

Baronet's Diary Derbyshire Life 2023

January 2023

After six months of being sworn to secrecy I can reveal that I am now a High Sheriff in Nomination for Derbyshire to take on the role in the year 2025/26. My sister and I attended the Royal Courts of Justice one Saturday morning in November to hear my name being read out alongside all the other future county representatives. It was quite a spectacle as we all trooped into Court No 4 where the recent Wagatha Christie trial took place. All four Judges were dressed in their wigs and full livery as they read out the nominations for each County. This year the date coincided with the Lord Major's Show and we were to witness the parade, the floats and the merriment from our allotted area in front of the High Court. I will report more about my future High Sheriff duties in the coming months. Meanwhile I am thrilled to be following in the footsteps of 5 of our ancestors who presided in the role with the most recent being our Great Uncle Sir William in 1940.

I have given the eulogy at several funerals over the past 15 years. Never an easy task as I try and take time to give my best for those left behind. In early November I was asked to read out the words from the two daughters of a village resident of 22 years, one David Jones. Both ladies had penned their tributes and I added a few words of my own to the final copy. Although I have delivered moving words myself I choked as I relayed the pieces from Samantha and Lorraine such was the poignancy of the occasion. Only family members and a core element of our village paid their respects to the lovely former Policeman and devoted gardener David but that was plenty to say goodbye. Gone far too early at 64, a super gentleman and we all send our condolences to his widow Eva and the family.

I wrote in a previous column about the 57 weddings that we have hosted at the Hall this year. After the formalities of the final marriage of Jason and Lianna in December I was able to 're clothe' my statues in the hats that they have been accustomed to wear. We have a running feud in the family about these decorative ornaments in that I feel that these accoutrements are an idiosyncratic and unique offering in our heritage space yet others feel that they might desecrate the seriousness of the day. I can happily report that these hats (from my extensive collection) are much appreciated by these statues as they encounter the winter cold. Of course, they shall be removed as we welcome our first happy couples in late March!

Of all the implements that go missing from our Tearooms in the village the most extraordinary item has 'walked' in the past week. The team and I are used to extra sachets of ketchup and mayonnaise, several salt and pepper grinders and numerous items of metal cutlery leaving the premises. But one particular item took the biscuit. We have two credit card machines and they have been happily ensconced behind the till for several years. On completing the cashing up recently I discovered that one of the 'docker units' was missing and instigated a thorough search of the premises but to no avail. What is so odd is that this unit needed unplugging and involved a sophisticated extraction from the tearoom without any staff noticing!!! If anyone does notice a spare docker unit for a credit card machine in unusual circumstances please report it to the Office for further investigations!! Irritating and curious!

It is now the time in our lives that Fiona and I are invited to 60th birthday celebrations. We had a mad week at the end of November when two happened on consecutive nights with a cricket dinner in London and a political lunch in Wirksworth thrown in between. Such was the pull of the speaker at the lunch that I had to get the last train home from St Pancras at 11.45pm and stay at the Penta Hotel near Derby Station in order to get to the event on time! The lunch was a great success with

former Prime Minister Boris Johnson reaffirming his commitment to Derbyshire Dales and the Peak District. The trip back to town was not without incident but the two 60ths were a great success with old friends..... in the main not showing their age!!

Photo RRF outside the Lawcourts

Photo Sir William FitzHerbert as High Sheriff in 1940 with his brother The Venerable Henry.

Photo Sir Richard and former Prime Minister Boris Johnson

Photo Lord St Helens and his hat

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