



## Dymuniadau gorau a phob lwc!

**IT IS axiomatic that the 2020-21 shrieval year has been unprecedented in living memory for most of us. With restrictions on our freedom of movement not experienced before in peacetime it has been difficult to maintain the profile of the Shrievalty in the normal way and nowhere has this been seen in starker terms than in rural counties such as Gwynedd.**

It is nearly 100 miles from Caer gybi (Holyhead) to Aberdyfi which raises logistical problems even without having to contend with the added strictures of the Welsh government's COVID-19 regulations. In common with many other colleagues I have found it both disappointing and frustrating not to have been able to go out and about in support of those groups and organisations within the county who normally look to the High Sheriff for recognition, encouragement and practical assistance.

Back in March, the start of my year in office should have been marked with a Declaration ceremony at the world-famous Portmeirion village. This had been long in the planning and I was looking forward to making my Declaration in the presence of around 75 friends and dignitaries in the Neaudd Ercwlff (Hercules Hall) followed by luncheon at the Hotel Portmeirion. With just about a week to go it was devastating to have to cancel everything when the first lockdown was announced. In the event I made my Declaration before a local JP literally standing on my doorstep! But with, as it turned out, misplaced optimism I decided to postpone the ceremonial at Portmeirion until the end of September. Sadly that also had to be cancelled. However, so as not to disappoint a number of friends who had committed to travelling to Gwynedd for the event we went ahead with a small socially distanced celebratory ceremony in my garden for which we were blessed with a glorious sunny day.

For the remainder of the year I have been extremely limited in what I have been able to do. I have participated in meetings and limited events via Zoom



including Crimebeat and PACT meetings. The occasions on which I met anyone in person or wore court dress outside a virtual meeting were limited to just four: sitting with the judge at Caernarfon Crown Court, presenting badges to my two North Wales police cadets on the steps of Caernarfon Castle, laying a wreath on Remembrance Sunday and doing a piece to camera to launch the North Wales Police internet safety poster competition for primary schools. Placing my wreath on the war memorial in Harlech where I was brought up was particularly poignant because my great-uncle Richard Williams, who was killed on the Somme, is commemorated on the monument. I was also delighted and honoured to participate in the 2020 National Crimebeat awards ceremony not least because the winning entry – ‘Sharing Stories’ – was a joint Gwynedd and Clwyd project which was fully deserving of the accolade.

The highlights of my year have been participating in the Crimebeat police cadets' challenge – not least because the winning entry came from my own cadet Joshua Taylor – and awarding certificates in a virtual ceremony to Royal College of Nursing in Wales volunteer representatives from Gwynedd. It was

**Above left:** Edmund Bailey, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Gwynedd, D Eryl Francis Williams, Sarah Foskett JP, and Revd Shelagh Naylor at the socially distanced gathering  
**Above:** Remembrance Sunday in Harlech  
**Below:** The High Sheriff with North Wales police cadets Joshua Taylor and Olivia Ward for the presentation of badges at Caernarfon Castle



Photo credit: PACT North Wales

humbling and inspiring to learn of the selfless dedication of NHS staff during this terrible pandemic.

And so this strange year comes to a close. It remains to thank all those individuals who have so readily given me their help and advice and to wish my successor, Gwyn Peredur Owen, a safe and successful year in office. *Dymuniadau gorau a phob lwc!*

**◆ D Eryl Francis Williams**  
*High Sheriff of Gwynedd 2020-21*