



# Under Sheriff steps into new role

JONATHAN DOUGLAS-HUGHES retired as Under Sheriff of Essex in April. In May Nicholas Charrington, the current High Sheriff, held a dinner at Layer Marney to mark his retirement and to give thanks for his many years' service to the county. He has assisted 26 High Sheriffs with extraordinary devotion and has now been appointed Vice Lord-Lieutenant.

In 1963 Jonathan became an articled clerk at Gepp & Sons Solicitors, lawyers in the county town of Chelmsford and he is now senior partner. A Gepp became Under Sheriff in 1827 and since 1921 the firm has always provided the Under Sheriff.

Jonathan has generously made himself available at all times for help and consultation, which has been much appreciated by every High Sheriff. He has been a fount of knowledge with firmly held views on the role of High Sheriff, explaining to us that we are there to serve the county in the fields of law and order, but also to thank the unthanked by visiting and encouraging those involved in the voluntary sector. Moreover, he has reminded us that pomposity must be avoided at all costs!

He organised the Declaration Ceremony, which takes place in the Crown Court in Chelmsford. In October the Under Sheriff's office makes the arrangements for the Justice Service, often held in Chelmsford Cathedral. Jonathan passionately believes in the role of the High Sheriff and those holding that office in Essex have been exceptionally lucky to have benefited for so long from his experience and wisdom.

♦ Julia Abel Smith DL  
*High Sheriff of Essex, 2013-2014*

**Top:** Leading the Procession to the Justice Service, 2013

**Left:** Julia Abel Smith and Jonathan Douglas-Hughes at her Declaration in 2013

