The Living Memory Historical Association’s [LMHA] was founded in Cirencester 1983 by a group mainly but not exclusively from the teaching profession. All were involved in the study and dissemination of information on the social history of the Cotswolds.

In 1989-90 the LMHA worked in close cooperation with Cirencester’s Corinium Museum presenting an exhibition of Daily Life in the Cotswolds in World War Two.

Taking advantage of the then recently closed Memorial Hospital in Sheep Street, and ever since that time, we have been able to use the original hospital air raid shelter as the venue for annual exhibitions. In August 2007 we leased extra space in the former hospital annexe from the Cotswold District Council in order to accommodate a larger exhibition, increase facilities for school parties and other visiting groups and attract more tourists to the Cotswolds.

While we have been told that the air raid shelter is not under threat we have received notice to quit the hospital annexe by January 4th 2013 so that redevelopment of the site can take place. The CDC has undertaken to try to obtain alternative accommodation for us but this obviously means rethinking our ability to provide a coordinated exhibition with the shelter and the annexe complimenting each other, especially in the case of school and other group visits. In order for there to be a link between the two sections of the exhibition we need to look to a venue as close to the shelter as possible. In view of this and other factors concerning the utilisation of an unused historic building we would ask if the CDC would consider allowing us to use space within the ground floor of the old Town Railway Station. We are aware that the building has been empty for some time and would need work doing to provide an environment suitable for the continuation of the exhibition now housed in the hospital annexe.

A scheme to put this Grade II listed building back in to public use could no doubt command grant aid from such bodies as the Heritage Lottery Fund and or other local and national charities. Over the years the members of the LMHA, who are all volunteers, have paid for or undertaken maintenance of the shelter and where possible the interior of the annexe. This included paying for the installation of an electricity supply to the shelter when the rear of the main hospital building had been demolished. The proximity of the station building would be a great advantage as it is also within very easy reach of the shelter when incorporated into school and group visits and with the adjacent car park would continue to be a useful tourist attraction in the town. Over the years we have had over 45,0000 visitors and in recent years played a major part in the town’s participation in English Heritage’s “Heritage Open Days”.

In view of the urgency of matters the trustees would be most grateful if this proposal could be considered as it would be an answer to a difficult immediate problem and in the longer term give a useful purpose to the station in its historic context.

Peter Grace  Trustee and Correspondent to the Trustees of the LMHA
9th October 2012