



'If you think you know your county...'

HAVING BEEN brought up in Worcestershire, I have recently coined the phrase: 'If you think you know your county, then be High Sheriff and you will discover that you didn't.'

My first day in office was marked by the sad news of the death of HRH The Duke of Edinburgh, and so my first official engagement was a service of thanksgiving and prayers in Worcester Cathedral.

Over the course of the year, I have visited or met with over 35 charities or volunteer groups, with a particular focus on mental health. Thank you to all for the welcome and time that you have given so freely.

I was delighted to be able to host a High Sheriff's reception last September and we were blessed with wonderful weather and it was, for many, the first unrestricted social gathering for 18 months.

I have presented 15 High Sheriff's Awards to nominated people and groups, which included the surprise celebration of the 99th birthday in Kidderminster of a Polish war veteran of the *Battle of Monte Cassino*. I have made financial awards from the High Sheriff's Fund to three of the county's deserving charities.

With regard to fundraising this year, my wife organised a High Sheriff's sky dive team, in aid of the Worcestershire Breast Unit Haven. In all, the team raised an incredible £33,000 from sponsorship. Congratulations and thanks to all involved.

In October, we held a High Sheriff's



With Pippa Mills, Chief Constable of West Mercia Police, and 'Peeler' the mascot at the West Mercia Police RFC v Staffordshire Police RFC mental health charity match at Bromsgrove Rugby Club



The Hon Mr Justice Pepperall and Richard Amphlett at the Declaration Ceremony at Shirehall, Worcester

golf day at Blackwell Golf Club. The weather during the round progressed from dull and overcast to heavy rain. Despite this, we had wonderful support from across the county and along with the auction we raised over £17,500 for the High Sheriff's Fund.

I have attended and presented awards at several ceremonies. These have included the West Mercia Police Young Citizen Awards and the Annual Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service Awards. These awards are to such deserving people, who either risk their lives or enhance the lives of others through their actions. It is very easy to feel humble in their presence.

I presented an inaugural High Sheriff's Law School Prize and Award for the top law graduate, at a special ceremony organised in the Law Faculty at



Presenting a High Sheriff's Award to Lia Palios-Hayden and Catherine Kevis of YSS, a charity that provides a wide variety of mainly community focused support



Richard Amphlett presents the inaugural High Sheriff's Law School Prize and Award to Danielle Jones at the University of Worcester

the University of Worcester. It is hoped that this will become an annual award.

Over several weeks, I was an onlooker with the police in the preparation of their bid for Safer Streets funding and witnessed the positive co-operation that exists among the statutory bodies that run our towns and cities.

I have sat in on both 'live' cases and a mock trials competition in Worcester magistrates' court. Moving from the magistrates' court to county courts, I have attended both a murder trial and also a murder sentencing.

Away from the courts, I attended and gave an address for the National Srebrenica Memorial Day in July last year. Later in the year, I also attended the National Holocaust Memorial Event. Both were a powerful reminder of the evils of ethnic cleansing and hate crime inflicted by neighbour upon neighbour. Tragically, recent events have shown us again that history has a dreadful way of repeating itself.

Inevitably, there have been many things that I would have liked to have done but restrictions and time have not permitted. It has been a huge privilege and honour to serve as High Sheriff and humbling to be able to meet, get to know, connect with and thank many amazing people and organisations who provide and deliver vital services to our communities and, without whom, society would not function.

Richard Amphlett
High Sheriff of Worcestershire 2021-22