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News from the South Eastern Circuit

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The Forgotten Generations

We were privileged to hear from Donald Campbell, one of the founders of The Forgotten Generations.

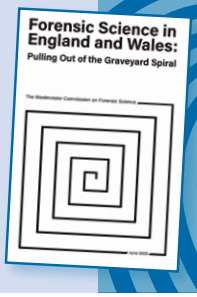
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WESTMINSTER COMMISSION ON FORENSIC SCIENCE

Attending an event at Parliament for the launch of the report by the Westminster Commission on Forensic Science.

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ANNUAL DINNER 2025







The South Eastern Circuit held its Annual Dinner on Friday, 3rd October 2025, in the historic grandeur of the Great Hall at Lincoln's Inn.

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EDITOR'S COLUMN

I have been actively involved with the SEC committee since around 2009. When I joined the committee, Stephen Leslie KC was the Leader of the Circuit. It is therefore with real sadness that I learnt of his recent passing. My thoughts and prayers are with his family at this very difficult time. I didn't know Stephen when I joined, he was a silk, the Leader of the circuit and I was, but a lowly newbie. Stephen never made me feel undervalued or unappreciated and my memories from that time are ones of a hugely energetic man, with a mischievous side and always a welcoming smile on his face. I was fortunate to arrive on the committee at a time when we had a nice, lovely bunch of people working with Stephen, one of the nicest being the late Fred Ferguson. It was a time when you had to physically go to meetings once a month and after each meeting a small band of us would retire to the pub across the road to put the world to rights. Stephen would often join us, dragging his coat and an oversized bag behind him, full of more energy and chat than all of us combined. Even as recently as the SEC dinner last year, Stephen greeted me with a big smile; he'd always remember my name and launch into some anecdote about our time on the committee. Stephen was very inclusive in a meaningful way, as he would invite us all to join the more exclusive, executive committee on a rolling 3month basis and would also invite along guest speakers to talk to the committee and so it was on the 12th May 2010 the DPP came along to give us a chat. The huge cuts to the CPS budget that were being implemented at that time were discussed in some detail. Little did we know that the then DPP would end up becoming our current Prime Minister!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped me as editor by providing articles over the past couple of years. Without them taking time to sit down and write an article or provide a report we would have nothing to publish. It exemplifies all that is special and good about the SEC, namely practitioners making time to give (for free) something back to the profession. Without those who make that extra effort to improve the lot of their fellow barrister, whether via a professional body, their Inn or simply in their chambers we would simply not function as a profession. I trust you will all enjoy this publication with, amongst others, articles on the Young Citizens Bar Mock Trials Programme, The Florida Advocacy Course, Black History Month and a report from a Forensic Science event in June.

Since our last publication we have had a new Secretary of State for Justice/Lord Chancellor appointed. I note that since 2007 we have had 13 people appointed as Lord Chancellor (actually 12 as Mr Raab, if your recall, came back for a second short stint) The longest serving in that time was Jack Straw, who was Lord Chancellor for around 3 years. Six of the 12 were in post for a year or just over a year, two for a mere six months. When Labour won the last election, there was a refreshing commitment to keeping ministers in post longer than had otherwise been the case. The advantages of such a policy were obvious; it takes anyone a period of time to settle into a new role, get to know the workings of a new department and hopefully engage with civil servants and others to effect some meaningful change. Anyways, Shabana Mahmood was in post as Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor for a whole year and two months. With our historical connection to the Prime Minister, I did of course try and engage Shabana Mahmood in this publication, both before and after the general election but sadly that came to nothing. She has now moved on to become the new Home Secretary and her previous roles have been given by the current Prime Minister to David Lammy, the former Foreign Secretary. Mr Lammy is obviously highly regarded as he can be trusted to not only combine the role of Lord Chancellor with that of Secretary of State for Justice but he can do both whilst also acting as the Deputy Prime Minister. I trust he can be effective in all these roles and I can only hope he remains in place long enough to actually effect some meaningful change. The list of things that need addressing is long and Mr Lammy, I'm told, is a better listener than some of those who have gone before, so I wish him well.

I wish you all good health and a happy read.

Kevin Molloy

- Church Court Chambers
- Editor of *The Circuiteer*

If you wish to contribute any material to the next issue of The Circuiteer, please contact:
K.Molloy@churchcourtchambers.co.uk



LEADER'S REPORT

Claire Davies KC
LEADER OF THE SOUTH EASTERN CIRCUIT

Where has 2025 gone? Since the last issue of the Circuiteer, we have been extremely busy on the Circuit.

It is a time of change for the Circuiteer. This edition marks the last of Kevin Molloy who is stepping down as Editor after 3 years and we thank him for his dedication, persistence and perseverance in "encouraging" contributions to the magazine. I am delighted to announce that Laura Kenyon is taking over from January 2026.

I also want to thank Tomas McGarvey who has served on the committee in the role as a junior for the past 3 years for the time he has given to the Circuit.

Since my last column in the Spring we have now had Part 1 of the Leveson Review. Although we still await the Government's formal response, it is clear that they intend to change the criminal justice system in a way they describe as 'radical'. What the future of the CJS will be is presently unknown. Part 2 of Leveson Review (efficiency) is underway and the Circuit has engaged in the consultation process. We welcome yet another Lord Chancellor.

The publicly funded bar have survived a cyber attack, which particularly hit the Family Bar hard and still continues to do so, which is unacceptable.

We have also had the publication of the Harman review into harassment and bullying which was difficult reading for the Bar and judiciary. Much work is now being undertaken to address these highlighted issues within Chambers but also within the judiciary. All are determined to ensure that the culture changes. This can only be positive.

I continue to have regular meetings with the Chief Crown Prosecutors, the HMCTS Delivery Directors, the Bar Council and Circuit Leaders. I am delighted to announce that the CPS/SEC Liaison Committee is up and running, please contact Colin Witcher (c.witcher@churchcourtchambers.co.uk) or Tim Hunter (thunter@2br.co.uk) if you have any issues that you wish to raise.

I visited Wood Green CC and Maidstone CC with Barbara Mills KC, Chair of Bar Council

The Bar Messes continue to thrive with many holding their own summer receptions and now embarking upon Christmas parties, please do consider joining your local bar mess if you have not yet. They are responsible for ensuring close links with the Circuit, courts and local judiciary. Quite often, it is the small things that can have a disproportionate impact and it takes the combined impact of the Circuit with a bar mess to make those changes to improve our day to day lives and I have encouraged the re-introduction of kettles in court centres without canteens – do let me know if your court centre still needs one!

We also now have a stronger connection with the chairs of the SBAs which has led to collaboration on educational events, most recently the joint lecture with the Family Bar on the joint protocol with criminal proceedings.

I was honoured to be Judge in the final of the Bar Mock Trial Competition, brilliantly run by the fantastic charity, Young Citizens. It is always a highlight of the year to see young people building their confidence in this way and increasing their understanding of, and interest in, the law. The standards are excellent. I hope you enjoy reading about this year's Final in an article written by the winning team on page 10. If you would like to get involved as a mentor, please email Colin Witcher (c.witcher@churchcourtchambers.co.uk), the Circuit rep for the Bar Mock Trials.

I was delighted that the Circuit launched the Kindness at the Bar report which is the result of research data from a study part-sponsored by the Circuit and Red Lion Chambers, and undertaken by Professor Bannerjee and his team at Sussex University. The work features input from both barristers and HCAs as well as, for the first time, members of the judiciary and looks at experiences of their working environments as well as how kindness can be promoted to improve the wellbeing of all who work in our court system. We are grateful to Nicola Shannon KC and Valerie Charbit for pushing this work forward. See page 8.

In June we enjoyed a lovely sunny evening with many of the senior judiciary, Resident Judges and Designated Civil Judges in the beautiful gardens at Middle Temple. The strong relationship between the Circuit and the judiciary is so vital, especially in light of the current stresses caused by the backlog, so we are grateful that this annual event is so enjoyable.

The Florida Advocacy Course was a great success again and you can read more about it here on page 12. If you are an advocacy trainer and are interested, do keep an eye out for the course next year. Scholarships are available.

At the end of the Summer It was my great pleasure to attend The internationally renowned Tim Dutton Advanced International Advocacy Course, "Keble", which was even more poignant this year having lost the founder Tim Dutton, see page 23. The flagship of the Circuit, it truly is an excellent experience, attended by advocates from all over the world. For those considering it, you can read more about it in this magazine on page 5. My huge thanks go to Aaron and the amazing Keble team led by HHJ Whitehouse KC for once

again sharing their time, energy and knowledge. The Circuit is honoured that Tim's daughter Pia has agreed to take on the role as SEC/Keble Ambassador

October saw the Opening of the Legal Year with a new Lord Chancellor being sworn in that very morning. I was privileged to lead the silks in the procession in Westminster Abbey, alongside the other Circuit Leaders. No one does pomp and ceremony quite like we do, with the tourists snapping away at these figures in their finery processing across to Westminster.

Then on 3 October over 250 members of the Circuit came together to enjoy our annual dinner at Lincolns Inn and I was delighted to welcome our guest speaker, Baroness Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill, Lady Chief Justice. It was a wonderful evening full of fun and celebration. I hope you enjoy the photos of that event.

I want to express my thanks to all those on the committee who have given the time when needed to assist me in many of the demands that are made of the Circuit. My particular thanks go to Rebecca Tuck KC, James Thacker KC, Alan Compton KC and Stephen Rose KC.

Huge thanks, as ever, to Aaron who runs the Circuit and its events so brilliantly – we would be lost without him and I am sure that you are all equally appreciative of everything that he does for us. I am of course as always indebted to Harriet.

Please enjoy the issue of the Circuiteer and of course if you wish to write an article please do contact Laura Kenyon, (Laura.Kenyon@18rlc.co.uk).

Finally, after 9 long years with the SEC, Harriet Devey has decided the time has come to spend time with her family and hands over her role as PA to Arabella Womersley on 1st January 2026. It is only right that her contribution to circuit life is recognised. All involved with the circuit will be very sad to see Harriet leave us. I and all other leaders could not have run the circuit without Harriet by our side and she was often ahead of us ensuring everything runs smoothly and that we did not miss a meeting. I will forever be indebted to Harriet and will miss her greatly. We wish her all the best for the future. Harriet will always be one of us.

Claire Davies KC

- Farringdon Chambers
- Leader of the SEC

Circuit Drinks Reception for Resident and Designated Judges

On Friday 13 June, the Circuit was delighted to host Resident Judges, Designated Civil Judges, Designated Family Judges and members of the senior judiciary. One of the highlights in the SEC calendar, this year was no exception, with everyone enjoying the chance to chat in person over drinks and canapes. This opportunity to reinforce old relationships as well as to build new ones makes our working interactions so much easier – as well as being a fun way to spend a sunny evening in beautiful surroundings.



SEC Mentoring scheme

We are delighted to announce the launch of the new SEC mentoring scheme. We have a panel of volunteer mentors available to assist tenants, both new and established practitioners.

Mentoring will be on a one-to-one confidential basis and those seeking mentoring can choose between a mentor in the same discipline/ specialist area of practice, but from a different chambers, or a mentor from a discipline/ specialism different to their own. We will pair those wishing to be mentored with an appropriately experienced mentor, who will endeavour to assist with, for example:

- practice development opportunities
- Chambers or practice area moves
- challenges of returning to work
- challenges or conflicts within Chambers

If you would like a mentor or you would like to volunteer as a mentor, please email mentoring@southeastcircuit.org.uk.

THE KEBLE DUTTON COURSE: FOUNDING FOUNDATIONS



There is a circularity to the pursuit of excellence. It begins with Keble.

The year is 1975. An 18-year-old boy arrives at the gothic college, full of hope and determination. A happy three years are spent learning jurisprudence at the side of Jim Harris FBA, rowing (and sinking) the Keble 4th boat, discussing politics with Sir Peter North and befriending David Etherington KC. The boy emerges from his BA inspired, resolved, and full of public spirit. Ready now to make his mark on the legal profession: he is Timothy Dutton CBE, KC.

The year is 1990. The belief at the Bar of England and Wales is that great advocates are born, not made. This belief is reflected in the Bar School course (there was then only one provider which was the Inns of Court School of Law, where the oral presentation element is confined to one short mitigation). There was no teaching of "advocacy" or how to become a truly persuasive lawyer. One brave barrister had written a short book on advocacy, but it formed no part of the curriculum and only the very diligent student read it. The Americans and an Australian couple were ahead of the game then. The Americans had set up a programme called the National Institute of Trial Advocates ("NITA"), which sought to nurture advocacy skills in aspiring trial lawyers. NITA did not have a formal college, instead, for its faculty, it recruited famous trial attorneys and they volunteered, pro bono, to train up budding young lawyers. One Australian, George Hampel, attended this programme in America with his wife Felicity and he had just started to export advocacy training to the Inns under a scheme he called the "Hampel Method".

Tim was then aged 33 years old, not a silk and in practice in a general Common Law set where a dozy approach was taken to advocacy. In practice then was Anthony Scriverner QC, who was also Chairman of the Bar. Tony's reputation was as a lawyer of the highest possible distinction. He had been prevailed upon by NITA to attend a week-long course they were running in Florida. This invitation to Tony was further to NITA's ethos that only the very best advocates of the day should be engaged as faculty. Tony, at that point, had twice been to teach on the Florida course. He was a barrister of considerable brilliance with a practice which traversed the whole gamut of the Law, ranging from criminal trials to esoteric Revenue cases. He would deploy lateral thinking to artfully argue that the manner in which language is construed in a contractual context should inform statutory or regulatory interpretation. He went frequently to what was then the House of Lords.

In 1990, Tim had been married to Sappho Dias for 3 years. Pia, their daughter, was 2 years old and very interested in Mary Poppins. Sappho had completed her pupillage in Tony Scrivener's Chambers and the 2-year-old Pia visited often. On one occasion, she asked "Mr Scriverner" (as a great authority on everything) whether Mary Poppins existed in "real life". Tony assured her that she did, and en passant, he said Pia could see this for herself in Disney World as he was surrendering his place on the NITA Florida course to Tim. It should be recorded that this was a deeply magnanimous gesture by him. This was the first time that Tim attended NITA as faculty. History does not relate whether Pia found Mary Poppins in Disney World, but she would one day meet the son of David Tomlinson (Mr Banks) who became Sappho's roommate in Chambers. From such fortuitous encounters are the genesis of great institutions made.

Tim was invited back as faculty on the NITA course for 4 successive years. There were occasions when he surrendered his place to others like Geoffrey Nice KC and HHJ Toby Hooper KC. However, as Disney World was thrown in as a fee, it was a good programme to go to for two struggling barristers with a small child.

The year is 1993. David Penry-Davey QC was in the second year of his three-year term as Leader of the South Eastern Circuit. He, and his wife Judy, were invited to dinner at the Dutton household in Pimlico. The Duttons had just returned from America and the talk was of the NITA course and how instructive and useful it was. David listened in his usual thoughtful way and asked Tim whether it was feasible for the South Eastern Circuit to run a similar course in the UK. He gave Tim permission to explore all avenues.

Choosing the venue was straightforward. NITA had run all of its courses at universities where plenary sessions could be held in large auditoriums and where smaller rooms were available, out of term, for one-to-one video reviews. In addition, it would be easy to house the faculty under one roof. An important feature of the courses was that trainers should mingle with the participants over meals and drinks. Tim knew, as a place conducive to true excellence, that the UK course should be housed at Keble College. He approached the College's Bursar about the costs involved which were initially prohibitive. Ever the silver-tongued advocate, he persuaded the College to charge less than the commercial rate for the first year of the course.

The Circuit did not have sufficient funds to subsidise the inaugural year (1994), so Tim went off to see his bank manager at, then, Midland Bank. After some tough negotiations, the bank agreed that they would subsidise the course providing they were given a half hour plenary session with the young participants where they could talk about the benefits of banking with them. This was quickly agreed.

The venue and the funds were now arranged. There remained the thorny issue of the faculty. Tim was 37 years old. He was not a silk. He was not in a magic circle Chambers then. And who could blame the older silks, now entrenched in the "Hampel Method" at the Inns, for viewing him with suspicion? Not daunted, Tim and Sappho wrote to the leading advocates of the day, inviting them to come as faculty to Keble, for one week, pro bono. To their astonishment, all those contacted responded with enthusiasm and accepted. Finding juniors to come along as trainers was easier and the wide circle of their friends all accepted. Everyone was excited to contribute to what they saw as a programme which would be advancing excellence at the Bar.

The final hurdle was the writing of the problems which would form the brief for the participants. There had to be two types of cases because the Bar was beginning to split into civil and criminal practitioners. Because the cases would end in mock trials on the last day of the course, the problems

had to be balanced – some facts would favour the plaintiff's (as he then was) case and some facts would favour the defendant. So also with the criminal case: some facts would favour the prosecution and other facts would favour the defence. There were not many volunteers for the writing of the cases, so in the end, Tim sat down to write the civil case and Sappho the criminal. Tim also co-wrote the expert medical problem with his treating endocrinologist (as he was a Type 1 diabetic), Professor Peter Sonksen. Mercifully, the financial expert problem was written by the accountants, Deloittes.

As the Bar became increasingly specialised, Tim and Sappho resisted all attempts to make the course more "practice specific". They maintained that good advocacy had little to do with particular expertise, and everything to do with careful preparation, concision, artful persuasion, strict accuracy and, above all, ethics. What is more, Tim watched as Sappho struggled. As a 5ft 1, Asian, female member of the Criminal Bar in the 1990s, life was not the picnic it was at the Civil Bar. Tim never lost sight of that. The strain of continued cuts to Legal Aid and the plight of young Criminal barristers were close to home. To his mind, there could only be a benefit in all disciplines coming together over a week-long course, encouraging discussion across all areas of the profession.

At around 8 years old, Pia began to ask question about the course: "why do you disappear every summer?", "how much training does one lawyer really need?", and "why don't we go to Disney World anymore?!" (what a brat). Tim answered with one sentence: "without firm foundations, the whole house will fall." Not satisfied with that, she continued to badger both parents about their annual absence. Charged on two counts of (1) Incessant Whining and (2) Spoilt Brattery, she was duly sentenced: "This year, you will be playing the vulnerable witness". She was examined-in-chief by Michael Lawson KC (video statements in chief did not then exist) and cross-examined by David Etherington KC.

From then on, Keble became an annual family pilgrimage. Each year, The Duttons attended whether as director, trainer, helper, musician, juror, or witness (vulnerable or otherwise); the August bank holiday week was always reserved for Keble. Was that because the rigour of the course was addictive? Was it because of some prescient feeling that Tim would not be here for very long? Perhaps. But the real reason was because without fail, every single year, it was possible to learn something new. As the participants battled the pressure of performing in front of peers and revered members of the judiciary, and bravely submitted themselves to the trauma of public critique, lessons were there for the plucking. Infallibly, all lawyers, whether participant or trainer, left better advocates than they had arrived.

In 2024, Pia attended the course, at last, as a participant. Even with all the years of having crashed the course before, she still found herself on the phone to Tim and Sappho demanding, "who are the sadists who set this thing up?!" Of course, Tim and Sappho raised a sensitive racehorse. But she was not the first participant to panic, feel the pressure, and begin to buckle, nor will she be the last. Overall, of course, the experience was invaluable. As usual, trainers found creative headlines and gave deft demonstrations, as if it were nothing. Far from the repetitive guidance of "closed questions", cultured pearls were handed out, such as "Wimbledon", to improve pace and precision in cross-examination, and "Mummy says no", to encourage confidence to occupy authoritative space during witness handling.

The year is 2025. Tim has passed away after a valiant battle with Motor Neurone Disease. Pia attends the course again. As the participants assembled, as usual, full of nerves and anticipation, the pressure was off (for this year at least). So, she started listening to the conversations around her with a little more care: some at dinner in hall, some out on the quods and some during the plenary sessions. To her profound shame, what she learned shocked her: brief fees which are less than travel costs; a cap on Civil Legal Aid which has been in place since 1996; the Cyber Attack resulting in a freeze on all fees; and inadequate safeguards for young members of the Bar visiting clients in crowded cells. Her ignorance was shameful but, sadly, perhaps not exceptional.

Justice itself is under siege and the war is being fought by half the army. There can be no criticism of the sleeping soldiers. What is unknown cannot be fought. However, it is incumbent upon all barristers to take up arms to support the Circuits, the Bar Council, and the profession as a whole, as it fights to maintain its high standards.

With an ever more specialised Bar has come isolation and a seeming lack of professional empathy. As the civil sectors soar through all the benefits of Covid, various banking crises and the booms brought about by the fallout from Brexit, the publicly funded Bar suffers. The decline in collegiality is regrettable. But it is not inevitable. It is open to all practitioners to remember their roots, to reach out to their old Bar School friends at other sets of Chambers, to speak to leaders or juniors in other Inns, and to join the new mentoring schemes designed to give comfort and guidance to the Young Bar. We must remember that without a determined collective consciousness there is a threat to the Independent Bar, and, then, to the Rule of Law itself.

In 2021, as he was nearing the end of his life, Tim was interviewed by Richard Coleman KC. He was asked what he was most proud of amongst his many and varied achievements. His unhesitating reply was "setting up the Keble Course".

Keble is now the "Keble Dutton Course". A wonderful tribute to a man who gave his all to a profession he loved. We must continue to preserve it. Of course:

"without firm foundations, the whole house will fall."

How to correct our professional separatism? How to reinforce the legal community and remember that we are One Bar, with a fervent belief in equal representation before the Law and Justice? We return to honing the craft on which livelihoods depend and invest our time in discussing, and combatting, the problems faced by all of our colleagues. Where and how does that take place?

It begins with Keble.



Sappho Dias

- 4-5 Gray's Inn Square



Pia Dutton

- Three Verulam Buildings

The Forgotten Generations

The 2025 theme for Black History month is "Standing Firm in Power and Pride". To mark this, on 7 October 2025 we were privileged to hear from Donald Campbell, one of the founders of **The Forgotten Generations** ("TFG"), a former officer of the Royal Air Force and now military historian. This is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to sharing the history, heritage and lived experiences of British African and Caribbean people.



He brought to life examples from among the countless Black servicemen and women whose stories remain underrepresented in mainstream narratives. From the dashing Caribbean pilots who served in the Royal Air Force, like Ulric Cross, a Trinidadian who flew 80 missions, to the children of the Windrush generation serving with distinction in Iraq, such as Sgt Major Johnson Beharry who is one of the very few serving recipients of the Victoria Cross.

This is a particularly apt topic as we have this year marked the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. We know this was a global conflict that reshaped nations, laws, and societies. The echoes of this might have been thought to have dulled in recent years, but now commitment to the institutions and conventions (not least NATO and the ECHR) are thought by many of us to be more imperative than ever.

The end of World War II was not just a military victory – it was a turning point. It laid the groundwork for the modern human rights movement, decolonisation, and the reimagining of justice on a global scale. Yet, for many Black veterans, the return home did not bring equality. Their fight continued – not on the battlefield, but in the struggle for civil rights, dignity, and recognition.

We were privileged to honour the memories of those whose stories Donald shared with us. And the importance he told us of mentorship is of course something we at the Bar are catching up with – so do sign up to the SEC Mentorship scheme.

If you missed the talk, or heard it and want to find out more, please check Donald Campbell's website at https://theforgottengenerations.com.

Rebecca Tuck KC

- Circuit EDI Director
- Cloisters Chambers

KINDNESS AT THE BAR



11th September saw a group of Bar leaders and practitioners brave the tube strike to attend the launch of the second Report on Kindness at the Bar. Others joined online, and the recording is also available on the Circuit website for those who missed it.

The report itself was emailed to all Circuiteers and attendees and is also available here https://southeastcircuit.org.uk/wellbeing/kindness-at-the-bar



The research was sponsored jointly by the Circuit and Red Lion Chambers and was the second such project for Kindness at the Bar, an initiative started by Valerie Charbit (my predecessor as Wellbeing Director of the Circuit) and I with its first report being produced in 2022. The Circuit has supported it from the outset, and it is on this circuit that the research has focussed.

We were delighted, however, to secure the support of all the Circuit Leaders as well as the outgoing and incoming Chairs of the Criminal Bar Association, each of whom signed the Foreword. Importantly, the research had also included members of the judiciary and the solicitors' profession in its focus groups, and we are grateful in particular to HHJ Katherine Tucker, the Wellbeing liaison judge and to Steve Kennedy of Law Friends, each of whom helped us invite the judges and HCAs who subsequently participated in the project. We were particularly pleased to welcome to the event HHJ Tucker, who had travelled from the Midlands to attend, and to begin what we hope will be ongoing partnerships across the professions and (for the first time on this topic) between Bar and Bench.

Professor Robin Banerjee of Sussex University presented the findings of a series of Focus Groups in which his research team alongside Valerie Charbit met judges, barristers and higher court advocates to hear about their experiences of kindness – and, sometimes, of its absence, while working in courts across the Circuit. The prevailing themes were of the positive impact of kindness and civility on both performance and outcome despite the inevitable constraints of a, largely, adversarial system.

Juniors in particular commended leaders and judges who supported them with empathy as they began in practice and then progressed to more challenging and complex cases. All spoke of the need to keep in balance our duties to the court and our clients with our duties to each other if we are to promote our own wellbeing and meet the challenges of recruitment and retention in the modern Bar.

As one participant put it: 'If your opponent in kind, you're sort of in it slightly together. Yes, you've got

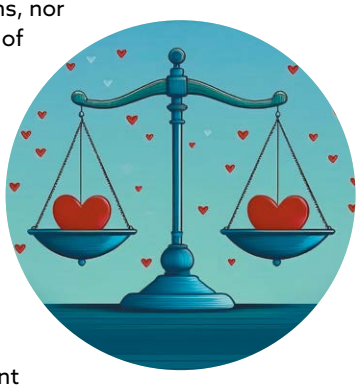


opposing positions, but it makes a big difference". As a Senior Junior, reflecting on his experience of being encouraged by a Silk opponent said: "... the next day and a half I was a different advocate, and it massively improved my performance, having somebody take a couple of seconds out to encourage me". The opposite was also true – the same Senior Junior also said this: "It's most obvious when judges are unkind...And these judges don't get the best out of the advocates in front of them. If you're worried about the next thing that's going to come out of the judge's mouth you're not focusing on doing the best advocacy you can do.".

Sadly, where things had gone wrong Juniors in particular felt it was difficult to effect practical change without securing the input and leadership of the senior Bar, and that the Bar Council's current complaint mechanisms (principally 'Talk to Spot') often failed to deliver results. This area of the research felt prescient in light of the findings of the Harman Report – published, by chance, earlier the same week. We anticipate changes in those formal channels, but it was noteworthy that participants highlighted the difference that could be made just by each of us 'calling out' bad behaviour or speaking up for our colleagues at the time. A greater readiness to do so is no doubt part of the necessary culture change spoken of by Baroness Harman.

It would be wrong, however, to see participants' comments as a counsel of doom – quite the opposite. So many reported positive experiences rather than negative ones, and there was plenty of optimism in our own ability to improve our daily experience at all levels of seniority just by taking the time to think about our colleagues and how our behaviour might affect them. Small, thoughtful steps made a huge difference: as one Silk commented about 'kind' opponents "If the night before a case they want to rely on a new authority and it's a long one, they'll send the authority to you, but they won't just dump it on your e-mail box; they'll tell you which paragraphs of the authority they want to rely on", and for one Silk remembering her time as a junior, the fact that a previous leader had asked her what time her children went to bed and when was best to call her in the evenings had made a huge impact on their professional relationship.

The Report does not make recommendations, nor does it impose a 'charter' or make demands of either Chambers or individual practitioners. Rather, it is hoped that it will be a starting point for discussions in robing rooms and chambers across the Circuit and beyond, as well as, perhaps, in judicial dining rooms.



Discussion followed Professor Banerjee's presentation, and those attending the Launch suggested ways to promote this initiative including volunteer 'Kindness Ambassadors' to drive forward this important culture change. We would like to hear from anyone who has ideas or suggestions on how we can take this forward so please do contact us (via the email address below), especially if you would like to take on an Ambassador role for your chambers.

As our leader, Claire Davies KC, commented in the discussion session at the end the standout quotations from the report were those which observed how much kindness and collegiality already exists between us, and how we – Bar, Bench and Solicitors – are still "in it together" as we face our current pressures. Whatever the future brings, it can only be better for all of us if we put kindness at the heart of that collegiality and our professional conduct.

Where it is present, the Report suggests kindness is contagious – so let's start now in getting the message out and see what we can do to make sure the future Bar is a kind Bar.

Nicola Shannon KC

- Wellbeing Director, SEC

Valerie Charbit

- Red Lion Chambers
  Valerie.Charbit@18rlc.co.uk
- Former Wellbeing Director SEC and CBA

BAR MOCK TRIAL COMPETITION 2025



From The Boswells School, witnesses at the trial:

Charlotte Pizzey

Andi Khan in Case One: R v Hinton

The Bar Mock Trial Competition was an amazing opportunity and for me it sparked a love for law and gave me the opportunity to understand and experience the processes in court first hand. During preparation for the competition, my team and I spent hours learning our statements and speeches and we found ourselves developing these characters from practicing, as our confidence grew, making every hour even more fun and memorable. Actually, being able to go to the Royal Courts of Justice and be a part of a 'trial' in the court rooms with an actual judge was something I never imagined would happen, but it was one of the most insightful and rewarding things I have ever done.

Kit Lusher

Payne Hudson in Case One: R v Hinton

I found the Bar Mock Trial competition an experience to remember. It was a lot of fun to work closely as a team and to watch ourselves improve over the weeks leading up to the competition. Seeing our hard work pay off was incredibly rewarding. The fact that we were able to perform in court is something I will never forget. Getting to visit the Royal Courts of Justice was an amazing opportunity. Furthermore, it was incredibly inspiring as we had the privilege of asking the Judges questions and receiving advice from them. Looking back, the journey from when we had our very first meeting, assigning roles and initial readings of the statements to becoming National Champions was the journey of a lifetime. I can't wait to re-enter the competition next year.

The South Eastern Circuit is delighted to support Young Citizens' Bar Mock Trials Programme again this year.

If you would like to volunteer as a mentor for one of the student teams, please contact Colin Witcher (c.witcher@churchcourtchambers.co.uk), the SEC Mock Trial representative.




The Royal Courts of Justice




Young Citizens



Florida Criminal Advocacy Course

2025



An opportunity to improve advocacy, travel to the United States of America, be within 10 metres of alligators, and represent the UK Bar? That is exactly what the "Gerald T. Bennett Prosecutor/Public Defender Trial Training Program" had to offer us, and we – Alban Brahimi, Sarah Memmi, Edward Armitage and Hannah Steventon did not pass on securing scholarships from the South Eastern Circuit to attend this truly wonderful course. Our team was only made complete with the guidance of two amazing silks, Benjamin Aina KC and Maria Karaiskos KC.

We put forward written applications that got us through to a virtual interview with Benjamin and Maria. The interviews were where the Florida flare really started to kick in. What we thought was going to be a gruelling set of questions and judicial intervention, turned out to be a moment of realisation that we were about to go on an unforgettable visit alongside first-class King's Counsel. Emphasis was placed on our responsibility to represent the fair and adversarial strength of UK barristers and show American lawyers what it really means to get our "wig on". As junior barristers of various experience, we had so much to share with the American participants but we were also keen to take away and learn from different styles of advocacy from the Florida Bar.

The scholarships kindly offered by the SEC covered the cost of the entire course, accommodation and it went out with a bang. Yes, that's right – "there's been a murder". The course focused on candidates either prosecuting or defending the wife that shot her husband! We flew to Gainesville where we stayed at a comfortable venue, the Hilton University of Florida Conference Centre, between the 20th and 25th July. Florida is often synonymous with Miami Beach, the Keys and Disney. While the city of Gainesville does not offer beaches, tropical islands or theme parks, it certainly does not disappoint – as we discovered to our delight during our week there. Right at the heart of Gainesville is the University of Florida (UF) – one of the oldest and most respected universities in the U.S. With a campus sprawling 2000 acres and a student population of almost 60,000, it is one of the largest universities in the world.

On paper, our hotel looked like it was just a few minutes away from the University and so we set out on foot to explore the grounds. We quickly discovered why we were the only ones outside – not a soul was walking during the day, thanks to the tropical heat with temperatures soaring into the high 30s. We did not let that stop us. Instead, we powered through armed with our SPF50, hats, and hand-held fans. Even the police who have a base on campus were curious to know what we were doing, and where we were going.

For the next few hours, we enjoyed some of the campus's most notable spots, including:

- The Harn Museum of Art which houses diverse and eclectic work from different cultures and artistic periods









- Ben Hill Griffin Stadium, known locally as 'The Swamp', where 88,000 football fans can gather to support the 'Gators' – the sports teams representing the University. This name comes from the alligator, a reptile native to Florida's wetlands, and a symbol that is intended to embody the strength, spirit, and toughness of the University's athletic programmes
- Lake Alice, a beautiful freshwater lake nestled within the campus, surrounded by walking paths and green spaces. It offers a peaceful natural retreat filled with wildlife – including real-life alligators!
- Fraternity and sorority houses scattered throughout the campus, each proudly displaying different letters of the Greek alphabet on their exterior. These social organisations play a vital role in university life, providing students with opportunities for leadership, community service, social events, and the chance to build lifelong friendships.

Tucked away within the campus was the Frederic G. Levin College of Law – our base for the week. With its classic Georgian-style buildings, magnolia trees, and quiet walkways, it felt like its own little academic retreat. Frederic G. Levin was a prominent American lawyer and philanthropist, best known for his significant contributions to legal education and his support of the University of Florida. The Levin College of Law features modern and well-equipped facilities with spacious classrooms and lecture theatres. Using state-of-the-art technology, each delegate's advocacy exercises were video recorded and then reviewed through playback sessions, allowing for constructive feedback and improvement.

On Sunday, day one of the course, the English delegation arrived at the impressive Levin College of Law, and were greeted with a warm welcome by faculty and students with their southern hospitality. The hard work and intense course kicked off on Monday where participants were split into four groups and attending our classrooms were assigned lecturers that included lawyers as well as the judiciary. Our assignment for the week – defending our client that was accused of killing her husband in order to escape a turbulent divorce, and begin a new life with her new lover. We were tasked with conducting defence opening statements, direct and cross examination, impeachment and closing statements. To enhance our experience, actors played the role of civilian witnesses, police, experts and the defendant, allowing us to fully immerse ourselves in each activity.

Following each piece of advocacy, we received feedback from peers within our group before heading to library breakout rooms with a member of the faculty for video replays. This is because each of our performances were filmed from an overhead camera and in these one-to-one sessions with faculty, we were able to analyse our verbal submissions, body language and use of space. The opportunity to discuss our submissions and receive critique was unique, very beneficial and it contributed to improving our advocacy.

On the Tuesday evening, we were treated to a change of pace and a taste of wild Florida by our wonderful American hosts. We headed east to the La Chua Trail in Paynes Prairie Preserve State Park. This three-mile trail offered a memorable wildlife encounter, immersing us in the raw beauty of Florida's natural environment. Along the way, we came across scores of alligators – some basking motionless along the muddy banks with their eyes just above the water, some waiting impatiently for their next meal







with their jaws gaping. It was both thrilling and humbling to observe them so close in their natural habitat. Another highlight of the walk was the elevated wooden boardwalk which led us to an impressive observation platform overlooking the vast prairie and wetlands. From there, we enjoyed sweeping panoramic views of the marshes, birds heading towards the sunset and a peaceful stillness – a truly immersive and memorable experience.

A contrast to the untamed beauty of La Chua Trail, was Downtown Gainesville just a short drive away. There, we all enjoyed a lively hub of local culture, delicious food, and a buzzing nightlife. The Alachua County Courthouse is located right in the heart of Downtown. It serves as the main judicial building for the county, handling civil, criminal and family cases. Other historic buildings house art galleries, student bars and The Hippodrome Theatre. The Bo Diddley Plaza provides an open green space, named after the rock-and-roll legend who once called Gainesville home.

Between our small group work sessions, we attended lectures by the faculty which included intellectually stimulating presentations on artificial intelligence, digital forensic examination, various ethical scenarios we may face in our careers and a useful breakdown on approaching expert witnesses. We were fortunate to also observe practical demonstrations of advocacy by American lawyers as well as a masterclass in closing speeches by Benjamin and an expertly analytical cross examination by Maria. These performances provided an interesting contrast between the British and American styles and approaches to advocacy.

On Thursday night in the hotel conference space, we hosted the Great British Barristers' Quiz Night – a legal themed quiz with an added twist! There were four rounds: court room trivia, music, film, and famous court cases. We made ourselves a makeshift Crown Court which acted as our stage whereby each question was performed by the UK delegates, who had dolled themselves up in their traditional court attire – Edward as host, Maria as the circuit judge, Ben as prosecution lead counsel, Hannah for the defence, Alban as prosecution junior counsel (in addition to playing Colleen Rooney and Tom Hagen), and Sarah as court clerk and multiple witnesses, including pop-stars Michael Jackson and Taylor Swift. It's hard to describe the scene that unfolded, but picture this... Maria walking out to the national anthem, Alban making an offer no one could refuse, Ben forgetting to wear his wig ("I can't see you, counsel!" bellowed the learned judge), Hannah going head to head with a Silk, Sarah cutting shapes on the dance floor, the Royal Family making an appearance, and approximately 100 Americans dancing to the Countdown theme tune in-between every single question. Not your average quiz, that is for sure.

Members of the Florida Bar were able to try on our wigs and gowns, and were able to see other items such as a barrister's wig tin and blue bag that we at the bar of England & Wales have grown so accustomed to. We were also able to share some of the UK's best delicacies including Jammie Dodgers, Custard Creams, Chocolate Bourbons, McVitie's Digestives, and a beautifully made Pimm's cocktail (yes, we really did bring a suitcase full of Pimm's all the way from ol' Blighty to Gainesville). It was a wonderful night and a perfect conclusion to an even more wonderful week. We would strongly encourage any junior barrister to apply for this course.

Well, we certainly called Gainesville our home for that week in July. A remarkable experience made even more special by the warmth and friendliness of our American hosts and the strong bond we formed with one another. A reunion of the British contingent is already on the horizon, where we'll no doubt reminisce and share stories about the incredible memories we created together.

Contributors:

Benjamin Aina KC
• Church Court Chambers

Edward Armitage
• Pump Court Chambers

Alban Brahimi
• Cornwall Street

Maria Karaiskos KC
• Church Court Chambers

Sarah Memmi
• Goldsmith Chambers

Hannah Steventon
• 5 St Andrew's Hill Chambers



BAR MESS REPORTS

Bar Messes are a vital part of life on the Circuit, both for social and professional reasons.

Please do support your local Mess and get involved with their activities.

Cambridge and Peterborough Bar Mess

Chair: Azza Brown
Juniors: Emma Fielding and Sally Hobson

Central Criminal Court Bar Mess

Chair: Tom Little KC
Junior: Philip McGhee

Central London Bar Mess

Chair: James Thacker KC
Junior: Emilie Morrison
Woolwich Crown Court Rep: George Penny
Inner London Crown Court Rep: Peta-Louise Baggott
Central London County Court Rep: Gita Chakravarty
Southwark Crown Court Rep: Faras Baloch

East Anglia Bar Mess

Chair: Stephen Rose KC
Junior: Joanne Eley

Essex Bar Mess

Chair: Allan Compton KC
Junior: Marc Brown

Herts and Beds Bar Mess

Chair: Kevin Molloy
Junior: Fiona McAddy

Kent Bar Mess

Chair: Nina Ellin KC
Junior: Stacey-Lee Holland
Reps: Amy Nicholson and Emin Kandola

North London Bar Mess

Chair: Philip Misner
Junior: John Warrington
Snaresbrook Crown Court Rep: George Penny and Jessica Peck
Harrow Crown Court Rep: John Warrington
Wood Green Crown Court Rep: Joanna Staples

Surrey and South London Bar Mess

Chair: William Hughes KC
Isleworth Crown Court Rep: Neil Griffin
Kingston Crown Court Rep: Keith Hadrill
Guildford Crown Court Rep: Matt Ralston
Croydon Crown Court Rep: Kwame Sekyere

Sussex Bar Mess

Chair: Alan Gardner KC
Junior: Sarah Thorne
Criminal Rep: James Hay
Civil and Family Rep: Charmaine Wilson

Thames Valley Bar Mess

Chair: Daren Samat
Junior: Adam Williams

CENTRAL LONDON BAR MESS

Inner London Crown Court

The new Resident Judge, HHJ Evans KC, has settled in well. Nothing else to update.

Woolwich Crown Court

CLBM is George Penny who is happy to help and assist with any questions, comments, suggestions. His email is georgepenny@187chambers.com

The backlog of trials is now 1,700. Lower-priority bail cases are being listed in 2029 and will shortly start being listed in 2030. That is up from 1,000 in 2022. Two courts have been given to Maidstone work. Woolwich can sit a maximum of 9 courts.

HHJ Lees has made a plea that cases listed for trial are as ready as they can possibly be to help ensure they get on. Earlier communication by clerks required re: unavailability of counsel, as very late notice of lack of available representation at trial which complicates attempts to give trial slots to ready cases.

Missing window to the advocates' room has now been repaired.

For anyone seeking to breastfeed or express milk at Woolwich Crown Court, a procedure is in place to provide a private room and fridge on request. Such requests can be directed to the security team or the court managers Mark Aldridge (mark.aldridge@justice.gov.uk) or Janine Ince (janine.ince1@justice.gov.uk).

Southwark Crown Court

CVP Procedure:
They follow the statutory framework in s.51 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, the LCJ's Guidance on Remote Attendance by Advocates in the Crown Court (2022) (https://url.uk.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/6wuUC76BWSA1NRwFqtkhohkUg), and the LCJ's Live Link in Criminal Courts Guidance (2022) (https://url.uk.m.mimecastprotect.com/s/m_R2C8qDBI6pqkESwuOhydAW1). They ask that any application for remote attendance be made as soon as possible, and in any event before the final list is published (usually at 3.30pm), to the Listing team, who will then refer the application on to a judge.

Mothers' room: There is a new mothers' room on the Third Floor at Southwark. It is accessible via a key code and has facilities which include a lounge and refrigerator. The key code can be obtained from the Security Office or Paul Tang, the Delivery Manager.

James Thacker KC
Chair

EAST ANGLIAN BAR MESS

Negotiations with Ipswich Crown Court have succeeded and the Mess has finally secured the installation of coffee machine in the robing room. This has been funded by the Mess and has been widely welcomed by the Bar. The court is also amenable to the provision of additional plug sockets for the use of counsel in the robing room and we are hopeful that we will see some progress soon.

The Mess is arranging a Mess Christmas Drinks to be held in Ipswich on 12th December 2025.
HHJ Martyn Levett is completing his term of office as Resident Judge at Ipswich Crown Court this year. We thank him for both his support and leadership. We hope to mark the occasion appropriately!

Stephen Rose KC (Chair)
Jo Eley (Junior)

ESSEX BAR MESS

The mess is looking forward to the Annual Essex Bar Mess dinner, which is due to take place on the 14th of November 2025 at the Lion Inn, Boreham. There is still plenty of room and we expect it to be well attended. We have a good number of judiciary attending (both current and retired). We also are pleased to see that there are some civil practitioners attending this year.

The mess is to witness the departure of the resident Judge at Basildon, HHJ Leigh, as she travels north to the tractors and potatoes of Suffolk, where she will take over from HHJ Levett in December. We wish her well, alongside all those who practice in Suffolk.

The mess was saddened by the death of John Caudle, who was a stalwart of these parts. There was a well-attended memorial event in his honour. He will of course be missed.

The Mess was also saddened to learn of the death of Steve Pay. Steve was a very much respected CPS caseworker, and many of us will recall his wit, his withering sarcasm, particularly in respect of all things civil service. But most importantly we remember the kindness he showed to junior practitioners who found themselves venturing into Southend Crown Court for the first time.

We were saddened also to hear of the sudden death of Andy Ioannou, the former clerk to the 18RLC Annex at Chelmsford. He served the Annex for many years until his departure in 2018 to a warmer climate.

Marc Brown
Essex Bar Mess Junior

HERTS AND BEDS BAR MESS

St Albans

The frustrations of the HMCTS building repairs system continue. The air-cooling system is still not fixed in courts 6 and 8, although, mercifully, with the cooler outside temperatures, it has not been as critical as previously.

On the catering front the court is considering tenders to try and get catering up and running again. It is hoped that this a successful applicant will get the canteen operational again sooner rather than later. Anyone interested in running the facility can contact Debbie Downer, the delivery manager: debbie.downer@Justice.gov.uk

The Resident Judge has listened carefully to the bar's concerns about the CVP protocol, and discussed them together at one of the judges' meetings. Andrew Johnson then took the lead in re-drafting the protocol to reflect what was agreed, and the court has drafted what they hope is a more approachable form than the LCJ's form. The court will also be sending the form by email, rather than as an attachment, which should mean it is less trouble to complete. It will of course be kept under review.

Luton

An updated version of Luton's Guidance Document for Legal Professionals was issued in February, slightly amending the previous version. The court is continuing the trial of not listing PTRs as a matter of course and would encourage counsel to notify the court when a standard FCMH is coming up, if it is not required because stage date compliance etc is good.

The court often get late requests from clerks to delay the start of a trial due to unavailability. The court treat every such request

(and others to do with listings) seriously and consider it in the context of all the obvious variables. Substantial work goes into formulating the trial plan at the beginning of the week for the following week, so the earlier the court know about a difficulty, the greater the chance that they may be able to accommodate it. There is no blanket approach. If the court can accommodate a listing request, then they will endeavour to do so.

Where the answer is no, it is genuinely because acceding would have either a disproportionate and detrimental impact on the rest of the list or that it is simply impossible when matching case type with available judicial resource. But the court will continue to try its best to help whenever we can.

Debbie Downer, the list officer of many years has been promoted to Delivery Manager at St Albans and so Luton are rebuilding their listings team. Debbie will be missed and all wish her well in her new post.

Kevin Molloy
H&B Bar Mess Chair

KENT BAR MESS

Bar and SEC Chair Visit to Maidstone Crown Court

On 18th July 2025, the Bar Chair, Barbara Mills KC and the SEC Chair, Claire Davies KC visited Maidstone Crown Court along with KBM Chair, Nina Ellin KC to meet the Resident Judge (HHJ Smith), members of the list office and staff, members of the Mess and other judges. There were some helpful discussions and information sharing, including in relation to issues over the listing of trials, communication with the list office and teething problems around listing cases in Southwark and Woolwich courts.

Canterbury

No news to report, save to congratulate the once Resident Judge of Canterbury, formerly HHJ Norton, on her recent appointment to the High Court Bench.

Annual Dinner

This year's annual Kent Bar Mess dinner (and dance) will be on the 21 November 2025 at the Dilly, Piccadilly. Tickets on sale.

Nina Ellin KC
Kent Bar Mess Chair

NORTH LONDON BAR MESS

Harrow Crown Court

HHJ Lodge states as follows:

Harrow CC is expected to start running again on 16/02/26. As well as the work on the roof, there has been some refurbishment.

HHJ Bourne KC is moving to Southwark CC in October. At present, Harrow CC has not been informed whether it is getting a replacement judge.

Nothing else to report.

Snaresbrook Crown Court

HHJ Canavan reports the news from Snaresbrook as follows, "We had our successful Macmillan Coffee Morning on 26 September.

We have the Remembrance Day Service and the Carol Service coming up in November and December

Our former colleague Baroness Levitt KC is now a junior minister in the Ministry of Justice.

Wood Green Crown Court

HHJ John Dodd KC reports:

Local news of significance – HHJ Joanna Greenberg KC retires soon, her valedictory will be on Friday 28th November, probably at 10am.

All are welcome – and I hope that one of you or an even more senior colleague, might attend and say a few kind words about Joanna.

We said goodbye to our wonderful usher, Don Costello, last week, after 28 years of loyal service. We presented him with loads of gifts and tributes.

Apart from that, we rumble along, doing the best we can, with a mounting backlog and no immediate signs of that reducing.

We have now held 2 successful events addressing the challenges of knife crime – facilitated in large part by Stephen Akinsanya.

Philip Misner
North London Bar Mess Chair

SURREY AND SOUTH LONDON BAR MESS

Overview

During the summer the SSLBM supported three separate parties at three of its four Courts. On the 12th June 2025 Kingston Crown Court hosted a Judges, Bar and Court users social in the main foyer of the building which proved to be an excellent event. The SSLBM would particularly like to express our thanks to the Resident Judge HHJ Peter Lodder KC for hosting the event and to HHJ Mark Bryant-Heron KC for his assistance in organising the event and providing the groovy sounds!

On 3rd July 2025 Guildford Crown Court hosted a Judges, Bar and Court users party in the rear gardens of the Court building which was a most enjoyable evening. The SSLBM would particularly like to express our thanks to the Resident Judge HHJ Patricia Lees for hosting the party and to HHJ Claire Harden-Frost for her great assistance in organising a memorable evening.

The following week, on 10th July 2025, the Judges at Isleworth Crown Court held their Garden Party for staff and Court users. Like the preceding events, this was again an excellent evening. The SSLBM would particularly like to thank the Resident Judge HHJ Martin Edmonds KC for hosting the event and HHJ Hannah Duncan who organised the whole evening together with SSLBM stalwart, Neil Griffin. The food and drink were plentiful!

All three events demonstrated how important regular liaison in a social setting between Judges, Bar, Solicitors, Court staff and other Court users are. The SSLBM will do its utmost to ensure these events continue.

Other News

In early September 2025 the Resident Judge at Croydon Crown Court, HHJ Michael Evans KC, moved to Inner London Crown Court to take over as Resident. The SSLBM wish him well at his new home Court. In the interim, HHJ Liz Lowe has taken over as temporary Resident Judge at Croydon whilst a permanent appointment is made.

And in a move mirroring the football world, HHJ Deborah Charles has moved from Croydon to Guildford with HHJ Shuhankar Banerjee moving in the other direction. No information on the transfer fees is available however!

Listing & Other issues

The Chair has been in close liaison with all four RJs as regards listing. All RJs are acutely aware of the issues facing the Bar, and are very sympathetic to problems those using these Courts encounter with regards to listing.

Any SSLBM member or user of any these Courts should contact the Chair, William Hughes KC, if they have any issue they would like raised or addressed, or the SSLBM representative for each Court – Isleworth – Neil Griffin, Guildford – Matthew Ralston, Croydon – Kwame Sekyere and Kingston – Gabriella Lewis.

William Hughes KC
SSLBM Chair

SUSSEX BAR MESS

Numerous members of the Mess helped out at the ever-popular Lewes Crown Court Open Day on 13th September. Despite the foul weather and replacement buses on the rail line into Lewes, over 1500 people queued along Lewes High Street to tour the building and watch members of the Mess undertake mock trials.

The Mess is holding a dinner in Brighton on Friday 10th October, something we hope might become a more regular event than it has been in the past. Tickets have been in high demand and the event is now sold out. The popularity of this and other events has helped increase the membership of the Mess. Welcome to all the new members.

Alan Gardner KC
Sussex Bar Mess Chair

THAMES VALLEY BAR MESS

Oxford

1. HHJ Daly retired on 19 September 2025 but will be sitting back in Oxford from time to time as a Deputy Circuit Judge to finish off some previous cases. He had a fantastic Valedictory but to mark the occasion further the TVBM are hosting a joint retirement dinner for HHJ Gledhill KC (who retired earlier this year) and HHJ Daly on 14 November 2025. Tickets are limited and almost sold out. If anyone wishes for further information please contact Adam Williams (aw@4kbw.co.uk).

Reading

2. The TVBM congratulate The Honourable Ms Justice Norton on her elevation to the High Court Bench where she has been allocated to the King's Bench Division. Reading Crown Court will miss her. In the interim until a new Resident Judge is appointed HHJ Nawaz has taken over the role having been the deputy resident judge.
3. On 02 October 2025 the TVBM hosted a social drinks event in Reading which was very well attended by the Judiciary, legal practitioners, and Court staff alike. We thank all those for attending and making it yet another successful evening.

Aylesbury

4. There is no current update for Aylesbury Crown Court but we will be looking to do a social event in the new year.

Adam Williams
TVBM Junior

Breastfeeding or expressing facilities

We are grateful to the Courts for identifying at our request facilities for mothers returning to work to have a private room for breastfeeding or expressing to enable them to carry on their practice. It is anticipated we will shortly be able to provide details of rooms within the Family Courts. Please contact the court office at these courts for access.



Courts with dedicated rooms:

- Woolwich
- Kingston
- Isleworth
- Harrow
- Central Criminal Court
- Southwark
- Snaresbrook

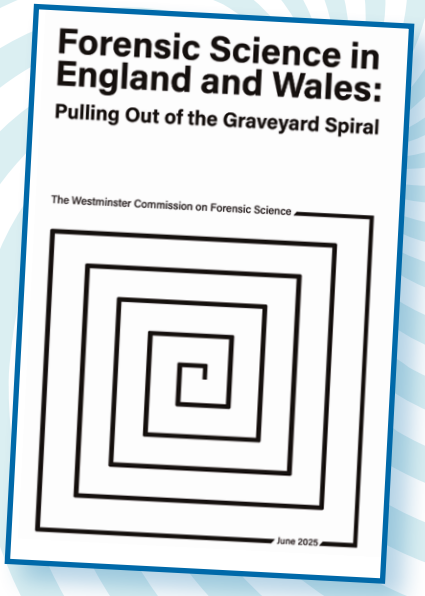
Courts where a room will be available upon request:

- Wood Green
- Inner London
- Croydon
- Basildon
- Maidstone
- Reading
- Oxford
- Aylesbury
- Lewes

WESTMINSTER COMMISSION ON FORENSIC SCIENCE

On 9 June, I attended an event at Parliament for the launch of the report by the **Westminster Commission on Forensic Science** on behalf of the Circuit.

(https://futurejustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/FS_Digital_latest.pdf)



The Westminster Commission inquiry, co-chaired by Baroness Sue Black and Professor Angela Gallop and launched by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Miscarriages of Justice at the end of 2022, took evidence over a two-year period in the form of a public consultation and written and oral submissions from forensic scientists, academics, lawyers and police investigators, as well as victims of miscarriages of justice and their representatives.

The report, *"Forensic Science in England and Wales: Pulling Out of the Graveyard Spiral"* makes for truly sobering reading. A "graveyard spiral" is an aviation term: a pilot who mistakenly believes they are flying level, disoriented by misleading sensation or faulty instruments, and in consequence, gradually drifts into disaster. It is an apt description of the looming crisis for forensic science in our jurisdiction. There have been seven major reports since 2005 detailing the dire state of forensic science provision in England and Wales. Each report has raised similar concerns and each report has been utterly ignored by successive Governments.

We all rely upon forensic science in our work, but this is now supplied by a dwindling pool of over-stretched and under-funded private companies. There is a crisis of funding and a crisis of recruitment for new scientists to carry out the work needed. Police forces deploy a limited range of standardised, commoditised tests, but which do not necessarily represent the best available science for each case and do not sufficiently incentivise the interests of the private supplier to continuing offering their services. There is an issue of equality of arms given the obvious disparity in access to defence-commissioned expert work.

It is very much hoped that the latest report will be the one which gains traction with the powers that be. It does not simply point out the problems, but also proposes a range of solutions, such as the creation of a National Forensic Science Institute and regional hubs for rapid responses for urgent investigations as well as proper funding to secure a long-term future for the sector with the forensic process extending seamlessly from crime scene to courtroom. Without these, we may increasingly find that essentially forensic testing required by police or defence simply does not happen or is of diminished quality if it does. We are collectively vulnerable to the whims of the financial successes of the private suppliers.

Harry O'Sullivan

- 5KBW
- Recorder of the Circuit



As Katy Thorne KC, one of the Commissioners, commented, the

> "Commission was dismayed by the current state of forensic science in our criminal courts. Cost-cutting measures in forensic science provision and reporting are eroding basic standards, and fundamental principles of natural justice, including equality of arms, are being undermined. The Criminal Procedure Rules are proving ineffective in ensuring trials admit only reliable forensic evidence. Fair trials depend on sound, reliable scientific evidence, and the risk of serious injustice – when science is misrepresented, misunderstood, or simply unaffordable – is increasingly evident. We sincerely hope that our recommendations will be implemented to reduce the risk of further miscarriages of justice."

South Eastern Circuit
ANNUAL DINNER 2025

It is truth universally acknowledged that members of the Bar in possession of a spare Friday evening, must be in want of a black-tie dinner.

The South Eastern Circuit held its Annual Dinner on Friday, 3rd October 2025, in the historic grandeur of the Great Hall at Lincoln's Inn. This black-tie occasion is the second such dinner to be held in the post-Covid era and is quickly cementing itself as a calendar fixture for years to come. The dinner brought together members of the Bar, the Judiciary, and invited guests to celebrate another year of our work together.

The Lady Chief Justice, Baroness Carr of Walton-on-the-Hill, honoured the Circuit as guest speaker. Fortunately for all in attendance, the Lady Chief Justice managed to include much wittier references in her excellent after-dinner speech, which was entertainingly structured around this year being the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth, but focussing particularly upon the Kindness at the Bar initiative.

The Circuit extends its warm thanks to the events team at Lincoln's Inn for their impeccable hospitality and assistance in hosting the dinner. See you all next year!





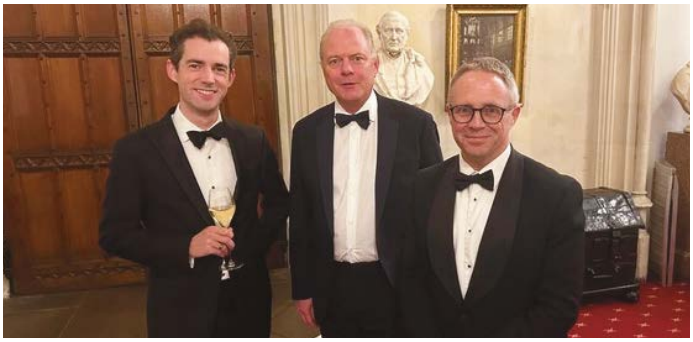














Harry O'Sullivan

- 5KBW
- Recorder of the Circuit

SOUTH EASTERN CIRCUIT
AGM 2025

SEC
YOUR CIRCUIT. YOUR VOICE.

Members of the South Eastern Circuit are invited to the AGM to be held:

on **Thursday 27 November 2025** at **6pm**

at **Farringdon Chambers**, 180-182 Bermondsey St, Greater, London SE1 3TQ

The meeting will be followed by drinks.

If you would like to attend, please let Harriet.Devey@southeastcircuit.org.uk know and specify whether you will be doing so in person or online.

THE HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF
THE INNER TEMPLE

The Treasurer, Richard Salter KC, is holding a dinner for the South Eastern Circuit at The Inner Temple on Wednesday 26 November and he would be delighted to see as many of you as possible there.

For those who are looking to become more involved with the Inn, this is a great opportunity to talk to us and other members about volunteering opportunities. Our students also greatly appreciate the opportunity to receive guidance and support from members.

South Eastern Circuit Dinner
Wednesday 26 November

Reception:	7pm
Dinner:	7.45pm - 10.30pm
Location:	The Inner Temple, London EC4Y 7HL
Dress code:	Business attire

Tickets

Benchers/Called Members:	£51.85
Members Under 7 years' Call:	£40.25
Inner Temple Students:	£28.65
Guest:	£51.85

Called Members and Benchers are welcome to bring a guest. Students may not bring a guest at this time but please let us know if you are interested in bringing one, as we will review availability nearer the time. To Book: **innertemple.org.uk/southeastern**

If you need your online account activating or password resetting, please email **members@innertemple.org.uk**

Alternatively, if you wish to pay by phone, please contact Kate Peters or Rosy Humphrey on 020 7797 8183/8264.

IN MEMORIAM

Tim Dutton CBE, KC



It is with deep sadness that we announce the death of Tim Dutton CBE, KC on 4th June 2025.

Tim was leader of South Eastern Circuit between 2004-2006. He was an extraordinary leader regarded as one of the most outstanding the circuit has ever known. He was a man of unwavering conviction, continually fighting for his beliefs and renowned for his compassion and gentlemanly demeanour.

Tim was truly dedicated to the Bar and a champion of the profession, he was an inspiration to many. He led by example. Not only was he leader of our circuit but Chairman of the Bar, Chair of the Advocacy Training Council, Chairman of the Association of Regulatory and Disciplinary Lawyers and Head of Fountain Court 2008-2013.

It was Tim's vision and passion that led to him being a founder of advocacy training for the Bar of England and Wales. Tim was fearless as our leader in promoting our interests, he took the time to listen to all, a charming and charismatic leader, whose focus and care for the juniors set him above others.

The circuit owe him an immense debt of gratitude for he was instrumental in establishing the Advanced International Advocacy Course now known as Keble and in recognition of Tim the course carries his name. It is his legacy. His singular purpose was to nurture and develop the finest advocates which he achieved and the course continues to achieve. His advocacy training was in demand across the world.

Tim was truly exceptional and his passing is a profound loss and his absence will be deeply felt by everyone on the circuit.

Our thoughts are with his wife Sappho, his daughter Pia and all friends and family.

A tribute by Fountain Court
https://www.fountaincourt.co.uk/2025/06/timothy-dutton-cbe-kc-1957-to-2025/

Podcast on creating Keble
https://www.theadvocacypodcast.com/creating-keble-an-interview-with-the-course-founder-tim-dutton-cbe-kc/

Stephen Leslie KC



The Circuit was deeply saddened to learn of the sudden and tragic death of Stephen Leslie KC, former Leader of the South Eastern Circuit.

His passing has come as a great shock to all who knew him within the profession and beyond.

Called to the Bar by Lincoln's Inn in 1971 and taking Silk in 1993, Stephen established an extremely successful career at the private Bar, defending in a substantial number of complex and high profile cases. He was an active member as a Bencher at his Inn since 2001.

Stephen led the Circuit in 2009 and 2010, with energy and commitment, and his contribution to its work during his tenure will long be remembered. He thrived in the company of fellow members of the Bar. Juniors remember him in particular for his inclusivity during his time as Leader.

Joining the Public Advocacy Team at its inception in 2014, Stephen played an active and essential role in establishing the reputation of the Team for providing high quality, sensitive representation for clients who appear before the criminal courts of England and Wales.

In all of his roles, Stephen showed unfailing kindness and concern for the welfare of his colleagues. Our thoughts and deepest sympathies are with Melissa, Theodore, Lara and Ophelia and all those close to him at this difficult time.

Charles Judge



It is with great sadness that we announce the death of Charles Judge on 10th November 2025.

Charles was called to the Bar in 1981 and was a member at 5PB since the early 90's. Throughout his career he was always keen to support and encourage the junior bar; even of late and despite his ill-health, his dedication never waned.

He was a cheerful and popular presence in both his Chambers and robing rooms across the South East but particularly in East Anglia where his passing will be deeply felt. He epitomised everything that is good about our profession. Whether prosecuting or defending he was an example to all: hard-working, conscientious and scrupulously fair. Over many years, junior tenants benefitted from his calm, friendly and wise advice - he had seen it all before and was happy to pass on his experience.

Although in recent years ill-health restricted the scope of his practice (and his ability to play tennis) he always relished the court day. He made friends with everyone - judges, lawyers and staff alike.

He was a fundamentally decent man and his colleagues in Chambers are all stunned at his untimely passing.

We extend our condolences to his daughters Brodie and Amy, his family, friends, colleagues and all who knew him.

John Caudle



It is with great sadness that the Circuit announce the death of John Caudle yesterday 1st June 2025. His loss will be deeply felt across the legal profession. The courts in East Anglia will not be the same. Our condolences to his family, colleagues and friends.

John was called to the Bar in 1976, and spent his entire career in Chambers having been pupil to Ronnie Trott back in the days when Chambers was still at 3 Hare Court, prior to the move to 2 Bedford Row.

He was not only a fearless prosecutor and defender and a fine advocate, but also great fun to be in a case with. Although hard working and dedicated, he always found time for fun and mischief, and was the life and soul of any robing room.

John drew particular pleasure from helping to train the next generation of barristers, and was a pupil supervisor and leader to many members of Chambers, and also served for many years on Chambers' management committee and as head of pupillage.

John also served as a Recorder since 2000, and will be remembered by those appearing before him as a scrupulously fair and sensible judge.

The Courts and robing rooms of East Anglia will not be the same without him.

We extend our condolences to his sister Rosemary and to all his friends and colleagues.

Rest in peace John, we will all miss you.

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The South Eastern Circuit
Suite 23, 9B Roper Close
Canterbury, Kent CT2 7EP

T: 01304 849149
E: admin@southeastcircuit.org.uk
W: www.southeastcircuit.org.uk



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