

ISLE OF WIGHT

News from and about members



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Island Highland Games and other adventures

Above: I was the ceremonial gilder of the horns of the Isle of Wight's Gilten Market champion beast

IT HAS been over six months since I wished my successor well, hung up my uniform and attempted to get back to normality. I look back at all the people I met and places visited and realise what a privilege it has been.

Since tourism is the biggest employer and earner on the island, I decided to make tourism one of my themes for the year. I was impressed to see how well the island is marketed online by Visit Isle of Wight Ltd. I had the pleasure of attending the reopening of the beautifully refurbished Swiss Cottage by TRH the Earl and Countess of Wessex at Osborne House.

I was challenged to abseil down the tower of St Mary's Church, Carisbrooke in support of Christian Aid. Nothing could prepare me for climbing over the edge on a very blustery day, but

as the Archdeacon had gone first I had no choice but to follow... never again! A suggestion to all High Sheriffs in nomination: I set up a 'JustGiving' page to encourage sponsorship, sent everyone I knew an email and they kindly sponsored me; a great help in a busy year.

Not having a legal background I was soon fascinated by the proceedings and outcomes when I sat on the bench with judges and the coroner, although walking into court for the first time was a little daunting.

I was caught by the local newspaper photographer trying to play the bagpipes at the Earl Mountbatten Hospice 'Island Highland Games'. Later that day I took the salute as six pipe and drum bands marched towards me playing

Highland Cathedral, a very moving experience.

Having had an agricultural upbringing I was delighted to attend the Isle of Wight Gilten Market, a Christmas market dating back 150 years. I was honoured with the task of gilding the horns of the champion beast; as a child I had watched this ceremony many times but never thought that one day I would be asked to do it.

During the year the Isle of Wight High Sheriff's Trust made grants to various organisations including local schools taking part in the 'Global Rock Challenge' competition. We bought a puppy for 'Ability Dogs 4 Young People' and made a grant to send young people on a 'Keep Out Campaign' at Lewes Prison.

I attended numerous award ceremonies, culminating in the Isle of Wight High Sheriff's Awards, which are presented to young people who have overcome adversity. Nominations are from a wide range of organisations and deciding on the winners was no easy task. After the ceremony many of the families of the recipients expressed genuine pleasure that their young person had been recognised.

Another unforeseen enjoyment was getting to know my fellow sheriffs from the western circuit.

My husband Geoff and I were pleased to attend legal services in five other counties and delighted to welcome back four High Sheriffs to my legal service. Organising a legal service seems to be a headache for many High Sheriffs – I just kept telling myself 'it would be all right on the night' and to my relief it was.

Despite the economic gloom and doom, I realise that the Isle of Wight is blessed with a huge number of volunteers willing to help others less fortunate. One group I visited was Age UK Isle of Wight. Last year their volunteers gave 36,000 hours of help to their neighbours. I am delighted that the Isle of Wight Society for the Blind has just received a Queen's Award for Voluntary Services.

I am grateful to have had much friendly advice from the Lord-Lieutenant, Major-General Martin White. The year was only possible with the support of my husband, who came to many of the evening events with me and helped to make it a memorable one.

♦♦ Mary Case

High Sheriff of The Isle of Wight 2013-14

Below left: Enjoying the view from St Mary's Church, Carisbrooke

Below: My piping debut at the Island Highland Games

