

HINCKLEY CIVIC SOCIETY

www.hinckleycivicsociety.org.uk

"striving for a better Hinckley"

NEWSLETTER

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NO. 7- OCTOBER 2008

NEXT MEETINGS

MONDAY 27TH OCTOBER 2008

COUNCILLOR DAVID BILL

LEADER HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

'UPDATE ON TOWN CENTRE ISSUES'

MONDAY 24TH NOVEMBER 2008

MARTIN TRAYNOR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

LEICESTERSHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

'REGENERATION IN LEICESTERSHIRE'

MONDAY 26TH JANUARY 2009

Will have a 'HEALTH' theme with input on both the history and current status of Hinckley's own hospital and also on the future of the proposed GEORGE ELIOT HOSPITAL FOUNDATION

TRUST

All meetings at GREAT MEETING, BAINES LANE - 7.30 pm

SECOND AGM - SEPTEMBER 2008

Main points from the 2nd Annual general Meeting held on 29th September include:

- Chair Howard Wilkins reported on a year of steady progress that had seen the Society gain a much higher profile as a consultee on planning and related issues with Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
- A proposal from the Trustees to increase annual subscriptions to £10 per household to meet the demands of an increasingly active Society was carried unanimously. The increased subscription is essential to fund the Liability Insurance premium (obtained at a preferential rate through our parent Civic Trust organization) that will be required in future years
- All Trustees from 2007-8 were re-elected for 2008-9

**SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2008-9 are now due -
£10 per household
please remit to Greg Drozd (Treasurer)**

Society hosts EMACS regional meeting in October

A further reminder that on **Saturday 18th October**, the Society will be hosting the regional meeting of Civic Societies from across the East Midlands. The venue will be the Great Meeting, Baines Lane. All members are most welcome to attend.

New factors emerge into the Town Centre equation

Since the last newsletter two new factors that may have considerable effect on the future shape of Hinckley Town Centre have come to light. One is very obvious in the impending arrival of Tesco as a major retailer in the town through its acquisition

of the Somerfield site adjacent to the Railway Station.

The second factor 'emerged' following our AGM when Councillor Dr James Moore spoke about various aspects of plans for the future of Hinckley. Among the widely known plans, he mentioned a hitherto unknown project relating to the possible redevelopment of the north side of St Mary's car park taking in the area where the Rectory and the Masonic Hall is situated.

No doubt both these issues are going to be among the issues raised at our next meeting at the end of this month when the Leader of Hinckley & Bosworth Council, Councillor David Bill has kindly agreed to

repeat the open and very successful format we had when he addressed us last November.

One significant change from just eleven months ago is undoubtedly the immediate economic outlook. The financial turmoil of recent weeks may well have a lasting legacy on the appearance of our high streets in months to come as some long-established names find themselves forced into reviewing their futures. The proposed merger of HBOS and Lloyds TSB is an obvious one that may affect Hinckley. In addition to banks, travel agents and estate agents, two of the staple outlets of the typical High Street of recent years, are both under pressure and Hinckley has lost one travel agent in recent weeks on Station Road, where there is now a noticeable array of 'to let' signs. Among the remaining travel agents in the town, four are equally split in the ownership of the two biggest travel groups (now both German owned) and there may well be some further 'consolidation' to come here. This is clearly not just a 'Hinckley' problem; many other towns are likely to see similar changes. Perhaps future plans and aspirations in many towns may require a dose of new reality?

Wanted - a good home for Red Telephone Boxes

The red telephone box was once a most familiar site on our streets throughout the

UK. Apparently, at the peak of their usage, there were around 70,000 of the K6 variety first introduced in 1935-6. Thanks to the era of the mobile phone they are now an endangered species and the Society has been approached about 'adopting' a couple of those that remain in the Hinckley area.

The feeling of the Trustees is that the Society simply does not have the resources (both financial and physical) to take on any lasting liability of care for them, but we are suggesting that one of these boxes might make a suitable incorporation into the new Atkins campus or perhaps into the garden area of the Museum; comments, ideas welcome.

Blue Plaques

The order for the three Blue Plaques the Society has identified has now been placed with Leander Architectural in Derbyshire, a manufacturer used by several Civic Societies including Birmingham to whom we are grateful for the initial contact. Plans are now being formulated for 'official' unveilings of the three new plaques and it is expected that two of the three events will have descendants of the commemorated person in attendance.

The three persons featured in this series of plaques will be

- Robert James Lees
- Elizabeth Coxhead
- Father James Norton

Literary Event - October 2009

A further meeting is due to take place in mid-October to take this project forward. For this meeting we are to be joined by a representative from the Bosworth Society, who have an expressed interest in becoming involved in the project as one of the authors to be featured in the event is Lady Florence Dixie with obvious Bosworth connections. The co-operation with the Bosworth Society is a most welcome development and it is hoped this may be the beginning of further collaboration on other events in the future.

Again it is stressed this is a huge opportunity to promote Hinckley & Bosworth's little known literary heritage to a wider audience, both inside and outside the Borough.

More on Elizabeth Coxhead.....

I recently obtained a copy of Elizabeth Coxhead's novel (from a bookseller in Australia!) *The Midlanders* first published over fifty years ago. The story is set in a very thinly disguised Hinckley (Alney in the book) of the late 1920s and it would appear some of the leading characters, good and perhaps not so good, are equally thinly disguised.

Elizabeth Coxhead's wry look at 'Alney' should be essential reading for anyone with an interest in Hinckley's past and the story may also have a more moral aspect too, depending on your interpretation. Do

read it if you can find a copy, as It is a fascinating snapshot of a small, but thriving 1920's industrial town and, in my view, it is well worthy of TV adaptation in the manner of the successful serialisation of Mrs Gaskell's nineteenth century works.

Endpiece.....

Taken from the Conservation section of the English Heritage website on 'Street Facts' which examines issues on signage and regulation in town centres in a Conservation context.

"The only way to control parking is to use yellow lines and signs

FALSE: Some parking restriction signs are no longer legally required. And some towns have already adopted the simple principle, already widely used in mainland Europe, of identifying where you **CAN** park, rather than where you cannot. Yellow lines are unnecessary where parking would clearly cause an obstruction. Where used, they need be no wider than 50 mm"

Now there is some food for thought.....

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