



# People make the world go round

Above: Interview with young journalist

Opposite page: Keeping my hand in

AS MY term of office draws to a close I can reflect on the great honour it has been to serve as Her Majesty's High Sheriff of Rutland. It has been one of the most wonderfully exciting, enjoyable and moving years of my life – over 250 events, the majority requiring court dress, and I urge those in nomination to wear your court dress until you wear it out. It is so important we maintain our English and Welsh traditions; prancing about the streets of Rutland in tights in the 21st century may seem bizarre, but if we lose these traditions we lose part of our national

identity. I for one will fight to keep that.

My aspiration to visit every school in Rutland was almost achieved, only missing the target by two. One of the highlights was being interviewed by the Young Journalists Association at a school in Kendrew Barracks. After a visit to one school where I mentioned I knew the father of two children, their father came home to two very excited offspring who, when asked what all the fuss was about, said, 'Dad, someone really famous knows you.' I usually hid in the staff room and then

appeared in the assembly to gasps from the boys about my sword. When the teacher introduced me as a special guest and invited the children to guess who I was, 'pirate' was the most usual answer.

If you can, try to get into the local press as often as possible. Local papers are good at publishing interesting pictures and articles and mine have been very helpful in raising the profile of what the Shrievalty can achieve. Someone even remarked that since they hadn't seen me in the paper the previous week they thought I had died, to which I replied that had I died I would have been in the paper's obituary column.

I have frequently asked to go into places most cannot access. I have been to every prison in Leicestershire and Rutland and even saw an inmate I knew. It's always nice to see a close relative in their natural environment! One of the more unusual trips was to a crematorium which was fascinating. The number of things one cannot put in a coffin is surprising, but the staff are always willing to show people round to allay some of the stigmas surrounding our ultimate destination. Don't be afraid to ask – they can only say no.

You may also get some strange requests. One of my last tasks was to play a game of crib with a

man travelling the country playing a hand in each of the ancient counties of England. I hadn't played for years but soon got back into it and gave him a good run for his money.

Please don't try to outdo your predecessor in the amount of money you raise or the size and number of parties you hold. I have raised a modest amount for my charities with my opera and comedy nights, but as Rutland is so small I think per capita I must be up there with the best.

At my Declaration I said that I loved my country and my county and would try to serve them both to the best of my ability. I hope I have achieved this and if I have made just one person's life a little better then it has been worthwhile. A quote I use frequently – 'We cannot all be stars but we can try not to be clouds' – is a really good philosophy. It is not oil or money which makes the world go around, it is people, and you will have the opportunity to meet some of the most selfless of them. To those of you looking forward to your year with nervous excitement, all I can say is, if you have half the fun I have had you'll have one of the best years of your life.

◆ Andrew Brown

High Sheriff of Rutland 2015-16

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