



Above: The High Sheriff with the principal participants at his Declaration standing on the sacred grass in front of Emmanuel College Chapel

Top Right: The Royal Marines Band from HMS Collingwood Beating Retreat.

Above right: The Royal Marines Band marching through Warboys en route to Beating Retreat



In tune on land

THE SHRIEVAL YEAR started on a bright sunny day with the Declaration held in the Long Gallery of Emmanuel College, Cambridge where I am fortunate to be a Bye-Fellow. In addition to the Lord-Lieutenant and the outgoing High Sheriff there were also present two Pikemen from Lord Robarte's Regiment of Foot providing the required protection for the visiting judiciary. The judges remarked that they would welcome their presence more frequently.

One of the many highlights early in the year was the general election. Following a precedent set by previous High Sheriffs I visited the smallest and largest polling station in each of the constituencies within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The final visit was to the smallest of all in the Old Rectory in Hadden where I was handed a glass of wine on leaving the 'polling station' in the sitting room and invited to join the party elsewhere in the house where it seemed all the electors were present. I decided to preside as returning officer in Huntingdon where the announcement was made by a very bleary-eyed High Sheriff at 5.30am on the Friday morning. My metabolism was restored later in the day by an excellent Founders' Feast in St Edmund's College, Cambridge.

As a former naval person who is retired in a virtually land-locked county I felt I should

do something a little different for the summer reception. I was fortunate to secure the Royal Marine Band from my former command at HMS Collingwood. The Band performed Beating Retreat and the Sunset ceremony magnificently after first marching through the village and collecting several hundred of the local community who also witnessed the ceremony, along with the High Sheriffs of the surrounding counties. Very generously the reception and the villagers raised over £6,000 for the High Sheriff's Award Scheme and the Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen Families Association.

The year so far has provided a unique opportunity to see at first hand the vital work undertaken by a whole range of groups which work with vulnerable and ethnic minority communities. This work is invaluable in Cambridgeshire where over 100 languages are spoken as a first language in Peterborough alone. It has also been a great privilege to visit those organisations which provide positive and constructive activities to help keep youngsters out of trouble, or not get back into trouble. They have my greatest admiration.

♣ Captain V H Lucas DL Royal Navy
High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire 2015-16