



Celebrating the 'Uncelebrated Journey'

AFTER YOU have agreed that your name can go forward as your county's nomination as a future High Sheriff, you have plenty of time to think about what you want to do and achieve during 'your year'.

As chair of Swindon Women's Aid, which provides refuge facilities and support for women and their children affected by domestic abuse (DA) in Swindon, I knew my focus would be on raising awareness of the impact DA has on victims and families in Wiltshire and planned to organise events that would raise funds to support the tremendous work of the charities and voluntary groups.

During my first six months, I have talked to Swindon Borough and Wiltshire Councils – both councillors and staff – about their work with victims, families and perpetrators. I've had great support from the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Chief Constable and his officers for whom DA is certainly a high priority. The MOD have recently published a DA strategy and Wiltshire's senior army officers have been very open on how they are dealing with incidents of DA within the army family.

I have visited charities providing support to victims and working with perpetrators; sat in court and listened to judges hear some horrendous



Right: Summer Party at STEAM (Museum of Great Western Railway): High Sheriff Nicky Alberry with David Waters from The Great Bustard Charity (Wiltshire's county bird)

Photo: Calyx Picture & TV Agency



News from and about members



Incredibly, 'Uncelebrated Journey' involved over 230 performers and featured five specially commissioned pieces of work shaped by Alfred's poems, with a spectacular finale sung by over 120 people.

This unique performance was a sell-out at the Wyvern Theatre, and a truly memorable and triumphant celebration of the wealth of artistic talent that symbolises the modern, vibrant, creative town that Swindon is today.

A quieter six months ahead? Perhaps, after the tandem sky-dive...

◆ Nicky Alberry DL

High Sheriff of Wiltshire 2018-19

Left: Fundraising dinner at Bowood House: Nicky Alberry with speaker Katie Ghose, Chief Executive Women's Aid Federation England and Olwen Kelly, Director Swindon Women's Aid

Below: Singers, musicians, actors and dancers in the 'Uncelebrated Journey' Photo credit: Calyx Picture & TV Agency

cases; visited my local prison Erlestoke to talk to the governor about some of his offenders; met the Crown Prosecution Service lead for DA; talked to probation and community rehabilitation staff about offender management; and met specialist support workers in mental health, drug and alcohol rehabilitation. It has been hectic, but I have been so impressed by the caring and professional approach shown by all of those I've met. It's clear to me that the money available to tackle DA is very stretched. This makes collaborative working a priority so I've chosen this as a focus for my DA Conference in January 2019. So far, I've managed to raise £20,000 from my summer party at STEAM and a dinner at Bowood House but we need much more.

Having worked in Swindon for many years, I also wanted to raise the profile of the performing arts in the town which has wonderful dance schools, a youth theatre company, many excellent choirs and singing groups, including a choral society and a full symphony orchestra.

So, a massive Swindon collaboration gave birth to 'Uncelebrated Journey' a truly unique event celebrating a combination of Swindon's performing arts, history and heritage. As our theme we chose key moments from the very moving life of the largely unknown and uncelebrated Swindon poet, Alfred Williams, who was known as 'The Hammerman Poet' due to his job in the Great Western Railway foundry.

