



SOUTH YORKSHIRE

News from and about members

The show went on

TRADITIONALLY THE Legal Service in South Yorkshire is held at Sheffield Cathedral or sometimes Doncaster Minster. This year I decided to have a multi-faith event, which required a few changes from tradition. The theme for my year of office was 'inclusivity'; I wished to embrace diversity and seek in my own small way to build bridges, and not barriers, in a world where far too many people feel excluded or uninvolved. It seemed incontrovertibly to follow that my Legal Service should be multi-faith. This would serve as a positive and active embodiment of inclusivity.

I enquired of the High Sheriffs' Association whether a multi-faith event had been held previously. I was informed that they believed that one had been held in the House of Lords in the early 'noughties'. I tried to track down the relevant past High Sheriff, regrettably without success. I had chosen Rabbi Yonosan Golomb of Sheffield as my chaplain and, as I know the Dean of the Cathedral quite well, it was easy to discuss the concept with the two of them. Fortunately they were both extremely supportive. I also involved the head of the multi-faith chaplaincy at Sheffield

Hallam University to advise me on how the event could be put together. I refer to this particular Legal Service as an event since different religions cannot (other than in the event of state occasions, so I understand) pray together. Accordingly it could not be held in a place of worship and so it was held in the Hadfield Room at The Cutlers' Hall in Sheffield. The venue is sufficiently large to allow for a normal procession to take place.

I woke on the morning of the Legal Service to several inches of freshly fallen snow. It was deep enough for me (momentarily) to ask myself whether the Legal Service should proceed, but of course the show must go on. This gave rise to two key questions: would all the speakers be able to get to the venue? This would not have been a problem as there was a contingency plan in place should anyone cry off at the last minute. The other question was how many people would be completely unable to make the journey?

There were inevitably a number of guests who apologised, and I fully understand and appreciate every single apology. In the main, however, the vast majority of guests, all of whom had to make a tremendous effort, were able to get to The Cutlers' Hall for what I believe was a highly memorable Legal Service.

Arranging the event had involved a huge amount of very careful planning. It symbolically comprised readings by representatives of five faiths: Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Moslem and Sikh. There were also readings by my daughter Jen Ingram and Mr Justice Goose.

All the feedback I have received tells me that it was a success and if my Legal Service is not remembered for being a multi-faith event, I can hope that at least it will be remembered for the snow. We also raised £11,901.31 for my chosen charity Whirlow Hall Farm Trust.

◆ Stephen Ingram

High Sheriff of South Yorkshire 2017-18

Above left: Imam Sheikh Mohammad Ismail, Dr Vithal Patel, Very Revd Peter Bradley Dean of Sheffield, Rabbi Yonosan Golomb, Singh Dhillon, Rev Canon Christopher Burke
Left: Rabbi Yonosan Golomb, Stephen Ingram, Andrew Coombe, Lord-Lieutenant of South Yorkshire, and his wife Sue

