



Be prepared

IT ALL started on 31 March with my Declaration in the Guildhall in Brecon. The only lost souls appeared to be the Chairman of Powys County Council and his wife, who, through a number of enforced errors, had not got a front seat and were not even on the list of attendees. Good start! The moral of that story is to spend some time learning the structure of county councils particularly if your county is made up of three old counties.

It soon became clear that there was interest in the High Sheriff and requests and invitations started to arrive at a rate of about three per week. Some were long – nearly 24 hours for election day – and some short – 15 minutes in total the day after the election, including a two-minute silence for VE Day. Much of the activity in a huge county like Powys – 100 miles top to bottom – seems to depend on the energy of one's predecessor. Phil Bowen had clearly been very active and his enthusiasm had permeated through to this year. We have met on a number of occasions, not the least of which was a lavish dinner



off quite well I thought, by speaking 'Fraglais' which one of the characters in the pantomime had been doing brilliantly, but then rather lost cohesion. Moral – make sure you know what is expected before you turn up. This pantomime was followed a couple of days later by the Mayor of Brecon's concert which was attended by no less a figure than the Lord Chief Justice and his wife supporting the Côr Dathlu Cwmtawe of which he is patron. The moral of this one is never miss

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hosted by the Chairman of Powys CC, giving the opportunity to lay aside our earlier difficulty with some direct talking!

Diversity has definitely been the order of the day so far, with one major highlight being able to watch Aberedw (a tiny village) Young Farmers' Club performing their pantomime at the Albert Hall in Llandrindod Wells. They went on to Torquay to be placed second in the UK YFC competition. At the end I was invited – somewhat unprepared – to give a vote of thanks. Leaping on to the stage, I started

an opportunity; if I fall short on support for the judiciary in my year then I have something on which to fall back!

Often accompanied by my wife Lorraine, I was returning officer at the general election, attended various police events, presented awards, lunched with the Lions of Llandrindod, explored the Elan Valley, rode in a fast police car, took part in an Agincourt pageant, met HRH The Prince of Wales, sat with magistrates, walked up Pen-y-fan in the dark, was President of the Brecon County



Show (better than 'parking and gates', my usual job), met the Wild Women of Welshpool and last but not least opened our local village fête in the pouring rain with nobody visible! On another occasion I was wearing court dress and had just presented a twelve year old with a certificate of achievement when he turned to me and said in a loud voice: 'Don't you feel embarrassed walking around dressed like that?' Moral: be ready for anything!

♣ Lt Colonel
MHL Lewis DL
High Sheriff of Powys 2015-16