



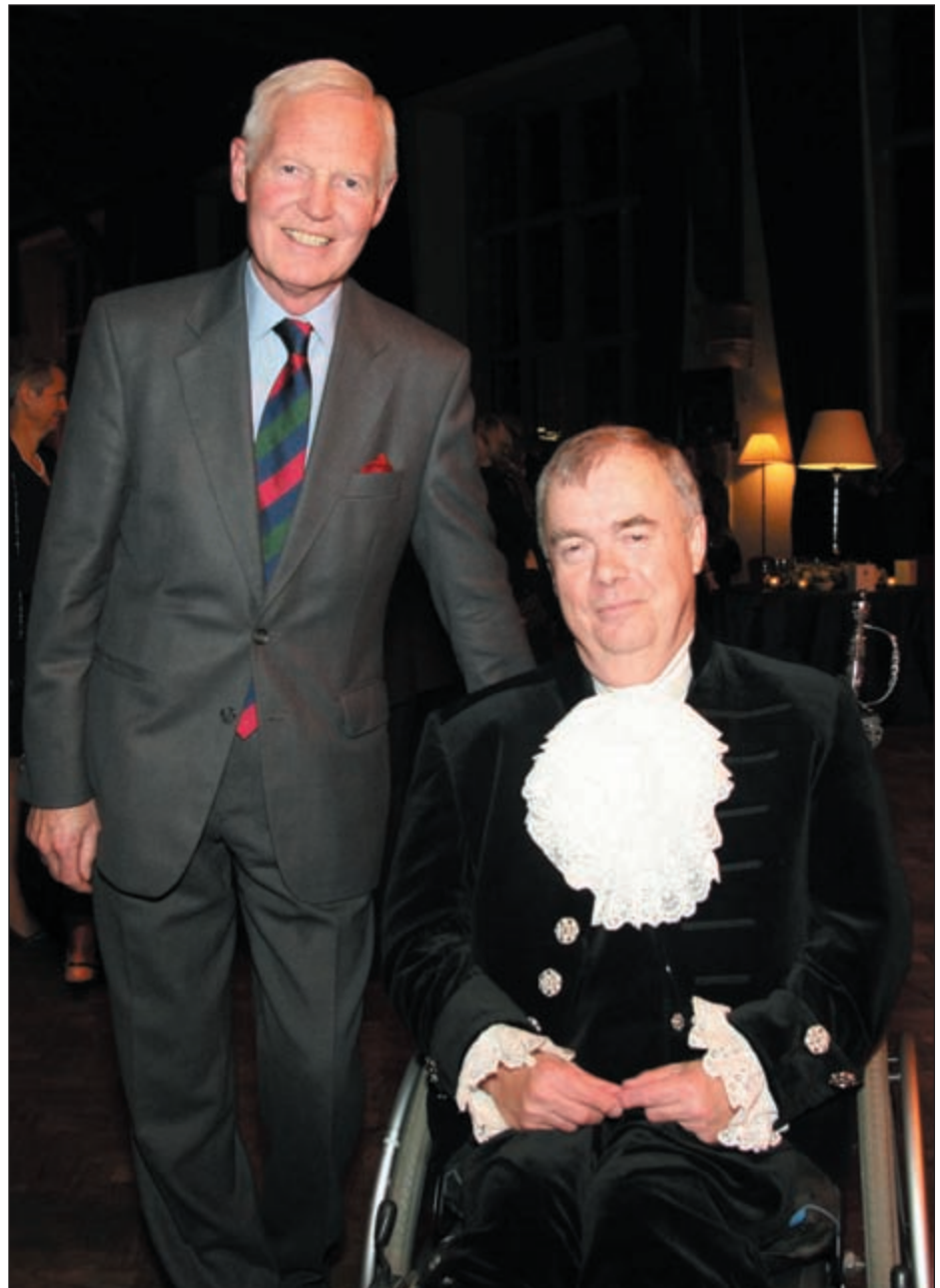
Rutland 2012-13

I sit here writing this, marooned by unseasonal snow drifts only two weeks before the end of my shrieval term! This immediately strikes me as yet one more memorable event in what has been a memorable shrieval year.

It seems a long time now since my I made my Declaration in the historic surroundings of Oakham Castle – the first day of bad weather following the driest spring on record. That set a pattern – immediately we were into preparations for the Diamond Jubilee festival in June and I was pleased to be involved in organising Rutland's entry in the Jubilee Pageant on the Thames. Ironically I launched our boat on Rutland Water on a very hot day in May – what a contrast to the Pageant some two weeks later but what was nevertheless a never-to-be-forgotten event. Here in Rutland that coincided with our County Show, a major feature in our calendar, so the day became a double celebration, ending in a notable Diamond Jubilee Service in Peterborough Cathedral. For me that was not the end of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations locally – about two weeks later HM The Queen came to Burghley Park, where she met four High Sheriffs from the area, including myself, and following this joined us for lunch, at which I was privileged to sit at her table, a memorable day.

As the summer passed, as well as opening schools and attending university graduation ceremonies, I attended a number of Diamond Jubilee related fetes and festivals across Rutland, notwithstanding the weather. In July I witnessed the Olympic Torch as it passed through the county, in particular when it crossed Rutland Water by boat.

Apart from celebrations, as the year has gone on I have visited and observed many public services on which we all depend – the police, fire service, military, courts and tribunals, judiciary and other law services such as



Rutland's Lord-Lieutenant, Dr Laurence Howard OBE JP, and myself at the High Sheriff's reception which I hosted at the Memorial Hall, Uppingham School on 20 October 2012.

victim/witness support. All of these are going through great changes at present, due to budgetary reductions caused by the need to reduce the national deficit. I hope I was able to give them encouragement and support where I could. The police are having to learn to work with the newly elected Police and Crime Commissioner and change many working practices to cater for funding cuts.

Rutland, being England's smallest county, has very few independent services – in practice the police and most other public services we share with our neighbour, Leicestershire and other services such as the ambulance Service, are run on a regional basis covering several counties. Likewise our cathedral in Peterborough is located in Cambridgeshire, although nearly all of the diocese is Rutland and



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Northamptonshire! Being High Sheriff of Rutland is therefore a complex role at times and I take this opportunity to thank my neighbours, particularly in Leicestershire and Cambridgeshire, but across the East Midlands as a whole, for their forbearance when I have been presumptuous enough to 'invade' their territories on the basis that Rutland's interests extend over their borders. A great advantage of this is that it helps cement good relationships with neighbouring High Sheriffs to the benefit of us all.

Another notable event during the year has been the arrival of the army, represented by 2nd Battalion, Royal Anglian Regiment, at Kendrew Barracks, formerly RAF Cottesmore, and I participated in their welcome to the county. Kendrew will become a major military centre with more troops scheduled to join them. This is going to become very significant for Rutland since ultimately, along with families and dependents, they will probably increase the population of our county by almost 20 per cent, and give a major injection to the county's economy. I attended several events at St George's Barracks, North Luffenham by the courtesy of the CO of 16th Regiment, Royal Artillery. It is also the home of 140 Military Working Dogs Support Unit

which I visited shortly before its departure for a tour Afghanistan.

I have been involved with several charities, including the Prince's Trust, our air ambulance and our main 'law and order' charity, Warning Zone, which we share with Leicestershire. This is a major interactive learning centre focused on safeguarding children in Leicester, which most Rutland primary school children now visit, to learn to avoid risk and consequences of antisocial behaviour. A purely Rutland charity I have supported is Voluntary Action Rutland, which organises volunteers to support people with a wide range of needs across the county. The volunteer is assuming ever-increasing importance, largely to fill the gaps caused by reduced funding. Another charity developing in this area is Canine Partners – Training Assistance Dogs for Disabled People – and I was pleased to visit its new centre. During my visit I had a somewhat unusual, even dubious, pleasure of being partly undressed by a dog – this role appears to take one from the sublime to the ridiculous at times!

In Rutland we only have a visiting High Court Judge every second year and for me this was the 'wrong year.' To make up for this, with the agreement of

the Lord-Lieutenant, we tried something entirely new, namely a 'County Service' in Peterborough Cathedral to celebrate Rutland life. The service was on a Sunday in late February, fortunately in reasonable weather, and it proved to be a great success, bringing together different aspects of life in our county. The very positive feedback makes me hope that this may be repeated in future.

I have done so many other things, too numerous to mention. In carrying out all of these activities I must thank the many people who have provided assistance throughout the year. Being a High Sheriff in a wheelchair can be challenging at times, but at no point was I made to feel this created difficulties for those I was visiting. I simply could not have managed without the support of several people, who included Julie Parker, my PA, Karin Harman, my chaplain, Uppingham School CCF cadets providing swordbearers on formal occasions, and several friends who acted as consorts; they all have given invaluable help. So may I publicly thank everyone who contributed to making my shrieval year so memorable. □

Bart Hellyer

High Sheriff of Rutland 2012-13