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## National Association of City and Town Sheriffs of England and Wales Cymdeithas Cenedlaethol Siryfion Dinas a Thref Lloegr a Cymru

### Chair's Newsletter - Summer 2023

As many of us look forward to our AGM weekend in Norwich, and the chance to see old friends and make new friends, we can reflect on a year of celebrations. Each of us will have stories to tell of our local Civic events, but the Coronation of King Charles III brought us all together for the major celebration of the year, in May. In Gloucester, a Lamprey Pie was prepared and, as is traditional, presented to the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire. I believe it is extremely important that we maintain our traditions and I have written a brief article on this subject which you can find later in this newsletter. I would love to hear about your heritage and customs for inclusion on our website.

I have also added a page which puts the spotlight on our new Sheriffs as a welcome to our Association. I hope those of you who enjoy reading about the role of Sheriffs, past and present, will find the book reviews of interest, this includes the NACTSEW publication produced in 2014 to mark our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is time to think about an update for 40 years and I welcome ideas and suggestions for content.

My thanks to all those who have helped and encouraged me this year. It has been a great comfort to have such positive "can do" support from Andy, Jeanne and Jan on the committee. The same goes for our Honorary Life President who has gathered a million and one NACTSEW anecdotes over the years. Much gratitude to Xena, who continues to develop our website keeping it fresh with new content and ensures member emails reach you promptly.

I'm delighted to report that the contact we have made with the Civics and the Civic Office at Haverfordwest has been a pleasure, with plans for 2024 taking shape.

Of course much of the hard work over the past year (and before) is down to the enthusiastic committee at Norwich. I'm delighted that bookings had exceeded 100 when I last checked, and still more coming in. Chris Higgins and his colleagues have pulled out all the stops and put together an excellent schedule for the weekend. I can't wait to explore the City and I hope to meet as many of you as possible.

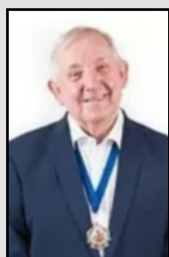


David Brown

David Brown - Chair

### Haverfordwest already preparing to welcome us in 2024

While I was on a short break in Pembrokeshire I took the opportunity to arrange a courtesy visit to the Council Offices in Haverfordwest and meet the Mayor and Town Clerk, Jill and Juliet. Unfortunately the Sheriff was at Hay-on-Wye in a Civic capacity.



Andrew Gravells

Both Jill and Juliet were very welcoming and we talked about the 2024 weekend and they told me that the Town Council is looking forward to hosting us. It was a great and friendly meeting and I'm looking forward to going back next year.

I also dropped into the Mariners Hotel where the owners told me they remembered our last visit there (2007) and would again offer a discount to those staying there and would work with the Town Council.

All in all a great visit! I'll need to start practising my welcome in Welsh!

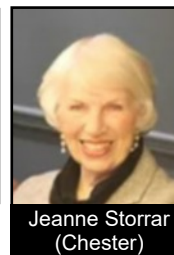
Very best wishes everyone, Andrew (Hon Life President)

### Your Committee - putting a face to the name

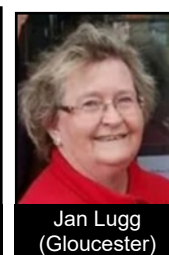
We know that all organisations rely on a few key people to keep things running smoothly. **Andy** has been associated with NACTSEW since 2010, serving many years as Treasurer and now an excellent support as Vice-Chair. **Jeanne** has been a strong supporter of NACTSEW since 2007 and keeps us on track with her attention to details. **Jan**, previously NACTSEW Secretary and a member since 2007, is also a detail person, so important as the bookings flood in for the Norwich AGM.



Andy Swinburne  
(Berwick)



Jeanne Storrar  
(Chester)



Jan Lugg  
(Gloucester)

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# Berwick-upon-Tweed extended a friendly welcome to all in 2022



- reflecting on the 37<sup>th</sup> Conference, 23<sup>rd</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> Sept.



Sheriff Eddie Mullins addresses the AGM

Berwick finally had the opportunity to share with us their unique history and a culture shaped by the town's close proximity to the border with Scotland.

In 2020 Covid had forced Berwick to shelve their plans. Berwick then stepped aside in 2021 to enable Chester to welcome NACTSEW to join them in marking the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their Shrievalty. The wait for Berwick 2022 was well worth it.

A friendly welcome was evident immediately. The Friday evening drinks reception in the packed Guildhall had an uplifting buzz and energy that many commented on as we enjoyed the hot buffet and welcome speech by Sheriff Eddie Mullins.

In true NACTSEW tradition the formal AGM business took place on Saturday morning. Again the venue was the Guildhall, followed promptly by a brief reception for current Sheriffs, and by a light buffet lunch for all guests.

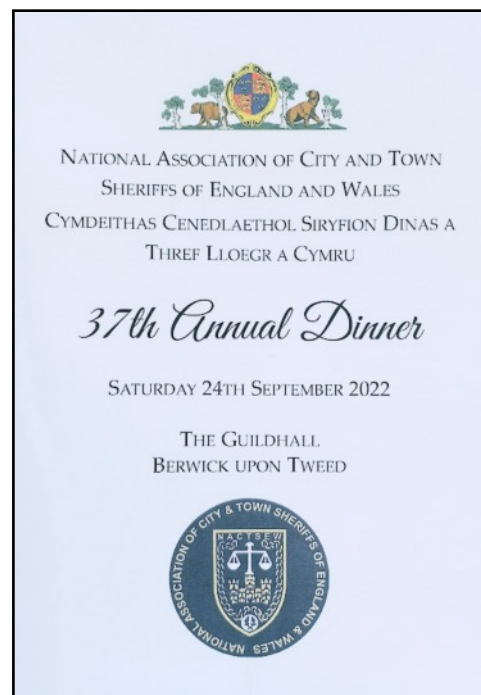


Picturesque bag for life for visitors

This set us all up perfectly with the energy and stamina to enjoy the afternoon in and around Berwick on one of the variety of afternoon tours which had been organised by Lance Robson, Michael Richardson and the rest of the Berwick Committee. These included an exhilarating trip on an old London bus to Chain Bridge Honey Farm (via Scotland), a boat trip on the River Tweed, an escorted guide of the town's Elizabethan walls and an escorted tour of the historic Guildhall / Town Hall.

The Guildhall proved to be the perfect 'fit' for the Saturday evening drinks reception and Dinner, with more than 110 diners enjoying an excellent menu; This was promptly served with a smile and followed by a highly entertaining guest speaker, Cameron Robertson, described as "photographer, researcher and curator" on his website. Cameron rounded off the evening perfectly with an informative talk about events throughout Berwick's history, including several very amusing anecdotes about key individuals, some of whom were remembered by those present.

Sunday morning arrangements were in place for Sheriffs to robe in the Guildhall before an official photograph and then a procession to Berwick Parish Church for the 10am service.



Sunday morning gathering on the steps of the Guildhall / Town Hall for the 'official' photograph. courtesy: Robert Yardley (Lichfield)

At the conclusion of the service there was a final opportunity to chat with friends, old and new, at the Guildhall over a cup of tea or coffee.

The buzz and energy we enjoyed at the reception on Friday still echoed around the Guildhall, mixing with final speeches and thoughts of gathering again in Norwich.

**Thank you Berwick for so many wonderful memories.**

**David Brown - NACTSEW Chair**

# The Countdown to Norwich is now on!

Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September - Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October

Members will have received the following schedule planned for the 38<sup>th</sup> Conference thanks to the efforts of a strong organising committee in Norwich, led by Chris Higgins, Sheriff of Norwich 2011.

Very little has had to be changed since delegates attending Berwick were provided with a helpful “goody-bag” of information and leaflets.

The itinerary can be summarised as follows:

## Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September

- from 6:00pm welcome reception at Norwich Castle, with drinks and canapés.

## Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September

Venue for the AGM and Lunch is City Hall, St Peters Street

- 10:30am tea and coffee will be served
- 11:00am the AGM starts prompt
- Following the meeting a Reception for 2023/24 Sheriffs will be held in the Lord Mayor’s Parlour. Subsequently a light cold buffet lunch will be provided for everyone in the City Hall.
- After lunch a choice of pre-booked trips, with Tour Guides, planned to start at 2:00pm.
  - Guided Walking Tour of Central Norwich
  - Guided Tour of Norwich Cathedral by The Dean of Norwich, The Very Rev’d Dr Andrew Braddock
  - Open-Top Bus Tour of Norwich
  - Free time (free Museum passes available)

Venue for the Evening Gala Dinner is Blackfriars Hall, St Andrews Plain

- 6:30pm Drinks reception with light canapés
- 7:30pm Gala Dinner - Dinner jackets are preferred

## Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October

Venue for Church Service is St Peter Mancroft, Hay Hill

- 8:30am Robing for Sheriffs before photographs, then to assemble and parade to the Church
- 10:00am service starts - followed by teas and coffees, thanks and farewells.



St Peter Mancroft Church

## City of Norwich Sheriffs Association

### Committee Leads

Chris Higgins (2011)  
Doug Underwood (1995)  
Derek James (2010)  
Beryl Blower (2015)  
Richard Marks (2016)  
David Walker (2017) - Treasurer  
Ros Brown (2018),  
Marian Prinsley (2019,2020)  
Caroline Jarrold (2021,2022)  
Dr Jan Sheldon (2023)



Magnificent view with Norwich Castle & Norwich Cathedral



# Website news from Xena

It is encouraging to see that our 'Sheriffs of England and Wales' website attracts people from outside our membership. Over the past year I have had several messages from people overseas, mainly the United States, Canada and Australia. The messages have been enquiring about past Sheriffs, asking where to get further information about historic matters and, most recently, sharing a memory about an inspirational camp leader who was English and who mentioned that his father was the 'real' Sheriff of Nottingham during that year (1956/7).



Xena Dion  
(Poole - 2016)

These messages usually initiate a bit of detective work on behalf of the enquirer and its been rewarding to find out more information for them or to at least signpost them to the right office.

I have been looking into setting up a fully on-line booking and payment system for our Conference weekends, but, alas, you have to have a business account with the website builder, which is hugely more expensive, so this is not likely to be possible. I do hope that the booking system is easier with all the information and forms available on the site.

Please, as always, keep me updated with any news and pictures and always let me know if there are any errors or outdated information so I can amend it.

## Guarding our Heritage, keeping up Traditions

A common bond that brings together all our member cities and towns is a love for our local heritage and long-held traditions.



Many of these traditions have their origins in the judicial responsibilities of our ancient predecessor Sheriffs. Whether that is as guardians of our 'boundaries' against hostile elements, or as guardians of the quality of the beer served in our hostel establishments!

Here are a few that have caught my eye.

Riding the Bounds was an important responsibility of the Sheriff of Berwick in days past due to constant disputes over the border between England and Scotland. Today, each year, the 'Chief Marshal' and other leaders meet the Mayor and Sheriff at the Guildhall steps and request permission to check the boundary of the 'Liberties of Berwick'. Permission is granted, the Town Flag is handed over and the toast given before the riders set off on the 17 or so miles to check the boundaries.

Details of similar boundary inspections are featured on our website related to Lichfield, Oxford, Southampton and York. For Poole the challenge for the Sheriff is slightly different as "Beating the Sea Bounds" involves a boat journey! Oxford have the "Inspection of the City Walls", clearly not for those who don't like heights.

York are proud of another historic tradition, familiar to many of us. As for Gloucester the Sheriff has the important duty of ensuring that the beer served in the local taverns is of good quality. Somebody has to do it!



All of these traditions - and others - are presented in much greater detail on our website - I am grateful to Xena for bringing this all together in one place making my job easier. I know that Xena would be pleased to feature traditions important in your city or town. Do please put together some words, ideally with a photo or two, and send to either Xena or myself.

We must do all we can to keep these traditions alive.

Pictures, clockwise from top right: "Beating of the Sea Bounds" (Poole), "Riding the Bounds" (Berwick), Assize of Ale" (York), Assize of Ale (Gloucester), "Inspection of the City Walls" (Oxford)



## Book Reviews - in order of publication date

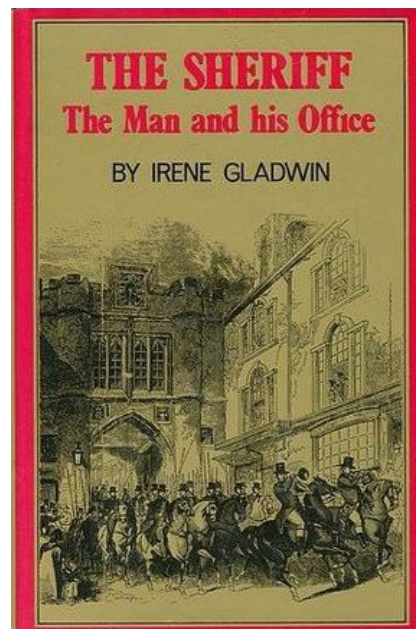
**Dust cover notes:** This account of the sheriffs of Britain, and their changing functions and duties, spans a thousand years from Anglo-Saxon times to the present day. It is the fruit of much research, and provides a fascinating social and political history, as well as giving glimpses of everyday life in England and portraits of scores of men, and a handful of women-some worthy, some staggeringly unworthy-who have held the position of sheriff.

Mrs Gladwin has a wealth of anecdotes, and many names on the fringe of one's memory are brought vividly to life: Sir John d'Abernon, Bushy and Bagot, Sir Richard Redmayne and Sir Francis Basset among them.

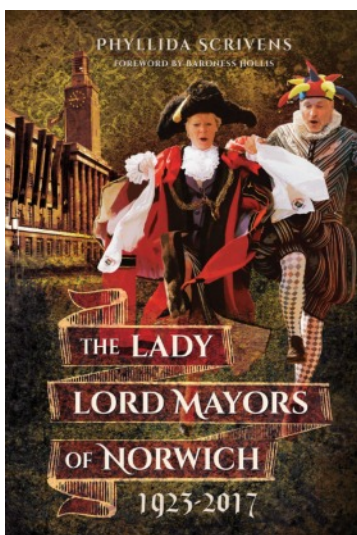
Gradually the sheriffs lost most of their power, and from Tudor times on many sought to avoid an office which involved such great expense. The sections of the book covering the last four hundred years are a gold-mine of information, drama, customs and brief biographies.

No synthesis of this kind exists, and the author communicates her own enthusiasm to the reader. The scope of the book is impressive: above all, it is immensely readable; it has all the sparkle and colour of a grand pageant.

**David Brown comments:** The sub-title does grate a little with me as, even in the era of its publication, women had held this office. However, it is a fascinating and complete history of the role of Sheriff and with dozens and dozens of references to source material it is invaluable to the serious reader.



Published 1974  
416 pages, 14.5 x 3.8 x 22 cm



**Amazon review:** Using in-depth personal interviews with surviving female Lord Mayors, their colleagues, friends and family members, supported by research material from local archival sources, author Phyllida Scrivens has uncovered fascinating anecdotal stories, both joyous and tragic, many involving royalty and national figures. This book, including original photographs, delves behind the scenes of public office, discovering inspiring women determined to rise above the constraints of a hitherto patriarchal world.

**David Brown comments:** I chose this book for two reasons. Not only will Norwich be hosting NACTSEW this year but also, despite the title, there are chapters devoted to individuals who served as Sheriff, whose names many reading this will recognise. Included are Lila Cooper (Sheriff 1984), Jill Miller (1989, 1991), Brenda Ferris-Rampley (1992), Jennifer Lay (1998), Brenda Arthur (2005) and, before the formation of NACTSEW, Mabel Clarkson (1928).

There is also a brief reference to the formation of NACTSEW and mention of the Sheriff of Gloucester in 1984, now Hon. Life President, Andrew Gravells.

Published 2018: 168 pages, 15.24 x 1.27 x 24.13 cm

## NACTSEW Publication:

*[Celebrating 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Founding of the Association]*

This 40 page book was brought together by the NACTSEW Committee and Members as a comprehensive record of the first 30 years. Thanks were recorded for "the assistance of the officers at the cities and towns which have retained the ancient office of Sheriff".

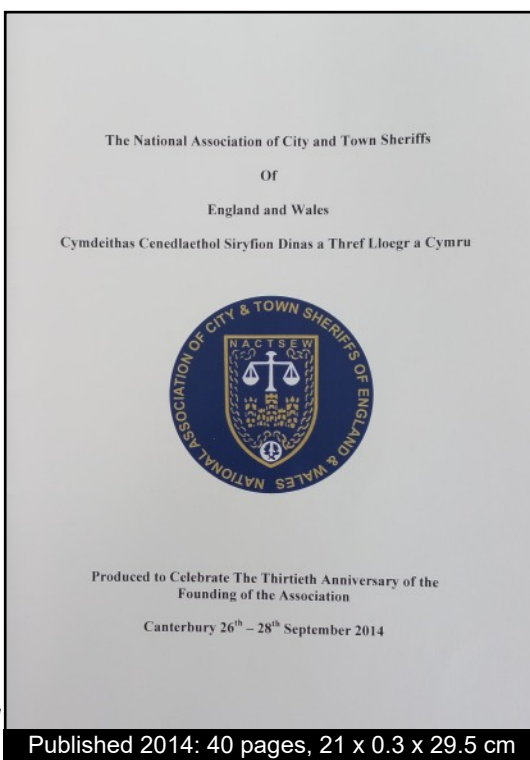
As well as a double-page entry for 16 cities and towns, each with a brief history of the office and a list of all to have held the civic honour since 1985, there were contributions from the following:

- Andrew Gravells - Hon. Life President, Chair 1985,86,87 (Sheriff of Gloucester 1984)
- Barrie Ferguson, Chair 2011,12,13 (Sheriff of York 2000)
- Peter Barrett, V-Chair 2012,13 (Sheriff of Lichfield 1995)

Copies were available to Members for purchase at the Canterbury AGM in 2014.

**David Brown comments:** this is a wonderful record of the Association with a comprehensive record of the dates for each venue and term of office for Committee Officers. I often leaf through my copy and reminisce.

*With the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary approaching I think it is the time to produce an updated version, which will no doubt be of interest to those joining the Association more recently. **Suggestions for additional content would be very much welcomed, please email me your thoughts.***





# The Sheriffs 2023 - 24



David Gordon - Berwick



Cllr Tom Mellish - Canterbury



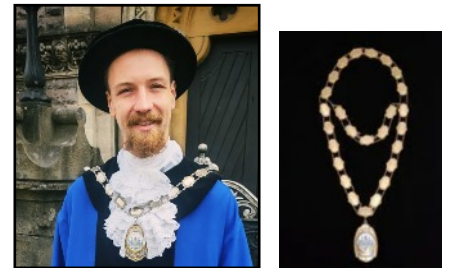
Cllr Heledd ap Gwynfor - Carmarthen



Cllr Hugo Deynem - Chester



Cllr Justin Hudson - Gloucester



Cllr Arthur Brooker - Haverfordwest



Adam Burns-Mace - Lichfield



Cllr Neil Murray - Lincoln



Cllr Maureen Lowson - Newcastle



Dr Jan Sheldon - Norwich



Cllr Shuguftah Quddoos - Nottingham



Cllr Mark Lygo - Oxford



Cllr Pete Miles - Poole



Cllr David Shields - Southampton



Ms Sue Hunter - York