



Next Meeting a Visit to:

Coventry University's Engineering & Computing Building

Monday, May 13 at 7pm

An opportunity to see one of the most outstanding buildings in the city.

The building also houses a Harrier Jump Jet! All welcome. Non-members £1.

Meet in the Reception Area of the

building. Entrance off Gulson Road almost opposite Elliott's Car Accessories



coventrysociety

May 2013

Craven Crusts

Okay the headline might be half baked, but CovSoc would like to send our best wishes to Craven Crusts who are moving ahead with a project to set up a community bakery, cafe and arts space at the former Pails Bakery on Craven Street.

Pails was the last remaining independent Coventry bakery and closed in 2008. Since then it has been lying vacant and unused. However when the owners put forward a plan to demolish the bakery and replace it with an out of scale development of student flats, local people were outraged. The Coventry Society, alongside many local residents and councillors, objected to the development which we all felt was disrespectful to the conservation area around it.

But a group of five young entrepreneurs went one stage further and put forward visionary plans for the regeneration of the building and bringing it back to its former use. Dave Condron, Ellie McCann, Carole Donnelly, Adam Hussain and Simon Mullholland are the leading lights in a Community Interest Company which is to be set up to run the project. The name Craven Crusts came after a local competition to name the new business. Two of our members attended the consultation event on April 2 at the Blue Bistro and were very impressed at the commitment and ideas for the project.

You can follow the progress of Craven Crusts on [Twitter](#) or [facebook](#)

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/CoventrySociety>

The next 12 months

It was hardly surprising that 'conservation areas and the listing and maintenance of historic buildings' was the most popular out of five possible campaigns for 2013, all of them presented at the annual general meeting in April. The result was probably an endorsement for the considerable efforts we have been making through campaigns to breathe new life into some of our much valued heritage assets.

In second place came 'campaigning for more diverse city centre amenities', for example a civic hall, restaurants and shops, especially areas to accommodate local, niche businesses.

This probably reflected a longstanding wish on the part of many local people to have a civic hall for the staging of cultural events, festivals and other activities. The lack of accommodation for small traders in the City Centre South development has also struck a chord with members.

Vying for third place: 'Strategies and policies for dealing with planning issues like student accommodation and the proliferation of hot food takeaways, betting shops and charity shops'; and 'developing 'green' areas in the city centre and suburbs, including further development of existing parks'.

Last but by no means least came the 'city centre art trail'. A worthy runner that might have gained better support but for one among us making the point that a booklet on the subject was printed a few years ago—and at an unfortunate moment!

The series of presentations proved to be a great success, with one of the best AGM attendances we have had for years.

CovSoc committee will now use this guidance as the various issues unfold during 2013-14.



Historic: Charterhouse without leafy foliage masking the timber-framed end section

Annual General Meeting business

For the first time instead of the usual Chairman's Report a four-page illustrated account of activity through 2012-13 was produced for all members. The document's content ranged from presentations by prominent personalities, among them Jonathan Foyle and Griff Rhys Jones, to evenings hosted by our Warwickshire cousins and a varied indoor programme, not forgetting the all important representations on important planning matters like the City Centre South project.

We welcome three new members of committee: Jayne Long, Les Fawcett and Chris Daniel. Officers and committee for 2012 remain in place. They are: Keith Draper, Chairman, Paul Maddocks and Colin Walker Vice-Chairmen, John Payne, Terry Kenny, Stuart Daniel and Adam Mottershead.

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

Travelodge

Further to the article in last month's newsletter, the planning application for the conversion of the former Leofric Hotel to student accommodation has now been submitted. The Coventry Society has contacted English Heritage to investigate whether the building is worthy of being listed. Unfortunately they consider that the internal alterations already carried out have removed any historic interest in the hotel.

The Coventry Society is disappointed to lose a hotel from this location, but we consider that student accommodation is more acceptable here than in some other locations that have recently come forward.

What a story

'About a year ago, I was in my way, trying to direct a short film with Jules Hudson, who was fronting our campaign to conserve Coventry Cathedral's stained glass and ruins. As I was about to gesture 'action', so that he'd emerge dynamically through a portal of St Michael's, behind me a man of about 40 with a scar on his bare scalp like a pink map of Antarctica burst into a flurry of expletives about life in prison complaining that 'there's nothing left here in (expletive) Coventry any more. No industry, no (expletive) jobs. We've only got our (expletive) heritage.' Heritage! What a word. And what an observation. I still wish I'd have caught his voluntary testimonial on film.

The historic environment of Coventry- its heritage- is a unique, finite and non-renewable resource. It includes buildings of the sort we could never afford to build again, streets, and spaces, archaeology, all of which contribute to the less tangible but more profound resources of memory and meaning.

We know this instinctively. And we all have our stories. But they seem to coalesce in this focal area defined by its unique array of three cathedrals. At a recent meeting I flicked through a Coventry and Warwickshire business brochure, in which the cathedral's skyline featured six times. It is iconic. It is still consecrated and important as a centre for reconciliation from conflict. But what else does it stand for?

It stands for the entire city. The area we call the 'Cathedrals Quarter' is the most historically rich, intact, memory-laden part of the city; the oldest, and the most elevated and chosen for the seat of government, sacred and secular, for almost a thousand

Bayley Lane - latest

Bayley Lane has certainly had its ups and downs lately, what with the proposal for students' flats in Bayley House and the black wall at the restaurant African Village.

While we applaud the enterprising development of another ethnic eating place we were very surprised that its proprietor had misread the importance of Coventry's premier conservation area.

The Chairman was interviewed for a national newspaper orientated to the African and Caribbean community and was due to speak on a BBC 5 Sunday night programme. The broadcast was called off at the last moment for unforeseen reasons. We now understand that the proprietor has been told to remove the paint within seven days.

The Bayley House proposal has apparently been withdrawn.



Charterhouse

The inaugural meeting of the Coventry Charterhouse Association takes place on Thursday, May 16 (7.30pm) in the Charterhouse building itself. The support group intends helping the Trustees of the building and its estate to become a visitor attraction with a centre interpreting the area as well as a venue for events and ceremonies.

It's a further opportunity to have a look at the heritage site as well as attend the meeting. Vice-Chairman Paul Maddocks is closely involved with the new association and can provide further details on 07814327614 or email:

paul_maddocks@yahoo.co.uk



An abridged account of Jonathan Foyle's recent presentation at Coventry Cathedral

years. The Cathedrals Quarter gives enormous identity to your city and helps define the distinctive character of Coventry. It is also a significant contributor to quality of life – the area of greatest value for prime jobs and enterprise. So it provides clear economic benefits; its quality and powerful story attracts tourism, bringing educational and commercial benefits, as well as its historic environment being a source of community pride, an obvious social benefit.

At least, that's how it should be. And yet... who knows of St Mary's Hall, the finest medieval Guildhall in Britain? It's shut for half the year and needs repairs. Who thinks to visit Coventry as the City of Three Cathedrals? What is there to do to really dwell at the heart of the city for a day, when you visit?

I believe Coventry's fortunes can be improved through enhancing the Cathedrals Quarter. The Cathedral and World Monuments Fund have already achieved much together, cleaning and repairing over 12,000 fragments of medieval stained glass, some of which travelled to the Sir John Soane's Museum in London for exhibition. The city council is now intent on creating policies for the city's conservation areas.

The partnerships are building, but three things are needed to make the change: confidence, investment and talent. We can help with all of them. But we need your support as we approach the display of the stained glass. It will be a revelation for many and a cultural asset for the city. Let's capture the opportunity together'. ► To support the project, please contact Dr Jonathan Foyle on jonathan@wmf.org.uk

Walking with George

Three events are planned in Coventry this summer to celebrate the life and work of novelist George Eliot, each involving a guided walk around sites in the city with an Eliot connection. Organised by playwright Vanessa Oakes and the George Eliot Fellowship, the walks will feature actress Sonia Ritter and will include readings from Eliot's novels, poems and letters.

Coventry City Centre Walks will take place on Saturday May 18 (starting at 2pm at the Herbert Art Gallery, Jordan Well) and on Sunday, July 14 (starting at 11am outside Loveitts, Greyfriars Green).

A Coventry Canal Walk takes place on Sunday, August 18 (starting at 11am at Coventry Canal Basin) and will visit the site of Rosehill and also George Eliot's Coventry home, Bird Grove.

All walks are approximately 2 miles/hours long.

For more information and to book a free place, telephone 07981 907285

or email vowriterinresidence@gmail.com.