



Dorset 2013-14

One of the things I have enjoyed most in the first half of my year in office has been going to places in Dorset of which I previously knew very little. My home, in the north of the county, is surrounded by the outstanding beauty of the Cranborne Chase, but the coast of Dorset is also spectacularly beautiful and it is here that I have encountered the Royal Navy on several occasions.

We are proud of being an island nation, but I think we sometimes forget how much our prosperity and security is dependent on our ability to access the sea. We rely heavily on a stable global market for raw materials, energy and manufactured goods and we rely on the Royal Navy to respond to any event that threatens our economy or our national interests.

I have enjoyed capability demonstrations on board minesweepers, *HMS Cattistock* and *HMS Blyth* and frigates, *HMS Portland* and *HMS Northumberland*. On all four occasions I have been struck by the highly professional, skilled and efficient officers and members of the crew; their expertise and commitment to the Royal



PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE PARSELLE

Capability demonstration – *HMS Northumberland* during Bournemouth Air Show.

Navy shines through and it has been a privilege to learn so much more about what they are doing when on deployment.

Commodore Jamie Miller, Navy Regional Commander (Wales and Western England) talks about 'sea blindness' because our ships are so often out of sight. He does an excellent job

in raising the profile and reminding us of how adaptable and versatile the Royal Navy has become.

I have enjoyed meeting and talking to the men and women who are away from home for months on end, doing difficult jobs in difficult conditions. They are wonderful ambassadors for a superb Service.



PHOTOGRAPH: www.samanthacookphotography.co.uk

With the Lord Lieutenant of Dorset, representatives of Dorset Children's Services and foster carers at Queen Elizabeth's School, Wimborne.



News from and about Members

I decided to break with the more traditional garden party and hold my summer party for children in care and foster families. The Lord-Lieutenant, Val Pitt-Rivers, joined me, together with representatives from children's services and voluntary organisations across the county to recognise and celebrate some of the outstanding care shown to children in Dorset. The number of children in care is increasing, so there is an ever-more-urgent need to find those children loving environments in which they can flourish and feel safe.

More than 80 children who are in the care of foster families came to Queen Elizabeth's School in Wimborne for afternoon tea and games organized by George, of Sharky and George, with two other frighteningly energetic entertainers! The children were wonderful and joined in with a huge variety of games; it was lovely to see them enjoying two hours of unsophisticated fun and also to have the opportunity to talk to some of the families who foster.

Foster carers work hard for the children in their care and are not seeking the limelight in any way; it was a humbling experience to meet so many unsung heroes. At the same time, professionals and volunteers from other agencies came together and chatted, in what I hope was a useful networking event. □

Catriona Payne JP
High Sheriff of Dorset 2013-14