



From The Warden, Michael Jones

Paid membership now stands at 129, but sadly we have lost four members - Helen Lovatt, a past Warden, Mike Warner, a member of Court, Chris Ryland, who was involved with the Soldiers of Gloucestershire Museum, and finally and most recently John Hazelwood, who was a founder member of the Honourable Company

I would, however, like to welcome new members, Mhairi Ball, Andrew Pitt, Nicola Lawson, Peter Cottingham and Dee Russell-Thomas; also Iain Lovatt who has agreed to join the Honourable Company in his own right having supported Helen for many years. Iain will join Court as membership champion in the New Year.

I feel it is worth repeating my comments from the AGM concerning the Community Support Group which, under the new leadership of Paul Massey, has championed active participation in all parts of the county. The Group and its members have visited charities in Gloucester, Cirencester, Moreton-in-Marsh and Mitcheldean and are doing their best to spread best practice between them. A particular highlight was returning to the Chamwell Centre 12 months after their £1,000 grant from the Company's Charitable Trust to see how they had spent the money. Their newly refurbished assisted changing room was impressive and the centre is a real asset for Gloucestershire.

In order to promote closer relations with The Gloucestershire Community Foundation I was invited to attend their AGM, where Talitha Nelson showcased the work which the organisation achieved over the past year. The GCF has funds from the Honourable Company which it invests and each year under the Charitable Trust's direction the proceeds are given to causes we consider worthy. In the past CSG (Andrew Tabor) has worked with Cranfield and the GCF to mentor charities. This has very been successful; however at present we are uncertain how this may develop for the future.



With Jonathan Danley, GCF Trustee and HCG Member

A number of our Company attended the High Sheriff's Race Day at Cheltenham racecourse on the 16 November to support Julie Kent and the High Sheriff Fund. Julie did an amazing job and the whole day raised £14,500.

In case there may be the odd member who has not diligently read the minutes of our recent AGM, I would like to restate my financial observations. Since COVID the financial landscape has changed. Many costs have increased yet our subscriptions have not increased a great deal. You will recall that last year I announced on behalf of then Warden Julie Kent an increase in subscriptions of only £20. I then gave an example: in 2009 our subscription was £150 and is now £195, an increase of only £45 in 16 years.

Additionally, our recommended contribution to our Charitable Trust was £100 in 2009 and still is £100. This stagnation has reduced our Trust's impact from that which was originally envisaged and forces us to be less generous where there is definite need.



Since the inception of our Company inflation is 77.3% which, if we were to maintain parity, would call for increases over and above those already imposed. I have asked Court to consider further actions that could be taken to redress this balance, or reduce our aspirations which, according to the data that I have received from the initiative which I announced at my installation, I do not believe will be the wish of our members. I am therefore announcing that Court has decided that our subscriptions will, from next April, rise each year with inflation as a minimum. Court has also decided to increase our Charitable Trust contribution, which Andrew Tabor (Trust Chair) announced at the AGM will be an additional £50 this year followed by a further increase of £25 in each of the subsequent two years.

I mentioned in the previous paragraph the initiative which I announced at my Installation. I would like to share with you a little more detail. The initiative is designed to help us define how the Honourable Company can become more relevant, meaningful and contemporary for the future. Some members have remarked we have lost our way, we are not as influential as we were, and some find it difficult to explain to potential members what we do. This is only a small snapshot of comments. We have engaged with many members, all the IGs, and compared ourselves with other similar bodies. During this process I have regularly communicated with Sir Henry to ensure we do not dilute any of our core values; there is no intention of proposing radical change, rather offering suggestions as to what we might wish to consider going forward.

There will not be another newsletter before the New Year. All that remains is to send all our members, on behalf of Elizabeth and myself, good wishes for a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Michael Jones, Warden

UPCOMING EVENTS ... UPCOMING EVENTS ... UPCOMING EVENTS

Our Christmas/Winter drinks event will take place on **Tuesday, 2 December**, 6.00 to approx. 7.30pm. Members and partners are invited. Roger Head has generously allowed us to use his excellent home which is particularly welcoming at this time of year. In addition, Roger has kindly agreed to give a talk during the evening on the renovations that he has undertaken to the house and gardens since first moving in. This is a free event, supported by the Company and Warden, with a little finger food to assist the consumption of wine. It is an ideal opportunity to bring along any friends/colleagues who you think might be potential new members. If you plan to invite someone, please make the Clerk aware in your response, so that he can ensure that Court members meet them.

The Gloucestershire Schools Christmas Lectures were held in the Bacon Theatre of Dean Close School last December. This year's Lectures are very close and will take place on **Monday 8 December** at the same venue. Patrick is well underway with organising the event.

At the AGM the Warden expressed his gratitude to all those who give their time to organise events and interesting visits, recognising the great deal of preparation required.



ARMED FORCES GROUP



After a long tenure Andy Hodson handed over the reins of the Armed Forces Group to Charles Calder (*pictured left*) on 30 September. Thanks go to Andy for all his hard work and in particular for leading on a very successful event at the Royal Agricultural University in May last year. Charles Calder, takes on the role of Group Chair following a full career in the Army. He is now living near Cheltenham and works for a tech start up in the defence sector. He would be very keen to hear from any members who are veterans and would be willing to get involved with the Armed Forces Group. At the HCG AGM the Warden thanked Andy (who remains a member of the AFG) for finding such an excellent replacement before he stood down.

The AFG focus has been on presenting the Cadet Awards agreed by the Company's Charitable Trust in the summer. The Warden and Charles Calder attended the Lord Lieutenant's Awards Ceremony on 24 October. The Warden was pleased to congratulate Able Cadet Olivia North, Gloucester SSC; Cadet Cpl. Abbie Ward, Eastern Avenue Platoon, C Company, Gloucestershire ACF, and FS Frank Robinson, 2419 Sqn. RAFAC, who were the deserving winners of the Honourable Company Individual Cadet Awards. The Awards are given for exceptional contribution to the Cadets and wider support to the Community. In the near future the Unit awards will be presented by the AFG Chair, who will subsequently report back on how the money has been spent.

ARTS & HERITAGE GROUP



On 25 September members and their guests enjoyed a private guided tour of Blackfriars Priory, one of a number of Grade 1 listed buildings in Gloucester. The host was Phil Moss, a well-known local historian, author and archaeologist.

Photographs show members and guests on the visit, Phil in action in one of the kitchens and some medieval graffiti in the Scriptorium. The visit was followed by an excellent supper at The Fountain Inn.





A suggestion from Trevor and Marianne Ford led to an A&H Group visit on 6 November to the A417 Missing Link. After a welcoming drink Carolyn Ferguson, Keir Group's Head of Stakeholder, Customer & Communications at the Keir Group, gave a detailed presentation and responded to many questions.



Members were then able to take photographs from a viewing platform overlooking the new road which will lead from the Air Balloon roundabout towards Cirencester.



Thirty-six different designs were originally submitted for the project, which is currently on budget and on track for opening to traffic in February 2027. The Development Consent Order was issued in November 2022 and environmental and archaeological works began in February 2023. Phase 1 started in Feb 2024. The main change will come in April 2026 when part of the new A436 will open, specifically at the Air Balloon roundabout.

The 'new' Crickley Hill road built in 1968 has the worst fatality rate in the area with increasing volumes of traffic, congestion and high pollution. This project is meant to address those issues, albeit Carolyn conceded there will be a need to look at solutions for easing traffic pressures that will inevitably arise at either end of the new 3.4 miles link.

Carolyn gave many fascinating facts and figures, of which these are just a few:

- 43,000 vehicles every day will use this route, expected to rise to 64,000 by 2041
- Over 3.5km (2 miles) excavated during archaeological works; 10,600 artefacts discovered
- Eight bat boxes already installed, 15 more to come; 15 ecologists on site
- 7,000 trees planted to date
- Four miles of dry stone wall hand-built with materials sourced 15 miles from site
- Over 2,900 people in organised groups have visited the site February 2025



- Health & Safety facilities on site to address mental and physical issues - to date only one lost personnel time during the project due to a twisted ankle
- Contribution to local economy - shopping, rented accommodation for the 70% of workers who do not live locally, etc.
- Workforce has raised thousands of pounds for local charities through challenges and donations
- The construction industry and farming have the highest rate of daily suicides - an on-site heart-shaped display of 50 hard hats highlights the need to address that sad situation

Although the A&H Group visit was Keir's last group visit for 2025, the Visitor Centre at Shab Hill crusher compound is open to the public every Tuesday and Wednesday from 10am to 2pm with no appointment needed; the address is A417 Project Office, Birdlip, Gloucester, GL4 8JX.

<https://www.kier.co.uk/discover-our-projects/a417-missing-link/>

You can find a scheme map and keep up to date via

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/a417-missing-link/>;

email: A417missinglink@nationalhighways.co.uk; tel 0300 123 5000; X: @HighwaysSWEST or Facebook @HighwaysSWEST

INTEREST GROUPS

If you would like to join one of our Interest Groups please contact the appropriate Chairperson:

Business Group - Chair Michael Jones on bg@honcoglos.org

Arts & Heritage Group - Chair Mark Hurrell on aandh@honcoglos.org

Community Support Group - Chair Paul Massey on csg@honcoglos.org

Countryside & Environment Group - Chair Peter Randall on ceg@honcoglos.org

Armed Forces Group - Chair Charles Calder on afg@honcoglos.org

NEWS FROM THE HCG CHARITABLE TRUST

Andrew Tabor, Trust Chair, presented his annual report to the AGM. He highlighted that in the 2024/25 financial year the Trust had given grants totalling £39,172 and in the current financial year so far has awarded £24,164, bringing the total awarded since the Trust was established in 2012 to £325,652. This money has benefited the county's communities, arts and heritage and helped young achievers.

The Honourable Company continues its focus on young people through the Charitable Trust and the Anne Cadbury Fund. In addition to the 2025 AFG Cadet Awards already mentioned, on 18 November the Warden presented the 2025 Gloucestershire Playing Fields Association Awards for young athletes. These Awards have been supported by the Company for many years and the Charitable Trust has entered into a new 3-year agreement, under which each year four winners receive £500 each.

The 2025 winners were Esme Kelly (aged 16, Stroud) – Handball, McKenzie O'Reilly (aged 16, Brockworth) – Para-swimming, Charlie Mason (aged 17, Leckhampton) – Athletics (Javelin) and Isla Pain (aged 17, Cheltenham) – Athletics (Heptathlon and High Jump).



L to r: McKenzie O'Reilly, Michael Jones, Charlie Mason and Isla Pain

Amongst their many achievements Esme (who was unable to attend) captained the Great Britain Women's U17 team at the European Championships in Kosovo this year; McKenzie took part in the Swim Wales Summer Nationals in August; Charlie achieved fourth place in the 2025 English Schools U21 championships and is Gloucestershire County Champion and Isla represented the South West at the English Schools National Combined events Championships in September. In 2026 Isla will

compete in the England athletics national championships for High Jump and Pentathlon.

At the Trust's September meeting successful applicants were Insight Gloucestershire, Voices for Life, Gloucestershire Bundles, Hope for Tomorrow, Brockworth Link and Kids Kitchen Collective, each receiving £500. Presentation reports and more information about the recipients can be found on the HCG website under 'View Recent Grants' - <https://www.honcoglos.org/the-trust/recent-grants/> The next Trust meeting will be on 10 December, for which the deadline for applications has already passed.



The David Vaisey Trust received £2,000 under the current three year agreement to support its annual Celebrating Library Innovation Awards. Debby Thacker, Chair of the David Vaisey Trust, is pictured left revealing the shortlist for this year's Awards at a lively event at Llanthony Secunda Priory in August.

The winners were announced on 12 October at the Cheltenham Literature Festival. The Warden, Andrew Tabor, Bill Armiger and Mark Hurrell attended. The awards were presented by Cressida Cowell (Author of children's books, including 'How To Train Your Dragon'), who praised Gloucestershire libraries for their "creativity, warmth and commitment to bringing books to everyone."

Coleford Library scooped the top £5,000 prize for bringing the joy of books into the wards of the new Forest of Dean Community Hospital. The judges praised the Coleford team for establishing a library where none existed before and transforming a neutral hospital space into a vibrant community hub. The Young Person's Award was shared by Emily Stevenson (16, Coleford Library) and Ted Holloway (15, Dursley Library), who each receive £100 for their outstanding volunteer contributions.

In the Schools category, Farmor's School in Fairford received £4,000 for its wide-ranging reading initiatives, while Severnbanks Primary in Lydney was awarded £2,000 for creating a new reading space

and supporting reluctant readers. Kingswood Primary in Wotton-under-Edge and Tredworth Infants and Nursery Academy in Gloucester each received £1,000 for their library development projects.

THE HONOURABLE COMPANY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2025



These photographs were taken by Elizabeth, Michael's wife:



Andrew Tabor, Debby Thacker, Cressida Cowell,
Michael Jones



Ted Holloway, Cressida Cowell, Emily Stevenson

This year's ceremony held added poignancy following the death of David Vaisey, CBE, former Bodley's Librarian at Oxford and lifelong champion of libraries. His legacy lives on through the David Vaisey Trust, which each year celebrates projects that help more people to read more books.



Eve Jardine-Young, Executive Principal of Cheltenham Ladies College, spoke at the AGM about the history of the College, its achievements and prospects for the future.

Four gentlemen determined to open a girls' school in Cheltenham and on its first day in 1854 over 80 girls attended. Nowadays more than 850 pupils aged 11-18 years attend this independent girls' day and boarding school. It is renowned for its pioneering approach to girls' education and is consistently rated one of the top girls' schools in the UK.

Please send me (Margaret Fuller at fullerswood@btinternet.com) stories, event reports, photographs - anything you think will be of interest to your fellow HCG members. Constructive criticism and suggestions will also be welcomed. I look forward to hearing from you!

The Honourable Company's mailing address is:
c/o hcrlaw, Ellenborough House, Wellington Street, Cheltenham GL50 1YD

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