



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

# The Leamington Society

## Newsletter

**November 2016**

### **Chairman's notes**

#### Leamington: Looking Back and Looking Forward

It's almost a century since William Louis de Normanville retired after 35 years as Borough Engineer and Surveyor of Leamington (1882-1917). His impressive career is celebrated in Janet Storrie's excellent account, now reprinted thanks to the Friends of the Pump Room Gardens. As their name suggests, the de Normanville family were immigrants to Britain back in the 18th century.

In 1885 the parliamentary constituency of Warwick and Leamington was created: bringing together ancient Warwick and the "new town" of Leamington, as our neighbours often describe us. Now, under government edict to reduce the number of MPs, the Boundary Commission is proposing to tear us apart. In a notable display of local cross-party unity the "1885" campaign opposes that separation, on the principle that we are geographic and economically linked communities.

Currently the draft Local Plan is being examined in great detail week after week, but elsewhere there is also much crystal ball gazing and conjuring of visions for the future of Leamington. Deep within the draft Local Plan, is a commitment to preparing an Area Action Plan for Leamington Spa town centre during the lifetime of the plan (policy TC10). In this Newsletter, Barbara Lynn describes the work of a Town Centre Forum. Meantime Royal Leamington Spa Town Council is embarking on a Neighbourhood Plan for Leamington. A major player in this locality is Warwick University, with over 5000 students resident in Leamington, especially in old town where community feelings are distinctly mixed.

The District is also pursuing its plans for a Creative or Cultural Quarter in south Leamington.

Although the country voted narrowly to exit the EU, in Warwick District we voted to remain, by nearly 59%. That might suggest wider horizons, but our District Council has so far been reluctant to contemplate consolidation with the County administration or indeed engagement with a West Midlands authority.

### **Talks and events**

#### **The British Motor Museum –**

**Then and Now**

**Vince Hall**

Thursday, December 8th, 7.30  
Conference Centre, Dormer Place

#### **Bridges and Tunnels of**

**Royal Leamington Spa**

**Nigel Briggs**

Thursday, January 12th, 7.30  
Conference Centre, Dormer Place

#### **Rough Guide to Cuba**

**Fiona MacAuslan**

Thursday, February 9th, 7.30  
Conference Centre, Dormer Place

#### **Windsor Chairs**

**Jim Steel**

Thursday, March 9th, 7.30  
Conference Centre, Dormer Place





















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16<sup>th</sup> June 2016

Your Majesty,

Friends of mine have suggested that you would find the enclosed article and photographs entertaining. It was written for the next quarterly Leamington Society newsletter. I should explain that the Leamington Society has a 'Friends of the Station' sub-group to look after the railway station: the gardens, benches, posters and so on. [This is not the station which your great great grandmother Queen Victoria passed through on the way from Osborne to Balmoral, but an Art Deco building completed in 1939 just before the outbreak of World War II and handsome in its own right.] We work in close cooperation with Chiltern Railways and this is where the article begins.

Most of the Friends are long retired but still active. I am in my 70s and plump. To celebrate the official birthday as "Queen" I shared the platform for three hours with other attractions such as Guide Dogs for the Blind, our local charity. Chiltern Railways sponsor a puppy "Ivor" from collection boxes on the station. He came, with other Labradors, and was of course charming. Four Railway Police were also present, which gave the impression that your (true) Royal Highness needed their protection.

When it was over and I could return to my normal, almost invisible, elderly self, I was exhausted and slept most of the afternoon. How your Royal Highness has the stamina to undertake all your public engagements is a matter for wonder and admiration.

My apologies for sending this in print, but my handwriting is very poor. I hope you enjoy reading my article.

Yours sincerely,

Her Majesty the Queen  
Buckingham Palace  
London SW1A 1AA



BUCKINGHAM PALACE

November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016

Dear Mrs Pitts,

The Queen wishes me to thank you for your letter telling Her Majesty about the Leamington Society and the Friends of the Station.

The Queen was interested to hear of the events organised to mark her ninetieth birthday and it was kind of you to tell Her Majesty of the care you took to find an outfit suitable for you to represent The Queen on that day. It was also kind of you to enclose photographs for Her Majesty to see and The Queen was glad to know everyone had an enjoyable day.

Her Majesty hopes you will understand that, because of the enormous number of letters and messages she has received in the last few months, it has not been possible to reply to you until now and I am to thank you, very much, for your thought for The Queen at this time.

Yours Sincerely  
Jennifer Garden-Jones

Lady-in-Waiting

Mrs M Pitts

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*The Leamington Society is a registered charity. It is a member of the West Midlands Amenity Societies Association and the National Organisation of Residents' Associations. 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*