



Diversity in a database

Below: Proclamation of The Great Fair, Carlisle, August 2014: (left to right) Tess Hart MBE; Martyn Hart, High Sheriff; Carlisle Town Crier; Steven Bowditch, Mayor of Carlisle; Christine Bowditch, Mayoress and the Reverend Keith Teasdale, Court and City Centre Chaplain

EVEN BEFORE my year began, I was extensively involved in organising a Grand Charity Dinner signalling the end of my predecessor's successful year and the launch of my period of office.

This enjoyable event provided important introductions for me while its proceeds reinvigorated our Crimebeat Fund, reducing the need for further fundraising.

My focus (and I do endorse choosing a basic theme) has been on young people with an emphasis on alternatives to anti-social behaviour. Adolescence can be a particularly vulnerable time and programmes building self-esteem and promoting positive decision-making are crucial.

Our county is large, diverse and sparsely populated, causing occasional communication challenges. I frequently encounter groups doing outstanding work, yet unaware of other organisations

doing something similar 60 miles away. I believe sharing information is essential, so I have set myself the task of trying to join up these groups by initiating a Cumbrian database that both identifies these organisations and links their efforts, especially those which help young people and their families.

I am receiving great support from the public sector and voluntary groups. I also hope to involve young people in this database compilation via 'Young Apprenticeships'. Their IT skills certainly outweigh mine! Happily, my successor shares my interest in continuing this initiative, so I trust it will be a legacy for Cumbria.

My late daughter had profound special needs, so I chose to host my Summer Reception at Carlisle's Ofsted-rated 'outstanding' James Rennie School which she attended and where I am a long-serving Governor. The venue highlighted my focus and also

gave influential people the chance to see the joyful surroundings while affording community groups a great networking opportunity. As a relevant backdrop to the fun of the evening, the work of numerous youth projects was beamed onto the walls throughout the event. I was also very grateful to the uniformed Reivers District Scout Group for their enthusiastic assistance during the evening; further links to my focus on the youth of Cumbria.

I have been involved with the County Council in the launch of an initiative assessing the viability of providing facilities for children with severely challenging behaviour. Currently, these individuals have to be placed outside the county at huge cost, both financially and emotionally.

Cumbria's natural beauty plays a key role in my work:

- I organised a sponsored walk across Morecambe Bay for the Crimebeat Fund with the assistance of Cedric Robinson, MBE, The Queen's Guide to the Sands. It was a unique, exhilarating day I'll never forget. I am sure the 80 other participants would agree.

- A day's fishing organised by the Masonic Trout and Salmon Fishing Charity provided another uplifting experience for 18 children with special needs and the 20 anglers who gently provided their expert fly-fishing instruction.

Nearly all of the children caught fish!

- A further memorable event was when my wife, Tess, and I visited Cowran Estate near Ulverston where Anne and Mike Diss have turned their farm into a centre delivering 'Extended Curriculum Work Placement Programmes', providing



Above: Members of the Cumbria Army Cadet Force with The Queen's Guide to the Sands, Cedric Robinson, and Martyn Hart at the High Sheriff of Cumbria's sponsored Morecambe Bay Charity Walk, July 2014

young people who have difficulties in a formal school environment with a place to learn rural, agricultural and small animal care skills.

The results are fantastic – learning by doing.

I especially endorse organisations providing Cumbria's youth with a gathering place they can call their own. In every engagement I have had with young people, I have found that once you sit down and talk freely with them, they grow in confidence. They are curious about court dress, but once you explain it and your role, I have found their responsiveness immensely rewarding and impressive.

◆ **Martyn Hart**
High Sheriff of Cumbria



ACF Training Camp at Strensall, York with John Thompson, Chairman of Eden District Council; Mrs Hensman, Lord-Lieutenant of Cumbria; Councillor Joan Raine; Geoff Cook, Chairman of Cumbria County Council; Tess Hart MBE; Martyn Hart, High Sheriff; David Ashby (contentmaster); and Peter Hensman OBE, August 2014



Cumbria army cadets in training at Strensall, York with Tess Hart MBE; Martyn Hart, High Sheriff and Col Mark Underhill OBE, Chief Executive NW Reserve Forces and Cadets Association, August 2014