

Stoke Local History Group

COVENTRY

Newsletter September 2022

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editor John Marshall

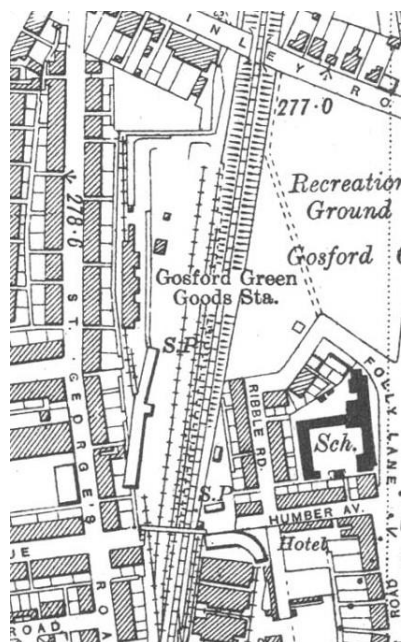
When trains could be spotted in Stoke

Do you remember the railway bridge that once passed over Binley Road? Can you recall seeing freight trains travelling along this line? And do you remember the time when Gosford Green had its own railway goods station?



Before the roundabout: this is Binley Road in the 1990s with the old railway bridge. Gosford Green Goods Station is shown on the map, c.1938. Photo: John Marshall.

The next meeting of Stoke Local History Group will take us back to a period when freight trains ran through Stoke on a branch line known as the Coventry Loop Line, which first opened in 1914.



Phil Tutchings will tell us about the history and purpose of the line, and its link with local factories, collieries, quarries and the city's wholesale market. The line no longer exists but it functioned for many years and has left its mark behind. "There is still plenty of evidence of the line in the vicinity of our meeting place at Stoke Library," says Phil, who will also mention other industrial lines and their link to the city's manufacturing history.

He emphasises that his talk will not be aimed solely at those people with a specialist interest in railways. "The talk," he says, "will focus mainly on the industries and sites served by the Loop Line rather than on elements which would only be of interest to railways enthusiasts."

The meeting takes place at Stoke Library on Friday October 7th, beginning at 10.30am. Restrictions on numbers have now eased in libraries so there is **NO NEED TO BOOK. Just turn up.** A reminder will be sent out nearer the time.

This is a special edition of the newsletter, designed to highlight this year's Heritage Open Days. Check the internet for more info.



Coventry Heritage Open Days, 2022

The city of Coventry will take part, once again, in the latest National Heritage Open Days which run this year from Friday 9th September to Sunday 18th September.

During this period numerous historic venues will be open, free of charge, and a number of places not usually accessible to the public will open specially for Heritage Open Days. A series of walks and special events will also be held during this period.

A few highlights are featured here, but readers are advised to obtain the special Coventry Heritage Open Days booklet or search the website for a full list of events and further details. Some tours require advance booking.

Council House, Earl Street



**Sat Sept 10-11:
10am to 4pm.**

The Council House is a Grade II early Tudor style listed building with rich heraldic decoration. It was built in 1913-17 although due to the start of the First World War, the building was not officially opened until June 1920 by the Duke of York. Take a look at the Council Chamber and Lord Mayor suites.

Drapers' Hall, Bayley Lane Sunday 18 Sept: 11am to 5pm.

Drapers' Hall is Coventry's finest Regency building. It was built in 1832 as social rooms for the Coventry Drapers' Company, who moved out in 1960.

"Historic Coventry Trust invites guests to wander around the impressive society rooms or book a place on a tour of Drapers' Hall. The renovation of this stunning Regency Hall built in 1832 for the Drapers' Guild of Coventry was completed last year and the site opened as a music venue in November 2021.

Drapers' Hall will open to the public on 18 September for a site visit and bookable tours with spaces available via the Historic Coventry Trust website, www.historiccoventrytrust.org.uk. Tours lasting 45 minutes will run from 11am until 4pm. The day provides an opportunity for guests to view most rooms in this impressive building that has been restored to its former glory. The building comprises two levels, the upper containing four society rooms and the lower kitchens, wine store, and other key historical spaces used by the Drapers' Guild of Coventry and subsequently as an Air Raid shelter in the second world war, and a youths' magistrates court before being closed in the 1960s. The building project to bring the site back into usage has been made possible by Historic Coventry Trust." **Open for casual visitors as well as pre-bookable tours. Just turn up.**



Heritage Open Days



Kingsfield Orchard, A444 island junction of Binley Road

**Saturday 17 September: 11am-3.30pm, Sunday 18
September: 11am-3.30pm**

The site was part of 'King's Fields', so named as it is said this was where King Richard set up his camp prior to the Battle of Gosford Green. It was an allotment site for many years but locals are trying to preserve it as a wildlife orchard.

Riley Cars Archive, Coventry Canal Basin

**Saturday 10 September: 11am-4pm
Sunday 11 September: 11am-4pm
Tuesday 13 September: 10.30am-4pm
Wednesday 14 September: 10.30am-4pm
Friday 16 September: 11am-4pm
Saturday 17 September: 11am-4pm**

Archive history of Riley motor cars from the first Riley built in 1898 to the last Riley Elf built in 1969. Opportunity to see a replica of the first car designed by Percy Riley in 1898. Other events at Canal Basin, 17 and 18th Sept.



Weaver's House and Garden, Upper Spon Street



**Saturday 10 September: 10am-4pm, Sunday
11 September: 10am-4pm**

A terrace of six timber-framed artisan cottages built in 1455 as the Black Swan Terrace. Featuring a restored weaver's house, once occupied by narrow-loom weaver John Croke and his family in 1540. At the rear of the house is a medieval garden. The terrace of cottages was originally built by Coventry Priory and each house was rented out to weavers or dyers, who supplied cloth to the priory. A rare survivor of Coventry's medieval cloth trade.

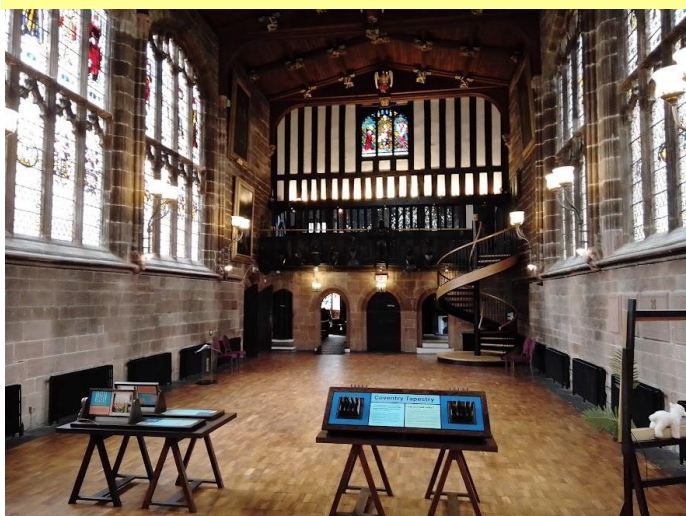
Mid-Century Art and Architecture Walk, Godiva statue, Broadgate

**Saturday 10 September: 10.30am-
12.30pm**

Organised by the Twentieth Century Society this walk through the centre of Coventry examines its post-war architecture and public art which were important features when planning and rebuilding the city. Email to book: c20westmidlands@gmail.com



Heritage Open Days



St Mary's Guildhall, Bayley Lane

Saturday 10 September: 11am-3pm

Sunday 11 September: 11am-3pm

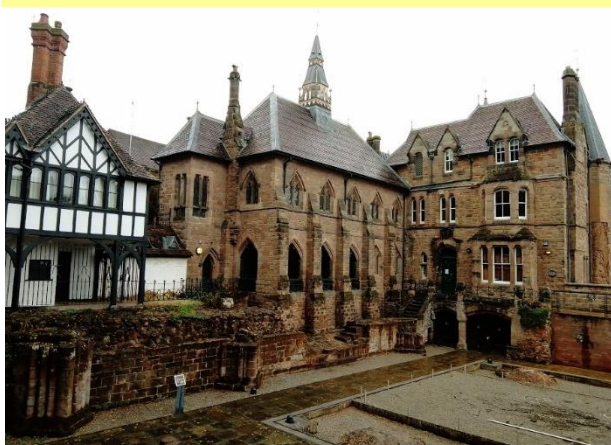
St Mary's Guildhall is one of the finest surviving examples of a Medieval Guildhall in the country. Recently re-opened after major refurbishments which included the restoration of the medieval kitchens and the cleaning and re-hanging of the world-famous tapestry. **No pre-booking, just turn up.**

King Henry VIII School, Warwick Road

Saturday 17 September: Tours commencing at 10.30am; 12noon and 1.30pm

Founded in 1545 in the aftermath of the Reformation, King Henry VIII School has stood on its present site since 1885. The mock Tudor facade dates from this time although the interior was extensively re-modelled following the 1941 Blitz.

"Take a walking tour of the school site and take the opportunity to view documents and other artefacts illustrating the 476 years since the school's foundation in 1545. Former and current staff and pupils will provide guided tours of the most historically important parts of the school building, including its Memorial Library (an official war memorial) and its Jeff Vent Archive. See where the bombs dropped on 8 April 1941 and walk the same corridors as famous alumni such as Philip Larkin, Martin Jacques, Roger Harrabin, Jerry Dammers and Peter Ho Davies. We are very proud of our heritage and we look forward to showing you around. Tours start at the front of the school on Warwick Road and last about an hour, finishing in the Archive. Tours include the ascent and descent of several staircases." **Must pre-book, email: alumni@bkhs.org.uk**



Old Bluecoat School, Priory Row

Saturday 10 September: 10am-

2.30pm; Sunday 11 September: 1pm-2.30pm

Old Bluecoat School (Holy Trinity church centre). "We can offer tours of the building on Saturday 10 September from 10am - 2:30 pm, and on Sunday 11th from 1- 2:30pm. Tours will take about half an hour." **Just turn up.**