



Celebrating the Chartists

NEWSLETTER

THE 175TH ANNIVERSARY ROLLS OUT ACROSS THE REGION

4 **Newport City Council sets up Chartist Commission:**
A Dame, ex-Archbishop and retired Teacher appointed
The Council is keen to make 2014 a 'celebration of Chartism' and will support the commission in its work', announced Councillor Bob Bright, Leader of Newport Council

8 **Shire Hall at Monmouth plans video link with Tasmania**
In our February edition, we boasted that we intended to reach the parts "where Frost & Co were banished".

9 **Gwent Archives starts activities in the Gwent Valleys. Rhondda LHS supporting 'Chartist Day School' at Pontypridd**

10 **CHARTIST HERITAGE rescued at Merthyr – Vulcan House restored**

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How to search the '*Northern Star*' - also excerpts from the '*Western Vindicator*'

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ONE HUNDRED & SEVENTY FIVE YEARS AGO During March 1839, Henry Vincent on Tour From Bristol to Monmouth [page 7](#)

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Vulcan House, Morganstown in Merthyr Tydfil, - Now

WHAT's in NEWPORT MUSEUM?

SILVER CUPS PRESENTED TO THOMAS PHILLIPS



Silver cup with profuse vine clusters, cover with figure finial, inscribed as presented "by the Committee for Conducting the Election for William Adams Williams Esq MP 1831"



Silver cup with inscribed lid "presented by Benj Hall Esq., MP of Ilanover to Thomas Phillips Esq.,Jnr., as a testimony of the high estimation he entertains of his talents and of the great professional knowledge and ability WHICH HE SO DISINTERESTEDLY AND PERSERVERINGLY EXERTED FOR THE GOOD OF HIS COUNTRY during the arduous contest FOR THE UNITED BOROUGHES OF MONMOUTH, NEWPORT, AND USK, IN 1831 & FIDUS ET FIRMUS"

Received for political services rendered

At the 1831 election, the 'reformers' were jubilant. They 'won' two of the three Monmouthshire seats and Thomas Phillips was feted for his successful electioneering, even though Hall's 'victory' proved to be pyrrhic. Nonetheless with the passing of the 1832 Reform Act, Phillips's star rose – the 1831 election became folklore amongst his friends. John Frost emerged from the campaign with a mistrust of the Whigs as well as the Tories.

Since the 17th century, parliamentary representation in Monmouthshire was shared by two landowning families – the Beauforts and the Morgans – and

was usually settled without contest. The elections held August 1830 were no exception. Unopposed, Lord Granville Somerset and Sir Charles Morgan retained the County seats and another of the Duke's sons, the Marquis of Worcester, held the seat for the Boroughs (Monmouth, Usk & Newport).

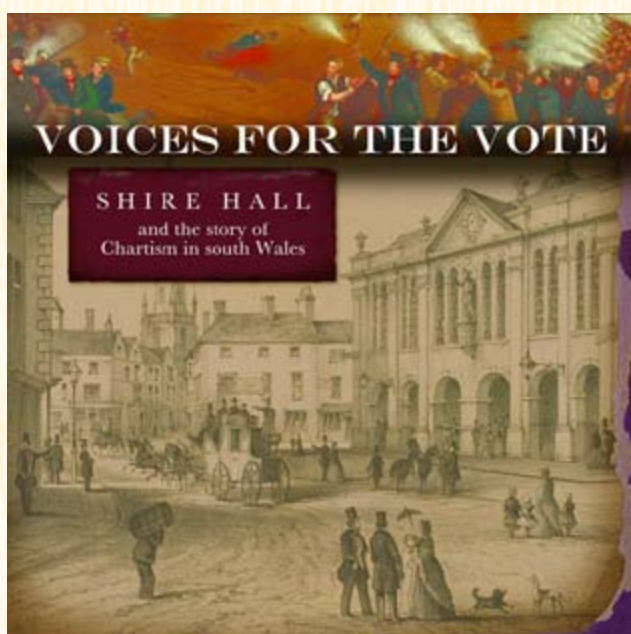
Following news of revolution in Paris, a mood change swept the country. Rural unrest grew and agitation for parliamentary reform spread. On 21st December 1830, John Frost joined Phillips at a meeting in Newport to petition for Parliamentary reform. Early 1831, the Whigs introduced a Reform Bill. Tension mounted as the Bill passed its Second Reading in the House of Commons by a single vote. In the ensuing crisis, Parliament was dissolved.

Events were moving fast. Crucially, Phillips brought to this 1831 campaign the support of his legal and business partner, Thomas Prothero - Newport's wealthiest and most influential citizen. Prothero's power stemmed from being Town Clerk since 1807 and the chief agent for the Tredegar estate. Thus Frost to his consternation found himself in political alliance with his arch enemy - an attorney who had caused him six months imprisonment in 1822 for criminal libel. In 1831, they were both supporting W. A. Williams of Llangibby Castle and Benjamin Hall of Llanover as 'Reform' candidates, with Phillips acting as their election agent.

Sir Charles, aged 72, was prevailed upon to retire. This meant W.A. Williams (and Somerset) were unopposed for the County seats. In

retaliation, Sir Charles dismissed Prothero from his service.

Hall won the Boroughs seat by 168 to 149 defeating Worcester, who had voted against the first Reform Bill. 140 of Hall's vote came from Newport, compared with 29 for Worcester, but jubilation amongst the 'reformers' was premature. Prothero had manipulated, bribed and bullied voters, whose choices were publicly recorded in the poll book and on appeal, many voters were deemed to be ineligible and the result was overturned. Hall had to await the 1832 election when an enlarged electorate voted for him. With the exception of Frost, Hall's supporters were content that the issue of Reform had been resolved by the 1832 Act.



BOOK of the MONTH

Voices for the Vote (Shire Hall

2011) £5 plus p&p

Welsh or English editions available

enquiries@shirehallmonmouth.org.uk

This 64 pager is intended as the essential 'starter' book for anyone setting out to find out about the south Wales Rising of 1839 and the subsequent treason trials. Hopefully it sets plenty of 'hares' running, leaving most readers convinced that

there is plenty more out there to pursue. The bibliography provides ample directions for further reading.

Vividly and lavishly illustrated, thanks to the 'tyro' picture research of Ruth Waycott, who I can vouch left no stone unturned and the generosity of an HLF grant which allowed us to pay the costly copyright fees for some of the key pictures we needed. Fortunately, the best illustrations we used are from the collections of Newport Museum and Art Gallery and the Nelson Museum, Monmouth, who are both to be commended for their public spirited and non-mercenary support. Consequently, the book retails at a remarkably low price.

Succinct contextual explanation is offered - the nature of Chartism, the aspirations of the Chartists, the main players (both protesters and those in authority), female support for the male franchise, the struggle for control of the chapel, church, beer house, the press and the streets - are all explored.

The presence within the team of Elin ap Hwyl, a Welsh language writer, influenced the attention we gave to the 'Welsh characteristics' of the movement - republicanism, Celtic 'bardic' ideals, Welsh as a language of sedition, the emphasis placed on Cyfiawnder ('Justice') and the emotional pressure that grew for the long awaited Y Cyfodiad ('the Rising'). We need further work to properly address this neglected aspect.

The book grew out of the Shire Hall restoration project and the needs for an interpretation programme that focussed on the most celebrated set of trials to take place there – the last mass treason trials in mainland Britain. Hence the book's sub-title is 'Shire Hall and the story of Chartism in south Wales'. Rather than looking at the drama of the Rising, we were briefed to take a different perspective and consider the court room drama.

Poor collection of evidence, casual questioning by magistrates, contradictory depositions, rushed preparation, false accusations, bullying and direction of witnesses, missing witnesses, unreliable informers, jury packing were all omnipresent and resulted in the Lord Chief Justice summing up for the acquittal of John Frost. An apoplectic Attorney General gratefully accepted the scalps of three middle class leaders offered by an obedient jury that knew its duty and he beat a fast retreat with generous plea bargaining for the others.

Last minute commutation of the death penalty, rapid transportation and subsequent refusal to allow the return of the three 'Welsh martyrs' confirms that the Government in 1840 considered Britain was in the most dangerous political situation since the Jacobite rebellions of the early nineteenth century – but had the Government punished its most dangerous opponents? I for one am looking forward to the **Gwent Archives** 'Trails to Trials' transcription project. It will give us the chance to take a closer look at the 'evidence' collected for the Monmouth Special Commission. We also need to cast our nets wider and look at the mass movement that immediately surfaced in the aftermath of the Monmouth Treason Trials demanding the release of Frost, Jones and Williams.

Les James 2014

Chartist Commission Appointed

Dame Rosemary Butler A.M., Dr. Rowan Williams & Patrick Drewett take charge of Newport's Chartist Heritage

Newport is fortunate. Three outstanding public figures have agreed to head up the City's Chartist Commission. Together, they bring a remarkable set of talents to the task of celebrating the democratic achievements of the Chartists. All three have long and close connections with our region, as well as keen experience of broader vistas.

Before reaching Canterbury, Rowan Williams started his episcopal career at St. Woolos Cathedral. Throughout his time as Archbishop of Wales, he served as a governor of the local university and is currently Chancellor of the newly formed University of South Wales.

Rosemary Butler, as local councillor and Assembly Member, now Presiding Officer of the Senedd, has a consistent track record asserting the place of women in politics and promoting widening participation in the democratic process.

Patrick Drewett, retired deputy head teacher of St. Josephs Primary School and since 2007, Chair of the Chartist Anniversary Committee, has long been a tireless champion of citizenship education in the school curriculum.

With this announcement (13 February) Bob Bright, Council Leader, and his Chief Executive, Will Godfrey, appear to have pulled off a surprising coup. We have yet to hear the remit for the duties of the Commission – and equally



importantly, the funds at their disposal. So has the Council done sufficient to atone for the demolition of the Chartist mural? The jury is out. All depends upon what the Commission has to spend.

£50,000 has been mentioned – this will not go far. When it was decided to remove the mural in 2007, a planning condition was imposed by the Council that obliged the development company, Modus, to fund £250,000 towards a replacement. Sadly that arrangement was aborted when Modus withdrew in the wake of the international financial 'melt down' in 2008. When a successor developer was found in 2011, their revised planning application was passed by the Council without any obligation to provide for an artwork. An immediate task for the Commission must be to hold goodwill talks with Queensbury to see if there is any scope for a Chartist work of art within Friars Walk.

Current available funds clearly do not allow for monumental solutions – and certainly not a 'replica' mural. The Commission will be well advised to step around the mural replacement quagmire and resist the pressure of believing "something must be done" and "twere well it were done quickly". They need to take the long view and press the Council for more cash and also to raise funds from other sources, including public subscription.

This does not mean that nothing can be done in the short term. The Commission would be well advised to look first at 'inclusive' small scale activities that will bring the community together and help heal the rifts and scars of October 3rd 2013. The consultation meeting organised by the Civic Society was well attended by the Newport art community and some highly imaginative and immediately realistic ideas were briefly 'paraded'. It was refreshing that so many present requested 'carnival' and 're-enactment' events.

For seven years, the Chartist Anniversary Committee has revived and prioritised the Children's Chartist March down Stow Hill in its November programme of events. If the interest expressed at the Consultation can be harnessed, then I can envisage the possibility of Newport holding the largest Chartist street celebration since the 150th anniversary in 1989. Such an event should be planned as the culmination of an intense performing and visual arts programme in our schools and communities.

Funding Bodies are rarely inclined to provide scarce funds for art works that simply repeat what has previously been done. At the Consultation, I sensed a strong sentiment for Budd's original mosaic (1978) to be honoured in any 'replacement'. It is apparent that people like Budd's 'narrative' mode and 'naïve' figurative style and are very comfortable with this imagery. Given the mosaic's controversial demise, public demand needs to be taken on board. However, forty years on, we must also embrace a very different artistic approach. The challenge is to combine the familiar from the past with an artist's natural urge to present a different 'take' – surely not impossible in a post-modernist and digital age?

I remember Kenneth Budd visiting Newport Museum. He was meticulous in getting 'right' the historical detail. The interpretation was ultimately his own, but it was a 'take' that reflected the strengths and weaknesses of current knowledge and a rather different 'zeitgeist' from today. If alive today, I am certain he would be interested to explore the researches of Ivor Wilks (1984) and David J.V Jones (1985) who radically changed our understanding of the events of 1839 and identified a significant body of named activists. Future editions of the Newsletter will be drawing attention to these people. The Commission must embed the names of those who died at the Westgate into the City's fabric – how about outside the Westgate hotel? The Chartist Rising is a regional story and it is of British importance. The dead were all from the coalfield and the whole of Britain campaigned for the freedom of the 'Three Welsh Martyrs'. Welsh Chartism did not end at the Westgate. Despite ruthless suppression, it survived at Newport, thrived at Merthyr and gathered support for petitions and the Chartist Land Company in many Welsh communities.

The Commission needs to be bold. A digital 'art installation' can fulfil the differing but complementary requirements demanded, it can include both physical and virtual art forms, it is mobile and flexible and secure from destruction, it can be used in our schools, seen across the planet and will appeal to all generations. Far more people than hitherto will see the endearingly named 'Murial'.

Les James 2014 (Museum Education Officer, Newport Museum & Art Gallery 1970-1990)

DIGITAL CHARTISM SOURCES

Northern Star and *Western Vindicator* - 'stamped' and 'unstamped' papers



VOL. II. No. 65

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 9. 1839

PRICE FORTY-FIVE HALPENNIES.
OR
FIVE SHILLINGS PER QUARTER.

The **Northern Star** appeared 18th November 1837 in Barnsley, but soon moved to Leeds following acquisition by Feargus O'Connor. As owner, he expected the editor to serve his political agenda and the newspaper certainly did make its new proprietor, the most recognisable of all the Chartist leaders. William Hill, who sold the paper to O'Connor, lasted as editor until 1843, when the owner of the printing press, veteran radical Josiah Hobhouse, took over. He was succeeded by George Julian Harney in 1847, following O'Connor's election as MP for Nottingham and his decision to move the editorial office to London. By 1851, they had fallen out over political content. Circulation was collapsing, O'Connor surrendered ownership and a great newspaper died in a futile struggle for control between Harney and one of his sub-editors, George Flemming.

Despite a high price of 4½d, including a penny stamp tax, the 'Northern Star' proved to be one of the most successful newspapers in the early nineteenth century, reaching 80,000 copies a week in 1839. Read out loud in pubs and beer houses, its 'readership' was far greater than its sales. Local Chartist leaders depended upon it to amuse and interest their followers. James Horner, a Newport shoemaker, sold the 'Star' and 'Vindicator' and regaled regulars at the Prince of Wales with readings. Despite a warning from the magistrates, Horner continued at the Queen Adelaide where he became landlord in the early 1840s.

For fifteen years, the Northern Star was the 'glue' that cohered the Chartist Movement across Britain. By raising money to defend 'political' prisoners and support their families, promoting the National Charter Association, establishing

the Chartist Land Company, reporting on local petitioning, speeches and meetings, and including a popular reader's column, the 'Northern Star' radiated collective confidence and camaraderie.

Find the Northern Star online: in a freely accessible and searchable collection organised by the NCSE project partnered by Birkbeck, University of London and the British Library at <http://www.ncse.ac.uk/index.html> This collection 1837 -1852 is the most complete in the world – for the first time all the issues, multiple editions and supplementary portraits have been brought together, with the exception of edition nos.1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 which the editors have not been able to locate.

Western Vindicator – a mouth-piece for HENRY VINCENT **Price 2d**

From March 1839, until his arrest on 9th May, Vincent wrote a weekly feature called 'Life and Rambles' - a daily diary of 'descriptive' entries that told readers where he had been visiting and what he had been doing.

Through these articles, we can follow him on his speaking tours in the west of England and Monmouthshire.

A selection of these can be downloaded from 'A Vision of Britain' (University of Portsmouth) http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/text/contents_page.jsp?t_id=Vincent

ONE HUNDRED and SEVENTY FIVE YEARS AGO

HENRY VINCENT ARRIVES in MONMOUTH: 16th March 1839

Henry Vincent and John Frost attended the opening (4th February) of the General Convention in London. They gathered to organise delivery to Parliament of the National Petition calling for the enactment of the People's Charter. Frost became absorbed with Convention affairs, but Vincent returned to Bristol, where since his early January tour of Monmouthshire, he was setting up a printing press and office to publish a cheap 'unstamped' broad sheet. This was an attempt to counter Tory/Whig press monopoly by spreading 'heartening' news of what was happening in Chartist circles and welding together the protest movements on both sides of the Severn estuary. Vincent peddled stories of huge gatherings, great support, stout supporters – cheers for the Charter and Convention – interlaced with regular weather reports and descriptions of scenery and architecture.

Within days of its launch on 23rd February, Vincent was promoting the *Western Vindicator* at Bath and its surrounding villages. He imaginatively avoided the restrictions imposed by the Stamp Act on papers that did not pay the stamp duty. Not allowed to report news or give opinions on State affairs, he adopted a travelogue approach and posed as a mere voyeur of events. In Edition no.3 (2nd March) his visit to Frome the previous Tuesday appears so casual -

We soon learned that a meeting of the people was to take place in favour of the CHARTER. Being of curious disposition, I determined to attend and witness.... (He finds himself) got upon the hustings.... (He discusses the merits of the Chairman and Roberts, the first

speaker ...and then tongue in cheek) To my astonishment the Chairman announced that Mr. Vincent would address them. Well, thinks I, this is strange; for a mere unknown rambler like myself to be called on to speak, when merely on a tour of general information.

With W.G. Burns, another London Chartist missionary, Vincent set off on March 3rd from Bristol on a tour of Gloucestershire through Cirencester, Cheltenham, Stroud, Gloucester, Tewkesbury to Ledbury and Hereford, arriving at Monmouth 11 o'clock, Saturday, March 16.

"We were unable to get up a meeting in Monmouth this day. The town is very Torified, being under the influence of the Duke of Beaufort. The Tories played us a clever trick. We engaged a bellman to cry a meeting for the Bell Inn, at 7 o'clock, but when we went to the place of meeting we found he had not cried it, having been bribed by the Tories. At the Bell we met about fifty of them who pretended to receive us friendly, and congratulated us on our prospects of a good meeting. We were not to be caught; so we told them they had been mistaken the night, for our meeting was to be held on Monday evening; in fact we had not yet convened it. They expressed their fear that we should not be able to remain until Monday — but we assured them time was of no consequence to us, and that perhaps we might stay a month. They looked surprised, and one after another vanished from our sight. We agreed to call the meeting for Monday night.

SUNDAY, March 17. — *Passed the day in Monmouth. The weather cold and stormy. Walked out a short way in the country and retired to bed early.*

MONDAY, March 18. — *Issued bills convening a meeting of the people in the large room of the Bell. The room is spacious and well-built, capable of holding near 1000 persons. On going to the place of meeting we found the Tories had mustered to the number of at least 100 — the room was soon filled. [Burns and Vincent spoke] I challenged the Tories to a public or private discussion, but they dared not meet me. They skulked into the corners of the room, and by degrees slunk out. Three cheers were given for Vincent and Burns, three for the Convention, and the meeting dispersed. On retiring to our inn we were waited upon by several intelligent people, who undertook to form the nucleus of an association, and to obtain signatures for the National Petition."*

NEWS from SHIRE HALL, MONMOUTH



Shire Hall Monmouth

Mike Booth, manager at Shire Hall, has taken up the challenge from **Nick Carter** in Australia. He's inviting historians at the University of South Wales, Gwent Archives, the Museum services in Newport and in Monmouthshire and the Accent Newport Trust to link up with Australian academics, heritage organisations and community groups interested in the Chartists. Shire Hall is equipped with the kit to make the link. **Prof Ray Howell** is convening discussions. Look out for further details in the next NEWSLETTER.

YOU CAN VISIT the recently restored SHIRE HALL at Monmouth



Court Room No. 1 has original furnishings and fittings - facsimile documents and weapons lie on the table - as you enter, it seems there has been a break in proceedings, the judge, jury and lawyers, the charged prisoner, the press and the paying public have just left the room. With the aid of an audio and visual handset, you can find out about the trial of John Frost and eleven other

Chartists charged with High Treason in January 1840.

On your handset are scenes of Frost's trial re-enacted, portraits of the protagonists and documents presented as evidence - you choose what you want, all at the touch of a switch. Sit in the jury box or the dock, if you dare. Listen while Lord Chief Justice, Sir Nicholas Tindal pronounces the death penalty - three men to be hanged, drawn and quartered.

Go down the steps to the holding cells where John Frost, Zephaniah Williams and William Jones waited to be brought up to hear their sentence. Before leaving get a view from the public gallery - and don't forget to visit the Judge's retiring room.



There is a 'silver lining' in the final video on the handset - the Lord Chief Justice reveals his 'big secret'.

Admission

Shire Hall is open daily from 10.00am to 16.00pm

Adults £2, Children £1 each - the admission price includes the use of a handset

Location

Agincourt Square, in the centre of Monmouth, NP25 3DY

Contact: 01600 775257

enquiries@shirehallmonmouth.org.uk

A Grade I* listed building (Philip Fisher, Bristol 1724)

Shire Hall is passionate about learning. Committed to working with teachers and pupils to provide an interactive learning curriculum solution. www.shirehallmonmouth.org.uk/

Calendar of EVENTS 2014 - the 175th Anniversary



Nantyglo Works c1845

**Please advertise the listed forthcoming
Chartist Events:**

21 MAY (Wednesday)

Nantyglo & Blaina Your Place in History Event
'Trails to Trials' Day: Exploring Chartism
Sites Tour 10.00 -12.30 (from Salem Chapel}
Lunch & Documents Session 12.30 -15.30
at the **Gwent Archives**, Ebbw Vale
FREE EVENT – Lunch & Transport provided
BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL
Contact: Rhiannon Phillips
enquiries@gwentarchives.gov.uk

28 MAY (Wednesday)

Tredegar
Your Place in History Event
'Trails to Trials' Day: Exploring Chartism
Sites Tour 10.00 -12.30 (from Tredegar Circle)
Lunch & Documents Session 12.30 -15.30
at the **Gwent Archives**, Ebbw Vale
FREE EVENT – Lunch & Transport provided
BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL
Contact: Rhiannon Phillips
enquiries@gwentarchives.gov.uk

Other Sessions are being planned
at Pontypool in June and at Newport in July.

20 SEPTEMBER (Saturday)

Day School on 'Glamorgan Chartism'
Venue: Pontypridd. organised by Rhondda LHS
and others

Photo Acknowledgements:

pp1, 10 Les James; pp3 & 8 Shire Hall, Monmouth;
p2 Newport Museum & Art Gallery; p11 Welsh Oak;
p9 Gwent Archives (from Gastineau print, private
collection) . p4, Rowan Williams , www.stpauls.co.uk

14 OCTOBER (Tuesday)

Friends of Newport Museum
& Art Gallery Lecture Programme
Venue: Newport Art Gallery
Lecturer: **Les James**
'Chartist Activism in South Wales
– Commemoration, Celebration and Denial'

15 OCTOBER (Wednesday)

Annual Merthyr Chartist Lecture
Venue: Merthyr College
Lecturer: **Brian Davies** (Pontypridd Museum)

1 NOVEMBER (Saturday)

Annual Chartist Convention
Venue: Newport City Campus.
Speakers include: **Prof. Malcolm Chase,**
Prof. Owen Ashton, Dr. Ryland Wallace

3 NOVEMBER (Monday)

Chartist 'Night Out' performance
at the 'Stute', Stow Hill

4 NOVEMBER (Tuesday)

Children's Chartist March
from Stow Hill to Westgate Square

4 NOVEMBER (Tuesday) 6.00pm

Remember the Chartist Dead
St. Woolos Churchyard, Stow Hill

You may circulate this newsletter, on-line/
email/ social media or in print, provided it
is circulated without charge and published in
its entirety, without amendment, as a single
document.

Historical content may be extracted and used
free of charge for educational purposes,
provided teachers and students acknowledge
author(s) and source.

The Publication of articles/extracts separately,
in any media, requires permission from the
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Editor: les.james22@gmail.com
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'Celebrating the Chartists' is a FREE
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Back copies are available

NETWORKING

Editor: les.james22@gmail.com

Great to hear from **Nick Carter**, previously Head of History at the Caerleon University Campus, now returned to teaching in Australia, this time at the Australian Catholic University (ACU). He is busy building a network of contacts for us and lobbying for the video link with Shire Hall and Gwent. (see [Shire Hall story p.8](#))

Huw Williams (Merthyr Chartist Forum) and **Viv Pugh** (Dic Penderyn Society) report things are 'occurring' in the Taff and Rhondda valleys, see [EVENTS \(p9\)](#). They are joining forces with the University of South Wales and the Rhondda LHS (**Lisa Powell**) to get a Chartist programme on the road this Autumn. Viv will be leading another Chartist trail this August, **Brian Davies** (Pontypridd Museum) will be giving the annual October lecture at Merthyr and there will be an Autumn Day School focussed on *Glamorgan Chartism*.

Chartered Institute Award for Chartist building

The Grade 2 listed Vulcan House at Morganstown in Merthyr Tydfil, once a hive of Chartist activity, has been rescued. (see [pic, front page](#)) The whole site behind the House was excavated by the **Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust**. Site and building work totalling £2.2m has resulted in 15 smart new homes, which are 'up for an award' organised by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) and *Inside Housing* magazine.



Undoubtedly, this success is due to the dogged campaign of **Lyndon Harris**, a descendant of Matthew John. There is a changing 'zeitgeist' in Merthyr Tydfil thanks to the efforts of Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Forum (Chair: **Joe England**).

The site, originally an 18th century brewery, became in Victorian times an iron foundry owned by the Chartist, Matthew John. The restored basement is where Chartists were said to meet in secret and had a printing press. Matthew John acted as spokesman for the Merthyr workers in the 1831 Rising. As a very young man, he fearlessly put their case to the ironmasters. An active Chartist from 1838, he supported the election of Henry Richards as MP in 1868 and was known locally at his death in 1888 as 'the last Merthyr Chartist'.

Dr. Matthew Griffiths is blogging the Newsletter on the revamped website of the Civic Trust for Wales <http://civictrustwales.wordpress.com/> It's also appearing on the Society for the Study of Labour History (SSLH): http://www.sslh.org.uk/sslh_news_events.php We have no money and depend upon goodwill and voluntary labour. Our email circulation is now running into hundreds, hopefully we will reach the thousand target by next month. *Please keep sending contact addresses of people who will welcome receiving Newsletters.*

Our next move is to get the Newsletter into print. We need volunteers to print and circulate copies. A start is being made in Blaenau Gwent, where Emyr Morgan (BG4H) aims to get printed copies into libraries and other local government centres in the Borough. We will be lobbying the new Chartist Commission in Newport. We are asking Libraries, TICs and Council Offices throughout the region to advertise and stock the Newsletter. This is a campaign our readers can assist.

News from SSLH - they are marking Chartism Day 4th July with a conference at the National University of Ireland, Galway. There will be an evening plenary on Friday 4th and a full day of papers on the Saturday 5th. We will circulate fuller details as soon as available.

Gerry Jackson reminds us of the 'Chartist March & Song' by Dawson Smith on a CD produced in 2006 - any one got a copy? Or know where we can acquire it? It would be good to give it an airing in November. There is also 'The Chartists'

band, famous in 1989 at the 150th Anniversary – must go rummaging, I know I've got their CD somewhere.

The newly formed **Friends of the Newport Museum & Art Gallery** has been launched this January – for programme and membership details <http://fonmag.org.uk/>

Prof. Ray Howell, in his president's welcome reminds members

"The events of 1839, sometimes described as the Newport Rising, place Newport at the heart of Chartist studies. The varied objects in the museum with direct links to these events enhance the interest and understanding of today's visitors. This very important part of our history is 'brought to life' by the Museum".

Our front page last week carried a nineteenth century drawing of **The Welsh Oak** public house NP10 9GG situated on the Risca Road (or is it the Newport Road?) – Presumably it depends which way you are travelling and on the night of 3/4th November 1839, the Chartists who were waiting here for hours, were heading towards Newport. It is here that Frost and Williams met to decide the final tactics for the march on the town.

This month we show a drawing taken from the pub's website www.thewelshoak.co.uk. Spot the difference? Think you will need to do some fieldwork to enter this competition!



Henry Vincent takes Tea with the Newport Ladies

Vincent left Monmouth on Tuesday, March 19th travelling by coach via the Wye valley and Chepstow for a 3 o'clock meeting at Newport. His companions Burns and Payne went to speak at Pontypool. Vincent spoke twice in Friars Field near the river wharves of Newport. The afternoon meeting was a few hundred strong, mainly women but after work when it became known he was about, a much larger crowd assembled at the same place.

In his 'Rambles' column, Vincent wrote:
"WEDNESDAY, March 20. — Convened a meeting for the ladies of Newport in the Bush Inn. The meeting was well attended by the wives and daughters of the respectable middle and working classes. Miss Dickenson, the daughter of our excellent Radical friend Dickenson, was called to the chair. [Thomas and Vincent spoke] At the conclusion of the ladies meeting, in consequence of the night being wet, a large meeting of the men took place in the same room, and was addressed at great length by Burns, Payne of Bristol, and myself. When the meeting was over the people would make me sing "The Democrat" — they joining in the chorus with great spirit. I never witnessed more enthusiasm. The people swear they will have the Charter."

The next day he took the steam packet to Bristol and spoke to the miners, whom he called the 'Kingswood Boys'.

Bristol, Chepstow, Newport, Ilfracombe and Tenby

Steam



Packets

WILL SAIL NEXT WEEK