



Working on the chain gang

HAVING LIVED and worked in the West Midlands all my life it has given me enormous pleasure to shine a light on the countless individuals, communities and businesses whose innovation, talent and creativity make the region so great.

I have attended a huge array of events and met some wonderful people. I have also been privileged to play a part in a number of truly ground-breaking schemes that will bring a whole host of benefits to the West Midlands region for many, many years to come.

I have learnt many things this past year not least what a solid, dependable and proud legal system we have in this country – it is something we should all cherish. Never was this more evident than when attending the Court Awards in March; I came across some phenomenal examples of extraordinary people who have helped to bring people to justice.

Since the start of my year in office, I have been overwhelmed by the sheer

number of people who volunteer their time to help others and I have been inspired by the dedication of so many individuals who uphold the values of community and inclusivity – it would be nigh on impossible for me to congratulate all of them. However, by fostering close relationships with the two lord mayors and five mayors in my Shrievalty, I hope that I went some way to recognising as many of them as possible by feeding into the individual charities that each support. I am sure that relationships between the ‘chain gang’ within the Shrievalty was strengthened as a result of our close working and it gave me great pleasure to thank all of them personally during my High Sheriff’s luncheon, also attended by the Lord-Lieutenant.

Since the start of 2015, there have been many standout experiences that have created lasting memories: meeting the Shirley Sea Cadets, hearing about the sterling work of the Royal Star &



At the annual celebration of the administration of justice service 8 March 2015

Garter Homes, who provide nursing care to the ex-service community, and speaking at the Reynolds Cross School, a special needs school for pupils with severe learning difficulties. I was also delighted to support an innovative scheme at Arden Primary School in Sparkhill, Birmingham that helped pupils build closer relationships with their fathers. As part of the programme, dads regularly attended the school to participate in activities with their children including sports, cookery and bowling, in addition to hearing talks and taking part in workshops on citizenship, improving confidence and how to become a good role model. The scheme was a huge success and could now be rolled out across other schools, which has to be a good thing.

My year as High Sheriff will be a time I will always look back on and remember fondly, and I sincerely hope the people and groups I have had the pleasure of meeting and working alongside will agree.

It was a unique opportunity to give something back to the county I am proud to call home and it has been an honour to embrace the role and undertake the many ceremonial, civic and social events.



Major Sylvia Parkin MBE TD JP DL, Dr Tim Watts DL and the Reverend Paul Cudby (chaplain to the High Sheriff)

◆ Dr Tim Watts DL
High Sheriff of the West Midlands 2014-15