



www.leamingtonsociety.org.uk

The Leamington Society Newsletter

November 2004

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Two major issues continue to dominate the concerns of the Society. The first is the proposed demolition of fine houses with large gardens, replacing them with blocks of flats or town houses. At a very well attended meeting in the Town Hall this month our members and the general public were able to question James Plaskitt, our MP, and John Archer, Head of Engineering and Planning at WDC, together with four other experts, about what can be done to stop developers spoiling the character of so much of Leamington and Kenilworth. Very recently, two developers have won appeals to the Planning Inspectorate and have overturned WDC decisions rejecting such developments. A full description of this meeting appears later in this newsletter.

The second issue, also long running, is the ever-growing number of pubs and nightclubs in central Leamington. These make our town centre very rowdy and even violent on Friday and Saturday nights. From next February, licensing decisions will be taken by WDC instead of the magistrates. Previously applications have often been heard all over the county; now they will be heard in our Town Hall. This less formal environment and much more convenient location should make it easier for interested parties (ie local residents or their representatives) to speak when applications are heard. Interested parties (and certain others) may also ask for licenses to be reviewed. The night-time turmoil in our town centre may become even worse when, from next November, licensed premises will have greater freedom to set their own opening and closing times. The fear is that this will place yet more pressure on our very limited local police resources. WDC is currently investigating whether it can be argued that Leamington town centre is saturated with bars and pubs with well above average provision by national standards. We are grateful to our licensing adviser Gordon Goddard-Pickett and to our member Andrew Cave for their tireless efforts on our behalf in responding to the recent consultation on licensing, arguing strongly that central Leamington is indeed saturated with drinking venues.

At our meeting on October 14th Ian Baxter talked to us about the railway through Leamington past, present and future. One interesting idea that he mooted was the formation of a group, perhaps to be called Friends of Leamington Station, to encourage local support for regeneration of the station. A steering group is currently investigating this idea.

It is great news that Jephson Gardens have been recognised as the Best Park in England. This is a marvellous achievement for the Parks Division of WDC. Congratulations to them. Let us hope that the Willes Road end of the gardens will now be finished, and that the gate to Willes Road will soon be fully restored without string!

The Audit Commission recently ranked WDC as the best in West Midlands with an Excellent rating, which is an honour for them. We offer our congratulations again. But we do wonder how this rating fits with the failure of WDC to give up its lease on Marlborough House after moving to Riverside Road costing local taxpayers an unnecessary £170,000 a year plus the maintenance costs of the building.

Archie Pitts

Dates for your Diary

A Most Unusual Job for a Lady

Marion Canning

Thurs. December 9th 7.45pm
Clarence Suite, Oddfellows
Hall

Warwickshire's Lost Buildings

Peter Bolton

Thurs. January 13th 7.45pm
Clarence Suite, Oddfellows
Hall

Czech Patriots in Leamington

Alan Griffin

Thurs. February 10th 7.45pm
Pump Room Annexe

Protecting Regency Town Architecture

Timothy Mowl

Thurs. March 10th 7.45pm
Clarence Suite, Oddfellows
Hall

Please note the various venues

More information on each of these talks is on the back page of this newsletter

RAILWAY THROUGH LEAMINGTON – FROM THE GREAT WESTERN TO ITS FUTURE WITH CHILTERN RAILWAYS

Ian Baxter, Business Development Manager, Laing Rail Projects, spoke to a well attended meeting on 14th October.

John Laing plc (JL) was a house builder but is now a major investor in other projects, including M40 maintenance, large construction such as hospitals, schools and roads. It also operates M40 Trains, which include Chiltern Railways (CR). JL, in partnership with Great North Eastern Railways (GNER), has formed a new company, London & Western Railway, to bid for the franchise for the Greater Western route. These are the main lines and feeder lines currently operated by First Great Western, Thames Trains and Wessex Trains, being largely lines to the Southwest and South Wales, operated from Paddington, by the Great Western Railway (GWR) before nationalization.



Elevation of the central portion of the new station buildings at Leamington Spa.

In spring 2003 CR and GNER achieved passenger satisfaction ratings of 89% and 87% respectively. Island Line and Gatwick Express achieved the only other similar high ratings.

The GWR main route through Leamington Spa originally served Birmingham, Shrewsbury, Chester, Birkenhead, Mid-Wales and the Cambrian coast. During the previous up grade to the West Coast Main Line (Euston to Northwest England, partly via Birmingham) in 1960 the route through

Leamington Spa carried the WCML traffic. This has been repeated during the 2004 upgrade.

In 1966 the route was down graded, part was single tracked, Birmingham Snow Hill station was closed, through services were split into separate services and markets were transferred and lost. By 1995 the Banbury-Marylebone line was threatened with closure, and Marylebone Station was suggested for conversion to a coach station.

Since take over in 1995 of the routes from Marylebone to Birmingham and to Aylesbury CR has increased passenger numbers by 70% and has achieved the highest ratings of punctuality (15 out of 16 trains are on time all day, every day of every week), also of reliability and passenger satisfaction. In five years £375 million has been invested in infrastructure. In 20 years it is expected that £1 billion will have been invested. CR received the National Rail Award in 2003 for the third time.

CR was the first new company to order new trains; the 100-mph Clubman Turbo has doubled its fleet from 80 to 160 vehicles. It has itself undertaken major construction on the routes and not waited for Railtrack, now Network Rail (NR), or government to act. Twenty-eight miles of the route, reduced to single track after 1967, have been restored to double track. New signal boxes have been built and commissioned. These measures substantially increase capacity of the route. During this work services were run direct to Paddington rather than imposing on passengers the inconvenience and delay of changing to coaches for part of their journey.

Warwick Parkway station was built by CR, in partnership with Warwickshire County Council, with a car park for 600 vehicles. Building was completed without disruption to services and within budget of £55m. (£10 m. from WCC) in six months. Apart from St. Pancras (Eurotunnel) this is the only station not owned by NR in the public rail system.

Extension of platforms to accommodate longer trains – a critical upgrade – was completed at six stations in 2003, together with enlargement of car parks. Two further platforms have been opened at Marylebone. A new Integrated Control Centre has been commissioned in Banbury – the first in the industry.

Maintenance facilities at Stourbridge and Wembley have been increased. The Cherwell Valley and Moor Street tracks have been resignalled. Moor Street Station has been regenerated – toilets, waiting rooms and information boards have been refurbished, the car park enlarged and the station is now cleaned each night. The service to Moor Street, taken over in 1995, has been successively extended to a re-opened Snow Hill, and to Stourbridge and Kidderminster.

CR took over Leamington Station earlier in 2004. Together with WCC, the approach to the station has been redesigned, and the car park re-organised to provide the maximum of clearly marked spaces within the area available. New passenger information systems, help points and refurbishment of the buffet (retaining the

mahogany and art deco features) are to follow, together with a refreshment room on the London platform. £100,000 of investment has been effected since take over. There is more to come.

CR wants communities to have a part in the development of the station – an asset in this elegant town. Mr. Baxter suggested that a body of the nature of a Friends of Leamington Spa Station might be formed, which would have the ear of management. Among early projects, might be suggested that the refurbished waiting rooms would benefit from a display of prints showing the history of the town. Members suggested that the Birmingham platform garden was another desirable amenity. A number of people present indicated willingness to be involved in these activities. Concluding, Mr. Baxter expressed the aims of Chiltern Railways as follows:-

*“All day, every day we aim to offer a safe, reliable, welcoming service, and a value for money service.
Our business will prosper because customers use us repeatedly and recommend the service to others.”*

Dr. John Oubridge

XX

CHANGES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PUMP ROOMS

During the last few months Leamington Society members have been worried about changes in the management of the Pump Rooms. These changes have been motivated by the desire to simplify the administration. At the moment both WDC and Redcliffe staff handle the booking system and provide security staff for the Assembly Room and the Pump Rooms Annexe. Redcliffe is the contractor who runs the Restaurant in the Park, the Aviary café and the café in the Pump Rooms; they also run public events in both the Assembly Room and the Annexe. From next year Redcliffe will handle all the bookings and the security, and the two WDC staff previously involved with this will be re-employed elsewhere within WDC.

Currently the Assembly Room and the Annexe are underused, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights. Redcliffe will be able to market these facilities better than WDC could. This should lead to more bookings and higher revenues, which will be shared between Redcliffe and WDC. We are assured that the returns from all these operations in Jephson gardens and the Pump Rooms will be shared in a way that is advantageous to WDC. In addition Redcliffe has agreed to pay for glazing the open front of the Aviary so it can be used all year round.

All local amenity groups will be able to use the Pump Room facilities as before, provided they have not been previously booked; moreover amenity groups may make bookings for the Pump Room Annexe or the Assembly Room for years in advance. The rates charged for the use of these rooms by amenity groups will continue to be set by WDC and not by Redcliffe.

While it is acknowledged that the Restaurant in the Park is not financially successful at present (a fact mentioned in the recent Audit Commission report) the changes that were considered and agreed by the WDC Executive on October 25th are not related to the current financial position of the Restaurant. WDC believes that the new arrangements (which will run initially for seven years) for managing the Pump Rooms and facilities in the park are financially a good deal for the council and local taxpayers.

Archie Pitts

XX

We welcome the following new members

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Ms Lois Sparling | Mr and Mrs Hardy (Richard and Joy) |
| Mrs Sally Dewhirst | Mr and Mrs Lim (Lincoln and Jennifer) |
| Dr Christine Hodgetts | Mr and Mrs Hall (Chris and Judy) |
| Mrs Estelle Dodson | Professor and Mrs Elworthy (Ken and Sue) |
| Mrs Ann Low-Bier | Mr and Mrs Payne (Tom and Catherine) |
| Mr Colin Stevens | Mr and Mrs Walkley (Jason and Emma) |
| Mr Patrick Kingston | Ms Rosalind Vinegrad and Mr Peter Sturtz |
| Mr and Mrs Nabbs (Roy and Jean) | Mr and Mrs Phillips (David and Elizabeth) |

HIGH DENSITY DEVELOPMENT IN LEAMINGTON?

At a meeting in the Town Hall on Thursday 11 November, a panel of six discussed the redevelopment pressures in Leamington with Chairman Archie Pitts. A full house, standing room only, of about 160 people (with some from Kenilworth and Warwick) listened quietly and politely for over an hour to the panel presenting their view. The proceedings were then thrown open to questions and comments. Here we summarise a discussion that lasted nearly three hours. The core points are listed at the end.

Panel discussion

The panel, with their introductory observations, were:

James Plaskitt, our MP and Leamington resident. His postbag is full of letters on housing and he told us that we are suffering a penalty of success. Leamington Spa is a very attractive and popular place to live and is in a prosperous area. There needs to be a balance between maintaining this prosperity with new developments and preserving the character of the town. However, he believes that local planners could mount a stronger defence against "demolition developers". There are some examples to follow; Solihull and Leeds have good local policies.

John Archer, Head of Planning at WDC for nine years and a local resident. He thinks that there is little room for manoeuvre in the present system of planning regulation. Our problem began in 2000 when the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), under John Prescott, changed government policy on new housing in Planning Policy Guidelines 3 (PPG3). The underlying principle of **sustainability** was given greater emphasis, which means sustainability of land. PPG3 severely restricts building on green fields and promotes the use of "brownfield sites" as a first choice for development. Unhappily for Leamington and other pretty towns, the formal definition of a brownfield site includes "all land on which there is or has been development and the curtilage of that development" – which includes existing houses in large gardens, even if they are in good order and very desirable as homes. Recyclable land includes residential land. Unless a building is protected, by being listed or in a conservation area, it can be demolished without the need for planning permission. Moreover, government policy is that public opposition to development is not in itself a ground for refusing planning permission unless it is founded upon valid planning reasons. The demolition of existing buildings for redevelopment is not new and has been a feature of the development process for many years. We were reminded that the Conservation Area had recently been extended, affording protection over a wider area of the town.

John Acres from Redrow Homes (formerly with the House Builders Federation and previously in local authority planning) representing developers. Much of the present problem started in the 1990s when, as a result of lobbying largely by CPRE to protect green fields, pressure was transferred to urban development – brownfield (or windfall) sites. Planners and architects, including Lord Rogers, the famous architect and advisor to the government, pointed to the advantage of high density developments as in Barcelona (at ten times the British density target). (Later it was pointed out that Lord Rogers lives in a house with a garden in Chelsea.) Developers, looking for sites to develop, are making high offers for groups of existing houses whose sites could be redeveloped more intensively; the highest density proposal will usually enable the best offer price and win the site.

Eithne Goode, active Local Councillor and recently Mayor. She is opposed to the destruction of good housing and urban gardens; the gardens form green corridors so act as (private) parks. The proposed redevelopment of 42-46 Lillington Road will be like a warehouse; the planning committee will consider three more redevelopments in the same road on November 15th. The councillors have been unanimous in their opposition to the demolition developers, and will give whole-hearted backing to the planning officers in all attempts to stop such redevelopments.

Peter Storrie, independent planning consultant and local resident. PPG3 is a radical change towards high density development with low car parking. This can work well in the centre of cities where access to offices, shops and amenities and the availability of public transport mean that people do not need cars (as in Brindley Place in Birmingham). It does not work in small towns like Leamington. One-size does not fit all; town cramming is not town planning. The trouble is that environmental issues are now subordinate to density targets and developments are allowed which would have been refused in the past

Clinton Sellers, local activist opposing current redevelopments in North Leamington with a website focussing on these threats. Clinton provided a vivid PowerPoint display of the recent and most conspicuous issue: Cala's successful appeal to the Planning Inspector to build 24 dwelling on the site of three detached brick 1970s houses in mature gardens on Lillington Road (including Swan House). The plans and view of the old site were compared with the new; the comparison was clear and dismaying. The new building would be an unbroken wall 213 foot long, 3½ stories high, with 60 bedrooms and very limited car parking. No details of features such as doors, windows, guttering and road surfacing were considered, even though this site is on the edge of the Conservation Area. The decision of the Inspector to allow the appeal was described as "perverse", so much so that it should be challenged in

the High Court. It was truly regrettable that WDC allowed the appeal to be written rather than by public hearing, thereby leaving the Inspector ignorant about the strength of local opposition.

John Archer responded that an eminent planning lawyer is reviewing this case and his advice will be available within six weeks so that WDC can seek to challenge the Inspector's decision at the High Court before demolition can begin, if advised that there is a case to be made. The request for this particular appeal to be dealt with by written representations was made by Cala Homes. From the Council's previous record of success in appeal, the written representations procedure is as likely to be successful as a public enquiry.

Questions and comments from the floor after 9pm

We now summarise the discussion, generally without attributing the points made.

Cala's success, if unchallenged, will set a precedent for other firms to promote similar schemes in Lillington Road, Beverley Road and Northumberland Avenue, although the latter has happily acquired the protection of a Conservation Area, thanks to commendably prompt action by WDC.

Other appeals against very high density development are also in process. One has recently been lost in another Conservation Area south of the river, in Russell Terrace. Here too the demolition of a house for flats threatens a garden, whilst too many such conversions for high intensity multi-occupation by students will inevitably change the character of the area. By contrast, there are few proposed developments in the more run-down parts of Old Town, where they would really be welcome. Developers concentrate on projects that will sell quickly and easily even if they destroy the amenity that creates this value in the process. In ten years' time, when their cumulative effects are judged, we will wonder how and why such decisions were made.

Earlier this year James Plaskitt asked the ODPM for interpretation of PPG3, and in particular of the definition of brownfield sites; the response came in a letter from the minister [Keith Hill, Minister for Housing and Planning]. It was felt that the Inspector, when considering the Appeal by Cala regarding 42-46 Lillington Road, had not taken this response into consideration; James suggested this point should be made if the case were taken to the High Court.

The exact status of the guidelines set in PPG3 is not clear. To what extent is PPG3 compulsory, or is it advisory, and how far can local authorities over-ride it? The recommended high building density in PPG3 seems to be compulsory. The loss of gardens is a loss to the whole community – in terms of trees and wild life, the quality of the view and the air we breathe. For our planners and the inspectors who judge appeals, environmental considerations are less important than the density target. There may be some relief in the recognition of the Regional Planning Guidance that Leamington and other small towns should not become high-density development areas; we must hope this becomes Government policy in time.

PPG3 does recommend (require?) that Local Plans and local planning guidelines and the design and character of the neighbourhood be considered. Our near neighbour, Solihull, has produced good and effective supplementary planning guidance to developers about issues such as the design of infill buildings and the density of housing. These were presented to our Chief executive Janie Barrett last summer – with no visible result yet. Unfortunately WDC's Local Plan is only at the Deposit Draft stage and there are no local supplementary planning guidelines. This means that Inspectors can say explicitly that they only give limited weight to local policies in making their decisions and we have to rely on the old Local Plan, which is not compatible with PPG3. John Archer hopes that the Second Deposit Draft of the Local Plan will go on deposit early in 2005. In view of the urgency of our position it might be better for WDC to adopt the Solihull guidelines with minor modifications than to have nothing at all. Peter Storrie pointed out that developers would welcome more clarity and certainty over what is and is not acceptable to us. John Archer explained that unless the local supplementary planning guidelines went through the proper process, it would be ineffective against planning appeals. This is one reason for not just crossing out Solihull and writing in Warwick District in the Solihull document.

PPG3 is currently under review for the second time and James Plaskitt will table a question to the Minister to define "the character of an area", which may have some effect on future decisions; he will also continue to urge the ODPM to make appropriate changes to this PPG. Now is a good time for the public to lobby MPs and the ODPM on the unforeseen consequences and ambiguities of the present system, even though our own MP is already well aware of the situation.

WDC needs to have an integrated view of the long-term future of our town, for housing, transport, heritage, amenities – or we will live in a sea of mediocrity. At the moment planning decisions are made individually, piecemeal and ad hoc.

Developers are currently making big profits (30%) in the volatile housing market. John Acres responded that builders and developers provide employment and survive by building what people want to buy, and making a profit, just as all businesses must.

John Archer has agreed to convene a public meeting organised by WDC early in 2005 to discuss progress with the Local Plan and local supplementary planning guidance in response to the request made at the meeting.

Summary

- The consensus of the audience is that high density developments, by demolition developers, using land from the destruction of large homes is unwelcome;
- The problem has become more acute since 2000 with the revisions to PPG3 which change the emphasis to the redevelopment of brownfield sites;
- The meeting called upon the local planning office to provide additional local strategy safeguards very quickly;
- The meeting was horrified by two recent appeal decisions to allow previously rejected planning applications and thought public appeals more effective than written ones;
- The appeal for 42-46 Lillington Road should be challenged in the High Court, if possible;
- There is a need for an integrated long-term plan for the town;
- WDC will arrange a follow up progress meeting early in 2005.

The panel articulated the issues and their points of view very clearly. The Leamington Society is extremely grateful to them for the considerable amount of care, thought and time they gave us. Even though many of the audience were angry about recent events, there was no slanging match.

The meeting closed at 10:30 – and we had barely touched on affordable housing or traffic problems.

Archie and Marianne Pitts

XX

THOSE WE HAVE LOST: WOODWARDS of ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA

February 1811, an advert appeared in the Warwick Advertiser giving measurements of an imposing site available on the corner of The Parade and Cross Street (Regent Street). A local syndicate provided funds for the building of Assembly Rooms. The following September, the Assembly Rooms opened with a grand ball, and became the centre of social life in the town for over fifty years. By 1878, for various reasons, the popularity of the town as a holiday spa was waning. The Assembly Rooms were sold for £5,600 and Mr. John Fell, builder, later a Mayor of the Borough, transformed them into a shopping centre offering various trades. E.T. Gamage, brother of the well-known departmental storeowner, A.W. Gamage of London, took it over near the end of the 19th C.

May 1908, P.H. Woodward & Co. Ltd. was incorporated and acquired the business of E.T. Gamage, nos. 94 and 96 The Parade. Founder and Managing Director, P.H. Woodward, was a draper and the company became well known for general drapery and for ladies' and children's' clothing. He had a special interest in the silk trade, for which Woodward's became noted. It was also noted for its personal service to its customers. Nothing was too much trouble and Mr. Woodward used to stand at the top of the stairs each day, dressed in a morning coat, to welcome in his customers, most of whom, it is said, he knew by name. It is recorded that in the early days he delivered parcels on his bike after hours. But in 1998, his grand-daughter, Sheila Smith of Cottingham, E.Yorks, revealed that her father had told her that it was he who used to make the deliveries on his bike, not P.H!

By 1914 more floor space was required, but the First World War halted further extension. Later the company extended into the furnishing business and in 1927 the adjoining premises in Regent Street were acquired for household linens and soft furnishings. It had become necessary to cater for all walks of life. With the development of the motor industry in Coventry people came in cars from further afield to shop. Woodward's established trade over a wide area of Warwickshire, Birmingham, Rugby, Stratford and Banbury.

1933, through ill health, Mr. Woodward, Senior, one of Leamington's leading traders, retired from the Managing Directorship. Mr. Oswald Davidson, who had considerable business interests in the West and North of England, took his place, but Mr. Woodward remained on the board until his death in 1944. After many years, his son left the drapery business and in 1938 became a professional ventriloquist and magician, using the stage name Hilton Woodward.

Mr. Davidson had great optimism, energy and foresight. He retained much of the old tradition – unfailing courtesy and care of customers' needs. He introduced new methods of trading, training his staff to look forward, in readiness for approaching changes in merchandising. This necessitated the re-modelling of the interior of the store and returning to elegance and fashion.

1938 saw the end of the living-in system for young employees, a relic of the old-fashioned drapery practice employed in all large stores, which had been in operation at Woodward's since the company's conception and which had thrived under the benevolent paternalism of Mr. Woodward himself. Mrs. Woodward took great interest in the

staff's welfare and was particularly concerned that the live-in staff, as well as those who stayed only for the mid-day meals, should receive good accommodation and food. Shop apprentices worked 13 hours day, 6 days a week, with take-home pay averaging 2/-d per week.

Extensive alteration in 1939 entailed the opening up of the whole store by removal of dividing walls, provision of a lift and new quick service fixtures. These changes reflected the increasing popularity of the Leamington shopping centre. But the coming of the Second World War caused trading difficulties, even so further premises, number 66A Regent Street, were acquired in which to extend the men's department. At the same time the upper floors above Halford's property were brought into use, thereby increasing the first floor fashion show rooms. Clothes rationing, staff shortages and restrictions of all kinds continued to make business difficult. The bombing of Coventry and Birmingham drove people to live and shop in Leamington. Short supply of goods and decreasing facilities affected turnover, but persistent hard work and much patience on the part of the management and staff enabled the company to continue the personal service, which had always been its pride. With the ending of the war, controls slowly relaxed and maintenance arrears and refitting were gradually carried out. Full employment, difficulties of staff recruitment and training and the five-day week caused problems, but with a nucleus of mature experienced staff, a new team was built up, providing traditional service of comfort and satisfaction of the customer, with most modern methods of retail trading. There were workrooms for making clothing alterations and curtains to customers' requirements.

1954 saw the addition of a further shop, 66 Regent Street. The whole of the block from The Parade to Bedford Street, which had also housed Halfords and the Gas shop, became incorporated. But in 1956, O.R. Davidson, resigned from the Directorship and his son D.G. Davidson, JP, replaced him as Chairman. He brought extensive merchandising business experience in the North of England, and appointed Wm. Hutchinson, Managing Director. Woodward's continued as a family controlled store.

March 1958, a non-commercial exhibition in the store, sponsored by **The Leamington Society**, with assistance from the Borough Librarian, Mr. Tallamy, and the Borough Engineer, Innis Jones, celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the incorporation of the company. It was concerned with the past, present and future development of Leamington Spa. Included were maps, diagrams, pictures and models.

1961 Woodward's taken over by the Shepherds Group, then in 1975 by Joplin Ltd., owners of a vast departmental store chain in the N.E. 1988 Joplins, paid Pennant Properties plc. more than £375,000 for the issued share capital of A.H.Hayes, furniture store, and £2.8 m. for its freehold property in Bedford Street, this being connected to another outlet in Warwick Street by means of a bridge. The new acquisition was used for the retailing of furnishings, electrical goods, carpets, kitchenware, lighting, and included a coffee shop. But in 1995 Joplins sold the Bedford Street and Warwick Street Properties to Lanham Intown, hoping to lease back the Bedford Street store. This did not happen. Lanham's signed up another large retail client, and the Warwick Street furniture store was converted by the Yates Wine Lodge group at a cost of almost £1.5 m, making it the largest licensed premises in the town. It was said that John Archer, Chief Planning Officer, considered the loss of one retail unit would make no significant impact on shopping facilities in Warwick Street. Throughout its history, Woodward's premises had always been leased. It was one of Joplin's last lease-holding stores, but in 1998 they finally purchased it.

Sadly, on 31st July, 2004, Woodward's was forced to close its doors, having been sold by the Sunderland based Merchant Retail Group, of whom Joplins are part, to Atlantic Property Developments. We wonder what will arise from the 'ashes'?



Woodwards just after closure in July 2004

Gareth Williams of King Sturge, the Property Consultants who negotiated the sale of the Woodward's store in the Parade to Atlantic Property Developments of Cardiff, tells the Leamington Society that there is no planned change of use for the store. The basement, ground and first floors (amounting to 21,000 sq. feet) will be kept for retail, while the top two floors will become residential. The store will be refurbished, with essential maintenance of the façade carried out in consultation with the planning and conservation authorities of WDC. The Society is assured that its part in the Parade will continue.

Jeannette Oubridge

Chairman

Archie Pitts
4 LeamTerrace
CV31 1BB 885532

Vice Chairman

W. Allan Jeffery
3 Rectory Close, Allesley,
Coventry CV5 9AE
02476 403797

**Hon. Secretary
Vacancy**

Hon. Treasurer

Marianne Pitts
4 LeamTerrace
CV31 1BB 885532

Planning Representative

Paul Edwards
423725

**Newsletter Editor &
Producer**

Jeannette Oubridge
55 Golf Lane, Whitnash
CV32 2QB 421321

Membership Secretary

Marianne Pitts
4 Leam Terrace
CV31 1BB 885532

Communications Officer

Tom Holloway
771772

Other Committee Members

Ruth Bennion 421862
Tim Griffiths 400537
Mark Sullivan 330104
Margaret Watkins 425733

Newsletter Distribution

Jo Clark

The Leamington Society is a registered charity. It is affiliated to the Civic Trust and to the West Midlands Amenity Societies Association. It exists to preserve the heritage and improve the character of Royal Leamington Spa and to encourage high standards of planning and architecture.

Charity No. 516078

Unless otherwise indicated, views expressed in these newsletters are the contributors' own and not necessarily the corporate view of the Society.

PLANNING MATTERS – Paul Edwards

1. It is good to be able to report that the current planning committee has refused some applications that would clearly over-develop a site. Other unsuitable ones have been withdrawn, or are still subject to negotiation. The application to develop a former rest-home into some 18 bedsits with only two bathrooms has been refused.
2. However it is horrifying to report that two similar refusals have recently been overturned at Appeal. CALA Homes has been allowed to demolish the three houses 42-46 Lillington Road (one of which is known as Swan House) and replace them with 24 residences, and Newbold Design has permission to demolish 56 Russell Terrace and replace it by 16 two bedroom flats with no off-street parking.
3. Applications for enlarging existing hotels continue to come in, contrary to the opinion recently given that town hotels were not wanted.
4. No date has so far been given for the inquiry into the proposed new Local Plan. However, as the 'emerging' Local Plan, it is being quoted in decision-making, including restrictions to development in the area shown as at risk to flooding.

XX

TALKS BEFORE EASTER 2005

A Most Unusual Job for a Lady, December 9th, Oddfellows

After a career in communication Marion Canning trained with the prestigious David Tilts Associates to become one of the very small band of lady professional toastmasters in the UK. Marion is now in much demand by clubs and organisations throughout the Midlands. She will amuse and entertain us with her experiences.

Her talk will be followed by hot punch and mince pies.

Warwickshire's Lost Buildings, January 13th, Oddfellows

Peter Bolton who has been scouring the county for thirty years for falling or fallen buildings talks about his ongoing survey of the lost and changing architectural scene in Warwickshire. This is a grim tale of crooks, philistines, and the ignorant; of bad luck, decay, poverty and a lost heritage.

Czech Patriots in Leamington, February 10th, Pump Rooms Annexe

Alan Griffin will tell us the story of seven Czech parachutists, commemorated by an ornamental fountain in the Jephson Gardens, who were killed in Prague in June 1942 after a gun battle with the Gestapo and SS units. The men, who had spent almost two years training in Warwickshire, were parachuted into their homeland on secret missions. In the spring of 1942 they assassinated Reinhard Heydrich, the Nazi Governor of Bohemia and Moravia. Heydrich was head of the German Security Service and chief architect of the Nazi plans for the extermination of the Jews in Europe.

Protecting Regency Town Architecture, March 10th, Oddfellows

Timothy Mowl will be telling us about Regency architecture up and down the country and wrestling with the problems of urban regeneration, renewal, conservation, and recreation. He will dish, once and for all, the meaningless word 'pastiche', as all revived architecture is pastiche. All of this will be related to Leamington and its recent problems with new developments.