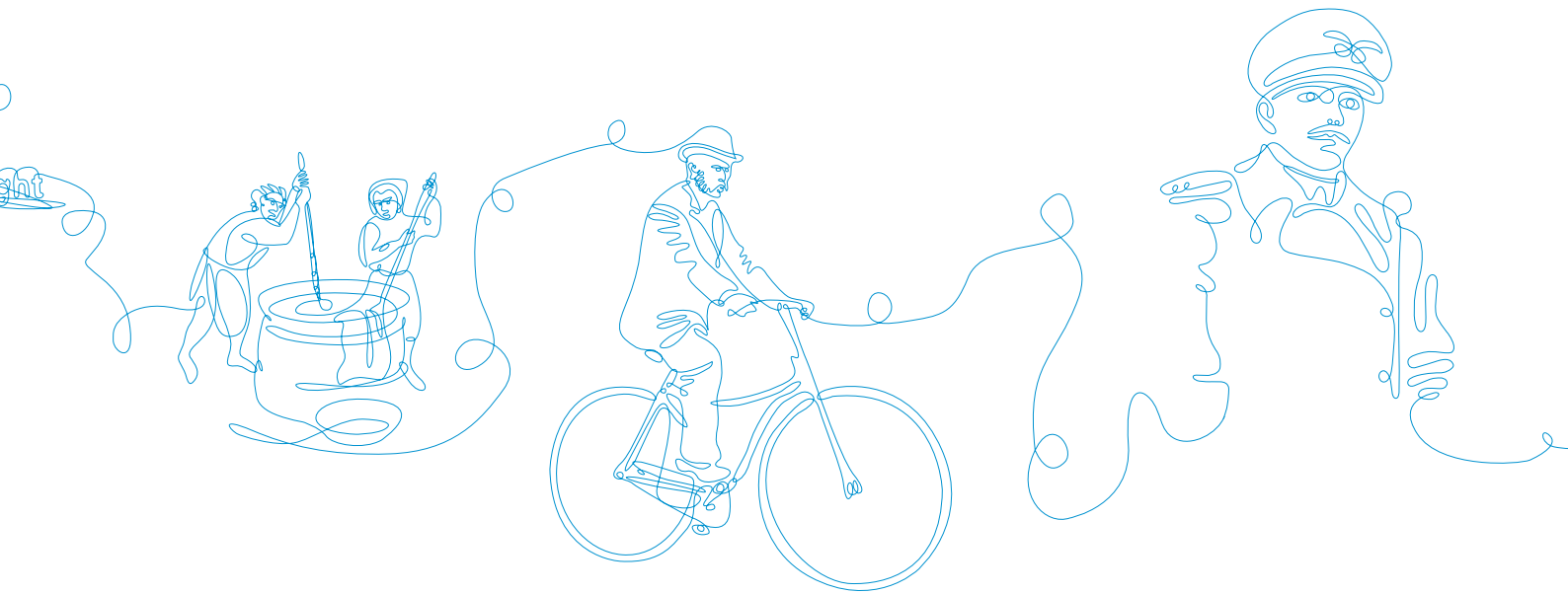


# Coventry city of invention

the first 1000 years

## Be !nventive factfile



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# Coventry

city of invention  
the first 1000 years

**1043** Godiva and Leofric's church begins to turn scattered dwellings into a town.

**1273** First record of wool being exported from Coventry.

**1300s** Coventry's weaving industry produces a high quality dye, much in demand, that gives rise to the expression 'True as Coventry Blue'

**1345** Coventry's new municipal charter is the first of its kind in England.

**1360** Coventry's new town wall, begun five years earlier, appears on the first modern map of England.

**1377** Coventry is said to be the third richest city in England, with a major export trade in wool through the Hanseatic League.

**1405** A Coventry school of glass painters produces city-born John Thornton, who designs the Great East Window in York Minster, the greatest work in mediaeval English stained glass.

**1520** The Mayor orders a detailed count to be taken of the city's population, the earliest surviving urban census in England.

**1627** A silk weavers' company is founded in Coventry, the first mention of this new trade.

**1650s** Clock-making is first mentioned in Coventry. With Shoreditch in London and Prescott near Liverpool, the city later becomes one of the principal centres of the watch trade in Britain.

**1700** A ribbon-weaving works is founded in the city, creating a trade that will become its staple industry for 150 years.



1860s

James Starley and the Coventry Machinists' Company begin making improvements to bicycles imported from France.

1870s

Starley goes into business on his own and makes so many innovations in cycle manufacture, notably the differential gear, that he is regarded as the Father of the Cycle Industry.

1885

Starley's nephew, John Kemp Starley, invents the Rover safety cycle, the ancestor of all modern bicycles.

1894

An electric car appears on the streets of Coventry for the first time.

1896

Harry Lawson founds the British motor industry in a former cotton mill in Coventry.

1900

For the first time, a motor car is used for a wedding and for a funeral in Coventry, creating a national trend.

1904

Courtaulds in Coventry invents artificial silk.

1912

Coventry engineer Charles Humpherson invents traffic indicators to be fixed on cars.

1930

Coventry-born Frank Whittle patents the jet engine while living in the city.

1941

In the wake of the Blitz, city councillors approve by a huge majority Donald Gibson's radical plans for a new Coventry.

1944

Coventry sets up a friendship link with Stalingrad, pioneering town twinning in Europe.

1948

Work starts on Coventry's traffic-free shopping centre, the first in Europe.

1948

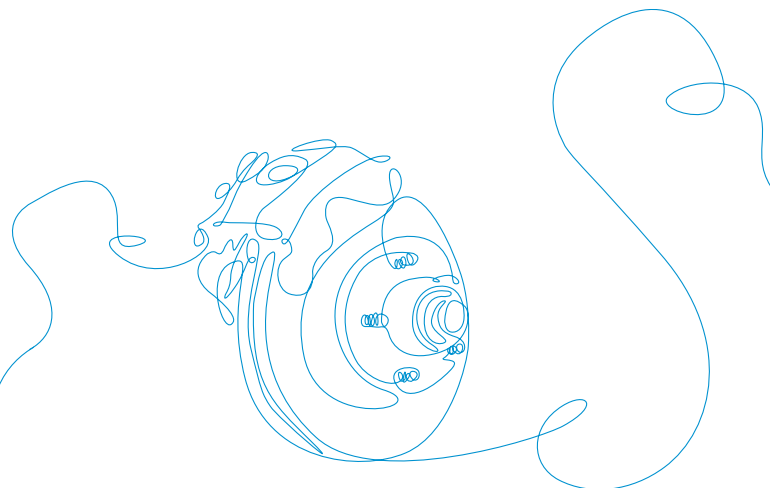
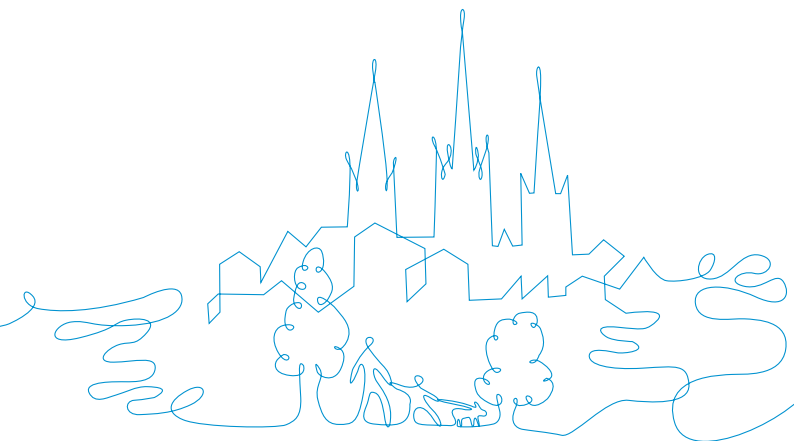
A Coventry Corporation Act creates Britain's first smokeless zone in the city centre.

1954

The Standard Motor Company unveils the first diesel-engine private car.

1962

Consecration of the city's new Cathedral, a symbol of Britain's recovery from World War Two and an unrivalled showcase of post-war British art.



**1965** / The innovative Belgrade Theatre pioneers the Theatre in Education movement in Britain.

**1999** / Coventry Cathedral is voted the nation's favourite 20th century building in a national poll.

**1966** / Britain's first ethnic minority policeman, Mohammed Daar, starts work in Coventry.

**2003** / A Demos/RICS study ranks Coventry 6th among 40 British cities for the number of patent applications per head of population.

**1973** / People, the forerunner of the Green Party in the UK, is founded in Coventry by political activists Tony and Lesley Whittaker.

**2005** / Growing Business magazine rates Coventry the 5th best place to do business in Britain.

**1978** / Global pressure group the International Lesbian and Gay Association founded in Coventry during a conference of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality.

**2007** / The Serious Games Institute opens at Coventry University, the only one of its kind in the UK.

**1979** / 2-Tone music from Coventry, spearheaded by The Specials and Selecter, takes the national scene by storm.

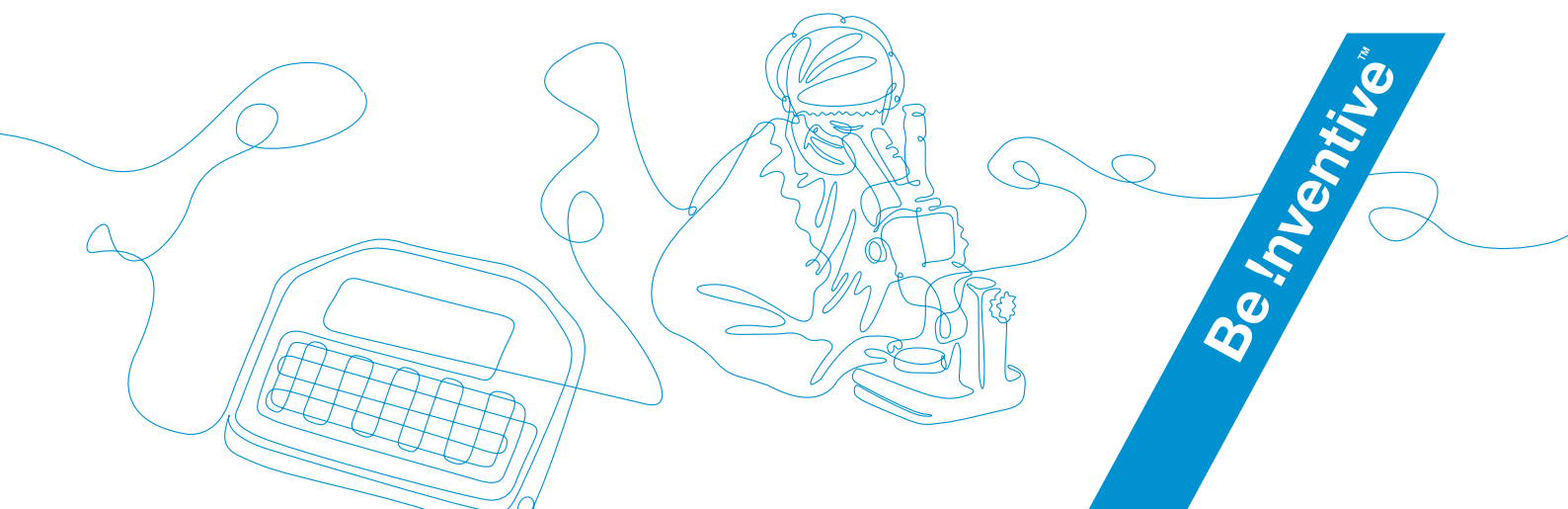
**2008** / Masterplanners Jerde unveil their ideas for a second re-invention of Coventry's retail heart.

**1981** / Coventry company DVW designs and manufactures the world's first rugged handheld computer.

**2009** / Britain's only virtual training centre for the construction industry opens at Coventry University.

**to be continued....**

**1997** / A consortium of Coventry engineering companies makes a key contribution to Thrust SSC, the supersonic car that smashes the World Land Speed Record.



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# cultural invention

## 2009

- ! The Theatre in Education movement, pioneered by Coventry's Belgrade Theatre in 1965, introduced a new way of teaching children about life and spread worldwide.
- ! A digital archive created by Coventry-based CeMAP for the major choreographer Siobhan Davies is the first openly accessible archive of a major dance company in the UK.

- ! Work has begun to create the Biggest Book in the World, filled with stories by Coventry children.
- ! Saxophonist and engineer Antonio di Maria has invented and is now marketing a product for musicians that turns a page of music using a foot pedal.

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# engineering invention

## 2009

- ! Coventry-born pilot and engineer Frank Whittle filed his first patent for the turbo-jet in 1930. It was the Germans who first tested jet propulsion in flight, but it was Whittle's engine that became the basis of post-war civil aviation.
- ! In 1954 the Standard Motor Company of Coventry unveiled the first diesel-engined private car.
- ! The disc brake was pioneered by a Jaguar/Dunlop partnership in the early 1950s, and was used in the company's world-beating generation of Le Mans sports cars.
- ! A consortium of Coventry engineering companies, led by Coventry University, made a key contribution to Thrust SSC, the current World Land Speed Record holder.
- ! Jaguar introduced the motor industry's first weight-saving aluminium body shell in 2004, an innovation that is now being copied by rivals.
- ! Developed by NP Aerospace, CAMAC armour is a highly advanced application of composite material that for the first time can completely replace metallic armour for use on vehicles.
- ! Trials are under way on a new automotive petrol engine, invented at Coventry University, that has been shown in early tests to achieve a 20 per cent improvement in fuel economy.
- ! Research chemists at the University of Warwick have devised a process using nano particles to create a range of high performance materials such as self-healing paint and clever packaging.
- ! Exilica, a spin-off company from Coventry University, has developed micro polymer beads that are now used across many industries, including cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and engineering.

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# green invention

## 2009

- ! In 1951, as part of its plans to re-build the city after the war, Coventry City Council introduced Britain's first smokeless zone, covering the new city centre.
- ! People, the forerunner of the Green Party in the UK, was founded in Coventry in the early 1970s.
- ! Modec, the world's first custom zero emission vehicle manufacturer, now has three types of commercial van available and is attracting interest from a wide range of users.
- ! Microcab, a consortium of Coventry companies, has produced a safe and silent vehicle able to be driven both indoors and on the road.
- ! Researchers at Warwick University are developing a system of using naturally occurring fungus in the fight against the varroa mite, which is destroying the world's population of bees.
- ! A Coventry University researcher has come up with a way of harnessing the energy created by a children's seesaw to produce power for African villages.

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# ict invention

## 2009

- ! In 1980, Coventry company DVW designed and manufactured the world's first rugged portable computer.
- ! Spin-out company Warwick Warp has developed world-leading software to recognise and scan distorted fingerprints.
- ! Coventry-based Rapide Communications launched a system to capture and analyse feedback from customers that won the Innovation Through Technology prize awarded by the British Chambers of Commerce in 2008.
- ! Tactile CRM, a business management software launched by Senokian Solutions, was named best e-business Solution at the recent UK Linux Awards.
- ! The rtCam, developed by Coventry-based Etalon Research, uses high-powered lasers with a camera to measure the velocity of fluids.
- ! Companies at Coventry University's Serious Games Institute are working on neurosky research, moving objects on a screen using only brain activity.
- ! The Institute is also host to companies working on virtual commerce and virtual environments for the teaching of Disaster Management.

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# medical invention

## 2009

- ! Work by researchers at Coventry University and in China has developed a new surgery-free treatment for liver and kidney cancer, using ultrasound.
- ! Osmium, a precious metal related to platinum but never used before in medicine, is being developed as an anti-cancer drug by researchers at Warwick University.
- ! A Coventry University spin-off company, Zone Innovation, has invented a paper towel with an anti-microbial coating that could drastically improve the fight against hospital-acquired infections like MRSA.
- ! Research scientists from a group of universities, including Warwick, have discovered that an existing cancer treatment involving platinum can be made 80 times more powerful by activating it with light.
- ! A method of producing synthetic bone, using techniques normally associated with making catalytic converters for cars, is being developed by researchers at Warwick Manufacturing Group.
- ! Experts at Coventry University are working with Coventry-based Stretching by Design to bring to the market the company's new muscle-stretching device that will bring relief to sufferers from multiple sclerosis.
- ! A new anti-flu product, based on research conducted in Coventry, offers protection against all types of influenza A by combining vaccine and anti-viral technology.
- ! Researchers from the University of Warwick have discovered that a compound within the vegetable broccoli could reverse heart damage from diabetes.
- ! Research into antibiotic resistant drugs has discovered how certain bacteria have become resistant to penicillin. This breakthrough could be used to design a new library of drugs for use against dangerous bacteria.
- ! A research team at the University of Warwick has discovered that high doses of Vitamin B can reverse the onset of early kidney disease in diabetics.
- ! Coventry University's Health Design and Technology Institute is developing to product stage a new toothbrush design that will foster cleaner teeth and healthier gums.
- ! A Coventry surgeon has made some discoveries about blood oxygen levels while climbing Mount Everest that could change the way critically ill people are treated in hospital.

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# social policy invention

## 2009

- ! In 1944, Coventry set up the first international friendship link with Stalingrad, pioneering the idea of town twinning.
- ! Coventry Cathedral's mission of Peace and Reconciliation, launched the day after the destruction of the cathedral in 1940 has grown into a worldwide ministry.
- ! Home Helps, Meals on Wheels and Comprehensive Schools were among the social policy advances piloted in Coventry during the 1960s.
- ! The first beat officer from an ethnic minority started work out on the streets with Coventry police in 1966.
- ! In the 1980s, Coventry was the first city in Britain to introduce a bylaw banning drinking in public. It has been widely emulated since.

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