



Enlightening, educating and humbling

WHILE MY shrieval year was relatively quiet for the first five months, the remainder of the year has been anything but! The postponed Matins for Her Majesty's Courts of Justice was held in Durham Cathedral at the end of October and was attended by a great number of High Court, Crown Court and District Court Judges. It was followed by luncheon at our home as the usual venue in Durham Castle was unavailable due to students being in residence. The Dean of Durham, the Very Revd Andrew Tremlett, gave the sermon. At the luncheon Under Sheriff Helen Dexter was Master of Ceremonies, grace was said by the Revd Alison Hobbs (High Sheriff's Chaplain) and the Hon Mr Justice Lavender responded on behalf of guests.

We organised 'A Carol Service for the County' in Durham Cathedral just before Christmas which was attended by 400 people. It was rather restricted due to the latest Covid outbreak at the time. It was purposely aimed at those in the county who might not otherwise have had the opportunity to visit the cathedral so it was rewarding that a number of those attending had never been before. It was only the third time that such an event had been organised. Guests were greeted and escorted to their seats by members of the police cadets. The lessons were read by the Lord-Lieutenant, Chief Constable, a member of Brandon Carrside Youth and Community Project and a pupil from Durham Johnston



Matins for Her Majesty's judiciary at Durham Cathedral with Lord-Lieutenant Sue Snowdon (front centre), Chief Constable Jo Farrell (directly behind High Sheriff), Hon Mr Justice Lavender and High Sheriff's Chaplain Alison Hobbs (both second row from left)

Comprehensive School. Prayers and the main address were given by my chaplain.

My visit to County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service was very enlightening and I was delighted to be able to congratulate staff on winning the UK Fire and Rescue Service of the Year Award. I also found my visit to Durham Constabulary most informative and would like to thank Chief Constable Jo Farrell for her support during my shrieval year.

My wife and I started to visit youth groups all over the county at the end of

Below left: 'A Carol Service for the County' L-R: Kieran Knight (Brandon Carrside Youth and Community Project), Lord-Lieutenant Sue Snowdon, Chief Constable Jo Farrell, Iesha Tharakan (Durham Johnston Comprehensive School) and Robert Harle

Below right: With High Sheriff's Youth Award Winners Stanley Area Youth Consortium



January in advance of the High Sheriff's Youth Awards. This was a particularly enlightening, educating and humbling experience. It was so good to meet people from all sectors of our society who do so much for no financial reward or public recognition. They are just decent human beings wanting to help others.

The High Sheriff's Youth Awards were held in the magnificent Ushaw historic house on 17 March. There were 11 groups which received financial awards with the highest award going to Stanley Area Youth Consortium from north-west Durham.

These awards were organised by the County Durham Community Foundation which has been of great assistance to me in supporting and promoting voluntary organisations within County Durham. Their help has been invaluable and they have opened doors to places and people that I would never have been able to access.

It has been a true privilege to be appointed as High Sheriff and I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting such a variety of groups and individuals throughout the year. I will endeavour to continue to support some of these groups going forward.

J Robert Harle
High Sheriff of the County Palatine of Durham 2021-22

Photo: Tom Banks