



Lincolnshire 2012-13

When asked if I wanted my name to go forward towards nomination, I was initially sceptical as to the relevance of the role in the 21st century, but doubts soon evaporated having worked through some of the pros and cons. A small doubt surfaced again in the last weeks of a most enjoyable year, when contacted by a graduate doing an MA in journalism. He asked if he could come over on Good Friday to interview me on the role of the High Sheriff and its place within the Constitution for his dissertation. Aware of the possibilities of a journalistic mugging, I decided to rely on my knowledge of shrieval history and recent practical experience to see me through the questions. I hope the young man was reasonably satisfied with my explanations, and my final assertion that there was a strong argument for the continuity of history, the High Sheriff's role being a thread running all the way from King Alfred to the present time, and no worse for being an ancient office. An important principle for me, picked up at one of the regional training days, was that the role was about 'ethos not ego', a point which I hope he will have remembered.



High Sheriff's Award presentation to Revd Liz Jackson for launching Be-Attitude project for homeless people in Lincoln with the proposer Dr Tim Ellis, Bishop of Grantham.

I don't think that my year has been very different in the series of invitations and events usually reported in these articles. It was, however, Diamond Jubilee Year for Her Majesty The Queen and the visit to Burghley and Stamford was an obvious highlight and demonstrated the tremendous undercurrent of affection and loyalty

felt towards Her Majesty for her achievements over the past 60 years. Burghley, conjoining point for the counties of Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Rutland, was the perfect place for such an event. The Jubilee picnic in the grounds was itself an historic occasion as Queen Victoria had visited Burghley House during her Jubilee year in 1897. By a quirk of fate, in 1565 Queen Elizabeth I did not get closer than Stamford when wishing to stay with her most trusted advisor and principal minister, William Cecil, the designer and builder of Burghley. The event in June 2012 was very different, with more than 10,000 people enjoying an almost rain-free day, with four county tents all visited by The Queen. There were numerous static displays, bands playing and aerial displays as well as a fly-past by the Red Arrows and, of course, four High Sheriffs for decorative purposes.

As an overview of the year the important things for me were the networking opportunities and discovering where it was possible to connect people who might not



High Sheriff's Award presentation to Peter Howie for long-term volunteering with the St John Ambulance in Lincolnshire with the proposer, Council member Mrs Dilly Erskine-Crum.



News from and about Members

otherwise have been aware of overlapping interests. Visiting various cadet and youth organisations in the county, it became clear that commitment by volunteer leaders is key to their success – it is not so much a finance question. I was welcomed and informed by many people in the Army, RAF, police, prison and youth offending services, as well as by academics at schools and universities and by civic leaders. I got to know our iconic Cathedral better and saw its use for a variety of graduation ceremonies and concerts, as well as carrying out its

religious purpose, nearly always with glorious singing and music. Fundraising for local charities, mostly connected to the Community Foundation, was worthwhile and I did my share, including an event at Lincoln Minster School where Lord Cormack gave an entertaining talk and touched on his new role as chairman of Historic Lincoln Trust, raising funds to rehouse our Magna Carta for 2015.

High Sheriff's Awards are an excellent way of reaching out to grass roots. I received referrals from a variety of

sources and 13 awards were presented at the Crown Court. As it was Olympic year I encouraged two nominations from Lincolnshire Sports Partnership. The Big Society is alive and well in Lincolnshire and it has been a great honour to meet so many dedicated people throughout the year. □

John Burke DL

High Sheriff of Lincolnshire 2012-13