



# Maidenhead Civic Society

# NEWS

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Issue 1/09

February 2009

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*The Millennium Walk offers this view from Temple Golf Club,  
said to be one of the finest vistas in the Thames Valley*

## In this issue

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The Millennium Walk in pictures

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Regular features on Talks, Outings, Projects and Planning

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# CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Amid the gathered gloom of January, one event provided a shimmering gleam of hope for the future. To ensure there was a youth perspective in its plans for the town centre, PRoM organised “*Regen 4 R Gen*”, a young peoples’ workshop.

Around 30 youngsters from schools and youth clubs turned up with an astonishing array of comments and suggestions, ranging from student rate public transport to the need for a proper Arts & Cultural centre. Perhaps the most novel was an idea to freeze over the York Stream for skating!

So what are you looking forward to? Well here are a few things to think about in 2009. It looks a busy year ahead.

If you weren’t there, then you’ve already missed the first of the Society’s 2009 events, the talk by the Borough’s Head of Planning & Development in January. It’s a pity if you did. Tim’s arrival a couple of years ago brought a breath of fresh air to the Planning Department. With his “can do” attitude, he was influential in the creation of PRoM.

Following the success of our first Civic Society luncheon, we’re arranging another one with Maidenhead’s police chief, Tim de Meyer, as the special guest in March. The last one was a sell-out so please be sure to book early. Before that, in February we have a talk giving us an insight into the work of Maidenhead Magistrates Court. Then, perhaps as an antidote to all this criminal justice, we’re taking a day at the races, including a look behind the scenes, at Ascot, and there’s an outing Greenwich and the Thames Barrier. Details of all these and more can be found in the Events section.

It’s also been suggested that it was time we got together again as members, so a social evening is being planned in April to allow us to do just that, to put names to faces, introduce new ones and chew over the issues – and there’s likely to be some tasty ones to get our teeth into. Heathrow’s third runway, for one.

Which of us wants it? Despite the go-ahead, will it ever happen? Noise, pollution and congestion would all increase – even official figures show road users and public transport users doubling by 2030 if a third runway is built. So protests seem set to continue. The forecast of commercial growth, which Maidenhead needs, may seem appealing and the promise of public transport improvements, but these would need to be an integral part of the package to even dent the opposition.

Meanwhile, in St Ives Road the Borough’s mandarins are busying themselves over the revised Core Strategy, trying to make local aspirations accord with government policy. Not an enviable task. A key issue will be housing provision, allocation and density. So we can expect a debate on Green Belt versus infill and high-rise. They will not have forgotten that last time round the Civic Society queried this section and subsequently it was one of the reasons the Government Inspector declared the Strategy “unsound”.

Finally, as we welcome in the new season, thanks to those of you who completed the membership questionnaire and thanks for your comments and suggestions. An outline of the results will be found on page 4.

Happy New Year!

Bob Dulson - Chairman

**Interested in the policing of Maidenhead?**

**Then please join us at:**

**The Civic Society Lunch**

**with**

**Superintendent Tim De Meyer**

*Local Police Area Commander for Maidenhead*

**on**

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

**at**

**The WAMDSAD Hall**

**Braywick Sports Ground, Maidenhead**



**Drinks Reception at 12.00  
followed by the presentation  
Two-course lunch and coffee  
Cost £23.00**

**Open to non-members**

**(Further details on page 9)**

# Survey Results show the Society on Track

The results of our recent membership survey indicate solid support for the Society's activities, although they underline the need for new members.

The Society undertook its first survey of members in September 2006 and the results were used by the Executive Committee in determining the Society's direction and were influential in devising a new structure and the introduction of new events. At the time we said we would undertake similar surveys occasionally to see if the Society was meeting expectations and to discover if there were other activities and issues that members thought we should be pursuing.

Our second survey was undertaken in November 2008 using broadly the same questions as the 2006 Survey to enable a comparison to be drawn.

On key issues the Society maintained a vote of confidence. Although the number of respondents fell from 13% to 9%, there were sizeable majorities in support of our main aims and activities. Here is a summary of the main findings.

- Asked how well the Society had fulfilled its purpose, 71% said well or very well, compared with 90% in 2006.
- The Society was choosing the right issues on which to campaign, according to 83% of respondents (90% in 2006). Suggestions for other issues to address, included:
  - Public transport
  - Flooding
  - Traffic management
- Asked about the Society's importance and relevance in today's society, a majority of 54% (51%) felt it was "moderately" so, while 31% (the same as 2006) believed it was still important or very important and relevant.
- There was a big thumbs-up for the Newsletter. Respondents appeared to like and appreciate it very much. 91% said they read "most of it" at least, with more than half of those claiming to read it from "cover to cover", an improvement on 2006. Planning issues continue to be the main items of interest.
- Our events calendar was popular among respondents with 54% saying they'd been to a talk or on an outing in the last 12 months. (A comparison on this question was not possible.)
- And the prospect of more social events brought an encouraging response with 84% (68%) of respondents saying they would definitely or possibly be interested.

Several members offered additional suggestions for events, for promoting the Society's profile and, in particular, for attracting new members all of which are being considered by the Executive Committee. So thank you for those and to everyone who took the time to respond.

Bob Dulson

# PLANNING MATTERS

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS

At the three meetings from November to January inclusive, the Planning Group considered forty planning applications in detail, and commented on ten proposals. There were three non-residential applications which were significant – Texaco at 143 Bridge Road, Tesco Express at 14-20 Bath Road and the infamous Old Cinema site in Bridge Avenue.

The application to enlarge and refurbish the Texaco filling station by Maidenhead Bridge was a re-submission of a similar proposal in September 2007. The new application had a more modest increase in the retail area and visually appeared to be single storey – although staff and services had accommodation on the first floor. The design and materials were more traditional – as befitting a ‘conservation area’. Our concerns were in two main areas: firstly, the amount of plastic fascia and signage, and secondly the increased traffic flow generated by the expanded operation. It is anticipated that traffic movements will increase by more than 35%. It is also proposed that the middle entrance/exit will be closed off. This will generate a major increase in vehicle movements exiting the site – primarily onto Ray Mead Road which is already a problem.



*Texaco's site at the roundabout near Maidenhead Bridge*

Tesco Express have applied to develop the old Greenoaks car showroom/forecourt at 14-20 Bath Road, just west of the Windsor Castle public house. This development (which includes land at 5 St Marks Road) will also include a total of 14 flats. To accommodate 10 flats above the retail store the building has a third storey with an unusual roof-form. It is felt that the third storey is excessive and dominates the adjacent two-storey buildings – especially the two listed houses at 22/24 Bath Road.

15 car-parking places have been allocated to the retail trade, but it is anticipated that these will prove to be inadequate. There will be considerable vehicle movement and on-street parking in an already busy location. It is also not felt that the case has been made for the need for such retail activity at this location, which is within 400 metres of the town centre, which could be further damaged by a supermarket on this fringe site. We have now learnt that this application was refused by the council on 31 December.

There was a public presentation/consultation of the revised proposals for the Old Cinema site. It was formally considered at our December meeting. In addition to the comments from our meeting, a Civic Society member who also practices in Maidenhead as chartered architect submitted a critique of the proposals. Our views are summarised by the Press Release which we issued on 15<sup>th</sup> December and which is re-printed below.

The outcome into the Badnells Pit proposals is still not known at the time of going to press. At the latest it is expected by the end of January, and it will be covered in the next edition of the Newsletter.

### **OLD CINEMA SITE – A Unique Opportunity Missed?**

The Council will be throwing away a unique opportunity to improve Maidenhead town centre if it approves the latest plans for the old cinema site.

That's the view of Maidenhead Civic Society which, in its formal response to the planning application, said this keystone site deserved special consideration.

“It is such an important site at the east entrance to the town centre, we have to get it right,” said Martin McNamee, the Society's Planning Group chair. “A towering office block is not the answer.”

In its response to the application, the Society conceded that there had been some improvements on the previous plans, including a café and terrace and better access to the Green Way and York Stream. But these benefits, it said, were outweighed by the height and bulk of the development.

The new building would compromise the visual corridor in a Conservation Area from Moorbridge Road and the High Street and impact adversely on Chapel Arches and the York Stream. The Society said it would prefer to see a mixed-use development, incorporating leisure and residential or, better still, that the site be used for public open space.

Mr McNamee said: “This land is earmarked in the local plan for leisure use. Apart from the token gesture of a café, which is probably too small to be viable, the developer plans to land us with an alien 4 to 5-storey office block. This would dominate nearby buildings, block out light, adversely affect the historic Chapel Arches and restrict the much-needed development of York Stream.”

He said he thought it was ironic that the Council was having to make a decision on such a crucial site while behind the scenes they had a special partnership, PRoM, working on a Masterplan for the future of the town. “The timing is far from ideal,” he said.

The Civic Society believes the site owners should liaise with the Council and PRoM and come up with something more appropriate. Failing that the Council should compulsorily purchase the site.

The Society has repeatedly highlighted the need for Area Development Briefs, which the PRoM Masterplan would provide, to ensure that any new development is appropriate to residents' needs, not just the whim of speculators and the market.

## **RESPONSE TO PRoM VISION & ACTION PLAN**

Towards the end of November last year, the Society responded to the invitation to comment on the Vision and Action Plan (VAP) prepared by PRoM. In general terms the Civic Society's view is largely supportive. Our comments were divided into a) Endorsements, and b) Recommendations.

### **Endorsements**

We are delighted to see so many of the suggestions contained in the Society's own Strategic Review of Amenity carried forward to the VAP. For example: -

- The need for mixed-use development, including retail, business, leisure and in particular residential
- The emphasis on improving transport links, especially the development of a combined train/bus station as part of an integrated transport hub
- The importance of including a Transport Strategy as part of the process
- The need specifically to develop the King Street, Queen Street, Broadway Triangle to provide a link between the town centre and the station
- The opportunity for the Waterways project to enhance the town centre
- Ideas for linking the town centre to the river
- The need for Area Development Briefs to influence appropriate development
- The requirement for quality and architectural merit in new builds
- The need to improve overall sustainability – more pedestrianisation & cycleways

### **Recommendations**

On consideration of the VAP it is clear that certain elements require reinforcement: -

- Station Forecourt area should be welcoming and under cover with high-level pedestrian access to King Street
- Parking at or near the station needs to be increased and improved, regardless of Crossrail
- Explore the use of Stafferton Way as the parking / arrival / ticketing point
- Ensure adequate parking within the town centre, underground where possible, and free for 2 hours for shoppers
- Find ways of offsetting the negative impact of the road/rail barrier round the town to encourage visiting
- Urge caution over a southern relief road which could improve circumnavigation but throw up a further barrier to town centre access
- Address the need for public open space within the town centre, e.g. the old cinema site would serve the community better as open space, rather than offices, along side York Stream
- A sense of community and social mix would be created with more restaurants and cafes, which together with increased residential accommodation would improve the night-time experience and security
- Whilst we are supportive of Norden Farm, its peripheral location unfortunately detracts from the town centre; there is a need for a purpose built cultural meeting place / concert hall / theatre
- There are further opportunities for sustainability, e.g. increased re-cycling, an incinerator to generate power and reduce landfill, and hydro-electric power with unobtrusive turbines at locks/weirs from Hurley to Romney

The Society is grateful for the opportunity to comment on the document and looks forward to a continuing dialogue as process goes forward. We welcome the cross-party and multi-stakeholder approach to addressing the regeneration of Maidenhead town centre.

Martin McNamee

# SPRING 2009 EVENTS

The events organised for 2009 promise to be varied and interesting which we feel sure will appeal to our members. We have a number of talks and some promising outings in the diary. We are also holding a reception in April, to give members an opportunity to meet together and to bring along any friends, family or colleagues. It will be an opportunity to talk about the work of the Society and our hopes for the future. Although the Newsletter does a vital job in keeping the membership informed, it is felt that we should also come together on occasions, if only to put faces to the names of the regular contributors to our publication. Of course, anyone can submit an article and in fact more contributions would be very welcome.

## Spring Reception – Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009

We will be holding a reception at Maidenhead Golf Club, Shoppenhangers Road, Maidenhead, on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2009 between 7.30 and 9.30pm. The purpose is to inform members and non-members about the activities of the Society, to raise our profile and to encourage new members to join us. We will be serving wine and a finger buffet. Please come and bring along a guest or two who may be interested in joining the society.

The cost is £8.50 and to reserve a place at the event please complete and return the booking form that is inside the current Newsletter.

We do hope that you can join us and we can have a convivial evening together in this very pleasant venue.



*Society members enjoy a social occasion with the visitors from Bad Godesberg*



# TALKS

## **MAGISTRATES IN THE COMMUNITY – Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009 by Gordon Anderson JP.**

Gordon Anderson has been a magistrate for seven years and serves on the East Berkshire Area Bench, which covers the Maidenhead, Slough, Windsor, Bracknell and Ascot areas. He will give us an illustrated presentation about the history and work of the judicial system in England and Wales and how the Magistrates' Courts fit in. The talk will focus on Maidenhead and will include some examples to demonstrate how magistrates determine sentences for offenders, and there will be an opportunity to ask questions.

As always we welcome any guests who wish to attend and there will be light refreshments served. There will be a small charge of £3.00 for members and £4.00 for non-members, and light refreshments.



*Maidenhead Courthouse*

## **2<sup>nd</sup> CIVIC SOCIETY LUNCHEON - Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2009 SPEAKER: Superintendent Tim De Meyer - LPA Commander for Maidenhead**

Maidenhead's "top cop" will be the guest at the second of our Civic Society Luncheons. He will talk about the comparisons between working in London and Maidenhead; his priorities for the town; his personal philosophy of policing, and how the community can help.

Supt. De Meyer, aged 33, joined the Metropolitan Police Service in London in 1997 and has since worked in a variety of roles. His accelerated career began in Croydon, South London, as a young officer patrolling the streets. In 1999, and remaining in Croydon, Tim joined his colleagues in CID as a detective constable, working on a number of specialist squads including burglary and robbery.

In 2002, Tim was promoted to detective sergeant on a child abuse investigation team. A year later he transferred to Lambeth borough, leading a team of detectives investigating serious crime and then working as an intelligence manager for the borough, before being promoted to detective inspector in September 2004.



His promotion led him to work within the Metropolitan Police's Professional Standards Department with responsibility for investigating deaths following police contact, internal corruption and serious public complaints. In October 2005, he was promoted to chief inspector, and in October 2006, the borough of Hounslow welcomed him as its new detective chief inspector - head of CID - covering the areas of Feltham, Chiswick, Brentford and Hounslow. Leading a team of 150 detectives, he was responsible for managing investigations relating to domestic violence, hate crime, sexual offences, robbery, burglaries, vehicle crime, serious frauds, and sex offenders. He left this role in 2008 to join Thames Valley Police where he was promoted to superintendent.

The Luncheon will take place at the WAMDSAD Clubhouse, Braywick Sports Ground, Braywick Road, Maidenhead, on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2009, commencing at 12 noon with a Drinks Reception, followed by the talk at 12.30pm. Lunch will be served at 1.15pm and will consist of a two-course meal (main and dessert) followed by coffee. The cost will be £23.00. Please note that cars may be parked at the Braywick public car-park or the Rugby Club car-park but not at WAMDSAD car park as it is needed for disabled members of the club.

We hope to repeat the success of our last luncheon and recommend early booking. Non-members will be most welcome. Please bring along as many friends as you wish. Bookings for places should be received by 4<sup>th</sup> March 2009 using the application form accompanying this Newsletter.

Tina Sell

## OUTINGS & EVENTS

Two visits to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in November and January were very successful and well attended.

Springtime sees a resumption of activities with a day at the races – with a difference. Our day at **Ascot Racecourse** on 27<sup>th</sup> March, will feature a “behind the scenes” tour, including a visit to the weighing room and stables, leaving time for lunch before the first race.



On May 10<sup>th</sup> we are visiting the historic **Maritime Village of Greenwich**. With so many attractions to be found there, we are leaving the morning free to allow you to go where your interest takes you. In the afternoon we have organised a visit to the **Thames Barrier** for a lecture and tour. There is so much to see and do in Greenwich and we feel sure you will enjoy this trip.

Mike Copeland

## HISTORY & HERALDRY ON OUR DOORSTEP

What do 24 popes, 10 monarchs and a Hampshire sculptor have in common? Answer: St George's Chapel Windsor.

These were among a plethora of fascinating facts shared with an appreciative audience at the Society Talk by Chapel Steward Jeremy Holloway in November.

The first point to register was that St George's is not merely a grand and historic place of worship for the Royals. For one thing, except on special occasions, it's not often their choice of church, the Queen preferring to use a much smaller and personal place for her regular Sunday service. But St George's is also a business, with a school, a successful conference centre and an archive.

The Chapel was built pre-Reformation in 1475 and, despite several serious alterations since, the great west window still depicts 24 Popes. It is also the burial place of 10 monarchs. Thanks to one of them, Henry VIII, the tradition of Knights crests began. These are the carved and colourful adornments which sit atop the helmets of the Knights of the Garter above their stalls in the chapel quire. And one man to be grateful for that is former engineer-turned-sculptor Ian Brennan from Southampton who, as "sculptor and woodcarver to the Royal Household" has turned out 85 of these in the last 20 years – and a whole lot more besides.



*Some of the many carvings by Ian Brennan*

Bob Dulson

# THE MILLENNIUM WALK

At the moment, this project is poised between success and failure, so it is perhaps an appropriate time to detail what it has to offer and why we have been “banging our head against a brick wall” for over ten years. Below is an extract from the first page of the proposal, originally written in 1997:

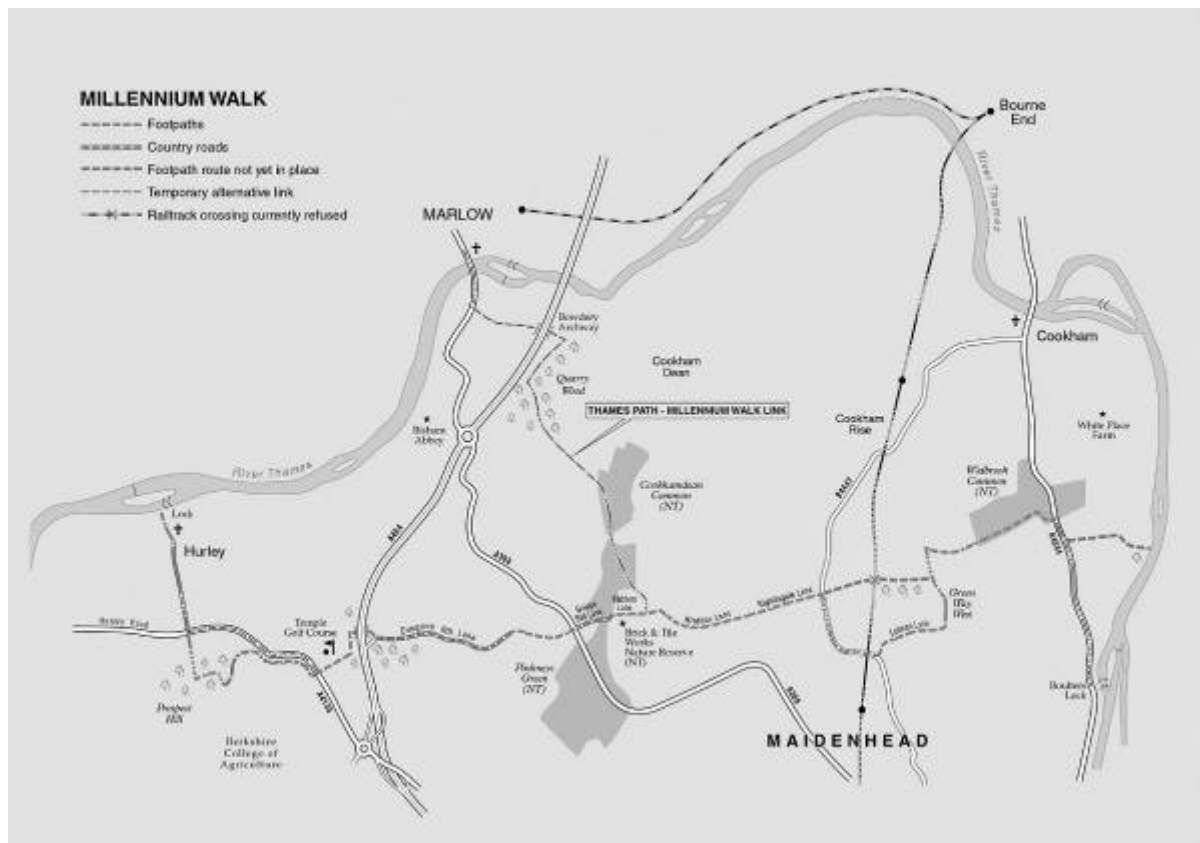
## AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the project are to:

- **increase pedestrian access** to the countryside by improving the existing footpath network including signing and by creating new footpath links
- create a **circular walk** with views of outstanding natural beauty
- facilitate **circular walks** with the **Green Way**, the **Thames Path**, and other public footpaths
- **increase safety** on existing paths and ensure new paths are also safe
- **link** existing **National Trust land** which lies along the proposed route
- create a continuous path along Maidenhead’s northern boundary improving the **Boundary Walk** - a charity walk run by Maidenhead Rotary Club

The Millennium Walk project has been included in the RBWM Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2005-2015.

## THE ROUTE OF MILLENNIUM WALK



The **Millennium Walk** runs from Hurley, through Pinkneys Green to Maidenhead Riverside, connecting at each end with the Thames Path. However, it is one thing to draw it on a map and to include it in an improvement plan and quite another to create it, and most of our efforts have concentrated on obtaining permission for the public to have access to various sections along the west to east route, and adding gates and way-marking to identify the Millennium Walk (as has been

done for The Green Way). In addition, a walk from Marlow, south to Malders Lane, was considered desirable to increase the flexibility of use of the Millennium Walk and this link was formally opened in 2005. An added benefit of this project was the provision of a safe crossing of the A404 near Bisham (Footpath 9).

### **SIGHTS TO SEE EN-ROUTE**

The following photos show “quiet roads” and vistas to be seen from the walk.



*The view from Prospect Hill, near Hurley*



*Hindhay Lane*

*Nightingale Lane*



*The White Brook on  
Widbrook Common*



*View of Cliveden from  
near the eastern end of the  
Millennium Walk*

As readers will know, there are still a few “missing links” in the route, in particular the safe crossing of the main road in front of Temple Golf Club, and the final stretch from the Lower Cookham Road to Maidenhead Riverside, and we are continuing to fight for these.

Ann Darracott

# HERITAGE CENTRE NEWS

Maidenhead Heritage Centre is celebrating a 33% increase in visitor numbers since it moved to its permanent premises in Park Street. Visitors have been full of praise for the spacious feel to the ground floor galleries, and for the range of cards, books and prints on sale. Regular lunch-time talks have been introduced on the second Thursday of every month from 12.45pm to 1.15pm. These talks, which cover the whole range of local history, are short enough for people to come along in their lunch hour. It is hoped that the talks will become addictive, with something different and interesting each month. See you there! Meanwhile, new front-of-house volunteers are always welcome, especially if they can offer the occasional Saturday, the most popular day for visitors but the most difficult to staff. There are other ways to get involved as well; please phone the centre if you are interested.

## **Thursday 12th February - 12.45**

**30-minute Lunchtime Lecture** in the Heritage Centre.

Details to follow. Nominal charge £1

## **Saturday 14th February**

**Event: LOVE IS IN THE AIR**

A Valentine's Day Tea Party at 2.30pm in the Centre

A delicious confection of home made cakes and romantic poetry reading. Choose and read your favourite love poem. Tickets £5.

## **18th Feb to 16th May**

**Exhibition: MAPPING MAIDENHEAD'S HISTORY** Local history explored in centuries of maps. Also lots of maps to buy.

## **Thursday 12th March - 12.45**

**30-minute Lunchtime Lecture** in the Heritage Centre.

"**Ray Lodge**", speaker Keith Parry. Nominal charge £1

## **Sunday 29th March**

**Event: STAMP AND POSTCARD VALUATION DAY**

A new venture for us, with professional dealers on hand to value your stamps, postcards and cigarette cards. 10.30-14.30 in the Heritage Centre with free entry and variable charge for valuation depending on the size of your collection.

## **21st May to 29th Aug**

**Exhibition: LOST BUILDINGS OF MAIDENHEAD**

Which buildings do you remember most?

## **Thursday 3rd and Tuesday 8th September**

**Event: RIVER THAMES HISTORICAL CRUISES 10am-3pm.**

Cruise the historic river from Maidenhead to beyond Marlow and back, with live commentary en route. Reservations now being accepted.

## **9th Sept to 31st Oct**

**Exhibition: BURIED TREASURE -The Archaeology of the Maidenhead area**

**Local finds from the stone-age to medieval times, including finds from Cox Green Roman Villa.**

## **12th and 13th September**

**Event: HERITAGE OPEN DAYS**

For further information and bookings, please contact the Heritage Centre:  
Telephone 01628 780555 or e-mail: [info@maidenheadheritage.org.uk](mailto:info@maidenheadheritage.org.uk)

# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2009 <b>Talk</b> by Gordon Anderson JP	“Magistrates In The Community” Methodist Church Hall, 8.00 pm
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2009 <b>Lunch &amp; Talk</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Civic Society Luncheon</b> With Guest Speaker Supt. Tim De Meyer WAMDSAD Hall, Braywick, 12 noon
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2009 <b>Visit</b>	Behind the Scenes at Ascot Race Course
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2009 <b>Event</b>	Reception and Social Evening Maidenhead Golf Club, 7.30 – 9.00 pm
Sunday 10 <sup>th</sup> May 2009 <b>Outing</b>	A Day in Greenwich

## CIVIC SOCIETY OFFICERS

President of the Trustees	John McIntosh, 26 Harvest Hill Road, SL6 2QQ	633259
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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR 2009

Parish Centre in St. Luke's Church, at 7.45 pm.  
13<sup>th</sup> January, 10<sup>th</sup> February, 10<sup>th</sup> March, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 9<sup>th</sup> June, 14<sup>th</sup> July, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 13<sup>th</sup> October,  
10<sup>th</sup> November, 8<sup>th</sup> December

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETINGS FOR 2009

Parish Centre in St. Luke's Church, at 7.45 p.m.  
14<sup>th</sup> April, 13<sup>th</sup> October

The AGM will be held on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009 in the Wesley Hall at the Methodist Church at 8.00pm.

**The closing date for copy for the next issue  
of the Newsletter is 10<sup>th</sup> April 2009.**

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**News Editor**     **Brian Darracott**  
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