

## **GODIVA AWAKES**

### **OUTLINE FOR 2012 PROJECT**

Imagineer Productions have created a major project for 2012 in partnership with NP Aerospace.

As Coventry embarks on a period of major regeneration it is only fitting to visit the ghosts of the past, the foundations on which we are rebuilding the future. It seems a fitting time in this period of massive global change to reflect on this past, mark the present and imagine our future. We may know what our city will look like via the architects and the planners but what about the space between the buildings, the people the communities that fill our city? How will they respond to this new environment how will it affect them, and how in turn will they affect it? How will this change manifest itself in our thinking, our actions, our everyday lives? What is at the heart of the city? How will we describe its character? Is it the buildings, the people, the history, the geography, the industry, the art?

In this era of globalisation, the information superhighway, is it possible for a city to retain a unique identity, character? When we examine Coventry's history it is clear that the city has been a city of innovation, invention, and tolerance. In the past it has been a city able to 'move with the times' re-imagine itself again and again, from wool and cloth and to ribbons and silk, from watches & clocks to sewing machines and bicycles, from the motor car to the jet engine. Manufacturing and engineering being the heart of Coventry attracting people from all over the world for many centuries and those people have been crucial to its economic and social development. They have developed 'the character' of Coventry. Communities have sprung up expanding the boundaries of the city and those communities have learnt to live side by side respecting their differences. Today Coventry is a rich cultural tapestry charting its own social history and that of the migrating world.

With the demise of the manufacturing & motor industries Coventry has once again had to re-imagine itself in terms of its economic future. Applying its engineering know how of the past to technologies of the future it has once more put itself on the map, at the forefront of inventiveness. In design and research Coventry once more is pushing the boundaries, from computing tools to improve diagnosis of brain tumours to the Micro cab with zero emissions, from ground source heating technology to the virtual building site to a see-saw that can provide energy for powering schools in Africa. Coventry continues to be a leader in innovation.

How do we respond in terms of the Creative Industries? How do we develop and grow? How do we engage and reflect our past, present and future? From the past we can take inspiration from the Mystery Plays, the Corpus Christi Processions of the Middle Ages, The Great Fair, The Godiva Procession, The Coventry Carnival, The Godiva Festival, The Millennium Mysteries & Ramon Kervin's Walk between the two spires on Millennium Eve - all drawing thousands of people together united in hope and celebration, thousands of people coming together, participating in the spaces between the buildings, crossing the boundaries that usually separate them be it economic or cultural.

Arts and business working together, mutually benefiting one another. More recently we have also witnessed the successful marriage of Sports & Arts as Coventry has played host to some large scale sporting events such as The UK School Games, The International Children's Games and the staging of an event to mark the Olympic Hand Over Ceremony. Coventry has demonstrated the ability to draw on its strong heritage, to learn from the successes and strengths of the past in order to move forward – to be inclusive, to encourage participation and engagement, to understand the power of hope in art combined with the human appreciation for beauty and aesthetics combined with the desire for self expression . We have also come to understand that the cultural landscape of a city is as important as the architectural landscape.

The time is right for Godiva to 'Awake' and bear witness to this regeneration, this re-energising, and this future vision. 2012 will see the eyes of the world look to this country to provide the 'Hope' that is the aspiration of the Olympic Games – The country has promised to transform the landscape physically, socially and economically. Coventry is on this parallel course. On the eve of the Godiva Festival 2012 Godiva will awake to witness her own cities transformation – She will champion her city and walk to London to meet other great figures from cities around the UK and London who all share in this 'Hope' for the future.

Imagineer Productions in partnership with engineers from NP Aerospace both past and present, will create a beautiful 'living' work of art – A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Godiva. The week before the Eve of the Godiva Festival a Phoenix will appear in a nest in Millennium Place (6 Metres high). Sheltering in its wings the sleeping Godiva. On the eve of the festival a spectacular ceremony will take place. Out of the burning nest the Phoenix will rise opening its wings. Godiva will awake opening her eyes to greet a new city and its citizens. A fantastical coat will arrive brought to her in a night time procession of people from the city that will have made it. The coat will tell the story of Coventry from its beginning to now – She will be dressed in the coat to keep her warm until the dawn. The following day she will take a walk around the city to see its renaissance followed by the people of Coventry in a carnival procession.

Proud of her city and all it stands for following the Godiva Festival she will then embark for London taking representatives with her, arriving in time for the Olympics. She will meet with other great figures from cities across the UK who will also walk to London arriving in Victoria Park in the culmination of 'ImagiNation Our Nation' – ( Umbrella title for Kinetika project which carries the Inspire mark - finale to be directed by Stephen Powell)

She will then return to Coventry – and tired from her adventures, take off her coat, close her eyes and sleep until the following eve sheltered by the wings of the Phoenix in her resting place – Millennium Place. Visitors to Coventry will be able to see her sleeping, hear her breathing, throughout the year. Her coat will hang in the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum throughout the year for people to visit, view and interact with.

Drawing on the expertise that exists in the city – engineers, artists, designers, new materials, animatronics, virtual technology, our carnival culture and construction, together we will create a lasting legacy for the city. Godiva will be a living piece of art that bears witness to the history of a city & its people and will continue to do so for the next century, an educational tool, a tourist attraction, an invention, a figure who engages with the people of Coventry – and them with her.

## **THE COAT**

The coat will be created by people of the city working with artists. Around the bottom of the coat will be the amazing history and stories of Coventry – tapestry, needlework, craft and various other materials will create a visual and perhaps interactive design. There may be buttons to press for sound bites – voices of the city. There may be hidden gems, mysteries to decipher! The coat will hang in the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum - an exhibit, an educational tool, a place for reflection. Every 10 years another section of the coat will be added – telling the next part of Coventry's story. We envisage the coat will have 10 sections to fill – One century – a living, developing, history.

Work will start on research and development for the design of the coat in 2009 in terms of size, scale, materials, construction.

2010 – Work with the people of Coventry to gather material.

2011 – Creative work on the coat.

2012 – Creative work on 'The procession of the Coat' & the dressing of Godiva.

## **GODIVA**

Consultation has taken place with the city and we have their backing and allocated site for Godiva. Work has already begun with both working & retired engineers from NP Aerospace on the design of Godiva & the Phoenix. We are now in the process of identifying an illustrator and designer.

2009 – Designs to be drawn. Work continues with university. NP Aerospace to make a small scale prototype

2010 – Work to begin on structure.

2011 – (End of) Structure to be complete.

2012 – First 6 months - Creative work with structure (rehearsals with Godiva & Coat dressing).

July 2012 – 'Godiva Awakes'