



South Yorkshire 2012-13

The day of my Declaration as High Sheriff of South Yorkshire was probably one of the proudest of my life. I think of myself as a rarity in terms of High Sheriffs, since I still work full-time as Chairman and Chief Executive of my company, Pyronix Limited, which manufactures intruder alarms in Rotherham. One of my initial concerns was to ensure my company would not flounder while I travelled around the county on High Sheriff's business. Having made major changes to its executive, I was able to concentrate on shrieval duties knowing Pyronix was in safe hands.

My year in office has provided me with an extraordinary opportunity to meet people across all social spectrums and I have been inspired by the tenacity of some individuals. One of my abiding memories is of the Olympic Torch relay when I dashed to all four corners of South Yorkshire to ensure I witnessed a torch kiss in each of the four local authority areas: Barnsley, Sheffield, Rotherham and Doncaster. In Doncaster I witnessed Lance

Bombardier Ben Parkinson carry the torch for 300 metres on prosthetic limbs and without the aid of crutches. He was critically injured in a bomb attack in 2006 while serving with the Parachute Regiment in Afghanistan. The crowd was immense, and the support for Ben was palpable from the public and from some of his colleagues from the Paras.

In July I held my summer reception at Wentworth Woodhouse, a beautiful country house just north of Rotherham, featured in Dan Cruickshank's BBC series, *The Country House Revealed* and also Catherine Bailey's book *Black Diamonds: The Rise and Fall of a Great British Dynasty*. Wentworth Woodhouse was on the brink of disaster and desperately in need of rescue, but the core of the house has been renovated. It provided a wonderful venue for a lovely evening, made more special by a window of sunshine breaking through the wall of rain, enabling guests to wander through the garden.

My next big event was the High Sheriff's Awards Ceremony, held at the Lifewise Centre on the Hellaby Industrial Estate. Lifewise is an interactive safety centre located close to my own factory and is run jointly by the blue light services. This evening turned out to be a major highlight of my year, with 140 guests. I had received a staggering 99 nominations for an award and convened two panels of judges to share with me the almost impossible task of choosing a winner for each of eight different categories of award. A total of £1,500 was awarded to the winners, by courtesy of the James Neill Trust Fund, the Scarborough Charitable Trust and Pyronix Limited.

The main theme for my year was to support and recognise the importance of the voluntary sector and I think the awards ceremony certainly did that. Each and every one of the nominees has been recognised in some way. Those who were not chosen as winners or highly commended received a certificate to commend the work they do for the community of South



The High Sheriff of South Yorkshire with winners of the High Sheriff's Awards at the Lifewise Centre, Hellaby.



News from and about Members



Summer reception: Joint Services Cadets outside Wentworth Woodhouse, Rotherham with the High Sheriff of South Yorkshire and Mr Clifford Newbold, owner of the house.

Yorkshire. Those Highly Commended were invited to the ceremony and received a framed certificate, while winners received a cash prize for the charity, together with an engraved glass trophy and a framed certificate.

My final big hurrah was the South Yorkshire Legal Service which took

place in an alternative venue for the first time in its history. Sheffield Cathedral had started refurbishment work, so I had to arrange the service in beautiful Doncaster Minster. Once again the weather was kind as we processed through Doncaster's streets for the first time.

I wish my successor Lady Sykes well. I was honoured to have this opportunity and I will treasure the memories for ever. □

Julie A Kenny CBE DL
High Sheriff of South Yorkshire 2012-13