

News



# Much-maligned city hotel the star of new book

By ENDA MULLEN

IT has come in for more than its fair share of criticism over the years but Coventry's much-maligned Britannia Hotel is the star of a new book.

Older Coventrians may remember the Britannia Hotel in a very different guise, when it was the De Vere Hotel and one of the 'places to be seen' in the city.

When it opened in the early 1970s the De Vere was an architectural landmark and very much an upmarket destination.

Now the hotel features in a book written by its former general manager.

Patrick Griffin was part of the management team when the De Vere opened for business in 1972.

Now he has written a book on his career called 'The Grand Life - Confessions of an Old School Hotelier in the Digital Age' and Coventry's De Vere Hotel has a leading part to play.

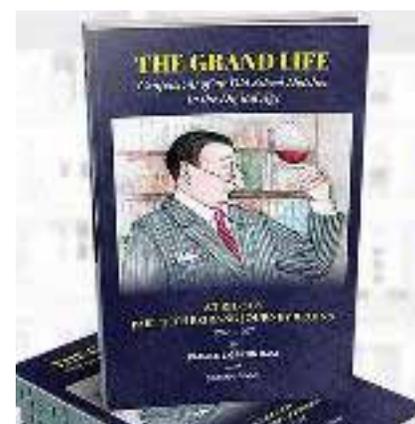
When the De Vere opened Patrick was deputy manager.

He moved to the De Montfort Hotel in Kenilworth to become its general manager but returned to the De Vere in Coventry to become general manager in 1982.

After a six-year stint in charge Patrick headed Down Under to become the manager of a swanky hotel in Melbourne.

But during his time in Coventry Patrick was a passionate advocate for the city.

He said: "During that time I was chairman, or served on the board of a number of organisations - such as the hotel and leisure section of Coventry and District Chamber of Commerce, Coventry and District Conference Association, the tourism and development committee of Coventry City Council and the Tourism Taskforce of the City of Coventry Department of Economic Development and Planning."



At the time there was a huge effort to push Coventry nationally and internationally.

When Patrick left for Australia the Coventry Telegraph interviewed him.

Although he was looking forward to a new challenge he said he was sad to be leaving and predicted a bright future for Coventry.

He said: "I'm convinced that in a few years time we'll have a city to be proud of and I'm sad I'll miss that."

Patrick, who is now 75 and retired in Australia has recalled many interesting Coventry occasions in his book.

They include meeting Princess Diana on her visit to Coventry, Coventry City's FA Cup win and even issues with the IRA.

The book contains many amusing anecdotes, including an almost Fawlty Towers episode at the De Vere where the chairman of a company holding a gala dinner suffered a heart attack and staff had to deal with the aftermath in the midst of hundreds of drunken revellers.

Patrick says the negative view some have of the hotel now as The Britannia is very much at odds with what it once was.

"The De Vere was one of the main attractions and an iconic hotel of the 1970s," he said.



IT'S A  
LOTTO  
QUADRUPLE  
ROLLOVER

TONIGHT

IT COULD BE YOU\*



THE NATIONAL  
LOTTERY

YOUR NUMBERS  
MAKE AMAZING  
HAPPEN

PLAY ON APP, ONLINE AND IN-STORE



Account Terms, Rules & Procedures apply. Players must be 18+.