

WEST GLAMORGAN

News from and about members



I'm doing it my way

MY DECLARATION took place on a lovely sunny day. The ceremony in the historic Margam Abbey and the afternoon tea in the beautiful Margam Orangery could not have gone better. It was a great start to what has been a fulfilling and heart-warming six months.

Being a magistrate, I was very keen to gain first-hand knowledge of police work behind the scenes. West Glamorgan High Sheriffs have great support from the local police officers and they were only too willing to arrange any number of visits to their facilities.

Because of my court experience, I was particularly interested in the support for victims of domestic violence. I spent a very interesting and informative morning at the Vulnerable Peoples' Unit speaking with officers dealing with the most difficult and sensitive crimes which include not only domestic violence, but child abuse, trafficking, paedophilia and sex offences. I was impressed by the professionalism, dedication and commitment of the officers. Wondering how they coped emotionally with these cases, I learnt that officers receive regular counselling to help maintain their physical and emotional well-being.

Visits to the South Wales Police Control Centre, the dog handlers, the mounted

police and the gun range, and attending events with the police youth volunteers, have also raised my understanding of policing across the county.

West Glamorgan has a very strong tradition of volunteering and from the outset I wanted to familiarise myself with the voluntary sector. My learning so far has been enlightening and humbling. I am noting many potential nominees for my High Sheriff's Awards at the end of the year! Time though is going quickly and I want to incorporate more informal visits to voluntary groups while I can.

My engagements have been diverse and wide-ranging, such as citizenship ceremonies, speaking at the Eid ul-Adha celebrations at Swansea University Mosque, climbing Pen-y-Fan with the police youth volunteers, supporting the Social Flag Project and watching the Freedom March of the Welsh Guards. I have enjoyed them all in different ways. I realised quickly the effect of time on memory so I decided to keep a journal to record my thoughts and feelings after each event which I can reflect on at my leisure – whenever that will be!

I have felt very privileged to have had the opportunity to take part in events that mean so much to others. I find it gratifying that people still value tradition

Top left: Awaiting the arrival of the First Battalion Welsh Guards for the inspection in Castle Square Swansea prior to the Freedom March through the City (L-R): Colonel TCS Bonas, Regimental Adjutant; Mr David King, veteran; Lt Colonel DWN Bevan MVO; the Lord Mayor of Swansea, Cllr P Downing; the High Sheriff; and the Lord-Lieutenant of West Glamorgan, Mr Byron Lewis

Above: Attending a citizenship ceremony with Mrs Joanna Jenkins MBE JP DL and the Lord Mayor of the City and County of Swansea, Councillor Philip Downing; The High Sheriff helping to raise the Mumbles St John's Ambulance Flag for the Social Flag Project in Swansea with members of the division, the Lord-Lieutenant Byron Lewis (High Sheriff 2004-05), and President of the Division, Dr Bryn John DL (High Sheriff 2009-10)

and appreciate the interest shown in them by the High Sheriff and various dignitaries. People are always interested in the role and I take any opportunity to speak about it and raise its profile within the community.

We are all temporary occupants of the High Sheriff's role and everyone advises 'do it your way'. 'Your way' becomes very clear once you are in office and I am very grateful to have been given the opportunity both to carry on the traditional duties of West Glamorgan High Sheriffs and also to do things 'my way'.

◆ Louise Fleet JP

High Sheriff of West Glamorgan 2017-2018