

# From marrows to magistrates and more...

## Sir Richard FitzHerbert Bt

High Sheriff of Derbyshire 2025-26

It is just over six months since I took the oath at our village church, St Mary's in Tissington, to accept the role of High Sheriff in our great County of Derbyshire. I am the sixth member of our family to undertake the position stretching back to Francis FitzHerbert in 1602. The family history meant that I have a lot to live up to.

I promised to champion the tourism and agricultural sectors and the various charities that help farmers and rural workers at difficult times and I was truly delighted that Alan Griggs, our local agricultural chaplain, agreed to be my chaplain. I have made it my business to attend as many agricultural shows as possible and thus far have been to ten around the county ranging from sheepdog trials to ploughing matches. At these shows my duties have ranged from 'judging

the best marrow' to presenting the myriad cups and prizes. Wherever I have visited on this rural idyll I have been welcomed with warmth and generosity as well as being sumptuously fed.

As chair of the Visit Peak District & Derbyshire Tourist Board I have tried to travel all over the county and, through the position, to promote the many smaller rural businesses that make up the astounding offer in the area. Visitors to Derbyshire know well the tourism 'hotspots' of historic houses such as Chatsworth, Hardwick, Kedleston and Haddon alongside towns such as Bakewell and Buxton but it is the hospitality businesses on the fringe in areas like Chesterfield, Clay Cross and Swadlincote which appreciate a visit from an incumbent High Sheriff at tearooms, cafes and attractions – with me in court dress and sword posing with a cup of tea to help put their businesses on the map. On my travels I have discovered

some extraordinary people and parts of Derbyshire that I never knew before, with all those that I met appreciating the High Sheriff making that effort.

Promoting law and order I have attended court in both Chesterfield and Derby; invited the county's magistrates back to our home of Tissington to view our annual well dressings in May; visited both prisons in the county – to see first-hand the dedication and commitment of all the prison staff – and attended many police functions. So far I have been on the beat in Darley Abbey, a suburb of Derby; visited police headquarters at Ripley for several Long Service Award ceremonies; and viewed demonstrations of both the dog section and the drone team which guard us.

At Derby Cathedral I have attended several services for the homeless, Derbyshire carers, VE and VJ Days alongside concerts such as Sinfonia Viva (a popular East Midlands orchestra) and pop artists – I have been immensely impressed by the hard work and dedication of the Dean and his team.

But it is the unexpected invitations which bring the greatest pleasure: the opportunity to hand deliver a 60th wedding anniversary card from Their Highnesses The King and Queen to a couple from Duffield; the honour to deliver a card on his 100th birthday to D-Day veteran Albert Kier in Darley Bridge; to recognise the life-long service at a Sue Ryder shop to a lady with stage 4 cancer; and to attend the funeral of another veteran, the late Donald Rose from Ilkeston, who died at the age of 110. It was humbling to take the salute in the Market Place alongside our Lord-Lieutenant Elizabeth Fothergill CBE as over 1,000 veterans on motorcycles and on foot paid their respects to this remarkable man. Humbling – I was so very proud of our county and our country.

Throughout this time, I have been accompanied by not one but four consorts (I can be called greedy I know!) – namely, two of my sisters, Selina and Lucy, our great friend Diana and my wife Fiona. I am lucky in that they all bring their own unique experiences and thoughtfulness to the role and they are much appreciated at the differing functions that we attend. As a quintet we look forward to the myriad of events functions and opportunities which lie ahead.



At the funeral of 110-year-old veteran Donald Rose



With Edward Attenborough (Notts), Veronica Pickering (Lord-Lieutenant Notts) and Elizabeth Fothergill (Lord-Lieutenant Derbyshire) at the Crich Stand Memorial



With Timothy Gillow (Staffs) and jester at the Blithfield Horn Dance