



West Midlands 2013-14

I have now had time to reflect on the past year, it has been without doubt one of the most fulfilling and enjoyable periods of my life. Everyone told me the year as High Sheriff would fly by, but the past twelve months have been very rewarding for my husband Tony Mitton and me.

It has been a privilege and honour to have served the County of the West Midlands as the High Sheriff and to have been able to combine the role with my professional life, as the Principal and Chief Executive of Birmingham Metropolitan College, has been truly unique and very special for me. I have been able to invite the students I work with to many shrieval events and the commitment they have given to me and to Tony has been outstanding. They have been out with us early mornings, late nights, Saturdays and Sundays, and they too have embraced the civic and ceremonial events with real passion and enthusiasm. I know they have made a lasting impression on all the people they have met throughout the year.

The office of High Sheriff is one of the oldest offices the county supports. Over the year I have come to realise this support comes by way of huge team effort. First, my thanks go to His Honour Judge Davis, the Recorder of Birmingham and all the other judges we have met over my year. Their friendship and hospitality has been much appreciated. We have witnessed some of the complicated and demanding work they all do; leadership and judgment, analytical and complex overviews along with the compassion and humour are a credit to our justice system which I believe is one of the best in the world operating with outstanding integrity and balance.

The support that has been given to my ambassadors has given them memories to treasure and aspirations to be fulfilled from the contacts and discussions they



The High Sheriff with the High Sheriff's Student Ambassadors at Birmingham Metropolitan College, Matthew Boulton Campus.

have had. Their time spent in the Crown and Magistrates' Courts will keep them on the right path, hopefully for the rest of their lives.

The second part of the team which is so crucial for the role is the Lord-Lieutenant, Paul Sabapathy, and his office and Deputy Lieutenants who manage visits of the Royal Family, which involve the High Sheriff. One of the highlights of the year was seeing the vast numbers of people who come out to support our Royal Family as its members recognise the tremendous voluntary work which goes on in the county.

The third part of the team are those responsible for civic and ceremonial

matters. My year has been significantly enhanced by joining the two Lord Mayors and five Mayors across the Midlands. We have come to know them well and appreciate how much they have supported their communities. As High Sheriff I have been able to celebrate and promote the work of the voluntary sector within the county, people helping others less fortunate than themselves. The whole fabric of community life in towns and cities would crumble without them. There are so many organisations and individuals across the county who make a real difference to the lives of others.

We have met many High Court Judges this year. We were delighted to be able to show them some of the county's rich



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heritage and listed buildings as well as treasures such as the Staffordshire Hoard in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery dating from 1885. We were also keen to showcase some of the fantastic new buildings in Birmingham, and appreciated dining in the Shakespeare Room of the new £189m Birmingham Library, which is the largest city centre development project ever undertaken in the UK.

We met many of the hard-working members of the Royal Family – HRH The Princess Royal, TRH The Earl and Countess of Wessex and HRH The Duke of Cambridge. I was particularly delighted when HRH The Duke of York agreed to open Harborne Academy, a new school of Birmingham Metropolitan College. He left so many wonderful memories with the staff and pupils, which I know will stay with them for a long time.

Tony and I have been given the opportunity to encourage and promote all kinds of good work and achievements throughout the county, and we were delighted to spend the year building upon the good work done by our predecessors, and also putting in place some further initiatives which we hope will be continued by future High Sheriffs.

Dame Christine Braddock DBE DL
High Sheriff of the West Midlands 2013-14



The High Sheriff and HRH The Duke of York at the opening of the Harborne Academy.



The High Sheriff and her husband, Mr Anthony E Mitton, with the Lord-Lieutenant and Lord Mayors and Mayors and their consorts of the West Midlands, which includes Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull and Walsall.