

# CHURCH AND KING

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## COMMEMORATION OF THE MARTYRDOM OF KING CHARLES 1995

Monday 30 January  
At the Banqueting House, Whitehall  
11.40 Devotions and Wreath-Laying at the  
site of the Martyrdom.  
12.00 Sung Eucharist in the Banqueting House.  
Preacher: Fr. Royston Beal, Vicar of  
St. John's Kensal Green.

**The Feast of the Nativity of King Charles** was observed at St. Katherine Cree Church in the City of London with a Sung Mass at midday on Saturday 19 November. The celebrant was Fr. Royston Beal and the preacher was the Rev. Canon Professor Roy Porter. It is intended in future to keep this festival on a Saturday on or near the date of the King's birthday.

**Membership of the Society.** The suggestion emanating from the 1994 Annual General Meeting that full membership of the Society should be open to members of churches other than those in the Anglican Communion and traditional Anglican Churches, has been received so far with less than enthusiasm. My reaction is to advise that we adopt the old Roman maxim and 'make haste slowly'. For the time being, we might do well to follow the

example of the Guild of All Souls and consider the following resolution: 'Members who, for the sake of conscience, cease to be members of the Church of England or of a Church within the Anglican Communion, or who have already done so since November 1992, should be allowed on request to retain their full membership of the Society. Our resolutions already cover those who have left the Church of England to join traditional Anglican Churches.'

**Barrie Williams.**

## KING CHARLES AND WALES

We reproduce below part of a letter from one of our members, James Samuel, of Neath. He has campaigned for some years for the restoration of King Charles to the Calendar of the Church in Wales. It is ironic that Wales should lag behind Scotland and England in giving the Royal Martyr his due. There seems to be a common feeling, that King Charles had no particular connection with Wales. Is that true?

The Welsh blood of the House of Tudor had received a strong cocktail of Anglo-Norman when Henry VII arrived on the scene. It is not generally known that his Queen, Elizabeth of York, through her descent from the House of Mortimer, brought the blood of the princely House of Gwynedd into the British Royal Family. King Charles was, of

course, five generations removed from Henry and Elizabeth with Scottish, French and Danish additions to the family tree, but both he and his father King James were regarded in Wales as the heirs of the ancient British stock. I do not know whether King Charles ever visited Wales in the days of his prosperity. But the last thing he did before raising his standard at Nottingham in August 1642 was to drum up support in North Wales. To me, it is an immortal memory since my ancestor Richard Lloyd entertained the King at Bryn- y -ffynnon in Wrexham and was knighted at the conclusion of the festivities. Sir Richard later put up a gallant defence of Holt Castle, one of the strongholds to hold out for the King (I believe that Harlech was the last of all). But apart from the close links in days of adversity, the Welsh Church owes a great debt to King Charles. For the past ten years, I have been researching the Church in Wales under the early Stuarts. My main conclusion (which I hope in due course to publish) is that under King James and King Charles, the Welsh Church enjoyed a rare season of prosperity, it was governed by good, hard working, unspectacular bishops, while the clergy had the overwhelming support of their flock. The restoration of King Charles to the Calendar would be a fitting commemoration of his services.

**Barrie Williams**

There is one sad omission in the Calendar of the Church in Wales. On 30th of January there is a gaping chasm where the name 'King Charles the Martyr' ought to appear.

Between 1660 and 1859 His name also appeared in the Calendar of the B.C.P. Its removal was due to no more than a printer's error.

Since then most Anglicans have restored the name of the only Anglican canonised saint to their revised Calendars e.g. Canada, Scotland, Australia and his name with that of his Archbishop and (former bishop of St. Davids) William Laud is in the Calendar of the A.S.B. It is in my view time for us to rectify this fault and I would hope that a good number of *Welsh Churchman* readers agree with me.

If there be any that agree with me and would like to join in a friendly non-partisan campaign for the restoration to the Calendar get in touch!

**James Samuel, 46 Station Rd, Coelbren, Neath.**

#### **THE MYSTERY OF "THE KING'S HEAD", GALWAY by J. Alan Smith**

To discover a public house in the Republic of Ireland called "The King's Head" was a pleasant surprise. The surprise was compounded when, on

entering "The King's Head", situated in the High Street, Galway, I saw a picture of Charles I. This makes the place a recommended port of call for any royalist visiting the west of Ireland.

An explanation for the name of the establishment and the portrait of the Royal Martyr is given in a framed document next to the picture:

*In December 1648 the greatly purged British Parliament at the behest of Oliver Cromwell, reluctantly passed sentence on King Charles I that he be executed for his part in causing two civil wars in his country.*

*So that he would not be executed by an Englishman, emissaries were sent to Ireland, Scotland and Wales in search of a volunteer. Two Galway soldiers, named Gunning and Dean volunteered and were sent to England, where on the 30th of January 1649, Gunning found himself masked in black, holding an axe and awaiting the signal. The signal came, the axe flashed and Charles I was dead.*

*A grateful Parliament bestowed this building on Gunning in 1649.*

*Gunning was often heard to boast in the taverns of Galway that "this arm felt the muscle of the King.*

Graphic though it is, there are reasons, both general and particular, for doubting the truth of this story.

In general, it is improbable that an Irishman, presumably a Roman Catholic, who had volunteered to execute the King and openly admitted it afterwards would have survived unscathed. In the English Civil War, Roman Catholic sympathies had lain with the King and his Roman Catholic wife rather than with Parliament, finding greater affinity with the Anglicans, under the spiritual leadership of Archbishop Laud, who supported the Cavaliers than with the Presbyterians, Independents, and levellers who supported the Roundheads. Certainly, some 15% of the King's officers in the Civil War were Roman Catholics, in contrast to the 1.2% they represented of the total population of England. After Drogheda, it is unlikely that an Irishman would have cared to boast that he had been, in effect, a hit-man for Oliver Cromwell. Moreover, after the Restoration, it is virtually certain that anyone who had made a serious and believed claim to have executed Charles I would either have been included in the list of those against whom official action was taken or else become a victim of unofficial retribution. Nine of the Regicides and four of their associates were executed;

John Lisle, who had fled with others to Switzerland, was killed by an Irish royalist.

In a search for particular objections, one would naturally turn to **The Trail of Charles I** by C. V. Wedgwood. According to Dame Veronica, there had been rumours that the public executioner and his assistant had refused to kill the King. It was said that, after an appeal for volunteers from Hewson's regiment, two troopers, Hulet and Walker, had agreed to do it in disguise. However, she concludes that there is no reason to think that Richard Brandon, London's principal hangman, who had already executed Strafford and Laud, had refused the task. Nevertheless:

The execution was not popular with the humbler sort of people to whom Brandon belonged". It is probable that he insisted on performing the task in disguise with an assistant supplied by the Army-controlled Parliamentary rump, thus explaining the call for volunteers. The pamphlet, **The Confession of Richard Brandon**, published in London in 1649, described "his remorseful death". In a footnote Dame Veronica draws attention to the pamphlet, **The Headsman of Whitehall** by Philip Sidney (Edinburgh, 1905), which summarised the innumerable rumours about the execution. In the late seventeenth century and even the early eighteenth century there were many who claimed to have been the King's executioner. Presumably, none of these claims were taken seriously by the authorities. However, this pamphlet makes no reference to Galway. Nonetheless, the **Handbook to Galway, Connemara and the Irish Highlands** (Routledge, London, 1854) contains a note that is relevant:

"in Lower Abbeygate-Street there is a remarkable old building, displaying considerable taste and elaborate ornamentation. In the days of Cromwell, and even at a later period, when Galway surrendered to the army of De Ginkle, after the battle of Aughrim, it was customary to reward their followers with the gift of a mansion in Galway. In those times house property was very valuable, as the town enjoyed great commercial prosperity, and had an extensive Mediterranean trade.

'It is stated that this old house was given by Oliver Cromwell as the price of royal blood; it having been transferred to a member of that unknown personage's family who struck off the head of Charles I. It was subsequently bartered by one of its proprietors for a large estate in the county of Galway. However, the days of its splendour and importance are passed, as it is now about to be removed.'

"The King's Head", Galway was so named in 1974. The framed document about Gunning was produced since 1989 when the present owner first

took possession, though it had been copied from an earlier document. Although there is every reason to view the story with some suspicion, it is probable that it has some connection with the earlier story about the separate property in Lower Abbeygate Street. *The author acknowledges the invaluable assistance of George Chowdharay-Best and John Grealish.*

## CHURCH - AND QUEEN.

The following is the conclusion of a sermon preached by one of our most faithful members, Fr. Nigel Davies, now retired. As it was originally an Advent sermon, it is appropriate at this time of year.

**God is not glorified in the insipid.**

**Our Liturgy and our Church should encourage greatness. We have so many advantages, so many springboards from which to leap forward. An established Church with a Monarch anointed by God is very precious. Those who wish to throw English history books out of the window and sadly there are some in the Church who wish to do that think of the Crown as an incubus. But at the very least our Established Church does protect us from wild excesses and is some check upon the lunatic fringe. I still think that the General Synod is a dreadful mistake but we still have the Queen in Parliament and Council as a final aid to safeguard our holy rites and worship, to save us, if you like, from ourselves.**

**We must not confuse the pageantry of Establishment, even in its Christian setting, with the essential presence of a Church with its threefold ministry, historic creeds and faith, handed down by valid succession for over 1500 years. But neither must we overlook the fact that the Faith has been handed down to us in a country where, because of the ecclesiastical links with our Christian Monarch, expressed to-day through the Queen in Parliament, none need ask in vain as there is an official representative in every parish to give ear. None need seek in vain, for we must by law announce our services and post them outside the Church. At the time of a statutory service all in a parish may knock and enter. This is what Establishment means responsibility. It is sadly true that if we were to be disestablished the historic rights of parishioners would suffer. Let us thank God for our past, for our Saxon, Norman, Reformation, Anglican tradition held together in a unique way through the mercy of God, the ever faithful God of Abraham who revealed Himself for our perfected salvation in His Son who said:**

**"Before Abraham was, I am".**