

## **Retiring Chairman's Report 2011/12**

My year as Chairman has passed remarkably quickly. It does not seem that 12 months ago I took on the challenge of being Chairman during a period of what I referred to as a year of Civic Frugality!

During that time I have attended nearly 160 engagements and at most of which my wife Sylvia has been with me in a very supportive role as Chairman's escort. Compare this with the 300 plus events attended by the former Chairman.

Over 87% of attended events have been within the Sevenoaks District in line with my desire to concentrate on those organisations providing Voluntary and Caring services to our citizens. Of the remainder, I would highlight the services at Rochester Cathedral for both the new Lord Lieutenant and the new High Sheriff. Both of whom have been unstinting in their support for many of the Voluntary Organisations that I also support and it has been a great pleasure to meet with them on many occasions. Our visit to the Buckingham Palace Garden Party was blessed with a warm sunny day.

Looking back over the year and trying to pick out specific events has been quite difficult so I have broken them down under specific headings in no order of priority.

### **CHURCH SERVICES**

19 in total including 6 Carol services! Highlights for totally different reasons were the Sevenoaks Mencap Carol evening – a noisy joyous and uplifting evening that proved that a mental illness does not stop you having fun. The other event that I was privileged to attend was the Military Funeral, in Eynsford Parish Church, of Lieutenant Oliver Augustin 42 Commando Royal Marines. Killed in Afghanistan on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2011, aged 23 years. A poignant reminder that my father, a professional soldier, also served in Afghanistan as far back as 1912!

### **SCHOOL VISITS**

11 in total including pre Olympic events at Primary Schools as well as visits to Knole Academy and Sevenoaks School.

Our visits to Dorton House and Valence School were inspirational both from the dedication of the staff working on a one to one basis with the children but also from the happy and relaxed atmosphere that existed in both locations. Many of the staff were still teenagers themselves and displayed both maturity and empathy beyond their years.

### **SPORTS EVENTS**

From opening the new Chipstead football club junior pitches to celebrating the Centenary of both the Sevenoaks Bowling and Hockey clubs, again showed what can be achieved by dedicated volunteers and the sporting prowess of our citizens.

## THE ARTS

Sevenoaks Philharmonic, the Lydian Orchestra, Sevenoaks Symphony Orchestra, the Sevenoaks & Tonbridge Concert Band together with Dance and Pantomime at the Stag, again provided memorable evenings of entertainment culminating in the Sevenoaks Young Musician of the Year competition in March.

Again demonstrating a wealth of talent we have within the district.

## VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

During my year I have visited or attended meetings with very many of the organisations that receive financial support from us. I do not propose to list them all as they are all well known to you.

I will however highlight two organisations, Riding for the Disabled and Sailability who provide and teach the disabled to sail small boats on Chipstead Lake. Both have large numbers of volunteers who turn out on several days of the week and have achieved remarkable results. That support is absolutely vital to their continued wellbeing and their appreciation of our efforts is demonstrated by the thousands of hours willingly provided in the service of others.

In concluding my year of office I express my thanks to the Vice Chairman for her support throughout the year, to my wife for her support and encouragement and to Margaret Hagger for sharing her immense knowledge of all things Civic with me and ensuring that I appeared at the right place on the right day!

Robert V. Orridge  
Chairman 2011/2012