

Heritage Open Days 2019

Paul Drinkwater, HOD Co-ordinator



ABOVE: 'Royal Gloucester' guided walk.

This year's Gloucester Heritage Days was held from Friday 13th to Monday 16th September inclusive. Despite the overlap of City Voices and Blackfriars Talks our numbers were up this year but it was harder to recruit volunteers due to the other attractions, although we did eventually manage to fill all the required time slots apart from 1 hour on Sunday afternoon.

88 Civic Trust members and 5 others gave of their time freely to act as guides and stewards at the total of 31 different walks, 56 venues open to the public, 12 music events and 8 talks. My sincere thanks to all who acted in this way.

BELOW: 'Olympus Theatre' talk.



There was considerable growth in numbers attending on last year. 826 went on guided walks. 425 attended the 8 talks and 427 the 12 musical events. Over 7,300 visited the venues not manned by Civic Trust members but not all numbers were returned

Unfortunately we were unable to open some regular places, namely the Tudor Room, Hedleys Cellar and the Kings Theatre. However, new places

this year were WI house, the Olympus Theatre, Barnwood Reading Room, the newly refurbished St Mary de Crypt and the newly named Folk.

My personal thanks to this year's HOD team of Gill Bryan, Chris Burton, Maggie Goodchild, Emily Knight and Helena Taylor for their assistance in putting on another successful weekend which takes most of the year to organise. Also to Pauline Roberts who updated all the entries on the National HOD database.

Next year's HOD in Gloucester will be Friday 11th to Monday 14th September. The National HOD theme will be 'Hidden Nature'.

The nationally set theme this year was 'People Power'

Gloucester's heritage comprises many people including the whole city who held out against the besieging army of King Charles 1 in 1643. It was fitting therefore that on the last day of this year's event BBC Radio Gloucestershire sent a reporter to interview walkers on the 'Siege of Gloucester' walk I was leading to get their views on Brexit which she saw as having some parallels with that historical event. Unsurprisingly their views as broadcast the following morning were as divided as the nation's!



ABOVE: Gloucester Waites.

BELOW: 'Cathedral Stonemasons' Workshop.



Civic Trust News

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SPECIAL EDITION!

Gloucester Civic Trust takes over the former Folk Museum Buildings and the EdShed is open for business.

Mayors Medal for John Lovell



The Mayor's Medal is presented to persons who have, in the opinion of the serving Mayor, made important and significant contributions to the City of Gloucester. Other than in exceptional circumstances the number of Mayor's Medals presented during a Mayor's term of office is limited to two. Phil Moss has also been awarded this medal in the past.

Joanne read out a long list of service to the City of Gloucester and his work as a volunteer. Some of the highlights of a long list are that John has worked as a Samaritan, was secretary of Rotary for 8 years, produced the award winning Rotary newsletter for many years, is a Trustee of the History Festival and of course is secretary for Gloucester Civic Trust. An award well deserved! Joanne is also a Trust member and is a member of the Membership Team.

John Lovell receiving the Mayor's medal from Mayor Joanne Brown at this year's AGM.

Editors Letter

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I delayed producing this Newsletter in the hope that I could bring news of our take-over of the former Folk Museum Buildings and this I am pleased to do. It has been an eventful period for the Trust in other areas

as well with a highly successful Heritage Open Days and a fruitful recruitment drive at the History Festival. We have also employed a Manager for the Folk, Nicolette Hamilton who is our first ever employee.

This edition will outline our plans for the Folk. On the front page we recognise and applaud a stalwart of the Trust, our long serving secretary, John Lovell.



Information and articles are always appreciated.
Please contact Alex Bailey,
Tel: 01452 840579 or e-mail newsletter@gloucestercivictrust.org



A tribute to our membership



In the Newsletter much of the content is about the work done by our active volunteers and of course they are very important to the Trust. However of equal importance are the many people who join the Trust because they support the work it does in the City and do not have the time or inclination to be an active

volunteer. We have members who are leaders in other Heritage attractions in the City, several ex-Mayors, leading City Councillor's, trustees in other Charities in the City and many citizens!

The Council of Management would like to thank you for your support.

St Michael's Tower - 10 year anniversary



In 2004, Gloucester Civic Trust were concerned that the Tower was being used as a storage area and negotiated a lease on the building with the owners, Gloucester City Council.

The Trust then embarked on a mission to have St Michael's Tower removed from the Buildings at Risk Register and to regenerate this part of the City centre, bring life to it once more with visitors and activities.

After four years of hard work, Heritage Lottery Funding of £199,000 was approved in 2008.

The Trust then worked with Quattro Design, English Heritage, our landlords, Gloucester City Council and local communities to complete the renovations needed and bring a project together which included a new website, new literature, a series of six audio trails and a heritage arts programme.

In 2009, St Michael's Tower became the headquarters of the Trust and "A Tower of Learning", where visitors can come to learn about Gloucester's rich heritage.

The Tower has proved to be a great success and sitting at the very heart of the City on the Cross it is a natural place for visitors to the City and locals to visit.

None of this could have happened without the volunteers at the Tower led by Carol who have established the Tower as a sustainable heritage attraction in the City.

The Folk of Gloucester is the next big step for the Trust and like the Tower over three years have already been spent negotiating the transfer to Gloucester Historic Buildings who will lease it to the Civic Trust.

♦ Steve Morgan, the then Mayor and David Champion at the switching on of the Tower lighting in December 2017. A Plaque was also unveiled to Marilyn Champion, David's wife, who was the driving force in making the Tower a reality.

Membership Report - November 2019

Sue Smith, Membership



♦ New members meeting held in the EdShed, Sue Smith at the front with volunteers Sally and Gareth talking about "volunteering".

Our current membership stands at over 650 and we extend a big welcome to all new Members and especially to those we met and signed up during the History Festival.

A New Members Social Evening was held on 12th November and attended by about 60 people. This was held in the Ed Shed at The Folk of Gloucester and everyone was offered some refreshments as they arrived. The evening started with a presentation about the background and formation of Gloucester Civic Trust and then continued with one about our exciting plans for the future of The Folk of Gloucester.

We were also introduced to Nicolette Hamilton, our new Manager at The Folk and the audience gave Nicolette a really warm welcome!

Members of the Council of Management (COM) supported this event and were invited to explain their role on the COM. This helps our new members understand how we are organised and indicates just how many volunteers are involved in the day to day running of Gloucester Civic Trust.

The latest Membership Team meeting was held in The Ed Shed for the first time and

we were able to view our new office space in The Folk. However, we won't be able to move there from the Heritage Hub until we have a fast internet connection installed, which we understand will take several weeks.

We are making some small changes to our membership application form and we are hoping to have our new online bank account in place in the next few months.

This will be a great improvement for those of us involved with membership subscriptions!

A reminder about subscriptions for 2020 is enclosed with this Newsletter and if you don't currently pay by Standing Order, please consider this option. It is very time consuming for our membership team, who are all volunteers, to collect lots of cheques and cash and pay this into the bank at the beginning of each year.

Social Events

There will be several social events organised next year for members, including our annual visit to Highnam Court. There is already a waiting list of members wishing to visit this beautiful house and places will be limited as usual.

We are also planning a visit to Reading and one to Cheltenham Civic Society in 2020. As usual

a special Member's free tour of Gloucester will be arranged in the summer as this is one of the benefits of being a member. As the usual cost is £5 this is a really good benefit. We will finish the evening in one of our wonderful historic pubs with a buffet supper. More information will be available in the next Newsletter.

Remembrance Day Talk

Chris Morgans



▶ Tony Condor leading the walk after the talk.

In 1919 King George V issued a proclamation calling for a great national silence lasting two minutes, during which there would be a complete suspension of normal activities. This Great Silence as it became known was held on 11 November to mark the end of World War One the previous year. Originally called

Armistice Day it became Remembrance Day in honour of those who died in both World Wars and subsequent conflicts.

On that day in Gloucester the Great Silence was observed at the Cross by the Mayor and civic party, together with a massive crowd

of people who also lined Westgate and Eastgate. A bugler on St Michael's Tower (the Tower) sounded the Last Post.

One hundred years later this scene was vividly described by Tony Conder as a group of us gathered outside the Tower to stand in perfect silence at 11 o'clock, some of us remembering family members who did not return home.

Mike Cox played a recording of the Last Post from inside the Tower, which was greatly appreciated by us and some bystanders.

Tony reminded us that it is important to understand that the two minutes are split, the first to remember those who died and the second to reflect on survival and to look to the future.

In his talk, followed by a short walk through the city Tony brought to life the story of what happened in the years following WWI, difficult times faced by many who returned from the fighting with the shadow of war lingering. A hard period economically when there was confusion and often anger throughout the country.

This talk by Tony is typical of the many walks and talks given throughout the year by our Guides Team who without a doubt are one of the largest, best qualified and able set of Guides anywhere in the Country.

Sue Smith - Chartered Freeman of the City of Gloucester

Sue Smith our Membership Officer who was awarded her Guides Badge last October decided to give her first tour as a qualified guide wearing her Chartered Freeman's robes. She is pictured above in front of the Cathedral with some of the people on the tour.

Sue was made a Chartered Freeman of the City of Gloucester on 4th January 2018, along with her son. The ceremony was conducted by the Mayor Steve Morgan in front of an invited audience in the Civic Suite.

She swore The Freeman's Oath, which is an oath of allegiance to the Queen and the City of Gloucester and in return received certain privileges. For instance, she can drive her sheep over The Cross and set up a stall on the Gate Streets to sell her goods without obtaining a licence!

These are two examples of the very old and rather quaint privileges which were of great value in medieval times but are not usually taken up these days, for obvious

reasons. Although Alan Myatt, an Honorary Freeman, did drive some borrowed sheep from the City Farm over The Cross a few years ago as a publicity stunt!

Sue can trace her ancestors back many generations and they were Chartered Freemen living here since before the Siege of Gloucester. She received this honour as a hereditary title, although some men and women have been awarded an Honorary Freeman of the City which lasts for their lifetime only. Her grandchildren can also claim the title, if they wish, when they are 21 years old.

After the tour she said "I am pleased to be able to wear my Chartered Freeman's robes when I undertake Tours of Gloucester as a trained Civic Trust Guide and I hope it helps to promote what we do for the city and creates more awareness of our Guided Tours. Being a



Chartered Freeman is a very ancient tradition and I am very proud of my connection with the City of Gloucester and its heritage"

Sue also said that she hoped that other guides might also find suitable attire to draw attention to the valuable service that guides offer!

Progress Report and Plans for the Future

by Alex Baley



The legal documents are still not exchanged for Gloucester Historic Buildings to own the property and then for us to lease it but confidence that this will happen soon is high. Given this the Council of Management agreed that we would take out a license to operate the premises until such time as the legal process is complete. It was also agreed that funds would be made available to the Folk team so that we can employ a Manager and start work on preparing the premises for opening. Perhaps the most important thing we have done is to employ a Manager, Nicolette Hamilton, the first ever employee of the Trust!. We have been fortunate to secure the services of an experienced Manager who started work for us on the 18th November. This is a message from Nicolette,

"I am new to Gloucestershire as well as The Folk having previously lived in Bath and London. I now live in the Stroud Valleys, and have three sons, the eldest two have now grown up and left home.

I have worked in and with many different types of museum from most recently the British Museum to small local authority historic houses and volunteer run museums. I have worked a lot with volunteers throughout my career and really value the passion and enthusiasm volunteers bring to organisations such as The Folk. My expertise is in engaging communities with heritage and audience development. I also have a first class degree in Arts Management and Fine Art. I look forward to working with you to make the folk the second most visited attraction in the city!"

The team have a great number of ideas and one of the first tasks for Nicolette is to lead a brain-storming session so that we can agree a vision of where we are going and a plan to get us there. The development of a realistic timeline is important, we simply cannot do everything at once.

In terms of exhibitions we have already started work on the Siege of Gloucester room.

An exciting possibility as yet at very early discussion stage is the inclusion of a Rugby Club Heritage display at the Folk. We are in discussions with Gloucester Rugby Heritage, a Charity, see their website for more details <https://www.gloucester rugby heritage.org.uk/>

Teams

To manage the amount of work that needs doing we have to break it down into smaller packages, each with its team of volunteers. We already have our first team who have made a big impact on the garden.

Garden Team



Plans for setting up the Operation of the Folk

▶ **BELOW:** Andrew Armstrong (City Archaeologist), Richard Crowhurst, Nicolette Hamilton, Sue Smith, Phil Moss and Alex Bailey taken at a meeting in the room where the Siege of Gloucester exhibition is planned to go. Andrew and Phil are leading this work.



▶ **ABOVE:** Donna, Helen, Bridget, Mary and Min having a well-earned tea break back in August which was the first gardening day. The garden had been neglected for a considerable time and was completely overgrown. An example of the impact they had is shown by the flagstones in this picture which at the start of the day were full of weeds in the joins. This work meant that the Cotton AGM took place in a reasonably smart area.

EdShed Operation

We took over responsibility for running the EdShed on the 14th November and this will of course provide us with our main source of income. In the short term members of the Operations Team have been running the EdShed together with Nicolette. This has been useful so that we can learn the ropes. We need a team of volunteers to help Nicolette manage the EdShed. By the time you read this we will have had a couple of initial meetings and hopefully have some help for Nicolette. A full set of guidance notes is being produced.

Café Team



▶ **ABOVE:** The Café in full flow at Apple Day.

The Café will hopefully be our second biggest source of income and so far we have run it with the equipment that we have which is pretty basic to say the least! Whenever people visit the Folk it will greatly enhance the experience if we can offer a good café experience. We need to establish a Café team who will lead the setting up of the café, what equipment we buy, setting the menu, how they run it and so on.

Other Teams

We will need many other things doing, meeting and greeting, producing guides, looking after some of the displays leading walks inside and from the Folk and many other things.



Apple Day in Photos

Photos taken by Michael Smith



This year's Apple Day was the first which was fully organised by the Trust. We ran last year's event but we did not organise it. This was the second major event which Marc Water's was in charge of what a success it was! Over 550 people attended, the most ever and they were treated to a great day.



▶ **ABOVE:** Dave of Day's Farm being interviewed at his Farm by Pete Wilson of Radio Gloucestershire who dedicated his programme to our Apple Day the Sunday before it happened.

▶ **RIGHT:** Haydn and Rosie our new Cider Horse.



▶ **ABOVE:** Sue Smith and Manager of the Folk Nicolette Hamilton admiring the Apple display by the Gloucestershire Orchard Trust.



▶ **LEFT:** Lassington Oak Morris Men in an impressive "airborne" display!

▶ **RIGHT:** Lassington Oak Morris Men workshop in the EdShed.



▶ **ABOVE:** Bygonz, Rob and Gillian Guest entertained with Pipe and Tabor.

▶ **RIGHT:** Tom Bull of Severn Cider with Marc Waters. We benefited from a share of the bar takings.

