

Memories of a War Time Royal Visit to St. Michael's Church

During the Second World War, after St. Michael's Church has ceased to be used for services, it became the reception centre for clothes which were distributed by volunteers from the Soldiers, Sailors and Air-force Families Association (SSAFA).

The bravery of the Merchant Navy personnel enabled beautiful, warm garments to be brought over from Canada. These were particularly appreciated by families with growing children, who found it difficult to clothe them within their allotment of coupons and to keep them all warm in the winters, when fuel was scarce.

There were still a few mothers who declared that the clothes were not in the latest fashion, so that my grandmother, Ette Keys, spent her days distributing clothes to grateful families and long evenings altering the garments deemed unacceptable by those who were unreasonably particular.

In a school holiday, I accompanied her carrying an old-fashioned carpet bag in which was the huge key to unlock the main church door. I started to go in, but she grabbed my arm and said, 'No, dear, we can't go straight in. We have to stamp our feet and clap loudly first.'

The ensuing scuttling noises told the reason. The building was rat-ridden. After a time inside, if the humans were totally quiet, the scuttling began again. The ladies did their

very best to keep the place clean and to protect the beautiful clothes, but it was a difficult task. However, they did receive high praise for their efforts.

My grandmother never mentioned it beforehand, so we never knew whether the volunteer ladies had been told in advance - probably not, for security reasons - but one afternoon, in about 1942, a shiny Rolls Royce drew up just inside Southgate Street and from it emerged Queen Mary, our present Queen's grandmother. Her identity could not be mistaken, for there was the toque, above the upright figure so familiar from cinema newsreels. She entered the church and spoke to each of the ladies, expressing appreciation for all their hard work, although she did not sully the white gloves by shaking hands. Those gloves were employed in a little detective work, for while she made towards the door, on her way out, she ran them along the tops of some of the pews. As she inspected them, she saw that they retained their alabaster hue, which makes me think that there must have been a warning of her visit - enough time for a little dusting!

The fact that Queen Mary had made the effort to come to the church greatly impressed those hard-working ladies and enthused them with a fresh determination.

From Trust member
Una Dowding

Culture Club

Culture Club resumes after the Christmas and New Year break with the following programmes :-

Wednesday 1st February
'Sharpness Scuppered Ships'
Paul Barnett

The secrets of the scuppered ships at Sharpness will be revealed! After the talk there will be a collection towards the work of the Friends of Purton who are surveying, photographing and recording each vessel to build up a full archaeological record of the site.

Wednesday 7th March
Join us as we celebrate National Science and Engineering week.

Wednesday 4th April
'Mosaics of Gloucestershire'
Mrs Barbara Blatchley

Gloucestershire is the home of some of the finest mosaics in the country, but they are

often overlooked - until now. Join us as we reveal and boast about incredible examples of Roman domestic artwork.

All Culture Club meetings commence at 1.10pm and are held at the Wheatstone Hall, Brunswick Road, Gloucester.

The above information is from Sarah Orton Lifelong Learning and Access Officer with Gloucester City Council who says: 'all are welcome to Culture Club and like our other activities it is free after normal admission charges to the Museum have been paid. Admission is £3.00 for adults and £2.00 for concessions and this ticket allows admission to the other site within a month. The membership scheme is very good value. Family membership is £20.00 a year and covers 2 adults and up to 5 concessions while individual membership is £10.00. Membership allows unlimited visits to both Museums for a year, a regular newsletter about our events and exhibitions and invites to our private views.'

Gloucester Day 3rd September 2011

Civic Trust members followed the Trust's new banner when they joined the Gloucester Day Parade on Saturday 3rd September 2011.

The Parade which commenced at 2.00pm was led through the four main gate streets by the Mayor and City Sherriff in full Civic Regalia. It ended in Brunswick Road for the official opening of the newly refurbished City Museum by Channel 4's Time Team's Phil Harding.



TOP: Our banner ready to lead the way at the start of the Gloucester Day Parade. **MIDDLE:** David Champion films the parade for the Trust archives. **BOTTOM:** The parade in Southgate Street. (Photograph courtesy of Colin Youngson).



Civic Trust News

Gloucester Civic Trust Ltd
Reg. Charity No. 264719

www.gloucestercivictrust.org.uk
Email postbox@gloucestercivictrust.org.uk

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A Happy New Year To All Our Members and a Happy 40th Birthday Gloucester Civic Trust 1972 - 2012

To mark the Trust's 40th Birthday a copy of the first Annual Report is enclosed. The Council of Management are considering a number of events to mark the occasion, one of which is a Thanksgiving Service in St. Mary de Crypt Church. Further details will be given in the Spring edition of Civic Trust News.

St Michael's Tower Bell Project Nears Completion



Photograph courtesy of Ian Hutton

Bell from All Saints Church, High Wycombe purchased for St. Michael's Tower.

For more details of the project see page 3 - "City Celebrations"

Membership Renewal

Membership subscriptions become due on 1st January, as is my usual practice, I have included a standing order mandate for those that do not already use this method of payment - it means you do not have to remember to send a cheque each year; your bank will do the work for you. However any member wishing to pay by cheque should make their cheque payable to Gloucester Civic Trust Ltd. and send it to Mr John Lane, Membership Secretary, 13 Lewis Avenue, Longford, Gloucester, GL2 9BQ.

Annual subscriptions are:- Single membership £12.50 - Joint membership £18.00

John Lane, Membership Secretary

Winter Programme Continues Into 2012

The Gloucester Civic Trust programme of Autumn and Winter Talks continue into 2012.

Below is a reminder of the programme:-

Wednesday, February 15th:- Dr Nicholas Herbert is well known to many members of the Trust having been County Editor of the Victoria History of Gloucestershire from 1970 until 2003. He has also spoken to members of the Trust on Medieval and Georgian Gloucester. Tonight, however, his subject will be Trade on the River Severn - an interesting look at a time when the Severn was the M5 of its time and places like Newnham on Severn and Frampton were vital stopping off points for commercial shipping.

Wednesday, March 21st:- Now for something different - a talk entitled Blood, Guts and a Little off the Top by John Putley whose alter ego is John Deighton, a Tudor barber-surgeon in Gloucester. During an unforgettable talk he will tell us of Tudor medical theories of diagnosing illnesses using uroscopy and astrology and of treatments involving snail water and salves to name but two of the more unusual 'cures.'

Wednesday April 18th:- Following the AGM, Angela Panrucker who delighted members with a talk last year on Gloucestershire pub names will be returning with a new talk entitled 'Odd, Curious and Quirky Gloucestershire.' This talk will be equally entertaining.

As usual, talks will take place in the GALA Club, Fairmile Gdns, Tewkesbury Road, Longford, Gloucester at 7.30 pm.

No entry charge is made, but there will be a retiring collection to defray costs of room hire

John Lovell
Programme Co-ordinator



Information and articles are always appreciated.
Please contact Terry Brooks, 44 Wheatway, Abbeydale, Gloucester GL4 5ER
Tel: 01452 411827 or e-mail terence.brooks@btopenworld.com.



News from the Docks



Concern About Accumulating Silt

Serious concerns have been expressed about the steady accumulation of silt in the docks and the limitations of the current efforts at dredging. If an adequate depth of water is not maintained, it will affect the viability of future tall ship festivals, Tommi Nielsen's shipyard, the lightship SULA and the hotel cruise boat Edward Elgar. (Citizen 10 Sep 2011)

Emergency Dredging

Following complaints from commercial operators about the high level of silt in the Main Basin at Gloucester, British Waterways have arranged an additional campaign using the Land and Water floating pump which stirs up the silt so that it can pass out through the sluices at the lock.

Possible New Museum

A museum dedicated to the Korean War could be established in the former office building between the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum and the Gloucester Yacht Club. Members of the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum are in talks with the city council and leading Korean businessmen who are keen to honour the role played by the Gloucestershire Regiment in the war. (Citizen 27 October 2011)



◆ Possible site of new Korean War Museum.

Dredger Lottery Award

The Friends of Gloucester Waterways Museum have been awarded £43,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund for repairs to the Museum's steam dredger, now recognised as the oldest steam dredger in Europe. The money will mainly be spent on a survey of the hull and the replacement of boiler tubes.



◆ Gloucester Waterways steam dredger wins Heritage Lottery Fund Award.

Lock Warehouse

The warehouse beside Gloucester Lock, recently the home of the Gloucestershire Arts and Crafts centre, is to be converted into 26 flats and 3000 square feet of retail space. Barnwood Construction will start work in November 2011, and the building should be ready for occupation in October 2012. (Citizen 20 October 2011)

New Phase for Gloucester Quays

The Peel Group have announced plans for a £60 million development of their Gloucester Quays designer outlet centre. The plans include a ten-screen cinema on the first floor of the building between High Orchard Street and Merchants Road, a variety of restaurants in the neighbouring units and development of the existing cinema building to provide more shops etc. overlooking the canal. (Citizen 27 Sep 2011)

New Waterways Charity

On 6 October, British Waterways announced that when the organisation becomes a charity in 2012, it will be known as the Canal and River Trust. The logo shows a swan in front of a bridge.

Gloucester Beer at Victorian Market

The first batches of Gloucester Gold and Docksider Dark beer from the new Gloucester brewery went on sale at the Victorian Market over the weekend 25-27 November. The market organised by Gloucester Quays attracted around 70,000 visitors. (Citizen 28 & 29 Nov 2011)

Merchants Quay Apartments Unveiled

The scaffolding has been removed from the side of the new Merchants Quay apartment block facing the Main Basin, showing all the windows currently covered by shutters. 33 of the 48 apartments have already been sold, and they are expected to be ready for occupation in February 2012.



◆ New Merchant Quay Apartments - December 2011.

These notes are from Hugh Conway-Jones monthly e-mail newsletter reporting activities connected with the Gloucester Docks and the Sharpness Canal. To receive a regular copy yourself go to www.gloucesterdocks.me.uk click on newsletter and type your e-mail address into the box.

New Members

We welcome the following new members to Gloucester Civic Trust:-

- ◆ Mr R Brunson
- ◆ M/s R Court
- ◆ Miss N Cox
- ◆ Mrs U Dowding
- ◆ Mrs N Fisher
- ◆ Mr R Jones
- ◆ Mr T Miles
- ◆ Mrs V O'Connor
- ◆ Mr M Sheridan
- ◆ Mr P Wiles
- ◆ Mr & Mrs M Williams

Railway Triangle Planning Application Report

This is a hybrid application which seeks detailed permission for part of the site (the Morrison's supermarket, car parks, access roads and footpaths) and outline permission for the remaining area.

The panel has no objection to the mix of uses proposed. The land contains no constraints on archaeological, conservation area, scheduled ancient monument, listed building, or environmental grounds. It is a highly visible, classic brownfield or industrially derelict site, which has been in an appalling state of maintenance for many years.

The panel believes the site should not be looked at in isolation but take into account other nearby railway land south of Metz Way and off Great Western Road opposite the hospital also in various states of highly visible dereliction.

The panel was reassured to hear that the access to the application site will provide a proper road link to the land south of Metz Way. This will enable that land to be further developed for operational railway use, and free a large area of land off Great Western Road (much nearer the city centre) for redevelopment. This would be a planning gain.

Gloucester Central is a perfectly adequate city centre railway station. Unfortunately the train companies running Cross Country services on the north-south line (Birmingham-Bristol) refuse to stop there, thus depriving a county town of huge

historic significance and tourism potential, a direct railway service to destinations as far apart as Aberdeen and Penzance.

The panel has no objection to the design and palette of materials used in the details of the Morrison's supermarket. We do have concerns about the treatment of the roof, because this is the part of the proposed building which will be most seen by passers-by on the elevated section of Metz Way.

Our objection is to the siting of the supermarket. It occupies the most suitable land which could be used in the future for a railway station on the north-south line to serve Gloucester. In public transport and strategic planning terms it should be protected from development.

Planning permission should be refused, providing an opportunity for a public inquiry on appeal, and an adjudication by the Secretary of State.

Report from Hugh Worsnip

Hugh Worsnip further reported: at a packed meeting, on Thursday 1st December 2011, the City Planning Committee unanimously approved the detailed application from LXB to build a Morrison Supermarket off Metz Way, subject to the signing of a section 106 agreement on contributions from the developers towards bus services and public art etc. It also approved outline planning permission for the rest of the 'Railway Triangle' site for employments uses.



◆ TOP: Tower Project Volunteers at the Charity Day. BOTTOM: Judy Leach and Martyn White (with Jeremy Wood) in the staff dining room.

Charity Day at Ecclesiastical Insurance Group Headquarters

On Wednesday 5th October 2011 our business partner the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group invited us to join in one of their charity days at their headquarters in Beaufort House, Brunswick Road in support of the Trust's St. Michael's Tower Bell project.

Tower volunteers, Marilyn Champion, Judy Leach, Carol Carpenter, Martyn White and Marilyn Morley set up our stall outside the staff restaurant where staff were encouraged to buy raffle tickets with the proceeds going towards the bell project.

The day proved to be a great success, part of which, we think, was due to the presence of Jemmy Wood (with Martyn White) who

News from Civic Voice MPs launch group for Civic Societies

Our new All Party Parliament Group for civic societies was launched in the House of Commons on 1st November 2011 and over 40 MPs have already signed up.

The first meeting heard from Tony Burton and Deputy Chair Freddie Gick and voted in the first officers, with Laura Sandys, MP as Chair. Laura is a long-standing friend of the civic movement and President of the Kent Federation of Amenity Societies.

There was strong support for more efforts to share experiences of civic societies around the country. One proposal was a get together of civic societies in the House of Commons in 2012 to display what everyone does, demonstrate the diversity and strength of the movement and meet MPs.

We would be interested in your thoughts on this idea. The meeting also agreed to invite Greg Clark MP to discuss neighbourhood planning and the review of national planning policies.

MPs also discussed their relationship with civic societies and asked for more contact. A large number of MPs have joined the group after being approached by their local civic society. This shows that we can make a difference when we work together.



◆ Photograph from Civic Voice shows members of the group.

in good fun, 'jemmed' money out of the pockets of the staff on their way into lunch.

Our volunteers were overwhelmed by the generosity of the staff and for the support they gave to our project. In all a total of £818.30 was raised, half of which came from the raffle and donations. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group matched the amount raised to make up the above figure.

Staff were very impressed with our efforts and with our display stand, one of the best they told us. The volunteers would like to thank everyone at the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group for their support in making it such a successful day.

Ecclesiastical Insurance Group Sponsoring Awards in the Local Community

In June 2011 I was privileged to be guest at the Gloucester Community Awards held at Kingsholm Rugby Ground.

The awards are sponsored by local companies to recognise people who against many odds have achieved amazing things in their communities.

Our business partners, the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, sponsored the local Hero Category which was won by a lovely lady called Annie Watkins for her dedicated service as a mentor to young people - helping to turn around their lives and indeed even saving their lives.

For me it was good to meet the other organisations that the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group support and chat to them, indeed the Ecclesiastical helps out many local groups behind the scenes.

The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group does all the photocopying for the Civic Trust

and printing such as our newsletters - the very one you are reading now and they print our Annual Reports. They also carry the cost of all the postage involved.

Two years ago the Trust's Council of Management was concerned about the ever rising costs of producing our newsletters and the postage which took up a large chunk of our membership fee income. So the help the Ecclesiastical give us is very much appreciated. Otherwise it would be a struggle.

Speaking on behalf of St. Michael's Tower, the Ecclesiastical has, these past eighteen months, done all our printing for school visits and mail outs to various groups. The mail outs have been highly successful and have resulted in a new audience for the Civic Trust.

They have also purchased, for the Tower, a large Plasma TV on a portable stand

at a cost of £1500.00. As it is moveable the TV has become an essential tool for our armchair tours, where people who are less mobile can come and learn about Gloucester's heritage.

In such difficult times where many community groups and charitable organisations are struggling, some even having to shut down, it's good to have a business partner on board and one that is so active in helping us to promote the good work done by the Civic Trust.

Marilyn Champion



Gloucester Civic Trust Planning Appraisal Meeting 21st December 2011

Update on Poundworld, Eastgate Street. This shop in the premier conservation area has been opened without getting planning permission for either the new shop front or advertisement signs. The panel objected at last month's session. A planning application has now been made and refused, and enforcement action has now begun.

December list as follows;

11/01340/LBC and 11/01339/FUL. Change of use of Cross Keys Inn, Cross Keys Lane, from pub to part pub, part retail and part residential. Internal alterations to create antique shop on part ground and first floors.

The panel has no objection to the change of use, which will enable more people to see inside this fascinating old building. The proposed alterations will remove 20th century additions and bring an underused 16th century timber framed building into use for an independent retailer in the heart of the city centre.

11/01325/LBC. Strengthening of the staircase at the Docks Office, Commercial Road, for British Waterways.

Acceptable and welcome. Once completed, there will be no outward sign of the work to this fine old wooden staircase.

11/01323/FUL and 11/01338/NMA. Replacement of condenser units on the roof of Sainsbury's, Northgate Street. Amended plan for the alteration of frontages to both Northgate Street and Hare Lane.

Both acceptable.

11/01285/CON. Redevelopment of the former Victoria Ironworks area to the rear of 143 to 147, Barton Street with 6 office/workshops and 12 flats, maisonettes and two bed houses.

The panel welcomes in principle this thoughtful scheme to replace a number of non-conforming, semi industrial uses. But the density of the housing is too high. Negotiations are continuing. The panel would like to see an amended plan.

11/01354/FUL. Housing scheme to replace No 68 Weston Road for Colburn Homes. Completely unacceptable.

Planning permission should be refused. Rarely have we seen such an incongruous plan for a conservation area. The main building to Weston Road is monolithic modern in a street of large Edwardian villas and the scheme includes intrusive back land development.

11/01371/FUL. Two flats to the rear of 20-22, Wellington Street on the corner of Arthur Street.

Acceptable, subject to the submission of suitable walling and window materials.

11/01229/FUL. Replacement garage at 59, Heathville Road with attic storage above.

The garage is very near the adjoining house. A hipped roof would be more acceptable.

11/01322/LBC. Replacement of unauthorised UPVC windows with 12 pane timber sashes at 89 Bristol Road (grade 2 listed).

Satisfactory end to a long saga. The panel supports the council's campaign to retain suitable windows in listed buildings.

11/01234/ FUL. Amended plan to regularise apart/hotel use at the Judges' Lodgings, Spa Road.

Our objections remain the same as for the previous applications. The use is wholly unacceptable. Planning permission should be refused.

Report from Hugh Worsnip

City Celebrations

Back in 2004 when the Civic Trust first embarked upon their St Michael's Tower Project, one of our main aims was to reinstate a bell in the Bell Tower and to repair the flagpole on top of the Tower. However the Heritage Lottery Grant money we had for the Tower didn't stretch that far. We decided it would be a standalone project in the future once the Tower project was up and running.

This year with the 40th anniversary of the Civic Trust, we thought it the ideal time to start thinking about it again.

2012 is also Jubilee year; we also have the Olympics; Gloucester Rotary celebrates 90 years and the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group celebrates 125 years.

So what better than to call our project 'City Celebrations'.

Our first port of call was to contact Mary Bliss our local bell expert. As you can appreciate this is a very specialist subject and Mary we thought would be the ideal person to point us in the right direction.

Mary recommended a bell broker - Keltek - and a bell installer - Bill Berry. There aren't many people around nowadays with these skills.

On contacting Keltek we were told it could take years to find the right bell for St Michael's Tower - so our hearts sank a little bit.

Then just a week later we were told that All Saints Church in High Wycombe had a suitable bell. Our bell man Bill got in touch with the church and it seemed that indeed the bell was ideal. Keltek negotiated the price on our behalf, the cost of which is £4,400.

Some of us went to High Wycombe to see our bell. It's in great condition originally cast in 1711 by Richard Phelps of the Whitechapel Bell Foundry.

The bell has the following inscription:

**'THROUGH MANY AN AGE
DID I RING TRUE
'NEATH SHADES OF WAR
MY VOICE FAINT GREW
WITH DAWN OF PEACE
NEW HOPES ARISE
MY WOUND IS HEALED
THROUGH SACRIFICE'**

The bell was recast in 1919 using the same metal but as it was a bell of historical importance the inscription was kept.

With the bell sorted, we turned to the flagpole - again not an easy thing with lots of health and safety issues. However, a suitable supplier was located in Hampshire and a

reasonable quote obtained. They will also supply the flag at an additional cost.

We've asked volunteers at St Michael's Tower what kind of flag should we have and we've also asked our users. So it looks as though we shall have the flag of St Michael which is a blue cross on a white background. Then in one corner to have the Gloucester Civic Trust Logo; the other corner to have the city crest; the third corner to have the red cross of St George and finally to have the Ecclesiastical Logo in the fourth corner - as they've supported us in many ways. We did think of having more than one flag but having to climb to the top of the tower all the time to change it - well, we thought that not practical. The final design of the flag will be approved by Council of Management.

Then we looked at the interpretation board. When the Tower's shut to the public there is very little heritage interpretation about the building and it really has lots of history and stories. Again this was something high on our wish list.

John Rhodes has supplied us with his wonderful essays on the history of St Michael's Church and Bell Tower and we've also included some of the Tower Tales given to us by residents. The whole lot has been sent off to a heritage designer who has started on the text. The text and design will also be approved by Council of Management.

English Heritage insisted that before we install the board we have to remove the litter bin and public seating outside the Tower as the area is too cluttered and spoils the appearance of the Tower. We had to agree to do this and pay for the cost of relocation ourselves - otherwise no interpretation board!

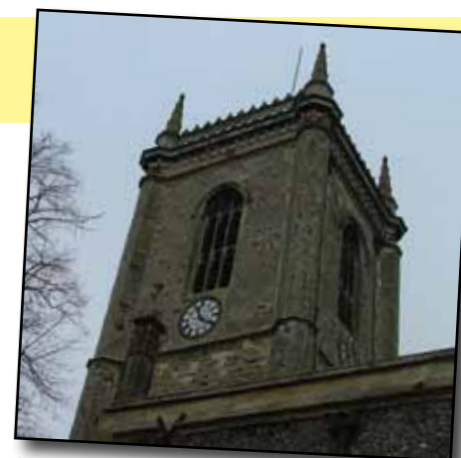
So once we had in all the costs we then had to seek out funding. The total cost of the project is £18,000.

Our business partners the Ecclesiastical Insurance kindly offered to buy the bell as part of their 125th birthday celebrations. We thought that was amazing.

We made a presentation to GHB and they awarded us £1,000. The Civic Trust contributed a cash sum of £2,000 and Gloucester Rotary also awarded us £1,000.

We then applied to Gloucestershire Environmental Trust (GET) for £10,000. We knew competition was stiff with so many after the same pot of money. Gloucestershire Environmental Trust kick started our Tower project in 2006 with a grant of £20,000 and this in turn led to other co-funding including the Heritage Lottery Grant of £199,000.

We had a site visit from GET for our latest project - it was quite intense and it lasted for ages. After that we had to provide



The Bell Tower, All Saints Church, High Wycombe. Photograph from Ian Hatton.

more information and even more after that. However, all the hard work paid off and GET awarded us the amount we asked for.

So what happens next - well we have to commission a professional survey by an appropriate qualified engineer for the bell. Plans have to be drawn up. We have to apply to English Heritage for Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent which may take up to 4 months.

We need to instruct the flagpole team and they will visit the Tower to carry out a more in depth analysis. Then we need to instruct the people doing our interpretation board.

We have to have a new property licence from the city council for the bell and flagpole. We have to build in safeguards for the city council to never sell on the bell should at any time the Civic Trust vacate the building - so lots to sort out come the New Year.

Our deadline for the project is October 2012. However, we do hope it can all be completed by the summer so that we can organize an inaugural summer ceremony which forms part of our grant terms and conditions.

Personally I'd like to thank the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group for offering to purchase the bell for us. For GHB and Rotary for their assistance too. The co-funding is very important as it shows confidence in our project.

Moreover the enthusiastic fund raising by the Tower volunteers was what swung it! Their commitment to the project and not just sitting back and waiting for it all to be grant funded (taking an easy option) - that was the key to our success. Grant funders like to see such activity nowadays and it gave our grant application the edge.

We all know that fund raising is such hard work and time consuming. For the Tower team it's meant manning cold and wet car parks - and we have two of those sessions coming up soon at the time of writing; and making endless cups of tea and coffee in the Tower. However, it makes it all worthwhile when we can see the results of all that hard work.

Marilyn Champion
Project Co-ordinator

Well Done To All, You Helped Make History

History Week, 5th - 10th September 2011

In the run-up to Gloucester's first History Week, you suggested I write a preview piece outlining the events taking place and suggesting that the week could indeed be history-making in itself.

Well was it?

I think the answer to that has to be an emphatic 'yes'.

Gloucester Day's procession was gloriously inclusive of so many organisations and witnessed by hundreds more. The opening of the refurbished museum - itself a tribute to the efforts of councillors and officers - was the icing on the cake.

The thousands who enjoyed Heritage Open Days spoke for themselves. The numbers of buildings open and the range of activities was only possible, once again, by the co-operation of the many and the hard work of the few.

In the middle of these two events was this year's innovation - six fascinating talks..... five of which were held in the awesome setting of Blackfriars. About 650 people came to listen during the week and the feedback showed not only the popularity of the talks but how willingly people respond to their heritage.

As one former city head teacher commented - how nice it was to have a series of inspirational in-depth talks at such a prestigious Gloucester venue.

However, as we all know nothing happens of itself. The week's success - talks included - is down to a wide range of people. These include the City crier, Alan Myatt; MP Richard Graham; hard-working city council officials and last - but by no means least - those who voluntarily gave up so much of their time to ensure success. Here I must, in particular, mention the role of the Civic Trust in organising the days and providing two speakers.

Nor should we forget the excellent publicity by this paper in the run up to the festival and the help of BBC Radio Gloucestershire.

At long last we can record a positive note about our city to offset the depressing headlines of late.

At the end of the preview, I wrote: "Let's lay the foundation for an annual Gloucester History Festival..... all you have to do is take pride in your city and take part."

To all who did - a huge thank you - your involvement made it all worthwhile. It gives us heart to plan for an even bigger event next year.

John Lovell
Secretary
Gloucester Civic Trust

John's letter appeared in the Citizen on Saturday 8th October 2011.

Heritage Open Weekend

8th and 11th September 2011

Just eight weeks before we were due to start Heritage Open Days we agreed to expand our brochure to include a 'History Week' and to include Gloucester Day in the programme as well. This was quite an undertaking not just for the Heritage Open Days team but also for Trust members, Phil Moss and Hugh Worsnip agreeing to give talks and John Lovell agreeing to manage the event. We also paid a price when the brochure was produced as we had not made it clear that there were now two Saturdays and that Heritage Open Days events would only be on the last one!

Despite this the event was once more a success. Although the number of events we had fell slightly

from the previous year our footfall went up again showing an increase for the third year in a row. The main reason for this we believe is that the reputation of our event has grown by word of mouth as well as by our advertising. Hillfield House is a good example with Richard Curzon struggling to cope with a 54% increase in visitors compared with last year. We also welcomed Blackfriars back following its refurbishment and the visitors flocked back as well, next year we may need to open on Thursday and Friday to meet demand!

We did struggle to arrange the manning for the events this year (that's to say Jenny did!) and for next year we would like to start our planning earlier so that people can also plan to be at the event as well. Colin Youngson is joining the team this year and is keen to involve the newly qualified guides in the event as much as possible. We also have some sad news as Nicola Jones, our administrator from the Council for the past four years, has taken voluntary redundancy. Nicola has been a tower of strength in organising the event and she will be sorely missed. The dates for next year are Thursday, 6th to Sunday, 9th September 2012.

Many thanks to all the guides who took part, the ones I met during the event were also having a good time as well!

Alex Bailey, Jenny Williams and Colin Youngson - Heritage Open Days Team.

♦ **TOP:** Tour guide Richard Curzon about to lead off with his *Seige of Gloucester Tour*. **MIDDLE:** Jenny Williams leading her *Public Art Tour* stops at *Emperor Nerva's Statue*. **BOTTOM:** The *Silver Singers* led by Peter Gould in *St. Mary de Crypt Church*. (Photographs courtesy of Alex Bailey).

Focus on Fielding and Platt Project



♦ View of Fielding and Platt's premises from the railway crossing on Southgate Street c.1950 - the present day site of the Quays retail centre and Travelodge. (Gloucestershire Archives D8489)

Gloucestershire Archives is hoping to bring to life the story of Fielding and Platt at the Quays in 2012.

Working with Gloucester City Centre Community Partnership (CCCP), the Archives is applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a project celebrating the archival heritage of Fielding and Platt, a well-known hydraulic engineering firm in the city until its closure in the 1990s.

From its beginnings in the 1860s, the firm became a major employer in the city with

well over 600 staff based at its extensive 'Atlas Works' on the site of what is now Gloucester Quays. There is little physical trace of its existence now, but plenty of oral evidence still survives within the local community and one

of the key aims of the project is to capture these memories. The recordings will be preserved at Gloucestershire Archives where the firm's formal business archive is already kept. The project will include sorting and cataloguing the archive material so that it can be accessed. People will be encouraged to share their memories and photographs through a community project website. At the Quays itself, to give visitors an insight into this part of the city's heritage, the project will fund a range of activities and events including a Memory Day, 'family fun' workshops, street theatre and interactive audio stories.

None of this will be possible without volunteers of course, who will be recruited and trained to help with a variety of activities including oral history recording; creating and managing a website; preserving and cataloguing traditional and digital archives; developing learning resources; and

helping to organise and deliver community events.

The Civic Trust has agreed to help promote and support the project through its Docks tours planned for the coming summer (which will start from the Quays customer information point, positioned on the old Fielding and Platt site).

Julie Courtenay, leading on the project for Gloucestershire Archives, says: "The success of the project very much depends on people coming forward to share their memories, photographs and other records relating to Fielding and Platt - whether as workers or as residents of the Quays area."

Depending on funding, the project is likely to run for 15 months starting next April. If any Civic Trust members would like to be involved in the project in any way, or are just interested to know more, then please get in touch with Julie at Gloucestershire Archives, Clarence Row, Alvin Street, Gloucester, GL1 3DW (01452 425297 or email julie.courtenay@gloucestershire.gov.uk).

Thanks to Julie Courtenay for the above contribution to Civic Trust News



New Guides Badge Presentation

10th November 2011

More than 1,700 people took guided tours around the historic areas of Gloucester during the last 12 months.

This was a big increase on the previous year, largely because of a boom in bookings by organised parties. Attendance for daily tours from the Gloucester Civic Trust Head Quarters at St Michael's Tower was up by 30 per cent to 315, in an extended season. Only in February were Civic Trust guides not in action.

At a civic reception in the North Warehouse on Thursday 10th November the Mayor, Councillor Andy Lewis, thanked Trust volunteers for their efforts, and presented badges and certificates to five newly qualified guides who have completed their training course and passed an examination.

The Mayor said: "I want to put on record the thanks of the City of Gloucester for all you do to tell visitors and residents alike about the wonderful historic place we live in. You are the custodians of our heritage. I find that

the more you tell people about our history, the more they want, so keep up the good work and thank you for expanding your activities over the last year."

He presented guide credentials to Sue Bartlett, Geoff Brookes, Tony Conder, Sue White and Julie Brooks.

Gloucester now has nearly 60 registered guides available for the Gloucester Civic Trust's 40th anniversary year in 2012.

The highlight of 2011 was the Heritage Open Days and History Festival of early September.

Heritage Open Days co-organiser, Jenny Williams, said; "Gloucester was third in the country for the number of buildings open and events organised. The number of people who attended was up 13 per cent on last year, contributing to a 30 per cent increase over the past three years."

Tour organiser, Ted Edmunds, said the Trust

♦ The photograph shows City Sheriff Councillor Pat Tracey, Julie Hodcroft, Assistant Training Co-ordinator, new guides Sue Bartlett, Julie Brooks, Sue White, Chris Morgan, Training Co-ordinator and Mayor Councillor Andy Lewis.

was now providing wheel chair and armchair tours from St. Michael's Tower as well as the walking tours. Bookings for the 2012 season beginning in May were already coming in.

Publicity and marketing officer, Terry Brooks, said; "Docks tours have been disappointing and a working group has been set up to investigate. Next year we will introduce a 6.15pm tour on Fridays in July and August as well as the Saturday and Sunday tours. We hope to work closely with the Gloucester Quays information centre in promoting our Docks tours."

Press release by Hugh Worsnip