



TYNE AND WEAR

News from and about members



Cadets to the rescue

THE COUNTY of Tyne and Wear takes its name from two magnificent rivers and therefore ports, docks, rivers and the sea dominate the landscape and played a prominent part in my first six months as High Sheriff of Tyne and Wear.

Just a few days after my Declaration, Britain's largest warship and helicopter carrier HMS Ocean sailed into the port of Sunderland to be awarded the Freedom of the City by Sunderland City Council. I was fascinated by the capability demonstration; learnt a great deal about the role of the Royal Navy in keeping our nation safe; marched to the Royal Marines Band; enjoyed the Salute at dusk (but I wished I worn some thermals!); dined with the Captain and thoroughly enjoyed learning more about the work of the Sea Cadets. It was a shock to the system once HMS Ocean sailed out of the port to no longer be saluted and called Ma'am every few minutes!

A little further south on the coast, while a guest of South Tyneside Council celebrating Armed Forces Day at South Shields, a squall from the North Sea whisked off my High Sheriff's hat and ostrich feathers; a fleet-of-foot army cadet dashed off to rescue it, with success I'm pleased to say. And a little further north on the coast, when invited by the Royal British

Legion to lay a wreath at Whitley Bay to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain, again I was grateful to the Sea Cadets for their hearty singing (the Salvation Army having failed to turn up and leaving me somewhat exposed as lead soprano).

On the Gateshead side of the river Tyne, the new Lord-Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, Mrs Sue Winfield (High Sheriff in 2010/11) commissioned a new pontoon for the Marine Cadets; I commissioned two new sailing boats, and the Gateshead's Mayor was allocated a rowing boat. Again the young cadets were impressive and I accepted their invitation to return to their open day and took part in rowing, sailing and other water sports. It was very cold and wet; the accompanying photographs were taken by another former High Sheriff of Tyne and Wear, Nigel Westwood, who shouted encouragement from dry land.

The young cadets are typical of the large number of young people I have met in the last six months who are members of the voluntary groups which have been financially supported by the Tyne and Wear High Sheriff's Fund, and about which my predecessor Ruth Thompson wrote so eloquently in the last edition of this magazine. Like Ruth, I have been touched



Top: Hard at work

Above: High Sheriff (second from left): 'What on earth are we supposed to do?'

by the sense of community in our county and the fabulous work undertaken by so many volunteers who are supporting our children and young people, many of whom face the most challenging circumstances in the early stages of their lives. While I have enjoyed every minute of the ceremonial side of the role, attending services in Durham and Newcastle Cathedrals, various civic events, celebrating Magna Carta, HM The Queen's long reign, Armed Forces Day, the Battle of Britain and the huge range of High Sheriff's activities, it is the work with these groups that proves the most rewarding. I am thoroughly looking forward to the next six months.

◆◆ Lucy Winskell, OBE DL
High Sheriff of Tyne and Wear 2015-16