

The Counties

**Association of British Counties
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Kidwelly Castle, Carmarthenshire

Government Statement 1974:

“The new county boundaries are for administrative areas and will not alter the traditional boundaries of counties, nor is it intended that the loyalties of people living in them will change.”

The Association of British Counties

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A Word from the Editor

Doing this biannual magazine is a challenge but in return is also hugely rewarding. Although I consider myself fairly knowledgeable about the counties, my knowledge is nothing compared to many of the others who devote their time to ABC. I learn more each time I do this magazine and I hope that I will continue to do so.

I would like to make a somewhat impassioned plea to all our members to remember that this magazine belongs to all of us and input from all members is essential to maintain a high standard which I hope that I have produced thus far. If you have anything to say on the counties, please say it: write an article or even just a blurb on something that interests you. An article can be about a county's history, its geography or tourism; whatever really. Or you can write a general article about several counties. I would just ask that you avoid a historical event that is single county specific, but something that covers many counties and its effect on them would be ideal. Perhaps, if you like to walk or visit historical sites, write about it. Or if you have had a battle with any sort of entity over your proper address, write about it. I am sure that other members would like to know of any little successes that people have had with regards to this. So please, get writing!

Chairman's Address

The following is a summary of the Chairman's address at the recent ABC Triennial General Meeting held on 13 November 2010:

The Chairman, Peter Boyce, began his address by saying that the long term challenge for ABC must be to forge an appropriate, sustainable role for the counties in the future life of the nation. This did not mean going back to how the counties were used in the past, but looking to find new ways in which the counties could be recognised, used and valued in the future.

Much of ABC's work involves trying to undo some of the wrongs of the last fifty years as regards the muddling of local government with county:

- ABC seeks to cement the concept of the historic county as a cultural and geographical unit totally separate from administration;
- ABC would like to amend LG terminology/names so as to make clear the distinction of LG from historic counties;
- ABC wants to see the geography of the historic counties resume its role as the standard, general-purpose geography of the UK.

ABC produces the Gazetteer of British Place Names and the Traditional County Postal Directory. Historic Counties Trust produces the Historic Counties Standard and the County Borders project, digitised border data in Google Earth format. ABC lobbies central government for changes to LG terminology. We lobby local government to erect appropriate border signs for the counties.

Elsewhere ABC tries to encourage an appreciation of the history and heritage of the counties. ABC lobbies for their fair treatment by the National Trust, English Heritage and the rest of the heritage movement.

ABC tries to encourage social, sporting and cultural organisations to base themselves on the counties, most especially by encouraging local ABC members to form 'county associations'.

In the three years since the last TGM, ABC and its association and member organisations have had a fair degree of success in many of these areas. For example:

New county associations for Sussex, Westmorland, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire and Monmouthshire have been formed;
HCT has completed its border data for England and Wales;
We have managed to get many bogus LG and former LG signs removed and signs for traditional counties erected;
Users of the gazetteer and the traditional county postal directory have continued to grow steadily;
We have seen DCLG go some way to recognising the importance of the counties by flying their flags. We've seen the Department for Culture, Media and Sport write in clear, uncompromising terms about the importance of the counties in our heritage, history and culture.

Many of these areas still require much more work. Where might our priorities lie?

Encouraging the creation of further county associations and flags?
Increasing our membership, especially our active membership?
Extending the county border project to Scotland and Northern Ireland?
Encouraging Royal Mail/address management software suppliers to keep supplying traditional county data?
Using the Department for Culture Media and Sport's words to lobby afresh bodies such as English Heritage?
Encouraging UK tourism bodies to make better use of historic counties?
Lobbying the Department of Communities and Local Government for change to local government terminology?
Lobbying the Department for Transport for proper provision for traditional county signs and lobbying more local authorities to erect traditional county signs?
Creating a more up-to-date feel to our web site and making use of Facebook, blogs, YouTube, etc. to spread our message?
Increasing the number and prominence of our patrons?

These are all worthwhile aims. However, perhaps ABC should also sit back and think outside the box about other ways we can meet the challenge of forging an appropriate, sustainable role for the counties in the future life of the nation. To some extent the county flag is such an idea though not from ABC! Over the last few years this has slowly spread to the point where half the counties in England will soon have an official flag. Such flags can provide powerful and far-reaching ways of displaying and reinforcing county pride and identity. Are there other ideas like this? We should challenge ABC members to see if they can think of any.

The Chairman concluded his address by reminding those at the meeting of three huge weapons in our armoury:

Tenacity-our message doesn't change. What we want doesn't change. We don't go away. Thirty-eight years on from LGA 1972 we are more active than ever; the counties are still a key part of the national life, albeit an undervalued one;
The breakdown of administrative geography as any kind of basis for general purpose geography;
The IT revolution-we can do things and reach people in a way which would have been inconceivable twenty years ago.



ABC Triennial General Meeting Report

The Triennial General Meeting was held at the Corpus Christi Parish Centre in Rainford, Lancashire on 13 November 2010. Many thanks are due to Friends of Real Lancashire for being our hosts and arranging the meeting venue and refreshments.

The meeting commenced with a presentation by the Chairman, Peter Boyce, on the Department for Communities and Local Government's Historic County Flags project and ABC's role in supporting this.

The treasurer presented a statement of ABC's current financial situation. The overall balance was £7,365. The Chairman noted that ABC can be

approached by member organisations or individuals for funding for specific projects.

The Chairman presented a brief report on membership. ABC currently has 191 paid-up individual members (130 in 2007) though membership is particularly low in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The following organisations were members: Friends of Real Lancashire, Yorkshire Ridings Society, Saddleworth White Rose Society, Unite Craven, Campaign for True Identity, and the Huntingdonshire Society. The following ABC county associations also exist: Sussex Association, Westmorland Association, Oxfordshire Association, Warwickshire Association, Gloucestershire Association and Monmouthshire Association.

The Chairman then gave his review of the noteworthy ABC developments during the past three years.

Election of Committee: Peter Boyce has been re-elected as Chairman of the association. The following were then re-elected to the committee: Michael Bradford (President), Rupert Barnes (Vice-Chairman), Tim Butterworth (Treasurer), Martin Philips (Border Signs/Local Government Liaison) and Robert Hawley. Mari Foster agreed to continue as the magazine editor. The following were newly elected to the committee: Hilary Holt and Jason Saber (County Flags Officer).

News from the Committee

The Historic County Borders Project

The Historic County Borders Project (www.county-borders.co.uk) has now been completed for the whole of England and Wales. This project, run by the Historic Counties Trust, is a crucial part of our plan to see the counties more widely used by the media, publishers, heritage organisations and even government. Without proper electronic border data this

aim can never be fulfilled. The data can be downloaded from the aforementioned web address in Google Earth or on Google Maps. One can view the borders on Google Maps simply by typing the following into the search box at the top of the page and clicking on 'search':

<http://www.county-borders.co.uk/HistoricCounties.kmz>.

ABC: Facebook, Twitter and Web Site Improvements

At the committee meeting in November 2010 it was agreed that a major effort needed to be put into updating ABC's website, giving it a more contemporary look and feel. The reality of the modern world is that a credible web presence is critical to any campaigning organisation. Consequently, we have given our main website a major overhaul. Among other features, the updated site features a news section, a members' area (with news of meetings, etc.) and a discussion board. The updated version will be online shortly and can be found at the usual address: www.abcounties.co.uk.

The Gazetteer of British Place Names is also being modernised and can still be found at: www.gazetteer.co.uk.

We have decided that Be Properly Addressed: A Traditional County Postal Directory could be more influential if it had its own site and can now be found at: www.postal-counties.co.uk.

Commercial companies have quickly discovered the mass potential of social networking sites for spreading their message. They can be equally valuable to organisations like ours. Hence, you can also now keep up to date with ABC's activities, join in discussions and spread our cause among your friends via our recently launched Facebook page: www.facebook.com/abcounties. You can now also follow us on Twitter (username: britishcounties). These sites are already providing a valuable way of involving interested people who we were not reaching through more traditional means.

Lobbying the Media

It can sometimes seem that lobbying the media to get its county references correct is a never-ending and thankless task. But it is an area where persistence can pay off. At the last committee meeting it was proposed that focussing on certain key, mass audience national programmes could achieve the best effect for the least effort. Chris Evans' and Jeremy Vine's Radio 2 shows were suggested as useful to focus on. If you listen to these shows and you hear an incorrect county reference, ring them up, email them, get on their Facebook or Twitter pages and let them know (politely, of course!). Even better, point them at the Gazetteer for British place names (www.gazetteer.co.uk). If everyone who cares about our counties does this, they will soon get the message, and so will their millions of listeners.

The National Trust-Guardians of our County Heritage?

ABC members have often noted, and complained about the confused and confusing use made of counties by the National Trust, an organisation that one might think would be a champion of our traditional county heritage. ABC member Edward Keene submitted the following question to the 2010 AGM of the National Trust: *'Why, as guardian of the nation's heritage, does the Trust not use the traditional and real counties of Britain as its standard universal geographical reference in the handbook, maps, and other literature, instead of utilising a confusing mixture of top-tier administrative authorities and defunct metropolitan areas?'*

Alex Youel, Head of Supporter Relations, replied: *'The way we produce our handbook and indeed all our literature is guided by a very simple question. How can we make this publication just as useful and easy to use as it can be, for the greatest number of people? This essentially leads us to a very pragmatic approach, based on what works best. To give one example, over the years we've developed the indexes at the back of the handbook to embrace most variations in everyday use of counties, cities and administrative areas, so that most people can easily find the places they are looking for. What you understandably describe as a 'confusing mixture' could just as well be argued as offering a helpful variety of*

possible entry points. We still do recognise, respect and acknowledge the historic or traditional counties, from the three Ridings of Yorkshire to the wilds of Westmorland, but for the very practical purposes of our printed publications, with all their constraints on space, we use the descriptive names with which most of our users are readily familiar.'

The 2011 handbook has since been published and continues the extraordinary confusion of previous years. If NT really has asked itself the question *'How can we make this publication just as useful and easy to use as it can be?'*, then one could only conclude that they undertook this exercise in order that they could then do exactly the opposite. In fairness to NT, reference is made to some traditional counties in England (Yorkshire, Middlesex and Sussex) but the whole thing is a bizarre mix of traditional, local government and ceremonial county names and must leave the reader utterly baffled. The treatment of Wales is scandalous, treating 'Conwy', 'Neath Port Talbot' etc. as equivalent to Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire.

Perhaps the way to go with NT is to accept that they see no problem with mixing these different types of areas together in one publication, and at least try to get them to recognise more traditional counties than they currently do. An obvious place to start would be to list the correct county for its 'Cumbria' listings, even if this is in addition to their being listed as 'Cumbria'. Despite Mr. Youel's fine words, there isn't a single reference to Westmorland in the 2011 handbook.

New County Associations Formed

Two new ABC county associations have been formed recently.

The Monmouthshire Association has been launched to raise the importance of the county's traditions and identity. The ancient county or shire of Monmouth-from the Wye to the Rhymney-is a county with an illustrious history and a great future. The Association has designed a Monmouthshire flag and is promoting its use and seeking its recognition by the Flag Institute. Details at: www.monmouthshire-association.org.uk

Sussex also now has its own county association. The Sussex Association is actively promoting its flag for the county of Sussex, St. Richard's Flag, named after the county's patron saint Richard of Chichester. More at: www.sussexassociation.webs.com.

Border Sign News-County Watch hits Westmorland

County Watch has been active again, this time erecting Westmorland signs at various points on the county's borders, and Lancashire signs at Bowness and Skelwith Bridge. Photos of these can be seen at: www.flickr.com/photos/56847297@N08/. Not surprisingly, this action has stirred up a lot of interest in the Westmorland Gazette, with a large majority of readers in support of the traditional county borders being properly marked permanently. Friends of Real Lancashire, the Westmorland Association and ABC will approach Cumbria County Council with a view to making this a reality. We are willing to pay for such signs provided the council are willing to erect them.

Friends of Real Lancashire report that Stockport Borough Council have expressed an interest in erecting Cheshire/Lancashire border signs on the Mersey crossings in the borough.

Following the erection of Yorkshire/Lancashire signs at Grains Bar, Saddleworth White Rose Society are negotiating with other land owners to see further signs erected in their area. Oldham MBC has erected new place name signs throughout the borough including 'in the county of York' and a white rose emblem on those places within Yorkshire.

The Historic Counties Trust has been negotiating with several London boroughs for the re-erection of Middlesex road signs.

Quadhurst's Map of the Historic Counties

This excellent wall map is shortly to go into its second edition (which will be supported by the Historic Counties Trust). It can be obtained from: www.quadhurst.co.uk

Department of Communities & Local Government Flying the Flag

The DCLG is continuing its project to fly the flags of each of the historic counties of England. ABC has been assisting in this by providing many of the flags flown. ABC member organisations have also been involved, supplying the flag for their own county. Friends of Real Lancashire provided the flag flown during the week of Lancashire Day in November. The Yorkshire Ridings Society will present their flag to DCLG in time for Yorkshire Day. The Hunts Society and Oxfordshire Association will also supply flags. We have been appropriately credited; for example Chris Dawson, then Chairman of FoRL, being quoted in the DCLG Press Release: *'Successive governments have confirmed the boundaries of Lancashire, and we welcome their further confirmation by the new government, which demonstrated the valuable part that traditional counties play in modern life. We hope that the flying of traditional county flags outside the Department's office will lead to further measures to promote the identity of Britain's traditional counties. We welcome the flying of the Lancashire flag in celebration of Lancashire Day.'*

This celebration of our historic counties by central government is, of course, very welcome and long overdue. It has, however, further illustrated what we already knew only too well, that Government is completely confused as to the difference between administrative counties, ceremonial counties and historic (real!) counties. Each flag flown has been accompanied by a press release. These often quote the leader of a county council or a lord lieutenant saying how glad they are that the flag is being flown for their historic county! A further problem has been that many counties do not have official flags registered with the Flag Institute, the only flags available being derived from the banner of a county council's coat of arms. These have had to be flown for some counties, there being no alternative. The biggest gaffe by far has been the flying of a 'Cumbria' flag (supplied by Cumbria CC) in what should have been the week for the Cumberland flag to fly.

These problems aside though, the project will garner publicity for many historic counties which DCLG would previously have regarded as dead

and gone (e.g. Middlesex, Huntingdonshire, Westmorland) and may help by spurring on development of proper flags in counties which don't currently have one like Somerset and Northamptonshire. It may also be a starting point in getting DCLG to understand what we mean by 'historic county' and that this has nothing to do with local government.

Further county flags are close to registration with the Flag Institute. Radio Nottingham is running a competition to choose a flag for Nottinghamshire the results of which are due to be announced soon. The Flag Institute has approved in principle the design of the Westmorland flag. The Westmorland Association will shortly make the formal application for its registration. The Oxfordshire flag is at a similar stage. As noted elsewhere in this issue, the Monmouthshire Association and the Sussex Association are both promoting flags for their counties.

Websites Using Traditional Counties

www.folkorbit.talktalk.net/index.htm
Folk Orbit: Acoustic Live Root Music and Dance
All venues listed under traditional counties.

www.hill-bagging.co.uk/countyTopsHistoric.php
The Mountains of England and Wales
Highest points in all the counties.

www.list.jaunay.com/engnames/
Online English Names Directory for all pre-1974 counties.
Also available for Scotland, Wales and Ireland.

www.toshiba-web.com/uk-reseller/index.php
Toshiba website with interactive map of proper counties.
(Thanks to Iain Hewitt for this one.)

Huntingdonshire's New Flag

Rupert Barnes

Huntingdonshire is a county with a distinctive identity as well as a distinct identity crisis. Excised from maps since 1965, few outside know where it is, but it is more than just the guilty bulge on the west side of Cambridgeshire. It is a separate place, its little towns and villages strung along the Great Ouse and the Great North Road or the fen causeways linking them, the villages gathered around those towns, not around Cambridge as one finds in real Cambridgeshire. Huntingdonshire is set apart by nature, but to the wider public it has lost its 'brand image'. To help reverse this, a county flag has been developed.

The flag has only just become available on cloth but the design has been in the public eye for longer than might be guessed, actually since 1937. The arms granted to Huntingdonshire County Council in that year are shown in full colour on many council publications, but one detail has always been obscure when printed: the crest standing on top of the shield and helm. It has a red lion holding a flagstaff but little more can be made out. In fact, the College of Arms described it in detail: '*On a Wreath of Argent and Azure a Lion rampant Gules gorged with a Collar Flory counter-Flory Or and supporting a Staff proper flying there from a Banner Vert charged with a Hunting Horn stringed Or*'.

In plain English, this is the red lion from the royal arms of Scotland with a collar based on the edging of that shield, bearing aloft a green flag showing a golden hunting horn, strung with golden ribbons.

The lion is in remembrance of the Kings of Scots who were Earls of Huntingdon for some centuries. We may never know if they used a special flag for their southerly earldom, but the heralds' imagination has supplied one: a hunting horn for Huntingdon. That flag then was the obvious choice for a county flag.

In June 2007, the Huntingdonshire Society launched the idea of a county flag and it was all over the local press for some weeks. My wife,

Anne-Georgina, drew the first pattern and it is interesting to see that pin-badges, mugs and other such knick-knacks bearing the design have now appeared for sale on the web. The Flag Institute then took a hand, having established the UK Flag Register. Graham Bartram, the Chief Vexillologist, made some refinements, and last summer the new Huntingdonshire flag, specifically designated a 'county flag' appeared on that register.

At the same time, things were happening in London. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government decided to fly county flags week by week from his Department's headquarters, and the week for Huntingdonshire is at the end of April. The Association for British Counties and the Huntingdonshire Society got together to ensure a bulk order of the flags in time to be raised for the county day, 25th April.

From the perspective of ABC, establishing the Huntingdonshire flag in particular has been an important step to establish that a county flag relates to a real county, not to an administrative entity.

Orders have begun to trickle in and at least one town council is enthusiastic as is the community radio station. Goodwill is not quite enough, however; we want to see them flying and being talked about. We also need to recover some of the outlay through the sales and at the moment ABC can undercut the commercial suppliers!

In Cornwall for many years the famous 'St Piran' flag has flown from guest-houses, hotels, pubs; sometimes it seems there is not a building in the county without one. No one will ever think that Cornwall is just 'west Devon'! The flag has helped to promote the distinctive identity of that county and I hope that the new flag will begin to do much the same for Huntingdonshire.

To read more about the flag and its origins please visit the Huntingdonshire Society website: www.huntingdonshire.org.uk.

To purchase the flag please send a cheque for £5 (payable to ABC) to: Rupert Barnes, 4 Rugby Way, Croxley Green, Hertfordshire, WD3 3PH.

The Birth of the Welsh Counties

Mari Foster

I find Wales the most frustrating of all the home nations when discussing counties since there seems to be no firm idea as to what the actual counties are. People often describe themselves as living in 'North Wales' or 'South Wales' which I find rather vague and almost as irritating as use of the reorganised 'counties' of 1974. The use of names like 'Clwyd' or 'Powys' stand alongside Flintshire and Monmouthshire, causing confusion and mayhem. The people of Pembrokeshire have recently protested over Royal Mail's continued use of 'Dyfed', claiming that it hurts the county's tourism since no one seems to have the faintest idea of where 'Dyfed' is. So why continue using such ambiguous labels?

This mixture of old and new is not a viable way to divide the country. Even one of the books I used in my research for this article uses the traditional counties in its biographies but the post-1974 counties for the picture captions! As has already been done in Scotland, the clearest way forward is to encourage the use of the thirteen counties, from Anglesey to Radnorshire.

Let's start at the year 1240, a time when the Welsh may have perhaps thought that their chances of an independent Wales were closer to fruition than they had been at any other time. Although much of southern Wales (roughly the modern counties of Pembrokeshire, Carmarthen, Glamorgan and Monmouth) was ruled by the Normans the Welsh controlled the independent kingdoms of Gwynedd, Powys and Deheubarth covering much of the west and north. In this year Llywelyn ap Iorwerth, ruler of Gwynedd for forty years, died. He had attempted at the council of Strata Florida to settle matters of his succession by appointing his son Dafydd in this role. However, only 6 years after Llywelyn's death Dafydd was also dead leaving a dispute amongst three of his nephews as to who would succeed him. Llywelyn ap Gruffudd emerged victorious and was thus able to extend the influence of Gwynedd beyond its borders. He enjoyed a peaceful co-existence with Henry III at this time and after the Treaty of Montgomery (1276) was given the title of Prince of Wales.

However, all this was to end after the death of the king. Llywelyn was then faced with the veracity of Edward I, 'Hammer of the Scots' who turned his attentions towards Wales and in 1276 Llywelyn was pushed back into Gwynedd. The result of this was that Llywelyn's independence was lost along with a lot of his territory. In order to administer his newly gained land from the Treaty of Aberconwy (1277), Edward sent in officials who managed to cause resentment among even the king's supporters. Then, after further rebellion in 1282, Edward was keen to prevent further unrest so under the Statute of Rhuddlan (1284) the lands of Gwynedd were divided into Anglesey (*Môn*), Caernarfon and Merioneth.



Caernarfon Castle



Harlech Castle



Evidence of Edward's resolve was made apparent in the building of castles protecting these new counties: Beaumaris, Caernarfon, Conwy and Harlech.

These lands were now to be administered by the newly-created Justice of north Wales. The land bordering England in the northeast became Flintshire and was added to the lands already administered by the Justice of Chester. The new southern counties of Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire were regulated by a Justice of south Wales. In each of

these new counties there was a sheriff who oversaw a bizarre combination of English law and existing Welsh statutes. Much of the rest of what is modern day Wales was still controlled by the Marcher Lords, so unified ruling was virtually non-existent.

Now we move forward into the 16th century to the second significant period in the development of the Welsh counties. Henry VIII spent little time or indeed thought on Wales for the first 30 years of his reign and it wasn't until the 1530s that he commissioned Thomas Cromwell to look to the needs of it. In the intervening centuries the counties created by Edward I and the Marcher lordships had been festering. There was a desperate need to reorganise these lands into a more coherent organism. The king himself didn't seem to be concerned with the grievances set down by his fellow Welshman, however the savvy Cromwell knew that in order for Henry to succeed in his quest to be absolute monarch he needed a cohesive union between England and Wales. Thus the Act of Union was instigated in 1536.



There were benefits from this to the Welsh namely that they were made equal to Englishmen and could now inherit land. But the main objective of the act was to prevent any threats to English domination in Wales.

With regard to establishing these new counties, the Marcher lordships were now abolished and their lands were divided between existing Welsh counties and the English border counties of Shropshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire. The remainder of this land was used to create the counties of Brecon (*Brycheiniog*), Denbigh (*Dinbych*), Monmouth (*Mynawy*), Montgomery (*Trefaldwyn*) and

The shire then became the basic unit of administration in Wales, with the chief officer, the sheriff, chosen annually by the Council of Wales and the Marches. He was responsible for any legal administration necessary outside the court, the assessment and collection of taxes, defence against the King's enemies and the conducting of parliamentary elections. Thus, each county was to be represented by a Member of Parliament with Monmouthshire having two due to its larger population and each ancient borough, with the exception of Merioneth, getting one.

As to the governing of these counties Wales retained its own law courts which were divided into four circuits (of three counties each) and these were to oversee more serious breaches of the law with judges visiting twice yearly. (These 'Great Sessions of Wales' continued until 1830.) But these courts were governed only by the laws of England, the Welsh laws having been made redundant. It is interesting to note that Monmouthshire was attached to Oxford's judicial circuit which may partly account for its sympathies being neither fully Welsh nor fully English still today. Regional chanceries/exchequers were instituted in the towns of Brecon and Denbigh on top of those already in use in Caernarfon and Carmarthen. Two coroners were appointed for each county for the administration of criminal law and, most importantly, safeguarding the crown's finances. They had already been in existence in England since the 12th century.

Cromwell also introduced voluntary Justices of the Peace (eight for each county) who came into the position with an independent income and who were to be fully conversant with the law. They were to be concerned with the fair governance at the local level. Essentially, they were policemen, judges and civil servants rolled into one. These justices generally acted as individual justices or in quarter sessions which were held every three months. They were responsible for trying and sentencing a variety of offences as well as performing general administrative duties. This could involve various activities such as maintaining bridges, setting

wages, inspecting weights and measures, licensing taverns and inns and even the supervision of poor relief. The shires were further divided into hundreds, each also in the care of a Justice of the Peace who then appointed two constables as aides. Some minor courts such as the freeholders' or county court was held monthly by the sheriff with hundred courts in attendance every few weeks as well as borough courts and court leets to deal with misdemeanours. Two surveyors for the highways were also appointed.

So now we can see the full development of the Welsh counties and their administration. It should be said that all the proceedings in the aforementioned courts were performed only in English so Welsh-only speakers were at a distinct disadvantage. This most certainly helped to foster resentment towards the English and instilled a sense of Welsh nationalism that is still alive now. The later Act of 1543 put the final nail in the coffin of Welsh language and culture. Since most of the gentry already spoke English Welsh became solely the language of the middle and lower classes. This upper class also benefitted from the dissolution of the monasteries and were trusted enough to become Justices of the Peace. It was in their interest to continue fostering goodwill with the King so it was really only the lower classes who became disillusioned with their English rulers. The newly established Council of Wales, formerly the Council of the Marches, had its headquarters in Ludlow since there was no Welsh capital to speak of and no suitable place in the country which could be agreed upon. The English control of the country was complete.

Despite this, the Act of Union was a positive move in the process of bringing about a more coherent organisation of the Welsh counties, one that the current Welsh government would do well to reinstate.

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Flying the Flag

Jason Saber

Unlike American States or German Länder, the counties of the United Kingdom have not, uniformly, borne distinctive flags. A few, such as Kent and Essex, have been associated with specific emblems for centuries which in the modern era have appeared on flags. The constituent divisions of federate or confederate states such as in Germany and Switzerland readily adopt or are ascribed flags as attestation of their authority. The constituent divisions of the United Kingdom, the counties, never having exercised such powers have not required such expression.

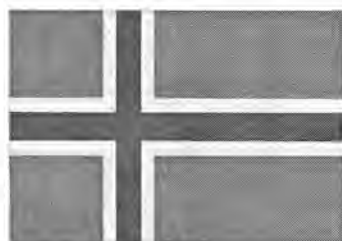
Certain territories of the UK however, with differing historical, cultural and linguistic legacies have raised flags to mark out these distinctions. For instance, a Cornish flag has existed since the 19th century and is considered there to be a 'national' flag reflecting the status of the territory and its people. Similarly, flags for the North Atlantic archipelagos of Shetland and Orkney, with strong Scandinavian heritages, were created in the 20th century.



Shetland



Orkney



In recent years such enthusiasm has spread and a number of British counties have marked their presence as distinct entities with a county flag. In much the same manner that one may wave a national flag to demonstrate pride in one's nation or as support for a national sports

team, so people wanting to demonstrate their local pride or indicate their origins have turned to flags as a natural means to do so.

The complication of this trend however, is that for England and Wales at least, there is no 'flag act' on the books that might authorise such county flags. Thus, there is no official method or process of establishing them. The College of Arms is commissioned to design flags for government offices and departments and it also designs and registers the arms of individuals and corporations. However, it has never been required to do the same for any of the shires; it does not supply county flags. In an effort to regularise the situation a registry has been established by the Flag Institute. Founded in 1971 this organisation is one of the world's leading research and documentation centres for flags and flag information and an advisor to the government on all flag related matters. Its National Registry of United Kingdom Flags exists as a definitive record of the flags which exist in the UK both nationally and locally. There is no other similar formal national listing, so whilst ostensibly it operates as a record book of county flags, it effectively serves also as the de facto authority which endorses them. The criteria laid down for inclusion in the registry emphasise the authoritativeness of the record. Designs are not accepted without question but have to demonstrate a definitive usage or acceptance.

The design must be unique within UK;

The design must be in the public domain and not copyrighted;

County flags must normally apply to a historical county;

The flag must be registered with the College of Arms or the Office of the Lord Lyon, of a traditional design, selected by public vote or an appropriate organisation.

For county flags this, in practice, generally means being endorsed by a venerable county organisation which can be a county council or an active local pressure group. The flag for Hertfordshire, for instance, was registered after its sanction by Hertfordshire County Council, whilst the flag of Lancashire appeared as a result of a request from the Friends of Real Lancashire. As indicated, north of the border all Scottish flags must be authorised by the Lord Lyon (the chief heraldic authority) and recorded

in the 'Public Register of All Arms and Bearings in Scotland'.

County flags fall broadly into three categories: 'banners of arms' of local authorities released for public use; flags derived from or utilising elements from banners of arms in a simplified pattern; entirely new and ground-breaking designs. A 'banner of arms' refers to the practice of extending the design from the shield found in a coat of arms onto a rectangular piece of cloth to form a flag. All bodies or individuals who have been granted coats of arms by the College of Arms may display them in this fashion including county councils. Since their establishment in the late nineteenth century confusion has occurred between the counties and these local administrative bodies, the councils, set up to administer them. This uncertainty is particularly evident in the area of arms and banners. It is often generally assumed that arms granted to a county council also represent the county it administers and that a banner of such arms is therefore the county flag; this is not the case. Coats of Arms and banners derived from them may be legally used only by the body to whom they have been granted and individual citizens have no right to display or fly such banners without specific permission.

Such confusion can be attributable to the fact that council arms frequently include symbols or devices that are locally familiar or used traditionally to represent the county and its people. Symbols of this kind may derive from local legend such as the Stafford Knot or may originate from the arms used by families of local renown over several centuries. Often the same or similar versions of symbols found on Council arms will be seen on the badges of county sporting bodies or 'fire and rescue' services so there is a clear association between device and county.

For several counties the situation differs slightly. The counties of Kent, Essex and Sussex originated as kingdoms in the Anglo-Saxon period. As such they were anachronistically ascribed arms by mediæval heralds several hundred years later with arms based on local traditions. Thus, three white seaxes (short Saxon swords) on a red field was the arms of the ancient kingdom of Essex and were also used in Middlesex which originally formed part of the early kingdom. A white horse on a field of red

was attributed to Kent and six gold martlets on a field of blue to Sussex. Such emblems were associated with the respective counties for centuries before the foundation of local government. The county councils in these counties were accordingly granted arms incorporating these ancient emblems but having thus existed before the origin of the county councils, such arms could not be restricted to their use alone. Citizens of those counties have always been free to bear flags with these ancient devices.



Kent



Essex

Aside from the legal restrictions on their use there are also stylistic objections to the use of council arms as county flags. As heraldic contrivances the designs are often complicated or 'fussy'-replete with motifs and colours that might serve well on a town hall wall but do not work too well on a piece of cloth flying from a lofty perch. The complex heraldic patterns generally contravene the tenets of good flag design highlighted by the Flag Institute which state:

Keep It Simple The flag should be simple enough that a child can draw it from memory.

Use Meaningful Symbols The flag's elements, colours or patterns should relate to what it symbolises.

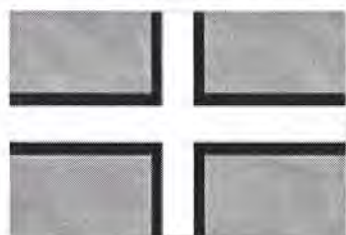
Use Two or Three Basic Colours Limit the number of colours to three which contrast well and come from the standard colour set: red, orange, yellow, green, light blue, dark blue, purple, black and white. Yellow and white work well on the other colours and vice versa.

No Lettering or Seals Avoid the use of writing of any kind of an organisation's badge, seal or coat of arms. It is better to use elements from an appropriate coat of arms as symbols on the flag.

Be Distinctive or Be Related Avoid duplicating other flags, but use similarities to show connections.

How Will It Fly in the Wind? Remember, the design must be distinctive when flying on a high pole in a strong wind, and when hanging in windless conditions too. Remember that it will almost always have ripples caused by the wind which may affect its appearance.

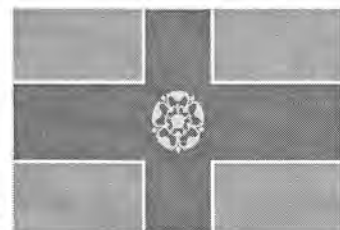
In the modern era with the practice of flag-flying gaining ever greater popularity, several campaigns to establish county flags have appeared and successfully achieved registration with the Flag Institute. Such recent successes include Devon, Dorset, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Huntingdonshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Gloucestershire.



Devon



Derbyshire



It is to be hoped that we may soon see the creation of flags for all the counties of the UK. It only takes a bit of application by determined parties to get the ball rolling.

County Quote

"And Cambridgeshire of all England,
The shire for men who understand."

Rupert Brooke

County Books

A Lancashire Miscellany-Tom Holman (2010). A book which generally stays true to the traditional counties with plenty of the usual miscellany one finds in these sort of books: food, sport, folklore; plenty of fascinating facts.

Castles in Wales: a Handbook-Gerald Morgan (2008). One of the few book of castles divided properly, with access information and history on the largest most magnificent of Edward I's castles down to even the now lost castles of the country.

County Name Origins

Antrim: From the Gaelic 'Aontroim' possibly mean 'one tribe' or 'one house' or even 'lone elder tree'.

Argyllshire: From the Gaelic 'Earra Ghaidheal' meaning 'boundary' or 'coast of the Gaels'.

Berwickshire: From the Old English 'Bere wic' meaning 'bare place'.

Caithness: From the Norse 'Kataness' meaning 'nose of the cat', probably a description of the county's shape.

Denbighshire: From the Welsh 'din bich' which means 'little fort'.

Derbyshire: Of Danish origin, the name 'Deoraby' having something to do with deer; first recorded in 1049.

Gloucestershire: Originally from the Brittonic 'Glouiu' meaning 'bright place' or 'shining fortress', then *Gleaucestrescir* first recorded in 1016.

Kent: Likely comes from the Celtic 'canto' meaning 'edge' or 'rim'. It is the oldest recorded county name in the United Kingdom.

Kirkcudbrightshire: Meaning the Kirk or Church of Saint Cuthbert, a 7th century monk from Melrose who may have visited the area.

Orkney: Also from the Norse 'Ork Ay' meaning 'whale island'.

Tyrone: From the Gaelic 'Tir Eoghan' or 'Eoghan's Land'. (The name Eoghan means 'born of yew'.) Eoghan was one of the sons of Niall of the Nine Hostages, High King of Ireland in the 4th century.

County Quiz

England and Wales

1. **Bedfordshire:** Which famous abbey is home to the Duke of Bedford?
2. **Berkshire:** Alfred the Great was born in 849 in which town?
3. **Buckinghamshire:** Hughenden Manor was the home of which Prime Minister?
4. **Cambridgeshire:** In what year was the university at Cambridge founded?
5. **Cheshire:** The town of Macclesfield was once famous for producing which commodity?
6. **Cornwall:** Which river divides the county from its neighbour Devon?
7. **Cumberland:** Which two Lakeland poets, married to sisters, lived at Greta Hall near Keswick?
8. **Derbyshire:** Which village is known as "the plague village" as three-quarters of its population died in 1665?
9. **Devon:** Which two villages are connected by a hillside funicular?
10. **Dorset:** Which group of men formed the first trade union in 1834 and were subsequently transported?
11. **Durham:** Which two rivers form the north and south boundaries of the county?
12. **Essex:** The town of Tiptree is famous for producing which foodstuff?
13. **Gloucestershire:** Which decisive "Wars of the Roses" battle was fought in the county in 1471?
14. **Hampshire:** Which town is known as the "Cradle of Cricket"?
15. **Herefordshire:** Which gorge runs along part of the River Wye here?
16. **Hertfordshire:** What was the Roman name of St. Albans?
17. **Huntingdonshire:** Which 17th century writer was born in Huntingdon and attended the same grammar school as Oliver Cromwell?
18. **Kent:** Which castle in the county was home to two of Henry VIII's wives- Anne Boleyn and Anne of Cleves?
19. **Lancashire:** Which town saw the birth of the co-operative movement?
20. **Leicestershire:** Which canal runs from Leicester to Market Harborough?
21. **Lincolnshire:** Grimsby Town play their matches at Blundell Park in which nearby town?

22. **Middlesex:** Which village saw the marriage of Henry VIII to two of his wives, the execution of Charles I and was the government seat of Oliver Cromwell?
23. **Norfolk:** What was the original name of Kings Lynn?
24. **Northamptonshire:** What is unique about the lodge built by Thomas Tresham at Rushton Hall near Corby?
25. **Northumberland:** What is the most easterly outpost of Hadrian's Wall?
26. **Nottinghamshire:** What is the name of the neo-gothic house lived in by Lord Byron?
27. **Oxfordshire:** The village of Bladon is the burial place of which former Prime Minister?
28. **Rutland:** Who, instigator of the fictitious Popish Plot against Charles II, was born in Oakham in 1649?
29. **Shropshire:** The High and Low Towns of which place are connected by steps and the steepest gradient railway in England?
30. **Somerset:** What is the name of the Italianate style bridge that spans the River Avon in Bath?
31. **Staffordshire:** Stoke-on-Trent is made up of Stoke, Tunstall, Hanley, Fenton, Longton and which other town?
32. **Suffolk:** Which town hosts the music festival established by Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears?
33. **Surrey:** Which town was the home of HG Wells and the setting for the beginning of "War of the Worlds"?
34. **Sussex:** Harvey's Brewery is a feature of which town?
35. **Warwickshire:** Birmingham's City Museum and Art Gallery has a world-famous collection of paintings from which genre?
36. **Westmorland:** Which town was the home of and the place where William Wordsworth is buried?
37. **Wiltshire:** Which town is known for the manufacture of carpets?
38. **Worcestershire:** Which Worcestershire town is an enclave in neighbouring Staffordshire?
39. **Yorkshire:** Bradford is home to what type of museum?
40. **Anglesey:** Which of Edward I's castles was built on the island?
41. **Breconshire:** The town of Crickhowell stands on which river?
42. **Caernarfonshire:** Which Plantagenet king was born in Caernarfon Castle?

43. **Cardiganshire:** The National Library of Wales is in what town?
44. **Carmarthenshire:** Llanelli was once the world's largest manufacturer of what?
45. **Denbighshire:** The Ladies of Llangollen lived at which house here?
46. **Flintshire:** Which town stands at the northern end of Offa's Dyke?
47. **Glamorgan:** What is the Victorian resort at the tip of Swansea Bay?
48. **Merioneth:** Harlech Castle overlooks which bay?
49. **Monmouthshire:** What is the name of the Roman legion fort near the River Usk in the county?
50. **Montgomeryshire:** Lake Vyrnwy provides water to which city?
51. **Pembrokeshire:** Gerald of Wales was born at which castle?
52. **Radnorshire:** What is the county town (the smallest in England and Wales)?

Quiz Answers

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1. Woburn | 27. Winston Churchill |
| 2. Wantage | 28. Titus Oates |
| 3. Benjamin Disraeli | 29. Bridgnorth |
| 4. 1209 | 30. Pulteney |
| 5. Silk | 31. Burslem |
| 6. Tamar | 32. Aldeburgh |
| 7. Samuel Taylor Coleridge & Robert Southey | 33. Woking |
| 8. Eyam | 34. Lewes |
| 9. Lynton & Lynmouth | 35. Pre-Raphaelite |
| 10. Tolpuddle Martyrs | 36. Grasmere |
| 11. Tyne, Tees | 37. Wilton |
| 12. Jam | 38. Dudley |
| 13. Tewkesbury | 39. Media |
| 14. Hambleton | 40. Beaumaris |
| 15. Symond's Yat | 41. Usk |
| 16. Verulamium | 42. Edward I |
| 17. Samuel Pepys | 43. Aberystwyth |
| 18. Hever | 44. Tinplate |
| 19. Rochdale | 45. Plas Newydd |
| 20. Grand Union | 46. Prestatyn |
| 21. Cleethorpes | 47. The Mumbles |
| 22. Whitehall | 48. Tremadog |
| 23. Bishops' Lynn | 49. Caerleon |
| 24. It is triangular. | 50. Liverpool |
| 25. Wallsend | 51. Manorbier |
| 26. Newstead Abbey | 52. Presteigne |