

Agenda Item 2 – President’s Opening Remarks

Good morning everyone,

· I’m so sorry that a chest infection has meant that I’m unable to be with you this year. I’m so very disappointed, especially as it’s only the second time that I’ve missed an AGM weekend, since I founded our Association way back in 1985 in Gloucester.

· Ever since the very early days of our Association in the 1980’s, Berwick has always been a great supporter of the Association. I remember so well our very first formal Lunch in Gloucester Guildhall when the Rev Arthur Wilshire arrived as Sheriff of Berwick and was very keen to see our Association prosper. Sat next to my chaplain at the lunch, they helped us to get off to a great start.

· We owe Berwick a debt of gratitude for being so encouraging in our early days, when our numbers were so small.

· This year, I was so very sorry to hear that our great colleague and friend John Reay had passed away. John was a great friend to me and was always happy to share his thoughts and great advice when I discussed with him any tricky problem that the Association had to address.

He was a very kind and wise member of our Association. I’m hoping that Hilary will be with you today as she too has been a faithful friend to our Association.

· My thanks go to all the Association officers for their work to ensure that our Association continues to thrive from one year to the next. Their work is mostly unseen but so necessary to ensure our future.

· I hope that you all have a productive A G M now and a pleasant Dinner tonight and a special Church Service tomorrow morning. I’ll be thinking of you all over the weekend. See you in Norwich.

· God Save The King !

Agenda Item 8 – Chairman’s Annual Report

At the Chester AGM Xena Dion (Poole) kindly offered to further develop the Association's website using new software tools available. This offer was welcomed.

My thanks to Graham Kent (Lincoln 2015) for helping me gather together content he had prepared for the previous website useful for the new website. I am also grateful to John Ebo for similar contributions.

After input from our President Andrew Gravells, a web address was secured and members were advised through my Newsletter in May.

I hosted the regular half-yearly meeting in April via Zoom. In attendance were Officers of NACTSEW, plus representatives of the Conference Weekend organising committees from both Berwick-upon-Tweed and Norwich.

They reported on progress and contributed thoughts and ideas. Xena gave a presentation of the status of our website. A number of topics were suggested for discussion at the Berwick AGM.

Also in April I was invited to attend the City of Chester Shrievalty Association St George's Day Dinner organised by the Hon. Alderman Andrew Storrar, helped in no small part by our very own Jeanne Storrar. Our President Andrew Gravells was also pleased to attend as was my wife Joanne who has since been installed as Sheriff of Gloucester.

At the dinner I presented a book to Sheriff Jill Houlbrook about the life and achievements of Ethelflaed, Queen of the Mercians. A key historic figure who links the cities of Chester and Gloucester.

On 8th September, along with everyone else, I heard the upsetting news that our beloved Queen Elizabeth II had died.

I felt it important that NACTSEW should acknowledge this, and I invited NACTSEW members to contribute their own recollections and photographs of visits by the Queen.

Through our website and email communications, Xena was able to get the message out the next day, within minutes of me sending her my statement.

I recognise the tremendous time and energy put in by the organising committees in both Norwich and Berwick upon Tweed. We have already enjoyed a wonderful Friday evening reception in Berwick, with more to come.

Berwick waited a long time to welcome us. First, in 2020, postponed by Covid and then stepping aside last year to enable Chester to celebrate 900 years of Shrievalty in that great City.

Much of the progress this year would not have been possible without the support of Andrew Gravells, Jeanne Storrar (our Secretary) and Jan Lugg (our Treasurer).

I do wish to give one other "thank you" and it's to our Consorts. We now have a Queen Consort and this has given a new focus on the responsibilities of a Sheriffs Consort. I stand before you as Chair of your National Association but I am also the current Consort to the Sheriff of Gloucester. I am chauffeur, photographer, bodyguard (to the chains) and consultant. So can we show our appreciation for our Consorts please. Thank you all.

David Brown - Chair NACTSEW