

# **GWENT COUNTY HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

## **NEWSLETTER**

## **SPRING 2020**

### **STAY WITH US**

As you will appreciate, this is a very difficult time not just for individuals but for organisations, including GCHA. All our affiliated organisations have cancelled events and, at time of writing, it appears that it may well be the autumn or beyond before meetings take place again.

Our AGM, due to be held on 13<sup>th</sup> June, has been postponed or cancelled (see opposite). A decision will be made shortly on the joint MAA/GCHA Day School, due to be held at Risca on 4<sup>th</sup> July. We will do our best to keep you informed.

At present we plan to continue publishing our journal, *Gwent Local History*, as normal, but this situation could change if, for example, our printers are unable to do the work. We will keep you posted.

In the meantime, you can help GCHA by promptly renewing your membership. Most importantly, take care and stay safe.

### **GET INTO PRINT**

We are always on the lookout for articles for our journal, *Gwent Local History*. There is no minimum length for articles and help will be given on matters such as style and editing. So don't hide that research under the bed, share it with the world! As well as being distributed to GCHA members, copies of our journal go to all four UK national libraries and to Harvard University Library in the USA.

**2020    A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY    2020**  
**Annual Chartist Convention. Saturday 7<sup>th</sup>**  
**November, Riverfront Theatre, Newport.**  
(depending on the medical situation; please check beforehand)

### **DO YOU AGREE?**

There is nothing in our constitution which deals with what we should do if we are unable to hold our AGM. We could try to hold it later in the year, although it is still far from clear if the situation will have improved in time. The committee is therefore proposing that we hold it over for a whole year until June 2021. Current officers would remain in place until then. If you disagree with this decision please let us know.

### **ARE YOU GETTING OUR EMAILS?**

If you received this newsletter by email then obviously yes!

If you received it through the post, then this may be because you don't have email or don't wish to give us your email address. This is fine and we will continue to contact you by post.

It is also possible, however, that you are happy to be contacted by email but that we don't have a correct email address for you. (Perhaps because we have misread what you wrote on your last renewal form). If you think you are in this category email Pete Strong, GCHA secretary on [strong@btinternet.com](mailto:strong@btinternet.com) and we will add you to our mailing list.

Clearly, it saves GCHA money if we can avoid postal charges by contacting you electronically.

**CONTACT US:** Correspondence should be sent to: Pete Strong, GCHA, 8 Deepweir, Caldicot, Mon. NP26 5JG  
[strong@btinternet.com](mailto:strong@btinternet.com)

## KEEP IT BRIEF

*A warning to the Chair of our affiliated Local History Societies not to overdo things when introducing guest speakers is provided by this extract from the South Wales Weekly Argus 10 December 1921:*

The Rev A T Jones, replying to a vote of thanks for his lecture at Duckpool Baptist Chapel, on Monday, recalled an incident in a lecture given a short time ago. The lecturer was a well-known speaker and the subject was a popular one. But the chairman spoke for three-quarters of an hour on the subject of the lecture. After his concluding remarks, the "was-to-be" lecturer got up and proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman for the lecture, and suggested that they should go home.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE: Our bank has informed us that in future cheques must include our full name: Gwent County History Association. GCHA etc will not be accepted.**

## A WORD OF WARNING TO ORAL HISTORIANS

from the South Wales Gazette (Abertillery)  
20 January 1893:

It was the heaviest storm ever known in the memory of the youngest inhabitant of the Welsh hills. I quote the youngest inhabitant for verity's sake. Everybody quotes the oldest inhabitant. I used to, but I found out that he was such a hoaty-headed old liar ....

## RECOMMEND A FRIEND

To keep on an even keel financially we need to increase our membership. Do you have a friend or colleague who might be interested in joining the Gwent County History Association and receiving the *Gwent Local History* journal? If so please send us their name and address and we will send them a complimentary back issue of the journal with an invitation to join.

## FAITHFUL TO BOTH?

*The old (and now redundant) debate over whether Monmouthshire (as it was then) belonged to England or Wales surfaced at a meeting of the Monmouthshire Local History Council in 1961, as reported by the Weekly Argus 3 June 1961:*

## IN WALES? THE LAST WORD HAS BEEN SPOKEN

It was bad psychology for the people of Monmouthshire to feel neither Welsh nor English, Mr Iwan Morgan told members of the executive committee of the Monmouthshire Local History Council on Saturday. "I don't like the idea of Monmouthshire being a sort of 'shandy-gaff'\* county," declared Mr Morgan.

"I now feel that the government has accepted Monmouthshire as being in Wales," said Mr Morgan, who felt that the report of the boundaries commission recently made public was a "final argument" in the controversy.

Discussion arose after Mr Ivor Waters had reported that the Chepstow branch of the council would strongly resist any moves to include Monmouthshire as a part of Wales, though they did not object to "and" being used in the title of "Wales and Monmouthshire".

"Chepstow is not Wales," he declared. "It was built by the Normans, and until three hundred years ago records in the parish show that people considered themselves English.

Mr Morgan said he was surprised Mr Waters carried on with this idea for there was not a "tittle of evidence" to say that Monmouthshire was other than inescapably Welsh.

Mr Arthur Clarke told the executive committee that the people who lived in the true kingdom of "Gwent" objected to the name being used in the *South Wales Argus* to describe the crimes or activities of people who had no territorial claim to the description.

People in valley towns did not belong to "Gwent" and never had, said Mr Clarke, and true Gwent natives objected to having its name dragged in the mud.

(\*shandy-gaff = a beer and lemonade shandy)