



Leicestershire 2013-14

'Opportunity is a bird that never perches'

My year as High Sheriff was certainly an eye-opener – I learnt so much about Leicestershire and its people and wonderful activities. My aim for the year was to get involved in all the different aspects within the county and I feel incredibly privileged to have been able to experience these.

Immediately after becoming High Sheriff I held a court opening service for the first of three High Court Judges who visited the county. I was fascinated to sit with him in Court on the opening day of the trial, the summing-up, and when he delivered the verdict. I also watched proceedings in the Magistrates' Court and awarded the Magistrates of the Leicestershire and Rutland Bench a High Sheriff's Award for their services to the community.

An important part of the High Sheriff's role is to spend time with the enforcers of our legal system and I was fortunate to gain an insight into the Police Force in Leicestershire. I spent time with police on the beat and in their headquarters and now have a better understanding of the tough job they do. I attended the Chief Constable's Award



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The High Sheriff hosted a dinner for the past High Sheriffs of Leicestershire (with 18 attending) and the Lord-Lieutenant, Lady Gretton. We had Brigadier Ed Butler as our guest speaker, who enthralled us with stories of his experiences in the Middle East.

Ceremony where the services of the police were acknowledged and rewarded.

One of the highlights of the year was meeting other High Sheriffs from the East Midlands. They were a tremendous support to me and we got on exceptionally well, visiting the East Midlands Airport and the National Memorial Arboretum together. My husband and I also attended the High Sheriff of Greater London's lecture by Professor Sherman, Director of the Institute of Criminology at Cambridge (see Greater London article).

A focal point was Leicester Cathedral which is so inclusive of all faiths. I have really got to know it and many of the people who are so involved in the work it does in the City. One of my highlights was attending the installation of the Very Revd David Monteith as Dean of Leicester.

As the first lady High Sheriff of Leicestershire for nine years I felt it was important to shine a light for charities

involving women and children and met many wonderful people who give their time to help others across the community. Our main law and order charity was Warning Zone, which we share with Rutland. It is a major interactive training centre to safeguard children in Leicestershire and Rutland.

Leicestershire is blessed with three universities which all complement each other. During the year I attended a total of fourteen graduation ceremonies at the universities. It has been wonderful to see the young people collecting their degrees and looking forward to the opportunities that lie ahead. I had the privilege of hearing two lectures at the universities, given by the Bishop and the Dean of Leicester and named after Derek Hole, my Chaplain, who has been the Chaplain to twelve High Sheriffs of Leicestershire – I think he deserves to be in the *Guinness Book of Records*.

We had three royal visits. For me it was particularly thrilling when HRH the Duchess of Gloucester came to the



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500th anniversary celebration of the Wyggeston Hospital almshouses, since I had worked for her 27 years ago. HRH the Earl of Wessex opened the Queen Elizabeth Jubilee Sports Hall at De Montfort University and HRH The Princess Royal visited The Diamond Jubilee Woods in the National Forest where she planted a tree.

I was invited to many Girl Guide events and was fascinated by the variety of activities that the children are able to do. In August I went to Otterburn in Northumberland to see the Leicestershire army cadets parade at their camp, a marvellous event, and I also followed a Prince's Trust team covering a multitude of events. My year as High Sheriff culminated in a service of thanksgiving at the cathedral. This

gave me the opportunity to thank everyone who had made a difference to the people of Leicestershire, from sport teams to charities. It has been a great privilege and honour to be a part of this community and Leicestershire has certainly found a champion in me. □

Sally Bowie

High Sheriff of Leicestershire 2013-14