

The Chairman's Report 2011

by Robin Morris

“The curfew tolls the knell of parting day..... and leaves the world to darkness and to me.” Thomas Gray 1716-71

IN the 37th annual report I expressed concern about the future of Llanthony Priory particularly having regard to the then condition of the gatehouse. I have continued to take an interest in the situation and was encouraged when scaffolding appeared preparatory to the commencement of work and this had been mentioned at meetings of Gloucester Historic Buildings. You can imagine my satisfaction when I recently drove past the gatehouse only to see the finished product. I compliment the Llanthony Trust on the achievement which is quite splendid and I look forward to the next phase of the restoration.

We continue to have our Council of Management meetings at the Ecclesiastical Offices in Brunswick Road which is a very pleasant venue. Terry Brookes also tells me what wonderful service he now has over the printing of the newsletter. He takes the disc into Ecclesiastical and there is a 48 hour turn round which is delivered with great courtesy from the Ecclesiastical staff. I would also like to give my personal thanks to Carole Gilbert and Ceri Foster for all they do for us. We are most grateful.

St Michael's Tower continues to be a success story thanks to Marilyn Champion and her tireless committee. There is a full programme of events planned for 2011. This has been further helped with the substantial grant from the Arts Council which will enable the Trust to continue to run art classes focusing on Gloucester's historic built heritage.

Another exciting project is to obtain and hang a bell in St Michael's Tower. The aim is to reintroduce the tradition of the curfew bell. Marilyn and Nigel Spry are actively pursuing the project. I am personally very enthusiastic about it. The bell could also be rung on days of celebration such as Gloucester Day. It is a bit of fun during a difficult period which can be achieved at a relatively modest cost.

Talking of difficult times money in all its forms is in short supply and the City are looking at ways of economising. It would be a great shame if one of the results was the loss of good employees on the heritage side of the City's life. There is also the danger that we will end up with too many cowboys and not enough Indians.

Another bi-product of the financial stringency is the fact that we may have to put the Massie Statute project on the back burner just for the moment. It would be inappropriate for the Trust to be seen trying to raise a substantial sum of money to spend on a work of public art at a time when grants and funds generally are difficult to raise.

The past year has been a good one for all the Trust's activities. Beatrix Potter shop where the Trust's volunteers make a significant contribution continues to be a great success and tourist attraction. Our public meetings, thanks to John Lovell, have been of a high standard which has resulted in a much improved attendance.

Thank you to all our members and volunteers who give their time and effort to support the Trust's work to improve the quality of life in the City of Gloucester.