



Discovering hidden gems

THE SECOND half of my shrieval year continued to be very busy and included many memorable experiences. One of the great pleasures of the year has been the friendships forged between the four Yorkshire High Sheriffs and their wives. In addition to attending and processing at the various legal services in the counties, we have visited several places together. These included the Police National Treatment Centre in Harrogate, which is a rehabilitation facility for injured police officers; the state-of-the-art Police Training Centre near Wakefield where we were shown the range of facilities, including firearms training, driver training and riot control; and a number of joint visits to prisons.

The eight of us spent a day in Hull, first visiting the regional offices of the Border Force where we gained an insight into the important work of this government agency. This was followed by an afternoon sail on the Humber in the sailing boat owned by the charity Cat Zero which is led by Jim Dick, High Sheriff of the East Riding.

We also spent a day visiting two organisations in North Yorkshire that work tirelessly to help keep us all safe.

First we went to the little-known outpost of GCHQ near Scarborough which has operated in that location for over 100 years. They explained the important work they do in the areas of counter-terrorism and cybercrime, as well as addressing other issues including child sexual exploitation, people trafficking and smuggling. Later we visited RAF Fylingdales which was the site of the giant 'golf balls', once a prominent sight on the North Yorkshire landscape and now replaced by a single giant pyramid structure. It forms part of the worldwide chain of ballistic missile early-warning sensors and their radars provide early warning of a missile attack. They are also engaged in space surveillance, monitoring the movements of the tens of thousands of items orbiting in space, from objects a few inches long through to the international space station which is the size of two football pitches.

One of the great privileges of being High Sheriff is the opportunity to discover hidden gems in the county. The Wakefield area is the home of the 'rhubarb triangle', a nine-square-mile area which is famous for the forced growing of rhubarb, a cultivation

method that was developed in the early 1800s. Together with Charlie Forbes Adam, High Sheriff of North Yorkshire, and his wife Ros, my wife Heather and I were part of a group which visited a forced rhubarb growing shed and listened to an explanation of the growing technique from a third-generation rhubarb farmer. The rhubarb plants spend two years outside and are moved into heated sheds in November and kept in complete darkness until they are harvested by candlelight during February and March.

The shrieval year flew by, as I knew it would, but it has provided so many experiences that will stay with me forever.

◆ Ed Anderson

High Sheriff of West Yorkshire 2015-16

Below left: Ed and Heather Anderson visit Oldroyds Rhubarb Farm, Carlton, Wakefield

Below: Yorkshire High Sheriffs and wives at RAF Fylingdales: Jim Dick (East Riding), Christine Dick, John Holt (South Yorkshire), Ros Forbes Adam, Ed Anderson (West Yorkshire), Lynn Holt, Heather Anderson, Charlie Forbes Adam (North Yorkshire), Station Commander Wing Commander Dave Keighley

