

Ramgarhia Sikh Gurdwara visit Monday, May 12 at 7pm



Meet at the Temple at 1103 Foleshill Road—from the city beyond the 'Ribbon Island' and on the left. Please be prepared to cover your head and take off your shoes before you enter the Prayer Hall. Visit for members only please.



coventrysociety

May 2014

It's high-time we cared for our landmark buildings

Central Swimming Baths



The British Listed Building website provides us with a revealing description of our Central Swimming Baths. It says: 'Coventry has been provided with one of the finest swimming pools in the world. It has probably no equal in Europe, and local pride has reason to be satisfied.'

The site for the Swimming Baths was constricted and the requirements complicated. Yet the result is undoubtedly an architectural success. The enormous bird-like form has an imaginative and dramatic elegance which outclasses any of the other recently erected buildings in central Coventry.' (ref. Coventry New Architecture).

Our comment: We need our iconic buildings. The council's thinking appears to be faulty in respect of both the sports centre and its offices; the existing buildings are defective so you spend millions building new ones, ignoring the fact that the old ones remain a liability. Even if you sell them, they carry the same liability.

It would be worth closing Central Baths for two years for a complete refurbishment, and sending the customers to AT7's new pool during the project.

Whitefriar's Gatehouse



The university's representatives were kind enough to invite us to meet them after the outline application and again after submitting the current application for a Science and Health Building. They took the trouble to present their scheme with persuasive enthusiasm, but

in our view by re-configuring the new building there could be major advantages all round.

In essence the new application is worse. The proposal, five-storeys, is as close to the listed Whitefriars Gatehouse as the previous one and dwarfs it. There are now proposals to fill the space between the building and the gatehouse with steel cages to contain gas bottles, surrounded by a metal palisade fence. Nothing could be more calculated to insult the listed building. The last use of the gatehouse was residential. While it is regrettable that the council has failed to let the building since the

death of the former tenant, it clearly should be used as a residence again. The proposed development should not use the listed building as a screen.

Copsewood Grange



While the Council appear to be maintaining a hard line on the retention of the Grange and Lodge the intentions of the developer, Morris Homes, is far from clear.

The plight of the buildings has attracted both media

attention and involvement of the police and fire services. Yet it appears that no further steps to protect or safeguard the buildings have been taken by Morris Homes since they acquired the site.

The outline application in 2012 contained detailed plans for the restoration and residential conversion of Copsewood Grange and Lodge. Planning permission followed requiring completion of the proposed restoration within five years, and that no more than 100 residential units could be occupied until works to Copsewood Grange and Lodge were completed.

There has been no development on the 'Phase 2' land and both buildings remain in a derelict state. We are seeking clarification of the situation.

Annual General Meeting

This year saw a good turnout for the annual meeting. Officers and committee were all re-elected and are as follows: Chairman; Keith Draper; Vice-Chairmen: Paul Maddocks and Colin Walker (who is also Treasurer); Secretary: Stuart Daniel; Minutes Secretary Terry Kenny; Website: John Payne; and Les Fawcett, Jayne Long, Chris Daniel, Adam Mottershead. In the ensuing discussion on a manifesto presented by David Tittle the following were considered priorities for 2014-15:

Priorities for Civic Voice:

Town & City Centres
Historic Environment
Design Quality
The Planning System
The Housing Crisis
The Public Realm and Civic
Pride and Civic Action

Priorities for the Society:

City Centre
Design Quality
Historic Environment
The Planning System
The Housing Crisis
The Public Realm and Civic
Pride and Civic Action

Please find a full report of the manifesto meeting over page

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

Drafting a manifesto

Coventry Society members at their recent AGM helped to formulate Civic Voice's manifesto for the 2015 general election. Civic Voice is the national organisation for civic societies and has been very successful at influencing Government since it was set up four years ago. The organisation is drafting a manifesto to take the initiative on policy and influence the political parties ahead of the election in May 2015.

Town & city centres, the historic environment, design quality and the planning system were the themes that members thought Civic Voice should be prioritising. Working in small groups members discussed what policies should be campaigning for within these themes. Members supported moves to safeguard town and city centres through the planning system and varying business rates but were less sure about a levy on out-of-town parking. We favoured strengthening heritage protection and reversing the way that VAT favours demolition and rebuild over conservation. An interesting suggestion was that conservation officers should be independent from the council.

Design Champions in local authorities and strengthened planning policy was thought to be the best way to promote design quality. Campaigning on the planning system was thought to be very important but members were not sure about some of the suggestions that had been put forward by other Civic Voice members: these included making sure every place has an up-to-date local plan (Coventry does not), more resources for Neighbourhood Planning in less well off area and a community right of appeal on planning decisions.

The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the priorities for the year ahead for the Coventry Society. The city centre, design quality and the historic environment were seen as top priorities. It was felt that the Society could campaign on these issues by continuing to comment on planning applications, pushing for an update of the City Council's design policy, pressing for design briefs on development sites and supporting the work of the conservation officers. The re-elected committee will be digesting the results of the meeting and planning the Society's campaigns and activities for the current year.

David Tittle



One of Coventry's most important medieval sites has until now lacked a serious historical appraisal. Caludon Castle was in the late 16th Century one of the most important buildings in the Midlands, but all that remains is a single stretch of wall and numerous myths and fantasies. It is now the subject of a new book: **A History of Caludon Castle; The Lords of the Manor of Caludon**. It's available from the Herbert Gallery priced at £24.95. A full review by John Payne can be read on our website.

High-speed -no done deal

So parliament has agreed to HS2 phase one going ahead with no firm plan to connect to Heathrow or to the Channel Tunnel, and Euston still being debated after 2 plans were abandoned. The HS2 hybrid bill will not get through this parliament. The improved compensation package for neighbours will eat into the contingency fund as the blight spreads from houses that will be demolished to their neighbours and onwards. No-one knows how much it will cost.

People may think HS2 is a done deal but actually it's a work in progress. As the date

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

We also have our own page on Facebook.

You can also follow us there at

<http://www.facebook.com/CoventrySociety>

pencilled in for construction looms, people may begin to wonder whether it will be worth ten years of reduced capacity at Euston just when more is needed. Centro, keen advocates of HS2, are objecting to it because the government is not listening to their plea for the links that are needed to make it all work. The fight continues for something better than HS2, better for the nation and better for Coventry.

Civic Day

The name Sherbourne is said to come from the Anglo-Saxon word 'Scir Burna' meaning clear water, hardly an apt description for Coventry's own river these days. But that's about to change when a big clean-up starts on June 21—the Society's project for Civic Day. Centred on Charterhouse and its fields there will be a photo display and talk with pictures on the big screen. Little Vintage Cake Company will be there with teas and delicious cakes. The event lasts from 10am to 4.30pm, is free and open to all.

Late-payers!

There are still a few members who have forgotten to renew their subscription. It will be appreciated if you feel able to continue supporting the work of our Society.

You can pay by PayPal on the Coventry Society website, or by cheque to the Treasurer at 77 Craven Street, CV5 8DT. You can pay direct to the bank on 30-92-33 2693076. Please advise by email colin@collywobbles.f2s.com and use your surname as a reference

Betting Shops

We welcome the announcement that the Department for Communities and Local Government will consult on giving communities the chance to decide for themselves via the planning system whether betting shops are needed. Currently, bookmakers can open up in the same premises as a bank, estate agent, pub, takeaway or restaurant without the need for any planning permission. Changing the planning category would force any new betting shop to require planning permission first, giving councils and residents the statutory support they need for greater local control on this issue.

Heritage Weekend

Once again we are opening St Mark's Church on Heritage Open Days, Saturday and Sunday, September 13-14. As well as providing another opportunity for the public to see the Hans Feibusch mural, it's our shop window to promote the Society and all that it is involved with. To enable the opening we do need one or two more volunteers. Please contact the Chairman if you can help.