



by Sir Richard FitzHerbert

*Happy Christmas and a Joyous New Year to all my readers!*

## The roll of the dice

Like most workplaces every year we treat the staff to a Christmas party in December. This year we decided to host our party at the Hall combining the House staff with the Herbert's tearooms team. With over 40 in the Main Hall we did something different and hired in some gaming tables with croupiers and gave each participant £4,000 to save, gamble or give away at the tables over the evening. The prize of a bottle of champagne was awarded to the person who had the most money at the end and a plucky Louise emerged victorious with £127k at the end of the night despite the attentions of Daisy Dachshund on the blackjack table! An amusing evening with some sore heads the next morning!



Staff party

### FAMILY FORTUNES

Over Christmas I received correspondence from kinsman Martin Ward of Allestree who informed me that we were related to Dick Whittington. Martin had undertaken some painstaking research that culminated with the fact that Dick (aka Sir Richard) Whittington was my and Martin Ward's 19x great uncle. The descent tracks back to the famous and real Dick Whittington (1354-1423). The pantomime legend of Dick Whittington is based on fact. The real Sir Richard made his fortune as a merchant but as he and his wife were childless they left their fortune to charitable causes (with a nominal amount for his brother and our ancestor, Sir Robert). Dick Whittington built a London fresh-water and sewage system which saved thousands of lives, and also reduced the rat population (so promoting the cat legend), and was mayor of London four times in total.

### Topical tales

Every month or so I am invited to join Ian Skye on his breakfast show at BBC Radio Derby in the slot from 9-10am when another invitee and I become 'The Loudmouths' for the hour. Before Christmas I was on with Trevor Middleton from Heanor as we discussed two topics of the day. First was the case of an infuriated Derby woman being fined £75 for feeding ducks on the Riverside as they were creating a nuisance... No signs to warn against feeding were visible and the fine was subsequently revoked. However, the subject received more calls than any other that I have engaged with on the show,



At Radio Derby with presenter Ian Skye

so many that we christened it 'Duckgate'. The next subject was the well-worn one of Brexit... which received no irate callers. The hour passes quickly and it sheds a fascinating light on what does and does not matter to the citizens of Derby.

### AN INVITATION TO VIEW

The 2018 Invitation to View brochure contains over 90 family country houses that are open by appointment on certain dates when the tour of the property is taken by a member of the family. A great many of these homes are not normally open. I will be taking five tours of Tissington throughout the season, starting in February when I will show more rooms than we usually open on a 'public day', followed by coffee/tea and sumptuous cakes in the library. The scheme developed nationally after starting as an East Anglian project about ten years ago. Further details can be found on the website at [www.invitationtoview.co.uk](http://www.invitationtoview.co.uk)

### DANGEROUS CROSSING

The severe weather over Christmas meant the usual inevitable incidents at the ford. Rather than rain it was ice on the road down the hill from the estate to Bradbourne that caused this year's major accident. A holidaymaker with his family hit the ice and collided with one of the gritstones placed there to stop joyriders driving over the fields. The gamekeeper who was following was unable to assist as the car (a sturdy Volvo) was wedged tight, so the family (thankfully unharmed) retired to Herbert's Tearooms for warm drinks and wifi. Sadly, to add insult to injury, their rear windscreen was



Danger at the ford

also smashed by a car trying to turn back at the water splash! Be warned, many people – including me – have come a cropper at the ford!