



‘Oh no! Not the Sheriff of Nottingham’



IT'S NOT always easy to explain the role of High Sheriff to a member of the public, particularly when the county's principal city also has an elected Sheriff. I should have foreseen that the task would be made even more difficult by taking two of our grandchildren, aged seven and five, to the Nottingham Playhouse pantomime of Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood just before Christmas. The audience was encouraged to shout out 'Oh no! Not the Sheriff of Nottingham' every time that evil man appeared upon the stage. I was grateful that my grandchildren didn't repeat it at my installation.

The modern role embraces, of course, all faiths, and my first official appearance was to join approximately 3,500 Sikhs in Nottingham's Old Market Square for their Vaisakhi celebrations, marking the 550th birth anniversary of their founder, Guru Nanek Dev Ji. I must confess to being nervous about catching a tram to the event, wearing court dress with sword, but nobody even blinked an eye. Following the arrival of the holy books, carried from the Forest Recreation Ground by bare-

Above: High Sheriff and Under Sheriff, Hon Mr Justice Jeremy Baker (in the background), Recorder of Nottingham Judge Dickinson QC and ten circuit judges

Below: High Sheriff, Lord-Lieutenant Sir John Peace, and former High Sheriff Dr Jas Bilkhu

footed faithful, there were prayers and rituals, before the meeting broke up and there were displays of martial art sword fighting, free vegetarian food, and turban-tying. The Lord-Lieutenant, Sir John Peace, former High Sheriff Dr Jas Bilkhu and I all volunteered for this, and my

trip back on the tram in court dress and turban attracted a lot more attention.

The next event was a dinner at a local mosque for the Muslim charity 'Walk for Peace', which has the objective of breaking down the barriers between different faiths, different races and different viewpoints. Last year it raised £1m for charity, with all administration costs being absorbed by the Muslim community so that every penny raised went to charitable causes.

May was busy. It started with a visit by South American lawyers to Nottingham, and in particular to the National Justice Museum where I am a trustee. They loved the surroundings of the old Shire Hall, where I used to appear as a barrister, and where they observed a mock trial. That was followed by the High Sheriff of Rutland's Service, the 25th anniversary of the Lincs and Notts Air Ambulance, a presentation by the army and a beautiful afternoon at Buckingham Palace for a royal garden party.

The major event for the High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire is HM The Queen's Birthday Service at Southwell Minster. There was a congregation of over 300, with no fewer than 11 circuit judges and one high court judge. We entertained 64 people at a delicious lunch supplied by a local caterer, and managed to sit down on time even though the judges and others (including myself) had been locked out of the changing area and were temporarily unable to get back into civilian clothes.

◆ **His Honour Jonathan Teare**
High Sheriff of Nottinghamshire 2019-20

