



Creative culture



Photo credit: Jas Sansi

Above: At the launch of My Route with Vanley Burke, photographer, Tas Bashir, Sampad writer, Reyahn King, Director of Heritage Lottery Fund West Midlands, Piali Ray OBE, Director Sampad

THE FIRST six months of my shrieval year have been an enormous honour and pleasure. I have put arts, creative industries, young people and justice at the centre of the year. I have enjoyed meeting visiting judges and attending a range of judicial, arts and cultural events with them.

At my Declaration in Birmingham's historic Victoria Law Courts I launched an Arts & Creative programme through which I have met many young people participating in arts, right from day one when illustrator Katie Tomlinson captured my Declaration in pencil. Other occasions have covered 3D printing at Solihull School, beautiful stained glass at Coventry Cathedral, great paintings in Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Wolverhampton and Walsall Art Galleries, and the 'Little Hoot and Big Hoot' launches that have engaged so many talented people and sponsors in support of Birmingham Children's Hospital. I have presented awards to school pupils who aspire to be

our lawyers and artists of the future at the local and national Mock Trial Finals. I enjoyed the launch of Sampad's My Route project which captures, shares and preserves the vibrant and culturally rich heritage that exists on the Stratford Road in inner city Birmingham (Sampad: South Asian arts). Over the last 60 years this road has welcomed many new residents from across the globe, whose lives and experiences have created a diverse and colourful tale that My Route acknowledges.

We recognised the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta with contributions from writer and commentator Joshua Rozenberg, Chancellor of Hereford Cathedral Chris Pullin and a specially created Magna Carta 'interactive table' by John Sear from the digital Humanities Hub at Birmingham University.

I have been honoured to attend royal visits; Anzac anniversary celebrations; Vaisakhi and Armed Forces Days; celebrations of HM The Queen's achievement



as the longest serving monarch by Coventry University and the British Organisation for People of Asian Origin. The months have been full of surprises such as the bicentennial celebration of Australia's Coventrian founder Sir Henry Parkes and Walsall's long-standing 'Buns and Shilling' tradition of giving to disadvantaged children, to new additions to the county like the Genting Arena at the NEC and the Bengali TV Studios in Small Heath, Birmingham.

Our summer garden party was held at the Library of Birmingham's garden in the city. Many of our guests enjoyed a series of artefacts and a specially commissioned exhibition by innovative and inspiring theatre company Stan's Cafe – 'Of All the People in All the World' – on the theme of young people, arts and justice. I also launched Birmingham's Creative Future and presented High Sheriff's awards to many inspiring young people nominated by our seven mayors. The event was generously supported by the library and Selfridges which made a special award to Yusuf Niazi, a young talent who is going places in theatre. Fourteen young cared-for children received an award for their group contribution to a Starlight owl sculpture for the Big Hoot.

We plan more of these events as the winter draws in and our hearts are warmed with the uplifting music, dance and arts from the rich diversity of people and cultures which make up the West Midlands.



Photo credit: Daniel Graves

Throughout my year, I have tweeted and blogged about the county-wide arts and creative activities I have attended, supported and encouraged. I'm told I may be one of the first High Sheriffs to use social media. You can follow me here: Hashtag – [highsheriffWM15](https://twitter.com/highsheriffWM15) – or get all the latest High Sheriff of the West Midlands stories, pictures and videos on my website – <http://highsheriffwm15.uk>.

♦ **Jonnie Turpie MBE**
High Sheriff of the West Midlands 2015-16

Above: Ready for the Big Hoot's Little Hoot

Below: Some of the winners of the award for their contribution to the Starlight owl: supported by Cllr Brigid Jones (back, centre) and nominated by the Mayor of Birmingham, Cllr Ray Hassall (sixth from right)



Photo credit: Graham Peet