



West Sussex 2012-13

Little did I suspect when I took office as High Sheriff of West Sussex that before my year of shrievalty was up I would be arrested on trumped-up charges and put in jail. However it was all in a good cause, and accompanied by the chief constable, the police and crime commissioner and others, we raised several thousand pounds for Crimestoppers. I continue to deplore the omission of their mention by the media when referring to people being afraid of being identified as informers by the criminals – it is exactly for that reason that Crimestoppers provide a nationwide confidential service and I encourage all High Sheriffs actively to support their work.

Having done about an appointment every two days, in actual fact it was far more 'lumpy' than that, with some weeks having only two engagements, other days having three, and a couple of runs of ten days of one each day. I wore court dress on about 15 occasions, for royal visits, school assemblies and so on. HRH Princess Alexandra came to Queen Alexandra Hospital Home, Worthing, on 4 April to open new facilities, and the Earl and Countess of Wessex toured Canine Partners on 8 June. We had no other royal visits, but several jubilee celebrations and garden parties – particularly notable was the parade at West Hoathly with every conceivable vehicle from veteran cars to Second World War armoured cars.

I had particular pride in presenting nine Queen's Awards for Enterprise, mainly for innovation, but also for export and one for voluntary service, so manufacturing is therefore successful and thriving in West Sussex.

I planned to attend at least one civic event in each town so that the role of High Sheriff could be seen and to encourage future engagement with the shrievalty. Thirteen towns, or cities, were therefore visited for mayor-making



The High Sheriff of West Sussex with the Lord-Lieutenant, Susan Pyper, at Canine Partners for a royal visit.

ceremonies, civic services, carol services or candlemas.

About a quarter of my time was spent with the armed forces, youth groups and related charities, such as SSAFA, Girlguiding, Scouts, Armed Forces Day, 47 Regt RA and 12 Regt RA at Thorney Island, various TA centres and activities, RBL, ABF and Remembrance Day. Four events were particularly enjoyable and interesting. On 13 May the annual gathering of the Italy Star Association at Chichester was celebrated with a reception, a service in

Chichester Cathedral, a parade by veterans and their families, and finally a splendid meal at the South Downs Holiday Village where many were staying (as it is a national event). The Armed Forces and Veterans' Drumhead Service on 1 July at Worthing was not only a grand spectacle but also an opportunity to talk one-to-one with those taking part. I was also pleased to see the signing of the Military Covenant at Chichester, whereby the County Council and the armed forces work closer to address their common needs, such as housing, education and



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care. Of particular family note was the Royal Sussex Regiment annual dinner at Lewes, where I sat in front of the silver mounted cavalryman donated by my great-grandfather when he retired as Honorary Colonel of the 3rd Battalion – and the multiple choruses of *Sussex by the Sea*.

My theme of ‘the reduction in repeat offending’ also included visiting mosques and ethnic community leaders. Naturally about a quarter of my time was spent with the police, courts, prisons and probation service, and I was particularly impressed by the work of the Hardman Trust at Ford Prison in eliminating repeat offending. The Firebreak initiatives at various fire stations showed another successful way of removing youngsters from a life of crime. Finally there were numerous charities that I supported with time, and sometimes donations, as I saw a key part of the High Sheriff’s role as supporting them and thanking them for all their hard work. □

Andrewjohn Stephenson Clarke
High Sheriff of West Sussex 2012-13



West and East Sussex Declaration ceremony in Lewes, with Andrewjohn Stephenson Clarke’s trumpets and banners.