



'IN THE SPOTLIGHT'

Each month we put a different person 'in the spotlight' and pose 12 wide-ranging questions to them. This month, we feature Mark Jackson, OBE, High Sheriff of Worcestershire.

1. Tell us an interesting fact about yourself that not many people know.

As a 21 year old novice soldier I guarded Rudolph Hess in Spandau Prison, West Berlin, in 1972.

2. What book made most impact on you as a child?

No individual book. I grew up in a family where books were a large part of our young lives. My father had an academic paying hobby and I remember sitting on the floor of his study surrounded by bookshelves with him recommending I "have a look at this one". I have read a great deal all my life and continue to do so every day now. Although I am very happy using an electronic reader, there is still a certain comfort in turning a paper page.

3. What is your favourite film, and why?

I go to the cinema to be entertained, not to be subjected to political messages. The cinema is a world of escapism. I love history, especially military history so greatly enjoyed "Master and Commander" but my favourite is "Zulu".

4. What are your main hobbies/interests, apart from reading, of course?

I used to be a very keen sportsman and was happy to play any game going, though my favourites were cricket and rugby. Due to my age now, my sporting involvement is reduced to watching either on television or live.

5. What would be the three things you would like to have if you were stranded on a desert island?

A radio to listen to the BBC. An allotment to grow my own fruit and veg. My library so that I could read the books I have not yet read and re-read those that I have.

6. What would a look at your bookshelves tell us about you?

My love of history and travel.

7. If you could invite any three people, dead or alive, to a dinner party, who would they be, and why?

My Father (who died when I was 16). Winston Churchill. Dame Cicely Saunders.

8. What kind of music do you like, and is there one favourite soundtrack?

Up until the age of 18 I used to play the violin at school and it is one of my regrets that I gave it up on leaving. My parents instilled a love of classical music, but I am a child of the Sixties and so also love much pop and music from the 60s, 70s and 80s. Military music has also



featured in my life quite a lot. Lastly, I like singing (not too well) and have both sung and played my favourite piece a number of times: Handel's Messiah.

9. What are your favourite charities/good causes, and why?

Having had the huge privilege of working at St Richard's Hospice for 11 years it is a cause dear to my heart. Additionally I am concerned that our soldiers and veterans are cared for properly so support the ABF Soldier's Charity and my Regimental Charities. Lastly, I feel it is very important that our current and future generations understand our history that has shaped their world and I am Chairman of Trustees of the Mercian Regiment Museum (Worcestershire) in Worcester.

10. Who is the person who has influenced you most/you most admire?

Brigadier Ronnie Silk CBE DL was the Colonel of my Regiment. We served together over many years. He was a very intelligent, honest and approachable man with a wicked gentle sense of humour and clear standards in life. A consummate leader.

11. What is your connection to Evesham?

As a child I grew up in Aston-sub-Edge and Willersey. My parents started a firm of insurance brokers in Evesham in 1957 that lasted for 40 years. My Mother continued to run it after my Father's death. On leaving the Army I returned to live in the Vale between Evesham and Pershore.

12. What would you list as your greatest achievement to date?

My greatest achievement is my family. Kathy and I met, and married, while both were serving in West Germany. Despite moving house around the world 14 times in 24 years we have three fantastic children and two grandchildren, so far. They are a never-ending source of pride and joy.

My ambition career-wise was to command my family and county Regiment: The Worcestershire and Sherwood Foresters Regiment. I was fortunate enough and honoured to do that.