



Maidenhead Civic Society NEWS

Issue 4/04

October 2004



An integrated transport hub centred on the railway station: will we ever see it?

In this issue

AGM Agenda and Annual Reports

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

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Having already written the report for the forthcoming AGM, I feel a little short of items to advise you on. However, there are still one or two issues which should be relayed to members. Under planning laws, developers in the larger constructions are required to make a contribution to amenity in the town. It is up to the Council how to use this resource. Recently, the Society has been asked to comment on a revamping of the facilities of Kidwells Park. These include extension of planting of shrubs, trees, more flowerbeds and paths. There is also to be a children's play area, a new youth shelter, a revival of the pavilion, currently boarded up, and a number of reconstructed 'football', tennis and netball courts. The park already seems to be used by a number of people and families and the Society is generally in support but expressed concern that some of the additional planting and paths were excessive. It was also pointed out that there is a deficit in the repair of items in various other of the town's parks, some of it due to vandalism and the Society would like, if possible to see some of the money available applied to these. The question of effective wardening was also raised.

At long last the saga of Footpath 9, the link from the Millennium Walk into Marlow has been concluded. This long-drawn out issue concerned safe and effective passage under the A404(M). The inspector found in favour of the route preferred by ourselves and the local Ramblers Association. There was then an unexplained delay after the report was known to be in favour of our preferred route and it seems to have languished in the Government Office of the Southeast. However, it is now out and the chosen route can go ahead. Again as on many occasions one has to wonder how, what, on the face of it, is a simple decision gets wrapped up in so much red-tape, cost and delay. Again one has to thank Ann Darracott for her persistence in getting the Footpath through to its happy conclusion.

Now, it only remains for me to urge you to come along to the AGM on Wednesday 17th November in the Methodist Church Hall. See you there!

John McIntosh

HAVE YOUR SAY

The Newsletter is not just for the various Committee chairmen to report their goings-on; it is also there for you, the membership at large, to have your say on any matter that falls within the purview of the Civic Society. Please consider making a contribution: anything from a short snippet that may of interest to others, to a longer article on something that may be topical – or even contentious! Your fresh ideas and outlook would be a vital contribution to keeping the Society on the right track and the Newsletter fresh.

Editor

TALKS

WEDNESDAY 20th October 2004 – 8p.m.

**“GHOSTS & TRADITIONS OF MIDDLE THAMES”
Concentrating on the Maidenhead area.**

An illustrated talk by Michael Bayley, who came to Maidenhead in the late 1950's and was brought up on some of these stories!

OUTINGS

In July we visited Eastnor Castle in Herefordshire. This is a magnificent castle set in beautiful countryside with it's own man made lake alongside. The castle has been lovingly maintained and has a dedicated team of craftsmen to keep it in the original style. It is filled with the most wonderful antiques and paintings.

On the 2nd October we went to London to tour the Houses of Parliament. We were split into 3 groups and all had very interesting and knowledgeable guides. In the afternoon we visited the Cabinet War Rooms. Here we were provided with very good audio commentaries. This outing was very well supported and was one of the most successful that we have run.

Our next visits take place on the 8th January 2005, to the RAF Museum in Hendon and then to the Freud Museum in North London. A very contrasting pair of visits, but which we hope will be of interest to our members and their friends.

Mike Copeland



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

**To be held on Wednesday, 17th November 2004
at the Methodist Church Hall at 8.00 pm.**

AGENDA

1. Introduction by the President
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the 43rd Annual General Meeting.
3. Accounts for the year ended 31st May 2004
4. Reports for 2003/2004

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 OFFICERS

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

Elected 2001	Elected 2002	Elected 2003
Mrs Ann Darracott Mr G. Ashton	Dr Daphne Line	Mr Michael Copeland Mrs Lydia Parker Mrs Angela Howorth Mr R. Sandys

It is with regret that it has to be recorded that Mr R. Sandys died during the year. There are a total of 12 vacancies to be filled.

Mrs Darracott and Mr Ashton offer themselves for re-election.

During the year Mrs June Jorge was co-opted to the Committee and now offers herself for formal election.

In addition, Mrs Lillia Bailey-Hamilton offers herself for election to the Committee.

7. Any other Business.

MINUTES OF THE 43rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAIDENHEAD CIVIC SOCIETY

Held on Wednesday, 19th November 2003

The President, Mr Richard Poad chaired the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Nigel Cockburn, June Churchman, Angela Howorth, Gillian Moore, Rudi and Ady Sheldon.

1. The President welcomed Councillor Vicky Howes, Lead member of the Council for the Environment and Town Centre.

The Civic Society has had a busy year with important successes, as shown in the annual reports given in the October 2003 Newsletter. The Strategic Review, in particular, is a thoughtful and reasoned document and will increase the Civic Society's influence by promoting a well-organised reasoned debate on the document. The President accepted that it would make the Civic Society's views more acceptable. He offered his congratulations to Brian Darracott on the development of the Newsletter as it is now even better and had become a very effective communication tool.

The Outings programme had gone well and had given a useful boost to the Society's finance. The next outing would be to Portsmouth but this required significantly more support to make it viable, and the President urged members to go along. Many thanks go to Mike Copeland for his efforts.

Thanks go to Angela Howorth who, as Vice Chairman, had chaired all last year's Executive Committee meetings, and the Society wishes her a speedy recovery from her recent operation.

The President then turned to the Planning Group whose one-time role was the beginning of the Civic Society. During the year, Nigel Cockburn had taken over from Michael Johnson as Chairman, to whom thanks are due for his meticulous handling of the detailed issues involved in studying planning applications. Thanks were also due to Janice Crewe and John Ashford.

2. The Minutes of the last meeting held on the 20th November 2002 were proposed by Michael Bayley and seconded by Michael Johnson.

3. **Accounts**

The Treasurer, Trevor Farnfield, reported that the Society's finances were in a healthy state. The income had increased for two reasons: First, there had been donations from the Kidwell Trust to purchase a digital camera for the Society and also a donation from Stiefel as a contribution towards the new bridge over the Widbrook stream near their property. Secondly, Gift Aid had made a substantial contribution of £1,161 although this would have dropped to about £800 in subsequent years. The surplus on Outings had also made a significant contribution. Apart from the expenditure on normal administration some equipment had been purchased, notably a new scanner and sound amplifier equipment. Public liability insurance had become a problem since the event of 9/11 and premiums had risen to a level scarcely affordable by the Society. The Civic Trust had come to the rescue with public liability insurance costing approximately £200 p.a. of which the Society has taken advantage. Further monies had been expended on upgrading the Society's website.

The Treasurer drew attention to the need to find suitable uses and projects to which the Society's funds could be applied. The Charities Commission could possibly bring pressure to bear on us although that was not likely at the moment.

Adoption of the Accounts were proposed by Mike Copeland and seconded by Sue Scrimgeour.

4. Reports

The reports from the officers have been given in the October 2003 Newsletter. These were taken as read and the President invited questions from members to amplify any aspects of these.

A question was asked by Mr Brian Madge who commented that the Planning Group did an excellent job. However, he found his frustration at the overall situation, now very common in Maidenhead, where one or more dwellings were being demolished and replaced by many more smaller properties. He cited particularly Boulters Court where four dwellings were being replaced by sixty. He acknowledged that these developments had gone through the usual planning processes but despite this and the council rejecting quite a number of them, in the end local decisions are overturned on appeal. Was there any point in continuing to fight these applications and what price local democracy? The President replied that it was absolutely worthwhile proceeding. The same problem had arisen over many years and was a consequence of national government priorities and the fact that the legislation is now in favour of development. Cllr. Vicky Howes reinforced this by saying that the views of the Civic Society on applications are always looked at by officers and councillors and are regarded as 'sensible.'

5. Election of Officers

Richard Poad was proposed as President by Michael Johnson and seconded by Trevor Farnfield. 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 Richard Poad and seconded by John McIntosh.

6. Election of Committee

Outgoing member, Brian Williams, was retiring and this left a maximum of 12 vacancies to be filled. Mike Copeland, Lydia Parker and Bob Sandys offered themselves for re-election. In addition, Angela Howorth, who stood down as Vice Chairman, stands for election as a committee member.

They were proposed by Michael Bayley and seconded by Sue Scrimgeour.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.40 pm.

Following the meeting a Talk on Ockwells Manor – 16th and 17th centuries was given by Ann Darracott.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2004

The office of Chairman of the Society has still found no takers so I have continued to fill the role in an acting capacity during the past year. Equally, we still lack a candidate for the vice-chairmanship. Despite the uncertainty resulting from this the Society has functioned well thanks to the unremitting efforts of members of the Executive Committee and of the Planning Group. However, I reiterate what I said in last year's report: The Society is an integral part of the fabric of organisation which keeps the town and its development in a healthy and improving state. It is essential for it to play its role and we must have a continuing access of new activists to maintain its vigour. That goes for the chairmanship also.

Our major action during the year has been the successful launch of the Society's 'Strategic Review of Amenity' for the town. This was triggered by a similar initiative by the Windsor and Eton Society but has been developed and extended into a pattern suited to Maidenhead by **Nigel Cockburn** and **Bob Dulson**. Thanks to the latter's skills in the field of publicity the launch had very good coverage in the Maidenhead Advertiser (10th September) and on local radio. Both Radio Berkshire and Slough Radio had interview coverage. The document, illustrated suggestively by **Michael Bayley's** artistic skills has been widely distributed. All our members have had a copy with the Newsletter. In addition, copies have gone to all Councillors, Council Officers and other opinion formers. The objective is to create a strategic vision of what we would like to see Maidenhead become. The time scale of developments stretches far beyond the four-year period between Council elections when there may well be a change of administration. Most of the actions needed to bring our vision to life will need the Council whatever its political complexion to be committed to the Strategic Review. Inevitably the Society does not cover all the desirable developments of facility etc. in the town. In order to bring our bit to life we have set up on-going discussion of the Review with the present Council, with the other political groups and the Council officers. Having made a good beginning the task now is to maintain the momentum and not let the initiative run off into the sands. This needs people willing to commit effort on an ongoing basis. The aim is to create a small group dedicated to ensuring the Review is kept up to date and progress against it is regularly checked.

The Planning Group has continued its vigilance not just in vetting a selection of applications for development but also in monitoring the various central government directives and their interpretation and use by the Council. These documents are detailed and often complex but in the end dominate what the Council can do. They are the legal framework for decision-making about the town's future and unless they are complied with the Council's powers to act in the town's interest are blunted.

Outings have been a great success during the year with a good take up of places. Only one, a proposed trip to the Portsmouth Dockyards had to be cancelled for lack of support. The surplus earned plus the Gift Aid it earns has helped stabilise the Society's funds and reduced the need for this year at least of a review of the subscriptions. Our thanks are due to **Mike Copeland** for organising these trips so excellently and to so many interesting locations.

Organising talks has been taken on by **Shashi Dare** in addition to her commitments as Membership Secretary. Despite this load a series of interesting talks has been given and a future programme is planned. Attendance has not always been commensurate with the high quality of the speakers and we would welcome some reaction from members to help guide us as to whether the subjects chosen appeal. Suggestions of speakers and topics are always welcome. Publicity is a difficult issue and we have relied heavily on the announcements in the Newsletter to alert members to what is on offer. The offerings are also posted on the website. The cost of publicising these talks via paid

advertisements in the Advertiser is prohibitively expensive and we feel that some rethink of publicity needs to be made.

During the year **Ann Darracott** has kept up unrelenting pressure to complete the definitive course of the Millennium Walk as well as pursuing the quest for adequate and permanent water flowing in the York Stream. Another of Ann's long-running activities has been to try and get an adequate flow of water back in the York Stream. Perhaps this project is beginning to bear fruit for the Environment Agency has at last started the large-scale dredging operations north of the town which at least are needed to get the flow through the town going. Whether this will be enough to provide a permanent solution to the problem in the town centre remains to be seen. Watch this space next year.

The Society has continued to make its presence felt in any issue relating to the provision and development of amenity in the town. There are major challenges round the corner most important of all the probability that Maidenhead will become the western terminal for Crossrail. This offers the chance to enhance many desirable aspects of the town. At the very least there will be the opportunity to bring to fruition the concept of a transport hub at a revamped station and an integrated transport system with buses linked to trains and adequate station based car-parking facilities. This opportunity must not be missed and the Society will be doing everything it can to play its part.

It remains for me to thank all those who make the Society function. First, those who organise and run the Newsletter and its distribution, **Carol Innes and all the Distributors of the Newsletter**. Then **Brian Darracott** for editing the Newsletter to an even better standard this year with the inclusion of clever and illuminating shots from the Society's digital camera. It should not be forgotten that even in this digital age the Newsletter is the prime vehicle for keeping members informed and holding the Society together. Thanks are also due to **Tim Goldingham** for managing the Society's website which aims to parallel some of the information of the Newsletter but also to give a quick route to new information and comments thereon. In the Planning Group, still the core of the Society's activities thanks go to **Nigel Cockburn** for his perceptive chairmanship of what is an excellent and committed group. It has been strengthened during the year by **Bob Dulson and Rudi Sheldon** becoming regular members. Much of its success depends on the work of **Janice Crewe and John Ashford** who select the applications for scrutiny by the group. They also give time to keeping abreast of the official documents governing planning plus on occasion attending Council Planning Meetings, Appeals etc. We are fortunate in having the continued support of **Trevor Farnfield** as **Treasurer**, **June Churchman** as **Secretary**, **Shashi Dare** doubling **Membership Secretary and Talks** and **Gillian Moore** as **Minutes Secretary**. Thanks go to all of them. During the year two members came forward to help on the Executive Committee. These are **June Jorge** who was co-opted to the Committee during the year and **Lilia Bailey-Hamilton** who has attended recent meetings. Both will be standing for election to the Committee at the AGM.

I now have formally to record the sad death of **Bob Sandys**, a long-standing member of the Society and of the Executive Committee. Bob, with the help of his wife Ivy, ran the Society's Outings for no less than 16 years. Due tribute has been paid to this and his other contributions in the last Newsletter. To honour his memory the Society, in agreement with his widow, has proposed to donate and cover the cost of buying and installing a memorial bench by the river in Cookham.

It remains for me to encourage all members to become involved in the Society's work, to come on the Outings, to come and enjoy the Talks, to attend and check up on the Committee meetings (St. Luke's Church Hall second Wednesday each month, except August, at 7.45p.m.) and to get involved wherever they can contribute. I say this each year so do make it happen!

John McIntosh

OUTINGS REVIEW

During the last year we have been quite well supported in our Outings. Our first visit was to Woburn in March with the added adventure of driving through the Safari Park before visiting the magnificent country house. Our next outing was to Knowle and Chartwell in Kent on a glorious June day where we saw the largest private house in England followed by Sir Winston Churchill's country residence with beautiful gardens. In July we were off to Eastnor Castle in Herefordshire. This is a magical castle set in extensive grounds that has had considerable funds spent on renovation and decoration. Our October visit was the best supported to the Houses of Parliament and the Cabinet War Rooms with a guided tour of the House which was most entertaining. I do urge all members to come on our trips as they are a great way to meet other Maidenians and new friends, but also a way to experience the wonderful culture of the British Isles and it helps to provide a revenue stream to the Civic Society which we use to improve our town.

Mike Copeland

PLANNING GROUP REVIEW

Like the Council planning officers, The Civic Society Planning Group has had a busy year-Maidenhead continues to experience a large quantity of planning applications. This was aggravated by the decision to reduce the size of the 1 in a 100-year flood zone, following completion of the Jubilee River, which opened the floodgates to a raft of planning applications. The Civic Society had urged that a more precautionary approach be taken to allowing development in the reduced area until the relief channel was proven to work. Sadly, our advice was not heeded and many applicants outside the reduced area who have been granted permission since 2001 now find they are back in the high-risk zone with all the attendant concerns about flooding.

On the positive side there is a trend towards more residential accommodation in the town centre and a significant reduction in applications for office space. We remain concerned, however, about the lack of affordable housing in the town. We await Sainsbury's new development and that on the old Nortel site and petrol station on Bridge Road. We have also complained to the Council and the Environment Agency repeatedly about the deplorable state of the York Stream but so far to no avail.

In response to the consultation exercise about the Local Development Framework, which will guide development in the borough until 2016, we strongly refuted the Council's proposition that the pressure for additional new housing means that adjustments need to be made to Green Belt Boundaries. We wish to maintain the existing definition of the Green Belt and would like to see it extended to include the River Thames corridor through Maidenhead.

We believe that 4,100 dwellings for the Royal Borough between 2001 and 2016 can be achieved and the current level of planning applications means that this target is likely to be exceeded easily. We have called for a policy to control the number and the type of developments and to ensure they are of the highest quality instead of the current practice where each application is considered separately at the instigation of the developer without regard to the overall impact on a particular area.

We believe the Council should resist any pressure to build additional homes, especially if they are not affordable or for key workers until the local infrastructure of transport, schools, hospitals and other services are in place to meet the demand.

We are also concerned about the future changes that will be made to the character of Maidenhead by building large blocks of flats. There are due to be some 135 flats replacing 13 houses in Shoppenhangars Road and in the Boulders Lock area there are applications outstanding for 150 dwellings in 14 developments. We are not against blocks of flats as a principle but are concerned about their impact, especially where they are large. Such development has already led to deterioration in the environment and character of certain areas and increased traffic and parking problems. There is also a price to be paid by the loss of open space and wildlife habitat.

Government policy (PPG3) requires local authorities to develop a shared vision with their local communities of the types of residential environments they wish to see in their area and articulate this through their development plan policies. The government intends that increases in density should not be achieved at the expense of the desirable characteristics of the areas concerned. PPG3 calls on local government to curb the amount of greenfield land taken for development but also to promote an 'urban renaissance and an improving...quality of life'. The types of new housing appropriate to different neighbourhoods should be agreed before any more ad hoc applications for increasing density are approved.

Although government policy in PPG3 calls for denser housing it also requires the Council to designate those area where this type of housing is appropriate. Furthermore, PPG 3 calls for such developments to enhance the character of the area. The Local Development Framework should incorporate such policies and designate the specific areas where such development will be allowed. We can only hope that the Council takes our views on board.

Nigel Cockburn

PROJECTS REVIEW

GREEN WAY/YORK STREAM

Meetings of the Green Way Working Group chaired by Kate Dagnall and Anthony Hurst of the Royal Borough have been attended by myself and Harold James this year.

There has been no improvement in the town centre section of York Stream though the Environment Agency (EA) in May sent a representative to Maidenhead Town Forum to say what they plan to do about restoring water flow. We predicted in the last AGM Report that the water would get to the town centre by the end of the year; it got there in January and, as also predicted, left again in the spring (May). However, thanks to the programme of tree/reed clearance and dredging carried out by the EA this year the water is slowly making its way towards Maidenhead. We hope it will be in the town centre by November.

We will continue to press the EA to carry out work to maintain flow in the stream system. However, the Council also has responsibilities as riparian owners that we would like them to implement, particularly in the area of the stream next to the library. Landscaping the banks and dealing with the accumulated reeds (at York Road bridge) plus the nettles and ground elder would improve the appearance of this eyesore.

MILLENNIUM WALK

The aim is to create a Walk from Hurley to Maidenhead Riverside connecting at each end with the Thames path. In addition, another link is sought from Marlow to Malders lane. This will create

two circular walks. The emphasis this year has again been in supporting the Secretary of State in her decision to divert Footpath 9 Bisham which would allow the Marlow to Malders Lane link to be created and continuing to press for the link from the Lower Cookham Road to the towpath. Filling in the missing links in the Millennium Walk has been included as an objective in the Royal Borough's Rights of Way Improvement Plan currently being drafted. Our comments on the Royal Borough's Landscape Character Assessment Plan also pointed out that the Millennium Walk passes through differing landscapes almost all of great visual amenity.

A404 Footpath 9 Bisham- Secretary of States orders

The Enquiry into these orders took place in Maidenhead in November 2003. The Inspector's report published in July 2004 found in favour of the Secretary of State's orders and a new safe route under the A404 will now be created. A chronological history of this project is on our website under Millennium Walk should you wish to consult it. Thanks are due to the Ramblers Association and especially Margaret Bowdery, of East Berks Ramblers, for battling for this path. Many other people helped including Margaret Cubley of CPRE, and local resident Mike Post. We are also grateful to our MP Theresa May for writing letters and asking three parliamentary questions. It should be pointed out that the Secretary of State does not often implement her powers to create paths and we are thankful that in this case she did so.

Lower Cookham Road to Towpath

Completing this section of the walk has had its ups and downs this year. The main set back has been the decision of Ready Mix Concrete (RMC), owner of White Place Farm, to withdraw the promise of a permitted path for 10 years. This meant that our application to the Onyx Environmental Trust for funds to implement the path was unsuccessful because of "unresolved land issues". Once the dust settles on the planned takeover of RMC by Cemex (see page 16) we will try again.

There have been two positive developments. The activities of the Environment Agency have resulted in an improved appearance of the White Brook in the area of the proposed path (the vista across to Cliveden was featured on the cover of the April Newsletter) and the decision of the Royal Borough to accept Quintain's land next to the towpath if funding is available.

BOY AND THE BOAT STATUE

Some years ago the Society was responsible for persuading the Council to put this statue up as part of the then town centre redevelopment. At that point it had been languishing in a foundry for many years: a planning gain gone wrong. As noted in last year's AGM Report, the statue was vandalised over the 2003 August Bank holiday. Thankfully, it is now in the process of being repaired and we hope that by Christmas the legs, which are still *in situ* at the top of the High Street, will be joined by the rest of the body!

OCKWELLS PROJECT

The major advance this year has been sorting out the identification of the Mortimer of Chirk coat present in the great hall at Ockwells (see April 2004 newsletter). I am grateful to the Society for facilitating my visit to the National Mortimer Conference in Usk, Monmouthshire in March.

I have been asked to update the Ockwells entry in Nicolas Pevsner's book on Berkshire. Pevsner was a renowned architectural expert who described buildings from different counties. He described Ockwells as "the most refined and sophisticated manor house in England".

Ann Darracott

MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

Since the last report, we are pleased to welcome the following new Members: Mr Richard G Batt, Richard A Cheek & Janet K Cheek, David Fuller - Life Member, Mrs E Parcell and Mrs B Sansom.

The total number of entities (Household Members, Honorary and Corporate) is 299 compared to 315 this time last year. This includes 68 Life Members, 21 Honorary and 6 Corporate Members. The Society has generated much interest and enquiries through its good work but not corresponding memberships. I think it is equally incumbent upon the current members to encourage family and friends to join and support the Society.

On behalf of Maidenhead Civic Society, our sincere sympathies extend to the respective families following the deaths during the year of Mrs A Trapani, Mr R E Sandys and Mrs M E Bloodworth.

Once again I would like to thank Carol Innes and her group of newsletter distributors for their valuable voluntary service in the distribution of the magazine. Please note that any queries regarding the non-receipt of the Newsletter should be directed to Carol on 01628 532418, who will be pleased to help.

Shashi Dare

TREASURER'S REPORT

During the last few 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 improve still further.

The Annual Accounts have been circulated and I would like to highlight the following points.

- Subscription income has increased by 20% during the year. This is mainly due to the number of Life Members.
- Steady profits have been made on most outings thanks to the high take up of coach seats.
- The tax refunds noted under the 2002/2003 financial year relate to Gift Aid donations over a three year period. No Gift Aid submission was made during the last financial year. In future years, including the current financial year, they will be made in June/July for the previous tax year. Typically this should yield £600 - £800.
- During previous financial years we, along with most other civic societies, had problems in obtaining public liability insurance cover at anything like an affordable rate. The Civic Trust stepped in during 2002/2003 to offer a blanket policy scheme to members and we joined this scheme. The figure quoted in the 2002/2003 accounts covered virtually two years. Premiums will be paid in June of each year in future.
- The balance of funds still includes a donation of £1,000 from Stiefel, received in 2002/2003, for use towards a potential new footpath bridge.
- Expenditure on the Ockwells Project is being funded from a CAF donation of £500 received from Shell in 2001/2002. About £200 remains unspent.
- Income from raffles at talks, whilst not specifically highlighted, has helped to offset some of the speakers' costs.

The Civic Society accounts are clearly in good health and I encourage the Committee to consider 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 2004

2002/2003		2003/2004
INCOME		
1 485	Donations	0
2 948	Subscriptions Received During Year	3 536
288	Interest On Bank And Other Deposits	422
809	Surplus/Loss On Outings And Social Events	657
2 161	Tax Refunds On Deeds Of Covenants / Gift Aid	0
£7 691	Total	£4 615
EXPENDITURE		
Administration		
1 758	General Expenses, Printing, Postage, Etc.	2 523
165	Hire Of Rooms And Meeting Expenses	545
266	Subscriptions	50
430	Insurance	0
1 172	Equipment	0
Donations		
50	WMUWG	0
Other Expenses		
46	Various Small Projects (incl. Ockwells Project)	282
19	Millennium Walk. (Net cost)	18
200	Website	87
93	Presentations	34
£4 199	Total	£3 539
3,492	EXCESS/DEFICIT OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE	1,076
9 416	Balance Brought Forward	12 908
3 492	Balance Carried Forward	1 076
£12 908		£13 984
FUNDS		
905	Bank (Lloyds TSB) and Cash	2 430
12 227	Charities Deposit General Fund (COIF)	12 639
0	Debtor/Insurance Payments In Advance	0
-224	Creditors/Commitments	(1 085)
£12 908	BALANCE OF FUNDS	£13 984

Trevor Farnfield - Hon. Treasurer

11.07.04

PROJECTS

GREEN WAY/YORK STREAM

As happened last year, the water retreated from the town centre section of York Stream, this time in May, and by August was again north of the flood control gate at the western end of the flood bund. However, hopefully by the time this report gets to you there will be flowing water in the town centre section of York Stream. If it happens it will be due to the further tree clearance and dredging of the White Brook plus clearing of reeds in the stream system done by the Environment Agency (EA) in August and September. Their current plans are that they will treat the reeds in Maidenhead Ditch and nearer to the town with herbicide next spring.



The White Brook before tree clearance, January 2004 (left), and the Brook after tree clearance and dredging, October 2004 (right).

We have written to the EA reminding them of a passage in the planning application for the Maidenhead, Windsor and Eton Flood Alleviation Scheme (MWEFAS), now called the Jubilee River, which read ***“Existing channels which pass through the centre of Maidenhead town will be upgraded to offer greater capacity during flood time, whilst their appearance under normal conditions will also be considerably improved”***

This now becomes more likely to happen as the report by the consulting engineering group on the failure of the Jubilee River has shown that it is only capable of carrying 81% of its planned capacity, so there will be a shortfall when there is another flood. We have also suggested that it would be cheaper to keep our stream system functioning than have to pay for the repair of the Jubilee River.

We are also hopeful that they will re-dredge the Marsh Meadow Ditch at Cookham. This was originally dug out in 1996 to try and get more water into the system. This work has been on hold because of the presence of water voles, a protected species. However, the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) Water Vole officer now says that the water voles are absent from the ditch, perhaps due to mink predation. We think there is now no reason to delay further and have asked the EA to clarify the situation.

An unexpected bonus from the EA dredging was the rescue of the boundary stone that has been in the White Brook for about 30 years, seen here on the right. The Society wants to get the stone re-sited at its correct location on Maidenhead's boundary. The stone's inscription reads "MB 1934", and was put in when the Borough of Maidenhead was expanded.



Above: the boundary stone being lifted out during the dredging of the Brook, and Right: Terry Hinds of the Environment Agency and the retrieved stone.



MILLENNIUM WALK

A404 Footpath 9 Bisham- Secretary of State's Orders

The Enquiry into these orders took place in Maidenhead in November 2003. The Civic Society made written submissions in favour of the orders and also spoke at the enquiry. The Inspector's report published in July 2004 found in favour of the Secretary of State's orders and a new path will be created. As I write (8 October 2004) the Government Office of the South East (GOSE) though promising to publish the orders this week, have not so far done so. Eventually they will do so after which the Royal Borough will create the path. Once this is place our plan is to organise with the Ramblers an inaugural walk of the route probably in May 2005.

Lower Cookham Road to Towpath

As noted in the last Newsletter, Ready Mix Concrete (RMC), owner of White Place Farm, changed their mind about allowing a permitted path for 10 years along the southern border of their land, despite agreeing to one in 2003 at a meeting at Stiefel Laboratories. The reasons given for the change of heart were (a) thinking of selling White Place farm (letter dated 27 April to Theresa May MP from D N Wiseman, Development & Estates Manager,) and (b) redeveloping the farm buildings (letter dated 7 June to me from M G Foster, Executive Director of the RMC group). However, a related reason seems to be the takeover bid for RMC by Cemex, a Mexican construction group. This bid, made public on 27 September, has to gain acceptance by 75% of RMC shareholders and if this is gained Cemex expects to complete the acquisition by the end of the year. Cllr Richard Fagence (Lead member for Leisure & Culture) has written twice to RMC asking them to allow the path. Apparently, Onyx Environmental Trust liked our project and if RMC give permission Onyx say we can re-apply for the grant. However, realistically speaking, no one is likely to make any decisions until the dust (or should it be cement) settles around the end of the year.

BOY AND THE BOAT STATUE

This statue, which was vandalised over the August Bank holiday in 2003, is now in the process of being repaired by Lydia Parker (nee Kapinska), assisted by Ben Williams of Sculpture Services. Funding for the repair is coming from the Royal Borough, the Baylis Trust and the Civic Society, together with a contribution from the offender. We are grateful to Lydia, who made the original statue and is a member of the Executive Committee, for undertaking its repair. We are also grateful to Chris Mansfield, the Local Economy Manager at the Royal Borough and to Martin Trepte of the Maidenhead Advertiser for arranging funding. Lydia's best estimate is that the statue will be repaired by Christmas.



Right: The "Boy" awaiting repair

OCKWELLS PROJECT

The major advance this year has been sorting out the identification of the Mortimer of Chirk coat present in the great hall at Ockwells (see April 2004 newsletter). I hope shortly to publish the work on Great Malvern Priory that facilitated the identification of this coat.

There are eighteen shields at Ockwells and this new identification has thrown light on the glazing scheme that Norreys planned and suggests that the set of 5 lights which begins with the armorial achievement of John Norreys Esq and his 2nd wife Eleanor Clitherow represents men connected with her family who have lands in Herefordshire, Worcestershire and Kent.

Ann Darracott

HERITAGE CENTRE NEWS

“Maidenhead Voices”

Come to us to buy your copy of this autumn’s best selling local book. Commissioned by Maidenhead Heritage Centre, it is based on interviews with over 60 local people, including Michael Bayley and the late Eric Brooks. It contains 90 photographs which have never been published before, and makes fascinating reading for all Maidenheadians, whether by birth or adoption. **Maidenhead Voices** costs £12.99 from Maidenhead Heritage Centre, where you will also find a wide range of local gifts, books, prints and calendars suitable as Christmas presents.

Exhibitions and Events

Lest We Forget 1914-1918 - November 3rd to 20th

A special exhibition for the Season of Remembrance, recording the role played in the First World War by local people of all classes, from Julian Grenfell of Taplow Court to a woodsman’s son called Henry Easden, who joined the Navy but ended up on the Western Front where he died of wounds. ***Lest We Forget 1914-1918*** will include a comprehensive record of all known Maidenhead casualties from the Great War, which was compiled by Leslie Ritson-Smith.

Stanley Spencer & The First World War - October 28th at 8pm, King George VI Club, York Rd.

The first of two special fund-raising lectures relating to World War I. Spencer joined up as a medical orderly, serving first at Beaufort Hospital near Bristol and then in Macedonia. Later he joined the Royal Berkshires as an infantryman. The lecture will examine in detail his war-time experiences and how they influenced his subsequent work, including the superb paintings in the Sandham Memorial Chapel near Newbury. The speaker is painter and writer Timothy Hyman, who curated the Spencer exhibition at the Tate. Tickets £5 (incl. complimentary glass of wine) – advance booking recommended.

Animal Heroes & Villains Of WWI - November 16th at 8pm, King George VI Club, York Rd

This lecture by Edward Dixon, who lives at Pinkneys Green, will fascinate all animal lovers. The villains of the war were the vermin, the heroes the birds, dogs and horses who played an amazingly important role. Tickets £5 (incl. complimentary glass of wine) - advance booking recommended

Toys Of Yesteryear - 24th November to 18th December

Many people have already agreed to lend childhood toys and family heirlooms dating back to the 1930’s for display in this exhibition, and there is plenty of space for Civic Society members to put their favourite on show as well (in secure display cases, of course). How old a toy does a toy have to be to count as ‘Yesteryear’? About 40 years! So Galt toys from the 1960s will be on show alongside many older items.

Maidenhead And The Movies - January 11th to 20th February 2005

The New Year’s first exhibition will look firstly at the town’s cinemas and then at the film-making history of the area. Both Hammer Films and Gerry ‘Mr Thunderbirds’ Anderson started their film-making successes locally, while Maidenhead Town Hall is only one of many local buildings to have found a role in many films being shot at the large studios to the west of London.

During the first quarter of 2005, there will also be a **5-week local history course** at the Heritage Centre about the Aviation history of Maidenhead, which began before World War I and continues right up to the present with West London Aero Club operating out of White Waltham, one of the largest grass airfields in Europe.

Plans for the rest of 2005 are well advanced, and there are even exhibitions pencilled in for 2006 and 2007. The Heritage Trust's lease on the former The Green Dragon pub in Moorbridge Road is expected to expire some time next year and Trustees are hoping to lease suitable and affordable premises closer to the town centre for a period of up to three years.

If you are interested in local history and would like to help us a volunteer at the Heritage Centre, we would be delighted to hear from you. We need front-of-house stewards, researchers, IT experts and someone with marketing experience. Please do phone for a chat!

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

PLANNING DIGEST

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Since the last Newsletter, the Planning Group has met a couple of times and considered and responded to 24 planning applications, details of which are on the Society's website.

The applications included another blocks of flats in Shoppenhangars Road, a blocks of 67 flats for social housing in Moorbridge Road next to the Heritage Centre, a new block of 8 flats in place of the Chef Peking in Ray Mead Road and a development of 11 houses and flats in Courthouse Road; a block of 14 flats at 25 Marlow Road, a block of 10 flats in Lock Avenue in the floodplain and plans to convert the Custom House, which is a listed building and currently houses the Heritage Centre, into a restaurant.

We have also received notification of a consultation exercise on the proposed upgrading of Kidwells Park. Everybody on the Civic Society is encouraged to comment and for those who have not received a copy of the consultation forms they are available from the Town Hall, York Stream House, Maidenhead Library, and the Magnet Leisure Centre

We have also been consulted about the process for the consultation that is due to take place regarding the new Local Development Framework (LDF) and I have also submitted comments on the Local Development Scheme which sets out the timetable for progressing the LDF.

In addition, I have been sent the revised floodplain maps following the Environment Agency's notification that the Jubilee River and the River Thames do not have the capacity originally projected to prevent flooding. I understand the EA will be contacting all those applicants who have received planning permission and are now back in the floodplain to advise them of this development and the Council is again restricting new applications that are in the latest floodplain. (Note from Ed.: You can view the flood risk maps for your area by visiting the EA's online flood site at <http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/> and entering your postcode where indicated.)

Finally, if you have not already noticed, the planning office has moved from Aston House to York Stream House in St. Ives Road.

Nigel Cockburn

EYESORES OF MAIDENHEAD

This article, which we ran in the last Newsletter, mainly out of frustration, has certainly served the Society well through being highlighted in an article with pictures in the Maidenhead Advertiser edition of 6th August. No doubt it is just coincidence, but the Advertiser carried an item on the 20th August that raised hopes that the derelict cinema at the eastern end of the High Street is being considered for re-development with a block of flats. And as mentioned above, an application has been submitted for the redevelopment of the jungle on the site at the corner of Moorbridge Road and Waldeck Road.

Editor

PAST STRUGGLES TO SEE PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Society member Michael Bayley recently drew to my attention an article in the Maidenhead Advertiser edition of 24 November 1967, which reminds that our Planning Group has had to fight over the years to get to the present day open rapport with the Borough's planning department:

“Civic Society members are not much further forward with their desire to see details of planning applications submitted to the Borough Council. Latest ruling is that they will be shown detailed plans only if the applicant sanctions it.

The battle to be fully informed about planning applications has been going on for as long as Society members care to remember. Architect Michael Bayley, who has been prominent in the Society's push for a look at proposals before they are considered by the planning committee, wrote to the legal department of the Royal Institute of British Architects. He sought a ruling on copyright. Some Society members claimed they could not be shown the plans because they had been told at the Town Hall that they were copyright. The Institute's ruling was that merely to show plans to anyone did not constitute an infringement of copyright as that did not constitute reproduction.

Mr Bailey said ‘We were told that if we were shown plans it would be an infringement of copyright. I wanted clarification’. A Town Hall spokesman said: ‘We have never suggested there is any copyright. But we have always said it was unreasonable to show plans submitted to the council without the applicant's consent’. Usually they agreed, although the council had no duty in law to do this. ‘Local authorities are urged to give maximum publicity to planning applications, but we are not compelled to show plans. They belong to the individual concerned. We have never said there was any infringement of copyright’ said the spokesman.

Mr Bailey's comment: ‘I don't see any point in this, because a person proposing a development might not want anyone to see that it was. The council might also be glad of support in opposing a plan it didn't like, but would be unable to gain full support if the applicant had refused permission for his plan to be seen.’ Mr Bailey said the interval between a member inspecting the registers and applications being dealt with by the planning committee was too short to allow proper representations to be made.”

A Michael says: “We *did* win that one!” – and thank goodness, too.

Editor.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 20th October 2004

Talk by Michael Bayley

“Ghosts & Traditions of Middle Thames”

Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m.

Wednesday 17th November 2004

44th Annual General Meeting

Methodist Church Hall, 8 p.m.

CIVIC SOCIETY OFFICERS

President	Richard Poad, Hollyhocks, The Common, Cookham Dean, SL6 9NZ	484298
Acting Chairman	John McIntosh, 26 Harvest Hill Road, SL6 2QQ	633259
Vice-Chairman	Vacancy	
Secretary	June Churchman, 20 Chiltern Road, SL6 1XA	638546
Asst. Secretary	Gillian Moore, 10 Langdale Close, SL6 1SY	630130
Treasurer	Trevor Farnfield, Ditton Meads, Winter Hill Road, SL6 6NS	638142
Membership Sec.	Shashi Dare, Silvretta, Islet Road, SL6 8LD	629976
Planning Group	Nigel Cockburn, Willow House, Fishery Road, SL6 1UN	621084
Outings Sec.	Mike Copeland, 14 Laburnham Road, SL6 4DB	681955
Newsletter Distributor	Carol Innes, Contour, Briar Glen, Cookham Rise, SL6 9JP	532418

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2004

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

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

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 17th November 2004 in the Wesley Hall at the Methodist Church at 8.00pm.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue
of the Newsletter is 7th January 2005.**

(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**
6 Medallion Place, Maidenhead, SL6 1TF (01628 620280)