



Parachuting in...

I HAD one of the less common starts to my shrieval year in that I was telephoned in the last week of February to ask if I could take on the role a year early. With so little lead-in it immediately threw up several problems – how to organise a Declaration Ceremony at such short notice, where to have it, how to get invitations printed and guests invited in time, and also the problem of acquiring court dress a year earlier than anticipated. By having the ceremony at home and with a combination of luck and perspiration everything went off very well and all those who came enjoyed the slightly less formal atmosphere.

As my charity I chose H.O.P.E., a small multiple sclerosis charity based locally. My hasty start meant that I was too late to tap the larger businesses in the area, but managed to raise over £9,000 from the generosity of many friends and acquaintances. To give a focus to this appeal I did a tandem parachute jump from 12,000 ft at Swansea Airport on 5 September (not in court dress I may say). An interesting experience.

One advantage of advancing a year was that I was able to exercise my right

to act as returning officer for the general election. I duly announced the result for the Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire constituency – a very enjoyable experience apart from one galling moment when the girl serving coffee at two in the morning took one look at my attire and enquired if I was the town crier!

I imagine that every High Sheriff discovers how much goes on within their county about which they previously knew nothing. I was constantly amazed by the wonderful work done by a complete cross section of people. Attending Police as well as Fire and Rescue Service Long Service Awards brought home to me the dedication and bravery of members of the emergency services. One of the normally unseen projects that impressed me was the Fire and Rescue Service Phoenix initiative. This gives young people on the cusp of offending or being excluded from school a five-day course of drill and fire and rescue activities, at the end of which there is a passing-out parade and the award of certificates. This is having a very beneficial effect and gives the



Above: High Sheriff below!

Below left: Roland Lewis, Under Sheriff of Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire; the Hon Robin Lewis OBE, Lord-Lieutenant of Dyfed; Jamie Lewis, High Sheriff of Dyfed; the Venerable Dennis Wight Archdeacon of St Davids, High Sheriff's Chaplain; David Ellis JP; Richard Morris, Under Sheriff of Ceredigion

participants encouragement and a sense of self-worth that most lack.

We had two very enjoyable garden parties at home in August on the two sunniest days of the summer

We had a visit from a High Court Judge to Pembrokeshire in the summer. This has not happened for many years and was a very unexpected, but enlightening, experience.

There have been so many interesting occasions during the year and so many people to thank for inviting me/us to their events that the list would go on for pages. Just let me say that without Judy, my wife, I would have sunk without trace.

Note to High Sheriffs in nomination: I had not been able to attend the Burghley Seminar two years before I was due to be High Sheriff and was then in office before the 2015 one. My resulting lack of information has often been a disadvantage. Don't miss Burghley!

♦ **Jamie Lewis**
High Sheriff Dyfed 2015-16

