

LANCASHIRE

News from and about members



Old meets new

Right: The High Sheriff unveiling a memorial bench recognising the tremendous efforts, courage and fortitude of women during World War I, with Mrs Eileen Eastham BEM (Hon Secretary, Darwen Townswomen's Guild) and Cllr Brian Taylor, Mayor of Darwen

Below: Immediately after the service at Lancaster Priory (L-R): the Hon Mr Justice Norris (Vice Chancellor of the County Palatine of Lancaster), the Hon Mr Justice Sweeney, the High Sheriff and Mrs Barnett, the Hon Mr Justice Peter Jackson, His Honour Judge Mark Brown (Hon Recorder of Preston and Resident Judge for Lancashire), His Honour Judge Sycamore (Honorary Recorder of Lancaster), His Honour Judge Stuart Baker (Circuit Judge) and Mr Timothy Duke, Norroy and Ulster King of Arms

IN LATE May, it was a case of old meets new at my official shield-hanging ceremony. Together with my wife Danielle, we introduced some additional elements into the day's proceedings to reflect the fact that I'm believed to be the first Jewish High Sheriff of Lancashire.

At the church service in Priory Church, Lancaster, immediately before the shield-hanging ceremony, two religions were intertwined and this was testament to the close working relationship between the High Sheriff's chaplain the Revd Christopher Newlands, Vicar of Lancaster, and Rabbi Ephraim Guttentag of St Anne's Hebrew Congregation who is Rabbi to the High Sheriff. The two religious leaders worked on the order of service together with Danielle, so that it was acceptable to both Jewish and Christian members of the congregation.

It was a huge honour to hang the family shield in such an historic setting as the Shire Hall, Lancaster Castle, and a day to remember and pass on to future generations.

And so my 12 months of service was well under way. I had anticipated many aspects of the role such as the time commitment, the travelling and making arrangements. What I had not envisaged was the impact it would have on me and Danielle seeing the great work that is undertaken in Lancashire and hearing the deeply personal stories.

One highlight for us, as founder and patron of Blackpool Carers Centre, was the news



that Children in Need planned to support the development of the new centre and they had enlisted the help of BBC Television's *DIY SOS* programme.

Over the summer months, presenter Nick Knowles and designer Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen engaged with builders, plumbers, plasterers, electricians, gardeners – you name it – and harnessed their energy into making a super place for young carers to get help and support with their issues.

The role of High Sheriff has also presented opportunities for me to learn more about the county where I have lived all my life.

I knew nothing about the women of Darwen until I was asked to unveil a new bench in their memory. The inscribed granite bench will always be a reminder of the Darwen Townswomen's Guild to honour the women of the area who supported soldiers during the Great War. Around 1,300 soldiers from Darwen died in the war but what is often forgotten is the vital role women played.

Meanwhile, at another event, Danielle and I were moved to hear the story of a young girl who has cancer. Having been invited to attend Cancer Research's Relay For Life event in the Lancashire countryside at Gisburn, we were surprised and delighted that the first part of the walk was led by cancer patients. To later hear a seven-year-old girl talk about her illness and show such bravery was extremely emotional for everyone.





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And, before you know it, I am halfway through my year in office. The sheer range of events we are invited to and hearing about the great work that people undertake in the local community is inspiring.

From supporting Blackpool Council in its bid for the Great Exhibition to giving a talk to children in a disadvantaged school, every day is a challenge I and my wife are relishing.

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

Above: The Barnett family (L-R): Joey, Ben, Sam, Serena, Danielle and John at County Hall Preston for the High Sheriff's Declaration on 8 April 2016