



Variety is the spice of life!

WHAT STRUCK me most about the first few months of my shrieval year is the extraordinary variety of events, meetings and special occasions which you attend in your capacity as High Sheriff. The ceremonial, judicial, formal and informal occasions seem to appear randomly in the calendar and each one has its own charm and memorable elements.

In Lancashire we begin the year with the High Sheriff's Declaration in County Hall which is appropriately formal. There follows in June the highlight of the year – the Shield Hanging in Lancaster Castle. A splendid service of Thanksgiving in Lancaster's lovely Priory is followed by the ancient ceremony which culminates in the High Sheriff being allowed to hang his coat of arms alongside the 660 other shields dating back to Richard the Lionheart. This was a truly memorable occasion. I was also delighted to attend the 125th anniversary dinner of 'Lancastrians in London'. This year the dinner was held in the Mansion House, by courtesy of the current Lord Mayor of London, Dr Andrew Parmley, a Lancastrian, and was a splendid affair.

In between there have been all manner of events, big and small, which together make such a huge contribution to life in our county. I have of course spent time with the local and visiting judiciary, as well as our magistrates, and witnessed at first hand just what a big commitment they all continue to have to our criminal justice system. When visiting the police and associated agencies I have been particularly interested and impressed by the county-wide move towards greater cooperation, and sharing of skills and resources between the public services. Although perhaps this has been initially driven by the need to save money it is now evident to many that there is a

fantastic opportunity to develop a set of services within the county which can be much more effective and cost less. I am hoping that I will be able to support and encourage this movement in the coming months by holding a forum to share best practice and inspire the leaders of our services to seize the opportunity.

The Prince's Trust runs an excellent 12-week course for young people with challenged backgrounds and in Lancashire it is delivered by the Fire and Rescue Service. The impact this opportunity has is often very significant for a high proportion of the participants, and I have been most impressed with the dedication and quality of the leadership and support provided to all those involved. More informally it

has been a delight to engage with smaller organisations in the county – too many to mention – which bring such sunshine into the lives of many. In particular, the recent opening of Lancaster's Hospice Café was a great success.

Finally, I continue to be humbled by the tireless work which is carried out by our enormous number of volunteers within Lancashire. The selfless help and assistance they provide to so many people in need is a great inspiration to us all, and the welcome they have given both me and my wife Carole wherever we have visited has been very warm.

◆◆ Robert Webb JP DL
High Sheriff of Lancashire 2017-18

Below: Opening the new café at St John's hospice; The Webb family following the High Sheriff's Declaration: (L-R) Hannah, Will, Aria, Harriet, Carole, Joanna and Mike

