



Check your route, leave plenty of time

Right: Presenting cheque to mental health charity Gofal

Below: At a Welsh-themed evening hosting a second Court of Appeal Judges' Dinner

Below right: Attending a citizenship ceremony

OH WHAT a year it's been! My Declaration at St John's Church Porthcawl took place on a crisp, sunny day with Sir Wyn Williams, Wales' senior presiding judge kindly hearing my Declaration as High Sheriff of Mid Glamorgan. This was the start of a frenetic five days, with a large marquee to entertain guests from my Declaration remaining in situ for a Charity Ball two days later and a Fashion Show two days after that. The caterers fed and watered just over 600 people in a matter of five days, so it was a busy start to a non-stop year.

After a career in television, I have been involved with many charities and I decided to support a mental health charity called Gofal. After the Crystal Ball and the Fashion Show, £18,000 was presented to this charity and it was time to turn my full attention to the job, with a citizenship ceremony my first engagement. Using my car



satnav instructions to Merthyr Tydfil I quickly realised I was going to be late after ending up in Aldi supermarket car park. First lesson, check your route and leave plenty of time!

As High Sheriff for just one year, I felt that it was important to raise the profile of the Office and try to answer the much-asked question 'What do you actually do?' So as well as being asked to speak at various groups, I visited a number of schools in

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the county wearing the full uniform. I explained about the role of the modern-day High Sheriff and promoted the Mid Glamorgan Community Youth Awards scheme, giving cash awards to young people who are doing outstanding work in the community.

Wales had an equal mix of male/female High Sheriffs in 2015-2016 and it was the turn of the four female Sheriffs to co-host the Court of Appeal Judges' Dinner at the Mansion House in Cardiff. Speeches to our honoured judges were well received and thank you letters were in praise of the warm, Welsh welcome.

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I sat alongside High Court Judges on a range of cases from murder and child custody to clinical negligence. The seriousness and depth of their



work helped me understand why we as High Sheriffs can provide some light entertainment in the form of a dinner at home. My husband Rob and I hosted a number of judges' dinners at our farm and the stories told were full of humour and bonhomie; memorable times we will cherish and chuckle over.

My royal moments have been unforgettable. Our day at the Buckingham Palace garden party was eventful when one of our daughters fainted as Her Majesty The Queen passed us! HRH The Prince of Wales visited the county three times during my year and I managed to stay upright with no sign of being star-struck during those moments!

My year has come to a close and it will be one I will never forget – somehow the rest of 2016 will pale into insignificance as I flick through my diary for 2015.

♥ Mrs J A James
 Mid Glamorgan 2015-16

Above: At the Court of Appeal Judges' Dinner at the Mansion House in Cardiff

Below left: Jayne James (mounted, centre) with the mounted section of South Wales Police

Below: Seven of the eight High Sheriffs in Wales at the Legal Service at Llandaff Cathedral in October 2015: Libby Evans (Gwynedd), Jayne James (Mid Glamorgan), Bob Redfern (West Glamorgan), Andrew Tuggey (Gwent), Heather Stevens (South Glamorgan), Janet Evans (Clwyd) and Jamie Lewis (Dyfed)

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