



## Berkshire 2013-14

As with other High Sheriffs, I am writing this roughly halfway through my year. I decided early on that I really wanted to be involved with issues within the county where I could make a tangible difference. In part, and because of my professional background, I decided that one theme for my year might be to improve mental health and learning disability awareness for magistrates by improving training in that area. I soon discovered that there was no training available so we piloted a new course for JPs within Berkshire, which we hope, in time, will become UK-wide. Secondly, as a long-standing volunteer with the British Red Cross I decided again, as a theme, to disseminate more widely the work that the Red Cross undertakes within the UK. Both these themes will, I hope, prove fruitful.

My year inevitably started very quickly. Two weeks after being sworn in I attended Her Majesty The Queen for the State Visit at Windsor of the President of the United Arab Emirates. It was a beautiful spring day and the ceremony was splendid.



The High Sheriff visits a nursery school and opens a 'wood' school where the children play outside (whatever the weather) and they learn more about nature, make dens and play games.

I have sat in the Crown Court in Reading with the Judges on several occasions and learnt much. I have also visited areas of jurisdiction, perhaps lesser known, such as Her Majesty's Coroner's Court. I have visited various local charities such as alternatives to

custody for female offenders and have seen, at first hand; the real difficulties such bodies have in obtaining sustainable funding. Where possible I have put them in touch with local charitable trusts. I have also visited food banks and again seen their necessary



PHOTOGRAPH: STEWART TURKINGTON PHOTOGRAPHY

Former High Sheriffs of the Royal County of Berkshire.



# News from and about Members

work with those who are the least privileged in our county.

I held my summer reception in a local landmark site, West London Aero Club at White Waltham Airfield near Maidenhead. This venue is a private club and not, as such, open to the public. However, it is an important and historic site where the Air Traffic Auxiliary were based during the Second World War, and more than 174 aviators and aviatrixes (for the first time) ferried planes from factories to

operational stations without instruments or radio. During the reception we arranged for guests to see the memorial to those who sadly lost their lives.

Following a discussion with Berkshire's County Archivist, we discovered that the last recorded official photograph of High Sheriffs of the Royal County was taken in 1958! We decided to hold a new photo 'shoot' and you can see the result. We managed to enlist 15 former High Sheriffs and we are now starting a small new archive of High Sheriff

memorabilia. You will note that the male past High Sheriffs are not wearing their formal court dress – this is because many had passed their uniforms on, but some commented that 'they were just too tight!'

I very much look forward to the rest of my year. □

**Suzanna Rose JP DL**

*High Sheriff of the Royal County of Berkshire 2013-14*