



## Tomorrow will be a better day

**AS WITH all High Sheriffs in this COVID year, I was unfamiliar with exactly what to expect. We know to expect the unexpected, but I was unable to appreciate how much I might be missing and what I would have had the privilege to be party to. I have very much taken the attitude of *Que será, será*.**

With an expectation of what may lie ahead, my predecessor as High Sheriff of South Glamorgan, Dr Isabel Graham, brought forward the handover dinner, which so far has been the only social function we have all attended; this was held with an almost full complement of the county's previous High Sheriffs and partners shortly before the lockdown.

At the restricted Declaration ceremony (before social distancing), presided over by His Honour Judge Twomlow, Jeff Edwards JP managed to swear in both Jason Edwards for Mid Glamorgan and myself at the same time.

When the pandemic hit in March I had already managed to adapt one of my factories to produce hand sanitiser. And so despite working 24 hours 7 days a week, I was in some ways thankful of the easement from my ceremonial and social duties. Making and supplying hand sanitiser and other PPE equipment to the NHS, police forces and MOD was certainly a great honour and privilege.



The High Sheriff with Gabriella Howell and Maroof Pirzada from Muslim Charity loading donations bound for Yemen

As my official duties had ground to a halt before even beginning I switched my attention to the charitable role of High Sheriff, and have taken the motto 'Protecting the Protectors' as a daily duty. I was able to help many among us both locally and overseas, who were in need during the early days of the pandemic as well as those less fortunate than ourselves. I managed to donate to those in the 'new front line': homeless charities, medical centres, care centres, hospices, fire service, police and military. It was inspiring to meet these heroes as my family and I personally delivered the vital PPE so that they could continue doing their work. It meant that (within social distancing rules) I was given a better understanding of their needs and the desperate situation they were in. Further afield I donated our PPE to those medical personnel in critical situations attending refugees in Yemen, the indigenous people in Guyana, the Lebanon (the camps and the residents of Beirut after the terrible explosion), and islands in the Caribbean which are experiencing economic meltdown with the lack of tourism which is mainly their only income.

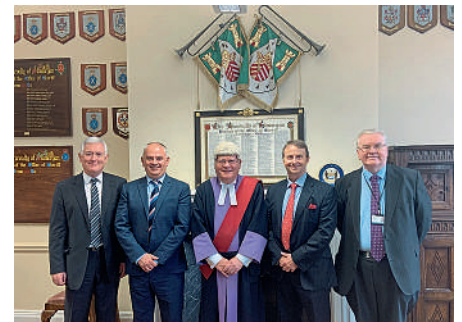
In partnership with my fellow High Sheriffs – Jason Edwards in Mid Glamorgan and Debbie Williams in West Glamorgan – and with the IT skills of my daughter Isabella, we produced a video of a very uplifting and enthralling COVID poem, read by a number of Welsh celebrities. This can be seen on: [www.highsheriffsouthglamorgan.com/poem](http://www.highsheriffsouthglamorgan.com/poem).

Michael Sheen, Sir Gareth Edwards, Griff Rhys Jones, Sir Bryn Terfel Jones, Rhod Gilbert and Alun Wyn Jones are among those featured. We raised over £18,000 for the NHS and are still open for donations. Please pass on this link; it is very moving, and you even catch a glimpse of the three Glamorgan High Sheriffs!

The show must go on in these surreal and uncertain times. As unprecedented as this pandemic is for all of us, we must look for positives and can take inspiration from past High Sheriffs who no doubt battled on through worse pandemics



Screenshot during the reading of the poem



Philip Evans (Under Sheriff South Glamorgan), Jason Edwards (Mid Glamorgan), His Honour Judge Twomlow, Andrew Howell (South Glamorgan) and Jeff Edwards JP at the joint Declaration

like the Black Death (1346-1353), the Spanish Flu (1918), Asian Flu (1956-1958) and even the flu pandemic in 1968. Experts say that the Little Ice Age, which followed the Black Death and lasted until 1850, may have been partly due to the Black Death plague. We have certainly seen COVID's impact on the environment, which we can take as one positive from this insidious virus's devastating destruction.

Looking for other rays of sunshine and hope: I always loved the sentiment from the Morecambe and Wise song 'Bring me Sunshine' which I'm sure we all find uplifting whenever we remember it. We now also have Colonel Sir Tom Moore's truly inspirational Yorkshire grit and humour, hope and positivity, with his key message of *Tomorrow will be a better day*.

Keep smiling, keep sanitising and keep safe.

**◆ Andrew Howell**  
*High Sheriff of South Glamorgan 2020-21*