

Gloucester Mystery Plays

We have taken on many projects in the past which have sparked the imagination and grown a little larger than we had anticipated, but never one that has developed a whole life of its own and which we hope will unite the city in the way that the Gloucester Mystery Plays have.

Since Edward II was performed, my association with Gloucester has continued, and when I was approached in April 2011 with the idea of performing the Mystery Plays at the Cathedral, a chain of events was started that would make you believe that something was giving this idea a little push to make sure it happens.

York is the centre of the Mystery Play world (and world is the right word), with Mystery Plays now being performed not just in York, but in Lincoln, Lichfield, Chester, Coventry, Toronto, Sydney and countless festivals around Europe.

Most use scripts in hard-to-understand Medieval English. We have decided to modernise the language so that audiences can get the most from the performances, and we can involve the Youth Theatre, as the kids will be able to work with the modernised script.

Rachel Murray has spent countless hours creating The Gloucester Scripts working with

composer Robert Perry, and we now have scripts and music to produce a performance of The Gloucester Mystery Plays which is uniquely Gloucester's.

A cast and crew of over 100 is being assembled to tell the greatest story ever told, in two cycles; Fall of Lucifer to Death of Herod took place in November 2012 and the Life of Christ to Judgement Day in April 2013, thus fitting into the church calendar. Performances will be at Gloucester and Worcester Cathedrals.

The City Council has asked us to take plays into the city to create a new tourist attraction and so, on the weekend of 15th and 16th June 2013 the inaugural Gloucester Medieval Mystery Play Festival will take place, with plays being performed at ten stations around the city 'on Wagon' in the traditional way. We shall be supported by over 50 Medieval Groups turning the clock back to create a medieval town full of all the sights and sounds, smells and activities that would have accompanied the touring players between 1100 and 1700 when the plays were originally performed.

We have even thrown in a Legion of Romans just for good measure: if you are going to crucify Christ they do come in quite handy!

To top it all off we have Rick Wakeman coming to perform The Myths and Legends of King Arthur at Kingholm on the Saturday. Then there will be a charity concert on the Sunday to raise, we hope, a large sum of money for the Cathedral and other local charities. The County and City Councils, Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, Rotary, Women's Institute, Tesco, Sainsbury and Civic Trust to name but a few have now pledged their support for this event, so we will have an opportunity to create a wonderful spectacle which will come around every few years and be uniquely Gloucester's, raising hundreds of thousands of pounds for the place that inspired it all in the first place - Gloucester Cathedral.

*Phil McCormack - Producer
Gloucestershire Theatre Association.*

This article which first appeared in the Friends of Gloucester Cathedral Newsletter Autumn 2012, is reproduced by kind permission of Phil McCormack and is included in this newsletter as the Trust is supporting the event.

Heritage Open Days

6th to 9th September 2012

Last September's Heritage Open Days were the biggest and best ever with 118 events and our footfall up by 22% compared with the previous year. We stayed in the top five cities in the country and we believe put on the most diverse offering of events.

The lunchtime talks clearly benefited from the History Festival synergy and for the first time ever they were fully subscribed with 100 people at each talk. One talk celebrated our great composer and poet Ivor Gurney and we also had a walk around Ivor Gurney's Gloucester led by author Eleanor Rawlings who read a poem at each stop.

We also benefitted from the Lock200 event and arranged a number of new events in the Docks of which the main successes were the Cotton Owners Club display which was busy all day long and the Brewery who commented afterwards that after the HOD weekend and Lock200 they felt that people now knew they existed!

A real highlight was the opening of the Undercroft at the Fleece Hotel for the first time since 2008 and we had nearly 1,000 visitors. We had a number of buildings open for the first time, the Carriage Building, Wotton House/Redcliffe College and the former All Saints Church.

We had our usual diverse musical offering with the Cathedral Junior Choir and a Brass Band performing for the first time alongside established favourites like the Gloucester Waites and the Silver Singers.

The city's museums also took a full part with a welcome return of the Waterways Museum.

Perhaps the biggest change last year was the range and number of themed walks which we put on with 12 different walks led by Civic Trust Guides with a total of 68 walks in all. As well as these we had walks on Gurney, Gloucester Inns, Gargoyles, Hempsted Hams and other tours around the museums, St Mary de Crypt Crypt and Tower. All in all surely the most extensive guided walks offering in the country.

This was my last year of organising the Heritage Open Days but I am pleased to be handing over to the very able Colin Youngson who will be supported by Jenny Williams, someone who has been a key member of the team for a number of years now.

*Report from Alex Bailey
Heritage Open Days Co-ordinator*



ABOVE: Town Cryer Alan Myatt and Alex Bailey, Heritage Open Days Co-ordinator.
RIGHT: Hannah Talbot-Cooper performs on behalf of the Gloucester Music Society in St. Mary de Lode Church.



ABOVE: Face painting at the Tower.
BELOW: Tour Guide Tony Conder's introductory talk to visitors before their tour of Winfields.



Civic Trust News

Gloucester Civic Trust Ltd
Reg. Charity No. 264719

www.gloucestercivictrust.org.uk
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A Very Happy New Year to All Members

1972-2012 - 40th Anniversary Celebration



Trust Chairman, Robin Morris addresses members and guests at the 40th Anniversary Reception held at the Guildhall on Saturday 27th October 2012.

Obituary Phillip Brown

It is with great sadness we report the death of Phillip Brown who died in Gloucestershire Royal Hospital on 17th November 2012. Phillip was a long standing member of the Trust and had made a number of interesting contributions to Civic Trust News, the last of which was in the Spring 2012 issue.

We offer our condolences to his wife Pat and all members of his family.

Membership Subscription Renewal

Membership subscriptions became due on 1st January, as is my usual practice, enclosed is a standing order mandate for those who 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 still wishing to pay by cheque, should make it payable to Gloucester Civic Trust Ltd. and send it to

Mr John Lane, Membership Secretary, 13 Lewis Avenue, Longford, Gloucester, GL2 9BQ.

Current annual subscriptions remain:
Single membership £12.50
Joint membership £18.00

*John Lane
Membership Secretary*



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



Lock200

The 200th anniversary of the opening of Gloucester Lock to commercial traffic was celebrated on 8 September with a gathering of decorated boats in the Main Basin and stalls on the North Quay. Two boats re-enacted the original opening, rising in the lock to the sounds of a band playing, a gun firing and spectators cheering.



Lock200 - Richard Trelfa, tour guide and Waterways Museum volunteer in the 1812 role as Chairman of the Gloucester to Berkeley Canal Co.



Lock200 - Replica Trow, Herefordshire Bull sails the main basin.

Albion Cottages

A planning application has been submitted for change of use of No1 Albion Cottages from offices to one three bed-roomed house. (App Ref 12/00720)

New Quays Cinema

Work has started on the creation of a new multi-screen cinema in the Gloucester Quays shopping centre. Hoardings have been erected in Merchants Road and High Orchard Street.

Quays Crane

A huge crane was erected on 4 October between Merchants Road and High Orchard Street to help in the construction of the new multi-screen cinema in the Gloucester Quays shopping centre.

New Gym

On 17 September, work started on the creation of a new 24-hour budget gym on the corner of Llanthony Road and Bakers Quay. Contractors are fitting out the unit for the Gym Group who operate a chain of gyms around the country.

North Warehouse Refurbishment

Plans to refurbish the interior of the North Warehouse to provide a suite of serviced offices for the Regus Group were approved on 2 October. The top floor will be retained by the City Council, including the existing council chamber and the mayor's parlour, and a new committee room will be formed in place of the sheriff's parlour and the silver display area. (App Ref 12/00764)

Contractors have now started work on refurbishing the interior of the North Warehouse.

Concrete Barge

The concrete barge that was once an exhibit at the Waterways Museum has sunk at its moorings near the old Marshfield timber pond south of Purton. Only the tiller is visible above water and boaters are advised to be careful.

Dredging Started

On 5 November, dredging contractor Land & Water started a trial of cutter suction dredging to remove silt from the Main Basin. It is expected that this will be more efficient than water erosion dredging used in recent years.



The Land and Water cutter suction dredger at work with a line of black floats supporting the discharge pipe leading to the small dry dock (picture courtesy of Hugh Conway-Jones).

Docks Public Realm

The contract for managing the eastern side of the docks on behalf of Gloucester City Council and the Gloucester Docks Estate Company has been awarded to the Peel Group which owns the Gloucester Quays Shopping Centre. The new arrangement covers cleaning, maintenance and landscaping of the public areas to ensure they are welcoming and attractive. (Punchline e-zine)

Waterways Museum Award

Gloucester Waterways Museum has been recognised as a 'quality assured' visitor attraction by Visit England. Mystery shoppers visited the Museum at the end of October and made a number of anonymous telephone calls and e-mails to assess the Museum for its customer service. (ThisIsGloucestershire website 19 Nov 2012)

Boat Jumble

This year's Boat Jumble will be held on Sunday 14 April. Anyone wishing to volunteer is asked to contact Richard Trelfa e-mail rjtrelfa@talktalk.net.

These notes are from Hugh Conway-Jones monthly e-mail newsletter reporting activities connected with the Gloucester 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.

B and B (or Bells and Board!)

As the 40th anniversary of Gloucester Civic Trust drew nearer, we were anxious to complete the latest St. Michael's Tower project in time for the celebrations.

It was August 2011 when we embarked upon our latest Civic Trust project to reinstate the flagpole on top of the Tower, to bring back the 'curfew bell' and to erect a quality interpretation board outside St. Michael's Tower.

The project was to cost us £22,000 and thanks to a grant of £10,000 from Gloucestershire Environmental Trust and money from Rotary Club of Gloucester, GHB and Ecclesiastical Insurance - coupled with the superb fund raising efforts of all the volunteers who help out in St. Michael's Tower, our financial goal was achieved in just a few months and in record time. That truly was the easy bit!

Then the hard work started..... co-ordinating all the various contractors, agreeing specifications and design and progress chasing all the work as well as keeping an eye on the budget.

There were delays along the line as our bell engineer, Bill Berry, had to have an operation which meant he was out of action for a while - so long in fact that we had to commission a sub contractor bell engineer from Exeter. This added extra costs to the project which was met by volunteers in the Tower working extra hard in attracting funds.

The flagpole was the first element to be completed very smoothly. Having a flag flying high from the Tower has made a huge difference to the street scene vista. In fact the flag can be seen miles away on the approach roads in to Gloucester. We must thank Nigel Spry for sponsoring the flag of St. Michael which is the regular flag we fly. Daily people come in to the Tower asking why are we flying the 'Finnish' flag? It's certainly been a good talking point since it was installed.

The bell we had from All Saints in High Wycombe has proved a huge hit with the public both young and old. At the end of the day, Tower volunteers go home with ringing in their ears! The local traders tell us they love to hear it ring out during trading times and Phil the Flower man on the Cross is the bell's biggest fan. We have now had an automated timer fitted so we can programme the bell to ring out on the hour when the Tower is closed.

The interpretation board which now stands outside the Tower, although at the outset seemed the most simple element of the project, turned out to be the most complicated.

We had numerous meetings with the City Council and officers of the Highways Department. There were differing opinions between them as to where the board should be sited. We then had to fill in endless reams of paper for the highways licence. We were made to use the City Council's installation firm who quoted us a £1,000 to install the board. It seemed a lot. So we went along with all the things we had to do; such as the searches that had to be done to ensure we would not cut off the Gate Street electricity supply when installing the board and thus interfering with the police CCTV. So many things had to be considered.

Chris Keeling at Gloucester City Council deserves a huge thank you as it was he who patiently handled our board design and we made so many changes. Many thanks also to John

Rhodes, Nigel Spry and Phil Moss for their input with the Board.

When the board arrived, it was stored very kindly by the City Council's firm of contractors until the Highways gave us permission for the licence. Come the time when the board was due to be installed, the firm recommended to us by the City Council, said that they had ceased trading all of a sudden.

When I asked the contractor for our board back he said NO!

Clearly we were the piggy in the middle of some kind of City Council politics. I got Robin Morris involved and senior officers at the city and we sorted out the issue. In the meantime, we had to find another contractor to install the board. It's not easy locating a suitable contractor as they have to be licensed by the Highways Department to work on the public roads - and there are not many locally. However, we used Freemans in the Forest of Dean.

Thinking that all could now forge ahead - another problem arose, the Highways, due to a change in management, couldn't find our file and details of the work - so we had to repeat a lot of the application for the installation and once more supply maps and details of the job. This caused another delay.

Once we got going Freemans did the most amazing and first class job and they only charged us £480! A lot less than we had been quoted by the City Council's preferred contractor. So I guess fate was on our side at the end of the day! Many people stop by to read the interpretation board. The board really does enhance the street scene and completes the external heritage interpretation of this lovely Grade 11* Listed Building and Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Now during the upheaval with the interpretation board, I had a phone call from Bill our bell man, literally from his hospital bed. He was agitated and not just from his operation!

He said that 2 Rudhall bells had just been sentenced to be melted down at the Whitechapel Bell Foundry and could the Civic Trust raise enough money in such a short time to save them and bring them back to Gloucester where they were made in 1710. An immediate decision was needed.

I immediately said "Yes" and then called Robin Morris, our Chairman. It was a must we both agreed as did Council of Management.

Such has been the fund raising efforts amongst the St. Michael's Tower team that we could afford to buy one of the bells. Then Phil and Gill Moss stepped forward to buy the second bell to donate to the Civic Trust as a 40th Anniversary gift. Everything happened so quickly and the money was sent to St Michael's Church in Stone, Staffordshire.

Then another delay as the day our bells were due to be removed the church hit a technical snag as is par for the course. Since the bells had been installed in 1710, they had installed a clock mechanism underneath the bells. This all had to be removed to get access to the bells - so it meant a further delay and in the meantime, the clock was ticking to the 40th anniversary of the Civic Trust. Thankfully, the bells arrived at the Tower on Tuesday, 23rd October and are now

Interpretation board in place outside St. Michael's Tower.



in place in the Tower. They need a bit of a clean with warm soapy water, which will be done in the New Year.

In the meantime, the Tower team with Phil Moss, is working on a new heritage display to enhance the interpretation of the bells and David Champion is working on a bespoke design to house the bells. It is agreed that the bells are to be kept permanently on display for the public to view and appreciate.

Phil Moss is also working on a new Bell Talk which will be held in the Tower on Saturday, 28 September 2013, at 11 am. Definitely a diary date!

Children will be able to 'bong' the bells with a leather mallet as well as being able to do brass rubbings from the pretty designs on the bells. We aim to have a 'St. Michael's Bell tune' which will include the bell from All Saints so there's going to be lots of bonging and binging in 2013.

Watch out Tower volunteers I think we're in for a noisy year!

Finally I would just like to thank all the Tower volunteers, Phil and Gill Moss and David Champion for their expert skill and time they've given (all free of course), to ensure this latest project is a success.

Report by Marilyn Champion



TOP: The bells from St. Michael's Church, Stone, Staffordshire were so heavy a winch was used to transfer them from the trailer into the tower. (photo courtesy of Marilyn Champion)

BOTTOM: The two 1710 Rudhall Bells now on display at the tower.

Abbey Wall or City Wall

In the old leaflet Historic Gloucester appears the following entry about St. Lucy's Garden: 'The garden was the north-east corner of the St. Peter's Abbey precinct. The only surviving piece of the precinct east wall can be seen in the corner of the garden behind the new Northgate Hall'. Much the same can be found on the blue plaque in St. Lucy's Garden. But is it true? Is the cross-section of wall in the south-east corner of the garden really part of the abbey precinct wall? Frankly I have long doubted this.

According to the Victoria County History of Gloucestershire, vol. IV, the abbey extended its boundaries at about the time of its rebuilding by Serlo on land originally belonging to St. Oswald's priory and a wall was built in the early twelfth century. In 1218 there was a further extension of the precinct at the expense of St. Oswald's and the precinct came to enclose 13 acres of the north-western sector of the city. To quote the VCH: 'It was bounded on the west by Abbey Lane and Half Street (parts of the later St. Mary's Street), on the north by the later Pitt Street, on most of the east by Grace (later St. John's) Lane, and on the south by a back lane to the burgate plots on the north side of Westgate Street'.

Along Pitt Street the precinct wall also served as part of the city's defences and as the outer wall of the Bishop's palace. Stretches of the Abbey precinct wall can also be found in St. Mary's Street and a portion can be seen next to St. Michael's Arch. The wall turned north and followed a line on the western side of St.

from Ian Holt
Trust Guide

John's Lane until it connected with Pitt Street. In fact it would have joined the section of the city wall to the west of the North Gate.

If the cross-section of wall in St. Lucy's Garden were part of the Abbey Precinct wall it would be on a north-south alignment. But it is on an east-west alignment. Between the cross-section and Northgate Hall is a modern brick wall. Sometimes I have found a conveniently placed industrial sized recycling bin or even a brick and have been able to clamber up the modern wall and look over. There is a narrow passage, to the south of which is Northgate Hall. To the left is an older brick wall which contains much older material, which would appear to be medieval rough stone. If you follow the cross-section and the wall with the rough stone it takes you back to the site of the Northgate. This structure was excavated in the seventies, but, sadly, was not preserved in situ like the Eastgate. A small handful of the huge Roman blocks can be seen in the shoe shop now on the site.

The cross-section in St. Lucy's Garden is on entirely the wrong alignment to be part of the Abbey precinct wall. It is, however, on precisely the right alignment to be part of the city wall running back to the Northgate. Indeed it can hardly be anything else. Therefore, it is the only part of the city wall which can still be seen in the open air and as such is a very important monument.

Gloucester Day

1st September 2012

Members joined the Gloucester Day Parade through the City Centre on Saturday 1st September.



▶ ABOVE: Gathering in Constitution Walk
BELOW: A brief pause in Westgate Street.



Water, Water Everywhere

The western part of Gloucester slopes gently down from the Cross, the ancient centre of the city, to the banks of the River Severn which is tidal, the height of its waters varying, therefore, not only with the amount of rainfall on its feeder area in the Welsh hills, but also with the state of the ocean tides.

While these conditions give rise to some spectacular bores, waves of sometimes admirable proportions which regularly roar up the river, they also render those in Lower Westgate area a little like King Canute. In the 1940s, the river burst its banks and crept up Westgate Street, causing a panic lest the muddy waters encroached upon the glorious cathedral. Planks, sandbags and anything else which would prevent the crypt being flooded, formed a barrier around the ancient building, while the local children ventured into the brown, congealing mess swirling across the main road, daring each other to let the water rise just a little bit further towards the top of their rubber boots. It took a long time and many heavy downpours for the greyish slime and unpleasant smell to disappear after the water subsided.

Subsequent floods have never been so spectacular but one year in the 1950s, during my time teaching at Archdeacon Street, I cycled to school to find that the last few yards had to be taken at a rush, with feet held above the flooded road.

Water was lapping at the edge of the pavement, trickling over it and threatening little runnels which

the caretaker was frantically brushing back with his largest broom. A Welshman, he tackled the English river with as much determination as had his forebears making their stand behind Offa's dyke against the English invaders.

Almost all the children arrived by coach or taxi, private cars then being the transport of the very few rich families, so Mr Brock was on the lookout for these vehicles approaching, lest their bow waves should cause a threat to 'his' boilers which were situated below the school and which were a source of great pride to him.

They were studied, tended, adjusted and cosseted several times a day and, since he had been in charge of these monsters, he could proudly claim that no head, teacher or child had felt too hot or too cold, whatever challenge the weather threw at him. If the sight of him brandishing his broom at every approaching vehicle had not been so comical, it would have smacked of great bravery in the face of a possible overwhelming adversary - the Dunkirk spirit, indeed.

As each child alighted, he was lifted over the watery gap (much to his or her disappointment) and deposited in a dry playground, an island in the midst of a grimy ocean.

By playtime, the floods had receded and the next day the river had retreated to its allotted course, but the smell hung around for long enough for us to wonder if we would ever get rid of it.

Shortly after this inundation, the Council brought forward their so-called 'slum clearance' scheme for the area. This involved uprooting several generations of old-established families from their cosy, terraced houses, many of which had been lovingly decorated and tended by the residents, to new council houses where conditions were no doubt more convenient and, perhaps, hygienic, but families were split up. A way of life which had survived for hundreds of years, with each generation passing on experiences and advice, was destroyed and we saw many tears as the furniture vans manoeuvred their way through the narrow streets.

One of the main problems of this regeneration was the existence of a burial ground, situated just opposite the school railings. If ever there was a case to be made for cremation it was the sight of ancient bones being thrown into great wooden boxes. It was some consolation to know that they were re-interred in the sacred ground of a more modern cemetery, but the memory haunts me still. Of course, the children delighted in the macabre sight, especially as the song 'dem bones, dem bones, dem dry bones' was a current popular hit and the episode gave rise to several interesting projects, led by the children's macabre observations.

Article by Trust Member
Una Dowding

Trust Celebrates 40 Years Work

Members of Gloucester Civic Trust processed through the city on Saturday 27th October to celebrate 40 years of protecting and promoting its history and heritage.

They were accompanied by the Mayor and Sheriff and the city MP on their way from a service of thanksgiving at St. Mary de Crypt Church to a reception at the Guildhall.

At the service, conducted by the Rev. Rosie Woodall, the congregation of some 90 members were reminded that it was the vicar of St. Mary de Crypt, Canon David Paton, who inspired the formation of the Trust in 1972, with the aim of promoting civic pride, protecting and interpreting the city's archaeology and ancient buildings, and encouraging a high standard of architecture and design.

Founder member, Phil Moss, said that, since its inception, Civic Trust guides had taken nearly 86,000 people on conducted tours of the city, bringing in an income of more than £53,000.

It had raised funds through its development arm to restore four threatened buildings and successfully fought to prevent the destruction of Llanthony Priory and the dock warehouses and basins.

More recently the Trust had paid for the statue of Emperor Nerva and brought St. Michael's Tower back into use and recently had returned to their home city, two bells cast at Abraham Rudhall's Gloucester foundry in 1710.

At the Guildhall reception, the Trust's chairman for the last 30 years, lawyer, Robin Morris, was

presented with a glass claret jug, decorated with Gloucester images by the Stroud based glass engraver, Danek Piechowiak.

Trust secretary John Lovell said: "Robin Morris' inspiration, passion and belief in Gloucester has got things done and kept the Trust on the straight and narrow. "Trust members, and everyone in Gloucester, owe you an enormous debt of gratitude for your long and distinguished service."

Mr Morris said that he had been reluctant at first to take on the job, but his doubts had been dispelled by the support of "splendid people the Trust had been able to attract to its ranks."

The Mayor, Councillor David Brown, presented credentials to four more Trust members who have completed the training course and passed an examination to become tourist guides. They were Bob Brunsdon, Natalie Cox, Dave Burley and Mick Walsh.

City MP, Richard Graham, said: "What does every great city need? A superb cathedral, a great manufacturing tradition, historic personalities and a great soul. We have that in spadesful.

"But it also needs a great champion, or guardian, to maintain, restore and promote it - and that has been the role of the Gloucester Civic Trust over the past forty years. I look forward to it continuing in this role for another forty years."

The reception concluded with a lecture by Henry Hurst, Emeritus Reader in Classics and a Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge. As a young field archaeologist in Gloucester in the late 1960s and

early 70s, Mr. Hurst's discoveries during an era of redevelopment rewrote the Roman and medieval history of Gloucester.

Report by Hugh Worsnip

An edited version on this report appeared in the Citizen on Tuesday, 30th October 2012

The retiring collection for the work of Discover DeCrypt and the restoration of St. Mary de Crypt Church and Old Crypt Schoolroom taken at the end of the thanksgiving service amounted to £169.10.



▶ New guides, Natalie Cox and Mick Walsh with Mayor Councillor David Brown and Chris Morgan, Trust Training Co-ordinator. Dave Burley and Bob Brunsdon were unavailable for the photograph.

News from the House of the Tailor of Gloucester

In the city of Gloucester, the house that Beatrix Potter chose as the setting for her tale The Tailor of Gloucester is not only a civic landmark; it is a place of literary pilgrimage. Indeed, as part of the city's heritage, it is a building in which not just the city but the county and beyond should take pride. Were it not for its discovery by Beatrix Potter in the mid 1890s, this insignificant little building, tucked into the side of College Court against the imposing St Michael's Gate, may have faded into oblivion. We, as a city, therefore, owe a great deal of gratitude to Beatrix Potter for raising this building out of obscurity and, through her story, we should continue to celebrate what we have.

Indeed, 2013 marks the hundred-and-tenth anniversary of the publication of Potter's book The Tailor of Gloucester and so it can be seen as a very significant year for this little house in College Court. And, I believe, not only the staff in the house of the tailor but the city should make a great deal of fuss over its literary heritage and celebrate this event.

As a catalyst to this, we in the museum have made a start. The principal exhibition in the house - upstairs in the museum - has been specially reorganised and updated to reflect past and present commercial interest in the story of The Tailor of Gloucester. The memorabilia on display now reflects a time-scale from some of the earliest artefacts available to the public to some of the more recent items. We are delighted

that Helen Duder, the Secretary of the Beatrix Potter Society, has made this new exhibition possible by allowing us to display some of her most precious and, arguably, the most valuable pieces in her collection.

By March, 2013, our celebrations of the story of the tailor of Gloucester will continue with the publication of Potter's original tale. This version of the story is longer than the tale published by Warne's in 1903. It incorporates the traditional legend of how between midnight and dawn on Christmas Day the animals are able to speak, but her original version of the story was more in keeping with the spirit of this festive season, hence it includes traditional carols and rhymes. The proposed book will be limited to a 1000 copies, each bound, then numbered and presented in a slipcase. There has already been a great deal of interest in the book and my advice is to reserve a copy before it is too late. Members of the Beatrix Potter Society worldwide, Potter enthusiasts and collectors have all marked their territory regarding the proposed book.

Since taking over the management of the House of the Tailor of Gloucester, I have been both fascinated and intrigued not only by the number of visitors to the museum/shop but surprised by some of the visitors' expressions when we welcome them then tell them that they are standing in Beatrix Potter's house of the tailor of Gloucester. Naturally, I am pleased to see that

the Potter brand embraces both young and old, British and foreign tourists, but whilst they know of Beatrix Potter, some visitors have not made the connection between the house in which they are standing and the Beatrix Potter oeuvre. After all, The Tailor of Gloucester is not the best-known of Potter's tales. Albeit the story was Potter's favourite, a great many of our visitors are probably more acquainted with The Tale of Peter Rabbit, Jemima Puddleduck and Mrs Tiggy Winkle. Whether this is because they are better tales for children, or because the merchandising of these tales has been more successful and there is less memorabilia available for The Tailor, is debatable. But if this is the case, as a city with a great historical legacy we must help rectify this.

We, as the custodians of Potter's story in the house/museum, have made a start. However, we need help from the city to promote The Tailor of Gloucester. Gloucester must not sit complacently and allow its heritage to pass it by. The house of the tailor of Gloucester has been a part of the city's history for almost 119 years. Together with the volunteers who staff the 'house', I am determined to make it flourish and keep it so that the house, as well as Potter's tale, is a part of Gloucester's present as well as its past.

Report from Dr. George Haynes
Manager of the Tailor of Gloucester
Shop and Museum

The Founding of Gloucester Civic Trust

27th October 2012

Transcript of speech by Phillip Moss at the 40th Anniversary Thanksgiving Service

In the spring of 1971, Henry Hurst, the city archaeologist excavated the site of the proposed extension to the Midland Bank at the Cross. The dig revealed a large Roman column standing over six feet high. This was the tallest standing Roman column that had been discovered in Britain. Arrangements were made to lift it and move it to the museum in Brunswick Road. It was during these operations that Henry found access from the back of this site into the rear part of Southern's Stores that fronted onto Northgate Street. This building was earmarked for imminent demolition, but hidden behind the Victorian façade lay a 15th century timber framed building. Henry informed members of The Gloucester and District Archaeological Research Group of this discovery and they carried out a measured survey of the building. The archaeological group mentioned the discovery to Alan Watkins a reporter with The Citizen who embarked on a series of articles regarding the plight of Gloucester's heritage.

Between May and October many other historic features were revealed during the demolition work in advance of the redevelopment of the city centre. Most notable were the Duke of Norfolk's House in Westgate Street and a Tudor mansion house hidden behind the façade of the old Woolworths building in Eastgate Street.

This building was once the home of William Henshawe, bell-founder and several times mayor of Gloucester. The newspaper articles concerning these buildings produced a flood of correspondence in the letters page of The Citizen deploring the loss of so much heritage in the city.

It was Canon David Paton, Rector of St. Mary de Crypt, St. John the Baptist and St. Michael's, who suggested the need for a society to monitor the city's heritage. On the 12th of November 1971 he called a meeting of interested parties at the St. Mary de Crypt schoolroom. Seventy people attended this gathering which resulted with the appointment of a steering committee to establish an amenity group in the city. The Gloucester Civic Trust was formally launched on the 13th March 1972 and became officially incorporated exactly forty years ago today.

The new council of management set up various committees including planning appraisal, historic

features, fund raising, and riverside walk. The officers also had the foresight to appoint Robin Morris as their honorary legal advisor. It says much for the determination and persistence of the trust's members as it took fifteen years to reinstate the riverside footpath between Hempsted and Sandhurst.

In 1974 the Trust produced the Historic Gloucester leaflet which featured some forty sites of interest in the city. This publication won an award in guide book competition sponsored by the Design Council. Other leaflets soon followed including The Port of Gloucester, The Via Sacra, a Robert Raikes Trail and a Sculpture Trail.

In 1975 the tourist guides were formed who, following a brief training session, were let loose on an unsuspecting public. The number of people partaking in these first tours is not recorded, but from 1976 to the end of 2011 the guides have had no fewer than 85,839 customers for the walks. These have generated an income of over £53,000 for the Trust.

The parlous state of Llanthony Priory has been of concern since the early days. By 1976 the western part of the site had been engulfed in impenetrable jungle. This was cleared by our members with billhooks, sickles and pitchforks supplied by the city council. Today the priory has a more certain future.

During the summers of 1977 and 1978 our volunteers staffed a tourist information caravan, loaned by the Heart of England Tourist Board, in the car park of the cathedral. At that time Gloucester did not have a tourist information centre but the phenomenal success of this enterprise proved the need for such a facility, and it led, eventually, to the establishment of a T.I.C. in College Street. The trust later set up a satellite information point in the foyer of the National Waterways Museum.

Please do not think that everything the Civic Trust touches turns to gold. We have had a number of failures and unresolved issues. In 1977 a meeting was arranged for a number of interested parties to consider the problems associated with coach parking!! We are still working on that issue.

In 1987 the Aviation Murals in the Jubilee Garden were commissioned to celebrate the important local contribution to aircraft production.

The Trust took part in the Heritage Open Days for the first time in 1995 and we managed to persuade English Heritage to let us open Blackfriars priory at the weekend. An official from EH rang me on the following Monday saying that he had been at one of their properties in Somerset that weekend and he was pleased that they had 250 visitors. 'How many did you have at Blackfriars' he enquired. 'We had 524' I replied. This was followed by a very long silence at the other end of the line.

Over the years we have attended a number of public enquiries, often with or in support of the city council. The most notable was probably the intended demolition of the North Warehouse by British Waterways Board. At that time they also suggested filling in the Barge Arm and the Victoria Basin. The result of that enquiry is, thankfully, very evident today.

In more recent years the Trust has commissioned the equestrian statue of Emperor Nerva. This was a millennium project to celebrate the founding of the civilian settlement at Gloucester in 96-98AD. In 2006 negotiations began with the city council for the Trust to take over and renovate St. Michael's Tower in order for the Civic Trust to have a permanent presence in the city centre. This venture has been very successful in hosting many activities that promote the rich heritage of the city. A curfew bell was reinstated in the tower recently, and two more bells arrived this week. These bells were cast in Gloucester in 1710 by the famous Rudhall family of bell-founders.

The Gloucester Civic Trust has achieved much during its first forty years but there is much more looming on the horizon that will require our attention. There is a saying that what goes round comes round and I can illustrate this by quoting the first line of the very first annual report of the Trust-

"Let us start with King's Square, now complete".

Planning Appraisal Report

21st November 2012

12/01062/ADV. The Gym, Bakers Quay, The Docks. Illuminated and non illuminated fascia and projecting signs, illuminated lettering and window vinyls for John Treharne.

Planning permission should be refused. This is a landmark new building on the corner of Bakers Quay and Llanthony Road, visible from a wide spread of the conservation area. There are too many signs and the proliferation of plastic over the window surfaces is unsightly and unworthy of this carefully designed building. The panel wants no vinyls on the canal or Llanthony Road frontages and would like to see frosted or etched images on the glass. Signage on the main entrance is satisfactory, but do we need to know five times that it is The Gym? The sign facing

Pillar and Lucy warehouse should be deleted. This application needs complete renegotiation with the Conservation Officer.

12/01038/LBC. 172, Southgate Street. Individual letters sign for Griffiths Marshall accountants. *A very acceptable solution for this handsome ashlar stone building.*

12/01010/LBC. The Guildhall, Eastgate Street. Internal alterations and redecoration for Trustee Savings Bank. *Acceptable.*

12/01078/LBC. Hillfield Gardens, London Road. Restoration of the stone balustrades at the

entrance gates for Julia Hurrell and Friends of Hillfield Gardens.

Excellent scheme for what is becoming an increasing asset to the city.

12/01078/LBC. Advertising signs at North Warehouse, The Docks, for Karen James. *Acceptable.*

12/00625/LBC. Insulation to interior and exterior of south west and north west corners of 30, Barnwood Road. *Acceptable.*

Report from Hugh Worsnip

Autumn and Winter Series of Talks 2012-13

The Trust's Autumn and Winter Programme of talks resume after the Christmas and New Year break and continue to be held at the GALA Club, Fairmile Gardens, Tewkesbury Road at 7.30pm. As usual there is no admission charge although there will be a retiring collection at the end of the evening. As I am sure most of you know in addition to room hire costs, many of our speakers also require payment although in some cases, the money goes to charity.

Taking us into the spring we have some interesting talks on offer and I hope you will find something of interest for you.....please bring a friend.

Here is a reminder of the New Year programme:-

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2013

As part of our last programme of talks John Putley delighted us with an insight into Tudor medicine. He will be the first speaker in the New Year when he makes a welcome return. His subject (at the time of writing) is still a little uncertain since it will depend on whether or not we can acquire a digital projector and lap top. If we can then John will talk on Gloucestershire highwaymen - if not we will be having a talk on Roman medicine with John dressed appropriately.



It has been a while since the last news from Discover DeCrypt and there has been a lot happening. The last few months have been primarily about consultation and background work to inform plans. We have been engaging with people and organisations, and using feedback to shape the project - we have been talking to head-teachers, parents and children, archaeologists, architects, quantity surveyors, solicitors, and even the Archbishop of Canterbury!

ARCHAEOLOGY

Last summer we commissioned archaeologists to review the significance of the site, and gather together all the relevant background information. Repair and alteration of the schoolroom is being prioritised, and before we proceed any further the City Council have asked for an Archaeological Evaluation. We are organising this as a community archaeological dig - a team of professional archaeologists will supervise volunteers as they dig beneath the floor of the schoolroom. We have the enthusiastic support of the Gloucester City Centre Community Partnership in co-ordinating volunteers.

After applying through the Gloucestershire Community Foundation, we are delighted to have just been awarded generous funding from Ecclesiastical Insurance Group as part of their 125 year anniversary celebrations - which means the dig can go ahead in the next few months. We will be setting a date soon.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20

A couple of years ago one of our own members Ian Hollingsbee gave us a talk on Mills along the River Twyver. He now has a new offering and tonight he will be talking about Second World War Prisoner of War camps in Gloucestershire. It is a subject which has engaged Ian's research for many months. No sooner did he think that he had a finite list when another camp was brought to his attention. It should be another intriguing evening.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17

Pat Furley is a man known to many of us through his Magic Lantern shows which have delighted county audiences for more than 40 years. He is constantly on the lookout for new original source material and during the last couple of years has come up with fascinating footage from the early days of the cinema.....just the sort of thing our grandparents would have enjoyed in one of the city's many cinemas immediately before and after the First World War. It should provide a light hearted follow up to the Trust's annual meeting/

John Lovell
Series Co-ordinator

Discover DeCrypt

by Rachel Court, Project Manager

CONSULTATION

Using feedback from English Heritage, the Diocesan Advisory Committee and the City Council, amongst others, drawings are being updated and our plans for the church and schoolroom are coming together.

In our efforts to move forward we have received some wonderful support and advice from local people and organisations, and from those further afield. We are hugely encouraged by feedback.

We have been engaging with potential future users of the church and schoolroom. A web-based questionnaire went to the head-teachers of all the schools in Gloucestershire early last year - both community and Church of England schools. The results indicated that plans for developing Discover DeCrypt will clearly meet needs in local schools for imaginative and experiential visits that support the history and RE curriculum. The facilities provided will need to be attractive, functional and of a high educational quality.

We have been visiting Toddler Groups around the city to determine their needs, and inviting them to contribute ideas for the developing project - with some interesting suggestions received. We would be pleased to hear from any other Toddler Groups who would like to contribute.

In the coming months we are planning to carry out some more public consultation with shoppers in the city centre - we want to engage further with local people and visitors.

REVIEW OF THE LAST SEASON OF EVENTS

Gloucester Civic Trust volunteers staffed the church Monday to Saturday from April through

New Members

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

- ♦ M/s P Bosley
- ♦ Miss S Byard - Re-joined
- ♦ Mrs V Cusiter
- ♦ Mrs C Davidson
- ♦ M/s P Francis
- ♦ Mr and Mrs C Gabb
- ♦ Mrs S Gardiner
- ♦ Mr and Mrs D Golightly
- ♦ Mr A Jarrett
- ♦ Mr M Jennings
- ♦ Mrs M A Lewis
- ♦ Mrs K A Macduff
- ♦ Mrs M McGarva
- ♦ Mrs C Meller
- ♦ Mrs J Toy - Re-joined
- ♦ Mrs M Wood

to the end of September - they welcomed in excess of 5000 people to the church during the year and shared their wealth of knowledge about the church and schoolroom, the history and the people associated.

Tours and other events have been offered to various organized groups, and the season ended with over eighty visitors from the USA attending an entertaining talk on George Whitefield by Tony Pugh. A huge thank you is due to the Civic Trust volunteers and others who made the place come alive during the year.

Civic Services have been a feature at the church - with the Gloucester Day service in September leading up to History Week and a range of musical and other events, including the fun Remember Raikes! Celebration - with children dressed as urchins - dancing, marching and singing. The 27th October saw the Gloucester Civic Trust's 40th Anniversary Service in St. Mary de Crypt. Canon David Paton was the founding Chairman of the Civic Trust - he was rector of St. Mary de Crypt at the time and the first meetings were held in the church - so it was entirely fitting that the 40th Anniversary celebrations were centred in the church.

In July, the Archbishop of Canterbury visited the Cathedral and also our stand outside on College Green - he gave encouraging support for all we are doing with Discover DeCrypt. As well as learning a little about Robert Raikes, George Whitefield and our project - visitors were invited to contribute their Sunday School memories in our scrapbook, which is now in the church.

Since receiving this report the date of the community archaeological dig have been confirmed as the two weeks beginning 21st January 2013.