

Programme Secretary's Report

By John Lovell

THIS has been my first stint as Programme Secretary and I've spread my net wide in order to bring to the Trust a range of speakers whose expertise will appeal to the diverse range of members' interests.

We kicked off in September with Chris Oldershaw, Chief Executive of the Gloucester Heritage Urban Regeneration Company, with a talk which, unfortunately wasn't terribly well attended. Since both his company's heritage title and our own concerns coincide, it should have been a fascinating evening since there are many in the Trust who feel that Chris has yet to earn his spurs in the heritage stakes. As it was he escaped relatively unscathed. He has offered to come again and next time we must try to get more members present to ensure Chris has a warm welcome!!!

The October meeting was slightly better attended when Phil McLellan gave us a fascinating insight into the highs and lows of his term as the city's Mayor. He's still a hard working councillor and we are grateful for the time he gave us.

The November meeting was very well attended - perhaps because it was better publicised in The Citizen and also because wine and mince pies were on offer! Chairman Robin Morris, spoke about Gloucester banker (and miser) Jemmy Wood - but to prove he's in a different category - Robin bought the wine! A good pre-Christmas evening was had by all.

In February members were entertained by local man Pat Furley to his Magic Lantern show. Pat has been collecting old 'lanterns' and glass slides for years and has shared their magic with numerous local audiences. This time it was our turn - and we weren't disappointed.

Last month one of our Trust members, Jackie Perry, gave us an insight into boat building on Alney Island - a hugely important business in the city for generations. Once again Jackie showed how lucky we are to have such talent within our own ranks.

As part of the Programme, we welcome my old boss (and friend) Ian Mean, formerly editor of The Citizen but now, more recently appointed editor-in-chief of Gloucestershire Media. He's extremely busy (usually from around 6am till 10pm) and we are very grateful he has given up an evening in his tight schedule to speak to us. Of all the bosses I have worked with, Ian is by far the editor who has most involved himself with the city. Both as an editor and as vice chair of the regeneration company Ian has strong views on the city's future and isn't afraid to express them. I know also from past experiences he welcomes questions so let's ensure he doesn't get off the hook too easily.

- All of our Autumn and Winter meetings are open (at no expense) to the public as part of our continuing 'mission' to involve the public in the city's past, present and future. We will, of course, be hoping that non-members who show an interest by attending might eventually sign up as members.