



I do like to be... beside the seaside

IT DOESN'T seem two minutes since I was standing in County Hall, Preston, accepting the honour of being the High Sheriff of Lancashire... and what an honour it has been.

Danielle and I have thoroughly enjoyed the last 12 months and, as we live in Blackpool, I feel entitled to use the phrase 'it's been a rollercoaster of both emotions and experiences'.

I can honestly say that Lancashire is thriving... the work we have seen in all corners of the county has been truly breathtaking.

I saw at first-hand the hard work that the judiciary carry out in Lancashire to ensure justice is done.

I was impressed with the volunteers at the Fleetwood lifeboat station who give up their time and put their lives at risk every time the boat is launched to save others.

There is great work going on in Lancashire to help people who find themselves homeless. I spent the night with the Street Pastors in Preston, providing help and support when needed.

One of the big projects of the year happened at the Carers Centre in Blackpool where both Danielle and I are patrons. Nick Knowles and the BBC's *DIY SOS* team



Above: Welcoming HRH The Prince of Wales to the BAE Systems 'Academy for Skills & Knowledge' at Samesbury

Below: At the Blackpool Tower Ballroom

arranged the volunteer services of hundreds of people to turn a run-down building into a world-class facility for young carers. It was estimated to be worth a million pounds! There is no way that the charity would ever have been able to pay for work like that. But it re-affirmed my belief that if we all do a little in life, a lot can be achieved.

However, it wasn't just the community sector that impressed us.

At the BAE Systems facility in Samesbury we were able to see how pioneering technology is leading the world and had the honour of welcoming HRH The Prince of Wales.

The universities in Lancashire are also doing splendid work. I am especially grateful to UCLan for sponsoring this year's High Sheriff's Young Citizens Awards at Lancashire Police headquarters and to witness the inauguration of the new chancellors.

We were also delighted and honoured to represent Lancashire at this year's National Crimebeat Awards. It was wonderful to be able to give something back to the outstanding young people we have in Lancashire.

I have met some incredible people this year; they are all working hard in their field to make Lancashire a dynamic, forward-thinking and thriving place:

- Police officers keeping us safe
- The armed forces
- The teachers and lecturers at colleges and universities
- Firefighters and ambulance staff
- All those who work in prisons
- Council staff

I'm now proud to be known as a past High Sheriff and honoured that so many of Lancashire's past High Sheriffs were able to join Danielle and me at the world-famous Blackpool Tower Ballroom where the Wurlitzer played 'I do like to be... beside the seaside!'

It has been a privilege and an honour to have Danielle at my side throughout my year as the High Sheriff of Lancashire, and I hope that we were able to make a difference in people's lives.

♣ **John Barnett MBE DL**
High Sheriff of Lancashire 2016-17

