



A Duchy High Sheriff

The High Sheriff of Lancashire's shield-hanging ceremony at Lancaster Castle

Above: High Sheriff's procession into Lancaster Priory Church: (right to left) Max Winterbottom, Under Sheriff of Lancashire; Tim Jacques, Assistant Chief Constable; Dr John Martin Robinson, Maltravers Herald Extraordinary; Dr Barry Johnson, High Sheriff; His Honour Judge Russell; Mr Justice Norris and Mr Justice King

Right: Barry and Carolyn Johnson hanging the shield in the Shire Hall at Lancaster Castle

IN LANCASHIRE, Greater Manchester and Merseyside, together comprising the County Palatine of Lancaster, the three High Sheriffs are appointed by Her Majesty The Queen as Duke of Lancaster. Each Lord-Lieutenant recommends a name to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and The Queen 'pricks' the names of the three High Sheriffs on the Lites (the parchment list of names) with a bodkin, a practice dating back to the time of Queen Elizabeth I. The ceremony only takes place a few weeks prior to the installation of the High Sheriffs, hence the absolute secrecy of the names selected until the pricking has taken place.

In April 2014, following my appointment as High Sheriff of Lancashire, the colourful spectacle of hanging my shield took place in the Shire Hall in Lancaster Castle, alongside 650 other shields dating back to Richard the Lionheart.

High Sheriffs' shields show their personal coats of arms, often portraying significant aspects of their professions and interests, designed by heralds at the College of Arms. As I am a veterinary surgeon, mine contains a cow's head and horses' heads with collars of Lancashire red roses. The white bar in the middle represents the bar, my wife's profession, pierced with ermine spots representing our six sons.

The shield-hanging ceremony began with a service in the magnificent Priory Church with a procession of various dignitaries, including the Lord-Lieutenant of Lancashire, Lord Shuttleworth, the Constable of the Castle, Mrs Pamela Barker, and the Judges of the High Court, the Hon Mr Justice King, and the Hon Mr Justice Norris (also Vice-Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster), His Honour Judge Russell QC, Honorary Recorder of Preston, His Honour Judge Sycamore, Honorary Recorder of Lancaster and Dr John Martin Robinson, Maltravers Herald Extraordinary.



Keeper of The Queen's Peace

TWO INITIATIVES I have arranged as High Sheriff of Lancashire, which I hope may inspire future High Sheriffs, involved patrolling with the Blackpool Street Pastors and organising a Restorative Justice Forum. I and my wife Carolyn went out with the Street Pastors in the town centre on a Saturday night and presented them with a High Sheriff's certificate. We were particularly impressed with their huge commitment and dedication and the difference that they make in enhancing and safeguarding the community and visitors to Blackpool.

As Keeper of The Queen's Peace in the county I wanted to observe Blackpool's night-time economy from the perspective of the numerous volunteer agencies such as Street Pastors, who provide invaluable support.

The Street Pastors are out in the town centre from around 10.00pm to 2.00am every Saturday night. They are an inter-denominational church response to urban problems, such as homelessness, drug abuse, binge drinking and the associated problems of the night-time economy.

They help 'anyone and everyone', offering a shoulder to cry on, an ear to listen, plasters and free flip-flops to those in painful high heels and free drinks of water to those who are looking a little worse for wear. They make sure that those who are in a seriously vulnerable state get home safely and in one piece.

It was a typical Blackpool Saturday night, very windy and cold, the resort awash with fighting gangs, alcohol-fuelled hen and stag parties and busy brothels.

I believe one of the most important roles of the High Sheriff is to give active support and encouragement to the police and emergency services, the probation and prison services and other agencies involved in crime prevention. Restorative justice, I believe, is a growing, powerful tool in reforming attitudes.

I have attended – and been hugely impressed by – the Sycamore Tree accredited programme running in many of our prisons in Lancashire, which is based

on the principles of restorative justice, delivered by trained Prison Fellowship volunteers. Meeting and observing other diverse professional and voluntary organisations all striving to reduce crime, rehabilitate offenders and satisfy the victims of crime, I initiated a High Sheriff's Forum. Its aim is to bring together businesses, voluntary groups, the police, the probation and prison service, social services, lawyers, victims, former offenders, Prison Fellowship volunteers, the churches and other related organisations, to provide an opportunity to share good practice, highlight and publicise their specific work and goals, and build partnerships and networks for reform and collaboration.

John Timpson, Chairman of Timpson, the service retailer that has over 1,300 shops trading as Timpson, Max Spielmann and Snappy Snaps, was the keynote speaker. Over the last 10 years Timpson has developed the country's most proactive recruitment programme for ex-offenders, with nearly 10 per cent

of the current workforce having joined the company from prison, and it also runs training and apprenticeship schemes for prisoners in two of our prisons.

Other speakers included a prison chaplain, an ex-offender, victims of crime, a Crown Court Judge, an Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner, an assistant Chief Constable, the CEO of Street Soccer Academy and a trustee from Prison Fellowship.

Over 120 people attended the Forum and actively participated in the discussions and networked enthusiastically over lunch. Lancashire is spearheading a pilot study on restorative justice and the initial results were encouraging. I am confident that the relationships forged by the High Sheriff's Forum will publicise and progress restorative justice to reduce reoffending and promote a sense of justice and peace in our community.

♦ **Barry Johnson**
High Sheriff of Lancashire 2014-2015



Above: High Sheriff's Forum: (left to right) Carolyn Johnson, Amanda Webster (solicitor and Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner), Barry Johnson, Tony Watson (trustee) and Stephen Hawkins (regional co-ordinator), both from Prison Fellowship



Left: Blackpool street pastors receiving a High Sheriff's Award from Barry Johnson in the town centre on a blustery Saturday night. Left to right: Carolyn Johnson, Karen Trigg (co-ordinator and senior street pastor), Barry Johnson