

Revealing Collections during Archive Stock Taking

Each January, the team at Coventry Archives spends two weeks taking stock of collections: tidying archive stores, updating locations, repackaging material, and processing new acquisitions. This year one of the highlights of stock taking was the discovery of a vast array of interesting film slide collections. The slides had come to the archives, over the years, from various sources associated with the Council and the city of Coventry, and were stored in our Audio-Visual strong room, ready to be processed and accessioned. Accessioning is the act of formally recording collections which will subsequently require cataloguing in fine detail, and is therefore the first step to making collections available.

As with most archival collections, on deposit, they do not arrive in appropriate storage, therefore the first step was to remove the slides from the original plastic boxes, clean the surface of the film (using a conservation grade brush), and place the slides into archival quality enclosures and boxes, pictured below:



Slides were viewed using a light box and cleaned with a brush



Film slides stored in archival quality enclosures and box

The optimum storage (cool, dark, dry, not subject to extremes of temperature and humidity) of the Audio-Visual strong room has meant that the slides have not degraded and remain in excellent condition. Whilst dyes inevitably fade over time, luckily the majority of the slides found were on Kodachrome, which is known to fade slower than other film stock.

The slides found largely date from between 1940 -1999 and depict a variety of subjects such as views of Coventry, mapping the striking transformation of the city, gatherings & events, communities, and even some in a domestic setting. Below is a selection of some of our favourite images:



Coventry city centre at Christmas c.1960



Mercia House c.1960-70



Caribbean wedding c.1960-1970



Coventry Library, September 1975



Spon Street, May 1987



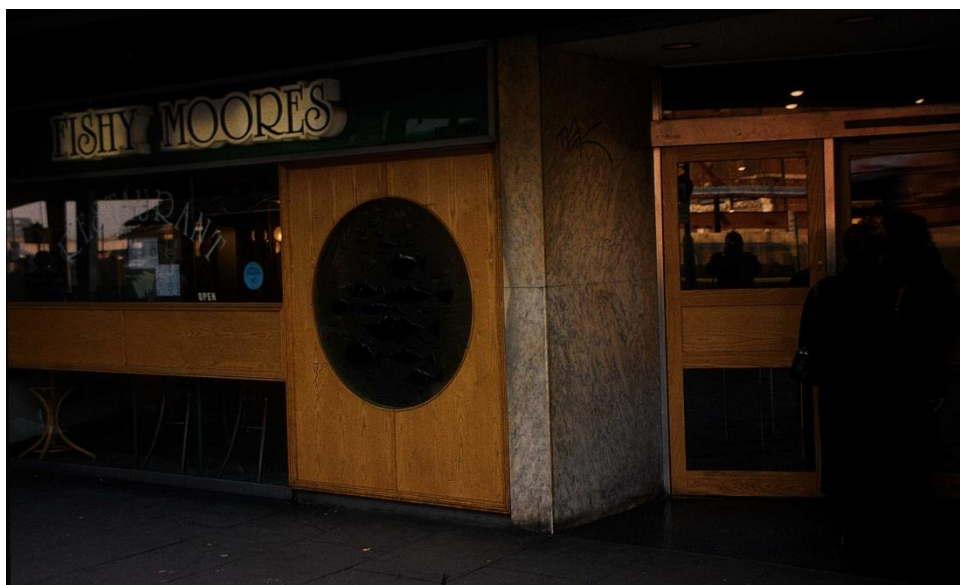
Trinity Street, June 1973. Coventry's third branch of Wimpy, currently occupied by the Flying Standard pub



Empire Theatre, 1971 (Now demolished. The collection of slides documents the demolition)



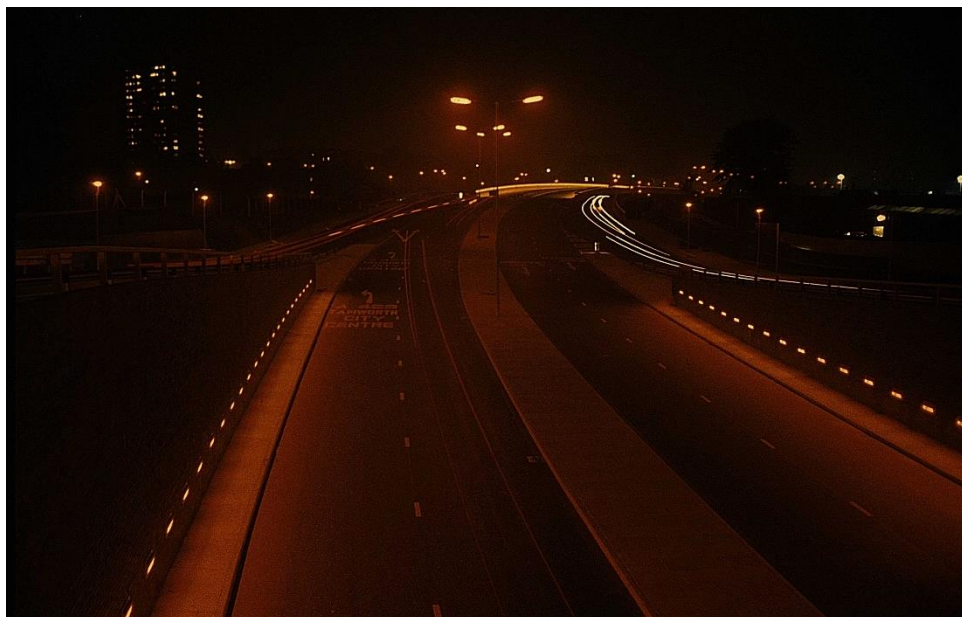
Belgrade Theatre, 1969



Fishy Moore's, Coventry's legendary chip shop, 1993 (Established in 1890, called Moore's Oyster Bar upon opening, and closed in 2009)



Coventry Cathedral, 1973-4. Some sights remain unchanged



Coventry ring road, from a collection of night time images of the city

Interestingly, the as of yet unknown photographer of one of the slide collections, has included images of his home. Our assumption is that he may have tried to finish off a roll of film but we are glad he did because we have been given a rare glimpse of the domestic life of a Coventrian in the 1970s:



c.1970s

Vida Milovanovic

Archives Assistant