



## Annual Reports

### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, 2008, by Robin Morris

*“As creeping ivy clings to wood or stone  
And hides the ruin it feeds upon,  
So sophistry, cleaves close to, and protects,  
Sin’s rotten trunk, concealing its defects”*

*Progress of Error (1782) – William Cowper*

I refreshed my memory of where we were all at this time last year, by reading my contribution to our 36th Annual Report. It was a somewhat depressing experience, because I am not sure that we have made any progress on many burning issues which were concerning us at that time. For example, Gloscat/Greyfriars seems to be firmly embodied on the rocks and there has been no perceptible movement on the Blackfriars site.

I made an inspection of Llanthony Priory several days ago, only to find that the site is heavily contaminated by litter and some of the walls are affected by graffiti. More importantly, ivy is growing out of the gatehouse and there is a wonderful crop of Buddleia just about to leap into leaf and bloom throughout the site. I am also not sure if the statutory obligation to keep the buildings wind and water proof is being observed – this will be my next priority. If it is not, I will ask the City to commence formal steps to enforce it. Most of the work I have mentioned involves little expenditure but plenty of elbow grease.

Come on Llanthony Priory Trust – get your finger out!

St Michael’s Tower is making progress as we see elsewhere in this report. I have just signed the Licence for the works to be carried out with the City Council. I have also signed the Contract with the Contractor. Congratulations to everyone who is involved.

We have had several meetings with representatives of the Church of St Mary de Crypt regarding the future of the School Room, and the Church itself. I have also been in touch with the Solicitors representing the Diocese, who are Messrs Madge, Lloyd and Gibson (Mr Robert Perry Jones). Some progress has been made with the Charity Commission regarding the Crypt School Room itself, and some of this work may be useful to us. We have also commissioned a report on the state of the ground floor which is affected by wet rot. It would appear that the situation is not quite as bad as we had originally thought. I am hoping to have a meeting with the Diocesan Trustees fairly shortly.

My wife Pat and I went to look at the situation at All Saints Church in Hereford. As many of you will know, this was a daring project to undertake, but it has been enormously successful. The additions to the inside of the Church are unashamedly modern. Much of the construction is in stainless steel and similar modern materials.

When the pilot scheme was designed for the Crypt Old School Room and Church some years ago, it involved an external extension to allow for toilets and disabled access. I am no architect, but having seen All Saints I am rather wondering whether it would be possible to construct these facilities within the body of the existing Church giving inter-communication between the School Room at both levels. The Church itself could be used for concerts and similar activities in addition to Christian worship. If we can get some initial grants for feasibility studies, then this is something we shall have to look at. It could be a challenging, and very exciting project, which would tie in well with the work which has been carried out at St Michael's Tower.

St Mary de Crypt could be a major attraction from a tourist point of view because it has historical associations with such people as George Whitefield, John Biddle, Robert Raikes and Jemmy Wood - to name just a few.

I have to say that I am concerned about the future of the Docks. At the centre of the project lies forlornly Merchant's Quay, unloved and uncared for. As I understand it there is no planning application for any future development of the site. I am guessing when I say that I am assuming that British Waterways and Crest Nicholson still have some form of commercial interest in the building.

This canker at the centre of the Docks appears to be spreading, because there are problems at the British Waterways Museum where three options are being considered:

1. Close the Museum down completely
2. Mothball the Museum in the hope that visitors will increase
3. Keep the Museum open on a restricted basis through the use of volunteers

Gloucester Civic Trust has increasing expertise in this field with our Tour Guides Committee, St Michael's Tower and Beatrix Potter. Similarly, the Cathedral Guides must have a considerable body of experience in organising rotas and carrying out duties within the Cathedral. It did occur to me that it might be possible to organise a small Steering Committee to see whether we can all help one another. It is all very well for the City to talk about marketing Gloucester, but unless we are careful we will find that there is very little to market!

There is one success, however, and that is 66 Westgate Street, where the restoration is now largely complete. I am not altogether sure what the building is going to be used for, but I offer the owners of the building my best wishes for a successful commercial outcome to the project. In a sense, the restoration of the building represents successful co-operation between the City, GHB, and the Civic Trust, because all three bodies gave contributed to the venture.

On a personal note, there has been a certain amount of discussion regarding the English Heritage decision to insist that the building was rendered, as opposed to the exposed timber. I have to say that I quite like the rendered finish.

On a sad note, I have lost my old sparring partner, Tony Ault, who has worked with me for more years than I can care to remember. On the other hand, he will continue to be an inspiration to all of us to keep working for the wellbeing of Gloucester and its citizens.

## Programme Secretary's Report by John Lovell

It's always a relief to know that one's efforts have reaped their rewards.....and as Programme Secretary I tend to judge my efforts by bums on seats and feedback after the talks  
As a mark of success the numbers attending this year's Winter and Spring talks have been remarkably buoyant with excellent attendances for all speakers whose contributions appear to have met with members' approval.

My thanks go to you all for supporting the events and to The Citizen which has given us the occasional plug!

We kicked off in September with a fascinating talk by Paul Barnett on Lost Memories of the River Severn which focused on the boats which were abandoned on the Severn side at Purton.

In October our speaker was Dr Ray Wilson who gave an excellent illustrated presentation on Gloucestershire's Industrial Heritage and he, in turn was followed in November by the Dean of Gloucester who once again proved to be a thoroughly entertaining and thought provoking speaker.

This pre-Christmas meeting was, once again treated to wine (thanks to our Chairman Robin Morris) and mince pies (from yours truly) and was a great start to festive events.

The decision to combine the talks with training meetings for the guides proved spot on when I arrived at the February meeting to find most of the seats taken. This time the speaker was Hugh Conway-Jones whose talk was on the firms, people and trades at Gloucester Docks during its heyday. As one expects from Hugh it was a comprehensively researched and a well illustrated presentation.

At the time of writing we're now looking forward to hearing club stalwart Phil Moss speak on old pubs of Gloucester at the March meeting and for Gloucester Town Crier Alan Myatt to entertain us after the club's AGM in April.

On a more sobering note we will be asking for donations to offset room hire costs at all future meetings.

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## Press Officer's Report by Hugh Worsnip

THANKS to the members who rang in or sent me cuttings of items on television, radio or in the press concerning Gloucester.

Very often I have been contacted when members have noticed factual errors which need correcting. These are best dealt with by contacting the reporters, editors or press officers concerned and making sure that they have the accurate version of the city's history.

Sometimes corrections are requested but refused.

There was a classic example in May when The Times carried half a page on Gloucester written by Kasia Maciejowska, in its "Bricks and Mortar" section.

Her article contained four glaring errors.

I wrote a letter for publication to the editor outlining these faults and requesting a correction. It was not published.

Kasia noted that Gloucester constantly suffers comparisons with neighbouring Cheltenham – which always raises my hackles!

My letter to The Times was as follows:

**"Sir**

**Kasia Maciejowska was spot on when she said Gloucester constantly suffers comparisons with neighbouring Cheltenham (Bricks and Mortar story 30 May) but her piece then contains four serious inaccuracies.**

**To set the record straight:**

- **The High School for Girls is not an independent, but a council run girls' grammar school**
- **The Forest of Dean is administered by the Forestry Commission and not the National Trust**
- **The restaurant recommended, called the Haus, has been closed for well over a year.**
- **The Cathedral was begun in the 11th Century and not the 12th.**

**If Gloucester is to successfully compete with its neighbour, Cheltenham, it helps if reports of its attractions are accurate and up to date".**

This just shows what we are up against in seeking to promote and enhance the city's reputation as a tourist destination.

Locally The Trust continues to enjoy very good relations with The Citizen, Radio Gloucestershire and Gloucester FM. It is a great pity we no longer have the benefit of our local ITV channel, Central South.

## Visitor Information Point – ‘A Year of Changes’ By Lindsay Mitchell

Following a year or more of frustrations, we began 2008 unable to keep our traditional pattern of remaining open throughout the year, except for closure on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Sadly our office at Merchant’s Quay was closed by the Dock’s Trading Company from 23 December until January for a variety of reasons which have never been properly explained to me. So, in the circumstances, it seemed appropriate, for the well being of our team of helpers, to suspend shifts at our tourist information office for the whole of January.

We resumed our service in February, but there were more frustrations, such as closure of our toilet facilities and no drinking water. The work men cut through the mains water supply causing serious flooding outside our entrance door. Then we were in danger of falling panes of glass inside Merchant’s Quay and we were instructed to leave our office while repairs were carried out.

After these disruptions, once again we resumed duties and soldiered on bravely but our enthusiasm was waning and we were desperate for a new home and yet no one seemed to want to help us. There was some hope from British Waterways to occupy a shop unit in one of their new buildings on the West Quay when their dispute with the builder was solved! It really seemed we had no reasonable future in the Docks. Then the famous swing bridge was closed to install an automatic mechanism thus preventing visitors from gaining access to our Office. The spark almost went from us.

But, but but... our cry of despair was heard and local business man and property owner, Tony Pelopida (Caffe Roma fame) offered us his shop in College Street, en route between our wonderful Cathedral and the Historic Docks. This was readily accepted by the Gloucester Civic Trust Council of Management and so we prepared to move out of Merchant’s Quay and into No. 9 College Street – with the welcome help of Colin Nyland and his 2 sons Steve, Chris and his wife and his friend Dan with the Van.

We were indeed greatly blessed when we all gathered on 1st July at No. 9 College Street. Our terms of reference were changed to being a Visitor Information Point. Becoming V.I.P.’s seemed an encouraging description for many of our illustrious team members. We resumed our duties with much of the old relish and with some new members and even a few former members who asked to re-join us.

On 1st July we enjoyed a lovely party atmosphere where we all met up and re-launched our voluntary duties with new enthusiasm and with extra room to develop new ideas.

Jenny Williams set about making our window displays interesting and attractive. Ivan Taylor found us a useful glass display cabinet and Jane McKay offered to show some of her “Turn and Burn” woodwork items for sale. We set up a small photographic display in our extra room about the “Purton Hulks” and postcard sales encouraged visitors into our new office. Other ideas for sales items were developed and later in the year, leading up to Christmas, we undertook to sell “cards for causes”. In fact we sold over £4,000 worth of stock. Commission raised from the post cards has been used to offset our rent. As you may probably guess, all this has given us a new impetus for our efforts.

However, more than 6 years of struggle and frustration has taken its toll and as we start 2009, a very special afternoon gathering was arranged to welcome Richard Trelfa, one of our more recent team members. Richard has agreed to take over my role as the new Organiser/Co-ordinator of the VIP – yet another change this year.

Many thanks to all those who attended on 13 January, Richard was delighted with the support given by you all and, of course, I must add that I was somewhat taken aback when Jenny called us to order, and on behalf of the team, she presented me with a generous book token together with a box of delicious Thornton's chocolates. In addition there was a beautiful bouquet of flowers for my wife who was also present, for all her support over the years. Please accept our grateful thanks for your surprise and kindness to us both.

Since that happy day, Richard and I have been working along side each other – but I must add that when he told me he intended to move the Forest of Dean into Room No. 2 – I was a little surprised. Then I realised he only meant the leaflet stand!

I have also been able to voice my delight to our T3 Committee meeting by informing all present that I felt good now to be able to sit back and let Richard take the strain. I know that he will be able to develop the many ideas for the future of our VIP as we continue to welcome the many visitors to our wonderful city of Gloucester in the years ahead.

Than you Richard and many thanks to all our team and Civic Trust supporters for your friendship, and generosity to myself and my wife, Sheena and not forgetting your warmth extended to our grand son, Lewis, who, as many of you know, loves his visits to No. 9.

## **Gloucester Civic Trust Awards 2008**

### **By Caroline Ansell – Conservation Projects Officer, Gloucester City Council**

Following the success of the Gloucester Civic Awards 2006, which were revived after a gap of 12 years, it was decided in the spring of 2008 that enough new schemes had come forward to run another event. As before, it was run by the City Council with sponsorship from the Civic Trust, The Citizen and the Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company.

In case a few schemes had ‘missed the boat’ in 2006, it was agreed that nominations could be made for any scheme completed from 2003 onwards, providing it hadn’t been nominated for the 2006 awards. Seven categories were decided upon, for which there would be an overall winner, with an opportunity for commendations where it was considered appropriate.

The event was publicised in The Citizen newspaper and on the City Council’s website with a nomination form for members of the public to complete. In total 22 different schemes were nominated by the public.

The panel of judges included an independent architect nominated by the GHURC, the Editor of The Citizen, representatives of the Gloucester Chamber of Trade, the City Council and the Gloucester Civic Trust. The judges were impressed by the range and quality of the schemes put forward. In addition to the 6 Civic Awards (no award was given in the Best Housing Scheme category), 7 commendations were made.

The Ceremony was held on the evening of Wednesday 9th July in the Civic suite at the North Warehouse, where The Right Worshipful The Mayor of Gloucester, Cllr Norman Ravenhill, welcomed over 80 guests from as far a field as London, Bristol and Birmingham. Mick Thorpe, Head of Policy, Design & Conservation at the City Council announced the awards and the Mayor handed out the certificates. The awards were as follows:

#### **Best New Building or Extension-**

Civic Award, No 4 Spa Road  
Commendation, The HomeSense Building, St Oswald’s Park

#### **Best Major Restoration or Sensitive Alteration-**

Civic Award, The Judge’s Lodgings, Spa Road  
Commendation, St Peter’s Church, London Road

#### **Best Minor Restoration or Sensitive Alteration-**

Civic Award, 101 Hucclecote Road  
Commendation, 16 Brunswick Square  
Commendation, Statue of Queen Anne, Gloucester Park

#### **Best New or Improved Shopfront-**

Civic Award, Hayden Taylor, 60-62 Westgate Street  
Commendation, Blushes, 76 Westgate Street

#### **Most Improved Public Area-**

Civic Award, Chapel Square, Barge Arm, The Docks  
Commendation, St Michael’s Square Community Garden

#### **Best Climate Friendly Scheme**

Civic Award, Gloucestershire College, The Docks  
Commendation, Barge Arm Flats, The Docks

It was generally agreed that the evening was a great success. The City Council subsequently published a leaflet which includes photographs of the winning schemes, limited numbers of which are still available from Caroline Ansell, Conservation Projects Officer at the City Council.

## Tour Guides Committee Report by Colin Nyland

I'm pleased to present an optimistic report for the past year 2008 to 2009.

The guide's season re started in February 2008 with a series of eight lectures, which are always full of interest to both new and active tour guides. The quality of the talks improve year on year and we are indebted to Phil Moss who always brings the up-to-the-minute slides and brand new stories. The 90 minutes just fly by – the nostalgia of Gloucester's yesteryears always amaze and fascinate.

Thank you Phil.

The work of the tour team known as T3, is on going throughout the year. Each member of the team has a specified job, but all co ordinate and work as a team.

I'm proud to head up this line up and add input and guidance.

A flavour of the work carried out includes; booking tours, training new recruits, reports and secretarial work, training and historical research, preparing for national events such as Heritage Open Weekend, publicity and marketing, accounts and bookwork, organising the Visitor Information Point (V.I.P.); attending various meetings with the Council and other organisations. Organising rota tours, and visits to places of interest. This is just part of the various tasks T3 undertake voluntarily with a cheerful and professional spirit.

Thank you Margaret, Karen, Chris, Alex, Phil, John, Terry & Lindsay. Without your input, expertise and time we would not have a tour guide's team.

I wish to pay tribute to two members of T3 who decided late 2008 to resign;  
Lindsay Mitchell & John Stedman.

Lindsay has headed up the VIP for many years taking over from Peter Thompson; several moves took place under Lindsay's stewardship.

In 2008 Lindsay spearheaded the VIP move from the National Waterways Museum to Merchant's Quay. Then in 2009 Lindsay supervised the move from Merchant's Quay to No. 9 College Street – the present home of the VIP. It's quite a task having to pack everything up and then set up in a new location. Thank you Lindsay for your dedicated work and friendship over the years. I'm pleased to report Mr Mitchell is still an active team member of the VIP. Well done.

John Stedman stepped in to the Treasurer's shoes several years ago and was a calm member of T3 - always willing and contributed 100% to T3.

Thank you John for your dedication and I know you are still an active tour guide and take a keen interest in all things Gloucester.

Two new members of the T3 are Richard Trelfa and Brian Mayell

Brian has taken over the role of Treasurer for the tour guides and has already become an active member of T3.

Richard is now at home at the VIP in College Street, bringing a wealth of experience from his previous life in the city, and working in the voluntary sector. I extend a very warm welcome to you both. Enjoy the new challenge.

The annual trip was to Ludlow, with a full coach of guides and friends who enjoyed the hospitality of this lovely market town.

Tours of Gloucester continued through the summer months ending on the Heritage Open Weekend in September – and what a weekend that was!

Gloucester was:

- Top destination in South West for the number of buildings open and
- Third in the whole country for the number of buildings open

Full marks to Alex Bailey who co-ordinated the weekend for Gloucester Civic Trust.

This was a brilliant achievement. New features included musical and theatrical themes.

We know 2009 is going to be even better.

All guides, helpers and volunteers have been asked to keep the 10th, 11th, 12th & 13th of September free to help out at the various venues that will be open.

Your help will be needed.

During the season several new guides worked hard to achieve their tour guides badge. This is a nationally recognised badge with a set course of both practical and theory work. There's a qualifying exam at the close of the tourist season.

Congratulations to: Angela Green, Anne Bartlett, Barrie Glover, Brian Mayell, Christine Griffin & Hilda Boakes. We WELCOME you to the tour guides qualified list.

Many thanks go to Chris Morgan – for all her training, leadership skills and support.

Another very important part of the organisation is the publicity and advertising of the various sections within the tour guides portfolio. This includes contacts with various organisations; promoting tours and organising the tour guides; the creation and distribution of posters - all helping to promote the tour guides. Thank you Terry for a job very well done here under your stewardship.

The Civic suite in October 2008 was the venue for the end of season party and presentation of badges to our newly qualified guides. It was truly a lovely evening with the opportunity to enjoy the company of old and new friends.

All information and work carried out by T3 is reported to the GCT at the Council of Management meetings. I wish to record grateful thanks to Robin Morris Chairman. Robin's help guidance and affordability is very much appreciated.

Looking forward to 2009 – this will be a very busy year not only for the tour guides but for all GCT members. I urge everyone to help in some way. There are so many opportunities for our members to get involved such as:

- Training to become a tour guide;
- volunteering at the VIP;
- helping out at St Michael's Tower;
- Church sitting at one of the City Churches;
- assisting at one of the many Heritage Open Weekend venues.

There is a job and a warm WELCOME for you all.

## Street Survey Report by David Champion

2008 has been an interesting year.

### **Plaques and Monuments Project: (P & M Collection)**

This is turning out to be a very exciting project. About 18 months ago we were asked to undertake a photographic survey of all our city's plaques and monuments on behalf of Gloucester Historic Buildings.

Well we've trudged through fields and hedges; got wet and muddy, but despite all of this we have on file some amazing photos. The P & M Collection is a wonderful insight into Gloucester's social history and heritage. Once the images are complete they'll be catalogued. Some need a certain amount of historical interpretation and others do not.

When we take the photos of the plaques and monuments, we're also photographing the buildings they are on and their location so they can be easily found if people want to follow a trail in the future. It's hoped that the images may be placed on our new Gloucester Civic Trust website so that people from afar can enjoy reading and learning more about our City and hopefully will be tempted to visit us.

Another suggestion is that we use these images to lay on a photographic exhibition in St Michael's Tower in the form of a Quiz to test peoples' local knowledge.

Many thanks to those who have sent in their own photos they've taken of plaques around the city. Many thanks to Pam Daw. Pam's now working on the final stage of the P & M Collection.

### **High Street Heritage:**

The saddest thing of all was to see the disappearance of the Woolworth store from our high streets and indeed from our own Eastgate Street. Truly part of our high street Heritage has disappeared.

### **Hard Work Paying Off!**

In 2004 and 2005 we worked our socks off photographing and doing surveys on every building in our Gate Streets. The results were placed on a CD and we trawled a power point presentation around the Chamber of Commerce and other city meetings getting the word across that we must improve our city.

The work culminated in a conference attended by many local businesses and residents on how we can improve Gloucester. Now all that hard work has really paid off. £85,000 has been set aside by the city council for improvements to be made in lower Eastgate Street.

One day Pam Daw and Marilyn Champion were doing a survey on the properties in Lower Eastgate Street. Pam walked into one of the takeaways to speak to the owner. The main shop was empty but the owner called out to Pam from the back of the shop. Pam bravely ventured forth only to be greeted with the owner washing his feet in the sink along with a load of chicken fillets! We're pleased to say the shop's no longer there and yes we could probably write a best seller on our street survey experiences.

Southgate Street has always been a bit of a thorn in our side. It's one of the main approach roads to and from the docks connecting the city. When we first carried out our street survey in 2004/2005 on the buildings in Southgate Street we were appalled at some of the neglect. As a result of our work, the city council has been working on a THI lottery bid for street improvements and the Civic Trust has been doing all it can to support this initiative and to make sure the bid's followed up.

We constantly report things such as buildings which are poorly maintained; litter strewn hot spots; poor pavement cleaning where takeaways are involved; fly tipping and anti social behaviour. We do hope some of these management and social problems may be addressed before the opening of the Quays shopping complex in May 2009. We're pleased that the Southgate Street Traders have now got together to form a Trade Association to help make improvements.

### **Empty Shops and Premises:**

We're concerned over the state of some of the empty shop premises in Gloucester. At times they are left in quite a state and look so unattractive when you peer through the empty windows. We've been lobbying for about a year now asking what can be done. We've been lobbying the city council and the shop owners. As most of the shops are in private ownership – it's not an easy task. We've spent hours on the telephone talking to the letting agents – many of whom are not local. This is the problem – many aren't local and they don't seem to care. Our efforts are starting to pay off with the proposed window displays for the former Hawkshead shop on the Cross and the former Going Places premises have now been cleaned. Many people like the new look in the former First Choice Travel shop in King's Walk. It's a great use for an empty shop as it now houses a motor bike display. It's colourful and attracts a lot of interest. We need more ideas like this to brighten up our street scene.

### **St. Mary de Crypt:**

We've been lobbying for over a year now for an improved look in the garden at the rear of St Mary de Crypt. Enterprise, the private company now in charge of our street cleaning, has given the place a bit of a good clean up. They've cut back a lot of the ivy away from the stone work and the grave stones. As a result the area looks a lot better.

However we still had problems with the commercial refuse bins located nearby. We've had site meetings with the appropriate street cleaning people. Finally it all happened and the local businesses are keeping the nearby area a lot cleaner. But everything seems to take a long time and we keep having to chase up people constantly. Many thanks to those who ring us with street problems. We take them all very seriously.

You can also call 01452 396 396 to report things or you can email Gloucester Environmental Services on [enviro@gloucester.gov.uk](mailto:enviro@gloucester.gov.uk)

## Civic Design Group by David Evans

We normally meet on a monthly basis in Herbert Warehouse. Our meetings are supported by a Planning Officer who provides us with background information on the developments that are set before us.

However, as the majority of proposed schemes are now also discussed by Council of Management, the Civic Design group meets less frequently.

Naturally, we were saddened by the loss of our leader, Anthony Ault, who had been our Group Secretary for many years. His architectural and historical expertise of Gloucester, along with his knowledge of our buildings has been immeasurable. He will be sadly missed. His Obituary is included elsewhere in this Annual Report.

Fortunately, Hugh Worsnip has stepped in to take the new lead role. Hugh's journalistic skills as former Chief Reporter at the Gloucester Citizen and his position as Trust Director are ideal. We welcome Hugh to our ranks.

Nevertheless, whatever the Trust's comments on planning applications, they can only bear fruit if and when the development is carried out.

The new Sainsbury's super market at Gloucester Quays is a scheme we've been carefully following.

Here the Architects, together with the City Council responded favourably to our comments.

We were given the opportunity to consider the conversion of the Robert Raikes House in Southgate Street which is now complete. This particular scheme definitely should be in line for an "Oscar" nomination.

If you haven't been in there yet please take some time to visit. The restoration is a credit to the city both inside and outside.

It's been an interesting year. We hope all the proposals for Gloucester are brought to fruition, despite these uncertain economic times.

## Planning Appraisal Committee by Hugh Worsnip

THE panel's job is to monitor and comment on planning applications made to the City Council for new projects or alterations to listed or other buildings of quality.

The panel consists of local architects in private practice, retired planning officers, and the former curator of the City Museum. We are assisted by the City Council's Conservation architect.

This year our work was overshadowed by the death of our Chairman, Anthony Ault. His knowledge of Gloucester's buildings, from the Cathedral to the humblest terrace, has been invaluable over the past 40 years.

Our greatest regret during the year was the loss of The New County Hotel, the last remaining city centre hotel in Gloucester. The panel totally opposed the application to convert it into a restaurant with flats above, on the grounds of loss of a basic function in the city centre and loss of commercial variety and vitality. We believe the hotel was commercially profitable and closed because it was part of a group which went into administration. Unfortunately, councillors on the planning committee did not agree with us and approved the conversion.

On the brighter side, we were delighted at the complete change of design on the site next to Llanthony Bridge. We objected to an initial design for a six storey glass box in this very sensitive location and asked for a building which would continue the roofline rhythm of the 19th century warehouses, as viewed from the north quay. We were pleased, and somewhat surprised, when the revised plan provided the pitched roof solution in stone, brick and slate which is now under construction between the bridge and the pillar warehouses.

Sainsbury's also provided a welcome surprise by coming up with a well above average design for their massive new store near St. Ann's Bridge. With its pitched, warehouse style roofline and first floor terrace restaurant overlooking the canal, and thoroughly modern green ventilation system and sun tube lighting. We believe this building will be a significant addition to the canal side landscape.

Right opposite, the panel was glad to see the plans for the refurbished multi screen cinema provide for the "about turn" of the frontage to face the waterside – something we asked for when the cinema was originally built in the 1980s.

The panel was apprehensive about a plan to turn the former Gloucester RDC offices in Brunswick Square into student accommodation for the University of Gloucestershire, because of the possible impact on the Brunswick Square lawn and this improving residential area, but this did not amount to a planning objection. The scheme, later approved by councillors, removes the ugly steel fire escapes from the exterior of the building and preserves the interior panelling and marble floors - we hope.

We have yet to see the detailed design of the new hotel in the grounds of Llanthony Priory, but the panel was pleased to support a revision to the footprint of the building, which means it will avoid the priory wall and enable the stonework to be repaired and put on view. This means an additional floor on the hotel which we do not believe will be obtrusive in this location.

The panel continues to support the council's policy of opposing the installation, without planning permission, of plastic windows in listed buildings, and the prosecution of those who refuse to remove them.

Probably the most significant trend during the year was the sharp reduction in the number of applications seen by the panel at the latter end of the year, as the banking crisis deepened. In September we saw more than 15 applications – in December only three!

## Membership Secretary's Report by John Lane

Ooops! I have to start by holding my hands up and admitting I got it wrong!! Many of you were somewhat confused as to what the subscription rates are this year.

My fault, I should have included the rates with the last Newsletter but due to amnesia/lack of time/stupidity/carelessness (take your pick) it didn't happen.

Many of my school reports said "Could do better"!

For the sake of clarity the rates are as follows :

Individual Member	£10.00
Family Member	£15.00
Business Members	£15.00
Life Membership (One off Payment)	£100.00

I will do my very best to include the rates next time, thanks for your patience.

Despite the faux pas many more of you have taken out Standing Orders which helps reduce the workload and means you don't forget to renew.

A new website is being developed and it is hoped that it will be possible to join 'on-line' (amongst many other new features).

The influx of new members proves Gloucester Civic Trust is still relevant and important in representing the views of local people in the development, restoration and preservation of our historic city – it's just a shame that worth isn't always recognised by our local Council.

Despite this, the Trust will continue to try and ensure the City's rich heritage is maintained and improved for future generations.

# Obituary

## Anthony Ault A Tribute by Hugh Worsnip

GLOUCESTER has lost a great champion with the death of architect, Anthony Ault, at the age of 80.

His encyclopaedic knowledge of the city's buildings, from the Cathedral to the humblest Victorian cottage, was of irreplaceable value to those who sought to preserve and enhance the built environment. Anthony Ault, of Grovelands, Barnwood, died in the Gloucestershire Royal Hospital on October 13 2008.

In recent years he had been receiving treatment for a persistent cough and shortness of breath. However, his deteriorating health did little to dampen his efforts to preserve the best of Gloucester's ancient buildings and ensure that new ones were of a high standard of design.

An early member of the Gloucester Civic Trust in 1972 (and the Civic Design Group and Civic Society before that), he was, at the time of his death, Chairman of the Planning Appraisal Panel which comments on planning applications made to the City Council.

Civic Trust Chairman, Robin Morris, said: "We shall miss his expertise enormously. I shall remember him for his quiet manner and wonderful sense of humour."

For most of his working life Mr Ault was an architect in private practice in both Gloucester and London, but his career started in the architects' department of the City Council. Among the buildings in which he took a leading part in designing were, the Fountain Square flats, the new cattle market of 1955, and the renovation of the Raven Tavern in Hare Lane.

Fellow architect, and Civic Trust colleague John Holman, who was also a trainee in a private architectural practice at the same time as Anthony says "Anthony was an inspiration to me and I learned a lot from him. While he was well versed in classical architecture, he very much embraced the architecture of the time, as his designs showed in their elegance and refinement."

At that time, Tony Ault was programme convenor of the Gloucestershire Architectural Association, arranging for leading architects, such as Sir Basil Spence, to speak locally.

Later, while in practice in London he worked on restoration projects at the Imperial War Museum, The Palace of Westminster, and the British, Natural History and Victoria and Albert museums.

Anthony James Ault was born in Gloucester in 1928, the eldest son of an electrical engineer on the LMS railway. The family moved to Watford, but, on the death of his father, returned to Gloucester where Anthony was educated at the Crypt School.

He wrote his first letter to The Citizen at the age of 16, deploring the neglect of Gloucester's historic buildings. His interest had been fired by his maternal grandfather, who took him on walks and bicycle rides in and around the city during long summer holidays in the 1930s.

His talent was recognised by Hope Costley-White, wife of the Dean of Gloucester, who put his drawings of the Cathedral on sale at the bookstall. He also illustrated her book "Gloucester Story."

His first commission on qualifying as an architect in 1951 was to design the plaque in the cathedral to John Stafford Smith who wrote the tune later adopted as the American National Anthem.

Anthony was commissioned in the Royal Engineers for his National Service and subsequently served for six years in the Territorial Army.

As a young architect with several Gloucester practices, Anthony's great mission to enhance the city continued apace.

He was one of those who, in 1958, organised a controversial public exhibition, "Outrage", which drew attention to the loss of historic buildings and the pedestrianisation of parts of the city centre!

His love of music inspired his involvement in organising the Three Choirs Festival from 1947 until he moved to London 18 years later.

In 1968 he met interior designer, Eduardo Marcello, who remained his close friend and partner. Together they renovated three houses, one in Islington and the others in Gloucestershire, including a silk mill in Chalford where they lived for sixteen years.

Anthony's efforts on behalf of the Gloucester Civic Trust were redoubled after he retired in 1990. He became a board member of Gloucester Historic Buildings Ltd and played an active part in the restoration of St Nicholas' church tower as well as the campaign to raise the money to erect the equestrian statue of Emperor Nerva in Southgate Street.

Anthony is survived by his partner Eduardo, a brother, John, and a sister, Wendy.

His funeral service took place at Gloucester Crematorium on 28 October 2008.

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## St. Michael's Tower Committee

### By Pam Daw

2008 was a momentous year for Gloucester Civic Trust.

On the one hand the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) awarded the trust £199,000 in June and by the year's end the country, indeed the world, was in a recession. The trust that has always had the best interests of the city at heart is now going forward with its base at the heart of the city in St. Michael's Tower. How good that is for Gloucester!

Four years ago this project was just an idea. First of all came the funding from Gloucestershire Environmental Trust that gave the project the kick start it needed to move forward; other funds followed from many sources as well as from kind individuals. Support from the local people and the City Council was outstanding and gratefully received.

During 2008, the tower team plodded on and organised a poetry day in chilly February 2008 courtesy of Peter Wyton.

In May, the Rare Breeds Survival Trust had a stand and publicised their aims while living rare breeds of animals settled down for the day around the tower and delighted everyone.

The animals came from the City Farm brought by Derek Wakefield-Brown and a great team of young helpers. A toy sale, and a walk over Alney Island were all well supported and much needed funds raised for the Tower project.

During the summer months the Tower played host to 2 exhibitions one for a local group of artists; the other to a talented, local photographer.

With a view to reviving Gloucester Day on the 5th September, the Hazzards Artillery re-enactors came and filled the tower with memorabilia to show what Gloucester was like in the days of civil war when Gloucester was under siege in 1643.

The door was open over Heritage Open Weekend and young musicians from GAMPA gave a recital. All these events cost nothing and everyone gave their time freely to support Gloucester Civic Trust's mission to bring the Tower back into use once more. It was good to see these events so well attended and by all ages.

In between the above events, there were many meetings on a host of related aspects. The team worried and wondered how HLF were dealing with the bid submitted for funds and then a financial assessor came and while he thought the project was a good one he left us with a challenge. Was the team being tested? A few weeks later in May came another important meeting with HLF people and others. The team coped well, the meeting was tense and yet it was also hopeful. "Competition is strong" the team was warned, "you will have our decision on 18th June". It came by telephone – the award was granted.

In August a great fund-raising opportunity came along with the idea to run a Saturday car park in the city. Through to December it boosted funds admirably but had to be done with the support of partners and fortunately the Gloucester Sea Cadets filled that role. At the time of writing (February 2009), it is continuing. Those involved work so hard and are giving the tower vital back-up money for its initial running costs, while the Sea Cadet unit is improving its premises with their share of the proceeds.

At the end of 2008 everything was financially in place for Conservation and conversion work to start so that St. Michael's Tower could become a Tower of Learning. The start date was a little late but as this report goes to press so too should the hoarding and scaffolding be going up around the tower.

A great programme of events is planned through summer 2009 and into 2010 all thanks to HLF funding. By saving this ancient building, Civic Trust is all set to make a great cultural difference to the city centre. The tower team is a sub committee of the well established trust whose chairman, Robin Morris and the Council of Management have given unfailing support.

Thanks must go to Adam Lubanski and the company he works for QAA. QAA have loaned us a lap top, projector and screen. The equipment has allowed us to produce professional power point displays which we've used at meetings to spread the word about Gloucester Civic Trust and the plans for St Michael's Tower.

Thanks must also go to the Officers at Gloucester City Council and the Guildhall. Their help and support is always there for us. However, it is the driving force and professional knowledge of Marilyn Champion in particular, who has brought the project this far. At such an uncertain economic time otherwise, St. Michael's tower and its transformation is a great achievement for the city.

As the hoardings go up around this lovely building as we now start work, we look forward to its completion in June. Many thanks to all of those who have helped to make it all possible.

For information on future events in St Michael's Tower please look at our website [www.gloucestercivictrust.org](http://www.gloucestercivictrust.org) which will be launched soon or please call into the Tower when we're open.

**A Year in the Civic Trust**  
**By Shaun Moore**  
**Shaun.moore@gloucesterfm.com**

I think I'm probably the youngest member in the Civic Trust. I'm 18 and have been a member for about a year now. I first learned of the Civic Trust when I went to an event in St Michael's Tower last April 2008. It was fun and I learned a lot and I also liked the people I met.

I was interested to learn about the plans for St Michael's Tower and that it will be an audio visual "museum" and a place for events and activities; and will give young people like me the opportunity of getting involved. I started to go along as a guest to the St Michael's Tower Committee meetings and then I became a member.

I'm a student doing a media course at Gloucestershire College as well as being a free lance radio presenter. I have my own radio show on Gloucester FM each Monday. I've had quite a few civic trust members on my show such as Hugh Worsnip and Marilyn Champion helping to promote Gloucester Civic Trust. I was also pleased to be able to plug day after day the car park that we help man on the former Gloscat site as this has helped bring in a lot of users and has helped to raise money for the Tower project.

I'm now team leader of the Community Filming Project for St. Michael's Tower. I see this as a wonderful way of getting younger people involved in a fun activity and one which is heritage based. I've started our first filming project for St Michael's Tower with the Barton and Tredworth Trust which is in Conduit Street. The premises are situated in a converted church. The church was redundant and the B & T Trust took it over and have transformed it into an amazing community building where so much happens. As part of this, our first filming project, I shall be interviewing long standing residents, recording their memories; we have many old photos of the church and also many photos of the work in progress when it was converted. I think this will make an excellent first film for Gloucester Civic Trust and St Michael's Tower.

The B & T community neighbourhood has quite a story and local residents are so excited that for the first time they can record their history. The film will be shown in St Michael's Tower and will also be available on DVD for people to buy. This is just one of many. In all 54 groups say they want to make a community history film – we'll get round them eventually!

The films we make will be very professional and of excellent quality. Thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Marilyn and I have been out shopping and we've bought the best filming equipment. For both of us it was quite a feeling walking in to a local shop and being able to spend so much money. We've also bought an IMAC Apple computer which has a dedicated film editing suite for us to edit our films.

As a young person I just want to say thank you for giving me this wonderful opportunity of getting involved. Not only am I learning so much about Gloucester but I'm learning skills that will help me get a better job and where I can continue helping the civic trust recording our neighbourhood history.

If you have any sons or daughters or grand children that would like to follow their family tradition of caring for Gloucester then maybe they'd like to join my filming crew? With 54 groups to get around I'm going to need some help! My email is above.

**CIVIC TRUST NEWS - ALWAYS THINKING AHEAD**  
**The News Letter of Gloucester Civic Trust**  
**By Terry Brooks**

Having completed and distributed one newsletter to members, my thoughts almost immediately turn to the planning and preparation of the next.

This is particularly so in the period between the winter and spring editions with only a short time between them. Gathering information about the Trust's activities during this limited period is a challenge. Luckily, since the introduction of Civic Trust News, with its eight pages, I have always 'made it,' thanks to the support of members who pass information and articles to me.

As editor of Civic Trust News my continued aim is to ensure our members are aware of our activities and our involvement in the life of the city.

Most of our members live in Gloucester, but the Trust's membership is quite widely spread not only through the county, but throughout the country, from Ayr in Scotland to Glamorgan in South Wales and from Hampshire to the London area.

Continuing the communication theme, a theme I have used in previous reports, the Newsletter enables our widely spread membership to keep in touch with our activities in Gloucester and developments in the city.

I also like to use the Newsletter to highlight some experiences members encounter. For example, and reflecting on two such recent articles, Julie Hodcroft's 'A Guiding Experience' which I included in Spring 2008 and more recently in the Winter 2009 issue, Eve Stuart-Kelso's brief brush with national and international fame with the loss and subsequent return of her widely travelled garden gnome 'Murphy'.

As I write this piece for the Annual Report, at the end of January, planning issue 112 of Civic Trust News is well in hand. I hope members will find this issue, and future issues, interesting and enjoyable to read.

Once again I would like to everyone who has supported me in the production of Civic Trust News. My thanks again to Simon Day for his excellent work in putting all my efforts on to disc ready for printing, and a thank you to HB Printing of Innsworth for the final production of our Newsletter.

# Toilet Tips

## By "The Toilet Team"

Toilets were high up on the topical subjects list in 2008.

The older we get the more it seems we need to know where the better toilets are so that we can quickly pop in and use them.

Toilets are not just an issue in Gloucester but also in other cities where vandalism and cuts in budgets have led to a shortage of good toilets.

In some cities certain establishments allow members of the public to use their toilets and they place a sign on the door showing they participate in the toilet scheme. We do wonder if Gloucester City Council should perhaps adopt this system?

Reports indicate it's been a successful scheme. It encourages people into premises and even though they may only just want to spend a penny, often they spend a lot more as they buy coffee and food so everyone gains.

We thought we'd do our own research as to where our better toilets are.

We discovered that many cafes in the city centre such as Costa Café, Caffè Nero and Starbucks are quite happy for people to pop in and use their toilets – even if you don't buy anything. All these toilets are accessible to all and are relatively clean, although at times towards the end of the day, you can tell they've been extremely well used.

So after much research here is our Toilet Top 5 Chart list:

### **No. 1. Bell Walk - The Eastgate Shopping Mall Toilets**

These are located upstairs with great disability access. There are quite a few cubicles and the toilets are immaculately clean, with plenty of toilet paper, soap and hand dryers that always work! Wonderful.

The cleaning is of a high standard. Well done Eastgate Shopping Mall.

Score Rating: \* \* \* \* \*

### **No. 2. Debenham's in King's Square**

Located on the top floor with relatively good and easy access; good baby changing facilities. Well cleaned throughout the day.

Score Rating: \* \* \* \*

### **No. 3. Robert Raikes Pub, Southgate Street**

A very easy pub to walk into. The toilets are upstairs. Probably not the best for disabled access. However, no expense has been spared and these are probably the most expensive toilets in Gloucester – quality wise.

Score rating: \* \* \* \*

#### **No. 4. The Cross Keys Pub, Southgate Street**

Very clean toilets and in a recent city survey – they are also drug free!

Ruth and David the landlords are always welcoming with a warm smile and yes, you can just call in to use the toilet without having to buy anything. Just one warning – just watch out for the hand dryer – probably the strongest dryer in the city! It nearly blows you away.

Score rating: \* \* \* \*

#### **No. 5. Starbucks Café on the Cross, Gloucester**

Lesley the Manager is very welcoming and has no problem if people just walk in and use their toilet. There's just one toilet which is also a disabled one. This toilet has provided much welcome relief for members of the St Michael's Tower Committee these past couple of years. Thank you Starbucks.

Not quite city centre, but worth a mention, are the toilets in Frankie's and Benny's at the St. Oswald's Business Park. These are wonderfully clean. Yes, you can just call in and use them and not only that whilst doing your ablutions you can learn Italian at the same time. Mamma Mia!

Score rating: \*\*\*\*\*

Most people and visitors to Gloucester judge a restaurant, pub or café on the cleanliness of their toilets. The standards of the toilets in many eyes reflect the kitchen and staff standards of the establishment concerned.

Next time you're shopping in Gloucester and you need a decent toilet – we hope our toilet tips will give you something to go on!

## Car Park Capers By Marilyn Champion

It was February 2008 when we first approached English Partnerships (now called the Homes and Community Agency), who own the former Gloscat College Site, to see if we could make use of the redundant college car park in Brunswick Road. We thought we could use the car park as a fund raising opportunity for St. Michael's Tower.

It took many months of negotiation. We had to do a risk assessment; we had to put forward a good case as to why we wanted to use it; we had to sign a formal contract to secure the use of the site; a contract which is complicated and puts full onus upon the Civic Trust should anything go wrong. We were also told we had to pay commercial rates on the site – which we do – and also we had to ensure we had the right kind of insurance in place. We also had to meet the owners and their agents on site and be “interviewed”. Finally we got an agreement in August 2008 to use the car park as a Saturday Shoppers' car park.

One of the potential risks thrown up in the risk assessment was that the area is too large for our Tower team to manage. So we had to think carefully how to proceed. It was suggested that maybe we link in with another local charity. This is what we did. We contacted the Gloucester Sea Cadets who at that time were appealing for funds to improve their Gloucester Unit. They have some 50 boys and girls in their Unit and they all do such a splendid job.

So since the 2nd August 2008, members of Gloucester Civic Trust and the Gloucester Sea Cadets have been working together every Saturday manning the car park for our respective causes.

It's hard work for sure and we get cold and wet – but the benefits far outweigh the negatives. The sea cadets have been able to complete their much needed new galley and the Tower team – we've used the proceeds to pay extra architect's fees on the tower and to pay for other general costs. When it was really cold members of the public brought us cups of hot chocolate; others give us cakes and sweets – it does have its perks.

It's not easy manning the car park either. We've learned to be organised and efficient with a good system in place. We man it from 8.00 am until 5.00 pm. It takes a team of 10 people each time – 5 from Gloucester Civic Trust and 5 from the Gloucester Sea Cadets. We also need to have 2 “spares” each time who can step in at the last minute in case of illness or other emergencies.

We have many regulars that use the car park on a Saturday. They all say they hope we can continue it for the rest of the year. It provides a good value car park. The nearby Eastgate Market say they've seen a big increase in footfall on Saturdays. For the Civic Trust it's been a successful way of promoting what we do. We get many visitors and we're able to point them in the right direction and tell them a little bit about the city – in between being car park attendants. People who walk by the car park each day stop and chat.

We've made friends with Horace the Homeless. Horace lives on the steps of the former college – he calls the steps his “home”. He lives and sleeps there day in and day out in all kinds of weather. When it was really cold, we took him warm blankets and bought him hot food and drinks – so did the Sea Cadets. We look out for him. He's not a drug addict or an alcoholic. He's just one of those poor people Society's failed. He's not eligible for a lot of the help available in the city.

We've also made friends with Percy. We feed him too and look after him.

Percy's a partridge. We first spotted him strutting across the former campus last August. He was wild then. Now he's become quite tame and the car park team feed him daily. No wonder he's got so fat! We don't know how he came to be there but we do feel he may be lonely lacking other partridge company. Our biggest fear is that he'll end up as someone's Sunday lunch.

As part of our contract we have to keep the site litter free and fly tip free. So each Saturday without fail, we litter pick the whole site – which takes quite a while. At the end of the day when we leave the car park at 5.00 pm it's clean and tidy. The site as a whole now remains clean. We dread to think what the area would be like if we didn't litter pick. We have photos on file of the area before we started manning the car park and it was pretty awful.

Most of all new friendships have been forged and the Gloucester Sea Cadets and Gloucester Civic Trust we work as one team manning the car park.

The former Gloscat site is now in a state of transition as the land is being assigned to Linden Homes - a Bristol company. We've arranged to meet up with the Director of Linden Homes once the land assignment's complete to see if we may continue to use the car park.

I'd personally like to thank all Civic Trust members and in particular the Tower team for the hours and hours of personal time they've given to man the car park – it's pure and absolute dedication to the Tower project.

Thank you to Gloucester Sea Cadets for being our partners and making it all possible for us.

Thank you to Geoffrey Johnson for printing our car parking tickets.

Thank you to Lyn Cinderey who probably has the most difficult job of doing the monthly car park rotas!

Thank you to David Champion who 95% of the time sets up the car park each Saturday morning.

If you feel you would like to join our merry band of "car park attendants" – it's always good to have other people on the rota list.

Please contact Lyn on 0790 855 2855.