



# Robin Hood's nemesis

ONE OF my first tasks as High Sheriff was to explain to friends and family that the High Sheriff of today has little in common with the notorious Sheriff of Robin Hood fame. Indeed, at my Declaration, which took place at Nottingham Contemporary Art Gallery, I went to some pains to stress that I intended to use a good part of my year to support and promote the voluntary sector and much less time chasing outlaws.

I have long been an admirer of Framework, a local charity which does amazing work supporting people affected by homelessness. Given also my professional background in housing development the cause, and specifically the charity, seemed a natural choice for my year's focus.

While High Sheriffs are well connected in their counties the status of the Office and associated networks create a uniquely wonderful opportunity to



High Sheriffs of Nottinghamshire and Northamptonshire inspecting their new lace jabots and cuffs

build on and leverage those connections for the wider good.

Using my newly acquired status I have been able to contribute to the creation of a pioneering new partnership between Nottingham Forest Football Club and Framework. Under the partnership the club helps to raise awareness and much needed funds. It provides opportunities for entertaining existing and prospective donors and will shortly be hosting a gala dinner.

Wherever I go I meet such generosity. My preference was not to buy my court dress from new. It is quite expensive for one year in office! With the generous help of the High Sheriffs' network I swapped a case of good wine for a suit. For my lace accessories Nottingham Trent University, where I am a governor, offered to make them using archive designs from their library. In fact they made two sets. The duplicate I exchanged for a pair of court shoes sourced, via my good friend James Saunders Watson, High Sheriff of Northamptonshire, from Tricker's the famous Northamptonshire shoe manufacturer. It has been a pleasure to 'promote' these by wearing the products of two manufacturing traditions long associated with our respective counties.

Generosity was also a core theme at a ceremony I attended in June to mark the handover to the nation of a new £300m Defence and National Rehabilitation



High Sheriff at HM The Queen's Birthday Service at Southwell Minster on 10 June with (front L-R) His Honour Judge Dickinson QC, Recorder of Nottingham, Hon Mr Justice Hildyard, Deborah Hutchinson, Under Sheriff; (back row) Their Honours Judge Hildyard QC, Judge Lea, Judge Rafferty QC, Judge Coe QC, Judge Sampson, Judge Shaun Smith QC, Judge Coupland

Centre at Stanford Hall Nottinghamshire. The centre was opened by HRH the Duke of Cambridge. The facility was the idea of the late 6th Duke of Westminster who led the fundraising appeal to build the centre.

Being High Sheriff is a great honour and privilege. I have already met some extraordinary people from all walks of life – from outreach workers to High Court Judges. I have entertained judges – always such good company – on a number of occasions, including a memorable lunch following the service at Southwell Minster to celebrate the HM The Queen's Official Birthday. The judges have reciprocated with return dinner invitations and opportunities to accompany them in court. My diary has never been so full.

Next week I attend the opening ceremony of a new visitor centre in Sherwood Forest. It is wonderfully ironic that, centuries after Robin Hood strode through the forest glade, the direct descendent, by appointment, of Robin's nemesis has set himself the task of supporting the homeless, the poor and disadvantaged.



High Sheriff with (L) Michael Leng Deputy Chief Executive, Framework and (centre) Nicholas Randall QC, Chairman of Nottingham Forest FC

◆ Nicholas Ebbs

High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire 2018-19