



Making a donation

IN SPITE of the fact that Rutland is England's smallest county (but only when the tide is out on the Isle of Wight), we are up there with the largest counties regarding shrieval activities. My year in office started with my Declaration in historic Oakham Castle, a mediaeval fortified manor house built c1180, more than fifty years after the first recorded High Sheriff of Rutland. Having a young family and a wife who works full time means there has to be a lot of juggling of school runs and balancing the time commitment I need to give to the role and my responsibilities as a father and a farmer. Those of you with younger children

will know that they are horrified to have to be seen with their father wearing tights and frilly appendages, but I think they do take pride in the fact that a parent has been chosen to hold such an esteemed position.

I have been trying to get to every school in Rutland to educate the children about this ancient role and how it fits in to a modern society. They love the regalia and without exception most of the questions relate to the sword: 'Is it real? How many people have you killed? Are you going to kill anybody?' Others include, 'Do you know The Queen?' and 'Do you live in a castle?' It can be quite daunting to speak to 350 children in one

room, but I would urge you all to overcome any fear and get into as many schools as you can – the children love it!

I was a guest at the annual Rutland County Show in June, where the weather was awful, so I wore my full regalia with steel toe-capped boots rather than court shoes, which caused a certain amount of hilarity among the crowd. I was being shown around the trade stands when a small boy saw me and took one look and said to his mother 'that man was on Horrible Histories, I don't like him'; he then burst into tears. It is amazing the effect you can have on people!





Opposite page:
Reclining for a good
cause

Left: Resham Sandhu
(Past High Sheriff,
Leicestershire), Supt
Sally Healy and
Andrew Brown at
Armed Forces Day

“It was a bit like holding one of your own internal organs outside your body. A surreal experience, but donating blood is a way to be a hero without having to do anything brave.”

As a regular blood donor I want to raise the importance of this activity, so I arranged to donate in court dress and get some publicity pictures taken. Heads certainly turned when I arrived, but being stared at is something we all have to get used to. The needle was inserted and the appropriate weight of my blood was duly removed. The photographer then gave me my own blood to hold which was still warm from the donation. It was a bit like holding one of your own internal organs outside your body. A surreal experience, but donating blood is a way to be a hero without having to do anything brave.

Being High Sheriff will open doors for you, so don't be afraid to ask to go to, or do, something which particularly interests you. I have been out on patrol with the police, travelled in a rapid response ambulance for a day and am spending a day with the fire service. I have even passed my fire fighter's fitness test. I have also arranged to ride on the footplate of an inter-city train down to London and back, a dream of mine since I was a child.

Those of you who are taking over in April 2016 will now be thinking how quickly the last four years have gone and are probably worrying about how you

are going to cope. It has been said many times, but it really is up to you to do as much or as little as you want. It is your year after all and you are in charge. I would urge you not to say 'no' too often and try to do as much as you can. You will be tired and sometimes wonder why you agreed to speak at some obscure club or society on a dark winter's night, but it is always rewarding and always appreciated, especially by those who perhaps don't get much thanks for what they do.

◆◆ **Andrew Brown**
High Sheriff of Rutland 2015-16