



Merseyside 2012-13

The role of the High Sheriff of Merseyside, in respect of visiting Royalty, the High Court and the emergency services is as expected, but the key characteristic of this special place is the unique nature of its people, especially the Liverpudlians. One quickly learns that it is not only those of us who live here that value it. Who knows better than the Royal Navy? Liverpool is frequently described by visiting ships' companies as 'the best run ashore in Britain!'. Depending on whose statistics you believe, Liverpool is the sixth or the second most visited British city by all tourists, outside London.

With my military background, I thought very carefully about how to approach my year in office. There have been the traditional commitments: the Declaration, the entertainment of High Court Judges (more than most counties, but not as many as some), the Cathedral Service for the start of the legal year and so on. With Liverpool cathedral, the largest Anglican Cathedral in the world, as the venue for the service, who could fail to be impressed? Presenting Judges' commendations has been a useful contribution to the legal life of the county.

As a soldier, I worked with the emergency services at home and abroad so I felt very comfortable accepting invitations to visit the police, the fire service, the ambulance service and the probation service. I concluded that at all levels they valued an intelligent curiosity about their work. In particular, the younger personnel have welcomed an opportunity to show off their training, equipment and operations. In turn I have found it very easy to be impressed, to offer encouragement when appropriate and to thank them for what they do on behalf of us all. Perhaps because of my military past, I have been accepted in some unlikely circumstances. Taking a tennis ball into a pile of rubble for a



In his first duty of his year of office, the High Sheriff planted a tree commemorating HM The Queen's Diamond Jubilee in St Thomas CE Primary School, Lydiate, north of Liverpool.

fire and rescue Service search dog to be rewarded for finding me was not dignified but it was great fun! More sobering was spending a day training with the Fire and Rescue Service, learning how to cut open a car, followed by a night-time call-out to a serious motorway crash and watching the rescue of four trapped people.

Happily no one involved was badly injured.

All High Sheriffs say that visiting schools and children's charities is great fun and so it has been for me. I have enjoyed planting Jubilee trees and speaking to young people about the significance of the Jubilee. I have had



News from and about Members

the privilege to meet Olympic torchbearers and both Olympic and Paralympic medallists. I have found rewarding my visits to hospices, prisons, Ashworth high security psychiatric hospital and probation hostels, as well as my visit to support those working in the very difficult areas of diversity discrimination and with victims of trafficking.

With two great rivers in the county, the Mersey and the Dee, events associated with boats and the water have been particularly enjoyable. Joint training by the Fire and Rescue Services and the RAF of helicopter winch men in the Mersey estuary at night is dramatic, and in winter not warm. At the height of last summer, I helped crew the boat representing Merseyside on the Thames as part of the Jubilee Pageant; it was also the coldest that I have been, but a wonderful day! Perhaps most memorable both for me and for Her Majesty The Queen was launching into the docks in Liverpool on board a 70-year-old DUKW amphibious vehicle, which had a distinct list. I know it was memorable for The Queen; Her Majesty told me so a few months later at the dedication of the Jubilee window at The Queen’s Chapel of the Savoy.



The High Sheriff of Merseyside and his wife patrolling the River Mersey with a crew from the Marine Rescue Unit of the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service. The world famous Liver Building stands in the background.

It has been my privilege, as for so many of us, to learn that there are centres of excellence in this county which set a standard not just locally, but nationally. Often, by their nature, they must remain confidential and in the background, but as High Sheriff it is easy to get to know them and to acknowledge that we have so many men and women working so well for the common good. If I have been any

use as a High Sheriff this year, it has been as the inquisitive visiting lay person who has been able to say, “What you are doing is mightily impressive, it is a privilege to have been asked and thank you so much for all that you do!”

Colonel Martin Amlôt OBE DL
High Sheriff of Merseyside 2012-13



HM The Queen and the HRH The Duke of Edinburgh launch into the Liverpool Docks in a 70-year-old DUKW accompanied by the High Sheriff of Merseyside and the civic party (left). Later in the year another of the three surviving DUKWs in Liverpool sank! Happily it had been evacuated first (right).