



Leicestershire 2012-13

The final six months have been as frantic and exciting as the first, but it was often more targeted as I got fully into my stride. There were all the important visits to our three prisons, the magistrates' courts, civic services, Remembrance Day parades, charity fundraisers and carol concerts (including one with a fabulous gospel choir). And we held another Court Opening Service in Leicester Cathedral as our fourth High Court Judge arrived.

We have been welcomed by a range of brilliant businesses across the county: the gypsum mine at Barrow upon Soar which produces 85 per cent of the bagged plaster used annually in UK; the world-recognised car-testing track at MIRA; Samworth Foods (famous for their pork pies and a bakery that provides three-quarters of the sandwiches to Waitrose); Everards Brewery; East Midlands Airport and the hugely impressive DHL freight hub; and Bardon quarry where we blasted over 75,000 tonnes of granite.

In Leicestershire, we are blessed with the top sports university (Loughborough) and many exceptional professional teams. These include England's pre-eminent rugby club, the Tigers, where we also visited their training facility, Leicester City and Leicestershire County Cricket Club, but also the premier-league winning ladies' hockey team (the Pukkas). For total supremacy this last season though, the Leicester Riders basketball team are hard to beat. They have won one cup, been in a second final and recently secured the BBL championship with four matches still to play. I was asked to 'tip off' a semi-final game in March, and have helped them in their desire to move to a new purpose-built sports hall at the Cricket Club later this year. But the contribution the club and their players make to Leicester and Leicestershire is equally immense. They teach at over 100 schools, run training



The High Sheriff and Diana Brooks marking the identification of the bones of Richard III in Leicester with combatants at Bosworth Field.

programmes and opportunity days for young enthusiasts and, with the support of the city police, they host weekly 'Shoot2theFuture' evenings in many disadvantaged areas of Leicester. As a result of this latter initiative, anti-social behaviour incidents have reduced by 25 per cent in just two months in these areas.

The University of Leicester was placed firmly in the spotlight this winter with the brilliant recovery, dedicated research

and positive identification of the skeleton of our last Plantagenet king, Richard III. We listened to the fascinating account of the archaeologists, historians and geneticists involved, a team so modest and yet so professional, who deserve all the credit and acclaim that they are receiving. The discovery was celebrated on a cold sunny morning at Bosworth Battlefield by laying many white roses at the memorial garden, amid many dressed in traditional battle dress!



News from and about Members

My wife, Diana, and I have been welcomed across the city by the diverse religious communities which thrive in Leicester, and we have learnt much about Sikhism, Hindu life and the Quran when visiting temples and mosques. We went out with the Street Pastors on a filthy night in October, and witnessed the night-time economy in the city centre one Friday night with the police, noting the benefits of CCTV in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, attending the busy custody suite at Freemans Common, and the 24-hour control centre at HQ – following which we had to dial up 101 as we found ourselves locked in the car park of Central police station at 3.30am.



Richard and Diana Brooks teetering at 120 feet, the High Sheriff sporting a spiked helmet.

After a visit to Leicester Charity Link in February, we agreed to abseil 120 feet down a Leicester hotel with the City's Mayor, helping to raise over £20,000 for a most deserving cause. At the handover ceremony on 8 April, I gave High Sheriff's Awards to three inspirational people, Jean who had run a youth club for 32 years, Derek who helped Farmers in Crisis for 40 years and Lesia, who had started a choral group that now had six choirs and a huge local following. I also gave out five team awards to Leicestershire Police, the Youth Offending Service, Leicester Radio, the Fire and Rescue Service and Leicester Riders.

Richard Brooks

High Sheriff of Leicestershire 2012-13



The winning Leicester Riders basketball team with Diana Brooks, the High Sheriff, the Lord-Lieutenant and Chief Superintendent.