



SheriffsofEnglandandWales.org

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

Chair's Newsletter - Winter 2023 / 24

At this time of year we all look back at the past 12 months when we have a quiet moment. Many of us will, no doubt, have some wonderful memories of our Conference weekend in Norwich to ponder on.

The Sheriff of Norwich, Dr Jan Sheldon, Chris Higgins and the organising Committee "did us proud", all their hard work and planning certainly paid off. I have included a report on the following pages giving my personal view of the weekend, which I hope you will find interesting. I was delighted to learn, soon after our time together, that £1,152 was raised in the collection at the dinner for the Civic charity. The Norfolk Foundation is an excellent charity, dedicated to building stronger communities and improving the lives of people in Norfolk.

With this mailing you will also receive a copy of the minutes of our AGM together with the NACTSEW Constitution and a full transcript of my report at the AGM.

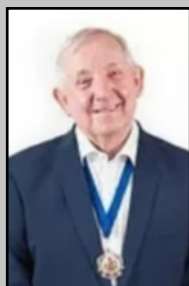
Those who attended the meeting may recall how I built on the message I included in my Summer Newsletter about "guarding our heritage and keeping up traditions". The Sheriff's Ride in Lichfield is a fine example of how the determination of the Lichfield Shrievalty made certain this tradition continues and I was fortunate to attend this spectacular event in 2023. I urge all NACTSEW members to do what you can to support such traditions in your City or Town.

As you will probably know we are approaching the 40th Anniversary of the first NACTSEW gathering. With your help I am bringing the 30th Anniversary book up to date, I will be talking more about this in my next newsletter.

Finally, my huge thanks to the NACTSEW Team who have supported me during 2023. We all know the value of volunteers and that all organisations rely on a few key people to keep things running smoothly.

David Brown - Chair

The NACTSEW Team wish you a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous 2024



From left to right (alphabetical order): David Brown (Chair), Xena Dion (Website Design), Andrew Gravells (Hon. Life President), Jan Lugg (Treasurer), Jeanne Storrar (Secretary), Andy Swinburne (Deputy Chair)

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)



A personal reminiscence of the Conference Weekend in Norwich by David Brown, NACTSEW Chair, with huge thanks to the organising committee.

Since my first NACTSEW AGM & Conference weekend in 2009, when I enjoyed the hospitality of Chester Shrievalty, this event has always been one of the very first dates I add to my calendar. Each year has been a joy, usually with the bonus of visiting a historic location for the first time.

As always, my wife and I were fortunate to be able to book a few extra night's stay giving ourselves the opportunity to explore and to "get our bearings". It was our first visit to Norwich - our honeymoon in Norwich, Vermont doesn't count!

Starting with a little window shopping at Jarrolds, we then took a brief pause at the Cosy Club. With map-in-hand this brought an immediate offer of help from a passerby. The enthusiastic (and full) resume of Norwich from a resident of 30 years was enlightening and set the tone for what proved to be a very friendly stay at every turn.

It is clear to me that what links our 15 great Cities and Towns is a respect and good guardianship of our individual history and heritage. This, no doubt, being the reason our predecessors made the key decision to retain the role of Sheriff at the time of the Local Government Act 1972.



Norwich Castle

As we explored further there were more offers of help from volunteer guides, all very smart and a credit to the City in their blue 'bibs'. Aside from locating the many fine historic buildings, some of which we would study more closely later, we were impressed with the neat market square. This must be a tremendous boost for local entrepreneurs and also for residents looking for unusual items and a bargain.

On the Friday evening there was a 'buzzing' atmosphere at the 'Welcome Reception' in Norwich Castle. A chance to greet old friends and meet some new members for the first time.



Dr Jan Sheldon



Friday reception, Norwich Castle

@RY

With speeches, which included a warm welcome from the Sheriff of Norwich Dr Jan Sheldon, it was the perfect start to the weekend, in the perfect venue.

For me the evening was not over as I had organised a meal for all those who had travelled from Gloucester, including our Sheriff. A short walk from Norwich Castle and we enjoyed an excellent meal with a lively atmosphere back at the Cosy Club!

Cont.

The AGM gathering at the City Hall on Saturday morning was another chance for all to get together again and the current Sheriffs present introduced themselves.

The passion for NACTSEW from members was clear. I was grateful to our Treasurer, Jan Lugg, who stepped in at the last minute to take on the role of Secretary, keeping track of some robust and opposing views during debate. My report, together with minutes of the meeting can be found on our website.



However, there was time to socialise and enjoy lunch before the afternoon excursions which had been organised in detail by the Norwich Shrievalty Committee, led by Chris Higgins. What a wonderful variety of choice we had for how to spend the afternoon in Norwich. Whether your interest was a guided Museum visit, a guided tour of Norwich Cathedral, an open bus tour of the City or simply to spend free time exploring on your own, the choice was there.

For me it was easy to decide as the Dean of Norwich Cathedral, Dean Andrew (more formally The Very Revd Dr Andrew Braddock), had been Interim Dean at Gloucester Cathedral until November 2022. Dean Andrew is well-known to Gloucester Civics, and it was impossible to resist seeing him again and join his guided tour of his new surroundings.



The Saturday evening black-tie dinner at Blackfriar's Hall was a glorious occasion in the perfect venue. Perfect in terms of historic setting and perfect in terms of venue size with more than 120 seated. We were 'watched over' by part of the largest collection of civic portraits in England, including past Sheriffs of Norwich.

We enjoyed the musical accompaniment from the harpist Lucinder Pennick-Yiasimi, the Toastmaster Bob Lloyd, with special guests Lady Dannatt Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk and our after-dinner speaker Lord Dannatt, whose distinguished career included Head of the British Army.

The standard of the food and prompt service (with 'military precision') at the dinner was extremely high, and many 'delegates' took the time to tell me they thought the same thing. This was another triumph for Chris Higgins and his organising Committee, which was the reason I asked them to stand and make themselves known. The team were acknowledged with enthusiastic applause.



I can report that kind and generous donations toward the Sheriff's charity appeal during the dinner amounted to £1,152.96 when taking into account cash and card donations, plus Gift Aid claimed.



Thank you to all those who donated.

www.norfolkfoundation.com/civic-charity

Sunday morning, 1st October, was the final opportunity for us all to gather together. This was the time for the 'great NACTSEW photograph 2023' taken on the steps of the City Hall. This was a short step or two to St Peter Mancroft Church for the traditional service, followed immediately by light refreshments.

The service was well-attended as always and it felt to me that people stayed chatting for as long as they possibly could, not wanting the weekend to end. I was keen to stay near the church door in order to chat with people as they were leaving.



I was overwhelmed with the strong message that came across about how much everyone had enjoyed the weekend. Well done to Norwich.

For my wife and I the weekend was not over as we continued our stay in Norwich. I think the amount of shoe-leather we wore out touring the City exceeded all personal records. We took away many, many happy memories with us, one of those being when we finally rested and enjoyed a cream tea at Jarrolds.

Thank you, Norwich, for the memories.

If you have memories and pictures you wish to share then please send them to Xena Dion, who do her best to find space to add to the many already included for you to enjoy.

David Brown, Chair NACTSEW

November 2023

