



Concentrate on the positives

AT THE time of writing, I can see the finishing line of my year fast approaching. I suspect that many High Sheriffs say 'Where has the year gone?' It seems that six months ago we had all the time to do what we wanted with no pressure. My thought now is 'Have I done enough?' The answer is in the lap of the gods and different for every High Sheriff. We will never know.

It has been a strange year, certainly not as restricted as the previous one, but it has had its interruptions, cancellations and postponements. Before Christmas we seemed to take a backward step with more lockdowns but since then things have looked up. I prefer to concentrate on the positives and to my mind it has been an excellent year.

When asked what the highlights have been, I can reel off this Judges' Service, that visit to a charity, or this dinner but to my mind what I have really enjoyed is meeting people. I have been privileged to meet and work with the two other High Sheriffs from the Duchy of Lancaster, Diane Hawkins from Greater Manchester and Edwin Booth from Lancashire; also with the High Sheriffs from Cheshire and from Cumbria, Robert Mee and David Beeby. They all have been great company and I believe we have worked well together.



The High Sheriff, the Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside, Mark Blundell, and the immediate past High Sheriff of Merseyside, His Honour John Roberts DL, cutting a cake to commemorate the 175th anniversary of Birkenhead Park (the first public park established at public expense in the UK) – what swordsmanship!



The High Sheriff about to board HMS Queen Elizabeth

The other people whom I have come across are too numerous to mention but there have been some inspiring and impressive individuals who make this county great. The five borough mayors in Merseyside have been a delight to meet and work with and also have been great fun. Libby and I have been to a number of Freedom of the City of Liverpool ceremonies and there is quite a backlog in the mayoral calendars. Sadly one or two people have died after being awarded the honour but before they could attend the ceremony.

I have been impressed with the children I have met and the young people involved in the Crimebeat Awards have all been hugely inspiring. The fascination with my sword has been a constant source of interest and fun. I was asked whether I had ever had a sword fight with the Lord-Lieutenant by one inquisitive boy – my answer was 'not yet'!

In my previous article I mentioned the maritime connections of Merseyside and we recently had a visit from HMS *Queen Elizabeth*; the aircraft carrier is the joint largest and most powerful vessel ever constructed for the Royal Navy. Seeing her tied up where the cruise liners berth was a privilege and a pleasure. The ship and crew welcomed us warmly and it was quite an experience.

I feel honoured to have served Her Majesty The Queen in my year and



At the High Sheriff's Awards held in Liverpool Town Hall with the Lord Mayor, Cllr Mary Rasmussen (centre), and Under Sheriff of the County Palatine of Lancaster, David Cam DL (back right)

seeing the Royal Family gathering for the memorial service for HRH The Duke of Edinburgh makes one feel proud. I was especially impressed with the younger royals and I believe the monarchy is in good hands for the future.

I now hope and believe that the road is open for my successor, Lesley Martin-Wright, to motor away.

Nigel Lanceley DL
High Sheriff of Merseyside 2021-22