



National Association of City and Town Sheriffs

of

England and Wales

Cymdeithas Cenedlaethol Siryfion Dinas a Thref Lloegr a Cymru

A history of NACTSEW : updated June 2025



York



Berwick-on-Tweed



Canterbury



Carmarthen



Southampton



Poole



Oxford



Nottingham



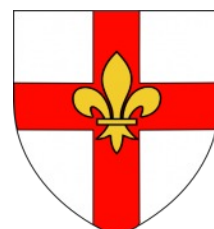
Norwich



Newcastle-upon-Tyne



Lichfield



Lincoln

The Aims of the Association

- To protect and preserve the ancient office of City and Town Sheriffs of England and Wales,
- To promote the office of Sheriff and ensure that the office meets the needs of today's society,
- To provide Sheriffs in office with the opportunity of meeting during their Year of office to exchange ideas and views.



Chester



Gloucester



Haverfordwest



Membership of the Association

Membership of the Association is open to serving and past Sheriffs of the 15 Towns and Cities which are affiliated to NACTSEW

Foreword

I am very honoured to be the current Chair of the National Association of City and Town Sheriffs of England and Wales in our 40th year, and equally pleased to have the opportunity to write a short foreword.

This Association started by our President Andrew Gravells has gone from strength to strength over the years and the constitutional aims of NACTSEW remain as relevant today as they were in 1985.

The aims of protecting and preserving the Office of Sheriff and making sure it is fit for purpose, particularly align to the current threat to civic budgets and the move to unitary authorities that we are seeing.

The current executive team and all our members are acutely aware of the challenges we all face. These have been highlighted in a report that has been produced by NACTSEW Secretary, Xena Dion, as a result of an AGM motion at Haverfordwest last year and further consultation with our members.

The report lists notable observations for us all to consider and for NACTSEW Executive, several key recommendations to undertake or develop.

I know we are all eager to proactively, see the implementation of these observations and recommendations as much as possible, to safeguard the Office of Sheriff and Civic life.

However, this 40th edition is also about celebrating our anniversary and this will take place in September 2025 at our AGM conference weekend in Lichfield.

I wish to thank my predecessor as Chair, David Brown for his work in producing this updated 40th anniversary version, an edition to the earlier 30th anniversary edition written by former chairs, Barrie Ferguson and Peter Barrett, both of whom I served under as Treasurer for NACTSEW.

I have been proud to have been part of NACTSEW since 2010 when I was Sheriff of Berwick upon Tweed and to be part of NACTSEW's success.

I look forward to seeing how NACTSEW evolves in the next ten years when we reach the next milestone of a 50th anniversary.



Andrew Swinburne

Chair NACTSEW 2024 - 2025

Sheriff of Berwick-upon-Tweed 2010

Editor and former Chair

This edition of the history of our Association brings fully up to date the lists of those individuals who have held the honourable role of Sheriff for their respective City or Town.

It has been 10 years since the last edition, which was published in print and made available for members to purchase at the Canterbury conference weekend, September 2014.

I am hugely indebted to the main contributors at that time Barrie Ferguson (Sheriff of York 2000) and Peter Barrett (Sheriff of Lichfield 1995) who have made my task now relatively straightforward.

Sadly, Peter Barrett is no longer with us, but I am grateful to Barrie Ferguson for giving me his blessing to produce this updated edition.

It is important to add my grateful thanks to Xena Dion (Sheriff of Poole 2015) whose tremendous work building and maintaining our website (www.sheriffsofenglandandwales.org) has ensured that much of the information I needed was available at the click of a mouse!

My aim has been to update to the present day, remaining faithful to the format of the 2014 copy, although I have added a new section about our website, which has been developed since. My main difficulty has been the technical challenge of converting content to digital format.

This is the first edition made available exclusively in digital format. Not only will this allow for wider and convenient distribution among NACTSEW members, who can download their own copy via the website, but this will also enable future updates to be made with relative ease.

My wish is that we look upon this as a living publication and that it is kept up to date at much shorter intervals. I also look forward to new content being added. In Gloucester our Association Committee have very nearly completed a list of Sheriff's Ladies / Consorts from 1967 to the present day. I encourage other Associations to similarly recognise those in that important supporting role and perhaps we can find space in a future edition to include their names.

I hope you will enjoy leafing through, or more accurately "scrolling" through the pages that follow. I'm sure many of you will recognise those names which appeared in the 2014 edition as well as those appearing now for the first time.

As we look back through our history let's not forget to look forward too. The message I gave at the AGM in Norwich last year was that we must all guard against threats to our local heritage and customs. We must recognise that Council budgets are under pressure, putting the Civic role itself under the microscope. This pressure is not new but it seems to me it has intensified in the past 12 months.



David Brown - August 2024

Chair of NACTSEW from Oct. 2021 to Sept. 2024
(Sheriff of Gloucester 2009)

Recollections from our Life President regarding the Association's beginning

During my year as Sheriff of Gloucester (1984-1985) I often attended civic events across the City with the Mayor. It was always a privilege to meet other Mayors and Council Chairs. This was of course in the pre Internet, Google and email era !

During my year as Sheriff I often wondered how the other Sheriffs were enjoying their year in office, and that it was a pity that there was no organisation which would bring us all together during our year. So I decided to write to them all, asking if they'd like to come to Gloucester so we could all meet at least once, and that, if there was enough interest, we could form something along the lines of a National Association. I was surprised how quickly and enthusiastically they all replied. In a nutshell, they all said 'Great idea Andrew. We'd love to come. Please let us know when!'

So, on April 30th 1985, almost all of the City and Town Sheriffs of England and Wales turned up at Gloucester Guildhall. We had told the local Gloucester newspaper, The Citizen, what we had planned. But they must have shared it more widely as we ended up with the BBC national News team and their cameramen; Australian TV and CNN. They all spun it along the lines of a posse of Sheriffs arriving in Gloucester to consider their futures. We made the national BBC TV News both at 6pm and 10pm (It must have been a slow news day!).

Once everyone had arrived and refreshed, we gave all of the Sheriffs a short coach tour of Gloucester and the surrounding Cotswolds, followed by Lunch on return to the Guildhall.

After lunch, we adjourned into a committee room, and I distributed a very brief agenda and a draft constitution for a possible NACTSEW. There followed a very quick discussion on whether or not the assembled Sheriffs wished to form something along the lines of a formal Association and it was unanimous that we did. We then discussed the draft constitution I'd produced, and that found rapid and total support too.

So then I asked for nominations for the first Chair of NACTSEW and somebody said ' Well, that's easy isn't it?'. Sometimes being a bit slow on the uptake I asked them what they meant and they replied that as I'd done all the work in arranging everything so far, I might as well carry on as chair! This got unanimous agreement.

So that's how we began way back in 1985, and I'm pleased that we're still going strong nearly forty years on from that!

Andrew Gravells MBE
Life President NACTSEW

The Sheriffs from 11 Shrievalties across England and Wales pose for the first official photograph of the new Association in 1985



Top row from left to right: Arthur Wilshire (Berwick-upon-Tweed); Malcolm Jones(Carmarthen); Thomas Jones (Chester); Randolph Meech (Poole)

Bottom row from left to right: Douglas Fenn (Canterbury); Nick Sedgwick (Lichfield); Burt Standing (Oxford); Geoffrey Ranger (Southampton); Kenneth King (York)

The Origins of the NACTSEW

In September 2014, the 30th Annual Meeting of the NACTSEW took place in Canterbury. We are a unique Organisation amongst people who have been elected or appointed to one of the most ancient of Civic Offices.

Obviously it is a matter of regret that only 15 Towns and Cities in England and Wales have continued to support the office of Sheriff, its customs and traditions. So it is that 15 of them have banded together to help promote and maintain the office of Sheriff within Local Government.

A number of Towns and Cities formed their own local Shrievalty Associations before the constitutionally created National Association. We know that a number had mutual visits and exchanges and discussed shared objectives.

In December 1983, the then Sheriff of Lichfield, Kathryn Duncan-Brown invited other current Sheriffs known to exist at the time to a gathering in Lichfield. The event which took place on the 28th April, 1984 was to mark 'National Heritage Year.' There is no official record of that gathering, but a booklet was produced by Lichfield City Council recording the background and history of the Sheriff in each Town and City. For those Sheriffs who did attend it was deemed to be a Civic Duty and some turned up with Robes, Regalia and Civic cars. There was a feeling abroad at this gathering that this should be a regular feature, but nothing was formally agreed or ever followed up.

In 1985 the new Sheriff of Gloucester, City Councillor Andrew Gravells, who had not been involved with the Lichfield gathering, wrote to all of the Sheriffs of England and Wales inviting them to Gloucester for a Lunch and Meeting on April 30th 1985. Andrew said that 'we could meet together to discuss our roles and problems, and even try to ensure that the office does not disappear altogether, as there are now only a few of us left'.

The meeting in the Guildhall went well, so much so that a Constitution for the NACTSEW was circulated there, by Andrew, and unanimously adopted. The "Gloucester Gathering of Sheriffs" made the BBC National TV news, and Councillor Gravells was unanimously elected the Association's very first ever Chairman, and later Lila Cooper (Norwich) succeeded him with Andrew being appointed Hon Life President. Other officers were Malcolm Bartram (York) Vice Chairman; Tom Steele (Canterbury) Secretary.

The first General meeting with the newly elected Officers and Constitution took place on the 25th September in Canterbury almost exactly 30 years to the day for its anniversary. From this beginning the National Association has met every year, visiting each of the 15 Towns and Cities in turn. Membership now stands at 200 and is growing steadily.

Barrie Ferguson - August 2014

(Chair of NACTSEW 2011-2013, Sheriff of York 2000)

The Origins of the City and Town Shrievalties

The role of Sheriff pre-dates the Norman Conquest, and the word derives from the Old English “*scir-gerefa*”, a “*scir*” being an administrative area. The “Shire Reeve” was appointed by the Sovereign to be responsible for keeping the peace throughout a shire or county. The word Sheriff has been in use since at least 1055, and was used by King Cnut when he sent friendly greetings to “Aethelwine the Sheriff” at Canterbury.

The monarch appointed the Sheriff, in a process which involved “pricking with a bodkin” a list of preferred nominees. The Sheriff held two jurisdictions, one civil and one criminal. The former was mainly about land, with the Sheriff responsible for maintaining defined boundaries of an area. This was normally done by “perambulations” of the boundary, with the Sheriff usually on horseback. Boundary divisions between Shires, Counties and individual settlements were literally a matter of life or death, as a stranger crossing a boundary without announcing his presence could be put to death – hence the danger implied in the phrase “overstepping the mark”!

The Sheriffs were also responsible for all military matters in a Shire, until the Tudor monarchs created the role of Lord Lieutenant, who took over this function.

By the reign of Henry I the Sheriff had become the pivot of the English legal system, but due to ambiguities in the role, and the great power wielded by certain individuals, the legal authority to try serious cases was gradually lost, and completely so by the end of the 13th Century. Clause 24 of Magna Carta prohibited the Sheriff from hearing pleas to the Crown.

The main duty of the Sheriff then became to raise revenues for the Sovereign, by managing the fee farms, but not all revenues were passed to the Crown, and some families of the Sheriff became suspiciously rich!

The role of the **City or Town Sheriff** was created in the 14th Century and arose from a conflict of interest between existing counties or shires and the increasingly important cities and towns, which had created in effect new jurisdictions. The Oaths of Investiture are full of exhortations to maintain the Sovereign’s laws, many expressed in language which seems nowadays to be truly arcane. Many Sheriffs ran prisons and supervised executions, and welcomed judges who arrived for the Assizes.

They would, therefore, have presided over or attended infamous trials, such as those for witchcraft or heresy, and supervised the carrying out of what we would think of today as barbarous punishments.

The Sheriffs also inspected the City plate, enforced market regulations and maintained parish and town boundaries. There are cases of there having been two or even four Sheriffs, with responsibilities over different parts of the same town. All towns with Sheriffs had Courts of Quarter Session. Charters were granted in which the towns or boroughs were created as Counties in their own right. The city or town Sheriff was not appointed directly by the Crown, but by the burgesses and later the city or town councils.

These towns were referred to as “The Town and County of...or the “City and County of...” and were then known as “Counties Corporate.”

The 1888 Local Government Act created “County Boroughs” and some Counties Corporate became part of the administrative structure of the county in which they were situated. By this stage the role of City or Town Sheriff had become largely ceremonial.

The 1972 Local Government Act, which came into effect in 1974, formally abolished Counties Corporate – with the right to appoint a Sheriff being retained at local discretion. The fifteen cities and towns which now retain a shrievalty thus uphold a tradition which has its origins many centuries ago.

City and town Sheriffs give precedence to the mayor, and many a town clerk has had to spell out that the sheriff must NOT step in front of the mayor or attempt to dominate proceedings. Sheriffs know, however, that their office long predates that of mayor, and exercise restraint!

Peter Barrett - March 2014

(Sheriff of Lichfield 1995)

Charters installing City or Town Sheriffs

Berwick-upon-Tweed	1333
Canterbury	1448
Carmarthen	1604
Chester	1120
Gloucester	1483
Haverfordwest	1479
Lichfield	1553
Lincoln	1409
Newcastle	1400
Norwich	1404
Nottingham	1284
Oxford	1853
Poole	1568
Southampton	1447
York	1396

NACTSEW Website



sheriffsofenglandandwales.org

At the AGM in Chester (2021) members were delighted to hear the proposal from Xena Dion (Sheriff of Poole 2015) to incorporate new features into the website, which would help members to interact more and for visitors to the site to learn more about the ancient office, traditions and functions and to promote the aims of NACTSEW.

Xena has been able to incorporate new functionality and below are just some of the features that make the website an absolute joy to use.

- Complete lists of Sheriffs of each City and Town since 1985
- Information on each Sheriff chain and associated local traditions
- Review of Conference weekends
- How Andrew Gravells had the idea to form the NACTSEW during his year as Sheriff in 1985
- NACTSEW documents, eg. Constitution, minutes of meetings etc.
- Comprehensive list of past NACTSEW Officers
- News of Sheriffs current and past
- History of the role of Sheriff
- Option to register for updates and newsletters



Xena Dion
(Website design
+ update control)

Inevitably, with all the hundreds and hundreds of details provided, Xena will be the first to acknowledge that there may be one or two corrections needed. Also this will always be a 'work-in-progress' and it is important for members to submit photographs and feature articles which keeps the website 'fresh' and may be of interest to others.

To suggest corrections or submit additional content Xena's email address can be found on the website.

We are very grateful to Graham Kent (Sheriff of Lincoln 2015) for his work in setting up an earlier website for members and for his kind support in providing some of the content which we still enjoy today.

National Association of City and Town Sheriffs

of

England and Wales

Record of the Officers and the Venues of AGMs

**Incorporating the names of past and serving Officers
since the founding of the Association in 1985**

Record of AGMs and Officers of NACTSEW

1985 (May) Inaugural Meeting in Gloucester - Chair Andrew Gravells (Gloucester)

Year of AGM	Venue	Chair	Vice Chair	Secretary	Treasurer
1985 (Sept)	Canterbury	Andrew Gravells	Michael Bartram (York)	Tom Steele (Canterbury)	Lila Cooper (Norwich)
1986	Poole	Andrew Gravells	Michael Bartram	Gordon Williams (Gloucester)	Lila Cooper
1987	York	Andrew Gravells	Michael Bartram	Gordon Williams	Lila Cooper
1988	Carmarthen	Lila Cooper	Michael Bartram	Randolph Meech (Poole)	Agnes Dunbar (Carmarthen)
1989	Southampton	Lila Cooper	Randolph Meech	Alan Troughton (Gloucester)	Agnes Dunbar
1990	Oxford	Lila Cooper	Randolph Meech	Alan Troughton	Agnes Dunbar
1991	Berwick	Lila Cooper	Randolph Meech	Alan Troughton	Agnes Dunbar
1992	Norwich	Lila Cooper	Randolph Meech	Alan Troughton	Agnes Dunbar
1993	Chester	Randolph Meech	John Reay (Berwick)	Alan Troughton	Agnes Dunbar
1994	Lichfield	Randolph Meech	John Reay	Alan Troughton	Agnes Dunbar
1995	Haverfordwest	Randolph Meech	John Reay	Alan Troughton	Agnes Dunbar
1996	Lincoln	Randolph Meech	John Reay	Alan Troughton	Agnes Dunbar
1997	Gloucester	Randolph Meech	John Reay	Alan Troughton	Agnes Dunbar
1998	Nottingham	Brian Marshall (Nottingham)	John Reay	John Ebo (Chester)	Agnes Dunbar
1999	Canterbury	Brian Marshall	John Reay	John Ebo	Agnes Dunbar
2000	Poole	Brian Marshall	John Reay	John Ebo	Agnes Dunbar

Record of AGMs and Officers of NACTSEW continued

Year of AGM	Venue	Chair	Vice Chair	Secretary	Treasurer
2001	York	Douglas Gomm (Canterbury)	Vacant	Alan Troughton	Agnes Dunbar
2002	Carmarthen	Douglas Gomm	Don Twigg (Haverfordwest)	John Reay	Agnes Dunbar
2003	Southampton	Douglas Gomm	Don Twigg	John Reay	Agnes Dunbar
2004	Oxford	Douglas Gomm	Don Twigg	John Reay	Agnes Dunbar
2005	Berwick	Douglas Gomm	Don Twigg	John Reay	Agnes Dunbar
2006	Norwich	Douglas Gomm	Don Twigg	John Reay	Agnes Dunbar
2007	Haverfordwest	Douglas Gomm	Don Twigg	John Reay	Agnes Dunbar
2008	Lichfield	Douglas Gomm	Don Twigg	John Reay	Agnes Dunbar
2009	Chester	Douglas Gomm	Don Twigg	John Reay	Agnes Dunbar
2010	Lincoln	Douglas Gomm	Patrick Vaughn (Lincoln)	Sylvia Briggs (Nottingham)	Agnes Dunbar
2011	Newcastle	Barrie Ferguson (York)	Don Twigg	Sylvia Briggs	Andy Swinburne (Berwick)
2012	Gloucester	Barrie Ferguson	Peter Barrett (Lichfield)	Sue Blakeley (Gloucester)	Andy Swinburne
2013	Nottingham	Barrie Ferguson	Peter Barrett	Sue Blakeley	Andy Swinburne
2014	Canterbury	Peter Barrett	John Ebo (Chester)	Sue Blakeley	Andy Swinburne
2015	Poole	Peter Barrett	John Ebo	Barrie Ferguson	Andy Swinburne
2016	York	Peter Barrett	John Ebo	Jan Lugg (Gloucester)	Andy Swinburne
2017	Carmarthen	John Ebo	John Hartshorne (Nottingham)	Jan Lugg	Andy Swinburne
2018	Southampton	John Ebo	John Hartshorne	Jan Lugg	Andy Swinburne
2019	Oxford	John Ebo	John Hartshorne	Jan Lugg	Andy Swinburne
2020	Berwick Cancelled / Covid	John Ebo	John Hartshorne	Jan Lugg	Jan Lugg from June 2020
2021	Chester	David Brown (Gloucester)	Andy Swinburne	Jeanne Storrar (Chester)	Jan Lugg
2022	Berwick	David Brown	Andy Swinburne	Jeanne Storrar	Jan Lugg
2023	Norwich	David Brown	Andy Swinburne	Jeanne Storrar	Jan Lugg
2024	Haverfordwest	Andy Swinburne	Bob Rudd (Chester)	Xena Dion (Poole)	Suzie Mercer (York)

Honorary roles within NACTSEW

The founder of NACTSEW, Andrew Gravells, was declared Life President at the AGM in Carmarthen, in 1988.

No more than four Honorary Vice Presidents may hold office simultaneously:

- Randolph Meech and Alan Troughton were declared Honorary Vice-Presidents for Life at the 1999 AGM in Canterbury.
- Agnes Dunbar was elected Honorary Vice President for Life in Norwich in 2006
- John Reay was elected as Honorary Vice President for Life in Lincoln in 2010
- Douglas Gomm was elected Honorary Vice President for Life in Gloucester in 2012
- John Ebo and Jan Lugg were elected Honorary Vice President for Life in Chester in 2021

Recalling the decisions of the Association

The minutes of the AGMs record that the Association has been alert to any changes in the role of city or town Sheriff considered by local authorities, and to encourage those which considered reinstating the role. Since the inauguration of the Association, an invitation was issued to the Sheriffs in London, who have not joined, while Newcastle has done so, the office of Sheriff having been restored in 1997.

Worcester and Bristol have allowed the office of Sheriff to lapse. In the case of Nottingham the Sheriff would attend the AGM as part of Civic Duties. In 2013 Hull reinstated the role of Sheriff, and the Association looks forward to welcoming the Sheriff in office at a future date.

The AGMs record decisions regarding subscriptions, the dress codes for different events during the Weekend Celebrations, classes of membership, the production of twice yearly newsletters for members, a website, issues regarding the financing of events, and the choice of a Hymn to be sung at the annual church service ("Ye who know the Lord is Gracious.") In addition, arrangements have been made for the production of ties and badges.

The constitution of the Association was changed in Newcastle in 2011 to limit the term of office of Chairman to one of three years.

Various changes to the Constitution were debated at the AGM in Norwich in 2023. Some were passed by those members present and some were rejected.

Berwick-upon-Tweed

The office of Sheriff is of recent creation, although historically related to that of the former Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed. Since re-organisation in 1974 the office is solely an honorary one, the holder being “a local officer of dignity”, for which provision was made in the Local Government Act of 1972.

The office prior to 1974 existed under the provisions of the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, which enacted that the town of Berwick-upon-Tweed was to be a county and town corporate. The Berwick-upon-Tweed Act, 1836, further declared and enacted that the borough and town of Berwick-upon-Tweed was to be a county in itself to all intents and purposes, except only in so far as it related to the return of a Member or Members of Parliament. Although the Office then had certain legal and administrative functions these were gradually eroded and for many years have been mainly of a ceremonial nature. Such legal functions as were left to the Sheriff were exercised by his Under-Sheriff, whom he was obliged to appoint, along with a London Deputy. The present Shrievalty has no such duty. For ceremonial purposes, when the Mayor is present the Sheriff is accorded precedence after the Mayor.

Although there is a line of individual Sheriffs since 1836, little of the history of the Office is known before then. The Office of Sheriff is referred to in the Charter of Edward I (1302) and it is known that there are references to the appointment of a Sheriff of Berwick by Edward III on 25th July 1333, following his victory at the battle of Halodun Hill.

Berwick is one of the few towns in which the Sheriff is appointed from outside the Council and is nominated by the Mayor Elect, who is the Deputy Mayor.

The Sheriff is then appointed following the approval of the Town Council.

The most colourful event in the Civic calendar is the annual Riding of the Bounds. This reflects one of the most important original duties of Sheriff, i.e. to ensure boundaries were maintained and observed. This was of great importance in Berwick, due to the disputes over the border between England and Scotland. These boundaries were agreed in 1438. From 1542 the bounds were walked, and in 1550 they were ridden for the first time, by the Chief Marshall and the garrison soldiers.

In 1609 the Riding of the Bounds became a Civic event, with the Burgesses riding the bounds.

At one time there were two Ridings annually, although now there is one, which takes place on 1st May each year, with some 100 riders taking part over a route of some 16 miles. There are various fun events at the half way point.

As one of the Civic Party the Sheriff is invited to attend, and some Sheriffs also take to horseback to take part in the ride

Sheriffs of Berwick-upon-Tweed

1985 Alan Thompson
 1986 Roy Thompson
 1987 John Paul
 1988 James Armstrong
 1989 John Reay

1990 William Leith
 1991 Wallace Rea
 1992 Albert Clemit
 1993 John Marshall
 1994 James Smith
 1995 Henry Thompson
 1996 Christopher Matthews
 1997 Rodger Johnson
 1998 Peregrine Fairfax
 1999 Gerald Taylor

2000 Tom Wakenshaw
 2001 John Mole
 2002 Philip Stanbury
 2003 David Wilson
 2004 John Stephenson
 2005 Alexander Ritchie
 2006 Angus Murray
 2007 Alan Bowlas
 2008 Ian Hay
 2009 James Hutchinson

2010	Andrew Swinburne
2011	Lance Robson
2012	Robert Dalglish
2013	Michael Richardson
2014	Michael Richardson
2015	Ian Hay
2016	Brian Douglas
2017	Liam Mutch
2018	Jude Eltringham
2019	Martin Warner
2020	Martin Warner
2021	Canon Alan Hughes
2022	Eddie Mullins
2023	David Gordon
2024	Joe Lang
2025	Joe Lang



Canterbury

Canterbury became a County of itself by Royal Charter in 1448 under the Lancastrian King, Henry VI, with the bailiffs answering to the King for the fee farm, and taking over duties previously undertaken by the High Sheriff of Kent. The role of Town Sheriff was therefore created in all but name. The Charter creating Canterbury as a City and County was granted by Edward IV in 1461, in return for Canterbury lending its support and giving a large sum of money. The role of Sheriff, who was originally known as the “Sherwick”, was confirmed by this charter.

The Sheriff was elected from among the Common Councillors of the City and had to take an oath before the Mayor or his Deputy in the Guildhall, and not elsewhere, within four days of his election. He was then called upon to give a dinner to the whole House of Burghmote or pay a fine of £3.6s.8d. if he refused. Thomas Giles was so fined in 1562.

The Sheriff was responsible for the discharge out of the Royal Exchequer of the money demanded of the City for the fee farm of the city until 1837. He and his Undersheriff appear to have spent a great deal of time and money in suing their Quietus (receipts for payment of debt) in the Exchequer, so much so that it was small wonder that the City complained. In 1652 the sum spent was £3.7s.10d., but by 1719 it had risen to £26.13s 0d. In 1765 it was over £52.

The Sheriff was not paid a salary, but collected fees of all sorts: £40 for a conviction for burglary or felony; various casual profits such as deodands (payments due if a person’s chattels had caused a death, usually a horse); payments for executions; court fees. In the 1630s there was a great deal of trouble over payment of the Sheriff’s expenses because they were numerous, small and difficult to estimate. These claims for expenses from the Burghmote led to endless arguments over many years. In the end the City agreed to be liable for them all.

The Sheriff sat at Quarter Sessions and was also responsible for arranging executions, having coffins and gallows made, buying ropes and so on. In July 1635 there is mention of 13d. disbursed at the execution of Susan Whentnall. £1.17s 5d. was allowed the gaoler for carrying up one Moore, a supposed popish priest who spoke treasonable words against King Charles I in extolling the Pope’s supremacy in 1641; in 1653 one of the Town sergeants was paid £4.10s. 0d. in connection with the execution of William Lee, who was executed for poisoning his wife.

These sums were allowed on the Sheriff’s account each time. In 1661 the Sheriff was paid £3.8s.2d. in connection with the execution of some witches; and 30s. he had paid out to the King’s footmen then in the City. Each time he obtained a conviction for felony or burglary he was paid £40. From 1725 this was paid out of the Common Fund.

The Sheriff could be fined for non-attendance on the Mayor or at the Cathedral. In 1570 the Sheriff was fined 3s 4d for “wearing his beard”, while in 1587 the Sheriff, Mark Berry, was allowed to wear his hat in Burghmote due to a “disease in his head”, presumably a skin infection.

Other than these duties, he was generally in attendance on the Mayor and was fined 3d. for every non-attendance. From 1652 he was expected to attend in the Cathedral every Sunday on pain of a fine of 10s.

In 1787 a special Chain of Office was purchased for the Sheriff.

From 1837 onwards the Sheriff of Kent was also Sheriff of Canterbury, although separately accepted. When the Courts of Quarter Sessions were abolished in 1972, his Office became an honorary one, and still is.

A furious argument broke out in 1910 about the Sheriff’s position at the Proclamation of King George V, probably because of an accusation that the Mayor was engaging in party politics.

Sheriffs of Canterbury

1985 Tom Steele
 1986 Brian P Rye
 1987 Douglas R Gomm
 1988 Robin Gregory
 1989 Willam Arthur Wildman MBE

1990 Patrick Burke
 1991 Bemard Collins
 1992 Iris Law
 1993 Ron Flaherty JP
 1994 Andrew Frogley
 1995 Maisie Seager
 1996 Martin Fisher
 1997 Philip Bond
 1998 Kate Panton
 1999 Michael Street-Williams

2000 Jennie Bukht
 2001 Jennifer Yonge
 2002 Brian Hunter
 2003 Fred Whitemore
 2004 Richard Parkinson
 2005 Lewis Norris JP (until 22 Sept.)
 Jeanne Harrison (from 22 Sept.)
 2006 Jeanne Harrison
 2007 Gillian Reuby
 2008 Charlotte MacCaul
 2009 Gabrielle Davis

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 2023
 2024
 2025

Sally Pickersgill
 Hazel McCabe
 Heather Taylor
 Ann Taylor
 Tony Austin
 Robert Jones
 Rosemary Doyle
 Colin Spooner
 Jeanette Stockley
 Jeanette Stockley
 Anne Dekker
 Anne Dekker
 Louise Harvey-Quirke
 Tom Mellish
 Keji Moses
 Steph Jupe



Carmarthen

Carmarthen is one of only two towns in Wales to have a Sheriff – the other is Haverfordwest. The Carmarthen Sheriff generally, but not always, progresses to become Deputy Mayor and then Mayor.

The Borough is of great antiquity, and probably possessed several municipal privileges under the native Princes of South Wales, who made this place their seat of government.

Early references to the Sheriff are dated 1223, when a writ of Henry II was addressed to his Sheriff of Carmarthen and Cardigan. Following the Welsh Wars Edward I's Statute of Wales erected the Welsh counties. Sheriffs subsequently appeared in Carmarthen from 1241.

The accession of James I in 1603 marked the end of the Tudor dynasty and the beginning of the Stuart. The new Charter of 1604 raised the status of the Borough to that of a County Borough, so that Carmarthen became a County of itself, with the formal title of "The County and Borough of Carmarthen". The Charter replaced the two bailiffs with two Sheriffs, and confirmed the Borough's previous "possessions, privileges and jurisdictions". The original Charter, written in Latin, still hangs in the Mayor's Parlour.

In 1831 controversy arose over the conduct of an election to the Borough. No return was made, and, in conditions of noise, disturbance and violence the Sheriffs did not "take effectual means to preserve the freedom of the election... and keep the poll open as long as allowed by law". A new Writ was issued for the Borough.

In 1835 the number of Sheriffs was reduced to one.

One tragic and notorious case over which the Sheriff presided was the trial of George Thomas for the murder of a young girl, named as Jones. The Home Secretary, Mr Asquith, saw no reason to issue a reprieve, and so George Thomas was hanged.

Until 1974 the Sheriff greeted the judge on his arrival for the Assizes and presented him with white gloves, and ensured he had suitable lodgings.

Sheriffs of Carmarthen

1985	Lawrence Victor Rice		
1986	Agnes Maria Dunbar		
1987	Richard John Williams		
1988	Peter Hughes Griffiths		
1989	John Elfed Williams		
1990	Thomas James Hurley		
1991	Richard John Goodridge		
1992	June Williams		
1993	Kenneth Bryan Maynard		
1994	Douglas Edmund Ynyr Richards Rose	2010	Philip Grice
1995	William Gwynoro Jones	2011	Alun Lenny
1996	Dr Margaret Elizabeth Evans	2012	Arwell Lloyd
1997	Nia Rhiannon Griffith	2013	Prof. Diarmait Mac Giolla Chriost
1998	Douglas Edmund Ynyr Richards Rose	2014	Wyn Thomas
1999	Llyr Hughes Griffiths	2015	Dorothy Bere
		2016	Emlyn Schiavone
2000	William Gwynoro Jones	2017	Phil Grice
2001	Mary Kathleen Davies	2018	Angharad Jones Leefe
2002	Nerys Mair Defis	2019	Miriam Moules
2003	Aled Prys Williams		
2004	Philip Grice	2020	Wyn Thomas
2005	D. Jonathan Edwards	2021	Wyn Thomas
2006	Alan Speake	2022	Emlyn Schiavone
2007	Kennethe Lloyd	2023	Heledd ap Gwynfor
2008	Alan Speake	2024	Russell Sparks
2009	Reverend Tom Talog Defis	2025	Luned Voyle



Chester

The Office of Sheriff of Chester dates back to the 1120s and Chester claims that it is the oldest in the country. It certainly predates that of Mayor. A Sheriff is first mentioned in a charter to the Abbey of St Werbergh c1121-1129

Chester appointed two Sheriffs each year until the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 came into force.

They had legal duties, such as the return of writs, assisting the Mayor in the running of the Portmote Court and presiding over the Pentice Courts and the Passage Courts. The Portmote Court, first mentioned at the beginning of the 13th Century, registered land transactions and also dealt with covenant and debt. It is documented until 1720. The Pentice Court dealt with debt and trespass, and cases not settled were referred to the Passage Court.

Under the “Great Charter” of 1506 one Sheriff was chosen by the Mayor, and the other Sheriff by the Freemen of Chester. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there were many complaints that the Sheriffs were failing to hold their courts, and in 1604 the Assembly insisted that they restore them to regular use.

The Sheriffs were responsible for maintaining the City gaol in the Northgate.

One of the duties still performed by the Sheriff of Chester is an annual inspection of the City Plate, and to move the sealing of documents at Council meetings. The Sheriff is also host with the High Sheriff of the bi-annual Legal Service in Chester for the judges on the local circuit.

The names of a few of the early Sheriffs, and of all the Sheriffs since 1836 are recorded on the panelling in the main Committee Room in the Town Hall; the names of the Sheriffs are known in an almost unbroken line from 1238.

Sheriffs of Chester

1985	Kate Peate
1986	J Gordon Smith
1987	John Frederick Randall
1988	Frank Z Pierce
1989	Eric Brock Gerrard
1990	Lilian G Price
1991	John Butler
1992	Christine Russell
1993	Elizabeth Bolton
1994	John Ebo
1995	David Nield
1996	Ken Holding
1997	Ray Bott
1998	Patricia Johnson
1999	Marie Nelson
2000	Terry Ralph
2001	Eleanor Mary Johnson JP
2002	Edward Walley
2003	Sandra Rudd
2004	John Boughton
2005	Colin Bain
2006	David Hughes
2007	Andrew Storrar
2008	David Hull
2009	Hilarie McNae



2010	Pat Lott
2011	Reggie Jones
2012	Bob Crompton
2013	Angela Claydon
2014	Herbert Manley
2015	Alex Black
2016	Myles Hogg
2017	Jane Mercer
2018	Stuart Parker
2019	Gill Watson
2020	Gill Watson
2021	Jill Houlbrook
2022	Bob Rudd
2023	Hugo Deynem
2024	Alex Tate
2025	Simon Eardley



Gloucester

In common with other towns and cities the office of Shire Reeve, or Sheriff, with the same responsibilities, existed before 1200, and probably back in Anglo Saxon times. King John's Charter of 1200, at a time when local government in Gloucester was by the general meeting of the Burgesses, is the first to give specifically the right to have two Bailiffs to perform the role of Sheriff. Consequently, in Gloucester, the office of Sheriff is at least 250 years older than the City Council.

Gloucester has a fairly complete roll of Sheriffs from 1200 to the present day. The first bailiffs/sheriffs appear to have been Walter Cadivor and Robert Clavus. The first Sheriffs under the Charter of Richard III in 1483 (when Gloucester became a city and the office of Mayor began) appear to have been William Francomb and John Poole.

The Sheriff was originally the agent of Royal jurisdiction in Gloucester. He presided over the local courts, had powers of summons and restraint, held prisoners and collected fines and taxes. He executed Royal writs, such as those to repair the castle and to provision the army. Most of these duties were continued into modern times – he remained personally responsible for taxation until 1732, and summoned courts until 1974.

The 1483 Letters Patent of Richard III provided that there be two sergeants-at-mace to serve the two Sheriffs. Ever since on formal occasions they have joined the Mayor's two mace-bearers and the sword carriers and preceded the Mayor and Sheriff in procession. In the 1600's there were up to four Sheriffs for a while. The 1835 Municipal Corporations Act reduced the number of Sheriffs to one.

The current chain and badge of office were presented to Mr Henry Jelfs by his brother Freemasons when he was Sheriff in 1883. At the end of his year of office it was given to the Gloucester Corporation in Trust for future Sheriffs to wear. It is of a more elaborate design than that of the Mayor.

Since local government reorganisation in 1974 the office is purely one of dignity, but the City Council wanted to preserve the office for historic reasons. The office of Sheriff was combined with that of Deputy Mayor in 1983.

In 2002 the method of electing the Sheriff (and the Mayor) changed from being elected by the majority party on the City Council to sharing the role between the three main political parties in turn.

Sheriffs of Gloucester

1985 David Short
 1986 Elsie Hedge
 1987 Donovan Hartshorne
 1988 Eric Edge
 1989 Peter Grant-Hudson

1990 Tony Ayland
 1991 John Neary
 1992 John Holmes
 1993 Tony Workman
 1994 Tony Potts
 1995 Ben Richards
 1996 Tony Hanks
 1997 Rose Workman
 1998 Geraldine Gillespie
 1999 Terry Haines

2000 Rose Workman
 2001 Carol Francis
 2002 Paul James
 2003 Sue Blakeley
 2004 Harjit Gill
 2005 Bob Gardner
 2006 Chris Witts
 2007 Jan Lugg
 2008 Nigel Hanman
 2009 David Brown

2010 Geraldene Gillespie
 2011 Pam Tracey
 2012 Philip McLellan
 2013 Said Hansdot
 2014 Lise Noakes
 2015 Jim Beeley
 2016 Said Hansdot
 2017 Paul Toleman
 2018 Howard Hyman
 2019 Colette Finnigan

2020 Jan Lugg
 2021 Pam Tracey
 2022 Joanne Brown
 2023 Justin Hudson
 2024 Pam Tracey
 2025 Linda Castle



Haverfordwest

The earliest reference to a Charter for the Borough of the Town and County of Haverfordwest is in 1171, when Henry II, on his way to Ireland, confirmed the liberties granted by his father, Henry I, to “the town and inhabitants of Haverford”.

On 30th April 1479 Edward, Prince of Wales decreed that the town should have a Mayor and a Sheriff and two Bailiffs, and conferred on the town the status of a county. That status was confirmed by the Act of Union of England and Wales in 1543, which gave it the right to hold its own Assize. In 1545 it was granted the right to have its own Custos Rotulorum, or master of the rolls and its own Member of Parliament. In 1761 it was granted its own Lord Lieutenant. However these privileges have disappeared with time.

As a county, Haverfordwest had its own Sheriff and that office continues, as one of the fifteen City and Town Sheriffs in England and Wales, to be part of the national Association and alone with Carmarthen, in Wales.

In early times the Sheriff was involved with the legal process, from the courts to the gaol. He was also instrumental in conducting Parliamentary elections in the Borough.

A well documented story dating back from 1741 regarding the capacity of the Sheriff's powers involved a woman called Dorothy Rees from Prendergast who was caught stealing a flannel petticoat worth sixpence. The Sheriff had to arrange her transportation to America for seven years and before this she was stripped to the waist and marched through the streets from the gaol near St Thomas Green to her home in Prendergast. This punishment had to be supervised by the Sheriff.

The Sheriff was elected at the first Hundred Court held after the Feast of St Michael, either from the 24 common council-men or from the burgesses at large, and was as often chosen from the one body as from the other.

The Sheriff waited upon the Judge of Assize and when no crime had been committed in the Borough, he presented the Judge with a pair of white gloves, a ceremony last performed in 1995.

He appointed an Under Sheriff who carried out the judicial work.

The Sheriff received £10 to provide a breakfast on Whit Monday for important citizens of the Town and would see that donkeys and ponies were at hand to be ridden later in the day to Portfield for special races and sports. At Cuckoo Lane novices went through an initiation ceremony at the Bumping Stone, where a fee was demanded. They later rode back through the streets of the town to a special dinner provided by the Mayor. He also received a quota of 200 apples from each shipload of apples arriving at the quay – usually from the Forest of Dean in Gloucestershire.

The Shrievalty Association of Haverfordwest was formed in 1996. A Sheriffs Service is held at St Mary's Church in April each year and this is followed by a Sheriffs breakfast. All Sheriffs in Haverfordwest are members of the Town Council.

Sheriff's Chain

The Sheriff wears a silver-linked chain inscribed with the names of those who have held office from the middle of the last century onwards. From the chain hangs a badge showing the reverse of the Town Seal. There is a representation of a fortified gatehouse with side towers. On the central tower is a trumpeter flanked by flying banners and on the base a slain wyvern. On one side is a lion and on the other an eagle. The badge is suitably inscribed and bears the town's motto. The badge and chain were presented by former Sheriffs in 1953 to commemorate the Coronation of Her Majesty the Queen.

Many of the Sheriff's traditional roles have developed into ceremonial ones as their relevancy has altered over the years. He appears with the Mayor on formal occasions. The National Association of City and Town Sheriffs of England and Wales held its Annual General Meeting at Haverfordwest in 1995, 2007 and again in 2024.

Sheriffs of Haverfordwest

1985 Mrs C M Cole
 1986 D E Pritchard
 1987 P A Stock
 1988 Mrs B A Morgan
 1989 D L James

1990 D R Twigg
 1991 J Nicholas
 1992 Mrs C M Cole
 1993 Mrs B Thomas-Cleaver
 1994 C W D Davies
 1995 S M Davies
 1996 W M B Griffiths
 1997 S M James
 1998 Mrs M Campbell
 1999 Mrs J Wannacott

2000 Mrs B A Shone
 2001 D J Westrup
 2002 Mrs B Thomas
 2003 Rev C L Gillam
 2004 W R Thomas
 2005 Mrs B A Morgan
 2006 D L James
 2007 D R Twigg
 2008 A Buckfield
 2009 W R Thomas

2010 C W Davies
 2011 Miss S M Llewellyn
 2012 C Blakemore
 2013 Mrs B A Morgan
 2014 Mrs E Repton
 2015 Chris Thomas
 2016 Sue Murray
 2017 Gillian Howell
 2018 Chris Thomas
 2019 Chris Thomas
 2020 Richard Blacklaw-Jones
 2021 Richard Blacklaw-Jones
 2022 Helen Lewis
 2023 Arthur Brooker
 2024 Jill Owens
 2025 Dani Thomas-Turner



Lichfield

The office of Sheriff in Lichfield was created by a Charter of Queen Mary in 1553, which granted the status of County and City, and this is confirmed in further Charters of succeeding monarchs dated 1559, 1620, 1623, 1664 and 1686, all of which are still extant.

The civil jurisdiction declined after the Conquest since pleas relating to land were transferred to the feudal courts and later the royal courts.

The first Sheriff of Lichfield was Gregorie Stonynge who, in 1548, had been the first Senior Bailiff (Mayor) appointed under the Charter of Edward VI.

In common with other Sheriffs, the Sheriff of Lichfield was responsible for keeping the prison and gallows, and heavy neck collars chain and shackles. In 1611 the Sheriff would have been present at the trial and subsequent burning at the stake of Edward Wightman, the last person to be burnt for heresy in England.

The Sheriff continued to supervise the system of “frankpledge” (swearing to keep the peace by a family or group of inhabitants) until this became obsolete in the fourteenth century, but is retained in a purely ceremonial form to this day.

The City of Lichfield still maintains the “Court of Saint George”, which, as the name implies, is always held on Saint George’s Day, 23rd April. This is the Court Leet and the said View of Frank Pledge, when the Mayor and City Council become Lords of the Manor, which the Sheriff attends in support of the Mayor and the Barony of Lichfield. There is a presentation of reports from each of the City Wards, and from the Pinner and Ale Tasters, all done in a humorous manner.

The Sheriff also attends the Court of Arraye or View of Men at Arms which takes place at the Spring Bank Holiday. This Court is only ceremonial, but has taken place in an unbroken line for over 1000 years.

The major event in the Sheriff’s civic calendar is the Sheriff’s Ride, which is held on the Saturday nearest the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which takes place on 8th September

On that day a colourful procession of horsemen –and women take part. The ride is over 16 miles of the surrounding country as the city boundary is marked. The High Sheriff and other Civic Heads are invited, and until quite recently up to 100 riders have taken part. The event, luncheon and presentation of prizes for best turn out are open to the public.

Sheriffs of Lichfield

1985 James Hopping
 1986 Elise Beedle
 1987 Marjorie Symonds
 1988 George Kemp
 1989 Anthony Thompson



1990 Terence Finn
 1991 John Mercer
 1992 Malcolm Knight
 1993 David Bailey
 1994 Robert White
 1995 Margaret Barratt
 1996 Peter Barrett
 1997 Kenneth Edwards
 1998 Michael Bennett
 1999 John Haggett

2010	Colin Greatorex
2011	Neville Brown
2012	Brian Bacon
2013	Terence Thomas
2014	Bob Awty
2015	Mike Sheldon
2016	Robert Yardley
2017	Andrew Smith
2018	Michael Mullarkey
2019	Daryl Brown
2020	Daryl Brown
2021	Peter Hitchman
2022	Janice Greaves
2023	Adam Burns-Mace
2024	Cathy Wood
2025	Reverend Ian Hayter

2000 Doris English
 2001 Mark Warfield
 2002 Barry Diggle
 2003 Janet Eagland
 2004 John Rackham
 2005 John Smith
 2006 Gwyneth Boyle
 2007 Terence Thomas
 2008 Norma Bacon
 2009 Simon Price



Lincoln

The Sheriff, who is not normally chosen from the members of the Council, should be appointed at the Annual Meeting of the Council, the appointment taking place immediately after the election of the Mayor. The Sheriff holds office until the appointment of his or her successor, and must make a special declaration under the Sheriff's Act of 1887.

In 1206 the royal officer, the Reeve, yielded place to the communal Mayor. The Burgesses were given the right to choose their own Mayor, who, with the Bailiffs, farmed the town i.e. they were responsible for raising the taxes demanded of government.

In 1409, under a Charter of King Henry IV, the City of Lincoln became the County of the City of Lincoln, and the Bailiffs were replaced by two Sheriffs who were still personally responsible for the collection of this revenue. It was of such great importance to the City's liberties that they had to find sureties for the due performance of their duties. Needless to say that there were complaints that these unfortunate Bailiffs, and subsequently Sheriffs, never rose from poverty and misery.

The existence of a Shire Court for the City and other provisions of the Charter may have brought some financial relief. In 1466 the addition to the County of the four towns of Branston, Waddington, Bracebridge and Canwick enlarged the area from which revenue could be gathered. Even so, the resources of the Sheriffs became so inadequate that by the sixteenth century it had become customary to indemnify the Sheriffs against claims for the fee-farm rent and the burden was borne by the Common Council.

It is interesting to note how the two Sheriffs were elected for their office. In the Middle Ages the City was governed by an inner Chamber consisting of the Mayor and twelve Aldermen, the Aldermen being elected for life, and an outer, less powerful body called the Common Council, 40 in number, their members being called Chamberlains. Four Chamberlains were appointed, one for each ward, year by year, by the Mayor, and a like number retired. When they went out of office they became known as Chamberlain Peers and had various privileges, such as exemption from Jury service. From among the Chamberlain Peers were chosen two Sheriffs – one nominated by the Mayor, and the other elected by the Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council from a calendar of five ex-Chamberlains.

The Sheriffs were to be sworn before the Mayor and Commonality in the Guildhall and were to hold County Courts every six weeks in the County and City of Lincoln. The old City courts were to empanel Juries, execute Royal Writs and other processes, and to preside in County Courts. Their chief responsibility was for the fee-farm rent. A past holder of the office having become a Sheriff's Peer, was eligible for election as an Alderman, an office which was held for life.

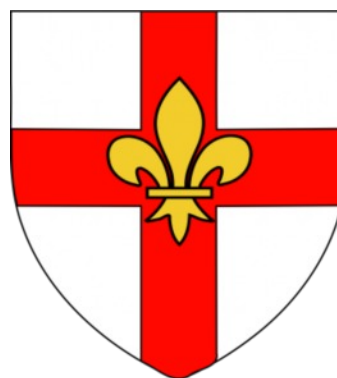
The gaols were in the custody of the Sheriffs who were fined if a prisoner escaped. The pillory was also their affair. One Robert Bishop, having been taken for petty larceny and having left the city, returned, whereupon the Sheriffs were commanded to set him in the pillory and nail his ear to it. One of the Sheriffs brought him to the pillory but confessed he did not do execution upon the offender as the Mayor had commanded, for which undue squeamishness he submitted to such fine as the Mayor and his brethren imposed.

Since the Municipal Corporations Act there has been only one Sheriff in Lincoln, whose role is now of a ceremonial nature. The Sheriff is accorded precedence after the Mayor.

Sheriffs of Lincoln

1985	Sidney Campbell
1986	Norah Baldock
1987	Richard Brindly-Augur
1988	Oscar R Stewart
1989	Arthur Tindall
1990	Ian Emmerson
1991	Malcolm Rollinson
1992	John Stanley Robertson
1993	Brian David Smith
1994	Irene Goldson
1995	David Hayward
1996	Patrick Vaughn
1997	Richard Courtney
1998	Trevor Rook
1999	Roy Mance
2000	Ralph Amode Toofany
2001	Gerald Makenham
2002	Jeff Boyall
2003	Peter Robinson
2004	David Grattrick
2005	Christine Noble
2006	David Beresford
2007	Darren Grice
2008	Frank Connell
2009	Lance Pennell

2010	Roy South
2011	Robin Renshaw
2012	Melanie Tointon
2013	Patricia Carter
2014	David Jackson
2015	Graham J Kent
2016	Hilary Willerton
2017	Jo Rimmer
2018	Roy South
2019	Jo Rimmer
2020	Jo Rimmer
2021	Stephen Dixon
2022	Jasmit Kaur Phull
2023	Neil Murray
2024	Brian Harding
2025	Gary Daley



Newcastle-upon-Tyne

The names of Sheriffs of Newcastle are recorded since 1400, the first Sheriff being William Redmarshall.

The practice was discontinued upon local government reorganisation in 1974. The title of Sheriff was introduced in 1996 and added to that of Deputy Lord Mayor. The more common form of address is simply “Sheriff”

Since the Local Government Act 1972, the Deputy Lord Mayor/Sheriff has full status as Vice-Chair of the Council, having been appointed at the Annual Meeting by the full Council. The Deputy Lord Mayor/Sheriff is given precedence immediately after the Lord Mayor and carries out all the functions of the Lord Mayor in his or her absence.

The Armorial Bearings of the City of Newcastle upon Tyne are of interest. The three towered triple castle motif goes back to earliest times for originally the town took its name from the “New Castle” built by order of Robert Curthose, eldest son of William the Conqueror, in 1080 and a castle was depicted on the twelfth century common seal.

The motto, “*Fortitur Defendit Triumphans*” (“Triumphing by Brave Defence”) was adopted during the Civil War , probably following the stubborn defence of the town against the Scots in 1644.

Sheriffs of Newcastle-upon-Tyne

1996 Mary Nixon
 1997 David Slesenger
 1998 John Cunningham
 1999 Peter Thompson

2000 Mary Carr
 2001 John Marshall
 2002 Margaret Carter
 2003 George Douglas
 2004 David Slesenger
 2005 Diane Packham
 2006 Peter Arnold
 2007 David Wood
 2008 Michael Cookson
 2009 Brenda Hindarsh



2010 Geoff O'Brien
 2011 Jackie Slesenger
 2012 Margaret Wood
 2013 George Pattison
 2014 Ian Graham
 2015 Hazel Stephenson
 2016 Linda Wright
 2017 David Down
 2018 David Cook
 2019 Habib Rahman

2020	Habib Rahman
2021	Anita Lower (to July - RIP)
2021	Karen Robinson (from July)
2022	Veronica Dunn
2023	Maureen Lowson
2024	Henry Gallagher
2025	Jacqui Robinson

Norwich

The office of Sheriff is one of the oldest appointments to have survived into modern local government, and in Norwich dates from a Charter of Henry IV granted in 1404.

This gave Norwich the right to County status independent of Norfolk, and the right to appoint two Sheriffs, eventually reduced to one by the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835. It had become necessary for Norwich to have a Sheriff because the Charter of 1404 had made it into “the County of the City of Norwich” so that it was no longer under the authority of the Sheriff of the County of Norfolk.

The Sheriffs of Norwich once exercised extensive judicial powers which included holding a County Court every month and as often as twice a week, hearing actions for debt and trespass in what became known as the Sheriff’s Court. Over the centuries, however, the powers of the office dwindled to little more than responsibility for summoning jurors and executing writs and with the re-organisation of local government on 1 April 1974, the duties of the Sheriff of Norwich became purely ceremonial.

This arose because the Local Government Act 1972 provided that only the counties created by the Act would be allowed to appoint Sheriffs to carry out the surviving official duties of the post and Norwich is therefore once again under the authority of the High Sheriff of Norfolk. This is also the reason why the word “county” no longer forms part of the official title of Norwich.

The City Council decided in 1973 however that it should apply for a new Charter which would give it the status of borough and allow it to retain some of the traditional privileges which the City had enjoyed, including the right to continue to appoint a Sheriff, as a “local officer of dignity” even though the office would only be of civic and ceremonial significance. This right was granted in the Charter of 1974.

In the past the Sheriff of Norwich also acted as Returning Officer at Parliamentary Elections, but this duty ceased on 31 March 1974, and the Lord Mayor then took over this function.

Sheriffs of Norwich



1985	Geoffrey Goreham		
1986	Arthur Clare		
1987	Leonard Stevenson		
1988	Rev Jack Burton		
1989	Jill Miller		
1990	Brian Watkins		
1991	Jill Miller		
1992	Brenda Ferris-Rampley		
1993	Phillip Read		
1994	William Carpenter	2010	Derek James
1995	Douglas Underwood	2011	Chris Higgins
1996	Ralph Gayton	2012	John Jennings
1997	Audrey Brown	2013	Graham Creelman
1998	Jennifer Lay	2014	William Armstrong
1999	Peter Jarold	2015	Beryl Blower
		2016	Richard Marks
2000	Roger Sandall	2017	David Walker
2001	Sheila Kefford	2018	Ros Brown
2002	Bryan Gunn	2019	Marian Prinsley
2003	Moya Wilson		
2004	Paul King OBE	2020	Marian Prinsley
2005	Brenda Arthur	2021	Caroline Jarrold
2006	John Drake	2022	Caroline Jarrold
2007	Nick Williams	2023	Dr Jan Sheldon
2008	Roy Waller	2024	Sirajul Islam
2009	Tim O'Riordan	2025	Stuart Wright



Nottingham

Nottingham has had a Sheriff for about a thousand years. In fact, from 1449 to 1835 it had two and for a short time in 1682 it even had four.

After the Norman Conquest, the city was divided into two parts: one for the French and the other for the Saxons. Each was to have its own Sheriff but at first there was only one – a High Sheriff who was master of both Nottingham and Derbyshire.

The menacing medieval castle which stood on Nottingham's Castle Rock was the seat of his power. He collected taxes, punished wrongdoers and, as a Frenchman, became a hated symbol of Norman repression.

As Nottingham grew in importance interference by the King's officer, whose primary concern was the royal forests of Sherwood and the High Peak, became even more bitterly resented. But, it was many years before Nottingham escaped his attentions.

The first step came in 1189 when the city was given the right to choose its own tax gatherer. Then, in 1284, Nottingham was permitted to elect two bailiffs to execute writs, appoint a Mayor and hold a November fair.

The Sheriff continued to interfere in the administration of the City until 1449 when the Great Charter gave it County status. As the two boroughs had not yet merged into one, the charter provided for the appointment of two Sheriffs. They were chosen every year from among the burgesses, leading citizens with full rights, and were responsible for law and order, carrying out the King's instructions and levying his dues.

Nomination for the office was not always welcome and there were many cases of those elected paying fines to be excused. Those who accepted office retained the right to wear their official crimson gowns after their year in authority and were said to belong to livery or clothing burgesses.

There are records, too, of Sheriffs being fined for refusing to provide the City Council with a traditional dinner. One, who was bankrupt, was removed from office by no less a figure than the Attorney General. There was another scandal in 1682 when rivalry between two factions led to the City having, for a short period, two Mayors and two pairs of Sheriffs.

Nottingham continued with two royal officers until the Municipal Reform Act of 1835, long after the original distinction between the English and Norman boroughs had ceased to exist.

However, something of this tradition remains, as today's Sheriff still has two silver maces which precede him in procession. These, incidentally, cost £10 each in 1669 and the Sheriffs who bought them were each reimbursed by succeeding office holders, less ten shillings, until they were paid for.

The Sheriff's wand is a plain mahogany staff five feet long with a silver top. It bears the city arms, the inscription "Villa Nottinghamia" and the date 1627.

In 1836, the year after the last double holding of the office, the head of one of the wands disappeared and did not turn up again until 1928. It had evidently been kept by one office holder as a souvenir.

The Sheriff's present chain of office dates from 1958 and replaced one given to the city in 1881.

To discover which of the early Sheriffs, if any, was in conflict with Robin Hood is as difficult as providing conclusive proof of the existence of the legendary outlaw himself.

Sheriffs like Philip Marc or Mark and John de Oxenford are known to have caused unrest and resentment in the Middle Ages for the corrupt way they enforced the law and levied taxes. But there is no evidence to link them with Robin Hood.

Today the Sheriff of Nottingham fulfils a mainly ceremonial role, a much loved figure who can be relied upon to promote the interests of his beautiful city all around the world.

Sheriffs of Nottingham

1985	Thomas V Harby
1986	Barrie Parker
1987	Royce You
1988	Brian Marshall
1989	Anthony F Robinson
1990	Alfred T Stone
1991	Shaukat Khan
1992	Brent Charlesworth
1993	Anthony F Robinson
1994	Ron McIntosh
1995	Roy Greensmith
1996	Malcolm Wood/Sylvia Briggs
1997	Anthony Robinson
1998	Chris Gibson
1999	Mike Whittal
2000	John Hartshorne
2001	Joan Casson
2002	Ali Asghar
2003	John Hartshorne
2004	Derek Cresswell
2005	Derek Cresswell
2006	Jeannie Packer
2007	Jeannie Packer
2008	Brian Grocock
2009	Leon Unczur

2010	Penny Griggs
2011	Ian Malcolm
2012	Merlita Bryan
2013	Ian Malcolm
2014	Jackie Monis
2015	Mohammed Saghir
2016	Jackie Morris
2017	Glyn Jenkins
2018	Catharine Arnold
2019	Patience Ifediora
2020	Patience Ifediora
2021	Merlita Bryan
2022	Nicola Heaton
2023	Shuguftah Quddoos
2024	Liaqat Ali
2025	Zafran Khan



Oxford

The office of Sheriff of Oxford has been in existence since the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835, Section 61 of which, provided that the City Council should in every year appoint a fit person to execute the office of Sheriff with the same duties and powers as the Sheriff or the person filling the office of Sheriff would have had if the Act had not been passed.

Since the Act did not specifically say what the Sheriff's duties were, it was necessary to consider who previously carried out duties similar to those of a Sheriff. In Oxford these duties seem to have been the responsibility of two individuals known as Bailiffs. At various times prior to 1835 the Bailiff's duties included the following:-

- To take and enjoy all property of the Courts as waif ('waif' seems to have meant primarily goods stolen, but 'waived' or thrown away by the thief in his flight. A second meaning was goods, found and not claimed by their rightful owner), stray or stray (namely, valuable animals found wandering, whose owner was not known), felons' goods, customs, tolls, and all other profits and advantages belonging to the office of Bailiff.
- To have the custody of offenders.
- To maintain order, with the help of sergeants.
- To receive the fines of the City Court Leet (a court of record long fallen into disuse and finally abolished on local government reorganisation).
- To receive the fines at Quarter Sessions and the forfeited recognizances; and
- To receive treasure trove.
- To act as conservators of Port Meadow. As the Town Clerk put it in 1840, the two Bailiffs were 'resorted to in all questions, and they attended to the repairs, drove the Meadow at least once in the year, and pounded the cattle of trespassers'.

The majority of these functions are no longer relevant to the office of Sheriff but they do emphasise that the position of the Sheriff of Oxford is quite different from that of any other sort of Sheriff and that even the Bailiffs in their hey-day had much more limited powers than those of, say, the present Sheriff of Oxfordshire, whose functions include, for example, the enforcement of Orders of the High Court.

From the above list the only two functions recent Sheriffs of Oxford have had any responsibility for were:

- For fines and forfeited recognizances at Quarter Sessions, but even these have now disappeared as a result of the coming into operation of the Courts Act 1971 on 1st January, 1972.
- The second surviving function of the Bailiffs with which the modern Sheriff is concerned is that of acting as Conservator of Port Meadow (an area of common land in North Oxford), and drives are carried out, usually once a year, as a continuation of the annual drives of the former Bailiffs.

Arrangements for the Drives are kept as secret as much as possible and at about 6.00am on the morning of the Drive, the Sheriff and his or her assistants, among whom are a number of horse riders or on foot, assemble at one end of the Meadow and begin to drive the cattle and horses to the other end where they are impounded. The Drive usually takes some two or three hours and is followed by breakfast. Throughout the day following the impounding, owners come to claim their cattle and horses and if they are Freemen or Wolvercote Commoners, or others lawfully entitled, the animals are released on payment of a toll of 10p per head, but if they are trespassers they pay a fine of £35 per head, together with the actual cost of keep (£1 a day). In recent years informal drives have also been conducted.

- It is also the practice for the Sheriff to administer the oath at admission ceremonies for new Freemen of the City of Oxford.

Sheriffs of Oxford

1985 A Ramsay
 1986 Mr A Pope
 1987 Mrs N Whorley
 1988 Lady P Yardley
 1989 Mrs E F M Standingford

1990 Mrs B M Gatehouse
 1991 Mr J Power
 1992 J C Blewitt
 1993 Mr W Buckingham
 1994 Mr A J Tumer MP
 1995 Mr P M F Moss
 1996 Mr W Baker
 1997 Carole Roberts
 1998 Councillor R I Price
 1999 Mrs B I Keen

2000 Councillor Mrs V Smith
 2001 Mrs M Christian
 2002 Mr P Stannard
 2003 Mr BC Keen
 2004 Councillor Mrs Gill Sanders
 2005 Councillor James R M Campbell
 2006 Councillor Susan Pressel
 2007 Councillor Mary Clarkson
 2008 Councillor John Goddard
 2009 Councillor Elise Benjamin

2010 Councillor Colin Cook
 2011 Councillor Jean Fooks
 2012 Councillor Dee Sinclair
 2013 Councillor Mohammed Abbasi
 2014 Rae Humbertstone
 2015 Sajjad Malik
 2016 Susan Brown
 2017 Mohammed Altaf Khan
 2018 Craig Simmons
 2019 Stephen Goddard

2020 Dick Wolf
 2021 Dick Wolf
 2022 Mike Rowley
 2023 Mark Lygo
 2024 James Fry
 2025 Andrew Gant



Poole

The post of Sheriff of Poole was created in 1568 under the Great Charter of Elizabeth with the first post holder being Christopher Rose. The original document as sealed by Queen Elizabeth I is still in existence and from time to time is put on show at Poole Museum.

The role was extremely important within the administrative and judicial systems in the Town at that time, and included the following duties: presiding over a monthly court to administer justice; to receive all written commands from the Monarch concerning the Town; to receive all Crown debts (e.g. fines) and account for them to the Exchequer, control of the Town Gaol and responsibility for the prisoners within (the key to the Town Gaol still forms part of the Sheriff's Regalia); to superintend executions, to be the Returning Officer for Parliamentary elections; to receive all Royal Proclamations; and to summon Jurors for the Court of Quarter Sessions.

During the Civil War, the Sheriffs of that period must have been in something of a dilemma. Officially they were the representatives of the Monarch in the Town, and, as such, should have been loyal to the Crown which must have been somewhat awkward as Poole declared for Oliver Cromwell and Parliament! Fortunately however, it appears no harm was done, although no doubt this was due in no small part to the Parliamentary victory. However, it should be noted that there does not appear to have been any ill-will held by Charles II upon the Monarch's return as he made a cordial visit to Poole in 1665.

During the 18th Century Poole continued to grow and prosper but with powers becoming more centralised within Parliament and the subsequent lessening of the Monarch's power, the extent of the Sheriff's role declined.

During the 18th Century the role of Sheriff was legally compulsory and, if elected to service, anyone declining the position could be fined. However, as the cost of the fine was considerably less than the expenses incurred in carrying out Shrieval duties this did not always act as a deterrent.

Following the 1972 Local Government Act, Queen Elizabeth II granted a further Charter to the Town retaining, amongst, other things, the role of Sheriff. Today the role is purely ceremonial and forms the first year of the three year term in Civic Office (Sheriff, then Mayor, then Deputy Mayor). However the Sheriff is still bound to protect the Mayor and travels in the front of the Mayoral Car carrying the Staff of Office ready to use against any marauders who may attack the Mayor. Fortunately, and certainly in recent times, this has not proved necessary!

The Sheriff attends the ceremony of Beating the Bounds by water, which occurs on the anniversary of events connected with the history of Poole, e.g. 1998, the 750th anniversary of the Longspee Charter, by which Poole gained its freedom from the Mayor of Canford. The event took place in 2000 and 2009. NACTSEW has fond memories of this ceremony, as the Association held its Annual General Meeting there in 2000 and members joined the Mayoral party on a vessel which, with other boats, beat the Bounds by sailing into and round Poole Harbour. Various practically attired local volunteers boarded the vessels in search of plunder – i.e. donations for the Mayor and Sheriffs' charities!

Sheriffs of Poole

1985	Gerald Bailey
1986	Edward Webster
1987	Kevin Chaffey
1988	Mary Ballam
1989	Ann Stribley
1990	Doreen Burgo
1991	Thomas Churchill
1992	Bruce Grant-Braham
1993	Fred Winwood
1994	Bernard Ewart
1995	Edward Hogg
1996	Annette Brooke
1997	John Curtis
1998	Frederick Wretham
1999	Joyce Jones
2000	Ronald Parker
2001	Graham Mason
2002	Ray Smith
2003	Les Burden
2004	Lou Knight
2005	Judy Butt
2006	Jeff Allen
2007	Joyce Lavender
2008	Charles Meachin
2009	Chris Bulteel



2010	Graham Wilson
2011	Carol Evans
2012	Philip Eades
2013	Peter Adams
2014	Jo Clements
2015	Xena Dion
2016	Lindsay Wilson
2017	Sean Gabrielle
2018	Elaine Atkinson
2019	Julie Bagwell
2020	Julie Bagwell
2021	Tony Trent
2022	Mike Brooke
2023	Pete Miles
2024	Mark Howell
2025	Karen Rampton



Southampton

For many years, the town of Southampton had been under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff of Hampshire, but in the fifteenth century the important burgesses running the town secured privilege after privilege from the Crown which reduced the Sheriff's ability to interfere in its affairs.

Finally, in 1447, King Henry VI granted a Charter making the Borough a County in its own right, separate from Hampshire, and with its own Sheriff. The Charter specifically mentions as a main reason for the grant that the Mayor and other officials and also the merchants had been arrested and imprisoned by the county Sheriffs.

The important and burdensome duty of the Sheriff of Southampton in the next two or three centuries was that of paying the farm fee (an annual payment to the King in lieu of all royal revenues due from the town). This sum which became increasingly difficult to find as the prosperity of the town decreased rapidly from the end of the fifteenth century.

Southampton was run as a separate county right through until 1974, when its separate role was abolished during a review of local government boundaries. The privilege of a Sheriff, however, remains.

In Southampton he was elected each year by the burgesses and later by the councillors from amongst their number. This contrasts with the County Sheriffs who have always been chosen each year by central government.

The Sheriff has always, therefore, been a member of the Town Council, and has usually succeeded to the office of Mayor in the following year.

The Sheriff has worn the robes of an alderman since at least Elizabethan times, but his or her distinguished chain and the staff of office are Victorian. Nothing has been found out about the staff in the records, but the Council Minutes of 9th November 1892 record the presentation to the Corporation of a "Gold Necklet with enamelled Badge for the future use of the Sheriffs of Southampton" by Mr William Lankester JP, the retiring Sheriff.

A newspaper reported that Mr Lankester had long felt that some such distinctive mark for the Sheriff was desirable, and that, as the Mayor's chain bore the date 1792, it was especially appropriate for the Sheriff's chain to be presented in 1892.

The same newspaper then reported, unfortunately, that Mr Lankester was not then chosen as Mayor because of his increasing deafness.

From 1974 the office of Sheriff has been without particular legal or fiscal duties, but even today, its occupant plays an important role in civic life. If it is not possible for the Mayor to personally attend the many events to which he or she is invited, the Sheriff acts as an able substitute.

Sheriffs of Southampton

1985	Jack V Candy		
1986	Ivy White		
1987	Maria Bear		
1988	Norman Best		
1989	Mary Key		
1990	Joan Baker		
1991	Pat Bear		
1992	Kenneth Street		
1993	Eddie Read		
1994	Margaret Singerman	2010	Terrence Matthews
1995	Dorian Attwood	2011	Derek Burke
1996	Kenneth Street	2012	Ivan White
1997	Michael Andrews	2013	Susan Blatchford
1998	Derek Burke	2014	Linda Norris
1999	Peter Wakeford	2015	Cathy McEwing
		2016	Les Harris
2000	Christine Kelly	2017	Stephen Barnes-Andrews
2001	Norah Goss	2018	Peter Baillie
2002	Parvin Damani	2019	Susan Blatchford
2003	Harry Mitchell		
2004	Edwina Cook	2020	Alex Houghton
2005	John Slade	2021	Jacqui Rayment
2006	Stephen Barnes-Andrews	2022	Valerie Laurent
2007	Brian Parnell	2023	Dave Shields
2008	Elizabeth Mizon	2024	James Baillie
2009	Carol Cunio	2025	Pat Every



York

By the Charter of Richard II, 18th May 1396, the three bailiffs who had been chosen by their predecessors in office were replaced by two Sheriffs elected by the Mayor, Aldermen and Councillors. The election took place on 21st September and the year of office began at Michaelmas. Their duties are summarised in the Bailiff's Oath of 1353. They were responsible for the payment of the City's fee farm rent to the King, and had to enforce the assizes of bread and ale and other market regulations, empanel jurors, do justice to rich and poor and collect the issues of the City courts.

As the ranks of the Aldermen were filled by past Sheriffs, the Shrievalty was a step towards the Mayoralty. Each Sheriff had his Sergeant-at-Mace, responsible for making summonses and arrests, and also a Clerk. According to the decree of 1419 the Sheriffs were to be preceded through the City by a Sergeant and have an "honest servant" at their back; this rule made the office very expensive. In addition, the Sheriff had to provide an Annual Feast for the dignitaries of the City and a dinner after their yearly "riding" during which they proclaimed the byelaws at various places – a copy is printed in Hargrove's History of the City of York (1818) Vol1 pp 312-3.

In 1762 the Sheriffs were expected to provide at their election eleven gallons of red and white wine and six shillings in bread, also two tablecloths, six napkins, sugar, cups, glasses and two tea-kettles. They usually wore black gowns but had scarlet ones for elections and feast days, the Assizes and Quarter Sessions. The fine for refusing to serve as Sheriff was very heavy (£100 in the early nineteenth century,) and fines from non-residents elected to the office, but unable to serve, made a substantial contribution to the City's revenues.

The Sheriff held a Court of Pleas most Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, but later only weekly, chiefly for pleas of debt and trespass. The Sheriff had his own prison, commonly called the Sheriff's Kidcote, on Ouse Bridge, for felons and misdemeanants.

There were two Sheriffs until the passing of the Municipal Reform Act of 1835, from which date one only has been appointed each year, and the Court over which they presided has been discontinued. Although elected by the City Council he is the Sovereign's representative in the City, and, as he or she attends E.M. Judges when they visit the City three times each year.

It was also his duty to attend executions and ensure that they were properly carried out, but this duty has passed into history. He or she must formally oversee arrangements for Parliamentary elections. The social duties are heavy, as he or she assists the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress in such matters, and may deputise for them.

Before the Sheriff is appointed the Lord Mayor-Elect is consulted, as the two must work in close harmony. As with the Office of Lord Mayor that of the Sheriff is unpaid. The holder ranks next to the Lord Mayor in civic dignity and is entitled to the deference of all citizens. On civic occasions a fur-trimmed robe is worn with a gold chain and badge.

Each year, on Lord Mayor's Day, the retiring Lord Mayor presents to the new Sheriff's Lady the Lady Mayoress's staff of honour, with instructions that she is to use it to keep the Sheriff in order until the next formal reception at the Mansion House, which takes place two or three weeks later. The Sheriff's Lady then hands it back to the Lady Mayoress for a similar purpose for the remainder of the year.

Sheriffs of York

1985 Malcolm Bartram
 1986 David Wilde
 1987 Paul Milling
 1988 Ken Cooper
 1989 William Richardson

1990 Peter Brown
 1991 Bernard Bell
 1992 Cyril Waite
 1993 David Horwell
 1994 Sue Cooke
 1995 Reginald Pulleyn
 1996 Kenneth Cooper
 1997 Eurig Thomas
 1998 Bernard Bell
 1999 Hany Briggs

2000 Barrie Ferguson
 2001 Janet Greenwood
 2002 Martin Brumby
 2003 Keith Orrell
 2004 Robert Scrase
 2005 Gilbert Nimmo
 2006 Richard Baldwin
 2007 Keith Hyman
 2008 David Wylde
 2009 Jill Burnett

2010	Richard Watson
2011	Alan Deller
2012	Paul Firth
2013	Brian Watson
2014	John Kenny
2015	Brian Smith
2016	Jonathan Tyler
2017	Gillian Brian
2018	Verna Campbell
2019	Dafydd Williams (22/05 - 25/07) Jo Trythall (from 26/07)
2020	Jo Trythall
2021	Ashley Mason
2022	Suzie Mercer
2023	Sue Hunter
2024	Fiona Fitzpatrick
2025	Paul Doughty



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