



Cambridgeshire 2012-13

What an amazing year 2012 was to have been High Sheriff! It was a huge honour and privilege to serve in Cambridgeshire during the incredible Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty The Queen.

The year started with my Declaration, held in my village church in Swaffham Prior. As we emerged from the simple ceremony I was thrilled to be greeted by primary school children and teachers who were waving flags and cheering.

My work began with three High Court Judges arriving in Cambridge during the first four weeks. I sat with them in the Crown Courts and with the Circuit Judges, and in the County and Magistrates' Courts in Peterborough and Cambridge. I even shadowed court staff for a day. I cooked and transported many lunches into the court houses for judges and court staff and met many organisations and individuals working to reduce offending and reoffending.

The main focus for me during the year was on the primary role of a High Sheriff, supporting those who are involved with the maintenance of law and order and the administration of justice. Another thread was working with young people; I was accompanied on many official visits by my cadet, Cadet Sergeant George Metcalfe, and my trumpeters, music students from Cambridge University and elsewhere, who composed fanfares and arranged special compositions for many of the larger events. I also visited many youth groups and youth projects. Throughout the year I supported the armed forces and attended many civic events. Strengthening relationships was another thread and the ball is now rolling for the reintroduction of the official position of Honorary Recorder in both Cambridge and Peterborough.

With the help of a small steering group, I organised the High Sheriff's Legal Conference, hosted by the Cambridge



The High Sheriff helps to raise funds for the Ormiston Children and Families Trust at the charity's inaugural Jail & Bail fundraiser. 17 participants went through a mock arrest, a trial at Cambridge Crown Court and then raised bail money.

Union, where an eminent panel of national figures discussed 'Youth Injustice and whether society fails young people'. The idea was developed further at a follow-up conference attended by key public sector bodies, together with leading academic, legal and charitable groups. The next step is to work with a Cambridgeshire secondary school with a high truancy

rate and ask it to commit to try and reduce truancy by half in three years. The Institute of Criminology at Cambridge University will guide, monitor and analyse the evidence-based research so that the results can be applied elsewhere.

A highlight of my year was the Justice Service, held in the majestic Ely



Presenting awards at the High Sheriff's Award Scheme awards ceremony.



News from and about Members



The eminent panel at the High Sheriff's Legal Conference hosted by the Cambridge Union.

Cathedral in October on one of the few sunny days last year. It brought together people from all walks of life and many different religions, and my chaplain, Dom Adrian Convery, OSB, gave thanks for justice and law and order in our county.

Other highlights were the privileged access to the police, the courts and the prisons and the rare chance to see their

work from such close quarters. I was able to repay this kindness by presenting long-service awards to Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Peterborough court staff and prison staff, and I attended the swearing-in of new police recruits. Christmas Day was particularly special, visiting the seven main police stations which were open to thank those on duty for all that they do to keep our county safe.



Neighbouring High Sheriffs visiting the Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, to see an early 10th-century manuscript, one of the earliest surviving records of English royal legislation, which contains references to sheriffs in AD 670.

I was amazed how willing people are to support a High Sheriff with fundraising. For the annual Chariots of Fire Race around Cambridge's famous colleges, I was persuaded to run in a girls' team called 'Grey Shades of Fifty', which nearly killed me! Also, I and other desperados were arrested and tried in aid of Ormiston Trust, assisting children and young people to fulfil their potential and lead happy and productive adult lives. With a group of friends I organised a drinks party at the Fitzwilliam Museum which benefited the museum and the High Sheriff's Awards Scheme. The scheme recognises the fabulous contribution of so many remarkable youth leaders and young people and I was honoured to present awards and grants to 20 inspirational groups at the awards ceremony at Bottisham Village College.

Finally, a High Sheriff's other great duty is to attend on members of the Royal Family when they visit the county. The highlight was welcoming Her Majesty The Queen to Burghley House in June 2012. It was exciting too, as High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire, to welcome Their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on their first official visit to Cambridge in November 2012; what a treat! Without the help and advice of my husband, family, friends, and my Under Sheriff, Caroline Stenner, I could not have done even half of it and I shall forever be indebted to them. □

Mrs Penelope Walkinshaw
High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire 2012-13