



Selflessness in many forms

My shrieval year started on 26 March when I made my Declaration in the court of the Resident Judge and Honorary Recorder of Durham at Durham Crown Court, His Honour Judge Adkin. It was very much socially distanced and only attended by seven of us, but the court kindly streamed it live to allow my sons and daughters-in-law and other friends to watch the ceremony.

The first few months were relatively quiet due to COVID-19 restrictions, although I attended a Service of Thanksgiving to celebrate the life of His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh in Durham Cathedral. It was a moving service.

I attended the Richardson Hospital in Barnard Castle at the end of April to help them celebrate Teesdale Primary Care Network administering their 20,000th COVID-19 vaccine. At that time, their vaccination rate was one of the highest in the country. I was impressed with the Dunkirk spirit of all the staff and volunteers, ably led by Dr Dilys Waller.

Judge Adkin has authorised three Crown Court Awards under the Criminal Law Act 1826, Section 28. I presented the first one in April to Jemma Wood who stopped her car after observing a serious road traffic accident on the A68 in September 2018. She called the emergency services and then stayed on the



Inspecting Air Cadets following the Battle of Britain Commemoration Service in Durham Cathedral

scene offering words of comfort to those who were trapped in the motor vehicles having suffered severe injuries. The certificate stated this was a 'particularly notable act of kindness and selflessness'.

I undertook another presentation of Crown Court Awards at Horden to each of the Singh brothers who were actively involved in the apprehension of somebody who had attempted armed robbery in their family's general store.

The Commemoration of the Battle of Britain organised by the Durham and Northumberland Wing Air Cadets was held at Durham Cathedral in September

and was followed by the cadets' parade. This was the first time that they had been together since spring 2020.

HRH the Duke of Gloucester opened the revamped Globe Theatre at Stockton at the end of September and was shown the extensive restoration works.

Early in my year I unveiled some benches at the Wetlands Trust in Langley Park.

This area has been reclaimed from derelict ground and converted into a sanctuary for under-privileged children to visit and see the wildlife along the river bank.

The County Durham Community Foundation has been extremely helpful in directing me to support local charities in the county. I appreciate their help and will be supporting the High Sheriff's Charitable Fund within the Foundation.

I attended St Margaret's Centre in Durham City to celebrate its 30th anniversary and saw the good work carried out by an enthusiastic and committed group of helpers and volunteers in dealing with adult mental health issues. It has been a privilege to see how many good things are done by so many people. I would not have experienced this if I had not had the honour of serving the county as its High Sheriff.



Judge Adkin, Jemma Wood with her court award, High Sheriff



Harjeevan Lally and Jaskarran Lally Singh receiving their court awards from the High Sheriff

◆ J Robert Harle

High Sheriff of the County Palatine of Durham 2021-22