



Worcestershire 2012-13

Everyone said 'hit the ground running' and how right they were. Within three days of my Declaration, HRH The Princess Royal came to visit Hindlip Hall, West Mercia Police HQ, and also open a apprentice centre for young offenders.

I have had a fascinating, amazing, privileged, humbling and fun year. How fortunate I was to have 2012, with the Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics and Paralympics, and I have been honoured to meet so many members of the Royal Family. Sadly our Lord-Lieutenant, Michael Brinton, died a month after my Declaration. He had been so reassuring and helpful in my nomination year. In July, Worcester sparkled for the visit of Her Majesty The Queen to open The Hive, a new library complex joint venture between the University of Worcester and Worcestershire County Council. HRH. The Duke of Edinburgh commented 'Great hat, High Sheriff', which will remain with me for ever!

The Hive is not only an impressive building with 21st-century facilities for all ages, but it has been an outstanding



High Sheriff and Recorder of Worcester, Judge Robert Jukes with Mock Trials Day winners.

success and its usage is starting to rival the British Library. This is the result of a visionary Vice-Chancellor.

The shrieval service at the beginning of the legal year was a colourful event with two Bishops, and Lord Justices of Appeal, High Court Judges, Recorders, Circuit Judges and many Magistrates.

Worcester Cathedral was resplendent and the Dean and Chapter have been so helpful, inclusive and hospitable throughout the year.

St Richard's Hospice was my chosen charity and it was inspirational to feel the warmth, optimism, care and good humour there. Like St Richard's, there is a vast number of excellent organisations in the county which depend upon thousands of people who give their time, energy, expertise, care and love. Whether employed or voluntary, in most cases they are taken for granted as they quietly get on with the job. We have met and chatted to many of these wonderful people who are the real heroes of Worcestershire. It is for these that I have accepted or instigated many invitations during the year; as the Bishop of Oxford summed up the role of High Sheriff – "Seek out the good in the community, speak well of it and promote it in any way you can".

During my exposure to the various branches of the law, police, prisons and probation, I was introduced to the SORI project on restorative justice.



Duncan Clegg (Gloucestershire), Jenny Clegg, Lt Col Charles Thwaites (Herefordshire), Mandy Thwaites, Penelope Lewis (Worcestershire) and Dr Kenelm Lewis at the Three Choirs Festival.



News from and about Members

It was humbling to witness prisoners who were genuinely remorseful, and I trust that this will have a definite effect on the re-offending rate.

A trip to Long Lartin Prison (Category A) was an awakening, especially as it was just after Abu Hamza was deported to the USA. One problem that we encountered was that my chaplain's fingerprints at departure did not match those of his entry – purportedly due to the mayonnaise in the sandwiches! Fortunately, the deputy governor was at hand to rectify the situation.

Being affiliated to the local sea cadets was a great revelation. They have won numerous awards this year including four travel scholarships – a team effort, but mainly due to the to the enthusiasm of their commanding officer. It is here that young people learn drive, discipline and determination as well as developing skills to help them in the future .

As in many counties, the magistrates organise a mock trials competition for the county's schools. The day was oversubscribed and the participants

excelled. Everyone was very enthusiastic and no doubt a number of the students will swell the ranks of lawyers and court officials in the years to come.

All in all it was a wonderful year – fulfilling and at times exhausting, but very rewarding. □

Penelope Lewis

High Sheriff of Worcestershire 2012-13