



NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2012

Chairman's Report	2
Glenfall House	3
Summer Party	4
Conservation and Planning	5
Tewkesbury Road Gateway	6
Planning Forum & Civic Pride	7
Europa Nostra	8
Wilson Plaque	10
2013 Programme	11
Forthcoming Events	12
Civic Society Executive Committee	12

Dates for your diary – see back page for details

Paterson Memorial Lecture

Tuesday 11 December 2012

Ben Bolgar, Director of the Prince's Foundation for Building Community gives this year's lecture at Christ Church, Malvern Road.

Cheltenham Civic Society Winter Party

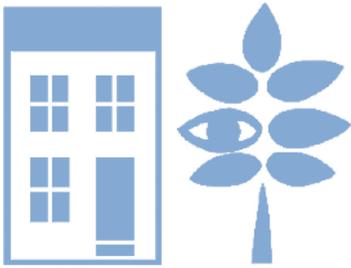
Sunday 13 January 2013

Don't forget to complete your application form.

Lecture at Parmoor House

Tuesday 12 February 2013

Revd. Charles Whitney talks about the first 100 years of Dean Close School.



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The highlight of a busy summer has to be the Olympics, where I spent over 2 weeks as a volunteer in the Olympic Park. It just showed what fun pride and enthusiasm can be, not forgetting the wonderful display of flower meadows and of course the magnificent efforts of all the athletes.



Flowers around the Olympic Stadium

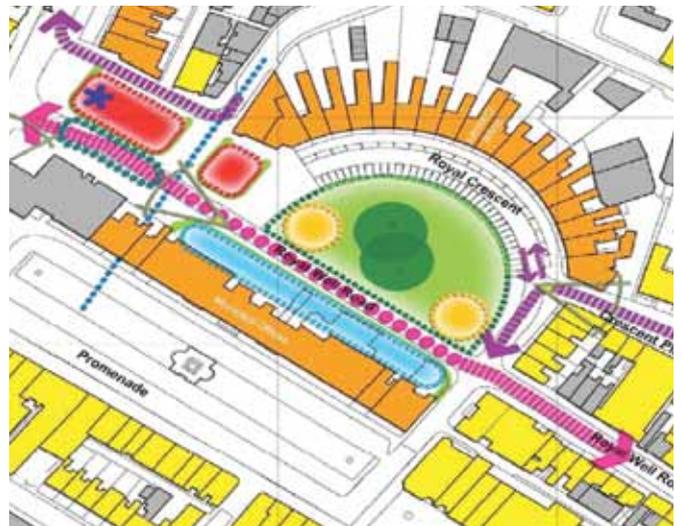
It was pride and enthusiasm by a wide group of volunteers that made Cheltenham Heritage Open Days in September bigger and better. There were more buildings open, more walks and restaurants joining in the scheme for the first time to celebrate our town and its heritage. It has also been the pride and enthusiasm of the "Wilson group" that has in this centenary year celebrated the life of Cheltenham's own Edward Wilson, with a finale marked by the unveiling of the plaque on 10 November at Crippetts, where a young Edward Wilson nurtured his skills and knowledge in both painting and natural history.

So often on my travels, the mention of Cheltenham brings favourable comment about the Festivals, now an essential part of the character of this special town. After the discussions in previous years about the Gardens and the Festivals, it was pleasing to see how well the new design for Imperial Gardens worked. It was much more the festival in a garden that we had hoped for. Not everything was perfect; the layout in Montpellier Gardens in particular could be improved and the aftermath not surprisingly brought out the critics. But these should all be

soluble problems. The efforts by the Montpellier traders to embrace the Festivals are a welcome positive move. The Festivals and the Gardens are important to us all, whether residents or businesses, and I am sure that with pride, enthusiasm, and vigilance, we can all continue to enjoy them.

The Development Brief for Royal Well and the Municipal Offices is out for consultation until 3 December. This is an important consultation and I urge all of you to take a look either at: www.cheltenham.gov.uk/civicpride, the Municipal Offices or the local libraries, and have your say. The changes subject to consultation are relatively subtle and are aimed to stimulate more imaginative bids from developers.

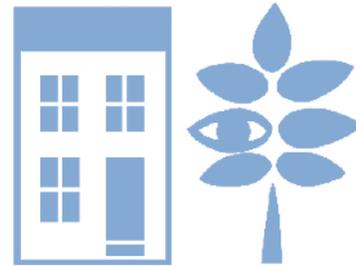
The Executive Committee will discuss the Consultation during November and submit comments, so if you have any comments, then do please let me know as well as submitting these through the consultation process.



Royal Well and Municipal Offices Consultation

Finally we are pleased to welcome Ben Bolgar from the Prince's Foundation for Building Community to give the Paterson Memorial Lecture on 11 December on "Learning from Cheltenham". It promises to be a stimulating evening and I hope to see many of you there.

Stephen Clarke



GLENFALL HOUSE



Glenfall House

Thirty-two members enjoyed this visit on 24 July. Since 1992 the house has been a Diocesan Retreat, and perhaps appropriately we were blessed with a delightful sunlit evening. Glenfall House has undergone several modifications, evolving from a simple farmhouse to a substantial mansion, only a wing or two short of the Stately Home category. The farmhouse was replaced by a genteel square brick villa in 1765, later considerably extended in the early nineteenth century, transforming it into an imposing Regency-style house with classical proportions. The twentieth century saw further metamorphoses – a 1920's enlargement (library, gallery, ballroom in a new South wing and a first-floor terrace). The 1960's removed the entire second floor (giving the house a curiously elongated profile) and re-modelled the entrance hall and staircase.



The Panelled Library

The handsome rooms have thus often changed function; the present dining room has been a chapel and a ballroom within living memory.

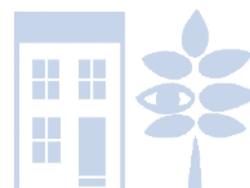
In the 1980's Glenfall was a Benedictine Convent; a timely bequest enabled the Gloucester Diocese to take it over and embark on a major restoration. As our lively host commented, incoming investment in the property over the centuries, has often originated from the licensed trade (three brewers and distillers) so the tradition of hospitality is in its genes.

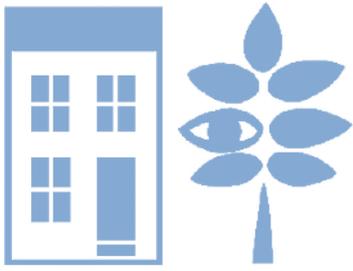


Terraced Gardens

Site and setting are Glenfall's most memorable qualities. The 1920's transformed its four acres of grounds, as well as the house, and both benefitted from the local Arts and Crafts movement, notably Peter Waals' carpentry in the library and, almost certainly, Norman Jewson's designs for the terraced gardens with their different 'rooms' and magnificent panoramic Western prospect.

Michael Storm





SUMMER PARTY 25 AUGUST 2012

The annual Civic Society Summer Party was held at Parmoor House this August. Regrettably, the wettest summer since records began prevented the use of the gardens, but despite the rain a good evening was enjoyed by all. The lack of sun was certainly more than compensated by the wonderful spread, for which we must thank the Catering Committee.



Jane Woodley, Thelma Martin, Moyra Stephens, Diana Brown & Paulette Faulkner – Catering Committee



Stephen Clarke, Aidan & Pat Rose



Jenny Ogle and John Eden



Sheila Chaplin, Roger Woodley & Penny Crowe



Jane Woodley, Ken Stephens and Joan Bate



Michael Gibson, David & Thelma Martin



Tom & Fiona Clarke with Roger Brown (centre)



CONSERVATION AND PLANNING

At our September meeting the speaker was Simon Roper-Pressdee, Senior Associate Director (Historic Buildings) at CgMs Consulting, specialist advisers to the property industry. Having qualified as an archaeologist Simon worked for a number of local authorities in the West Midlands as a Conservation Officer, giving in-depth statutory advice on proposals that impacted on the historic environment. He also provided input on the design of some major property development schemes. In 2011 Simon joined the CgMs office in Cheltenham and is now responsible for advising on proposed developments that affect Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and other areas of local importance.

Simon began by saying that Planning and Conservation go together like Love and Marriage! There has to be Respect for each other and an Acceptance that sometimes each party has different aims or objectives. Any differences have to be negotiated with Courtesy and invariably there has to be some Compromise. Above all, both parties have to Work really hard to achieve a happy outcome.

He defined Architectural/Building conservation as the process through which the material, historical and design integrity of the built heritage are prolonged through carefully planned interventions. He then ran through a history of the legislation designed to protect the national Heritage and Environment. The Town & Country Planning Act, 1947 was the first act to try to regulate planning in the UK and developed a system of 'listing' for buildings that were of special importance, or 'at risk'. The 1947 act led to a number of further measures to protect the Heritage, such as the Historic Buildings and Archaeology Act, 1953, the Ancient Monuments Act, 1979 and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act in 1990. In addition, alongside this legislation, there has been a massive growth in bodies to protect the environment.

Of these, English Heritage is the UK Government's statutory adviser and consultee on all aspects of the historic environment and its heritage assets. It monitors and reports on the state of England's heritage and publishes the annual 'Heritage at Risk'



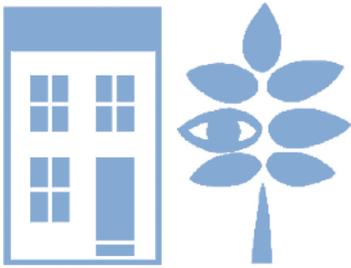
Simon Roper-Pressdee

survey which is one of the UK Government's official statistics. It is tasked to 'secure the preservation and enhancement of the man-made heritage of England for the benefit of future generations.' In addition it manages over 400 sites and monuments.

It is through this maze of organisations, legislation and vested interests that Simon has to steer when giving advice to developers and local authorities. He concluded by coming back to home and spoke about how he has advised the potential developer of the North Place/Portland Street development in Cheltenham. From initial tender and design, through public consultations to planning application, Simon has advised on the potential impact such a massive building project will have and has endeavoured to plot a course that will please both the local authority and the developer – let's hope he has got it right.

Roger Brown





TEWKESBURY ROAD GATEWAY

Mention Tewkesbury Road and there is universal condemnation of this important gateway into Cheltenham. At the March AGM this year, Tony Davy reminded us that there had been a report produced a number of years ago on Tewkesbury Road known as the Latham Report.



View from Hayden Road Junction

Produced in 2001 as part of the Civic Pride Initiative, Latham Architects carried out an Urban Design Study stating that:

Ideally, primary routes into a town such as Cheltenham should provide a grand, noble, and dignified approach to the centre, to provide the visitor with feelings of expectation and pleasure.

But then goes on to say how the approach falls short of this vision:

Once the urban area is reached, the road becomes a utilitarian corridor bordered by an undistinguished and monotonous ribbon of poorly related developments.



View from Princess Elizabeth Way Junction Roundabout

In a 2006 Urban Design Study by Halcrow, Tewkesbury Road becomes purely a traffic route, having dropped down the priority list of actions for Civic Pride. Today the Cheltenham Development Task Force acknowledges Tewkesbury Road with sympathy but regards it as being outside its remit.

Tewkesbury Road is one of those post-war highways; rushing cars from the motorway into the centre past the retail parks and car showrooms. Turning it into a Regency boulevard would present an impossible challenge, but why is there no cohesive planning policy for improvements to this increasingly important gateway?



View from Tesco Junction

There are some notable landmarks along the route such as the old Gasworks, St Peters Church and the modern Aston Martin Showroom, which received a Civic Award. We need to build on these with a contemporary interpretation of Cheltenham's character of a planned green urban streetscape. Why cannot landscaping opportunities be identified, trees planted, consistent design standards set for new buildings, and a planning framework agreed, so that perhaps in another 50 years time there will be a dignified and even noble approach to our town centre?

Perhaps what Tewkesbury Road needs is some Friends and then something might happen. What do you think?

Stephen Clarke



PLANNING FORUM & CIVIC PRIDE

This has been a quiet quarter, although we are about to have our next meeting at which we shall be considering the major scheme for North Place. To report back on the schemes I referred to last time, we are disappointed that the boarding house for the Ladies College in Parabola Road was approved. Building work – or more accurately, demolition – has started on the old tax office. Work has also started at Dean Close to build the new hall we also disliked.

There have been a lot of schemes recently to reinstate or replace railings, and these are to be welcomed. But it is a concern that sometimes over-elaborate railings are proposed, when plainer designs would be more in keeping. A scheme has been approved for very fussy arched gateways in railings at the Vanilla Restaurant in Cambray. It seems to us that these will detract from the dignity of the terrace that the railings front. Similarly, a house in Evesham Road has had railings approved that sweep up to excessively grand gates. A plain railing and gates of the same height would in our view have been more appropriate. An application for railings for the Lansdown Hotel is still pending. We would prefer them to copy the illustration in Rowe's Guide, which are simple and traditional. But this is not what is proposed!

John Henry



Beautifully simple railings in Montpellier Spa Road

CIVIC PRIDE REPORT

Jeremy Williamson, Managing Director of the Cheltenham Development Task Force gave an upbeat report at the annual Civic Pride meeting on 6 November. He told us that with major private investment in the High Street at Regent Arcade and the Brewery, there was considerable interest from retailers for the new larger shops.



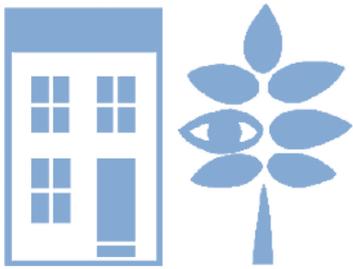
Portland Street - proposed townhouses

Skanska on the North Place/Portland Street site should deliver high quality, highly sustainable houses, and Jeremy hoped the Haines and Strange site along with the vandalised Odeon could also be redeveloped for housing. St Mary's Churchyard improvements are now under active review, and the Royal Well and Municipal Offices brief is being updated prior to going out for bids from developers.

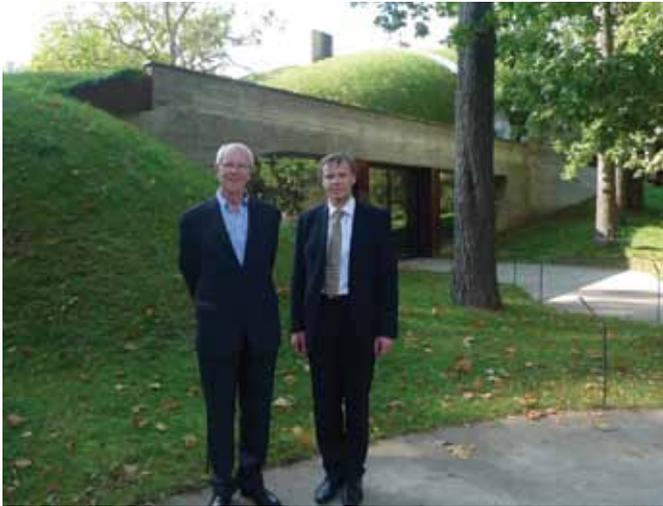
The closure of Boots Corner to all traffic except public transport is now being planned thanks to a grant from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. The return of two-way traffic is also planned to improve traffic flows, and other measures to encourage more cycling and greater use of public transport are to be included. In the Promenade, the east side has now been repaved, and will be followed shortly by the west side repaving.

There is still a lot to do and many risks to be managed but the Civic Pride programme is moving forward. In thanking Jeremy Williamson, Diana Brown praised his enthusiasm and energy, but reminded him that we would continue to critically appraise changes that we felt threaten the special character of the town.

Stephen Clarke



EUROPA NOSTRA CELEBRATES EUROPEAN HERITAGE



Roger Woodley in Lithuania with Gintaras Karosas, Restorer of the Award-winning Liubavas Watermill

If you have trouble in tracking down the elusive Dr Roger Woodley in Cheltenham, try extending your search to the Hague, Lithuania or some Scottish Castle. For Roger is vice-chairman of the jury for Category One of the Europa Nostra award scheme and an assessor for Categories Three and Four, which means he is always on the move. Fortunately, the Civic Society was able to pin him down for an evening to describe the activities of Europa Nostra, “the voice of cultural heritage in Europe”, which is presided over by Placido Domingo.

Europa Nostra (Roger informed us) was founded in 1963 and comprises virtually all the member states of the Council of Europe (45 in all). It is connected with UNESCO and the European Commission and has among its membership some 400 NGOs, such as English Heritage and the National Trust. Its main tasks are to facilitate networking between interested bodies, to lobby on heritage matters, to celebrate success through its award scheme, to publicise heritage at risk and to form a movement which will support heritage in all its aspects.

Its award scheme, based on Britain’s Civic Trust awards system, started in 1978 and comprises four categories: 1) conservation, 2) research, 3) dedicated service, 4) education, training and awareness training. The conservation category is exemplified by the six

recently restored historical organs in Mafra Basilica, Portugal; and the research category by The Augustus Botanical code of Ara Pacis in Rome – one of this year’s Grand Prix winners. William Morris’s Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings has won an award for dedicated service; while the transformation of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford won an award in the fourth category.

The statistics are impressive. This year the award scheme attracted 226 submissions from 31 European countries, and from these 28 winners were selected. The crème de la crème of the winners were each awarded the Grand Prix and €10,000, and I was delighted to see that in the conservation category one British entry - the Poundstock Gildhouse in Bude, Cornwall - was honoured in this way along with the Averof Building of the National Technical University in Athens and the Number 2 Blast Furnace in Sagunto, Spain. This just goes to show that an entry does not have to be sophisticated or palatial to impress the judges; the Gildhouse is a modest but meticulously restored example of the vernacular and plays an important role in the life of the community - and that is why it won this prestigious prize.

Roger’s informative talk was illustrated with pictures of the British entries. Although it is not a requirement of the job, he tries to visit as many of these as possible, and this year’s crop included Stirling Castle, Blencow Hall in Cumbria, the Medieval and Renaissance Galleries of the V&A, Leighton House in Kensington, Taunton’s Hestercombe Garden and the No.1 Smithery in Chatham Dockyard.



The Gildhouse, Poundstock, Bude, Cornwall



Europa Nostra Plaque

Only Leighton House and the Gildhouse actually won awards, although the Rainey, Greg and Cunningham Mausolea in Belfast (which Roger did not visit) received a special mention.

Regardless of who wins or fails to win an award, as a committed European I fully endorse Europa Nostra's philosophy that appreciation of our common cultural heritage is vital for a better understanding between Europeans and is a means of bringing us closer together. We are greatly indebted to Dr Woodley for bringing Europa Nostra and the valuable contribution it makes to our attention, and I shall look forward to reading more about its activities in the future. I suppose the idea of a Civic Society outing to see the major prize-winners is too much to hope for in a time of austerity; but I can heartily commend to your attention EN's handsome brochure of photos and details of Europa Nostra award winners. For further information please go to the website www.europanostra.org/

Roger Jones

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

Parmoor House opened its doors again for this annual event, and welcomed over 140 visitors on the Saturday and Sunday. They all enjoyed looking round the house and garden, admired its grandeur and taste, and reminded us how lucky we were to have it. Also of great interest was the display of archives from the Civic Society's collection, which in practice means our albums of press cuttings.

For the past couple of years, the Civic Society has played a larger role for HODs in Cheltenham as a whole. Stephen Clarke and I have sat on a Council-

led but Civic Society initiated consultative group, chaired by Conservation Officer Karen Radford, where representatives of the various places opening can meet together and coordinate operations. Our successes include the production of an attractive leaflet covering the town, sponsored by us and Eagle Tower; a programme of walks, led mainly by representatives of the Civic and Local History Societies; and persuading Francis Close Hall, one of the town's star buildings, to open for the first time.

Roger Woodley



Parmoor House

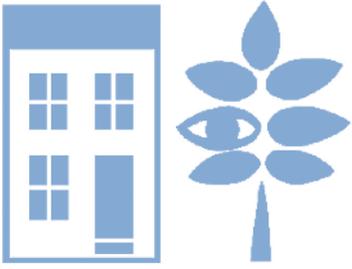
MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The current membership year ends on 31 December and subscriptions therefore fall due on 1 January 2013. A membership renewal form for 2013 is enclosed with this Newsletter. If you already pay by Standing Order then you do not need to do anything. But, if you pay by cheque, or wish to change your method of payment to a Standing Order, then please return the form to the Membership Secretary.

Please let us have your email address. We are building up a register of members' email addresses so that we can send out reminders of Society events and news of other events that may be of interest to members, but cannot always be included in the Newsletter.

We warmly welcome to the Society Mr & Mrs Tom Pettigrew, Ms Sadie Hawson, Miss Lesley Knight, Dr Hanne Lambley, Mr Ashley Mills and Mr Ian Round.

Roger Brown, Membership Secretary

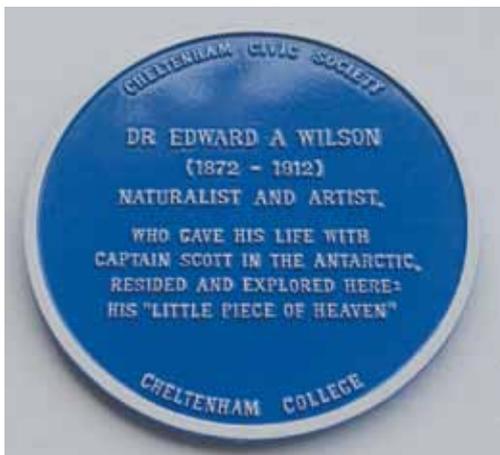


DR EDWARD ADRIAN WILSON

The last of this year's plaques was unveiled on Saturday 10 November: to Edward Wilson, distinguished explorer, artist and naturalist – and Cheltonian – who died in the Antarctic with Captain Scott a century ago. The date, in November, commemorates that on which the bodies of the last survivors were discovered.

The location for the plaque, unusually, is not centrally in Cheltenham, where Wilson was born (in Montpellier Terrace) and lived for much of his childhood (in Montpellier Parade), but at Hillcrest (then Crippetts Farm), out near the Cotswold Way, south of Leckhampton. Here the Wilson family had a small farm where he spent much formative time as a boy and a young man.

Steve and Rhian Cooper, who live in the house today, welcomed the chance to see on it the commemorative plaque sponsored by the Civic Society and the Old Cheltonians. The blue plaque was 'unveiled' by the Borough Mayor of Tewkesbury – because, curiously, the house now lies within the Tewkesbury boundary – but both towns were fully represented. Mayor Colin Hay of Cheltenham was there, and short speeches were made by Martin Horwood, our MP, by Laurence Robertson the Tewkesbury member, and Dr Alex Peterken, Head of Cheltenham College. Perhaps the most moving, almost spiritual, moment was when Dr David Wilson, the explorer's great nephew, recalled how much being at the Crippetts, studying nature, drawing and painting, helped to form Wilson's faith and philosophy.



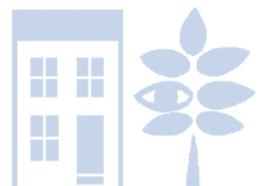
Philip Surman, Mayor of Tewkesbury, Stephen Clarke, Chairman, Cheltenham Civic Society and Dr Peterken, Head of Cheltenham College

After the unveiling, those present attended a service of celebration at St Peter's, Leckhampton, and a rededication at the Wilson family grave in the churchyard. These too were moving experiences. But for me, it was up at the Crippetts, as we looked out over the white town of Cheltenham, at peace in the late autumn sunlight, that I felt closest to the man himself.

Roger Woodley

Apologies

The July Newsletter item on the Rev Francis Close plaque unveiling, referred to his statue on the south facade of Cheltenham College (as quoted in the usually infallible Pevsner). We thank Mrs Jill Barlow of the College Archives, who has kindly pointed out that this in fact represents Bishop Barry, who was Principal of the College in the 1860s.





2013 PROGRAMME

The 2013 Programme is enclosed, which I hope you will all again find interesting and enjoyable. Certainly the lecture on 12 February to be given by Revd Charles Whitney will be entertaining because he is a natural raconteur. Moyra and Ken Stephens have kindly agreed to be in charge on the night as I will be away in February.

But before that is the Paterson Memorial Lecture on 11 December this year. We have been extremely fortunate that Ben Bolgar of the Prince's Foundation has agreed to speak on the work of the Foundation and its principles. He is an admirer of much of Cheltenham's architecture and town planning, so here is a real opportunity to appreciate the significance of our town.



I have again to thank the Programme Group (the three Rogers, Brown, Jones and Woodley, and Chris Wilton) for their help and advice. My time is up in March 2013 and I know that my successor would continue to have their support. Surely there must be someone among the readership of the newsletter who would be prepared to take over from me in March. You might even find it enjoyable. Please contact me on 01242 263394 if you think you might be able to help.

Sheila Chaplin

CIVIC AWARDS 2012

The closing date for 2012 Civic Awards nominations has now passed. In the capable hands of Diane Lewis the assessment process has begun, and the Awards Panel will convene early in 2013 to visit each project and make a decision.



Fire Station, College Baths Road

Despite the recession, a number of interesting projects have been put forward, including the decidedly modernist new Fire Station in College Baths Road.

Do you have strong views about anything that affects the environment of Cheltenham?

If the answer is yes – then tell us about it.

The Editor welcomes letters, emails or any other contributions to the Newsletter.

Please send letters to:

The Editor, Cheltenham Civic Society,
Parmoor House, 13 Lypiatt Terrace, Lypiatt Road,
Cheltenham GL50 2SX
or email: newsletter@cheltenhamcivicsociety.org.uk

Please note that the deadline for the March issue is 4 March 2013.



FORTHCOMING CIVIC SOCIETY EVENTS

Tuesday 11 December 2012 – 7.30pm
**Paterson Memorial Lecture –
Christ Church, Malvern Road**

Ben Bolgar, Senior Design Director of the Prince's Foundation for Building Community will be giving this year's Paterson Memorial Lecture entitled *Learning from Cheltenham*. Admission on the door £5 including a glass of wine.

Sunday 13 January 2013 – 12 noon to 2.00pm
Winter Party – Parmoor House

Refreshments provided. For details please see and complete the enclosed form.

Tuesday 12 February 2013 – 7.30pm
Lecture – Parmoor House

Revd. Charles Whitney, School Archivist, will be giving a talk on *Dean Close School: First 100 Years*.

Tuesday 12 March 2013 – 7.30pm
Annual General meeting and Open Forum

An opportunity to attend the AGM and have your say about the activities and work of the Society.

The admission charge to a Civic Society Lecture at Parmoor House is £2 (members) and £4 (non-members). It would be helpful if you could tender the correct change at the door. Doors open at 7.00pm for tea or coffee and biscuits beforehand.

CHELTENHAM CIVIC SOCIETY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Chairman: Stephen Clarke
chairman@cheltenhamcivicsociety.org.uk

Vice-Chairman: Douglas Ogle
ogle1welly@waitrose.com

Chairman of Planning Forum: John Henry
planning@cheltenhamcivicsociety.org.uk

Honorary Treasurer: Ken Stephens
treasurer@cheltenhamcivicsociety.org.uk

Plaques Officer: Roger Woodley
rjw821@btinternet.com

Programme Secretary: Sheila Chaplin
01242 263394

Diane Lewis
dianelewis@waitrose.com

Bob Keevil
robertkeevil@btinternet.com

Newsletter Editor: Mike Duckering
newsletter@cheltenhamcivicsociety.org.uk

www.cheltenhamcivicsociety.org.uk