



An invaluable overview

Above: With the High Sheriff of Merseyside (left), as joint reviewing officers, and the Mayor of Northwich, at the 146 Sqn ATC Northwich graduation parade (photo by Cadet Sgt Indie Mackintosh)

WHEN I heard about all the things High Sheriffs no longer do, I admit to wondering whether there is still a worthwhile role in the 21st century. At the end of the year my answer is a resounding 'yes'.

Getting out and about across your county gives an invaluable overview, creating a unique opportunity to 'join the dots', facilitate introductions, make suggestions, signpost towards possible funding, and generally help to make things happen. It is hard to know the value of the many conversations you have but it is very satisfying when, perhaps months later, you learn that your input has made a difference. I started a website with a news blog which, although time consuming to keep up to date, has been surprisingly well received. It provides a vehicle to promote the wonderful work of many individuals and charities and also helps a wider audience to understand what High Sheriffs can contribute.

As well as learning about our judicial system and supporting the work of the police and

emergency services, I focussed on volunteers. People don't volunteer to be thanked but they appreciate it when they are. From the radio presenter aged 10 to the street pastor aged 92, I have been so impressed with the volunteer effort which makes such a difference within our county. I have actively promoted volunteering wherever I have been – from citizenship ceremonies to schools – as something that not only 'does good, but does you good as well'.

People often ask what is the best thing I have done. This is impossible to answer as there is such diversity in the activities my hugely supportive husband and I have undertaken – from large ceremonial events, to visiting prisons, and meeting organisations helping young people struggling with poor self-esteem and low aspirations. Crucially, looking back, I can hardly think of anything that has not been worthwhile in some way. If pushed, one highlight would have to be witnessing history being made as the first female Church of England Bishop, Libby Lane, was consecrated amid magnificent and moving pageantry at York Minster



and later her installation at a packed Chester Cathedral.

The year has also been dominated by the commemoration of the centenary of the start of World War One. As an ex-WRAF officer I have been particularly pleased to attend many events involving our armed forces – from set-piece parades such as the Mercian Regiment being given the freedom of towns and boroughs across Cheshire, to visiting several of the impressive cadet forces or listening to the drums and pipes at a Royal British Legion concert. It has been heartening to see the high regard our armed forces are held in and how much they themselves appreciate this.

Cheshire, like every county, has its problems but perhaps, most encouragingly of all, I am not aware of any that are not being tackled in some way and I feel grateful for the opportunity I have been given to play a small part in its vibrant and varied life for the past year.

◆ Susan Sellers

High Sheriff of Cheshire 2014-15



Photo: Dave McDonald

Wearing a rather different hat litter-picking with Crewe Clean Team



Off to unveil two memorials at Sandiway Golf Club to honour the US soldiers stationed there who participated in D-Day landings 70 years ago