

# LEICESTER CITIZEN

## THE JOURNAL OF LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

[www.leicestercivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.leicestercivicsociety.org.uk)



***LOOK WHAT LEICESTER CITY COUNCIL HAS AGREED TO!***

**No.12 April 2007**

**BATH LANE TOWERS - DEVELOPERS UNLEASH MONSTER. 2006 AWARDS. MAY ELECTIONS - QUESTIONS FOR CANDIDATES. JOYCE BAILEY - AN APPRECIATION. CASTLE GARDENS. STONEYGATE. BUXTON. LONDON'S SQUARES & GARDENS. CHEPSTOW. LEAFY LEICESTER. MEDIEVAL STREETS. BRAUNSTONE HALL. PLUS REGULAR FEATURES AND MUCH MORE.**



# LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY

Founded 1971

President J.B. JOSEPHS MA (Oxon.)

Vice-President The Very Reverend Alan Warren MA

*Provost Emeritus of Leicester*

REGISTERED WITH THE CIVIC TRUST REGISTERED CHARITY No. 502932

MEMBER OF THE EAST MIDLANDS ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC SOCIETIES

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## EVENTS DIARY

Saturday 21st April: EAST MIDLANDS ASSOCIATION OF CIVIC SOCIETIES:

6<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting at Kibworth Harcourt, Leicestershire. Members welcome. Contact Stuart Bailey for details if you want to join us.

Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May: Guided Walk: "LEAFY LEICESTER - A MYSTERY WALK": See advertisement and bookings page for full details.

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 7.30pm: General Meeting. Members welcome. Contact any officer for location.

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May: SUMMER COACH TOUR: CHEPSTOW & CHEPSTOW CASTLE: Discounts for members. See advertisement and bookings page for full details.

Wednesday 23rd May 7.30 - 8.45pm: 36<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting. Large Function Room, "The Ale Wagon", Charles Street. Leicester.

Fri.8<sup>th</sup> - Mon.11<sup>th</sup> June: Leicester & Rutland Gardens Trust Tour

LONDON'S SQUARES & GARDENS. See enclosed leaflet for full details.

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> June 7.30pm: General Meeting. Members welcome. Contact any officer for location.

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June: EASTMACS: "THE BUXTON AWAYDAY": See enclosed leaflet for full details.

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July: Guided Walk: "MEDIEVAL STREETS": See advertisement and bookings page for full details.

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> July 7.30pm: General Meeting. Members welcome. Contact any officer for location.

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> July: EASTMACS Meeting at LINCOLN as the guests of Lincoln Civic Trust.

Members welcome. Contact Stuart Bailey for details if you want to join us.

Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 7.30pm: General Meeting. Members welcome. Contact any officer for location.

## The Chairman's Page

Leicester Citizen always prefers to be original, so we don't usually publish photographs that have been published before. However one picture says a thousand words, so for our front cover we have no hesitation in reproducing one of the images specially created for us and recently published in the Leicester Mercury to counter the deliberate lack of information put out by the developers. This view demonstrates only too clearly the awfulness of what is proposed for the future of one of the most important historic quarters of our City. Developers beware! Now that we have the ability to show precisely what is proposed we shall not hesitate to use this tool in the future.

The 39 storey building (That's about one third the height of the Empire State Building) together with its adjoining 22 and 27 storey counterparts, will make no positive contribution to the City whatsoever. The otherwise distinguished architect has clearly designed precisely what his masters asked and paid for – the cheapest thing that they could hope to get away with. There are no contributions to sustainability and no contribution towards affordable housing. All we can now hope for is that it doesn't go ahead. A lot is against the project. Leicester City Council, who waxed lyrical about this icon of regeneration, has no proposals to build a further river crossing or redesign the streets in the vicinity. Without these factors the future of this redevelopment is problematic, as the developers claim that a major hotel chain needs to commit to the building before they will even start work.

Elections to the City Council are looming in May of this year. In this edition you will find the questions we shall be putting to every candidate. We shall of course be publishing the results to demonstrate just how willing candidates are to commit themselves to the betterment of Leicester. Those who can't be bothered to answer will be named and shamed. Those who say one thing and then do another will also be exposed in future editions. Please study the questions carefully as you too may wish to ask them when candidates come a-knocking on your door.

2007 is turning into a year of pathetic anniversaries. One year before the station clock regained its lost hands, and three years since the Castle Gardens footbridge was closed. Now that the client has admitted publicly that it won't put any pressure on the contractor to finish the remedial works, we can expect this saga to drag on for even longer.

Talking of footbridges the Council just doesn't seem able to cope with them. Apart from Castle Gardens, our partially failed attempts to get the redundant Charles Street footbridge removed seem set to run and run. It is very worrying that, whereas the Council appears to have a bottomless purse for certain new regeneration projects, they are totally disinterested in either maintaining or removing the scruffy remains of failed projects from the past. This attitude does not of course bode well for the future. Now we see that the Harvey's Walk footbridge has been closed for repairs yet again. We are told that this other failed eyesore from the 1970's may also be removed. A good job too - but don't hold your breath!

*Stuart Bailey*

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**THERE'S A LOT HAPPENING IN LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY**  
**- IT PAYS TO BE A MEMBER**  
**TELL YOUR FRIENDS!**

*CREDITS: Derek Hollingworth for the Awards Scheme photographs.*

*LEICESTER CITIZEN: Editorial Team: Stuart Bailey, Simon Harris, Gordon Goode.*

*The opinions expressed in LEICESTER CITIZEN are not necessarily those of the editors or Leicester Civic Society*

## EVENTS PAST & FUTURE

### ANNUAL DINNER

2<sup>nd</sup> February: We had a very enjoyable evening at La Tosca Restaurant, London Road. Thanks to Gordon for organizing this event. It was good to meet new members. Sadly many old ones didn't bother to turn up. They missed a treat.

### MR. GOODE'S NIGHT OF ONE-HUNDRED-AND-ONE DELIGHTS

20<sup>th</sup> March: We don't know how he does it but he does. Another first-rate entertainment by Gordon Goode, who achieved his stated aim of all 101 within 90 minutes. Once again we all spotted things that were new to us, more proof – if proof were needed - that Leicester really can surprise and delight. Thanks to the technical squad who made it all possible. The answer to the picture question that puzzled our Chairman on the back page of Citizen No.11 is the Royal Arcade entrance on Silver Street.

### EAST MACS IN LEICESTERSHIRE

21<sup>st</sup> April: East MACS 6<sup>th</sup> AGM as the guests of Kibworth Harcourt Conservation Society, Leicestershire. A day out in the spring countryside. Contact Stuart Bailey for full details if you want to join us.

### LEAFY LEICESTER – A MYSTERY WALK

5<sup>th</sup> May: This is our first time for a mystery walk. The springtime emphasis is on parks, gardens and trees rather than historic buildings – but we'll see plenty of those too. Join us for lunch at "The Hind" afterwards. If the weather is good enough we can sit outside in the pub stables that have been carefully restored. But the answer to your next question is no. Lunch is definitely not included in the price! See advertisement and bookings page, and book early to avoid disappointment.

### CHEPSTOW & CHEPSTOW CASTLE

19<sup>th</sup> May: Chepstow stands in the Wye Gorge a matter of a few feet inside Wales. The ancient town is protected by the "Port Walls" and we shall be able to explore this and then visit the great Norman Castle built to keep all those ancient Welsh in order! Following our spring mail-drop bookings are already coming in thick and fast. So see the back page for full details and use the bookings page now to avoid disappointment.

### 36<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

23<sup>rd</sup> May: Don't miss finding out about a year of achievement and our exciting plans for the future, followed by a drink with your committee at the Grand Hotel.

### LONDON'S SQUARES & GARDENS

8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> June: Join Leicester & Rutland Gardens Trust on their exciting weekend tour. See enclosed leaflet for full details.

### THE BUXTON 'AWAYDAY'

16<sup>th</sup> June: Join East MACS for their annual 'Awayday' in Buxton. Includes guided visits to the Opera House and the famous Dome. See enclosed leaflet for booking details of a great day out. At the moment this is a self-drive tour. We have been asked about organising a coach for East MACS Awaydays. The answer is yes, providing enough get in touch with our Chairman in advance to make it worthwhile.

### MEDIEVAL STREETS

7<sup>th</sup> July: A new guided walk for Leicestershire Archaeology Week. Investigate our medieval streets from Swine Gate to St. Francis Lane. Find out what life really was like in ancient Leicester. Join us for lunch afterwards in "The Highcross". (Strictly twenty-first century menu!) See advertisement and the bookings page. Numbers are limited so once again book early to avoid disappointment.

### LINCOLN

21<sup>st</sup> July: East MACS Meeting as the guests of Lincoln Civic Trust. Contact Stuart Bailey if you want to join us in this historic City.

### HADDON HALL

8<sup>th</sup> September: Great House and Gardens in the unspoilt Derbyshire Dales. Yet another fantastic coach tour. Priority bookings open on the coach on 19<sup>th</sup> May.

### VICTORIAN LEICESTER

22<sup>nd</sup> September: The architect, the inventor and the travel agent. Join them all on the return of this favourite guided walk after an interval of several years. Full details in our summer mail drop and in "Leicester Citizen No.13 out in August.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir

As occupiers of a 200 year old town house on Talbot Lane, we find the concept of a skyscraper slapped at the back of our office and hovering over the particularly special ancient area of Leicester - the Roman Wall, St Nicholas Church, Castle Gardens and St Mary de Castro Church - absolutely abhorrent. To completely diminish and belittle the few remaining special areas of Leicester with a building of such size in this area we consider extremely disappointing. While parts of Leicester may be able to cope with this type of building, we do not feel that the very small Bath Lane area is remotely suitable.

*Richard Wain*

Sir

I work on Talbot Lane and my office used to overlook the river Soar before the Westbridge Wharf was built. This building itself is horrific and I cannot imagine what a 39-storey skyscraper would look like. Why can't the council build a row of terrace houses with gardens that families want to live in and which are in keeping with the location? Who wants to live in these skyscrapers anyway?

*Jenney Jayes*

*(This is just a sample. Many other similar letters have been received – Ed.)*

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given of the 36<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Leicester Civic Society to be held in the Large Function Room at the "Ale Wagon", Charles Street, Leicester, on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2007 between 7.30pm and 8.45pm.

In accordance with the Constitution of the Society, the purposes of the meeting will be:

1. To receive the Annual Reports of the Chairman & Public Relations Officer, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and Society Archivist.
2. To elect a Chairman & Public Relations Officer, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer, together with not more than nine other society members, to comprise the committee of the Society for 2007 – 2008.

The existing Chairman & PRO Mr. S. Bailey, Vice-Chairman Mr. D. Hollingworth, Hon. Secretary Mrs. J. Westmoreland, Hon. Treasurer Mr. G. Goode, Society Archivist Mr. K. Dickens, Webmaster Mr. B. Ravillious and other committee members Mrs. L. Murphy and Mrs. A. Ross, have all indicated their willingness to stand.

There are vacancies for up to five other committee members.

Any nominations for officers and other committee members must be received by the Hon. Secretary in writing with the supporting signatures of proposing and seconding members, no later than Monday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

3. Any other business proper to the meeting. Please inform the Hon. Secretary in advance of the meeting, if you wish to raise any items under this heading.

*Mrs. Jenny Westmoreland*  
Hon. Secretary  
10<sup>th</sup> April 2007.



*TWENTY YEARS AGO – Civic Society activists and visiting VIP's gather for tree planting at St. Mary's Triangle. Left to right: Joyce Bailey, Arnie Gibbons, Mel Reid, Jindrich Veverka, Jim Marshall, local residents, John Burrows and Helen Tompsett.*

### **JOYCE MARY BAILEY. 12<sup>th</sup> March 1920 – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006.**

#### **An Appreciation.**

On Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2006, I was one of many at St. Anne's Church who gathered to give thanks for the life of Joyce Bailey - who I'd known as a close friend since 1971, and who I'd seen last on the 4<sup>th</sup> November. To my great surprise, Stuart appeared at my shoulder and asked me to read the eulogy his sister Susan had prepared. It was both a privilege and pleasure as I read, to learn so much more than I already knew of such a loyal friend and active member of the Civic Society.

A lot of hard work went into supporting the early years of the Society with her valiant committee work. Like Robert the Bruce, Joyce's motto was "If at first you don't succeed". She never ceased to demonstrate patience and persistence; always firm in both criticism and praise, and both given with an ever present twinkle in the eye. One of the first to realise that closer links with other like-minded groups in the City would be a boost to the cause, she could not understand why they were often reluctant to make that move.

Facing up to a limb amputation really fired her up. Slow her down? Not her! She held morale boosting sessions to fellow patients in her General Hospital ward - in what she termed "The Leg Club".

An active committee member from 1977 to 2001 and holding the positions of Hon. Secretary and Chairman in turn, Joyce was a spirited and determined lady with a strong will; a fighter when the odds were against her. Never one to shun hard work nor shy away from giving an opinion, and certainly never one to suffer fools gladly, Joyce will be sadly missed by all who knew her. The world seems an emptier place for her passing.

Joyce passed peacefully away on the morning of 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006, leaving us with a wealth of happy memories. A trusted friend, wife, mother, grandmother and a Great Lady, may she "Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory".

*John Burrows*

LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY & LEICESTERSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

SATURDAY 5<sup>th</sup> MAY 2007

# LEAFY LEICESTER

*A MYSTERY WALK by STUART BAILEY*

Circular from Thomas Cook Statue, London Road Station at 10.30 AM.  
FOLLOWED BY LUNCH at "THE HIND HOTEL"

**£2.50 per person per walk.**

ADVANCE BOOKING ESSENTIAL. TO: STUART BAILEY, 48 MEADOW AVENUE,  
LOUGHBOROUGH. LE11 1JT. CHEQUES PAYABLE TO "LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY"

***SEE THE BOOKINGS PAGE***

Other guided walks in the series include, "Ancient Leicester Part 1", "Ancient Leicester Part 2", "Victorian Leicester – or the Architect, the Inventor and the Travel Agent", "New Walk and the Georgian New Town", "Roman Leicester", "Old London Road", "Around the Walls of Leicester" and "Civil War". All walks can be booked for private parties of from six to twenty-four.

Telephone 01509-520904. Email [equanimity@simurg.co.uk](mailto:equanimity@simurg.co.uk)

LEICESTER CIVIC SOCIETY for LEICESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY WEEK

SATURDAY 7<sup>th</sup> JULY 2007

# MEDIAEVAL STREETS

*A New Guided Walk by STUART BAILEY*

Circular from High Street/Highcross Street corner at 10.30 AM. An exploration of the streets of Medieval Leicester existing in the area bounded by High Street, The Market Place, Friar Lane and Southgate Street. Discover their old names and where medieval buildings still lurk.

See two timbered halls and find out what the ancient town really looked like and why.

FOLLOWED BY LUNCH at "THE HIGHCROSS"



## THE 2006 CIVIC SOCIETY AWARDS

Two buildings were nominated for the 2006 awards. The adjudication panel consisting of our Chairman Stuart Bailey, Vice-Chairman Derek Hollingworth and committee member Liz Murphy, made site visits on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February.

The nomination in the 'New Build' category was for the refurbished Leicester Mercury Building on St. George's Street. It was submitted that the scale and nature of the new works constituted a new building rather than a simple refurbishment of the existing shell. The architects are Franklin Ellis.

The panel was unanimous in making an award for excellence to this building. In particular commending:

1. The visual impact on the adjoining St. George's Conservation Area. The scale of the building respects the conservation area and as viewed from St. George's Churchyard makes a strikingly modern contribution to its character.
2. The building makes the finest new contribution to the cultural quarter constructed to date.
3. The building demonstrates original modern design in its interior. The panel were particularly impressed by clever use of internal space given the constraints of the original structure and by the commitment in the design to sustainability

The nomination in the 'Restoration' category was for the tower and spire of Leicester Cathedral. The architect is John Radice.

The panel was unanimous in making an award for excellence to this building. Raphael Brandon spent a total of 31 years at work on the then Parish Church of St. Martin, completing the spire in 1870. The new tower and spire involved removal of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century structure to foundation level to ensure new foundations could support the weight of a far heavier tower and spire above. 134 years later survey work revealed that a great number of the stones had deteriorated to an unacceptable condition due to weathering and air pollution. Many stones were laid in an unsuitable orientation resulting in the facings laminating and being in danger of falling.

Work was completed in February 2006 having taken almost 18 months. The new tower is cleaner, brighter and stronger. The new stone, which came from Northumberland, is expected to weather in about ten years.

A particular feature commended by the panel was the reinstatement of the stone crosses over the sound holes and lucarnes to follow Brandon's original drawings, these having been either removed at some point in the past or maybe never even supplied.

The total cost was £617,000. English Heritage awarded grants of £246,000 and a significant bequest covered most of the balance.

The Society's guest of honour Mr. Nick Cooper of the University of Leicester Archaeological Service will present the awards at a ceremony to be held at the Belmont House Hotel on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> April.



## NEW BUILD AWARD

Civic Society Chairman Stuart Bailey with Nick Carter, Editor Leicester Mercury (Left), in the bright lights!

The foyer of the refurbished Leicester Mercury Building makes a suitably modern setting.

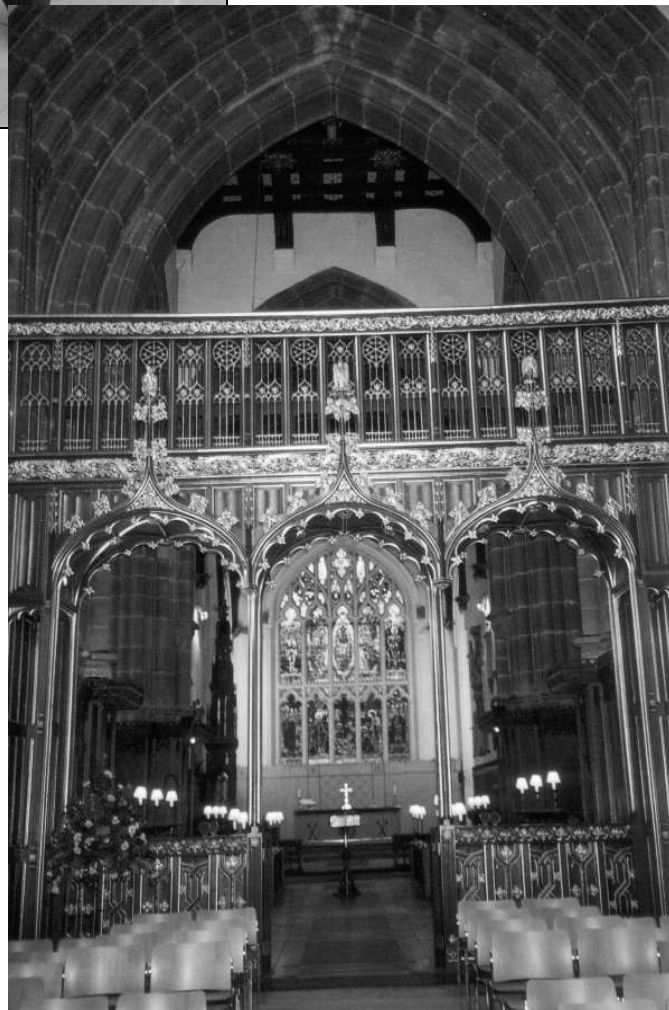
Panel members were given a tour of the building by Nick, who is rightly proud of the transformation that has been achieved.

## RESTORATION AWARD

The crossing and altar of St. Martin's Cathedral Church.

The tower arches in the interior of the church have been cleaned and re-pointed as part of the restoration.

Panel members were impressed by the scale and complexity of the works, which have taken two years to complete.



## **THE MAY LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS IN LEICESTER**

To all candidates for the City Council elections, Leicester Civic Society invites your considered responses to the following questions:

### **REGENERATION**

Regeneration in Leicester is an unnecessarily emotive issue. The principal reason for this is the unelected Leicester Regeneration Company, which is over active and largely out of the control of Leicester City Council. The City Council should be taking the lead in regeneration, employing expert urban design advice and establishing clear policies. These policies need to recognise that Leicester is a fundamentally low rise City with a considerable architectural heritage. This is not to say that there is no place for high-rise buildings. Leicester already possesses some outstanding good examples such as the Engineering Building at Leicester University and the National Space Centre. However most existing and proposed examples merely serve to litter the historic core of the City. Consequently future regeneration needs to be heritage led. To revitalize run down areas we need small scale, low-rise design of first-rate 21<sup>st</sup> century architecture to join the existing corpus of architecture from previous periods in our history. At the moment the only organisation in Leicester that appears to be implementing this is De Montfort University, which exercises heritage led regeneration as a principle behind its policies.

Leicester repeatedly forgets that there is no proper regeneration without a commitment to renewal. We need to create a constant culture of renewal; revitalizing and cherishing the things we have already. As a consequence there is a prevalent attitude of always starting at ground zero, which leads to the same mistakes being made every thirty years or so. LRC puts the cart before the horse. They produce grand designs and are then either unable to acquire the land to execute them, or abandon them the moment a developer comes along and wants to build any other development. All new developments seem to attract their support as they run around clutching at straws to justify their existence.

**Will the Councillors elected in May take control of regeneration in Leicester and adopt heritage led regeneration as the principal behind their policies?**

### **TRANSPORT & TRAFFIC**

Whole swathes of Leicester were devastated in the 1970's by the application of an outdated "predict and supply" approach to traffic management. In particular the central ring road isolated the City centre and its hinterland from each other in the worst possible manner. Unless this problem is dealt with we will continue to develop in a lopsided fashion with either a revitalized City centre surrounded by poor quality inner urban areas, or thriving inner city neighbourhoods surrounding a run down City centre. Leicester badly needs a whole new approach to the central ring road, with traffic reduction, traffic calming and massive environmental improvements. In particular there should be no subways.

Leicester's public transport infrastructure should enter the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We are a larger City than Nottingham, yet Nottingham possess one tram line and is already working on two more. Leicester needs trams to link Beaumont Leys with Wigston, and Hamilton with Fosse Park. The lines need to serve the railway station, bus stations, Royal Infirmary, Glenfield Hospital, Leicester University, De Montfort University campus and the Walkers Stadium.

We need the Leicester to Burton-on-Trent railway reopening, with stations inside the City.

We need tighter control on access to the City centre by motorists and no illegal parking tolerated.

**These policies need to work together to succeed in making Leicester a better place for everyone to live and work and an easier place in which to move around. Will the Councillors elected in May actively and imaginatively promote them?**

### **COMMUNITIES & EDUCATION**

There is a low level of civic pride in Leicester, which degrades the quality of life in our communities. This is evidenced by high levels of litter, graffiti and vandalism. Leicester City Council pours vast sums of money into remedial action without tackling the root cause of the problem. The City Council should be working with our schools to create a culture where this sort of activity ceases to occur. Children should

be taught civic awareness and encouraged to champion a clean and decent environment in which they will live and work as adults.

Education should include a strong element of local history to enable the young to appreciate our 2,000 years and not grow up the same as if they were living in a new town.

Children of the ethnic minority community are particularly vulnerable, coming from backgrounds where their parents may often embrace cultures to the exclusion of that in which these children will have to live and work as adults.

**Will the Councillors elected in May seek to promote civic pride in the young?**

ARTS & LEISURE

The work currently being undertaken in the Cultural Quarter must be proceeded with quickly and efficiently. The Council must look again at the Cultural Quarter and seek means to improve its urban design and restore its historic buildings. The result otherwise will be a handful of glittering new buildings surrounded by a drab and run down historic environment.

Other cities of Leicester's size enjoy varied performing arts and cinema outlets in different parts of their central areas. Leicester should not be afraid to do so. Putting all of our 'cultural eggs' in one basket is a mistake. In particular the Phoenix Theatre should continue as a priceless cultural asset on the opposite side of the City centre to the Cultural Quarter.

We need more investment in our museums and a serious investment in tourism to promote the City and enrich its economy. Leicester's museums are seriously under funded, many with reduced opening hours and insufficient space to display the rich collections owned by the Museums Service. Historic assets such as Leicester Castle are scandalously under used. The Castle possesses the largest medieval, secular, timber hall in England. As such it should be an immense source of civic pride and a major tourist attraction, transforming the local economy of its surroundings.

There is a clear wish amongst the people of Leicester to see a central swimming baths and ice rink. Such facilities should be features of an expanded Cultural Quarter. Culture doesn't just mean the arts.

**Will the Councillors elected in May implement positive cultural policies to promote the performing arts, sport and leisure facilities, the quality of our museums, and above all promote tourism as a major economic boost for the City?**

SUSTAINABILITY

Leicester needs a sustainable environment. Sustainability is a key factor in the draft Regional Development Plan for the East Midlands that will provide the framework for planning from 2008 to 2026. All new developments, both commercial and residential, should demonstrate this commitment. Buildings as close to carbon neutral as possible must become the buildings of now, to ensure that future generations inherit a safe and clean environment.

**Will the Councillors elected in May continue to work for a sustainable environment in Leicester, promoting wind power and combined heat & power schemes, together with other environmentally sound projects?**

HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The historic built environment is crucial to the quality of life in our City. It is the key factor that underpins everything raised in the points above. Our listed buildings are an irreplaceable architectural heritage and our conservation areas require constant re-assessment and management to ensure they continue to enrich our surroundings. There are many examples in both the past and present of this not happening and there is in consequence a running list of historic buildings continually at risk.

**Will the Councillors elected in May adopt the protection and enhancement of our historic built environment as a major policy and appoint Civic Trust Champions from their number to ensure that the protection and enhancement of this environment is central to all decisions?**

## TREASURER'S CORNER

Following my request for books in our last journal, I thank you for your donations. We will take anything in the book line, so please keep them coming. I also thank Phil Woolley of the Black Cat Bookshop in Charles Street for his help in our endeavours.

One member has written to say that they have mentioned us in their will – thank you for this but we hope it is a long time before we hear any more.

Those of you with subscriptions due in May will find notice enclosed with this journal to save postage costs. Please let us have your email addresses so we can keep you up to date with our campaigns. And please, please sign the tax declaration for gift aid as every little helps. As before we will not be sending receipts unless specifically requested.

Thank you

Gordon Goode

## **NEWS**

### BRAUNSTONE HALL

The Society has been in contact with English Heritage, The Georgian Group and Braunstone Community Association in an effort to find a solution. English Heritage says, *"It must remain the remit of Leicester City Council as both owner and the planning authority to resolve matters in a satisfactory way by demonstrating that they have, not only discharged their statutory duty to have regard to the desirability of preserving this listed building and its setting, together with any features of architectural or historic interest, but also to deal with their own building in ways which will provide examples of best practice to other owners of listed buildings"* So there!

### CASTLE GARDENS

The City Council has published a Conservation Area Appraisal for the Castle Gardens conservation area. The management proposals are excellent. They include:

1) Investigate the potential to create a new access point to the Castle Mound from Castle Yard to restore the historic connexion between the motte and its inner bailey and improve access to, and interpretation of, both sites.

2) Agree and establish a new management regime for the tree cover on the sloping sides of the Castle Mound by not replacing trees as they fail or die and removing undergrowth and self set trees as they occur, with a view to restoring the mound to its original tree free form with grassed slopes.

3) Undertake research to determine future uses for the Castle Hall and Magazine Gateway buildings, including rigorous assessment of the significance of the existing Court fittings in the former, to determine whether they should be retained in whole or part.

4) Work with partners as appropriate to fund works to these two important historic buildings.

The downside is the proposed removal of the entire scheduled ancient monument of the Roman Baths and St. Nicholas Church from the conservation area. The Society is vigorously opposing this as entirely against the spirit of the Civic Amenities Act, which was used to create the conservation area in the first place. If this goes ahead we shall be campaigning for a new St. Nicholas conservation area to embrace this site.

### STONEYGATE

The City Council has published its draft Conservation Area Appraisal for the Stoneygate conservation area. Here too the management proposals are excellent. They include Article 4 designation (wide range of permitted development rights removed) for the whole of Stoneygate. This is an ambitious but very welcome move.

With the exception of our grave concerns for the St. Nicholas Scheduled Ancient Monument above, we feel that The City Council's conservation and urban design teams are generally to be congratulated for the content of both appraisals.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### TELL ME SOMETHING I DON'T KNOW ABOUT LEICESTER VOL.1

By Derek Hollingworth

In the late ninth century a Welsh monk by the name of Nennius wrote a "History of the Britons". It is an extremely frustrating work. Nennius had access to a vast amount of material that no longer survives but not being a professional historian, he freely admits in his introduction that, "I have made a great heap of all that I have found".

Not for one moment could one accuse Derek Hollingworth of being a second Nennius. His material is carefully arranged in both geographical and chronological order. However he has made a great heap. This is not a book that one could easily read from cover to cover. It is however a remarkable gold mine of facts, and as the eraser of history rubs out bits and pieces of the Leicester that Derek describes, so the facts in this book will become increasingly rare and precious.

If the book has a fault it is that it presents an almost schoolboy view of history with emphasis on sequences and little grasp of the ebb and flow. But it could be argued that this is not what this book is about. It is a great litany of facts. Facts pure and simple. Buy a copy and become an expert on your corner of Leicester. Volume two is eagerly awaited.

### LEICESTER & ITS SUBURBS IN THE 1920's and 1930's

By Helen Boynton and Keith Dickens

Helen Boynton is no stranger to the shelves of those fascinated by our local history. Her books invariably capture the essence of their subject matter and readers feel themselves to be there. This latest offering does not disappoint. As a venture outside her particular part of Leicester to take an overview of a whole era it is particularly welcome. Though in so venturing, Helen is clearly indebted to the encyclopaedic knowledge of her co-author. We are treated – and yes I mean treated – to a panorama of exciting art and architecture from an exciting period of our history and as a result we are both entertained and informed.

My only criticism is that many of the superb colour illustrations are then repeated as black and white in the text, thereby wasting valuable space. But this is a minor cavil. One of the joys of Helen Boynton's books is her uncanny ability to make buildings and whole neighbourhoods come alive with the people who designed them, built them, lived in them and worked in them. Those who thrive on this social history aspect will not be disappointed with this resurrection of architects, industrialists and shopkeepers from undeserved obscurity. Highly recommended.

*Stuart Bailey*

### EMAIL LIST FOR CIVIC SOCIETY MEMBERS

We want to encourage communication between our members so we have created a members-only Google Email Group as a forum and announcement tool. We would strongly encourage those of you who use email to join this group.

Once on the list you will be able to send emails to [lcsmembers@googlegroups.com](mailto:lcsmembers@googlegroups.com) that will be sent to others on the list. We hope to encourage debate and further participation in all our campaigning and activities.

To join the list please send an email to [webmaster@leicestercivicsociety.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@leicestercivicsociety.org.uk) requesting to be added

*Ben Ravillious*

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Headmaster: J. H. Morris M.A.

# SHOCK! HORROR!

## DEVELOPERS UNLEASH 39-STORY MONSTER IN HISTORIC CITY.



Panic hit Central Leicester today as a 39-storey monster appeared on the skyline. Developers Dino-Soar Living announced that Leicester City Council had given them permission to release the creature. Councillor Muddlethrough, Lead Cabaret Member for Regeneration said, "This is the most iconic thing ever to happen in Leicester. With this monster on the rampage it isn't just developers who are making a killing. The dinosaur stamps on buildings. New buildings are built to replace them and the dinosaur then stamps on these. This is regeneration with a capital R."

Leicester Regeneration Company is reported at breaking point as its proposals are constantly ditched in favour of new ones, as no one can

*predict what the dinosaur will do next.*

*A spokesperson for Leicestershire Promotions was unable to confirm what impact the sudden arrival of Jurassic Park might have on tourism in Leicester but stated that this was an exciting development as the giant reptile itself counts as one more tourist.*

*There were remarkable scenes in Braunstone Park as gangs of Councillors were to be seen shouting, whistling and waving strings of sausages in the air to attract the beast's attention. "We are trying to get it to come over here", shouted one Councillor over the hubbub. "If the dinosaur will only stamp on Braunstone Hall it will save us a lot of money that we weren't going to spend anyway."*

*Leicester Civic Society was unavailable for comment, as its representatives have recently emigrated to Western Australia.*

*Councillor Muddlethrough added that he had been under a great deal of (Continued on Page 17)*

### ANOTHER SAD LOSS

We very much regret having to report the untimely death last Christmas of Jan Barker. Jan was a long serving and loyal member of the Society. She seldom missed our coach tours, which she always enlivened with her warm smile and enthusiastic participation. Our sympathies are extended to Jan's family and her many friends.

+++++

# Phillips & Powell Solicitors

Regulated by The Law Society

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## THE BOOKINGS PAGE

Please photocopy this page if you do not want to cut your Journal.

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ON SATURDAY 5<sup>th</sup> MAY 2007.

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PLEASE RESERVE \_\_\_\_\_ PLACES ON THE TOUR TO CHEPSTOW and CHEPSTOW  
CASTLE ON SATURDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MAY 2007.

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### GIFT VOUCHERS

Make a gift of Civic Society full or concession membership to a friend or relative Send us the voucher below with your payment and we will write to them with the good news and the latest issue of LEICESTER CITIZEN. You can choose whether or not to make your gift anonymous.

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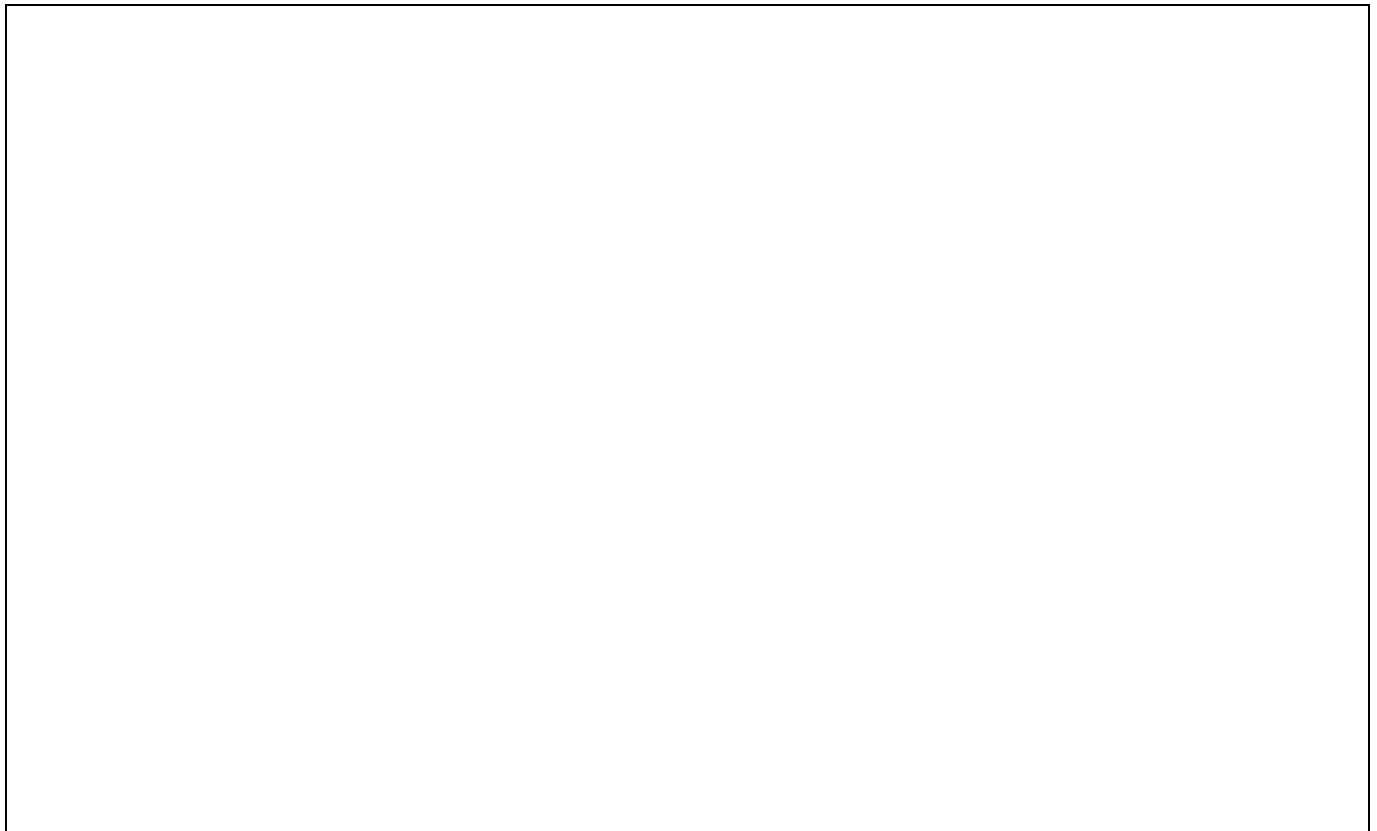
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**COACH DEPARTS:** LOUGHBOROUGH (The Rushes) 08.00AM  
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