



CHANCE
GLASSWORKS
HERITAGE
TRUST

The Flash

the email bulletin of CGWHT

www.cgwht.org

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Hallo and welcome to the inaugural edition of *The Flash* the official *ad hoc* email bulletin of Chance Glass Works Heritage Trust (CGWHT).

The huge former glassworks nestling alongside the M5 has long been a familiar and iconic site for many who pass through the heart of the Black Country. CGWHT aims to make it even more so with groundbreaking proposals to completely rejuvenate the area for the benefit of the local community and to provide a beacon of excellence and attraction for those beyond.

Over the forthcoming months *The Flash* will establish itself as the official organ of CGWHT with the express aim of keeping you informed of developments.

In the longer term it is anticipated that *The Flash* will also form the basis of historical records that will help future generations to appreciate the breadth of aspirations underpinning this hugely ambitious contemporary venture. In the meantime, we felt it may be helpful if we introduced ourselves and established our *bona fides* by way of a few Frequently Asked Questions and sources of further information.

What is, or was, Chance Glass Works?

On 18th May 1824 Robert Lucas Chance purchased the works of the British Crown Glass Company on the borders of Smethwick and a rapidly developing Birmingham. His brother William joined him in 1832 and sealed the future for a company that was to become the largest glassmaker in the land.

At its height Chance Brothers Glass employed 3,500 people and produced just about everything from scientific equipment to tableware. But it was the Great Exhibition of 1851, held in a Crystal Palace, for which Chance's had supplied the panes, that not only propelled the firm to the forefront of glassmaking but also saw its entry into the manufacture of lighthouses lenses, a field wherein it reigned supreme for over a century and the legacy of which can still be seen in virtually every lighthouse around the globe.

The site, which one extended to some 30 acres, finally closed in 1981 yet its stark remains are still very much extant and no-one can drive along the elevated M5 without noticing the imposing seven storey building of 1847 directly alongside the canal below. The view from the New Main Line of the Birmingham Canal Navigations is equally impressive.

Who are CGWHT?

The Trust was formed in 2015 by a small collective of professionals from diverse backgrounds who share the common vision of working alongside the current owners in bringing the Chance Glass Works to life through the forging of partnerships with

educational and commercial interest to redevelop the site as a multi-function facility. The CGWHT team comprises:

Patron

Toby Chance, a member of the Chance dynasty, now resident in South Africa where he is Shadow Minister for Small Business Development, Democratic Alliance party.

Trustees

Mark Davies (Chair): Proprietor MCD Project Management

Sue Howarth: CEO North Smethwick Development Trust

David Tittle: Head of Design Advice Design South East

Graham Fisher MBE: Writer & Broadcaster

The Trust has also brought together a group of experienced professional advisors.

CGWHT is altruistic and apolitical, with the sole function of rejuvenating this magnificent asset in the heart of the West Midlands conurbation.

When was it formed and why are we only now hearing about it?

The Trust was brought together in early 2015 but could not fully announce its intentions at the time until various legal and procedural requirements were in place. Having now sorted all the 'red tape' the Trust is delighted to now make public its intentions.

What are its aims?

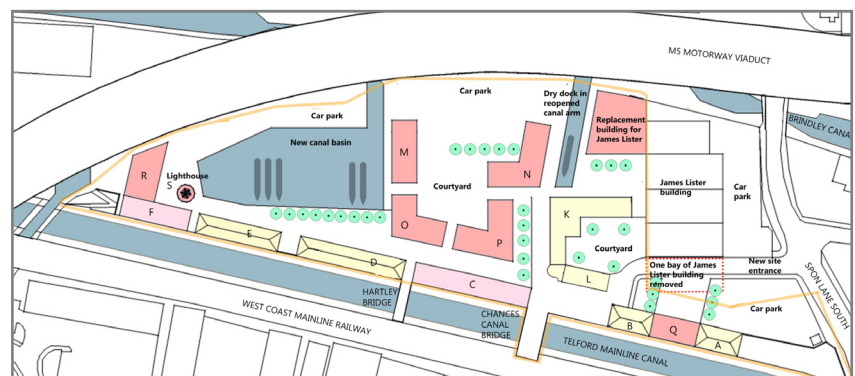
... to go from this



image: Mark Davies

to this ...

These are early ideas courtesy of architect Joe Holyoak and his team. Please don't hold us too closely to them just yet.



Plans are yet to be fully formulated but the overall vision is for a site of 'mixed use' to include an array of development across the spectrum, from small incubator business units to accommodation and recreational amenities, yet with due recognition to the

archaeology and history of the site - in particular its glassmaking and industrial heritage and its legacy on the surrounding economy and environment. It is proposed that the site will be made identifiable and *nouveau-iconique* by the inclusion of a 50-metre tall lighthouse, the likes of which helped make Chance recognizable around the entire world. The installation of the lighthouse will be an iconic acknowledgement of Chance's outstanding industrial achievements and its contribution as a world leader in technology of its day.

What is the timescale?

We believe this is realistically achievable within 5 - 7 years.

How will all of this be of benefit to me?

The Trust is seeking the support and active involvement of individuals, agencies and organisations to become involved and take a part in developing what will be one of the most iconic sites in the country that will attract national and international attention.

What will be the impact on the community?

This is very much a 'people-focussed' project for the benefit of the whole community. Our vision is for recreational facilities and public amenities in the restored buildings for local community use, including a research, learning and heritage centre that will showcase the industrial and technological history of Chance Brothers. And we propose to support local enterprise through providing space for new ventures, together with training and re-training opportunities for budding entrepreneurs and particularly the unemployed of the area.

Why should I take an interest?

Consultation with the public will take place at stages with a view to maximizing the expectations of the whole community. Your view matters. It really does.

What is the progress to date?

We have registered as a charity. CGWHT has secured £10k of Heritage Lottery Start-up Funding and a further £3k from the Architectural Heritage Fund for project feasibility work. Chance Glass Works Heritage Trust is grateful to the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership www.blackcountrylep.co.uk who have been very supportive and who have kindly awarded a grant of £660k to assist with site assembly. Once this is in place, and subject to further public consultation, the Trust can then look to securing finances and putting spades in the ground.

How can I support its work?

In a number of ways. We are will be seeking volunteers to support us in every aspect of our work including fundraising, administration, marketing and all facets of designing and developing the site regeneration. We will also be seeking to compile an information-bank based on the experiences of former employees and anyone with a Chance story to tell. For more information on all of our activities, or simply to get in touch, please view our website www.cgwht.org for full contact details.

So, where can I learn more?

Please note: Because our emails are usually addressed to more than one recipient they may fall into your 'spam/junk' folder. To avoid this, consider marking info@cgwht.org as a 'safe sender' or your 'not junk' system-equivalent.

Our website, which also contains full contact details and our blog, is at www.cgwht.org.

Register for further information free of charge via info@cgwht.org or 'contact' on our website.

Visit our friends at www.historywm.com

Issues: see Number 4 Spring 2014, which is devoted to glass and includes a feature on Chance by our Patron, the eponymous Toby Chance.

Podcasts: scroll to *Black Country Lives* for interviews with Toby Chance and former Chance employee Ray Drury. Free registration.

Films: scroll to *Black Country - Chance Brothers: pioneering glassmaking technology*.

Lighthouses: The Race To Illuminate The World Toby Chance & Peter Williams.

Publisher: New Holland Publishers Ltd; 1st Edition edition (26 Sept. 2008)

ISBN-10: 1847731740; ISBN-13: 978-1847731746

A limited number of signed copies may still be available via History West Midlands; others at Amazon etc.

Thanks, but no thanks. How do I stop you contacting me?

Having now learnt of our plans, we hope you will reconsider. But we do respect your privacy. See *Disclaimer & Data Protection* below and we will comply with your wishes immediately.

More soon; thank you for your support.

In the meantime, *Take a Chance*.

Graham Fisher MBE

PR & Comms CGWHT

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