

# RIVER FESTIVAL

# NEWS



## The Coventry Society theme for 2025 is the River Sherbourne.

As part of this theme we have had a talk and tour around the Charterhouse Heritage Park, a visit to Lake View Park and a visit to see an underground river in Sheffield.

We have also taken a close look at the planning application for the Spon End redevelopment and commented on the need to create an attractive feature of the river that passes through the development.

## Seven Places to Visit on the River Sherbourne

*There are many interesting and beautiful places to visit on the River Sherbourne through Coventry, but here are seven you shouldn't miss.*

**From Upstream to Downstream:**



**1. Brick Bridge** over the Sherbourne in the Coundon Wedge. This delightful bridge allowed animals to cross the river. Set in a natural length of the river with meanders and grassy floodplain, it is a very attractive area.

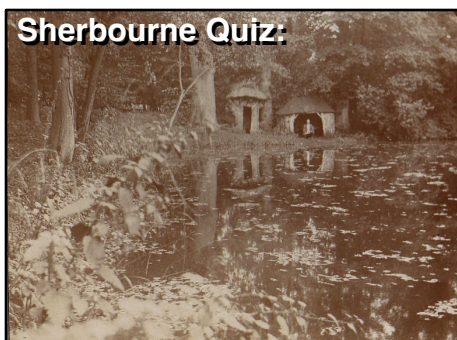
## Did you know?

- The river Sherbourne is a tributary of the River Sowe and joins the River Avon at Stoneleigh. This enters the River Severn at Tewkesbury which flows into Severn Estuary and Bristol Channel, finally reaching the Celtic Sea area of the Atlantic Ocean.
- The name Sherbourne is said to come from Anglo Saxon word 'Scir Burna' meaning clear water.
- Coventry is here because of the river. It provided drinking water for the first monasteries and convents.
- Coventry's woollen textile industry grew because of the River Sherbourne.
- The famous 'True as Coventry Blue' refers to the dyeing of fabric with woad using water from the river.

- Historically, there were 13 watermills situated along the nine-mile stretch of the River Sherbourne in Coventry. These mills were a significant feature of the river's landscape during the medieval period and beyond.
- In medieval times it was an offence to litter or foul the river with heavy fines or imprisonment for offenders.
- Much of the river has been built over in the city centre. A few intrepid cavers have walked through it, but it is not open to the public.
- Being underground is not good for the river. It limits wildlife and reduces water quality. The first scheme to "daylight" the river is under way at Palmer Lane.
- A new Heritage Park has been created along the river near the Charterhouse.



**2. St. Catherine's Well** can be found in Beaumont Crescent just off the Holyhead Road. For some time in the eighteenth century, it was used as a source of water for the city. It is Grade II listed.



Where is this location on the River Sherbourne? *Answer overleaf.*





**3. Spon Bridge and 4. The Chapel of St. James and St. Christopher.** The view from Spon Bridge gives a glimpse of what Coventry looked like in medieval times. The bridge itself was built in 1767 using stone from the dismantled Spon Gate. It replaced an older pack horse bridge. Next to the bridge is a wayfarer's resting chapel. St. Christopher is the patron saint of travellers and St. James the patron of visitors. The Grade II listed chapel was believed to have been built in 1395 by Coventry weavers. The building fell into disuse after the War and was largely demolished in the 1960s, leaving only a ruin.



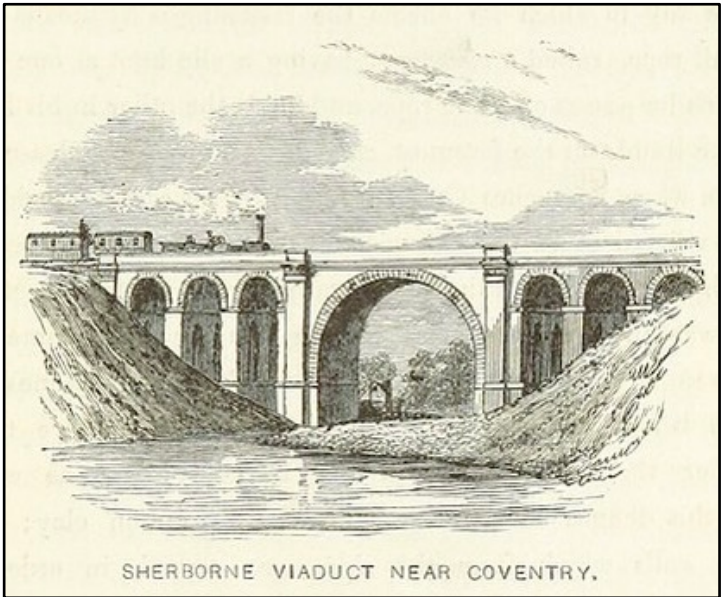
**5. Palmer Lane:** The River Sherbourne runs underground across most of the city centre. However there is one place where it comes up for air. At Palmer Lane you can get an impression of what Coventry was like during the medieval period. There is a project there to expose more of the river and create an attractive riverside environment.



**coventry society**  
Coventry's Civic Society  
[www.covsoc.org.uk](http://www.covsoc.org.uk)  
Email: [info@coventrysociety.org.uk](mailto:info@coventrysociety.org.uk)

**6. Coventry Charterhouse,**

also known as the Priory of St. Anne, was a Carthusian monastery founded in 1381. The Sherbourne runs through the grounds. It is a Grade I listed building, now managed by the National Trust and well worth a visit.



**7. Stephenson's Sherbourne Viaduct.** Built in 1838 the Grade II listed viaduct is accessible through the Charterhouse Heritage Park. It carries the main railway line over the Sherbourne River.

**Quiz Answer:** This fishing pool existed near to Staircase Lane in Allesley, until around 1930 and had various names. It was well used by the local vicar, the Reverend Bree, and others, for fishing. One of its names was The Frogmere. The owner has filled it with rubble. This photo was around 1900-1910.











# RIVER FESTIVAL COVENTRY

- MUSIC
- THEATRE
- CRAFTS
- MASCOT PHOTOS
- GUIDED WALKS
- TALKS
- STORYTELLING