



Cheshire 2013-14

I could of course tell you about the myriads of different events and happenings during my year as High Sheriff but it will only read like a list of dinners, VIPs and superlatives.

So instead I will mention my most unforgettable experience of the year, my charity fundraising event, and two initiatives pursued each year by Cheshire High Sheriffs which do make a real difference for the better.

The unforgettable experience was on 8 August, the day of the 50th anniversary of the Great Train Robbery, being present on platform 11 of Crewe Station to give an address at a service to commemorate the driver, Jack Mills, and his assistant, David Whitby, who were so badly treated by the robbers and who both only lived for a few short years afterwards. It was a lovely service and the congregation included two grandsons of Jack Mills and many retired railway staff. I focussed my address on my belief that the crime should never have been glorified, especially because it was not a victimless crime. The address was the subject of an article in the London Diary of the *Evening Standard* and *The*

Oldie magazine both of which found it necessary to make reference to Sir Richard Branson (Virgin Trains) and myself having been to Stowe School at the same time!

I decided to organise one charity fundraising event, aimed at the North West corporate sector, to raise money for my local community hospital (a charity) and for Cheshire Crimebeat. Sir Terry Leahy was the keynote speaker at the dinner and gave a vintage performance with 400 in attendance. The event and donations raised £50,000. I was delighted with the support and generosity of those who attended.

The two initiatives I wish to mention are Cheshire Crimebeat and the Cheshire High Sheriff's Awards for Enterprise. Crimebeat is small but successful (see Michael Trevor Barnston's adjoining article) and has provided for many years a pathway for the High Sheriff to make a real difference to communities in Cheshire. Its success and continuity is down to having a continuing Chairman (Michael) and an employed executive.



Presenting a certificate to Alison Wheeler for exceptional service to the community.

Caring communities are essential but so is a vibrant economy. I was delighted therefore to be the custodian of the eighth year of the Cheshire High Sheriff's Awards for Enterprise. The Awards have grown in strength steadily, with entries doubling during my year. They focus on encouraging entrepreneurship and entrants must be small, growing businesses. Awards include enterprise (MBA programme awarded), innovation and export achievement. Essential ingredients are generous sponsors (eg Bank of America), great administration and marketing support (provided by the University of Chester) and an expert judging panel. During the year we held our first alumni dinner, as well as the annual awards dinner, attended by over 200 people. Feedback from entrants and winners over the years continues to be hugely positive in terms of the networking benefits, access to the university and inspiring owners and their staff.

So that's me done – over and completely out! □

Martin Beaumont
High Sheriff of Cheshire 2013-14



Sir Terry Leahy speaking at Chester Racecourse at my fundraising evening.



Cheshire Crimebeat

The longest serving Crimebeat Co-ordinator, Frank Harding, has finally retired after serving 16 Cheshire High Sheriffs since 1998.

Frank Harding, a retired Chief Inspector from Lancashire Constabulary, returned to his Chester roots and joined the then High Sheriff, Michael Trevor-Barnston, during his term of office in 1998. Cheshire Crimebeat was launched in November that year by the Home Office Minister, Paul Boeteng.

Since then over 500 Crimebeat schemes have been installed county-wide, encouraging young people to tackle community issues ranging from graffiti and vandalism to under-age drinking and drugs, bogus callers, stranger danger and, more recently, addressing the concerns of cyber crime, bullying and identity theft.

Frank Harding has been held in high regard by all the High Sheriffs whom he has supported over the years and 12 of them and the Lord-Lieutenant were able to attend his leaving party held in late November 2013.

A pair of claret decanters suitably inscribed, and including the High Sheriffs' Association badge, were presented to him as a token of thanks.

Mark Watson took over as Co-ordinator for Cheshire in January 2014, and details can be seen on the Cheshire Crimebeat website, www.cheshirecrimebeat.org.uk



Michael Trevor-Barnston presents one of the decanters to Frank Harding.



Frank Harding with High Sheriffs.

Left to right: Nick Bromley-Davenport 2007, Carolin Paton-Smith 2005, Bill Spiegelberg 2001, Michael Trevor-Barnston 1998, John Lea 2011, Diana McConnell 2003, David Briggs 2006 (now Lord-Lieutenant), John Richards 2002, Martin Beaumont 2013, Alastair Stoddart 2008, Diana Barbour 2010, and William Fergusson 2009

Unable to attend: Miles Clarke 1999, S Chantler 2000, S Sherrard 2004 and William Lees-Jones 2012