

HARLOW CIVIC SOCIETY

Junction 7a is already under way

The roller coaster ride continues. After some signs of hope during last year (2015) it looks like we are returning to business as usual next year. It's not just Star Wars that's back! We look set to return to the war of attrition with Essex County Council concerning their proposed Gildea Way route for the new junction.

Our hopes were raised in the summer by the news that the Government had set aside £50m for the improvement of the existing junction, J7, and a rumour that the Highways Agency had had second thoughts about the wisdom of locating a new junction, J7a, so close to the existing one. These were signs at least of a delay and, possibly, of a complete rethink to proposals that would have ruined Old Harlow and brought yet further congestion on roads throughout the town.

Recently we have heard that the £50m is in fact to be allocated to the existing Junction 7, which is slightly more hopeful.

However, the various enlargements of roundabouts on the A414 in the town, can only mean that the implementation of the Gildea Way route is happening under our noses. This is despite the promise of a formal round of consultation this spring.



Harlow Civic Society members will remember the previous consultation by ECC contained so many errors it was deemed a dummy run and was not released. We must hope that ECC does a more professional job next time and that it listens to the answers it gets. Nonetheless, the firm impression we get is that this project is a done-deal and is being implemented right now regardless of the consequences and of the views of the people of Harlow.

Paul McLintic

A Peek Behind the Scenes

Members might not be aware that, a) major construction work is taking place within the Harvey Centre, although the tower crane above Tesco's could be a bit of a giveaway! And b) you can visit the construction work, courtesy of the main contractor Speller Metcalfe.

My wife and I took advantage of the 'considerate contractors' scheme to witness the complexity of converting the upper level of the old Tesco supermarket into a 6 screen cinema and 5 new restaurants. Suffice it to say that the existing building, with many large concrete columns to support the roof, does not readily suggest that it could become a picture house - restricted view anyone? As the cinema will be on two floors, part of the original roof is being removed – to be replaced by a higher one to accommodate the needs of the new usage.

I found our visit most interesting and can recommend it. This can be arranged by contacting Phil Turner, the project manager, on 07779306341, or via the Harvey Centre website – Speller Metcalfe page at –

<http://theharveycentre.com/news-and-events/latest-news/2015/08/12/speller-metcalfe-visitors-welcome/>

This gives the dates and times of the tours and contact details.

John Curry

The Civic Society Welcomes Good New Architecture

Some people tell me, when they want to have a dig, is that they know what the Civic Society is against but are not sure what it is for. Well, one thing we are in favour of is high quality architecture that is in sympathy with the original design of the town. This is why we will be introducing this year a new award to encourage good architectural design.

We are looking for a prestigious trophy that represents the spirit of the award and which will help to inspire architects and developers to enhance the quality of our built environment. We also aim, through this award, to engage the public more in our mission to enhance the quality of life in the town.

We are currently asking for proposals for the trophy from local artists and in due course will be asking for donations to fund it.

Paul McLintic

Heritage open days – Bishopsfield. A personal view

Woke up, thankful it was a dry day (the sun shone later). Went into usual routine (for groups of architects etc) putting out the archives, including framed photographs of Heinrich Buchel's Gibberd Gallery exhibition on Bishopsfield in 2012, and my paintings, among others, of Bishopsfield. Four groups arrived throughout the day, two from outside Harlow. One of these had wanted to visit Bishopsfield for years. The others had never been before – they were all invited to our Open Gardens for St Claire's Hospice next June.

After my talk and showing them round my house and garden, and their questions, I took them on a walk to see our community squares, green spaces, the lanes between our courtyard houses, the garage tunnel which is underneath the podium, and then up the ramp to walk round the podium and admire the views of Rye Hill Ridge and beyond, between the podium blocks.



The visitors were impressed by the experimental architecture which won a Civic Award in 1968. They felt it was so different from a lot of 'noddy' housing in Harlow. They liked the quiet and privacy of the courtyard houses, the community spirit and the feeling of security which comes of knowing your neighbours. The geometric lines of the estate were admired, and the spaciousness of the interiors.

However, they deplored the lack of maintenance, the neo-Georgian doors recently put in, the filling in of architect Michael Neylan's recessed doors and windows and the lack of sensitivity of recent Council/Kier work on the estate. Neylan's vision (he was only in his 20's when he designed Bishopsfield) was very much admired.

As I took the visitors along the podium residents were out sunning themselves and came to talk to me about their problems and concerns, which I will raise at our next Residents' Association meeting. I am secretary of Bishopsfield Residents' Association. It seemed like 'another day at the office'. On the whole it was a good day and the rain kept off. We all felt lucky we live here.

Moira Jones

Newhall on a Summer Evening

Thursday 25 June 2015 sticks in the memory as one of those lovely English summer days; warm and sunny, but not sweltering – it presaged a lovely evening for a stroll. And so it was that 24 members of the Society gathered at the Newhall marketing suite on that lovely evening prepared for an informative walk around the development.



We were met by Matthew Byatt, sales manager for Newhall who described, with great lucidity and enthusiasm the ethos of the project – attention to detail and good design for living stood out amongst the points that he made. The walk took us around many of the completed and

occupied areas that are now maturing into established communities. Matthew described the method by which the individual areas had been designed by well known and up and coming architectural practices, which were appointed by the master planner, Roger Evans. The process gives clear identities to each area of Newhall. What with the “bar code” houses, houses with thatched roofs, stone filled wire baskets – gabions – to shield front doors and a copper clad house looking suspiciously like an East Anglian windmill minus its sails, there is something to please the eye at every juncture. For the more traditionally inclined there is plenty of fine brickwork on display.

We walked through one of the most recently completed areas ‘Newhall Be’. A group of houses and apartments designed by Alison Brooks Architects, (former Stirling Prize winner 2008). The development was short-listed for the 2013 Stirling prize for Architecture. It didn’t win, which is not unusual for housing designs. But just getting on to the short list gives a clear indication of the standards being achieved at Newhall.

It is obvious to anyone who has been watching progress at Newhall that the term 'glacial' would best describe the speed of development during past few years. Things have changed and they are now pushing on. On the eastern horizon you can see good progress being made on the next phase. We did not visit this area – not enough time – but you get the feeling that Newhall are mightily relieved to see some work at last.



On we went into the balmy evening, led by the enthusiastic and informative Matthew. I got left behind whilst taking photographs and, in the process, I was asked by a resident of Harrowbond Road what was going on. When I explained why we were prowling the streets he kindly invited me in to his house. His children were at play as he enthused about the design and its suitability for family life. I thanked him for his hospitality and went in search of the group, now well out of sight and earshot.



We finished up back at the marketing suite which is adjacent to the two listed barns that will be the key structures to the proposed community centre. Interestingly, this phase of the work has been designed by Alastair Howe – Newhall resident – who, with his family is up-rooting for a new life on the Isle of Arran! Still, he's left his mark on Harlow with a finely judged chairmanship of Harlow Art Trust, his house – which is on the market – and the

Newhall community centre. The light was beginning to fade as we thanked Matthew Byatt for a most enjoyable and informative journey around Newhall. Some of us would have repaired to the pub on such a beautiful summer evening, but that is something that they don't have at Newhall – yet! Finally, my thanks to Mag Barrett for setting up this event.

John Curry

Looking After Harlow's Heritage

David Devine told the committee of Harlow Civic Society about his visit to the Study Centre to find out about the newly formed Heritage Watch group. As he reported it there were more people on the platform at the inaugural meeting than in the audience, and those that were present seemed rather apathetic.

Heritage Watch is an offshoot of Essex Police, and the main purpose of the scheme seems to be the protection of personal property, mainly in the form of nice houses. The Civic Society has no objection to this laudable aim, one that the Civic Society does its best to carry out in its own way. We urge anyone with information on crimes against public or private buildings, monuments, statues or any other amenities to approach the police. In our experience however, damage to sculpture in Harlow is more thoroughly dealt with by the Friends of Harlow Sculpture under the auspices of Harlow Art Trust. Recently the metal plaque attached to the figure of Kore in the High Street in Old Harlow went missing. It has probably been melted down by now, but the Friends and HAT will ensure that it is replaced. Their contact details are as follows:

Sue McDonald sue@harlowarttrust.org.uk



Barbara Burge

Lazarus Rises

The Square, Harlow's famous music venue, closed on New Year's Eve. However, following the Council's Planning Committee's refusal to accept the developers' second proposed plan for the site, there is some hope that money will be found to enable the Square's management to move to another location in the town centre.

In the week of Lazarus, David Bowie's final album, the Square might also rise from the Dead.

Barbara Burge

Harlow Civic Society is Online

The Civic Society is on Facebook and Twitter.

Please like us on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/HarlowCivicSociety>

and follow us on Twitter:

<https://www.twitter.com/@HarlowCivicSoc>

We are working on revamping and updating our web site: The address will be the same as the current out of date one:

<http://www.harlowcivicsociety.org.uk>

Harlow Civic Society Committee

Stan Newens – Chair: 420108
John Curry – Vice-Chair: 425214
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All contributions to the Newsletter to Barbara Burge (b_a_burge@yahoo.co.uk)

Harlow Civic Society welcomes new members. For information about joining contact the Treasurer or email hcs@evanstmd.plus.com If you are reading the edited version of this on paper, why not send us your email address to get the full version, and help us keep our costs down.