

# Stoke Local History Group

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Photo: John Marshall

## Telegraph Hotel celebrates mid-century architecture and design

The Telegraph Hotel is set to open its doors next month in the former headquarters of the city's newspaper.

The iconic Telegraph building in Corporation Street promises to add a touch of chic to the city and will retain many of its original mid-century features, as well as incorporating art works which celebrate the 1960s.

An art studio based in Fargo Village, Print Manufactory, was commissioned to create a series of bespoke print images which illustrate the working life of the building during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. *"The prints are based around original photographs taken within the building which depict its working practices in the 1960s, giving an insight into everywhere from the editor's office and typing pools to the printing press and kitchens,"* says the Telegraph Hotel website.

Two of the images will be placed in each of the hotel's 88 bedrooms to complement the mid-century interior design.

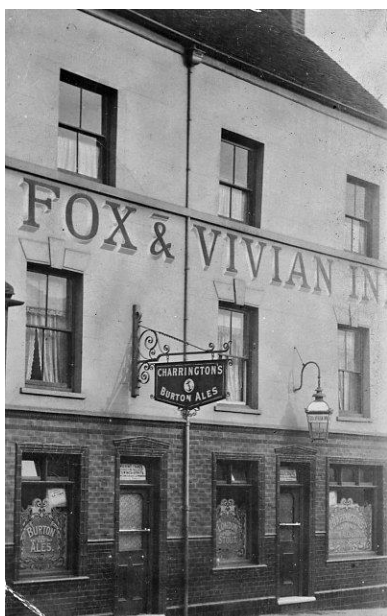
The hotel will feature an all-day bar and restaurant called Forme & Chase, and a rooftop bar, Generators, which overlooks Belgrade Square. It will also include meeting and conference facilities, such as the Editors Suite, which can accommodate up to 160 people.

The building has been redeveloped by Complex Development Projects (CDP) and will be operated by Bespoke Hotels. Brian Harrabin of CDP is quoted as saying: "Our aim has always been to create a hotel with that wow factor and the focus on mid-century architecture and design helps to do just that. We look forward to showcasing the hotel with everyone very soon."

## Gosford Green to Jordan Well – imagine a pub crawl in 1884



*The White Lion at Gosford Terrace, opposite Gosford Green. The pub is the building on the left with the prominent ground floor bay. It was the first home of Singers FC, later Coventry City, before the club moved to the Binley Oak in 1887. The White Lion was demolished in 1926 and replaced with a pub of the same name, which itself was demolished in 1987.*



*The Fox and Vivian in Gosford Street. A vivian was a type of dog. The first known mention of this pub was in the Coventry Standard in 1844. It closed in January 1971 and was demolished to make way for extensions to the Lanchester Polytechnic.*

In 1992 the Coventry Evening Telegraph published a map, dated 1884, showing all the pubs in Coventry during that time. Of particular interest are the pubs that lined the route from Gosford Green to the former Sir Colin Campbell pub near Jordan Well – a relatively short walk from Stoke into town. They conjure up an image of a pretty spectacular pub crawl that few would manage to complete if a pint of beer (or other alcoholic drink) was consumed in each pub.

The imaginary pub crawl could begin at the White Lion at Gosford Terrace, Walsgrave Road, facing Gosford Green. Then onwards to Far Gosford Street and a pint in the Pitt's Head, followed by pints in the Hertford Arms, the Hand and Hart, the Golden Cup, the Hare and Hounds, and the Cricketer's Arms. Then stagger on into Gosford Street for a drink in the Anchorsmith, the New Inn, the Antelope, the Fox and Vivian, the Peacock, the Chase Inn, the Blue Pig, the Black Lion, the Royal Oak, the Mermaid, and finally (still standing?) the Sir Colin Campbell.

Our photographs are taken from a guide to the history of Coventry pubs, available online on the excellent Historic Coventry website.



## A tree called Jabet's Ash



*Jabet's Ash today, to the immediate right of the house on Binley Road, close to Marlborough Road. Photo: John Marshall*

IN JANUARY 1929 a public spirited land owner in Binley Road presented to the city a small piece of land with a sapling ash tree growing on it. The land and tree were presented by a Mr Henry Whiteman. The young ash tree was a seedling of an ancient tree that stood nearby called "Jabet's Ash". In addition, the generous Mr Whiteman paid for the land to be enclosed and the Council paid for a plaque to be erected describing its history. Mr Whiteman's donation was "to preserve the traditions of the spot, and to commemorate Alderman William Hewitt, Mayor of Coventry who resided in this neighbourhood, and who died during his Mayoralty on the 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1924".

The historic Jabet's Ash stood for centuries and marked the boundary between the city and county. Located at a corner near the present day Marlborough Road, the old tree died and decayed and was in a dangerous condition before its removal by the City Council. In fact as early as 1868 "a Justice of the Peace, living at Stoke, noticing the signs of approaching decay, laid fresh soil about its roots, and did what was possible to preserve its life" – which helped it survive for a further half century.

However it is believed that even the old tree was not the original Jabet's Ash – the first dating back several hundred years before Stoke Church was built in the thirteenth century.

The history of Jabet's Ash was recorded by Dr Blyth in his History of Stoke. From many sources he gathered together the story of it. "Notwithstanding its venerable appearance," he wrote, "it probably occupies the site of a former tree, inheriting its name and serving its purpose."

The reason the tree was called "Jabet's Ash" is not known but there has been a lot of speculation over the years.

One theory is that the tree was named in Norman times after a Prior of Coventry called Joybert and the name Jabet is a corruption of that name.

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Another theory suggests that it takes its name from a certain John Jabet, “who held land in Marston Jabet as well as the immediate vicinity of Coventry, and was a great benefactor to Coombe Abbey, which lies about three miles to the east on the same road...”



*The dilapidated tree in 1915*

It has also been suggested that it derives its name from having been used as a gibbet, or having occupied the site of one.

In support of this opinion is a passage in an ancient Charter quoted by Dugdale, as having been given by Hugh Kevilok, Earl of Chester about AD 1184 under King Henry II. The Charter describes the boundary lines between the Earl’s and the Prior’s portions of the city, and is the forerunner of the divisions of St Michael’s and Holy Trinity parishes. The passage in the Charter is worded as follows: “And thence by the Brook of Endemere to the Highway leading from the midst of Harnall near to Stoke, as far as the Gibbett, and thence descending by Bisseleie to the Brook called Gosford; and so along that Brook and Ditch; and thence to the Walls of the Boundary.” Where did this gibbet stand if not at Jabet’s Ash?

The tree itself also figures in many historic documents from the time of Richard II. It seems to have been regarded as one of the limits of ancient civic processions, when the

Mayor and his brethren went out to meet Royal personages who were coming into the city by that way. The tree marked a boundary for many years until the expansion of the city in the 1920s and 30s rendered it obsolete.

***Although many Coventrians will have heard of Jabet’s Ash, how many have heard of Jabet’s Pit? This refers to a hollow which was on the opposite side of the road to the Ash tree.***

It was reported in the Coventry Standard on 8<sup>th</sup> January 1915 that “Parts of the Green which are not required for regulated games are to be levelled, and the present hollow ground they propose to improve and make into a kind of children’s playground. Not many people know that “the hollow ground was once a pool, known as Jabet’s Pit. It was more worthy of the name of slough than a pool though at some seasons of the year a good deal of water lay in it. There was no protection for the road, and one dark night a man walked into the Pit and was drowned. Then the authorities decided to drain it. Some objection was raised, as a matter of course, on the ground that the cattle on the green needed the water; but the argument prevailed that Robinson’s Pit on the lower green and the other pit on Stoke Green, would be sufficient for all necessary purposes, and so the pool was drained and the site partly levelled.”

Dr Blyth in his History of Stoke states that Jabet’s Pit was mentioned as far back as the time of Queen Elizabeth. □

***This is an edited version of an article first published earlier this month by the Coventry Society. With thanks to the Coventry Society and to David McGrory for supplying old press clippings used for this article.***