PARAMEDIC'S PERSPECTIVE – Wednesday 21st November 2008

by Paul Jefferries

Paul was appointed as the First Emergency Care Practitioner in Berkshire and has been in the service now for 13 ½ years; he was the youngest Paramedic that Berkshire had ever had (Pre-merger). He has had experience in all of the following posts: - Technician, Paramedic, Work Based Assessor, Clinical Supervisor, Training Officer, Station Officer, and is currently bringing in the Call Connect Project. He also works on the Air Ambulance. He is therefore highly qualified to explain the new role of Emergency Care Practitioner and will talk about the shift of emphasis in the NHS from reactive care to a more proactive preventative approach to healthcare, whereby the Ambulance Service aims to provide an increasing range of other services; to contribute to health promotion and the prevention of emergencies; to provide Ambulance Trusts with opportunities in changing the way the services are delivered and to offer enhanced patient care.



Please note that the presentation will start at 7.45 pm and will be followed by the AGM at about 9.00 pm.

PLANT GATHERING, LULLINGSTONE HALL – Wednesday 16th January 2008 **by Tom Hart Dyke**

Following the Society's visit on 23rd September, to Lullingstone Castle in Kent, scene of Tom Hart



Dyke's two TV series on BBC2, Tom will pay a return visit to Maidenhead to share his knowledge and enthusiasm for plant gathering in what promises to be a fascinating lecture. It was during his nine-month ordeal at the hands of Colombian guerrillas in 2000 that Tom designed his World Garden of Plants, which became the theme of the two BBC Television series *Save Lullingstone Castle* and *Return to Lullingstone Castle*.

SWAN UPPING – Wednesday 20th February 2008

by David Barber

David Barber has played a part in the Swan Upping tradition for 18 years and became the Queen's Royal Swan Marker in 1993. Preservation is paramount, so in recent years emphasis has also been



Recording the cygnets' vital statistics

placed on educating people about these protected birds. Swan Upping dates from medieval times, when the Crown claimed ownership of all Mute swans at a time when swans were considered an important food source for banquets and feasts. Today, the Crown retains the right to ownership of all unmarked Mute swans in open water, but the Queen only exercises her ownership on certain stretches of the River Thames and its surrounding tributaries. This ownership is shared with the Vintners' and Dyers' Companies, who were both granted rights of ownership by the Crown in the fifteenth century. Nowadays, the swans are counted and marked, but rarely eaten except perhaps occasionally at State Banquets. Swan Upping takes place during the 3rd week of July every year on the Thames from Sunbury to Abingdon to monitor swan numbers on this stretch of river.

THE MAKING OF MAIDENHEAD – Wednesday 19th March 2008

by Brian Boulter

Local historian and Heritage Centre curator Brian Boulter will lead us through the fascinating story of the origin and development of the town of Maidenhead.

Tina Sell

OUTINGS

Our latest trip was to Kent on a glorious September day. We firstly visited Down House, the family home of Charles Darwin, where we were given an excellent audio guide narrated by David Attenborough, which took us around the house and educated us on the life of Darwin and his discovery of the Origin of Species. The house was set in a beautiful garden with superb views.

Our next stop was Lullingstone Castle, which was just a 30-minute drive away. This is a privately owned Castle next to a lake, with the famous World Garden laid out within the walled garden. The creator of the garden - Tom Hart Dyke - was there answering questions and selling some of the plants that he had cultivated. Readers will be interested to know that he will be our speaker for the January Talk.

We will be taking a break over the winter period and resuming our visits in the spring as most places of interest are closed in the winter. Our next trip will be detailed in the February newsletter.

Mike Copeland

PROJECTS

GREEN WAY/YORK STREAM

The Green Way

The Green Way path was a joint project of Maidenhead Civic Society and the East Berks Ramblers Association, the first Green Way leaflet being published in 1985. The aim was to create a streamside walk from Cookham through Maidenhead to Bray. The walk is in place but cannot be described as streamside. For a great deal of its length the stream, especially in the warmer months, is invisible from the path due to growth of weeds on the banks and excessive reed growth in the stream itself. The problem with weeds has arisen partly because of the change of land use from pasture to crops. In the past grazing cows kept the weeds down on the banks of the stream. In addition, dredging in the 1980s deposited silt on the banks that has provided an ideal habitat for weed growth, especially nettles. The spread of reeds is due to the fact that since 1989 there has been no dredging of Maidenhead Ditch. In the past the Ditch and York Stream on Maidenhead Moor were dredged regularly.

Another effect of the spread of weeds has been effectively to force walkers away from the public right of way and onto the edge of the field under crops, an area subject to regular chemical treatment with herbicide. The Ramblers proposed that the mowing regime be amended to return the path to its original line and the Council has recently attempted to do this.



Margaret Bowdery standing where the path had been before the recent mowing

The photos below show what was uncovered following the mowing:



An original metal stile



*Monitoring well cover plate uncovered
by weed clearance*

At a meeting of the Green Way Working Group on 5th June 2007 there was discussion of how best to open up views of the watercourses from the Green Way footpaths by creating “windows” in bank-side and aquatic vegetation at appropriate locations. It was agreed that the amenity societies would draw up some draft proposals for clearance work and the Environment Agency representative would provide cost estimates on the basis of these proposals. The proposal was drawn up by myself and Margaret Bowdery of East Berks Ramblers and sent to the EA in August. They have recently responded favourably and have put us in touch with their own contractors. We plan to obtain a quote for the work that hopefully will be started in early summer 2008.



Reed congestion in Maidenhead Ditch

MILLENNIUM WALK – missing links

This missing link was again walked on Sunday 7th October for the 2007 Boundary Walk organised by Maidenhead Rotary Club. With the help of Howard McBrien, this year's organiser, we obtained



A welcome break for the route-clearing party

permission from the landowners to cross to the towpath. We would like to thank Mr John Edwards, owner of White Place Farm, and the Environment Agency for allowing a majority of the walkers the opportunity to see this attractive alternative to walking back to Boulters Lock via the road. The route was cleared by members of the Civic Society, East Berks Ramblers and Maidenhead Rotary Club. Ground staff at Stiefel Laboratories cleared the route across the EA land and Curly Carver, National Trust warden, dealt with a tree that had fallen on the path. Members of the Ramblers (Margaret Bowdery and Gerald Clark) and Civic Society (Ann

Child, Carol Stevens, Bronwen Renwick, Angela Howorth, Shashi Dare and myself) acted as marshals on the day of the Boundary Walk. I am grateful to all concerned.



Rambler Bob Ford clears a branch



Curly Carver trimming branches

Gerald, Carol and Bronwen sitting on the Lower Cookham Road



Ann Child escorting Richard Poad across the road

Ann Darracott

HERITAGE CENTRE NEWS

PARK STREET CONVERSION WORK STARTS

Work at 18 Park Street to convert the former Cricketers Arms into the town's Heritage Centre and Museum is in full swing, with the building due to be handed over in early February and a target opening date of Spring 2008.



Artist's impression of the new Heritage Centre

Civic Society members, especially those who donated so generously to the appeal fund, are invited to a special progress briefing on Tuesday 27th November at 7.30 pm at the King George VI Club in York Road. The presentation will include photographs of the work in progress and architect's impressions of the interior spaces.

EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

Aviation Lecture Series

On Monday evenings starting on 14th January, a 6-week lecture series called *Maidenhead's Aviation Story* will be held at West London Aero Club at White Waltham. Using archive photographs and films, the lectures will cover a fascinating part of our heritage, beginning around 1900 with three visionary pioneers and continuing through the post-war boom years of Fairey Aviation and other companies right up to the present day. Phone the Heritage Centre for full details.

The shelves in the present Heritage Centre in King Street are groaning with delicious Christmas puddings and a wide variety of suitable Christmas gifts, including prints, books, trinket boxes, mugs etc. The last day for shopping will be Saturday 15th December, when the Heritage Centre will close prior to relocation, though you will still be able to contact the Heritage Centre by phone or by email.

Maidenhead Heritage Centre is open from 10 am to 4 pm, Tuesdays to Saturdays, until 15th December, at 3 Kingsway, King Street, Maidenhead SL6 1EE, ☎01628 780555.

Website: www.maidenheadheritage.org.uk; email: info@maidenheadheritage.org.uk.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 21st November 2007 (AGM)

Talk by Paul Jefferies

47th Annual General Meeting

“Taking Healthcare to the Patient – a Paramedic’s Perspective”
Methodist Church Hall, **7.45 p.m.**

Wednesday 16th January 2008

Talk by Tom Hart Dyke

“Plant Gathering, Lullingstone Castle”

Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m.

Wednesday 20th February 2008

Talk by David Barber

“Swan Upping”

Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m.

Wednesday 19th March 2008

Talk by Brian Boulter

“The Making of Maidenhead”

Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m.

CIVIC SOCIETY OFFICERS

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2007

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

10th January, 14th February, 14th March, 11th April, 9th May, 13th June, 11th July, 12th September, 10th October, 14th November, 12th December.

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 21st November 2007 in the Wesley Hall at the Methodist Church at 8.00pm.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 18th January 2008.**

News Editor **Brian Darracott**
6 Medallion Place, Maidenhead, SL6 1TF (01628 620280)