



Trains and boats and planes (and bikes and feet)

Above: Supreme Court Judge Lord Lloyd-Jones, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge Professor Stephen Toope OC and Lord Bishop of Ely the Rt Revd Stephen Conway led the largest assembly of judges and academics ever to process through Cambridge
Photo credit: Jet Photographic

IT CAN'T possibly be a year since my wife Lily Bacon, also a DL, and I started out on our extraordinary journey, without doubt one of the most rewarding experiences that we have had. From the outset, we decided to engage with (almost...) anything that came along, in addition to our own elaborate projects and plans. As a result, we participated in more events than there are days in the year, covering well over 10,000 miles across the county along the way. It was, as a number of our friends put it, a thoroughly hyperactive year!

We arranged to criss-cross the county in several challenges, including a 40-mile cycle ride from Peterborough to Cambridge, travelling from

Cambridge to Ely by river, and finally completing the loop by walking 40 miles (directly into Storm Gareth!) along the Hereward Way in a Lenten pilgrimage between the county's great cathedrals in Ely and Peterborough. Another challenge was to visit the most northern, southern, eastern and western villages of the county in a day, also taking in the highest and lowest villages for good measure. The county is well served by the rail network, and with our boys Raphael and Gabriel, both train fanatics, we managed to visit all the 20 stations in a day, including the country's least visited station at Shippea Hill. We also flew over the county in formation with the University Air Squadron based at RAF Wittering. These challenges formed the core of our fundraising efforts, but more



importantly were a terrific way of meeting people from all walks of life and explaining the Office High Sheriff.

It has been an enormous privilege to spend time with the many people and organisations involved with justice in the county, a cornerstone of the role. Our three prisons are all very different, and we have a police force stretched by urban issues of drugs and associated violent crime and rural issues particular to the flat landscape of the county. We have spent time in all the county's courts and are struck by the dedication and hard work of all those involved there in often difficult and challenging conditions. We came to particularly appreciate the entirely voluntary work of magistrates, and were pleased to initiate a High Sheriff's Award Scheme recognising length of service – two of our magistrates have over 35 years of service!

High Sheriffs are often asked what the highlight of their year was. It is an invidious question, but if pushed I think we would have to say it was our Justice Service on Sunday 7 October. As members of the University of Cambridge, we were able to hold it in the University Church of Great St Mary's, where historically an annual service was held until the abolition of the assize courts in 1971. Trinity College was a fitting backdrop to the day, with the Master's Lodge and the Hall coming into their own for a glittering drinks reception and splendid lunch. On a gloriously sunny day, Trinity Street was closed to traffic to allow a procession of some 200 to and from the church, where a capacity congregation of 1,200 were uplifted by a service including Hubert Parry's 'I Was Glad' on the exact 100th anniversary of his death, complete with Coronation Vivats by kind permission of HM The Queen. In another special touch, John Rutter conducted his own anthem 'The Lord Bless You and Keep You'. If this were not enough, it was also Lily's birthday, which was marked appropriately with a rousing chorus over lunch. Judges sing with gusto!



The culmination of our fundraising activities was the High Sheriff's Awards ceremony, held on the last full day of the shrieval year. The blood, sweat and tears of our numerous exertions had paid off, and we were able to make awards totaling £110,000 to a wide range of regional charities, with a particular focus on those involving young volunteers. We were delighted that Carol Vorderman was able to join us in hosting a joyful end-of-year celebration, which was also an opportunity to thank our many friends and supporters for their kindness and generosity.

It has been a huge honour to serve the county of Cambridgeshire, supporting the work of the wider judiciary and civic life more generally. Every aspect of the county relies in an intrinsic way on the contribution of volunteers, and the importance of this to the wellbeing of the region is our abiding memory.

♣ **Dr Andrew Harter CBE DL**
High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire 2018-19

Above: Magistrates receiving long service awards at an inaugural ceremony and reception hosted by the High Sheriff and Lily Bacon DL Photo credit: David Johnson Photographic

Below Right: Local charities receive financial awards at a ceremony and reception hosted by the High Sheriff and Lily Bacon DL with Carol Vorderman MBE

Below Left: The High Sheriff and Lily Bacon DL with senior staff members of the University Air Squadron at RAF Wittering after flying in formation around the county

