



Christmas Quiz

and Peter Walters presenting his recently published book: **The Story of Coventry**
Monday, December 9, 2013 at 7.30pm
at The Shop Front Theatre, City Arcade
Mulled wine and mince pies
Visitors welcome



coventrysociety

December 2013

Membership

After a successful day at the Craft Market in the Shop Front Theatre the membership now stands at a record 117.

Thanks to John, Terry, Paul and Colin we made a considerable number of Christmas card sales and sold a few of the calendars. But we need to sell many more to cover our costs.



The next opportunity to purchase will be at the December meeting. Or phone Keith on 7640 2030, Paul on 07814327614 or Colin on 76672625 to arrange to collect.

They are on sale at £6 per calendar. Members can purchase at the special price of £10 for two.

Drapers' Hall - latest

We have become used to false starts but at last a cohesive plan has been brought forward for the Grade II listed Drapers' Hall. Behind the scheme is the Alan Edward Higgs Charity that is working in partnership with Coventry University and Coventry City Council to re-use the historic building as a music and performing arts venue for city schoolchildren and adults.

In advance of a formal application, at the end of November a large gathering of council officers, representatives and voluntary groups saw the plans presented by Birmingham architect David Mahoney and clerk to the charity Peter Knatchbull-Hugessen. Essentially the centre will provide performance space, rehearsal space, a library of sheet music and the possibility of musical instruments on loan. Performing arts from different organisations, including the current headquarters at the Chace Studio Centre in Willenhall would be brought together.

While the historic building will be restored and adapted with meeting rooms where the old kitchens were and practice areas in the cellars, a new build on the back of the building will provide a new entrance hall, performance area, storage facility and cloakrooms. Unsurprisingly considerable interest was shown at the Development Forum. Questions were even asked as to how the development will fit visually and practically with the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, new and old Cathedrals.

There will be a further opportunity to talk through the detail when our committee meets the architect for the scheme on December 10. If you would like to be included in the pre-committee meeting discussion please let the chairman know.

Cycling Coventry - removing the barriers

"Too many people in the UK feel they have no choice but to travel in ways that are dangerous, unhealthy, polluting and costly, not just to their own wallets but also to the public purse. Urgent action is required to address Britain's chronic levels of obesity, heart disease, air pollution and congestion." (*Parliamentary Report 2013 "Get Britain Cycling"*).

Removing the barriers to cycling is one of the ways of tackling these problems. Unfortunately Coventry has been going backwards in this respect, with cycling's share of journeys to work falling from 2.8% to 1.6% in the ten years to 2011. During the same period other British towns and cities have made progress. In Bristol the share of cycling in commuter journeys grew from 4.6% to 7.5% and in Oxford from 14.9% to 17% over the same period. Yet change is coming. Cycle Coventry has begun!

Cycle Coventry is a three year £7M project to improve Coventry's cycle routes and change its population's attitude towards cycling. Public consultation is already being held on plans to improve the road across Hearsall Common by widening the pavements to support shared cyclist/pedestrian use. Tarmac is being laid to provide a virtually motor traffic free route between the University Hospital and Longford Park via Henley College. Further infrastructure improvements are in the

design stage.

Changing attitudes is as critical as building infrastructure in these early days of transforming Coventry into a cycle friendly city. Cycle Roadshows are being held at business parks and the universities promoting the message that cycling is for everyday journeys as well as for sport and recreation. There's also training courses; on cycling in traffic and on basic cycle maintenance. Although not a central part of Cycle Coventry, I believe that reducing traffic speeds in residential streets to below 20 mph and removing through motor traffic would greatly encourage the take-up of more walking and cycling at the same time as improving the street environment.

I hope that Cycle Coventry is just the beginning of a "virtuous circle" of substantial increases in the number of cycle journeys leading to increased spending which in turn stimulates more cycling. The parliamentary report mentioned above suggested that cities the size of Coventry would need an annual spend of £3-6 million to meet its target of increasing cycle use fivefold to 10% of all journeys by 2025, and 25% by 2050.

More details can be seen on Coventry Council's website. The minutes of the Cycle Coventry Advisory Group are posted on www.CoventryCyclist.org.uk

George Riches, secretary Coventry Cycling Campaign.

Chapelfields



After the Craven Crusts project in Craven Street, Chapelfields failed to attract the necessary investment to purchase and develop the site as a community bakery, owners of the property have now come up with a design for a terraced dwelling (pictured above) that is thankfully in sympathy with the style of other properties in the conservation area.

Another development just down the road at 31 Allesley Old Road is nearing completion and looks like being a good result. Over the years the roof of the house of the historic watchmaker's house was ravaged by fire on several occasions and the topshops at the rear were eventually demolished when they were deemed unsafe.

The restoration owes much to the Society as the Chairman and Stuart Daniel organised a much overdue site visit, then persuaded the Council to motivate the owner to restore the house and rebuild the wing.

Work is nearly completed as the picture below shows and soon the remaining hoarding will be removed.



Spon Street



Spon Street traders have been celebrating recently after the completion of a major rehabilitation of the street.

With ever increasing numbers of delivery vehicles the cobbled roadway and pavements were in a very poor state of repair and the gas flambeaux and downlighters provided insufficient light in the street.

After a series of helpful talks with planners the street surface has been relaid as tarmac with stone chippings set in the surface. Stone pavements have been re-set and the Coventry Lantern installed along the medieval section of the thoroughfare.

City Centre South

Queensberry Real Estate has been declared the chosen developer for the City Centre South scheme that will see a new 'street' driven through from Bull Yard to Ikea.

We found some of Queensberry's work on the net and looked at a completed shopping centre scheme called The Vaults in Bath. It forms the final component of the hugely successful retail led mixed use development at SouthGate, and has created a new contemporary dining quarter adjacent to the historic grade 2* listed Bath Spa railway station, built by Isambard Kingdom Brunel in 1840. Housed within the Brunel built arches, originally forming part of Bath's historic Bath Spa railway station, The Vaults is situated at the gateway to the City of Bath where visitors arrive by train, bus and car.

Our immediate impression of the Bath scheme is one of a characterful development that we believe could and should be repeated in the City Centre South scheme. There is plenty of opportunity to emulate the historic buildings at the top of Hertford Street and link with the Methodist Central Hall.

The Society plans to ask for an early meeting with Queensberry.

Subscriptions

Individual subscriptions for the new financial year will remain at **£12** per member.

However, two changes will take place as from **February 1st 2014**.

Husbands and wives/legal partners may become **joint** members at **£18** per couple.

Visitors to our meetings will be charged **£2**.

contacts

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If Twitter is your thing, you can follow

us at <https://twitter.com/#!/CovSoc>

We also have our own page on

Facebook.

You can also follow us there at

[http://www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/CoventrySociety)

CoventrySociety

*Christmas
Greetings
to all*

More news and views on our website: www.coventrysociety.org.uk