



NORTHUMBERLAND

News from and about members



Left: Lady Joicey takes over as High Sheriff from Michael Orde in 2019, with (L-R) Alexander Dickinson (Under Sheriff), Revd Juan Vilaseca (High Sheriff's chaplain) and Professor Joy Palmer Cooper JP

From 'Fly Me to the Moon' to COVID-19

THANKS TO Max Humphreys on the trumpet and his mother on the organ I exited my Declaration service to a jazz version of 'Fly Me to the Moon', but as everyone knows what goes up comes down, and so it proved, with the end of my shrieval year being very different from the beginning.

In the first weeks I learnt that my satnav was essential, that I should always leave a lot of time to get anywhere, that I could ask as many questions as I liked, that I could talk to anyone and that a sense of humour was essential.

During the year I met so many remarkable people and had some amazing experiences – a Friday night police patrol in Newcastle city centre was an eye-opener, as was separately meeting a seven-year-old whose ambition in life was to get an ASBO. My respect for the social services is great, my respect for the many volunteers in all walks of life is unending; what goes on in the county is unbelievable. Add to that a hugely increased knowledge of how the legal system works. The icing on the cake was

the judges – so easy to entertain and so entertaining. I took two High Court Judges to see Opera North's production of *Street Scene* when it was showing in Newcastle. One judge said that the evening was the perfect antidote to a day in court – but then reflected that the story line of infidelity, domestic abuse and wayward children actually smacked more of a busman's holiday!

I visited prisons, encouraged voluntary groups in their work, supported the armed forces, slept out at Ashington Football Ground in aid of the YMCA and attended various church services including an excellent one organised by Northumberland County Council to support International Women's Day.

And then it all came to a shuddering halt. The diary was full to bursting for the final three weeks including our annual award ceremony to be held at Ashington College, which would have seen all the award-winning groups coming together to receive their certificates. Within a few days everything was cancelled, lockdown was imminent and so a

lovely and hastily rearranged handover happened. Just Tom Fairfax, the incoming High Sheriff, with his family and the necessary officials needed to oversee the service met together in his sitting room. It was simple and very moving.

Unlike me Tom is excellent with technology. This coming year and because of COVID-19 High Sheriffs will have an even more important role in helping and supporting their counties, but the engagement model has changed and Tom is unlikely to travel the thousands of miles that I have. The feeling in Northumberland is that the High Sheriff of Northumberland Fund administered by the Community Foundation is going to be more essential than ever. Already he is busy fundraising, to ensure that we can support small and mostly voluntary groups doing valuable work with the youth of Northumberland. For anyone interested in knowing how our county fund works, do email Tom at highsheriffnorthumberland@gmail.com, as I am aware that not all counties have such schemes in place.

◆ Harriet Joicey

The Lady Joicey, High Sheriff of Northumberland 2019-20



Lady Joicey hands over as High Sheriff to Tom Fairfax TD in 2020 with (L-R) Canon Alan Hughes MBE TD (High Sheriff's chaplain), His Honour Judge Sloan QC (Honorary Recorder of Newcastle upon Tyne) and Harry Chrisp (Under Sheriff)